**Minutes of the December 2021**

**Meeting of the Municipal District of Ennis,**

**held at 10:30am on Tuesday 7th December 2021,**

**in Council Chamber, Aras Contae an Chláir**

**Councillors:** A. Norton, P. Daly, C. Colleran-Molloy, P. Murphy, M. Howard, M. Nestor, J. Flynn.

**Officials:** Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, Niamh O’Connor, Administrative Officer & Meetings Administrator, Lily McInerney, Staff Officer.

Apologies: Carmel Kirby, Director of Services, Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer.

Chair, Cllr. A. Norton, opened the meeting welcoming all. Leonore O’Neill read apologies received from Carmel Kirby and Eamon O’Dea who were tied up dealing with the emergency response to Storm Barra.

**Item No. 1. Minutes of the November 2021 Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis held on 2nd November 2021**

*This item was proposed by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by all Members.*

**Minutes of Budget Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis held on 9th November 2021**

 *This item was proposed by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy, seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by all Members.*

**Item No. 2. Matters Arising**

1. Cllr. Flynn acknowledged the progress of the Corovorrin traffic calming project. He also issued a reminder on an item raised under A.O.B, re footpaths at Curates Court new housing development in Roslevan.
2. Cllr. Howard recalled her previous motion for an update on traffic calming measures at Shanaway Road junction with N.85, referencing two accidents in the space of a month, and she urged that this project be given greater priority by TII. Cllr. Daly voiced support for this, stating that priority is warranted given the volume of daily traffic in an area which has seen a vast increase in population and with a hotel, golf club and GAA clubs. *It was agreed that this would be forwarded to the Road Design Office.*

**Item No. 3.**

(i) **Section 11 Roads Act 1993: Declaration of Public Road at Aughanteeroe.**

Report circulated in advance of meeting.

*This item was proposed by Cllr P. Daly, seconded by Cllr J. Flynn, and agreed by all Members.*

(ii) **Section 11 Roads Act 1993: Declaration of Public Road at Woodstock Hill, Ennis**

Report circulated in advance of meeting.

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

(iii) **Section 11 Roads Act 1993: Declaration of Public Road at Noughaval, Doora, Ennis.**

Report circulated in advance of meeting.

*This item was proposed by Cllr J. Flynn, seconded by Cllr C. Colleran-Molloy, and agreed by all Members.*

**Item No. 4 2021 GMA allocation for approval**

List of remaining 2021 councillor-specific allocations for approval.

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

**I****tem No. 5 Notices of Motion**

**No. 1 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard**

Walking Trails at Fr McNamara Park.

I regularly get representations regarding this well used local amenity. Is it possible to put a regular programme of maintenance in place as it gets very overgrown and the weeds and briars have become trip hazards.

***Anthony Considine, Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*Similar to 2020, maintainence works continue to take place to the walking trails around Fr. McNamara park. These works took place in mid November 2021 and again were completed outside of the bird nesting season which runs from 1st March to 31st August each year.*

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

Cllr. Howard commented on the walking route which had gained popularity during Covid-19 and she stressed that regular maintenance was warranted. Cllrs Flynn, Daly and Colleran-Molloy supported this motion commenting on the transformation of what was a landfill site into a valuable resource which also accommodates the camogie club, men’s shed and an aviary.

**No. 2 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. A. Norton**

Can the Ennis MD look after the maintenance and grass cutting at the roundabout at Ballymaley.

***Tommy Scott, Senior Executive Technician, responded as follows:***

*The top of the roundabout is maintained as a Biodiversity meadow.  The crop will now be cut and removed. Grass cutting has finished for the season and will recommence in April.*

*The grass cutting on the Ballymaley roundabout is carried out in a similar manner to the roundabouts on the N85 where the grass is permitted to grow and become a wild flower meadow in line with good biodiversity practices. This is part of the Tidy Town’s biodiversity programme.*

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

Cllr. Norton acknowledged the response from Tommy Scott and highlighted the fact that the location was too dangerous for Barefield Tidy Towns to take care of. This motion was supported by Cllr Colleran-Molloy and Cllr Murphy who had noted that the roundabout area looks unkempt and in need of maintenance.

**No. 3 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr.**  **J. Flynn**

Ask for an update on any progress on the Connecting and Co-Creating Ennis project  which was undertaken in 2020 by the Intelligence Unit (IU) of the School of Architecture at UL at the invitation of Director of Service, Ennis MD executive, in conjunction with the elected members to look at ; 1) Connecting ; ie re-joining parts of Ennis physically and socially and 2) Co-Creating : ie to get citizens and visitors actively involved in the development of Ennis.

***Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer replied as follows:***

*Funding was secured under Active Travel measures to advance certain Level 1 works outlined in the ‘connecting’ objectives of the Connecting and Co-Creating Ennis document.  These works will be undertaken in 2022.   The co-creating element is being advanced through a number of agencies, in co-operation with Ennis MD.*

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

Cllr. Flynn commended this very important piece of work initiated by Director of Service, Carmel Kirby and supported by senior management. He highlighted the advantageous liaison with University academics who described the project as an impressive plan to connect up over 100 protected structures via walking routes. Leonore O’Neill, SEO, confirmed that €950,000 had been secured under ‘Active Travel’ and advised works such as footpaths, pedestrian crossings and seating will be advanced in 2022 with other elements going forward for Part VIII approval.

**No. 4 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy**

That the Ennis Municipal District of Clare County Council call on the Office of Public Works (OPW) to issue the up to date maps that have been prepared to represent the Ennis South flood relief works completed at Toberteascain, so that our next County Development Plan will benefit therefrom, and not be hindered by their absence.

***Sean Lenihan, Senior Engineer, responded as follows:***

*As the Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme is not yet officially completed, the updated Flood Maps which will detail the benefiting areas post scheme, are also not yet at completion. They are currently being progressed and developed by scheme consultants Ryan Hanley and specialist hydrological consultants, Hydro Environmental. Once completed and reviewed by the Council, they will then be forwarded to the OPW for their consideration and approval.*

*Thereafter, they will be made publicly available and may be used by the Insurance Industry and indeed the Planning Authority as a tool to inform further in relation to particular locations. In terms of their impact on the County Development Plan, Members will be aware that there will be a new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment completed as part of the review process in any event. However, the aforementioned updated Flood Maps will be useful in considering any potential submissions received as part of that process over the next few months.*

*I will keep the Members aware of developments in this regard and circulate the maps to them once available.*

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

Cllr. Colleran-Molloy acknowledged the response and is confident the appropriate consultation is taking place. She stressed the urgency of having the flood defence maps available to inform the upcoming consultation phase of the County Development Plan 2023. Cllr. Murphy supported this motion stressing that residents should no longer have to wait to avail of appropriate insurance rates based on these maps. Cllr. Daly reminded the meeting of the significant costs of flood defence works and its importance for zoning of lands for development. Cllr. Flynn also supported stating that the level of investment should now be delivering the benefit to the community.

**No. 5 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Murphy**

That Ennis Municipal District follow the lead of Limerick City and County Council in rolling out the use of the SpaceFinder app, which is designed to help disabled drivers find parking spaces.

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

*Ennis MD have previously examined the implementation of a similar system. Unfortunately, a source of funding was not available to implement the solution.*

*If a source of funding is identified, Ennis MD can progress this initiative.*

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

Cllr. Murphy briefed on the benefit of this scheme to disabled drivers and highlighted how this could be another component of the Ennis mobility plan. He recommended consideration be given to use of GMA funding or other to follow up on this. This motion was supported by Cllr. Flynn commenting that it would be good to be second only to Limerick in embracing this technology. Cllr. Norton, in support, commended the recent enhancement of disabled parking in Ennis, recommending that this scheme be rolled out throughout the county.

**No. 6 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Daly**

I ask Ennis MD to install a filter right arrow on the traffic lights at the Clare Road (adjacent to the tyre centre) to accommodate traffic coming from the Limerick Road side who presently are finding it very difficult to turn right in the Gaol Road.

***Ian Chaplin, Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*The Ennis MD recently installed two hatch boxes at this junction to assist access from Clare Road Tyres and the hatch box at the Captain Macs Cross side of the junction should assist the traffic flow as buses will not be obstructed when turning left out of Old Goal Road. The Ennis MD are discussing the proposed filter light with the Road Design Office so as divers coming from Captain Macs Cross are certain that the oncoming traffic has stopped and it is safe to turn right into Old Goal Road.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr Daly welcomed the response, stressing the ongoing difficulty for drivers turning right at this junction and that the upgrade will be a significant enhancement of Gaol Road as a convenient link road on the outskirts of town. Cllr. Norton voiced support for this motion.

**No. 7 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Nestor**

This motion is requesting Clare County Council to replace the timber fencing at the top of Cahercalla Hill as it's in a poor condition.

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

*The work will be included in the schedule for the Ennis MD works crews.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. A Norton and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr M. Nestor acknowledged the response and stated that he looked forward to the works being carried out. Cllrs Norton and Murphy supported this motion.

**No. 8 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard**

Riverbank at Lenabeg

Is it possible to cut back vegetation, trees and bushes along this riverbank?

It is currently badly overgrown and the residents fear vermin are nesting there plus this area is being used to dump rubbish.

