

Ceantar Bardasach Carraig Mhachaire Rois – Baile Na Lorgan

Comhairle Contae Mhuineachain



The Municipal District of Carrickmacross – Castleblayney

Monaghan County Council

Minutes of proceedings of MD Monthly meeting held in Carrickmacross Civic Office, Riverside Road, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan on Monday 27th June 2022 at 10.45am.

Present: Cathaoirleach Aidan Campbell.

Cllrs. Aoife McCooey, PJ O’Hanlon, Colm Carthy, Noel Keelan.

In Attendance: Damien Thornton, A/District Co-Ordinator, Matthew Lambe, District Engineer, Michelle Boyle, Staff Officer, Sarah Moore, Clerical Officer.

1.0 Confirmation of Minutes

On the proposal of Cllr. Keelan and seconded by Cllr. Carthy, the minutes of the May 2022 monthly Municipal District Meeting, held on Monday the 23rd of May 2022, were adopted.

1.1 Minutes of May monthly meeting

Cllr. Keelan commented on the condition of the fencing/hoarding that encloses the Drummond Close Estate stating that it is an absolute disgrace and an eyesore at the entrance to the town. Cllr. Keelan queried as to whether a simple tidy up and painting of the hoarding could be completed and asked if the Co-Ordinator or the District Engineer could provide any information on this.

Cllr. Keelan referred to lands located off Main Street, to the rear of the Bank of Ireland building, on Bridewell Lane and implored that everything be done within the power of the MD to acquire this piece of land. He stated that the land had great potential to enhance the town and asked the A/District Co-Ordinator to please investigate this.

Cllr. O’Hanlon sought confirmation that a letter had issued to Tuath Housing as per his request at the last MD meeting. He stated that Cllr. Keelan has worked very hard on highlighting the issues with the Close Drummond Estate and Breffni House and agreed that the boundary fencing to the Close Drummond Estate was a complete eye sore.

Cllr. Keelan confirmed that he has spoken with the Developer responsible for Breffni House and that work has started to restore the property to a fully functioning B&B. Cllr. Keelan stated that the Developer was committed to these works and stated that all derelict buildings needed to be kept in check.

Cllr. Carthy commented that Minister Humphreys mentioned a new scheme that facilitates the purchase of derelict buildings to bring them back to life. This need to be investigated. Cllr. Carthy also expressed concern that land negotiations in relation to the Active Travel scheme at Lurgans Hill remain ongoing and queried if the MD Executive could provide any update.

Having regard to the Carrickmacross Emmets Rounders Team, Cllr. Carthy stated that when the team won the All-Ireland, he had requested that a civic reception be held to recognise the magnitude of the achievement. Cllr. Carthy opined that as time moves on it dilutes the achievement and asked if the MD could look at finalising a date on this.

Cllr. O'Hanlon commented that there are several other achievements that should also receive public recognition however, with the reality of the Covid-19 situation and the schools on summer holidays, the MD could not realistically proceed with this event at this stage. Cllr. O'Hanlon expressed his hope that such an event will take place in Q3 2022. He commended Cllr. Carthy for his involvement with the local groups and stated that this matter should be re-addressed in early September.

A/Co-Ordinator, D. Thornton, advised Cllr. Keelan that the MD Executive are currently reviewing applicable legislation in relation to the safety issues surrounding Close Drummond Estate. The Co-Ordinator further advised that a safety audit has now been completed and that the District Engineer has sought quotations with a view to engaging a Contractor to carry out any necessary remedial works to the boundary fencing.

Cllr. Keelan commended both the Co-Ordinator and District Engineer for their work on this issue.

In relation to Lurgans Hill, Mr. Thornton advised that land negotiations have been protracted owing to a death in the family of one of the landowners.

In relation to the lands at Bridewell Lane, the Co-Ordinator advised that the MD Executive are currently trying to ascertain the registered owner of the land.

1.2 Minutes of Special Meeting – Castleblayney Market House & Market Square Regeneration Project

D. Thornton advised that as all members had not been in attendance at the presentation, it was hoped that a further presentation would take place at the July MD meeting.

