



MINUTES OF THE MARCH MONTHLY MEETING OF THE THURLES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT WHICH WAS HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM ON 15TH MARCH 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	A/District Director
Liam Brett	Senior Engineer
Thomas Duffy	District Engineer
Aoife Cahill	Executive Engineer
Jim Ryan	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 Sean Ryan and seconded by Councillor S. Lee and resolved:

"That the Minutes of the February 2021 Monthly Meeting which was held on the 15th February 2021 be adopted as a true record of the business transacted at the Meeting."

3. Update from Housing Section

Kieran Malone, Executive Engineer, Jim Dillon, Administrative Officer and Breda Ryan, Senior Staff Officer, Housing Section were in attendance via Zoom for this item. A report on Housing Services was circulated to the Members with the Agenda in advance of the Meeting. The report outlined the following:-

- Housing Construction – details of houses that are currently in construction stage.
- Capital Assistance Scheme:
 - Thurles Lions Trust
 - Templemore Voluntary Housing Association
- Housing Grant Applications 2021



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- Housing Adaption Grants Private Houses
 - Energy Efficient Works – Phase 1
 - House Purchases 2021
 - Housing Loan Applications 01/01/2021 to 28/02/2021
 - Tenant Purchase Scheme
 - RAS and Leasing 2021
 - HAP 2021
 - Housing Applicants and Vacant Houses
 - Number of approved housing applicants per area

Kieran explained that there were no house purchases from January 2021 to date in Thurles MD because house purchases are now being wound down by the Department who want the concentration to focus on house construction. House purchases will be permitted for specific categories only.

The Members raised the following issues:-

- There would appear to be a significant shortage of housing accommodation given 931 approved applicants and only 50 vacant units.
- HAP accommodation is in many instances either substandard or cannot be sourced.
- The Council must ensure that of the 40 houses being built in Glencarrick, Roscrea, ample 2 and 4 bed houses are also included in the development as there is considerable demand for them.
- The discrepancies in social housing eligibility amongst counties needs to be addressed by the Department, e.g. the eligibility criteria in adjoining Counties Cork and Kilkenny is considerably different to Tipperary.
- There is a massive deficit of 4 bed and 1 bed housing currently in the District.
- For applicants who were assessed in 2020 as Priority 1 for Mobility Aids Grants, will the grants be paid out in 2021 e.g. if an applicant requires a shower instead of bath.
- Do the Council intend to make another application to the Department in respect of those houses in Tara Drive, Gortnahoe that did not meet the eligibility requirement under the Midlands Retrofit Scheme, simply because they were built a few years after the qualifying houses in Tara Drive.
- The Just Transition Fund provides huge opportunities for the Council to access funding to upgrade its housing stock and should be availed of.
- When is construction expected to commence at the Ned Hayes Park Estate in Two-Mile-Borris.
- Issue with HAP applicants having no long term security where landlords will not renew agreement and tenants must find alternative accommodation.



- What is the update in relation to the vacant house on Mitchel Street, Thurles that burned down a few years ago and has been left in an appalling state since then.
- Do the Council have any plans to make safe an area of ground in Derrynaflan Drive, Littleton located across from a number of houses where illegal dumping is taking place and the area is frequently occupied by horses.
- Under the current Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, are contractors still permitted to undertake mobility aid works in houses if the family feel comfortable to permit it?
- Can the Council liaise with the Department regarding the introduction of an income sliding scale in relation to the income threshold for housing applicants. Under the current system if an applicant is, for example, only €100 over the limit they will not qualify for housing resulting in a poverty trap.
- The provision of parking spaces in housing estates, generally one space per household, is not sufficient as households typically have more than one car. This results in haphazard parking within estates and can cause difficulties for emergency services trying to gain access such as Cabragh Court in Thurles.
- There are two houses in Templemore Town that have been lying idle for several years; one of the houses is ready to move into but idle for 2 years and the other house has been idle for 4 years.
- Repair works are required on old houses in Templemore, in particular on Lacey Avenue, where houses are in a bad state of repair with issues of dampness and cracked walls.
- There is a big supply and demand issue regarding the provision of houses and it is vital to get the construction industry back on site. Can the Council liaise with the Department with regard to getting the construction industry back on site.
- Must applicants who were successful under the Rebuilding Ireland Loans Scheme and subsequently found themselves in receipt of the PUP Covid-19 Payment now have to reapply for the scheme all over again.
- Councillors should be notified when an applicant nominates a councillor on a housing application as quite often the Councillor is not aware of it.
- There are several villages in Thurles MD that do not have any Council housing such as Killea, Knock, Gortagarry, etc. despite an expression of interest of being housed in these areas.

