

Minutes of the Municipal District of Ennis Meeting held at 2pm on Wednesday, 24th June 2015, in the Council Chamber, Áras an Contae, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Present:

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

Officials: Ger Dollard, Director of Services, Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Catherine O’ Hara, Meetings Administrator & Fiona Whelan, Staff Officer.

Apologies: Cllr. T. McNamara.

Item No. 1. Minutes of the May monthly meeting held on the 2nd June 2015.

It was proposed by Cllr. Mary Howard and seconded by Cllr. Pat Daly that the Minutes of the 2nd of June 2015, monthly meeting, as circulated, be agreed and adopted.

Item No. 2. Francis Street Pedestrian Crossing – Section 38 Notice.

E. O’Dea informed the meeting that progress is being made in this project. The closing date for submissions is Friday the 26th of June, 2015, and to date no submissions had been received. This matter will go before the full County Council meeting before proceeding to tender later in the year.

Item No. 3 Community & Arts Grants 2015.

G. Dollard gave an update on the various grants already approved. The following grants were then proposed by Cllr. Paul Murphy, seconded by Cllr. Mary Howard and agreed unanimously by members:-

Clarecastle €4,000 Allocation

- Clarecastle Tidy Towns €1,000.00
- Clarecastle Regatta €1,000.00

(€1,000.00 previously approved to Clarecastle Men’s Shed & €1,000.00 to Clarecastle Community Garden.

Community & Arts Grants 2015

- Clare Peace Park Initiative – postponed
- An Sean Dún Green Community €1,200.00
- Marta Terlikowska - €1,000.00 on the condition that there is no restrictions on Clare County Council using the DVD for the promotion of the County.
- Rape Crisis Centre €500.00

Festivals & Events 2015

- Ennis Food Festival was allocated €1,000.00 from the Festival and Events Budget.

Item No. 4. Parking in Ennis.

G. Dollard referred to the various reports and suite of incentives being piloted in relation to parking in Ennis. In advance of the 2016 Budget Process, it is now proposed to hold a comprehensive review of parking which will involve the business community, to deal with (a) the provision of parking (b) availability of parking (c) price of parking.

Members suggested that a survey be carried out to assess how the current initiatives are working. We need to quantify how the initiatives are working so far and do a further review in September before the workshops take place.

No. 5 Notices of Motion

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Breen (deferred from June 2nd Meeting) was seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy

That the road from Michael Hegarty's house to Kilnamona National School be surfaced dressed for approximately 100 meters long.

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

This road will be included in the Road Works Programme for 2016.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J Flynn was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard.

Ennis as a European Centre - Phoenix Open University ; That Ennis Municipal District engage with Phoenix , twin town of Ennis , to try to become the European centre for the largest On-line University in the world. As Ireland's Information Town and with proposed improvement to Broadband that Internet based courses from Phoenix be run for European students in Ennis.

Members held a general discussion on this motion. As County Clare does not have a Third Level College and is linked to the largest open university in the world, it was suggested that a programme could be initiated through the link between Ennis and Phoenix. The Open University in Phoenix was the first of its kind and pioneered this idea. As this is a market that has not been tapped into in the past, this is an idea that can be worked on over a period of time.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr C. Colleran Molloy was seconded by Cllr. P.Daly

In light of "near-miss" vehicular collisions reported to me, that "Slow Down" and "Deer" Crossing signs be placed on the Quinville Hill Bend on the approach to Quin Village.

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

There is a low cost safety scheme proposed for this section of the R469 this year. The proposed scheme will provide additional warning signs at this location.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr M. Howard was seconded by Cllr. P.Murphy

That Ennis Municipal District carry out immediate road surface improvements on the road leading to the carpark at Ballybeg Woods. These works should include road widening at points to facilitate cars to pass and the improvement of the existing pass point.

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

This road is not included in the road works programme this year. The Council will inspect the road in conjunction with the tree felling works required in Ballybeg Wood this September.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr P. Murphy was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn

That this Municipal District/Council request that the Main Street in the Heritage Village of Clarecastle be enhanced and rejuvenated as per the proposals set-out in the 2007 Draft, CLARECASTLE VILLAGE, ACTION PLAN FOR STREETSCAPE REJUVENATION; that an application is made to and funding secured from the Department of the Environment, Community, & Local Government from the €80 million urban development fund which is designed to deliver projects that will contribute to the social, economic and environmental development of their areas.

