



MINUTES OF THE JUNE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE THURLES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT WHICH WAS HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM ON 21ST JUNE 2021

Present: Councillor Seamus Hanafin Cathaoirleach, presided.

Councillors Noel Coonan, Shane Lee, Michéal Lowry, Eddie Moran, Jim Ryan, Sean Ryan and Michael Smith.

Apology: Councillor P. Ryan

Also Present:

Eamon Lonergan	A/District Director
Liam Brett	Senior Engineer
Thomas Duffy	District Engineer
Jim Ryan	Executive Engineer
Aoife Cahill	Executive Engineer
Sharon Scully	District Administrator
Orla McDonnell	Acting Senior Staff Officer

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. Ryan and seconded by Councillor N. Coonan and resolved:

"That the Minutes of the May 2021 Monthly Meeting which was held on the 17th May 2021 be adopted as a true record of the business transacted at the Meeting."

3. **Update from Housing Section**

Shane Grogan, Administrative Officer, Sean Lonergan, Administrative Officer, Kieran Malone, Executive Engineer and Tony O'Neill, Senior Executive Technician were in attendance via Zoom for this item. A Housing Services Report was circulated to the Members with the Agenda in advance of the Meeting. The report outlined the following:-

- Capital Assistance Scheme
 - Thurles Lions Trust – Stannix House 19 units
 - Templemore Voluntary Housing Association- 14 Units
- Housing Grant Applications 2021



- Housing Adaptation Grants Private Houses
- LA DPG's
- Energy Efficiency Works
- House Purchases 2021
- Buy and Renew 2021
- Housing Loan Applications 01/01/2021 to 31/05/2021
- Tenant purchase Scheme 01/01/2021 to 31/05/2021
- RAS and Leasing 2021
- HAP 2021
- HAP Place Finder Service 2021
- Vacant House Breakdown
- Offers of Tenancy

The Members raised the following queries:-

- What is the update in relation to the house in Templemore which has been vacant for three and a half years.
- Is there a role for the Council to address the issue of vacant/abandoned properties within housing estates, that have been repossessed by banks who will not engage with residents. Quite often these houses are subject to illegal dumping, break-ins, and vermin and neighbours have no point of contact in addressing the issue. Can the issue be addressed through the County Development Plan that will force the Banks to address the matter.
- Has the Council made any progress in relation to the acquisition of 2nd and 3rd floors of vacant/derelict buildings in towns.
- Are follow up inspections being undertaken on HAP premises as it would appear that improvements works are not being completed within the designated 6 week period.
- Do the Council intend to make a further application under Phase 2 of the Midlands Retrofit Scheme for those houses in Tara Drive, Gortnahoe that were excluded from the 1st phase of the scheme due to their construction date.
- Can Housing Section issue a letter to the Member in question when he/she has been nominated as a representative by a housing tenant as quite often the Member is unaware that they have been nominated.
- What is the update in relation to the vacant house in Limerick Street, Roscrea which is not only dangerous and unsightly but is also subject to anti-social behaviour.

Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- The issue of the vacant house in Templemore will be investigated.
- The issue of banks not communicating in relation to vacant repossessed houses is a national issue which is being examined centrally.



- There is an onus on the housing applicant to advise the Member that he/she has been nominated by the applicant. If Members are not being advised Housing Section can examine and review this policy.
- There are 2 Technical Staff, based in the offices in Thurles MD, engaged full-time in HAP inspections. Inspections were impacted during the lockdown but have now resumed. Housing Section will follow up if they are notified of specific houses that have not been inspected.
- An application under Phase 2 of the Midlands Retrofit Scheme will be made in 2022 but it is unclear at the moment if the houses in Tara Drive will be included in the application.

