**Minutes of the February 2022**

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

**held online at 10:45am on Tuesday 1st February 2022**

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

**Officials:** Carmel Kirby, Director of Services, Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, Barry Conway A/Senior Executive Engineer, Niamh O’Connor, Administrative Officer & Meetings Administrator, Carmel Greene (SEO) for item 3, Lily McInerney Staff Officer.

**Apologies:** None.

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

**Item No. 1. Minutes of the January 2021 Meeting of Municipal District of Ennis held on 11th January 2022**

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

**Item No. 2. Matters Arising**

(i) B. Conway responded to Cllr. Flynn’s request for an update on the footpath audit for Ballyallia; a site visit was carried out and areas for repair were identified. It is envisaged that these works will be progressed in the coming weeks.

**Item No. 3. (i) Disposal of property at McMahon Villas, Clonroadmore, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

Report and map circulated in advance of meeting. C. Greene (SEO) described this property as a long-term leasehold and disposal was appropriate in order to regularise the status.

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

**(ii) Disposal (by lease) of building at the County Museum, Arthur’s Row, Ennis, Co. Clare**

Report and map circulated in advance of meeting. C. Greene clarified that this lease for the Museum was required, the previous lease between Shannon Development and Failte Ireland being obsolete. Director of Service Carmel Kirby commended the insightful work undertaken in arranging for the refurbishment.

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

**(iii) Nominate area for CSS Paint Scheme 2022**

This scheme is run by the Rural Development directorate and a maximum grant of €10,000 is available per Municipal District.

Following discussion, the following was agreed:

*€5,000 - Old Military Barracks & St. Clare’s Close*

*€5,000 - Lower Parnell Street*

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

**Item No. 4.** **Notices of Motion**

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

I request Ennis MD to seriously consider installing a "Learn To Cycle" Track - this "Learn To Cycle" Track will allow young children to learn to cycle on a real life road structure with lines, signs and pedestrian crossing without the  traffic.

I believe Lee's Road /John O'Sullivan Park to be the ideal location for such a facility.

***Tim Forde, Head of Sports & Recreation, responded as follows:***

*This Notice of Motion has arrived at Sports & Recreation and to that end we will research the possibilities, specifications and costs of a proposed ‘Learn to Cycle’ Track.*

*This information will be forwarded to EMD for consideration of a location. AE John O’Sullivan Park, Lees Road, does not have a free area, sufficient in size, if this project is to realise to its true potential. We remain  open to further discussions.*

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

This motion was well supported by Members and referring to its success in Dungarvan, Cllr. Howard added that Lees Road represents an ideal location due to its link to the West Clare Greenway route. Director of Service Carmel Kirby confirmed that this proposal aligns with current ‘*Active Travel’* initiatives.

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

Can Ennis MD repaint the disabled parking spaces in John O Sullivan Park Lees Road.

***Tim Forde, Head of Sports & Recreation, responded as follows:***

*Sports & Recreation have consulted with the EMD regarding this Notion of Motion.*

*Costs are being sought and details necessary examined,  i.e. all spaces including disabled & EV, Sharks teeth on ramps, arrows, STOP’s, YIELDS.*

*It is envisioned, that the project including AE Leisure Complex Car Park, would form part of the EMD road works, once funding can be sourced by the Social Directorate for same.*

*This would have to be funded from Active Ennis resources.*

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

An annual maintenance programme for disabled parking bays was strongly recommended by Cllr. Norton, to mitigate their mis-use due to not being clearly identifiable. Cllr. Murphy outlined a recent mishap whereby he had inadvertently availed of a disabled bay due to the poor road marking. This motion was well supported by Members.

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

I ask for a progress report on previous requests for a flooding solution to resolve flooding affecting properties in an area from Victoria Court  across Lahinch road and lower Cloughleigh including Gordon Drive.

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

*The Members will be aware of longstanding concerns in this area and I would have advised previously that following initial investigation and inspection by our staff, we applied to the OPW for the necessary funding to carry out a more detailed feasibility study of the area and to design a technically possible, environmentally compliant and economically viable solution.*

*I am glad to report that we received confirmation from the OPW by letter dated January 18th 2022 that following our submission, they were making €22,000 available under the Minor Flood Mitigation Works & Coastal Protection Scheme to carry out the required Feasibility Study of Victoria Court & Gordon Drive, Ennis. I wish to point out that the study area also includes Shallee Drive. This work will commence immediately with a view to identifying a preferred solution which can then be advanced through the Minor Works Scheme process. I will keep the Members informed of developments in this regard.*

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

The response and the timely receipt of funding was welcomed by Cllr. Flynn and he commented on this area being prone to flash flooding since the extensive flooding of 1995. This motion was well supported by Members.

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

That the Clareabbey Task Force Group be recalled and a meeting (virtual if necessary) be set up soonest to focus on:-

(a) the ongoing issues of fly tipping and antisocial behaviour;

(b) accounting by the EMD as to the recording of “dumping” complaints lodged, and action steps taken to address these complaints;

(c) identifying concrete proposals further to the deliberations of this Clareabbey Task Force that will ameliorate this longtime ongoing unacceptable situation.

