

Minutes - December 2023
Ennis Municipal District meeting
10:30a.m. on Tuesday 5th December 2023
Council Chamber and on-line

- Councillors:** P. Daly, T. O'Callaghan, P. Murphy, C. Colleran-Molloy, M. Howard, A. Norton.
- Officials:** Patrick Tiernan, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Niamh O'Connor, Administrative Officer and Meetings Administrator, Lily McInerney, Staff Officer (minutes).
- Apologies:** Cllr Johnny Flynn, Carmel Kirby, Director of Service, Leonore O'Neill, Senior Executive Officer.

Chair Cllr. Pat Daly opened the meeting welcoming all. The Mayor extended sympathy to Cllr. Johnny Flynn on the passing of his mother-in-law.

Item No. 1. (i) **Minutes of the November 2023 Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis held on 7th November 2023**

This item was proposed by Cllr. M. Howard, seconded by Cllr. T. O'Callaghan and agreed by all Members.

(ii) **Minutes of the Budget Meeting of Ennis Municipal District held on Thursday 9th November 2023.**

This item was proposed by Cllr. P. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. T. O'Callaghan and agreed by all Members.

Item No. 2. **Matters Arising**

- (i) Cllr M Howard requested an update on the Shanaway Rd. junction project. Paddy Tiernan, A/SEE, responded that Roads section who are managing this project, will be requested to provide the latest update to Cllr Howard.
- (ii) Cllr M. Howard requested an update on her Notice of Motion No. 8 at the October meeting regarding designated sites for election posters. Paddy Tiernan responded that suitable locations have been identified and will be circulated to Councillors.

Item No. 3.

3. (i) **Twinning Report 2023, Cllr. M. Howard.**
A report was circulated in advance of the Meeting. Cllr Howard gave a summary to the Meeting of the main events over the past 12 months.

She mentioned the high-level delegation who visited from Phoenix in September to celebrate the 40th anniversary and were officially recognised at the Council September Meeting. She estimated the net worth of the anniversary visits for Ennis to be in the region of €100,000. The groups had a busy schedule and travelled extensively throughout Clare on walking tours etc. Cllr Howard recommended a line be inserted into the Ennis MD budget to cover these events.

Chair Pat Daly commended the great work of the twinning committee and how positive it was to have so many visitors to Ennis and Clare.

(ii) Section 11 Roads Act Declaration of Public Road (T.I.C.) Cúirt Tuírín, Knockanean, Ennis

Report and maps had been circulated in advance of the Meeting.

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

(iii) Section 183 Transfer of property at no. 4 Station Road, Ennis.

Report and maps had been circulated in advance of the Meeting.

This item was proposed by Cllr. P. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by all Members.

(iv) Section 183 Transfer of property at no. 1 Claireen Drive, Ennis.

Report and maps had been circulated in advance of the Meeting.

This item was proposed by Cllr M. Howard, seconded by Cllr. T. O'Callaghan and agreed by all Members.

(v) Date of January 2024 meeting

Tuesday 9th January 2024 is the proposed date for January 2024 meeting

This item was proposed by Cllr. P. Daly, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by all Members.

Item No. 4 GMA for approval

The following items were proposed by Cllr. T. O'Callaghan, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by all Members.

Beneficiary	Amount
Clarecastle GAA	€4,000.00
Cloughleigh Community Centre	€1,000.00
Avenue United	€1,000.00
Avenue Utd (pitch sanding/drainage)	€2,500.00
Banner GAA (pitch sanding/drainage)	€2,500.00
Barefield NS (outdoor play area)	€2,500.00
Clarecastle Comhaltas	€500.00
	€14,000.00

Item No. 5. Notices of Motions

No. 1 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy

That an update be provided in the Council's legal efforts to address the longstanding illegal encampment on the Kilrush Road.

