**Minutes of the September 2021**

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

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

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

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

**Officials:** Carmel Kirby, Director of Services, Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, Niamh O’Connor, Administrative Officer & Meetings Administrator, Barry Conway, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Lily McInerney, Staff Officer, Mairead Griffin, Assistant Staff Officer.

Apologies: Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer.

Chair, Cllr. A. Norton, opened the meeting welcoming all.

**Item No. 1. Minutes of the July 2021 Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis held on 6th July 2021**

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

**Item No. 2. Matters Arising**

1. Cllr. J. Flynn referenced the Notice of Motion in relation to ‘Clean Air Strategy’ voicing a concern that the manganese in the water in Sixmilebridge could be connected to the bauxite residue storage at the Aughinish Alumina refinery plant, 25km south west of Ennis.
2. With reference to the awaited Corovorrin traffic calming measures, Cllr J. Flynn highlighted the hazardous location of current pedestrian crossings both at Lifford and Tulla Road, with cyclists and scooters using footpaths at these locations.
3. Cllr. M. Howard referenced her Notice of Motion No. 7 at July Meeting which had requested festoon lighting for Lifford. Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, responded that the funding from Failte Ireland for this grant had been expended and that requests for additional funding had not been forthcoming. Cllr. Howard reminded the meeting that costings were to be provided for festoon lighting in Lifford so that Members could consider whether to fund through their GMA. Costings for festoon lighting at Lifford to be provided to Members.

**Item No. 3.**

(i) **Section 183: Proposed Disposal of Property (by way of lease) to Glór Irish Music Centre Ltd.**

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

(ii) **Section 183: Disposal of lands at Gort Road Industrial Estate, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

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

(iii) **Section 183: Disposal of lands at Dulick, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare**

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

Department of Education to purchase permanent site for ‘Ennis Educate Together’ school. Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, clarified that the Department has yet to fully commit to the purchase. Cllr. J. Flynn questioned whether a condition could have been attached for provision of a playground. Carmel Greene responded that as this is a county-wide Section 183 disposal of lands, no planning conditions can be applied.

(iv) **Section 38: Ballybeg Footpath works**

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

**(v) Section 38: Barefield Village Renewal**

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

**(vi) Section 38: Clarecastle Traffic Calming (a) Roche clearing, and (b) additional parking at Church Drive.**

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

Cllr P. Murphy welcomed the proposed works and added that further upgrades to the centre and parking facilities would be needed in the longer term. He added, the fact that the IDA cannot plan for a replacement enterprise venture at the Roche site until it is fully cleared, highlights the importance of getting these works commenced at the earliest opportunity.

**(vii) Section 38: Accessibility works in Ennis Town (including EMHA Friendship Seating at Abbey Street Car Park).**

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

The work of the EMD technical team was commended for this initiative.

**Item No. 4 GMA Councillor-Specific Allocation – Update**

Members were presented with their 2021 GMA specific allocations current balances. Members were requested to outline how they wish their remaining balances to be allocated.

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

**Item No. 5 Notices of Motions**

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

The pedestrian crossing on Francis Street opposite the Irish Wheelchair shop is faded and needs repainting.

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

*The crossing point at this location is an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing. The black & white markings had previously been removed as they were not appropriate for the location and replaced with “look left/right” markings as an aid to pedestrians. These markings will be inspected by the MD staff and scheduled for refreshing if necessary.*

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

Cllr. Howard questioned if a pedestrian crossing could be considered given the level of retail activity and student footfall and particularly with the new library on the way. Barry Conway, A/Senior Executive Engineer responded that this could be given consideration in the future, in light of future crossings to accommodate Glór/new library.

**No. 2 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn**

Flooding at Aughavadda & Gaurus Bridges.

Following historic flooding of R352 Tulla Road and previous river flow blockages/restrictions at Aughavadda bridge and concern about the river flow capacity at the downstream Gaurus bridge I ask that Ennis Municipal District immediately provide screens to prevent blockages resulting in restriction of flow of the Ballymachill river at these bridges.