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

*The Clareabbey Task Force held a number of meetings to examine issues relating to Clareabbey, including those raised above. Please note that Clare County Council continue to use all powers available under existing legislation to deal with issues relating to fly tipping, illegal dumping and anti-social behaviour. Please see response from Environment section below.*

***Brendan Flynn, Senior Executive Engineer Environment responded as follows:***

*The Environment Section record all complaints relating to waste and litter on the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Each complaint is investigated in a timely fashion. If required, appropriate enforcement action is taken under the Waste Management Act 1996, as amended or the Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended.*

*The Environment Patrol Warden will provide daily patrols in the Clareabbey area and will attend to any complaints received. The Environment Section will continue to work with the Ennis Municipal District to remove waste on public land in a timely fashion.*

*The Environment Section will attend scheduled meetings of the Clareabbey Taskforce Group and provide an update on actions taken to date.*

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

Cllr. Colleran-Molloy welcomed the response but still recommended revisiting the Clareabbey Task Force and she sought clarity on when the group had last convened. Members strongly supported this motion, Cllr Murphy added that the area been subject to vandalism and that pledges had been made to seek funding for cctv to prohibit this activity. Director of Service clarified that the Bill is currently before the Oireachtas as part of the National Climate Action Plan and that cctv will be an element of the implementation measures. Leonore O’Neill SEO clarified that the Clareabbey Task force had convened three times, once in person and subsequently on-line. She stressed that most of the issues were being addressed within the powers available to the local authority and that all cases of dumping are logged, investigated and action taken where possible.

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

That the road drainage problems that persist adjacent to the footpath on the Clare Road between Captain Mac's traffic lights and the St. Flannan's roundabout are addressed. This has been raised a number of times previously and pedestrians continue to get drenched wet making their way to and from town.

***Barry Conway, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*Additional road drainage has been installed at this location following previous representations from Cllr Murphy. The MD office will continue to monitor the area to see that the improvements have been effective and make further alterations if deemed necessary.*

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

Cllr Murphy acknowledged the response to this Notice of Motion.

**No. 6 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. M. Nestor**

This Notice of Motion is requesting Clare County Council to carry out works along the main road of St. Michael's Villas to resolve water ponding issues in the area.

***Barry Conway, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*The Ennis MD staff will assess the road drainage along St Michaels Villas and install additional road drainage where ponding is an issue.*

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

Cllr Nestor acknowledged the response to this notion of motion which he had brought forward after some residents of St Michael’s Villas had requested support on this issue.

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

I ask Ennis M.D. to upgrade the road (by tarring it) at the 6 Bungalows on Lees Road.

***Barry Conway, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*The road serving these bungalows is the L-8330-0 and is a local secondary road. It will be examined by the MD office and considered for inclusion in the schedule of municipal district works. Any maintenance deemed necessary will be carried out in the short term.*

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

Cllr. Daly acknowledged the positive response, having observed the state of this roadway.

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

Ennis Historic Town Signage.

These signs have been a great addition to the town since they were introduced back in 2009. However I believe they now need some refurbishment as most displays have condensation issues, this is affecting the integrity of the information posters within the frames.

Is there a pamphlet with this information available for local history fans along with schools?

Who maintains these signs?

Do we have a stock of the posters used?

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

*The “Historic Town Trails “ was a Failte Ireland designed and supported initiative in 2007/2008.*

*There are four trails with:*

*53 x ornate sign poles.*

*125 x cast finger directional signs.*

*19 x cast wall plaques.*

*32 x display case support frames.*

*42 x glazed display cases in two sizes.*

*42 x bilingual printed information panels in two sizes.*

*There is no pamphlet with this information available. I can advise that the signs are the property and responsibility of Clare County Council. A complete survey of the infrastructure can be undertaken to ascertain the extent of the repairs, refurbishment and replacements required. However, a source of funding will need to be identified.*

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

Cllr. Howard commented on the deteriorating state of historical signage which detracts from the very points of interest it serves to highlight. She recommended a survey be carried out and funding sought to revamp where required. Cllrs. Flynn, Colleran-Molloy and Daly also supported this Motion and Cllr. Colleran-Molloy suggested funding through GMA as well as from Clare County Council’s Tourism section.

It was agreed that costings would be done and funding sought from Tourism section, Failte Ireland and GMA.

**No. 9 Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr C. Colleran-Molloy**

Returning to the issue of speeding through Spancilhill, could the Senior Executive Engineer elaborate on his previous mention of a more immediate process that can be undertaken to potentially reduce the speed limit in this area in advance the statutory speed limit review process.

**Barry Conway, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:**

*A previous response to this motion noted that a National Speed Limit Review is initiated every 5 years by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). The last Speed Limit Review in Clare was completed in 2018 and that there is no formal interim review process available at present.*

*Funding was granted in 2021 for a Low Cost Safety Scheme at Spancill Hill which was to introduce additional safety measures including additional road markings, new speed limit signs, new reflective road studs and roadside hedge maintenance. This work commenced under contract in late 2021, but due to a combination of Covid related delays and weather conditions, was not completed. It is expected that this Low Cost Safety Scheme will be completed in the coming weeks.*

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

Cllr Colleran-Molloy acknowledged the response and requested clarity on whether Eamon O’Dea (SEE) had previously referenced a potential interim measure that could be considered whilst awaiting the next 5-year review in 2023. B. Conway A/SEE confirmed that Eamon’s response had been that there is no interim measure available. Barry Conway will make direct contact with Cllr Colleran-Molloy to discuss options from the Roads section.