Cllr. Carthy commented that the project design was very comprehensive and very practical. He stated that it was an exciting project and that the design team were very amenable to public input into the design and he hoped that this would be the case in relation to the Workhouse in Carrickmacross.

1.3 Minutes of Special Meeting – Housing Need and Demand Assessment and Review of Housing Provision by KPMG.

On the proposal of Cllr. Keelan and seconded by Cllr. O’Hanlon, the minutes of Special Meeting – *Housing Need and Demand Assessment and Review of Housing Provision by KPMG* were adopted.

2.0 Matters Arising

No matters arising

3.0 Correspondence

i. Correspondence regarding GP Services in Carrickmacross (no. 1-4 pages 19-25)

Cllr. Keelan referred to Cllr. O’Hanlon’s reference to the new Primary Care Centre and stated that it was fantastic for the town. He cautioned however, that the day the centre was opened there wasn’t a GP present. He stated that the MD had a big job to do to try and attract more GP’s to the town. He advised that a letter published in May 2022 stated that Carrickmacross has the same number of GP’s at the foundation of the State as they do today. In the correspondence received, Cllr. Keelan noted that it states that Carrickmacross has sufficient GP’s and he does not believe that this is credible. He stated that in his opinion, GP’s are retiring and not being replaced. He stated that any GP’s that are being trained in this country are leaving as soon as they have been trained, not only because of pay but also quality of life as he is aware that it is a very difficult work environment for GP’s in this country. He stated that if you look at the Doctor on Call service, they no longer see you after 10.30pm. As a result, people are more inclined to phone an ambulance and are shipped off to A&E. Cllr. Keelan advised that this issue needs to be given priority as it affects all families in the community, and it is simply unacceptable that in a modern western society that when you ring your GP for an appointment you are unable to get one.

Cllr. O’Hanlon clarified that the GP’s team was present at the opening of the Primary Care Centre. He stated that the lack of GP’s was not just a problem for Carrickmacross but an issue throughout the country. He stated that if you read through the correspondence that it talks about investment going forward and asked is there a problem with accessing your GP, yes there is. He stated that the MD need to keep pushing on this issue and that getting the same letters from local TD’s was not, in his opinion, moving forward. He stated that when the Members sit with their TD’s that they need to raise this issue and ask that they come back with information on this. Cllr. O’Hanlon stated that Cllr. McCooey and himself would request their representatives to come into a meeting to discuss the issue and that this needed to occur now and not in 3 months’ time.

Cllr. Carthy asked if a date could be agreed to speak with the Oireachtas members. He stated that the HSE have a lot to answer for regarding the GP services in this country. He stated that the recent announcement of the closure of Navan A&E will only further impact on Drogheda A&E. He stated that the HSE needs to become more actively involved in all areas of the state but none more so than Carrickmacross. He commented that people in Carrickmacross are unable to get an appointment with their GP and are having to go to Castleblayney or Kingscourt for a GP. He stated that there was a need for additional GPs and that the Oireachtas members needed to be sat down and spoken to on this issue.

Cllr. McCooey stated that GP's are leaving the country once they are qualified and are simply not going to be there. She stated that the people in Castleblayney are unable to get an appointment with their GP also and that they needed to get their Oireachtas members to sit down in a meeting and try and get a resolution on this.

ii. Letter from AIB re: ATM

Cllr. Carthy welcomed the response and stated that it was a good to get a response from both banks, however he feels that banks are now moving to the space of online services but commented that the banks needed to know that the issue was there. Cllr Carthy commented that for a bank to respond and say that the Post Office is open is simply not good enough and that the bank needs to ensure that their ATM's are running properly. Cllr Carthy stated that the letter from AIB states that the ATM is working 95% of the time and this simply is not happening, certainly in his opinion the ATM is out of order in Carrickmacross more than 5% of the time.

Cllr. O'Hanlon stated that the MD need to take control over what is happening in the town and suggested that AIB, BOI and An Post are invited to a MD meeting to discuss the issue. Cllr. O'Hanlon queried that if AIB have an ATM that is not working then what is their plan B? What type of services are they providing? Cllr. O'Hanlon stated that when you go into the Bank there is only one teller at the counter and that banks are pushing all services online. This is proving difficult, particularly for the elderly looking to use these services. The people wishing to use counter services should not be forgotten.

