

**Minutes of the Carrick on Shannon Municipal District Meeting held in the Online
Information meeting on Monday, 11 May 2020 at 10.00 am**

Members Present: Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire (Cathaoirleach)
Councillor Paddy Farrell
Councillor Des Guckian
Councillor Sean McGowan
Councillor Thomas Mulligan
Councillor Enda Stenson

Officials Present: Joseph Gilhooly, Director of Services, Economic Development,
Planning and Infrastructural Services
Mairead Shanley, Meetings Administrator Carrick-on-Shannon
Municipal District
Darragh O'Boyle, Senior Executive Engineer
Pamela Moran, Clerical Officer
Joe Lowe, Head of Local Enterprise Officer

CMD.46.20 Minutes of Carrick on Shannon Municipal District held in the Council Chamber, Aras an Chontae, Carrick on Shannon on Monday 6th March 2020 for noting and subject to formal approval at the statutory meeting.

Councillor Des Guckian queried the status of today's meeting as the Minutes could not be approved and anything that was on the Agenda that was for approval was only being noted today for approval at a statutory meeting. He questioned why Minutes etc. could not be formally approved today. He said that this meeting had been billed as an information meeting but he commented that he was not sure the members were getting the information they needed.

Mr Gilhooly explained to the meeting the rationale behind the holding on meetings online and the legalities attached to such meetings. This was all previously outlined to the Members by the Chief Executive, Mr Lar Power on Tuesday 5th May 2020 in an online information meeting of the full council. Mr Gilhooly stated that any items on today's agenda, which require formal adoption or approval could only be noted today with the purpose of them being formally approved at a statutory meeting at a future date. He gave two examples of such items on today's agenda:-

- Minutes from meeting held on 9th March 2020
- Tidy Towns allocations under the General Municipal Allocation.

Councillor Guckian responded that this was hair splitting and no need for it. Again he reiterated his point that he Minutes should be approved and amended here and now and not put off until a further date and lead to a large volume of items on an agenda.

Mr Gilhooly stated he agreed with Councillor Guckian and that he was surprised at the legal interpretation given to local authorities especially when meetings held, like today, were backed up by video. He said that the legal definition of “place” in the constitution states a “physical place”.

Councillor Guckian commented that the content of the Minutes were adequate.

No matters or amendments arising from Minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Des Guckian, Seconded by Councillor Sean McGowan AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED;

“That the Minutes of the Meeting of Carrick on Shannon Municipal District held in Aras an Chontae, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim on Monday 6th March 2020 be **noted and subject to formal approval at statutory meeting.**”

CMD.47.20 To receive update from Mr Joseph Gilhooly, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Economic Development, Planning & Infrastructural Services in relation to the current situation regarding the COVID 19 National Emergency.

Mr Gilhooly stated that it is a week since the Chief Executive gave the members a comprehensive update at their recent plenary meeting, he intended to give the member an update of events over the last week.

Roads Department/Road Works Programme

He said that over the last number of weeks there has been a strong focus on the recommencement of works in full i.e. Roads Division – Roads Construction and the Roads Programme. All Road works programme involve a large amount of operational preparedness.

Under the national return to work protocol issued by the government it is anticipated that outdoor works will return on 18th May 2020. Council outdoor works would be covered in the list of staff permitted to return on 18th May. A Guidance Document has been prepared for all outdoor staff. It is about 25 to 30 pages long and covers all adjustments required for safe working practices including social distancing and hand washing. This was a very comprehensive piece of work undertaken which required every single aspect of work to be reviewed to determine the level of adjustments required. Other measures include the using of individual’s vehicles to get to a place of work. All employees will now need to use their own vehicles to get to sites rather than sharing of pick-ups and special rules will be considered where two people are required to work within the two metre distance. PPE will be provided to all works to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

He added that this document will be reviewed again this week in line with the latest national protocols.

He stated that there was no alternative work or redeployment options for Outdoor Staff during the lockdown. However, he stated that the time was well used as a vast amount of work has gone on behind the scenes for e.g. with Road Safety Management etc.

Planning Department

With regard to Planning he informed the meeting of the Ministerial Order which issued, effectively pausing the planning system for a period from 29th March 2020 to 23rd May 2020 inclusive (8 Weeks/56 Days).