Padraig McCormaic, A/Senior Executive Officer, responded as follows:

Currently there are High Court and Court of Appeal orders, as modified by a Supreme Court judgement, prohibiting trespass and unauthorised development by any persons other than one named household and a carer. I wish to advise that reports are being obtained in relation to additional unauthorised occupants at the site with a view to enforcing the existing Court Orders against those to whom the Supreme Court judgment and Order does not apply, subject to the findings of those reports. The housing needs assessment of all occupants is being reviewed and, subject to same, the intention is that the matter will be referred back to the High Court in the coming months to seek Court Orders with regard to the trespass and unauthorised development, having regard to the issues raised by the Supreme Court in its judgement. I can also confirm that as part of this process Notices were issued in recent weeks to a number of occupants on the site in relation to both illegal occupation of the site and further and ongoing unauthorised developments on the site.

This item was seconded by Cllr. T. O'Callaghan and agreed by all Members.

Cllr Colleran-Molloy requested clarity as to the household and carer referred to in the response, and also whether new notices being issued are part of, or separate to, the Court orders in place, as members are inundated with calls regarding additional new households moving in. She questioned also if the wooden fence marks the official boundary between the Council owned occupied lands and the private land, which, if the case, would leave it vulnerable to being breached.

Cllr O'Callaghan supported the Motion and stated that there is a further concern regarding the safety of the individuals within the encampment and that litigation does not serve well in these cases. He stressed the importance of unity in highlighting the message that this is not how we provide housing. Cllr Norton supported and voiced grave concern that Members have seen this encampment continue to grow and while court judgement has been given, no action seems to be taking place. She highlighted the monies expended by the Council on this matter which could have gone to much more productive use elsewhere.

Cllr Howard echoed the sentiment of her colleagues and stressed the length of time this illegal encampment has been allowed and the tragic truth that 40 no. families could have been housed with the cost so far. This issue she stated is enormously frustrating for executive and extremely difficult for neighbouring residents and landowners.

Cllr P. Daly supported this Motion, adding that the Courts system serves to confuse rather than remedy matters and that the costs have to be borne by the Council.

Padraic MacCormaic, A/Senior Executive Officer addressed the meeting, outlining an extremely complex situation at Ashline and he advised Members that this particular case is being monitored by LAs nationwide. He reminded members of the 2019 injunction to remove persons from the encampment culminating in a Supreme Court appeal which stipulated some exceptions, thus allowing some persons to remain. Pandemic lockdown measures impacted further, and people continued to move in at this time also. He advised there are a number of issues, which involve multi-agency cooperation and whilst many of these are outside of the direct Housing remit, every effort is taking place to contain the problem and he is coordinating responses and reports from many sources. He made reference to the concept of 'proportionality' in the legal system, commenting that it is highly likely that the High Court will rule against local authorities, if forcing people off these illegal lands, is going to negatively impact upon their lives. With regard to the wooden fence border, he advised that a planning process must be followed and to replace existing boundary with one of increased height would require planning permission.

Cllr Colleran-Molloy acknowledged the update from Housing and strongly criticised what she termed the 'unequal' application of the law in this case. Costs over a year ago stood at €200,000 and it was confirmed by SEO Housing that this cost has escalated significantly due to the further legal engagement.

No. 2 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. T. O'Callaghan (jointly with Cllr J. Flynn)

Abbey Street Carpark Civic Space Usage.

In recognition of the 50th Anniversary of the First Fleadh Nua in Ennis in 2024 that Ennis Municipal District Executive refrain from preventing Comhaltas using the Abbey Street Carpark Civic Space for Fleadh Nua public celebration events. Such events, if they so wish as they have done in the past, might be free public Gig Rig Concert(s).

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

Ennis Municipal District have never refrained from allowing any group utilising spaces around Ennis subject to the submission of the relevant insurances, road closure notice (where applicable) and an agreement on the relevant event management plans. No contact has been made with Ennis Municipal District from Comhaltas regarding any proposals for 2024.

This item was not agreed by Members.

Members again joined Cllr O’Callaghan in expressing condolences to Cllr Johnny Flynn on the passing of his mother-in-law.

