

**COMHAIRLE BAILE MHUINEACHÁIN
MONAGHAN TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday the 14th December 2009 at 6.00p.m. in the Council Chamber of Monaghan Town Council, Town Hall, 1 Dublin Street, Monaghan.

Cathaoirleach: Cllr. Seán Conlon

Present: Cllrs. Mary Carroll, Robbie Gallagher, Thomas Hagan, David Maxwell, Paul McGeown, Donal Sherry, Seamus Treanor and Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha.

In attendance: Declan Nelson, County Manager, Gareth Mc Mahon, Town Engineer, Marie Deighan, Town Clerk and Mary Hughes, Staff Officer.

1. Confirmation of November Monthly Meeting held on 16th November 2009.

On the proposal of Cllr. Paul McGeown seconded by Cllr. Robbie Gallagher it was agreed to adopt the Minutes of the November Monthly Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 16th November 2009.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes

It was noted that pay parking in Monaghan town will be suspended from Friday the 18th December to Thursday 24th December 2009 inclusive from 12 noon to 6.00p.m. and will apply to all on-street car parking and public car parks in the town as an encouragement to attract additional shopping into the town.

The Cathaoirleach congratulated and praised all those involved in the recent turning on of the Christmas lights and the associated entertainment events in Monaghan town on Sunday the 29th November 2009.

It was noted that the Christmas lights will be erected in Park Street in the coming days.

The Members expressed disappointment at the National Budget decision to reduce vat rates by 0.5%.

It was noted that the closing date for observations/submissions is Friday 18th December 2009 in relation to the proposal to make a one-way traffic system in Mill Street, Monaghan.

It was noted that repair works are being currently carried out to windows/doors in the Killygoan area.

3. Manager's Orders

The Members noted Manager's Orders numbered 256/09 – 272/09.

4. Correspondence

The Members noted the following correspondence:-

- Letter dated the 2nd December 2009 from Pat Grant, Chief Ambulance Officer, Health Service Executive regarding a recent incident involving a delay in an ambulance reaching an emergency situation in the town.
- Letter dated the 25th November 2009 from Margaret Dawson Baxter, Department of Social and Family Affairs regarding the Monaghan Social Welfare Branch Office.
- Letter dated the 30th November 2009 from Cecelia McKenna, Chilean Ambassador to Ireland stating that she will accept, with great pleasure an invitation from the Town Council to address the newly elected Council. It was agreed to invite members from the Monaghan Rotary Club, McKenna Clan and the Monaghan Chamber of Commerce and to hold the meeting in the Market House, Monaghan.
- E-mail dated the 3rd December 2009 from Gerry Burke, Airtricity Utility Solutions.
- Letter dated the 27th November 2009 from Paddy Mc Gannon, Water Services Section, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government regarding the Monaghan Town Water Supply Augmentation Scheme Final Accounts.
- Letter dated the 19th November 2009 from An Garda Síochána, Monaghan regarding the proposed North Road, Monaghan Upgrade Layout Part 1 and Part 2. The correspondence stated that the Gardaí are of the view that two lanes of traffic should continue to operate on the North Road in order to facilitate lane changes to the Plantation and Glaslough Street entrance.
- Letter dated the 13th November 2009 from Dr. Rory O' Hanlon, T.D.
- Letter dated the 20th November 2009 from Eamon Scanlan, T.D.
- Letter dated the 3rd December 2009 from the Department of Finance regarding VAT
- Letter dated the 20th November 2009 from the Office of the Tánaiste and Office of the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment regarding a reduction in VAT and the introduction of a special tax designation status for all towns designated "Hubs" and "Gateways".
- Letter from the Monaghan Chamber of Commerce Retail Group thanking the Members for their valued contribution to the official switch on of the Christmas lights in Monaghan town on Sunday 29th November 2009.
- Letter dated the 7th December 2009 from the Office of the Minister for Finance regarding a report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes.

- Letter dated the 9th December 2009 from the Office of the Minister for Defence stating that County Monaghan VEC will be taking over the former Military Barracks at Knockaconny, Monaghan within the next few weeks. The Members welcomed this correspondence and on the proposal of Cllr. Paul McGeown seconded by Cllr. Seán Conlon it was agreed to congratulate Martin O’ Brien, C.E.O. of Monaghan V.E.C. and the Management Committee on acquiring the former site for the development of a new multi-purpose education campus.

5. Business submitted by An Cathaoirleach

On the proposal of Cllr. Seán Conlon seconded by Cllr. Thomas Hagan it was agreed to send a letter to the Commission for Communications Regulation regarding complaints received by the Members in relation to poor television reception experienced by householders in Monaghan Town especially in the Glaslough Street area. The Members stated that it is believed that the problem has arisen as a result of a new communication system installed recently at the Garda Headquarters Division in Monaghan Town. It was also agreed that a letter be issued to the Gardaí in Monaghan Town asking if some fine tuning could be carried out to the system in order to alleviate the disturbance.

On the proposal of Cllr. Seán Conlon seconded by Cllr. Pádraigin Uí Mhurchadha it was agreed to issue a letter to Tommy Clarke, DPT Mixed Use Developments requesting them to investigate the feasibility of including a new Theatre for Monaghan Town and its environs in the Monaghan Mixed Use Development Project.

6. Planning Applications

The Members noted Planning Applications numbered 09/29 – 09/32 and a Part VIII Planning for a new roadway as part of the Phase 2 works for the N54 - R188 Monaghan Town Link Road, linking the Cortolvin Road with the Coeohill Road. It was agreed that a copy of the Plans for the proposed road be placed on public display at Teach na nDaoine Family Resource Centre, Mullaghmatt.

7. Consideration of Reports of Committees:-

The Members noted Minutes of a Planning Sub-Committee Meeting of Monaghan Town Council held on Monday 16th November 2009. The Members noted Minutes of Meeting held in committee with Members from the Chamber of Commerce on Monday 16th November 2009.

8. Roads/Housing

A number of matters were noted for the attention of the Town Engineer:-

- 14 Ard Glas – Doors/Windows require repair
- Drains/Gullies on Glen Road to be cleaned
- Steps throughout Mullaghmatt estate in bad condition.
- Improved Public Lighting required in the Coolshannagh area
- Castleblayney Road – Traffic Island – unlit
- ESB poles, Old Armagh Road – sagging of cables.
- Improvement of Road markings required throughout town

9. Telecommunication Mast at Killygoan

The Members look forward to the removal of the Telecommunication Mast at Killygoan, Monaghan.

10. Mullaghmatt Remedial Scheme

It was agreed that a site visit for the Members be arranged on completion of works to the first block of houses in the Mullaghmatt Remedial Works Scheme.

11. Nomination of Member to An Coiste Gaeilge

The Members noted correspondence dated the 12th November 2009 in relation to the above. Cllr. David Maxwell proposed Cllr. Mary Carroll and Cllr. Thomas Hagan seconded the proposal. Cllr. Paul McGeown proposed Cllr. Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha. This was seconded by the Cathaoirleach, Cllr Seán Conlon. A vote was taken which resulted as follows:-

In favour of Cllr. Maxwell's proposal:- Cllrs. Maxwell, Hagan, Carroll, Treanor, Gallagher (5)

In favour of Cllr. McGeown's proposal:- Cllrs. Conlon, Sherry, Uí Mhurchadha, Mc Geown (4)

Cllr. Mary Carroll was nominated to An Coiste Gaeilge.

12. Nomination of Member to the Harvest Time Blues Festival Committee

On the proposal of Cllr. Robbie Gallagher seconded by Cllr. David Maxwell it was agreed that Sheila Connolly, Mullaghmatt be nominated to the Harvest Time Blues Festival Committee.

