

Minutes of the Municipal District of Ennis Committee Meeting held at 10.30am on Friday March 3rd, 2017, in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Present:

Councillors: P. Daly, C. Colleran Molloy, A. Norton, T. McNamara, J. Breen, P. Murphy, J. Flynn and M. Howard.

Officials: Ger Dollard, Director of Services, Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Ann Reynolds, Administrative Officer and Fiona Whelan, Staff Officer.

Item No.1. Minutes of the February 2017 Monthly Meeting held on 3rd February, 2017

Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District February 2017 monthly meeting were proposed by Cllr. T. McNamara, seconded by Cllr. J. Breen and adopted by members.

Matters Arising

Members queried if a valuation had been sought on the lands at Rocky Road. G. Dollard confirmed that a valuation has been received by the Council but with respect to the landowner it was not appropriate to release this information.

The issue of the Barrack Street Junction onto Market Place was again queried. E. O'Dea, S.E.E., confirmed this survey is still ongoing and he will revert to members in due course.

Item No. 2. Schedule of Municipal District Works.

Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer, outlined the Schedule of Municipal District Works 2017, as required by Section 58 of the 2014 Local Government Reform Act.

In 2017 the total fund available is €18.48m for County Clare. This represents a 9.3% increase when compared with the 2016 total fund of €16.8, but compares with a total reduction of 40% when compared with the overall allocation of €31.12m in 2008.

No allocation has yet been confirmed by the TII in respect of overlay works on National Secondary Routes. It is envisaged that allocations in this regard will be confirmed in the near future. T. Tiernan further outlined detail in relation to the Ennis Municipal District Allocations for 2017 which includes a once off allocation of €1m in respect of urgent works on the R458 Latoon Creek Bridge under the Specific Improvement Grant Scheme.

Members welcomed the report on the Schedule of Municipal District Works for 2017 and in particular the increase in funding from 2016.

This item was proposed by Cllr. T. McNamara, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by members.

Item No. 3. Speed Limit Bye-Laws

Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer, outlined the process involved in reviewing the Speed Limit Bye-Laws. This included a public consultation process where submissions were received from the public. Clare County Council and the Gardaí examined all submissions and made the some alterations. The changes in relation to the Municipal District of Ennis were outlined in detail.

Members welcomed the Draft Speed Limit Bye-Laws, however, queried speed limits in the vicinity of schools and housing estates. Members requested further time to consider the draft bye-laws and will arrange to meet in advance of the April monthly meeting to consider this matter further.

The Draft Speed Bye-Laws will be an item on the Agenda for the April monthly meeting of the Municipal District of Ennis.

Item No. 4. Budget 2017.

Ger Dollard, Director of Services, presented Budget 2017 to the members of the Municipal District of Ennis. The total General Municipal Allocation (GMA) is in the amount of €274,400, some of which has already been allocated to Specific Annual Contributions and agreed by members at the last meeting.

Cllr. J. Flynn queried his presence during proposed allocations under Festivals & Events considering the fact that he is a committee member of some committees involved. G. Dollard, Director of Services, assured Cllr. Flynn that there was no conflict in this instance as he does not directly benefit from his involvement.

The €100,000 allocation agreed for the Festivals and Events for 2017 was outlined as follows:-

Festivals & Promotion 2017

Ennis Book Club Festival	€10,000	
Ennis Street Festival	€10,000	
Ennis Food Festival	€10,000	
Ennis Trad Festival	€10,000	
Ring of Clare Cycle	€10,000	
Clare Agricultural Show	€2,000	
Clare Garden Festival	€2,000	
Ennis Fringe Arts Festival	€2,000	
Festival Co-ordination in conjunction with Ennis Chamber	€20,000	
Town Promotional Activity	€10,000	
Other Festivals & Events	€14,000	€100,000

A further €51,900 from the GMA is yet to be allocated and will be considered further at the April monthly meeting.

Members welcomed the €100,000 allocation to Festivals and Events for 2017 which will increase the footfall in the town for all events. Members also welcomed the proposed festival co-ordinator in conjunction with Ennis Chamber of Commerce.

This item was proposed by Cllr. J. Flynn, seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara and agreed by members.

Item No. 5. Car-Parking Review.

G. Dollard, Director of Services, presented a report on Parking in Ennis which outlines the overall framework for parking in the town. Parking availability and parking price are the two main items being considered. In relation to parking availability, it is the Council's estimate that permit holders and employees use up to 40% of available parking in the town. Proposals were outlined on progressing the increase of parking availability in the report circulated. For convenience, it is also proposed to alter the unit price of parking to €1.00.

Members welcomed the report on parking and agreed by working together and in conjunction with Ennis Chamber of Commerce over the next number of months that parking issues will be resolved.

