

**Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council
held on Thursday 2 September 2021 in the Council Offices, Circular Road,
Dungannon and by Virtual Means**

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| Members Present | Councillor Molloy, Chair Councillors Black, Burton, Clarke*, Corry*, Cuddy*, Doris*, Kerr*, Milne*, Quinn* |
| Officers in Attendance | Ms Campbell, Director of Leisure & Outdoor Recreation Ms Linney, Head of Community Development** Ms Grogan, Democratic Services Officer |
| Others in | Councillor S McGuigan* |
| | Deputations Blackwater Community Barge For You Charity, Dungannon Naomh Colum Cille GAA |

* 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 Molloy welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor Molloy 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.

D128/21 Apologies

Councillor Ashton, Elattar, Monteith.

D129/21 Declarations of Interest

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

D130/21 Chair's Business

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

D131/21 Blackwater Community Barge

The Chair welcomed to the committee Mr Brian MacAuley, Mr Conor Mallon and Mr Andrew Trotter, representatives from Blackwater Community Barge and invited them to make their presentation.

The representatives thanked members for giving him the opportunity to present to the committee the Blackwater Community Barge Project (appendix 1).

They provided a brief overview and outlined the attraction of the Blackwater River which included:

- Heritage – The Argory, Coalisland Canal, Ulster Canal, Moy and Blackwatertown, Verners and Bonds, GNR Railway, The Vikings, Clonmore Shrine, Eel Fishing on Lough Neagh and Coney Island
- Natural History – Birds, Flora and Fauna, Insects
- Leisure – Fishing, Boating Canoeing and Walking

The Chair thanked the representatives for their impressive presentation and stated that the Blackwater River was something very close to his heart as he had grown up very close to it.

Councillor Doris thanked the representatives for their presentation and said that she was really glad to see this being brought to this committee tonight and encouraged any of the Councillors who planned a boat trip to go ahead and stated that she would certainly be in contact with the group. She advised that she had been down at the site not so long ago with the Chief Executive and Head of Tourism to see the entry at the barmouth at Lough Neagh which resembled a wall being built to stop access into it and felt that this was very sad as there were a lot of boat owners who had indicated that it was easier to put their boats on the Lakes of Fermanagh rather than the Lakes of Lough Neagh because of how bad it was.

She said that it was very hard to see the issues when there was such potential within the area which hasn't been reached and if the Lakes of Kerry was looked at, felt that this was nothing compared to what we have locally. She advised that a motion had been brought to Council a few months ago about securing the bed and soil at Lough Neagh and felt that this project really needed to tie in with it. She commended the group and reassured them that the Council would certainly continue to work hard on this project and said that it was fantastic to see the disability access onto the boats amongst other things as her uncle who was a wheelchair user unfortunately didn't get the chance to see this which would have been fantastic for him, but advised that it was great to see this service now being offered.

Councillor Cuddy advised that he knew the representatives well through his work with the Enterprise Centre and recalled them talking about this project for years. He stated that Mr MacAuley had taken him out on a boat a few weeks ago and he had previously kayaked up and down the Blackwater for a good few years with his daughter and was a world of its own, with the banks being high and whilst paddling up and down and can hear the traffic going from Benburb to Blackwatertown and unreal to think that a few miles away from here there was a complete new world there. He said that he hadn't been out to Lough Neagh yet but certainly the day he went out with Mr MacAuley he was confident that he knew the Blackwater reasonably well, but whilst on the boat the team were able to explain the entrances for the Ulster Canal, Coalisland Canal and other small rivers going in and out which was very interesting and have something going really well. He said it goes to show what a small group of people within the community can do without a serious amount of money and revisit what was our strength

and wealth a hundred years ago. He concurred with Councillor Doris' comments regarding Council becoming more aware of Blackwater and Lough Neagh and felt that it would be important to keep this momentum going.

Councillor Kerr thanked the representatives for their presentation and said that he was glad to see them mention the enhancement of all the bodies of water which was attached to the Blackwater especially the Coalisland Canal. He said that the dredging issue had really come to a head and one of the issues which he had raised regarding the dredging was the barrier of time it took Lough Neagh Rescue to get onto that part of the lough especially if a person got into difficult circumstances as the debris and other stuff which was causing the blockage would result in time delays for Lough Neagh Rescue and its volunteers. He referred to damage to boats the hoped that along with ourselves, ABC and all the relevant stakeholders that this issue could be grabbed by the scruff of the neck and try and get it resolved for once and for all.

The Chair thanked the representatives for their impressive presentation and said that the River Blackwater runs straight up to the Clogher Valley. He said that the group were providing fantastic work and the more people which could access the River and its facilities the better and as a Council working in unison with our neighbours in ABC, that this was the kind of projects this Council wish to develop where we encourage tourism and recreation and where people can get out and about and enjoy their local surroundings and encourage people from afar to come and see what was on offer. He concluded by stating that Officers would be in touch to press on some of the issues raised tonight.

