

MAGHERAFELT DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Proceedings of a Meeting of the Recreation and Tourist Committee of Magherafelt District Council held in the Council Chamber, 50 Ballyronan Road, Magherafelt on Monday 4 November 2002. The meeting commenced at 7.30 p.m.

Present: J A McBride
P McLean
R A Montgomery
S O'Brien
J P O'Neill
G C Shiels

Officials Present: J A McLaughlin (Chief Executive)
T J Johnston (Director of Operations)
M G Browne (Development Officer)
Mrs A Junkin (Chief Executive's Secretary)

The Chief Executive read the notice convening the meeting.

1. **Election of Chairman:**

It was

PROPOSED by Councillor P McLean
Seconded by Councillor J P O'Neill

That Councillor J A McBride be elected as Chairman.

There being no further nominations Councillor J A McBride was elected Chairman.

2. **Election of Vice-Chairman:**

It was

PROPOSED by Councillor P McLean
Seconded by Councillor S O'Brien

That Councillor R A Montgomery be elected Chairman.

There being no further nominations the Chairman declared Councillor R A Montgomery elected as Vice-Chairman.

3. **Proposed development of Ruben's Glen:**

Submitted a letter of offer from the Environment and Heritage Service dated 4 October 2002 regarding the proposed development of Ruben's Glen (Appendix 1).

Mr Browne explained that the Council had applied to the Environment and Heritage Service (Natural Heritage Grant Scheme) for £16,612 towards the development of a scenic walkway at Ruben's Glen. Members would note that the Department had made a conditional offer for the full amount. He said that he had advised the Slieve Gallion Group that the Council was prepared to make them an offer on the strength of this offer. The group was now in the process of making the necessary arrangements as outlined in the letter of offer.

Noted.

Mr Johnston stated that regarding the dispute over ownership of land, Mr John McRobert, Roads Service had clarified that the land did in fact belong to Mr Stewart.

4. **Killynumber Right-of-Way:**

Mr Johnston said that Members would be aware that Killynumber Right-of-way had been on the Agenda since January 2002 and he had hoped to advise Members of progress at this meeting. Unfortunately he had no progress to report. The matter remained with the Council's legal adviser, or to be more accurate, the barrister advising him. The Council's Solicitor had telephoned and written to the barrister, often in Mr Johnston's presence, in an effort to get a response. The last time he telephoned the barrister was on Thursday 29 October, just five working days ago. The Council's Solicitor had advised him that legal opinion could be sought from another barrister but this would delay the process further as he would have to start from scratch. Mr Johnston said that it seemed that the best option was to allow the Solicitor to keep putting pressure on the original barrister until he replied, hopefully before the next Council meeting. Mr Johnston advised the Members that the gates erected at each end of the right-of-way remained in place despite letters from the Council sent on 10 April and 28 May 2002 instructing the landowner to remove them. He also advised that monitoring of the right-of-way continued on a weekly basis and on all occasions when the gates remained closed. In his opinion this constituted an obstruction to the right-of-way. Mr Johnston hoped to be able to advise Members further on the situation at the November meeting of the Council.

Noted.

Councillor J A McBride commented on the "bad blood" between the parties and Councillor R A Montgomery requested that the matter be moved forward as quickly as possible.

5. **Ulster in Bloom Competition 2002 Results:**

Submitted the results and comments from the judges regarding towns and villages entered by the Council in the Ulster in Bloom 2002 competition (Appendix 2)