Kieran and Jim replied to queries raised as follows:

- It is intended that there will be a mix of houses in Glencarrick, however demand is greater for 2/3 bed houses. The issue will be reviewed by Housing Section.
- Two houses in Church Street, Templemore will be accommodated as one bed housing units each.



- The current batch of houses in the Midlands Retrofit Scheme covers 60 houses for this year. The Council do intend to apply to the Department, probably next year, to re-apply for further houses to be included in the Scheme. However it is anticipated that next year it may concentrate more on the southern part of the County.
- There is a contractor on site at Athloman Terrace, Mitchel Street, Thurles. The house has been cleaned out and works are commencing on excavation for an extension to the rear. It is anticipated that works will be complete before the end of the Summer.
- Timeframe for works at Ned Hayes Park, Two-Mile-Borris - tenders are due back this week and the Council will then revert back to the Department for approval which may take 2-3 weeks. If successful a contractor will then be appointed. It is estimated that it will be mid May/June before contractor comes on site and assuming no lockdown at that time.
- The Council are working with the Tipperary Energy Agency (TEA) with regard to undertaking deep retrofit works for four houses in Templemore, two of which are in Lacey Avenue.
- The National Guidelines will determine when builders can go back on site. It is a Government decision in conjunction with NPHET and is determined by Covid numbers.
- The disparity in income threshold between Tipperary County Council and other Councils, notably Cork and Kilkenny, has existed for years and is very inequitable. The Department are aware of this issue which the Council raised as recently as late 2020 when a Department Official visited the Council. The Council will continue to raise this issue with the Department.
- The RAS scheme has been in place for several years now and there are currently 850 landlords in the Scheme. Approximately 10 landlords annually will opt out of the scheme but some of those will convert to long term leases.
- HAP is a private scheme with approximately 1,700 tenancies at the moment. The Council have discretion to agree to a HAP payment up to 20% above the prescribed maximum rent limit.
- The Midlands Retrofit Scheme is a new scheme which has only come on line within the last week or so. The Council can put an application together for additional houses, however, under the Scheme works must be complete and money drawn down by the end of the year. The Council will liaise with the Department to see if the date can be extended.
- Generally contractors are not currently doing any Disabled Persons Grants works at the moment, however, if a contractor is happy to go into a house to undertake works under the Mobility Aids Grant he can go ahead
- The Council currently have very few Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan applications. If a person was approved for a loan and was earning at the time they may proceed but if circumstances have changed and that



applicant is now on a PUP payment they must wait until they are back in employment. Each application will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

4. Update from Community & Economic Development

Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer, Community & Economic Development was in attendance via Zoom for this item. A briefing report on the Community & Economic Development was circulated to the Members with the Agenda in advance of the Meeting. Kathleen gave a brief outline of the contents of the Report to the Members which examined the following items:-

- LECP – Community
- Local Development Strategy/LEADER
- SICAP
- LCDC Team Led Funding Schemes
 - CLAR Scheme
 - Town & Village Renewal
 - Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme
- Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) 2020
- Healthy Ireland
- Tipperary Together
- Children's and Young Person's Services Committee
- Age Friendly Tipperary
- Joint Policing Committee
- Mental Health
- Pride of Place Competition
- Migrant Integration
- Comhairle na nÓg
- Tipperary Sports Partnership
- Economic and Enterprise – County Marketing Campaign
 - Retail Sector and Supports
 - Painting and Enhancement Scheme
 - Christmas Retail Support Programme 2020
 - Shop Local Tipperary Campaign
 - Review of Casual Trading/Markets Bye-Laws
 - Supporting Towns – Town & Village Accelerated Funds 2020
- Craft Sector
- Digital Strategy
 - Enterprise Centres; Digital Hubs; Shared Work Spaces
- Broadband Connection Points
- Town and Village Grants Retail and Digital Strategy
- LECP – Economic
- Tourism
- Local Enterprise Office (LEO)
 - Student Enterprise Awards



