

## **Minutes of the Municipal District of Ennis Meeting held at 3.30pm on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015, in the Council Chamber, Áras an Contae, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

### **Present:**

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

**Officials:** G. Dollard, Director of Services, I. Chaplin, Executive Engineer, C. O' Hara, Meetings Administrator & F. Whelan, Staff Officer.

### **Item No. 1. Minutes of the July monthly meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, 2015.**

It was proposed by Cllr. Paul Murphy and seconded by Cllr. Mary Howard that the Minutes of the July monthly meeting, held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, 2015, as circulated, be agreed and adopted.

### **Item No. 2. Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, 2015.**

It was proposed by Cllr. Paul Murphy and seconded by Cllr. James Breen that the Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting, held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, 2015, as circulated, be agreed and adopted.

### **Item No. 3. S.183 of the Local Government Act 2001, Disposal of land at Ballyalla, Ennis to Mr. Gerard McNamara.**

This item was proposed by Cllr. James Breen, seconded by Cllr. Ann Norton and agreed.

### **Item No. 4. S.11 Roads Act 1993 – Declaration of roads to be public roads in the in the following estates:**

Honeywell, Knockaderry Grove, The Park, Quin, The Cloisters, Quin.

This item was proposed by Cllr. J. Flynn, seconded by Cllr. J. Breen and agreed. Members wished to acknowledge the work done by Ger Dollard, Director of Services, in relation to this matter.

### **Item No. 5. Proposed One Way System at St. Michael's Villas, Ennis.**

Members discussed this item and a vote was taken in relation to the proposed one way system and the result of the vote is as follows:-

**For the proposal:** Cllr. Tom McNamara and Cllr. Ann Norton (2 votes)

**Against the proposal:** Cllr. J. Flynn, Cllr. J. Breen, Cllr. M. Howard, Cllr. P. Murphy, Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy and Cllr. Pat Daly (6 votes)

The Mayor Cllr. Pat Daly declared the proposal for a one way system at St. Michael's Villas, Ennis, defeated and that the status quo is to remain at St. Michael's Villas.

### **Item No. 6. Report on Traffic Management (Pedestrian Crossing) proposal Frances Street, Ennis.**

No submissions had been received from the public in relation to this matter and the pedestrian crossing is to go ahead with a letter of support from the Gardaí. This item was proposed by Cllr. J. Flynn, seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara and agreed. It is hoped that the pedestrian crossing would be in place before the year end.

### **Item No. 7. Community and Arts Grants 2015**

- Clare Tag Rugby - €500

This item was proposed by Cllr. T. McNamara, seconded by Cllr. A. Norton and agreed.

### **Item No. 8. Briefing on the Local Economic & Community Plan.**

G. Dollard advised that Clare County Council has commenced the preparation of an integrated Local Economic and Community Plan for County Clare. The Plan will set out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic and community development of the County over the next 6 years. A Socio-Economic Statement which identifies themes and high level goals to be included in the plan has been drafted. Each Municipal District will be part of the consultation process through the SPCs and LCDC. A series of public consultation workshops have already taken place.

### **Item No. 9. (a) CEDRA – pilot REDZ initiatives (b) Urban Development Fund – Designated Urban Centre Grants**

G. Dollard outlined the following in relation to item no. 9.

- (a) At the July meeting 3 submissions were agreed under the CEDRA initiative. There are a number of constraints and the money must be spent before the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2015. The closing date for applications is Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> of September, 2015.
- (b) There is an allocation of €1m for Ennis under the Urban Development Fund. Applications must be submitted by the end of October, 2015. This is particularly positive news for Ennis.

Members welcomed this very positive news and projects such as development of Ballyalla Amenity Area, the new County Library in Ennis, the Post Office Field and the development of Height in the Town Centre were all identified as possibilities for funding.

Members felt that it is very important with the Fleadh Ceoil na hEireann coming to Ennis in 2016 that the town of Ennis is showcased in a positive light, especially with the possibility of holding it again in 2017. Members agreed that it would be important to concentrate on doing one project at a time which would have an impact on the town.

G. Dollard agreed that one project, that makes an impact, would be the best option, however, criteria must be met to get the funding. Grants must be drawn down by the year end with 3 years to complete the project.

