

**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council
held on Thursday 29 October 2020 in the Council Offices, Circular Road,
Dungannon and by Virtual Means**

Members Present

Councillor Black

Councillors Ashton*, Burton*, Corry*, Elattar*, Kerr*,
Hughes*, Kearney*, McNamee* Milne* Molloy, Monteith*

**Officers in
Attendance**

Mr Adrian McCreesh, Director of Business & Communities**
Ms Campbell, Director of Leisure & Outdoor Recreation
Ms Linney, Head of Community Development**
Mr McKeown, ICT Support
Ms Grogan, Democratic Services Officer

**Others in
Attendance**

Councillor Mallaghan
Councillor S McAleer***
Councillor S McGuigan***

Deputations

Causeway and Mid-Ulster Women's Aid***
Mutual Bank Campaign***
All Ireland Health Campaign***
East Timorese Community Group

* 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.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor McNamee (attended virtually), the Deputy Chair, Councillor Black took the Chair.

The Chair, Councillor Black welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor Black 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.

D168/20 Apologies

None.

D169/20 Declarations of Interest

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

D170/20 Chair's Business

The Chair advised that questions would be taken after each completed presentation.

D171/20 Causeway and Mid-Ulster Women's Aid

The Chair welcomed to the committee Ms Sharon Burnett and Ms Maggie Bryson from Causeway & Mid Ulster Women's Aid and invited them to make their presentation.

Ms Burnett advised members that in 2015-16 7.4% of women stayed within their refuge for over 4 months and this has now risen to 24.9% in 2019-20. The increased duration of stay equals reduced ability to settle women and children in the community and to move new women and children in. In 2019-20 26.5% of all women refused access to refuge in Northern Ireland because the refuge was full relate specifically to Cookstown refuge. This has risen from 16.1% in 2015-16.

She updated the committee on the progress to date: Lease for 99 years from Mid Ulster District Council; Meeting with Minister for Communities to advocate for support based on Mid Ulster need; Investigation into Housing Association partnership. (Appendix 1).

The Chair thanked Ms Burnett for her impressive presentation and said that he was in no doubt that the corona virus pandemic had made this more challenging and aspirates the challenges which is faced unfortunately by the victims of domestic violence.

The Chair thanked Ms Burnett for her presentation and said that he had a few questions to ask.

The Chair noted comments regarding numbers rising from 7% in Women's Aid care over a 4 month period to 25% and asked if there was any particular reason for this significant increase and asked if she knew why there was a driving force behind this.

He also raised issues around Covid-19 and enquired what impact or if any were on the way services were being delivered and the impact on the people which were presenting to Women's Aid seeking help.

Ms Burnett in referring to the increase in time that women and children stay in refuge, stated that this was something that was happening all over Northern Ireland in the last number of years in every refuge, but the biggest issue was Mid Ulster as it had the most significant rise in the length of stay. She said that the main issue was the availability of accommodation as housing executive houses, housing association and private rental which were the hardest to acquire.

She stated that the impact of Covid-19 resulted in a decrease of referrals during lockdown but there was a significant spike 2 weeks before lockdown as every statutory agency and community association were making sure referrals were made as they were concerned about families they were in contact with and what may happen. She said that for 2 months Women's Aid was very quiet because women were feeling very isolated being at home with a perpetrator as these people had total control over their partners making sure any opportunities for the victim to get out and seek help was

gone. When the restrictions were lifted this resulted in a significant increase of women contacting the organisation seeking help.

Ms Burnett advised that women which were being supported were always looked after and supported through phone calls, additional home safety equipment and other additional responsibilities. The impact on victims during lockdown was very hard due to the fact they could not contact support workers or Women's Aid with many having to call the crisis incidents through the PSNI which was a very different experience for many victims. She stated that Women's Aid did not cold call as the group needed to be sure that women were safe to pick up the phone, but discovered more ingenious ways of making contact with vulnerable women in order to protect them.

The Chair thanked Ms Burnett for her impressive presentation and asked for any members comments.