Cllr. Campbell added that the letter mentioned a digital wallet and agreed that people were being forced online and some people are unable to readily access online banking.

iii. Letter from Tuath Housing

iv. Letter from Court Service

Cllr. O'Hanlon asked what happens after the audit is complete. Are we going to be looking at a trophy building? Does the MD need to ask the Court Services to attend a meeting and ask them what the plan is for this building? The building is in the middle of the town and he will not allow it to lay vacant. Cllr. O' Hanlon commented that if you look at the Market House in Castleblayney, and the money that has been spent on restoring that building that

the MD would not allow the same thing to happen with the Courthouse. Cllr. O'Hanlon queried whether all court services are moving to Monaghan Town or Cavan Town?

Cllr. Carthy stated that court services moving to the larger towns and away from Carrickmacross was one thing but leaving the building vacant could not happen. He stated that the building was a focal point in the town and that there was a lot of history attached to the building and that the MD would have to come out strong regarding the building's future use and ask the Court Service what are the future plans and ensure there is an alternate use for the building.

Cllr. Keelan stated that the building was in the centre of the town and it was very important that the MD find out what will happen to it. Cllr Keelan stated that it would not be tolerated for a public building like this to become vacant.

Cllr. McCooey commented that she was envious of how ahead of the issue the MD were given that they were working hard to undo what was done to the Market House in Castleblayney. She stated that to drain the town of these services was unacceptable and confirmed her support on the issue.

4.0 Presentation – Proposed CCTV Scheme for Carrickmacross – Damien Thornton

Cllr. Carthy stated that he was happy for the presentation to be sent on to him.

Cllr. O'Hanlon stated that the MD were not going to have the delays that other towns have had.

Cllr. Campbell thanked the Co-Ordinator and District Engineer for their work on this project.

5.0 MD Co-Ordinator's Report

Cllr. Keelan:

Thanked Damien Thornton for the report and stated that it gives members a good overview of what is being done. He stated that the Inniskeen Bike Rental Scheme was going in to its second summer and he felt that this would be a good tourism opportunity. He stated that it was obviously not attractive and asked if this was because of the public liability insurance. He stated that he was disappointed that the scheme was not up and running and understood that this was no fault of the MD staff but would like a response.

Reply –There was negotiations with two operators both of which subsequently withdrew their interest. There is the option of tendering to the wider market.

Cllr. Keelan asked if there was a possibility of this scheme being up and running this summer.

Reply – Being realistic, this is highly unlikely.

Cllr. Keelan stated that this was disappointing as the funding was there and the bikes had been purchased and urged the Executive to do whatever it could to get it up and running.

Cllr. Keelan commented on the proposal of walking routes around the village of Inniskeen and stated that these walking routes should be a priority and that safe walking routes over the River Fane are also a priority.

Regarding the N2 Ardee to South of Castleblayney Bypass Cllr Keelan advised that he understood a meeting will take place with the affected landowners. Cllr. Keelan stated that this was very important as he was aware that people can't get planning permission and that commercial development has been curtailed due to the uncertainty around this. He stated that he was pro development and pro employment and hoped that there can be some movement on this project.

Cllr. O'Hanlon

Commented in relation to the N2 Ardee to South of Castleblayney Bypass that to the best of his knowledge, anyone who wished to meet with the Consultants will be facilitated.

In relation to the CTEK-II building the MD report indicated that it is envisaged that letters would issue in a week. Cllr O' Hanlon sought clarification on this. Cllr O' Hanlon is aware that this new building will create 80-90 new jobs and he acknowledged that the MD have worked hard to get it to this stage but asked is there a date for turning the sod?

Reply – Pending approval, Letters of notification shall issue this week. There is a 14-day standstill period after the letters of notification are issued and provided there are no challenges, a Letter of Acceptance will be issued. It will then ultimately be the Contractor who will confirm a works programme that complies with the terms of the Contract.

In relation to Brennan's Cross, have we got the money to complete this work. It is a very dangerous junction, when is this going to happen? If we are going to be spending money on this junction then we don't want to be duplicating the work further down the line.

Reply – Funding has not been confirmed.