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

Previously, such proposals would have had an opportunity for funding under the Urban & Village Renewal Programme but such a programme has not been operated for a number of years now due to restrictions on the national finances.

The Council understands that significant EU Structural Funding is available for sustainable urban development and urban regeneration. It is proposed that a bidding process will shortly be announced at national level inviting local authorities to bid for this ERDF support for projects that will contribute to the social, economic and environmental development of urban areas. An assessment can be made of the type of projects that would qualify under any such scheme when details of the scheme are available.

The Council has received a proposal from Clarecastle Tidy Towns for an initiative as part of the Public Area Enhancement Scheme 2015. The elected members of Clare County Council decided at the May monthly meeting to allocate €100,000 from the Council's own resources to this overall scheme in 2015.

Members further discussed this Notice of Motion and complimented the various Clarecastle Committees on the works that have been done to date. Gateway and Tidy Towns have aided the works done to date, however, the further enhancement of Clarecastle would benefit if a village renewal scheme was in place, as currently funding is not available.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Daly was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

I request that the Ennis Municipal District confirm the official locations where the Clare Road, Ennis begins and ends and where the Limerick Road, Ennis begins and ends between Darcy's Corner and the Clareabbey roundabout.

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

The Clare Road extends from Darcy's Corner to the boundary of Ennis and Clarecastle which is between the Clareabbey Roundabout and the Westfields Roundabout and is noted by an old mile stone. The name Clare Road derives from the road heading to the village of Clare now known as Clarecastle.

E. O’Dea to follow up with Ordinance Survey Ireland for confirmation on this matter.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr J. Breen (deferred from June 2nd Meeting) was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard.

That immediate works take place to eliminate flooding at Cusack Road, Ennis that is there for the past twenty years.

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

The Council is preparing a submission to submit to the OPW for a small flood relief scheme adjacent to this location. This submission should be with the OPW in July and the proposed works will assist the drainage of this location.

Members supported this Notice of Motion and acknowledged the positive response from E. O’Dea.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr J. Flynn was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard.

Ennis Town Team ;That Ennis Municipal District support the development of a Town Team to assist in re-vitalising Ennis in economic , social and environmental terms. Such a Town Team be set up as per REI Town Centre Framework Document.

Ger Dollard, Director of Services, replied as follows:

There has been significant engagement with representatives of Retail Excellence Ireland and representatives of the business community on initiatives that would assist in revitalizing the core retail offer in the town of Ennis. The Council has to date played its part through a variety of initiatives and projects such as the Garraunakilla Market proposal, parking incentives, participation in Promote Ennis, and involvement in the Purple Flag Working Group and so on.

The Council would hope to continue with such intensive engagement to progress specific initiative and proposals for the betterment of the town of Ennis.

Members further discussed this Notice of Motion and it was agreed by all members that Ennis needs to “up its game” to compete with on-line shopping and regional centres. We need to improve the experience of people when they visit Ennis. A Town Team would re-engage with the businesses and local communities to make our town more attractive to visitors and customers.

Town Teams are specifically set up to increase the vibrancy of the town’s streets to make it attractive to visitors with more availability of parking etc. The idea is to better the town as one single shopping centre.

Ennis has several groups already in place with the same people attending, therefore, a cautious approach must be taken. We should utilise existing structures and if this is not adequate we should introduce different ones. When the structure is correct then funding must be addressed.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton.

That this council assist and facilitate the development of a statute of the late Michael Tierney and his dog Paddy.

Ger Dollard, Director of Services, replied as follows:

It would be useful for the members of Ennis Municipal District to discuss and agree a protocol regarding the commemoration of individuals who have contributed to or have had a strong association with the town.

The proposal contained in the motion has previously been the subject of discussion at Ennis Town Council and it was the decision of that Council that it was inadvisable to commemorate individuals lest it would cause offence to others who may justifiably feel that they should also receive some civic recognition of the type referred to in the motion.