This was enacted because the public could not engage with the public consultation process with for submissions/observations on planning files or Part 8s owing to the government's restrictions around travel.

Planners were also unable to go out and visit sites and this was not deemed as essential travel.

If Phase 1 of the re-opening of the country goes ahead, it is hoped that Planner's will recommence site visits from 25th May 2020.

He stated that quite an amount of work had been done prior to the lockdown and introduction of the Ministerial Order, which allowed the Planning Department to issue a number of decisions within the statutory timeframe.

Economic Development/Capital Projects Office

Economic Development and Capital Projects Office staff have continued with business behind the scenes with all staff working from home.

Most of the projects are at the development or design stage. A large number of meetings have been held online.

Work with the Town Teams is continuing.

Councillor Armstrong McGuire thanked Mr Gilhooly for the update adding that it was great to see the Roads and Planning functions hopefully returning.

Councillor McGowan also welcomed the update adding that he was glad to see a lot of planning work done before the restrictions were imposed

He enquired as to when works would commence on the N4 between Jamestown and Masonite, these works were scheduled to be done in March.

Mr O'Boyle stated that once the restrictions had been lifted these works would commence. He added that it was the responsibility of each contractor appointed to a job to provide their own plans for their staff in accordance with Covid-19.

Mr Gilhooly said that he was not aware of any delay for these works. He commented that all outdoor staff will take part in a staff induction process with regard to methods of operations on site. This will take a number of days to complete and will be given by the District Engineers. Works will recommence on a phased basis. It will take time as suppliers will only be gradually returning and they also have to train their staff in new procedures/protocols.

Councillor Stenson enquired if any of the works on the N4 will be carried out at night?

Mr O'Boyle responded that this is unlikely as there would be safety issues.

Councillor Guckian commented that the N4 works from Masonite to Carrick should be given priority.

Mr Gilhooly responded that the project had taken time to progress it. Detailed Designs carried out in 2019 highlighted the need for a more robust job to be carried out. Discussions took place between the Road Design Office and the TII. It was originally estimated that the works would cost €1.5 million, that figure has now risen to €4 million.

Councillor Farrell raised an issue of illegal dumping near where he lived. He stated that a mattress had been dumped by the side of the road

Mr Gilhooly informed him that the Community Wardens are still continuing with inspections.

Mr O'Boyle stated that if his staff can get to it safely within the Covid-19 restrictions they will look at it. He also referenced the bins in Carrick being used by people for domestic waste. He said the bins have now been fitted with stickers advising not to dump domestic waste and that CCTV cameras are in place.

Councillor Mulligan highlighted incidences of fly tipping around Lough Rynn/Gortletteragh. He also enquired about the status of grass cutting.

Councillor Stenson raised the issue of a caravan full of rubbish which had been abandoned at Eslin Community Centre.

Mr Gilhooly responded that the grass cutting was run by the Leitrim Development Company. He did not know what the current situation was but he would check it out.

With regard to fly tipping the council will look into it once we know what staff are mobilised. He reminded the members that the removal of waste is the responsibility of the land owner. He said it he would take up all the items raised and revert back to the members.

Councillor Armstrong McGuire encouraged anyone who sees fly tipping to report it to the council. She said that fly tipping cannot be condoned.

CMD.48.20 To approve proposed Tidy Town allocations under the General Municipal Allocations for noting and subject to formal approval at the statutory meeting.

Report from A/Senior Engineer, Roads, Transportation and Rural Water was circulated to Members in advance of the meeting (This appears as Appendix 1 to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book).

Councillor Armstrong McGuire noted that the allocation for Leitrim Village of €1,195 was slightly lower than the allocation for other villages of €1,250.

This is a shortfall of €55 and she enquired if this money could be sourced from somewhere, she did not want it taken from the other allocations.

Councillor Farrell supported this recommendation.

Councillor Mulligan highlighted the good work done by all the Tidy Towns committees. He enquired in light of the Tidy Towns Competition being cancelled this year, could the Council possibly look towards organising something in recognition of their hard work and effort.

Councillor McGowan welcomed the report and the funding and supported Councillor Mulligan in his suggestion to have some sort of recognition for the hard working Tidy Towns committees.

