



MINUTES OF THE MARCH MEETING OF THE THURLES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT WHICH WAS HELD ON 21st MARCH 2022

Present: Councillor Seamus Hanafin Cathaoirleach, presided.

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

Also Present:

Eamon Lonergan	District Director
Thomas Duffy	District Engineer
Jim Ryan	Executive Engineer
Sharon Scully	District Administrator
Orla McDonnell	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, seconded by Councillor J. Ryan and resolved:

"That the Minutes of the February 2022 Monthly Meeting which was held on the 21st February be adopted as a true record of the business transacted at the Meeting."

3. **Update from Housing.**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Seán Lonergan, Administrative Officer, Shane Grogan, Administrative Officer and Enda Walsh, Executive Engineer who were in attendance via Zoom for this item. Helen Butler and Margaret Burke, Community Liaison Officers, were also present for this item. A Housing Services Report was circulated to the Members in advance of the Meeting. The Report covered the following items:

- Housing Construction
- Capital Assistance Scheme County Development Plan
 - * Thurles Lions Trust – Stanwix House
 - * Templemore Voluntary Housing Association – Main Street, Templemore
- Housing Grant Allocations
- Midlands Retrofit Programme
- Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme 2022
- Housing Loan Applications



- Tenant Purchase Scheme (Countywide)
- RAS and Leasing
- HAP
- Housing Applicants and Vacant Houses
- Vacant House Breakdown
- Offers of Tenancy
- Approved Housing Applicants

The Members raised the following queries:

- Will there be another Retrofit Scheme available in the future for those houses that did not qualify for the current Energy Efficiency Retrofit Scheme?
- Will the Members be given access to the portal for the new Choice Based Letting System?
- The number of housing loan applications is very low. The issue would appear to be the condition stipulating that a tenant has to raise 10% of the cost and prove a savings pattern. Can the MD write to the Department to see if these criteria can be amended to make it easier for the tenant to access a housing loan?
- When will the local authority housing on the Mill Road, Thurles and at Ned Hayes Park, Two Mile Borris be allocated?
- There appears to be very little dog control in relation to dogs roaming and continuously barking, including a report of biting, in Gortataggart housing estate, Thurles. Can the number of dogs permitted in a household form part of the tenancy agreement and a condition also be included that if a dog is removed from a household, then another dog cannot be brought in to replace it?
- In instances where the banks have repossessed private houses, the houses are left boarded up for long periods. One such house in Thurles has been boarded up for 2½ years and the grounds are overgrown with rats and mice. Can the Council purchase these properties under Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) legislation if dereliction orders are not being dealt with by the owner?
- Council houses in Templemore are not being turned around quick enough when pre-letting works have to be undertaken.
- The unused Sacred Heart Convent building in the centre of Roscrea is in a dangerous condition. Can the Council liaise with the owner of the property to examine different potential possibilities for the building?
- There are 2 derelict buildings in Roscrea, one at the top of Limerick Street where the road had to be closed off as the building was unsafe. The second building is a couple of hundred yards down the road on the left-hand side.
- The former Grants Hotel in Roscrea is now left abandoned and in a derelict state. It would be an ideal opportunity for the MD if they could take control and develop the building.



- Tenants seeking transfers have to go through the entire process of re-applying for housing as if they were making an application for the first time, despite having previously made an application.
- How can the Council improve its turnaround time in relation to pre-letting repairs? The turnaround for Tipperary County Council seems quite high when compared to other Local Authorities.
- Is there a direct contact at Council level to deal with issues in relation to the Ukrainian refugees?
- There are a large number of landlords leaving the rental market. This is having a negative knock-on effect on the availability of HAP properties.

Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- While derelict buildings do fall under the remit of the Environment Section, Housing section do have a Vacant Homes Officer who actively engages with the banks, all derelict properties raised at this meeting will be referred directly to the Director of Housing.
- Choice Based Letting will roll out later this week with viewings on the website available by the end of the week. A letter will issue to all tenants today giving them their User ID and access to the portal. Members will also have access to the portal.
- There is a provision in the Tenancy Agreement in relation to the control of dogs. Community Liaison Officers work in conjunction with the Dog Wardens. Housing Section will examine this provision in detail and revert back to the MD and specifically in relation to the house in Gortataggart, Thurles.
- Any tenant who signs up to HAP is asked if they also want to go on the housing list and if so, their HAP application automatically includes them on the housing list. It is only those tenants who are applying for a transfer that are requested to re-apply for housing. This re-application is a Department requirement and it gives the Local Authority an opportunity to re-confirm an applicant's details.
- The Council have received 13 housing loan applications so far this year, with 4 valid applications and 5 approved applications.
- In relation to the turnaround of housing stock the Council cannot hand a house over to a tenant without undertaking works as the Council will be held liable if an issue arises. The average minimum spend for the Council to turn around a house is €7,500. Any house that requires a major refurbishment must first be approved for funding by the Department. The MD currently have 22 minor repairs and 11 major refurbishments that will require Department Approval.
- There is currently a 25-30% refusal rate across the County which is very high. It is hoped that tenants will engage with the Choice Based Letting system and it will lead to a reduction in the refusal rate.
- The Mill Road Housing development, Thurles will be allocated in 2 phases, allocation of the first phase of 14 houses will commence in April and the second phase will commence in May.



