

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MONTHLY MEETING OF THE
COBH MUNICIPAL DISTRICT, HELD VIA MS TEAMS ON MONDAY
1ST FEBRUARY 2021.**

Present: Cllrs. S. Sheppard, A. Barry, C. Rasmussen, A. O'Connor, S. O'Connor & S. O'Callaghan.

Officials: Mr. S. O'Callaghan, Senior Executive Officer
Mr. P. Lynch, Municipal District Officer
Mr. G. O'Hora, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. R. O'Sullivan, Executive Engineer
Ms. A. Walsh, Cobh Municipal District

1.0 Deimhniú Miontuairiscí/Confirmation of Minutes:

On the proposal of Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen, seconded by Cllr. Sinead Sheppard, the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on 4th January 2021 were adopted.

2.0 Matters Arising:

Connolly Street:

G. O'Hora stated that he was putting a funding package together to carry out urgent works at Connolly Street. As soon as the funding was in place, which Mr. O'Hora hoped to complete by March, construction could start. Cllr. S. O'Connor thanked Mr. O'Hora for the report on Connolly Street however he continued to raise the concerns of the residents as contractors are due to move into the area shortly to lay pipework for Irish Water. He stressed that any works to stabilise the wall would have to take place before the Irish Water contractors commenced working. G. O'Hora stated that he fully understood the urgency of the situation and he was working to secure funding. The location also presented physical and engineering difficulties which would also have to be overcome.

Disposal of Land at Bishop Roche Park, Cobh:

P. Lynch stated that the disposal had been approved at Full Council on 11th January 2021.

Elton Estate, Cobh:

P. Lynch confirmed that to date no response had been received from either Cork County Council or Irish Water.

Cuskinny Hill, Cobh:

G. O'Hora confirmed that work at Cuskinny hill was progressing.

Slatty Pumping Station:

P. Lynch confirmed that no response had been received to the letters sent.

Ballinacleithe Bridge:

G. O’Hora confirmed that a road alignment survey had been carried out at Ballinacleithe Bridge and any road improvement scheme would be subject to receiving funding.

Ticknock Hill:

G. O’Hora confirmed that the area was listed for works and this should commence shortly.

Carrigtwohill Railway Station:

G. O’Hora stated that the works were scheduled to be carried out shortly.

Road Subsidence, Cobh:

G. O’Hora stated that CCC roads staff were presently working in Cobh town repairing road potholes using a ‘Hot box’ (i.e. Hot patch macadam road repair).

Cul de Sac Signs, Cobh:

G. O’Hora stated that some of the signs had now been erected and the crews were working through the rest of the list.

Decorative Lights, Cobh:

G. O’Hora stated that an electrical contractor had been appointed to carry out repairs, however there was an issue with cabling to these lights which would not be fully resolved until the works started on the proposed new streetscape.

Garda Checkpoint, Cobh Cross:

P. Lynch stated that the response received from the Gardai had been circulated.

Pedestrian Crossing, High Road, Cobh:

G. O’Hora stated that he had examined this location and that sightlines were an issue at this location. In order to obtain sufficient sightlines, it would be necessary to locate any pedestrian crossing further to the east (i.e. closer to town), which may result in the crossing not being used. Cllr. Rasmussen thanked G. O’Hora for the report and appreciated that the sightlines were problematic in the area and queried whether traffic lights were required at this location.

Road Repairs, Cobh:

G. O’Hora stated that the ‘Hot box’ (i.e. Hot patch macadam road repair) was working through the list of road repairs in Cobh town.

Norwood School signage:

G. O’Hora stated that the location had been examined and extra signage approved.

Fota Road:

G. O’Hora stated that the land on the river side of the road was not in public ownership, the provision of a cycle lane could be considered as part of the bigger scheme to improve the R624.

Old Ashbourne Hotel:

G. O’Hora stated that he had costed the works involved in providing additional lighting at the rear of the old hotel at around €80,000, which was almost twice the annual MD public lighting budget. He would examine other sources of possible funding to fund the works.

Watergrasshill:

G. O’Hora confirmed that the road markings at Watergrasshill would be refreshed soon.

Active Travel Initiative:

G. O’Hora informed the members that he was examining several projects for possible funding in 2021 and he would be submitting schemes to the Dept of Environment for funding shortly.