Cllr O’Callaghan outlined how he and Cllr Flynn had decided to jointly submit this Notion of Motion, given the exciting proposal for the *Fleadh Nua* to take place in Ennis May 25th to June 3rd, 2024, and the importance of ensuring that the best possible venue - Abbey Street Car Park – would be available for what he described as a significant Irish traditional, cultural and innovative event which is integral to our identity. He added that if Abbey Street Car Park is not available, the event will not be successful.

Cllr Howard raised the issue regarding the use of the term “refrain” which she stated gave the incorrect impression that Ennis M.D. was attempting to take an action, which is not the case.

Cllr Norton sought clarification regarding the Motion and questioned if it is necessarily correct to say that an event will not be successful if not in Abbey Street Car Park. *Fleadh Nua*, or any festival of Comhaltas, she stated, has always been a success and there are other venues. She recommended a discussion between the executive of Clare County Council and Comhaltas, that the expertise lies there, rather than between Ennis Members at this Meeting.

Cllr Murphy voiced support for *Fleadh Nua* and all they aspire to achieve, but also acknowledged the Senior Executive Officer’s response, adding that Templegate was another potential venue.

Cllr Colleran-Molloy questioned the wording of the Notice in that it suggests Ennis MD have taken an action they have not in fact taken.

Niamh O’Connor, Administrative Officer, advised Members that Ennis M.D. has a great relationship with Comhaltas. She outlined how Comhaltas had initially planned for a *gig rig* in the Abbey Street Car Park but it was not included in their final schedule of events.

Cllr Daly voiced his respect for Comhaltas and that he would not object if they decided to use Abbey Street Car Park for the 2024 *Fleadh Nua*.

Cllr O’Callaghan thanked Members for their comments and repeated the importance of having the great open space of Abbey Street Car Park available for *Fleadh Nua 2024*.

Cllr Colleran-Molloy, in support of Cllr Howard, requested that the wording is changed, in particular that the word “refrain” is removed from the Notice as it indicates that an action was taken by Ennis M.D. when this is not the case. Cllr Howard requested that the Notice of Motion be withdrawn as it creates the assumption that Comhaltas have asked Ennis M.D for something and Ennis M.D. has refused.

Following a discussion it was agreed that this Motion would be withdrawn.

No. 3 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard

Ballyallia Lake.

This amenity needs a schedule of maintenance put in place.

1. The footpaths are overgrown with briars and brambles
2. One section of path less than 3 meters in length need to be raised and chipped as it is prone to heavy ponding.
3. The Dog Poo Bag Holder needs to be relocated as it is at the slipway- plus the location needs at least two. The holder/s should be moved to either of the two main walking paths (Ennis side and by carpark)

Brendan Flynn, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:

1. *The Gardening Team will carry out scheduled maintenance work next week.*
3. *The Environment Section will provide one additional dog poo bag holder to Ennis Municipal District for placement.*

Paddy Tiernan, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:

2. *Ennis MD will investigate this issue with a view to resolving same. We note some of the lower footpaths nearest the lake are prone to seasonal flooding and any proposed solution may involve re-routing sections of footpaths. Such works needs to be cognisant of Ballyallia lakes designation as a Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area.*

This item was seconded by Cllr T. O'Callaghan and agreed by all Members.

Cllr Howard acknowledged the responses, referencing one area particularly prone to flooding and she highlighted how pandemic restrictions had served to regenerate Ballyallia as the "little Lahinch" of Ennis and that a regular maintenance programme was appropriate.

Cllr O'Callaghan, Cllr Murphy and Cllr Norton supported this Motion, acknowledging Paddy Tiernan's recent site visit and agreeing that a scheduled maintenance would be beneficial. Cllr Collieran-Molloy also supported, making reference to the proposed amenity scheme for which presentations were made to Members some months previous. Paddy Tiernan clarified that this was a scheme run by the General Design Office. Cllr Howard concluded that an increase in outdoor crew numbers is necessary for various maintenance works.