Councillor Elattar thanked Ms Burnett for her very informative presentation. She enquired where the high number of women which were being turned away go to and asked if they were going into other accommodation, floating support or what was the situation. She also wished the organisation well in their new project and asked if the 24 new houses were for permanent accommodation for women or were they temporary like a stepping stone onto something else for people.

Ms Burnett advised that if a woman contacts Women's Aid and needs refuge and no space available, they are not turned away but the group would work with that person to access available accommodation throughout the region quickly as they had a system to allow this with the hope that the options available would be suitable for her. If the victim has been moved away from her local area and a space becomes available nearer her home, then she can be relocated back to her local area. If there is no available refuge accommodation, Women's Aid will liaise with the NIHE to try and source emergency accommodation which is always a difficult situation as housing is scarce, but had to say that the Housing Executive has been as great asset to work with over her last 20 years regarding homelessness and domestic violence. She advised that it was particularly hard for the Housing Executive to provide local housing as very little is available through the pandemic and it may be the situation of a person having to travel a lot of miles to B&B accommodation to seek safety.

Ms Burnett advised that the most difficult situation was when a mother came in with her children and may not be fortunate in securing local accommodation and as she does not want to move her children from their school and from their friends, she may decide to suffer the consequences and return back to the perpetrator due to the needs of her children.

She said that the new accommodation was meant to be a move on accommodation so there was a flow through, but the reality was that it takes a lot longer to get social housing and longer again for private rental due to the high cost associated with it.

Councillor Burton advised that as a PCSP member she received statistics for the Mid Ulster area on a regular basis and confirmed that the PCSP members were keeping a very close eye and for her especially as a woman and as a mother. She enquired if there was support there for mothers who find themselves in a volatile situation as she

had received statistics on women who had been murdered during the Covid pandemic which was a really scary position to be in for a lot of women and children especially being brought up in that situation. In the past the PSNI and Crime Prevention Officers provided safe rooms within the victim's homes and the PCSP wanted people to know that their doors were always open and to work together more than the current situation allows and wished Ms Burnett well in their new project.

Ms Burnett said that Women's Aid works closely with Crime Prevention Officers and is something the organisation always utilises and uses for referrals. She said that group have an inability to receive funds they always try and get a stock of home safety equipment which was more domestic violence specific i.e. door stops which sets of an alarm is the door is being kicked in, item hanging on door handle if falls to floor will set off an alarm, but agreed that they were fortunate to have a good working relationship with Crime Prevention Officers to make sure victims get what they need to feel secure and protected. She said that sometimes Crime Prevention Officers come into contact with some victims which haven't worked with Women's Aid before and may not want to get involved with the group, but work can be done through these Officers to liaise with the group so the appropriate support and measures are provided to the victim.

In referring to safety rooms, she said that this was known as the Sanctuary Scheme and this can still be something that can be done, but is not done on a very regular basis as it can be extremely high risk, but does happen on rare occasions. She said that they were currently working with the Department for Communities in supporting people on a whole review to see how they could spread out the Sanctuary Scheme as a means of making sure that victims of domestic violence can remain in her own home rather than leaving, although this was in the initial stages the Department is really committed, but there are issues which need to be addressed like accommodation being allocated outside Housing Executive remit etc. but anticipated that this would be something that would become available in the future.

Councillor Monteith thanked Ms Burnett for her presentation and welcome Ms Bryson to the meeting and to pay tribute to the hard work which was carried out by the group in the past. He said that the group's work was second to none and a complete asset to our community and had a strong working relationship with the Dungannon area. He also paid tribute to the group in their working during the Covid response in the area which was to their own personal cost and their working was a credit to the organisation and area.

He said that he had been involved in community work in Dungannon and working with young teenage girls through Youth Services with youth workers delivering projects like health relationships and help in alerting them to the early signs of cohesive relationships. He said that he was aware that this was not a uniform measure within schools and youth clubs in delivering such programmes and would encourage this Council to push this through so this can become mainstream and part of the school curriculum as this was education for life. He said that he would be interested to hear the thoughts of Ms Burnett and Ms Bryson as this was vital as people were in immediate crisis now but there was a need to work with young girls so they were aware of the early signs of such abuse.

