**Minutes of the November 2021**

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

**held at 10:30am on Tuesday 2nd November 2021,**

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

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

Chair, Cllr. A. Norton, opened the meeting welcoming all.

**Item No. 1. Minutes of the October 2021 Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis held on 5th October 2021**

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

**Minutes of Special Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis held on 14th October 2021**

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

**Item No. 2. Matters Arising**

1. Cllr. Flynn acknowledged the works currently underway for the Corovorrin traffic calming project and commended the diligence of the Road Design and EMD Engineers in this regard.

**Item No. 3.**

(i) **Section 183: Disposal of lands (by lease) at Bunnow, Ballaghboy, Doora, Ennis, Co. Clare, for Ennis Mens Shed.**

Report from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer circulated in advance of meeting.

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

Cllrs Flynn, Daly and Howard voiced support for this lease, commending the success of the Ennis Mens Shed project and the excellent use of a brownfield site.

(ii) **Councillor specific allocations for approval**

Report on allocations since September 2021 EMD meeting, circulated in advance.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Project** | **Amount Allocated** |  |
| **Cllr Johnny Flynn** | The Art of Clare | €4,000.00 |  |
|  | Realprint - printing Part VIII planning files | €90.00 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Cllr Pat Daly** | Kilnamona Development Association | €1,042.86 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Cllr Paul Murphy** | Clarecastle Project | €11,292.86 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Cllr Mark Nestor** | Hermitage FC | €1,000.00 |  |
|  | Cloughleigh Celtic | €1,000.00 |  |
|  | One Act Drama Festival | €1,500.00 |  |
|  | Banner GAA Club | €5,000.00 |  |
|  | Kilnamona Community Centre | €792.86 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Cllr Ann Norton** | Barefield Tidy Towns | €2,126.00 |  |
|  | Barefield Development Company | €2,126.00 |  |
|  | Clare Crusaders Childrens | €2,126.00 |  |
|  | Clare Carers Association | €3,002.86 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy** | Kilnamona Cancer Care Centre | €1,000.00 |  |
|  | Ennis Players | €1,000.00 |  |
|  | Kilnamona Community Centre | €1,000.00 |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Cllr Mary Howard** | Ennis Tidy Towns | €2,000.00 |  |
|  | Kilnamona Community Centre | €2,000.00 |  |
|  | Ennis Tidy Towns | €494.10 |  |
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*This item was proposed by Cllr. J. Flynn, seconded by Cllr M. Howard, and agreed by all Members.*

It was agreed that a report on all approved Councillor specific gma funding allocation for 2021 would be circulated to Members

**Item No. 4 Part VIII – O’Connell Street**

The Planning Department’s report on *Part VIII public realm works for O’Connell Street* was circulated to Members in advance of meeting.

*This item was proposed by Cllr. J. Flynn, seconded by Cllr. M Nestor and approved by all Members.*

All Members provided positive feedback on the proposed works and the visual enhancement that can be expected based on the success of the *Parnell Street Laneways & Bowways* project. The following issues were flagged for further consideration at detailed design stage;

* Retention of flag poles for hanging baskets, with the added potential to fly banners advertising local events such as Ennis Book Festival. Potential for the hanging baskets to be self-watering.
* Ability to salvage the existing paving for re-use elsewhere.
* Potential for LED lighting to be adaptable to a warm setting as befitting the historical nature of the town.
* Clarity on funding for the project.

Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, commended Members for approving the feasibility study which paved the way for the design phase of this project. She addressed each of the items of concern raised.