- The Ned Hayes housing development at Two-Mile Borris will be delivered by the end of October and should be up on the Choice Based Letting website in November.
- The average turnaround time for houses is currently 40 weeks. However, the average time in the County was affected considerably by the Council seeking additional funding from the Department to address works on major voids that the Council would not have been able to finance themselves. Refurbishment works on these major voids will cost between €50,000 to €70,000 per house. These major voids are skewing the average figures somewhat as the Council is obliged to take them into account when producing average returns. This year the figures should return to normal.
- The query in relation to the Retrofit Scheme will be examined and Housing Section will revert back to the MD.
- The Red Cross and IPAS (International Protection Accommodation Services) are the two bodies that are dealing with the Ukrainian refugees at a national and local level. The Council currently does not have a role to play with the refugees. It is anticipated that the hotel sector will be part of the solution for the next few months. There are currently 9,000 Ukrainian refugees in the country with a total of 140,000 expected and Local Authority participation will increase over the coming weeks and months. Further information will develop over the coming days.

4. Update from Community and Economic Development.

Kathleen Prendergast, Economic Development Officer, Community and Economic Development was in attendance for this item. A Community and Economic Development Report was circulated to the Members with the Agenda in advance of the Meeting. The report outlined the following:-

- Community Initiatives
 - ~ Comhairle na nÓg
 - ~ 'Tipperary Together' Newsletter
 - ~ Community Activities Fund
 - ~ CLÁR 2021 and CLÁR 2022
 - ~ Town and Village Renewal Scheme
 - ~ Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme
- Sports – Tipperary Sports Partnership
 - ~ Participation
 - ~ Education and Training
 - ~ TSP Funding Scheme
 - FAI - Club Mark
 - Club Development
 - League Coaching Sessions
 - Schools
 - FAI Spar Primary 5's School Competition
 - Training and Education



- Tourism
 - ~ Tipperary Tourism Membership 2022
 - ~ Tipperary Tourism PR and Marketing
 - ~ Tipperary Tourism Training
 - ~ Tipperary Tourism Product Development
- Local Enterprise Office (LEO)
 - ~ Measure 1 – Direct Grant Support
 - ~ Green for Micro
 - ~ Trading On-Line vouchers
 - ~ Business Clinics
 - ~ 1 – 1 Mentoring Support
 - ~ Student Enterprise Awards
 - ~ Local Enterprise Week 7th – 11th March
- Economic
 - ~ LECP
 - ~ Digital – Hubs, enterprise Centres and shared Spaces
 - ~ Remote working Strategy for Business
 - ~ Retail Initiatives – Painting and Enhancement Scheme
 - Commercial Vacancy Incentive scheme
 - Branding
 - Town Centre Initiative Templemore
 - Christmas Retail Support Programme 2021
 - Shop Local Tipperary Campaign
- Broadband
 - ~ Initiative 1 – the delivery and implementation of the rollout of the National Broadband Plan (NBP)
 - ~ Initiative 2 – the delivery of high-speed Broadband connection Points (BCP's) in County Tipperary.
 - ~ Connected hubs Funding
 - ~ Initiative 3 – to Support Commercial Operators in delivering their plans to deliver high speed fibre Broadband Services in Urban locations in county Tipperary
 - ~ SIRO
 - ~ Initiative 4 – To support the Mobile Network Operators and Mobile Infrastructures Providers to continue to carry-out coverage and capacity wirelless Improvements to 2G, 3G, 4G 4G plus and 5G and future technologies in County Tipperary
 - ~ Initiative 5 – to complete the installation and maintain a fully supported free Wi-Fi Networks across public access points, at designated locations (six towns) in County Tipperary, under the European Commission WiFi4EU Programme
 - ~ Initiative 6 – to progress a design solution with the Telecommunications Industry to pilot the concept of Shared Underground Telecommunications Infrastructure with Industry.