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- Business Continuity Vouchers
 - Enterprise Ireland Retail Scheme
 - Online Trading Voucher Scheme
 - Client Stimulus Scheme
 - Sustainable Enterprise Fund – Enterprise Ireland
 - National Enterprise Awards
 - National Broadband Plan & Commercial Investment
 - National Broadband Plan
 - Commercial Investment in high-speed Fibre Broadband
 - Commercial Investment in Mobile Phone and Mobile Broadband
 - Future Technologies
 - WiFi4EU Initiative
 - Digital Innovation Project

The Members raised the following queries:-

- What is the update position in relation to the Reach Programme in Roscrea on the old Tesco site and when is it expected to come on stream?
- Can the Council put pressure on broadband providers such as Eir to improve the service anomaly in the level of broadband quality depending on where you live in a town, with outskirts of towns tending to have greater connectivity. This is now more vital than ever before given the large numbers of people working from home and children being home schooled.
- Will the new Casual Trading Bye-Laws cover trade in rural areas, i.e. villages outside towns.
- Given the level of investment currently taking place in Liberty Square, Thurles, a Digital hub for the town centre needs to be considered. There are prime locations within Liberty Square such as the Ulster bank or the old Elvery's store. Such a hub would have a positive knock on effect on shops, cafes etc.
- The CCTV cameras currently in Thurles are not fit for purpose. Tipperary County Council need to support the MD to advance the upgrading of the cameras in the town.
- Will the CAP Scheme continue going forward?
- Development of the waste site in Derrynaflan Avenue, Littleton needs to be advanced. Liaison has been made with locals regarding the use of the area.
- When will the new Tipperary County Council Pilot CCTV Scheme in Fethard and Littleton commence and will it be used as a template for the County.
- Can another application be made under CLAR funding for flashing speed signs in Grange Village?



Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- A number of board meetings took place in Q3 and Q4 of 2020 in relation to the REACH Project in Roscrea and a lease of the premises was agreed. Tender has been published and a Contract has been offered. 1st phase meetings have taken place in January and a number of meetings with Architecture Firm have taken place
- Issue regarding WIFI and Broadband – All queries will all be put together and submitted to Broadband Officer and Kathleen will revert back to the MD via the District Administrator.
- Works will be ongoing regarding business supports and shop local campaigns to promote the notion of remembering to keep it local.
- The works undertaken with regard to casual trading was to look at standardising casual trading across all Municipal Districts in the County. Each District has the standardised document and must now decide where they wish to permit trading stands. Following this decision consultation will take place before the new casual trading areas are adopted by the MD. Now is the time to submit any areas you want to be considered and alert people who are trading that this process will be taking place.
- Community and Economic Development Section are open to working with Thurles MD to explore the provision of a digital hub for Thurles Town. However, digital hubs are a bottom up approach, i.e. it is critical that there is a local involvement group which enables funding streams to come through and the idea has to be driven by the Municipal District.
- The issue of CCTV in Thurles is a matter for the Joint Policing Committee and it will be referred back to them.
- CAP and CLAR queries will be raised with the responsible persons and replies will be reverted back through the District Administrator.

5 To Formally approve Draft Schedule of Municipal District Works 2021

The District Engineer outlined the Draft Schedule of Municipal District Works 2021 for the Thurles Municipal District covering road maintenance, housing maintenance, street cleaning, maintenance of amenities, drainage works and burial ground maintenance, copy of which was circulated in advance by email with the Agenda.

The District Engineer noted the following 2 items:

- The works on the N62 will be finished on the evening of 16th March and the contractor will continue in northern area on 1st April.



- The Members are to advise Technical Staff of their proposed location for works in relation to Tertiary Works as soon as possible in order to have them included in the Roads Programme.

