

Minutes of the Municipal District of Ennis Meeting held at 3.30pm on Tuesday February 3rd, 2015, in the Council Chamber, Áras an Contae, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Present:

Councillors: J. Flynn, J. Breen, T. Mc Namara, P. Daly, M. Howard, A. Norton, C. Colleran Molloy and P. Murphy.

Officials: Ger Dollard, Director of Services, Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Catherine O’ Hara, Meetings Administrator & Fiona Whelan, Staff Officer.

Inis Fest Committee: Carmen Cronin, John McCarthy, Darren Purtill and Declan O’Grady

Item No. 1. Minutes of January monthly meeting held on the 6th of January, 2014.

It was proposed by Cllr. T. McNamara and seconded by Cllr. Paul Murphy that the Revised Minutes of the January, 2015, monthly meeting, as further circulated, be adopted. The revised Minutes were agreed and adopted.

Item No. 2 Matters Arising – General Municipal Allocation 2015

G. Dollard advised the meeting that the allocated figure for the Ennis Brass Band should read €2,900 and not €2,700 as previously recorded.

The correct amount of €2,900 was proposed by Cllr. Daly, seconded by Cllr. McNamara and agreed.

Item No. 3. Inis Fest 2015 Presentation.

A presentation from the Inis Fest Committee outlined the proposal for a 3 day music festival which is scheduled to take place in Tim Smyth Park, Ennis, from Friday 26th of June, to Sunday 29th of June, 2015.

Ger Dollard welcomed the presentation and offered the support of Clare County Council to the event. He confirmed that alot of engagement has already taken place between the Inis Fest Committee, the Gardaí and the Civil Defence. G. Dollard stated that Tim Smyth Park was an ideal location for such an event and that any financial support available from the Council would be discussed with the members in due course.

All members welcomed the proposed event and congratulated the Inis Fest Committee on their presentation. Members raised a number of questions which were answered as follows:-

- There will be a licence for alcohol sales at the event each evening until 11pm.
- A marquee will be erected with a capacity for 3,500 people, therefore, the weather should not infringe greatly on the event.
- Tickets will be priced at €27.00 per night. No 3 day ticket will be on sale. €2.00 from each ticket sale will go to charity.
- The marquee will be erected in the green area inside the running track and a fence will be erected for security purposes with the use of the playground and active Ennis area not affected during the day.
- The marquee is certified for Fire & Health and Safety.

- Security will be in place each night and an appropriate Garda presence will also be on site.
- A full command centre will be erected on site.
- A public consultation process has already commenced with businesses and residents in the area.
- A parking strategy is to be developed in consultation with the Gardai
- The Event will cease at 11pm to facilitate local residents and to give possibility of additional business to other local businesses in the town.
- A further public meeting will be held in March 2015 to ensure all concerns are dealt with.
- Sponsorship to include a tiered ticket sale process which will be put in place in due course.

The members of the Inis Fest Committee left the meeting following discussions on their item.

Item No. 4. Urban Heritage Visitor Attraction for Ennis. (John Ruddle, Shannon Heritage)

This item was deferred.

Item No. 5. Proposed re-naming of Friar's Walk, Ennis.

Ger Dollard referred to this item which had been raised at the November, 2014, meeting of the Municipal District of Ennis. It was recommended that the Council proceed with a public consultation process with regard to the re-naming of the street known as Friar's Walk from its junction with Station Road to where it joins Causeway link.

The section of the road from Clonroad to the car park at the Temple Gate should be known as Friar's Walk with the car park at that location continuing to be known as Friars' Walk Car Park as indicated on current signage.

Members supported the proposal and to proceeding to the public consultation process.

Item No. 6 – St. Patrick's Day Parade 2015.

Ger Dollard outlined that as Ennis Town Council no longer exists that the St. Patrick's Day Parade which had formally been run by the Town Council could now possibly be run by Community Groups as is the case throughout the County.

There were 3 no. considerations to be discussed:-

- Should Clare County Council get involved in the organising of the parade?
- Should the parade take place over a weekend?
- Should a 3rd party be employed to oversee the parade? Noted that an expression of interest had already been sought for this?

Members agreed that a St. Patrick's Day Parade should take place and that the Council should be involved. Members agreed that the budget from the full County Council should be used to fund the Parade of the County town.

G. Dollard agreed that it would be a poor reflection on the Council if there was no parade and that the budget was not an issue as it is provided for as a specific item in the Budget for 2015. G. Dollard informed the meeting that the Council should appoint an interested party in assisting Clare County Council in organising the 2015 Parade. Community and Businesses need to become more involved and share in the preparations. This item was agreed by all members.

Item No. 7 – Update on Proposed Extinguishment of Right of Way at Castlelawn, Ennis.

G. Dollard informed the meeting that no decision has been made to date by the members on this matter. The proposed extinguishment had not been initiated by the former Ennis Town Council but had resulted from the Ennis Flood Relief Scheme process. Correspondence has been received with some agreeing and some disagreeing with the proposal. It was agreed by members to defer this item to a later meeting when all correspondence has been made available and evaluated fully.

Item No. 8 – Notices of Motion.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr A. Norton was seconded by Cllr. Flynn.

That Clare County Council secure and make safe the now derelict house located at the junction of the motorway slip road and the Ballyogan road as this is now a safety hazard due to a recent fire.”

Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied as follows:

This property was acquired by the Council as part of the M18 bypass project. There was a fire at the property in December 2014 and this is under investigation by the Gardai. The access road to the house is secured by means of large concrete block barriers. It is necessary to trespass onto the site to gain access to the property and the Council is presently arranging the securing of window and doors to prevent trespass into the house.

E.O’Dea is to enquire from the Roads section as to what the owner intends to do with the property. The owner would be requested to have the doors and windows boarded up.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr James Breen was seconded by Cllr. Colleran Molloy.

That all correspondence to and from the N.R.A. be produced to this Council in relation to replacing signs at the Ennis side of Loughville Cross with more visible signs.

Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied as follows:

The Council had been in direct contact with the NRA office dealing with Road signs on the N85. I have recently spoken to a resident who has been in contact with Cllr Breen. The solution to easier access on to the N85 at peak traffic times will have to be discussed with the NRA engineers. As outlined in a response in relation to the Shanaway Road Junction the Council will draft an outline proposal for submission to the NRA for consideration under the Low Cost Safety Schemes on National Roads.

Cllr. Breen was not happy with the response received from the Council in this instance.

E.O’Dea pointed out that not all correspondence with the NRA is in written format and that quite often discussions are held on site with NRA staff. The Council is in continuous contact with the NRA in relation to works on the Ennis to Kilnamona road and if there is an issue to be addressed it will be done. The Council is committed to having works done and is in regular discussions with the NRA when on site.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllrs Johnny Flynn, Pat Daly, Tom Mc Namara, Clare Colleran Molloy, Paul Murphy, Mary Howard, James Breen and Ann Norton.

That all eight Ennis Municipal District Councillors request that the parking charge be reduced from €1.30 per hour to €1 per hour.

John Corry, Administrative Officer, replied as follows:

This matter was raised at a previous meeting of Ennis Municipal District. The reduction of the parking charge from €1.30 per hour to €1 per hour is part of the overall budgetary consideration of Clare County Council. The budget for 2015 has now been adopted. No reduction in parking charges has been provided as part of the 2015 budget.

The Members should be aware that a reduction in the hourly parking charge would likely result in a reduction in the revenue projected from parking charges. The suggested parking charge amounts to a reduction of 23 % in the hourly parking charge. The Members would need to have due regard to this potential loss of income and its consequent effect on the delivery of services.

A review of the Parking Byelaws can be undertaken to see if amendments are necessary to address issues at particular locations

All members supported this motion and a further discussion took place by members. Members aired their concern for businesses in the town and considered that the cost of parking was affecting business in the town. Members agreed that this is an on-going issue which must be dealt with.