The Members raised the following issues:-

- Thurles was awarded the European Town of Sport in 2012, however nothing has ever been done to take advantage of this. There is no signage, no events and no reference to it in any leaflets or brochures. What are the plans, if any, in relation to sports tourism for Thurles?
- Following the association between Comhairle na nÓg and Jigsaw some time ago, have there been many referrals to Jigsaw?
- The criterion for CLÁR funding has changed. Previously it could have been used for speed detection signs which are no longer eligible.
- Has a location for the Bushcraft Centre been decided and when is it anticipated that the Bushcraft Centre will be complete. When will the Part 8 go to the Council for the Littleton Labyrinth?
- When is the proposed GAA tour of Thurles, to include Semple Stadium, expected to be rolled out?

Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- Kathleen will revert back to the MD in relation to the number of referrals to Jigsaw.
- Community and Economic Development do not have any say in the requirements for CLÁR funding but they will raise the issue with the Department.
- Currently awaiting on Jane Ryan, Thurles Tourist Office to revert in relation to the GAA walking tour of Thurles to determine how Tipperary County Council can support it.
- The MD should liaise with Thurles Tourist Officer to discuss the promotion of Thurles as a town of Sport. Signage to showcase Thurles as the 2012 European Town of Sport is an issue for the MD.
- A site at Loughdoire Bhile is currently being examined by Bord na Mona for the location of the Bushcraft Centre and feedback from them is currently awaited.

5. Presentation by Marie Phelan, Tourism Officer.

Marie Phelan, Tourism Development Officer gave a Presentation to the Members on Tourism for Tipperary County. Marie's report covered the following:

- Tipperary Tourism Company – established 2015, Company limited by guarantee.
- Its role - to promote, market and develop Tipperary as a destination of choice.
- Pre Covid - tourism worth €101 million to the Tipperary economy.
- Tipperary Tourism works with other Organisations.
- August 2020 – A task force consisting of 26 members was established.
- Resilience Plan – to address issues pertinent to recovery post Covid.



- Destination Development Plan
- Digital Market
- Activate the Outdoors – Interactive Map of the County
- Packaging new Experiences - Thoroughbred County
- Unlocking Tipperary Communities – tour guide training
- Events and Night Time Economy - Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme
- Brand refreshed – original brand focused on heritage. New brand focused on outdoor activities.
- Available on: social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter);
- Marketing Campaign -digital, media, radio, influencers,
- Flickr Account -2000 high quality photographs uploaded
- Vimeo Account – Stores high quality videos that are accessible to tourism businesses.
- Transforming Tipperary – Littleton Labyrinth and signage
- Holycross RRDF application
- Boundary changes – review of boundaries undertaken by Fáilte Ireland
- Hidden Heartlands and Ancient East

The Members thanked Marie for her Presentation and raised the following query:-

- Will further monies become available this year under the Outdoor Dining Grants similar to last year's scheme that was funded through Fáilte Ireland.

Marie replied to the query as follows:-

- When last checked in January there were no plans for further funding for Outdoor Dining Grants but the issue will be checked again with Fáilte Ireland.

6. Amendment to the Thurles Municipal District Meetings Standing Orders to facilitate the holding of hybrid meetings.

It was proposed by Councillor M. Lowry, seconded by Councillor P. Ryan and resolved:-

“that the Thurles Municipal District Meetings Standing Orders be amended to facilitate the holding of hybrid meetings.”

7. To formally approve the Draft Schedule of Municipal District Works 2022.

The District Engineer outlined the Draft Schedule of Municipal District Works 2022 for the Thurles Municipal District covering road maintenance, housing maintenance, street cleaning, maintenance of amenities, drainage



works and burial ground maintenance, a copy of which was circulated in advance, by email with the Agenda.

The Members acknowledged that there are a lot of good works identified in the Programme and raised the following issues:-

- How will cost inflation impact the 2022 Works Programme?
- There has been no street cleaning in Thurles town on a Sunday since Covid hit in 2020.
- Has clarity been sought, following the recent Members Workshop on the Road Works Programme 2022, in relation to the road at Lismakin in order to identify the best way to move forward - 300 metres of the road had been declared a public road but a query arose in relation to the second part of the road.
- Clarity needs to be sought in relation to some roads that have been deemed to not qualify for Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) as Roads Central have subsequently stated that these roads did qualify. These roads were done previously under a CIS and now find themselves in limbo.
- When will the CCTV cameras for Thurles be upgraded and to what extent will the €70,000 allocated for Thurles CCTV under the Road Works Programme cover the project costs?
- To what extent will the €40,000 allocated under *Underground Infrastructure Thurles Town* go towards resolving the flooding issue at Friar Street, Thurles? Are Irish Water being consulted in relation to the works?
- Has a pedestrian crossing been included in the Ragg Junction Realignment and Safety Measures?
- Can clarity be given in relation to the street cleaning and maintenance of Market Square, Roscrea. Cleaning on Sunday mornings is also needed in this area?
- Who is responsible for road maintenance at Ballypatrick where approximately 4-5 houses are no longer on the public road following road realignment works?
- There was a commitment from the MD that, upon completion of the refurbishment works at Liberty Square, Thurles, the traffic flow for the entire town would be examined, problematic areas would be investigated and a concise plan would be put in place for the town in order to get away from the ad-hoc solution that has prevailed up to now.
- Roscrea Chamber of Commerce are seeking an urgent meeting with Thurles MD in relation to the allocation of funding towards Christmas Lighting for the town. Businesses have stated that they will no longer continue to subsidise the shortfall in funding for Christmas lighting.



Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- No reply has been received to date from Roads Central in relation to the second half of the Lismakin Road. The issue will be referred to them again.
- The District Administrator will contact the Roscrea Chamber of Commerce to set up a meeting to discuss funding for Christmas lights.
- There is a plan in place to address the traffic management of the three towns of Thurles, Nenagh and Clonmel. Consultants have been appointed to carry out a Regional, Spatial and Economic Strategy to assess the existing traffic transport and movement conditions in Thurles.
- The €40,000 that has been allocated under the Road Works Programme to *Underground Infrastructure Thurles Town* works is not nearly enough to address the flooding issue on Friar Street, Thurles. This funding will go towards works on the N62 at Slievenamon Road, Thurles to facilitate any future storm water flood alleviation works. The funding to address the flooding at Friar Street is substantial and falls under the remit of Irish Water.
- There have been no complaints from residents/locals in relation to no Sunday morning clean up in towns.
- Tender for the appointment of Consultants for the Ragg Junction realignment and safety measures is ongoing. The inclusion of a pedestrian crossing will be examined as part of the brief.
- Roads have confirmed that the specific locations in Ballypatrick which, prior to road realignment works formed part of the public road, can still be included on a road works programme.
- Clarity will be sought and the MD will revert in relation to those roads that have been deemed to not qualify for Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) but were previously covered under this scheme.
- The plan for Thurles CCTV is to revert to the original town centre plan and examine to what extent the €70,000 allocated towards the project will allow it to advance.
- It is anticipated that cost inflation will have a significant impact on the Schedule of Works but the exact implications are not yet known. The Director of Roads is monitoring the situation carefully.

It was proposed by Councillor J. Ryan, seconded by Councillor M. Lowry and resolved 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 2022 Schedule of Municipal District Works for Thurles Municipal District be and is hereby adopted."



8. To formally approve the 2022 General Municipal Allocation.

Draft proposals under the 2022 General Municipal Allocation were circulated to the Members in advance of the Meeting.

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

“that the General Municipal Allocation 2022 be apportioned as follows:-

Village Enhancement Works – Hose & Jockey	€ 25,000.00
Village Enhancement Works – Killea	€ 25,000.00
Village Enhancement Works – Drombane	€ 15,000.00
Village Enhancement works – Knock	€ 10,000.00
Christmas Lighting Contributions	€ 16,500.00
Festival & Events - Grant Schemes	€ 43,000.00
Residents Associations - Grant Scheme	€ 26,000.00
Contributions to Sporting Clubs and Associations	€ 17,000.00
Economic Development Thurles	€ 11,000.00
Seed Funding – Project Pipeline Plan, Thurles Municipal District	€ 18,000.00
Improvement works Back Lanes, Thurles Town	€ 7,000.00
TOTAL GMA 2022	€213,500.00

9. Update on District Project Pipeline Plan.

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

Liberty Square Enhancement Scheme, Thurles Phase I	Project completed. Next Phase - Snagging and Final Account
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Liberty Square Enhancement Scheme Phase II	Consultant appointed for the Part 8 process. Topographical Survey, Archaeological Survey, Tree Survey and Heritage Impact Assessment - all completed. Part 8 submission prog for Q3 2022														
Proposed Market and Extension to Farm building	Tender evaluation and recommendation ongoing.														
The Littleton Labyrinth Phase 1	Councillor Workshop completed. Agree Scope, Programme, Costings and Procurement Method for Construction Works with Bord na Móna. Submission of Part 8 application in next 4 weeks.														
Holycross Tourism Centre	Funding application was unsuccessful for the detailed design for development of multi-purpose facility with tourism at its core in order to boost rural economic development.														
Templemore Town Hall Cultural and Enterprise Centre and Civic Plaza	Finalise detailed design following meeting with Consultative Group.														
Gantly Road 'Age Friendly Neighbourhood'	Part 8 application commenced January 2022.														
Roscrea Enhancement Pan	A Stakeholder Engagement plan is to be developed to identify and prioritise projects and locations in the Town.														
Vacant Housing Units	<table> <tr> <td>Awaiting receipt of keys to property</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>At Inspections/Costings Stage</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>At Tender Stage</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Budgets submitted to Housing Section</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In Progress</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Retrofit Works to be completed before Pre-Lets</td> <td><u>2</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </table>	Awaiting receipt of keys to property	1	At Inspections/Costings Stage	6	At Tender Stage	0	Budgets submitted to Housing Section	2	In Progress	9	Retrofit Works to be completed before Pre-Lets	<u>2</u>	TOTAL	20
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In Progress	9														
Retrofit Works to be completed before Pre-Lets	<u>2</u>														
TOTAL	20														