Litter at Harbour Row, Cobh:

P. Lynch stated that he had spoken to both the Corporate and Environment sections of Cork County Council who informed him that there is a legal difficulty in relation to using CCTV images from the Credit Union to issue litter fines, in particular the Data Processing Commissioner had taken issue with another local authority who had attempted something similar. Cllr. S. Sheppard stated that it would appear that some local authorities had had success in using CCTV to tackle litter but that Cork County Council continued to have problems putting a successful programme in place. Cllr. Sheppard stated that substantial funding was still available from government to fund local CCTV programmes. She proposed that Cork County Council contact other local authorities to find out how they operated their programmes. P. Lynch stated that he would circulate a document he had accessed to explain the issues around local authorities accessing CCTV images. Cllr. Rasmussen stated that a crime was being committed when dumping occurred and the Gardai do have the power to access any CCTV system and perhaps this is the approach that should be taken. Cllr. Rasmussen fully supported Cllr. Sheppard’s motion to contact other local authorities. S. O’Callaghan stated the issue with CCTV was not just a Cork County Council one, but a nationwide issue with GDPR and who exactly is the Data Controller for CCTV systems. He suggested that P. Lynch should liaise with the Council’s own Data Protection Officer and find out if the Council can apply for funding for CCTV. The members agreed to this proposal.

Rushbrooke Manor:

G. O’Hora stated that the pothole had been repaired.

College Manor, Cobh:

G. O’Hora stated that the signs for the uncontrolled pedestrian crossing had been erected and the road lining contractor was due to start shortly.

Pat O’Brien Close, Cobh:

G. O’Hora confirmed that the footpath was inspected by CCC staff and now listed for repair.

Colaiste Muire, Cobh:

G. O’Hora stated the footpath was inspected and repair will be included in this year’s footpath programme.

Christmas Lights:

P. Lynch stated that he was awaiting more invoices, so could not yet give the members the total cost of the Christmas lights.

Trees at Ramblers:

G. O’Hora explained that the trees were originally listed to be cut back, but when a crew went up there, the residents objected and works stopped. Cllr. Sheppard stated that she had now been approached again. Mr. O’Hora said pending available funding a crew may be able to return later this year.

Carrignavar:

Cllr. Sheppard stated that a commitment to carrying out a traffic survey in Carrignavar had been committed to during the November meeting, but not recorded in the Minutes. G. O’Hora replied that he had examined the road location. He was exploring various traffic calming options however any works would be subject to funding and would not be undertaken until later in the year. He hoped to have some further update for members at the June MD meeting.

Road Gritting in Cobh:

G. O’Hora stated that the gritting programme covers the main approach roads to Cobh town and salting/gritting main streets but may be extended during prolonged period of ice, depending on resources.

3.0 Comhfhreagras / Correspondence:

P. Lynch circulated the response from the Garda Siochana.

4.0 Tuairiscí ó Ofigigh / Officer's Reports:

Restoration Maintenance Programme (RM):

G. O’Hora presented the Restoration Maintenance Programme to the members. The programme consists of 19 roads to be surface dressed during the coming year. Mr. O’Hora explained that although this years’ (2021) road funding allocation had yet to be confirmed, he anticipated that it would be much the same as last years and had drawn up the list accordingly.

Restoration Improvement Programme (RI):

G. O’Hora presented a list of 20 roads under the Restoration Improvement programme. The allocation for 2021 has not yet been announced but a similar allocation to last year is expected.

Footpath Programme:

Finally, G. O’Hora presented his footpath programme for 2021 to members, which consists of 24 footpath repairs or improvements spread all over the Municipal District.

The members thanked the engineers for their work in preparing the various programmes. Cllr. Sheppard stated that she had hoped to see one or two other problem areas on the list and would examine each of the programmes carefully and revert to the engineers with any queries. Cllr. Sheppard stated that the road near Walterstown School was in bad repair and had been brought up at the January meeting, but fully understood that there was a limited amount of money available. G. O’Hora replied that it was possible that other funding arrangements may become available during the year. Cllr. Rasmussen expressed his

satisfaction with the roads programme. Cllr. Barry sought clarification on the location of one of the schemes.

School Zone, Bishops Street, Cobh:

G. O’Hora circulated a drawing for a proposed, “school zone” under an initiative by the NTA and Green Schools Programme for Bishop street, Cobh town. The scheme is aimed at slowing and reducing traffic speeds in the area and to encourage walking and cycling to school. The scheme would involve the addition of raised ramps on either side of the existing pedestrian crossing, no parking would be allowed within the zone and approximately 12 parking spaces would be removed. G. O’Hora invited the members to study the drawing and suggested that the scheme could be discussed further at the next meeting.

