**Minutes of the July 2022**

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

**held in the Boardroom at the Clare Museum and on-line**

**at 10:30pm on Tuesday 7th July 2022**

**Councillors:** C. Colleran-Molloy, M. Nestor, M. Howard, P. Murphy, J. Flynn.

**Officials:** Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Niamh O’Connor, Administrative Officer & Meetings Administrator, Lily McInerney Staff Officer.

**Apologies:** Cllr A Norton, Cllr P. Daly, Carmel Kirby Director of Services.

Chair, Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy opened the meeting welcoming all present.

**Item No. 1. Minutes of the June 2022 Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis and the Annual General Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis, held on 17th June 2022**

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

**Item No. 2. Matters Arising**

1. Cllr. Flynn requested an update on June Notice of Motion No. 3 which proposed that Ennis M.D. take over the grass cutting either side of the distributor road in Cappahard estate. Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, confirmed that the matter was being examined and a response would be provided in due course.

**Item No. 3. Section 38 Low Cost Safety Scheme at R352 Tulla Road, at junction with L4573 Kevin Barry Avenue in Corovorrin**

 Report and map had been circulated in advance of the Meeting. No submissions had been received. Eamon O’Dea SEE recommended adoption of this Section 38 which will improve and enhance the safety of this section of the Tulla Road.

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

**Item No. 4. GMA Funding – Items for approval**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  **Project** | **Amount** |
| Doora Barefield Comhaltas | €1,000.00 |

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

**Item No. 5. Notices of Motions**

**No. 1 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy**

That the roll-out plans for the installation of E-charging points for electric vehicles throughout the Ennis Municipal District be discovered and advised to the members.

***Anne O’Sullivan, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*The CCMA has identified the Local Authority’s role in the development of the EV charge point infrastructure beginning with the development of an EV and EV Charge Point (EVCP) strategy & to assess the optimum locations for public EVCPs within its county boundaries.*

*The Council is currently developing an EV and EV Charging Point strategy. Through the development of the EV & EVCP Strategy for County Clare an assessment of the need for the infrastructure will be carried out. This will include mapping existing charger locations, examining current usage, modelling likely demand, drafting design for on-street chargers & how the rollout should be achieved. This strategy will be guided & informed by the Department of Transports Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy 2022 -2025 which has been out for public consultation & will be published in Q3 2022.*

*Engagement with stakeholders including ESB Networks, EV charging companies, Retail Providers, Car Park Owners, etc. is required and this has commenced.*

*In parallel with this it is anticipated that a small-scale pilot project for the installation of on street chargers will commence in 2022 subject to funding availability. “*

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

Cllr Colleran-Molloy acknowledged that a strategy is being developed, noting that roll out and location of charging points is going to take longer. Cllr Flynn supported this Motion recommending that locations are based around *Park & Stride* out-of-town locations. Eamon O’Dea, SEE, confirmed that “fast” and “medium” speed charging points are to be strategically located, and fines will apply for vehicles overstaying the allotted charge time. It was also confirmed that the new parking byelaws will need to provide regulation for EV charging.

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

The Clare County Council Tourism Strategy identifies deficiencies in Clare tourism offering including a serious defect in tourist accommodation beds both in Ennis and Clare.  It also identifies poor transport links within the county to countywide tourism attractions in West, North and East Clare.

I request that Ennis Municipal District Executive commence discussions with Clare County Council Tourism department, Irish Rail, Mid-West Third Level Institutes, Failte Ireland to investigate the possibility of development of Tourism/Student Accommodation at the Freight Yard at Ennis Rail Station which is a significant transport Hub with National rail and bus network.

Consideration of building visitor accommodation which could be used off season for 3rd level students availing of transport link offerings from Ennis such as the €20 weekly “Green Bus “ ticket to UL, MI, LIT.

***Deirdre O’Shea, A/Head of Tourism, responded as follows:***

*In line with the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030, Guiding our Journey to a Vibrant New Future in Tourism and specifically to the strategic objective (18a) set to review the Accommodation Audit stock within the County as follows:*



*The Tourism Department of Clare County Council are currently working with Fáilte Ireland on the development of an up-to-date accommodation audit information report, which will focus on approved Accommodation Stock, taking into account the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 and all relevant strategies and plans for the County. The main focus of the report will be to establish the demand drivers and opportunities for provision / increase of overnight accommodation. The suggestion to increase the capacity of student accommodation is welcome and will be included in this audit as the process is currently in research stage.*

*In relation to transport management, this key objective is highlighted under the Burren Visitor Experience Development Plan, as well as being a strategic priority of the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030. Traffic and transportation solutions will also form part of the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040.*

*In relation to the specific strategic objective to address the traffic management initiatives (8a) in the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030, as follows:*



*A North Clare public information meeting was held on the 1st March 2022, in order to engage feedback with key local stakeholders. All feedback has been received and key themes of the challenges are emerging. The process or next steps is to identify what actions (a) are in progress (b) can be fed into a pipeline of projects going forward and (c) identify and address challenges and resolutions.*

*Working on a cross directorate basis and collaboratively with State Agencies, this specific strategic priority of the Clare Tourism Strategy has been initiated and a dedicated commitment will be given to working on this with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. In this regard, the Tourism Department welcomes all such input from Ennis Municipal District.*

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

Cllr Flynn welcomed the response and with reference to ‘critical deficiencies in infrastructure and accommodation’ identified in the tourism strategy, he recommended the freight yard at Ennis station be considered for student accommodation. Cllr P. Murphy strongly supported this Motion, stating that outputs from the tourism strategy were critical to the success of the town and county. Cllr. Howard supported the genesis of the Motion but was not supportive of Ennis-based UL student accommodation, as student preference is predominantly to locate close to college rather than commute. Cllr Colleran-Molloy questioned if the response adequately addressed the key issue being raised. Cllr Flynn then confirmed that overnight accommodation is the key issue in question. Leonore O’Neill SEO confirmed that the response highlights several transportation strategies being worked on, and that Ennis is categorised for an “area-based transport assessment” which will have broad as well as specific solutions for Ennis.

**No. 3 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Murphy**

That Ennis M.D. review the parking situation at the Clareabbey end of the Fergus Riverwalk, this amenity is being used by huge volumes of people which is fantastic, but emergency services may have problems getting in if something isn't done to sort out the ad-hoc nature of parking that currently exists.

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

*The Ennis MD will examine the land ownership between the N85 and the Clareabbey access road on the Clareabbey Roundabout side of the railway line to confirm if there is a suitable location for the provision of parking facilities for persons using the Fergus Riverwalk. Once this is established a funding mechanism needs to be considered for any proposal.*

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

Cllr P. Murphy commented on the quality of this well-developed walking route and the absence of a dedicated car park to serve it. This Motion was supported by Cllrs Flynn, Howard and Colleran-Molloy commenting on how cars appear to be abandoned at the Clareabbey side. An additional issue was raised in terms of safety for kids on scooters emerging from the walk onto the Quin road side and whether a barrier might be placed here to circumvent the hazard. Eamon O’Dea SEE confirmed that the RDO would be requested to look at the safety issue at Quin road side and he confirmed that the designer would be asked to take a look at the parking element and come back with a solution.

**No. 4 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. A. Norton**

Can Ennis Municipal District ask UL to paint all the railings and the outside wall of the Ennis Hospital and to maintain them going forward as the outpatients is moving to the Kilrush Road.

*No response Required*

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

In Cllr Norton’s absence this item was not discussed except to provide clarity that in this case “UL” should be “UHL”.

**No. 5. Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr M. Howard**

A couple of years ago I brought forward a motion regarding the lack of bus shelters around the town.

Has there been any progress in introducing more shelters?

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

*The Ennis MD are engaging with the NTA Public Bus Services to determine the present status of the proposed Ennis Public Bus Service. It would then be feasible to consider the design and provision of bus shelters where existing and proposed bus stops are at the same locations subject to funding from the NTA.*

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

Cllr Howard acknowledged the response highlighting the exposed bus-stop on Lifford Road. Cllr Murphy and Flynn supported this Motion, Cllr Murphy mentioning that he would like to see the relocation of the Clarecastle bus stop itself to a more suitable location. Cllr Flynn added that bus stops identified in *Ennis 2040* are long awaited and all stops should be sheltered and clearly mapped for public transport users.

**No. 6 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn**

I request Ennis Municipal District to arrange cutting back growth & a clean-up of the overgrown Corovorrin River particularly at the bridge into Corovorrin Estate itself.

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

*The Ennis MD carried out a substantial clean-up of the Fergus Minor – Corovorrin River in recent years and will examine the location adjacent to the Corovorrin Bridge. Any works in this area will require environmental assessments, engagement with the NPWS and to be carried outside the nesting season.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. Colleran-Molloy and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr Flynn acknowledged the response and commented on the importance of keeping rivers clear to allow deflection of floodwaters and whilst acknowledging the clean-up of the Fergus minor, he outlined that a clean-up of Corovorrin river would be welcome and would represent a biodiversity enhancement.

