

Minutes of Meeting of the Killaloe Municipal District

held on Wednesday, 19th July, 2023 at 9.30am

Meeting held in Meeting Room, Killaloe Municipal District Offices

In attendance: Cllr. Alan O’Callaghan
Cllr. Joe Cooney
Cllr. Tony O’Brien
Cllr. Pat Hayes
Cllr. Pat Burke

Officials: Mr. Pdraig MacCormaic, A/SEO, Social Directorate
Mr. Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner & Meetings Administrator
(attended remotely)
Mr. Derek Troy, A/Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. Pauline Costelloe, Staff Officer

Apologies: Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Service

Members of the media attended.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Tony O’Brien chaired the meeting.

Item 7 It was agreed to bring forward presentation Item 7 on the Agenda “Update to Members from Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) – Strategic issues in East Clare”.

Triona Lynch, FET and Aobhán Haverty, AEO attended and provided a detailed presentation on the following;

- Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board – Structure
- Capital Investment Programme
- Role of SOLAS within the College of Further Education and Training (FET)
- College of FET – County Clare Infrastructure and Investment
- College of FET – County Clare Provision, Engagement and Supports
- College of FET – Current Projects 2023

T. Lynch and A. Haverty provided an overview of training and education opportunities available in locations around East Clare including community venues and the Scarriff Campus.

Following a request from Cllr. T. O'Brien a copy of the presentation is to be circulated to the members.

Cllr. T. O'Brien identified the need for training and upskilling to identify local needs anticipating increased investment in the Killaloe MD area linked to such projects as Inis Cealtra, the new ByPass & the Finsa site. Cllr. J. Cooney referred to the importance of apprenticeship in many areas, especially construction, Cllr. O'Callaghan highlighted the increasing demand for training in the area of horticulture, beekeeping etc. Cllr. P. Burke raised the issue around training for those involved in agriculture and A. Haverty replied LCETB provide digital skills to assist with farm accounts and online systems.

In reply to Cllr. J. Cooney, A. Haverty advised a funding application for expansion of the Scarriff Campus was submitted earlier in the year and additional information has been sought. T. Lynch advised she would revert to the members with an update on the Raheen Woods Community NS project.

A. Haverty referred to a number of Solas centres including the Near Zero Energy Centre (NSEC) in Limerick providing training and apprenticeship courses in a wide range of skills i.e. construction, aeronautical, electrical, hairdressing, beauty salon training and welcomed the members to visit any locations of interest.

Cllr. P. Hayes referred to the importance of progression rate and queried where do students move onto from these courses. A. Haverty highlighted the different objectives of training i.e. for some it is an issue of community connectivity or improved literacy (including IT) and some may progress to further training and qualifications. A. Haverty also referred to the importance of census data to identify relevant courses as well as the role of local transportation for students in accessing course venues.

Cllr. P. Burke referred to Killaloe GMA funding that has been approved for the sports project at Scarriff Community College and sought clarification regarding LCETB funding. T. Lynch replied that a project of this nature would fall under the Sports Capital Grant. Cllr. P. Hayes referred to his role as Chairman of the Scarriff Community College BOM and expressed dissatisfaction with the funding mechanisms. T. Lynch agreed to revert to the members on this issue.

B. McCarthy thanked A. Haverty and T. Lynch for a very informative discussion. Referring to the *Killaloe MD Elected Members Strategic Work Plan* which sought to enhance linkages with Further and Higher Education Institutes and Training providers to maximise opportunities for social and educational development of East Clare and Killaloe MD, Brian McCarthy thanked the LCETB for their presentation and engagement and stated he looked forward to continued linkages with the LCETB.

A. Haverty & T Lynch left the meeting

Cllr. T. O'Brien informed the meeting that in his role as Mayor of Clare he convened and chaired an inter-agency meeting last month to discuss an integrated approach and resolution to the appropriate access, the subsequent management and enforcement of water safety and byelaws and the management of a minority of user's anti-social behaviour at amenity areas on Lough Derg. Cllr. T. O'Brien advised that he has noticed improvement in the situation around Lough Derg since this group met and a number of actions have been implemented. A follow up meeting is planned.

It was proposed by Cllr. T. O'Brien and seconded by Cllr. J. Cooney that an Garda Siochana be invited to attend the next Killaloe MD meeting.

