



MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING OF THE THURLES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT WHICH WAS HELD IN THE DISTRICT CHAMBER, THURLES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OFFICES, CASTLE AVENUE, THURLES ON 19TH FEBRUARY 2024

Present: Councillor Seán Ryan, Cathaoirleach, presided.

Councillors Noel Coonan, Seamus Hanafin, Shane Lee, Micheál Lowry, Eddie Moran, Jim Ryan and Peggy Ryan.

Also Present:

Eamon Lonergan	Director of Services
Liam Brett	Senior Engineer
Thomas Duffy	District Engineer
Jim Ryan	Executive Engineer
Enda Walsh	Executive Engineer
Sharon Scully	District Administrator
Orla McDonnell	Staff Officer

Apology: Councillor Michael Smith

1.1 Disclosures/Conflicts of Interest.

There were no Disclosures/Conflicts of Interest raised at the Meeting.

2.1 Minutes of the December Monthly Meeting of Thurles MD.

It was proposed by Councillor M. Lowry, seconded by Councillor N. Coonan and resolved:

"That the Minutes of the Thurles Municipal District January 2024 Monthly Meeting which was held on the 15th January 2024 be adopted as a true record of the business transacted at the Meeting."

3.1 Section 38 of Road Traffic Act, 1994 – Public Consultation for Traffic Calming Measures N75 Thurles – Public Submissions.

Michael Woulfe, Senior Engineer, Roads Section, along with representatives from Limerick Road Design office were in attendance for this item. Michael advised that 6 submissions were received following the advertising of the Section 38 Public consultation Notice for traffic calming measures on the N75 Thurles. One of the submissions stated a dwelling house was in the wrong location on the drawings provided with the advert. It was noted that this was a drawing error and has subsequently been corrected. Otherwise it is recommended that no changes be made to the proposed plan for traffic calming works.

The Members raised the following queries:-



- The sightline, when exiting from Elmwood housing estate which is a significant sized estate with over 40 houses, is insufficient.
- The proposed narrowing of the carriageway will be challenging for trucks exiting from housing estates.
- TCC need to ensure that communication with businesses and residents impacted by this scheme continues.

Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- This scheme will improve the sightlines for people exiting from estates. The stop line at Elmwood will be altered and this will significantly improve the sightline. The sightline to the left is impacted by existing dwellings that cannot be interfered with.
- Regarding the narrowing of the carriageway, the turning movement of trucks and bin-lorries will be analysed to ensure that sufficient room is available for turning manoeuvres.
- TCC is aware that communication is key and will continue to engage with residents and businesses throughout this scheme. There will also be a Resident Engineer on-site.

4.1 Update from Economic Community and Rural Development Section.

Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer and Geraldine Manning, A/Administrative Officer, Community and Economic Development were in attendance for this item. An Economic, Community and Rural Development Report was circulated to the Members, along with the Agenda, in advance of the Meeting.

Kathleen and Geraldine outlined some of the key points of the Report and the Members raised the following queries:-

- There are still no signs/plaques in place to showcase that Thurles was the European Town of Sport in 2012. Such signs/plaques would be a big advantage to Thurles in terms of tourism.
- Has the position of Tourism Activator been filled yet?
- Work on broadband for the Littleton Deployment area, consisting of 2,460 premises, will not commence until January 2026, and is affecting lots of people in this catchment area who cannot work from home as their broadband is not strong enough.
- The old Post Office in Liberty Square, Thurles has been lying idle for five years now. Is there anything that TCC can do to deal with this issue.
- What is the update in relation to the feasibility study for a digital hub in Thurles for which funding was secured last year.

Replies to queries raised were as follows: -



- The MD Administrator will liaise with the TSP Co-ordinator in relation to the showcasing of Thurles as the European Town of Sport in 2012.
- Interviews have taken place for the position of Tourism Activator; however the post has not yet been filled.
- Kathleen will liaise with the Broadband Officer, Simon Howe, for an update regarding the broadband rollout in the Littleton deployment area.
- The issue of the old Post Office in Liberty Square, Thurles is an issue for the MD.
- A feasibility study for a digital hub in Thurles was completed last year. The study found that a digital hub would most probably survive in a town such as Thurles, however, it would require a local group to run it. Community and Economic Development would work with such a group but they would need to make their interest in such a project known. However, digital hubs are not as popular now as they once were because people today have the capacity to work from home. The focus nowadays is more about developing enterprise hubs.

4.2 Update from Libraries and Cultural Services/Biodiversity.

Ann Marie Brophy, Senior Executive Librarian was in attendance for this item. A Cultural Team Report was circulated to the Members, along with the Agenda, in advance of the Meeting. Ann Marie outlined some of the initiatives that the libraries have been involved with over the past few months.

The Members thanked Ann Marie for her Report and raised the following queries:-

- When will the Source Library carpark re-open to the public?
- Are the Home Energy Saving Kits available to borrow from the libraries?
- Have the libraries sufficient C-Pen Readerpens to deal with the demand.