### **Item No. 10. Notices of Motion.**

#### **Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. A. Norton was seconded by Cllr. J. Breen.**

That the existing potholes from the M18 motorway Barefield exit to Farm Road be filled and that the lights under the bridge at this interchange be repaired as a matter of urgency.

**Ian Chaplin, Executive Engineer, replied as follows:**

I have visited the location and the Farm road referred to is generally in good condition and the Council has carried out repairs previously on this road. There are a few potholes which will be repaired in the coming weeks by the Roads crew.

There is a drainage issue on farm road at the underpass creating ponds of water during periods of wet weather. This problem requires further investigation to ascertain what drainage provisions are currently in place and whether maintenance on the existing drainage will solve the problem or if drainage works are required.

The lights in question are on the Bridge structure of the underpass and are the responsibility of the Council and the Maintenance company the Council engages for public lighting have been instructed to investigate the issue and repair the lights.

**Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton.**

I request the engineering department of Ennis Municipal District clarify the situation regarding the provision of a loading bay on Cornmarket Street/ Old Mill Street.

**Ian Chaplin, Executive Engineer, replied as follows:**

- (a) Currently there are loading bays provided on the Old Mill Road and Cornmarket Street at the following locations:
- (b) From a point 19m west of the junction with Cornmarket St./Carmody St., along the north side of the road, in a westerly direction for a distance of 32m.
- (c) From a point 15m west of the junction with Cornmarket St./Carmody St., along the south side of the road, in a westerly direction for a distance of 16m.
- (d) From a point 11m West of Sims Lane, along the south side of the road, in an easterly direction for a distance of 8.5m.
- (e) From a point 28m south of the Pound Lane, on the east side of the road, in a northerly direction for a distance of 10m.

The area office will investigate the existing traffic management and layout of the loading bays in this area to ascertain if a better arrangement could be installed within the existing space to suit current businesses in the area. This issue could also be explored in more detail during the proposed 'parking Workshop'.

**Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. T. Mc Namara was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton.**

As part of budget formation 2016 I call on the Ennis municipal district to introduce a grant scheme to encourage property owners in the centre of Ennis to paint the outside of their buildings.

**No reply required.**

A general discussion took place by members in relation to this Notice of Motion.

All members welcomed and supported the idea. An overall plan should be put in place and a colour scheme agreed in advance. This must be acted on quickly in order to progress it for the Fleadh 2016. The Council's Budget for 2016 must also give consideration to showcasing Ennis for the Fleadh 2016.

**Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Murphy was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard.**

That Ennis Municipal District actively pursue funding from the appropriate sources in order to provide a "Welcome to Ennis", "Welcome to Clarecastle" or erect appropriate signage/statues at Clareabbey roundabout. This is now more important than ever in advance of Fleadh 2016 being staged in Ennis and a lead could be taken from the beautiful floral display/shrubbery that has been in place at Coonagh roundabout, Limerick over a long number of years.

**Ger Dollard, Director of Services, replied as follows:**

The Council is very conscious of the status of Clareabbey roundabout as an arrival point for the town of Ennis. Consideration has been given to initiatives for this roundabout but the scale of the roundabout is such that a major proposal, with funding, is required. The roundabout is also under the auspices of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (formerly National Roads Authority) who would have to be consulted in relation to any proposal.

I fully agree with the importance of addressing this location in advance of Fleadh 2016. It is clear from other host towns for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann that various Arts initiatives have been undertaken at major entry points to those towns.

The matter is something that has been receiving consideration and will receive greater consideration in advance of Fleadh 2016.

**Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard.**

To ask for a report of progress of the extent of Clare County Council role and support with regard preparation for Ennis hosting Fleadh Cheoil Na hÉireann 2016.

**Ger Dollard, Director of Services, replied as follows:**

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is a festival organised by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann as a celebration of traditional music. The festival has extended in recent years and the scale of the event is now such that the hosting of the event requires the involvement of local authority, Gardaí, other statutory agencies as well as significant input from the entire community.

