

**Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Lifford-Stranorlar held
on 30th March 2021 at 11am.**

Members Present	Cllr. Gary Doherty, Cllr. Gerry Crawford, Cllr. Frank McBrearty, Cllr. Liam Doherty, Cllr. Martin Harley, Cllr. Patrick McGowan.
Officials Present	Joe Peoples, Olive Gillespie, Tony Browne, Ciara Condon, Kathleen McGowan, Claire McGeever, Daragh McDonough, Paul Gallagher.

Cllr. Gary Doherty, MD Cathaoirleach opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance at the remote meeting. On the proposal of Cllr. Frank McBrearty and seconded by Cllr. Martin Harley, the Meeting was adjourned until 11.25 am to conclude the Workshop agenda.

Items from the agenda were discussed as follows:

265 Corporate Services

265.01 Votes of Sympathy

Members passed a vote of sympathy on the passing of:

- Karen McGuire, sister of our colleague Anthony Walsh, Human Resources Section.
- Margaret Noel Alcorn, mother of Noelle Alcorn, Customer Service Centre.
- Jim Canney, our retired colleague.
- Dorothy Southern, mother-in-law of our colleague Fergal Doherty, Roads Services.
- Isa Brennan, mother of our colleague Majella McClay, Housing & Corporate Services, aunt of our colleague Fergal Tinney, Reprographics Section, and aunt of our retired colleague, Eugene McCosker.
- James Doherty, father of our colleague Anna Brogan, Cultural Services and our deceased colleague, Jimmy Doherty.
- Patrick Gallagher, brother of our colleague Kathleen Gallagher, Fire Service, Letterkenny.
- Sharon O’Kane, our colleague, Finance Section.
- Willie McCleary, father of our colleague Eddie McCleary and father-in-law of our colleague Caroline McCleary.
- Packie Tourish, our retired colleague.
- Philomena O’Donnell, mother of our colleague Martin Roarty, Environment Section.
- Gene Keelan, mother of Fiontán Ó Caoláin, Training Department.
- Colm Moyne, father of Brendan Moyne Roads Services, Moville.
- Noel McConnell, Uncle of Cllr. Frank McBrearty.

As a mark of respect and to remember all those who have sadly passed away, a one minute silence was observed.

265.02 Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Lifford-Stranorlar held 2nd February 2021.

The Minutes were approved on the proposal of Cllr. F McBrearty and seconded by Cllr. G Crawford.

266 Confirmation of Date and Venue for Next Meeting and Business Prescribed by Statute

266.01 It was agreed that the next meetings of the Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District would be held online on Tuesday, **11th May 2021** as follows:

- **Workshop** **10.00 am.**
- **Meeting** **11.00 am.**

266.02 The Schedule of Municipal District Works 2021 was proposed by Cllr. L Doherty and seconded by Cllr. F McBrearty.

267 Consideration of Reports & Recommendations from Services

267.01 Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services

The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. The following comments were made:

- Daragh McDonough informed Members that the presentation to be delivered by National Broadband Ireland had to be cancelled as there was no one available to attend the meeting. Members expressed their frustration that no one was able to attend and highlighted the importance of good broadband coverage for remote working, for businesses and attracting people to relocate back into towns throughout the Municipal District. Daragh McDonough agreed to contact National Broadband Ireland and request an alternative date for a meeting with Members of the Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District.
- Daragh McDonough advised Members that the new digital hub at the BASE Enterprise Centre, Ballybofey was 99% complete. Members welcomed this development but also highlighted that other locations throughout the District may require a digital hub facility, for example Raphoe, Convoy, CAKE Centre - Killygordon, the CPI Centre - Castlefinn and at the new council offices located on the site of the old Lifford Army Barracks. Cllr. F McBrearty queried if there was any indication of a

need for digital hubs in other towns/villages throughout the Municipal District. Daragh McDonough agreed to liaise with the Economic Development Section in relation to a needs based survey of digital hubs.