Nomination of Member to the Strategic Policy Committee of Monaghan County Council.

On the proposal of Cllr. Mary Carroll seconded by Cllr. Paul McGeown it was agreed that Cllr. Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha be nominated to the Social, Cultural, Voluntary and Community Strategic Policy Committee of Monaghan County Council.

Nomination of Member to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee of Monaghan County Council.

On the proposal of Cllr. Seán Conlon seconded by Cllr. Paul McGeown it was agreed that Cllr. Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha be nominated to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee of Monaghan County Council.

13. Notice of Motion:-

- (a) “In light of the continuing decrease in monthly residential rents in the private sector, that this Council write to Minister John Gormley, Department of Environment and Local Government, seeking similar decreases to rents imposed by Local Authorities to their tenants and that the reduction in revenue to the Council is subvented through the Local Government Fund allocation to each Council.”

Cllrs. Uí Mhurchadha, Conlon, Sherry, McGeown

On the proposal of Cllr. Seán Conlon seconded by Cllr. David Maxwell it was agreed to adopt the above Notice of Motion and to circulate it to each Local Authority.

14. Questions:-

Cllrs. Uí Mhurchadha, Conlon, Sherry and McGeown asked:-

- (a) In relation to the European Regional Development funding allocated to the Town Council for playground/recreational facilities, what progress has been made regarding site selection, design and consultation with the relevant communities?

Each of the Residents Committees have been met in this regard and discussions are ongoing as to locations. One Residents Group has indicated that they are not in favour of any play facilities being installed. The design and development of planning documents for the community garden is ongoing.

- (b) In relation to recent and repeated flooding in the vicinity of Monaghan Shopping Centre resulting in considerable inconvenience and loss of business, what assurances can be given to those affected that all measures possible are being taken by both Monaghan Town and County Council that will prevent same re-occurring?

Monaghan Town and County Council are working jointly to establish the exact cause of the flooding in this location and to determine ways in which the flooding can be prevented or minimised in the future. To this end, a detailed survey of the Shambles River will be commissioned to establish the characteristics of the channel and adjacent lands.

- (c) What is the status on the provision of pedestrian crossings, proposed by the Sinn Féin Members, in the vicinity of Beech Hill College and also St. Macartans College?

The Dublin Road is a County Council road and the placing of a pedestrian crossing on this will ultimately be a decision to be made by them.

However, during discussions in this regards at a previous Town Council meeting, the pedestrian crossing proposed at Beech Hill College was not unanimously accepted as being merited or suitable at this location.

The crossing was suggested as a mechanism to help slow down traffic coming into town on the Dublin Road. However, because the pedestrian route from Old Armagh Road to Beechhill Hill is not highly trafficked, it was argued that the pedestrian crossing would not be activated at a frequency necessary to help the problem of the speed of traffic flow on the Dublin Road. It was agreed to install the new traffic arrangements in the form of line marking in the vicinity of the Old Armagh Road and Beech Hill junctions and reassess the merit of placing a pedestrian crossing at a later stage.

The pedestrian difficulties in the vicinity of St. Macartans College are being dealt with by the Area Engineer of Monaghan County Council. The Area Engineer has held a joint meeting with the School, the Gardaí and the local petrol station. Arising from this meeting it was agreed to resurface the junction, renew the double yellow lines, lay speed bars across the approach, upgrade approach lines, upgrade flashing school lights on the approach and install new public lighting at the area.

- (d) When is it anticipated that construction work will commence on new Fire Station located on the town bypass?

This project is being managed and overseen by the Fire Services section of Monaghan County Council. The first phase of the tender process has been completed. A short list of 10 suitable candidates has now been assembled. These 10 firms have been issued with tender documents. These tenders will be received on 14th January 2010.

- (e) Will the replacement/repair of damaged footpaths and potholes in Ashgrove Lawns be included on the 2010 schedule of works and be completed in the early part of the year?

