



MINUTES OF THE MARCH MEETING OF THE THURLES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT WHICH WAS HELD ON 20th MARCH 2023

Present: Councillor Peggy Ryan, Cathaoirleach, presided.

Councillors Noel Coonan, Seamus Hanafin, Shane Lee, Micheál Lowry, Eddie Moran, Jim Ryan, Seán Ryan and Michael Smith.

Also Present:

Eamon Lonergan	Director of Services
Liam Brett,	Senior Engineer
Thomas Duffy,	District Engineer
Jim Ryan	Executive Engineer
Enda Walsh	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 N. Coonan and resolved:

"That the Minutes of the February 2023 Monthly Meeting which was held on the 20th February 2023 be adopted as a true record of the business transacted at the Meeting."

3. **Adoption of the R498 Active Travel Project at Castlemeadows, Thurles**

Gillian Flynn, A/Senior Executive Engineer was in attendance for this item. The Part 8 Chief Executive's Report on the R498 Active Travel Project at Castlemeadows, Thurles was circulated to the Members in advance of the Meeting. The Members raised the following questions:-

- What is the timeline for delivery of the project and how will the project be funded?
- Does the project take account of illegal parking in the area during match days?
- The Art Work at Semple Stadium to celebrate Thurles as the birthplace of the GAA is very welcome.



- The bus set down area and bus parking area will be very beneficial to the school
- When construction works commence they will need to be synchronised with any matches taking place.
- Does the proposed project allow for a right-hand-turn into Coláiste Mhuire.

Gillian replied to queries raised as follows:

- €15,000 Active Travel funding was made available for 2023 to develop and design the project. It is anticipated that works will commence in 2024.
- The concept of the artwork has yet to be determined. Melanie Scott will be developing a brief for this.
- The feasibility of a right-hand-turn into Coláiste Mhuire was examined but it cannot be incorporated as it would impact on cyclist and pedestrian safety.

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

“the Part 8 Chief Executive’s Report on the R498 Active Travel Project at Castlemeadows, Thurles – PT8TT1 be and is hereby accepted.”

4. Update from Housing.

Cora Morrissey, Senior Executive Officer, Kieran Malone, Executive Engineer, Shane Grogan, Administrative Officer and Deirdre Flannery, Senior Staff Officer were in attendance for this item. A Housing Report was circulated to the Members in advance of the Meeting and was taken as read.

Deirdre gave a presentation to the Members on Local Authority Rents. The Members raised the following issues in relation to the presentation:-

- When calculating income, Carer’s Allowance is considered, yet it is not considered when being assessed for a Medical Card. Is it possible to change this assessment process?
- Family Income Supplement is included when calculating income, as a result, families are finding themselves exceeding the income thresholds when it comes to qualifying criteria for social housing.
- When will the current scheme be reviewed.

Deirdre replied to queries as follows:

- The current Differential Rent Scheme is in operation since 2018 and it is a combination of the previous 9 schemes. To exclude the Carer’s Allowance or the Family Supplement from the income calculation,



would also require a complete revision of other areas of the scheme. Some Councils do not take these incomes into account but consequently their qualifying permutations would be different.

- There are no plans to review the current scheme.
- The Department were to examine the feasibility of a National Scheme. Deirdre will follow up in relation to the current status of this.

The Members raised the following issues in relation to the Housing Report circulated to them:

- When will the keys be handed over to the tenants of Ned Hayes Park housing estate, Two-Mile-Borris and when will the snagging be complete – the road adjacent to the estate is in a poor state and the border between the estate and the sensory garden needs to be upgraded.
- Has there been any development in relation to single applicants who currently cannot bid on the Choice Based Letting system?
- Has there been any increase in the participation rates for Choice Based Letting – people were finding the system difficult to use when it was first introduced.
- Can houses that did not qualify for the Retrofit Scheme, due to their year of construction, be included in future Retrofit Schemes. Houses such as Tara Drive, Gortnahoe and Derrynaflan, Littleton did not qualify for retrofit works and tenants are facing huge energy bills due to the energy crisis.
- The Council needs to be doing everything possible to secure additional 4 bed houses – there is only one 4 bed roomed house in Dun Muilleann housing estate, Mill Road, Thurles.
- What is the exact location in Cuchulainn Road, Thurles of the proposed 6 units that the Council are to construct.
- Is it proposed to use the houses in Stradavoher Court, Thurles, that are being taken over by Novas, as social housing or housing for the homeless.
- Stradavoher Court, Thurles is in a dreadful state and the issue needs to be addressed.
- Have Housing Section engaged a contractor to address the issues outstanding at the Glebe Estate, Mill Road Thurles as follows:
 - Loose stones on footpaths to be removed and footpaths to be tarmacked
 - Wall, where an ESB box was removed, to be plastered
 - Road markings to be applied
- What impact will the removal of the Eviction Ban have in the District; will it increase pressure on the Housing Section and do the Council have the necessary resources to deal with the issue?
- CRMs are not being addressed.
- The Tenant Handbook should be made available to all housing tenants.



