



MINUTES OF THE JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING OF THE THURLES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT WHICH WAS HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM ON 18TH JANUARY 2021

Present: Councillor Noel Coonan Cathaoirleach, presided.

Councillors Seamus Hanafin, Shane Lee,
Michéal Lowry, Eddie Moran, Jim Ryan, Peter Ryan,
Sean Ryan and Michael Smith

Also Present: Eamon Lonergan Acting District Director
Thomas Duffy District Engineer
Liam Brett Senior Engineer
Sharon Scully District Administrator
Orla McDonnell Acting Senior Staff Officer

Welcome.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the District Administrator to her first Municipal District meeting.

1. Disclosures/Conflicts of Interest.

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

2. Adoption of Minutes.

It was proposed by Councillor S. Hanafin, seconded by Councillor M. Smith and resolved:

"That the Minutes of the December 2020 Monthly Meeting which was held on the 21st December 2020 be adopted as a true record of the business transacted at the Meeting."

3. Adoption of Standing Orders.

It was proposed by Councillor S. Ryan, seconded by Councillor S. Lee and resolved:

"That the Thurles Municipal District Meetings Standing Orders be amended to facilitate meetings to be held by zoom/teleconference."

4. Update from Environment and Climate Change.

Marion O'Neill, Environment and Climate Change Section was in attendance via Zoom for this item. A report on Environment and Climate



Change was circulated to the Members with the Agenda in advance of the Meeting. The Report examined the following items:-

- Infrastructure and Maintenance
 - Burial Grounds
 - Textile Banks
- Community Services
 - Tidy Town/Burial Ground Maintenance Grants
- SPC Meetings
- Control of Dogs
- Control of Houses
- Derelict Sites
- Litter Enforcement
- Public Awareness

The Members raised the following issues:-

- What is being done to tackle the serious issue of illegal dumping in the District?
- Is it possible to go down an alternative route of mediation instead of the Courts System to resolve cases of illegal dumping as the Court System is both timely and costly.
- Is it possible to bring forward the date for the National Spring Clean event which is generally held in March each year.
There are currently volunteers with the time available to attempt to tidy up their communities, if supplied with gloves, pickers, bags, etc.
- Did the Environment and Climate Control Section receive any communication from the Department regarding the proposal to allow septic tank owners to procure an inspection by a certified person in order to avail of the Septic Tank Grant.
- Littering of coffee cups and fast food wrappers is an issue in Thurles Town Park and in the new car park off Liberty Square, can something be done for this.
Do fast food outlets contribute towards the cost of clean ups.
- What can be done to protect the old cemetery buildings, or part buildings, which are of significant historical value.
It is equally important that these buildings do not pose a health and safety risk.
- Dumping is an ongoing issue in the two cemeteries in Templemore, can bins be provided in the burial grounds.
- There are dogs roaming freely in the new cemetery in Templemore and also in Railway View Housing Estate, Templemore.
- Significant illegal dumping of bottles and take-away packaging on the N62 between Templemore and Roscrea, particular in the vicinity of McDonald's Restaurant.
- Dumping at the Water Treatment Plant in Roscrea is a concern.



- Small refuse collectors have been forced out of the market by Government legislation and requirements around licences. This has contributed to more dumping. Can legislation be reversed to allow small refuse collectors back into the market.

Marion replied to queries raised as follows:

- Numerous letters/reminders are issued to an individual for illegal dumping before pursuing in the Courts system, which is the last resort.
- €50,000 was spent on illegal dumping clean-ups in 2020 and eight dumping sites have been cleaned up in December alone resulting in almost 2 tonnes of rubbish.
- If the perpetrator leaves no evidence of identity in the dumped rubbish bags no further action can be taken.
- Environment and Climate Control Section can examine the possibility of bringing forward the National Spring Clean Event which is usually held in March every year.
- The Department have acknowledged receipt of the letter from the Environment and Climate Control section proposing that certified personnel be allowed to undertake Septic Tank Inspections. Currently awaiting a full response from the Department.
- Environment and Climate Control section will examine the feasibility of undertaking a promotion in town parks in an attempt to highlight the dumping of coffee cups.
- There is a small fund available for the restoration of buildings. Marion will liaise with Environment Engineer to examine what is feasible in relation to preserving historic cemetery buildings.
- The Dog Warden is investigating the issue of dogs roaming freely in Templemore.
- The Department have advised that Small Collectors must meet the criteria as set down with regard to Waste Collection permits.
- There are currently over 60 'No Littering' signs on approach to towns and villages throughout the County.
Members are requested to make hotspot dumping areas known to the Environment and Climate Control Section in order for signage to be erected. Mobile CCTV may also be erected if the location is suitable.
- Request that Thurles MD write to the Department requesting that the current legislation in relation to illegal dumping is outdated and needs to be examined.