A Fleadh Executive Committee has been established for the hosting of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2016 in Ennis and Clare County Council is represented on this Committee. In addition, representatives of the Council, across the range of Departments that are likely to be involved, were present during the Fleadh in Sligo and have obtained extensive information on the logistics and infrastructure required to stage this event. The Council is working with the local branch of Comhaltas, who is leading on this event, to progress preparations necessary for the hosting of the event. It is expected that an event management company will shortly be appointed to co-ordinate the detailed work required for the application for an Events Licence which is required for the hosting of the event.

The Council will also be required to contribute financially to the hosting of the event and this matter will be brought before the Elected Members for consideration in due course. Overall, the scale of the event and the preparations required for a successful event should not be underestimated. The influx of visitors to the town of Ennis over the period of the Fleadh from 14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> August 2016 will be very substantial and all parties, particularly businesses in Ennis and Environs, need to commence the detailed planning and preparation for this event at a very early stage.

Members welcomed G. Dollard's response and hoped that hotels, restaurants, taxis etc would not overcharge people or increase their prices during the Fleadh 2016.

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

Are the NRA providing funding for improvements to the N85, West of Kilnamona Cross arising from a request from County Engineer Tom Tiernan to complete the 3 km.

**Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer, replied as follows:**

TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) - formerly the NRA - has just approved the appointment of consultants to commence a process which will, in the first instance, examine options to facilitate appropriate alignment improvement along the section of the N85 through Kilnamona and then continue to subsequent stages including confirmation of the preferred option, preliminary and detailed design, environmental reports, etc. The rate of progress will depend to a large degree on

availability of funding year on year but Clare Co Council regards the issue as one of priority and will continue to pursue as such.

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

I call on the Municipal District of Ennis in conjunction with the Planning Section to carry out an audit of the derelict site properties in Ennis Town Centre and to engage with the property owners with a view to reopening or leasing their properties to revitalize the town centre.

**Ger Dollard, Director of Services, replied as follows:**

The Council is already active in dealing with derelict sites throughout the county. In relation to Ennis, there are at present 18 properties/sites on the Derelict Sites Register, of which 11 are residential properties and 7 are non-residential. There are a further 19 properties on which the derelict sites process has begun – 8 of which are residential properties and 11 are non-residential properties/sites.

Since 2013, 18 properties have been removed from the Derelict Sites Register in Ennis of which 8 were non-residential and 10 of which were residential. Removal from the Register means that the properties or sites were addressed to such an extent that they no longer constituted dereliction within the meaning of the Derelict Sites Act.

Many of the properties have been brought to the attention of Clare County Council by the Ennis Tidy Towns Committee. In many cases, properties would simply require painting and other cosmetic measures.

It should be noted that properties can only be pursued where they meet the definition of dereliction under the Derelict Sites Act. In previous proceedings brought by the former Ennis Town Council in relation to a derelict property, the District Justice took the view that the derelict sites legislation was not meant to be used to require owners to paint their properties or undertake other enhancements. Unless the definition of dereliction within the meaning of the Act can be satisfied, the Council cannot pursue under the Derelict Sites Act.

The Council will continue to work with all parties to improve on the present situation but would welcome the support of all sectors of the community in adopting a strong civic approach, particularly as the town will be on show in the national and international media for the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2016.

**Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard was seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy.**

I ask that the road safety section +/or the engineering department of Ennis Municipal District of Ennis Municipal consider the provision of speed ramps as a simple effective measure to reduce vehicle speed in St Josephs Terrace / Ballaghafadda.

**Ian Chaplin, Executive Engineer, replied as follows:**

I understand that there is a concern that the estate is being used as a rat run between the R473 Kiladysert road and the R458 Clare Road. The Council will investigate the situation by monitoring the traffic over a specified period of time, normally 24 hours, with traffic counters which records data such as number of vehicles, type of vehicles and vehicle speeds.

This data when collected can be analysed and a report will follow with proposed actions if required.

**Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. T. Mc Namara was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn**

I call on this municipal district to carry out repairs to footpaths in Girroga heights off the Gort road and examine how the two undeveloped sites across from one another at the entrance to this estate could be cleaned up.

**Ian Chaplin, Executive Engineer, replied as follows:**

I have inspected the footpaths in Girroga Heights and I have identified some locations where cracking of the bitumen based surface has occurred. The Council will carry out these minor footpath repairs.