This item was proposed by Cllr. P. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara and agreed by members.

Item No. 6. Notices of Motion

No.1. NOM submitted by Cllr. J Flynn was seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy.

CPO of road into Killone Graveyard. That Ennis Municipal District request Clare County Council to commence a CPO process of acquiring the access road to the historic graveyard and Abbey at Killone. The council have maintained this road in the past and a public right of way that has existed for centuries since the Abbey was constructed in the years around 1195.

Betty Devanny, Administrative Officer, replied as follows:

Killone graveyard is located on the grounds of Killone Abbey and is accessed via a roadway through a private landholding - Newhall Estate. The graveyard and the abbey are registered in the folio of the landowner. This property has changed ownership since July 2016 and is now registered in the name of the new landowner.

There is a gate and pedestrian access to this burial ground. The land surrounding the abbey and the graveyard is farming land and livestock were on the land up to the time of the change of ownership.

The previous landowner maintained this access road in the past and it may have received previous funding from Clare County Council under a local improvement scheme which facilitated works on non public roads.

Killone Abbey and Killone Graveyard are recorded monuments and are afforded protection under national monuments legislation. The OPW maintain Killone Abbey.

The previous landowner has facilitated access to the burial ground and it is anticipated that this will continue with the new landowner.

Members requested follow up with the new landowner on this matter.

No.2. NOM submitted by T. McNamara was seconded by Cllr. P. Daly.

I call on Clare County Council to take in charge the road leading into the Banner GAA Club off Shanaway Road in Ennis.

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The road from the Shanaway Road to the end of the housing development is not in charge of the Council however it is in reasonable condition. The private access road from the housing development road to the Banner GAA Club is not of a standard that would be considered for taking in charge by the Council.

The Council is unlikely to have a Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) this year as available funding will be required for maintenance of the existing public road network. There is an option for the Municipal District to fund a LIS application from their Municipal District Allocation.

Members discussed the matter and agreed to write to the Director of Services, Transportation & Infrastructure to request that the road be taken in charge and developed under a Community Involvement Scheme (CIS).

This was proposed by Cllr. T. McNamara and seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

No.3. NOM submitted by Cllr. P. Murphy was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

While welcoming the recent allocation of €1million towards the replacement of the Bridge deck at Latoon and the lodging of the Part 8 planning notice, I am now requesting that whatever works are required (minor I believe) in order to have the original Latoon Bridge open to light traffic during the works period, are considered as a means of continuity of connectivity for the residents of the affected area. Also, what is the likely timescale for these works/what is the anticipated period of closure for the Bridge?

Ann Cronin, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The old Latoon Bridge is not suitable as an alternative while the deck of Latoon Creek bridge is being reconstructed. Access onto Old Latoon Bridge would have to be within the Site to be controlled by the appointed Contractor. The alignment of any route onto the old bridge from the existing R458 would be sub standard.

In addition to the above old Latoon Bridge is in need of significant repair to allow traffic to use it. Clare County Council hadn't looked for funding to repair it given that it's not carrying traffic and could not be given priority.

Likely timescale for the works to Latoon Creek Bridge is 4 to 6 months.
Part 8 Application was lodged on 17th February 2017.

No.4. NOM submitted by Cllr. J Breen was seconded by Cllr. T. McNamara.

When will the pedestrian crossing and the speed ramps be painted in the Ennis Municipal District?

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The Municipal District Office has a company employed to provide road markings in 2017. It is not good practice to install larger road markings when at times of wetter weather and when there is road salting being undertaken. The quality of the larger markings can be compromised leading to their early deterioration. The Municipal District Office is in constant communication with our road marking contractor with the intention of carrying out the required works. Locations where surfacing works will be carried out in 2017 will not have line marking carried out until the surfacing works are completed.

No.5. NOM submitted by Cllr. C Colleran Molloy was seconded by Cllr. P. Daly.

That the "third world" and unacceptable condition of the heavily utilized road from Knockanean School to Moyriesk Creamery be immediately addressed as the condition has been entirely unacceptable for far too long.

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The Knockanean School to Moyreisk Creamery road is 2.81km long. The road is not listed in this year's restoration improvement programme; however there have been a number of requests from Municipal District Councillors in regard to this section of road over the past year. The Municipal District Office will carry out structural work and road surfacing in four hollow locations between Creggaun and Moyreisk Creamery this year.

No.6. NOM submitted by Cllr. Ann Norton was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

Can the Road Engineer get a survey done on the traffic on the Gort Rd, to see if there is any way to help traffic flow coming out of the numerous housing estates.

