**Minutes of the January 2021**

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

**held at 10.30am on Tuesday 19th January 2021,**

**online via ms teams**

**Online:**

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

**Officials:** Carmel Kirby,Director of Services, Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, Niamh O Connor, Administrative Officer & Meetings Administrator, Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Lily McInerney, Staff Officer.

**Item No. 1. Minutes of the December 2020 Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis Committee held on 2nd December at 10.30am**

*This item was proposed by Cllr. P. Daly, seconded by Cllr. A. Norton and agreed by all members.*

**Item No. 2. Matters Arising**

The members sought an up to date response from the Planning Department on the planning status of Homesavers stores at Ballymaley. It was agreed that Ennis Municipal District would seek an urgent update from the Planning section.

**Item No. 3. Section 38 Road Traffic Act 1994: Proposed Traffic Calming Measures: Pedestrian “Puffin” Crossing at Aughanteeroe, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

*This Item was proposed by Cllr. A. Norton, seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn and agreed by all members.*

Only one submission was received, from An Garda Siochana, which was supportive of the proposed crossing. The pedestrian crossing was welcomed by Cllr. A. Norton and Cllr. J. Flynn as a positive safety measure for the Educate Together School, Cois na hAbhna Music Centre, and for residents on this approach road.

The Section 38 Kilnamona agenda item was deferred to the February 2021 meeting

**Item No. 4. Clare Tourism Advisory Forum**

The Tourism section requested one elected member nominee from EMD to become a member of this forum. The group’s primary objective is the oversight and delivery of the Clare Tourism Strategy. It was agreed that a postal ballot would be organized and the item moved to the February meeting.

**Item No. 5 Notice of Motions**

**No. 1 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. A. Norton**

Can Ennis MD look at putting lighting along the Ballybeg Road. As it is a very family friendly area and so many people are availing of the woods also.

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

*It is planned to commence footpath works on Ballybeg road in early 2021. As part of these works, provision will be made for the future installation of public lights. As there is no current funding designated for the extension of the public lighting network, a suitable funding source will need to be identified in order to proceed with the installation of public lights on completion of the footpath.*

*Seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy and agreed by all members.*

Members voiced support for this motion and the benefits of lighting this well utilised footpath. The work of the outdoor team in widening and clearing the footpath was commended. Eamon O’ Dea SEE clarified that the footpath works in the area is deferred, in line with current level 5 lockdown, but that it remains a priority. It was clarified with respect to the installation of public lighting, a funding source would need to be identified, as the revenue budget allocation only covers the replacement of existing lighting with LED lighting.

**No. 2 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard**

Droichead na Gabhar

The volume of traffic is constantly increasing along Drumcliffe Road, the traffic is often speeding and I request better signage as to the speed limit as well as rumble strips / speed bumps to facilitate the slowing down of traffic.

This area has been causing concern from both residents and vulnerable road users as I regularly receive observations and complaints on health and safety grounds.

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

*The Speed limit on Drehidnagower bridge is 30kmph and new signage has been erected in recent days to indicate this. It is also proposed to put additional “SLOW” road markings on the road when weather conditions allow. The use of rumble strips is not promoted in residential areas as they tend to be quite loud and can cause their own issues particularly at night time. With additional signage and road markings in place, the MD office will arrange a traffic survey and if it is apparent that a problem persists, the information will be forwarded to the traffic corps of An Gardaí Siochana.*

*Seconded by Cllr. M. Nestor and agreed by all Members*.

Cllr. M. Howard reiterated the ongoing concern of local residents and highlighted the approach from the bridge towards Lees Road. Cllr. M. Nestor suggested a yield system akin to Inch Bridge, or a stop/go lighting system could be installed. Leonore O Neill, SEO advised that an application for funding to design and secure the necessary planning consents for the provision of safe pedestrian access on the Drehidnagower Road from Watery Road to Drumcliff Road including access over the River Fergus was made under the ‘Active Travel Fund’ in July 2020 which was unsuccessful. This area remains a priority, and Ennis MD intends to again apply for the project under the 2021 Active Travel Fund.

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

Ennis Town Team

I refer to my previous notice of motions on this subject during the last Council and again ask that the Ennis Municipal District lead to support the development of a Town Team to assist in re-vitalising Ennis in economic, social and environmental terms. To do so would put into action Clare County Council County Development Plan 2017-2023 Development Plan Objective CDP 16.3; “It is an objective of Clare County Council: to explore the possibility and potential benefits of establishing a “town team in Ennis town centre.....”

