

**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 11 March 2021 in the Council Offices, Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt and by Virtual Means**

**Members Present**

Councillor McNamee

Councillors Ashton\*, Black, Burton\*, Clarke\*, Corry\*, Cuddy\*, Doris\*, Elattar\*, Hughes\*, Kearney\*, Kerr\*, Milne\*, Molloy\*, Monteith\*, Wilson\*

**Officers in Attendance**

Mr McCreesh\*\*, Chief Executive  
Ms Campbell, Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation  
Mr Browne\*\*, Head of Tourism  
Mr Gordon\*\*, Head of Leisure  
Mr Hill\*\*, Head of Parks  
Ms Linney\*\*, Head of Community Development  
Mr McCance\*\*, Head of Culture and Arts  
Ms McKeown\*\*, Head of Economic Development  
Ms Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

**Others in Attendance**

Councillor McFlynn\*\*\*  
Councillor McKinney\*\*\*

- \* Denotes Members present in remote attendance
- \*\* Denotes Officers present by remote means
- \*\*\* Denotes Others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

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

*The Chair, Councillor McNamee wished everyone a Happy New Year, he stated that last year was difficult but that there was now a vaccine and the infection rate was coming down and that he hoped the situation would improve in the coming months.*

**D044/21 Apologies**

None.

## **D045/21 Declaration of Interest**

The Chair Councillor McNamee reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declaration of interest.

Councillor Clarke declared an interest in Agenda Item 6 – Cooperative Partnership Marketing Fund and Digital Technology Refresh for Visitor Information Centres.

Councillor Wilson declared an interest in Mid Ulster Pipe Bands under Community Development Report – Good Relations.

## **D046/21 Chair's Business**

Councillor Molloy referred to Moy Shared Education Campus which was announced in 2014 as a project with a number of others to provide a shared education project on a same campus with Moy Regional and St.John's being chosen as part of that project. He advised that the project was now forging ahead and asked that the Council look at identifying their own site if one cannot be ascertained and urgently re-engage with the Education Authority and the design team of Moy Shared Campus to seek opportunities to maximise facilities as the people of the Moy had waited long enough for this.

Councillor Monteith agreed with Councillor Molloy and said that this had been discussed at the last DEA Capital Workshop and while he had concerns around the whole project and rationale behind the Campus, there was a lack of facilities in the village of Moy and agreed if space could not be identified that the Council locate a site to provide top class recreational provision to accommodate Moy residents as they had waited long enough and would fully support the liaising with the Education Authority, but more importantly the Statement of Intention of Moy village and the people of the village. He said that the people of Moy had waited long enough and was unacceptable for a village of that size to have no Council facilities which was a poor reflection on this Council and the previous Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council and would support Councillor Molloy in his proposal, but most importantly that he would support the people of the Moy in getting top class facilities which they rightly deserve.

The Head of Leisure advised that a brief discussion had taken place with the Education Authority this week and had spoken to one of the Officers which was on the project board who gave a commitment that they would engage with Council within the coming weeks. He referred to appointment of ICT team last October and they were anticipating the first draft design to be back from the team within the next number of weeks and at that time the Education Authority had advised that they would be more than happy to engage with Council and sit down and determine what this may look like. He hoped that an update could be brought back after the discussion with the Education Authority.

Councillor Corry sought an update on the theft of items at Maghera 3/4G pitch and new leisure arrangements after there were security arrangements were put in place.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation confirmed that a theft had taken place at the new 3/4G pitch at Maghera with some of the carpet being stolen within the last number of days. She advised that the security of the site was the responsibility of the contractor who were confident in their thinking that arrangements were adequate. With the length and the size of the carpet, this was not done by opportunists as it had taken an orchestrated effort to get it removed from the site which was now under investigation by the contractor and will have to be replaced by them to allow the pitch to be finished. She advised that once she had all the relevant information, members would be updated further.

Councillor Doris advised that today she had met with representatives from Kevin Barry's GAC, Derrylaughan and Council Officers regarding the club's lands which were up for lease within the next few years. She stated that it was a credit to the people of Derrylaughan as they had completed all the maintenance on that bit of ground and was extremely well used and now the club were looking to extend the lease or potentially purchase the land themselves.

It was proposed by Councillor Doris that a report be brought back to the next Development Committee with the two options so a choice could be made.

Councillor Elattar seconded Councillor Doris' proposal.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that there was no difficulty in bringing back a report to committee, but would have to engage with Legal and Land & Property Services and may not come back within the month, but once all the information was received that this would be brought back to committee.

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that a report be brought back to a future Development Committee on options for lands at Kevin Barry GAC site in Derrylaughan.

Councillor Wilson advised that some time ago a lot of funding was designated to Moneymore Recreational Centre and he was of the opinion if some work was going to be carried out at the site that local residents would be consulted. He stated that he had been contacted by a number of residents who were not consulted about the installation of flood lights.

The Head of Leisure advised that this was a Peace IV Shared Space project that was taking place in Moneymore and wasn't aware of the whole history behind the project as this was more to do with Community Development.