The Members raised the following issues:-

- There is concern with the turning circle for HGV's at the new layout of Clongour and Slievenamon Road. Works are almost complete and therefore the issue needs to be addressed immediately.
- The sightline of the Foot Clinic beside the Mall access has been reduced dramatically following the development works in the area as there is now a bend on the road that was not there before. Can the issue be investigated before contractors finish up?
- The proposed traffic lights at the Clongour/Slievenamon Junction will cause mayhem especially when traffic is heavy going to and from schools. A flat roundabout would be considered a better option.
- Can the roads at Galboola and Tonagha be examined under the Programme of Works as both roads are in an appalling condition.
- What is the update from the TII regarding the resurfacing works required at Slievenamon Road approaching the roundabout at Dunnes Stores Shopping Centre.

Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- The turning circle for HGV's at the junction with Clongour and Slievenamon Road will be examined.
- Request that a letter be submitted to the MD regarding the issue of sightlines at the Foot Clinic being altered following development works and it will be referred to Capital Section with concerns highlighted.
- Funding streams for the upgrading of the road at Galboola will be examined.
- The issue regarding the installation of traffic lights as opposed to a roundabout at the Clongour/Slievenamon Road Junction is a Roads Central decision and was recently raised at the Roads SPC meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor M. Smith, seconded by Councillor S. Ryan and resolved that:-

"That, in accordance with Section 103A of the Local Government Act, 2001, as inserted by Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, the 2021 Schedule of Municipal District Works for Thurles Municipal District be and is hereby adopted."



6 To formally approve the 2021 General Municipal Allocation

Draft proposals under the 2021 General Municipal Allocation were circulated to the Members in advance of the meeting. The District Administrator outlined to the Members that the MD has set aside €97,277 to fund capital projects around the MD so that when funding calls are made the District are in a position to reply.

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

“that the General Municipal Allocation 2021 be apportioned as follows:-

Village Enhancement Works – Upperchurch	€ 25,000.00
Village Enhancement Works – Toomevara	€ 25,000.00
Village Enhancement Works – Loughmore	€ 25,000.00
Christmas Lighting Contributions - Borrisoleigh, Clonakenny, Clonmore, Gortnahoe, Holycross, Littleton, Moyne, Roscrea, Templetuohy, Two-Mile-Borris, Horse & Jockey, Ballysloe	€ 15,500.00
Festival & Events Grant Schemes	€ 12,000.00
Residents Associations Grant Scheme	€ 15,000.00
Seed Fund District Project Pipeline Plan – Thurles LED	€ 48,638.00
Seed Fund District Project Pipeline Plan – Templemore/Roscrea LED	€ 48,638.00
TOTAL GMA 2021	€214,776.00

7 Update on District Project Pipeline Plan

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. All underground works are completed on the southern side of the Square from the Slievenamon Rd junction to the entrance to the new carpark. The contractor is now installing all underground works on the southern side of the Square from the new carpark to the castle. It is expected that footpath works will commence in this zone in mid April.
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Templemore Town Hall Cultural and Enterprise Centre.	EML are appointed as Design Stage Consultants. Updated design presented to Councillors in February 2021. The consultants are currently preparing the final design and cost estimate for approval. Following on from this the main works tender documentation will be prepared for issue in the 3rd quarter 2021. Project will be tendered based on the two stage restricted procedure.														
Roscrea Enhancement Scheme.	The project is substantially completed however the contractor cannot progress to full completion until current Covid restrictions are stepped down on the 05th April 2021														
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. Following on from this Technical Consultants will be tendered to progress the planning, design and construction.														
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. An application for funding of Phase 1 of the walkway has been submitted under Active Travel. Appointment of consultant to progress project to shovel ready status is ongoing.														
Vacant Units Update	<table> <tr> <td>MD awaiting receipt of keys to property</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>At Inspection/Costings Stage</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>At Tender Stage</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Budgets Submitted to Housing Section</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In Progress</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Completed to Covid-19 Standards</td> <td><u>1</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </table>	MD awaiting receipt of keys to property	3	At Inspection/Costings Stage	8	At Tender Stage	0	Budgets Submitted to Housing Section	0	In Progress	8	Completed to Covid-19 Standards	<u>1</u>	TOTAL	20
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The District Engineer outlined to the Members the importance of identifying projects to set in motion the district Project Pipeline stating that ideas from Councillors and communities are very welcome. He outlined his intention that within the next month or two, going forward the monthly report on projects will be more of an over-arching report providing more detail of ongoing projects.

