

**Minutes of the Adjourned January meeting of the West Clare Municipal District held online at 9.30am on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**Cathaoirleach sa Cathair :**

Cllr Cillian Murphy

**I Lathair:**

Cllr Gabriel Keating, Cllr Joe Killeen, Cllr Joe Garrihy, Cllr Liam Grant, Cllr Ian Lynch, Cllr PJ Kelly, Cllr Shane Talty.

**Apologies:**

Cllr. Bill Chambers

**Officials present:**

Mr. Leonard Cleary, Area Co-Coordinator & Director of Service

Mr. John O'Malley, A/Senior Executive Officer & Meetings Administrator, WCMD

Mr. Enda MacNamara, SEE, WCMD

Mr. Alan Kenneally, SEE, WCMD

Mr. Steve Lahiffe, Senior Staff Officer, WCMD

Cllr Murphy convened the Meeting.

At the outset of the meeting the Chair acknowledged the tragic passing of Paul Dillon. He offered his condolences to Paul's family. A minute's silence was then held in Paul's memory. The members all offered their condolences, with Cllr. Kelly advising that he had taught Paul and remembers him as a pupil always with a permanent smile.

Condolences were also offered to Leonard Cleary and his wife Michelle on the death of her father.

The elected members also offered their condolences to their colleague Cllr. Mark Nestor on the death of his brother.

**18. Notice of Motion from Cllrs. Joe Garrihy and Liam Grant:**

Call on the West Clare MD to engage with CLDC and other stake holders to repair parts of the Cliffs of Moher coastal walk, particularly from Doolin to the visitor centre. Parts of the walk have become very dangerous. The path can lead you very close to the edge without realising. Repairs and upgrades would greatly improve the safety of the world class trail. Clare County Council need to start taking some responsibility for the upkeep of the path.

**Reply from John O'Malley, A/Senior Executive Officer, West Clare MD:**

The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is managed by CLDC under the National Walks Scheme. Permissive access agreements are in place with the landowners for the maintenance and upkeep of the walk and the boundary.

Due to the iconic nature and ever increasing popularity of the walk, environmental/habitat protection needs, repairs and maintenance issues there are challenges in ensuring that the walk is kept up to standard which requires funding and personnel resourcing. Clare County

Council have initiated commitment to the coastal walk initially by 2 kilometers (1k north and 1k south) and are engaged with landowners on these sections.

Clare County Council are currently working with the Cliffs of Moher team and CLDC on a solution to the areas that require upgrading on the walk. A longer term solution for the whole walk is also being considered to ensure the protection of the habitats of the Special Protection Area, public health and safety and a positive sustainable visitor experience.

It was emphasized that engagement is needed with the landowners. Leonard Cleary acknowledged the development of the path could not have taken place without the landowners and the IFA in North Clare. The issue is there in respect of the capacity to maintain the path. The existing model is not fit for purpose going forward. Clare County Council would like to take the lead and this is currently being examined.

### **Physical Development**

#### **19. Notice of Motion from Cllr. Gabriel Keating:**

That Clare County Council carry out a restoration and surface dressing programme of works in Kiladysart village in 2022.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Murphy.

#### **Reply from Alan Kennelly, Senior Executive Engineer, West Clare MD:**

A section of the R-473 in Kildysart village is included in the 3-year roadworks programme for the Municipal District. I hope that these overlay works will be included in the 2022 or 2023 Schedule of Municipal District Works.

#### **20. Notice of Motion from Cllr. Gabriel Keating:**

That a footpath and lighting be provided for Kilmurray McMahan Church to join with the footpath from the school (provided by the ESB) to accommodate traffic at funeral and church services.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Kelly.

#### **Reply from Alan Kennelly, Senior Executive Engineer, West Clare MD:**

There is a distance of approx. 600 linear metres between the end of the existing footpath near Kilmurry McMahan community Centre and Kilmurry McMahan Church.

- The cost of constructing the footpath requested would be substantial. If the proposed footpath is constructed to the standard of the existing, then land acquisitions and the piping of significant amount of roadside drainage will be necessary.
- For road and traffic safety reasons, public lighting is not usually provided on footpaths outside speed-limited areas. There aren't any public lighting columns on the existing footpath for example. The proposed footpath is located along a regionally important road (R485) where the maximum speed limit applies. It is my understanding that our

Road Design Office are in not favour of the provision of additional public lighting in these circumstances.

- It would be difficult to conduct a favourable cost / benefit analysis of the provision of the footpath requested. Cllr. Keating has suggested that the purpose of the footpath is simply to accommodate vehicular traffic at funeral and church services, i.e. on relatively rare occasions.
- There are car-parking facilities available at the church grounds and in a property across the road from the church. The Church also owns other property in the immediate vicinity. It is possible that the necessary car-parking facilities could be provided by the Church at a far cheaper cost than the footpath requested and at no cost to the public purse.
- The West Clare MD has not the funding for the works requested in this year's budget, and a funding source would have to be identified before works of this scale could be commenced. If the elected members wish, the footpath in question can be included in our next Active Travel application.

