

**Minutes of Municipal Area Meeting of Stranorlar District held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2014 at the Regional Training Centre, Stranorlar, commencing at 11.00am.**

**Members Present:**

Cllr Gary Doherty (Cathaoirleach)  
Cllr Patrick McGowan  
Cllr Gerry Crawford  
Cllr Frank McBrearty  
Cllr Liam Doherty

**Officials Present:**

Joe Peoples, Director of Service, Senior Management Team  
Gerry Gilroy, Area Manager, Corporate & Housing Services  
Charlie Kerr, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads & Transportation.  
Paul Christy, Senior Executive Planner, Central Planning Unit.  
Paddy Doherty, Divisional Manager, Community & Enterprise  
Martina Morris, Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services

**Apologies:**

Cllr. Martin Harley.

<b>05.00 Corporate Services.</b>
----------------------------------

**05.01. Votes of Sympathy.**

Members in turn, expressed their deepest sympathy to their colleague Councillor Martin Harley, his wife Denise and their family, on the tragic death of their daughter **Ms Kym Harley**, Dreenan, Ballybofey. A minutes silence was also observed.

Members also passed a vote of sympathy on the passing of:

- Mr. **Patsy Friel**, 335, Grahamsland, Castlefin, former employee of Donegal County Council.
- Mr. **Hugh Joseph Doherty**, St Oran's Road, Buncrana, former Member of Buncrana Town Council.
- Mrs. **Margot Henry**, mother-in-law of Fitz Howard, Senior Executive Engineer.
- Mr **Neil Mc Loone**, Station House, Pluck, Letterkenny, husband of Virginia McLoone.
- Mr. **Hugh Shalvey**, Raphoe, husband of Edel Shalvey (O'Donnell) H.R. Department.
- Inishowen couple **Jimmy and Kathleen Cuddihy**, Churchtown, Carndonagh.
- Mrs. **Jacinta Gallen**, Ballybofey, wife of comedian Conal Gallen.

**05.02. Confirmation of Minutes of Stranorlar Municipal Area Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014.**

On the proposal of Cllr. Gerry Crawford and seconded by Cllr. Patrick McGowan the minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014 were confirmed.

**05.03. Confirmation of Minutes of Stranorlar Municipal Area Workshop held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014.**

On the proposal of Cllr. Patrick McGowan and seconded by Cllr. Liam Doherty he minutes of the Workshop meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014 were confirmed.

**05.04. Confirmation of Minutes of Stranorlar Municipal Area Budget Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014.**

On the proposal of Cllr. Frank McBrearty and seconded by Cllr. Gerry Crawford, the minutes of the Budget meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 were confirmed.

**05.05. Adoption of Standing Orders.**

A revised copy of the Draft Standing Orders, including the amendments confirmed in the minutes of the Stranorlar Area Workshop meeting held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014, was circulated to the members for their consideration.

On the proposal of Cllr Frank McBrearty and seconded by Cllr Gerry Crawford the Standing Orders circulated at the meeting were adopted.

**05.06. Capital Programme 2014-2016 (referred from July Council meeting).**

Members acknowledged that this matter had been fully considered in the context of the Budget meeting.

**05.07. Confirmation for date & venue of next meeting.**

Members confirmed that the next meeting of the Stranorlar Municipal District would be held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December at 11.00 am in Lifford and that a Workshop meeting would also be held that morning.

**Consideration of Reports & Recommendations from individual Services.**

Members were critical of the lack of written reports from individual Services, noting that only a few reports were circulated with the agenda, in advance of the meeting. Members were unhappy that on too many occasions, reports from some sections were only being presented on the day of the meeting, or were in the form of a verbal report.

Members also requested that they be advised whenever staff are transferred or their responsibilities are changed.

<b>06.00 Housing Services.</b>
--------------------------------

**06.01. Housing Reports.**

Members noted the reports circulated with the Agenda and presented by the Area Manager.

