**Minutes of the July 2021**

**Meeting of the Municipal District of Ennis Committee,**

**held at 10:30am on Tuesday 6th July 2021,**

**in Council Chamber, Aras Contae an Chláir**

**Councillors:** P. Murphy, A. Norton, P. Daly, C. Colleran-Molloy, J. Flynn, M. Howard.

**Officials:** Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Sean Lenihan, Senior Engineer (Director of Services representative), Lily McInerney, Staff Officer ; Niamh O Connor, Administrative Officer & Meetings Administrator,

Apologies: Cllr M. Nestor, Carmel Kirby, Director of Services, Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer.

Chair, Cllr. A. Norton, opened the Meeting and began by extending sympathy to the O’Brien family of Doora Barefield on the tragic loss of their son Fionn. She extended sympathy to his parents Michelle and Pat, and his siblings Niall, Conor and Sadhbh. Fionn had worked as a lifeguard for Clare County Council since 2019. All Members joined in this expression of sympathy at this sad and tragic death. Sean Lenihan, Senior Executive Engineer, expressed deep sympathy on behalf of the Executive. A minutes silence was observed by all attendees in Council Chamber as a tribute to the late Fionn O’Brien. R.I.P.

**Item No. 1. Minutes of the June 2021 Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis Committee held on 11th June 2021**

*This item was proposed by Cllr. M. Howard, seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy and agreed by all Members.*

**Minutes of AGM of Municipal District of Ennis Committee held on 11 June 2021**

*This item was proposed by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard, and agreed by Members.*

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis Committee held on 22nd June 2021**

*This item was proposed by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by all Members.*

**Item No. 2. Matters Arising**

1. Cllr. Howard referenced notice of motion no. 1 from June EMD and requested an update on maintenance works requested for St. Clare’s Close. Lily McInerney, Staff Officer, responded that housing maintenance had been requested to provide a further update and that this would be followed up and reported back to Cllr. Howard.
2. Cllr. Howard referenced notice of motion no. 7 from June EMD and requested an update on the opening of the Ennis Friary by the OPW. Niamh O’Connor, Administrative Officer, reported that she is continuing to check with OPW and will report back.
3. Cllr. Flynn referenced notice of motion no. 2 from June EMD regarding the agreed SPC evaluation of poor air quality in Ennis, which is to include input from expert Dr. J Sodeau of U.C.C. He stated that the evaluation should review whether the very large bauxite residue storage at Aughinish Alumina refinery plant which is located 25km south west of Ennis, has an impact on the poor air quality in Ennis.

**Item No. 3.**

**(i) Section 183 Disposal of Lands: Lands to rear of Unit 9, Gort Road Business Park, Dulick, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

Report and map had been circulated in advance of meeting.

*This item was proposed by Cllr. J. Flynn, seconded by Cllr. P. Daly and agreed by all Members.*

**(ii) Lease of land at Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, clarified that Local Authorities have responsibility for the procurement of sites for schools. Report and map circulated in advance of meeting which references an area of land currently being leased to Ennis Educate Together N.S. It is proposed to continue the existing lease for a six-year period from September 2019 while work is ongoing to secure a permanent location.

*This item was proposed by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy, seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn and agreed by all Members.*

**Item No. 4 Notices of Motions**

**No. 1 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard**

I request that Ennis MD lower kerb heights at junctions to facilitate wheeled access and mobility. To this end I request a survey undertaken to identify locations where this needs to take place.

***Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Officer, responded as follows:***

*The Ennis MD are presently undertaking drop kerb adjustments to footpaths at crossing points in town. The location and provision of disabled spaces is being reviewed in the Francis Street-Friary Carpark-Abbey Street Carpark and Lower Market Street and the existing disabled parking spaces are being reviewed to determine that immediate accessibility is available to the footpath.*

*The Ennis Public Realm Works in Parnell Street, Laneways and Bow-ways and the proposed works at O’Connell Square, O’Connell Street and Barrack Street all are fully accessible with shared surfaces, table top crossing points or dropped kerbs provided.*

*The works proposed under the NTA funded Active Travel Schemes will provide greater accessibility. The items listed in the Age Friendly walkability audit and previous accessibility audits are being examined and works scheduled.*