The representatives left the meeting at 7.25 pm.

D132/21 For You Charity, Dungannon

The Chair welcomed to the committee Ms Glena McDowell-Khan from For You Charity and invited her to make her presentation.

Ms McDowell-Khan thanked the committee for allowing her the opportunity to address the meeting tonight and provided a brief overview of the work carried out by Me, You and Them which was a registered charity based in the heart of Dungannon (appendix 2).

She advised that the charity was a social enterprise which reacted to the need within the local area which provided everyday help, ie second-hand furniture items, clothing, mental wellness, foodbank, prepared meals, workshops & training, holistic therapies, befriending service, drop-in centre etc.

For You became a registered charity within 10 months of being established and supported:

- Over 1600 people since For You established in January 2020
- Provided toys for over 1000 children at Christmas
- Delivered over 6000 meals during Covid

MUDC, CFNI, Comic Relief, Halifax and Clothworkers are some of the funders that have invested in For You's work and currently there are over 20 active volunteers delivering services which was massively the organisation were very proud of and achievements to date and the support which was received.

Ms McDowell-Khan outlined the group's intentions for the future:

- To continue to consult with the community
- To create a positive impact in the area
- To work towards sustainability in the area
- Remove stigma in getting help or support
- Being reactive, now was the time to be proactive

The Chair thanked Ms McDowell-Khan for her impressive presentation and said that this was a moderate run down of what the group had achieved over the last while as he was aware of some of the fantastic work in which the group had been engaged in. He felt that 1600 people was well underestimated and the positive impact which the group had made on the community.

Councillor Burton thanked Ms McDowell-Khan for her presentation and said that it was interesting to hear of all the good work which was being carried out locally and delighted to hear that the group had linked in well with the Council to obtain funding and would really encourage her to keep that link going. She said that she would also encourage the group to liaise with Lorraine from COSTA based at President Grant's who quite often seeks funding and may also help the group find trained up Counsellors in dealing with some issues the people which the group are in contact with on the ground. She said that she was aware of how difficult it was when trying to support families and support the elderly through providing meals and having been a bit involved with this during the Covid lockdown, there were times that she had called at some elderly person's home when they were not seeing their extended family as often as they would have normally done. She recalled calling with an elderly lady and 9 times out of 10 when you met her in the past she was a really happy-go-lucky kind of lady, but had lost a child of her family and when Councillor Burton was about to leave her, she felt that the lady was going to go back into the house and not see anyone for the rest of the day and there was a part of her that was afraid to leave her. The lady picked up on Councillor Burton's anxiety about leaving her and she advised that she had lived with this every day and had come to terms with it, but really appreciated someone calling and providing her with a lunch really meant a lot to her.

She commended the work the group were doing and said that there were other agencies out there that would support the group. She advised that she also sat on the PCSP and over lockdown there had also been a lot of issues within families which had to deal with domestic violence and asked that Ms McDowell-Khan get in touch with Officers with that regard to see what support they could provide the group. For each of the 40 Councillors which meet in this Council asked that Ms McDowell-Khan keep in touch with them also to let them know what the group were currently working at as there could be some help and support which could be provided as well and encouraged the group to liaise with COSTA as they do grant trackers and grant finders to support the work in which the group were doing.

She concluded by thanking Ms McDowell-Khan for taking the time to attend the meeting tonight and wished her well for the future.

Councillor S McGuigan thanked Ms McDowell-Khan for her impressive presentation and acknowledged the work the group had done as he knew her well. He said that following on from Councillor Burton's comments, it was now the case of how to broaden and develop the networks as this was the course which was needed. He stated that support was needed from Councillors from those members which know about the group already and was confident that the group had a strong support from them and was good to see that this being spread amongst the remainder of members.

Ms McDowell-Khan said that she appreciated all the support she had received to date from Council.

Councillor Kerr reiterated with previous members comments and advised that he follows the group's work on social media and commended the workload they have done in such a short space of time especially establishing the group in the middle of a pandemic which no-one was prepared for. He said that in a post-Covid society, poverty was only going to get worse, with services and organisations like For You being made very welcome. He referred to the news today that the Tories were going to cut £20 each week from welfare and reading one beneficiary's account stated that it was like practically taking food from his mouth. He advised that a food bank was established in Coalisland to deal with the enormous amount of pressure some families had encountered and now it has been decided to set this up permanently. He hoped that the group would be about for a very long time and commended the group on the very good work that was being carried out.

Councillor Doris commended Ms McDowell-Khan and her group as they had been a lifeline to local people during the most difficult times within their lives and their service was invaluable to some people. She concurred with member's comment regarding putting yourself within a difficult position as there were all types of different situations and may be beneficial linking up with other groups in the area as it was a very heavy burden to carry. She said that she was very interested in comment made regarding working parents and quite often or not there was two parents working where the childcare was putting them over that edge for poverty but on paper they do not qualify for benefits. In relation to mental health said that if a person had an ongoing counselling service that costs £45 to £50 per week to get trauma or something similar and felt that there should be more of a focus on how to help people who are working and under that kind of threshold and not in the position to receive government help. She concluded by saying that the group were doing fantastic help and any help that she could provide please do not hesitate to get in contact and she would do everything she possibly can.