Cllr. Sheppard stated that she would study the drawing and revert, however she predicted that there would be vocal opposition to the removal of parking spaces. Cllr. A. O’Connor stated that on initial inspection, the scheme looked good. Cllr. Rasmussen acknowledged that the scheme would make the area safer, but the removal of parking spaces would be contentious. He proposed meeting the engineers on site to discuss further the implications for visitors and residents in the area.

Waterrock Contribution Scheme

P. Lynch stated that a In-Committee meeting would be held on Friday 12th February in conjunction with the members from the East Cork Municipal District regarding the Draft Development Contribution Scheme for Waterrock, which would subsequently be presented at a full Council meeting. Cllr. Barry stated that he was glad this protracted issue was coming to an end.

Proposed Traffic Calming Works/Improved Pedestrian & Cycle Facilities at Carrigane Road:

P. Lynch stated that Cork County Council intends to commence a Section 38 Process shortly under the 1194 Road Traffic Act for proposed traffic calming works including improved pedestrian and cycle facilities on the L-3617 (Carrigane Road) in Carrigtwohill.

The scheme will comprise the upgrade of Carrigane Road between its junctions with ‘An Tosach’ (L-7643) and Fota Rock access road (L-7737). The upgrade includes work at both junctions and the construction of new/improved pedestrian and cycling facilities between the two junctions. Formal letters will issue shortly to the members.

5.0 Tuairisc ó Oifigeach Ceantair Bardasacha / Municipal District Officer's Report:

General Municipal Allocation:

On the proposal of Cllr. C. Rasmussen. seconded by Cllr. S. Sheppard, it was agreed to approve the changes requested by Kilcully Campsite and Cobh (Great Island) Community Centre to the projects for which they had received funding.

Town Development Fund/Project Act:

P. Lynch requested that members forward any suggestions in relation to the Community Fund for 2021 to him and he would circulate to the members details of what types of signage were covered by the scheme. Cllr. Sheppard stated that plastic signs were inappropriate in a Heritage Town and business owners should be encouraged to use more traditional signs.

Village Enhancement Scheme:

P. Lynch stated that no project had yet been decided on for the Village Enhancement Scheme, he had spoken to S. O'Callaghan and C. O'Súilleabháin in relation to a planned Part 8 for an NTA funded project for Little Island, one option open to the members is to upgrade or enhance those works. Cllr. Barry stated that any works done under this scheme should be for the benefit of the residents of Little Island and not the people working there.

Cllr. Sheppard queried whether a proposed project by Carrignavar Community Council to develop a showcase for the history of the village incorporating a walkway and seating could be considered under the Village Enhancement Scheme. P. Lynch replied that Carrignavar had received considerable funding under this scheme in 2018 and it was intended that the fund should be spread out amongst all the villages and settlements in the district. S. O'Callaghan suggested that the Carrignavar project may be suitable as an ORI project.

St. Patricks Day Parade, Cobh:

Cllr. Sheppard wanted to bring to the members attention that this years Parade would not be going ahead but that it was envisaged that a specially constructed float would be driven around the town and streamed online. She also stated that Cork County Council were running a series of virtual courses over the next few days for anyone who was interested.

6.0 Review of Parks Use Policy

P. Lynch presented the members with an updated Parks Use Policy for the members consideration, drawing their attention to the changes, namely the addition of Haulbowline Park to the scope of the policy, the standardisation of the start dates and the procedures by which licences may be allocated in the event of the number of applicants exceeding the number of licences available.

Councillors Sheppard, Rasmussen and O'Connor had a number of queries regarding the number of licences available for the Promenade in Cobh, stating that another stall holder was interested in applying for a licence but was unsuccessful and stating that barriers should not be put in the way of new applicants. Cllr. Barry enquired as to the situation in Carrigtwohill and Watergrasshill and stated that he would not be in favour of allowing a range of mobile vendors to operate out of the Promenade.

P. Lynch replied that currently there was one licence available for trading within the Promenade and two licences for Haulbowline. Members could, if they wished, allocate a second licence for the Promenade, but reminded them that Haulbowline park was over 22 acres in size and was not serviced by other vendors, which was not the case for the Promenade in Cobh. P. Lynch stated that the Parks Use Policy only covered public parks, that the Casual Trading Byelaws prevented trading at the side of the road. Cllr. S.

O'Callaghan stated that it was very difficult for established businesses who paid rates etc. to see casual traders coming into an area at peak times.

