**Minutes of the March 2021**

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

**held at 10.30am on Tuesday 2nd March 2021,**

**online via ms teams**

**Online:**

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

**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, John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Lily McInerney, Staff Officer.

**Item No. 1. Minutes of the February 2021 Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis Committee held on 2nd February 2021 at 10.30am**

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

**Item No. 2. Matters Arising**

None.

**Item No. 3. Schedule of Ennis Municipal District Works 2021.**

Chair Cllr. P. Murphy welcomed the Schedule (“SMDW”) circulated to Members, commending the hard work of all involved.

John Leahy, Senior Engineer, presented an overview of the SMDW, highlighting salient points.  John recommended adoption of the SMDW.

John Leahy and Eamon O’Dea provided clarity in response to particular Members’ queries :-

* Footpath upkeep to now fall under IPBMI grant rather than Discretionary Grant and despite a reduction in the latter (to €250k), the combination gives an overall increase.
* Safety fund at €130k would cover works at Corovorrin, Newpark and Spancill Hill to Toureen.
* PMO and TII continue to engage on Kilnamona realignment, and this is progressing.
* LIS fund now coming from Rural & Community Development Department (rather than Transport), allocation is expected by Easter (€480k in 2020 for the County).  The 2020 secondary list will be submitted for 2021.
* CIS funding allocation 2021 €142k for the County, this will only allow for one scheme in each area, Transportation section will refer back to the MDs in the coming months.  All backlogs in the County are now complete.
* Specific grants are now awarded on a case-by-case basis, as ‘Active Travel’ funding takes precedence.
* Reference to ‘Ballyhannon South’ relates to Latoon to Quin Road to Jaspers Bridge, rather than the main road.
* Summerhill new overlay works will tie in with the completion of Parnell Street works.
* St. Michael’s Villas would require new footpath construction, therefore does not qualify under IPB.
* Low-Cost Safety Scheme €35k relates to crossing point immediately after the Roslevan Roundabout on the Newpark Road in Roslevan.
* The Link Road from Gort Road to Tulla road continues to be a key objective for Clare County Council.

Director of Service commended the work by John Leahy, Eamon O’Dea and the Roads team.

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

**Item No. 4. Food & Fuel Poverty Emergency Fund – Approval of GMA Donation €350 per Member**

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

**Item No. 5 Notice of Motions**

**No. 1 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. A. Norton**

Can I request that Ennis MD tidy up The Farmers Road in Barefield; it is overgrown with briars and weeds, and the road where the bridge need to be re tarred as there are huge potholes that are gathering huge amount of water.

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

*The Ennis MD Works Crew cleared the drainage system, cut the hedges and patched the road surface at the M18 underpass. It is intended that the underpass and the immediate adjacent sections of the accommodation road will be surfaced this year.*

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

While Cllr. Norton welcomed the response, she recommended further attention be given to resurfacing this roadway as well as further briar maintenance on the motorway side for safety reasons.

**No. 2 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard**

There is no waste recycling facility on the southern side of Ennis.

I request that Ennis MD do whatever is necessary to identify a suitable location and provide a recycling facility for glass, cans, plastic, clothes etc.

***Brendan Flynn, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*Clare County Council currently operates 5 No. Civic Amenity sites at Ennis, Shannon, Scarriff, Lisdeen and Inagh, providing a geographical spread across the county. In addition, we also operate 50 Bring Bank facilities which are situated in many of our towns and villages, the majority of these can be accessed 24 hours a day.*

*In Ennis we have Bring Banks at Ennis Civic Amenity Site, Ennis Leisure Centre and Francis Street, which is the most southerly location in Ennis. The Francis Street Bring Bank location encompasses all of the Southern Ennis area within a 3km radius. There is also a Bring Bank located at Deasys Centra, Clarecastle and a 3km radius of this goes north into Ennis as far as Station Rd. The Environment section can investigate locations for additional Bring Banks and will commit to working with Ennis MD in trying to secure a suitable location.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn and agreed by all Members.*