- Who is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the Retirement Village in Templemore - it is in a very poor state and needs to be addressed.

Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- Tenants of Ned Hayes housing estate will receive the keys on 27th March next.
- Countywide, there has been an increase in the usage of the Choice Based Letting system from 66% to 69%.
Housing Section have corresponded directly with tenants who are aged over 60 years and tenants with disabilities in relation to the Choice Based Letting system and staff are available to assist tenants in the use of the system.
- Housing Section are always trying to source 4 bed houses which are quite difficult to obtain.
There is one 4 bedroomed house available for a specific family in Ned-Hayes Park, Two-Mile-Borris.
- Housing Section are working closely with Novas in relation to Stradavoher Court, Thurles.
Novas have purchased 11 of these properties and intend converting them into housing units.
Houses will be made available for letting to approved housing tenants.
- The abolition of the Eviction Ban at the end of the month will have an impact on the County Council. The Council will work closely with landlords to purchase properties where the landlord intends to sell with a tenant in situ.
The purchase of such houses will depend on the condition of the house, the need for and the size of the house.
- Housing Section are currently developing a new scheme that will allow single tenants to bid for houses on the Choice Based Letting system and the issue will go before the CPG next May.
Currently there are tenders advertised for the construction of 2 one bed houses in Templemore.
- Housing staff are currently compiling a list for the 2023 Retrofit Scheme.
If there is a specific location where Members feel the properties are in need of retrofit works, they should submit same to Housing Section.
- The 6 single units planned for Cuchulainn Road, Thurles are located on the junction with O'Donovan Rossa Street.
The scheme is currently at Stage 1 Scoping.
- Housing advised the following in relation to works outstanding at the Glebe/Dun Muireann housing estates, Mill Road, Thurles:
 - The contractor has confirmed that road signage will be complete in the next two weeks.
 - Awaiting to hear back from the Contractor in relation to the footpaths



- The issue in relation to the plastering of the wall, where the ESB junction box was removed, will be examined.
- The query regarding the Tenant Hand book will be examined.
- Ownership of the Retirement Village in Templemore will be examined.
- The contractor is still finalising works at Ned Hayes Park, Two Mile-Borris before snagging can take place.
The border with the sensory garden will be examined and the road adjacent to the estate will be tarmacked.
- Members are asked to inform Housing staff if there are any outstanding housing CRMs on the system.

5. To formally approve draft Schedule of Municipal District Works 2023.

Councillor S. Lee expressed his disappointment that following a Workshop, which was held on the 15th March to discuss Thurles MD's Schedule of Municipal District Works for 2023, information was circulated publicly that claimed an objection was made by him in relation to the allocation of funding.

Councillor Lee asked that it be noted that he did not make any such objection and fully supported the 2023 Schedule of Municipal District Works for Thurles MD.

It was proposed by Councillor S. Lee, seconded by Councillor S. Hanafin 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 2023 Schedule of Municipal District Works for Thurles Municipal District be and is hereby adopted."

6. To formally approve the 2023 General Municipal Allocation

Draft proposals under the 2023 General Municipal Allocation were circulated to the Members in advance of the Meeting.

