

Minutes of the Municipal District of Ennis Committee Meeting held at 10.30am on Friday May 5th, 2017, in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Present:

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

Apologies: J. Breen.

Officials: G. Dollard, Director of Services, I. Chaplin, Executive Engineer, A. Reynolds, Administrative Officer, J.J. Counihan, Traffic Warden, and F. Whelan, Staff Officer.

Item No.1. Minutes of the April 2017 Monthly Meeting held on 10th April, 2017.

Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District April 2017 monthly meeting were proposed by Cllr. P. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and adopted by members.

Item No. 2. Parking.

G. Dollard, Director of Services, briefed elected members on the Parking Report presented at the meeting. The report followed on from the parking workshop which had been held earlier with the Elected Members.

G. Dollard outlined the various options in the parking report which are to be introduced on a trial basis until the end of 2017 with the exception of the parking permits option which will be considered further for 2018 in consultation with local businesses etc.

Members welcomed the report which accurately reflected the findings of the parking workshop. Members also requested that further advertising and promotion of the various parking options be carried out by the Council. This item was proposed by Cllr. T. McNamara, seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn who recommended a review of the business permit arrangements. Members agreed to implement the recommendations including the move to €1 per unit pricing contained in the report on a trial basis from early June 2017 to 31st December 2017.

Item No. 3. Budget 2017.

This item was deferred to the June meeting.

Item No. 4 Standing Orders.

Revised Standing Orders were presented to members which included the following change:-

The Municipal District of Ennis monthly meetings will be held monthly on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 10.30am. The June 2017 meeting will be held on Tuesday June 13th at 10.30am.

This item was proposed by Cllr. M. Howard, seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy and agreed by members.

Item No. 5. Update - Rural Development Funding Opportunities & Competitions.

Details of the following grant schemes were circulated to members:

- 2017 Community Facilities Scheme 2017
- Clare in Bloom Competition
- Burial Ground Maintenance Priming Grant 2017

This item was noted by members.

Item No. 6. Ennis Paint Scheme 2017.

G. Dollard, Director of Services, informed the meeting that following on from the success and positive feedback from the 2016 Ennis Streetscape Scheme it is proposed to proceed with a similar scheme ahead of Fleadh Ceoil na hEireann 2017. Ennis Town Centre Paint Scheme 2017 will be advertised in the coming week with a closing date of Friday 26th May, 2017. Dulux are on board again in 2017 with a 20% reduction on exterior paint. Grants will be a maximum of €700 per property or 50% of the total cost.

Members welcomed the 2017 Ennis Paint Scheme and queried if the inclusion of Clarecastle would be considered. It was confirmed that there is an annual Town and Village Paint Scheme in place, details of which will be circulated to members.

This item was proposed by Cllr. A. Norton, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by members.

Item No. 7. Update - Purple Flag Renewal.

Ann Reynolds, Administrative Officer, updated members in relation to the process and success to date of Ennis' participation in the Purple Flag Initiative. Ennis was the first town in the Country to achieve the Purple Flag Status. Ennis Chamber of Commerce is the lead on this Initiative and has assistance from Clare County Council, Ennis Gardaí and local businesses. Members complimented the work that has gone into achieving the Purple Flag for Ennis. Other towns and villages look to Ennis as a successful example in this regard. The working group is to meet next week to progress the 2017 Purple Flag submission.

This item was noted by members.

Item No. 8. Notices of Motion.

No.1. NOM submitted by Cllr. Mary Howard (Part 1 of this NOM was seconded by Cllr. P. Daly (Part 2 of the Notice of Motion withdrawn by Cllr. Howard)

Can Ennis Municipal District Council identify and provide funds for the complete refurbishment of the green area at St Michael's Villas, this refurbishment to include

new car parking facilities. This matter has been brought up on numerous occasions in the past.

I also request that this matter be a headed item on the agenda at each meeting of Ennis Municipal District (Part 2 was withdrawn by Cllr. Howard)

Eamon O Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The Municipal District Office has a draft layout for additional car parking at St Michaels Villas, however a Part 8 Planning Process has not been carried out and at present there is no funding stream identified for the project.

No.2. NOM submitted by Cllr. James Breen (same as NOM No. 7)

That a pedestrian crossing be expedited as a matter of urgency at the Eire Óg GAA grounds.

Eamon O Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

As stated in previous responses, the Municipal District received no funding from the Department of Transport in 2017 for Low Cost Safety Schemes and the funding provided in 2016 covered part of the cost of the Pedestrian Crossing at the Gort Road. The next priority for a pedestrian crossing is at Carmody Street at Drumbiggle Road, request from Ennis National School to change the location of the school crossing on the Kilrush Road, Clare Road at St. Flannans. The MD Office will examine the traffic flow and speeds along this section of St. Flannan's Drive / Turnpike Road to confirm if a pedestrian crossing is warranted at this location and what other interim measures may reduce traffic speeds.

No.3 NOM submitted by Cllr. Tom McNamara was seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy.

As part of the installation of high speed fibre broadband to housing estates around Ennis I call on the Senior Executive Engineer to insure that all roads and footpaths are reinstated to an acceptable standard and that all water gullies are properly functioning after completion of works as some gullies in Cahercalla Estate appear to be filled with silt.

Eamon O Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The Guidance for Managing Openings in Public Roads, known as the purple book, states that Statutory Undertakers that have powers to open, dig or excavate a public road are:-1. Network Operators in the Telecommunications Sector. It also states that in conjunction with deregulation of the telecommunications and electricity sectors, other private sector agencies operating under ministerial sanction will be licenced to carry out road opening activities.

Section 2.5.2 of the guidelines states that the legislation which provides for telecommunication companies or "network operators" to open public roads for the establishment of underground communications infrastructure is the Communications

Regulation Act 2002 (2002 Act) and the Communications Regulation (Premium Rate Services and Electronic Communications Infrastructure) Act 2010 (2010 Act). It also states that the 2002 Act provides for local authorities to grant consent to telecom operators to open public roads for the establishment of underground communications infrastructure. The 2002 Act and amended under the 2010 Act designates the Local Authority as the consent giving authority for regional and local roads. TII are the consent giving authority for national roads and motorways.

Therefore the Local Authority as the roads authority can only condition the road opening licence and Endeavour where feasible to co ordinate works to reduce impact on the public. When the works are completed by the telecommunications operator, the public areas are jointly inspected with the roads authority and only at that stage does the 2 year maintenance period commence.

Any queries in relation to Virgin Media should be directed to their customer contact number (087) 6018466 for their broadband works in Ennis.

Members further discussed this Notice of Motion and while they welcome the Broadband Initiatives to Ennis, it is important that the contractors re-instate all properties and roads to an acceptable standard. Residents need to be supported by Clare County Council to ensure the compliance of contractors in this regard.

Ian Chaplin, Executive Engineer, confirmed that there is protection there in regard to this matter through the Road Opening Licences Process and if there are any defects the Council will ensure they are rectified on the snag listings.

Photographic surveys can be very useful as evidence, should any dispute arise, and the Council will strongly suggest this to the contractor.

No.4. NOM submitted by Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy was seconded by Cllr. M Howard.

That the Ennis Municipal District of Clare County Council assess the suitability of a community project involving the Mens Shed at the open space at Claireen Drive, Road No. L8518-0

Eamon O Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The use of this open space would be subject to a draft outline of the proposed work being submitted to the Municipal District for consideration and that a consultation would be undertaken by the Mens Shed with the Residents of Claireen Drive. The location is adjacent to the Claireen River.

No.5. NOM submitted by Cllr. Paul Murphy was seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy.

What options, if any, are open to Ennis Municipal District regarding widening the road from Keevagh Quarry to Tommy Sheehan's dwelling?

Eamon O Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

A detailed design of a new road alignment would be required before any land owners could be approached along this section of the R469 Quin Road. The funding of this type of road widening project was by means of Specific Improvement Scheme Grants from the DOT. The Municipal District Office has inquired from the Director in the Transport Section of the Council as to whether this form of funding would be returning in 2018 or 2019 and the Director has not got any definite response from the DOT. Therefore the Council has no guidelines as yet to what type of projects will be considered under new funding and subject to that guideline a priority list of works in the Ennis MD would be drafted and this would be included in a priority list for the County. As stated in previous responses in regard to work by the Road Design Section of the Council that priority is given to works where funding is provided in the 2017 Grant Allocation from the DOT.

No.6. NOM submitted by Cllr. Johnny Flynn was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard.

That a progress report be presented to Ennis Municipal District about the carrying out a " Town Health Check " as I had previously requested to be done previously in 2013

Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner replied as follows:

The Planning department in conjunction with the Heritage Council and the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht was included in a 'pilot' trans-disciplinary National Town Centre Health Check (TCHC) Training Programme consisting of two workshops held in September 2016 and March 2017 with town centre survey programme/mentoring period taking place during October-December 2016. The purpose of the training was to support the creation of robust Town Centre Health Checks (TCHCs) for 10 Irish towns, which are formally linked to the statutory planning system, through the review of County Development Plans (CDPs) and Local Area Plans (LAPs). Ennis was selected as one of these towns.

The key aim of the 'pilot' TCHC is to highlight the critical role that town centres play and the wide-ranging impacts that their vitality, vibrancy and viability have on overall socio-economic, environmental and cultural growth and development, and on quality of life for both the current population as well as visitors.

The Town Centre Health Check (TCHC) provides a comprehensive databank, which establishes a useful 'baseline' for comparison with future Town Centre Health Check assessments of Ennis. A number of building use surveys have been conducted in the last number of years however nothing as extensive as the criteria listed for this TCHC. The 2016 Ennis TCHC is envisaged to be the first step in an on-going strategic management programme of health checks for Ennis going forward. The town centre health check embraces a number of different types of quantitative and qualitative primary research.

The following indicators of vitality and viability were surveyed;

- Pedestrian Count Survey

- Vacancy Rate Survey
- Building use survey
- Retailer Survey
- Consumer Survey
- Car Parking Survey
- Accessibility audit

The aim of the project is to create a reliable baseline of information for Ennis Town Centre to inform future projects carried out in the town centre. The health check will also act as a benchmark against which any future research can be compared, allowing data comparison on a yearly basis. The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To develop a comprehensive town centre health check for Ennis Town centre.
- To provide an evidence base for use in other studies and strategies carried out in the Ennis Town centre and in the wider Clare area.
- To support the future preparation of Ennis local area plan, particularly helping to inform economic development, tourism and retail policies contained within the plan.
- To provide a best practice baseline for assessing the impacts of proposed retail development on the town centre.

Due to the significant amount and comprehensive nature of data received it is anticipated that subject to staff resources a report will be available in late July/early August to issue to the Members.

No.7. NOM submitted by Cllr. Pat Daly was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard.

I again ask the Ennis MD to consider a pedestrian crossing at Clonroadmore, in particular adjacent to Eire Óg, where up to 400 children use the facilities on a weekly basis.

Eamon O Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

As stated in previous responses, the Municipal District received no funding from the Department of Transport in 2017 for Low Cost Safety Schemes and the funding provided in 2016 covered part of the cost of the Pedestrian Crossing at the Gort Road. The next priority for a pedestrian crossing is at Carmody Street at Drumbiggle Road, request from Ennis National School to change the location of the school crossing on the Kilrush Road, Clare Road at St. Flannans. The MD Office will examine the traffic flow and speeds along this section of St. Flannan's Drive / Turnpike Road to confirm if a pedestrian crossing is warranted at this location and what other interim measures may reduce traffic speeds.

Ian Chaplin, Executive Engineer, confirmed that the next step is to fully justify the need for a pedestrian crossing at this location. It was agreed that at small delegation would meet with the Council in this regard.

No.8. NOM submitted by Cllr. Cllr. Mary Howard was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton
I request that footpaths be provided on the road from Dreichidnagower Bridge to Drumcliffe Road. This road is very unsafe due to lack of footpath, this section of road has a lot of pedestrian use due to its proximity to Lees Road.

Eamon O Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

There is no detailed design for this proposed footpath work. The manner in which pedestrians and cyclists cross the Drehidnagower Bridge will have to be considered and unlike the Quin Bridge there is no clear sightline to permit a yield system, therefore some form of traffic light system would be required. Some land will need to be acquired to make provision for the footpath from Drehidnagower Bridge to Drumcliff Road.

No.9. NOM submitted by Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton.

That the extremely poor condition of L8230-0 located in Nutfield town land exiting to the right of L4162-42 be assessed for redress

Eamon O Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The L8230-0 is in the East Clare Municipal District, however due to its location off the L4162-42 the maintenance of same is dealt with by the Ennis MD Crews. This is a tertiary local road that is not a through road and it will be included in the list for the velocity patcher when it is in this area. The only means that this road will be improved is by a Community Involvement Scheme and the Residents should consider making an application through the East Clare MD office.

(I am aware of recent correspondence from my colleague in the East Clare MD Office on this matter to Minister Breen's Office suggesting that the Residents consider a CIS scheme.) Details of the Community Involvement Scheme are to be forwarded to members.

No.10. NOM submitted by Cllr. P Murphy was noted by members

I am proposing that notices of motion that require a physical response by outdoor staff are restricted to one per member at our monthly meetings.

No reply required.

No.11. NOM submitted by Cllr. Johnny Flynn was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton.

That a Ballyalia Lake & Amenity area working group be set up within Ennis Municipal District to urgently progress a master plan project for the public owned lands.

Gerard Dollard, Director of Services replied as follows:

In recent days, the Minister of State for Regional Economic Development as part of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs has announced details of an €11m scheme for outdoor recreation infrastructure as part of the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development. The idea of the scheme is to provide funding for the development of outdoor recreation infrastructure and for the necessary maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreation infrastructure in rural areas.

The Council has not yet received details of the scheme but it is possible that proposals for the Ballyalia Lake and amenity area may fall for consideration under the scheme. I would suggest that the Council should await details of this scheme before progressing proposals in relation to Ballyalia Lake and amenity area. The Members will be aware that much work was done with the local community on an overall plan by the former Ennis Town Council.

The outdoor recreation and infrastructure scheme will be administered by the Rural Development Directorate and it will be a matter for that Directorate to ascertain the most appropriate structures for delivery of any project.

Members further discussed this Notice of Motion and requested that a project be in place and ready should a funding source become available.

G. Dollard confirmed that there is already a proposal in place and members can be briefed on this at the June meeting and see if this proposal is suitable. We also need to decide where Ballyalla sits and what type of scheme it can be considered under. There is already a budget of €25,000 in place to improve the footpaths as a starting point.

No.12. NOM submitted by Cllr. Pat Daly was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

I request the Ennis MD to investigate the possibility of opening the old National School as a public car park, by engaging with the owners on a public private partnership basis, or else to purchase outright.

Gerard Dollard, Director of Services replied as follows:

The site of the old National School is a strategic site in the overall Development Plan for Ennis Town. The Council has been active in monitoring progress on the overall site on which we understand a sale is being finalised.

The redevelopment of this site is seen as a critical component in the overall development of an expanded town centre area for Ennis and its use as a car park would not be an appropriate use of the site.

It may well be that short term use as car parking might be possible and that an overall development proposal for the site may incorporate a parking element. However, no discussions have taken place in this regard and it will be a matter for the new owners to engage with the Planning Department on an appropriate development.

Item No. 9. Correspondence

None

Item No. 10. Any Other Business

- Members queried the omission of a campsite at Ennis Rugby Club from the Fleadh 2017 Plans. There is only one campsite included which is located at Clarecastle GAA Club.

G. Dollard confirmed that the period for submissions on the event licence application is now closed. The Fleadh 2017 event licence application was submitted by Comhaltas and not Clare County Council. There was a reason that the decision was made just include the Clarecastle campsite in this year's application which was based on a number of factors and Clarecastle met all the guidelines in relation to Environmental Health etc.

- Members welcomed the newly finished footpath on the Kilrush Road which is a great asset to the area. There are a couple of small potholes on the road which are to be addressed by the Roads Area Staff.
- Members requested that the issue of illegal dumping be further tackled.
- The Mayor reminded the meeting that the re-naming ceremony of Lees Road to John O'Sullivan Active Ennis Park will take place at 3pm on Friday 19th May, 2017.
- The 2017 AGM of the Municipal District of Ennis has been confirmed for 3pm on Thursday 22nd June, 2017.

Signed: _____
Mayor

Signed: _____
Meetings Administrator

Date: _____