The Head of Community Development advised that the lighting installed was low level and low lux to light the pathways to ensure minimum impact to the residential properties and river bio diversity. She advised that there had been consultation with the wider community who identified the project for delivery; however due to it being low lighting away there had been no direct consultation.

Councillor Wilson said that although he remembers this, the residents living along Riverside Drive had advised that there was no consultation with them at all. He said that he appreciated that the lighting was low level, but a number of the residents were

elderly and were concerned about additional traffic etc. and wanted to raise his surprise at these residents not being consulted who were impacted the most. The Chair said that it was unfortunate that work had already taken place and not much the Council could not do but appreciated Councillor Wilson's point.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation referred to issue at Ballysaggart Lough where part of the retaining wall had collapsed a few weeks ago and advised that a Structural Engineer had looked at the wall and his recommendation was that it needed replacing. She sought permission to start a process for procuring a contractor or consultant to come in and repair and rebuild the wall as soon as possible as the wall was currently cordoned off due to health and safety reasons, but another report would be brought back once approval was granted to proceed once the costings involved with it were known, but this would allow for repairs to be done as soon as possible.

Councillor Molloy referred to the ownership and said that this entailed the layby and asked if there was any update on work which may be considered in partnership with Roads Service.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that as part of the process the Council would be consulting with Roads Service in terms of ownership but in this point and time nothing was committed to yet, but were proceeding to get more realistic costs to try and get repairs done as soon as possible.

Councillor Monteith said that although he would agree, he would however have a fear that this could drag on and would urge that although we need to do the job right, we need to do the job as soon as possible and need to treat this issue the same as one of our Leisure Centres having a collapsed wall and move at the same speed for getting it sorted. He said that he would have a fear when discussions take place with Roads Service there could be a lot of toing and froing with them and also be the concern in the community that this could linger on. He felt that this needed to be done as a matter of urgency.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy  
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to start a process for procuring a contractor or consultant to come in and repair and rebuild the wall at Ballysaggart Lough as soon as possible. Going forward a report to be brought back on costings once they were identified.

## **Matters for Decision**

### **D047/21 Schools Sports Facilities Grant**

The Head of Leisure presented previously circulated report to advise Members on the advertised Schools Sports Facilities Access Grants. Details below:

- Cookstown Hockey Club – funding proposal - £4,500.00

- Dungannon Rugby Club – funding proposal - £500.00
- St John's PS Swatragh – funding proposal - £1,864.00

Councillor Black referred to £10,000 for the grant with award coming in under £7,000 and enquired where the remainder of the £3,000 was being allocated. He also sought clarification on sentence within the report on "*Council recognises that a few underrepresented sports may be constrained by lack of access to suitable facilities*" and enquired what those sports were.

The Head of Leisure advised as Council were reaching the end of the financial year, he wouldn't anticipate reallocating the remainder of the budget, however it would be the intention to go out with this grant programme within the next number of months, towards the summer to give clubs and schools an opportunity to apply again. In terms of criteria for the grants, it was to facilitate access for a shared collaboration where Council do not have synthetic sport facilities to try and increase participation between clubs and schools for underrepresented sports to help fund the ongoing costs.

In response to Councillor Black's query, the Head of Leisure advised that unrepresented sports were normally guided criteria by Sport NI, with an example being non mainstream sports like Women's & Girls and Youths.

Councillor Cuddy agreed that it was a good programme but asked if schools could apply for using other schools or sports facilities.

The Head of Leisure advised that this wasn't the case but clubs could make a request for access from schools in which they use, so as to increase this collaboration between the community groups and the local schools.

Councillor Wilson referred to comments regarding non mainstream sports being targeted towards Youth and Women and no mention of sports which this grant was set up to target for instance cricket and hockey etc. and felt that it would be useful to have a list of the sports rather than the target group.

Proposed by Councillor Elattar  
Seconded by Councillor Doris and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to agree to the recommendation for successful grant applications as detailed above.

Councillor Burton referred to the youth annex at Fivemiletown College and stated that two different parties had contacted her this week advising that none of the football grounds were floodlit in the Fivemiletown area and asked if the Officers could work with some of those people to try and investigate opportunities as there was some antisocial behavior ongoing within that area with the young people and some community activists considering this as a possible deterrent of getting these young people of the streets at night.

The Chair advised that this would be investigated.

## **D048/21      The Provision of Access for Outdoor Recreation in Northern Ireland – Key Stakeholder Consultation**

The Head of Parks presented previously circulated report and sought Members approval in responding to the Provision for Access for Outdoor Recreation in Northern Ireland – Key Stakeholder Consultation, prepared by DAERA.

Councillor Corry thanked Council staff on the hard work they had put into the consultation response as it was well answered and correct in what they were saying about opportunities but there was still many improvements to be made with walkways to be better used and so on. She referred to the Public Rights of Way and the special website and advised that she had went on to it and bar the well publicised walkways, she couldn't see any of the other walks and asked how these could be located and asked if these could be raised as only well publicised walks were advertised.

The Head of Parks said that in regards to Space NI, where Public Rights of Way were advertised and recognised for anyone to check on the website. The Council has other ways of promoting walking routes like WalkNI which we contribute to the material which was posted on those portals and said that Officers could certainly check if there were any omissions, but there were also other websites which carry relevant information in a tourism capacity for Mid Ulster area. He agreed to investigate this issue.

