

Minutes of the Municipal District of Ennis Meeting held on Tuesday January 6th, 2015, at 3.30 p.m. 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 and P. Murphy.

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

Apologies: Cllrs. A. Norton & C. Colleran Molloy.

Item No. 1. Minutes of November monthly meeting held on the 2nd of December, 2014.

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Murphy and seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara that the Minutes of the monthly meeting held on the 2nd of December, 2014, be agreed and adopted.

Item No. 2 Matters Arising

No matters arising.

Item No. 3. General Municipal Allocation 2015.

The Mayor of Ennis stated that as he was involved with two organisations included in the proposed allocation of funding i.e. Ennis Street Festival and Promote Ennis, that he would excuse himself from the meeting while those two proposals were being considered. The Deputy Mayor Cllr. James Breen agreed to take the chair during this period.

G. Dollard outlined the framework as had been discussed at the December 2014 meeting for the General Municipal Allocation for 2015 as per the report circulated. There is a proposed total allocation of €104,000.00 available for 2015.

There are 4 elements to the framework:-

1. Contributions made by the former Ennis Town Council which includes a proposed schedule of contributions to be made totalling €43,300.00. The Mayor of Ennis Cllr. Flynn who is on the Ennis Street Festival Committee had excused himself from the meeting and the Deputy Mayor James Breen chaired part of the meeting. It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Cllr. James Breen, seconded by Cllr. Pat Daly and agreed by members.
2. Major Festivals and Events - as Ennis is the capital town and it is necessary that significant festivals and events be encouraged, attracted and promoted for Ennis and the wider area, a proposed sum of €20,700.00 is to be set aside for this overall area to be allocated to major festivals and events and Promote Ennis 2015. The Mayor of Ennis Cllr. Flynn who is on the Promote Ennis Committee had excused himself from the meeting and the Deputy Mayor James Breen also chaired this part of the meeting. A proposed sum of €6,800.00

for Promote Ennis with a balance of €13,900.00 left available for major festivals/events. This was proposed by Cllr. Howard, seconded by Cllr. McNamara and agreed.

3. Allocation of €20,000.00 to the Environs of Ennis i.e. the wider geographical area of the Ennis Municipal District now incorporates the areas of Clarecastle, Kilmaley, Kilnamona, Barefield and Quin. This was proposed by Cllr. Howard, seconded by Cllr. Murphy and agreed.
4. Community & Arts Grants Scheme – Applications to be sought for projects and initiatives in accordance with the draft advertisement for the Grant Scheme. Members would decide on the allocations based on the merits of each application submitted. A proposed total sum of €20,000.00 is to be allocated to this Scheme. Item No. 17 of the the Draft Community & Arts Grant Scheme was amended to read “Applicants are encouraged to be registered with the Public participation Network”. This was proposed by Cllr. Flynn, seconded by Cllr. McNamara and agreed.

Item No. 4. Invitation from the Mayor of Langenfeld, Germany.

An invitation from Mr. Frank Schneider, Mayor of Langenfeld, was circulated to members inviting a small delegation to the Langenfeld city festival from April 17th to April 19th 2015.

G. Dollard outlined the twinning link between Ennis town and Langenfeld as being relatively new and much sought after by Langenfeld. However, now that Twinning is a County function, approval must be sought from the full Council for such trips abroad. The Mayor of Ennis, Cllr. J. Flynn is not available to attend the festival and as Cllr. M. Howard is familiar with Langenfeld and a member of the Twinning Committee, it was proposed by Cllr. P. Daly and seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara that the Deputy Mayor Cllr. James Breen and Cllr. Mary Howard attend the festival from the 17th to the 19th of April, 2015, in Langenfeld, Germany.

Item No. 5. S. 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, Disposal of land at No. 100 Clancy Park to Ms. Carmel Crowe.

This item was proposed by Cllr. P. Daly, seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara and agreed.

Item No. 6. Notices of Motion.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy, in the absence of Cllr. Colleran Molloy, this motion was proposed by Cllr. T. McNamara and seconded by Cllr. Daly.