Ms Burnett thanked Councillor Monteith for this kind words and said that she was very lucky to inherit such a good team but couldn't take the credit for Mid Ulster as this was down to the previous CEO and their staff who carried out this invaluable work. She said that Women's Aid had been delivering the Healthy Relationship Programme in schools with social guardian training being provided by teachers in Primary Schools which allowed children to identify emotions; unhappy, sad, afraid, anxiety and who they could talk to etc. and this had been rolled out across by the Department of Education and each primary school across Northern Ireland in the last 5 to 6 years with school staff being trained on the rolling out of the programme. She said that she would like to see this programme being rolled out in secondary schools on Healthy Relationships, in terms of what is a healthy relationship and where a person can go to for help but funding was an issue and not consistent as the funding may only allow for 6 months and just some particular schools within Mid Ulster and Causeway areas. She said that this would be a fantastic opportunity to educate secondary school pupils as it was an invaluable measure preparing them for future.

The Chair advised that Councillor Monteith had raised some very good points around the educational aspects of it and would agree that it was a very important piece of work going forward and enquired if Councillor Monteith wished to make this a proposal that Council Officers sit down and reach out to Women's Aid to see if there is anything to be done is trying to move the Healthy Relationship Programme forward.

Councillor Monteith said that he would be happy to make this a proposal as he agreed with it wholeheartedly.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that officers liaise with Women's Aid to see if anything can be achieved in trying to progress the Healthy Relationship programme in schools.

Ms Bryson advised that before Ms Burnett took on her role as Chief Executive, the Healthy Relationship programme was delivered the last 5 years to 16 secondary schools in Mid Ulster area and before that it was delivered in the Cookstown area through the support of the PCSP and their support continues which Ms Burnett and Councillor Monteith may not be aware of this. She said that year on year the Council had provided funding to carry out the programme but unfortunately due to the pandemic it wasn't delivered this year even though funding was there and wanted to thank the Council for their continued support along with the land for the proposed new accommodation.

Councillor Monteith stated that it was important that the Healthy Relationship programme becomes a mainstream part of the educational curriculum as it was equally important as Maths and English in a child's education and should not be the case where there was funding there or not as these were skills for life and that the Education authority should be looking at making this part of the curriculum.

Councillor Molloy said that he was interested to hear comments around the issue of women being able to stay in their own home after an incident instead of relocating to another house due to domestic abuse and felt that this was something the Council could lobby the DoJ to make moves on this so it goes to legislation.

Ms Burnett advised that while there was a need for refuge accommodation, it is essentially the victim who leaves the house after a serious domestic violence incident and this is not something that Women's Aid wishes to see as they should be the ones which remain in their own home or return safely as soon as possible but this is the way the system is set up. She said if a PSNI Officer comes across a person which is at serious risk then it is up to that officer to make sure that woman is moved into refuge, but Women's Aid preferred option was to return the victim to her own home if was safe but this was not always the case. She said that Women's Aid would be fully supportive of returning women to their homes if this could be done safely and have the perpetrator removed but this is not always the case just because a woman reports domestic violence and ends the relationship, prolonged abuse can still occur, but it is still a string in the bow in response to the needs of victims and making sure that children are safe and settled within their own surroundings and would be more than willing to work with the Council to see if this could be investigated as this would be the preferred option.

The Chair enquired if there was anything that he wished for the Council to do now or could it form part of the conversation between Women's Aid and Officers and an action to follow on the back of that.

Councillor Molloy agreed that this could be something that could be brought forward as part of the discussion and some work done in forming some sort of a motion to be forwarded to the DoJ.

Councillor Black advised that it was a very useful discussion and thanked everyone for their input tonight. He said that it was encouraging to hear that the Council had supported the organisation and hoped that this continued going forward.

The representatives of Women's Aid left the meeting at 7.40 pm.

D172/20 Mutual Bank Campaign

The Chair welcomed to the committee Dr Bridget Meehan from Mutual Bank Campaign and invited her to make her presentation.

Dr Meehan advised that a Mutual Regional Bank was:

- An alternative approach to banking as people know it
- Moves away from the privatised system that exists now
- Moves towards a democratised system that gives each of us a say in how our money can be used for our benefit and the benefit of our region

She said that the Campaign have: An Advisory Committee to take the bank through the licensing and development stages; Registered the Northern Mutual with the FCA;

Anticipated to have a business case completed by the end of the year – to present in January. (Appendix 2).

The Chair thanked Dr Meehan for her presentation and said that he had a few questions relating to the overhead slides.

He said that on the slide it showed that how the Mutual Bank would work in practice, on the first slide it showed how a conventional bank worked with a lot of investment going on outside the region, like property and shares which comes back to the customer who deposited money into their accounts and asked if this was part of the model in the Mutual Bank Campaign. He asked if this model allowed for a certain amount of interest to be earned for those who deposited their money within the Mutual Bank.

He also referred to businesses, micro-businesses and social enterprises within the area and asked if this was solely who the Mutual Bank would support or was it open to other organisations within the organisation or other types of business as well.

Dr Meehan stated that when High Street Bank invests and tries to make money and a return, this is not for the account holder but for shareholders as the banks were profit driven and profits not being shared amongst loyal customers but to shareholders and this was the core of what banks must do and answers to its shareholders. She said that the Mutual Bank model changes that because there are no shareholders anyone who wishes to open an account with their bank will become a member and can buy a share for £15 and if someone wishes to buy 100 shares then a return would be provided when it was worked out. She said although Mutual Bank was not profit driven it would still like to make money and would be recycled back into the region and would be shared with the members and would be making enough profit to pay the bills and keep the whole enterprise afloat. She advised that this was the motivation for the Mutual Bank which was completely different to the High Street banks motivation.

In referring to the Chair's query regarding businesses, micro-businesses and social enterprises, Dr Meehan advised that it was going to be like any bank at the minute and if any business wished to do business with it like lending, overdraft and get a current account and this can be achieved if they reside or belong to the region in some way. She said that there was a market for this type of banking as conventional banks were only interested in big companies and not interested in sole traders or small businesses or any other kind of small enterprise which are not being supported by the banking sector. She advised that the Mutual Bank was for everyone who wanted to bank with the group.

Councillor Kearney advised that the Mutual Bank Campaign was very similar to the workings of the Credit Union and was good to see this kind of bank opening and maybe going forwards may look into Post Office opportunities. He asked how the bank would be controlled, in terms of Directors and how accessible would it be to the people in need or haven't got broadband and not access to banks.

Dr Meehan stated that the board was going to be like a 2 tier system as people need to understand banking and have expertise, but the board would be elected by the members and can be volunteers similar to the Credit Union to have that scrutiny and

accountability. She said that the people with the banking experience were there to provide information to board members who were elected as those would be the people who make the decisions as this model had a lot of ethos of the Credit Unions, but it is a bank. She said that people would be getting everything that you would get from a bank but with a Credit Union ethos.

In referring to Councillor Kearney query regarding broadband issues and little access to banks, Dr Meehan agreed that some people do have little access to broadband and can see where there are more branches of banks closing and the closure of ATMs and it is hoped that the Mutual Bank would address these issues. She said that all these major banking authorities were profit driven and if they think they are going to lose money and make savings by closing branches then this is what they will do regardless of their customers' needs. She said that the group's business case model allowed for 17 branches and automated facilities that allows a person to do all their banking if they don't have broadband or online if they cannot speak to anyone and this was done through a virtual screen where you can contact a member of staff at another branch with any concerns or information which may be required.

She stated that technology seems to be the way forward and this saves time queuing in branches but if something goes wrong with the online facility then this would not be good enough and there was a need to speak to someone that can be trusted. High Street banks make decisions centrally and when a person joins the Mutual Bank it would be done locally and not a centralised services with people being made feel very welcome and felt that this was the system which was missing for a long time.

The Chair thanked Dr Meehan for her great presentation and said that it was very thought provoking and wished her well in the future.

