

Minutes of the Municipal District of Ennis Committee Meeting held at 3.30pm on Tuesday February 2nd, 2016, in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, 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: Ger Dollard, Director of Services, Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Catherine O’ Hara, Meetings Administrator & Fiona Whelan, Staff Officer.

Item No. 1. Minutes of the January 2016 monthly meeting held on the 5th of January, 2016.

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Flynn and seconded by Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy that the Minutes of the January 2016 monthly meeting, held on the 5th of January, 2016, as circulated, be agreed and adopted.

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

1. Cappahard Roundabout, Tulla Road. Members welcomed the announcement that €200,000 has finally been allocated under a separate application for the completion of this roundabout.
2. Ennis National School Traffic. Members welcomed the meeting which has been arranged between the Council and the Board of Management of Ennis National School to examine proposals to relieve congestion at the school during peak times.
3. Corrovorrin Junction, Tulla Road. There is no current allocation to provide traffic calming at this junction. Funding had been provided in the past but did not receive the required support and was therefore used on other traffic calming measures in the town.

It was also queried whether Standing Orders allowed for a Notice of Motion could be included again within a 6 month period. This matter was noted.

Item No. 2. Declaration of Public Roads under S. 11 Roads Act 1993.

This item was proposed by Cllr. J. Flynn seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara and agreed. G. Dollard confirmed that this included all services in the estate.

Item No. 3. General Municipal Allocation (GMA) 2016.

G. Dollard outlined that the GMA for 2016 was significantly less than in 2015. Following a small under spend in 2015, the total allocation available for 2016 is €58,850.

Cllr. Johnny Flynn left the Chamber at the commencement of this Item as he is involved with a number of the organisations for which funding is being proposed.

G. Dollard outlined the 3 main Elements of the €58,850 GMA Budget for 2016 as follows:

1. Festivals and Events - €10,000
2. Community & Arts Grants and Ennis Environs Allocations - €17,600
3. Annual Contributions from the Municipal District of Ennis - €31,250

This was proposed by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy, seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara and agreed.

1. It was then agreed under the €10,000 Festivals and Events budget that €6,800 would be allocated to Promote Ennis leaving a balance of €3,200.
2. It was agreed that €17,600 would be divided as follows,
€10,000 is to be provided for the Community & Arts Grants Scheme 2016
€7,600 is to be allocated to the Ennis Environs of Kilmaley, Barefield, Kilnamona, Quin & Clarecastle.

The Community & Arts Grant Scheme (as circulated to members) was agreed and to be advertised with a closing date of Friday the 26th of February, 2016. It was also agreed that sporting organisations would be exempt under the 2016 Scheme. This was agreed by members.

Annual Contributions totalling €31,250 are being awarded as follows:

Franciscan Friary, Ennis	€1,000
St. Columbus, Ennis	€1,000
Society of St. Vincent de Paul	€750
Ennis Gospel Choir	€1,000
Ennis Street Festival	€4,500
Ennis St. Johns Community Games	€1,000
Ennis Brass Band	€2,500
Clare Roots Society	€3,000
Ennis Tidy Towns	€10,000
Traditional Irish Music Promotions Ltd.	€4,500
Ennis Fashion Week	€2,000

The various allocations as outlined were proposed by Cllr. M. Howard, seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy and agreed by all members.

Cllr. Johnny Flynn re-joined the meeting.

Item No. 4. Notices of Motion

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr J. Flynn was seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy

In light of the urgent need for large scale employment in Ennis and the huge financial investment already made at the Gort Road 35 acre Technological Park serviced site by both Clare County Council (of € 4 million for access road) and the former Shannon Development (of circa €6 million re

building , site servicing , infrastructure, etc) that Ennis Municipal District Committee request both Clare County Council and Shannon Group to;

- a) immediately build the access roundabout to open up the 35 acres for development
- b) rename the site as "Innovation Age Park " from "Information Age Park
- c) market the availability of Enterprise serviced sites at this location .

This site was developed and invested heavily in on the expectation that it would result in the creation of up to 4,000 jobs. “

Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer, replied as follows:

As I understand it, Shannon commercial Properties (formerly Shannon Development) proposes to construct the required short link between the Eastern end of the substantially constructed first phase of the Northern Inner Relief Road (NIRR) with the Information Age Park (IAPE) in the near future.

This will be accompanied by completion works on the NIRR by Clare Co Council – resulting in availability of access to the IAPE via its originally intended route for the first time. While its new junction with the Gort Road will be adequate to facilitate the needs of the IAPE as presently developed, further upgrading of this junction will be necessary in due course – to be funded most appropriately via development contributions associated with future planning applications within the IAPE.