G. Dollard informed the meeting that he had no difficulties with this request and that discussions had already commenced with the Chamber of Commerce. The overall budget for 2015 has already been adopted by the full Council with an income of €1.1 million from parking included. If this was now to be reduced, additional income would need to be sought or cutbacks would have to be made on spending. Members must decide which to do.

The Council could face a budget shortfall of €250,000 if parking charges were reduced in 2015. Availability of car parking is a more serious issue for the town.

It was proposed by Cllr. Flynn and seconded by Cllr. Colleran Molloy to have this motion considered at the April 2015 meeting of the full County Council.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy

McNamara Park ; That the Ennis Municipal District address the unacceptable conditions for County Clare's camogie players that pertain at McNamara Park on the Quin Road, Ennis. The litter, unfinished carpark and lack of toilet facilities make for a very stark and poor contrast when compared with Countywide hurling facilities and the facilities available in Shannon for camogie players.

No reply required (Clare Camogie Board)

This matter was discussed by members. Some members felt that the GAA should offer more support to Camogie as it is perceived as the "poor relation" within the GAA.

Members generally felt that Clare County Council have not role in the development of the facility and had already supported and assisted Clare Camogie Board by giving them the field on a long term lease basis and that it is now the responsibility of the Clare Camogie Board to develop and maintain the pitch as is the case with all other clubs throughout the County.

G. Dollard agreed that the Council's only involvement was the very fair deal that had been done with the Clare Camogie Board in giving them a long-term lease and that it is now their responsibility to develop and maintain the facility and to fundraise as required. There is no responsibility whatsoever with the Municipal District members in relation to this facility.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Tom Mc Namara was seconded by Cllr. Howard.
We call on Clare County Council to surface dress the road leading to The Banner GAA facilities off the Shanaway Road.

Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied as follows:

The road leading to The Banner GAA facilities off Shanaway Road is not in charge of the Council. The Municipal District Office is aware of proposals by The Banner GAA to improve the entrance and access road to the club facilities.

While the road in question is not in charge of the Council, the Council would see if they could assist with any works being done.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Mary Howard was seconded by Cllr. Flynn.

The Ennis Municipal District inspect all streets within the Ennis Urban Area. Some streets are in need of urgent repair, eg- O’Connell St, Bindon Street, the Market area.

Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied as follows:

The Municipal District Office is inspecting roads and maintenance is being carried out. Work was carried out late last year in a number of locations around the town and we intend to do work at the Market Roundabout as soon as traffic management arrangements can be agreed.

There are a number of large projects just completed in the town including The Lower Fergus Certified Drainage Scheme and a number of projects due to proceed Watermain Rehabilitation Scheme , Garraunakilla Market Redevelopment Project & Ennis South Flood Scheme that we have to be mindful of when considering road works.

The Council has identified localised repair work in the Ennis Urban Area and works will proceed subject to resources.

Members further discussed the wheelchair access around the town centre. The matter needs to be taken seriously. Ennis town centre footpaths need to be upgraded and brought to an acceptable standard.

E.O’Dea stated that works have been deferred due to upcoming projects and we are also awaiting the announcement of what funds are due from the Department of the Environment Community & Local Government.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Paul Murphy was seconded by Cllr. Flynn.

Considering the dangers currently being posed to pedestrians and cyclists in particular at Clareabbey Roundabout due to high volumes of traffic and excessive speed, I am proposing that the Senior Executive Engineer liaise with the N.R.A. in providing a solution that would improve safety for all at this location ie. speed bumps / rumble strips.

Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied as follows:

The Municipal District Office will bring this location to the notice of the NRA Road Safety Engineers when they are in Clare. Works were carried out under a low cost safety scheme to reduce the carriageway width at the uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on the N85 Relief Road. The Council will be proceeding with detailed design and public consultation for a cycle/walkway at this roundabout as part of the Active Travel Project. The maintenance of this roundabout is carried out by Colas-Roadbridge as part of the NRA Motorway Maintenance Contract.

