**Minutes of the June 2021**

**Meeting of the Municipal District of Ennis Committee,**

**held at 3.15pm on Friday 11th June 2021,**

**in Council Chamber, Aras Contae an Chláir**

**Councillors:** P. Murphy, A. Norton, M. Nestor, P. Daly, C. Colleran-Molloy, J. Flynn, M. Howard.

**Officials:** Carmel Kirby, Director of Services, Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, Niamh O Connor, Administrative Officer & Meetings Administrator, Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Lily McInerney, Staff Officer.

Apologies: None.

Newly elected Chair Cllr. Ann Norton opened the Meeting welcoming all.

**Item No. 1. Minutes of the May 2021 Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis Committee held on 4th May 2021 at 10.30am**

Cllr. J. Flynn requested a correction, Notice of Motion No. 3, first line of page 4 should read “Parnell Street” not “Abbey Street”.

*Pending this correction, this item was proposed by Cllr. P. Daly, seconded by Cllr. M. Nestor and agreed by all members.*

**Item No. 2. Matters Arising**

1. Cllr. Flynn referenced May Notice of Motion no. 3 and informed the meeting that a number of Woodquay businesses had expressed an interest in street surface upgrading, in line with other areas in town. He requested Woodquay be included in the feasibility study for upgraded surface works for Abbey Street.
2. Cllr. Flynn referenced May Notice of Motion no. 9 requesting extension of the sewer from Ross Leamhain estate to the Main Tulla Road sewer via Aughvaddy Bridge. He informed the meeting that Transport Infrastructure Ireland had in the past proposed the extension of the sewer to properties in Hillside estate, and that this item should be pursued by EMD.

**Item No. 3 Declaration of Public Roads, Section 11 Roads Act 1993: Fort View, Creggaunnahilla, Clarecastle**

Report and map circulated in advance of Meeting.

*This item was proposed by Cllr. P. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy and approved by all Members.*

**Item No. 4**

(i) Clare Going WeLL School Teen Programme – agree donation of €500 per Member.

*This item was proposed by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy, seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy and agreed by all Members.*

(ii) Town/Village Centre Paint Scheme – selection of town/village for 2021.

Location agreed: Properties directly adjoining the Parnell Street, Laneways and Bow-ways Public Realm Enhancement works

It was clarified that €10,000 had been allocated under the *Town/Village Centre Paint Scheme* from the Rural Development Directorate. It is proposed to allocate a further €8,000 from the GMA allocation to this paint scheme. The poor state of some gutters in this area was highlighted in addition to the debris from gutters falling onto the new surfaces. Thus a scheme to encourage and support properties in cleaning the gutters would be beneficial at this time.

The following distribution of funds was agreed; €300 towards the painting of the property and €100 for gutter cleaning

*This item was proposed by Cllr A. Norton, seconded by Cllr J. Flynn and Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by all Members.*

Following agreement on the funding of the scheme, Cllr. Howard outlined how it supports the work of Tidy Towns. Cllr. Norton welcomed the scheme which would engender a sense of community pride in the town. Carmel Kirby Director of Service requested support from the media to highlight this significant decision by Members which would underpin the success of the Parnell Street public realm works.

Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, highlighted property owners responsibilities under Section 70 of the Roads Act 1993, advising that a notification regarding same may be issued in conjunction with details of the scheme.

(iii) Casual Trading Byelaws – Date for Special Meeting of EMD (between 22nd and 25th June 2021)

Date agreed: Tuesday 22nd June 2021, 11.30am via MS Teams.

**Item No. 5 Notices of Motions**

**No. 1 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard**

St Clare's Close:

I request that Ennis MD housing department survey this location as the building needs some TLC.

- chutes are clogged with vegetation.

- the building (Apts 4 - 7) has not been painted in 20 years.

- doors and windows need to be inspected as some need to be replaced.

***Tony Neville, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*7 of the 9 No. properties in St. Clare’s Close, Turnpike are Council owned. Each of these was surveyed during 2018 as part of our Planned Maintenance Stock Condition Survey. At that time all the windows and doors were given a 5 year lifespan and no maintenance requests were received through our tenant contact number. An up-to-date inspection will be arranged shortly and actioned accordingly. The houses have been painted over the past three years, funded as part of void property refurbishment. Quotations to clean and paint the apartment blocks have been recently sought. Works will proceed, subject to funding being available, likely through Estate Management.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy and agreed by all Members.*

Whilst acknowledging the response, Cllr. Howard stated that residents, some of whom are there over 25 years, do not concur with this report. She pointed out that double-glazed windows with a 20-year lifespan are in place 25 years. She also reported that No. 4 had been refurbished inside but not outside. She requested further attention be given to this Notice of Motion. Cllr. P. Murphy supported this Motion and requested that all areas in Ennis Municipal District are given equal priority.