The apparent deficiency of amenities in west and south sides of Ennis had been brought to Cllr. Howard’s attention by residents in Collins Park/Tobarteascáin, and which compares poorly with similar European towns. Members showed support for this Motion commenting that more facilities will encourage recycling and disincentivise illegal dumping. The Director of Service reminded Members that kerbside collection was the standard recommended for waste disposal. Bring Banks are complimentary and geared more towards town centre rental populations. Whilst this request would be considered, it is not a current priority and clarified that funding for these services is a mix of grant and LA funding. The Director stressed the role of the environment department in supporting community clean-ups and highlighted the national review which is being carried out on civic amenity sites.

**No. 3 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn**

Town Bus Service

I ask for an update to my previous requests and submissions over the last decade for the provision of an Ennis Town bus service.

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

*The Ennis MD are in ongoing communication with the NTA Public Transport Service Planning Team who are responsible for the planning and design of the Town Bus Service in Ennis. The primary objective of a Town Bus Service is to provide convenient access to town centre activities and key destinations as a viable alternative to the private car. To ensure the efficacy of the service, careful consideration must be given to route and stop selection, schedule design and service integration. The physical constraints of the Ennis urban environment present significant challenges to development of a strong customer focussed bus path through the town centre requiring consideration of a range of traffic management and urban design issues.*

*The Transport Service Planning Team are also committed to ensuring that any proposal is fully aligned to other mobility measures planned for the town to provide a fully integrated service for passengers and negate the requirement for subsequent service amendments. Preparation of a detailed Transport Planning Case will shorten the lead in time to implementation, if and when budgets become available to support the operational cost of providing the service. The Ennis MD has and will be communicating with the NTA Service Planning Team to assist in the process of developing the Planning Case.*

***The NTA added :***

*The National Transport Authority continues to liaise with the Department of Transport to make the case for funding for public transport network development, particularly in urban markets where the pattern of regular commuting can be influenced to switch to public transport with consequential benefits to mobility and the economic development of the town, and to climate change impacts nationally and globally.*

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

Cllr. Flynn, whilst acknowledging responses from Eamon O’Dea and NTA, voiced frustration that a proposal he had been recommending since 2004 was still outstanding, referencing a 2012 feasibility study which predicted some 5,500 workers and 13,000 students would potentially utilise a route between Clarecastle and Ballymaley. He highlighted Eamon O’Dea’s work on securing Coach parking in the centre of town which further supports this initiative. Most Members voiced support. The Director of Services advised Members that the NTA is very supportive of transportation initiatives generally for Ennis and Clare and is supportive of the bus service for Ennis.

**No. 4 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Nestor**

This motion is requesting that an inspection be carried out on all wheelchair accessible car parking spaces in the Municipal District, to ensure that all of these spaces are in compliance with the Irish Wheelchair access guidelines.

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

*The Ennis MD is undertaking an inspection at present and shall report back to the councillors on completion of the inspection and assessment.*

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

Eamon O’Dea’s response was acknowledged by Cllr M. Nestor who said he would welcome the ensuing report from the Executive at the earliest opportunity. Cllr. Norton in supporting the motion added, that in scenarios where a disabled space is not available in a car park, there is no safe alternative.

**No. 5 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy**

That another review be had by the Ennis Municipal District and Clare County Council as to the feasibility of purchasing the Rocky Road in light of the renewed prioritization of greenway amenities exemplified in current government policy.

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

*On the last occasion when Clare County Council met with the landowner, the asking price on the property for sale at the Rocky Road exceeded the value of it as an amenity area. The Council must prove a value for money outcome in this regard.*

*Ennis MD have significant investments that need funding for other amenity projects in the Ennis MD area such as lands at Gaurus, Ballyallia Project, Lands at Kildysart Road, therefore future proposals for land acquisitions must take the existing pipeline of proposals into consideration.*

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

Leonore O’Neill’s response was acknowledged by Cllr. Colleran-Molloy but she voiced support for a renewed effort to secure the lands in question, as it would deliver an invaluable walking link between Ballybeg and the town centre. Many members supported this motion and reference was made to the geographical, historical and cultural aspects of the route and the value of securing it for public use.

It was recommended that the proposal be deferred until such a time as a more appropriate price manifests in future, with the potential of using a GMA contribution towards necessary funding.

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

I am proposing that Ennis Municipal District applies for funding to introduce segregated cycle lanes on all the main approach roads into Ennis (ie Kilrush Road, Lahinch Road, Gort Road, Quin Road and Clarecastle to Ennis Road) through one of the relevant funding streams recently announced by Minister Eamon Ryan.

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

*The National Roads Authority (NTA) has funding oversight for the Active Travel Fund which is part of the overall Sustainable Transport Measures Grant (STMG) Programme announced by Government. Improving the cycle lane infrastructure across County Clare, which includes the provision of segregated cycle lanes where appropriate, is an ambition of Clare County Council.*

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

Cllr P. Murphy highlighted the urgency to identify ‘Active Travel’ initiatives that are likely to be supported. Cllr C. Colleran Molloy echoed her support for this Motion.

**No. 7 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Daly**

I ask Ennis MD to arrange for Public Lighting to be installed in the Drumcliff area, in particular from Lees road/Drumcliff road four-crossroads to just beyond Drehidnagower bridge, as Pedestrians and Cyclists pass through on a daily basis and evening basis.

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

*There is existing lighting on the Drehidnagower Road between the Bridge & Watery Road and the next public lighting is at the Junction of Drumcliff Road. The Ennis MD is in discussions with the Public Lighting Engineer to see if it is feasible to provide additional lighting from existing power supply poles on the Drehidnagower Road. The long-term solution is to provide a footpath and pedestrian crossing across the River Fergus and the Ennis MD has sought funding for this project in the 202O DTTAS Active Travel Scheme without success and we have submitted this project in the initial list of 2021 Active Travel Projects to the NTA.*

*We expect that the developer constructing the houses at Drehidnagower Road will proceed with the construction of the roundabout at the junction of Drehidnagower Road and Watery Road once the pandemic restrictions are lifted. The LIHAF Scheme road infrastructure has a roundabout at the junction of the Drumcliff Road and the Drehidnagower Road.*

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

*It was agreed that this Motion be dealt with concurrently with Notion of Motion No. 10 submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy.*

This Motion gained widespread support from Members, particularly when considered in light of upcoming housing schemes which further highlight the current deficit of public lighting and road safety measures on this stretch of roadway.

**No. 8 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Nestor**

This motion is requesting that the road markings in the Glenina estate, on the Gort road be re painted, as they are currently very faded.

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

*The line marking at Glenina will be included on the list of works for the line marking contractor.*

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

Eamon O’Dea’s response was welcomed by Cllr Nestor who added that this upgrading is now even more urgent with the reopening of schools following Level 5 Lockdown. Cllr M. Howard voiced support and also referenced other locations in town, Cloughleigh, Tobarteascain, where paint has faded from speedbumps and the potential consequences for the Council in liability claims.

**No. 9 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Daly**

I request Ennis MD to bring together all the stakeholders regarding the Market Area building at Upper Market Street, with a view to getting a positive outcome such as strong Commercial Trading activity that will enhance the whole area, while getting full support from the general public.

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

*EMD are happy to address the request in a post-Covid era, when trading conditions will be more favourable and the trading environment will be more optimistic.*

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

Cllr P. Daly highlighted the need to revitalise this amenity, following the departure of Ennis Farmers Market, the current issues with anti-social behaviour and its current operation as a car park facility only.He drew comparison with Limerick’s “Buttermarket” as the type and level of activity that should be operating from the Market building at the weekends. Members showed support for this motion. SEO Leonore O’Neill reassured Members that EMD are keen to explore all opportunities to make this a fully functional facility. A briefing with Councillors will be arranged, following a return to ‘normal’ trading activity.

**No. 10 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy**

That the dangerous absence of public lighting be addressed from Lees Road/ Drumcliffe Road junction towards Oak Park.