Alan Kennelly advised at the meeting the difficulties are not insurmountable if funding can be found.

**21. Notice of Motion from Cllr. Ian Lynch:**

In the interest of public safety **and due to the lack of adequate infrastructure**, I request that Clare County Council make a submission to the TII requesting to reinstate the lower speed limits of 50KPH\* to the original Kilrush Town boundaries.

*\*Cllr. Lynch sought to amend the motion to 50kph from original 60kph and this seconded by Cllr. Murphy and agreed before the motion was seconded.*

I respectfully request that this submission is made as a matter of urgency and not to wait until the next speed limit review, however, I would request that the public consultation phase of the next speed limit review to commence in the coming months.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Keating.

**Reply from Steve Lahiffe, Senior Staff Officer, West Clare MD:**

Transport Infrastructure Ireland can be written on behalf of the West Clare MD through our Roads Department if agreed by the members requesting re-instatement to the 60KPH.

A speed limit review is initiated by the TII. The public consultation phase must be conducted in accordance with the statutory guidelines, however the West Clare MD will ask the Roads department that the public consultation will be carried out as early as allowed under the guidelines when review is initiated.

Discussion was had by the members that speed limits need to be brought down. Cllr. Lynch requested that Clare County Council look at its bylaws to bring down limits. That overall traffic needs to be slowed and there are numerous areas that speed limits need to be reviewed. Cllr. Lynch asked that TII would present on the reasoning behind the decisions made.

**22. Notice of Motion from Cllr. PJ Kelly:**

That the Council erect a new LED light across from Ballycorrick Church & replace the existing lights with LEDs.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Keating.

**Reply from Alan Kennelly, Senior Executive Engineer, West Clare MD:**

There are road and traffic safety issues with providing additional public lighting columns outside speed-restricted areas where the maximum speed limit applies. This is the case at Ballycorrick Church, which is on the on the R473 regionally important road. Therefore, an additional lighting column is not feasible.

Existing light bulbs will be changed to LED as part of the National RMO Lighting project. It is expected that the changeover to LED bulbs will be completed in Clare (*part of the South West Region*) in 2023 / 2024. As all old-style bulbs are to be replaced with LED's in the near future, the West Clare MD does not currently have a budget to upgrade to LED. However, the upgrade of existing bulbs to LED is relatively inexpensive and if a funding source can be identified then I am sure that the bulbs can be replaced sooner.

**23. Notice of Motion from Cllr. PJ Kelly:**

That Transport Infrastructure Ireland will be requested to resurface the damaged part of N68 at Knockalough.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Lynch.

**Reply from John O'Malley, Senior Executive Officer, West Clare MD:**

The West Clare MD will liaise with our Roads Department to highlight this issue to the TII.

**24. Notice of Motion from Cllr. PJ Kelly:**

That an update be given on the discussion between Transport Infrastructure Ireland and Clare County Council in respect of the Cranny Cross Junction on the N68.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Lynch.

**Reply from John Gannon, Senior Executive Engineer, Road Design:**

This junction has been identified in the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) HD17 works programme as a potential hazardous junction. The Road Design Office have it on our priority

list for the N68. The next steps are to carry out a topographical survey and preliminary design options in advance of a Feasibility and Options Report.

**25. Notice of Motion from Cllr. Cillian Murphy:**

That extra car parking be provided to service Doughmore Beach at both the surfers access and at the public car park.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Lynch.

**Reply from Alan Kennelly, Senior Executive Engineer, West Clare MD:**

In relation to Doughmore Beach Clare County Council (*West Clare MD*) has plans to introduce parking bye-laws at a number of the car-parks that we provide at beaches along our West coast. Once introduced I would hope that it will be relatively easy to deal with existing parking issues. If the problem persists post bye-law introduction we can, of course, revisit the issue.

As regards the surfer's access to Doughmore Beach, discussions are ongoing with Trump International Golf Links & Hotel, Doonbeg about the provision of additional car parking spaces, which would facilitate those using this access to the beach. It is hoped to have a solution will be in place for the 2022 high season.

John O'Malley advised confident that the issue will be progressed now to have it done by the summer season.

**26. Notice of Motion from Cllr. Cillian Murphy:**

That the West Clare MD work with local communities to identify and develop a pilot series of community centric "slow roads" throughout the municipal district, and an application be made under the Active Travel scheme to fund this pilot project.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Lynch.