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

I am requesting that funding for improved safety measures that have been previously called for at the junction of Barrack Street, Old Road and Church Drive/Creggaunahilla approach road are applied for, and that this application includes an improved road design that incorporates properly marked parking along Old Road that would act as a speed deterrent as well as provide much needed Village Centre parking.

Paddy Tiernan, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:

Ennis MD are currently working on a revised layout for the area. The revised layout will involve realignment of the existing roads, additional parking and upgraded footpaths and pedestrian routes. It is our intention to present a Section 38 to Elected Members in Q1 2024 for approval. To date efforts to secure funding for this project have proved unsuccessful. Ennis MD will continue to try to establish a funding source for this project.

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

Cllr Murphy again highlighted the hazardous wide span of road from the green area heading towards the Credit union and also the obvious benefits of incorporating car parking in Church Drive, thus alleviating the prevalence of illegal parking on footpaths. Cllr Colleran supported this Motion and would look forward to the referenced Section 38 next year; she questioned if the Council's own resources can be used if funding proves difficult through the regular methods.

Paddy Tiernan clarified that in terms of funding, NTA under *Active Travel* is the first port of call, and that NTA have not yet issued funding notification for 2024. He warned that NTA will likely focus nationally on large schemes like Tulla Road Cycle Scheme in 2024 and therefore the funding, which he estimates in the region of €200,000 for this scheme, should not be expected. He suggested breaking down the project into phases, 'realignment of roads', 'public lighting', 'new footpaths', however he reiterated that if the NTA do not fund, options are limited. He pointed to GMA is an option, referencing the Clonroad accessibility project 2023 which would not have been possible without the GMA funding provided. Cllr Daly supported this Motion and said it would be positive to see the works come to fruition.

**No. 5 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn (jointly with Cllr O'Callaghan)
Abbey Street Carpark Civic Space Usage.**

In recognition of the 50th Anniversary of the First Fleadh Nua in Ennis in 2024 that Ennis Municipal District Executive refrain from preventing Comhaltas using the Abbey Street Carpark Civic Space for Fleadh Nua public celebration events. Such events, if they so wish as they have done in the past, might be free public Gig Rig Concert(s).

Leonore O'Neill, Senior Executive Officer, responded as follows:

Ennis Municipal District have never refrained from allowing any group utilising spaces around Ennis subject to the submission of the relevant insurances, road closure notice (where applicable) and an agreement on the relevant event management plans. No contact has been made with Ennis Municipal District from Comhaltas regarding any proposals for 2024.

This item was not agreed by Members.

After a lengthy discussion by Members, it was agreed that this Motion would be withdrawn.

See Notice of Motion No. 2.

No. 6 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. A. Norton

I ask the Ennis MD to tidy up the trees outside water park house around the lights, as the dark nights approach the trees are covering over the trees which reduce the lighting. Also, there is pooling of water on the entrance to water park house and the footpaths in the same area.

Paddy Tiernan, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:

Ennis MD currently have a contractor engaged to carry out tree maintenance works within the town and surrounding areas. Almost 300 trees have been identified for treatment. Where required will add the trees within this area to this list with a view to completing the works in advance of Christmas. We will also examine the issues with ponding and intervene where required.

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

Cllr Norton thanked Paddy Tiernan for the response adding that it was positive to be advised of an action in place to remedy this. She noted however that water pooling around the entrance remains an issue, adding that she has raised this previously.

Cllr Colleran-Molloy supported this Motion adding that it is important that Members communicate with the Senior Executive Engineer to ensure these lists of jobs are included for consideration. Cllr O'Callaghan welcomed the response also, recommending a consistent approach be taken particularly where there is a large volume of trees, and the maintenance should be scheduled annually.

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

I ask Ennis M.D. to coordinate with the local Gardai with a view to arranging a free flow of traffic throughout the town, particularly as Ennis presently is experiencing chronic traffic congestion.

Paddy Tiernan, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:

Over the past few months various infrastructure projects have been undertaken within Ennis. These include resurfacing projects on Clon Road, Quin Road, Tulla Road and the R458 in Clarecastle. Uisce Éireann have also undertaken various water main replacement projects including on the Clon Road from the Quin Road Roundabout to Captain Macs. The commencement of the Public Relam project has also resulted in a road closure of Upper O'Connell Street from the junction of Old Barrack street to the junction Carmody street. These projects have contributed to a degree of traffic congestion within the town over the past few months. With the majority of these projects now complete we expect to see an increased improvement in traffic conditions within the town.

This item was seconded by Cllr Tom O'Callaghan and agree by all Members.

Cllr Daly acknowledged the response but again highlighted that traffic congestion is becoming more of a concern than ever before and that despite the temporary nature of the ongoing projects throughout the town, it is still important to address the issues with An Gardai. Cllr O'Callaghan supported this Motion, highlighting the importance of mobility, accessibility and signage where appropriate. Cllr Murphy supported the sentiment of the Motion and noted former colleague Cllr James Breen had recently raised this issue via local media and he recommended all efforts be made to ensure a balance between pedestrian safety and the free flow of traffic. Cllr Norton supported the Motion adding that the significant addition of pedestrian crossings is to be welcomed given the increased volume of cars on road also year on year. She added that driver behavioural change such as parking on outskirts and continuing a journey on foot should be encouraged, also noting the historical narrow streets which likely lend themselves to an element of inevitable traffic congestion.

No. 8 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy

Ballybeg Road Footpaths

While acknowledging the superb work on the upgrades to the Ballybeg road, footpaths and lighting which has created the Ballybeg Loop Walk for Ennis residents, I am requesting that the final section of footpath to connect with the Kildysert Road be undertaken and that the necessary funding be identified and sourced forthwith.

Paddy Tiernan, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:

Ennis MD has recently completed Phase 2 of the Ballybeg Footpath project. An allocation of €150,000 was committed by the National Transport Authority (NTA) for this project in early 2023 and this was subsequently increased to €200,000.

A further 150m of footpath remains outstanding at the Kildysart Road end of Ballybeg. Ennis MD together with our colleagues in the Active Travel Team intend to put this project forward to the NTA as a priority for funding under the Active Travel Scheme for 2024. We expect the NTA to make a call for this funding in the coming weeks. Should the NTA not fund this scheme it will prove difficult to secure alternative funding to complete this important project. We estimate the cost to complete the scheme to be in the order of €60,000 - €70,000.

This item was seconded by Cllr O’Callaghan and agreed by all Members.

Cllr Colleran-Molloy voiced her wish to accentuate the positive works carried out at this great amenity and that the one small remaining issue would be invaluable if completed, 150m of footpath and she welcomed the news that a funding stream will be sought in this regard. Cllr O’Callaghan supported this Motion, highlighting the popularity of the amenity. He added that funding for this type of work should come from *Active Travel* sources and not via general municipal allocation. Cllr Norton supported this Motion, adding that this should be a priority for *Active Travel* given the obvious success thus far. Cllr Howard supported this Motion, highlighting the progress made. Cllr Daly also supported this motion. Cllr Colleran-Molloy thanked Members for their support.

No. 9 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. T. O’Callaghan

To ask Ennis Municipal District ensure a strong campaign is launched this Christmas Season with the message Shop Local This Christmas ensuring the public are fully aware Ennis Town is open for business.

Niamh O’Connor, Administrative Officer responded as follows:

It is important that we avail of every opportunity to promote shopping local this Christmas. Clare County Council Tourism Department released a specific promotional video for ‘Winter Escapes to Ennis’ in November [Winter Escapes to Ennis - YouTube](#). There is a heavily set digital marketing campaign placed behind this video too, which is running from November through to March. A poster outlining the schedule of events in Ennis prepared by Ennis MD is being circulated widely on social media to attract people to the town in the lead up to Christmas. The Ennis Street Fashion Show on December 2nd hosted by the Holman Lee Model Agency provides an opportunity for local retailers to showcase to a local audience and national media and the event has been well advertised. In addition to the specific business supports to local Ennis Businesses, the Local Enterprise Office has planned a one-off advertising campaign through local media channels around December 8th asking people to support local businesses in the County. EMD added the ‘Look for Local’ logo to the end of the ‘Switching on the lights’ video, which was posted online and viewed over 7,000 times. The Ennis Chamber is also planning a promotional campaign to ask people to support local businesses this Christmas.