Mr Johnston pointed out that none of the towns or villages entered from the Magherafelt area featured in the winners list. In defence he said that the Council could not do all the work and that there had to be co-operation from the Department of Rural Development, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the public or a concentrated effort on one or two towns or villages, as was the case with Broughshane or Hillsborough. He noted that both Broughshane and Hillsborough again featured in the winners list. Regarding the judges comments on the towns and villages entered by the Council, Mr Johnston said that he was surprised by the tone of the reports. He felt they were somewhat harsh. They mentioned dull baskets, one-sided grave beds and tubs dotted along inhabited stretches of roads. They also stated that parks need to be redesigned, steep banks needed better management and that even the tubs were the wrong colour. He believed that some of the criticism could be accepted but he felt that the hanging baskets, flowerbeds and tubs were excellent, particularly later in the year. He criticised the competition organisers for judging in late June/July when a number of the beds, etc. had just be planted. He felt it might be necessary to review how to deal with this competition in future years, for example, was the Council spreading its resources too thinly by entering so many towns and villages. He felt the matter required further discussion if the Council hoped to be included in the winners list.

Councillor P McLean spoke of the judges' harsh remarks and stated that they were not bench-marking.

Councillor R A Montgomery referred to the judges' remarks regarding graffiti in a shelter in a public park and where there were no flowers and asked what they had to do with the Ulster in Bloom competition which he thought was about colour and flowers.

Mr Johnston referred to the judges' comments on the co-ordinated watering system in the main thoroughfare in Magherafelt. He advised that the Council did not have such a watering system.

Councillor P McLean enquired if it cost the Council to enter. Mr Johnston replied No.

The Chief Executive said that if the Council were entering the competition it was not going all out to win. If everyone agreed to this then the Council should do the work and forget about entering.

Councillor G C Shields commented that the Council should not ditch what had been achieved and the fact that there was no financial gain was irrelevant.

Councillor Montgomery suggested that the Council should pick out the points and send them to business people and perhaps they would be of use.

Councillor J A McBride described the comments as negative. He suggested that the results could have been better if verges had been cut.

Councillor Shiels said it was the competition judges' job to make constructive comments.

Councillor Montgomery suggested that the Council might consider a competition of its own as well as entering Ulster in Bloom and perhaps there would be more community involvement.

Councillor P McLean suggested leaving entering Ulster in Bloom for a year and monitor it.

Councillor Montgomery felt that we should stay in. Tobermore had won the Best Kept competition on a number of occasions.

It was

PROPOSED by Councillor R A Montgomery
Seconded by Councillor G C Shiels, and agreed to

RECOMMEND: that the Council continue to enter the Ulster in Bloom competition and that a tough letter be sent to the organisers of the competition to ask for an explanation on a number of issues raised by their report.

Councillor J A McBride said that it should be pointed out that Richhill was in County Armagh not in County Antrim.

6. **Touch Screen Information Service at the Bridewell:**

Mr Browne stated that Members would recall a proposal brought to Council some time ago in relation to installing a BIC out of hours touch screen information service booth at the Bridewell. He said that the rationale behind this was to supply visitors and locals with useful tourist related information. Mr Browne stated that this make of touch screen was no longer available and he had considered alternatives.

A number of other Councils were using a company called New Media to provide a touch screen service at their Tourist Information Centres. This make of touch screen had been installed by Cookstown District Council and officers from the Council had visited the Burnavon Centre to assess its potential. The costs of installing this make of touch screen was £2,500 for the equipment and installation and £1700 per year for a maintenance contract. It seemed, however, that the system was not reliable. This was confirmed by Derry City Council who had advised that they had experienced problems with their New Media system.

Mr Browne stressed that the out of hours information was a very important service and one which was required by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board networking membership. He said that given the circumstances with the touch screen from BIC and the unreliable New Media system, he recommended that the Council compile its own Powerpoint presentation which would run in the window of the Bridewell. The presentation would run on a six minutes cycle displaying information on the following:

- Section 1 – Welcome/General Section
- Section 2 – Leisure facilities
- Section 3 – Accommodation
- Section 4 – Attractions
- Section 5 – Information on the Bridewell
- Section 6 – Local events and entertainment
- Section 7 – Restaurants
- Section 8 – Taxis
- Section 9 – Church Service times
- Section 10 – Activities.

