

Minutes of Meeting of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 23 July 2020 in the Burnavon Arts and Cultural Centre, Cookstown and by virtual means

Chair Councillor Mallaghan

Members Present Councillors Ashton, Bell, Black, Brown, Buchanan, Burton, Clarke, Colvin, Corry, Cuddy, Cuthbertson, Elattar, Forde, Gildernew*, Glasgow, Graham, Corry ,Hughes, Kearney, Kerr, N McAleer, McFlynn, B McGuigan, S McGuigan, McKinney, McNamee, D McPeake, S McPeake, Milne, Molloy, Monteith, Mullen (7.04pm), Oneill, Quinn, Robinson, Totten and Wilson

Officers in Attendance Mr A Tohill, Chief Executive
Mr McCreesh, Director of Business & Communities
Mr Moffett, Head of Democratic Services
Mrs Forde, Member Support Officer
Ms Canavan, Director of Organisational Development
Mr Cassells, Director of Environment & Property
Mr JJ Tohill, Director of Finance
Ms McNamee, ICT|

* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7 pm

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. The Chair in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the meeting in the chamber and by virtual means, by referring to Annex A to this minute.

C132/20 Apologies

Councillor Doris and S McAleer

C133/20 Declarations of Interest

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declarations of interest.

C134/20 Chair's Business

Councillor Buchanan congratulated local man Stuart Dallas who started his football career in Coagh Football Club and now plays for Leeds United who earned promotion to the premier League having been crowned champions after sixteen years. It was highlighted that Stuart Dallas the Northern Ireland star capped off a brilliant Championship-winning season by being named Leeds United Players' Player of the Year.

Councillor Cuddy concurred stating that he too was a Leeds United supporter!

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated he would send a letter of congratulations to Mr Dallas.

Resolved That the Chair, Councillor Mallaghan forward a letter of congratulations to Stuart Dallas for being named Leeds United Players' Player of the Year and playing on the team which earned Leeds United promotion to the Premier League.

Councillor Clarke referred to farmers and the £25m set aside in response to COVID 19 and highlighted some of the issues faced by farmers in recent months. He referred to the farm business application grants but stated that for suckler farmers it was difficult to demonstrate the loss.

Councillor Mullen entered the meeting at 7.04pm

Councillor Clarke highlighted the number of cattle held in barns whilst the Marts have been closed and the loss of earnings and additional costs for feeding suckler farmers have faced yet they are not recognised within the grant schemes.

Councillor Clarke requested that Council send a letter highlighting the concern to the Minister for DAERA.

Declaration of Interest

Councillor Clarke declared a conflict of interest as a farmer.

Councillor McKinney concurred and reflected back to a motion brought by Councillor Brown earlier in February and his proposed amendment which was rejected. He emphasised if the primary producer is not supported the product will disappear and welcomed the turnaround.

Councillor McLean stated he appreciated the matter which had been highlighted and had no problem lobbying any department but emphasised that unless the Minister for Finance released the monies the Minister of DAERA could not allocate it. Councillor McLean further highlighted that £25m would not go far and stated that

the whole of the NI Assembly faced the same challenges as there was not an endless pot of money.

Councillor McKinney on a point of clarification stated that there was approximately £6m unallocated and this should be distributed to farmers.

Councillor Kearney stated the funding should be available to all.

Resolved That Council to write a letter to Minister of DAERA to express its concerns regarding;

- (i) Lack of support to Suckler farmers who have been severely impacted by COVID 19;
- (ii) Time delay in monies from funding programmes reaching the farmers; and
- (iii) The delay in the launch of tranche two of tier two of the Farm Investment Programme

C135/20 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” at the Council meeting held on Thursday 25 June 2020

Councillor Kerr drew attention to *C114/20 Chair’s Business – Black Lives Matter* and highlighted a further human rights issue in relation to Liam Campbell who was facing extradition from the Republic of Ireland to Lithuania and raised concerns about the prisons in Lithuania some of which had previously been found to be in breach of the Convention of Human Rights. Councillor Kerr stated that he did not believe the man would receive a fair trial and requested that Council oppose the extradition of this man.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated whilst he agreed with the sentiment of Councillor Kerr’s comments he could not relate it back to Black Lives Matter and stated that it should have been raised as an item in Chair’s business or via a notice of motion.