* Universal accessibility was central to the design and the minimum footpath width standards as per DMURS of 1.8m from the building line was used. Due to medieval layout of the street, achievement of 1.8m was not possible along the entirety of the length of O’Connell Street. In this context she explained, consideration will be given to adding decorative poles where space permits.
* The construction management plan will look at the potential to salvage materials for re-use depending on cost and suitability of the material.
* Regarding LED lighting, there are established lighting standards and there is a requirement to adhere to the standard for urban town centres. She indicated that these standards could be discussed further with Members.
* With reference to a potential hanging basket scheme – consultation will be carried out with businesses and the public all the way to the construction phase, and that one of the items sought will be a ‘hanging baskets scheme’. She emphasised that this must happen in consultation with individual business owners as part of the design and construction phase.
* Clarification was provided on the funding of this project. 75% funded under URDF, 25% Clare County Council, as a unified project covering the O’Connell Square, High Street, Bank Place, Old Barrack Street and Barrack Square. The project is expected to commence Q3/Q4 2022 with an approximate construction timescale of 18 months.

**Item No. 5 Notices of Motions**

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

Benches and litter bins have been removed from Abbey St car park, can these be reinstated as soon as possible and can we explore the use also of single seats.

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

*The Ennis Mental Health Association successfully applied through the Clare County Council Memorial Committee for Memorial Seating on the seating area beside the River Fergus in Abbey Street Carpark to mark the 30th anniversary of their organisation’s existence. It was originally intended to have the seating in place by Mental Health Week (10 Oct) but due to lockdown delivery delays, the seating will not arrive until early December. The seating will comprise of one bench and three chairs. A plaque will be in place with a quote promoting mental health awareness.*

*The litter bins will be re-instated and new line markings will be installed as soon as we can get the contractor on site.*

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

Cllr. Howard explained the genesis for this notice was the repeated requests for seating to enable elderly residents, and parents with strollers to take a rest during their walks/visits to town centre. She welcomed the response. Cllr. Howard queried whether requests for such infrastructure could be considered by the Municipal District instead of the Memorial Committee. Cllr. Colleran-Molloy who chairs the *Memorial Committee*  responded that the current committee was established in 2017 to standardise the assessment of requests being received. She advised that there is potential to review the Committee’s functionality and potentially break it down by district and she advised she would take the comments at the meeting forward to this review.

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

I refer to my previous notice of motions requesting the development of the Ballyallia looped walk and I request progress report ﻿on the project in terms of the works carried out , costs etc.

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

*The Ballyallia Looped Walk was funded under an ORIS Accelerated Measures Scheme and the work is complete.*

*Amendments were required to the original proposal as set out in the Earth Route Ennis Recreational Trails including the use of variable message signs. The walk is structured for the walker to go around the lake via Ballycorey Bridge –Drumcliff - Reaskaun – Templemaley Bridge - Ballyallia Cross to Ballyallia Amenity Area, as the traffic warning system is structured to caution drivers of oncoming walkers. There are a number of line marking items that will be completed following surface dressing programme in 2022.*

*A Project Cost of €56,490 was submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development and grant aid sought of €40,000.*

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

Cllr. Flynn stated that it was fantastic to see the project progressing on a site that had in the past been considered for sale to the private sector, adding that the project had concurrently remedied the potential for illegal dumping and encampment. Cllr. Norton commented on the valuable amenity and added that it was important to continue to work on the accessibility aspects. Cllr. Daly added that the amenity provided a quality and challenging walk.

**No. 3 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr.**  **C. Colleran-Molloy**

That the Spancilhill area be defined/zoned as a “Settlement” in the new County Development Plan.

***Helen Quinn, A/Senior Planner responded as follows:***

*Spancilhill is identified as a Cluster within the County Settlement Hierarchy in the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023. Clusters are described as the smallest type of settlement in the County Settlement Hierarchy and each cluster has a defined boundary. The draft new Clare County Development Plan is currently in preparation and the continued inclusion of Spancilhill as a defined Cluster within the over settlement hierarchy for the County will be considered as part of the plan-making process.*

This item was dealt with in conjunction with Notice of Motion No. 9.

