

Minutes - November 2023

Ennis Municipal District meeting

10:30a.m. on Tuesday 7th November 2023

Council Chamber and on-line

Councillors: P. Daly, P. Murphy, T. O'Callaghan, M. Howard, J. Flynn, A. Norton and C. Collieran-Molloy.

Officials: Carmel Kirby, Director of Service, Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Patrick Tiernan, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Niamh O'Connor, Administrative Officer and Meetings Administrator, Lily McInerney, Staff Officer (minutes).

Apologies: Leonore O'Neill, Senior Executive Officer.

Chair Cllr. Pat Daly opened the meeting welcoming all.

Item No. 1. Minutes of the October 2023 Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis held on 10th October 2023.

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

Item No. 2. Matters Arising

- (i) Cllr Howard raised her notice of motion (no. 8) from the October meeting which requested designated sites for consolidation of election posters. Patrick Tiernan, A/SEE responded that Ennis M.D. had prepared a draft plan having checked suitability on each of the approach roads and green areas in ownership of the Council where posters could be consolidated. He advised that a temporary structure was not a viable solution, highlighting the requirement to keep signs low to the ground and self-supporting.

Item No. 3.

3. (i) Section 38 Proposed Traffic Calming Measures at Bramble Court, Ennis.

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

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

Patrick Tiernan advised that section 38 was in response to a notice of motion from Cllr Howard seeking a solution to traffic speed.

- (ii) Section 11: Declaration of Public Roads: Proposed "Taking in Charge" of Cúl na Coille, Tulla Road, Ennis.

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

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

(iii) **Christmas in Ennis 2023 - Update**

Niamh O'Connor, Administrative Officer, outlined the schedule of events planned for Christmas in Ennis. The annual "*Switching on the Christmas Lights*" event will take place on Thursday 23rd November with entertainment from *Socks in the Frying Pan*, *Pantaloons*, MC Colm McGrath from *Clare FM* and special guest Clare senior hurler *Shane O'Donnell*. She advised that the event will take place on a Thursday, to facilitate retailers and increased traffic in Ennis owing to '*Black Friday*'.

A street fashion show will be hosted by the *Holman Lee Model Agency* on Sat 2nd December, on O'Connell Street. There will be two shows, 12.00pm, and 2.30pm and Ennis retailers are invited to participate and showcase. Thursday 14th December there will be a *Music in the Plaza* event from 6-8pm featuring Comhaltas, Ennis Gospel Choir, Jaskane Trio and Ennis Brass Band. She advised that all events will be advertised in social and local media.

A discussion ensued with various comments from Members, expressing disappointment that the *Christmas Market and Santa Train* were not scheduled to run in 2023. It was explained that the decision not to go ahead with the *Christmas markets* was a mutual one between Ennis MD and the provider. The AO briefed on the work of the Ennis MD team to secure alternative entertainment with various providers, such as an ice rink or luminaire, however the costs were way beyond budget. She advised that providers had cited insurance as a contributing factor to these high costs.

Cllr O'Callaghan stressed the need to review the schedule of events for 2024 to ensure 'Christmas in Ennis' meets the expectations of members of the public. Cllr Flynn whilst acknowledging the work commitment by Ennis M.D, issued criticism around the investment in Clare Tourism which appears to have no remit for the county town and focuses only on county amenities. Cllr Collieran-Molloy expressed disappointment regarding prohibitive insurance costs and inquired if the costs of running the Christmas festival were readily available.

Cllr M. Howard welcomed the *fashion* show as a measure to demonstrate support to local retailers and she expressed disappointment at the loss of the *Carousel* and *Train* and acknowledged the need to justify public spend. Cllr P. Murphy also expressed disappointment but agreed that prudence is required regarding public spending. Cllr. Norton highlighted the success in the past of simple ideas like the *snow machine* and *Train* for what is essentially the most special time of year, and she agreed that Clare County Council tourism should have a remit to fund the county town for events like this. Cllr. Daly welcomed the street fashion show which should encourage shoppers to come to town who might otherwise travel to Limerick and Galway.

Director of Service Carmel Kirby addressed some concerns, highlighting that there are additional items added this year and that the *Switching on* event was the highlight last year. She stated that this year will focus on retailers and businesses, with over 40 retailers participating in the fashion show. She added that other events were reviewed but proved too costly. She addressed concerns re tourism, she assured Members that Ennis is very much a key focus of all tourism plans for Clare.

She concluded that she believed Christmas will be a very special event in Ennis this year emphasizing that more than €100,000 is spent on Christmas in Ennis and asked the public to come in and spend time in Ennis this Christmas as well as supporting the local retailers.

Item No. 4 GMA for approval

There were no conflicts of interest declared in advance of this item.