Councillor Cuthbertson said he welcomed the ruling of the Chair, Councillor Mallaghan that the comments did not relate to the item in the previous minute and was in fact a political statement which had nothing to do with Mid Ulster district.

Councillor Wilson concurred with Councillor Cuthbertson.

Councillor Monteith accepted the Chair’s decision as it was final but echoed the concerns expressed by Councillor Kerr.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that if the Councillor so wished he could raise through proper process in August.

Councillor Monteith drew attention to C124/20 Notice of Motion in relation to the lighting of Council buildings and commended the publicity surrounding it but stated

that less than a month later we see government picking one worker over another in relation to pay increases. He emphasised that the general public was heartfelt in their appreciation of the NHS shown through displaying rainbows and clapping but now there was clear variations being made in essential workers such as those in care homes, shop keepers who keep risking their lives to serve others and clapping does not pay the rent. Councillor Monteith stated that Council needed to raise the matter loud and clear that we can't go back to the minimum wage, he stated that sick payments were the worst in Western Europe and Council needed to be proactive.

Councillor Kerr thanked the Chair for his comments and reiterated the comments of Councillor Monteith.

Proposed by Councillor B McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

Resolved That the Minutes of the Council held on Thursday 25 June 2020 (C112/20 – C124/20 and C131/20) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C136/20 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” Policy and Resources Committee Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 2 July 2020

Councillor Glasgow drew attention to *PR104/20 Implementation of Review on Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016* and stated that he fully supported the recommendations referring to previous difficulties with the implementation of the one arm bin collection unit in rural Cookstown and the changing of Graveyard openings and stated that lack of broadband in many areas led to online communication being ineffective and thus he would support the committees approach as detailed.

Proposed by Councillor M Quinn
Seconded by Councillor S McGuigan and

Resolved That the minutes of Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday 2 July (PR096 – PR111/20 and PR125/20) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C137/20 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” Planning Committee Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 6 July 2020

Councillor Bell drew attention to *P056/20 Receive Report on Council's Consideration of Application by Dalradian Gold Ltd (LA10/2017/1249/F)* and referred to the discussion and stated that he felt it had been the mind of the

committee to proceed with a working group to oversee Council' response to the public enquiry and sought clarification on same stressing its urgency.

Councillor S McPeake concurred it was his understanding also and stated a working group should be established without haste.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan concurred.

Councillor McFlynn stated it was her understanding also and stated whilst the planning application was not in Mid Ulster it would have major impacts on the Dark Sky Project and the health and wellbeing of the community.

Resolved That a working group of Councillors tasked with response to Public Enquiry for Application by Dalradian Gold Ltd (LA10/2017/1249/F) be established.

Councillor McKinney expressed concern in the breakdown of ICT meeting links at the planning committee and highlighted similar problems at a recent Policy and Resources committee and stated that as progress is made to move out of lock down Council needs to reflect on how it does business. He stated that protocol did not allow the meetings to move on until connections were resumed but poor broadband in rural areas was a major issue.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that he could concur with comments in relation to technology but stated it was important that the public had an opportunity to listen and observe as well as those Members connecting remotely. He stated that staff were endeavouring to do their best and Members should be supportive of them as they continue to deliver vital services. The Chair stated that he had met with the Chief Executive regarding the matter and the issue was under review.

Councillor McNamee welcomed the new build application for Holy Trinity College, Cookstown.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan read out a car registration number and advised the owner needed to go to the vehicle.

Councillor Clarke left the meeting at 7.26pm

Councillor McKinney clarified that he had no issue with officers and stated it was the equipment they are expected to use emphasising that equipment needed to be up to specification for the task and if new equipment was needed there should be no holdback on attaining it. He reiterated he had no issues with staff especially those who had worked through the lockdown.