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

I refer to reports concerning ongoing poor air quality results in Ennis from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) , my previous notice of motions  for a Clean Air Strategy for Ennis and ask for urgent action on  this serious human health and environmental hazard.

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

*Following a similar Notice of Motion in 2021, this matter was referred to the Physical Development SPC in September 2021. The Environment Section of Clare County Council are currently engaging with the Environmental Protection Agency on more recent findings.*

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

Cllr. Flynn expressed frustration at the ongoing air quality issue in Ennis which he confirmed has recorded individual ratings well below the WHO safety standard. Cllrs Norton and Howard supported this Notice of Motion, Cllr Howard adding that smog alerts should be included in Clare County Council’s emergency alerting systems. Director of Service Carmel Kirby confirmed that there is a baseline value set by the EPA, with real-time data posted on their website, and there must be 35 instances of exceedance in order for the EPA to take action. Burning of solid fuel was the greatest culprit and therefore public responsibility plays a part.

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

Given the extremely mild weather that was experienced during the Autumn and winter to date, and the resultant high volume of grass growth, I am requesting that a plan is put in place to deal with this, acknowledging that earlier cutting dates aren't an option for biodiversity reasons can collecting the first cut of grass be considered?

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

*Grass management plan for 2022****:***

*Grass has continued to grow through the winter due to the warm conditions. To meet the objectives of the pollinator plan grass cutting would normally not commence until mid-April. This year it is proposed to undertake an early cut, commencing in the* ***last week of February****. There will be a six-week gap between this first cut and the second cut to make the early flowers available to the pollinators. Providing this pollinator friendly opportunity will result in greater grass volumes in the subsequent cuts.*

*Collecting grass cutting is not practical in this district for logistical and budgetary reasons.*

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

Cllr Murphy acknowledged the response and welcomed the plan for an earlier cut which he hoped would alleviate the issue and prevent the overgrowth that had resulted in excessive volumes of mowed grass in April 2021.

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

This Notice of Motion is requesting Clare County Council to install a ramp at the rear of Scoil Chríost Rí to allow access to the river Fergus for the schools kayaking club.

***Barry Conway, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*Ennis MD have carried out a survey at this site and completed a draft design of a ramp to allow easier access to the river Fergus from Cloughleigh N.S. We are currently in discussions with relevant stakeholders in relation to the design of the ramp. Once agreement has been reached tenders will be sought and we will proceed with construction, subject to funding being made available.*

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

The response was welcomed by Cllr Nestor who briefed on the considerable achievement of Scoil Chríost Rí in being the first school to have a kayaking club and that the ramp was the one outstanding item to complete the project. He sought clarity on timelines and funding for this project and reminded the meeting that he had ringfenced monies from his GMA 2020 allocation. This Notice of Motion was supported by all Members as a great initiative for the physical and mental health of young people.

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

I request Ennis M.D. to install pull-in’s from Templemaley graveyard to the bottom of Templemaley Hill, heading towards Ballyallia, as the road is very narrow.

***Barry Conway, A/Senior Executive Engineer, responded as follows:***

*The L-4146-4 at Templemaley is a narrow road bounded on either side by stone walls. The addition of pull in’s would be most practical in the vicinity of existing gateways or field entrances and would require the cooperation of landowners. Ennis MD will examine the location to identify if suitable locations exist and if so, engage with landowners to see if this proposal can be progressed.*

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

Cllr Daly commented on the narrow road which has become popular for walkers; he welcomed the response and would be hopeful of landowners’ cooperation. Cllr Howard supported the Motion having observed an incident at a funeral whereby a vulnerable driver had difficulty in reversing to a suitable location to accommodate a passing truck. Cllr Flynn supported this Motion stating that it would be a natural adjunct to the Ballyallia Looped Walk.

**Item No. 5 Correspondence**

None.

**Item No. 6 Any Other Business**

(i) Members joined Cllr. P. Daly in extending condolences to Des Neylon and the family of the late Margaret Neylon R.I.P. Margaret was extensively involved in Tidy Towns, Ennis Chamber, Purple Flag & Twinning Board for many years. Her dedication, hard work, knowledge and ability was commended by all Members. May she Rest in Peace.

(ii) Cllr Colleran-Molloy requested clarity on future Ennis M.D. meetings as to whether they will be on-line, in person or a blend of both. This issue will be followed up and the potential to provide for blended in-person/remote meetings will be sought.

(iii) Cllr Daly raised the issue of anti-social behaviour, with several vehicles being damaged in town recently and he suggested the Chief Superintendent be invited to the March Meeting of Ennis M.D.

The Meeting ended at 12:20pm.

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

Mayor of Ennis

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

Meetings Administrator

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