**No. 2 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn**

I ask that Ennis Municipal District Executive carry out a review of the causes of poor air quality in Ennis as recorded by the EPA and liaise with relevant state agencies and academic bodies with expertise in this area (such as UCC) to prepare an action plan to protect both our environment and citizens.

***Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, responded as follows:***

*Ennis MD will bring this Notice of Motion forward to the Physical Development SPC to determine the merits of undertaking a review of community / academic led air quality analysis in urban settings in Ireland and the success of any actions arising from same.*

*I can advise that the Environment Section have promoted a number of awareness campaigns on “smoky coal” in recent years across all our social media outlets and in print.*

*Under the Air Pollution Act (Marketing, Sale, Distribution and Burning of Specified Fuels) Regulations 2012, the Environment Section  has taken appropriate enforcement action on a number of retailers/distributers and the public in relation to breaches of the said regulations.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr C. Colleran-Molloy and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. Flynn briefed on this motion, stating that he had long recommended the banning of smoky fuels and whilst he acknowledged the measures undertaken by the Environment Section, he described this issue as a broader public health one. Cllr. Flynn recommended engagement with a retired Professor Emeritus of University College Cork, Dr J. Sodeau, who has expertise in this field. He also recommended including representatives from EPA. Cllr. Colleran-Molloy, in support of this motion, stated that she would support this in her role as member of the SPC and she acknowledged the ongoing concern regarding the availability of smoky fuels.

**No. 3 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Nestor**

This motion is requesting that the height of the boundary wall at the entrance of Glenina estate, Gort Road be raised.

***Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*The Glenina boundary wall has not been altered since the construction of the scheme and there are a number of pedestrian access points through the wall from the Gort and Glenina Roads. A section of the wall was rebuilt near the Fior Uisce and St Clare’s School access road end of Glenina in recent years. The Ennis MD has met the local residents in recent times in regard to traffic movement from Gaelscoil Mhichil Ciosog and are willing to meet the concerned residents regarding the boundary wall. The Ennis MD has no means of funding this work in the Schedule of Municipal District Works 2021.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. Nestor thanked Eamon O’Dea for his response and he informed the meeting that a number of residents had health & safety concerns regarding the ease with which access is gained straight onto the Gort Road. He requested that this work be considered when funding becomes available. Cllr. Murphy supported this Notice of Motion.

**No. 4 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy**

That the footpath on the south side of the Tulla Road be continued as far as the turn off for Martin Williams Cement.

***John Gannon, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*A shared footpath extension on the northern & southern sides of the R352 to the L-8168-0 junction with the R352 is being incorporated as part of the transportation planning requirements for the proposed Data Centre on the R352, Tulla Rd.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. P Daly and Cllr J. Flynn and agreed by all members.*

Cllr. Colleran-Molloy acknowledged the response stating that the data centre is only at pre-planning stage. She reiterated the significant benefit of these footpaths with the increased levels of local walking and she hopes that this footpath extension will be delivered as promised. This motion was supported by Cllr. P. Daly and Cllr. J. Flynn.

**No. 5 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Murphy**

That Ennis Municipal District conveys a message that Ennis welcomes Campervan users/owners this summer, provided that they can be self sufficient in terms of sanitation and that consideration be given to using one of the council carparks (Drumbiggle or Áras an Contae) to facilitate this endeavour and valuable business opportunity.

***Camel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, responded as follows:***

*The use of Council car parks, either at Drumbiggle or New Road as campervan parks would require fully manned facilities specifically for this purpose. At present, the car parks are full on the five-day working week serving staff, councillors and customers.  With greater numbers likely to be returning to offices in the coming months, the use is likely to increase.  Saturdays are often used for regular maintenance works that can only be done when the offices are vacant.*

*While Saturdays and Sundays could be looked at in terms of feasibility, recruitment of staff, cleaning costs of facilities including toilets, security, 24 hour cover etc, it is considered that there may be other options.  It should be noted that there are no showers in either facility and this is a key requirement for caravan parks.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton and Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. Murphy outlined how the “Ennis is open for business” ethos should encourage the provision of a facility to accommodate campervans for family staycation holidays, and that this type of visitor brings substantial benefit to the local economy. He referenced the remarkable success of sites in Cobh and Portumna. He recommended that if this facility cannot be provided on Council owned lands, then a call out to private sector should be undertaken. Most members supported this motion. Cllr. Howard stressed that when visitors are choosing Clare and Ennis as a destination, we must be in a position to accommodate, and that cooperation with private landowners had great potential. She proposed that EMD visit the Cobh Campervan facility to learn from their experience. Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, advised that the location had a critical bearing on the success of these sites. Cllr. Flynn referenced the Ballyallia site as a long standing area for consideration but Cllr. Murphy clarified that this notice of motion applies to the provision of sites within the town for those who wish to socialise in town.