Councillor Cuthbertson drew attention to *LA09/2019/1259/F* and stated whilst he understood the advice given by the Planning Manager he expressed concern on the loss of retail space in Dungannon town and stated that the heart was being taken out of Dungannon.

Councillor Cuddy stated that it was difficult enough to be a retailer and expressed frustration at the decision stating it was changing the character of the town and asked if the decision could be looked at in more depth.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated the decision had been made.

Councillor Monteith accepted the decision but concurred that as in other streets such as William Street and Irish Street the character of the town was changing and such decisions were detrimental to the retail and other properties in the area. He stated in the past people complained about licenced premises now complaints were received about flats.

Councillor Clarke returned to the meeting at 7.31pm

Councillor Monteith stated that such actions need to stop and Council needed to plan to try to keep retail outlets going in the town.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that such stipulations needed to be incorporated in the development plan as the planning committee had to make decisions in line with current policy.

Proposed by Councillor Brown
Seconded by Councillor S McPeake and

Resolved That the Minutes of Planning Committee held on Tuesday 6 July 2020 (P051/20 – P056/20 and P062/20) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C138/20 Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” Environment Committee Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 7 July 2020

Councillor Kerr drew attention to *E139/20 Bus Shelter Update* and asked if Council could explore options for provision of a bus shelter at Stewartstown that had been identified by Translink who currently had no budget for provision.

In response the Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that Council would explore and consider implications of further options for a bus shelter at Stewartstown

Councillor Cuthbertson drew attention to *E145/20 Entertainment Licences* and spoke of the impact of the night time economy in Moy Village stating that his telephone was ‘red hot’ and urgent action was needed from both Council and PSNI needed to take action as residents were going berserk at the ongoing situation. He highlighted an example where on one evening over 100 people did not gain entry into licenced premises and remained in the village, running through and urinating in gardens and generally displaying unacceptable behaviour especially during the

COVID 19 restrictions. Councillor Cuthbertson stated that it was a tragedy waiting to happen as it was a short distance to the river and he had been shown one video of a person collapsing in close proximity to the water.

Councillor Cuddy stated Moy was a lovely village and had a variety of evening entertainment and stated that the situation arising needed to be managed and thus he felt it was important for the DEA Councillors to meet and endeavour to manage the situation. He said Moy had a rich night time economy which offered entertainment to many who enjoyed it in a proper manner. Councillor Cuddy proposed that a DEA meeting be arranged to establish a way forward.

Councillor Molloy concurred stating that the needs of both residents and businesses needed to be addressed. He emphasised that people needed to adhere to the restrictions and go home in a respectable manner and supported Councillor Cuddy's proposal for a DEA meeting with officers responsible for various functions.

Councillor Monteith stated that he too had been speaking to residents and it was hoped that following the massive outburst of premises opening the situation would ease. He stated there are powers already in place and Council must address the issues of the residents who were putting up with an intolerable situation.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that the local Policing and Community Safety Partnership should be involved in the process.

Councillor Burton stated not to take away from what was happening in Moy advised that Fivemiletown area had previously experienced similar issues and the Chamber of Commerce had been working hard to maintain local businesses on Main Street.

Councillor McFlynn, Chair of the PCSP stated she would have a conversation with the PCSP manager.

Resolved A Dungannon DEA meeting to be convened to discuss ongoing impact of anti-social behaviour in Moy village impacted by the restricted numbers in licensed premises due to COVID 19. PCSP to be included in the process.

Proposed by Councillor S McGuigan
Seconded by Councillor B McGuigan and

Resolved That the Minutes of Environment Committee held on Tuesday 7 July 2020 (E131/20 – E152/20 and E157/20) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C139/20 **Receive and Consider Minutes of matters transacted in “Open Business” Development Committee Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 9 July 2020**

Councillor Burton drew attention to *D088/20 Chair's Business Carleton Cottage* and stated for clarity that only part of the roof had collapsed and emphasised that a multi-agency approach would be required and asked if officers could arrange a meeting as soon as possible to drive the issue forward as the cottage was of great historical interest.