The District Director referred to the issue of derelict buildings in Roscrea that was raised previously during the Meeting. He stated that Roscrea had received grant approval of €100,000 to undertake a Master Plan for the town which will focus on vacancy and dereliction. He stated that the MD have a good record of turning around buildings. He acknowledged that public owned buildings are easier to turn around than privately owned where there has to be a willingness to sell in the first instance, funding might be an issue and a CPO can be a long drawn out process. He also stated that the Council will be establishing Town Centre Regeneration Officers over the next coming months.

The Members raised the following queries:-

- When will the Part 8 for the Littleton Labyrinth proceed?



- There are a number of houses in Thurles town that the banks have repossessed which have now become derelict. Can the MD force the banks to be proactive?
- Will all the entry/exit points for the proposed Riverside Walk in Thurles be wheelchair accessible?
- The Enhancement Committee for the Roscrea Master Plan need new members, can the issue be examined.

Replies to queries were as follows:

- The Littleton Labyrinth is expected to proceed within the next four weeks.
- All of the entry/exit points for the proposed Riverside Walk in Thurles will be wheelchair accessible.

10. Notice of Motion.

Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor J. Ryan ID 2389

"Given the amount of housing that exists on the N75 Two Mile Borris to Thurles road that the Thurles Municipal District would write to the TII and request that the possibility of developing a footpath along some of this road be examined as part of any future upgrading works."

Reply to Notice of Motion was as follows:-

Thurles MD will discuss the request with TII representatives, however the provision of footpaths outside the speed limits (this is a 100 kph road) is not an approved detail for rural fringe areas to national Road Networks for the primary reason of safety for the pedestrian user.

Councillor Ryan expressed his satisfaction with the response. He stated that the road is very busy, there are lots of houses on this road and a new business has set up in the area recently.

11. Correspondence.

There was no correspondence.

12. Votes of Congratulations / Sympathy.

Votes of Congratulations were extended to:-

- Rachel Blackmore on her recent success at Cheltenham winning the Gold Cup.
- Cathal Ryan, Loughmore Village, Templemore, Co Tipperary on becoming the National Winner of the All Ireland Under 17 High Jump Competition




- James Scott, Manager of the U17 Ireland Women's' Soccer Team whose team are taking part in the UEFA cup this week.
- David Ryan, Cloncleigh, Two Mile Borris who became the All Ireland Under 23 Indoor 400m Champion with a personal best of 48.63 seconds.
- The Ursuline and Presentation Secondary Schools, Thurles on winning the Junior A's and Junior B's All Ireland Camogie Finals respectively.
- The Committees of the St. Patrick's Day Parades in Roscrea and Littleton and the on-line parade in Thurles.


Votes of Sympathy were extended to:-

- The Stanley family, Georges Park, Gortnahoe on the passing of Ronan Stanley. Ronan had been involved in several projects with the Council and the GAA in Gortnahoe.
- Councillor Phyll Bugler on the death of her brother William Ryan (Haven), Graffin, Clonmore, Templemore.
- Noeleen Maher, employee of Tipperary County Council, on the death of her brother John Joe Dunne, Toomevara.

13. Any Other Business.

- A Civic Reception will be held in the Templemore Arms Hotel to celebrate the success of the Loughmore Castleiney GAA Club on winning both the Tipperary Senior Hurling and Football Championship Finals in 2021. A date for the Civic Reception of 7th April will be confirmed later this week.
- The Meetings Administrator advised that nominations for the Thurles MD 2022 Civic Awards Reception must be submitted by the first week of April, in order to be referred to the Corporate Policy Group for consideration.

SIGNED:  DATE: 14th April, 2022.
CATHAOIRLEACH

SIGNED:  DATE: 14th April, 2022.
MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR