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

Cllr O’Callaghan welcomed the response and highlighted the success of the ‘switching on’ event. Consumer spend comprises 70% of local economy, he added, and so one fifth of sales occur in last two months of year, so it is important to spread the message to ‘shop local’. He outlined that vouchers purchased tend to be utilised in the early months of the year concurrent with a period of low sales.

Cllr Norton supported the Motion stating it is important that people spend locally and whilst visitors are a positive addition, it is imperative that local people choose to spend in their own locality. Cllr Daly supported this Motion highlighting the high standard in fashionwear that Ennis has to offer. Cllr Howard supported this Motion and highlighted the challenge of on-line shopping. The local multiplier is so important and we have a great retail mix, home interiors, gifts etc. Cllr Murphy supported this Motion and commended the response from Niamh O'Connor and the great work being undertaken by the executive. Cllr Collieran-Molloy supported and acknowledged the boost generated by the Ennis Street fashion show, reiterating that every effort must be undertaken to encourage local shopping instead of on-line. Cllr O'Callaghan concluded that on-line shopping is actually down this season and it is hoped that local shops will benefit.

No. 10 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard

Tim Smyth Park /Fair Green

The facilities at this park badly need to be looked at.

The new dressing room facility is locked most of the time and those using the park do not have access to toilet facilities.

The dressing rooms are too small.

Is it possible to use the meeting room as a referees room?

Would it be possible to install a keypad and share code & / a key fob with the management of the teams who are based there?

Can we investigate with Active Ennis possible funding streams to install a new stand-alone toilet block near the playgrounds for children using the park?

Tim Forde, General Manager, Sports & Recreation, responded as follows:

The Dressing Room/Toilet facilities are attended by a caretaker from Ennis Municipal District daily. When access to the dressing rooms is required for matches the Active Ennis caretakers open them to the teams, a key is left to the team manager until such time as the match is concluded and players leave. The Meeting room however is not 'fit for purpose' as a referee's changing room. The toilet facilities are available to the public when there is a caretaker on duty Monday to Saturday and we have recently secured additional caretaker hours which will help address any concerns.

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

Cllr Howard highlighted the numerous calls she receives regarding availability of toilet and changing room facilities in Tim Smyth Park, and in particular on long summer evenings when no caretaker is on duty. She questioned if coin-activated toilets could be considered. She noted the huge improvement in facilities here since 2009 and the excellent use made of the Fairgreen adding that soccer teams have been requesting a separate referee changing room for a long time. She strongly recommended the hiring of greater numbers of outdoor workers to support these amazing facilities.

Cllr Collieran Molloy supported this Motion referencing recent social media furore re lack of toilet facilities and she was glad to learn that this situation may be improving. Cllr Murphy supported this Motion and welcomed the additional caretaker hours, and hoping this will include Sunday. Cllr Norton supported this Motion and highlighted the value of this amenity which always necessitates accompanying toilet facilities. She highlighted the significant campaign via sports bodies regarding respect for referees, and separate facilities contributes towards this cause. Cllr O'Callaghan supported the Motion, highlighting how fortunate it is to have a central facility like Tim Smyth Park for benefit of all. Cllr Daly supported this Motion and commended the facility for Ennis town. Cllr Howard concluded that toilets at this site are necessary and so well used, and that a referee room would be a huge benefit.

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

I am requesting that works are carried out to alleviate flooding that impacts the Keane, Ryan and Broughan dwellings at Drimeen. This issue was previously logged as a C.R.M. via the Councillor App.

Paddy Tiernan, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:

Ennis MD will assess the area within the next week to determine the extent of the issue and cause of same. We will also examine the most recent planning application associated with the individual sites listed above in order to determine responsibilities. Where relevant we will assign a crew to resolve the drainage issues.

This item was seconded by Cllr Tom O'Callaghan and agreed by all members.

Cllr Murphy acknowledged the response and requested that drainage works be at the same time as other works to limit disruption. Cllr O'Callaghan supported this Motion. Cllr Daly also supported this Motion noting the significant use of this road.

Paddy Tiernan agreed that drainage work is required, following investigation. He advised that this work will be added to the Schedule of Municipal District Works for 2024.

No. 12 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. A. Norton

I am asking the Ennis MD to clean up a pile of rubbish left in the park sitting against the wall close to the building of David English business. This is county council property and unfortunately, we have residents that don't respect their neighbours or neighbourhood.

Paddy Tiernan, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:

Ennis MD are aware of an issue of illegal dumping within this estate and will arrange for the rubbish to be removed in the coming days.

This item was seconded by Cllr Tom O'Callaghan and agreed by all Members.

Cllr Norton acknowledged and thanked Paddy Tiernan for his response and highlighted the frustration around illegal dumping especially for people living in areas where it is a regular occurrence. She highlighted the unfair reliance on volunteers and local people as well as the Ennis M.D. outdoor crews. Cllr O'Callaghan supported this Motion and thanked the outdoor teams for their endeavours and agreed that if it wasn't for the dedication of Tidy Towns and others, the situation would be even worse. Cllr Collieran-Molloy supported this and highlighted how some people place burden on others in society by disrespecting their civic duty. Cllr Daly supported this Motion noting the health and safety aspects also. Cllr Murphy supported this Motion and complimented Paddy Tiernan and Donal Healy for their work as well as Norah Murphy in Environmental Patrol. Cllr Norton thanked Members for their support and issued a reminder that during Christmas there tends to be an escalation in illegal dumping and to be unified in the message for all to ensure proper disposal of Christmas trees and wrapping.

No. 13 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Daly

I ask Ennis M.D. to examine alternative uses other than parking for the Market building and seek Departmental funding for the change of use.

Niamh O'Connor, Administrative Officer responded as follows:

Ennis M.D. engaged the School of Architecture Intelligence Unit in the University of Limerick to research and propose alternative uses for the Ennis Market building. They produced a report 'Alternative solutions for a centrally located and adaptable space' in 2021. The students proposed that the building use could change throughout the day, fitness & gym, food truck at lunchtime, children's play area and theatre group. Another proposed design included a garden centre, indoor playground and café. These designs were presented to Councillors at a briefing in February 2022 for consideration. A design solution would have to be agreed in advance of sourcing an appropriate funding stream.

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

Cllr Daly acknowledged the response and again highlighted the ongoing difficulty with regard to making this building viable. He added that the building is currently closed due to anti-social behaviour and highlighted that it is an opportune time for Ennis M.D. to sit down and work through the many options available to transform this building for future use. Cllr Colleran-Molloy congratulated Cllr Daly on his important Motion and was critical of the decision taken to shut the building in a way that seems to bow to what she deemed "the lowest common denominator - anti social behaviour and drunkenness". She stressed that the closure has impacted on local market businesses via the loss of this crucial car parking area. She also wished to state that Members should acknowledge that the building itself was a mistake at the very outset, but that it was not correct to close it on basis of anti-social behaviour. Cllr Howard supported this Motion and reminded the Meeting that the former *Ennis Town Council* had engaged with the *Farmers Market* at that time, and who later, disappointingly, chose to relocate to Roslevan even though they had sought shelter from the elements which the building provided. She also requested that the executive make every effort to use flexibility where possible in terms of groups finding it difficult to secure the required insurances to make use of the building as a venue for their events. She urged that the building should now be re-opened, with on-site security provided if necessary. Cllr O'Callaghan agreed with Cllr Colleran-Molloy that it was a mistake in the first place adding that it is preferable to have more activity around an area to render it safe rather than leaving it closed. Cllr Murphy supported and agreed that some security may be the answer rather than closing it in absence of a solution. Cllr Norton supported the Motion and expressed regret at the negative aspect that this building has generated.