Mr Browne said that this information could be compiled by the Bridewell staff and put onto a computer. The screen of the computer would be positioned so that it would be visible through the windows next to the main door. He added that the only cost to the Council would be the cost of a new computer with TFT screen and the building of a cabinet to hold the computer. He estimated that a computer with 17” TFT would cost £850 plus VAT.

Councillor P McLean referred to the New Media system used in Enniskillen which was regularly updated.

Councillor J A McBride commented that any system that showed up the area was an advantage.

Mr Johnston added that the Powerpoint presentation could be the most cost effective method of displaying tourism information.

On consideration it was

PROPOSED by Councillor G C Shiels,
Seconded by Councillor J A McBride, and agreed to

RECOMMEND: that the Council install its own Powerpoint Presentation at the Bridewell Tourism Information Centre as outlined by the Development Officer.

7. **Letters of Request:**

Submitted letter of request from the Chairperson, Portglenone Enterprise Group Ltd. dated 4 September 2002 (Appendix 3).

The letter referred to the lack of signage and the bad state of the present signage in the Clady, Innishrush and Portglenone areas within the Council's area and requesting similar signage to that used when entering Magherafelt for approaches to these three areas.

Mr Johnston advised that it was only recently that the provision of town and village signs had been clearly identified as being a responsibility of the Council. In the past it was thought to be the responsibility of the Department of the Environment, and they in fact, until recently, had erected all of the town and village signs. The first signs erected by the Council was on the approach roads to Magherafelt town. Mr Johnston agreed with the writer of the letter that the signs were tasteful. In view of this he recommended that the Council erect similar signs in Clady, Innishrush and Portglenone areas, but that the Council standardises on this design of sign for towns and villages throughout the District and erect them as the need arose.

Mr Johnston explained that the signs for Magherafelt looked well and really were not very expensive. He quoted a price of £450 for the four signs erected on approach roads to Magherafelt. He stated that the General Purpose and Finance Committee had agreed to his recommendation.

The Chairman, Councillor J A McBride commented that the signs were a bit big.

Councillor R A Montgomery questioned as to who would pay for the signs. A number of towns and villages had already erected signs. He said that in Draperstown Sperrin Metal Products had sponsored the signs.

Mr Johnston agreed that sponsorship could be investigated.

The Chief Executive stated that the sponsorship name on signs should be small and not take away from the main sign.

It was

PROPOSED by Councillor J P O'Neill

Seconded by Councillor R A Montgomery, and agreed to

RECOMMEND: that the Council provide signage for Clady, Innishrush and Portglenone similar to the design of signs used for Magherafelt town.

8. **Petition from Curran Residents:**

Submitted a petition from Curran residents regarding facilities that they believed would enhance the village (Appendix 4).

Mr Johnston stated that the letter contained five requests, two of which applied to the Council. The others would fall into the remit of the Department of the Environment or Department of Rural Development. The first of the two requests concerning the Council was the provision of a play area. He said that members would be aware that the Council's current policy was to refurbish existing play areas on an ongoing electoral area basis, starting with Moyola, then Sperrin and then Magherafelt town.

The Council had at least thirty existing play areas, nine of which had been refurbished, leaving twenty-one. The cost to date was approximately £450,000 and in his opinion, would cost a further £700,000 to £800,000 if all the remainder were refurbished. The officers had found it extremely difficult to reach agreement in dropping any of the existing play areas. He advised that play areas would almost certainly be more expensive to provide, for example, land would be required, caretakers and the provision for ongoing maintenance. He suggested that if the Council provided one, two or even three additional play areas there could be difficulty in refusing others and suggested that these factors should be considered before a decision could be taken on any request.