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The Municipal District Office has requested the Road Design Section to examine the junctions from Ivy Hill to the Gort Road Roundabout. The MD Office will examine traffic data from previous and more recent traffic surveys to confirm speed levels on the Gort Road and the provision of digital speed signs is being considered between Ivy Hill exit and the Auburn Lodge Hotel.

No.7. NOM submitted by Cllr. M Howard was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

I request that Ennis Municipal District Council ask Clare County Council to ensure any further public amenity project developments are geographically balanced around the town of Ennis.

No reply required.

This NOM was further discussed by members. We need to balance our County Development Plan and public amenities. There are some exceptional amenities on the West side of Ennis with Lees Road and Tim Smyth Park. Ballybeg Woods and the Rocky Road on the other side of town need to be utilised further.

The Rocky Road was again suggested as an option to purchase by the Council.

The Council needs to clarify the issue of the "right of way" so that both the public and the landowner are clear.

It was proposed by Cllr. T.McNamara and seconded by Cllr. A. Norton to have the Rocky Road as an item on the Agenda for the April monthly meeting.

No.8. NOM submitted by Cllr. J Flynn was seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy.

Investigation of any threats to water quality at the Killone Group Water Scheme by Development works in the vicinity of its water sources.

That Ennis Municipal District request Clare County Council to arrange that its Water Services and Environmental Sections urgently carry out an investigation of any development works currently being carried out or proposed to be carried out in the vicinity of Killone water supply sources that might cause a threat to the Water Quality of the Killone Group Water Scheme.

Sean Ward, Senior Engineer, replied as follows:

"The notice of motion refers to earth-moving works near Killone Group Water Scheme's water treatment plant, on lands which slope down towards the borehole which is one of the raw water sources used by the group.

As supervisory authority for GWSs Clare County Council is responsible for monitoring compliance by the groups with the Drinking Water Regulations, and therefore cannot directly advise a group on how to achieve compliance. In the case of a GWS with its own source and treatment process, compliance entails management of the raw water source. However, purely on a good neighbourly basis I have contacted one of the officers of Killone GWS and advised him that the works referred to are taking place. If the borehole is constructed to a high standard - including having a secure casing with grout surround, and a tight cap - and drilled down to a good depth into rock, there should be little risk of pollution by any run-off from works. I have also contacted the Environment Section in case there are any wider implications for the quality of water bodies in the area.

Members further queried the planning controls and monitoring of ongoing works in such close proximity to the source of the Killone Group Water Scheme and its potential impact. Further information in relation to this matter was requested.

No.9. NOM submitted by Cllr. T Mc Namara was seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy.

In the interest of road safety I call on Clare County Council to provide stop line markings on all local road junctions with national and regional roads in the Ennis Municipal District and at all four cross roads on local roads as well.

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The junctions onto National Secondary and Regional Road will be examined and any damaged markers, signs or line marking will be replaced. This is normally carried out over a number of years with different roads being completed each year. It is not possible to give an undertaking in regard to local cross roads however the locations where line marking and signs have been provided by the Council will be inspected. In most locations on local roads it is not possible to provide line marking as the road width may not be wide enough to permit road markings.

No.10. NOM submitted by Cllr. P Murphy was seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy "That the elected members of Ennis Municipal District consider scheduling some meetings (maybe bi-annually) in the outlying villages of the Municipal area".

No reply required.

Members discussed this NOM and agreed that if any community within the Municipal District wished to invite members to hold a meeting in their area that this would then be considered by the Mayor and members of the Municipal District.

No.11. NOM submitted by Cllr. J Breen was seconded by Cllr. J.Flynn

That a progress report on all motions put before this Council by the elected member in the last 12 months be furnished to this Council. And Here in after a quarterly report be made available.

Gerard Dollard, Director of Services replied as follows:

At the February 2017 meeting of Council, a motion was discussed regarding a monitoring system to be put in place on foot of notice of motions put forward at meetings of the local authority. The motion sought that:

- a register of agreed actions be put in place;
- a report be provided to Elected Members on a quarterly basis to outline progress or completed actions;
- that the same method be adopted to incorporate county and district level.

At the meeting, the Chief Executive undertook to follow up in relation to the proposed system sought and I understand that the Meetings Administrator is at present progressing such a system. The approach being adopted is to put in place a system for issues arising at full Council and then apply it subsequently to the Municipal Districts.

Members welcomed the proposed new monitoring system which will highlight progress being made on foot of Notices of Motions. Members acknowledged that funding and staff constraints need to be considered in some instances, however, positive responses to Notice of Motions are no good unless the work is being done. There should be accountability and a sense of progress.

No.12. NOM submitted by Cllr. C. Collieran Molloy was seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy.

