**Minutes of the October 2021**

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

**held at 10:30am on Tuesday 5th October 2021,**

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

**Councillors:** M. Howard, A. Norton, M. Nestor, P. Daly, P. Murphy, J. Flynn

**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. C. Colleran-Molloy.

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

**Item No. 1. Minutes of the September 2021 Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis held on 7th September 2021**

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

**Item No. 2. Matters Arising**

1. Cllr. Flynn confirmed that he would make contact with Ennis MD Office to confirm an allocation of €4,000 from his Councillor specific allocation towards the cost of producing a cultural book “The Art of Clare”.  This will need to be approved by all Cllrs at the next MD meeting.
2. Date for special meeting of Ennis Municipal District agreed for Thursday 14th October 2021, 09:30am, in Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, to discuss the Section 38 Corovorrin junction traffic calming measure project.

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

**Item No. 3.**

(i) **Section 183: Disposal of lands at Keelty, Beechpark, Ennis, Co. Clare – File Ref No. CP 534 (a)**

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

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

(ii) **Section 183: Disposal of lands at Keelty, Beechpark, Ennis, Co. Clare – File Ref No. CP 534 (b)**

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

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

**Item No. 4 Notices of Motions**

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

New roundabout at Willow Park on the Drumcliffe Rd

I request the Ennis MD consider continuing the footpath from the Drumcliff Rd junction onwards into Willow Park.

**Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Ennis MD replied as follows:**

*The works on the roundabout at the junction of Drehidnagower Road and Watery Road are being undertaken by the developer of the housing scheme as set out in their planning permission. The margin on the Willow Park side of the Watery Road will be wide enough to cater for a footpath. This footpath will be done as part of the Drehidnagower Road footpath from Drumcliff Road to Watery Road.*

Cllr. Howard welcomed Eamon O’Dea’s response and added that a number of residents had requested that a footpath at this location be included with the current works. Cllr. Flynn seconded this motion commending this crucial piece of infrastructure which he stated was one of the last remaining areas in need of upgrade. Cllr. Daly also supported the motion, highlighting the benefit to walkers using the route.

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

Town Centre Loading Bays

In order to support Ennis Town Centre businesses and jobs I ask that Ennis Municipal District to enable deliveries from suppliers to these businesses provide at least two loading bays in each retail street, in each public carpark and monitor their usage.

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

*This should be considered when the Parking Bye Laws for Ennis Town are being reviewed.*

*Presently there are loading bays provided in a number of the streets or adjacent streets. Some of the loading bays have time constraints that were previously requested by the business community to facilitate customers later in the day (Abbey Street). Consideration of the provision of loading bays will require consultation with the business community in regard to the type, frequency of and timing of deliveries and this may result in the reduction in available space for the convenience of customers.*

*A number of the collection service operators for businesses in Ennis do not use vehicles that comply with requirements for loading bays, and other forms of short-term parking needs to be considered for this activity. Customers collecting from premises need 10-15minute parking with high turnover of spaces also.*

Cllr. Flynn outlined that additional loading bays would be useful as up to 80% of businesses in Ennis don’t have rear access to their premises. In support, Cllr. Murphy highlighted the regular misuse of loading bays. Cllr. Flynn also requested an update on the number of parking meters that are out of order. Director of Services, Carmel Kirby, informed the meeting that a parking review of the entire county was to be undertaken and that these issues would be examined in the review.

**No. 3 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. A. Norton**

As Clare Sports Partnership provide such a great service to the people of Ennis and the whole county, can Ennis MD look at rehousing it to John O Sullivan Park Lees Road. It would be a real asset to have it in the sports complex.

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

*The Social Directorate has been working with Clare Sports Partnership for the past number of months with the objective of providing additional supports to this limited company. One of the options being explored is the possibility of providing office accommodation to CLSP at the above address. Plans have been drawn up and we are currently looking at costs and compliance issues relating to these plans. It will be necessary to secure funding and agreement for this proposal to be realised.*

Cllr. Norton welcomed the response, commenting on the expansion of Clare Sports Partnership and the suitability of Lees Road as a location. Cllr. Murphy supported the motion commending the work of the CSP and acknowledging their limited space at the site in Westgate. Cllrs. Flynn and Daly also supported the motion commenting on the invaluable support of CSP to the community during lockdown.