Item 1 Minutes of Killaloe MD Meeting held on 17th May, 2023

The Minutes of Killaloe Municipal District Meeting held on 17th May, 2023 were adopted having been proposed by Cllr. J. Cooney and seconded by Cllr. A. O'Callaghan

Item 2 Minutes of Killaloe MD Annual General Meeting held on 30th June, 2023

The Minutes of Killaloe Municipal District AGM held on 30th June, 2023 were adopted having been proposed by Cllr. P. Burke and seconded by Cllr. P. Hayes.

Item 3 Matters Arising

Referring to Item 3, Cllr. T. O'Brien requested an update on the EV charging points in Killaloe town, D. Troy replied that discussions with ESB are advancing and funding has been identified for the playground site.

Referring to Item 3, Cllr. T. O'Brien requested an update on the installation of speed control ramps on the approach to Killaloe Boys NS. D. Troy advised speed surveys are currently being arranged.

Referring to Item 8, Cllr. J. Cooney requested an update on the proposed carpark in Scarriff. B. McCarthy advised there has been some progress on conveyancing, however, the site is not yet in full ownership of Council. He added that it was anticipated that a call for Category 1 - RRDF capital funding application would be made later in the year. Cllr. J. Cooney queried if additional car parking could be provided in the interim, B. McCarthy replied that in the absence of full ownership and funding under RRDF the Local Authority would not be in a position to develop a car-park on the specified site, however B. McCarthy indicated that proposals for the provision of temporary parking spaces at another town centre location area at an advanced stage and details will be confirmed shortly.

Referring to Item 6, Cllr. P. Burke sought update on repair to road between Ash Tree Cross and Dereny in Whitegate, D. Troy replied repairs are to take place shortly.

Item 4 Disposal of lands at Calluragh, Ballinruan Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

Report, dated 6th July, 2023 from Mairead Corbett, Administrative Officer, Housing Department was circulated with the agenda. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of a site as outlined on the map (Folio CE29727) for the sum of €4,000 to Ms. Margaret Casey, Roslevan, Ennis, Co. Clare and Ms. Mary O'Connor, Cappamore, Barefield, Ennis, Co. Clare. The members noted the report, as presented, and the disposal was proposed by Cllr. P. Burke, seconded by Cllr. J. Cooney and agreed.

Item 5 Updated Standing Orders regulating the proceedings of meetings of the Municipal District of Killaloe (attached).

Updated version of Standing Orders as circulated was proposed by Cllr. J. Cooney, seconded by Cllr. A. O'Callaghan and agreed.

Item 6 Killaloe Municipal District General Municipal Allocation 2023.

Report as circulated was proposed by Cllr. J. Cooney, seconded by Cllr. A. O'Callaghan and agreed.

Notices of Motion from Cllr. Tony O'Brien:-

Agreed Item 8 & Item 17 be combined for discussion.

8. "That the work at the junction of the R466 and the R463 be completed. Presently the sight lines coming out of O'Briensbridge looking back towards Killaloe are now very much restricted by the growing high grass."

Proposed by: Cllr. T. O'Brien

Seconded by: Cllr. P. Burke

Reply from Derek Troy, Acting Senior Executive Engineer:

"I wish to confirm that Killaloe MD are currently arranging this work as requested and it is expected that this work will be completed in the coming weeks. Maintenance of sightlines at junctions and bends, in particular on regional routes is undertaken each year following the peak vegetation growth period. This period occurs usually in July each year, however, is influenced by the weather. This work is required to be undertaken within the nesting season, which falls under Section 40 of the Wildlife Act 1976, as amended by Section 46 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, runs from 1st March to 31st August. Therefore, verge cutting/trimming is kept to a minimum, but is undertaken to ensure that vegetation is not a hazard or potential hazard to persons using a public road and that it does not obstruct or interfere with the safe use of a public road, in accordance with the Roads Act 1993."

17. "I am asking that we immediately begin our verge trimming programme in the Killaloe district as a matter of urgency as a lot of our regional routes tourist routes and bus routes have become heavily overgrown and have becoming a real health and safety risk to both pedestrians and road users."

Proposed by: Cllr. P. Hayes

Seconded by: Cllr. A. O'Callaghan

Reply from Derek Troy, Acting Senior Executive Engineer:

"I wish to confirm that Killaloe MD are currently undertaking verge trimming maintenance of sightlines at junctions and bends, in particular on regional routes. This work is undertaken each year following the peak vegetation growth period. This period occurs usually in July each year, however, is influenced by the weather. This work is required to be undertaken within the nesting season, which falls under Section 40 of the Wildlife Act 1976, as amended by Section 46 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, runs from 1st March to 31st August. Therefore, verge cutting/trimming is kept to a minimum, but is undertaken to ensure that vegetation is not a hazard or potential hazard to persons using a public road and that it does not obstruct or interfere with the safe use of a public road, in accordance with the Roads Act 1993. Verge trimming is also undertaken, as deemed necessary, on roads that are subject to surface dressing or strengthening roadworks under the Schedule of Municipal District works.