Cllr. Carthy

Looking forward to seeing works completed on the Shirley House Lane Car Park Development. This will be great for the businesses in the town to have this space for parking.

Monaghan Road, Castleblayney – The right turning lane here has been removed at the Fire Station. Cllr. Cathy commented that people who don't know the area would need to be notified that there is a fire station up ahead. Whilst appreciating that the MD Executive has previously consulted with the Chief Fire Officer and has indicated that it will do so again, is this something the MD could look at ourselves?

Reply – The Executive shall consult with the Chief Fire Officer and explore the feasibility of erecting signs.

Commented on the new walkway at Tullynaskeagh East and commended the Executive for their work on this and stated it was a great addition to the town.

Cllr. McCooey

Regarding the Monaghan Way, Cllr. McCooey queried whether the development of a walking loop at Mullyash is included in this scheme. Is there any update?

Reply – The scheme provides for a feasibility study into a potential standalone walking loop at Mullyash.

What is the update on the fish sculpture at Lough Muckno? There is a fencing surrounding the fish and it is a complete eyesore.

Reply – Remedial works were carried out to make the sculpture safer however, following further engagement with Castleblayney Regeneration Committee it has been agreed that the sculpture be moved to an alternative location towards outdoor adventure centre.

There is a lot of signage in that area already. Will the fish be obstructing the view of the lake as we need to try and keep the area as natural looking as possible?

Reply – The fish will not hinder the view of the lake in its new location.

Cllr. Campbell

Thanked Damien Thornton and Matthew Lambe for their work and commented that he understood a lot of things are out of their control and that people can get frustrated.

6.0 Questions

Questions raised by Cllr. Colm Carthy for June 2022 meeting of Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District Council:

1. When is it expected the shuck/stream that runs through Foxfield housing estate, Carrickmacross, will be cleared of overgrowth (which is causing issues around drainage and rodent infestations)?

Response:

The stream in question will have maintenance works completed when the local authority is permitted by the Inland Fisheries to carry out works instream. Such works is permitted between the months of July and September annually

2. A recently installed right-turning lane (road marking), which was introduced on the Monaghan road (at the new Fire Station), Castleblayney, has already been removed to facilitate cycle lanes on both sides of said road; does this MD have any plans to reintroduce this right-turning lane and, if not, will the executive consider adding additional signage to forewarn motorists of this very important junction for emergency services?

Response:

The decision to remove the right-turning lane emanated from recommendations set out in the outcome report from a Stage 3 Road Safety undertaken on the recently installed Active Travel Scheme, that includes this section of road. It is therefore not planned to re-introduce this right-turning lane. The matter of additional warning signage shall be forwarded to the Chief Fire Officer for further consideration.

3. When is it expected the two-hour parking by-laws for Farney Street, Carrickmacross, will come into effect and has all homeowners on this street been notified of the parking permit system that has been introduced?

Response:

We have received delivery of the signs to our yard in Carrickmacross this week. Erection of the new signage will begin in Farney Street this week and the remainder of the signs will be erected over the coming weeks in Carrickmacross and Castleblayney, the intention is to have all signage erected early to mid Q3.

4. What is the up-to-date situation with the Carrickmacross Workhouse design/project?

Response:

It is envisaged that the Municipal District Executive shall receive Pre-Tender Approval from the Department within the coming days, at which point a tender for the engagement of an integrated multi-disciplinary design team shall issue to the market.

Questions raised by Cllr. Noel Keelan for June 2022 meeting of Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District Council:

5. What is the up to date position in relation to the roll out of the bicycle rental scheme for the Inniskeen area, given this is an important piece of infrastructure that will enhance the tourism offering in this region?

Response:

Unfortunately, recent negotiations with a potential operator have proved unsuccessful. Pending a review of procurement strategy, the MD Executive intend to return to the market in the coming weeks.

6. What is the up to date position in relation to the proposed Carrickmacross to Dundalk via Inniskeen greenway walking & cycling route?

Response:

The MD Executive previously commissioned a feasibility and scoping study for the proposed Greenway. Currently, there is no funding available to further develop the project. The MD executive shall continue to explore all potential sources of funding to advance the scheme.