For many years passage at the cross at Norrie Henchy's Pub on the Tulla Road from the Quin road has constituted a serious risk to life, which has been exacerbated by the very high volume of farmers with trailers going from the Mart to East Clare, I am calling for urgent remediation of this serious risk.

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The Municipal District Office is aware of the hazards at Henchy's Cross on the R352 Tulla Road. The Road Design Section are examining their records to confirm if there is an existing design for junction improvements at Henchy's Cross and whether that design would comply with present standards. Road surfacing works is proposed at either end of the Spanchihill Cross on the Tulla Road this year and the section at Hency's Cross is the next priority on the Tulla Road.

The funding of this work will have to be discussed with the Senior Engineer in the Transport Section as it may require sequential funding over a number of years to complete the works.

Funding for this type of works would be via Low Cost Safety Scheme or Specific Improvement Schemes and it is uncertain at this stage whether the levels of funding for these schemes will be increased from 2018.

The level of funding under the Specific Improvement Scheme has been substantially reduced by the Department of Transport in recent years and the Ennis Municipal District has got funding for the Dredhidnagower Road Bridge, the Cappahard Roundabout in 2016 and the Latoon Bridge works in 2017 from this funding source.

Members further discussed this NOM. E. O'Dea confirmed that this junction does not meet with current standards. We are requesting funding from the Dept. for works on this junction and are currently awaiting the plans on which design of improvement will be approved and under what type of allocation. This will dictate what is to be done and when.

No.13. NOM submitted by Cllr. M Howard was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

On foot of the recent excellent adjudication report for Tidy Towns, two weak areas were pointed out

* "Ennis is a warren of lanes and alleyways. These can be problematic in some centres but they are attractive features and they provoke interest and exploration, eg Chapel Lane."

We need to focus on the lane ways especially in Parnell Street.

and

* There is a lovely walk near Cloughleigh Rd where the River Fergus can be enjoyed. It is rather neglected looking however, with excessive weeds, litter and stands of Japanese Knotweed along the bank. A little attention would make this the perfect picnic and wildlife viewing location in the heart of the town. The Ennis River and Nature Walk panel is very hidden away and is in any case quite faded, this should be renovated and moved to a more visible position."

This Municipal Council requests that these issues are dealt with as a matter of urgency.

Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer replied as follows:

The Municipal District Office has examined locations for storing bins with the Environment Section in order to improve access throughout Ennis including lanes and alleyway's. Three preferred bin storage areas in the town centre have been agreed in principle. Consultations are ongoing with the affected stakeholders, local businesses and waste collection companies. Elected members will continue to be consulted in relation to the proposals in order to ensure successful completion of the project. This is part of an overall plan to remove commercial bins from town centre locations in Ennis outside of collection periods.

The Municipal District Office is examining the possibility of using road opening licence conditions to assist in the funding of the upgrade of certain lanes in the Parnell Street Area."

The Municipal District Office has assisted the Tidy Town Committee in their efforts and projects over the years. The note refers to the river walk between Victoria Bridge and Mill Bridge. The MD Office carried out cleaning and trimming works along this section throughout 2016 using resources provided by the Outdoor Crews and the Gateway Crew. If the location was examined this week it would be noted that the Japanese Knotweed is being treated in the first of a five year treatment programme. The matter of the Nature Walk panel has been identified with the Tidy Town Committee and this is due to be replaced. The Gateway Scheme is now finished therefore the resources available to assist the Tidy Towns Committee will be significantly reduced in 2017.

Item No. 7. Correspondence

None

Item No. 8. Any Other Business

- The Mayor of Ennis and members of the Municipal District of Ennis wished the Ballyea Senior Hurling Team every success in the forthcoming All Ireland Club Hurling Final on St. Patrick's Day 2017 in Croke Park.
- Members also reminded the public about the Ennis St. Patrick's Day Parade which will take place at 11am on Friday 17th March, 2017.
- Members sought an update on the Clare Abbey Flood Relief Scheme. E. O'Dea confirmed that tender documents will be issued to contractors next week and it is hoped to have the project under way by the end of July.
- Members expressed concern over reported anti-social behaviour in the grounds of Our Lady's Hospital on the Gort Road, Ennis. Ownership of this property is to be established and the matter investigated possibly under the Derelict Site Act.
- Members requested information on Ennis Market and an update from the Market Advisory Committee meetings. The Mayor of Ennis who is the current chairperson of the Market Advisory Committee confirmed that monthly meetings are ongoing with casual traders, the business representatives and Council officials. There is a huge investment in Ennis Market and we need to ensure and encourage positive use in the following areas:-
 1. Market
 2. Car-park
 3. Events venue
 4. Other suggestions would also be considered.

The meeting then concluded.

Mayor

Meetings Administrator

Date