It is expected that, following the nesting season, the annual verge trimming programme will be undertaken, with particular focus on regional routes, along with primary local roads, subject to the availability of funding."

Cllr. T. O'Brien commented that while work had been carried out at the junction at O'Briens bridge it has not been completed to a satisfactory standard, citing the grass verges are difficult to maintain.

Cllr. P. Burke, referring to Cllr. P. Hayes NOM No. 17 agreed with the motion that Killaloe MD appear to cut verges too late in the summer season and gave Ogonnelloe as an example. Cllr. J. Cooney supported the motions and added every local road coming onto a regional road should be included in the programme.

D. Troy accepted there was a delay in cutting the verges at O'Briensbridge junction and once cut sightlines at this location will be acceptable. Cllr. T. O'Brien was not satisfied with reply and requested that the works at the junction be re-visited and a finish similar to the Clonlara junction considered.

Cllr. P. Burke advised meeting verge trimming had been raised at recent full Council meeting and the need for additional funds for such works highlighted, he added that environmental concerns around biodiversity etc. were also raised.

Cllr. P. Hayes stated that a verge trimming programme should be in place, especially in an area promoting tourism, to ensure safety of pedestrians and cyclists on the roads. He also referred to accessibility for public transport and instances where roads cannot be accessed due to overgrowth. Cllr. P. Hayes acknowledged challenges with regard to biodiversity, but identified the important road safety aspect of verge trimming. He referred in particular to roads at Dromore, Lough Graney and Lough Derg and the footpath from Scarriff to Killaloe.

Cllr. A. O’Callaghan raised concern around regional road junctions on the R469, R462 and R470. Cllr. J. Cooney acknowledged financial concerns but stated there is a need to examine all junctions onto the regional roads across the MD.

D. Troy replied the legal responsibility lies with the landowner on all categories of roads. It is the policy of Killaloe MD to cut back junctions at regional and some minor road junctions during the summer period. Once nesting season is over all regional road verges and some priority local roads are cut. Killaloe MD spend on average €70k per annum.

9. “That a review of general operatives staff numbers in the Killaloe MD be undertaken as a matter of urgency as I believe the shortage of workers will have a serious negative impact on our service delivery.”

Proposed by: Cllr. T. O’Brien

Seconded by: Cllr. J. Cooney

Reply from Patricia McNamara, Administrative Officer, Human Resources

“At present all General Operative posts are filled in accordance with the current workforce plan and Department Sanction for Killaloe Municipal District. The Human Resources Department leads the strategic workforce planning remit and engages with each of the Directorates regularly for this purpose. The current staffing model and resource allocation including reprioritising is sufficient to deliver on the Councils corporate objectives presently. Future resourcing is constantly evolving and forms part of ongoing workforce planning.”

Cllr. T. O’Brien expressed dissatisfaction with the reply and stated there is a staffing deficit and this is impacting negatively on service delivery. P. MacCormaic commented on the workforce planning strategy and national restructure structures. Cllr. T. O’Brien requested a meeting with the HR Department and senior management to review the matter. Cllr. J. Cooney also supported the motion and agreed to attend meeting in his role as Cathaoirleach.

Notices of Motion from Cllr. Pat Burke:-

10. “Calling on Clare County Council to carry out drainage works on the R352 adjacent to the Three Chimney House at Cloonamirran, Mountshannon particularly outside property V94 K6P5”

Proposed by: Cllr. P. Burke

Seconded by: Cllr. P. Hayes/Cllr. J. Cooney

Reply from Derek Troy, Acting Senior Executive Engineer:

“I wish to confirm that Killaloe MD technical team will commit to undertaking a inspection of the location as described to establish the extent of drainage issues, and will take appropriate action, as required, subject to the availability of funding.”

11. “Calling on Clare County Council to provide an update on the delay in getting works completed on the church ruins in Moynoe Cemetery, Scariff. This is causing an inconvenience to families whose graves are in the vicinity of the church ruins.”