7. What projects under the active travel scheme is it hoped to deliver in the Carrickmacross Castleblayney MD area over the course of this year 2022

Response:

This question has been referred to the Roads Section, Monaghan Co. Council and a response will be circulated in due course

8. In relation to the public realm plan for Inniskeen village when is it hoped to commence some of the works proposed under the plan including the provision of safe walking routes throughout the village area across the River Fane , out to McGees corner and beyond given that this is a priority issue for the local community including community organisations such as the hard working tidy towns committee ?

Response:

Design consultants have been appointed and are at present preparing a Concept Development & Option Selection study. On completion of this study three options will be provided for public consultation with the relevant stakeholders. Following this public consultation process a detailed design can be completed for the preferred design solution.

9. In the interest of road safety what is the up to date position in relation to the provision of a pedestrian crossing adjacent to the Patrick Kavanagh centre & the Raglan road tearooms?

Response:

The proposed pedestrian crossing adjacent to the Patrick Kavanagh centre & the Raglan road tearooms form part of the Inniskeen Public Realm plan. This crossing will be addressed in the detailed design stage of the plan. At present this MD is in the process of procuring a detailed design team.

Questions raised by Cllr. Aidan Campbell for June 2022 meeting of Carrickmacross/Castleblayney Municipal District Council:

10. When will work commence on the outdoor area at the Black Island at the area known as the Point to where funding of 20,000 euro was received to enhance this area for children to give them an opportunity to appreciate Nature?

Response:

This project is at procurement stage and it is envisaged that works will commence in Q3 of 2022.

11. With regard to the Workhouse in Carrickmacross. What is the update in terms of engaging the multi-disciplinary team to progress the works on this project?

Response:

It is envisaged that the Municipal District Executive shall receive Pre-Tender Approval from the Department within the coming days, at which point a tender for the engagement of an integrated multi-disciplinary design team shall issue to the market.

12. When will the works on the Monaghan Road out of Castleblayney be completed with the all the new road marking particular at the Ballybay junction to improve safety at this busy part of the road?

Response:

It is envisaged that all outstanding road markings will be completed weekending the 8th of July 2022.

13. Can the MD look at putting a sign up on the Junction on the Monaghan Road out of Castleblayney and the Ballybay Road indicating where the bypass (Currently there is no signage here) and this would avoid unnecessary traffic going through Castleblayney?

Response:

The Municipal District Executive shall examine the feasibility and appropriateness of installing additional directional signs at these locations.

7.0 Motions

8.0 Directors Orders

Directors Order number 33/2022 was noted.

9.0 VOS/VOC

Votes of sympathy were extended to Rita Courtney on the death of Eammon Courtney, Paddy Gallagher on the death of Joan Gallagher and Brian Walsh and Family on the death of Kathleen Walsh.

10.0 AOB

Cllr. Keelan:

On the proposal of Cllr. Keelan and seconded by Cllr. O'Hanlon an occasion for Paul Clifford should be held. Cllr. Keelan stated that Paul was an outstanding public servant for over 40 years.

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Stated that the retirement of Paul Clifford was not a good day and will be felt throughout the organisation. Cllr. Keelan agreed that something needed to be done for him.

Cllr. Campbell:

Concurred with the remarks of Cllr. Keelan and Cllr. O'Hanlon and stated that this should be looked in to.

Cllr. Keelan:

Acknowledged the Patrick Kavanagh mural and stated that it was a fantastic addition to the town and thanked all those who played a role in it. He stated that it was a fantastic piece of work and will do a lot to promote the history of Patrick Kavanagh and Inniskeen village.

Stated that he was conscious that we were promoting active travel and walking. Asked if the hedges along the footpaths and walking routes around the town would be trimmed. He stated that people are having to walk on the roads because of the overgrown hedges.

Reply – The MD will come back on this point.

Cllr. O'Hanlon:

Regarding the roads programme when are they starting and when are works expected to be completed?

Reply – Works started last Monday. It is hoped to have the programme completed by the end of August 2022.

In the context of Community Involvement Scheme, Cllr. O’Hanlon stated that it was disappointing the reduction of funding that had been received. He asked how many roads were being talked about and was there a start date?

Reply – There are two roads. Start date TBC.

The meeting concluded at 12.20pm

Cathaoirleach

Date

Meeting Administrator