**No. 4 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.

*Cllr. Colleran-Molloy sent apologies for the meeting. This NOM was not proposed.*

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

That funding is sourced in order to provide shelter ie. large dugouts/small stand on the perimeter of the playing fields at Lees Road. Provision of these would give much needed shelter from the elements to players and management of teams as well as vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled, and that signage indicating that priority be given to these groups also be erected.

***Tim Forde, Head of Sports & Recreation, responded as follows:***

*There is presently no plan to provide Dugout/Shelters around the playing surfaces in Active Ennis John O’Sullivan Park, Lees Road.*

*That said we will source costs and options for discussion.*

*It should be noted, the Park is an ‘open area’, and as such it presents a number of challenges, if we decide to go ahead. These types of structures are safest, and best suited, if installed in fenced off pitches.*

Cllr. Murphy described the complete lack of shelter in the wide open pitch at Lees Road, leaving mentors and supporters badly exposed to the elements, some of these elderly and with mobility issues. He questioned why shelters should be limited to fenced-off pitches and stated he would welcome the referenced costings for such works. Cllr. Flynn supported this motion.

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

I ask Ennis Municipal District (similar to a previous motion) to arrange a visit for Councillors and staff of Ennis M.D. to the Milk Market in Limerick this October, with a view to seeking out positive ideas for the future promotion of the Market Building at Market Street, Ennis.

***No response required.***

Having previously submitted a similar motion before lockdown measures, Cllr. Daly now requests that the proposed visit be arranged during the month of October. He commented on the building costs of the Market Building at €1.5m and that much can be learned from the Milk Market’s success in Limerick. He referenced antique shows in Britain and food festivals which could be given consideration. It was clarified that the figure of €1.5m was for an enhancement of overall area, and the costs of the Market building were in the region of €500,000. This motion was supported by Cllr. Flynn who recommended private sector trustees to manage the Market area which could result in a potential €25k-€30k rental income.

It was agreed that a date to visit Limerick Milk Market will be arranged.

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

This motion is requesting Clare County Council to carry out works on the green area of Waterpark Heights, Drumbiggle Road, as it has become overgrown and littered.

***Tommy Scott, Senior Executive Technician, responded as follows:***

*This work has been scheduled for immediate and ongoing attention.*

Cllr. Nestor thanked Tommy Scott for the positive response and stated that he looks forward to the continued maintenance referenced in the response. Cllr. Howard supported this motion commenting that the maintenance work has a very positive effect.

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

Lee's Road

An invasive plant called Clematis Vitalba (Old Man's Beard) appears to be taking over large areas within the park.

I request Ennis MD deal with this as a matter of urgency as it is smothering plants throughout the park.

***Tim Forde, Head of Sports & Recreation, responded as follows:***

*The team in Active Ennis, John O’Sullivan Park, Lees Road, are aware of this developing situation. We have noted one particularly bad area at the end of the cycle track and there are isolated pockets elsewhere in the park, which we have begun dealing with.*

*We believe control, rather than eradication, is probably the best action moving forward, as this plant propagates easily and is now commonplace around the country.*

*We are in contact with the Council Gardening section and working on an action plan.*

Cllr. Howard briefed the meeting with details of the invasive species in Lees Road which has an alarming growth capacity. She urged that corrective action to eradicate the weed is not delayed before it gets out of control. Cllr. Norton supported this motion.

**No. 9 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn, Cllr A. Norton and Cllr C. Colleran Molloy.**

We are requesting Ennis MD urgently develop an action plan for the economic & social regeneration of Chapel Lane, Ennis.

***No response required.***

On behalf of Cllrs. Norton, Colleran-Molloy and himself, Cllr. Flynn briefed the meeting on what he described as a 16th century historically significant, yet underutilised area of the town with a 53% vacant occupancy rate. He stressed that the area will deteriorate further, if a regeneration plan is not put in place and he recommended that funding is sourced for a feasibility study. Cllr. Daly supported the motion and commented that advice would be necessary on the protected structure elements.

Senior Executive Officer, Leonore O’Neill, replied that there is merit in a feasibility study, but that it should incorporate a broader area such as Lower Market Street. She confirmed that a source of funding would need to be identified to progress such a feasibility study.