Proposed by: Cllr. P. Burke

Seconded by: Cllr. P. Hayes/Cllr. J. Cooney

Reply from John Treacy, Burial Grounds & Community Playgrounds: Coordinator:

“The church ruins at the Old Moynoe Burial Ground in Scarriff have been receiving the attention of the Burial Grounds Unit since March 2022. In the interest of any potential safety risks associated with the church ruins, the Burial Ground Unit sought the advice of Building Control in Clare County Council and subsequently erected scaffolding around the structure. This is currently being maintained at an ongoing significant cost to the Council. In order to progress matters, the Burial Grounds Unit liaised with the Conservation Officer and a funding application was made under the Community Monument’s Fund (CMF) in 2022. This application sought funding of €149k to undertake works to provide a permanent resolution to the outstanding issues on site. In 2023, a funding announcement was made awarding €30k for an Architectural Conservation Plan for the burial ground as opposed to funding to carry out physical works. While such a plan is invaluable in safeguarding the cultural and historical value of the site, it does not address the Council’s immediate interests as regards safety of the patrons of the Burial Ground and the need to address the remediation and stabilisation of the structure, which was the basis of the funding application made under the Community Monuments Fund.

The Burial Ground Unit is currently challenged by a limited budget that does not extend to the remediation of historical monuments and are now proactively engaging with the National Monuments Service (NMS) to explore alternative solutions.

In the meantime, on the advice of Building Control, the scaffolding must remain in place to address an immediate public safety concern.”

Cllr. P. Burke expressed disappointment with the reply and questioned the adequacy of the budget allocation of €30k. Cllr. P. Hayes and Cllr. J. Cooney concurred and asked that the building be made safe as soon as possible. P. MacCormaic to follow up with Burial Grounds staff.

Cllr. A. O'Callaghan noted the absence of staff from the burial ground and HR dept to take questions at today's meeting and requested that staff submitting notice of motion replies be requested to attend meeting in person or remotely. B. McCarthy agreed to arrange.

Notices of Motion from Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan:-

12. "Ask this MD to carry out works on the footpath in Quin out the Tulla road especially at the entrance of Cluain Gearrain estate and back at the village to make it more wheelchair friendly."

Proposed by: Cllr. A. O'Callaghan

Seconded by: Cllr. J. Cooney

Reply from Derek Troy, Acting Senior Executive Engineer:

"I wish to confirm that Killaloe MD technical team will commit to undertaking a inspection of the footpath from Cluain Gearrain estate to Quin Village to establish the extent of improvement works required. It is noted that there is likely to be issues with the existing road width, and the provision of a new footpath, at the junction of the Tulla Road L3180 and the R469 at Quin Village. Following the inspection, funding streams will need to be identified, in order to undertake any works required."

13. "That this MD would consider upgrading a piece of road between Enagh Cross and Pollough Bridge at a dip Eircode V95 YX86."

Proposed by: Cllr. A. O'Callaghan

Seconded by: Cllr. J. Cooney

Reply from Derek Troy, Acting Senior Executive Engineer:

"I wish to confirm that this section of road is not included in the 2023 Schedule of Municipal District Works, however Killaloe MD technical team will commit to undertaking a inspection of the location as described to establish the extent of the isolated road issue, and will take appropriate action, as required, subject to the availability of funding."

Cllr. A. O'Callaghan requested that this section of road be included in the 2023 roads programme. Cllr. J. Cooney concurred.

Notices of Motion from Cllr. Joe Cooney:-

14. “That Clare County Council install a pedestrian crossing in front of Clarks supermarket in the village of Crusheen in the interest of road safety.”

Proposed by: Cllr. J. Cooney

Seconded by: Cllr. P. Hayes

Reply from Derek Troy, Acting Senior Executive Engineer:

“In 2022, Killaloe MD submitted a proposal for NTA Active Travel funding for Crusheen. This proposal included the area from R458 at Clarks Supermarket & Service Station, past the GAA grounds, to Crusheen National School. The proposal sought to provide improved pedestrian facilities across the R458, and across the L4074 Tulla Road, creating linkages between the housing and activity centres, and to incorporate traffic calming measures. Unfortunately, this proposal, along with other similar proposals throughout Killaloe MD, was unsuccessful. It is intended Killaloe MD will seek funding from planning contributions, in order to deliver this project.”

Cllr. J. Cooney asked if planning contributions for this project could be availed of. B. McCarthy endorsed views expressed by members and referred to proposals for Crusheen Railway station and connectivity within the village, he informed the meeting that he has met with some of the resident groups and will arrange a further meeting of groups in September and October 2023.

Cllr. P. Hayes supported the proposal and expressed disappointment at the allocation of Active Travel funding within the county, stating that urban areas appear to be benefiting more from the scheme.