Mr Gilhooly said he would look into the matter of getting the additional €55 for Leitrim Village. He advised the members that the allocation this year was a 25% increase on last year. This money is ring fenced in the budget process. He said he would also look at possibly organising something towards the end of the year to honour the work of the Tidy Towns.

Proposed by Councillor Enda Stenson, Seconded by Councillor Des Guckian AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED;

“That Tidy Town Allocations under the General Municipal Allocations be noted and subject to formal approval at statutory meeting.”

CMD.49.20 Meeting Correspondence

Letter dated 7th April 2020 from Iarnród Éireann regarding car parking charges at Dromod Railway Station. (Appendix 2 to the Minutes of this meeting in the Minute Book).

Councillor McGowan noted the contents of the letter.

Councillor Guckian commented that with the amount of usage of the car park €1 would be sufficient

CMD.50.20 Motion from Councillor Des Guckian:

"That the Council engineers make direct and immediate contact with TII, to have the junction of the N4 and the L1601, at Fearnought / Faulties, realigned to make it safer and not so confined. The triangles dividing the lanes are too far out on the N4 (leading to a sign being swept away by a new car four years ago) and the entrance and exit lanes are too narrow to accommodate big lorries and buses. A man who drove HGVs in London traffic, for 30 years, says it is very difficult to identify where the entrance is. Bollards, colouring and extra lighting would help."

Report by Roads - General

"The Junction of the L1601 and the N4 was designed in accordance with the TII standards of their day and when the construction of the N4 Dromod – Rooskey Bypass was completed it would have involved a Road Safety Audit incorporating any recommendations into the scheme. Once the Government Covid 19 restrictions have been lifted Leitrim County Council will have a look to see if any upgrades are needed for the delineation of this Junction."

Councillor Guckian said he was not happy with the reply. He gave an outline of the problem with the road to the members.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Stenson and supported by Councillor McGowan.

Mr O'Boyle reiterated the contents of his response. He said they will have a look at it again once it is permissible to do so.

Councillor Guckian said that in his opinion the triangles should be moved back 5 or 6 feet to make this junction safer and extra lighting is also required.

Councillor Guckian also made reference to a previous motion he raised regarding a cycle lane at this location.

Mr O'Boyle stated that he did not have an update at the moment and this was something that the Road Design Office are looking into.

CMD.51.20 Motion from Councillor Des Guckian:

"That we hold actual Municipal meetings from this May forward. The numbers are small and getting written answers is no substitute for a proper meeting, with debates on issues raised and the opportunities to question officials on behalf of our electorate. The public would like to know that we are working harder than ever in this time of crisis."

Report by Director of Services for Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.

"In the context of the advice on social distancing requirements from the Department - our Corporate Policy Group agreed that the May, June and July, online information meetings of the Municipal Districts will take place on their usual dates. The agenda will include an update on the current situation by the Director of Service with responsibility for the MD, followed by questions from Members and consideration of Notices of Motions submitted.

Formal decisions which are required under statute at either plenary or municipal level will not be included on agenda for meetings which are held incorporeally on online platforms. Generally in regard to statutory decisions Friday 26th June has been identified as the date required formal meetings will be held.

The media area also invited to observe.

This arrangement will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in light of national provisions and guidelines and Health & Safety requirements going forward."

Councillor Guckian queried the reason why the Municipal District meetings could not be held physically. There are only 6 members and a number of council staff who attend. He said that written answers are no substitute for having discussions with the council executive/staff. He said that he was as wary as anyone else in relation to the virus but if all recommended measures were followed i.e. hand washing etiquette and social distancing he could not see a problem.

Councillor McGowan said he fully supported Councillor Guckian in his motion. He said that with the small numbers who attend the meetings that the council chamber should be adequate. He enquired if it were possible to hold physical meetings there from June.

Councillor Armstrong McGuire agreed with the comments made but stated that until we know more we need to adhere to the national guidelines issued from government.

Mr Gilhooly informed the meeting that the council chamber is currently being assessed and the capacity is now 10 due to social distancing measures. There will be a reduced capacity meeting with the CPG on 2nd June 2020 to discuss dates for AGMs. Currently there is no provision to meet face to face so the online system will continue. It is hoped to hold the AGMs at the end of June.