The Members thanked Marion for her Report.

5. Update from Culture/Library Services/Fire and Emergency Services.

Damien Dullaghan, County Librarian, Libraries and Culture Services was in attendance via Zoom for this item. A report on the Library and Culture



Services was circulated to the Members with the Agenda in advance of the Meeting. The Report examined the following items:-

Library Report

- Thurles Library STEM Challenge as part of Science Week 2020
- Thurles Library virtual workshop with Dublin Zoo
- Roscrea Library – zoom book reading by Children’s Authors
- Tipperary Studies – People and Place lecture series

Museum Report

- Bloody Sunday Hogan Jersey on the *Late Late Show*
- Development of Website
- Education Initiatives
- Launch of ‘*Rediscovery of Mick Delahunty’s Lost Recordings*’
- Funding for the Conservation of Textiles relating to the Decade of Centenaries

Heritage Report

- Completion of County Heritage Plan Actions for 2020
- Photogrammetric Survey of the Graves of the Leinstermen
- Training Videos with Birdwatch Ireland on ‘Birds and Wildlife in houses’
- Exhibition on Invasive Species
- Second phase of the Himalayan Balsam Eradication Programme

Damien outlined to the Members the level of work that is currently taking place in libraries, despite their closure, such as On-line Arts/Crafts; Story-time; Nursing Home videos; Cooking Videos; Podcast for Local History to name but a few. The Michael Hogan 1920 Football Jersey was displayed on the ‘*Late Late Show*’ and the Mick Delahunty Recordings featured on the ‘*RTE News*’.

There were no issues raised by the Members who thanked Damien for his presentation.

6. Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy – Presentation of Final Plan (LUC Consultants).

Nuala O’Connell, Senior Executive Planner and Emily Beedham, LUC Consultants were in attendance via Zoom for this item.

Nuala explained that a number of workshops were held in the preparing of the Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy. It is a ten year plan but can be changed as deemed necessary during that time. There are 24 Projects within the Plan from which an Action Plan will be developed.



Emily gave a presentation to the Members on the Final Plan which includes the following:

- Introduction
 - Purpose, Background and Scope of the Renewal Strategy
 - Creating a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Town
 - Preparation of the Strategy
- Background to Thurles
 - Physical development of Thurles
 - Strategic Policy Context
 - Existing and Ongoing Initiatives
- Thurles Today
 - People and Place
 - Land and Building Uses
 - Culture and Heritage
 - Education
 - Tourism
 - Green and Blue Infrastructure
 - Public Realm
 - Strategic Movement
- Consultation and Engagement
 - Online Survey
 - Working with Elected Members and Key Stakeholders
 - A Face to Face Community Workshop
 - The Second round of Engagement
- Summary of Findings
 - Strengths and Key Issues
- Our Shared Vision
 - Objectives
 - Objectives and Programme Summary List
- Delivering the Vision

The Members thanked Emily for her presentation and expressed their enthusiasm for the Project. They raised the following queries:-

- While artisan products/produce are greatly welcomed into the Town there will be a need to find additional ways to support this cohort as otherwise they will struggle to survive financially in the absence of tourism.
- When planning street-scaping, consideration must be given to urban trees and gardens as over time trees can become problematic causing issues with lighting and road/footpath structure.
- Within the Plan, it is important for those stakeholders that have contributed to the Plan that Thurles MD identify and delivery aspects of the Plan that can be achieved in the immediate short-term, i.e. within the next 12 months.



- The plan should take cognisance of the Local Transport Initiative – Local Links – and of the Rural Projects on the Thurles periphery, such as the Peatway, which should be linked together to allow all to benefit.
- Were GAA Headquarters approached to contribute to the Plan.
- Can the GAA tourism opportunities be included, such as signage throughout the town?
- It is important that the Plan is progressed and does not become a 'document on the shelf'.

Replies to queries raised were as follows:

- Consideration of the GAA Tourism opportunity is a project in itself that will be undertaken. Contact will be made with the GAA when there is a definitive plan in place rather than speculatively approaching them at the present time.
- The level of feedback from the public was enormous and only strengthens the resolve that the Project will be implemented.
- While there is a commitment by the Council to deliver on the Action Plan, the Council cannot implement the Project by itself and will require considerable engagement with public groups such as Thurles Lyons Club.
- This 10 year Plan will be delivered alongside other projects including Rural Projects.
- The Tourism industry in Cashel and Holycross can be used to further strengthen the Thurles Plan.

The Members thanked Nuala and Emily for their report.

7. Update on Projects

Liberty Square Enhancement Scheme, Thurles	The Contractor has been given clearance to complete main drainage works as they are crossing the N75 in Liberty Square. Remaining works associated with the footpath paving and kerbing, etc. are suspended until the current Covid restrictions are stepped down.
Templemore Town Hall Cultural and Enterprise Centre.	EML are appointed as Design Stage consultants. A preliminary design has been submitted which is being reviewed by the relevant parties. We expect a detailed design for the project in the 2nd quarter 2021.