**Reply from Alan Kennelly, Senior Executive Engineer, West Clare MD:**

There are two distinct segments to this Notice of Motion –

1. Identifying the "slow roads" &
2. Making an application to Active Travel.

I would suggest it wise to complete part 1 before commencing part 2.

I think that the councillor has also identified a very important requirement – that the MD work in tandem with our local communities to identify roads that may be suitable as "slow roads".

I would point out that there is neither a budget nor the personnel available within the West Clare MD to carry out the consultation process that is required. However, there are consultants who specialise in this type of work. The cost of hiring a firm following a competitive Tender competition may not be prohibitive. I am speaking on behalf of others, but it may be that funding might be available from a number of sources to fund the appointment of consultants. I

would suggest GMA, Fáilte Ireland via Clare County Council Tourism Office, and West Clare MD discretionary funding might all contribute.

If we set out suitable roads in a plan then an application to the NTA Active Travel fund could be made and would hopefully prove successful.

A long discussion was had where there was broad agreement that “slow roads” deliver for the community and tourism. Need to identify this slow roads and focus on same. Clare County Council can change the speed limits.

**27. Notice of Motion from Cllr. Shane Talty:**

Clare County Council extend the footpath out the Ennis Rd, Miltown Malbay, to the end of the 50KPH zone.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Killeen.

**Reply from Enda MacNamara, Senior Executive Engineer, West Clare MD:**

A submission will be made to the National Transport Authority under the Active Travel programme seeking funding for the extension of the existing footpath on the Ennis Road.

**28. Notice of Motion from Cllr. Shane Talty:**

Clare County Council progress a traffic management solution for the square Miltown Malbay. The current junction off the national route is a nightmare to navigate & sees many near misses every day. A roundabout might be a possible solution.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Garrihy.

**Reply from Enda MacNamara, Senior Executive Engineer, West Clare MD:**

The area office is working with the Road Design Office to explore design options for this location. Once a preliminary design is finalised, Clare County Council will approach the TII to agree on the design and seek funding for this project.

**29. Notice of Motion from Cllr. Liam Grant:**

Call on the West Clare MD to prioritise upgrading the facilities at Fanore beach. The amenities are lacking when compared with other popular beaches in the county. Proper toilets, showers, lifeguard station, water fountain and electric car charging point are all required. Fanore beach is very busy, and it needs upgraded facilities to cater for the amount of visitors.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Garrihy.

**Reply from Enda MacNamara, Senior Executive Engineer, West Clare MD:**

Significant funds were spent by Clare County Council on upgrades carried out in 2021 prior to the summer season. These upgrades included installing new posts and rope along with signage around the protected dunes. The old, damaged fencing was also removed. New timber posts and railing was also installed along with a new level path from the car park to the access steps to the beach. New line-marking was also installed to avoid congestion around the car park area. This was considered the first phase of upgrades for Fanore.

As part of the second phase, the area office is currently working with our General Design Office to prepare a design for upgrading of the existing toilets. Once the design is finalised, a suitable funding source will need to be identified to progress this project.

The area office has a request submitted to the ESB to consider installing an electric car charging point at Fanore. Upgrades to showers and a lifeguard station will be reviewed under future phases.

**30. Notice of Motion from Cllr. Joe Garrihy:**

I call on the West Clare MD to focus as a matter of urgency on implementation of a safe and appropriate mobility plan for Doolin in 2022 ahead of what we hope will be another very busy tourist season. At a minimum I call for safe pedestrian paths to be in place in advance of the tourist season.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Killeen.

**Reply from Enda MacNamara, Senior Executive Engineer, West Clare MD:**

In recent years, Clare County Council has constructed new footpaths from Fisher Street to Fitz's Cross. As part of the Active Travel programme, funding was awarded in 2021 to develop a pedestrian crossing at Fitz's cross and an extension of existing footpaths between Fitz's Cross and Roadford. The area office expect to commence construction of the pedestrian crossing in Q2 2022. A design was finalised for the extension of existing footpaths to Roadford but discussions with landowners has resulted in the requirement to prepare a new design. Works on a revised design are ongoing and discussions with various stakeholders are expected to take place over the coming weeks.

The intention of the area office is to seek additional funding under the Active Travel programme for new footpaths between Doolin Pier and Fisher Street. The extension of footpaths beyond Roadford will also be sought. This will be put forward in future submissions to the National Transport Authority (NTA)

**31. Any other business.**

Cllr. Kelly asked that a hybrid meeting would continue.

Cllr. Talty asked about the Speed Limit feedback signs being out of order and the delay in getting them repaired. John O'Malley advised that they were aware of the delay and were trying to get it sorted.

**Signed: Cllr. Cillian Murphy,  
Cathaoirleach**

**Signed: John O'Malley,  
Meetings Administrator**

**Dated this 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022**