It was agreed to invite Clarecastle Community Development to the May meeting of the Municipal District to brief the members on their plans.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Johnny Flynn was seconded by Cllr. Howard.

That a report on plans to reduce lead in public water supplies to a safe level in the Ennis Municipal District area, by replacement of mains etc, be provided to the Municipal District Committee meeting.

Aisling Buckley, Regional Information Officer, Southern Division, Irish Water replied as follows:

As part of Phase 1 of the Ennis Watermains Rehabilitation Contract that is just commencing, Irish Water and Clare County Council will be replacing public-side service pipes in Tulla Road, The Market, College Green Estate, Hermitage Estate, Ashfield Park Estate, Pine Grove Estate, New Road, Kincora Park/Shannon Park/St Senan's Road, Castle Lawn/Fergus Lawn, Watery Road, Clare Road, St Flannan's Terrace, Carmody Street, Mill Road/Harmony Row, Woodlawn, the R458 Ennis Road and Clarecastle areas. There will be c. 1,135 existing services replaced as part of the project, of which 223 are lead. This project represents an investment of €4.5m in the water infrastructure of Ennis Town. Lead distribution mains and an additional 84 no. lead services were replaced in Marian Avenue, Ahern Terrace & Linnane Terrace in 2014 by Irish Water and Clare County Council.

The lead issue arises solely from lead plumbing in older buildings, pre 1970's, with lead at low concentrations dissolved by the water passing through the pipe. It varies a little with different waters from place to place due to different chemistry. This has existed over the life of the buildings, but is now an issue because the limit for safe drinking water was cut from 25 microgrammes per litre to 10, in December 2013.

The installation of the meters has no impact on this and is not related to lead levels in water. However, in doing the metering work, Irish Water has logged properties where the installers noted lead pipes. Therefore, we are getting a clearer picture of where lead pipes exist. The presence of lead pipes will not always cause levels above the limit, but the risk exists. Customers can access the joint EPA/HSE Guidance on lead in drinking water on the Irish Water website, if they think they have lead and want to know more on its impact and actions to minimise lead levels in the short term.

We are in the process of finalising our strategy for lead with HSE & EPA. This will involve a random sampling programme and targeted replacement of Irish Water (public side) lead service pipes. However, the lead risk remains unless the households replace the private side lead to the kitchen tap. Recognising that this will not happen quickly, we are proposing to mirror the accepted practice in Britain, NI and parts of the USA for over 10 years by introducing orthophosphate dosing at the treatment plant.

This chemical has been shown to create a coating on the pipe which inhibits the take up of lead into the water. As a result those countries report 90% of samples meet the standard. It takes up to 12 months to be effective and will take a number of years to get it installed in our treatment systems. We hope this clarifies what is a complex issue in our public water supplies that is only now being addressed nationally since Irish Water took over.

We wish to advise that Elected Members are invited to attend monthly Councillor Clinics. We look forward to meeting with Elected Members and discussing any queries they have, or queries on behalf of their Constituents in relation to the delivery of water services. Our team will be in touch soon with details of the next Clinic.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Pat Daly was seconded by Cllr. Breen.

I call on the Municipal District to consider putting traffic lights or a roundabout at the existing Shanaway Road entering the Lahinch Road, particular as there are serious traffic delays on a regular basis.

Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied as follows:

There was a proposal as part of local area commercial centre (neighbourhood centre) to construct a roundabout at this junction; however this project has not proceeded. The Council will draft an outline proposal for submission to the NRA for consideration under the low cost safety scheme on national roads. One of the criteria for this scheme is very specific in relation to accident data. The proximity of the exit from the service station onto Shanaway Road will have to be reviewed as part of an outline proposal.

Item No. 10 – Correspondence – was noted as follows.

- Letter from Franciscan Friary
- Letter from Iarnród Éireann
- Letter from RNLI

Any Other Business

- Opening date for Drehidnagower Bridge to be determined.
- Fíor Uisce – Noted that the Contract has been signed and the start date is 16th of February, 2015.

The meeting then concluded.