## **06.02. Housing Issues**

Members raised the issue of the Council's policy not to allow tenants to install solid fuel stoves/ranges / back- boilers in their houses as an alternative/ additional heating source.

The Area Manager explained the background to this policy, i.e. that oil fired central heating using a high output condensing boiler was proven the most economical & efficient form of heating. Members however strongly expressed their view that tenants should be allowed install back boilers and unanimously recommended this policy be changed. It was agreed this matter be referred to the Relevant SPC.

The Cathaoirleach submitted that he understood from a recent discussion he had with an M.E.P. that there may be E.U. funding available for the retro-fitting of houses to bring up their energy ratings, and, he urged the Council to investigate this.

<b>07.00 Community, Enterprise &amp; Cultural Services.</b>
---

### **07.01. Community, Enterprise & Cultural Services.**

Members welcomed Mr Paddy Doherty to the meeting.

Mr Doherty advised that the servicing of the Municipal District of Stranorlar was still under review but he was happy to attend, note and follow up on issues identified. He also undertook to circulate a detailed written report to Members. Mr Doherty went on to make a verbal report outlining progress a number of issues, including the following, and dealing with any issues raised.

### **07.02. Donegal Community and Economic Plan**

Community consolation is now being completed. The DCC Research Unit is collating data across a range of relevant sectors. This plan will provide the basis for future funding programmes such as SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme) and LEADER/Rural Development Programme.

### **07.03. Public Participation Network**

Donegal County Council have been instructed by the Department of Environment, Community & Rural Affairs to establish a Public Participation Network (PPN) as part of the LCDC structures, the PPN will provide representation from the community & voluntary sector onto Council structures, representation from the community & voluntary sector will be drawn from three electoral pillars, environment, social inclusion and community & voluntary. PPNs will be established in Donegal at municipal district level and at county level. It is anticipated that the new structures will be established by early October

### **07.04. Donegal Age Friendly County Initiative**

Age Friendly Town Initiative is delivered nationally through Age Friendly Ireland and co-ordinated on a local level through Donegal County Council. The aim of the initiative is to significantly improve the quality of life of older adults living in the area and to engage them in shaping and enhancing their own communities.

### **07.05. River Links Project**

The River Links Project closed on 31 October 2014. Valued at €2.1m, the Project delivered capital infrastructure in the East Donegal and West Tyrone Border area. Project Partners include Donegal County Council (Lead Partner), Strabane District Council and BASICC (Ballybofey and Stranorlar Integrated Community Company). Specific Project outputs included: Doneyloop Footpath, Clady Bridge & Village, the BASE Enterprise Centre, Foyle Wetlands, and Foyle & Finn Rural Network.

### **07.06. Drumboe School Walkway**

Ongoing discussions are taking place with Donegal ETB and Council officials on the next steps with regard to the opening of this pathway.

<b>08.00 Environmental Services.</b>
--------------------------------------

### **08.01 Reports.**

Joe Peoples briefed members on his intention that a regular report will be prepared and presented to each Municipal District from the next meeting. In the meanwhile members were invited to identify issues which would be noted and followed up.

## 08.02. Irish Water.

Members again expressed their concerns that Irish Water was still not represented at these meetings nor had an acceptable arrangement been put in place to allow members to exercise their mandate in relation to this vital resource. The Council has a very important relationship with Irish Water, not alone the Service Level Agreement for provision of clean, safe, water but also in relation to environmental issues such as proper effluent treatment and the fact that all planning applications have to be referred to Irish Water. Members referred to problems in Convoy, where there were recent fish kills and in St. Johnston and Lifford, where sewage was running down the streets. They questioned how much authority had Irish Water and how much weight will be given to their recommendations in relation to planning decisions being made by the Council. The point was strongly made that the elected members have not accepted that they have no role in these matters.