15. “That Clare County Council explore what safety measures can be put in place at Harold’s Cross Clonlara and replace the Sixmilebridge sign which has been missing for some time.”

Proposed by: Cllr. J. Cooney

Seconded by: Cllr. T. O’Brien

Reply from Derek Troy, Acting Senior Executive Engineer:

“I wish to confirm that Harold’s Cross junction has recently been submitted to Clare County Council Road Design Section, for assessment and consideration under the Safety Improvement Works Grant for 2024. The reduction of traffic speed through the junction and improvement of the existing sightlines will be the primary objectives, however a review of the regional/local traffic prioritisation will also be undertaken. Killaloe MD Technical Team will review the existing regional route directional signage, and replace signs as required, as soon as possible.”

Notices of Motion from Cllr. Pat Hayes:-

16. “I am proposing that Clare Co Council put in traffic calming measures in place in the Tuamgraney area, with particular emphasis on the approach roads into Tuamgraney village, Speeding has become a major problem in these areas for local residents and needs immediate attention.”

Proposed by: Cllr. P. Hayes

Seconded by: Cllr. P. Burke

Reply from Derek Troy, Acting Senior Executive Engineer:

“In 2022, Killaloe MD submitted two proposals for NTA Active Travel funding for Tuamgraney. The first proposal included the provision of a new footpath on the R463 to link the existing footpath at Tuamgraney Castle, to the existing footpath on the Killaloe/Ogonnelloe Road, towards Raheen. The second proposal included the provision of a new footpath on the R352 to link the existing footpath on the Bodyke/Tulla Road, to the GAA grounds and Tuamgraney graveyard. Both proposals sought to provide improved pedestrian facilities across the R463 and R352, creating linkages between the village and centres of activity/interest, and to incorporate traffic calming measures. Unfortunately, these proposals, along with other similar proposals throughout Killaloe MD, were unsuccessful. It is intended Killaloe MD will seek funding from planning contributions, in order to deliver these projects.

I wish to confirm also that the driver feedback speed limit sign on the Bodyke/Tulla Road, which had been malfunctioning, has been replaced earlier this year.”

Cllr. P. Hayes referred to the need for traffic controls especially along Drewsboro and asked if a speed cushion like that outside entrance to Scarriff Health Centre could be considered? He added that there is a need to connect footpaths and ensure speeding controls in this area. Cllr. P. Burke referred to a similar motion he submitted earlier this year for the stretch along by Kerry Co-op. Cllr. J. Cooney stated that despite controls some drivers will speed up again and that enforcement is required. Cllr. J. Cooney proposed and members agreed that this matter be discussed with the Gardai when they attend the Killaloe MD meeting.

D. Troy to request the Road Design Department to examine possible traffic controls for area. Cllr. P. Hayes queried how funding could be sourced for such projects and it was agreed A/DOS would revert regarding Active Travel funding.

18. Correspondence

None

19. Confirm date for next meeting

It was agreed the next Killaloe MD meeting be arranged for Thursday, 21st September, 2023 in the Killaloe MD offices, Scarriff.

Other Business

The members thanked Derek Troy for his great work and the assistance he provided to the councillors during in his time as A/SEE in Killaloe MD and wished him well in his new role with Galway County Council. B. McCarthy also paid tribute to Derek's achievements in the Killaloe MD and acknowledged his service to Clare County Council over the past 20 years. D. Troy stated he very much enjoyed his time in Killaloe MD and appreciated the good working relationships with staff, the communities of East Clare and the Elected Members of Killaloe MD. Derek thanked all for their good wishes.

Cllr. P. Hayes congratulated Cllr. J. Cooney on his new role as Clare County Council Cathaoirleach and commented on the honour it is for the Killaloe MD to have a present and past Cathaoirleach as members.

A vote of sympathy was expressed to Padraig Myles in the Killaloe MD offices and to his family on the death of his sister Sarah, may she rest in peace. Members wished Kevin McGrath and Pat Moroney, Killaloe MD roads crew, well on their upcoming retirements.

Cllr. A. O'Callaghan requested that the roadway near Ballykilty Manor on the Quinn to Dromoland road be repaired following a number of complaints, he has raised this issue previously.

Cllr. T. O'Brien thanks members of the press for attending and Cllr. P. Hayes added that the members wished Fiona McGarry good luck in her new role.

Brian McCarthy,
Senior Planner and Killaloe MD Meetings Administrator
19th July, 2023