Cllr. Rasmussen asked if a decision had to be taken at today's meeting as he felt the issue merited further discussion. Cllr. Sheppard worried that the existing licence holder would lose out in a lottery system to an unknown operative. S. O'Callaghan stated that the important thing was to establish how many spaces should be allowed in the Promenade and he was satisfied that the fairest way to allocate licences was by drawing lots.

On the recommendation of the members, P. Lynch to place the Parks Use Policy on the agenda for the March meeting.

7.0 Fograí Rún / Notices of Motion

7.1 To consider the following Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr. Anthony Barry:

In light of the success of the Harpers Island project and the large number of visitors calling to the site, issues have been identified regarding traffic safety at the entrance. Could the Council investigate and remediate any issues that may need to be addressed?

Cllr. Barry stated the Covid crisis has brought forward the success of Harpers Island by about 2 or 3 years, but now there were major issues with parking. P. Lynch replied that there were plans to upgrade the entrance and increase the number of spaces, costings were currently being prepared and funding would then be sought. R. O'Sullivan stated that a contractor appointed by Cork County Council to construct a new cycleway was part of the problem there and would be contacted to park his vehicles elsewhere.

On the proposal of Cllr. A. Barry, seconded by Cllr. S. Sheppard, the motion was adopted.

7.2 To consider the following Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr. Sheila O'Callaghan:

I wish to propose the motion that the Municipal District of Cobh would consider installing "communication boards" in playgrounds throughout the district with a pilot scheme in Watergrasshill Playground.

Cllr. O'Callaghan gave a brief explanation of what a 'communication board' was and how important it was to children who were non verbal or had other communication or sensory problems. Cllr. Sheppard stated that a playground should be inclusive and supportive of all children. P. Lynch explained to the members that Cork County Council has a pilot scheme for Communications Boards already in place in four different locations the County, the one for this Municipal District is in Carrigwohill.

7.3 To consider the following Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr. Sheila O'Callaghan:

This Municipal would consider installing Energy efficient Public Lighting at the rear of the former Ashbourne Hotel, also to consider increasing lengths of footpaths to ensure children can walk safely to and from Glounthaune NS.

Cllr. O'Callaghan withdrew the motion as the issued had already been addressed by G. O'Hora.

- 7.4 To consider the following Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen:**
That this Municipal would write to and invite a representative from the NBI (National Broadband Ireland) to give us an update on their plans for rolling out the high speed fibre broadband to all areas in the Cobh Municipal District at our next meeting.

Cllr. Rasmussen stated that broadband in parts of the town of Cobh was terrible and that the operators should be held to account. Several councillors expressed support for the motion, particularly as so many people were now trying to work and educated children from home.

On the proposal of Cllr. Rasmussen, seconded by Cllr. S. O'Connor, the motion was adopted. Cllr. Rasmussen stated that if a representative of the company had already agreed to address the members at a full Council meeting in relation to the broadband rollout programme, there was no requirement for a second visit to Cobh as the members could raise the issue at that forum.

- 7.5 To consider the following Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen:**
That this Municipal would carry out a review of our annual litter plan and see what if any changes need to be made particularly now that Covid is affecting how we all do our business.

Cllr. Ramussen stated that he was aware that a Litter Plan had been in place for a number of years and now was the time to review it and put in place any changes before tourists and visitors returned. P. Lynch stated he would discuss the issue of resources with the engineering staff and revert to the members as soon as possible.

On the proposal of Cllr. C. Rasmussen, seconded by Cllr. S. Sheppard, the motion was adopted.

- 7.6 To consider the following Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen:**
That the necessary repair work on the Burma steps would be scheduled as soon as possible.

G. O'Hora stated that remedial works required at the Burma Steps were quite extensive and works were hindered by limited access. But he would include some repairs works as part of his 2021 footpath programme.

On the proposal of Cllr. C. Rasmussen, seconded by Cllr. S. Sheppard, the motion was adopted.

- 7.7 To consider the following Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr. Anthony Barry:**
That this Municipal District would support the installation of a walkway between the Community Councils Millennium Park and the GAA grounds in Carrigtwohill. This walkway would be of immense amenity value as well as taking huge pressure off the Main St from both a pedestrian and vehicular point of view.

Cllr. Barry stated that anyone familiar with the area would be aware that school drop off and collection times were very busy. The owners of the properties on both sides of the proposed walkway were happy to co-operate.

On the proposal of Cllr. A. Barry, seconded by Cllr. A. O'Connor, it was agreed that the engineer would apply for funding under the Active Travel Scheme, subject to obtaining approval from the owners.

