

**Minutes of the Manorhamilton Municipal District Meeting held in the HSE Offices,
Manorhamilton on Monday, 20 February 2023 at 2.30 pm**

Members Present: Councillor Frank Dolan (Cathaoirleach)
Councillor Felim Gurn
Councillor Justin Warnock
Councillor Sean McDermott
Councillor Padraig Fallon

Apologies: Councillor Mary Bohan

Officials Present: Lorraine McMorrow, A/Assistant Staff Officer
Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing, Corporate Services,
Community and Cultural Services
Eric Gilroy, SEE North Leitrim
Nicola McManus, Meetings Administrator Manorhamilton
Municipal District

**MMD.15.23 Adoption of Minutes of the Meeting of Manorhamilton Municipal District
held on 16th January 2023**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Padraig Fallon
SECONDED by Cllr Sean McDermott

It was **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the Manorhamilton Municipal District Meeting of
16th January 2023.

MMD.16.23 Meeting Correspondence

Acknowledgements were received from the Minister for Environment, Transport and
Communications, Eamon Ryan to the recent correspondence issued in relation to funding
for passing bays on local and regional roads in Co. Leitrim.

A response was received from the Minister for Environment, Transport and
Communications, Eamon Ryan to the recent correspondence issued in relation to extension
to the exemption granted to farmers for burning of green waste. Members noted the
contents stating that the that the existing exemption applies until 1 March 2023, and again
for a further three-month period, from 1 September to 30th November 2023 and that the
three-month period in late 2023 will definitively be the final extension granted under these
Regulations.

Cllr Padraig Fallon welcomed this response referring to confusion in the farming community
regarding the legality of burning green waste since January 2023. Cllr Fallon stated that
there will have to be an alternative proposal prepared by the Minister for Agriculture in
relation to the disposal of green waste, that is cost effective for farmers. Currently the costs

associated with the use of wood chipping and mulch machinery is expensive, unpractical and places additional financial hardship upon farmers.

MMD.17.23 Schedule of Municipal District Works 2023

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Director of Finance and Water Services, outlined the Schedule of Municipal District Works for the Manorhamilton MD for 2023. Mr. Dwyer gave an overview of the allocation for the Municipal District in terms of Housing, Tourism and Economic Development, Environmental Services and Recreation and Amenities. The allocation remains the same as 2022, with the exception of the Amenities budget which has increased by €5,000.

MMD.18.23 Draft Road Works Programme

Mr. Terry McGovern, Senior Engineer gave a detailed outline of the various road grants under the 2023 Roadworks Scheme including the discretionary maintenance grant, restoration maintenance and improvement grants, bridge rehabilitation grants, active travel and low-cost safety improvement grants. Mr. McGovern highlighted that the budget of €11 million is one of the largest roads programmes for the area with an increase of 23% on last year's budget. The Manorhamilton MD has been granted 40% of the overall roads budget for the County with works on over 50 local roads to take place in 2023.

Cllr Pdraig Fallon welcomed the increase in budget across a range of schemes in the Manorhamilton MD. He raised concerns regarding staffing levels and sought clarity on whether there is adequate staffing levels in place to be able to deliver this programme of road works for the area.

Mr Terry McGovern confirmed the staffing arrangements in place and advised members that the numbers of general operatives will be reviewed in light of the programme with additional staff recruited as required.

Cllr Justin Warnock also outlined his concerns re staffing levels and sought an update on the proposed works to Lennox Bridge.

Mr. Terry McGovern confirmed that €200,000 has also been awarded to Lennox Bridge, but Leitrim County Council are currently awaiting a response from the Department of Transport in relation to the preferred route.

Cllr Warnock highlighted that there are bad bends on the outskirts of Bundoran close to the bridge where it is not safe to walk or cycle. Mr. McGovern outlined Cllr Warnock that the preferred option for Lennox Bridge includes the realignment of this road which.

Cllr Warnock also raised the issue of dangerous bends close to Kinlough that need to be addressed. Mr McGovern stated that funding is focused on the rehabilitation of bridges. He highlighted that applications for funding along the R280 have been submitted to the Department of Transport, but funding has not yet been provided.

Cllr Sean McDermott sought further clarity on the realignment of the national primary road at Glenfarne.

