

**Minutes of the October 2017 Municipal District of Ennis Committee Meeting held
at 10.30am on Tuesday 10th October, 2017,
in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir,
Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

Present:

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

Officials: Brian McCarthy, A/Director of Services, Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Ann Reynolds, Administrative Officer & Fiona Whelan, Staff Officer.

Item No. 1. Minutes of the September Meeting of the Municipal District of Ennis Committee held on 12th September, 2017.

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

Item No. 2. Festivals & Events Coordinator – Presentation

Margaret O’Brien, recently appointed Festival & Events Coordinator for Ennis, outlined to members her new role which was created as a joint venture between Clare County Council and Ennis Chamber of Commerce. Margaret gave a very detailed outline of her work to date. She is already focussing on expanding existing festivals & events and plans to create new ventures into the future.

Members congratulated Margaret on her new role and volume of work done since commencing her role in July 2017. They welcomed her plans to expand on existing festivals and events and ideas into the future.

Item No. 3. Budget Allocations 2017.

Festival & Events Budget

€1,500 Halloween Parade – Festoon Lighting
Proposed by Cllr A. Norton, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed.

€2,000 Christmas Events
Proposed by Cllr. J. Flynn, seconded by Cllr. A. Norton and agreed.

Ennis MD Specific Projects

€6,000 LIT Course Certificate in Advocacy Leadership & Independent Living at Ennis Museum
Proposed by Cllr. A. Norton, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed.

€5,000 Limestone Seating at Ennis Peace Park / VMS traffic calming measures on Shanaway Road, Ennis.
Proposed by Cllr. M. Howard, seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn

Cllr. J. Flynn excused himself from the meeting during the following grant discussions.

€1,000 Gort Leamhan Safety Measures

Proposed by Cllr. M. Howard, seconded by Cllr. A. Norton and agreed.

Cllr. J. Flynn returned to the Chamber for the remainder of the meeting.

€6,000 VMS signs on Kildysart Road and Lissane Road, Clarecastle.

Proposed by Cllr. P. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. P. Daly and agreed.

Item No. 4. Notices of Motion

No. 1. NOM submitted by Cllr. James Breen was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

In order to encourage traders to use the covered Market, that the stalls be rented free of charge for the first 12 months on a first come first served basis.

Brian McCarthy, A/Director of Service, replied as follows:

In consultation with the Market Advisory Committee, work is ongoing to further develop and promote Ennis Market thereby increasing footfall into the newly developed market area. A number of successful markets and events have taken place in the market building e.g:

Monthly Biafest - on the second Saturday of each month an event is hosted to celebrate Clare's Artisan food producers. Up to twenty food producers showcase their food at these events.

"Art for All" Exhibition was held on Saturday 27th May which and a further such event is scheduled for Saturday 18th November,

The Fleadh TV broadcast from Ennis Market proved very successful and showcases the potential uses the market could accommodate.

Ennis Municipal District will continue to actively seek additional quality traders with a view to resuming a vibrant Friday market. In this regard, it is intended to seek further expressions of interest and offer incentives for a limited period of time in an effort to attract quality traders to the market.

Members further discussed this Notice of Motion and suggested that a Management Plan needs to be agreed for the Ennis Market. It was also suggested that ratepayers could be offered the building free of charge on a particular day per month for the sale/promotion of their goods. Signs need to be erected in the area and advertising needs to be considered. Other suggestions were for Antique Fairs, Record Fairs, Music Events, Clare Youth Centre uses. Members also wished to emphasise that the €1.75m spent on the project was for the entire Streetscape for the Upper Market area and that the cost of the building itself was in the region of €500,000.

B. McCarthy, A/Director of Services, acknowledged all ideas and comments from members in relation to the Ennis Market building and said that this item would be brought to the Market Advisory Committee for further consideration. We need to endorse positivity in relation to Ennis Market and there have been plenty of examples of successful events held in the building to date.

No. 2. NOM submitted by Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

That the EMD address the need for immediate traffic calming measure such as signage to "slow down" in Quin Village at the bend at the Credit Union and the longer term need to implement permanent traffic calming at this location, be it by way of a pedestrian crossing or other methods, be investigated and costed.

Eamon O'Dea, SEE, replied as follows:-

The Municipal District Office has identified to the Road Design Section that a new traffic calming layout is required on the R469 in Quin Village particularly from the Rine River Bridge to the Kilmurry/Sixmilebridge Road at Malachy's Bar. It is necessary to have a draft design layout before any cost estimates can be provided.

No. 3. NOM submitted by Cllr. Ann Norton was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

That Clare County council look at providing flood lighting for some of the grass pitches at Lees Road. During winter months, the use of these pitches is limited due to the short daylight hours. Optimum use cannot therefore be made of the facilities as it currently stands.

Brian McCarthy, A/Director of Service, replied as follows:-

In recognising the merits to such a proposal, there are two key factors to be considered. Firstly having regard to the size of the pitches and extent of illumination required, installing floodlighting around the conventional playing pitches, in addition to the capital costs, would also significantly increase the energy costs for the facility. In addition it would also result in significant increases in costs for the pitch maintenance program, which between these two overheads, currently account for 51% of our facility related expenditure.

Moreover, in the present situation during the wet winter season the pitches in their current format, usage and exposure, still provide opportunities for the grass surface and soil to be sustainably managed, maintained and available year round. On the advice of a Consultant Agronomist, when climate and weather conditions are considered and the potential increase in duration and volume of usage arising from flood lighting during inclement weather, it would ultimately result in overuse and result in poor quality pitch surfaces and potential closures as a result. The overuse of these pitches would have a very serious long-term effect on their ability to perform.

The Lees Road facility has maintained a very high standard of pitches in the last 5-6 years and rarely has to suspend play. When this does happen, it is usually a referee's decision, rather than one made by the facility. In noting the sentiment of the notice of motion, it should also be highlighted that Lees Road now possess a brand new state of the art floodlit Astro Turf surface which is FAI, GAA and IRFU compliant and is better able to cater for increased usage at very little additional cost.

No. 4. NOM submitted by Cllr. Johnny Flynn was seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy.

That an Ennis Traffic study be carried out in order to plan for the significant road infrastructure needed to be invested over the next ten years to meet current and future traffic needs.

Brian McCarthy, A/Director of Service, replied as follows:-

The Municipal District, Planning and Enterprise Development, and Roads and Transportation Departments of Clare County Council commenced the scoping of a transport and movement planning project earlier this year, to align with adoption of the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023.

The purpose of the scope is to quantify the extent of a project required is to produce a transport and mobility plan which will set out the interventions that need to be made in the town's transport and movement networks in order to accommodate the growth of Ennis town in the long-term, with an emphasis on prioritising sustainable modes of transport and movement.

The previous Traffic Plans were in 1967 with reviews in 1985 and 1995 with the last significant review carried out in the early 2000's. The provision of the M18 bypass of Ennis, the present & future traffic patterns in Ennis and more recent Design Manuals for Urban Roads and Streets need to be examined to determine the appropriate road infrastructure that will be required for the development of the town and adjacent district. The commencement of the preparation of such a plan however is subject to funds and resources.

No. 5. NOM submitted by Cllr. Paul Murphy was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard.

As a way of underlining the necessity that action is taken to improve safety for all at Clareabbey Roundabout, I am proposing that E.M.D. request An Gardaí Síochána provide a log of incidents/accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists that have occurred at Clareabbey Roundabout over the last number of years, a traffic count to indicate the volume of traffic that uses this busy piece of infrastructure and that this report is then forwarded to Mr. Michael Nolan, CEO of Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport.

No response required

Eamon O'Dea, S.E.E., supported members on this Notice of Motion and confirmed that the Council are engaging with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) on this matter. Eamon to revert to members in due course with an update.

No. 6. NOM submitted by Cllr. Mary Howard was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

In light of our excellent results and report at the Supervalve Tidy Town competition would Ennis Municipal District consider a paint scheme for private houses not unlike the initiative that has been a great success for local business owners.

Brian McCarthy, A/Director of Service, replied as follows:

The 2017 Paint scheme combined with the impact of the 2016 scheme has made a very positive contribution to the Ennis streetscape. Indeed in addition to hard work by local volunteers and property owners, the scheme contributed in part to the enhancement of the appearance of the town culminating in the achievement by Ennis of Ireland Tidiest Urban area in the Tidy Towns Award in 2017.

While the 2016 Paint Scheme focused on business premises, the 2017 scheme was in fact broadened to include private properties. In addition an annual Village Scheme provides funding to local groups across the Municipal District such as residents associations, tidy village groups and other community bodies in the pursuit of a visually upgraded built environment in

villages. Details of the scheme are published on the Council's website and advertised in the local media.

B. McCarthy, A/Director of Services, congratulated all involved with Ennis Tidy Towns on the success again in 2017.

He also indicated that the Council could revisit the idea of another paint scheme again in 2018.

Members queried why Clare County Council's Cathaoirleach had not been invited to attend the Tidy Towns Awards this year.

No. 7. NOM submitted by Cllr. Pat Daly was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard.

I request Ennis Municipal District (both staff and Councillors) to visit the streets of Ennis to identify the buildings that are derelict and closed down. Proprietors should then be identified and contacted with a view to re-opening them or improving their frontage as soon as possible.

Brian McCarthy, A/Director of Service, replied as follows:

Ennis has been named Ireland's Tidiest Large Urban Centre in the 2017 annual National Tidy Towns Competition. Indeed the adjudication report from the Tidy Towns for 2017 stated that "Travelling around Ennis by foot is a most pleasant adventure where we are treated to unexpected delights of traditional shop fronts, sculptures, historical structures, and well designed contemporary buildings." - a testament to the work of property owners, local volunteers, citizens of Ennis and the local authority.

Whilst as with any large town, there may be a small number of buildings which are unoccupied, a number of units in the town centre have re-opened in the last few weeks and work is ongoing with all stakeholders to enhance a number of properties in the area, reflecting the proactive day to day approach taken by staff of Ennis Municipal District and the Economic Development Directorate.

Members confirmed that a joint walkabout between members and staff is very helpful and the publicity surrounding this will increase the emphasis on property owners to react.

No. 8. NOM submitted by Cllr. James Breen was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

That the traffic lights in Ennis town be properly synchronised.

Eamon O'Dea, SEE, replied as follows:-

The Municipal District Office deferred works on the Kilrush Road Cross Traffic Lights so as works could be co-ordinated with ESB Networks, Broadband Operators and the Council's ducting of the traffic light loops. This work is due to commence not later than October 23rd. The new traffic control system on this set of lights will permit better movement of traffic at this junction. The Municipal District Office has sought quotes for amendments and alterations to existing controllers at O'Connell Street and Old Gaol Road to permit full synchronisation of the lights on Clare Road and Carmody Street.

No. 9. NOM submitted by Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

That a report on costings & efforts to access funding to finish the Magh Dara estate in Quin be provided, and that a 'stages' process be adopted so that if less than complete funding is accessible, that the estate be worked on in stages.

Eamon O’Dea, SEE, replied as follows:-

The largest item of work is the provision of the wearing course asphalt for the Maigh Dara roads. This work and associated adjustments of manhole covers and line marking is estimated to cost at least €90,000. The Municipal District Office has no budget provision for this work in 2017.

B. McCarthy, A/Director of Services, confirmed that he will seek funding from Central Government under a Site Resolution Funding Application specifically for unfinished estates in the County. Works on unfinished estates would be costed and prioritised.

No. 10. NOM submitted by Cllr. Johnny Flynn was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard.

That a review of the 2008 Ennis Parking Study, commissioned by the former Ennis Town Council, be carried out by the parking consultants, or other similar qualified company, in order to

- a) assess the implementation of the 2008 report’s carparking recommendations, and
- b) to provide carparking recommendations to meet the towns next 10 years carparking needs.

Brian McCarthy, A/Director of Service, replied as follows:

At the March meeting of the Municipal District, a report regarding Parking in Ennis was discussed and a number of actions were agreed by the Members following on from detailed discussions at a parking workshop with the Elected Members. These actions have been put in place and - at this stage - to address the issues raised in this notice of motion, it is preferable to wait until the outcome of the current trial ends and a review is undertaken in early 2018.

Members requested a progress report on parking spaces in Ennis. B. McCarthy outlined that a review will be done following year end and once the current trial parking arrangements are finalised.

No. 11. NOM submitted by Cllr. Paul Murphy was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard.

I am requesting an update on the likely timescale of works that is due to be undertaken at Latoon Bridge.

Ann Cronin, SEE, Road Design Office, replied as follows:-

The rehabilitation works on the bridge are anticipated to commence during November 2017 and be completed by mid 2018.

Members requested that a media campaign be put in place ahead of the commencement of these works.

No. 12. NOM submitted by Cllr. Mary Howard was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton.

Would Ennis Municipal District consider introducing a student rate for parking within the town centre?

Brian McCarthy, A/Director of Service, replied as follows:

Clare County Council has proactively introduced a number of parking incentives and arrangements in Ennis Town Centre over the last number of months for a trial period. These include reductions in the unit cost of car-parking to €1, the ability to transfer unused portions from one area of Ennis to another and a wider promotion of parking availability and options

available in public and privately operated car parks. Moreover the Council is presently undertaking a review of the current permit system to encourage permit holders and employees of businesses in the town centre area to avail of parking availability in off peak locations or other locations in the environs of the town centre area. Whilst appreciating the sentiment of the notice of motion, when taken together with the above issues, and having regard to a number of practical difficulties which may arise, it is respectfully considered that a student rate for car-parking in Ennis Town centre cannot be accommodated at this moment in time.

No. 13. NOM submitted by Cllr. Pat Daly was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

I ask Ennis Municipal District to upgrade footpaths and pavements throughout the town of Ennis.

Eamon O’Dea, SEE, replied as follows:-

The Municipal District Office carried out upgrade of footpaths on the Gort Road and Sandfield Park. Resurfacing of footpaths and provision of drop kerb access locations were completed in Hermitage following broadband ducting works. Work will be proceeding on footpath upgrades on the Tulla Road this month. It is intended that the footpath works in the roadworks programme will be completed before the end of the year. Repair of footpaths and pavements is being carried out as resources are available.

Item No. 5. Correspondence

None

Item No. 6. Any other Business.

- Members queried the accuracy of the article on the front page of a local newspaper this morning in relation to 200 homes being refused planning permission. It was confirmed that this article is not accurate.
- Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy and other members of Ennis Municipal District wished Clooney Quin Senior Hurling Team the very best of luck in the County Hurling Final on Sunday.

Cllr. Paul Murphy,
Mayor of Ennis.

Fiona Whelan
Meetings Administrator

Date