Mr Johnston stated that the second issue concerning the Council was a request for better floral arrangements, and in particular hanging baskets. He said that the Council's policy was to provide hanging baskets permanently each year in Magherafelt, Maghera and Draperstown as the three major commercial centres and thereafter in towns and villages entered in the Ulster in Bloom competitions. Members would be aware that to accommodate last year's requests for hanging baskets within the existing resources, it was agreed that staff would work overtime to avoid the need to buy additional vans, water bowsers, equipment, etc. and to avoid having to take on additional staff. Mr Johnston stated that he could possibly include Curran within these procedures, but Mr Johnston questioned what would happen if later in the year additional requests were received for hanging baskets. There had to be a point when additional resources would be required. He suggested that if the Council adhered to the current policy a decision on this request should be deferred until a decision was taken on next year's entries in the Ulster in Bloom competitions. If there were no further additional requests the Council could facilitate Curran, on the other hand if there were, additional resources would be required. He felt that this would be an appropriate time to discuss this request, when discussions would be taking place regarding the estimates or striking of the rates.

Mr Johnston stated that before the Committee made any comments on the two requests, he wished to advise that a number of people who had signed the petition were proposing to set up a formally constituted Community Group for Curran village.

In reply to Councillor G C Shiels, Mr Johnston explained that acceptable levels of play areas commenced at £25,000.

He said that the General Purpose and Finance Committee had agreed to recommend that the provision of a new play area in Curran would be considered in a few years time when the refurbishment of existing play areas was more advanced.

Councillor P McLean stated that a programme of work for play areas had been put forward by the Council and change was unlikely to take place. He agreed with the officers continuing with the established consensus.

Mr Johnston also stated that the Council had also to consider refurbishment of toilets which would cost approximately £500,000.

Councillor Shiels stated that in connection with "Ulster in Bloom" something should be done for Curran.

Mr Johnston in reply stated that he could accommodate Curran within the current procedures. If further hanging baskets were required he would need additional resources.

Councillor Shiels commented that providing floral displays was one function of the Council which was appreciated by the community.

Councillor McLean asked when did the Council cross over the threshold?

It was

PROPOSED by Councillor G C Shiels
Seconded by Councillor R A Montgomery, and agreed to

RECOMMEND: that a decision on this request by Curran be deferred until a decision was taken on next year's entry in the Ulster in Bloom competitions and when discussions took place on next year's estimates.

Switch-on of Christmas Lights in Magherafelt:

Mr Browne reported that the Switch-on of Christmas Lights in Magherafelt would commence at 6.30 p.m. on Saturday 30 November 2002. Music would be provided by the Q Radio Network. At 7.00 p.m. the Chairman would welcome all to the event and introduce Mr George Jones of BBC who would entertain the crowd for about twenty minutes. The evening would finish with the Chairman and four children from Kilronan Special School and George Jones switching on the lights at around 7.20 p.m. followed by a fireworks display.

It was also proposed to have street entertainers such as fire breathers, stilt walkers and jugglers entertaining the crowd with cartoon characters handing out sweets to the children and off course Santa Claus.

Noted.

10. **Refurbishment of Play Areas:**

Mr Browne said that as part of the monitoring process the present state of the Council's refurbished play areas was as follows:-

Bellaghy	The caretaker was Mrs O'Boyle, a local resident. There were no problems at this site
Castledawson	The caretaker resigned 8 weeks ago and the facility had been locked since. The play area had suffered a lot of vandalism and had become "a drinking den". The Local Community Group had been contacted but there were no volunteers to act as caretaker.
Tamlaght	The caretaker was Mrs Kirkwood. There were no problems at this site.
Tobermore	Councillor R A Montgomery acted as caretaker. There were a number of incidents whereby the site had been vandalised.
Swatragh	Councillor H E Mullan acted as caretaker
Knockloughrim	The facility had been closed for the past 7 weeks. There was some vandalism at weekends.
Desertmartin	Mrs Pitts was the caretaker. There were still minor problems relating to vandalism
Gulladuff	The caretaker was Mr Seamus MacCormack. There were now no problems. Mr MacCormack was not associated with any Community Group but had still volunteered to act as caretaker for the site.
Magherafelt	This facility was going well. As part of a large complex it was being supervised by the Council's Leisure Department staff.