Councillor Guckian commented that Cavan County Council held a physical meeting in a large centre. Longford Municipal District held their meeting in the mall. He added that if the doors into an area were a problem, leave them open. We need to be get back to some sort of normality.

Councillor Stenson said that he did not see anything wrong with today's meeting being held online. All items on the Agenda are being discussed and items that require statutory approval are being noted today for approval at a later date.

Councillor McGowan said that this was a fair point.

Councillor Armstrong McGuire concluded by saying that all voices have to be heard.

CMD.52.20 Motion from Councillor Sean McGowan:

"I ask Mr Darragh O'Boyle, District Engineer to look at carrying out improvements to Moheraven Junction. It is extremely dangerous for motorists, cyclists coming out from the "bog road" No. No L 5474-0 onto the Corrascoffy Fearnaught Road No. L 1475-0 as there is very limited view back towards Corrascoffy.

There was a serious incident there a few weeks back when a youngster on a bicycle cycled out of from the bog road and onto the Corrascoffy - Fearnaught Road and was almost ran over by an oncoming van, luckily the driver of the van was alert and managed to bring his vehicle to a stop. There have been other incidents in the past at this junction but none as serious.

The owner of the old shed that is at the cross is willing to let the Council have it to improve the view back towards Corrascoffy."

Report by Roads - General

"The L-5474 is very minor local road with little traffic. Most of the traffic is agricultural. With the knowledge that the land owner will transfer the land to the council and the recorded incidents at this junction, we will seek to apply for a low cost safety at this minor junction. It will be placed on our list for consideration."

Councillor McGowan noted reply. He informed the meeting that there was a serious incident about a month ago. There have also been a number of minor incidents that have never been reported. He commented that even though it is classed as a minor local road it is an extremely busy stretch of road used by pedestrians and cyclists. It is great to see it being used. He enquired if it would be possible to have the "Stop" sign moved back as it is 21 yards from the junction and also would it be possible to paint white lines.

Councillor Guckian and Councillor Stenson supported the motion.

Mr O'Boyle said that the council has a Restoration Maintenance Grant on this stretch of road this year however such a grant does not allow them to go onto private lands. He commented that it was good that the landowner was agreeable to facilitate works and this would allow the council to look for a Significant Improvement or Low Cost Safety Grant for this area.

In relation to the moving of the sign and painting of white lines he said that he would look at having it done this year.

CMD.53.20 Motion from Councillor Sean McGowan:

"I ask Mr Darragh O'Boyle, District Engineer to organise a machine for a day to remove a number of trees that have fallen into the Black River at Cloonlaughil, Gortletteragh between the bridge at the end of road No. L-16271 on towards the back of Mc Goldrick's garage. There is a right of way to the river by a lane alongside the garage. The trees have restricted very much the flow on the river with the result that the local lands become flooded after heavy rains."

Report by Roads - General

"Leitrim County Council have established a budget of 10K per annum for cleaning specific OPW drainage schemes. In 2020, this funding will be expended on the Rynn and Blackwater drainage district. If this section of the river and with land owner permission, we will endeavour to clean out the watercourse."

Councillor McGowan said he was reasonably happy with the reply. He commented that now would be a good time to get work done (bearing in mind the Covid 19 regulations).

Mr O'Boyle confirmed that Leitrim County Council has €10,000 to carry out drainage works. However he reiterated that this was specifically works on OPW drainage schemes.

Councillor McGowan confirmed that it was on the OPW drainage scheme.

CMD.54.20 Motion from Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire:

"The Local Enterprise Office staff have been very busy getting the message out to businesses that there are many offers of financial and mentoring assistance to concerned business owners both Sole Traders and Companies. How has the response been at this stage?"

Report by Local Enterprise Office

"During the first week of the Lock Down contact the LEO office made contact with many clients to gauge the level of impact and outline the level of supports that were offered. We also rescheduled all our training programmes to on-line platforms.

The primary offerings which we are delivering are on line advice/mentoring, the Business Continuity Voucher, Trading online voucher and pathway to credit through Micro Finance Ireland and of course our existing primary and expansion grant offerings.