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

*The MD roads crews will arrange to inspect and carry out maintenance/clearance works at both the upstream and downstream sides of both bridges prior to the winter months and arrange to implement a regular inspection schedule throughout the winter. The installation of screens is a matter that needs careful consideration as they can often times create bigger issues than they resolve. This is of particular concern in times of high intensity rainfall which can mobilise large quantities of relatively small debris which can clog the screens. There have been recent examples of this happening in Donegal and Dublin with devastating consequences.*

It was agreed to discuss this Notice of Motion together with Notice of Motion No. 8.

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

Cllr. Flynn referenced historical blockages and significant flooding in 2009 and the obvious inadequacy of the bridge adding that wrought iron screens would be a protection measure. Cllr. Howard, in support, commented how locals take it upon themselves to clear debris after heavy rainfall and that regular monitoring was essential. Barry Conway, A/Senior Executive Engineer, stated that monitoring and maintenance would be scheduled but again urged caution on the use of screens for reasons outlined in his response.

**No. 3 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. A. Norton**

In September it is World Alzheimer's month, Research has shown that exercise is good for people with dementia. Moving ensures that the mental deterioration slows down. You improve your thinking skills, restlessness, passivity and your blood circulation with exercise.   
Multi-person bikes offer people the opportunity to move together. With the Van Raam [Fun2Go side-by-side tandem](https://scanner.topsec.com/?d=1293&u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.vanraam.com%2Fen-gb%2Four-bikes%2Fside-by-side-tandems%2Ffun2go&r=show&t=316d4fdd7cafa0f8326c574a77ed3090b960407f) you can sit comfortably next to each other while enjoying a great bike ride. Because you sit next to each other, the supervisor can keep a close eye on the co-driver and assess whether he / she is still having fun or is tired. If the co-driver gets tired, the [foot plate/step option](https://scanner.topsec.com/?d=1293&u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.vanraam.com%2Fen-gb%2Foptions-en%2Fstep&r=show&t=58f06afc082c435f803b3f6d289b0dbb66838693) can also be used or the Fun2Go side-by-side tandem can be put in another position, so that the co-driver doesn't have to pedal along. In this way, the caregiver and patient can enjoy a carefree bicycle ride and the person with dementia gets enough exercise at the same time. Take a pleasant day out, for example, and stop in between for a cup of coffee, with a piece of cake.

Can Ennis MD look at the possibility of investing in these as a way of promoting inclusion around our beautiful town.

***No response required****.*

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

Cllr. Norton briefed the meeting that this item seemed timely in light of the upcoming new ‘Mobility Plan’ and the recent launch of ‘Ennis Age-Friendly town’ and that she wanted to raise awareness of the various modes of transport that are possible. In support, Cllr. Murphy added that all forms of transport should be considered as part of the ‘mobility plan’.

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

Ballybeg Footpath& Lighting:-

It is very welcome to witness the commencement of footpath works in Ballybeg. By way of clarification, could the following be provided:-

1. Is the ducting for street lighting being installed in the new stretch from the water tower?

2. Is the new stretch to finish directly opposite **Radharc na hInse?**

3. Is design underway for the gap between the end point of the current footpath works and the existing path?

4. Could new paving be provided at the small section in front of the Grotto (at beginning of new footpath??

5. Regarding the existing footpath from the Kilrush Road to the Grotto/Water Tower, when will the public lighting promised be installed?

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

1. *Yes, Ducting for streetlighting is being included in current works.*
2. *Funding granted in 2021 will extend the footpath from the water tower as far as the Radharc na hInse housing development.*
3. *Further funding will be sought to complete the remainder of the path next year. Design work has commenced.*
4. *Yes, this will be included.*
5. *Due to the presence of the lesser horseshoe bat in Ballybeg Woods, a bat survey is required prior to the installation of any public lighting in the vicinity. Such a survey is currently being arranged by the RDO and the findings of the survey will determine the programme of installation of the lights.*

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

Cllr. Colleran-Molloy welcomed the response and clarification from Barry Conway, A/Senior Executive Engineer, and she reported that residents are delighted to see the works commence. On seeking further clarity on a 100m that is not included, Barry Conway explained that this would be provided for in Phase II which will finish the project. He added the completed project would have a correlating traffic calming effect.