Dr Meehan left the meeting at 8.06 pm.

D173/20 All Ireland Health Campaign

The Chair welcomed to the committee Mr Conor Redding from All Ireland Health Campaign and invited him to make his presentation.

Mr Redding referred to the crisis of Covid and stated that the early stages of the pandemic saw hospitals across the island on verge of being overwhelmed and this was not just the result of an exceptional set of circumstances. Covid-19 was the perfect storm that highlighted long running deficiencies in healthcare systems with the HSE and NHS now operating in state of "permanent crisis" – shortages of beds, longer waiting times and understaffing. In the South, potential for crisis was so great that the state was forced to take control of private hospital capacity, with some private capacity now being used in the North too. Since then very little has been done to increase capacity in the long term sense. (Appendix 3).

The Chair thanked Mr Redding for his presentation and said that he had made some good points particularly around the NHS and how people were lucky here in Northern Ireland to benefit from that system and although it wasn't perfect there was a commitment from the Northern Ireland Executive to look at reform and with the Bengoa

report being brought forward. He said that in the past there was a deputation from the Northern Trust which showed some of the actions which were beginning to happen to move that process forward, but due to the pandemic things were put on hold but would be confident that there would be light at the end of the tunnel that will allow that process to come to fruition.

Councillor Monteith commended Mr Redding on his impressive presentation and agreed that people up here had a lot of emotional attachment to the NHS which was rightly so, but felt that it was a shadow of what it was envisaged to be due to underfunding and being run down over the years. He said that it would shock people if they knew the true extent of privatisation which actually existed within the NHS and the procurement of services, care services and social services and the outworking's of this was seen during the pandemic we were currently in. People can see the outworking through the lack of investment by which there was less capacity in ICU in March and April and felt that it was sensible for an all-Ireland approach and there was no reason why and Island of this size in Western Europe cannot properly fund an all-Ireland healthcare service which would be free at the point of delivery for all citizens because it does not exist in the 6 counties here and the other 26 counties, then this was the reality. He said that he became aware today of a gentleman having an emergency MRI for a trapped nerve, he's a lorry driver and had to stop work and was on the red flag referral for an appointment with the consultant, he rang the Consultant's secretary and was told it would be 4½ years before he could be seen by the Consultant. He stated that this was not an NHS that was functioning for the citizens of the area as the constituent had to go and pay to see the exact same Consultant and he can be seen within the next 3 weeks. Whilst the NHS can be seen as a great ideal, the reality on the ground for the ordinary people was that it wasn't envisaged to be what it was supposed to be and it was time for a new approach in bringing back free healthcare for all and would have no problem in proposing that Mid Ulster District Council fully support the campaign for a national health service for all the citizens in Ireland.

Councillor Kerr said that he fully supported Councillor Monteith's proposal and stated that he fully supported Mr Redding's campaign as the National Health Service was a fantastic aspiration and thought, but unfortunately there was a large degree of privatisation existing regarding healthcare. He referred to the documentary about the Dirty War in the NHS where there has been a campaign by the Tory Leaders and New Labour over the last 40 years to basically dismantle the NHS and make the NHS more reliant on privatisation. Within the documentary it outlined the first privatised hospital in England as being a disaster where managers were pressured by senior management into kicking patients out and when these managers raised concerns about the patients being too ill, they were told it didn't matter as long as more people were admitted for money. For the size of Ireland there should be adequate one Ireland healthcare system to deal with the pandemic successfully as there were overlaps on timescales etc. as this was the case regarding New Zealand who dealt with the pandemic very successfully.

Councillor Kerr said that Healthcare workers needed to be treated fairly and was disgraceful that the Tory government voted against a pay rise for these invaluable workers and no point going out to clap when they were not getting the recognition they truly deserve for putting themselves at risk during this pandemic to help others.

The Chair said that although the system in place here was not perfect, it was important that people don't lose sight of what we have and the benefit it gives to everybody that lives here.