The following items were proposed by Cllr. A Norton seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by all Members.

Councillor-Specific Allocations:

Beneficiary	Amount
Ennis Men's Shed – Tractor Restoration Project	€500.00
Barefield Tidy Towns	€3,027.00
Clare Crusaders Childrens Clinic	€5,809.25
Total:	€9,336.25

Strategic Projects:

Beneficiary	Amount
Parnell Street Canvas Project	€2,000.00

Item No. 5. Notices of Motions

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

Clancy Park

That there be traffic calming measure introduced in Clancy Park due to the ongoing speeding in this neighbourhood.

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

Ennis MD will investigate the issue and if justified will propose a suitable traffic calming measure for this area. We note that existing speed bumps are already in place along some of the route. Any proposed additional measure would likely involve additional speed bumps/ramps. We wish to advise that Section 38 approval is required for traffic calming measures. A funding source will also have to be identified for the scheme.

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

Cllr C. Colleran Molloy acknowledged the response. Patrick Tiernan clarified that ramps are only permitted on a public road where public lighting is in place directly above.

He added that a traffic calming measure (part of a low-cost safety scheme), had been included in a submission to the NTA for 2024 but that there is no guarantee.

Cllr Howard supported the Motion, having received many complaints. Cllrs O'Callaghan, Flynn, Murphy and Daly supported this Motion, highlighting safety of children, the prevalence of speeding traffic on a residential road and the inappropriate use of Clancy Park as a means of avoiding main thoroughfares through town.

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

Shanaway Road Junction.

What progress if any has there been in finding a safe solution to this dangerous junction.?

Has there been any recent contact to or from TII?

Karl O'Callaghan, A/Executive Engineer, responded as follows:

The Road Design Office are continuing to engage with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). A Road Safety Audit was carried out and a Pedestrian Crossing Assessment is currently being prepared as part of a Feasibility & Options report for an interim design solution which includes for a raised pedestrian crossing on the N85.

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

Cllr Howard informed the meeting of having spoken to Tánaiste Leo Varadkar directly on this issue which has become a real bone of contention for the large population of commuters facing daily delays at the junction. Cllr Howard read out the response she received from Andrew Moore, Senior Regulatory Manager at TII who stated that Clare County Council a) is responsible b) is in the process of arranging an active travel solution at this location and c) is required to produce a plan. She stressed that this issue remains outstanding, adding that she had sought a courtesy junction in the past, or even a left turn filter to ease the situation whilst awaiting the longer term works to take place, but to no avail.

Cllr Murphy seconded this Motion adding that he was again raising the issue of a similar situation at Clareabbey roundabout, and that the many residents, sports clubs and hotels deserve better. Cllr. Colleran-Molloy in support questioned the lengthy timescale of this project.

Cllr O'Callaghan vouched for the numerous phone calls he receives from residents and that the success of the hotel and golf club only attracts further traffic. Cllr. Flynn strongly supported this Motion highlighting risk to cyclists, walkers and commuters in and out of this junction and that this case demonstrates the loss of control at local government level. Cllr Daly in support added that the junction is unchanged in 40 years despite the huge increase in population, and that an upgrade similar to the successful one in Corovorrin would bring resolution to this issue.

Carmel Kirby Director of Service, assured Members that this project is a priority; there is an innovative solution being worked through by the *Active Travel Unit* of the Roads Department in conjunction with NTA and TII. She added that she noted the comments made, which will be taken forward to the Roads Senior Engineer but stressed that Members should be assured progress is being made.

No. 3 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. T. O'Callaghan

Ennis Flooding Notice of Motion

That an Engineer report be made available concerning potential risks of Flooding to both Parnell and Abbey Street Carparks in Ennis if a severe rainfall event occurred with Flooding and hightide levels similar that took place in Midleton. The recent Midleton flood recorded significant damage to property in the town, a town which is affected by tides such as Ennis.

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

The Town of Ennis is protected from flooding by the River Fergus Upper and Lower Fergus Certified Drainage Schemes (OPW), the Ennis South Flood Scheme (CCC), the tidal barrage at Clarecastle, the Watery Road Flood Scheme, Lough Girroga Flood Scheme. The Upper Scheme is between Mike Mc Tighe Bridge and Bank Place Bridge, the Lower Scheme is between Bank Place Bridge and Doora Bridge and the Ennis South Flood Scheme is on the west bank of the river between Doora Bridge and the N85 relief Road Bridge at Clareabbey.