Councillor Doris commended the report as it was good to see and said she may have to declare an interest in the following correspondence. She advised that she grew up in Derrylaughan and to the rear of her mother's home there had been a lot of moss they were fortunate to walk on, with a very unique landscape and unique wildlife at the area such as the Curlew. She said that concerns were being raised that more of the moss was being dug up lately and was devastating to see a change in the landscape within the last 10 years. She said that she realised that Officers may not have an update on the situation tonight but would like officers to correspond with the Moss Group in Derrylaughan and the Lough Neagh Partnership to act very quickly before more of that area was destroyed forever.

Councillor Clarke agreed with Councillor Doris and said that it was important to look after that landscape. He commended Officers on providing a good report and would be happy to propose it.

Councillor Black said that he would like to put it on record his thanks to Council Officers on their response to this consultation. He said that he noticed that there were 16 asserted Rights of Way that we currently have and to pick up on Councillor Corry's point of these being advertised online and the fact the Council always doing their own types of publicity themselves through our own website, wondered if there was something else that could be done to reflect the Rights of Way that there are within our own area and to encourage people to go to them. He also stated that under the Access to the Countryside NI Order 1983, we've been working with landowners to develop Rights of Way and enquired if there was a template around maintenance on the Rights of Way and potential Rights of Way so we know where responsibility lays going forward.

The Head of Parks in referring to the first point stated that information was put on Space NI and certainly some of those Rights of Way were an attractive locations to visit as they offer good access to the countryside as not all public Right of Ways provide that as sometimes these can be very short and limited. He said that most popular walkways were promoted in other ways using different vehicles also. In response to member's second query, the Head of Parks advised that the template on legislation covers those areas with regards to Council as they do not automatically have a responsibility to maintain and spend money on public Rights of Ways as it was a discretionary role which Councils have and they can do the works and claim that back from the riparian landowners. This was part of the legislation and guidelines that provides that information.

Councillor Black said that if there was any kind of promotion around our own website that this would be a good idea and good to be able to direct people to that and good to know that there would be no ambiguities around where responsibilities lay going forward.

The Head of Tourism advised that Officers were developing a tourism destination website with outdoor activities being very prominent including walking so that will be there also.

Councillor Monteith said that he had no difficulty with the report as it was a good piece of work and commended the Officers on the response but referred to question 10 and asked if the legislation could be strengthened to give the Council the power to push past through wherever they see fit. He felt there needed to be an in-between place to deal with the current situation where there was very little power for the Council to try and develop a path in a particular area. He said there could be an argument for some strength in the legislation to put back some more powers to give the Council more authority on part of the community to try and ensure the paths were developed and put in place as the current situation as things seem to go around in circles with everyone crying out for a path within a certain area around a geographical feature or particular community. He felt that these type of things don't happen as there were no powers in place to initiate and make it happen and felt that there was an opportunity there at question 10 where it talks about current issues with legislation and we should be saying that legislation be strengthened to give the Council more power, but not to override completely. He said that communities were crying out for access to local beauty spots.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation agreed that Councillor Monteith's suggestion be included in Question 10. She advised that Question 12 was identified as an opportunity for strengthening the legislation, but the difficulties were not identified but this could be reworded and incorporated into Question 10.

Councillor Molloy referred to litter being the epidemic within the pandemic and said that many landowners may be reluctant to open up their lands due to irresponsible people discarding rubbish and members just had to look at the roadsides to see the amount of litter in ditches.

Councillor Burton said that she took on the points raised by the two previous speakers and would be in total agreement with them. She referred to some forestry areas

where were licensed and some which were not for the public to walk and would be very keen as part of futureproofing in investment for the area and push forward for a new project at Favour Royal. She said that this was about getting agreement with everyone that the Council can work with. She advised that the points raised by Councillor Molloy were very valid on places which were opened up like Knockmany where local people were getting concerned about how their local area was being treated in terms of inconsiderate car parking and the generating of litter and felt that there was a need to have a process that works for everyone. She enquired if the meeting went ahead with the Forestry Service and also asked for an update on Lumford's Glen and wanted it recorded on where Forestry Services was being linked into that there was a necessity for them to ensure that maintenance work was carried out in terms of the trees as there were literally trees hanging over the roadside and other trees which may a danger and fall onto a road. She felt that it would be very beneficial to get a good working partnership with Forestry Service and would be keen to progress this going forward.

Proposed by Councillor Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the response to the Provision for Access for Outdoor Recreation in Northern Ireland – Key Stakeholder Consultation, prepared by DAERA. Also to include reference to investigate a way of strengthening up legislation.

The Head of Parks in reply to Councillor Burton's query advised that the meeting with Forestry Service was anticipated to take place on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021 with all relevant information on Lumford's Glen would be brought back after the meeting. He confirmed that this issue had been raised with Forestry Service in the hope of moving it on and was within the block licence held for Knockmany which was important to the Council as a solution was needed to assist us and would be looking at outdoor recreation strategy funding to match from other sources to make this happen at Lumford's Glen

He referred to concerns around unsafe trees and advised that he was aware of some at Glenhoy Road and Parkanaur and had engaged with Forestry Service this morning in regards to their responsibilities to inspect and maintain these trees along these sections of the road and any other trees in other areas which they have responsibility for.