7.8 To consider the following Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr. Anthony Barry:

In light of the growing number of people now walking due to the pandemic, safe routes for pedestrians are essential. Could the Council now or in the near future install a footpath from the one at the Barryscourt roundabout to Fr O'Keeffe Terrace.

Cllr. Barry stated that Cork County Council had carried out some works in the area but an extension to the existing footpath was now essential, it was a busy road and popular walking area, particularly since the introduction of travel restrictions since the start of the pandemic. G. O'Hora responded stating that the footpath extension required was 320m in length and he would apply for funding for same under the Active Travel Scheme Grant.

On the proposal of Cllr. Barry, seconded by Cllr. A. O'Connor, it was agreed that the engineer would seek funding for the extension to the footpath under the Active Travel Scheme.

7.9 To consider the following Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr. Alan O'Connor:

That the process of placing a Tree Preservation Order on the gardens of the Church of the Sacred Heart, and the former convent, at Norwood Grove, Rushbrooke, Cobh, be initiated, as per section 205 of the Planning & Development Act 2000

Cllr. A. O'Connor stated that the gardens of the now closed convent had a number of mature trees and were of civic and amenity value to the residents of the area. Cllr. Rasmussen stated that he had been in contact with the developer and all the trees have now been documented and tagged, discussions have also taken place with the Planning department, unfortunately some trees would have to be removed as they were unsafe, a list would be made available to the members in the next few weeks. P. Lynch stated that there is a procedure set out in the Development Act in relation to Tree Preservation and he would bring a report for the next meeting.

8.0 Aon Ghnó Eile / Any Other Business:

Cllr. S. O'Callaghan:

8.1 Coolown/Kilcronan Road:

Cllr. S. O'Callaghan raised the issue of illegal dumping at Coolowen and Kilcronan, which has increased substantially since the pandemic began last year. She felt it was counterproductive of the Council to raise the cost at bring centres throughout the County and then have to send out crews to collect rubbish from the side of the road.

8.2 Knockraha:

The ditches are very overgrown at Knockraha. Engineer to examine.

8.3 Salt bins:

Cllr. O'Callaghan wanted to commend the officials on the speed with which salt bins had been provided to residents' associations in the area. Cllr. Sheppard asked if the bins were only supplied to residents' associations, as she had been approached by residents in an area without an association but who needed a bin. G. O'Hora requested that the residents group details and request for new salt bin be sent onto CCC.

Cllr. A. Barry:

8.4 Barryscourt:

There was substantial flooding at Barryscourt again. R. O'Sullivan replied that a crew was due to undertake remedial works in the coming week.

8.5 Carrigtwohill:

The ramp at one end of Main Street, Carrigtwohill is causing problems for drivers drawing trailers, some have become detached from the towing vehicle and others have scraped on the ground. R. O'Sullivan replied that the ramp met all the road design criteria necessary and indicated that speed was more likely a factor than the height of the ramp.

8.6 Ryan Ahern Place:

The road was left in a deplorable condition following a water break. R. O'Sullivan stated that he would follow up with Irish Water.

8.7 Aldi, Carrigtwohill:

There was still no progress on the works at the Car park outside of Aldi. R. O'Sullivan stated that he would pursue this matter with the site manager.

8.8 Overgrown hedges:

Cllr. Barry queried whether the Council were following up on letters issued to landowners to cut back their hedges. R. O'Sullivan stated that the majority of landowners do carry out works to their boundaries, however letters are normally only sent to landowners along the routes of proposed road works and these are followed up.

Cllr. S. Sheppard:

8.9 Whitepoint Estate, Cobh:

Works from the main drainage scheme had resulted in a large amount of soil and debris being left in the area. Engineer to examine.

8.10 Ryngs Corner:

The barrier and steps around Ryngs corner are damaged and need immediate repair. Engineer to examine.

8.11 Speed Review:

Speed limit review for local and regional roads is due in 2021.

8.10 Community Fund Scheme:

At the last full Council meeting the Community Fund Scheme was discussed. Community and local groups are anticipating having problems fulfilling the criteria of the scheme, which usually involves the groups spending a certain amount, before obtaining a grant. In most cases the groups would be unable to supply matching funds. S. O'Callaghan stated that the principle that changes need to be made to the operation of the scheme had been accepted by management and documents were currently being drawn up which would be circulated to the members in the coming weeks.

This concluded the business of meeting.

CATHOIRLEACH

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OFFICER