Mr. Peoples referred to the report to a recent meeting of the full council which set out in detail the position in relation to Irish Water. He pointed out that the legal responsibility for the public water supply and effluent treatment had now been transferred to Irish Water. It is they who now make the decisions regarding which projects have priority, the provision of funding, etc. Capital Projects that were being managed by the council are now a matter for Irish Water, and while the council is encouraging Irish Water to quickly progress these projects, there is no definitive information as to when these will start.

He confirmed Donegal County Council's role is now as agents for Irish Water working under a Service Level Agreement and the council must comply with the terms of this legal agreement. He confirmed drinking water quality is a priority for Irish Water. He also acknowledged that there are legacy issues in Donegal in relation to package effluent treatment facilities in some estates. This is not a situation unique to Donegal. Addressing these issues was a priority for the council.

### 08.03. Bonfires

Members expressed their concerns regarding preparations for bonfires, in a number of locations, including within council estates, where residents are fearful of possible damage to property, and asked that the Council's Litter Warden liaise with the Fire Service and the Gardai and that materials such as tyres be removed from unsuitable locations.

Mr. Peoples advised that the Council had issued press releases advising of the dangers of setting bonfires and would take any measures considered necessary in consultation with the Fire Service and An Garda Síochána.

Members acknowledged the good work by the staff of the Environment Section and by Brian McBrearty, the Litter Warden.

<b>09.00 Roads &amp; Transportation.</b>
--

### 09.01 Road-Works Programme

Charlie Kerr briefed Members on the programme which was now 90% complete and undertook to circulate by e-mail a written report for their information.

Members again raised their concerns that insufficient funding was being made available for roads in the Stranorlar area. They considered that many roads are narrow with large volumes of traffic and are in a dangerous condition.

### 09.02. Other Roads Issues

Mr. Kerr also dealt with a number of issues raised including;

- **Castlefinn Bridge:** Works were ongoing.
- **L.I.S. Scheme:** Members were reminded to submit proposals for monies for local roads as soon as possible (€ 2,000 per member).
- **Cllr Mc Brearty** - indicated that he would want monies for the L.I.S. scheme to be retained and increased for next year.

- **Drainage at Lifford:** Members acknowledged the excellent job done recently at Lifford to alleviate problems with flooding.
- **Lights at Lifford School:** Repairs required - Light standard broken.
- **Bridge repairs:** Report required on progress of works under the Bridge Programme for next meeting.

Cllr McBrearty took the chair at this point.

## 10.00 Planning & Economic Development

### 10.01. Reports / Issues.

Paul Christy circulated and presented an updated report on Planning at the meeting and dealt with a number of issues raised.

### 10.02. Unfinished Estates

It was acknowledged that an early meeting was to be arranged with the Director of Services Mr. Liam Ward, Mr. Frank Sweeney SEP and Mr. Paul Christy, SEP. to discuss issues relating to some unfinished estates.

## 11.00 Notice of Motion.

### 11.01. Beltony Stone Circle

The following Motion submitted and proposed by Cllr McBrearty, seconded by Cllr Crawford, was unanimously adopted;

**"That Donegal County Council enter into discussions with the Department of Agriculture and Board Failte, to improve access to the Beltony Stone Circle and seek funding for improving the lane way and signage for the oldest historical site in the county."**



Members were informed by Mr. Paddy Doherty that the matter would be followed up by the Community & Enterprise Service who would contact the relevant agencies at an early date.

**11.02. Damaged crash barrier on Convoy to Letterkenny Road.**

The following Motion submitted and proposed by Cllr Liam Doherty, seconded by Cllr McGowan, was unanimously adopted;

**"That this Municipal District of Stranorlar immediately take action to put in place safety measures on the main Convoy to Letterkenny road where there was previously a barrier in place." I accept that the Council are hoping that this will be a successful application under the low cost accident scheme for 2015 however in the event of this not being successful I am urging this municipal district to have an alternative plan, furthermore I ask that remedial action be taken in the meanwhile".**

Members were informed that where a crash barrier had been struck and damaged by a vehicle the cost of repair or replacement would be sought from the owner or their insurer. The matter will be pursued as a matter of urgency and all options to improve this location will be considered.