“Returning to the issue of the over 100 unfinished estates in County Clare, I am seeking a progress update on the following:

- (1) the specific efforts being made by the Executive of the County Council to obtain central funds to address this matter;
- (2) whether the formation of Residents Committees in these estates will assist in the application for central funds;
- (3) the specific funds and works needed to complete and finish Maigh Dara, Quin, which has already been taken in charge by Clare County Council.”

Bernadette Haugh, AO, Planning & Enterprise Development, replied as follows:

- (1) On 9th May 2013, Clare Co. Council made a submission to the DoECLG for overall funding in the order of €14m as a minimum requirement to fully deal with all issues pertaining to

unfinished estates and Taking in Charge in County Clare. A reminder letter was sent on 9th May 2014. No response has been received on this submission to date.

This submission was also included as an appendix to the DoECLG as part of a **Progress Report for 2014 on Unfinished Estates** in October 2014.

- (2) It is a matter for individual Residents Committees to decide whether they wish to campaign to central government for funding. The Planning Authority will continue to access any available funding from bonds, Special resolution funds, etc to progress the completion of estates in accordance with the relevant planning permission in the interests of the residents of these estates.
- (3) With reference to a recent report from the SEE Ennis Municipal District Office, the Planning Authority understands that the following works have yet to be completed in relation to the development at Maigh Dara, Quin:
 - Repair of a section of the Storm Sewer on the main access road into the site (Short Section)
 - Complete Wearing Course macadam surface throughout the site (6800 square metres).

The estimated cost of these items is €96,000 including VAT if €11,000.

This Motion was further discussed by members and the importance of the matter was noted especially since the collapse of the building industry. G. Dollard informed the meeting that this matter has been discussed several times but unfortunately there is no magic wand and while progress is being made, it is slow. Public Lighting issues in housing estates that are not in charge of the Council have also, in recent times, become an issue.

The Council has also made a submission in relation to the IBRC bonds.

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

“As a means of promoting Ennis and increasing visitor/tourist numbers I am requesting that Management Staff and Elected Members kick start a campaign to have an alternative route to the Wild Atlantic Way's current leg from Tarbert to Killimer. The alternative route would follow the natural coastline and include towns and villages such as Foynes, Glin, Limerick, Shannon, Clarecastle, Ballynacally, Kildysart, Labasheeda and Kilmurry Mc Mahon.”

(No reply required)

This motion was generally supported by members with the route following the natural coastline and an “alternative” route being signposted accordingly.

Queries were raised as to how well the Wild Atlantic Way was advertised in County Clare.

G. Dollard stated that the Wild Atlantic Way is a huge success and is really only commencing as such. This concept was well researched from the outset and the full signage outlined for County Clare is in place. Balance needs to be struck as too much signage can be a distraction from the natural landscape.

G. Dollard was unsure about the motion as this is an International Marketing Tool and we need to be careful how it is handled.

Notice of Motion Submitted by Cllr Johnny Flynn was seconded by Cllr. Tom McNamara.

“Ballyalia Lake: That environment, sports, amenity and recreational plans be developed for Ballyalia Lake and Rocky Road in order to utilise the circa €25,000 and €24,000 funding streams allocated for those Ennis Area beauty spots”.

Gerard Dollard, Director of Services, replied as follows:

Ennis Town Council allocated a sum of €25,765 towards “water based leisure facilities” as part of its budgetary process some years ago. This allocation was intended for a progression of a plan for a water park type project at Ballyalla. In addition a sum of €22,697 was set aside for a Rocky Road amenity scheme to be progressed at that location.

Part of the Ballyalla allocation was utilised in 2014 as part of the Public Area Enhancement Scheme for improvement works at this location. A sum of circa €20,000 will remain available for further projects at Ballyalla. The allocation of €22,697 for the Rocky Road amenity scheme remains in place and discussions have been held regarding the land ownership at this location.

The Council fully understands and accepts the potential of both of the above locations and will be progressing plans and projects for these locations within any funding resources available. It should also be pointed out that the Ennis and Environs Local Area Plan, a draft of which will be published shortly, will also include objectives regarding tourism, amenity, recreation and environmental management which will relate to the above sites.

Notice of Motion Submitted by Cllr Mary Howard was seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy.

“That Ennis Municipal District with the assistance of the relevant operators use redundant public telephone infrastructure to provide free wifi hubs”.