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

"that the General Municipal Allocation 2023 be apportioned as follows:-



Village Enhancement Works – Moycarkey	€ 10,500.00
Village Enhancement Works – Clonakenny	€ 15,000.00
Town Enhancement Works – Thurles	€ 16,500.00
Town Enhancement Works – Templemore	€ 16,500.00
Town Enhancement Works – Roscrea	€ 16,500.00
Christmas Lighting Contributions	€ 15,500.00
Festival & Events - Grant Schemes	€ 13,536.00
Residents Associations - Grant Scheme	€ 15,000.00
Local Property Tax Project Allocations	€ 96,000.00
General Municipal District Allocation Total	€215,036.00

7. District Engineer's Report.

An updated District Engineer's Report for the MD was circulated to the Members in advance of the Meeting and taken as read.

The District Engineer stated that the Municipal District Roads Programme will commence on 21st March. The MD are keen to commence the Road Programme immediately so that the District will be in a position to respond immediately if more monies become available later in the year.

The Members raised the following queries:-

- Has there been any progress in relation to the implementation of a pedestrian crossing in the Ragg Village – the issue has been ongoing now for some time.
- Can a carparking area be installed in Beechwood Lawns, Thurles. The residents of the estate have recently cleared an area that was completely overgrown and littered and have requested that this area be made available for parking within the estate.
- When will the white lining programme commence as there are areas where road markings have become washed away and need to be reinstated.
- Following submission by the Members of proposed locations of the Speed Actuation signs, when will the programme commence?
- When will the snagging take place in Littleton Village following improvement works carried out under an Active Travel Programme?



- What is the update in relation to the commissioning of the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point in Parnell Street carpark, Thurles?
- Will there be a budget available to the MD this year for Bridge Rehabilitation Works as there are a number of bridges currently in need of repair works, namely, Pouldine and Derryhogan bridges on the R659, Cabragh.
- Can the overgrown green area at the front of Beechwood Lawns housing estate, Thurles bordering the Stanwix Village development be tidied up.
- What is the update in relation to road improvement works at Turtulla Cross, Thurles. The issue has been ongoing for a considerable length of time.
- Can Hogan's Drain and Pipe Cleaning be engaged in order to address the issue of blocked drains in the MD.

Replies to queries raised was as follows:-

- Consultants have been appointed to examine the proposed works at the Ragg and talks with landowners are ongoing. Once the proposed design is complete a workshop will be held with Members.
- The white lining programme will commence once the weather improves.
A schedule of works has been drawn up and will be submitted to the contractor.
- The Speed Actuation Signs programme will commence within the next number of months.
- The incomplete works at Littleton Village following improvement works undertaken under an Active Travel Programme will be undertaken during the Spring.
- There has been no update from the ESB in relation to the connection of the EV charging point at Parnell Street Carpark, Thurles.
The issue will be followed up again with the ESB. All civil works are complete.
- Cabra Bridge has been identified for works under the 2023 Bridge Rehabilitation Programme. Other bridges that require works can be added to the list and will subsequently be examined.
- Roads Capital are entering into talks with Thurles Golf Club in relation to road safety improvement works at Turtulla Cross.
Funding will be secured from the TII in order to progress the project.
- The land to the front of Beechwood Lawns, Thurles is currently with the Council's solicitor in order to establish ownership of the plot of land before any tidy-up of the area can be examined.
- The provision of a car parking area in Beechwood Lawns estate will be reviewed, however, any works will be dependent on identifying a budget.
- Hogan's Drain and Pipe Cleaning will be engaged in the coming weeks to address the issue of blocked drains in the MD.



8. Update on District Project Pipeline Plan.

An updated report on the 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 Phase 2 - Thurles	Options assessment and selection of a preferred option design with key statutory stakeholder. Meetings and Workshops with Elected Members and the public Stakeholders in Q2 2023. A Part 8 Planning Application in Q4 2023.
Proposed Market and Extension to Farm Building, Thurles	Agree Final design. Construction Works to commence in Q3/4 2023. Meetings with MIC and Farmers Market ongoing. Stakeholders ongoing.
Littleton Labyrinth Walkway and Cycleway - Phase 1	Bord-na-Mona employees to construct track. Construction commencement prog August 2023. Ongoing discussions with Bord na Mona as part of a Project Steering Group. Options routes for proposed Windfarm ongoing.
Littleton Bushcraft Centre	Procurement for external Consultants to prepare a detailed Feasibility Study of Bushcraft Centre located on Bord na Mona lands.
Holycross – Tourism & visitor Centre	Funding application under RRDF was unsuccessful. The future of the project to be considered in line with all available funding streams.
Templemore Town Hall Cultural and Enterprise Centre and Civic Plaza	Seek approval from the Department to proceed with the project. Award the Contract to the successful Tenderer in Q1 2023. Works to commence in Q2 2023.
Gantly Road in Roscrea - <i>An Age Friendly Neighbourhood</i>	Handover of Project from Planning to Thurles MD. Design Team to be procured.
Roscrea Town Centre First Master Plan	Meetings are on-going with consultants O'Mahony Pike (scheduled fortnightly). March 11 th - walking tour of town or workshop with Elected Representatives. March 14 th (online) evening public workshop to take place. March 15 th - Primary School Focus group. March 22 nd – Town Team Strategy lecture.