Tony O'Neill, Vacant Homes Officer made a presentation to the Members on vacant units within the County. His presentation covered the following areas:-

- Role of the Vacant Homes Officer
 - Identify vacant properties
 - Compilation of maps
 - Identify and contact the owner
 - Communicate with owner to determine his/her intentions
- Schemes - Repair and Leasing Scheme (RLS) and Buy and Renew Scheme
- Determine need and cost and whether or not it can deliver value for money.
- Property owners who do not engage – erect informal notice on property.
- CPO property acquisitions.
- LA covers the cost of the works – it is recouped by offsetting it against rent due to the owner of the property over the period of the lease agreement
- Statistics – 2020 - Tipperary County Council bought 6 properties under the Buy and Renew Scheme. To date 2021 - 1 property purchased, 1 sale agreed and 3 currently under consideration.
- Current vacancies in Thurles MD – 687 Residential; 186 Commercial; 27 mixed use.

Tony O'Neill asked that if Members have details of specific suitable vacant properties that they bring them to his attention.

4. Update from Community & Economic Development

Elaine Cullinane, Economic Development Officer was in attendance via Zoom for this item. A Community & Economic Development Report was circulated to the Members with the Agenda in advance of the Meeting which examined the following items:-



- Community/LCDC
 - Grant Schemes
 - Leader
 - Town and village
 - Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme
 - CLÁR
 - Community Enhancement Programme
 - Other Initiatives
 - SICAP
 - Healthy Ireland
 - Age Friendly
 - PPN
 - JPC
- Sports
- Tourism
 - Tipperary Tourism and Tipperary Destination Recovery Taskforce
- Broadband
 - To assist the delivery and implementation of the rollout of the National Broadband Plan (NBP)
 - Identify and deliver high-speed Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) in Co. Tipperary
 - Schools Broadband Connection Points
 - Installation of a fully supported Free Wi-Fi Network across an extensive Network of Public Access Points at designated locations in Co. Tipperary under the European Commission WiFi4EU Programme
- Economic Development
 - Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme
 - Painting and Enhancement Scheme
 - County Tipperary Digital Strategy
 - Shop Local Tipperary Campaign
 - Broadband Connection Points
 - Tipperary, The Place The Time
 - Commercial Property Portal
- Local Enterprise Office (LEO)

The Members raised the following queries:-

- In advance of the proposed Riverside Walk project can some immediate short-term improvements be implemented in the area, such as Poop and Scoop Bags, dog bins, lifebuoys and signage, to make the area more amenable and safer for its users.
- Could a Zip Wire be installed in Thurles Town park to improve the facilities available to young teenagers in the area. There is sufficient space in the park to undertake this.
- Has there been any update in relation to the creation of a Sensory Garden in Thurles.



- Can an application be made under Clár funding for the implementation of flashing speed signs in Grange Village.
- Can the Council consider having a '*Tipperary Day*' under the Tourism Strategic Plan 2016 to 2021 to encourage people to visit our towns, that will help the hospitality industry.
- What is the updated position in relation to the GDPR issues pertaining to the Pilot CCTV project to be rolled out in the first instance in Fethard followed by Littleton.
- Would it be possible to locate a preliminary drawing of Knock Village that was presented to the Members approximately 3 years ago. The drawing is required to examine a Clár funding application for the Village.

Elaine replied to the queries raised as follows:-

- The issue regarding the short-term improvement works at Ladyswell Walkway will be referred back to Community.
- There are plans afoot for a '*Tipperary Day*' by the Tourism Section who are very active on social media.
- The issue of Clár funding to implement safety measures in Grange Village will be examined.
- The installation of a Zip Wire in Thurles Town Park will be referred back to Mary McLoughney.
- The issue in relation to the CCTV will be referred back to Margo Hayes.
- A search for the map of Knock Village will be undertaken.
- The provision of a Sensory Garden in Thurles will be examined.

5 District Engineers Report

The District Engineer's Report was circulated in advance of the Meeting.

The Members raised the following queries:-

- Can the bottlebank at the entrance to the GAA grounds in Borrisoleigh be moved to an alternative location.
- Hedges at road junctions and crossroads are overgrown and need to be cut back. The junctions at Shanballa, Pouldine and Maxfort require attention.
- Does the design for the Templemore Town Hall building make allowance for the windows in order to preserve the protected structure status of the building.
- The road from Ballysloe to Coalbrook, which is a *Red Lined Road*, is in a very bad state and requires attention.
- Has there been any progress in relation to the upgrading of back entrances to Council Houses in some estates.



- Request that Thurles MD write to both Laois and Kilkenny County Councils regarding the establishment of a joint committee for the River Goul as joined up thinking is required to look after the river.
- When will the successful applicants under the LIS scheme be notified.
- When will work commence on the new footpaths in Churchview, Littleton as the current footpaths are a trip hazard.
- When will the safety signage be erected in Castle Park Estate, Two-Mile-Borris.
- Can the road patcher be used to address the issue of the pot holes on Clover Lane, Two-Mile-Borris. There are approximately 5 houses on the lane.
- Can CCTV or other safety measures be implemented at Parnell Street carpark in an effort to address the issue of some drivers doing 'donuts' in the car park.
- What is the update in relation to the safety works required at the Abbey Road roundabout and the resurfacing of Abbey Road itself.
- Have the speed surveys been undertaken in Marlstone Manor, Butler Avenue, Bohervaroon and Stradavoher to address the issue of speeding in these areas.
- The road surface in Athnid, Thurles is in very poor condition with several potholes resulting in damage to vehicles.
- When will the footpath improvement works in Rosemount, Thurles commence.
- Has there been any update in relation to the implementation of road safety measures in Thurles at Turtulla Cross and at Bowes Corner.
- In relation to addressing the issue of overgrowth at road junctions, can the Council draw up a list of priority areas and prepare a long-term strategy that will examine options to minimise or eliminate grass cutting altogether in problem areas. The issue of gullies should also be included in the strategy.
- A survey of road junctions and village signage needs to be undertaken with a view to cleaning, upgrading and replacing signage. Could Tidy Towns Committees be involved in such an undertaking?
- The footpaths in Roscrea town are in a poor state of repair and require upgrading.
- Signage, including safety flashing amber signage, in Roscrea town is deteriorating and is, in some instances, broken.
- Limerick Street, Roscrea is in a very poor state of repair and requires urgent attention.
- O'Reilly's bend, Beakstown, where the Council previously took land from the owner to straighten the road, has now become completely overgrown and requires attention.
- Extend the street lighting beyond the 60km speed limit on busy routes where the footfall warrants it.
- The footpath from Rosemount Estate out as far as the Án Post sorting office is in very poor condition and there are overgrown hedges with thorns and briars overhanging onto the footpath.



- When will the works at Má Teine commence given that a contractor has been appointed.

The District Engineer replied to queries raised as follows:-

- The bottle banks at the entrance to the GAA grounds in Borrisoleigh can be moved if an alternative suitable location can be found.
- A contractor has been appointed to undertake hedge cutting on the N62 from the Horse and Jockey to Roscrea in the coming days. Hedge cutting on regional and rural roads will be undertaken directly by Council Staff.
- The new windows in the Town Hall, Templemore are included in the design of the building and it is anticipated it will go to tender within the next 4 to 6 weeks.
- The resurfacing of the Coalbrook Road will be dependent on funding being available later in the year.
- No funding stream has been identified to address the issue of back entrances to Council Houses and therefore alternative measures will have to be examined. The Council will do a tidy up of the back entrances in order to address some aspect of the issue.
- The MD will write to Kilkenny and Laois County Councils in relation to their responsibility to the River Goul.
- The first 5 schemes identified on the LIS that was presented at the Member Workshop, plus an additional scheme from Roads Section, has been submitted to the Department for approval.
- The repair of footpaths in Church View, Littleton will be examined.
- The safety signage for Castle Park, Two-Mile-Borris will be addressed. The signage is in stock.
- Clover Lane is a private lane and therefore improvement works will not be undertaken.
- Drivers driving dangerously, performing 'donuts', in Parnell Street Carpark, Thurles is an issue for the Gardai.
- The roundabout in Abbey Road, Thurles will be addressed and the road will be resurfaced.
- Speed surveys will be undertaken in the specified areas identified in Thurles town to address the issue of speeding in these areas.
- The issue of the poor road surface in Athnid will be discussed with the GSS.
- The documents in relation to the safety measures to be implemented at Turtulla cross are currently being examined by the TII.
- The design documentation in relation to the safety measures for Bowe's Corner is currently being refined and will be circulated to Members once it is finalised.
- It is anticipated that hedge cutting in the District will be addressed in the next two weeks.
- An email will circulate to all Members to identify areas where signage needs to be addressed.