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

Arising from the Temporary Covid-19 Ennis Town Centre Mobility Plan concluding, and the success of the Summer outdoor dining scheme, I am requesting that a thorough period of public consultation on re-entering a similar project on a permanent basis is entered into as soon as possible. This would involve a period of in depth consultation with residents of affected areas, the traders of Ennis town centre, relevant stakeholders and last, but by no means least, the wider public with a view to concluding with a proposal that would satisfy the majority and allow Ennis to continue to thrive as we continue to exit from the Covid 19 Pandemic.

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

*Pedestrianisation measures were brought in as a response to Covid-19 and to enable social distancing on the narrow streets of Ennis. The plan was not intended as a permanent measure. Clare County Council committed at the outset that any proposal around permanent pedestrianisation of any streets in the town would be subject to full public consultation.*

*We will separately be undertaking a wider consultation with the public through the development of the Ennis Mobility Plan which is a requirement under the National Development Plan and will examine all modes of transport for the sustainable movement of people within Ennis and its environs. This process is due to commence shortly.*

*A full public consultation will be undertaken, either through the Ennis Mobility Plan process, or another means.*

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

It was agreed to discuss this Notice of Motion together with Notice of Motion No. 10.

Cllr. Murphy stated that the *covid19 temporary mobility plan taskforce* worked well, with a good number of groups and the input of different opinions. He added that it is vital to have proper consultation on any proposal around pedestrianisation. This motion was well supported by Members and considered a worthwhile debate to be having in the context of climate change. The idea of a survey around pedestrianisation was welcomed.

Director of Services, Carmel Kirby, added that following a recent meeting with the ‘National Transport Authority’, it is expected that Ennis will likely have the first draft mobility plan with final NTA guidelines in the coming weeks.

Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, stated that no discussion could have taken place on pedestrianisation until the lifting of restrictions which were applied under the *covid19 temporary mobility plan*. It is proposed to undertake a public survey to capture the viewpoints of all stakeholders. All submissions from the survey would be brought back to Members in advance of encompassing into the draft mobility plan.

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

I ask Ennis Municipal District to arrange upgrading of the timber fence at the entrance to Ffrench Court, Clonroad, Ennis.

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

*The location will be assessed by the MD to determine where responsibility lies for this fence and a suitable proposal will follow on from inspection. If works are required by the council a suitable funding stream will have to be identified.*

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

Cllr. Daly commented on the state of the fence as being an eyesore and an issue of concern for residents of this estate. He hopes for a positive outcome on whether the work can be done by the Council. Cllr. Flynn voiced his support for this notice of motion.

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

This motion is asking Clare County Council to write to Bus Éireann, requesting that additional stops be placed along Route 51 on the Gort Road and Barefield Village.

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

*The National Transport Authority (NTA) is the statutory body with responsibility for approval of new Bus Stop locations. Clare County Council Transportation section, in conjunction with the Ennis Municipal District, will engage with the NTA to consider this request.*

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

Cllr. Mark Nestor welcomed the response from John Gannon and he commented that the lifting of restrictions has served to highlight the need for a quality public transport service. He noted how this area in particular is poorly serviced given the number of housing estates and even students are having to commute by car on what is an ideal bus route. This Notice of Motion was well supported by Members and the number of unused bus stops around the town was noted. Cllr Norton commented on how Barefield suffers from its proximity to Ennis in that insufficient attention is paid to the volumes of commuters. Cllr Flynn added that the current state of public transport in Ennis is inadequate to meet national targets. Cllr Howard commented on the poor servicing of Ennis Bus Station which runs a profitable business, yet there are no staff to answer questions. It was agreed to invite Bus Eireann and Irish Rail representatives to meet Ennis Municipal District and outline their plans for Ennis.

