

Appendix 1

Minutes of Tourism Development Group Meeting dated 12th April 2022 and Officers Cluster Reports

Present

Cllr Frances Burton	Chair of meeting
Martin Graham	TNI Representative
Aaron Ballantyne	Northern Regional College
Norman Bell	Killymoon Castle
William Burke	Lough Neagh Partnership
Gerry Darby	Lough Neagh Partnership
Eimear Kearney	Lough Neagh Partnership
Simon Wiggins	South West College
Brian McCormick	SHHP
Cllr Niamh Doris	Mid Ulster District Council
Cathy O'Neill	Friels Bar
Dermot Friel	Friels Bar
Hugh McCloy	Embrace Tours
Richard Mullholland	Seamus Heaney Cluster
Claire Doherty	An Carn
Ciaran Bradley	Walsh's Hotel
Fiona McKeown	MUDC
Mary McKeown	MUDC
Allison O'Keefe	MUDC
Mary McGee	MUDC
Grace Booth	MUDC
Martha Beattie	MUDC
Genevieve Bell	MUDC
Charmain Bell	MUDC
Anne Reid	MUDC

	DISCUSSION	ACTIONS								
	<p>Welcome Cllr F Burton welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40%;">Terry McCrory</td> <td>Crafts Sector</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Anne Birt McCartney</td> <td>Northern Regional College</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sarah Cox</td> <td>South West College</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Claire Murray</td> <td>Deli on The Green</td> </tr> </table> </p>	Terry McCrory	Crafts Sector	Anne Birt McCartney	Northern Regional College	Sarah Cox	South West College	Claire Murray	Deli on The Green	
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1.	<p>Minutes of Meeting held on 3rd February 2022 Circulated in advance of the meeting</p> <p><i>Proposed: Norman Bell Seconded: Simon Wiggins</i></p>									

2.

Matters Arising

N Bell noted the date of the Cookstown 100 on 22nd & 23rd April 2022.

M McGee said there would be a restructure of the TDG group. This would go out to industry and they would seek new nominees.

2.1

Martin Graham – Tourism Northern Ireland

M Graham discussed the consumer sentiment analysis and recent growth in the NI and ROI markets with huge opportunities to draw from the Southern market. He noted there is an increase in optimism for travel to the Island of Ireland and an increased confidence to travel (internationally).

There is strong demand for travel in spring months.

Key motivations to stay in NI:

- Relaxation
- Having fun
- To unwind coming out of post Covid environment
- Increased living costs and Ukraine war has had an impact on travel
- 50% of people taking trips are coming to NI.

M Graham also highlighted the following trends in the industry:

- Perceptions of the quality of places to eat and drink in NI has been positive.
- There are more people booking indoor activities such as indoor events and eating indoors.
- Outdoor activities still popular, with demand still for walking trails, cycling etc.
- There are short leading times with people booking closer to date of travel due to Covid & cancellation policies.
- Refunds remain a key incentive for booking short breaks
- Other incentives to attract more people to Mid Ulster, include package offerings, accommodation and discounts.
- TNI perspective – “linger longer experience” encourage visitors to stay longer, focus on quality.
- Grow the idea to come for more than 1 day
- Uplift of £30 million to deliver programmes.
- Mid Ulster at forefront of receiving funding for programmes e.g. market led programme.

- Working with department of economy and capital projects

M Graham also outlined key industry challenges:

- Difficult to sustain domestic demand
- International bounce back at a slower pace due to rising cost of living
- It could be 2024 before we meet 2019 standards
- Challenges around skills and retention & recruitment.
- TNI budget position, facing 5% cut in budget going forward.

F Burton gave thanks to TNI for their work and support.

N Bell asked about the issue of P&O ferries being cancelled, and the challenges this poses for people coming over to the Cookstown 100. M Graham advised that TNI were working closely with Tourism Ireland to establish other routes for ferries and acknowledged this was difficult due to certain access routes. He advised that there is no solution at the minute however they were also working with Stena on the issue.

M McKeown acknowledged the challenging times facing the industry and mentioned how tourism could pull offers together and get them promoted by pushing them through the marketing campaigns. M Graham said offers can be used for The Green Button campaign and they can work with MUDC and Tourism Ireland to target the correct consumer market.

M Graham addressing question on Tourism NI developing large scale projects at Lough Neagh commented:

- Lough Neagh is bordered by a range of Council areas.
- There are infrastructure challenges
- It is important to facilitate cross Council forums and foster collaborative working on the project

Member asked about the core themes within the Sustainable Regenerative Tourism Programme and about the opportunities around the Lough Neagh?