He enquired if the NHS was something the people of the Republic of Ireland looked upon somewhat with a degree of jealousy on what we have here compared to what currently operates there. He enquired what the response was from the Republic of Ireland government to this initiative of an all-Ireland healthcare approach as a huge tranche of the funding would have to come to move this campaign forward.

Mr Redding said that he wished to thank Councillors Monteith and Kerr for putting their response forward.

Mr Redding said that there wasn't so much to say that people were jealous, but more admiration for the NHS and the principle of the NHS and stated that the points previously made by Councillors Monteith and Kerr stand and although the staff were amazing, unfortunately they cannot provide the quality of care the NHS would like to provide and the quality of care that the people deserve.

In referring to funding, he agreed that the Southern government should pay the majority of what would be required as the majority of the people live in the South. He felt that it should be also funded by progressive taxation as there was a lot wealth on this Island. He said that similar to the Bengoa report there was a process in the South called Slaintecare report which included a cross party committee which had a lot of plausible aims but since the publication it had been sitting on the shelf and no political will to bring forward what was recommended, but the ultimate would be a universal healthcare system. He said that he concurred with Councillor Kerr's comments regarding the pandemic and said that he was an Immunology PHD student himself and would say that without certainty that people should all be treated as one as this was a pandemic and not about politics, borders or identities and the virus didn't stop at the border and there was a need for cross border cooperation.

In response to the Chair query regarding engagement with the Republic of Ireland government, Mr Redding advised that there had been no formal engagement to date as this was a new campaign but they were trying to build support for the idea and when there was enough support for the idea then the government will have to acknowledge it. He said that several political parties in the South had already endorsed the campaign and two Council's in the North had backed the campaign and have supported what they have asked for. He stated that the more support that was generated for the campaign, the more the Southern government would have to address it but would anticipate that they wouldn't like the idea as it would require greater investment. He said that in the South people have to pay a lot for their healthcare which was an ineffective system because of the 2 tier nature and would be confident that it would be hugely popular with the people but not with the government yet.

Councillor Molloy thanked Mr Redding for his presentation and agreed that it doesn't make any sense to have a divided system in health, tourism and energy and that a joined approach would work a lot better. He referred to Regional Centres of Excellence in relation to heart specialism in Dublin and asked for his thoughts on that and whether

there should be a Regional Centre of Excellence for Cancer care and various other treatments.

Mr Redding said that the Regional Centre of Excellence was just a good example of that but unfortunately the way that they were being configured at the minute it means that people have to travel huge distances to access the best of care but this doesn't mean that this shouldn't substitute for the best localised healthcare. He said that some hospitals in the South were losing some of their services like A&E etc. and felt that this was unnecessary as there was a need for local health care also.

Proposed by Councillor Monteith
Seconded by Councillor Kerr and

That it be recommended to the Council to support the campaign for an All-Ireland National Healthcare Service.

Councillor Ashton asked that the paper be circulated to members in advance of the next meeting so members have a chance to look at it with a decision being brought forward to the next committee meeting.

Councillor Monteith stated that he had no issue with Councillor Ashton's request as long as it was agreed in principle.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to agree in principle to support the campaign for an All-Ireland National Healthcare Service. The matter to be brought to the next Development Committee meeting for decision once members had an opportunity to read the report.

The Chair thanked Mr Redding for this presentation and he left the meeting at 8.36 pm.

D174/20 East Timorese Community Group

The Chair welcomed to the committee Mr Felix De Jesus from East Timorese Community Group and invited him to make his presentation.

Mr De Jesus advised that TAIS was officially launched on 21st September 2019. It was a non-profit community association with charity ethos which covers electoral words of Mid Ulster, Armagh and Belfast. The organisation promotes identity, advocacy, diversity and inclusion. (Appendix 4).

He said that TAIS NI offers:

- Information
- Signposting
- Education
- Research
- Social Events
- Fundraising
- Bilingual Service
- Networking

The Chair thanked Mr De Jesus for his presentation and stated that it was evident the good work which was being carried out with other communities which was good to see.

