

**GRANARD MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**

**Minutes of Meeting of Granard Municipal District held in the Council Chamber on Monday, 23 September 2024 at 3:30pm**

**CATHAOIRLEACH**: Councillor Garry Murtagh

**MEMBERS PRESENT**: Councillors Turlough McGovern,

Pádraig McNamara, David Cassidy, Paraic Brady

**IN ATTENDANCE**: Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services

Ms. Breege Cronin, Administrative Officer

Mr. David Coppinger, Senior Executive Engineer

Mr. John Brannigan, Director of Services

Mr. Paul Newell, Senior Engineer

**APOLOGIES** None

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ms. Claire McNabola

1. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES – AS CIRCULATED**

On the proposal of Councillor Turlough McGovern seconded by Councillor David Cassidy, it was unanimously agreed to adopt the Minutes of Granard Municipal District Meeting held on the 22 July 2024.

On the proposal of Councillor Turlough McGovern seconded by Councillor David Cassidy, it was unanimously agreed to adopt the Minutes of Granard Municipal District Committee Meeting held on 22 July 2024.

1. **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

None

1. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

Councillor Pádraig McNamara declared his interest as a Committee Member and treasurer of the GMCE.

1. **MANAGEMENT REPORT INCORPORATING AREA ENGINEER’S PROGRESS REPORT**

Barbara highlighted the following from the Management Report and responded to queries raised by the Elected Members:

* Longford Age Friendly Report
* Archives and Record Management
* Padraic Colum Gathering
* Arts Office
* Creative Ireland
* Healthy Ireland
* Heritage programme
* Initiatives in the libraries
* Just Transition Investment Grant-Aid Scheme for private and community SME’s
* Regeneration
* Active Travel
* Town Centre First
* Housing – Applications and Assessments, Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2025 – 2029

David Coppinger detailed the Area Engineer’s Progress Report and responded to queries raised by Elected Members –

* General Roadworks
* Community Involvement Scheme
* Local Improvement Scheme
* Low-Cost Safety Schemes
* Granard Car Park
* Hedge Cutting season is now open.

The Members raised questions in relation to the following:

* Car park in Derrycassin – Barbara confirmed that Regeneration successfully applied for funding. However, this may not be adequate to deliver a completed facility
* Reduction in funding for Local Improvement Schemes – David confirmed that this reduction will impact on the number of schemes delivered in 2025
* Housing update in Colmcille Terrace – Barbara confirmed that she will forward the query to John Brannigan
* Department grant aid for managing trees with Ash Dieback – Longford County Council is not familiar with the details of government schemes
* Clarification on amendments to proposed works at Drumlish crossroads – David outlined the minor changes proposed
* Ballywillin Brdige – David will revert with an update
* Clonbroney Bridge in Drummeel – David will revert with an update

1. **ROADS – 3 YEAR PROGRAMME**

David Coppinger advised the Member that work has commenced on developing the Roads Restoration Programme for submission to the Department, this will be presented in detail at the October Meeting for consideration. David will arrange to consult individually with the Members on proposals.

It was agreed by the Members to include this on the agenda for the Special Meeting arranged to consider the General Municipal allocation. This will be preceded by an In Committee meeting. The final programme has to be submitted to the Department before the end of October.

1. **NOTICE OF MOTIONS**
2. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paraic Brady and seconded by Councillor David Cassidy**

I call on Longford County Council to carry out a safety scheme at Glannagh Ballinalee as there were a number of accidents at this bend. The landowner is in agreement.

**Response:**

This location is one of those unusual locations where the townland is in the Granard Municipal District, but the road is within the Engineering Area of Longford Municipal District . This request will be forwarded to the Area Engineer for Longford Municipal District for consideration/inclusion on their list of potential Low Cost Safety Scheme sites.

1. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Pádraig McNamara and seconded by Councillor Turlough McGovern**

I call on Longford County Council to provide an update on the GMCE joint project funded since 2018.

**Response:**

Paul Newell updated the Members on the proposed new timeline and scope of the GMCE joint project.

Paul provided a detailed update on what has happened since the project commenced in 2018. He outlined the funding committed for the project to be provided by Department of Rural and Community Development, Failte Ireland and Longford County Council. He explained that funding of €3.7m is currently available.

He confirmed that in 2021 Longford County Council took over as client for the project from GMCE and since then there was a number of design changes to reduce the scope of the project. In January 2023 he appointed a quantity surveyor to quantify the costs of delivering the project. He confirmed that the initial report projected a construction cost of over €18m for the original design which was multiples of the budget available.

A high-level meeting was held in September 2024. It was attended by Minister Peter Burke, Paul Kelly, Chief Executive of Failte Ireland, Paddy Mathews Director of Hidden Heartlands, Senator Micheal Carrigy, Chief Executive of Longford County Council Paddy Mahon, Director of Services John Branigan, Councillor Pádraig McNamara and members of GMCE The meeting was arranged to consider the future of the project. At the meeting a revised and significantly scaled down design was proposed with a projected construction cost of €4m. All parties at the meeting agreed with the new change of scope and a next steps to deliver the project was devised and agreed.