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

*Since the adoption of the previous County Development Plan, a review of the operating structures within Clare County Council was undertaken, and a decision was taken to assign a Senior Executive Officer (SEO) to each of the 4 Municipal Districts. The SEO is responsible for leading and managing the staff and resources in the Municipal District while co-ordinating and developing the activity both within and between the four Municipal Districts. One of the key responsibilities is to ensure the implementation of Clare County Council’s social, rural, physical and economic strategies within the Municipal District in partnership with key stakeholders and to build capacity and animation across all business activity within the MD.*

*Town Teams area generally an umbrella committee of representatives from a town’s community sector, business groups and enterprise bodies which are supported by agencies involved in rural and urban development. They provide a collaborative approach to identifying priorities within towns and planning for a towns future.*

*The concept of a ‘Town Team’ has been recently trialled through the Temporary Covid-19 Ennis Town Centre Mobility Plan Stakeholders Group, and through enhanced public and community engagement in a number of key projects. The Municipal District will continue to seek to work in partnership with all key stakeholders across the MD area and utilise the town teams model where opportunities arise.*

*Seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr Flynn thanked Leonore O Neill for her detailed response and outlined his research on the concept of ‘Town Teams’. Members expressed general support for the motion, noting that Cllr Flynn was seeking an exploration of the merits of creating a ‘Town Team’, whilst a number of members queried how it may impact on the work of the elected members as a team. Carmel Kirby, Director of Services, commended the research and noted the compelling discussion around same. The Director stated that in her experience, these groups work well when they are established for a specific task.

It was agreed the ‘Towns Team’ concept would be explored, in particular the town teams in County Clare and County Roscommon, and that Ennis Municipal District would draft a report on same.

**No. 4 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Nestor**

This motion requests that roads in the Hermitage area of Ennis be included in the 2021 roadworks programme.

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

*The roads in Hermitage will be examined in January and considered for inclusion in the 2021 Schedule of Municipal District Works.*

*Seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. M. Nestor thanked the Executive for their response and outlined particulars of the issue, uneven road and pavement surfaces on what is essentially an elderly residential area. Members welcomed the response and Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy highlighted that this type of concrete surfacing is prevalent in older estates like St. Michael’s Villas. Eamon O’ Dea explained that these concrete surfaces are more expensive to remedy.

**No. 5 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy**

That an update be given on efforts made or underway to acquire land to address the narrow road in Keevagh, Quin Road.

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

*The Road Design Office (RDO) has carried out topographical surveys of this road element, including relevant lands, on the R469 in Keevagh during the summer period 2020 and concept designs are being considered.*

*This type of road improvement project is funded by the Department of Transport (DoT) under a particular grant allocation namely ‘Specific Improvement Grants’. The DoT focus for the forthcoming year is towards Active Travel Initiates. Support for specific improvements grants will be subject to funding availability.*

*The RDO will progress design options for Keevagh to a stage that a project is ‘Shovel Ready’ as and when funding becomes accessible.*

*Seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy and Cllr. P. Murphy agreed that this Notice of Motion could be dealt with along with Notice of Motion No. 11 from Cllr. P. Murphy, as both related to the same matter. Both Councillors acknowledged the response from John Gannon and highlighted the hazards of the area for cycling or driving.

**No. 6 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn**

I ask for update on recommendations of the Ennis UDC commissioned Ennis Main Drainage Plan 2001 (for Wastewater and Stormwater) which has for example a waste-water treatment capacity target of 50,000 pe by 2025 (currently circa 37,000).

The update might also at a high level consider the following (1) the Southern Assembly RSES allocates 30% population growth figure and related employment growth for Ennis; (2) the Drainage infrastructure needed re Ennis 2040.

***Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, responded as follows:***

*Clare County Council are no longer a Water Services Authority following the establishment of Irish Water in 2013. The local authority no longer has a legislative basis or powers to provide municipal water/wastewater services infrastructure. That function resides solely now with Irish Water. We have forwarded this Notice of Motion to Irish Water and are awaiting a reply.  
  
Seconded by Cllr. M. Nestor and agreed by all Members.*

Whilst acknowledging that Clare County Council no longer has authority over water and wastewater, Cllr. J. Flynn emphasised the significant body of work delivered in the 2001 ‘Main Drainage Plan’, by the then Ennis UDC as well as the significant investment secured. He voiced concern regarding the inadequacy of current water and waste water systems and the lack of a back-up scheme in the event of Drumcliffe being contaminated.

It was agreed the Executive would write to Irish Water for an update on Ennis waste water, sewerage and ground water systems, to include progress against the 2001 recommendations.

 **No. 7 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Murphy**

"That Ennis Municipal District and the County Arts officer liaise with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media with a view to exploring all avenues regarding the unique opportunity that Ennis has regarding it's links to Daniel O'Connell," the Liberator". This could be done by promoting Ennis as "Daniel O'Connell's town" or "The Town of Daniel O'Connell", running a festival based on the theme of O'Connell, screening films about O'Connell on the gable wall adjacent to the O'Connell monument on a daily or weekly basis thereby increasing potential visits to Ennis, and engaging with a group like the 21eme Regiment de Ligne that could re-enact scenes associated with O'Connell".

*Seconded by Cllr C. Colleran-Molloy and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr P. Murphy briefed the group on the historical, tourism and social benefits of this initiative. All members individually voiced support for this proposal. Carmel Kirby, DOS added that the area around ‘The Height’ would be an appropriate location, if Clare County Council are successful in securing URDF funding for same.

Members requested that a Daniel O Connell festival / themed Town be explored in conjunction with Promote Ennis, Glor and other stakeholder initiatives.  It was agreed that the Municipal District will form a team to examine the request and formulate a proposal for discussion with Ennis Municipal District and Promote Ennis.

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

This motion requests Clare County Council to carry out repair works on footpaths in the Willow park estate, Watery road and also to address the issue of water ponding in the estate.

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

*The footpaths in Willow Park will be examined by the Municipal District and where necessary included in our 2021 SMDW. The surface water drainage network in the estate will also be examined.*

*Seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. M. Nestor welcomed the response and highlighted the failure of various utility companies to reinstate level surfacing, resulting in ponding. Eamon O’Dea, SEE explained that rather it was high quality finish by the utility companies involved in sealing the trenches that stopped the water dissipating. He agreed to examine the issue.

**No. 9 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Daly**

I request Ennis Municipal District to remove the heavy stones at Ballyalla lake as they are an eyesore (a local farmer is prepared to store them if required in the future)

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

*The removal of these rocks will be included in our 2021 schedule of Municipal District works.*

Cllr P. Daly had noted the unsightly appearance of the boulders and in line with current initiatives to enhance this popular leisure area, he had requested their removal. A lengthy discussion ensued on this motion with many contributions made. Cllr C. Colleran-Molloy voiced concern that in fact some of the boulders had been removed and whether they should be reinstated. The weight of argument generally fell on the greater need to disincentivise illegal encampments at this sight. Discussion continued on the legislative powers available to remove such encampments.

In light of the concerns raised, Cllr. P. Daly requested that the Notice of Motion be withdrawn at this time.

*Notice of Motion No. 9 withdrawn.*

It was agreed that the boulders which had been temporarily removed to be used elsewhere would be reinstated, or replaced with a suitable alternative at the Ballyallia amenity.

It was agreed to ask the Roads Section to report back on their current legislative powers to effectively remove illegal encampments on public roads.

**No. 10 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy**

That the centre line road markings on the Quin Road especially from LYNCH’s Cross to Ennis be renewed earliest, as they are very faint and may pose a danger.

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

*The road markings on the R-469 will be examined by the MD office and any improvements deemed necessary will be included in the 2021 SMDW.*

*Seconded by Cllr. P. Murphy and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy thanked Eamon O’Dea for response.

**No. 11 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P Murphy**

Re Road Design of R469 Keevagh Quarry to Sheehan's dwelling on the approach to Quin (further to my notice of motion of May 2017) I am requesting the following;

i) Has the detailed design of a new road alignment been concluded?

                                              ii) Have relevant landowners been spoken to/consulted?

                                              iii) That it be prioritised as a matter of urgency.

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

*The Road Design Office (RDO) has carried out topographical surveys of this road element, including relevant lands, on the R469 in Keevagh during the summer period 2020 and concept designs are being considered.*

*This type of road improvement project is funded by the Department of Transport (DoT) under a particular grant allocation namely ‘Specific Improvement Grants’. The DoT focus for the forthcoming year is towards Active Travel Initiates. Support for specific improvements grants will be subject to funding availability.*

*The RDO will progress design options for Keevagh to a stage that a project is ‘Shovel Ready’ as and when funding becomes accessible.*

*Seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. P. Murphy and Cllr C. Molloy agreed to discuss this Motion together with Cllr. Colleran-Molloy’s earlier Notice No. 5.

**No. 12 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Howard**

Tobarteascain

I have received complaints that a newly installed speed bump is too high and may be unsafe. Can this be addressed?