***Tommy Scott, Senior Executive Technician, responded as follows:***

*The riverbank is left to look after itself and provide a natural boundary to the river edge. It provides a habitat for all sorts of biodiversity and wildlife and is fenced off from the development.*

*A river walk was built along this area as part of the development. It forms a fitting natural finish along the interface between the development and the River Fergus.*

*This area is not in charge. Queries regarding the dumping of rubbish on this private land should be addressed to the Environment section who will engage with the owner of the lands.*

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

Cllr Howard commended the great work of the residents in keeping the estate in good shape but that they had hoped to get some assistance in maintaining the riverbank area. She acknowledged the response. Cllr. Murphy also supported this motion.

**No. 9. Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. A. Norton**

Can the Ennis MD work with the Gardai and the Colaiste Muire Secondary School to look at a traffic management plan for the College Road area.

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

*The Ennis MD will examine the location with the Gardai to explore possible solutions. It should be noted that College Road is a residential road where a number of the houses do not have front driveways, therefore at peak school times there is insufficient road width on the College Road between the School and Sandfield Park to cater for two way traffic and car parking.*

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

Cllr. Norton explained that student drop-off and pick-up is problematic for traffic flow on this relatively narrow road. She stated that the increasing student population throughout the district has exacerbated traffic congestion in an area that is predominantly residential with an elderly population. Cllrs Daly and Flynn pointed out that a solution needs to be found to mitigate the risk of emergency services not being able to gain access.

**No. 10 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn**

Ask that the planters and bollards on the segregated cycle way along Clonroadmore (front of  St Flannans to Kilrush road ) be adapted where required to ensure that drivers exiting estates and private houses can do so without crossing the centre line onto oncoming traffic.

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

*The Road Design office have confirmed that all the junctions comply with DMURS. On the tighter junction radius the driver has to approach the junction square to the main road and then rotate to the left. If the driver proceeds to cut the corner they will either mount the kerb (hit the bollard) or have to cross the centre line to turn left. The purpose of the tighter radii is to reduce speed of vehicles.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr. A. Norton and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr Flynn expressed concern regarding the difficulty for some residents exiting driveways, particularly to take a left turn and that it seemed that the narrow road was the issue here. He requested that this item be followed up on for a better solution for residents and road users in the area. Cllr Norton voiced her support and Cllr Murphy suggested Cllr Flynn follow this matter up with the engineers involved, to seek a solution in the longer term.

**No. 11 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy**

Due to health & safety concerns with ongoing parking on the footpath approaching the Ballybeg Road entrance to the Ballybeg Woods, that a review of the area be undertaken to address the situation which is preventing pedestrians, pedestrians with child buggies, and wheelchair users from using the footpath, thereby forcing them to walk on the road.

***Barry Conway, Executive Engineer Replied as follows:***

*The Ennis MD is forwarding a proposal to the Gardai for the installation of double yellow lines at the entrance to Ballybeg Woods to prevent the inappropriate parking on the footpath. The double yellow lines will be installed following the consultation with the Gardai.*

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

Cllr Colleran Molloy welcomed the response and added that the extension by the Council of the footpath to beyond Radharc na hInse estate was a huge benefit to the amenity as it covered the most hazardous part of the route. The motion was well supported by Members and it was agreed that all available measures should be considered to promote use of the car park and prevent opportunities to park on footpaths. Cllr Daly was supported by Cllr Flynn in his suggestion that the existing car park is extended and that signage be erected to promote better use.

**No. 12 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Murphy**

Re Clareabbey Roundabout and freedom of movement/Smart Travel

Further to numerous previous representations on this issue I am requesting a progress update from the roads department in relation to the last response, from February of this year when I was told that a preliminary design report focussing on the preferred option is required to be submitted to T.I.I. before final approval is granted. What is the current status of the process? I am also requesting that a pedestrian and cyclist overpass is now designed and funding sought for under the next round of Active Travel funding.

***John Gannon, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*The TII have advised me that they are currently carrying out trials on a similar roundabout in Kerry the outcomes of which will inform the design process in relation to Clareabbey Roundabout, also, Clare County Councils Design has been forwarded to their active travel team for comment and review.*

(b) Could I request a further response to the second part of the motion re design of an overpass/pedestrian and cycle bridge please.

***John Gannon, Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*The TII are reviewing the current design which incorporates pedestrian/cycle crossing points. The TII are now the Approving Authority for greenway projects having taken over this role from the Department of Transport with effect from 20th September 2021, they are also the approving authority for the National Cycling Strategy. In that context I have submitted a high-level ambition to develop a cycling/walking infrastructure that will ultimately link Lees Road Sports & Amenity Park in Ennis via Claureen Roundabout & Clareabbey Roundabout through Clarecastle and Newmarket on Fergus to Shannon Town. Cycling/walking & transportation infrastructure on the N85 from Claureen to Loughville will also be included.*

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

Cllr P. Murphy, whilst acknowledging the response, reiterated frustration that this project is taking so long to reach implementation stage. He stated that it is now some 14 years since the roundabout was completed and the timeframe is difficult to understand particularly with ‘Active Travel’ as a national priority. Cllr Norton, in support, stated that the roundabout was a hindrance to students opting to cycle to school. Cllrs Colleran-Molloy commended Cllr Murphy for continuing to prioritise this issue and Cllr Daly added that Clareabbey is one of the busiest roundabouts in the county and warrants prioritisation.

**No. 13 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Nestor**

This motion is requesting an update from Clare County Council on the low cost road safety works at Ballybrody, Toonagh.

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

*The section of the Corofin Road from Toonagh Stores towards Ryan’s Quarry is listed on the three-year roadworks programme with work scheduled to commence in 2022. The Ennis MD office will examine the approach to the narrower section of the road from the Ryan’s Quarry side to provide appropriate signs and road markings cautioning drivers of the concealed entrance.*

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

Cllr Nestor acknowledged the response, adding that residents in the area would very much welcome any improvement works that will be forthcoming to remedy the issue. Cllr. Colleran-Molloy supported this motion and Cllr Howard added that as a regular user of this road she can clearly see the need for safety improvement.

**No. 14 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Daly**

I request Ennis MD to install 2 signs “Children Playing” at each end of the road, at the St. Flannan’s College side of Collins Park Gallows Hill, as drivers are avoiding the newly installed speed bumps on the main road, and are instead using the local link road where children play outside their houses.

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

*Signage will be erected at Collins Park.*

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

Cllr Daly acknowledged the response and thanked Eamon O’Dea for this outcome to his motion. Cllrs Colleran-Molloy Murphy also supported this motion.

**Item No. 6 Correspondence**

None.

**Item No. 7 Any Other Business**

1. Chair A. Norton reminded the Members that the Clare County Development Plan was going out to public consultation on the 10th of December, and encouraged the public to view same, and make a submission where appropriate.
2. Members joined Chair A. Norton in acknowledging the success of Ennis Tidy Towns in the national ‘Tidy Towns Awards’ and she congratulated all community groups and volunteers for their dedication. She acknowledged the work of volunteers, the Council’s gardening section and roads outdoor crews.

Cllr. Norton also acknowledged other Clare towns for their dedication to this initiative during a challenging year. Cllr. Howard added the win was well deserved and made reference to previous years where Ennis was beaten by just a point or two.

(iii) Cllr. Norton congratulated Ennis on being a finalist in the Retail Excellence Ireland “Friendliest Town 2021” award and would be partaking again in 2022.

(iv) Cllr. Norton acknowledged the work of staff working through ‘Storm Barra’ and wished them well.

(v) Cllr. Norton acknowledged her fellow Councillors and the staff of Ennis Municipal District for support and hard work over the last year and wished all a very happy Christmas. She issued a reminder to everybody to continue to support local businesses during the festive season.

(vi) Cllr. Colleran-Molloy sought clarity on the protocol for on-line meetings and whether there will be an established “blended” model, so that it is clear to members of the public that they are still welcome to attend. Leonore O’Neill, SEO, explained that the Council follows public health guidelines on this matter and that the public can make contact with Ennis Municipal District and will be facilitated to log on to on-line meetings.

(vii) Cllr Colleran-Molloy and Cllr Murphy commended the public realm works being completed in Clarecastle, stating that the village was transformed by paint schemes and new car parking.

(viii) Members jointed Cllr P. Daly in extending sympathy to the family of the late Hugh O’Donnell who was the first secretary of Eire Og GAA Club in 1952, a great player who had won many championships. May he rest in peace.

(viii) Cllr Howard recommended that businesses such as banks and retail who now run their businesses on-line only, be encouraged to put alternative plans in place to accommodate elderly people who may not operate in this way.

(ix) In response to Cllr Daly’s query, Leonore O’Neill explained that €50k was secured under the ORIS project development funding for Ballyallia Lake Enhancement Scheme. She stated it is the intention to lodge a planning application to An Bord Pleanala in Q3 2022.

(x) Leonore O’Neill thanked Members for their dedication throughout the year and she acknowledged the great success of Ennis Tidy Towns Committee. She wished all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

(ix) A reminder was issued that the January meeting of Ennis Municipal District is to take place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 11th January 2022 and in line with current Government guidelines, will be held on-line.

The Meeting ended at 12:15pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Mayor of Ennis

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Meetings Administrator

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_