The Leo is now dealing with a very wide remit of enterprises - Hotels, coffee shops, hairdressers, manufacturing services to mention a few. On line training offering has been a great success with over 250 attending training over the last 5 weeks. 25 businesses have accessed direct mentoring covering issues of finance / HR / ICT and

Health and Safety. We currently have nearly 60 Business Continuity Vouchers applications which primarily are focused on financial reviews, projections and looking at new ways to do business. There is also great interest in accessing the Trading On-Line vouchers with over 50 clients attending training programme (which is necessary before applying for a TOV grant).

The feedback we are receiving from businesses is still one of shock and uncertainty. This uncertainty is inhibiting planning for the future. The tourism/hospitality sector in particular is badly affected with many now thinking of now operating until the 2021 season. Most enterprises are also awaiting further detail on the proposed Government incentives to get the Country up and running again. Many enterprises are reluctant to take on further debt in light of the level of uncertainty going forward with many wondering, that if social distancing is necessary going forward - will their business be viable - hotels, pubs, restaurants, hairdressers etc.

Summary table in regard to key interventions:

Support Applications	Submitted	No. Approvals	Value of Approvals €
Business Continuity Voucher	58	19	43,500
Trading Online Voucher		3	7,500

Support	No. of Participants
Covid Mentoring	31
Training	253

Councillor Armstrong McGuire said that she was very happy with the substantial reply she had received. She proceeded to read out the reply to the meeting.

Mr Lowe recapped the main points of his response.

Councillor Stenson asked could all members be supplied with a copy of the reply. He also took the opportunity to thank the staff of the Local Enterprise Office.

Councillor Armstrong McGuire commented that all 18 members of Leitrim County Council should be forwarded a copy of this reply. She highlighted the excellent work of the LEO and encouraged all business owners to contact them to get guidance and

support in these difficult times.

Mr Lowe informed the meeting that anyone can log onto their website which has a comprehensive amount of information/resources in relation to all aspects of business.

Councillor Guckian enquired what supports there were for farmers.

Mr Lowe informed him that this was not under his remit however he suggested that Teagasc may be able to provide some information or support.

Councillor Farrell commented that we were very lucky in Leitrim as the three marts in the area are all operating online and there was also an online bull show held recently.

Councillor McGowan commended the excellent work of Mr Lowe and his staff in the Local Enterprise Office.

CMD.55.20 Motion from Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire:

"Can I have brief progress report on the works planned on bringing Flynn's Field to fruition as a car park?"

Report by Director of Services for Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation.

"The Contract for the construction of the car park in Flynn's Field has been awarded to Harrington Concrete and Quarries Ltd. Works will re-commence on site as soon as the COVID 19 restrictions are lifted."

Councillor Armstrong McGuire very happy to see that a Contractor has been confirmed for this project and that hopefully we will see works progressing shortly.

CMD.56.20 AOB

Councillor Armstrong McGuire stated that Councillor Mulligan wished to raise a few matters.

House Fire in Cloonbonny

Councillor Mulligan made reference to a devastating house fire at Cloonbonny which occurred last Friday. He said that the homeowner was a retired member of staff from Leitrim County Council. He requested that a member of management would contact this person to offer our sympathies and any practical assistance where possible.

Councillor Sean McGowan and Councillor Des Guckian also supported this proposal.

Domestic Connection – Irish Water

On a separate issued he enquired if there was a charge for a domestic connection with Irish Water and how much was it?

Mr O’Boyle stated that this was not his area of work, however if Councillor Mulligan sent him on the Eircode, he would get in touch with the Water Services Department.

Ms. Shanley looked up the information on the Irish Water Website and informed Councillor Mulligan that the amount was €1935.00

Community Response – Wellness Packs

Councillor Enda Stenson paid tribute to the work done by Suzanne Duffy in conjunction with a variety of voluntary groups who prepared Wellness Packs for those cocooning. He also thanked businesses who provided goods for the packs.

The packs have proved very successful with 1500 already delivered, such was the demand that a further 1200 are being prepared for distribution this week.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 11.45 am

SIGNED: _____
Councillor Paddy Farrell
Cathaoirleach, Carrick on
Shannon Municipal District

SIGNED: _____
Mairead Shanley
Meetings Administrator

Date: Monday 14 September 2020