Councillor Burton advised that it was Cullenfad Road not Parkanaur which was opposite Parkanaur up a side road just in case there was any confusion of the matter.

The Head of Parks agreed that this was still part of Parkanaur Forest.

Councillor Clarke advised that in recent years Forestry Service did not carry any amount of manpower to do work on the ground and this may be one of the reasons why they were slow or unable to carry out any maintenance.

The Chair advised that the issue of manpower could be raised at the meetings arranged for the next few weeks.



Councillor Burton referred to Councillor Clarke's comment and said that Forestry Service should not get away with neglecting their responsibilities on maintenance and referred to meeting last year where a young girl made a presentation to committee regarding the death of her father due to a falling tree. She felt that as an organisation, the Council should hold Road Service to account and make them aware of any trees which were deemed unsafe and the same should go for Forestry Service if a tree falls within a forest and a person was injured or killed.

Councillor Kerr agreed with Councillor Burton and said although there may not be manpower, there was an onus on them to prioritise as these trees were very dangerous. He referred to his own employment where risk assessments were continuously being carried out and felt that the same should be done regarding dangerous or overhanging trees and suggested that a stern discussion was needed with Forestry Service on their responsibilities.

**D049/21      Cooperative Partnership Marketing Fund and Digital Technology Refresh for Visitor Information Centres**

The Head of Tourism presented previously circulated report and sought approval from Members to apply to Tourism NI for Cooperative Marketing funding and avail of the Digital Technology Refresh Scheme.

Councillor Doris said that there was real good work being done through the Tourism Development Group and wanted take the opportunity to congratulate Councillor Clarke and Mary on their appearance on BBC regarding Davagh Dark Skies and the Stone Circles.

Proposed by Councillor Burton  
Seconded by Councillor Doris and

**Resolved**      That it be recommended to Council that approval be granted to avail of the funding opportunity for both Cooperative Partnership Marketing Fund and Digital Technology Refresh for Visitor Information Centres from Tourism Northern Ireland.

Councillor Kearney enquired if livelinks were still operational in schools in the area.

The Head of Community Development advised that these were still operational in some post primary schools, but could use a lot more if there was something to go on them.

**D050/21      Corporate Events**

The Head of Tourism presented previously circulated report to provide an update to Members on the Corporate Events Calendar 2021.

Councillor Molloy said that he fully agreed with the proposal and advised that he had been approached by some groups enquiring about the future possibility of utilising and opening up of the Events Space on the Hill of The O'Neill. The groups involved

included musicians who felt that the Event Space was a prime location to practice due to ample ventilation.

The Head of Culture and Arts advised that he would investigate the issue and report back to members. He asked members if they were aware of any groups to refer them to his team and they would liaise with them.

Councillor Ashton enquired if the same budget was there for events this year, the same as last year event though there was an intention there now not to hold them.

The Head of Tourism advised that at this current time the budget was there, however this would be reviewed as we go along in terms of what happens to that budget.

Councillor Cuddy said he totally agreed with the Head of Tourism regarding the larger events. He referred to St. Patrick's Day event which was very good and a useful tool for virtual technology and said he would be interested to see how it works out. He felt that this allowed people to mark the day as no-one knew how long this pandemic was going to last and asked what kind of budget was being used for St. Patrick's Day events and enquired if this kind of thing could be transferred to other days throughout the summer like the 12 July celebrations in the event of an actual day being postponed.

The Head of Culture and Arts advised that in the terms of transferability and process that any events planned for St. Patrick's Day at the Burnavon and the Hill of The O'Neill, could be transferable to events delivered by external organisations and this is something that has been done before, but obviously now we need to be mindful of Covid restrictions. In terms of transferability this certainly could be done and in terms of cost implications, the delivery would be significantly less compared to events delivered pre Covid, but there would obviously be cost implications for the hire of professional sound and lighting equipment and sound and light technicians which needed to be invested in to stage the events in a way to attract an online viewing audience.

Councillor Cuddy said that it would be interesting to hear the feedback and felt that it was a good idea as there was an onus on the Council to improvise as people were unaware how long this pandemic was going to go on for.

Councillor Burton said that she would also like to be involved in a meeting with members going forward.

The Head of Culture and Arts advised that after the St. Patrick's Day events officers would touch base with the Councillors and issue an email to arrange a meeting via Zoom with any interested member linking in and having a discussion.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy  
Seconded by Councillor Milne and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that approval be given to:

- (i) Council not to organise any formal or planned events that would attract mass gatherings until the restrictions will facilitate such events.
- (ii) Events team submitting a further report in the months ahead to agree plans to celebrate Halloween and Christmas.

**D051/21 Council Support for Mid Ulster (Heaney) Cluster**

The Head of Tourism presented previously circulated report to seek support from Mid Ulster District Council for the Mid Ulster (Heaney) cluster of businesses in their application for Phase 2 Collaborative Growth Programme funding.

Councillor Kearney congratulated HomePlace staff on their delivery of successful virtual events and their work on St. Patrick's Day and wanted to commend that.

Proposed by Councillor Milne  
Seconded by Councillor Elattar and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that support be granted to this cluster in their request for financial support of £12,500 over the next three years.

**D052/21 Community Development**

The Head of Community Development presented previously circulated report to provide an update on key activities and sought approval for the following:

**(i) Community Grants – agree the rolling grants for Good Relations**

Proposed by Councillor Milne  
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve the Good Relations Grants, noting that the Desertcreatives is for 2021 – 2022 year activity. (£2,040.00) as appendix 1.

**(ii) Derrynoid Forest and Future Strategic Use – agree Council Support**

Councillor Corry referred to the Rural College and said it was a terrific asset to the area and very popular with people outside the district. She said that it was very sad to see it not being used and was aware of the hard work by Workspace in trying to get it utilised and felt that it was now a liability due to damage being done to it. She proposed that the Council to do whatever they can to support Workspace in their negotiations with Forestry Service. She said that this base was used as a hub and was a central point for Mid Ulster from other areas and was very popular with local people and was an ideal tourism area.

The Head of Community Development said that Officers were working very closely with Workspace and were anticipating taking forward a number of issues particularly with DAERA to seek flexibility for private sector use, to make connections with community planning regarding the potential of the asset and to support Workspace in its bid for it to be considered as a potential government hotdesk location. Councillor Elattar seconded Councillor Corry's proposal and said she echoed her sentiments entirely regarding her proposal for the Council to get this up and running again for the good of the community.

Councillor Wilson advised that this issue had become before LAG and would be supportive of that, but unfortunately they lost out and asked that any support that the Council can give them would be welcomed. However, he was somewhat concerned to read that the Council were heavily involved in negotiations and working with the public sector enquired if the Council done this for every group that came before Council.

The Head of Community Development advised that no actions had been undertaken as yet and was proposing to support Workspace in trying to get a use for the site; through a supportive role. It was confirmed that Council do not do this for all groups and this was the reason to bring it for members agreement.

Councillor Wilson proposed to see what we were actually going to do on this as it seemed and looked like the Council were taking a lead on this issue regarding Workspace and see what members were agreeing to.

The Head of Community Development advised that the role of Council would be to write a letter to DAERA Minister with regard to look at the potential for flexibility if there was any private sector interest in the site. Secondly, Officers were planning to send the site profile to Community Planning partners to identify if there was any interest or need for the space. Finally, Workspace has put in a proposal to see if the Rural Centre could be used as the new 'out of office hubs and hot-desking' which Council support was sought and we would be confirming Council support for this.

Councillor Wilson said that he was happy to agree to this as the matter was clarified.

Proposed by Councillor Corry  
Seconded by Councillor Elattar and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council that support be provided to Workspace in seeking potential usage for the Derrynoid Rural Centre.

**(iii) Paupers' Grave (South Tyrone Hospital site) Dungannon Memorial – To update members and agree way forward**

The Head of Community Development provided an update to the paper. She advised the original proposal was to partner the Trust on the commemoration garden; however the Trust confirmed they were undertaking the project directly themselves and did not wish to partner Council. They confirmed they were working with the Historical Society as a stakeholder but did not see the Council as a key stakeholder. She said that the Council has asked if they could be a stakeholder and still waiting on a reply on that.

Councillor Molloy said that he welcomed the work which was ongoing behind the scenes but took exception to the name of 'Paupers' Grave' as it was a workhouse where people endured horrific conditions and buried in unmarked graves. He felt that it would be important to stay from these type of titles and suggested that it be renamed 'Workhouse Graves' going forward.

Councillor Monteith agreed with Councillor Molloy's sentiments regarding terminology and also the renaming to 'Workhouse Graves'. He felt that these people were forced into poverty and once they were in this position it was virtually impossible to get out of the Workhouse where people were emotionally impacted on regarding separation from their families. He advised that the community were now a lot more confident that this was going in the right direction and conveyed their thanks and appreciation to Council Officers on their work to bring the Trust back into discussions again with the local History Group. He felt that there was still an opportunity to get involved and proposed that a meeting be arranged with the Trust and if they were unwilling to get involved with the Council then suggested Council provide funding support to the Historical group to allow them to be involved in marking the site.

The Chair felt that a meeting with the Trust shouldn't be a problem as Cookstown had created a simple site to mark Workhouse Graves which weren't expensive.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy  
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to support the provision of a memorial site at the Workhouse Grave site Dungannon, through the Historical Society, and for Council to write to the Trust for an update on this.

**(iv) Good Relations Plan 2021-2022 – for Members' consideration and approval**

Proposed by Councillor Molloy  
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to agree the annual Good Relations Action Plan 2021-2022.

Councillor Ashton enquired if the Good Relations plan give consideration to the 100 years commemoration.

The Head of Community Development noted that this is under the Decade of Anniversaries, where there is included the annual lectures and annual grant programme as per the update report provided by the Head of Arts and Culture and a further £5000 towards for an educational project led by the Arts and Culture Section.

**(v) Community Development – Note Community Development update**

Noted.

Councillor Wilson advised that there would be no pipe band happening this year at the first week of June and may have to be carried over to August or September if it takes place at all.

Councillor Wilson said he raised this issue each year regarding the Clergy Forum across the district and enquired how many new members were on these and not only on these but on other programmes we have or was it the same people which benefit from it all the time.

The Head of Community Development advised that the Council had signed up two years ago to a three year plan with the TEO Office and to minor updates for the 3 years. An audit is being carried out of the programme to help inform a new 3 year plan and will give consideration to this. In relation to the delivery of the good relations programmes each year, they would have different audiences particularly the school and youth, however Clergy Forum and the Churches Forum's membership changed very little if someone left or someone came on and would say that 75% of the people were the same each year. They did deliver projects, engagement activities, talks etc. The review will give consideration to this and future plans for the following three years was something for discussion.

Councillor Burton asked that Aughnacloy and Fivemiletown be used for the Sports programme.

The Head of Community Development advised that she would investigate this and come back to the member with an update.

#### **D053/21 Economic Development - OBFD**

The Head of Economic Development presented previously circulated report to provide an update on key activities and sought approval for the following:

##### **(i) ICBAN Funding Request (2021/22)**

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Milne and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve funding request from ICBAN for up to £15,000 from Council's Economic Development Budget (2021/22), to be paid in two equal instalments twice yearly, subject to Council being provided with the requisite documentation (application form, confirmation of match funding, copies of accounts, insurances, financial report and progress updates).

Councillor Monteith commended Officers on the engagement works with Traders which had taken place recently on business recovery and welcomed the use of new technology in doing so, as old models doesn't suit modern working. He also commended Officers on their efforts on securing a meeting with senior officials from the Bank of Ireland to address the anticipated closure of the Dungannon branch.

*Councillor Kearney declared an interest in ICBAN.*

The Chair stated that Traders should be happy about the recent good news story relating to rates relief extension for this year.

## **(ii) Coalisland Great Places Projects**

Councillor Kerr welcomed the contribution from Council towards the coalpits and Coalisland Canal and said it was something that residents should cherish and should be proud of.

Proposed by Councillor Doris  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to approve reallocation of funds for year 3 of Coalisland Great Places Project, and make provision for Council's final contribution of £3,000 to Lough Neagh Partnership in the new financial year (2021/22). This flexibility will allow final works on the project to be completed, having been delayed as a result of the pandemic, with no additional costs to Council.

## **Matters for Information**

### **D054/21 Minutes of Development Committee held on 11 February 2021**

Members noted minutes of Development Committee held on 11 February 2021.

Councillor Corry referred to Community Planning Poverty Plan and made reference to Mr Harvey's publication last week on Social Inclusion Strategies - Expert Advisory Panel report which will now form part of the work to co-design strategies alongside communities on poverty, anti-poverty, children's poverty, gender disability and LGBTQI equality and hopefully this Council can be part of that alongside our communities.

The Head of Community Development stated that Officers would get the reports and send to members and do a link in on these and hope to get an update session with DFC and members regarding these and links to our own plan.

Councillor Doris referred to D035/21 – Parks and Play Five Year Strategic Plan and said that although she wasn't looking at update tonight, she wanted to raise an issue with was raised through Coalisland Town Centre Forum regarding better access and installing of ramp at Brackaville Playpark. She said that there was a meeting due to take place shortly and asked if there was any movement on that.

The Head of Parks advised that Officers were aware of access issues at Brackaville Playpark and a review of the current lease which also has to take place but will bring back a more clearer update regards to the access issue.

Councillor Monteith referred to D032/21 Community Development – Mid Ulster Community Planning Poverty Plan and said that it was around the same issue previously raised by Councillor Corry on affordable housing. He stated that people

would be aware of letters being sent out to tenants regarding the increase in rent by Housing Associations which was totally unacceptable during these unprecedented times. He felt the Council had a onus on their residents to challenge these rent increases as Housing affordability was a problem, whether for people to purchase or rent homes for themselves or their families. He advised that families were paying over £600 per week in Dungannon for social housing and this was supposed to be affordable and some not fit for purpose.

He proposed that the Council write to the relevant Housing Associations which may be proposed the rent increase to say in our strongest terms that this increase on working families was not acceptable and request a meeting, but in the meantime, representations be made immediately on this increase not being acceptable and a duty of care and a public responsibility on the houses that they own being paid by the public purse and not acceptable to cost more to rent than some private houses.

He said that this was a major issue which had arisen in the last while and would commend the work which had been done on housing issues around Dungannon.

He also asked for an update on the same item – Timorese Association Inclusion Group Engagement. He said that last month it was stated that a meeting was being organised for a reengagement for the East Timorese Community and asked where the Council was sitting with that.

The Chair stated that the issue of affordable housing would be raised through the Housing Forum as well.

The Head of Community Development stated that research would be carried out on the rent increase issue and a meeting could then be organised with the Housing Working group as it was the time to have another housing meeting.

In response to East Timorese she advised that this would be actioned as soon as possible and advised members that due to work constraints within her section on the fuel vouchers this had been not followed up as quickly as first hoped.

Councillor Kerr seconded Councillor Monteith's proposal.

He said that he wished to be associated with Councillor Monteith's comments as it was absolutely ridiculous that when people were in the middle of a global pandemic and families struggling financially, that a Housing Association decides to raise their rents. He felt that this was unacceptable.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to research the rental issue further and write to the relevant Housing Associations which may have proposed the rent increase to say in our strongest terms that this increase was not acceptable and request a meeting and urgent representation on this not being acceptable.



The Head of Community Development agreed that suggestion by Councillor Monteith would be carried out and a meeting will be organised with the Housing Working group as it was the time to actually do that.

In response to East Timorese advised that this would be actioned as soon as possible and advised members that due to work constraints within her department regarding fuel vouchers this had been not followed up as quickly as first hoped.

Councillor Kerr seconded Councillor Monteith's proposal.

He said that he wished to be associated with Councillor Monteith's comments as it was absolutely ridiculous that when people were in the middle of a global pandemic and families struggling financially, that a Housing Association decides to raise their rents. He felt that this was unacceptable.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith  
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council to write to the relevant Housing Associations which may have proposed the rent increase to say in our strongest terms that this increase was not acceptable and request a meeting. In the meantime, representations to be made immediately on this increase not being acceptable and a duty of care and a public responsibility on affordability and fit for purpose.

Councillor Kerr referred to item D035/21 – Parks & Play Five Year Strategic Plan and sought update on upgrading of equipment at Killen Playpark as he had been approached by residents of the area concerned about the damage to swings, damaged kerbing and other issues which were highlighted regarding safety asked that Council Officers be more forthright on their response and provide an adequate timescale as residents were very concerned about the safety of their children.

He also sought an update on Washingbay Walking Shoreline regarding flooding issue and also if there was any strategy in place to deal with dog fouling on the walkway. He advised that he had met with a community representative and done a lap of the walkway and dismayed to say that over 25 pieces of dog excrement, with representative advising that during the month of January over 50 pieces were lifted. He asked that a more serious attitude be shown towards Washingbay and other areas where there was a high level of concentration of dog fouling.

Councillor Kerr referred to D034/21 – Scoping Studies for Altmore & Cappagh and proposed that a meeting be facilitated between Council, Roads Service, Housing Executive and Electricity Board to try and solve the flooding issues the residents of Altmore View experience after heavy rainfall out their bank entries.

He also referred to Cappagh Main Street and requested that Council organise a meeting with Road Service to discuss the ongoing issue of who is responsible for maintaining and refurbishment of road maintenance issues particularly around the street islands. He stated that there were legacy issues there and Council needed to stand by the residents of Cappagh.

The Head of Parks in referring to Killen Playpark advised that the Council took the safety of children very seriously and this was the case with Killen also. He said that Killen Playpark was identified with the strategy for the investigation for additional age-related play which was being investigated and conducted a survey in relation to available room for that site was a very narrow, long piece of ground with a limited number of play equipment on it. The provision of play equipment depends on having safety zones in and around free pass areas which all come into play with regards to any redesign or additional equipment to be brought onto a site. He said that this was being looked at within the strategy and as there wasn't a timescale within the strategy and this was what the Council were working to, but would undertake to investigate further and bring back further information back to committee. In referring to safety he advised that a seating had been replaced and a number of items were not safety related and were maintenance of axillary items relating to kerbing etc had been noted and would be identified under the maintenance process and would continue to work through issues with the local community.

He referred to Washingbay and stated that officers were aware of persistent dog fouling along the walkway. He said that officers had spoken to community representatives relating to the Gaelic Football club and Muinteach Community Group and Council reacted with making a clean-up which was on record. He said there definitely was an issue relating to dog walking and fouling on the site and felt there was an issue for the wider community to respond to cleaning up after their dog, but there would be more resources being put into the issue with more Council staff being deployed to carry out clean up around that area. It's anticipated that a wraparound campaign would be introduced around a litter campaign and dog fouling as part of a proposed action plan.

The Head of Parks advised that the Washingbay Shoreline Walk has now been inspected which showed erosion and currently waiting on a report on appropriate action to be taken, which is hoped to be done as quickly as possible and in hindsight it was now recognised that the pathway was too close to the Lough resulting in some significant erosion issues. Appropriate costings for the works were now being identified for a permanent solution and hoped within the next few months water levels would remain low so as to not cause any additional erosion.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation in response to issue relating to dog fouling advised that it was anticipated that approximately 50 staff which were to return from furlough would be redeployed to Technical teams to go out and support litter teams across the Parks and other areas of need which would allow for a solution to improve the dog fouling issue.

In relation to Altmore View and Cappagh Public Realm, the Director advised that this would be followed up.

Proposed by Councillor Kerr  
Seconded by Councillor Monteith and

**Resolved** That it be recommended to Council:

- (i) That a meeting be facilitated between Council, Roads Service, Housing Executive and Electricity Board to try and solve the flooding issues the residents of Altmore View experience after heavy rainfall out their bank entries.
- (ii) That a meeting with Road Service be facilitated to discuss the ongoing issue of who is responsible for maintaining and refurbishment of road maintenance issues particularly around the street islands.

Councillor Wilson referred to issue previously raised regarding Open Water Swimming at Ballyronan and said that this now came under the government body of Swim Ireland and would do no harm to contact them around safety issues.

Councillor Burton referred to matter around Mobile Catering Concessions and said that it was her understanding that a tender would be coming out any day now. She said that this was a slow process to get to this stage but felt frustrated that traders were still blatantly operating at Forest Parks when they have been advised to follow the tender process. She felt it was unfair on other Vendors who follow the guidelines on tendering process whilst others proceed to operate regardless. She asked if this left offender's opportunity lesser as she was aware of staff speaking to Vendors advising them to follow the process for them to return the following weekend which was totally unfair on the other traders.

The Head of Parks advised that the tender was almost ready to go out and was currently with procurement with anticipation of it being going out next week and in his opinion the sooner the better. He said that he totally agreed with Councillors sentiments as he was aware of Vendors trading at Brantry but they were not on Council owned land but on private ground, communication was sought by Environmental Health in relation to requirements for inspections and visit the unit to make sure that everything was in place. He advised that these Vendors would be spoken to and advised that respect the procurement process going forward.

The Chief Executive advised that litter was now the epidemic within the pandemic and that Council were doing their utmost to try and deter this through social media platforms. He said that there was now a strategy in place, with a meeting taking place three weeks ago with members to look at options and out of that an action plan would be collated and worked upon. He said that it was encouraging to see such community spirit each weekend by volunteers to go out on a litter picking exercise and in turn these litter champions were commended through Council's social media. He advised that Community Development would be trying to promote grants for such projects going forward.

Councillor Ashton felt that if Vendors refuse to follow the tendering process at Forests or Parks, then they should be advised that they would not be considered in the process as it was unfair to the other Vendors who follow the appropriate guidelines.

The Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation advised that Officers would be liaising with Environmental Health team and if they felt there was a breach then Procurement could be liaised with to discuss options.

## **D055/21 Economic Development Report – OBF1**

Members noted update on key activities as detailed below:

- BT Openreach: Delivering the Broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO) in Mid Ulster

Councillor Clarke referred to BT Openreach and the activity at the moment and felt that there was a lot of misunderstanding amongst the general community on what was going on. He said that in the middle of the Department for the Economy and Fibrus rolling out Project Stratum, there has been a high number of scam phone calls and emails being sent to consumers on all sort of prices and deals and during discussions with people they were receiving all this information and were totally confused. He felt that clarification was needed and referred to correspondence from BT leading to people in the Stratum programme could take up the BT offer and leave them outside Project Stratum. He suggested that some sort of a media campaign be identified to explain and simplify the difficulties which were in front of consumers who were not able to avail of decent broadband service at the minute.

The Head of Economic Development concurred with member's comments on BT Openreach USO which they had brought forward at this time which has caused some confusion in the midst of Project Stratum. She advised that the Broadband Working Group had recommended that this matter be brought to Members attention to raise awareness that 2873 premises in Mid Ulster are receiving correspondence from BT Openreach on Universal Service Obligation (USO), indicating that every home and business has the legal right to request that BT provide a 'decent' broadband service, defined as 10 mbps download speed and 1mpbs upload. BT Openreach advise in their letter that they are likely to meet the cost if it is lower than £3,400 per premise and if more than that, BT Openreach will provide the customer with the option of paying the difference. The BT service upgrade works are estimated to take place within 12 months.

The Head of Economic Development advised that DfE and Fibrus are rolling out Project Stratum to households and businesses in Mid Ulster on their "white postcode list", identified as not currently receiving a 30mbps broadband service, whilst concurrently BT Openreach are contacting residents and businesses to advise of their USO upgrade offer. She added that it is important residents and businesses choose carefully whether to opt for the short term gain of availing of the 'wireless option' under the Broadband USO, as doing so may result in them being removed from Project Statum's white postcode list, where they may be deemed eligible to receive a long term future proofed fibre broadband solution.

The Head of Economic Development concluded by saying that DfE and BT Openreach have the right to rollout their individual solutions and ultimately it will come down to customer choice. However, she indicated before doing so, it is important that residents and businesses have all the facts and said it was important Members are aware of this, should any business or resident contact them.

*Councillor Kerr declared an interest as his employer carried out work for Project Stratum and BT Openreach.*

The Chair stated that it was good for this to be brought to members' attention tonight and was confident that Broadband Working Group would be working on it.

- Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes - 07.12.20
- Virtual NI Apprenticeship Week (NIAW 2021) – 26-30 April 2021

*Live broadcast ended at 8.45 pm.*

### **Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business**

Proposed by Councillor Black  
Seconded by Councillor Burton and

**Resolved** In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst Members consider items D056/21 to D057/21.

#### **Matters for Decision**

D056/21 Catering Provision at Seamus Heaney HomePlace

#### **Matters for Information**

D057/21 Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 11 February 2021.

### **D058/21 Duration of Meeting**

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and concluded at 8.53 pm.

CHAIR \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_