**No. 7 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Daly**

With the severe shortage of houses both Social and Private in The Ennis M.D. area, I believe its important that all seven Councillors with the Planners, work together in securing as much zoned land as possible to service the population of Ennis M.D. with future development of houses, through the upcoming County Development Plan.

*No response required.*

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

In Cllr Daly’s absence, members supported what was called a timely and important motion and confirmed that all Ennis members would meet to take this matter forward.

**No. 8   Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Murphy**

I am requesting that Ennis M.D. row in behind Clarecastle Community Development's aspiration of extending the Fergus Greenway onwards to Clarecastle Quay. There is currently a live application for low level Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme funding that will allow a feasibility study for this project to be carried out.

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

*A joint application has been made by the Project Management Office and Clarecastle Tidy Towns to the Department of Rural & Community Development, under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)- project development measure, for funding for a feasibility study, to examine the options to extend the Fergus Greenway from the Clareabbey to Clarecastle Village.   The Ennis MD support any such applications whilst also being cognisant of which works will be prioritised for future submission under the different categories of ORIS funding.*

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

Cllr Murphy acknowledged the response and input from Eamon O’Dea and from Sean Lenihan of Project Management Office. He highlighted that whilst the Roche remedial works must be factored in, he and the Clarecastle Development Company were hopeful the application would be successful as a first step to bringing this project to fruition. Cllrs Flynn and Colleran-Molloy supported this motion. Leonore O’Neill SEO clarified that each Council can only submit one application for the ORIS project development measure.

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

Grass Cutting.

Is it possible for us to see the grass cutting schedule and locations included?

I have received numerous complaints ranging from grass not been cut to cutting done badly and grass not collected.

***Tommy Scott, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*The grass cutting locations specified in the tender documentation published on “etenders” has been circulated to Members.*

*The two complaints relating to grass not being cut within the contracted areas were acknowledged and have been addressed.*

*The* ***biodiversity measures*** *introduced (post contract award) has added restrictions and challenges to the grass cutting operations, however, excellent outcomes are being achieved with the wonderful display of flowers during April and early May bringing joy to all (while supporting biodiversity). This then is transitioned in phases from wild meadows to traditional grassed areas later in the season.*

*Grass collection is not included in the current contract. Grass cutting operations are continually under review.*

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

Cllr. Howard referred to the “No Mow May” policy and that it seemed appropriate to collect the first cut of the season, highlighting that a decision to this effect had now been taken at County level.

Cllr Nestor supported this motion highlighting that in some cases where a large area is cut, an adjacent smaller area may be left undone. Leonore O’Neill, SEO, provided members with some clarity on the current grass cutting contract. The contract went out to tender in 2021 for a 2-year service at which point the Government’s “no mow May” was not in existence. The number of cuts is based on the old traditional model and to move from “wildflower meadow” to “low cut” requires a few cuts. She advised that the ‘no mow may’ policy will have to be reviewed taking the learnings from 2022 into consideration. The SEO then commended the professionalism of the current contractor and any issues of concern are notified to Ennis M.D. and remedied satisfactorily. Cllr Howard stressed the importance of a public awareness campaign around the biodiversity goals.

**Item No. 6 Correspondence**

None.

**Item No. 7 Any Other Business**

1. SEE Eamon O’Dea paid tribute to recently retired General Operative Michael Dinan who made a huge impact during his time with the Local Authority. His attention to the upkeep of the Fairgreen was acknowledged. Members joined in paying tribute to Michael Dinan as a great ambassador for the town and commending his commitment and attention to detail in his work.
2. Cllr Murphy raised the issue of speeding traffic on Kilbricken Road and he will continue to request extension of the town boundary so that this road can benefit from a a 50kph speed limit. Eamon O’Dea SEE confirmed that such a request had previously been refused by the Transport section, but that Ennis M.D. would request this again.
3. Cllr Flynn raised the issue of anti-social behaviour affecting St. Flannan’s Terrace which is predominantly an elderly residential area has been impacted. The Mayor highlighted that a briefing has been arranged with Housing on this issue.

The Meeting ended at 11:49 a.m.

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

 Mayor of Ennis

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

 Meetings Administrator

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