Niamh O'Connor, Administrative Officer, clarified that the decision was taken to close the building temporarily due to immediate H&S risks posed to employees and the general public. Regarding flexibility around the insurances requirement for organisations running events at this location, Niamh clarified that insurance and indemnification is a requirement for the local authority. She committed to talking to colleagues in Transportation in relation to same. She also suggested revisiting design proposals from the UL School of Architecture.

Cllr Daly concluded that Ennis M.D does have the required expertise to find a viable use for this building and it is a wish of his to see this issue resolved during his tenure.

Cllr Colleran-Molloy questioned why Members were not informed in advance of the decision to close and instead had to find out via social media. Niamh O'Connor apologised if this was case, advising that the procedure is to advise Councillors in advance of going to the media. She emphasised that H&S was central to the decision to close the building at short notice.

Item No. 6. Correspondence

None.

Item No. 7. Any Other Business

- (i) Cllr Colleran-Molloy thanked Paddy Tiernan for his diligence in attending to a tree surrounding which improved the aesthetics and safety of the tree.
- (ii) Cllr Colleran-Molloy spoke on behalf of local residents in thanking Paddy Tiernan for works undertaken regarding drainage in Ballybeg for which local residents are very pleased.
- (iii) Members joined Cllr Mary Howard in extending condolences to the families of the late
- PJ Keane Corrovorrin R.I.P.
 - Nora Bugler-Barrett R.I.P.
 - Michael Kenny R.I.P.
 - Josie Moloney R.I.P.
 - Des Nealon R.I.P.
 - Gerry Queally R.I.P.
 - Agnes Knox R.I.P.
 - Kitty Baker R.I.P.
 - May McVeigh R.I.P.
 - Kris McAuley R.I.P.
 - Tras Honan R.I.P.
- (iv) Cllr Howard informed the Meeting of her invite by Superintendent John Ryan to the local Community Policing Initiative (*Beat The Streets*) in association with FAI Clare, at The Planet, where 19 teams took part and played a soccer tournament on a bitter cold evening. Great credit due to all involved.
- (v) Cllr Howard acknowledged a further great win by canoeist Róisín Cahill, who was previously honored in Council Chamber, and who is now 5th in the World in Ocean Canoeing Racing - a huge achievement considering that this is her 1st year competing at senior level.

- (vi) Cllr Howard acknowledged Laoibhse O'Malley, who is a 3rd year hairdressing student (with Bridget Haran & LCETB) and was awarded 1st place in the World Skills (Hairdressing) last September.

Laoibhse was also awarded Apprentice of the Year by Apprenticeship Ireland.
- (vii) Cllr Howard also wished to acknowledge the achievements of Christian Cummins from Toonagh, along with his U/16 Clare teammates, who won the All-Ireland Handball Final in Croke Park recently.
- (viii) Cllr Howard also acknowledged Toonagh National School who recently won the Cumman Na Bunscoil Competition.
- (ix) Cllr Daly marked the meeting by remembering the late Tras Honan R.I.P., former Chair of Ennis Town Council, who had done great work throughout her life in support of mentally disabled people. First woman in Ireland to be elected to *Seanad Eireann* and was a personal friend of Charlie Haughey. One minute's silence was observed in Council Chamber.
- (x) Members joined Cllr Murphy in acknowledging the work over many years of outgoing Executive Engineer for Ennis town and district, Ian Chaplin and wished him success in his future role.
- (xi) Members joined Cllr Howard in commending the great work of outgoing Senior Executive Officer, Leonore O'Neill, who is to move on from Ennis M.D.. Cllr Howard highlighted Leonore's ability to quickly learn the ropes in Ennis and her dedication to service, and that she will be really missed. Cllr Colleran-Molloy added her voice to this and referenced the trojan work and commitment of Leonore O'Neill, outgoing Senior Executive Officer.

The Meeting ended at 12:46.

Signed: Pat Daly MCC
Mayor of Ennis

Signed: Niamh O'Connor
Meetings Administrator

Date: 09/01/24