The River Fergus Flow through the town is a combination of the flow from the River Fergus from Ballycorey-Ballyallia (less the flow via the Fergus Minor through Corrovorrin) and the Claureen River from Inch Bridge. The River Fergus Catchment to the North of Ennis is a karst limestone area and the Fergus normally peaks in Ennis five day after heavy rainfall. The Claureen River catchment is mainly shale with more inclined relief resulting in discharge of rainfall in a saturated catchment arriving in Ennis in 12 hours. In all recorded floods the River Fergus is not at peak flow when the flashier flow from the Claureen passes through the town.

*The tidal barrage at Clarecastle will close as the tide rises as the river flow is retained upstream of the barrage resulting in the rising and falling of the river levels up to Mill Bridge. The tidal barrage will release the river flow on the ebbing tide. **The river is only directly affected by the tide levels downstream of the barrage.***

When the river levels are at a higher level the gravity discharge of the storm water network overflow into pumping stations and the stormwater is automatically pumped into the river. In certain areas of the town where there are combined sewers this discharges via the IW facility at Francis Street. Pumping stations are located at Watery Road, Fior Uisce, Maid of Eireann, Island Carpark (Cloughleigh), Harveys Quay, Francis Street, Courthouse, Castlelawn.

The rainfall levels on meteirann.ie and river levels which are available from river gauges on waterlevels.ie are monitored by the Ennis MD, we receive weather alerts and when significant rainfall or weather conditions are anticipated the Severe Weather Assessment Team for Clare County Council will be viewing the daily outputs from the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The responses by the Ennis Municipal District will be in accordance with the Flood Emergency Response Plan for Ennis and this outlines the various feature of the flood and actions that must be taken. The precautionary principle will apply where there is uncertainty in the forecast. As each significant flood event in the River Fergus dissipates the actions undertaken and outcomes are reviewed and any amendments required are included. This has been the case after different flood events in 2014, 2015 & 2020.

Ennis has a flood protection scheme and tidal barrage in place, therefore the breaching of the riverbanks or overflow of the riverbanks as witnessed in Middleton is unlikely to occur.

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

Cllr O’Callaghan outlined his concern of a repeat of the occurrence in Middleton and asked if an engineer can be engaged to vouch that there is no risk of flooding at Abbey Street Car Park and other zones. He questioned the viability of plans to develop two central car parks in a flood plain. Cllr Flynn supported this Motion and acknowledged the detailed response from Eamon O’Dea, SEE. Clare being vulnerable to high volumes of rain adds to rising sea levels so current flood defences could be breached. Both Abbey Street and Wood Quay/Harvey’s Quay are identified as zone A, ie. at high risk of flooding, he stated.

Cllr Howard highlighted that since 2009, huge investment has taken place, as evidenced by not having had to use pumps in Harvey's Quay and she stressed the importance of not raising unnecessary alarm in the public for what is no longer a real threat for Ennis. Cllr Colleran-Molloy questioned if our SEE could give full assurance that the risk is no longer there. Cllr. Murphy stated that it was important to recognise works that were done, Ballybeg culvert being a good example of good flood defence. Cllr O'Callaghan, whilst welcoming the response, asked if it was possible for an engineer to sign off on current status.

Eamon O'Dea, SEE, addressed the meeting, highlighting points made in his response. He assured members that the daily observation of river levels and advance weather forecasting is at the highest possible standard and that any individual can access the system and be informed immediately of river levels. He added that Parnell Street did not flood in 2009 due to the scheme that was in place at the time.

Carmel Kirby highlighted that there are a number of engineers in the Council with the expertise required and that over €13m has been spent on flood defence in Ennis. The most recent project commenced while Tom Tiernan was the Town Engineer, it had run into difficulty with escalating costs. Ennis M.D. in conjunction with the Project Management Office, persuaded the OPW to fund the completion of these defences. She concluded that she is confident regarding the status of flood defence in Ennis.

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

With the possibility of affordable houses and apartments coming on board in Ennis, I ask Ennis Municipal District to seek information from the Council Housing Section as follows:

- 1) How do potential purchasers qualify?
- 2) What discount per house will be made available?

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

- 1) *Potential Purchasers will need to firstly meet First Time Buyer / Fresh Start criteria and be residents in Ireland. Income will further decide eligibility and generally where a household income is approximately 21% or less of the market value a household may qualify. The Housing Agency have a very useful calculator available on <https://affordablehomes.ie/buy/eligibility-indicator/>*
- 2) *Each proposed scheme for County Clare will need to be submitted along with a business case to the Dept of Housing for approval. Upon approval and when properties are at an advanced stage of development Clare County Council will advertise same, along with proposed costs, discount ranges, and eligible income ranges. As each scheme is unique and every households circumstances differ it is not possible in advance of a scheme being launched to give a figure for a discount per house. However, it is expected equity per property, depending on household circumstances, may range from minimum 5% to approx. 20%.*

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

Cllr Daly acknowledged the response and commended the positivity of the current provision. Cllr Flynn supported this Motion and questioned if a system exists to deal with oversubscription.

Padraig McCormaic, A/Senior Executive Officer responded that it is not possible to give accurate discount values until an offer is being made. He clarified that Council policy in cases of oversubscription, 30% will be allocated to "locals", ie. those living within 10km of Ennis boundary.

No. 5 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn

Required Newpark, Roslevan to Gaurus Footpath works on health and safety grounds.

I ask for an update on delivery of the necessary construction of public footpath from Newpark, Roslevan (shopping Centre roundabout) to Gaurus bridge required to address existing traffic and pedestrian safety hazards . The update might also outline reasons for the delay as I and frustrated residents had understood that funding had been secured in the last few years for the works.

Anne O'Sullivan, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:

The General Design Office have advanced this project to Section 38 stage and it will be brought to the Municipal District elected members for ratification. The required land acquisition is being finalised for this project. At present a budget has not been made available for the construction of this particular project under the Active Travel programme. The Roads & Transportation Section will work to identify a funding source and a budget committed for these works in the coming months.

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

Cllr Flynn acknowledged the response but raised again the issue of accidents occurring on this portion of road and the fact that a land acquisition is causing further delay contrary to the simple solution originally envisaged. Cllr O'Callaghan in support raised the issue of funding difficulty and whether old footpaths could not automatically fall into the *Active Travel* fund. Cllr Collieran-Molloy supported this Motion and questioned why Active Travel funding does not provide for basic footpath repairs. Cllr Murphy supported this Motion, noting the high population in the area and the need for the repairs. Cllr Daly also supported, noting the high population from the Roslevan roundabout to Gaurus. Cllr Norton supported the Motion stating that it is imperative that safety mechanisms are put in place in built up areas. Cllr Flynn added that he hoped we can progress S38 and move this forward.

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

I am requesting that Ennis Municipal District correspond with Transport Infrastructure Ireland in writing, on behalf of the elected members, requesting an update as to where the modelling redesign of Clareabbey Roundabout is currently at in terms of being progressed. The situation since construction (approximately 20 years ago) for pedestrians and cyclists in particular, at this Roundabout is highly dangerous and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

James Keane, Executive Engineer, responded as follows:

The modelling of various design options has been completed by TII's consultants, the Road Design Office and TII have a few clarifications in relation to the model results and are awaiting feedback from the consultants. Clare County Council is working with the TII on the selection of the preferred option, once this is arrived at and a feasibility report is approved by TII, we will proceed to the statutory process stage.

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

Cllr Murphy acknowledged the response but reiterated that he had been raising this issue for nearly 20 years and still awaits the outcome. He stated that he had not believed the plan was the right one and that it serves to separate Clarecastle and Ennis with a very hazardous roundabout and that 'Safe to School' and other national government strategies are not being upheld here. Cllr O'Callaghan supported the Motion noting the excessive increase in traffic over the 20 years for what is the principal gateway to Clarecastle and to Ennis. Cllr Howard supported and highlighted the common thread of the Meeting being around the health & safety of our constituents, and the wish to help rather than deter children being able to cycle to school. Cllr Collieran-Molloy added that all local representatives wish to see action on these important issues for the safety of our community. Cllr Daly highlighted that this busy junction serves the main artery into Ennis. Cllr Norton, in support, added that getting TII in to answer Members' questions would be valuable, per Cllr Daly's suggestion.

No. 7 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. A. Norton

The Play ground in Water Park has been neglected. Unfortunately it really is not fit for purpose for children to play in. Can I ask the Ennis MD to do a clean-up or contact the appropriate people who might be associated with its. As this was a rapid program at the time it's a shame to see it neglected.

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

Ennis MD will inspect and assess the playground in the coming week and will organise for appropriate remedial measures to be carried out.

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

Cllr Norton thanked Patrick Tiernan for his response which came on foot of residents contacting her with concerns regarding a lot of waste and the question was raised as to what entity was responsible, as some works emerged through *RAPID* in past. She welcomed the very positive response adding that any works will give confidence to the local community. Cllr O'Callaghan highlighted the need to ensure these valuable outlets are protected. Cllr. Flynn added that €9m had been awarded to communities through the *RAPID* schemes. Cllr Howard advised it is probably the smallest playground in town, and it would be beneficial to have it maintained and equipment replaced if necessary. Cllr Daly supported highlighted significant benefit for local children.

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

That the VMS signs in Doora be examined as it appears that neither are working and can an update on the footpath design for Doora village be provided.