The Councillors raised the following queries:-

- Can funding be sought from the TII for the provision of a cycleway from Thurles to Two-Mile-Borris and from Thurles to Horse & Jockey. Both roads are regularly used by cyclists despite the presence of high speed traffic.
- There are lots of small stones on the cycleway from Roscrea to Nenagh thereby making it currently unusable by cyclists.

Replies to queries were as follows:-

- The small stones on the cycleway from Roscrea to Nenagh will be swept.
- The National Transport Authority (NTA) are responsible for the provision of cycle routes and their view is generally that cycle paths should be in urban environments off very busy routes. It is unlikely that the provision of a cycle path on either the Thurles to Two-Mile-Borris Road or the Thurles to Horse & Jockey Road will be considered a viable cycleway by the NTA as they are on the edge of National routes.

A rural area such as from Moycarkey into Cabragh on the old Railway line might be considered more viable.

The District Director thanked the Councillors for adopting both the Municipal District Allocation and the Schedule of Municipal District Works. He stated that the MD have sufficient projects identified and the Roads allocation of €8.2m is up significantly on last year's allocation. The MD will focus on where needs are the most and will concentrate on:-

- Roads strengthening works
- Road maintenance
- Footpaths/CIS schemes, bridge repairs and tertiary works.
- Resurfacing works
- 800k in amenities
- Village initiatives using GMA money

He stated that a Workshop will be held towards the end of April to show what works have been done.

8 Notices of Motion

Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor Jim Ryan:



Councillor J. Ryan formerly moved the following Notice of Motion in his name:

"I am calling on this District Council to install traffic calming measures and appropriate signage including flashing speed limit signs along the Mill Road in Thurles due to the huge level of traffic and pedestrians using the road on a daily basis."

The response issued to Councillor Ryan in advance of the Meeting was as follows:

"I draw your attention to the contents of the Policy on the use of Traffic Calming Measures in existing housing estates, adopted 13th May, 2019 This Policy outlines the information and the sequence of events required to take place for the implementation of any new traffic calming measures in an urban setting.

This specific location will be investigated and analysed as to the requirement and need of any traffic calming measures to be implemented. Separately, noting that a large portion of this road is within the town speed limits, the enforcement of same is the responsibility of An Garda Síochána."

Councillor J. Ryan expressed his satisfaction that the area will be investigated assuming a traffic survey will be undertaken. He stated that the road is used as an inner relief road around the town and users are travelling at high speed and not adhering to speed limits. He feels flashing speed limit signs would prove very effective as a way of reducing the speed of drivers.

The District Engineer advised that the data coming back from villages where flashing speed signs are present is indicating that they are not effective and generally only give a short-term gain. Signage will be erected and a speed monitor of the route will be undertaken.

9 Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

10 Votes of Congratulations / Sympathy

Votes of Congratulations were extended to:-

- Thurles man Tim Mawe, on his appointment as Irish ambassador to Australia.
- Karen Kennedy, daughter of former Thurles Town Councillor John Kennedy, on her recent camogie *All-Star* award.



Votes of Sympathy were extended to:-

- Bridget Kennedy, Banks Street Templemore.

11 Any Other Business

- Councillor Moran requested a meeting be arranged to discuss the taking-in-charge and development of Cluain Doire, Templemore.

The District Administrator informed Councillor Moran that this issue was outside the remit of the Municipal District, however, she will follow up the issue which is currently being examined by both Housing and Planning Sections and a reply will issue shortly.

- Councillor Hanafin requested a reply to his query regarding the lack of parking for residents in housing estates, in particular Cabragh Court, Thurles.

The District Engineer stated that this is an issue for Housing and Planning Sections, he will liaise with the Planning Director and revert back.

That concluded the official business of the Meeting.

SIGNED: 
CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE: 19th April, 2021.

SIGNED: 
MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR

DATE: 19th April, 2021.