While such an upgrade (be it in the form of a roundabout or otherwise), which would also involve reconfiguration of access to the Gort Road Industrial Park on the other side of the Gort Road, would be desirable as soon as possible in that it would serve to highlight the existence and status of the IAPE, I cannot identify a potential source of funding for such a development now – unless an interested third party such as SCP wishes to fund or part fund such an endeavour in the short term.

Members cautiously welcomed this positive news and added that all Members of the Oireachtas need to support this.

Mayor Pat Daly proposed to invite the IDA to the next monthly meeting, this was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn and agreed.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr C. Colleran Molloy was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton.

That Clare County Council call on the Minister for Education & Skills to immediately fund the construction of the PE facility at Scoil na Mainistreach, Quin, Co. Clare.

No reply required

Members wished to use the Municipal District Committee meetings as a forum to highlight the issue of schools not having adequate or any General Purpose rooms as part of their facilities. Both Quin N.S. and the Gael Scoil were highlighted as examples in the Ennis Municipal District area. It was agreed that having these facilities is particularly important in the fight against obesity and in ensuring that schools can implement a full PE programme (including indoor PE) regardless of weather conditions. It was it noted that it is up to public representatives to highlight this as a serious issue.

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

That Clare County Council look at the revamping of the Gort Road to make it pedestrian friendly, with particular reference to traffic calming measures to be put in the housing estates adjoining the Gort Road eg, Glensheen and investigate the feasibility of installing a pedestrian crossing in Dulick to

facilitate the crossing of the road between Ashfield Park/Girroga Heights and Lidl and Auburn Lodge and install a slow down flashing sign in the vicinity of Hogan's shop and Lynch's Centra, as there are 3 schools exiting onto the road in this area.

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

Traffic Calming has been provided on Drehidnagower Road adjacent to Glensheen. The Council has a draft proposal for a pedestrian crossing on the Gort Road from Ashfield Park to the frontage of the Lidl Store, however this would be regarded as the second priority after a pedestrian crossing at Carmody Street at the Drumbiggle Road Junction.

A funding stream will need to be identified within the Road Works Programme for this work. The Municipal District Office will discuss the provision of advance warning signs on the R458 between the Gort Road Industrial Estate and Pine Grove with the Road Design Section.

E. O'Dea confirmed that the pedestrian crossing at Tesco is due to commence shortly.

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

I request that two short sections of road be raised by 30-40cms as there is on-going ponding of water between the cross roads on Drumcliff Road and the cottages on Lees Road.

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

The Municipal District Office included this section of Lees Road in our submission for roads affected or damaged by flooding and the Council is awaiting confirmation of funding from the Department of Transport.

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

I call on Clare County Council to surface dress the R474 from Ballymacala to Knock cross with special attention given to improve the sightline on exiting the L41382-0 from Ballyvoe and exiting off the R474 for Magowna in the interest of road safety.

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

The Municipal District Office has not included this section of the R474 in the road works programme for 2016 as a road opening licence is being sought for ducting from the Windfarm Developments in West Clare along this section of the R474. It will be included in the road work programme at a later date. The MD Office will examine the Ballyvoe/Magowna Junction area with the Road Design Section with the intention of acquiring land to improve junction sight lines subject to funding.

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

That this Council raise the road for approximately 30 meters at Nutfield, Barefield in order to allow residents access to their homes during periods of flash flooding.

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

This road is in the East Clare Municipal District however it is maintained by the MD of Ennis. This section of road will be considered with others in the district for improvement subject to funding being provided by the Department of Transport for flood affected roads.

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

What is planned for Clareabbey Roundabout in the short term in advance of the Fleadh, and what is the long term plan for same?

Gerard Dollard, Director of Services, replied as follows:

The Clareabbey Roundabout represents a significant area of land which is under the control of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (formerly NRA). Any long term proposal for an installation on this roundabout will require the consent of TII and also require an overall selection process and formal planning process. It is also noted that overhead power lines exist at this particular location.

It is clear that a long term proposal will require considerable resources and involvement of various parties and cannot be implemented in the short term.

The approach being adopted currently is towards a short term solution and to have same in place for the summer of 2016 and in advance of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Ennis in August 2016. In parallel, it is intended to pursue a long term solution which will involve the detailed process outlined above.

Discussions are also underway with the Office of Public Works in respect of utilising funds under the Per Cent for Arts Scheme in respect of capital projects recently undertaken in the town of Ennis.

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

I ask Municipal District of Ennis to complete the upgrading of Toberteascain Road in particular from St Flannan's College roundabout to where other works have been carried out along that road.

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

The upgrade of this road will be carried out on the completion of construction of the storm overflow pipe from St Flannan's College to the back drain of the river Fergus. The over flow pipe is part of the ennis south flood scheme which the Council is currently awaiting approval from the OPW.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr C. Colleran Molloy was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton

In the interest of safety of children and alleviation of traffic congestion, that there be an immediate examination of the afternoon pick-up at Ennis National school with the objective of redirecting the flow of traffic and possible introduction of a one way circular road being constructed.