Discussion took place on the involvement of Community Groups in being responsible for play areas.

Councillor R A Montgomery commented that there were usually only four or five people who were actively involved in any group.

Councillor G C Shiels suggested that the Groups should be told that if vandalism continued then the money would stop.

The Chief Executive advised that the vandalism often occurred during the daytime.

Mr Johnston advised that the General Purpose and Finance Committee had recommended that Council Officers would visit the Community Groups to advise that if they did not provide caretakers, after a six months period the play equipment would be removed from their area.

Members suggested that a period of six months should be given to monitor the situation.

It was

PROPOSED by Councillor J P O'Neill
Seconded by Councillor J A McBride and agreed to

RECOMMEND: that the Council Officers would visit Community Groups to advise them that if they did not provide caretakers, after a period of six months the play equipment would be removed from their area.

11. **Pedestrian Crossing at Meadowbank:**

Mr Johnston advised Members that since the opening of the play area at Meadowbank Recreation Centre large numbers of children and their parents were walking to the facility and most were crossing the road at the entrance to Meadowbank. A number of the parents had requested a controlled pedestrian crossing at that point. Mr Johnston agreed with the parents and recommended that the Council submit the request to the Roads Service.

Members agreed to

RECOMMEND: that the officer be authorised to write on behalf of the Council to Roads Service requesting a pedestrian crossing at the entrance to Meadowbank Recreation Centre.

12. **Queen's Avenue Football Pitch:**

Mr Johnston advised that a number of complaints had been received regarding the misuse of the pitch at Queen's Avenue, Magherafelt. A number of incidents had already been reported to Council.

Residents were particularly unhappy with the ongoing acts of vandalism, disturbance and noise, etc. and were suggesting that the Council fence off the area to prevent these activities taking place. Mr Johnston stated that in his opinion, the only fence which would be effective would be a palisade fence. Such a fence around this pitch alone would cost at least £20,000. To fence the entire area including Sperrin View Play area would cost more. Mr Johnston stated that there was vandalism at most of the Council's pitches and none were fenced off. Mr Johnston felt that if one pitch was fenced off the Council would be setting a precedent and other pitches would have to be fenced off. There were in fact sixteen pitches with major sites such as Meadowbank and Cahore Road which would be extremely expensive to fence off. He suggested that in this case the situation should be further monitored with perhaps Leisure Centre staff liaising with the Police to determine the extent of the problem before deciding on what measures would be appropriate to the level of vandalism that was occurring.

13. **Tobermore United Football Club:**

Mr Johnston stated that that the letter from Tobermore United Football Club wishing to develop their youth programme which would include approximately 100 children of both sexes aged between 6 and 16 years of age (Appendix 5).

However, to make the venture work they were requesting that the Council provide two pitches and training facilities at Tobermore Gold Driving Range. The pitches would be used on Saturday mornings from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the coaching area they request is for approximately twenty children every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening from 7.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Mr Johnston suggested that any proposal that involved 100 children was worthy of consideration and it might be possible to construct two pitches on the Tobermore side of the range. The Council had already approved the other side of the range for golf development. He, however, had a number of concerns regarding the proposal. The first of which was, could football be played, from a health and safety point of view, while the Golf Driving Range was open. It would certainly be in operation during the times proposed by Tobermore United Football Club.

There were also no changing facilities for footballers at the range so he assumed that the children would change at Fortwilliam Park and then cross the main road. It was a very busy road and this was also a concern. Car-parking for both golf and football players and fishermen (bearing in mind the ponds were now leased to Moyola Angling Club) could cause problems. There was also some talk about the provision of lights to facilitate evening training. These issues had to be addressed and Mr Johnston suggested that the Committee agree in principle to the provision of two pitches at Tobermore Golf Driving Range, for general use (if the land was available for two pitches) on the Tobermore Road side of the range.