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

The Council has been in contact with Eircom and the present owners of Smart Telecom’s redundant public telephone units in Ennis. Eircom recently removed a public telephone unit in Abbey Street car park. The Council will contact the telecom companies and inquire as to provision of wifi hubs from the redundant telephone unit locations.

Members agreed that as Ennis had been known as the Information Age town that it would be important to have free wifi in the town centre.

G. Dollard informed the meeting that a thorough analysis has been done on the matter and there is an issue with ownership of the kiosks. The companies involved have changed often in recent years, however, the Council will follow up with Eircom to put a solution in place.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Tom Mc Namara was seconded by Cllr. J. Breen.

“I call on Clare County Council to increase public lighting at cross roads in Kilmaley in particular the two local roads leading into the R474.”

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

The Council does not have a Community Lighting Scheme in place and there is no means of funding the proposed works.

Members outlined the risk involved at this cross roads as “an accident waiting to happen” particularly since the funeral home had opened in the area. It was suggested that the funding should be provided as it appeared the health and safety issue outweighed the shortage of funding. Eamon O’Dea agreed to look further at the matter and see how it may be possible to solve the issue.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr James Breen was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

“That the Lee’s Road road complex be re named The John Purcell Memorial Park in memory of World Athletic Champion who was born in Templemaley, Barefield.”

Monica Meehan, Senior Executive Officer, replied as follows:

The athletic track located at the Active Ennis Sports & Amenity Park, Lees Roads was dedicated to Honest John Purcell in 2009. A plaque is erected on the main facilities building and reads as follows:

‘This track is dedicated to the memory of Honest John Purcell former World Champion and World Record Holder in the Long Jump and the Hop Step and Jump in the 1880’s. John Purcell was born in Ballymaley, Ennis in 1860 and died in San Francisco in 1904’.

The Lees Road facility caters for a number of sports and recreational uses including football, soccer, rugby, athletics, orienteering, skateboarding, walking, children’s play areas etc. The purpose of the Active Ennis brand is to promote all recreational uses of the Lees Road facility and in that regard re-naming the entire complex as suggested would negate the marketing potential of the facility.

The re-location of the plaque to the athletic track will be examined.

Ger Dollard agreed to follow through with the re-location of the plaque.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Pat Daly was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

“I request the Municipal District of Ennis to upgrade the main toad into Woodlawn, Loghville Ennis immediately after the sewerage scheme is connected up to the houses”

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

Certain sections of the road restoration are covered by the road opening licence for the Group Sewerage Scheme. The Council is not in a position to commit to works until we have sight of the 2015 Road Grants from the Department of Transport and taken account of priorities for works.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Paul Murphy was seconded by Cllr. J. Breen.

“That works are carried out to improve drainage outside the Mc Mahon, Clohessy and O’Donoghue homes on the Kildysart Road, Clarecastle.”

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

The Council will confirm the location of gullies with the Residents and this work should be carried out in Spring, as I expect this section of the R473 will be surface dressed this year.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Johnny Flynn was seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara.

“Public Health and Safety Deficit of Public infrastructure on approach roads to and at Drehidnagower Bridge . Now that major public funded works are to be carried out on Drehidnagower Bridge ; That a plan and funding be urgently put in place to address the following additional serious deficits in public infrastructure at Drehidnagower bridge and the approach roads to the bridge ;

- (a) provision of safe footpaths and access for pedestrians and cyclists on the approach roads either side of and across the bridge both during current closure and into the future.

- (b) provision of a group sewerage scheme in order to enable at least 8 septic tanks currently in use be decommissioned in this extremely vulnerable groundwater area adjacent to the Drumcliffe Springs, which is the Ennis Water supply source for circa 40,000.
- (c) provision of public footpaths and adequate public lighting all the way from the end of such services on the Gort Road town side of the Bridge to and across the bridge as far as the footpaths and lighting near the Lees Rd Sports and Recreation facility.”

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

- (a) The Council is considering layouts for the provision of pedestrian and cycle access over the Drehidnagower Bridge.
- (b) The local Residents should submit a drawing showing the location of the houses to the Group Scheme Section of the Council.
- (c) The provision of footpaths on Drehidnagower Road from Watery Road to Drumcliff Road will be examined by the Council, however provision of footpaths will be subject to a funding source for the works.