It is currently proposed to deliver the works on the northwest of the site to include a bailey surrounding a granary, chapel and activity shelters. Paul then outlined the next steps which includes submitting a revised scope to DRCD together with a request for additional funding. A steering group and working group will be set up to manage the project with a tender for design consultants to issue for the construction phase.

Paul Newell answered any questions raised by the Members.

Councillor Turlough McGovern said he is very happy to see progress being made on the project. However, he raised concerns that the Granard Municipal District Members were not informed of or invited to the meeting and said he was disappointed that not even the Cathaoirleach was invited. He stressed that the Members have been very supportive of the project and provided financial support to the committee and project. He said the committee will continue to require the support of all the Members if the project is to be delivered.

Councillor Pádraig McNamara confirmed that the Members were not invited. He explained that, in the past, invitations to meetings were issued by the committee to Granard Municipal District Members but, unfortunately, they did not attend.

1. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Pádraig McNamara and seconded by Councillor David Cassidy**

I call on Longford County Council to introduce traffic calming measures in Abbeylara Village as there have been numerous complaints of speeding reported by residents.

The members agreed that the Notices of Motion regarding traffic calming measures, speed surveys and raised pedestrian crossings would be dealt with together. An update in relation to the specific notions would be provided.

**Response:**

There has been a significant increase in the number of requests for traffic calming measures, speed surveys and raised pedestrian crossings. Unfortunately, due to budgetary constraints, it is not possible to provide solutions in all cases. Therefore, such works must be prioritised.

There are a number of steps which must be taken in advance of determining which works will be carried out.

Each such request requires an initial speed survey of the relevant location in order to determine if indeed a speed/safety problem exists. Sometimes local perceptions of speeding traffic and safety hazards are not backed up by the data or garda statistics. In each case depending on the speed survey findings and the specific request, an action plan may need to be developed and costed. This whole process can take a long time per scheme.

Once the initial fact-finding research and surveys have been carried out and the proposed project plan costed, Longford County Council will determine what if any funding may be available for a scheme.

Unfortunately, there is no specific funding stream for Traffic Calming projects. Therefore, such projects must compete with all other ‘discretionary’ works such as hedge cutting, new paths, public lighting etc.

While some may fall into the Low Cost Safety Scheme category (up to €80k or so), many will not be due to the high cost of such schemes. The Low Cost Safety Schemes list is already quite long so funding through this scheme may take many years. The Dept of Transport require verifiable evidence of a problem and a cost effective solution for all special funding requests.

For larger schemes Specific Improvement Grants might be an option but again there has to be verifiable evidence of a problem and a cost effective solution.

Future requests will need to be prioritised on the basis of need, taking into account traffic and pedestrian volumes and other local factors. As with all prioritised lists, some will be ahead of others.

Funding for such works could be something the Elected Members can consider as part of the 2025 budgetary process.

Specifically, relating to the request outlined by Councillor Pádraig McNamara, Road Design section is currently carrying out speed and traffic volume assessment within the village. The results of these will determine if any further action is warranted.

1. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Garry Murtagh and seconded by Councillor David Cassidy**

I call on Longford County Council to raise pedestrian crossing/s in:

* Ballinalee (traffic lights) at the entrance to the forest walk on the Ballinalee/Granard road.
* Aughnacliffe (flashing lights) x2 – school to church & the junction at Leebeen Park

**Response:**

See response above.

Specifically, relating to the request outlined by Councillor Garry Murtagh regarding the entrance to the forest walk on the Ballinalee/Granard road. Road Design section will examine this when resources allow. When completed the results of these will determine if any further action is warranted. It should be noted that the Gardai are actively conducting speed checks in this area*.*

Regarding the proposal of Pedestrian Crossing lights in Augnnacliffe. Again, as outlined above Road Design section will examine this when resources allow. When completed the results of these will determine if any further action is warranted.

1. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Garry Murtagh and seconded by Councillor Turlough McGovern .**

I’m calling on Longford County Council to install wheelchair accessible swing in Leebeen Park and any other suitable equipment for children with disabilities to enhance a more inclusive play experience.

**Response:**

Longford Co. Council is very supportive of the need to make facilities more accessible for young people and children with disabilities. In recent years communication boards have been provided in many of our playgrounds and a new communication board has recently been ordered for the Leebeen Park playground in Aughnacliffe to provide help to children with special needs, particularly with communication difficulties.

Longford County Council is aware that the cost of acquiring, installing and maintaining playground equipment has become increasingly expensive in recent times. In that regard, the Council recently requested quotes for the provision of an accessible wheelchair swing in Leebeen Park. In addition to the acquisition and installation of the swing, enabling works would be required to dig out the area and install kerbing and a wetpour surface. Estimated costs are in excess of €26,000. The Council also examined the costs of a wheelchair accessible roundabout which are higher again.