Ashgrove Lawns will be included in the Engineers survey to commence early 2010. This survey will provide the basis for the road programme for 2010. The draft road programme will be brought before Members early in the New Year. The Road Programme will not be finalised until the DOE's grant allocation is known in February/March 2010.

- (f) We understood that the policy of Monaghan Town Council was that OPD local authority houses were not for sale. Has there been a change of policy?

*Monaghan Town Council has not disposed of any OPD's
It was agreed to circulate a list of Monaghan Town Council O.P.D's to the Members at the January Monthly Meeting.*

15. Resolutions from other Local Authorities:-

- (a) “That in view of the ongoing revelations surrounding Fás this Council calls for its abolition in its present format.”

South Tipperary County Council

Following a discussion and on the proposal of Cllr. Robbie Gallagher seconded by Cllr. Pádraigín Uí Mhurchadha it was agreed to mark the above Resolution read.

- (b) “Bandon Town Council support the work carried out by Bandon Family Resource Centre and acknowledge the vital service that it provides to the Community and asks the Taoiseach and Dáil to ignore the recommendation as outlined in the McCarthy Report in relation to the Family Resource Centres”.

Bandon Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (c) “Bandon Town Council calls on the Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Deputy Mary Hanafin to ensure that no cuts will be introduced in the special social welfare payment, at Christmas. Families with children use this money to cover the costs of Christmas and there is a real danger that this year without it people will be pushed into the hands of ruthless money lenders. Also elderly people use this additional payment to help cover the costs of fuel over the winter and as a result of this cut will undoubtedly go without sufficient heating.”

Bandon Town Council

It was agreed to support the above Resolution.

- (d) “That the Members of Castlebar Town Council resolve to call on the Government to put in place an embargo on the re-employment by state and semi bodies of former employees who received their retirement gratuity and pension and that the motion be circulated to all other Local Authorities for consideration”.

Castlebar Town Council

Following a discussion it was agreed to mark the above Resolution read.

- (e) “That rent supplement should not be paid to tenants of Landlords who are evading taxes by not paying the levy to the Local Authority on their non-residential homes or those who are not registered with the Private Residential Tenancies Board, as is a requirement under the Residential Tenancy Act 2004” (see additional correspondence dated 2nd December 2009 attached)

Ballina Town Council

It was agreed to mark the above Resolution read.

16. Any Other Business

A discussion took place in relation to criticism expressed by Cllr. Seamus Treanor regarding local Fianna Fáil T.D.'s voting in the Dáil in favour of a 42-bed hospital for Kenmare, Co. Kerry.

It was agreed to meet with the three applicants on Thursday the 17th December 2009 at 4.45p.m. in the Council Chamber of Monaghan Town Council to allocate the Casual Trading Spaces located at the rear of the Courthouse.

17. Sympathy/Congratulations

It was agreed to extend a vote of Congratulations to the following:-

- Paul Curran, Clontibret on his appointment as County Chairman of Monaghan County Board
- Sean Mc Kenna, Monaghan on his appointment as County Secretary of Monaghan County Board
- Drumhowan G.F.C. on winning the Intermediate Football League Title against Monaghan Harps.
- Donaghmoyne Ladies Football Club on winning the County League Title against Emyvale.
- Seamus Keenan, Monaghan on his recent retirement from the Ambulance Service, Monaghan.
- Conor Forde, Monaghan United on being selected for the Ireland Under 15 Soccer Team.
- Pat Mc Enaney on winning the title Best Referee for the 3rd year in a row.

A vote of Sympathy was extended to the following:-

- Monaghan Town Council Staff Member, Eilish Clarke on the recent death of her sister Noeleen.
- The family, friends and work colleagues of the late Garda Gary McLoughlin, Fenagh, Co. Leitrim who tragically lost his life in the line of duty.

This concluded the business of the Meeting

Dated this the 18th day of January 2010.

Cathaoirleach.