	Agreed that a Final Draft of the Roscrea TCF Masterplan will be submitted to TCC at the end of June and complete by July.												
Templemore Town Streetscape Enhancement Project	Concept at this stage.												
Vacant Housing Units	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>MD Awaiting receipt of keys to property</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>At Inspections/Costings Stage</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In Progress</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IPB Insurance Assessment</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Retrofit works to be completed first</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>18</td> </tr> </table>	MD Awaiting receipt of keys to property	1	At Inspections/Costings Stage	4	In Progress	10	IPB Insurance Assessment	2	Retrofit works to be completed first	1	TOTAL	18
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TOTAL	18												

The Members raised the following issues:

- Are the MD on track to commence works on the Littleton Labyrinth trail in August, 2023?
- When will the Feasibility Study for the Bushcraft Centre at the Littleton Labyrinth be completed.
- What is the update in relation to adding additional routes once the current proposed walking route at Monahincha is constructed.
- What is the update in relation to Templemore Land Bank and its current status within the Project Pipeline. Is the parcel of land that was reserved for sports clubs to come together still available?

Replies to queries was as follows:-

- It is anticipated that construction works on Littleton Labyrinth will commence in August 2023.
- The District Engineer will revert with an update on the Feasibility Study for the Littleton Labyrinth Bushcraft Centre.
- National Parks and Wildlife Service, who are landowners of a portion of the proposed track, have requested an Ecological Survey and a Tree Survey be undertaken before Ministerial consent can be given to undertake works on NPWS land.
The Tree survey is complete and has been returned to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for review before the Ecological Survey is carried out.
- The development of Templemore landbank is currently at concept stage. A formal application must be made to the Council by Templemore Development Association wherein they outline their purchase/leasing requests in relation to the land. A public consultation by Templemore Development Association will also be necessary in order to engage with all local clubs.



9. Notice of Motion.

There were no Notices of Motion.

10. Correspondence.

There was no correspondence.

11. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations.

Votes of Sympathy were extended to:

- The Cahill family, Gortnahoe on the recent passing of Annie RIP.
- The Duffy Family, Fermanagh on the recent passing of Josephine Duffy RIP, mother of Thomas Duffy, District Engineer.

Votes of Congratulations were extended to:

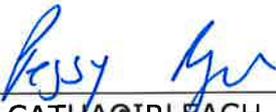
- Brian Gleeson, Loughmore who was part of the Ireland U20 Six Nations Rugby Team that won the Grand Slam.
Brian was named Man of the Match following the Ireland and Wales match.
- The organising committees of the St. Patrick's Day Parades and events in Thurles, Littleton, Templemore and Roscrea for the enormous level of work involved in organising the Parades.
Special recognition was given to Julie Barrett, Thurles Municipal District.

12. Any Other Business

- The Cathaoirleach stated that it is proposed to hold the District Civic Awards on 20th April and a Civic Reception on 11th May. The proposal is currently with the CPG for consideration.
- Councillor Lowry requested an update in relation to the Traffic Management Plan for Thurles, given the completion of works at Liberty Square and Bowes Corner.
Liam Brett stated that the design process is currently ongoing with the Consultants and Roads Capital will revert back to the Members in due course.

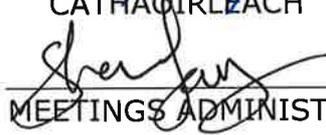
That concluded the official business of the March Meeting.

SIGNED:


CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE: 17th April, 2023

SIGNED:


MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR

DATE: 17th April, 2023