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

*This issue has been addressed by the contractor working on the Ennis South Flood Scheme. Adjustments have been made to the entry/exit gradients of this ramp.*

*Seconded by Cllr C. Colleran-Molloy and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr. M. Howard acknowledged and thanked the Roads team for their positive response.

**No. 13 Notice of Motion by Cllr. P Daly**

I ask Ennis Municipal District to acquire part of a front garden in order to widen the road at Cloughleigh Road/ Claureen so that traffic can flow freely.

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

*There are three property boundaries that seem to affect the potential for two-way traffic and foot/cycle path at Cloughleigh Road.   
  
A yield system facilitating one-way traffic at any given time is currently in operation at this location in conjunction with the foot/cycle path.   
  
One of the properties is currently being developed and the boundary is being set back as part of that development.   
  
A survey will have to be carried out to ensure that setback on the other properties will achieve the desired two-way traffic system and foot/cycle path.   
  
The derelict sites team are currently engaging with the property owners of one of the other properties with a view to organising setback if agreement can be reached and funding is available.   
  
The effect on the final property will then be assessed as part of the survey and design.*  
*It is the intention of the Ennis MD to facilitate two-way traffic and a foot/cycle path at this location if agreements and funding permit.*

*Seconded by Cllr. M. Nestor and agreed by all Members.*

Cllr P. Daly thanked Ian Chaplin for the response received. He reminded the meeting that there are regular traffic hold-ups at this location and reiterated the value of acquiring the front garden space to expand and improve road traffic flow at this area.

**Item No. 6 Correspondence**

A response was received from the Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment, Leo Varadkar to a letter from EMD requesting *his department discuss with the IDA, the feasibility of Clare Technology Park as a location in the next phase of planning and development of Technological Buildings.* The letter which was read out by Leonore O’Neill, stated that the Clare Techncology Park is not currently under consideration as a location. Cllr. J. Flynn thanked Leonore O’Neill for taking this forward and expressed disappointment at the outcome. He urged Members to continue to use all the political will at their disposal to secure this type of investment for Ennis.

**Item No. 7 Any Other Business**

Condolences:

Members expressed their condolences to John and Philip Colleran, cousins of Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy, on the recent passing of their mother. May she rest in peace.

Members expressed their condolences on the death of Margaret McMahon, Doora. She was described as a great lady who was very much involved in both the Parish Church and the GAA. May she rest in peace.

Cllr. P. Daly requested an update on the proposed Data Centre at Toureen which he said had potential to attract several hundred jobs. *Ennis Municipal District agreed to request an update.*

Cllr. J. Flynn congratulated Cllrs. Nestor and Colleran-Molloy on their membership of the DAC for Ennis 2040.

Cllr. J. Flynn requested that the ‘Tourism Strategy’ be included in the February meeting of Ennis Municipal District.

*EMD agreed to request the tourism officer to attend a briefing with the Councillors.*

Cllr. J. Flynn commented the negative aspects of Brexit, particularly the loss of London Heathrow as a connectivity hub for this region.

*It was agreed that Councillors would highlight this issue at a national level.*

Cllr. J. Flynn commented on the increased anti-social behaviour during lockdown which had affected some healthcare workers returning home after late shifts. He stated that incidents of car break-ins were increasing, and that this issue was of concern for elderly residents.

*Executive will relay the issues raised to the Joint Policing Committee.*

Cllr. C. Colleran-Molloy requested clarification on the etiquette for online statutory meetings and whether it was appropriate to have cameras switched off. A discussion ensued around difficulties experienced by some persons with connectivity and broadband, and no consensus was reached.

*It was agreed that Ennis Municipal District will raise the discussion with Corporate Services.*

Cllr. P. Murphy voiced concern regarding the pressure on Recycle Bring Banks in Clarecastle due to the ‘Active Ennis’ site being closed.

*It was agreed Executive would consult with Environment Section and report back.*

Cllr. P. Murphy raised concerns regarding the unauthorized development of a shed at a Council owned property in College Grove, requesting that Estate Management and Planning departments would take action to remedy the development.

*Executive to request planning and housing to provide an update on this unauthorised development.*

Cllr. A. Norton expressed appreciation for the efforts of the staff during the Christmas season.

Chair Cllr P. Murphy closed the meeting by wishing good health to all, and recommending a continued perseverance in maintaining personal safety during the Covid-19 pandemic national lockdown.

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

Mayor of Ennis

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

Meetings Administrator

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