The Chair advised that Ms McDowell-Khan had the support of the Councillors which were at the meeting and had also continued support across the board and anything the Council could do i.e. signposting etc. towards many of the groups to get in touch. He also said that there were various strands of funding available and asked her to keep her ear to the group and keep in touch and wished her continued success in everything that the group were doing.

Ms McDowell-Khan left the meeting at 7.41 pm.

D133/21 Naomh Colmcille GAA

The Chair welcomed to the committee Ms Joanne Canavan, Mr Damien O'Neill and Mr Colm Morgan from Naomh Colmcille GAA and invited him to make her presentation.

The representatives thanked the committee for permitting them the opportunity to present to committee on future plans of their club (appendix 3).

Ms Canavan advised that CLG-CC Naomh Colum Cille Hurling and Camogie Club was established in 1986 and was the only hurling club serving the Coalisland and Clonoe area. The camogie club was established in 2021 due to community feedback and demand.

She said that the club was working in collaboration with community groups to increase community wellbeing and provision of a variety of events to increase inclusion of all members of the community:

- Summer Camps, Yoga, Online Concerts, Halloween events, Irish Language Classes/Events, Cultural Events, Fun Days, Music Classes, Virtual 5km, Walks, Nutrition Sessions and Volunteer Work Schemes within club grounds.

Mr Morgan outlined the future plans for the club were:

- For a multi-use community facility
- Skills arena
- Walkway and flood lights
- Clubrooms made accessible for disabled access and female changing areas

The Chair advised that when capital projects were going to be developed like this, funding was always the stumbling block no matter what community group or enterprise it was. He said that from the presentation he picked up that there was community buy in and this could only be a good thing and a start. He said that it was up to Council and Councillors to signpost, engage and make sure that the group had covered all avenues in regards to what funding streams that may be available i.e. Rural Development, Sport NI, Sports Council etc. and was under no illusion that the group were already doing this work but just on the off change there may be something that falls through the cracks or missed. He stated that there was also renewable funding streams coming on board on a regular basis and the Council would endeavour to make the group aware of those.

Councillor Doris commended the representatives in doing such a fantastic job on providing an oversight on some of the issues in the area. She felt the group were being very modest and have been left behind and constantly fell through the cracks in relation to funding.

Proposed by Councillor Doris

That the relevant Council Officers at their earliest convenience arrange a meeting at the site just to see how dilapidated the place was.

She felt the Hurling Club was asking for very little for the value in which they bring to the community. She said as the Hurling Club was the only one within the community, there was literally lots of children coming on board from newcomer and minority groups etc. as there wasn't anywhere else locally. She felt the first thing to do would be to make the site safe and accessible as this currently wasn't the case and people need to get it into their heads what the issues were down there as the photos show an aspect of it but in reality it was completely different. She said that there was community buy-in and were much more than a Hurling Club and had an awful lot of overheads like sliotars, sticks, helmets etc which other places do not have.

Councillor Kerr seconded Councillor Doris' proposal.

Councillor Kerr said that as far as he was aware there was previous dialogue with Council Officers and wanted to thank the representatives for their impressive presentation.

He referred to previously mentioned comment in the presentation regarding it being a hotbed of activity for young people and said that it was great to see such a huge interest in hurling as it was under appreciated within our County compared to football, as it was our natural heritage in which we should be very proud of.

He said as alluded to earlier in the presentation, volunteers from Naomh Colum Cille worked through the pandemic and assisted the foodbank which was greatly appreciated and was one of the many positive activities that the club carries out. He said that he knew some the members personally and were very passionate Gael goers and GAA members and hoped that going forward that the Council could provide every option on the table for the representatives to realise their ambitions. He stated that this was the only Hurling Club that was predominately in the East Tyrone area and provided for the Coalisland, Brackaville, Derrylaughan, Derrytresk, Brockagh and the whole catchment. He hoped that this was the start of a conversation and in a few years' time we will be seeing Naomh Colum Cille's plans as a reality.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council that the relevant Council Officers at their earliest convenience arrange a meeting at Naomh Colum Cille's site to see how dilapidated the place was.

Councillor S McGuigan wanted to say on behalf of himself and others that the area and the Club itself should be very proud of the work it was doing at present with the struggling resources, but also the fact that this was reflected in the strong support in which they were getting from their area and wished them well in the future.

The Chair thanked the representatives for their impressive presentation and outlining their intentions for the future of the Club and said that the committee wished them well and hoped to see things developing in the near future.

D134/21 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7 pm and ended at 8.05 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____