<b>12.00 Members written questions.</b>
---

**12.01 Group Schemes taken over.**

The following question was submitted by Cllr F McBrearty.

" How many group water schemes in the SMD have been taken over by the Council before Irish Water took over the council's responsibility for water".

Cllr McBrearty was informed that the responsibility for the provision of water services has transferred to Irish Water from 1<sup>ST</sup> January 2014 with the Council now providing services under a Service Level Agreement with Irish Water.

In relation to Group Water Schemes, in the Stranorlar Municipal Area, 26 schemes had been formally taken over by Donegal County Council before the transfer of responsibility.

### **12.02 St Johnston Sewage Scheme.**

The following question was submitted by Cllr F McBrearty.

"Can I have a full update on the St Johnston sewage scheme?"

Cllr McBrearty was informed that the legal responsibility for the public water supply and effluent treatment had now been transferred to Irish Water. It is they who now make the decisions regarding which projects have priority, the provision of funding, etc. Capital Projects that were being managed by the council are now a matter for Irish Water, and while the council is encouraging Irish Water to quickly progress this project, there is no definitive information as to when it will start.

### **12.03. Staffing numbers:**

The following question was submitted by Cllr P McGowan.

"Please give a breakdown of all staff numbers in Donegal Co Council, The Department they work in, their role and position within their Section. Please include Contract staff and Job Bridge Numbers as well?"

Cllr McGowan was informed that Donegal County Council currently have 873 employees. This includes 26 temporary, seasonal and contract staff. The council also employ 151 retained Fire-fighters.

These employees comprise a wide range of grades and responsibilities, some of whom carry out roles across directorates and sections on a pooled basis.

In general terms the roles would include clerical / administrative, engineering, planning, and various other technical and operational / maintenance roles some of which are specialist in nature.

The council have also facilitated internship placements under the Job Bridge Scheme, and there are currently 15 interns in place in this regard.

**12.04. Council Assets.**

The following question was submitted by Cllr P McGowan.

"Please can I be supplied with a list of all Council owned property in the County, Land, Sites and Buildings?"

Cllr McGowan was provided with a list of the Council's assets.

**12.05. Estates taken in charge.**

The following question was submitted by Cllr P McGowan.

"Please can I have a detailed report on All Housing Estates which have applied to be taken in charge in the Stranorlar Municipality highlighting those with problematic Sewerage treatment facilities?"

Cllr McGowan was advised that there had been applications for taking-in-charge of 25 estates in the Stranorlar Municipal District area. Of the 25 estates, 14 are connected directly to the public sewer without mechanical plant, and the dwellings on a further 2 estates are served by individual septic tanks.

The remaining 9 sites are served by some form of mechanical plant such as a treatment plant; a treatment plant and pumping mechanism; or just a pumping mechanism. Some of these discharge to the public sewer; some do not.

Of these 9 estates, 3 are considered to have problematic plant.

**12.06. Pathway at Drumboe Woods.**

The following question was submitted by Cllr Liam Doherty.

"Why is the pathway in Drumboe Woods, Lower, Stranorlar closed?"

Cllr Doherty was informed that ongoing discussions are taking place with Donegal ETB and Council officials on the next steps with regard to the opening of this pathway.

**12.07. Street Lights at Knock Road Junction.**

The following question was submitted by Cllr Liam Doherty.

"Are there any plans to fix the two lights at the Knock Road junction on Navenny Street?"

Cllr Doherty was informed that the two lights have been reported to **Airtricity** who are contracted to fix them.

**This concluded the business of the meeting.**

---

**Area Manager**  
**Municipal District of Stranorlar**

---

**Cathaoirleach**  
**Municipal District of Stranorlar.**