Ann Marie replied to queries raised as follows:-

- There are health and safety issues, such as electrical problems, yet to be addressed at the Source Library carpark. Ann Marie will check exact details and revert back to MD.
- There are 11 Home Energy Saving Kits available to borrow from the libraries.
- There are 15 C-Pen Readerpens available for use throughout the libraries.



4.3 Update from Roads Capital.

Michael Woulfe, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads Section was in attendance for this item. He advised the Members of the following:

- TCC will lobby for the Thurles Ring Road to be included in the National Development Plan 2040.
- The Preliminary Design for the Slievenamon Road Improvements Phase 2 is complete and TCC is currently procuring a consultant for detailed design.
- The Advance Works Contract has commenced at Latteragh which includes tree cutting and site clearance. An Archaeology study will commence in the next couple of months and the main works contract will be advertised. It is anticipated that construction works will commence in Q3 2024 and will take approximately 18 months.

5.1 District Engineer's Report.

An updated District Engineer's Report for the MD was circulated to the Members, in advance of the Meeting and taken as read.

The Members raised the following queries:-

- The loss of the Munster Hotel carpark, with over 100 car spaces, will cause major issues for parking in the town. Could TCC consider purchasing the hotel and carpark. As a prime property, it could potentially improve the streetscape on one of the main routes into Thurles Town.
- Has a survey been undertaken to examine the issue of vehicles speeding and mounting footpaths at Butler, Iona and Innisfallen Avenues, Thurles.
- The TII resurfaced a part of the N62 Thurles to Templemore Road from Thurles CBS to Thurles Co-op but they left a small gap of the road surface untouched. That part of the road is now unravelling and needs to be addressed.
- The road surface at the roundabout onto the M8 at Pouldine is in a very poor state of repair and needs to be addressed.
- The flashing speed sign on the N62 at Pouldine National School is not working.
- Has there been any update from the TII in relation to the resurfacing of Thurles Suir Bridge which is in a very poor state of repair.
- What is the update regarding the use of Mobile Radar Speed Signs to deal with traffic calming.
- Can the MD examine ways, such as vertical deflectors, in which the speeding of traffic into Gortnahoe village from the Kilcooley side can be addressed?
- The road outside Roscrea, near Liffey Mills, is in a poor state of repair following all the recent heavy rain and requires attention.



Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- The Munster Hotel and carpark is in private ownership and currently has a live planning permission on it. TCC do not have the funds to purchase the hotel. Identifying an end use for the hotel would be difficult and extremely high risk.
- The speed survey at Butler, Iona and Innisfallen Avenues, Thurles is complete and Thurles MD are currently awaiting the National Speed Limit Review before any permanent measures are implemented.
- Thurles MD have submitted a geo-app application to the TII to fund remedial works on a small section of road on the N62 Thurles to Templemore Road from Thurles CBS to Thurles Co-op.
- TII have been notified for immediate attention of the poor road surface at the roundabout onto the M8 at Pouldine.
- The flashing speed sign on the N62 at Pouldine National School is now working.
- Thurles MD will seek an update from the TII in relation to the road surface on the Suir Bridge, Thurles.
- Sockets are in place for the installation of the Mobile Radar Speed Signs to deal with traffic calming.
- As per Policy, any measures to introduce vertical deflectors must be part of a larger plan for villages and not implemented in isolation.
- The road at Liffey Mills, Roscrea requires attention due to a collapsed water pipe in the area and the MD have applied to the OPW for funding. The road will remain closed until the water table drops and remedial works can be carried out.

5.2 Update on District Project Pipeline Plan.

An updated Report on the Capital Projects for the MD was circulated to the Members, in advance of the Meeting, as outlined in the table below and taken as read:-

Project Name & Details	Next Phase Works/Actions
Liberty Square Enhancement Scheme Phase 2 - Thurles	Workshops with the MD Elected Members were held in Q4 2024. The 'preferred' design solution and option assessment is being agreed with the prescribed statutory stakeholders, prior to finalising the design detail and presenting to the public. Public consultation in advance of the planning application is planned for January/Feb 2024. Discussions with the national URDF team will be required in early 2024 to finalise the position with costings, funding requirements and Gateway/programme status.



	A Part 8 planning application is expected to be lodged in Q1 2024. Subject to planning approval the final design and tendering stage could commence in mid-2024.
Market Quarter - Thurles	Tender documents advertised on E-Tenders. Procurement of Main Works Contractor Q2 2024. Construction to commence Q3 2024 with a programme timeline to be agreed.
Littleton Labyrinth Walkway and Cycleway - Phase 1	All rail tracks are now lifted and removed by Bord na Mona. Site works progressing as planned with a projected completion date set for the end of Q1 2024.
Littleton Labyrinth Walkway and Cycleway - Phase 2	Identify the best routes back into the villages. Landowner approval
Littleton Bushcraft Centre	Feasibility Study to be completed for Q2 2024.
Templemore Town Hall Cultural and Enterprise Centre and Civic Plaza	It is planned that construction works will take 13 months to complete, June/July 2024.
Gantly Road in Roscrea - <i>An Age Friendly Neighbourhood</i>	Department issued Notice on 22 nd Nov. 2023 to proceed with issuing the Verification and Due Diligence phase for the Project. Total Project Costs, Detailed Construction Costs, Funding, Inflation Costs and Project Milestones identified and sent to Department by TCC. An external Design Team will be procured once approval to proceed has been obtained from the funding Department in early 2024.
Roscrea Town Centre First Masterplan	Progress projects as set out in the Roscrea Town Centre First Action Plan (short-term 0-3 years). Identify funding opportunities and submit applications accordingly in line with funding calls. Funding of almost €50,000 was awarded to TCC under the ORIS in November 2023 for the Roscrea River Rooms project, to allow for the detailed design, planning and feasibility for a series of connected spaces along the riverside in Roscrea.



Main Street Enhancement Works, Roscrea	Finalise the initial Design Brief and Scope of Works and proceed to Tender Stage for the engagement of an external Design Team in early 2024 to develop designs and advance the project through the Part 8 planning process, subject to funding availability and tenders received.											
Vacant Housing Units	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="671 629 1302 674">MD Awaiting receipt of keys to property</td> <td data-bbox="1302 629 1383 674">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="671 674 1302 712">At Inspections/Costings Stage</td> <td data-bbox="1302 674 1383 712">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="671 712 1302 750">In Progress</td> <td data-bbox="1302 712 1383 750">11</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="671 750 1302 788"></td> <td data-bbox="1302 750 1383 788"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="671 788 1302 826">TOTAL</td> <td data-bbox="1302 788 1383 826">22</td> </tr> </table>		MD Awaiting receipt of keys to property	3	At Inspections/Costings Stage	8	In Progress	11			TOTAL	22
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The District Director informed the Members that a Workshop will take place later this month to discuss all future proposed projects in the MD.

There were no queries raised.

5.3 Contributions to Sporting clubs – Youth Involvement/Female Participation – closing date for noting.

It was noted that the closing date for the Contributions to Sporting clubs – Youth Involvement/Female Participation is 23rd February, 2024.

5.4 Contributions to Resident’s Associations for Estate Enhancement Works – Closing date for noting.

It was noted that the closing date for the Contributions to Resident’s Associations for Estate Enhancement Works is 23rd February, 2024.

5.5 Date to be agreed for the March Monthly Meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor S. Hanafin and seconded by Councillor J. Ryan that the date for the March Monthly Meeting be rescheduled from Monday 18th March to Monday 25th March due to the Public Holiday on 18th March in lieu of St. Patrick’s Day.



6.1 Notices of Motion.

Motion Id 2766 in the name of Councillor Micheál Lowry

That this Municipal District carries out traffic calming and pedestrian safety improvement measures in Ballycahill Village (R503) as a matter of urgency.

Reply to NOM

If there is consensus among the elected members of Thurles MD, technical staff will commit to carrying out a speed survey in Ballycahill Village.

It should be noted that Flashing Speed Radar signs have previously been installed in the Village as part of traffic calming and safety improvement measures.

This Notice of Motion was seconded by Councillor Seán Ryan.

Councillor Lowry requested that the speed survey be undertaken as soon as possible. He outlined the big shift in dynamic of traffic in the village since the opening of a shop there and stated that an independent speed survey was undertaken which recorded the average speed through the village in the high 60kph region over a relatively short span of roadway of 400 metres. He further stated that there is a lot of traffic activity in this area as the road is a regional road.

Councillor S. Hanafin supported the Notice of Motion stating that the village is very busy and flashing speed signs on their own are not sufficient to deal with this issue.

7.1 Correspondence.

Following a request at the September, 2023 MD Meeting requesting a meeting with the Minister for Transport to see if he can be convinced to include the By-Pass project for Thurles in the current National Development Plan, a reply has been received from Minister Ryan via his Private Secretary as follows:-

'On behalf of the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan, T.D., I wish to thank you for your request concerning Thurles By Pass, the contents of which have been noted.

This request is currently with Officials who will respond to you shortly.'

Councillor J. Ryan thanked the District Administrator for the reply who stated that she would follow up on the reply with the Minister's Department later in the week.



8.1 Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations.

Votes of Sympathy were extended to:

- Mae Quinn, former Town Councillor on the death of her brother Eamon Meagher, Knockinroe, Templemore.


Votes of Congratulations were extended to:

- Councillor Peggy Ryan on the birth of her son Denis.
- Enda Walsh, Executive Engineer Thurles MD on winning the Munster Junior B hurling final with Drom and Inch.
- Presentation Secondary School, Thurles on winning the Munster A U17 soccer.
- Mary Immaculate College on winning the Fitzgibbon Cup Final. The team consisted of several players from clubs within the MD District.
- Ger Sammon, on his recent exhibition at the Source Arts Centre of photographs from Thurles town taken by his late father Donal.

9.1 Any Other Business.

Councillor S. Lee stated that the new mural painting in Roscrea town has been very well received by the residents of Roscrea.

That concluded the official business of the February Meeting.

SIGNED:  DATE: 25th March, 2024
CATHAOIRLEACH

SIGNED:  DATE: 25th March, 2024
MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR