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

I request Ennis MD assess the stream at Aughavaddy on the Tulla Road.

This stream floods on a regular basis due to constrictions in the flow of the culvert, often causing ponding/flooding on the main road.

Is it possible to schedule regular cleaning of the culvert as there is also evidence of dumping in the stream thus blocking the two pipes which are approximately only 3 feet in diameter.

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

*The MD roads crews will arrange to inspect and carry out maintenance/clearance works at both the upstream and downstream sides of both bridges prior to the winter months and arrange to implement a regular inspection schedule throughout the winter.*

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

This item was discussed together with Notice of Motion No. 2.

**No. 9 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. J. Flynn**

I ask Ennis Municipal District to commence a public consultation process on the potential or otherwise of re-instating portion of wrought iron railings, in the style of the original railings, around the O Connell Monument. Such works could complement and enhance the Part 8 Planning Permission which has funding for public realm works in the Square/Bank Place and the conservation works currently underway on the O Connell Monument itself.  Such works could also be seen to be complementary to proposals incorporated in the current Part 8 planning application for welcome public realm upgrades to O Connell Street and Barrack Street.

***Candace Ingram, Executive Planner, responded as follows:***

*The O’Connell Monument is listed on the Record of Protected Structures (Reference RPS 702) and is also included on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (Reference NIAH 20000001). Neither the RPS or the NIAH descriptions of the monument make reference to railings around the monument. It is an objective of the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (as varied) (CDP15.2) “To protect, as set out in the Record of Protected Structures, all structures and their settings, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest”.*

*There would be no exemption under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) for the erection of railings around the monument. Therefore, any such proposal would require Part 8 consent.*

*The proposal for the upgrading of the public realm of O’Connell Square was informed by the Ennis Town Centre document entitled “A detailed study of the potential of Parnell Street as a Heritage and Cultural Quarter including the feasibility of covering part or all of the street and the redesign of O’Connell Square to enhance civic use, pedestrian comfort and a better setting for the monument” (December 2016), commissioned by Clare County Council in association with the CEDRA Rural Economic Development Zone (REDZ) initiative. As part of the overall redevelopment of O’Connell Square new seating areas to the west of the O’Connell Monument and also stepped areas to the south contribute to creating a flexible space which can accommodate various uses/events. It is important to consider any potential impact of installing railings on both the context and setting of the protected structure, as well as on future active uses of this public space. The maintenance of the area within the railings would also need consideration, in particular the potential for littering to occur.*

*It is suggested that should this proposal progress further that there should be consultation with the O’Connell Square project design team and also with the Planning Department to determine the appropriateness for the inclusion of the railings in the reconfiguration of the Square.*

*This item was seconded by Cllr P. Murphy.*

Discussion ensued and whilst some Members were not in favour of railings around the monument, it was agreed that the potential could be discussed in greater detail in the near future whilst bearing in mind the opinion provided by the Planning Authority.

**No. 10 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. A. Norton**

With the covid task force for the town mobility plan now finished can we look at seeking interest from different groups to look at a new plan for Ennis, as there is an opportunity to look at a mobility plan going forward for the betterment of our town.

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

*Pedestrianisation measures were brought in as a response to Covid-19 and to enable social distancing on the narrow streets of Ennis. The plan was not intended as a permanent measure. Clare County Council committed at the outset that any proposal around permanent pedestrianisation of any streets in the town would be subject to full public consultation.*

*We will separately be undertaking a wider consultation with the public through the development of the Ennis Mobility Plan which is a requirement under the National Development Plan and will examine all modes of transport for the sustainable movement of people within Ennis and its environs. This process is due to commence shortly.*

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

This Notice of Motion was discussed together with Notice of Motion No. 5.

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

Spancilhill Cross & Spancilhill Speeding

(A) Due to serious health and safety concerns with traffic at the Spancilhill Cross and the ongoing speeding on this section of the Tulla Road, that the EMD request the RDO to review this Cross for low cost safety scheme design.