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

*There is existing lighting on the Drehidnagower Road between the Bridge & Watery Road and the next public lighting is at the Junction of Drumcliff Road. The Ennis MD is in discussions with the Public Lighting Engineer to see if it is feasible to provide additional lighting from existing power supply poles on the Drehidnagower Road. The long-term solution is to provide a footpath and pedestrian crossing across the River Fergus and the Ennis MD has sought funding for this project in the 202O DTTAS Active Travel Scheme without success and we have submitted this project in the initial list of 2021 Active Travel Projects to the NTA.*

*We expect that the developer constructing the houses at Drehidnagower Road will proceed with the construction of the roundabout at the junction of Drehidnagower Road and Watery Road once the pandemic restrictions are lifted. The LIHAF Scheme road infrastructure has a roundabout at the junction of the Drumcliff Road and the Drehidnagower Road.*

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

*It was agreed that this Motion be dealt with concurrently with Notion of Motion No. 7 submitted by Cllr. P. Daly. (See Notice of Motion No. 7).*

**No. 11 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P Murphy**

That Ennis Municipal District engage with Clare County Council with a view to applying to Minister Eamon Ryan for some of the 248 new jobs related to expanding walking and cycling facilities to be made available to County Clare. This would strengthen our road engineering team and create a vision for our county that would encourage people to engage in Active Travel.

***John Leahy, Senior Engineer, responded as follows:***

*We note the content of the motion.  Clare County Council is committed to promoting and delivering active and sustainable travel and is making an application for funding under the Active Travel Scheme. However, the matter of staffing for local authorities requires the sanction of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and all staff matters in Clare County Council must be consistent with our Workforce Plan.*

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

Cllr P. Murphy recommended every effort be undertaken to align with current Government funding priorities in the procurement of additional staff to compliment the Roads team and enhance the potential to deliver on the many objectives being pursued through Active Travel. This motion was supported by Cllr. A. Norton.

**No. 12 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard**

Following recent representations, I request clarity on any agreement on the operation of Ashford Court Hotel.

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

*Ashford Court Hotel is a private accommodation provider from whom the Council buy rooms to meet the needs of emergency homeless persons. The transaction is a commercial transaction and is mirrored in establishments throughout the County. There is considerable demand for emergency accommodation in Ennis and due to lack of available alternative accommodation the concentration of emergency placements in this facility was such that the Council engaged Mid-West Simon to provide professional supports to the provider to meet the needs of those in the service. Each client in homeless services has a caseworker who works with the individual to support them while in the service and to exit from the service into secure accommodation.*

*To date this has been very successful whereby it has enabled CCC to provide a safe and effective holistic response to clients rather than just a hotel room.*

*In late 2020 in response to many representations and to address concerns re rough sleeping in Ennis we introduced the Winter Initiative project in which we added extra supports to facilitate and accommodate rough sleepers. This project has been most beneficial to the individuals as they have a safe space and supports available to help them in this pandemic and to manage the intense period of cold weather we have been experiencing. Essentially it is fair to say the availability of this facility has saved lives. That said it is not intended that this will be a long-term solution to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and it expected that the roll out of Housing First and the re-orientation of existing facilities will lead to vulnerable clients being facilitated in alternative settings with the appropriate wrap around supports over time.*

*Mid-West Simon and the Council HAT work closely with the Community Gardai to ensure a collaborative approach to try to mitigate the anxieties and ensure the service has negligible impact on the community. Ashford Court is staffed 24/7 by Mid-West Simon who are engaging with the community to address any concerns in relation to the Winter Initiative project.*

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

Cllr M Howard acknowledged the challenge in balancing the responsibility for providing accommodation to homeless persons with the responsibility to ensure the safety of vulnerable elderly residents in the area of the Ashford Court Hotel and she questioned whether this venue was appropriate for emergency accommodation. Personal safety concerns had been raised both by local residents and hotel occupants. Discussion ensued and this motion was well supported generally. The main thrust of argument fell on the perceived lack of communication to elected members on key decisions like selecting locations for emergency accommodation and the fact that the public expect their local representatives to have an influence on housing decisions. Cllr. Howard informed the meeting that she had arranged neighbourhood visits with Simon Community Rep, to talk to locals as a way of assuring them that their concerns are heard.