*It is the view of the Ennis MD that resources are not available at this time to carry out a survey to identify locations where drop kerbs are required. There are locations where crossing points are being considered that will require detailed design due to their position relative to roundabouts or particular junction types.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. Howard referred to the incumbrance for wheelchair users in having to seek out the nearest driveway to avail of drop kerb for ease of crossing the road and that even just for residential areas drop kerbs at junctions would be beneficial. She acknowledged the response from Eamon O’Dea who further clarified that there are many varied accessibility provisions being considered, such as upgrades from the Active Travel schemes rollout. All new projects benefit from an accessibility audit at pre-design stage. A meeting is arranged with the Irish Wheelchair Association to audit the proposed Disability parking bays in Friars Walk and Abbey Street car parks in addition to accessibility to toilets and a ramp at the footbridge. Two additional Disability parking bays to be provided at Lower Market Street. He described how Francis Street is a greater challenge but that improvements where possible are forthcoming. Sean Lenihan, Senior Executive Engineer added that retrofitting of old designs was challenging but that a high standard of accessibility was now applicable to all new projects.

**No. 2 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn**

I ask the Ennis Municipal District carry out works over the summer school holiday period to reduce the current road safety hazard being experienced by Doora National School going children (vulnerable pedestrian road users), due to both speed and volume of vehicles at that location, and that the works would also address the winter localized flooding at the location which at times forces children out onto the road carriageway.

***Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Officer, responded as follows:***

*The Ennis MD will contact the school and identify their safety concerns. Doora National School made submission to the NTA funded school works programme but were not listed for work in 2021. There is a new methodology for this funding via the Green Schools programme and the NTA. The Ennis MD will seek the information submitted by Doora School and see if assistance can be provided.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. Flynn welcomed the response particularly in light of the school’s NTA submission not being successful. He described what has become a hazardous area for the hundred or so vulnerable road users due to speed and volume of traffic. This motion was supported by all Members, Cllr. Murphy reported receiving calls from concerned parents. Cllr. Howard highlighted the need for a standardised 30kph limit in such areas across the district.

**No. 3 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Nestor**

This motion is requesting that the fencing at the back of Fioruisce estate on the Gort Road be replaced as it is currently in poor condition.

***Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Officer, responded as follows:***

*The Ennis MD will examine the fencing and provide a cost estimate for the works and the Councillor can consider the inclusion of the works under the Councillors General Municipal Allocation Works.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn and agreed by all Members.*

In Cllr. Nestor’s absence, Cllr. J. Flynn and Cllr. P. Murphy voiced support for this motion.

**No. 4 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy**

That an update be given on the actions taken by the Council to address the ongoing speeding on the Ballybeg Road.

***Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*The Ennis MD will carry out further traffic counts on the Ballybeg Road and details will be forwarded to An Garda Siochana. The Section 38 traffic calming public consultation process for the provision of footpaths on Ballybeg Road from the Water Tower to Radharc na hInse is underway and shall be concluded with a report before the Councillors in September. The works will proceed immediately following approval by the Councillors.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr Colleran-Molloy sought clarity on the results of the initial traffic counts and if these could be shared with Members and also clarity on when works were to commence. Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Officer, explained that public consultation is underway and the deadline for submissions is the first week of August, after which Members approval is sought before proceeding with the works. The public lighting element is currently going through evaluation. Regarding traffic counts, these are run at various times of day and incidences of speed excess are tracked, this data is processed by An Garda Siochana. The survey, he explained, will establish (a) if there are significant speed breaches and (b) are there any works that could mitigate this. Sean Lenihan added that these counts provide detailed data.

**No. 5 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Murphy**

I am requesting that a budget is sought by Ennis Municipal District  to facilitate the engaging of an appropriate contractor to gather and dispose of the huge volume of excess cut grasses that are on our green areas across the Municipal area. This is as a result of later starting dates for grass cutting in order to promote Biodiversity. However, while welcoming this initiative, many residents committees and Tidy Towns groups now have a huge problem with the unkept appearance of our public spaces.

***Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Officer, responded as follows:***

*The grass cutting contractor was required to delay the initial grass cut and reduce the grass height in a specified way as set out in the Council’s Biodiversity Policy. There are locations where this has left untidy cut grass which would normally be macerated in further grass cutting and become less visible.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. Murphy acknowledged the response and the obvious biodiversity benefits of delayed grass cutting, but that this change in process should be accompanied by a plan for disposal of the excess grass which is unsightly especially in wet weather and is often strewn across adjoining footpaths. He added that the longer grass meant that children could not avail of these green areas for sports.

**No. 6 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Daly**

I ask Ennis MD to continue road upgrading from the exit gate of Ennis Golf Club right down to Showgrounds Cross on the Drumbiggle Road.

***Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Officer, responded as follows:***

*The Ennis MD will be surfacing the road from the Golf Club-Westwood to the Drumbiggle Road using a thin coat surfacing material, this work is being scheduled with a specialised contractor.*

*The Ennis MD listed the provision of a footpath from the Golf Club-Westwood to the Drumbiggle Road in the NTA Active Travel funding for 2021, however it was not listed in the works programme. The proposed works are a priority for the Ennis MD and the design work will be undertaken in 2021-2022 so the road can be included in the submissions for pedestrian works in the 2022 NTA Active Travel call. The road will be included in the Road Works Programme for asphaltic overlay when the footpath is constructed.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. Daly described the poor state of this road and reiterated that improvement works were needed. Cllr. Flynn fully supported this Motion commending Cllr. Daly for his long standing representation for these residents and that it was unfortunate that the National Transport Authority (NTA) did not list this work as a priority for 2021.

**No. 7 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard**

I request that Ennis MD reconsider hanging festoon lights in the Lifford area. The businesses in that area would appreciate the lights being installed for the summer months.

***Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, responded as follows:***

*I can advise that the lighting provided for the outdoor dining was facilitated through a grant from Failte Ireland. Unfortunately, the full value of the grant has been expended by Ennis Municipal District, and there is no further funding available at present to extend the lighting.*

*If an alternative source of funding becomes available, we are happy to consider the request.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. Howard acknowledged the response but stated that lighting was available at Christmas, she was mindful of the need to support all rate payers at this time. This motion was supported by Cllr. Flynn who also commended the festoon lighting elsewhere in town. This motion was supported by all Members. It was agreed that costings would be carried out by the Executive for “festoon lighting in the Lifford area” for the outdoor dining season, presented to Members with a view to allocating funds from GMA for same.

**No. 8 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn**

Due to the large traffic volumes ( 15,000 vehicles a day ) on a main road to and from the M18 namely Tulla Road - I ask that Ennis Municipal District ,  in addition to proposals being considered at Corovorrin  junction, look at providing additional traffic calming measures both east and west of the railway bridge -  such as pedestrian crossings at the Lifford Road and New Road junctions.

***Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Officer, responded as follows:***

*The Ennis MD has forwarded your motion to the Road Design Section for consideration in the detailed design of the LCS Scheme at Corovorrin Junction.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. P. Daly and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. Flynn acknowledging the response, outlined the lack of safe pedestrian crossings for vulnerable elderly residents along with, the awaited Corovorrin traffic calming measures, has become a source of frustration for locals. Cllr. Daly supported this motion voicing concern for residents of Kevin Barry Avenue and Corovorrin. Eamon O’Dea explained that the draft layout map was currently with the Department for approval. He reminded Members that the upcoming Active Travel “Connecting and Co-creating Ennis” project will also deliver a broad range of accessibility solutions across town.

**No. 9 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Nestor**

This motion is requesting that Clare County Council in conjunction with *Glór* Theatre arrange a series of outdoor concerts, to be held in the Market building at times that would not interfere with trading in the area.