- Cllr. G Doherty requested the timescale for the remaining public WiFi access points under the WiFi4EU Project to be rolled out to the remaining locations. Daragh McDonough confirmed that 15 access points will be rolled out over the next few months.
- Cllr. P McGowan referred to the Caravan & Camping Study by KPMG and queried when this process would begin as Members had not yet received a report as previously agreed. Daragh McDonough agreed to refer this query to the Economic Development Section for a response.
- Cllr. M Harley referred to the Tourism Marketing Campaign and queried if the Omagh/Fermanagh region could be included in this campaign also. Daragh McDonough agreed to refer this query to the Tourism Marketing Unit.
- Cllr. M Harley requested training for Members in relation to using Twitter and other social media applications in order to assist Members in promoting the positive elements of the services that the Council provide to the public.
- Cllr. M Harley requested that the Council write to the Minister for Business, Enterprise & Innovation to request an additional Restart Grant Scheme to keep businesses afloat during lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Daragh McDonough agreed to refer this request to the Local Enterprise Office.
- Cllr. P McGowan requested the Economic Development Section to organise a meeting with the Donegal East Tourism Committee.
- Cllr. G Crawford informed the meeting that there is a mobile phone blackstop from Rossgier, Lifford to St. Johnston, and requested that this be examined. Daragh McDonough agreed to revert to Cllr. Crawford on this issue.

267.02 Housing & Corporate Services

The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. The following comments were made:

- Olive Gillespie advised Members that the Housing Office is waiting on approval from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage in relation to a submission made under the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme. Members welcomed the inclusion of two estates within the Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District but highlighted that the current allocation to retrofit 45 houses is wholly inadequate to address the poor condition of windows and doors within the Council's housing stock. Olive Gillespie acknowledged the comments from the Members and advised that this is a 10 year rolling programme and expected the allocation to significantly increase in the years ahead. Joe Peoples acknowledged that there was a change in policy under the Retrofitting Programme but also advised Members that the Council would be writing to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to request additional funding.
- Members welcomed the adoption of the Policy in relation to the maintenance of backlanes, roads and footpaths in Council owned housing estates at the meeting of

the Plenary Council on the 29th March 2021. Cllr. F McBrearty referred to a previous Motion submitted by him and requested a commitment by the Council to carry out works at St. Eunan's Terrace, Raphoe. Joe Peoples welcomed the approval of the Policy by the Members and confirmed the next steps include the Roads Section carrying out a survey of works to be completed, to supplement the surveys already carried out by the Housing Section. The next steps would be to consider, what works are to be prioritized, in the context of multi-annual budgets.

- Cllr. P McGowan referred to his Motion at Plenary Council in relation to planning for biodiversity initiatives in Council owned housing estates and requested a proposal for the next meeting of the Municipal District.
- Cllr. P McGowan requested that the Senior Engineer, Housing Construction, attend the next meeting to discuss serviced land sites for social & affordable housing. Olive Gillespie agreed to forward this request to the Housing Construction Division.
- Cllr. M Harley requested an update report in relation to the turnkey development at The Beeches, Ballybofey from Housing Construction. He also referenced the impact of Covid 19 on the construction sector which slowed the target delivery of homes in 2020. Cllr. M Harley referred to the number of vacant properties in Donegal, which requires financial support to bring back into circulation.
- Members referred to the need to review the income thresholds for eligibility for social housing supports as house prices and building costs are steadily increasing, limiting the housing options available for those who are outside the current social housing income thresholds. Olive Gillespie explained that the Council do not have discretion in applying the income thresholds which are set by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage. Ms. Gillespie further explained that the Council has been issued with a Department Circular advising of changes to the Social Housing Regulations under Household Means Policy. This change outlines that the determination of whether an applicant household meets the income criteria will now be based on a calculation of their 12 months' net average income proceeding the date of receipt of their application, as opposed to the previous calendar year calculation.
- Cllr. G Crawford referred to the number of housing projects and planned maintenance works that are paused due to Covid-19 restrictions and highlighted his concern about how this may impact on the Housing Programme going forward.
- In response to a query from Cllr. G Doherty as regards the planning status for the Habinteg Project, in Castlefin, Ciara Condon explained that while she couldn't comment on a current planning application, she could confirm that the Agent for Habinteg was working on a solution to an issue raised by the Council.