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

Cllr. Colleran-Molloy reiterated her previous representation on behalf of residents of Spancilhill regarding highly inappropriate speeding particularly approaching from the east side, and a continuous hazard for locals. She deemed the response to her “Settlement” motion as unhelpful to the situation and regarding her Notice of Motion No. 9, she questioned if the speeding review referenced is bound by a 5-year term or was there potential to review at an earlier date when deemed necessary.

Cllr. Flynn voiced support for this motion describing Spancilhill as a village divided in two by high speeding traffic. Cllr. Howard recommended every effort is undertaken to influence the speed review so it doesn’t have to wait until 2023.

Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, replied to the issue of the speed limit review, advising that the 5-year term is set by the TII, and that the local authority has no discretion in the matter. Cllr. Colleran-Molloy would have to request the Roads Senior Engineer John Leahy to interact with TII on her behalf. He also cautioned that a review may not necessarily deliver the expected lowering of a speed limit and that driver behaviour was a considerable factor in the issue and therefore a matter for An Garda Siochana.

Regarding Notice of Motion No. 3, Eamon O’Dea explained that a change of zoning can have the desired effect of lowering speed limits as evidenced, for example, by Doora. ‘Settlement strategy’ however, he explained is solely for determination by a Planning Authority. He advised that he would make himself available to attend any meeting with Cllr. Colleran-Molloy and the Planning Authority in support of this issue.

**No. 4 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Murphy**

I am requesting an update in relation to the response that I received to my notice of motion from February which requested that Ennis M.D. and Clare County Council collaborate  with relevant stakeholders such as Ennis Chamber of Commerce, Ennis Traders Group and Retail Excellence Ireland in preparing a document, detailing the improvements to the flood defence system and outlining how the risk of flooding has been minimised as a result of the works completed. Information provided in the requested document was to meet the requirements of Insurance providers from a risk management perspective, and was to assist homeowners and businesses in obtaining or retaining insurance against flooding. The response stated that "A more detailed response will be provided when the replies come from the OPW and the CFRAMS project person".

***Sean Lenihan, Senior Engineer, responded as follows:***

*As the Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme is substantially complete with only snagging and some ancillary works remaining, the Project Team is now focussed on finalising a map to show the areas that benefit from the scheme. Some additional modelling may be necessary to inform the outcome of this review.*

*This work is continuing in consultation with the OPW and Scheme Consultants Ryan Hanley and will result in the production of a series of updated flood maps which may be used to assist the Insurance Industry in determining the cost and provision of flood cover to homes and businesses in the area.*

*I will keep the Members aware of developments in this regard and make the maps available once finalised.*

In Cllr. Murphy’s absence, and upon his instruction, this Notice of Motion was moved. This item was proposed by Cllr J. Flynn, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by all Members.

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

With planning permission granted to reopen a former pedestrian entrance boundary wall at St. Flannan’s College, I ask Ennis Municipal District to put down a controlled crossing on the R458 Clare Road to accommodate mainly students of the College.

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

*Clare County Council issued a notification of grant of permission to The Board of Management of St Flannan’s College on October 13th. The Ennis MD will await the final grant of permission before proceeding with the Section 38 traffic calming public consultation process for a controlled pedestrian crossing on the Clare Road.*

*One of the conditions of the grant of planning permission is “No works on the proposed development shall take place until a controlled crossing on the R458 at the location of the proposed development is in place unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority. Reason: In the interest of traffic and pedestrian safety.”*

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

Cllr P. Daly welcomed the response and referenced some accidents that had occurred at this location which is heavily populated by students. Cllr. Howard supported this Motion and added that she looked forward to this pedestrian crossing coming to fruition. Cllrs Flynn and Nestor also strongly supported this Notice of Motion, Cllr. Nestor adding that this would be a valued asset to the school.

**No. 6 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Nestor**

This motion is requesting Clare County Council to carry out works outside the Ivy Hill/Fern Hill estates on the Gort road to alleviate water ponding in the area.