Councillor Kerr sought an update in relation to *D093/20 Continuation of Northern Ireland Forest Schools* within Council Area and asked if there was any update to address issues raised.

In response the Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that officers would report back.

Councillor Colvin drew attention to *D092/20 Review of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation Service Level Agreements 2020/21* and stated whilst he was not on the committee he had noted the comments of Councillor Wilson and stated that he would concur with the nature of the service level agreements in that you are paid to deliver a service and thus if you don't deliver in full you should not receive payment in full. He stressed that moving forward to set budgets reality needs to set in and he would concur with the comments of Councillor Wilson noted in the minutes.

Councillor Cuddy drew attention to recommendations made at *D094/20 Walk NI Consortium 2020/21* and reiterated that there was great potential for tourism in walkways. He highlighted that many of the Gaelic Clubs had walkways around them and emphasised that provision of walkways and promotion of same was not that costly and they would be in situ for decades to come for many to enjoy scenic Mid Ulster.

Councillor Cuddy drew attention to *D103/20 Culture & Arts Service Improvement Plan 2020/2021* and stated he looked forward to future proposals for provision for historical visitor experiences.

Councillor Ashton referred to Councillor Colvin's comments regarding service level agreements and stated that the matter was discussed at committee and the decision was made to pay for this year due to the exceptional circumstances. She advised that concern had been raised in relation to targets and a clear message was to go back to organisations but due to COVID 19 and the difficulties faced it was important to support organisations. Councillor Ashton acknowledged that going forward savings would have to be made.

Councillor Ashton commended the Orange Order in the leadership displayed over the Twelfth of July celebrations.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan referring to Service Level Agreements stated that many of the organisations had been first out to help during the crisis.

Councillor Kerr in relation to service level agreements reiterated comments made at the committee that if a community group is falling below targets this should be flagged early and not at the end of the year.

Proposed by Councillor Corry
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That the Minutes of Development Committee held on Thursday 9 July 2020 (D086/20 – D105/20 and D110/20) transacted in Open Business having been printed and circulated, were considered and adopted.

C140/20 Requests for Civic Recognition

The Head of Democratic Services sought approval for the previously circulated report on civic recognition requests from Members, in line with the stated Council Policy, as detailed within the report at appendix a.

Councillor Wilson requested that Lillie Crooks and Jackie Burns be upgraded to civic reception status as they had represented their country in line with criteria.

In response the Head of Democratic Services stated that the report had been prepared pre March 2020 and at that stage had not represented their country but had been selected. He stated the requests had been pending for a number of months and he would check the status.

Councillor Wilson advised that both individuals had now represented their country and as such should be upgraded.

Council Molloy sought clarification as to the categorisation of St Patrick's Academy All Ireland Camogie winners.

In response to Councillor McLean's query the Head of Democratic Services advised that a meeting of the civic recognition working group was set for 26 August 2020.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr
Seconded by Councillor Molloy and

Resolved That approval be given to

- (i) submitted requests for civic recognition as outlined in the report and be dealt with as previously resolved by April council in that recipients receive a letter together with an award, where appropriate;
- (ii) that upon clarification the required criteria is now met by Lillie Crooks and Jackie Burns and thus be upgraded to Civic Reception category

Matters for Information

C141/20 Correspondence

Members noted previously circulated report providing correspondence received for the attention of Council.

Councillor Monteith referred to the correspondence from Youth Work Policy Team, Department of Education and proposed that the offer be taken up by officers to meet with Mr McGee the Senior Youth Worker as what is currently happening is not addressing the needs of young people and they are really missing out.

Councillor McAleer returned to the meeting 7.52 pm

Councillor Black left the meeting 7.52pm

Councillor McNamee expressed concern and disappointment in relation to the letter received from Department for Infrastructure in that whilst Minister Mallon had suggested a meeting with the Project Team, who were excellent, it was important to have connection with the Ministers themselves and thus the non-attendance of Minister Mallon at the meeting scheduled for 4 August was frustrating.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan shared the frustration stating that a number of Ministers had afforded the Council an opportunity for a meeting.