He felt that the Council could be setting a precedent if the pitches were made available for use only by Tobermore United Football Club, therefore, they should be capable of being booked by any team, including Tobermore United at the normal rate. Tobermore United could of course apply for priority booking. The decision to provide pitches, however, should be subject to the Council being able to resolve the issues and implement satisfactory arrangement that would allow both golf and football to operate satisfactorily at this site.

Mr Johnston advised that for information, the opening hours of the Golf Driving Range were Monday to Friday 5.00 – 10.00 p.m. and Saturday & Sunday 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

It was

PROPOSED by Councillor R A Montgomery
Seconded by Councillor G C Shiels, and agreed to

RECOMMEND: that the Council agree in principle to provide pitches on the Tobermore Road side subject to the Officers obtaining the required clarification and implementing suitable rules and regulations that would allow both golf and football to operate satisfactorily at this site.

14 **Moyola Football Club:**

Mr Johnston stated that the request was somewhat similar to the request by Tobermore United Football Club in that Moyola also proposed to develop youth and ladies soccer (Appendix 6). Moyola, however, were not only requesting the provision of pitches but an exclusive lease of the site at a small fee. This would be after the Council had fenced off the area at a cost of approximately £20,000. They did not mention maintenance such as grass cutting, etc. but suggested that their permanent presence would reduce vandalism.

Mr Johnston said that he could not see how the Council could agree to this request. He advised that Moyola were the main users of the pitch, but it was also used by other teams on a regular basis. If the Council agreed to lease, the fee would be set by the Valuation Office and it might not be a small fee. Mr Johnston believed that it was not feasible to fence off the pitch even if the cost was not a factor. A number of houses could claim rear entrances to their property and the Council could face a legal challenge if the Council fenced them off, and again there was the problem of setting a precedent for other clubs to follow.

Mr Johnston recommended that the Council on this occasion, did not agree to lease the pitch to Moyola Football Club and that it continued to be available to all clubs at the set charge.

It was

PROPOSED by Councillor J P O'Neill,
Seconded by Councillor S O'Brien, and agreed to

RECOMMEND: that the Council do not agree to lease the Boyne Row football pitch to Moyola Football Club and that it continues to be available to all clubs as per Council policy.

15. **Alexander Park Residents Association:**

Submitted letter from the Chairperson, Alexander Park Residents Association dated 25 September 2002 (Appendix 7).

The letter intimated that there was a problem with youths playing football on the street and causing annoyance to tenants. It was stated that within the park there was an area that could be used which would be safer. The Association wished to know if it was insured and if goal posts could be erected.

The second matter concerned the level of dumping within the estate and the Association wondered if there was a possibility of a recycling centre. Mr Eugene Corbett, Northern Ireland Housing Executive stated that there would be no objection and additional grounds would be provided if necessary.

Mr Johnston explained that the first issue which was the erection of goal posts in the old tennis courts area to provide what the Association claimed would be a safer area for children to play football, that is safer than playing on the main road. He suggested that playing football anywhere was safer than playing on the main road but advised that the old tennis courts had a hardcore surface and were surrounded by a metre high wall, having been designed years ago. Mr Johnston stated that in today's world of health and safety, ROSPA guidelines for play areas, insurance claims, etc he could not recommend that this area be used to play football. He accepted that it would be safer than playing on the road but felt that the council could not ignore its responsibilities. At best it may be the lesser of two evils. Mr Johnston pointed out that the Council provided an excellent grass football pitch in Upperlands on the Macknagh Road which could be used by all the children of Upperlands. In his opinion children playing football on main roads had to be the responsibility of parents and he felt that the Council could not solve a parental or even a police issue by neglecting its own responsibilities. He sought the Committee's comments.

It was

PROPOSED by Councillor P McLean,
Seconded by Councillor S O'Neill and agreed to

RECOMMEND: that the Council do not erect goal posts in the tennis courts at Alexander Park, Upperlands.