Members further discussed this Notice of Motion and while members generally acknowledged the late Michael Tierney and his dog Paddy, they were cautious on how to mark his memory. The sentiment was tentatively supported by members.

It was agreed that before this motion is progressed further, members need to decide on how to commemorate such characters.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr P. Murphy by seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

I am requesting that the Roads Department consider installing a turning bay on the Kildysart road, adjacent to Joe Mungovan and John Kelly's dwellings in Buncraggy, in order to improve road safety for traffic turning right into the road known locally as "Old Road".

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

The Council will examine the accident data on this section of road and this should confirm whether a low cost safety scheme proposal can be drafted for submission to the Department of Transport for their approval.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr P. Daly was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn

I call on the Ennis Municipal District to widen the link road reference Number L-4116-0 from Ballaghboy Cross to where it meets the motorway between the Skehannagh & Killow West roundabouts due to the serious level of heavy traffic. (Map enclosed).

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

The Council has no proposals to widen or carry out any significant improvements to the alignment of this road. If widening of this road was being considered it would have to be along the complete road from the N85 Relief Road to the R469 Quin Road as any improvement will lead to additional traffic movement. As outlined previously to Councillors the Specific Improvement Scheme would be the means of funding this type of work and the funds allocated under this scheme will be prioritized for structural improvements to masonry bridges on the regional and local road network.

Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn

That the NRA confirm the need or not for noise barriers along the M18 flyover at Knockanean to protect nearby residences.

Ann Cronin, Senior Executive Engineer, Road Design, replied as follows:

The noise maps contained in the Clare Noise Action Plan 2013 were prepared by the National Roads Authority on behalf of Clare Local Authorities at that time. This action plan was approved by Clare Co Council in July 2013.

Areas with noise levels of less than 55dB Lden and less than 45dB Lnight are not mapped because these levels are below the threshold for inclusion under the legislation.

Only locations with noise levels above the 70dB Lden and 57 dB Lnight threshold values would be considered for further assessment following production of the Noise Action Plan 2013.

In relation to the current query – there are a number of houses in the vicinity of the M18 underbridge at Knockanean which are within the noise mapping. There is one location which required assessment using the matrix assessment method. The result of that matrix assessment means that no further assessment is required.

The other locations are below the threshold values.

Noise barriers are therefore not deemed to be required in the vicinity of the M18 underbridge at Knockanean.

REPLY TO NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY CLLR T. Mc NAMARA TO THE JUNE MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ENNIS 2015

That this municipal district call on the NRA to erect noise barriers where required along the M18 and in particular along the Quinn Road flyover to protect nearby residences.

Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer, replied as follows:

The noise maps contained in the Clare Noise Action Plan 2013 were prepared by the National Roads Authority on behalf of Clare Local Authorities at that time. This action plan was approved by Clare Co Council in July 2013.

Areas with noise levels of less than 55dB Lden and less than 45dB Lnight are not mapped because these levels are below the threshold for inclusion under the legislation.

Only locations with noise levels above the 70dB Lden and 57 dB Lnight threshold values would be considered for further assessment following production of the Noise Action Plan 2013.

In relation to the current query - the location of the houses adjacent to the Quin Road Motorway Bridge is within the 55-59 dB Lden contour and the 45to 49 dB Lnight contour on the Noise Maps.

Therefore as it is below the threshold for further assessment it is unlikely that noise barriers would ever be deemed to be required in that vicinity.

A review of the current 2013 Plan will take place with a new set of noise maps to be prepared in 2017 and a new action plan to be prepared and approved during 2018. Therefore the current plan expires in 2018.

Any Other Business

Droichead na Gower Bridge

Members queried when this bridge would be re-opened. Currently the proposed date for re-opening is the 31st of July, 2015. E. O’Dea will seek further information on this matter.

Parking Charges

Members queried the status of the issue of reducing parking charges from €1.30 to €1.00 as the Chief Executive of Clare County Council had undertaken to respond on this matter.

G. Dollard informed members that as parking initiatives have already been put in place anything further will be done as part of the 2016 Budget process.

The meeting then concluded.