Mr McGovern confirmed that the Design Office will review that Bridge on Blackrock road on the N16. He highlighted the difficulty in appointing bridge specialists for works.

Cllr Sean McDermott also queried whether there is any flexibility within the Roadworks Programme in directing funding to different roads, if required.

Mr. McGovern stated that a PSCI assessment is carried out on all roads in Co. Leitrim on a multi annual basis. Each road is given a PSCI rating and this rating determines if upgrade works are required. If the rating is lower than 6, then funding can be applied for from the Department of Transport in respect of upgrade works. It is very difficult to make adjustments to the Roadworks Programme as all works are funded and approved by the Department of Transport. Roads with a higher PSCI rating will not receive funding.

Cllr Sean McDermott acknowledged the response but also highlighted that there could be a lot of changes to the condition of a road in three years.

Cllr Felim Gurn welcomed the €11 million funding an increase of 23% upon last year's budget, highlighting that costs have increased since last year. Mr. McGovern acknowledged that costs had risen sharply in the last two years and this has been taken into account in the delivery of this budget.

Cllr Gurn asked if funding could be made available to extend the Glencar Cycleway which currently stops at the statue. Mr. McGovern confirmed that there is no discretionary funding within the road works budget to complete this work. An application for funding through the Capital Projects Office and the Department of Rural and Community Development would have to be sought to deliver this work.

Cllr Gurn acknowledged the funding for Safe Routes for Schools and requested that works be carried out when the schools are closed for the summer to avoid disruption.

Mr McGovern explained that during the summer months, the application of surface dressing to local, national and regional roads takes place due to drier weather conditions. During this time, outdoor staff are assigned to these areas, and may not be in a position to dedicate time to works at schools.

Cllr Gurn sought clarity on the number of roads that will be completed under the LIS programme in 2023. Mr McGovern confirmed that up to 200 applications have been received for the new LIS programme, these are currently being assessed and eligible applications will be costed by the Area Offices. Mr. McGovern estimated that up to 10 roads will be completed each year depending on the individual cost of each. A second tranche of funding is expected to be announced later in the year.

Cllr Gurn questioned on whether costs have fallen recently in relation to materials and labour. Mr. McGovern explained that costs remain high and have not fallen.

Cllr Gurn queried what was the current strategy for targeting weeds with the region? Mr. Govern confirmed that Leitrim County Council use herbicides and pesticides that do not contain glyphosate.

Cllr Frank Dolan highlighted that there are a number of roads under the LIS programme not yet finished. Mr McGovern reassured the members, that these roads will be finished and closed out in the near future.

Cllr Dolan welcomed the budget allocation and expressed his satisfaction with the ongoing progress of Drummahan and Munakill works. He asked if there has been any contact from Sligo County Council regarding traffic management on the N16, as upcoming works will result in diversion to Leitrim Roads.

Mr. Eric Gilroy confirmed that no communication has been received and confirmed he would follow up with Sligo County Council.

Cllr Sean McDermott also stated he was happy to see ongoing progress on the N16 and the realignment will be a fantastic project once complete.

Mr McGovern explained that Leitrim County Council made the decision to complete the realignment of the N16 in sections, completing different parts of the road every year.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Felim Gurn

SECONDED by Cllr Frank Dolan

It was **AGREED** to approve the allocation of funding under the Schedule of Municipal District Works, to include the Area Programme 2023, as circulated to the Members.

NOTICES OF MOTION

It was agreed to take the three motions relating to road crossing at the Beepark together.

MMD.19.23 Motion from Councillor Frank Dolan

"On behalf of the staff of the National Learning Network in Manorhamilton I ask the engineering staff of Leitrim County Council to examine the possibility of putting a zebra crossing on Park Road from the community centre to the Bee Park as a safety measure for their members, and also the same on the N16 near the bus stop in order to facilitate access for their members to the proposed accommodation in Glen Owen estate."

MMD.20.23 Motion from Councillor Pdraig Fallon

"I propose that the possibility of a zebra crossing on Park Road from the community centre over to the Bee Park Manorhamilton be examined."

MMD.21.23 Motion from Councillor Sean McDermott

"I ask is it possible to provide a zebra crossing on the Park Road, Manorhamilton from the Community Centre to the Bee Park. This zebra crossing would be beneficial to the whole community and the different groups using the Community Centre which includes children walking to school, the Kilgar Group, Creche, Men's Group, Women's Centre and the Gym.