M Graham noted:

- There is a boost of community tourism and development of experiences in local areas. People

<p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>	<p>are interested in local human stories, this helps to keep people employed in rural areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNI held an internal staff day looking at regenerative tourism and educating people on sustainable tourism and this will be rolled out to the industry. <p>M Graham briefly outlined the 10X programme and how we can improve the GDP of Tourism and reposition tourism as a higher priority.</p> <p>F Burton noted how other Councils are pushing better connections with rail travel and the need to make it easy for collaborative working.</p> <p>M Graham exited the meeting at 12:30pm</p> <p>Update from Lough Neagh Partnership – Gerry Darby G Darby displayed presentation on screen and gave an overview of The River Blackwater.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage project around the lough, restoring signs • Protect and restore bogs, working with Council and private sector • Addressed issue of travelling through Lough Neagh and navigation issues. • Develop projects and brand whole lough destination • Study on Blackwater, dredging the mouth of river, link with DFI to do this and work with ABC AND MUDC. • There are opportunities to go up the Blackwater River and stop in Moy, The Argory and Blackwater Town. • There are wider issues of navigation and ownership to consider • Ensure economic and people benefits • Cross party political support for development of lough <p>F Burton said she was keen to work with G Darby and incorporate this into the Tourism strategy going forward. F Burton thanked G Darby for his presentation.</p> <p>Industry Update – TDG Members</p> <p>Killymoon Castle N Bell gave thanks to Council for work going on in Killymoon Castle and mentioned the American US army</p>	
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<p>basement exhibition opening in future. Local hotels are booking up with international travellers coming over for the Cookstown 100 on 22nd and 23rd April 2022.</p> <p>C Bell mentioned the work completed through the market led programme and how Tourism have been able to retain their authentic experiences. Market Led has enhanced the Killymoon cellar exhibition, notably with work completed by Redhead Exhibition. C Bell gave thanks to TNI and market led funding project.</p> <p>Friels Bar D Friel commented on the FAM Trips great success & how C O'Neill has launched her famine walk experience with great success. C O'Neill said that Emigrants walk is now brand aligned.</p> <p>South West College S Wiggins said that SWC have launched a level 2 award in Barista Skills starting in Dungannon on Monday 9th May 2022 for 6 weeks in evening time. SWC are also promoting a foundation degree in Culinary Arts, they are the only college in NI to offer this degree.</p> <p>Walsh's Hotel K Bradley noted that the hotel has recently had their ensuites updated and they have launched 5 new lodges. They are still experiencing staffing issues.</p> <p>Seamus Heaney HomePlace B McCormick said business has picked up, their Arts programme is up and running, operating at full capacity and they have had five sold out events over the past few months. SHHP is launching a new programme next week for summer season. Exhibition visits and bookings for conferences have increased. They have developed an Open Ground experience with tour guides from The HomePlace from early summer. Fam trips, thanks to Bronagh Mallon hosted the NI tour guides last weekend, 28 tour guides, great opportunity to target these businesses and attract more tour groups to Mid Ulster.</p> <p>Aaron Ballantyne New Creative Media class Level 3. Trained tour guides over last few years, with Business Engagement team, very successfully. Sought examples of projects students could work on.</p> <p>Embrace Tours Not as many public bookings but an increase in private bookings. Wand making was a success through The</p>	<p>Tourism team to circulate to businesses and to hospitality industry.</p> <p>Promote opening of launches through Council</p>
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<p>5.</p> <p>6.</p> <p>7.</p>	<p>Market Led Programme and was popular at Meet The Buyer.</p> <p>A Reid exited meeting at 1pm</p> <p>Business Engagement Programme – Mary McGee M McGee continuing to link in with tourist providers and site visits with new potential hospitality businesses. The Tourism Team have completed Rural Needs training. M McGee mentioned the TNI board meeting in Cookstown with M McKeown thanking the team and trade for work for their hard work on the evening.</p> <p>M McGee outlined a range of different projects that Tourism have been working on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet The Buyer workshop • Hosting of Meet The Buyer Fam Trips • Lough Neagh Shore Line experience • Event in Rosehill House • Poems and Painting experience, Tyrone Crafted Glass, Emigrants walks and Symphonia Gin experience. • Working on Slieve Beagh Partnership • 145 people engaged in WhatsApp group • The IMAP opportunity for businesses to go out into the marketplace is available through Tourism Ireland currently. <p>Cluster Reports Previously circulated prior to meeting. M McGee shared officer reports on screen. F Burton invited people to ask questions regarding reports.</p> <p><u>Seamus Heaney – Mary McGee</u> Report shared on screen. No further comments.</p> <p><u>Archaeology, History & Heritage – Genevieve Bell</u> G Bell agreed dates for Hidden Heritage Trips on Saturday 18th June at Killymoon Castle & on 2nd July 2022 ‘If the Cross Could Talk’ (new product developed with Kate Taylor) and on 8th October 2022 An Emigrants Walk.</p> <p><u>Outdoor Activities – Allison O’Keefe</u> Report shared on screen. No further comments.</p> <p><u>Hoteliers – Charmain Bell</u> Report shared on screen. No further comments.</p> <p>Brown Signage – Genevieve Bell</p>	<p>M McKeown will raise Sliabh Beagh and The Market Led Programme at the next meeting.</p> <p>Euro Heritage open days will feature US Grants and Bridewell – circulate to Communications Team</p>
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G Bell suggested to formulate a terms of reference and to recruit a company to look at existing brown signage in the Mid Ulster area. G Bell advised this could be a 9-12 month project. Transport NI have no list of brown signage. M McKeown said that core funding comes from the tourism budget and a report will be sent to Council for approval. There needs to be a review of the current budget as no funding body will pay for this piece of work. Issues include:

- Missing signage
- Scenic driving routes
- Faded signs
- Damaged signs

8.

Spring Marketing Campaign 2022 Update – Mary McKeown

M McKeown gave a brief overview of the Tourism Spring Marketing Campaign 2022.

- Unwinding time brand launched on social media with new photos and videos
- Last 2 weeks the goal was to develop the unwinding time website. She gave thanks to A O’Keefe, A Berryman and K Robinson.
- Touch screens at each of the visitor sites
- Website received a reach of 160,000 with over 80,000 engagement, through hashtags and positive comments.
- Over 10,000 new clicks to website in first 2 weeks.
- TV and Cinema advertising was launched in mid-march, Cinema advertising in Belfast Derry etc., and across border counties.
- Billboard campaign and radio advertising launched 14th – 21st March 2022.
- As part of the Spring Campaign a competition was launched for the new boathouses at Ballyronan, which included a trip to the Lough Shore. The winners were from Trillick and Omagh.
- We had launched an Influencer campaign (Jill McDowell). She visited a range of our experiences in Mid Ulster, creating social media content and promoting our experiences.
- Next steps include running a summer campaign with the need for offers and packages (add-on) and also to get into the Green Button campaign.

9.

Any Other Business

M McGee mentioned the launch of the Unwinding Time brand and also the launch of the ‘A Taste of Mid Ulster Banquet’ on Wednesday 27th April 2022 on The Hill of The

<p>O'Neill. The Tourism team had recruited 17 restaurants across the district to take part in the programme. This included receiving chef training and filming and photography of their signature dishes to feature on the Unwinding Time website. They also had the opportunity to be part of the digital food trail map.</p> <p>C Murray from The Deli on The Green will be providing the catering for the banquet, using local produce. There is an extensive guest list of Tour operators & the MICE market who have been invited. It is also a fantastic opportunity for trade to showcase their products.</p> <p>C Bell hosted Tourism Ireland Media Fam, Hidden Gems. Filming for Hidden Ireland, (Beaghmore Stone Circles & Lough Neagh Stories) commencing at the end of May 2022. M McKeown mentioned that OM had been selected as part of the Tourism Ireland project. Martin McKenna was the photographer, with a feature on the BBC going out mid May.</p> <p>F McKeown mentioned the LMP Programme (Labour Market Partnership Programme), with funding received from The Department of Communities and The Economy. It is a large scale project aiming to get people into employment. It will fill skills gaps and needs in the Hospitality sector.</p> <p>The Cookstown Continental Market is running on 28th and 29th May 2022. It will operate on Saturday 10am – 8pm & on Sun 11am – 5pm with approximately 40 traders coming over.</p> <p>A O'Keefe stated that we now have a facility on our new website to promote events.</p> <p>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 29th June 2022 at 10am via zoom or hybrid</p>	
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Mid Ulster Council Tourism Development Group Officers Cluster Report – 12 April 2022

1. SEAMUS HEANEY CLUSTER – M MCGEE/C BELL

Invest NI Collaborative Growth Project

The tender process and interviews for the recruitment of a Phase 2 Collaborative Growth facilitator has been completed. Lara Goodhall Consultancy was successfully appointed and attend an initiation meeting with the cluster at Ballysullion Park on 10th February 2022. This was the first in-person meeting since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lara introduced her team and talked the cluster through each work stream. Representatives from Invest In also attended the meeting. Lara has already commenced working through the work streams.

Branding

The procurement process for recruiting a company to complete the commercial brand exercise has been completed. McCadden Design was successfully appointed last week. The first in-person meeting with McCadden and the cluster is scheduled for Friday 15th April 2022.