267.03 Roads Services

The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. The following comments were made:

- The Roads Works Programme 2021 was proposed by Cllr. P McGowan and seconded by Cllr. L Doherty as outlined in the update report.

- Claire McGeever referred to the recent funding allocation announcement in relation to the Active Travel 2021 Programme. Members discussed the various projects to be completed under this programme of works and welcomed the funding announcement, with of over €750k approved for projects in the Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District.
- Members expressed concern in relation to the completion of roads works by year end. Claire McGeever advised Members that she is considering taking on seasonal workers or contracting out some work to get the works completed by year end.

267.04 Environmental Services

The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. The following comments were made:

- Paul Gallagher advised Members that the Council had agreed the relocation of the bottle banks in the Twin Towns from the current location at the Old Fire Station, Stranorlar, to two more suitable locations, one at Maguires Shop, Stranorlar and one at Supervalu, Ballybofey. This was welcomed by Members. Cllr. G Doherty requested an update in relation to the location for bottle banks in Castlefinn. Paul Gallagher agreed to revert directly to Cllr. Doherty on this issue.
- Paul Gallagher advised Members there is an increased focus on Climate Action with a successful Climate Action workshop having taken place in February 2021 with 19 groups taking part.
- Paul Gallagher advised Members that community clean-ups are continuing during the pandemic. Cllr. F McBrearty highlighted the importance of informing volunteers in relation to health and safety issues. Paul Gallagher advised that groups are made aware of any potential dangers and volunteers are provided with the appropriate equipment. Members commended the various community groups for their work.
- Members expressed their disappointment at the continuing level of illegal dumping throughout the District. Paul Gallagher advised that Suzanne Bogan, Waste Awareness Officer, is continually looking at ways of reducing the level of litter in the area. Cllr. F McBrearty requested an update in relation to the Old Dump, Raphoe. Mr Gallagher confirmed that the Waste Enforcement Team has been monitoring the site. Members wished to thank Caroline Meehan, Litter Warden, for all her work and assistance throughout the District.
- Members raised the issue and level of dog fouling throughout the District, and the danger this poses to children. Paul Gallagher advised that a cross directorate working group may be required to address the problem and agreed to revert to Members at the next meeting with a solution.
- Paul Gallagher updated Members in relation to work being carried out on a number of flood relief schemes. Members welcomed the progress made to date. Cllr. F McBrearty referred to the OPW and their responsibilities, and highlighted that areas prone to flooding should be prioritised for drainage works. Cllr. P McGowan requested an update in relation to the Ballybofey/Stranorlar Flood Relief Scheme. Mr Gallagher agreed to revert with an update for the next meeting.
- Members requested an update in relation to an issue involving bog slippage at Meenbog, Ballybofey and requested that the Senior Engineer, Water Capital &

Environment Section, attend the next meeting of the Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District to discuss this issue.

267.05 Community Development

The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read. The following comments were made:

- Cllr. F McBrearty highlighted the need for the Council to make progress with regard to Beltany Stone Circle and Raphoe Castle. Cllr McBrearty suggested that the Council could take ownership of the Beltany Stone Circle to progress works at the site and also liaise with land owners in relation to Raphoe Castle. Kathleen McGowan agreed to refer this request to Paddy Doherty, Senior Executive Officer, Community Development.
- Cllr. G Doherty queried when the application process will open for the Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2021. Kathleen McGowan agreed to revert to Members with this information.