(B) Due to the community’s serious concerns about speeding on this section of road from Spancilhill Cross towards Ennis (with a collision reported there in recent days), that the EMD coordinate with the Gardaí to patrol this section more regularly (possibly locate a speed van on a regular basis)  to address the ongoing speeding & safety issues.

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

*(A) The Road Design Office will include Spancilhill Cross on the R352 within the 2022 Grant Funding Application to the Department of Transport for Road Safety improvement Works on Regional & Local Roads.*

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

Cllr. Colleran-Molloy briefed on a meeting she had attended on site at Duggan’s car park in Spancill Hill with John Gannon SEE and Ian Chaplin EE to witness the inappropriate speeding at this location and where farmers report hazardous conditions for exiting onto the road. An enquiry is to be done to ascertain if Spancill Hill can qualify as a “settlement” zone under planning law, in which case the Local Authority will have powers to effect speed limits on this road.

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

I request Ennis Municipal District to accommodate the Lynch family access to their house by arranging and putting down a square box and a right turn on it, on the main Kilrush Road (opposite Curleys).

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

*This location will be assessed by the MD to determine what difficulties are being experienced by the homeowner and to see if anything can be done to improve their situation.*

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

Cllr Daly outlined how “yellow box” road marking would be appropriate at this location where the family encounter daily problems entering and exiting their property due to heavy volumes of traffic and the nearby school. Barry Conway, A/SEE reiterated that the area would be examined.

**No. 13 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. P. Murphy**

I am querying what actions will be carried out to treat the Japanese Knotweed that is present on many of the roadsides around Ennis Municipal District.

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

*This Council compiles a data base of all cases of this invasive species identified on public property, within the district. Chemical treatment is arranged (specialist contractors) on an annual basis, subject to budget limitations. The number of sites treated each year varies, with new sites being added into the process as others are declared free of the infection. The treatment takes place in September, each site can require treatment for as many as three to five years. The process is ongoing.*

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

Cllr. P. Murphy welcomed the response and clarity provided by Tommy Scott. Cllr Howard added that she had received calls from residents regarding Japanese Knotweed along the Riverwalk opposite the Bishop’s residence, Lahinch Road.

**Item No. 6 Correspondence**

None.

**Item No. 7 Any Other Business**

(i) Cllr. Norton congratulated all Leaving Cert students who had just received their results and she hoped that Covid-19 restrictions had not and would not have a negative impact on their future studies and careers.

(ii) Cllr. Norton led Members in congratulating Director of Services, Carmel Kirby on her PhD graduation in Local Government Studies.

(iii) Cllr. Howard recommended a letter of condolence be issued from Ennis Members to Members of twin town Lagenfeld in Germany, on the recent passing of Deputy Mayor Manfred Stuckmann.

(iv) Cllr. Howard issued congratulations to Arts Officer, Siobhan Mulcahy on the various music events scheduled around town.

(v) Congratulations was extended to Brendan Keogh and his team, for their contribution towards the floral displays around town over the Summer months in addition to advising on planting schemes in Clarecastle.

(vi) Cllr. Murphy led Members in congratulating Clarecastle native and Council lifeguard, Roisin Cahill, who won a Gold Medal in Cherbourg for canoeing at the European Ocean Racing Championships. She had previously won silver at the U23 World Championship. Roisin is to be invited to the next Mayoral meeting.

(vii) Cllr. P. Daly led Members in extending sympathy to the family of the late Paddy Coote of Kilrush Road, who had left home at the age of 13 and returned years later to successfully run a local business. R.I.P.

(viii) Cllr. P. Daly led Members in extending sympathy to the family of the late Bernard Hoey, late of Roslevan, a renowned hurler. R.I.P.

(ix) Cllr. P. Daly led Members in extending sympathy to the family of the late Donal Kenny, late of Hermitage, a renowned local golfer. R.I.P.

The Meeting ended at 12:00pm.

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

Mayor of Ennis

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

Meetings Administrator

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