Members queried whether the completion date of the 2nd of March, 2015, could be brought forward. Eamon O’Dea to check the timeline and revert to members.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy, in the absence of Cllr. Colleran Molloy, this motion was proposed by Cllr. P. Daly and seconded by Cllr. J. Breen.

“With respect to Silver Grove, Ballybeg, what specific conditions are preventing this long established neighbourhood from being taken in charge? “

Bernadette Haugh, AO, Planning & Enterprise Development, replied as follows:

The Planning Authority made a full claim on the bond in August 2013. A schedule of outstanding work was submitted to the Agent appointed on behalf of the Receivers in April 2014 on the basis that the Agent had been appointed to undertake due diligence on all the Developer (Gerry Connellan) developments. This due diligence has been completed and the Planning Authority understands that a recommendation has been made by the Agent to the Receivers & the Surety Providers in respect of the various developments, including Silvergrove. The Planning Authority has sought clarification from the Receivers in this regard.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Tom MC Namara was seconded by Cllr. P. Daly.

“That Municipal District of Ennis requests Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann to maintain a daily presence at Ennis Railway Station to ensure continued quality customer service for all its users”

(No reply required)

This matter was discussed by members. There are 28 buses stopping in Ennis every day and it is the first port of call for most visitors to the town. It was described as disgraceful and scandalous that the bus service and train service did not compliment each other as it stands currently.

Members agreed to invite both transport providers to attend a meeting of the Municipal District of Ennis to address future plans for the Station at Ennis.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr James Breen:

“That a Doctor only parking space be provided outside the dispensary in Clarecastle.”

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

The dispensary in Clarecastle is on Patrick Street at the junction with Church Drive. There is a double yellow line at the junction to the front of the dispensary and a hatched taper to the parking to the front of the adjacent houses on Patrick Street. The purpose of the double yellow lines and the hatched taper is to provide sight line to drivers at the junction of Patrick Street and Church Drive. It would not be possible to provide a parking area in front of the dispensary and it would not be appropriate to have a specific parking space in front of the adjacent house.

This matter was further discussed and it was outlined that this particular corner outside the Clinic in Clarecastle was a blind spot and it was important to keep a line of vision clear in the area. It was suggested that as the doctor is in attendance in the Clinic on a limited basis that it may be possible for a local arrangement to be put in place where an area could be coned off for the doctor’s visits.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Pat Daly was seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara.

“I ask the Municipal District of Ennis to investigate the serious flooding at Kilbricken, Doorra (just off Junction 12 roundabout) with a view to alleviating it”.

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

The Council has met local landowners and is in the process of getting costs of carrying out drainage work on the Manus Drainage District. There are a number of queries that the Council has to confirm including a source of funding before we would be able to confirm whether work will proceed in 2015.

Item No. 7. Correspondence

Correspondence was noted.

Reply from President LIT

Members were disappointed with the response issued by the President of LIT through Pat Breen T.D. and agreed to invite the President of LIT to an upcoming meeting of the Municipal District to discuss the matter further.

8. Any Other Business.

Schedule of Municipal District Works (SMDW) as received from the Dept. of Environment, Community and Local Government was distributed to members.

Gardaí to attend the February meeting of the Municipal District of Ennis at 2.30pm as had been previously requested by members.

Pedestrian Crossing at Tesco – Eamon O’Dea had met with the Regional Director of Tesco and significant progress has been made in relation to the provision of the pedestrian crossing at Tesco. The design is already in place.

Additional Funding for Ennis – members requested additional funding for the County Town and that it should be made clear to the other Municipal Districts that as Ennis is the County Town this investment should take place.

HSE – Members were not happy with the treatment of County Clare citizens in Limerick Hospital with patients being left on trolleys for over 50 to 100 hours. This issue has been raised several times and no improvement has been made. Currently there are 600 people nationwide on hospital trolleys and this must be addressed as soon as possible.

It was unanimously agreed to write to both the HSE Management and the Minister for Health for urgent measures to be taken.

The meeting then concluded.