On the proposal of Cllr. Liam Doherty, seconded by Cllr. Patrick McGowan, Members unanimously agreed the award of Development Fund Initiative Funding for Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District as follows:

Development Fund Initiative 2021

Applicant Group	Total By Group
Brighdín Carr Blue Ribbon Arts	€ 1,000
Men's Shed Network Donegal	€ 1,000
Turas Colmcille Camino - developing Slí Cholmcille – The Irish Camino	€ 1,250
Ard Baithin Residents Group	€ 2,500
Ballybofey and Stranorlar Integrated Community CLG	€ 8,000
Ballybofey United Football Club	€ 2,500
Castlefin Celtic FC	€ 3,000
Castlefinn Partnership Initiative Ltd	€ 7,000
CLG Ghleann Fhinne	€ 2,500
Convoy Community & Environmental Committee	€ 5,000
Deele Community Anglers	€ 3,500
Deele Harps FC	€ 4,500
Drumkeen Utd FC	€ 3,000
Gleann Fhinne Cuideachta Faoi Theorainn Rátháíochta	€ 2,500
GRA Grahamsland Residents	€ 3,000
Latch CLG	€ 2,500
Lifford Celtic	€ 7,000
Lifford Community Garden	€ 2,500
Naomh Pdraig Leifear GAA Clum	€ 4,000
Planet Youth	€ 2,750

Raphoe & District Game Protection Association	€ 5,000
Raphoe Community Sports Dev CLG	€ 13,000
Raphoe Tidy Towns Ltd	€ 4,000
Robert Emmet's CLG	€ 3,500
Rodney Deery Music	€ 2,500
Setanta Hurling Club	€ 3,500
St Eunans Tce Residents Ass Raphoe	€ 5,000
St Mary's GAA Club, Convoy	€ 2,500
St Ninians Convoy Parish Church	€ 9,500
Twin Towns Lost & Found Dogs	€ 2,500
	€ 120,000

267.06 Planning Services

The update report circulated with the agenda was taken as read.

The following comments were made:

- Ciara Condon advised Members in relation to Extensions of Time and Retention Applications, in response to concerns raised by Members at a previous meeting. Ms Condon explained that where an applicant seeks an 'extension of time' in relation to applications for retention permission, this can have an impact on the progress of getting an effective resolution to an unauthorised development. However, the Planning and Development Act does make specific provision that where a written request for an extension of time is received by the planning authority, the matter is not discretionary and the Planning Service is obligated to extend the period for the consideration of the application. While it may give rise to delays in getting a resolution to a case, in itself this provision does not influence the planning authority's commitment to properly resolve cases of unauthorised development in the interests of the wider community and under the terms of Part VIII of the Act.

268.01 The following Motion was submitted by Cllr. F McBrearty:

Motion: *"I am calling on DCC to construct a new footpath at the bottom of the Glen in Raphoe to connect with the Meadow Hill footpath."*

Reply:

'Each Municipal District agreed a 5 year list of projects that funding would be sought for under the Specific Grant Programme. These lists were then compiled into a county wide list for agreement at Full Council. Four projects were prioritised from the Stranorlar MD onto the Year 1 submission to the Department for funding. This included the Guest House End footpath with an estimated cost of € 300,000. No notification of funding has been received in respect of this project.

The provision of a footpath at the Guest House End/ Glen will require design/ land acquisition, possible Part 8 and funding to progress.'

The Motion was seconded by Cllr. G Crawford.

268.02 The following Motion was submitted by Cllr. G Doherty:

Motion: *"That this Council conduct speed surveys on the N15 on the approaches into Castlefinn and Lifford and ascertain what additional measures can be put in place to prevent speeding and write to TII to ensure progression of proposed safety scheme on N14 at Gallow's Lane."*

Reply:

'A further speed analysis can be requested on the N15.

A Feasibility and Options Report HD15 for N15 Lifford was circulated to Members in 2020 and submitted to the TII for funding. The TII has approved funding for Option 1. The measures proposed are to improve signage on entry to 60kph zone and reduce speed inside the 60kph zone, including additional traffic calming works at Main Street/Gallows Lane Junction to aid safe pedestrian crossing. Road Design shall undertake the Preliminary Design Report and Road Safety Audit before issuing construction drawings. It is envisaged the scheme shall be constructed in Q3 2021.'

The Motion was seconded by Cllr. G Crawford.