Councillors have been contacted recently by the National Learning Network on this issue, also they have raised the issue of a zebra crossing on the N16 road near the bus stop situated close to Glen Owen Housing Estate, where the Rehab Group-Supported accommodation will be located."

Report by Roads – General

"The suggestion of a zebra crossing on Park Road from the Community Centre will be looked at for viability under Active Travel initiatives. The National Transport Authority fund the Active Travel Investment Program, the allocations have been set for Leitrim County Council's 2023 Active Travel schemes, Leitrim County Council can include for the provision of a controlled crossing point at this location in the next round of funding applications for review by the NTA (January 2024). Please note this location will have to be examined from a road safety and planning point of view for the suitability of installation of a controlled crossing.

Feasibility for the zebra crossing on the N16 near Glen Owen will be investigated under the Safe Routes to School initiative. St Clare's National school has qualified for the Safe Routes to School scheme in this location and Leitrim County Council are currently drafting documents to procure consultants to progress a design for the area. Leitrim County Council will highlight this location for inclusion in the design. As this is a National Road, the TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) have responsibility for this road and therefore any changes along this route will be subject to their approval."

Cllr Frank Dolan outlined that he and a number of the members of the Manorhamilton MD had been contacted by the National Learning Network, who have expressed their concerns regarding the safety of its students and staff in accessing the building.

Cllr Sean McDermott agreed with Cllr Dolan and requested the road be reviewed along with safe access to the Glen Owen Estate.

Cllr Felim Gurn also stressed that Park Road is a dangerous road for users of the NLN to cross to access the centre. He also requested that the road be resurfaced.

Mr Eric Gilroy stated that works of this nature would have to be done under the Active Travel Scheme and funding for the TII would have to be approved for this project. He confirmed that a plan is currently being developed for the Glen Owen Estate.

MMD.22.23 Motion from Councillor Frank Dolan

"I ask if there has been any communication from the Court Service in relation to the courthouse in Manorhamilton. I believe it is a shame to see such a building falling into dereliction year by year. I propose that Leitrim County Council make contact with the court service on this issue again."

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

Manorhamilton Court House was first identified as a priority for the Town as part of the Manor Summit in 2016. In 2019 Leitrim County Council and the Town Team applied for

funding to develop plans, designs and a business case for the redevelopment of the Courthouse, which unfortunately was unsuccessful. The Courthouse project has remained on the agenda as part of the REDZ roll forward plan for the Town 2019-2022.

On foot of this and the strong commitment of the Town Team, Leitrim County Council with the co-operation of the Courts Service together with the Manorhamilton Chamber and Town Team applied for a Development Measure grant under Town and Village 2022 of €50,000 to carry out a Feasibility Study and to carry out preliminary design and planning work including surveys to move the project to the next stage. This application was one of those announced as successful by the Minister in December 2022 and once Leitrim County Council receive a formal Letter of Offer from the Dept we will issue the Letter of Offer to the Town Team, who can then move forward with procuring expertise to carry out this work, ultimately moving the development of the Courthouse forward to the next stage."

Cllr Frank Dolan confirmed that the old courthouse is well serviced with a carpark and as it will never be used again as a courthouse, it should be handed over to Leitrim County Council or to local community groups who can make use of the building. He stressed that it was shameful to see this building standing empty and going into dereliction.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Frank Dolan

SECONDED by Cllr Sean McDermott, Cllr Felim Gurn and Cllr Justin Warnock

It was **AGREED** to write to Courts Service to seek an update on the progress of the handover of Manorhamilton Courthouse for use by the public.

Cllr Sean McDermott acknowledged that there are local community groups with good ideas that can bring this building back into use. The building has lots of history attached but has become an eye sore and requires financial investment to undergo renovation.

Cllr Felim Gurn acknowledged that funding of €50,000 has been made available from the Department to complete a feasibility assessment of the building.

Cllr Justin Warnock expressed his concerns that every year the building is left vacant, more money and more work will be required to bring this building back to an acceptable standard.

MMD.23.23 Motion from Councillor Pdraig Fallon

"I propose that our area engineer along with the active travel section examine the possibility of enhancing safety features at St Brigid's National School Drumkeeran."