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

Ennis MD have recently carried out a survey of all VMS boards throughout the district. A significant quantity of solar powered VMS boards has been either damaged or vandalised.

We are currently preparing a tender for the repair/replacement of the VMS boards and this includes the ones on both approaches to Doora Village.

With regard to footpaths – earlier this summer Ennis MD arranged for a topographical survey of the village in order to inform the design of footpaths in the village. Design work has now commenced and is expected to be complete in the new year. Ennis MD will continue to explore all available options to secure a funding source for this project.

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

Cllr Colleran-Molloy acknowledged the response, having noticed the damaged signs on travelling through Doora and she welcomed the survey referenced. She also highlighted good progress on footpaths in this area which benefits the zoning upgrade to village status. Cllr Flynn supported this motion and Cllr Colleran-Molloy's diligence in keeping the area in focus. Cllr Howard supported, having had residents of the area contact her regarding speed limits. Cllr Murphy supported this Motion advising he had contributed GMA funding towards these VMS signs. Cllr O'Callaghan and Cllr Daly also supported the Motion, stating that these residents really deserve this support.

Patrick Tiernan, A/SEE, clarified for Members that of the 26 no. VMS signs in the district, approx. 10 no. are damaged, mainly through vandalization (stealing batteries and solar panels). He informed that some discretionary maintenance is available however the cost is considerable, at €1,500. There is no pool of funding for footpath repair, we get some funds from IPB solely for existing footpath maintenance, so our only funding is GMA for small items, or Active Travel schemes like Ballybeg which tend to be urban centric. He concluded funding for Doora was sought through the NTA last year and will be sought again in 2024.

No. 9 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard

Pedestrian Crossing at Millbank/ Tulla Rd

As a matter of urgency this pedestrian crossing needs to be made safe.

A number of years ago on foot of a motion I brought forward this junction was to be monitored and traffic calming introduced and if necessary, the crossing be moved to a safer location on the Tulla Road to ensure safety of those using it.

I request our engineers and road safety officer look at what safety options are available to us.

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

Ennis MD can confirm that this pedestrian crossing will be upgraded as part of the Tulla Road Cycle Scheme. This project is currently at detailed design stage and funding has been secured from the NTA.

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

Cllr Howard recalled raising this issue years ago and assumed it had been resolved. She welcomed the proposal to replace it with a superior system. Cllr Murphy supported what he deemed a valuable Motion. Cllr Flynn also supported, advising that he had raised a similar issue ten years previously at Ballymacahill Cross which sees 50,000 vehicles per day, and leaves pedestrians vulnerable. Cllr O'Callaghan supported the Motion expressing disappointment at the length of time to rectify an obvious need. Cllr Daly supported and commended the Motion.

No. 10 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. T. O'Callaghan

Considering recent discussions on Public Parking can the Director of Service confirm the exact number of public car-parking spaces on-street and off-street parking that have been lost over the past 20 years from new roads, cycling lanes and public realm upgrades works to date.

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

The change in the number of car parking spaces is as a result of a variety of works aimed at a) improving pedestrian safety b) safety for school children and c) to ensure greater access for disabled persons. Other car parking spaces were reassigned, to boost economic activity in the town centre e.g. The Coach Park. The table below outlines the changes over the period 2008 (car parking report) to 2023.

	2023	2008 Car Parking Report	Loss
Off Street	675	759	84
On Street	905	980	75
	1580	1739	159

All works were subject to either a Part 8 or Section 38 approval by MD Councillors. These figures do not include the 70 car parking spaces currently available at the Cloister / GAA car park.

Off Street Car Parking in Ennis

- *Abbey Street: Public realm Brewery Lane and amended Accessible Spaces. Amended central accessible Spaces and accessible access from Shanks Lane to Riverbank. Public Realm Shanks Lane including improved accessibility. Riverbank walkway providing accessible pedestrian access at the pedestrian bridge ramp-steps.*
- *Bindon Street: Amendments to the Accessible Spaces*
- *Francis Street: Amendments to layout to removed existing non-functioning accessible space and provide tow new accessible spaces at Friary Bow.*
- *Market Place: Market Building and Public Realm works.*
- *Friars Walk Long Stay Car Park: Converted back to coach park facility.*

On Street Short Stay Parking

- *Bank Place: Public Realm and Bicycle Stands*
- *Cabey's Lane: Public realm work providing safe pedestrian accessibility at the entry from the Market.*
- *Garranakilla: Amendments to streetscape at the Market Building & adjustments to the exit onto Carmody street to prevent illegal traffic flow.*
- *Lower Market Street: Provision of two new accessible parking spaces as set out in the market byelaws.*
- *Market Place: Public realm works around the Market Building adjusting the perpendicular and linear parking areas.*
- *Summerhill: There should not be significant change here as the works are in areas of double yellow lines.*

Short Stay Two Hour Parking

- *Francis Street: Provision of the Zebra Crossing*
- *Harmony Row: 2016 Active Travel project required adjustment at Club Bridge*
- *Station Road: Provision of safe access for school crossing location and amendments to school vehicle entrance area*

Long Stay Parking

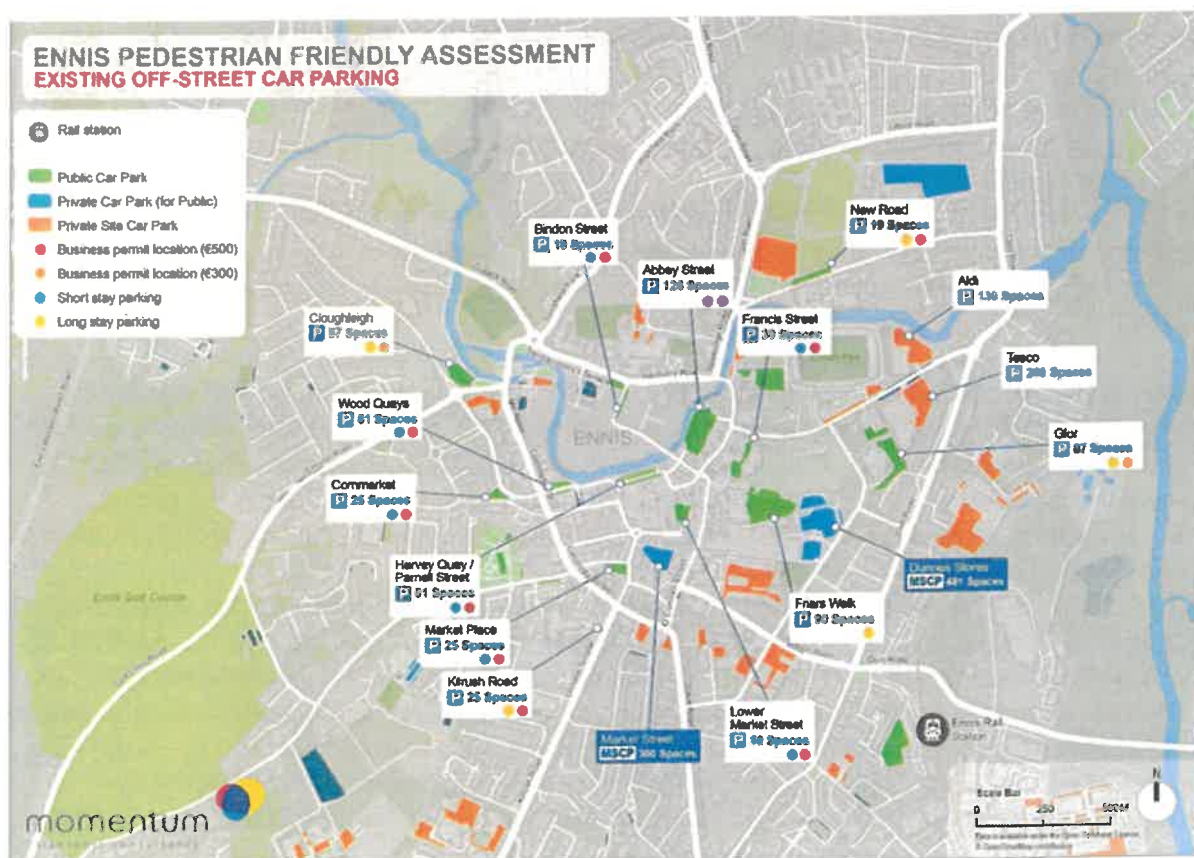
- *College Road: Provision of school bus bay.*
- *Mill Road-St Anthony' Terrace: Provision of Zebra Crossing form new Gael Collaiste and set down area for the new school.*

The map below identifies all available car parking facilities in Ennis town centre and its environs. The map also shows walking distances from the relevant car parks to O'Connell Square in the centre of the town.

The total number of car parking spaces in Ennis available for use by the public currently lies at 2,923. These spaces will remain available for the foreseeable future.

There currently is 1 parking space for every 13 people living in Ennis. To put this into context, Waterford City has 1 parking space for every 29 people, while Navan – a town not dissimilar in size and population to Ennis - has 1 parking space for every 24 people.

An additional 85 public parking spaces will be provided at the Waterpark campus in Drumbiggle subject to Part VIII planning approval being secured in early 2024. Planning permission also has been granted for the allocation of a further 129 permanent spaces at the Cloister Carpark, which currently offers 70 parking spaces. The correct map was circulated at the meeting.