268.03 The following Motion was submitted by Cllr. P McGowan:

Motion: *"That this MD seek support for a pathway from Castlefinn to Donaghmore church & hall is extended on to Liscooley using the existing grass verge either by providing a hard shoulder or construction of a 1-5 mt pathway."*

Reply:

'The TII are not considering constructing footpaths outside of speed limits on the National Roads. Any new infrastructure must be designed in accordance with national standards. All greenway projects will be required to follow the DoT project management guidelines and comply with DPER decision gates processes.

The new Greenways Unit is in the process of being set up in the Council's Road Design Dept. The immediate priority for this unit is to progress those funded Greenway projects in Inishowen and Stranorlar MDs, i.e. Bunrana to Carndonagh, Muff to Quigley's Point and Carrigans to Castlefinn. Some funding has also been confirmed for the Burtonport to Letterkenny Greenway and it is intended that this project will be progressed as the second priority.

Other Greenway projects that the Council agree to develop will be progressed as resources permit to allow for more robust funding applications to be made to the various national bodies in the future. It is expected that the Outdoor Recreation Strategy currently being developed by the Council will help identify and prioritise those projects.'

The Motion was seconded by Cllr. G Crawford.

269 Members Written Questions

269.01 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. F McBrearty:

Question: *"What is the current progress with St Johnston and Raphoe town and village renewal schemes."*

Reply:

The St Johnston Town and Village Renewal Scheme is complete. The current update on Raphoe Town and Village Renewal is included in the Community Development Report for the meeting.

269.02 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. F McBrearty:

Question: *"What are the results of testing on tar for roads in the MD over the past 18 months."*

Reply:

The Council Roads Central division receives all the required Declaration of Performances, CE Mark Certificates, Aggregate AAV Certificates, LA Coefficient Certificates, PSV tests and NSAI Certificate of Conformity of the Factory Production Control, from each Contractor prior to the seasons work in respect to non-national roads. All results have been in order. Any spot check using the Sand Patch tests on SMA/HRA surfaces have also passed. The MD staff carry out temperature testing on site and these have also been compliant. National Roads are managed by the NRD office.

If a specific road is identified as having issues then further examination can take place and if defects are determined within the guarantee period then these defects should be rectified by the Contractor.

269.03 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. P McGowan:

Question: *“Can the proposed Greenway from Ballybofey to Donegal Town and other walking and cycling route projects be itemised on the Lifford-Stranorlar MD agenda for every meeting with regular written and verbal updates.”*

Reply:

The new Greenways Unit is in the process of being set up in the Council's Road Design Dept. The immediate priority for this unit is to progress those funded Greenway projects in Inishowen and Stranorlar MDs, i.e. Buncrana to Carndonagh, Muff to Quigley's Point and Carrigans to Castlefinn. Some funding has also been confirmed for the Burtonport to Letterkenny Greenway and it is intended that this project will be progressed as the second priority.

Other Greenway projects that the Council agree to develop, including the Ballybofey to Donegal Greenway, will be progressed as resources permit to allow for more robust funding applications to be made to the various national bodies in the future. It is expected that the Outdoor Recreation Strategy currently being developed by the Council will help identify and prioritise those projects.

As the Ballybofey to Donegal Greenway is not one of the initial projects being progressed by the Greenways Unit there will be no progress to update Members on at the MD Meetings.

269.04 The following Question was submitted by Cllr. P McGowan:

Question: *“Can this MD arrange a meeting with the Donegal East Tourism committee to discuss and agree a plan how to development and support tourism and relevant businesses following the present Covid lockdown and invite Director Garry Martin and Annemarie Conlon to attend.”*

Reply:

The Council's Economic Development Division is happy to attend a meeting with elected members of Stranorlar MD and Donegal East Tourism Committee to explore opportunities to support the development of tourism in the Lifford Stranorlar MD and support businesses affected by Covid 19 restrictions.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

**Cathaoirleach
Municipal District of Lifford-Stranorlar**

As agreed at the Lifford-Stranorlar Municipal District Meeting held 11th May 2021