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

*The existing gullies at the entrance to Ivy Hill/Fern Hill were checked recently and are in good order and functioning correctly. The issue at this time of year is the leaves are flushed by the rainfall towards the gullies and causes an obstruction to the flow. Once the leaves are removed the local ponding area dissipates quickly.*

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

Cllr. Nestor welcomed the response and thanked Eamon O’Dea for clarification on the temporary nature of the water ponding.

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

The area around the Limerick Road has a dearth or scarcity of family friendly facilities, especially for small children. Can Ennis MD investigate a suitable site for a playground and/or other facilities suitable for small children.

**Adrian Head, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:**

*The Social Development Department wish to advise that the Social Development (Housing, Culture and Sport/Recreation) Dept. has no property in the area described within which to develop a playground and/or other facilities suitable for small children.*

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

*If a community group (or a group of individuals from local residents associations) came forward with a proposal for a playground Clare County Council would assist them in the initial governance and set up of a Committee through the RCDO’s and signpost them to any available funding schemes. A community playground is a facility provided by the Community, for the Community and would require significant local fund-raising efforts to assist with the initial site purchase and provision of the facility. Local committees can also seek funding under the LEADER programme (administered by Clare Local Development Company).*

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

Cllr. Howard explained that the Notice was on foot of awareness raised by mothers residing in the Clare Road side of town who noted a marked absence of a play area for their children within walking distance. Cllr. Flynn, in support, referenced housing estates in the area for which development contributions were paid and which are now paying property tax, yet don’t have playgrounds nearby.

Cllrs P. Daly recommended getting estates together in the area to work together towards development of a shared space. Cllr. Colleran-Molloy suggested Clarecastle playground as a great amenity within a ten-minute walk.

**No. 8 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn.**

In the interest of protecting vulnerable road users , pedestrians & cyclists , I ask that the safety standard of road markings , signage and public lighting be reviewed and improved if necessary at the Pedestrian crossings at ; Lifford road near the playground and at Kelly’s corner near the hospital.

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

*The Ennis MD Office will examine the line marking and specifically the lighting levels at these crossing points and report back to the Councillors.*

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

Cllr. Flynn thanked Eamon O’Dea for the response which he welcomed particularly in light of the blind spot at Lifford Road, and also at Kelly’s Corner where an improvement will be very welcome. Cllr. Nestor voiced support for this adherence to standards in lighting and road markings at pedestrian crossings throughout the town, as he had previously requested same for Mill Road.

**No. 9 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy**

Spancilhill:  
In the interests of public health and safety, the people who live in the Spancilhill area are keen to have the Council assist in reducing the permitted speed from 80kmph to a lower and safer speed along the stretch of road passing through their neighbourhood. Can guidance and assistance be provided as to how this can be accomplished in the immediate term.

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

*A National Speed Limit Review is initiated every 5 years by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). The last Speed Limit Review in Clare was completed in 2018.*

*As part of the next Speed review, submissions will be requested from the Public, Community Groups, Municipal Districts and Public Representatives. There is no formal interim review process available at present.*

*The Low-Cost Safety Works at Spancil Hill will be installed this month and further speed surveys will be undertaken following the installation of additional speed limit signs.*

This Notice of Motion was addressed along with Notice of Motion No. 3.

**No. 10 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Murphy**

*Deferred to the December meeting for discussion.*

**No. 11 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Nestor**

This motion is requesting Clare County Council to resurface the pedestrian right of way linking Hazel Lane to Ivy Hill.

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

*This lane was not constructed by Ennis MD and does not meet current accessibility standards. Any upgrading and re-surfacing of same would require consultation with the Residents in Fern Hill/Ivy Hill and Hazel Lane with input from the Gardai and a source of funding would need to be identified.*

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

Cllr. Nestor thanked Eamon O’Dea for his response, emphasising that every effort should be made to improve walking routes and reduce reliance on car use. Residents, he stated, use this as a slipway to traverse between estates and that past Notices of Motion did not deliver on an upgrade of the laneway. Cllr. Flynn supported this Notice of Motion stating that it was valuable to the limited number of locals who use it regularly. Cllr. Daly supported the Notice of Motion stating that many Gort Road residents make use of this laneway.