16. **Castledawson Primary School:**

Submitted a letter from the Principal of Castledawson Primary School dated 9 October 2002 requesting the Council to allow the school to use the pitch at Boyne Row, Castledawson between 3.00 p.m. and 4.00 p.m. at a reduced fee or free of charge (Appendix 8).

On discussion it was considered that if the Council agreed to this request, other requests of a similar nature would be received. Agreement to this request would be setting a precedent and therefore could not be agreed to.

It was

PROPOSED by Councillor J P O'Neill
Seconded by Councillor P H McErlean, and agreed to

RECOMMEND: that the Council do not accede to this request from Castledawson Primary School to reduce the fee for their use of football pitch facilities at Boyne Row, Castledawson.

17. **Permission to erect a summer seat at Polepatrick Cemetery/Park:**

Submitted a request dated 30 September 2002 from Ms Sharon Bigger seeking permission to erect a summer seat in Polepatrick Cemetery in memory of her mother (Appendix 9).

Mr Johnston stated that he could well understand the sentiment behind this request and he did not wish to sound insensitive but he felt that the Council could be setting a precedent, if it agreed to this request. The rules and regulations that controlled memorials in Polepatrick more or less related to the grave itself but they were very specific and designed to allow for a tidy and uniform cemetery. If the Council was to allow additional monuments, such as summer seats, he felt that it could become a major problem and there would almost certainly come a time when the Council would have to refuse such requests.

He recommended that in Polepatrick Cemetery memorials should be confined to the grave itself, as set out in the “Rules and Regulations for Polepatrick Cemetery” and that this recommendation become Council policy for Polepatrick Cemetery.

On consideration it was

PROPOSED by Councillor J P O’Neill,
Seconded by Councillor S O’Brien, and agreed to

RECOMMEND: that the Council decline Miss Bigger’s request and write and explain to her the reason, and that the recommendations of the officer be adopted, that is, memorials in Polepatrick Cemetery be confined to the grave itself and that it become Council policy for Polepatrick Cemetery/park.

18. **Special Olympics 2003:**

Mr Browne stated that at the last meeting of the Special Olympics Host Town Committee the Chief Executive’s letter clarifying the Council’s position regarding funding and the format was discussed.

At the meeting Councillor Montgomery had made the Council’s position very clear. It was stated that Magherafelt District Council would only fund 50% of the overall costs up to a maximum of £20,000, with part of the funding being in kind, that is, for the use of leisure facilities, officers’ time, etc.

The Secretary of the Special Olympics Host Town Committee had noted the comments.

Mr Browne further reported that to date the Committee had raised £3,000 towards the event.

Noted.

19. **Magherafelt Arts Trust’s Programme 2002/2003:**

Mr Browne submitted copies of the Arts Trust’s Autumn Programme for 2002/2003. He said that it was a wide and varied programme and outlined briefly the calendar of events as follows:-

October 2002	Creative Writing Group
November 2002	Puppet Theatre at the Bridewell
13 December 2002	Christmas Carol Event

January 2003	Painting, Photography, Drums, Tin whistle, Guitar and Keyboard lessons
February/March 2003	Writing Competition
14 February 2003	Valentine's Storytelling Event
March 2003	Curriculum based play in the Bridewell
April/May 2003	Arts and Drama workshops
May 2003	Spring Puppet Show

Members commented favourably on the programme.

Noted.

20 **Christmas Tree Grants:**

Councillor R A Montgomery requested that consideration be given to increasing the grant funding given to towns and villages at Christmas to illuminate their communities at the festive season. He said that grants had not increased for some years and would not cover the costs of replacing lights, electricity, etc.

It was agreed that the Council re-consider this matter immediately.

The meeting concluded at 9.00 p.m.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The foregoing Minutes are hereby Confirmed.

_____ (Chairman)

_____ (Date)