**No. 13 Notice of Motion by Cllr. J Flynn**

Corovorrin Junction.

I ask for an update to my previous requests and submissions over the last decade for junction improvements to be carried out at Corovorrin Junction ie. leading into and out of Corovorrin Estate at junction of Kevin Barry Avenue and the very busy Tulla Road.

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

*Further to* ***Circular RW 1/2021****;* ***2021 Regional and Local Road Grant Allocations****, a fund of €75,000 for a Low-Cost Safety (LCS) scheme at Corrovorrin Junction has been approved by the Department of Transport. I anticipate that additional funding (i.e., GMA or Active Travel funding) will be needed to supplement this grant allocation in order to incorporate additional cycling lanes, footpaths and pedestrian crossing points within the final design arrangement. To date the survey work for the design options has been substantially completed.*

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

The response was welcomed by Cllr. J Flynn who explained he had already donated €15,000 from his own GMA for what is now becoming a very urgent issue, with heavy traffic on Tulla Road, numerous housing estates with ageing populations, a Creche and a graveyard. He suggested the possibility of using a Plebiscite to move this issue forward. Motion was well supported and the €75,000 funding was welcomed. Director of Service recommended allowing the Roads Design team to complete the preliminary design proposal first, after which it can be taken to stakeholders and Members.

**No. 14 Notice of Motion by Cllr. A. Norton**

At the Ballymaley roundabout there are a number of broken bollards can Ennis MD repair them.

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

*The required bollards will be ordered and this will be put on the works list for the Ennis MD Crews*

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

**Item No. 6 Correspondence**

1. Senior Executive Officer, Leonore O’Neill, read out an email response received from Irish Water on Notice of Motion No. 6 from Cllr. J. Flynn at January Meeting of Ennis Municipal District. It was agreed that this response be sent out to all Members.
2. A report on the implementation of the waste management bye-laws was received from Environment. This was an action item from Cllr. M. Nestor’s notice of motion no. 4 at the February meeting. It was agreed that this report would be sent out to all Members.

**Item No. 7 Any Other Business**

* Cllr C. Colleran-Molloy briefed on numerous calls received from Quin residents following the felling of “the largest most iconic tree in Quin” village. She reported the dismay and anger of residents who had assumed such a tree would have protected status and that none of the 5 Killaloe Municipal District Members had been informed of the felling but later learned that the decision was taken, when Quin village came under the jurisdiction of Ennis Area Office (prior to 2014). Cllr Colleran Molloy stated that the issue raised concerns regarding communication with Councillors. She requested a joint press release from Killaloe and Ennis Districts be issued on this issue.

SEO Leonore O’Neill responded that EMD operates a tree monitoring system, and a tree assessment is undertaken every few years so that trees found to be at end-of-life and/or considered dangerous, would then be annually inspected. The tree in question, unfortunately, was deemed to be high level risk and, after changeover of jurisdiction, when Killaloe Municipal District undertook its own assessment, the tree was then deemed “an immediate threat to safety of the public”. The tree was diagnosed with a disease which rots the bark from the inside and creates a risk of sudden complete or partial collapse. The SEO stressed that preservation of trees was always the intent and that only in cases of “immediate threat of danger to the public” would a tree be considered for felling. She recommended that it may be more appropriate for Killaloe Municipal District to take this matter forward as Ennis Municipal District’s involvement was to diagnose and recommend action at the earlier stage.

* Cllr M. Howard informed the Meeting of a Local Enterprise Office National Pivot award won by WowWee.ie on their innovative online retail business adjustment to Covid.
* Condolences were expressed by Cllr. P. Daly to the family of the late John Cooley of Hermitage. John had been involved with hurling over the years and would be greatly missed. R.I.P.

Chair Cllr P. Murphy closed the meeting.

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

Mayor of Ennis

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

Meetings Administrator

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