Report by Roads – General

"Leitrim County Council's Active Travel team can explore the possibility of an Active Travel scheme at St Brigid's National School Drumkeeran. This scheme will be subject to it meeting the criteria for funding under the Active Travel Investment Grant from the National Transport Authority and the priority list for available funding. 2023 Active Travel funding has been allocated to various projects throughout the county, therefore this project can be

explored for possible funding in the years ahead."

Cllr Pdraig Fallon welcomed the reply and also highlighted that parents are seeking a zebra crossing to be constructed on the approach to the school. He requested that the Roads Department examine the carpark at the school to explore the possibility of obtaining funding to make the area safer for buses and parents dropping off children to school.

MMD.24.23 Motion from Councillor Felim Gurn

"With the rising costs of electricity in the last year, sports clubs throughout the county are being hit hard trying to keep the lights on for training pitches, astro turfs and tennis clubs. Funding needs to be made available to them to explore alternative energy sources like solar lighting or facilities will be underutilised from October to March."

Report by Sports Department

"Significant financial support has been provided to sports clubs, community organisations and facilities over the past 2.5 years through Sport Ireland, National Governing Bodies, Leitrim County Council and Leitrim Sports Partnership. The Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin TD, together with Sport Ireland, announced almost €52 million in funding for the sport sector under a number of separate support programmes in December 2022.

In relation to energy costs the position is that Leitrim Sports Partnership has been allocated Covid-related funding of €46,000, at the end of 2022, for Community and Sports facilities, to alleviate the increased energy costs and the impact on sports clubs and organisations in the County. It is proposed that this funding will be advertised once the Community Support Fund funding has been allocated, as eligibility criteria are similar.

This will ensure a wider reach to clubs and community facilities. The Community Support Fund is currently open and taking applications for non-pay running costs such as utility bills (electricity costs, refuse charges, heating charges) or other non-pay operating costs (e.g., rental/lease costs, insurance bills). Groups will also be able to use the funding to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities, purchase equipment such as tables, chairs, tools, signage, laptops, printers, lawnmowers, canopies, training equipment etc. Closing date for receipt of applications under the Community Support Fund is Monday February 27th 2023"

Cllr Felim Gurn stated that the cost of electricity to run pitches has increased significantly and requested that an exploration of alternative energy sources be delivered through funding to seek cheaper alternatives.

The cost of the installation of new LED energy saving lights can cost up to €200,000 which would be a huge expense for clubs. Newer technology is being developed all the time for energy saving alternatives.

Cllr Justin Warnock supported the motion and advised that now is the opportunity to go green. Small scale solar or wind energy generation can be delivered as an alternative energy source for lighting.

Cllr Sean McDermott also supported the motion and stated that there are plenty of alternative options to be examined. The current rise in energy costs have made it impossible for local communities to run their amenities.

Cllr Felim Gurn requested that Leitrim County Council review and speak to community groups with a view to seeking Departmental funding.

Cllr Sean McDermott confirmed that ATU Sligo are currently working on a project with community groups on alternative energy sources.

Cllr Pdraig Fallon highlighted that community centres also require help with electricity costs. He proposed that Leitrim County Council write to the Minister for Environment to seek an extension to the Community Energy Support Scheme to allow community groups to seek financial assistance for energy costs over an extended period of time. All members supported this motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Pdraig Fallon
SECONDED by Cllr Frank Dolan

It was **AGREED** to write to the Minister for Environment to seek an extension to the Community Energy Support Scheme.

MMD.25.23 Motion from Councillor Felim Gurn

"A recently published report indicated that HSE buildings that are empty for last number of years are not fit for purpose for housing Ukrainian refugees and the cost to bring them back into use would be prohibitive. I ask what is alternative to this? Do we just leave them empty in our towns and villages to further decay over the coming years.

This could be the starting point for a Vacant Buildings Officer in our towns and villages to work with the HSE to either give them to the community groups or find a new purpose for them."

Report by Housing Department

"Leitrim County Council Housing section were recently asked to assess the suitability of a number of HSE properties throughout Co. Leitrim to temporarily house Ukrainian refugees. Leitrim County Council Housing section indicated in their return to the DHLGH/DCEIDY that a number of the HSE properties identified were suitable for refurbishing into Ukrainian accommodation with capital funding. The Vacant Homes Officer and the recently appointed Town Regeneration Officer supported by the Housing and Economic Development sections will be working collaboratively to assess key vacant properties in our Towns and Villages that can be repurposed to meet a housing or community need. If HSE buildings have the potential to form part of a regenerative project, Leitrim County Council will engage with the HSE to secure the property and advance the potential project."