Councillor Kerr seconded Councillor Monteith's proposal for a meeting highlighting that in Coalisland especially there was many mental health issues and youth clubs play a major roll particularly in relation to the pandemic. He highlighted that they do a great work.

Councillor Colvin said Council must invest in young people as many become disillusioned and if lives fall apart it is more costly to try to repair. He stated it should not just be about money young people need rescued and supported before it all goes wrong.

Councillor Molloy concurred.

Councillor Monteith stated if officers could progress meeting and if required DEA Members could attend.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That Council's Community Development Team meet with the Senior Youth Worker and establish ongoing dialogue.

Councillor Molloy referred to a letter received by Members from Coach Operators in Northern Ireland (CONI) which highlighted how many operators were on the point of collapse due to the COVID19 crisis yet were falling through the gaps in relation to

funding and were not involved in meetings in relation to the transport industry. He stated that Council should write as requested to the Minister to support them.

Councillor Wilson concurred with Councillor Molloy stating that Translink is heavily subsidised yet these private businesses deliver sterling service.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Wilson and

Resolved That Council write to the Minister for the Economy expressing concern at the lack of support to private Coach Operators in Northern Ireland (CONI) as result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

C142/20 Consultations Notified to Mid Ulster District Council

Members considered the previously circulated report.

Councillor D McPeake referred to NIHE Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy 2020-2025 and stated that Council should respond and also that the working group established by Council had not met in recent times.

The Head of Democratic Services stated he would follow up on the working group.

Councillor Kerr supported Councillor D McPeake's proposal.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that delegated authority could be given to Policy and Resources committee to deal with consultation if required.

Proposed by Councillor D McPeake
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That Council

- (i) Submit response to Consultation on NIHE Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy 2020 -2025; and
- (ii) Resume the Travellers Working Group meeting(s) to initially consider response.

C143/20 Mid South West Region Growth Deal Report

Members noted the previously circulated report.

Councillor Monteith stated that he had raised the issue previously that whilst any funding is welcome he would question the relevancy in the new economic environment and he believed Council needed to take wider issues on board highlighting the forthcoming workshop regarding the antipoverty strategy and the subsequent document which should be central in all decisions together with the rights of workers. He stated that Council could not preach at others if they did not

start at their own door. He continued saying that if there was to be substantial money for capital projects workers' rights must be enshrined and that whilst the report covered many aspects it required buy in and consultation with all of Mid Ulster citizens not just big businesses especially if it was to change the economy for all.

Councillor Kerr concurred with Councillor Monteith's comments and stated that it should not be led by big businesses, trade unions should be recognised, zero hour contracts extinct and it should be discussed completed at every level of the post COVID19 society. He emphasised that no one know what communities would look like at the end of furlough and other financial support mechanisms.

Councillor Cuddy referred to Councillor Monteith's comments and stated that what he was saying is right the needs for all must be considered and needs to be reflected in the capital projects within the southwest region. He stated Council had been lobbying for many of these projects for years and now was the opportunity to create wealth, to get key projects in place and subsequent wealth would follow.

Councillor Milne left the meeting at 8.04 pm

Councillor McLean stated that the Councillors on the committee leading the process had identified over-arching strategic projects in line with the growth deal criteria which would improve infrastructure and then the follow on from this should lead to improvements in areas aforementioned. He emphasised that the councillors on the group had ensured that this area would not be left behind.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan concurred that that there was criteria that the region must adhere to and highlighted that much emphasis was placed on training, skills and apprenticeships for young people and there would be significant benefits to them. He advised that a portion of the project is in relation to infrastructure but there was also a strong focus on training young people to allow them to new destinations in the workplace. He emphasised there was no social aspect to the programme.

Councillor Monteith stated he was aware that there had been a lot of work done but emphasised as a Councillor it was his job to raise the concern of his community. He stated that 'trickle down' economics leads to poverty and left people unable to pay the rent. He stated that yes roads needed to be built but at every opportunity he would raise the plight of people especially those disadvantaged. He again reiterated that the 'Anti Poverty' document should be central to all decisions.

Councillor Cuddy stated that Council wanted to create wealth to help young men and women attain better salaries but emphasised if we don't accept the growth deal the area would end up with nothing.

Councillor Cuthbertson left the meeting at 8.16 pm

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that he accepted the comments of Councillor Monteith but stated that opportunities within the growth deal had not been ever seen before.

Notice of Motion

C144/20 Notice of Motion

Councillor Clarke moved the motion as undernoted:

“That Mid Ulster District Council resolves to take the necessary steps to have Davagh Dark Sky Park officially designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site”

Councillor Clarke stated, “the recent official recognition of Davagh Forest International Dark Sky Park by the IDA Board of Directors has moved The Dark Sky Park Area to a new level of interest locally, nationally and internationally.

The Davagh Dark Skies Park is remarkable for much more than its Dark Skies which can also be understood as being unaffected by light pollution from surrounding areas and towns. This is why the solar system is much clearer than is the norm. It is not a co-incidence that at the elevation of Davagh and its surroundings, valley and mists do not interfere with viewing the solar system. Given the importance of the Solar System to the earliest residents it is reasonable to conclude that this is as good an explanation as any as to why humans settled in the area surrounding and including the Dark Sky Park Area in such great numbers over thousands of years.

Harry and June Welsh in their Book “The Prehistoric Burial Sites of Northern Ireland” all 479 pages A4 size state “Many burial sites incorporate a wide range of burial monuments, some spanning long periods of time and several demonstrate significant clustering of burial monuments, such as at Broughderg in County Tyrone, with no less than 59 individual monuments, including 28 burial cairns. A further 60 burial monuments are present nearby, suggesting the presence of an extensive sacred area”. The Giant’s Grave which is a Wedge Tomb and part of the archaeological offering in Davagh is a perfect example of this.

Also located within the Davagh Dark Sky Park Area is a site known as Eagles Rock. Eagles Rock is described in Earth Science Conservation Review as amongst the oldest seen in Northern Ireland. Part of what is known as the Corvanaghan Formation it is concluded that it is close to 1000 million years of age. The Earth Science Review also concludes “that Eagles Rock is a site of National importance offering an opportunity to study a wide range of lithologies and structures representative of the Corvanaghan Formation. This site forms an important part of the Central Tyrone Inlier which remains one of the least understood and most enigmatic component “terrane” of the Precambrian basement of Northern Ireland and will no doubt be the subject of future scientific studies.

The Ice Age impacted on the landscape of the Dark Sky Park Area with an Esker running in an Easterly direction almost from Beaghmore Stone Circles through Davagh where it's known as the Davagh Esker.

I believe that The Davagh Dark Sky Park contains a number of elements of significance which meet the criteria for designation of a World Heritage Site.

Primary of course is the IDA officially recognised Dark Sky Park.

Secondly there is the very obvious connection between the clear skies of the area and the dense human population which for thousands of years has lived in the area as evidenced by wide variety of remains and the vast number of those remains.

Thirdly there is the Geological importance of the Eagles Rock given its age and its important place in the Corvanaghan Geological Formation.

Fourthly there is the Ice age impact which left the Davagh Esker behind which provides the setting for many Archaeological sites.

Finally there are opportunities to study Blanket Bog and opportunity to study Blanket Bog reinstatement. A diverse range of habitat much of which is now extremely rare locally or nationally exists within the Dark Sky Park.

Astrology, Archaeology, Geology and Ecology are all key elements within the Davagh Dark Sky Park."

Councillor Clarke proposed the motion

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan proposed an amendment to the motion to read

"That Mid Ulster District Council resolves to explore the necessary steps to have Davagh Dark Sky Park officially designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site"

Councillor Clarke accepted the amendment and all agreed.

Councillor Corry seconded the motion stating,

"I would like to second Cllr Clarke's motion. Davagh and Beaghmore have been described as "the middle of nowhere, centre of the universe" I think this is very apt, Eagles Rock is part of the foundations of Ireland. The area was clearly of huge significance to our ancestors who cleared the land 6000 years ago for agriculture and then abandoned this to create the stone circles, rows and cairns we now know, for reasons not yet fully understood.

Many believe the site is of great astronomical importance, it is aligned with the sunset of the summer solstice. It also has some of the darkest skies in the world, which has been IDA recognised. This is definitely to be treasured that in our Council

area we can see clear night skies, stars, planets, comets and other phenomenon, especially when much of the planet is now so badly effected by light pollution, they can barely see a star.

Councillor Clarke has outlined the reasons why we believe Davagh should and could be a world heritage site and the potential this could bring to the area. We are extremely lucky to have a jewel like Davagh on our doorstep. What we already know about this amazing area needs to be protected and there is also so much more to be discovered.”

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan reflected that what has transformed at Davagh is powerful and the tourism and infrastructure was all falling into place. He stated that this was the next natural step to take in relation to this spectacular site noting that Stonehenge was a younger site and we see and hear of its significance.

Councillor McLean welcomed the amendment and stated he would like to see the outworking of the exploration and the associated costings and available funding.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan stated that this item would no doubt be raised through both Policy & Resources and Development Committees.

Councillor Colvin stated it was a fascinating area and he too welcomed the amendment as the impact on the whole area needed to be taken into account.

Councillor Hughes stated that the SDLP would support the motion which would put the area on the world map.

Councillor N McAleer left the meeting at 8.25pm.

Councillor Glasgow stated that it was an interesting and exciting process adding that in a recent document he had read noted 32 sites listed under UNESCO. He advised that in a report written by the Department in Scotland which highlighted the pros and cons emphasised that the key initiative is to get the balance right as to what serves the community and economy and what would bring restrictions. He further advised that the document highlighted that the costs had three layers and consideration must be given to planning decisions, businesses and the community.

Councillor Cuddy stated he did not know the area well but his concern would be the time and effort required to attain the status and its impact on local planning but if it could be established it would be great.

Councillor McKinney stated he would have concern with regard to planning decisions highlighting that the country was moving out of lockdown and needed to be mindful of the impact on businesses and Council must consider the broader picture before committing.

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan highlighted that the emphasis of the motion was to explore options.

Councillor S McPeake stated that people were nervous and reflected that Councillor Clarke had shared the heritage of the site, he had lived in the area for a life time and was passionate about it and the people he represents. He stated that yes the planning committee would have considerations but much of the nervousness was not realistic as many of the issues could be dealt with and Council should put their trust in what councillor Clarke was proposing for the greater good of the district.

Councillor Clarke in closing thanked Members for their comments and stated he had thought about the proposal for a long time. He stated there was many local initiatives springing up such as cottages being developed and that is what we want to see. He stated it was not just a local project but an Ulster project. He stated that funding, the growth deal, strategic projects, rural development, DAERA may afford opportunities as the return will be far beyond the cost which will put Mid Ulster in a different race.

Councillor Mullen left the meeting at 8.34 pm

The Chair, Councillor Mallaghan given the cross party consensus declared the motion carried.

Councillor Clarke thanked Members for their support and stated it was a step forward and in the future all would see the benefits.

Members of the public left the meeting.

Items restricted in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. The public will be asked to withdraw from the meeting at this point.

The live broad cast concluded at 8.36 pm

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor Colvin and

Resolved That items C145/20- C151/20 be taken as confidential business

Matters for Decision

- (i) Council Confidential Minutes of Meeting held on 25 June 2020
- (ii) Policy and Resources Committee Confidential Minutes of Meeting held on 2 July 2020
- (iii) Planning Committee Confidential Minutes of Meeting held on 6 July 2020
- (iv) Environment Committee Confidential Minutes of Meeting held on 7 July 2020
- (iv) Development Committee Confidential Minutes of Meeting held on 9 July 2020

- (v) Contract for the Collection and Processing of Residual Waste

C152/20 Duration of Meeting

The meeting was called for 7pm and ended at 8.50 pm

Chair _____

Date _____