- Priority areas at junctions will be examined in order to introduce measures that will address the maintenance of these junctions. Roadstown Road Junction was trialled last year where the area was set back and gravel was put down to prevent re-growth.
- Footpath repair works in Roscrea commenced this week and will be ongoing over the next few weeks.
- Members should advise the MD in relation to any flashing signage they are aware of that is not working.
- The upgrade works at Limerick Street, Roscrea can be considered as part of the upcoming 3 years Road Programme subject to the PSCI rating.
- The issue in relation to the provision of street lighting in certain areas outside the 60km speed limit will be referred to Roads Central for a direct response.

6 Update on District Project Pipeline Plan

Liberty Square Enhancement Scheme, Thurles.	Services and utility diversions currently being undertaken. Footpath works have commenced on the southside at eastern end of the Scheme.
Liberty Square Enhancement Scheme Phase II.	Project Charter completed to apply for Category 2 URDF funding. Scheme extents drawing completed.
Proposed Market and Extension to Farm Building.	Funding approved.
The Littleton Labyrinth Phase 1.	Memorandum of Understanding and Land Licence Agreement being drafted.
Holycross Tourism Centre.	Develop RRDF application for submission.
Templemore Town Hall Cultural and Enterprise Centre and Civic Plaza.	Design finalised, tender documents being prepared.
Gantly Road 'Age Friendly Neighbourhood'.	Draft Masterplan complete. To be presented to Members at a workshop.
Main Street, Roscrea.	Draft scheme prepared.
Enterprise Hub, Roscrea	Costing and tender preparation.



7 Formal Approval of the Painting and Enhancement Scheme Grants

The following queries were raised:-

A number of interested parties, including the Refresh Tidy Towns, missed the advertisement for the Painting and Enhancement Scheme. Is it too late for them to apply for the Scheme at this stage?

The District Administrator replied as follows:

As the closing date has now passed no new applications can be accepted at this stage.

It was proposed by Councillor N. Coonan and seconded by Councillor S. Lee that the Painting and Enhancement Scheme Grants for 2021 be approved.

8 Notices of Motion

There were no Notices of Motion.

9 Correspondence

Following on from a letter issued to the HSE regarding the Shannon Doc Service to Roscrea, the HSE issued a reply in relation to the reduction in the level of service in the Roscrea area. The HSE stated that the same level of service was being delivered to the area, it was just being delivered in a different kind of way.

The Members requested that an actual meeting with the HSE be requested to discuss the matter further.

10 Votes of Congratulations / Sympathy

Votes of Congratulations were extended to:-

- Sean Mockler, Coldfields, Two Mile Borris on winning a silver medal in the men's AAI under 23s Hammer throw with a throw of 53.26 meters

Votes of Sympathy were extended to:-

- Mrs. Catherine Foley and the Foley family Liskiveen Littleton on the death of Billy Foley formerly of the council outdoor staff who passed away recently.
- The Harney family, Manna Cottage, Templemore on the death of their mother, Imelda Harney.



- Gerry O'Hara, Water Services Section on the death of his wife, Jean.
- Nesbitt family, Loughmore on the death of Tom Nesbitt of Doheny and Nesbitt's Public House.

11 Any Other Business

- Councillor S. Ryan enquired as to when Residents Association grants would be paid out.

The District Administrator advised that these grants are being processed for payment at the moment.

- Councillor J. Ryan stated that complaints have been received from Casual Trading applicants regarding the application of the same license fee in both urban and rural areas which seems unjust.

The District Administrator advised the current Bye-laws are currently being reviewed. They will be put on public display within the next 2 weeks at which stage submissions can be made.

Applicants can hold off applying for a license at the moment until the introduction of the new Bye-Laws.

SIGNED: 
CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE: 19th July, 2021.

SIGNED: 
MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR

DATE: 19th July, 2021.