Councillor Molloy advised that the East Timorese Community had provided a great addition to the workforce in the area and would commend their involvement in cultural events within the community like St. Patrick Day and the Hill of The O'Neill festivities. He wanted Mr De Jesus to know that the East Timorese Community were very much appreciated in the community and thanked them for that. Regarding the work the group do and Mr De Jesus pulling the community together in a cohesive unit can only be a good thing and get themselves into a unit which can engage with Council and other bodies and this has be fully appreciated.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy

That the request be brought back to the Development Committee for decision but in the meantime Officers with the group on what help and assistance can be provided through possibly the Good Relations programme or any other programme to provide support and said that it would be useful for a group meeting to be set up to progress this.

The Chair concurred with Councillor Molloy and said that it would be useful for Officers to sit down with the group to see what avenues can be explored and what assistance that can be given by Council and support them in their endeavours.

Seconded by Councillor Monteith

To support Councillor Molloy's proposal.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that this be brought back to the next Development Committee and that Council Officers liaise with the group on possible funding opportunities which may be available to progress this matter.

Councillor Monteith said that he would be happy to second Councillor Molloy's proposal as the East Timorese were very forthcoming in becoming involved with many initiatives in Dungannon town like St. Patrick's Day events and also within his own club, Thomas Clarke's GAA where children have played and now some of their own children are involved with the club and when Thomas Clarke's won the championship, there was nobody more pleased than the East Timorese community and the club was very proud of that.

He said that he wished to make another proposal in relation to concerns around consular rights and passports etc. but there were also major issues around housing and the conditions associated with that not just for East Timorese people but for other nationalities also which a lot of Irish people wouldn't live in. He proposed to set up a workshop for whichever Councillors wish to attend with Mr De Jesus and his team on issues around housing, workers rights or any other concerns that this may arise. He said that meetings could be done virtually or by writing letters and campaigning on their behalf as a Council as the physical aspect of things may have to wait. He said that this would be very important due to some conditions these people are living though and up

to Council to protect our citizens as no Irish people would live in the conditions that they were expected to live in.

The Chair advised that he was aware of the first proposal and asked if Councillor Monteith proposal could be incorporated into Councillor Molloy's proposal and if the two members would be in agreement with that.

Councillor Monteith said that he would have no issues with that as long as Council Officers liaise with Mr De Jesus and his team beforehand as it was important that these issues were addressed.

The Chair advised that the proposal was being amended so that emphasis be placed on Officers to liaise with Mr De Jesus and his team on issues of concern as a matter of urgency.

Amended Proposal

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that this be brought back to the next Development Committee and that Council Officers liaise with the group on possible funding opportunities which may be available to progress this matter. Officers reach out to Mr De Jesus and his team on other areas of concerns they may have as a matter of urgency.

Councillor Kerr thanked Mr De Jesus for this presentation and said that he was looking forward to working with his organisation on behalf of the Council to enhance the Mid Ulster area.

Councillor Ashton enquired if there were any recent visits by the Consulate as in previous years and asked if this was something that the East Timorese Community reached out to due to Brexit coming up as there was some concerns from communities and asked if this could also be pursued in the coming months.

Mr De Jesus advised that there had been communication with the Consulate due to concerns around passports and settlement status within his community as passports were out of date. He stated that that his colleagues had raised this and with the help of Michelle Gildernew MP there was a team sent over last December for 3 consecutive days to try and address the matter, these people were due to come back in March but this didn't materialise due to the Corona virus pandemic. He said that people within his community were sitting with passports which were out of date and were really concerned about their future as was the case for some other nationalities like the Portuguese who were also sitting without status and concerned about non-renewal of passports.

He said that it was important to speak on behalf of these people and try and help these families with their immigration status.

The Chair advised Mr De Jesus that the Council would help in any way they could to try and help his community.

Mr De Jesus said that his community would be more than grateful for the Council's help on these important matters like dealing with the Consulate to make things happen quickly on behalf of those people.

The Chair advised that these matters of concern would be picked up by Officers and would be in contact to set up a meeting and was happy with what was proposed at tonight's meeting.

The chair thanked Mr De Jesus for this presentation and he left the meeting at 9.14 pm.

D175/20 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and ended at 9.15 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____