Cllr Felim Gurn expressed his concern that there are empty HSE buildings in towns and

villages all over Leitrim that are not fit for purpose. Currently the HSE are not inspecting or assessing these buildings on a regular basis. Cllr Gurn highlighted that there are currently two houses in Manorhamilton owned by the HSE lying vacant. Cllr Gurn questioned Leitrim County Council on what the plan is for these buildings and asked that the Town Regeneration Officer explore options to address this issue.

Cllr Frank Dolan confirmed that there were a number of HSE buildings in Manorhamilton that could be converted into office spaces or accommodation.

All members supported the motion.

MMD.26.23 Motion from Councillor Sean McDermott

"I ask if the entry off the N16 on to road number L2200 at The Big Bog Cross, Glenfarne be repaired. This road leads on to St Michael's Church and school, can the edge of this entry be built up and re-surfaced and also the green bollards have yet to be replaced."

Report by Roads - General

"The junction of the L2200 with the N16 will be surveyed for defects and any necessary repairs will be carried out.

The TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) routinely review signage and delineation bollards on the National Road network, Leitrim County Council has been informed that TII plan to replace and reinstate delineation bollards on the N16 this year."

Cllr Sean McDermott welcomed the response and confirmed that the works have been completed. He thanked Leitrim County Council for their prompt response to the issue.

MMD.27.23 Motion from Councillor Cllr. Justin Warnock

"With over 70% of the land in the Manorhamilton MD in the new ACRES scheme, with the objective of achieving improved biodiversity, climate, air and water quality outcomes, I ask that Leitrim County Council write to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue to clarify if this means that all new commercial afforestation, construction of windfarms and the possibility of gold mining is now prohibited in these areas?"

Cllr Justin Warnock stressed that farmers who are enrolled in the ACRES scheme make a huge commitment to improving water quality and conducting farming practices in an environmentally friendly manner, however licences approved for mining and forestry can destroy all the good work being done by farmers. All members supported the motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr Justin Warnock
SECONDED by Cllr Pdraig Fallon

It was **AGREED** to write to Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine to seek clarity on whether prospecting licences or approvals for forestry planting will be granted for areas specified in the ACRES scheme.

MMD.28.23 Motion from Councillor Cllr. Justin Warnock

"I ask Joe Duffy, the Civil Defence Officer for Leitrim a) How many members are in the Civil Defence in Leitrim and b) is there a designated unit of volunteers in the Manorhamilton MD?"

Report by Head of Finance & Water Services

"In answer to a) there are currently approx. 20 active volunteers in the unit. I have 12 applications for membership that will be interviewed shortly and suitable candidates selected and b) there is only one unit in Leitrim and it is based in Drumshanbo."

Cllr Justin Warnock expressed his dissatisfaction with this response. He raised concerns that the Civil Defence headquarters are based in Drumshanbo which is over 40 miles from Kinlough. He confirmed that surfing has increased in popularity in Tullaghan along with mountain climbing and the number of members in the kayaking club at Lough Melvin are the highest ever. He stressed that there is no Civil Defence team in North Leitrim. In the event of an accident or natural disaster, it is concerning that there are not more members. It is imperative to have a unit based in Manorhamilton which is 13 miles from Kinlough.

All members supported the motion.

Ms Mary Quinn outlined that the Civil Defence is comprised of volunteers from around the county and there are members from North Leitrim. She explained that Leitrim County Council don't have the resources to set up other Civil Defence units throughout the county and in the event of an accident or emergency, the Fire Service, Ambulance and Gardaí are the first port of call. The Civil Defence are a support service to the frontline emergency services. Ms Quinn explained that the Civil Defence are currently recruiting new members and Leitrim County Council can raise the profile of the Civil Defence so that volunteer numbers increase and the membership is as broad as possible from all areas across the county.

This concluded the business of the meeting at **15:50**

SIGNED: _____
Councillor Frank Dolan
Cathaoirleach,
Manorhamilton Municipal
District

SIGNED: _____
Nicola McManus
Meetings Administrator

Date: Monday, 20 March 2023