Roscrea Enhancement Scheme.	The project is substantially completed however the contractor cannot progress to completion until current Covid restrictions are stepped down.
The Littleton Labyrinth' (Peatway).	The Just Transition Fund for the Littleton Labyrinth Project has successfully met the required criteria set down by the Department and is being made a provisional offer of €663,719. A final offer will be subject to a normal verification assessment process.
The Old Rail line between Roscrea and Birr.	Correspondence has been issued to the original Birr-Roscrea Greenway steering group members to ascertain if there is any merit in re-visiting the proposals. It has been agreed that the group will be assembled in the near future to discuss the current status.
River Suir Walkway, Thurles.	Thurles Lions Club are in the process of writing to all affected landowners advising that they are examining the potential for a looped riverbank walk and getting preliminary views from the landowners. Application for funding of Phase 1 of the walkway has been submitted under Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure. Appointment of consultant to progress to shovel ready ongoing.
Roundabout Sponsorship Scheme, Roscrea.	Work to enhance the roundabouts has been completed.
Breakdown of Vacant Houses in the District.	Status of 15 units that the District is responsible for under Minor Repairs as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 = In progress • 1 = Completed to Covid-19 standards • 1 = Awaiting Budget Approval • 1 = At Tender Stage • 5 = At Inspection/Costings Stage. • 1 = Awaiting return of keys to the District.

The District Director explained that the Project Workshop, which was originally anticipated to be held in January, will now have to be held remotely. The aim



of the workshop is to provide an update on the current main projects and to identify future projects that can be put into the project pipeline for development over the next number of years.

The Members raised the following queries:-

- When are works expected to go to tender for the Littleton Labyrinth (Peatway).
- Can we expect the Roscrea Enhancement Scheme to be advanced to the next stage of the Project and put forward for public consultation this year?
- Following the grant approval of €53,000 under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme for Templemore Town Park, when are the works likely to be undertaken. Some of the footpaths are in a poor state of repair and overgrown trees are blocking the public lighting. There are very few 'Disability Parking Bays' in the Park and within the town also.

Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- It is intended to undertake a Feasibility Study and prepare Tender Documents for the Littleton Labyrinth in the first half of 2021. The District Project Engineer will work directly on the Project.
- The progression of Roscrea Enhancement Scheme will be reviewed and considered in line with project funding from the Department.
- It is anticipated that scoping and pricing works will be undertaken in the first quarter of 2021, with works due to commence in the 2nd quarter of 2021, subject to availability of resources.

8. Correspondence.

There was no correspondence

9. Votes of Congratulations/Sympathy.

Vote of Sympathy was extended to:-

- The family of the late Ann Commins, Blackcastle Farm, Two-Mile-Borris, Thurles and former employee of Tipperary County Council.

10. Any Other Business.

The District Engineer requested that Members bring to his attention any areas in the District where hedge cutting requires attention.

The Members raised the following queries:-



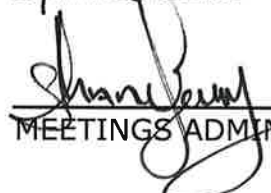
- What discretion do the District have regarding the Council salting schedule as it would appear that there are numerous roads in the District that are not being salted.
- When will the works at Parnell Street car park be undertaken?
- Do the Council intend to introduce a phone app to report lighting outages for use by the general public, similar to what Laois County Council have recently introduced.
- Request that the Council write to Irish Water to see what is the reason for the numerous water outages/intermittent water supply in the Littleton/Horse & Jockey/Ballysloe area recently.
- What is the current situation regarding the District White Lines Programme?
- The issue of pot holes needs to be tackled as this is the time of year when roads will deteriorate, such as Turtulla Cross, Thurles, which requires attention.

Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- The MD is at 100% of its salting capacity. The current routes will be circulated to the Members. Any representations submitted regarding alternative salting routes will be collated and submitted to the Roads Section for consideration in the 2021 salting season. It is important to note that if a new road is added, then an existing road will have to be removed from the schedule given that it is operating at full capacity.
- The works at Parnell Street car park have been temporarily put on hold while the current works in Liberty Square are ongoing in order to prevent further disruption to the town. Designs for the car park are complete.
- Tipperary County Council has an app for members of the public to report public lighting outages.
- The installation of white lines are dependent on favorable weather conditions. Works typically take place from April through to September each year.
Locations can be raised by Members directly with Engineering Staff for consideration.

That concluded the official business of the Meeting.

SIGNED:  **DATE:** 15th February, 2021.
CATHAIRLEACH

SIGNED:  **DATE:** 15th February, 2021.
MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR