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

Cllr T. O'Callaghan reiterated his long-held view that pedestrianisation measures and public realm works are all to be welcomed but that the long-term goal must entail adequate parking to support these measures. He advised that he saw the loss of car parking as part of an ongoing attack on the town centre. He questioned the viability of advice to remove any parking space which he stated was to the detriment of local businesses who rely wholly on footfall. He added that accessibility of all people, regardless of their mode of transport, needs to be accommodated.

Cllr Flynn acknowledged detailed response from SEO Leonore O'Neill but that the Map provided did not appear correct in stating a shortfall of just 300 car parking spaces. 159 spaces, he stated, have been lost since 2008 until now, so nearly 2,000 spaces short. He advised he has attended many seminars, consultants put a value of €20-€30 per hour on a car parking space. According to Ennis Health Check 2018, over 70% businesses in Ennis felt there was inadequate availability of car parking. Private retailers like Aldi and Tesco provide parking for customers and should not be included in statistics.

Cllr Colleran-Molloy questioned Cllr Flynn's disputing of in-depth study by local expertise, and the tendency to look backwards rather than seeing how the situation has evolved over the years; also, the refusal to acknowledge the valuable contribution of Aldi and Tesco car parks. She queried why an in-depth analysis of loss to businesses is attributed to loss of "public" car parking spaces. She advised that car parking is being worked on and the need to recognise the upcoming new public bus service.

Cllr Howard questioned the value of referring to reports that are 20 years old. A new bus service, has been a game changer in Carlow, Sligo, Clonmel. There are further car parks, train station, Holy Family school and parking is not difficult to find, especially since Cloister car park came online, has had huge impact. She added one must acknowledge the increased number of disability parking space. She expressed concern that 75% of parking spaces in Abbey Street are taken up by staff. She added the fact that there is 1 space per 13 people living in Ennis, which demonstrates we are on the right track.

Cllr Daly voiced that he feels there is a shortage of parking. Business permits and staff permits are taking up spaces and a multi-storey car park will free up these spaces – the customer is the key person to keep parking free for.

Cllr Flynn reiterated that account should not be taken of private car parks which are simply complying with planning conditions and must provide parking for their customers. The issue remains that the deficit in spaces is not being addressed, nor the monetary loss to businesses.

Cllr O'Callaghan voiced concern for this very crucial issue.

Carmel Kirby, Director of Service, addressed the Meeting, thanking Members for their contributions. Ennis town is developing as a sustainable town going into the future and we are all trying to build footfall and support businesses, so all people must be allowed access, she stated. There is a need for modern day living influences including climate change, with a move toward walking and cycling. Public and private spaces are indistinguishable in terms of provision and the availability of 2,923 spaces is a healthy number for a town the size of Ennis.

The 2008 report, she continued, stated parking was adequate at that time and that it predicted a further growth based on car ownership and population growth which would create a need for an addition of 800-1000 spaces. That actual parking need, using criteria in the 2008 report was 300 additional car parking spaces. She added that we are developing an age friendly town with more disabled parking, public realm and safety measures. Spaces were handed over for more sustainable uses including age friendly but yes, it is accepted that parking spaces were lost in the process. She assured Members that development contributions collected for car parking will be used for car parking.

The DOS continued that whilst the *Health Check* did put value on additional parking, it is important to acknowledge from that report that people also indicated that they want an additional offering, in terms of placemaking and being able to enjoy the town for a different reason. She added that 85 car parking spaces will be provided in Waterpark in 2024 subject to Members approval; a further 75 in Cloister and the GAA is making progress on providing 129 which they have secured planning for. The new bus service also has to be taken into account. Members had dedicated valuable time to bring the new town bus service to fruition and which is on target for 2025. The most recent bus

service is in Carlow with 40,000 people using it in a 4-week period. The DOS concluded that all this needs to be taken into consideration when looking at future parking need.

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

I call Ennis M.D. to look at the possibility of putting down traffic calming measures at Ballaghboy, Doora, from the Quin Road to Gaurus Cross.

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

Ennis MD have recently submitted an application for funding for this scheme to the Department of Transport under the Low Cost Safety Scheme Improvement Works Programme 2024. We are hopeful that this application will be successful.

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

No. 12 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn

Required traffic calming works on the Gaurus/Ballaghboy road (L4118) for safety.

In light of recent accidents, persistent speeding and dangerous driving issues being experienced on the Gaurus/Ballaghboy road (L4118) , and in particularly prior to the temporary relocation to Gurteen of Knockanean School which will result in increased traffic , there is a need for traffic calming measure to be installed urgently .