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

A meeting is being arranged with the Board of Management of Ennis National School to examine proposals to relieve congestion at the school during collection time.

Members welcomed this response. G. Dollard stated that the road in place is designed as a distributor road. It is not a cul-de-sac. Behavioural changes would help a traffic management plan. A combination of measures will assist. It is in the interest of all parties to resolve the issues.

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

The footpaths on the Lahinch Road are in an appalling state, at this stage there is NO stable or hard surface just mud. I request that Ennis Municipal District resurface these footpaths without delay.

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

The audit of the N85 shall be completed and submissions made to the TII by mid February and we will await approval of funding for the works.

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

I call on Clare County Council to identify all the roads in the Ennis Municipal District that have been prone to flooding over the last few years and to include the repair and preventative measures that need to be taken to keep these roads open from the flood relief monies that have been promised by the government.

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

Clare County Council submitted a list of roads and storm drainage works to the Department of Transport for funding under the roads affected by flooding. Works will be subject to the funding received from the Department of Transport.

€106m had been announced by central Government for storm and flood damaged Counties. The Elected Members queried what portion of this would come to County Clare as members of the public are getting increasingly frustrated waiting on repairs to be carried out.

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

That the road from Kilnamona Cross to Kilnamona National School (approx ¼ mile) be surface dressed in 2016.

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

The Kilnamona Cross to National School Road is included in the Surface Dressing Programme this year.

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

I request a progress report on any developments following on from my suggestion in 2015, when I served as Mayor, that Ennis Municipal District work with other organizations over the next number of years to provide a legacy to events each year. In 2016, if such a community garden was built it could become the first of a possible series of designed Ennis community gardens.

Gerard Dollard, Director of Services, replied as follows:

Clare Co Council has in recent years provided some funding to the Clare Garden Festival which is takes place in April each year. In 2015, in conjunction with An Bord Bia, the festival added a new dimension to the event by constructing the first Show Garden which was designed by Eric Mc Namara. The show Garden proved to be a very successful element to the festival with the result that the organizers propose to include a show garden at the 2016 festival.

Clare Co Council has committed to supporting the relocation of the 2016 Show Garden to a permanent site near the newly refurbished Mill Wheel adjacent to the walking/ cycle route. The garden will also incorporate bike stands and picnic tables and will be a significant enhancement to this location. The garden will be maintained by the Gardening Section of Clare Co Council once installed and will provide a legacy to the Town of Ennis to be enjoyed by all.

It is not possible at this stage for the Council to make a similar commitment both in terms of resources and funding should the festival continue to develop a show garden.

Members welcomed this response and complimented the staff of Clare County Council on all the works done to date. In particular the Gardening Section was commended on their work and dedication in all weathers to the town of Ennis.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr P. Murphy – This Notice of Motion was withdrawn by Cllr. Paul Murphy.

That Ennis Municipal District calls for the Fergus River Drainage Committee to be re-established.

Michael McNamara, Senior Executive Officer had replied as follows:

The District of Fergus Drainage Act 1943 placed responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the drainage works associated with River Fergus with the Clare and Galway County Councils. Orders made under the Act provided that Clare County Council was responsible for 98.80% of the expenditure on the District with Galway County Council being responsible for the remaining 1.2% of expenditure incurred.

The Fergus Drainage Committee was a statutory committee established for the purposes of administering the Councils responsibilities in regard to the River Fergus and its drainage works. The Committee consisted of 5 elected members of Clare County Council and 2 members nominated by Galway County Council and the undersigned acted as Secretary to the Committee for the past 20 years or so. The only source of income for the Committee were from monies provided by Clare and Galway County Councils in the proportions outlined above.

The works on the drainage area over the years were undertaken for the most part by the Ennis Area Senior Executive Engineer with some works also carried in the Kilfenora/Corofin area by the Area Engineer for that area. The Minister for Environment, Community & Local Government signed an order in October 2014 providing for the dissolution of all remaining Drainage Committees including the Fergus Drainage Committee. The Fergus Drainage Committee was one of 7 Committees dissolved by that order of the Minister in 2014 and the Committees were formally dissolved from 1st January, 2015.

The functions of each Committee were to be undertaken henceforth by the respective County Councils.

The Mayor and other Elected Members wished their three colleagues who are contesting General Election 2016 all the very best with their campaigns. All other candidates contesting the general election 2016 were also acknowledged and complimented for putting their names on the ballot paper. The Members expressed the hope that whoever gets elected will continue to work diligently in the best interests of the County.

The meeting then concluded.