**No. 12 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Daly**

I have been asked by residents of the Old Military Barracks in Kilrush Road to arrange for Ennis Municipal District to paint houses no. 19, 20 & 21, as well as an outdoor stairs adjacent to those houses, as they have not been painted for over ten years.

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

*No.’s 19, 20 and 21 Old Military Barracks, Ennis are Local Authority owned dwellings hence responsibility is within the Social Directorate. I agree an uplift of the external facade of these properties would enhance the general area. However, our annual Housing Maintenance or Estate Management budgets are not sufficient to deal with such works.*

*There are numerous estates within Ennis and countywide where similar requests have been made.*

*An increased budget for Estate Management has been requested and any works will be prioritised accordingly.*

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

Cllr. Daly acknowledged the budgetary constraints, but voiced disappointment that the Council could not deliver in a case like this where residents were showing a sense of civic pride. He stated that he is considering reverting to the maintenance unit of Housing section to ask if they could just provide the paint so that residents could do the job themselves. This Notice of Motion was strongly supported by Cllr. Nestor who vouched for the pride taken by residents of Old Military Barracks in their homes, and therefore every effort should be made to support them. Cllr. Howard also recommended assistance in this case and Cllr. Flynn added that these houses were built 20 years ago and warrant attention.

**Item No. 6 Correspondence**

None.

**Item No. 7 Any Other Business**

(i) Chair Cllr. Norton expressed a note of thanks to the residents of Clare Rd. following the step-down of the West County Hotel Vaccination Centre, for their patience with the temporary traffic management plan that was in place.

(ii) IBAL results – Cllr. Norton expressed gratitude to the outdoor staff of Ennis Municipal District, the Gardening Section of Clare County Council and to Ennis Tidy Towns for their ongoing contribution, resulting in very positive results for Ennis. She referred to the colourful displays of flowers throughout the season and the respect that was due to all in keeping Ennis litter-free.

Cllr. Howard voiced delight at Ennis’s success in IBAL results and stated that great credit was due to Tidy Towns Committee who had recently got together after staying apart for over a year to sew plants at Claureen Roundabout.

Cllr. Howard also announced that the ‘Tidy Towns Awards’ are due in the coming weeks, which she described as one of the best initiatives in the country to generate civic pride and positivity around communities.

Cllr. Flynn praised the use of IBAL as an “external auditor” and commended the effectiveness of the new roadsweeper. He also recommended consideration be given to promoting Ennis as the first “Climate Adaptive Town”.

(iii) Cllr. Norton congratulated Ennis Chamber for their hosting of the *Clare Business Excellence & Resilience Awards* in Glór and congratulated all the businesses, both winners and finalists. Ennis Tidy Towns were also acknowledged at this event.

(iv) Cllr. Howard extended congratulations to Major General Adrian O’Múrchú, an Ennis native, who has been appointed as the new Defence Forces Deputy Chief of Staff.

(v) Cllr. Flynn requested hedgecutting at Curates Court, Roslevan, where pedestrians with buggys are having to step onto the roadway to pass by.

(iv) Cllr. Norton acknowledged the successful launch of *Ennis 2040* on 22nd October with Tánaiste Leo Varadkar.

(v) Members joined Cllr. Norton in extending sympathy to the families of the late Liam Murphy R.I.P., and Sean Tyrrell R.I.P. Both had been prominent musicians who had contributed hugely to the culture of Clare and were a loss to the community.

(vi) It was agreed to move the date of the January meeting to Tuesday 11th January 2022.

The Meeting ended at 12:10pm.

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

Mayor of Ennis

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

Meetings Administrator

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