The footpaths appear to be greater than 20 years old and for a good section of the estate, the grass verge is encroaching onto the footpath by up to 400mm in places so it appears that the footpaths are actually narrower than they are. The Council will cut back the encroaching grass and other vegetation to expose the full widths of the footpath in the estate.

The two undeveloped sites are in private ownership. The sites are slightly overgrown and there is no fence or boundary to the public road. I did not see any litter but I did see some grass cuttings on one of the sites.

If a residents association were in existence at Girroga Heights they could possibly contact the landowners to see if they can come to some mutual arrangement to keep the sites tidy and the grass cut.

There is an Amenity Works Grant scheme available whereby up to €300 per year (based on 2014 figures) can be claimed, by a Residents Association, upon production of receipts for expenditure of €450 or greater. The maximum grant payable is dependent on the annual budget and number of successful applications received. The purpose of the amenity works grant is to allow Clare County Council to contribute financially to local groups such as residents associations, action groups, small tidy village groups, etc. that carry out environmental work. Each application will be considered on its merits.

The grant must be used for the purpose of purchasing trees, shrubs, brushes, shovels, street furniture and other incidental items which are required to carry out the maintenance and improvement works. The scheme is usually advertised in April of each year and the closing date is in May. Further details are available from the Environment section of Clare County Council or the Council's [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie)

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

In the interest of the Health and Safety of the high numbers of motorists that use the main Ennis to Kildysart road, I am requesting that works are undertaken to raise a number of "sunken gullies" between Kildysart Cross and Ballybeg Cross (and for the road to be recycled if Budgets allow) in advance of Winter 2015-2016."

**Ian Chaplin, Executive Engineer, replied as follows:**

The Council will raise the sunken gullies. There is no funding allocated in the current years roadwork's programme for road maintenance at this location. This location can be considered for next year's roadworks programme.

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

That proposed parking workshop , to discuss among other things cost & availability, involving business, Municipal District officials and elected members be arranged in the month of September.

**Catherine O'Hara, Administrative Officer, replied as follows.**

As part of the preparation for the agreed workshop, the Roads / Traffic Directorate is currently compiling relevant data in relation to the first three months (June- August) of this pilot parking initiative. This information will be available later this month.

In addition, Clare Co Council in conjunction with Ennis Chamber of Commerce is carrying out a survey among business' in the town as part of the review of this pilot initiative. The outcome of this survey will also be available later this month.

It is important that as much relevant data is available as possible for the workshop. With the approval of the members of the Municipal District of Ennis it is proposed that the workshop would

take place on either the morning or the afternoon of Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015 in Áras Contae an Chláir.

It was agreed to hold the workshop at 9.30am on Wednesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, 2015.

**Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Breen was seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara.**

That a feasibility study be carried out with a view to covering the pedestrian area of Parnell St.

**Ian Chaplin, Executive Engineer, replied as follows:**

While in principle anything is possible, I believe that the covering of Parnell Street certainly is not a straight forward proposal. A number of issues should be considered prior to seeking a feasibility study such as:

- (a) The feasibility study itself will have a cost and will depend on the brief.
- (b) The eaves heights of the buildings in the street vary greatly from approximately 5-8m and also vary on both sides of the street.
- (c) A roof structure on the street would present lighting issues for the residential occupants of the buildings.
- (d) Maintenance of such a structure would have to be considered, if the roof is to be translucent it will need to be cleaned regularly and this could present an expensive maintenance requirement.

G. Dollard then suggested that Parnell Street and The Height could be submitted as the proposed CEDRA project which could mean works would be progressed by year end.

**Any Other Business**

- (a) Members welcomed the work being carried out at Ballybeg Woods.
- (b) Illegal dumping was identified at the back of Curley's Furniture Store
- (c) Flooding issue outside the County Hospital is to be addressed by the HSE
- (d) Noted that the water supply in Ennis will be greatly enhanced as a result of all the works & disruptions that have taken place around Ennis in the last number of years, including the current mains rehabilitation scheme. Blind ducting should be considered while roads are already open.
- (e) Consideration to be given to extending the Christmas lights on Francis Street, with the possibility of sponsorship from local businesses.

**The meeting then concluded.**