***Siobhan Mulcahy, Arts Officer, responded as follows:***

*Clare Arts Office is currently working with Fidget Feet Irish Aerial Dance Company to provide entertainment in Ennis over the summer months and if suitable to their needs we will give consideration to the Market Building. The Arts Office is also operating the Outdoor Live Music Local Performance Scheme countywide, including in Ennis. We are currently assessing the applications under this scheme and again, will give due consideration to use of the Market building, subject to public health guidelines and technical requirements of the applicants.*

***Orla Flanagan, Director of Glór, responded as follows:***

*Glór has considered the Market Building for potential outdoor events, but we have had to rule it out as it does not meet the definition issued by Fáilte Ireland of an outdoor space which is very specific (because it has walls) and as far as I understand it is designated an Indoor space officially by Council.*

*In terms of outdoor activity planned by Glór, we have already staged 2 drive-in dance performances as part of Lasta Young Curator’s Festival on Sunday 12th June, and are staging a production by the Gate Theatre and Mikel Murfi on a truck in the car park at Glór on the 29th July with 2 performances, and also will support Siobhán Mulcahy, Arts Officer, and Fidget Feet with their programme in August and later in the year.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton and agreed by all Members.*

**No. 10 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy**

That an update be given on the illegal encampment on the Kilrush Road?

***Siobhan McNulty, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*Notice has been served on the parties to vacate the site however to date those present on the site have not complied with the notice. To that end we have advised the High Court of the non-compliance and are waiting on a further court decision to take action to enforce the High Court Order. The Housing department continue to work with the households approved for social housing support to assist in securing accommodation.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. Colleran-Molloy voiced dismay at the lack of regard for law and order displayed by persons engaged in illegal encampment and that issues of law enforcement which were of nationwide importance are being left for local authorities to manage without support from central government. All Members voiced support for this motion. Cllr. Daly highlighted the huge costs incurred by Clare County Council in High Court actions that usually yielded little result. Cllr. Murphy highlighted additional issues such as stray horses and dogs, and the fear factor for the general public regarding where an encampment will move to once it is forcibly moved from one site. Cllr. Flynn, in support, shared the contact details of the three tenancy enforcement officers who were working round the clock to bring resolution in these cases. Sean Lenihan, Senior Executive Engineer, agreed to follow up on this issue.

**No. 11 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Daly**

I request Ennis MD to upgrade the road at the cluster of the six two-storey houses in Edenvale, Ennis.

***Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Officer, responded as follows:***

*This road is not identified in the schedule as being in charge of the Council, therefore the only mechanism for carrying out improvements to the road would be through a Local Improvement Scheme.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr P. Daly stated that he didn’t consider the Local Improvement Scheme would be appropriate for this estate and he questioned whether this estate was on the Council list. Eamon O’Dea clarified that the current electronic list does not include this estate as having been taken in charge. Cllr. Flynn highlighted a similar motion had been raised previously. Eamon O’Dea explained that works may have been carried out at this location in the past by the Council due to a site being deemed a danger to the public. Sean Lenihan, Senior Executive Engineer, recommended that an application be made to have the estate taken in charge by the Council.

**Item No. 5 Correspondence**

None.

**Item No. 6 Any Other Business**

(i) Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Officer, informed Members that Abbeyville/Abbeycourt traffic calming measures are now complete.

(ii) Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Officer, informed Members that lighting at the pedestrian crossing in Gort Road is almost complete.

(iii) **Flood Relief Schemes:** Sean Lenihan, Senior Executive Engineer, informed members that the Lower Flood Relief Scheme at Abbey Street is now completed. The main scheme, Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme is now substantially complete. At that stage, written confirmation of areas covered, that should benefit from the scheme, can be provided. The Project Management Office will be in a position to issue “Letter of Comfort” to applicants for flood risk insurance in these areas.

Cllr. Flynn queried whether a parcel of land to the west will be returned as ‘available for use’, further to completion of the Ennis South FRS. Sean Lenihan will report back on this issue.

Sean Lenihan confirmed that the issue of the structural integrity of the barrage has been referred to the OPW and a definitive answer is awaited on this.

(iv) Niamh O’Connor, Administrative Officer, briefed Members on a request from Cllr. J. Flynn to seek approval at this meeting from all Members for the reallocation of €5,000 from his 2020 Councillor-specific allocation towards St. Michael’s Villas. This money had been allocated to the Corovorrin project but this had received alternative funding. This was agreed by all Members present.

Cllr. Norton confirmed that the County Development Plan consultation meetings have been postponed until further notice.

Chair Cllr. A. Norton reminded attendees that the next Ennis Municipal District Committee Meeting would be Tuesday 7th September. She wished everybody a safe and healthy Summer and closed the meeting.

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

Mayor of Ennis

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

Meetings Administrator

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