Whilst waiting on a decision whether the NTA approve a more extensive low cost road scheme I ask that Ennis Municipal District immediately put in place an interim solution to install at least two or three tarmac speed ramps to address what a resident , one of the 43 residents who signed a petition lodged earlier this year, describes as “ the currently ridiculous speeding and dangerous driving situation “ . The resident goes on to state that since the petition was handed in “ a further two accidents have occurred on the road and if no action is taken, it seems inevitable that a fatality will occur.”

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

Ennis MD have recently submitted an application for funding for this scheme to the Department of Transport under the Low Cost Safety Scheme Improvement Works Programme 2024. We are hopeful that this application will be successful.

The form of any proposed traffic calming measure along this road needs careful consideration. The installation of ramps may inadvertently increase the likelihood of accidents given the rural nature of the road, the volume of traffic and the speeds encountered. Alternative solutions such as horizontal deflections, increased signage and increased road markings need also to be considered.

Ennis MD together with our colleague in the Road Design Office will examine the situation in more detail in the coming weeks with a view to putting a Section 38 application before Members in early 2024. As outlined above we are confident our existing application for funding will be successful.

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

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

I am proposing that Ennis Municipal District engage with a family member of Val Bredin R.I.P., with a view to acknowledging the huge contribution that he made in regenerating the Barrack Street, Summerhill and Lower Parnell Street areas of Ennis.

Such expression of appreciation could be the erection of a suitable plaque in the Barrack Street area in memory of Val and could be tied in with Public Realm Works that are currently in progress.

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

Any person or group with an interest in the erection of a plaque or memorial is required to put an application directly to the Clare County Council Memorial Committee. The application process sets out guidelines and requirements and all applications are given due consideration by this committee.

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

Cllr P. Murphy clarified that the ethos of his Motion was to request that the Local Authority, upon the passing of Val Bredin, would officially recognise the significant public realm works undertaken by the then Urban District Council in conjunction with Mr Bredin, which resulted in the regeneration of key areas in the centre of town. He requested that Ennis M.D. would directly contact the Bredin family and engage with them with reference to a memorial which would befit the contribution of Mr Bredin to town regeneration. Cllr Howard strongly supported the Motion, adding that Val was man with a vision. Cllr Colleran-Molloy supported commending the valuable works undertaken. Cllr Daly supported this Motion, recognising the regeneration of the area. Cllr Flynn also supported the great service to town. Cllr Norton supported this motion.

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

When a person reports an issue with the council accommodation they are living in. How long does it take for an inspection?

How long does it take for the issue to resolved?

How does the council communicate with their tenant?

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

On receipt of a maintenance request from a tenant the Local Authority will firstly decide if the repair is tenants responsibility and if so the tenant will be advised of same the matter will be closed. If the repair is the responsibility of the Local Authority the repair request will be logged, categorised and referred to the relevant Clerk of Works. It is not always necessary for an inspection to take place to decide if repairs are required or not and in many cases a contractor can be appointed without inspection for standard routine repairs. The Clerk of Works will then make contact with the tenant to arrange access and/or to advise that a Contractor has been appointed to undertake the repair. The Local Authority will forward your contact details to the nominated Contractor to arrange the repair.

In order to provide an acceptable level of service for the maintenance of properties, repairs are categorised, with the appropriate response times as follows:

Category	Timescale
<u>Emergency</u> – works where it is considered that there is a potential risk to human life e.g. electrical repairs	2-3 working days for the works to be completed
<u>Urgent</u> – works where it is considered that there is the potential for damage to the property e.g. internal plumbing	5-10 working days for the works to be completed

Routine – tenant requests for repairs where if is considered that there is no risk to the tenant or the property e.g. damage to internal fittings

closed out within 6 weeks

It is important to note that, except in the case of emergency repairs, regard will be had to any arrears on a tenants rent account in dealing with their request for repairs.

While above targets are generally met there are occasions where they are not for various reasons. With 3,814 valid requests to date in 2023 there have challenges at times in relation to availability of contractors, and concerns for health and safety of staff and contractors, while on occasions some cases require further interventions and support from external agencies

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

Cllr Norton welcomed the response and wished to clarify how people contacted Clare County Council.

Item No. 6. Correspondence

A letter had been received by Cllr Howard and the Twinning Committee from the Mayor of Langenfeld, Frank Schneider. The letter was an invite for a delegation from Ennis to visit Langenfeld in 2024.

Seconded by Cllr. Colleran-Molloy and agreed by all Members.

Item No. 7. Any Other Business

None.

The Meeting ended at 1:00pm

Signed: Pat Daly MCE
Mayor of Ennis

Signed: Mark J Connor
Meetings Administrator

Date: 05/12/23