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

I ask Ennis Municipal District to seek Department funding towards the continuation of the Riverwalk from Ennis to Clareabbey, onto the Quay in Clarecastle, with a view to access to a future Greenway walk/cycle on the banks of the Fergus and Shannon rivers.

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

*The Clarecastle Community Development CLG partnering with Ennis Chamber of Commerce and Promote Ennis commissioned a report on the Clarecastle Ennis River Fergus Walking Route Feasibility Study.*

*This outlines the provision of a walkway from the Quay in Clarecastle to the Quin Road. The section from the N85 Clareabbey to the Quin road has received ORIS funding of €200,000 and is under construction in conjunction with the Ennis South Flood Scheme.*

*Our understanding of the methodology of seeking funding for such schemes is that they benefit from their inclusion in Community led Master Plans and identified in the County Development Plan-Local Area Plans.*

*The section from the N85 Clareabbey to Clarecastle Bridge and onwards to the Quay is mainly on private lands with consultations required with the TII, Irish Rail, OPW, Harbour Commissioners, NPWS, Fisheries and the Council.*

*The funding source for the project needs to be determined, geotechnical surveys, engineering design, and environmental evaluations have to be undertaken to determine the costs of providing the Riverwalk, determine uses that can be facilitated and the level of accessibility.*

*Discussions with the appropriate Government Department(s) shall be commenced to see where project funding can be sought to further the feasibility study. There may be certain funding requirements that will determine when further work will commence on the project*.

Cllr. Daly commented on the huge potential of a greenway at this location by extending the current river walk and recommended funding be sourced for this valuable project. Cllr. Murphy seconded this motion and outlined how Clarecastle Community Development and the Chamber had come together back in 2019 to look at maximising the potential walking route. He acknowledged that the Roche site has to be factored in as well as some challenges presented such as the barrage and wetlands. Cllr. Flynn also voiced support for this motion and the necessity to provide these projects in stages.

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

That provision of an Ennis Town and Environs bike rental scheme be prioritised as part of the Ennis Town Mobility Plan.

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

*This will be considered in the context of the Ennis Town Mobility Plan.*

Cllr. Murphy recommended that a bike rental scheme be a key element of the ‘Ennis Town Mobility Plan’, incentivising visitors to park in the outskirts and enjoy a visit to the centre of town by bike. This scheme would further enhance green, smart travel and wellbeing initiatives and reduce traffic in town. He also referenced the success of e-cargo bikes as well as the potential for promoting e-bikes for those whose fitness levels are challenged. This motion was supported by Cllrs. Norton and Flynn.

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

This motion is requesting Clare County Council to repaint the road markings in Clancy Park, as they have become quite faded.

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

*This area is on the works list for the Line Marking Contractor.*

Cllr. Nestor acknowledged the response and welcomed the referenced action to be taken in this area. This motion was supported by Cllr. Daly.

**Item No. 5 Correspondence**

None.

**Item No. 6 Any Other Business**

(i) Cllr. Howard, further to a previous notice of motion, referenced again the difficulty being experienced by motorists emerging from Shanaway Road onto the Lahinch Road and the potential for accidents to occur. Cllr. Murphy strongly supported this comment.

(ii) Paint & Gutter Scheme for areas adjoining public realm works in Parnell Street & adjoining laneways and bowways:. Leonore O’Neill, SEO, reminded the meeting that originally €10k had been provided via the Community Support Grant, and a further €8k from EMD Members GMA allocation; with an agreed €300 per premises towards paint scheme and €100 towards gutter cleaning. A total of 26 applications were made for one or both schemes. It was agreed to extend the gutter cleaning scheme to all areas of the town centre, including Lifford. Businesses to be advised that they can use the contractor who is erecting/removing the Christmas lights in town, to carry out this work.

(iii) Members joined Chair A. Norton in extending sympathy to the family of Eugene Ryan who had recently retired from the Housing Section of Clare County Council.

(iv) Members joined Chair A. Norton’s in acknowledging the retirement of Garda Superintendent Brendan McDonagh for all his support over the years and wishing him success and happiness in his retirement.

(v) A Special Meeting of Ennis Municipal District will take place on Thursday 14 October 2021 at 09:30am in Council Chamber, to agree the Section 38 proposed Low Cost Safety Measure project for Tulla Road at Corovorrin junction.

The Meeting ended at 11:40am.

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

Mayor of Ennis

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

Meetings Administrator

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