Longford County Council’s budget for playgrounds covers the cost of maintaining 26 playgrounds and 3 green gyms throughout the county. It also includes the Council’s contribution to the upgrade of one playground per year which is supplemented by a capital grant from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

The funding available through the current budget is fully committed to the completion of the 2024 maintenance and upgrade programme and while the Council would wish to be in a position to provide a more positive reply, regrettably the cost of the requested equipment is beyond the scope of the current budget.

Increased funding for maintenance and upgrade works in playgrounds could be considered by the Elected Members as part of the 2025 budgetary process.

1. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor David Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Pádraig McNamara.**

I call on Longford County Council to carry out a traffic speed survey on the basis of speeding issues in the villages of Ennybegs, Aughnacliff and Ballinamuck.

**Response:**

See response above.

Specifically, relating to the request outlined by Councillor David Cassidy. The local Killoe Development Group has commenced a process of developing a village plan which will include Traffic Calming and other measures. Once completed they then plan to seek funding from whatever sources available to implement the plan. This is a very good way to manage this type of issue as it gets local buy-in, and the local groups are much better placed to source funding through the many Community grants available national. Granard MD staff are providing whatever assistance we can.

As regards Ballinamuck, following a request from the local enterprise group last year. Road Design section have recently installed speed monitoring equipment in the village and the results should be available in the next month or so. Those results will then determine what if any actions that may be necessary.

As regards Aughnacliffe, this will be placed on the list of villages for assessment of Traffic Speed and Safety issues. A commitment as to when resources will allow for these assessments cannot be made.

1. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor David Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Pádraig McNamara.**

I call on Longford County Council to cut back overgrowth which has become an issue to pedestrians on the Drumlish to Monaduff walkway.

**Response:**

As part of the 2024 budgetary process, the Elected Members allocated funding for the maintenance and upkeep of walkways and greenways in the County. As this funding is limited, works will have to be prioritised. It is hoped that additional funding will be made available for 2025.

Longford County Council is currently in the process of the procurement of a contractor to undertake works on walkways and trails in the Granard Municipal District area. There are a number of tracks and trails within the Municipal District requiring work. Works will have to be prioritised as, unfortunately, it will not be possible to carry out all the work required within the budgets available. It is planned to do whatever we can within the available budget in the coming months.

Councillor Paraic Brady, supported by the other Members, suggested that responsibility for the maintenance and upgrade of walkways, greenways and trails rest with Regeneration as they developed them. Barbara explained that, while funding was made available in the 2024 budgets, additional funding will be required in order to maintain all the existing amenities developed in the county. This will be something the Elected Members can consider as part of the 2025 budgetary process. A decision regarding responsibility for carrying out the maintenance and upkeep works was not one which could be made at the Granard Municipal District meeting.

1. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor David Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Paraic Brady**

I call on Longford County Council for an update on the proposed re-alignment at the crossroads in Drumlish and resurfacing of the village of Drumlish on the R198 that was due to begin in late August.

**Response:**

There has been a number of delays to the commencement of the Crossroads Safety works, mainly due to the Section 38 process and difficulties securing a contractor to undertake the work. It is quite a difficult project from a Traffic Management and H&S point of view. However, the works are scheduled to commence in the week beginning 30th Sept (next week). The resurfacing works will be carried out in conjunction with the Safety works.

1. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Turlough McGovern and seconded by Councillor Pádraig McNamara**

I call on Longford County Council to address the issue of wheelchair parking spaces in Granard, only one is of benefit to wheelchair users and at least two should be marked out in front of the two pharmacies in Granard. Increased congestion and larger vehicle sizes are exacerbating the parking issue in Granard, while older people, those with disabilities and parents with children are most affected by the lack of said parking bays.

**Response:**

This matter was raised previously and it is planned to provide these parking bays before the end of this year. Longford County Council will consult with the appropriate businesses in the town as to where the best location would be. The Council is also in the process of providing 4 more disabled parking bays in the new car park behind the Garda Station.

1. **The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Turlough McGovern and seconded by Councillor Garry Murtagh**

I call on Longford County Council to implement changes (as it has major visibility issues) to the dangerous right hand turn on the N55 to Cavan road at Creevy turn off (53.79919023305475, -7.4619734896347110).

**Response:**

As the N55 is a National Secondary Road, Longford County Council will review the issues at this location and will discuss with the relevant Transport Infrastructure Ireland inspectors. Improvements at this location will be subject to support and funding of Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

1. **DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Granard Municipal District will take place on Monday, 21 October in the Council Chamber.

1. **Votes of Sympathy**

The Members extended their condolences to the Family of the late Sean Regan, employee of Longford Community Resources Ltd who passed away suddenly last week – May his soul rest In peace.

The Members extended their condolences to the Family of the late Donal Brady of Aughafad Longford who passed away recently – May he rest in peace.

The Members extended their condolences to the McGee family, Kilnashee, Drumlish on the recent passing of Teresa - May she rest in peace.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Claire McNabola**

**Meetings Administrator**

**Confirmed and adopted at Granard Municipal District Meeting held on the 16 December 2024.**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Cathaoirleach**