It was agreed to request the Tourism section to examine the potential for campervan sites to support the tourism sector.

**No. 6 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Daly**

I ask Ennis Municipal District to make better use of the local knowledge of the Councillors in assessing housing need, with a view to streamlining the waiting list and reducing duplication.

***Siobhan McNulty, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*The Social Housing Assessment (Amendment) Regulations 2021, which came into force on April 19th 2021, legislates for local authorities to determine eligibility for housing support and determining housing need. The legislation provides for a new social housing application form which is more streamlined and accessible for the applicant and which will provide the Local Authority with greater data for those approved for social housing in strategically planning how best to meet that housing need. The Clare Co Council Social Housing Allocation Scheme 2021, adopted by the Members of Clare Co Council at the March 21 meeting, sets out the priorities and procedures for allocating tenancies to approved social housing applicants.*

*The Housing team are meeting quarterly with the MD Councillors to discuss issues arising in the housing arena.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. M. Nestor and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. Daly thanked Siobhan McNulty for her response and for the impressive briefing provided to Members by herself and John Corry, Administrative Officer, in advance of the May EMD Meeting. However, he outlined how the knowledge and expertise held by Members is not being used effectively. Members voiced strong support for this motion and comments were made as to how GDPR rules and the particulars of ‘Choice Based Lettings’ often diluted their representative role. It was noted and acknowledged that Siobhan McNulty and John Corry had agreed to a more open communication system in relation to housing of applicants.

**No. 7 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard**

Ennis Friary

Can Ennis MD get clarity as to when the OPW intend in opening to the public this 13th century Abbey.

***Niamh O’Connor, Administrative Officer, responded as follows:***

*Ennis MD received correspondence from Trish Ryan, Heritage Services - National Monuments Administration at the Office of Public Works, advising that the Office Of Public Works do not have an opening date for Ennis Friary.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. Howard reminded the meeting that Ennis is now open for business and that it was disappointing that primary school tours had missed an opportunity to see a quality local heritage site which has been closed since early 2020.

**Item No. 6 Correspondence**

An email from Ennis Tidy Towns had been circulated to all Members, thanking Members and Executive for the grant aid in 2021. It stated this aid would implement projects that involve and benefit the community of Ennis.

**Item No. 7 Any Other Business**

1. Cllr M. Nestor proposed allocating €7,000 from GMA to the Ennis CE Scheme to assist in the purchase of van in line with the application submitted.

*This item was proposed by Cllr M. Nestor, seconded by Cllr. A. Norton, and agreed by all Members.*

1. Cllr. Daly queried if a tender was underway for the new library. Members will receive response to same.
2. Clarification was sought by Cllr. Flynn as to whether the rough grass cutting was in relation to biodiversity. It was clarified that departmental recommendations at the outset of the season was to delay cutting and to apply high-set cutting for a period of time to facilitate pollinator activity. This phase has now passed and therefore normal cutting will proceed. Any issues should be communicated to Ennis Municipal District and will be acted upon.
3. Cllr. Murphy asked if communication had been received requesting street seating in town. It was clarified that a special “friendship bench” request had been received and that Ennis MD were engaging with Ennis Mental Health Association with reference to their request.
4. Cllr. Colleran-Molloy requested clarity as to why residents of Abbeyville/Abbeycourt were being refused flood risk insurance despite flood relief schemes in place. Eamon O’Dea clarified that some insurance companies do their own risk assessment and grant or refuse insurance on that basis. There is a general reluctance to provide flood risk insurance and companies default to refusal in the absence of specific information to the contrary, so that the onus is on the insurance seeker to demonstrate how the flood relief scheme covers the property. Where the scheme is an OPW scheme, then EMD can write to them on behalf of applicants.

Chair Cllr. A. Norton thanked all Members, staff and media present stating that it was a privilege and an honour to take on the role of Mayor. The meeting closed at 16:25.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mayor of Ennis

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Meetings Administrator

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_