NI Tour Guides Fam Trip

NI Tour Guides completed their trip on 2 April 2022. There was a group of 22 NI tour guides present and they visited Seamus Heaney HomePlace, Lough Neagh stories and Glenshane Country Farm.

2. ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY & HERITAGE CLUSTER – G BELL/M MCKEOWN

The cluster group met virtually on Wednesday 30th March 2022.

DEARA Collaborative Experiential Programme – Rural Tourism, Heritage

Kate Taylor's contract finished on 31 March 2022. The feedback has been excellent with the experiences trialled by Council staff, Tour Operators, DEARA and TourismNI.

The 3 experiences that will be brand aligned to Embrace the Giant Spirit are: **An Emigrants Trail** (a walk up Carnogher Mountain telling the very emotive history of the famine, then visiting Friel's in Swatragh to see an original famine pot and sample nettle soup).

Poetry and Prayer (a tour that will allow time to disconnect from the world around us and reconnect to our inner self, taking in the monastic sites along the shores of Lough Neagh which include the Round Tower in Antrim, the old church ruins and holy well at Cranfield Point, Ardboe Cross and graveyard, Washingbay and the Priory in Benburb)

Poetry and Painting (the experience takes place in Donaghmore and Parkanaur over a weekend. Emma Heatherington, an international bestselling author will deliver a creative writing course and Jim McKee, an artist who will show you how to do Plain air painting in Parkanaur Forest).

Tourism NI, Delivery of Market Led Product Development Programme 2021-22TNI

The Experience Development Programme, a market lead programme is also coming to a close comprising of 4 programmes through experiences – Living history and script writing support, new costumes and a food trail / food circle. 15 scripts developed by Emma Heatherington are near completion and the Lyric Theatre are working on 23 costumes for the 15 locations.

The Banquet on Hill of The O'Neill will take place on 27 April 2022.

New videos have been produced for OM: The Christmas Show and 'To the Moon and Back'.

Repairs had been made to the solar walk and the red lights had now been installed.

Update from Cluster Members

Interaction in the group continues to be positive and most cluster members are continuing to improve on their product and experience. A number of businesses have indicated bookings for the Spring-Summer season 2022 are on the up.

3. OUTDOOR & EVENTS CLUSTER – A O Keefe/ C Bell

A report has gone to Council to contribute to a joint Sperrins Partnership Hill Walking Festival with the 4 Council areas that make up the Sperrins region; Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Derry City and Strabane District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Mid Ulster District Council, one programme delivered in each Council area.

Suitably qualified professional guides / organisations are being invited to quote to plan and deliver two-day walking events on 4 separate weekends across the 4 Council areas that make up the Sperrins region, that will develop and co-ordinate outdoor recreation participation programmes for the local community and visitors alike, resulting in increased participation and ultimately improve physical and mental health.

The professional guides/organisations will liaise with each of the Council's marketing/communications team to promote and cross-sell each event. Evaluations will also be carried out to develop the festival further. It is anticipated the suitable organisation/guide will be in place beginning of May 2022 and marketing/promotions will commence June 2022.

Tourism will promote, on our new Visit Mid Ulster platforms, all walks across the district in conjunction with the Mid Ulster element that will be held on Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 September 2022. Due to the increase of visitors looking to experience open spaces tourism have developed a video of hill walking in the Sperrins. The video will be used for promoting the Hill Walking festival.

4. HOSPITALITY CLUSTER – CBELL/M MCGEE

The rollout of Taste Mid Ulster continues successfully as part of the Tourism NI FUNDED Market Led Programme.

To date we have delivered the following:

1. 3 Christmas Market Cookery Demos across Mid Ulster in Dungannon, Cookstown and Magherafelt
2. Recruitment of 17 restaurants as part of Taste Mid Ulster
3. Development of at least 17 signature Mid Ulster dishes across the businesses
4. Chefs training programme (2 workshops initially) delivered by Sean Owens
5. Mystery shopped all restaurants included in the Taste programme

6. Photography to include interior, exterior and dining experience in each business
7. Filming of a selection of producers and restaurateurs to give a real Mid Ulster flavour
8. All businesses and signature dishes included on a new Taste Mid Ulster Section of Visit Mid Ulster website
9. New Taste Mid Ulster Food Trail map in development online
10. Taste Mid Ulster banquet themed around the marriage of Hugh O'Neill and Mabel Bagenal on historic Hill of the O'Neill, Dungannon planned for Wednesday 27 April 2022. We will launch Taste Mid Ulster at this event also.

This is very much Phase 1 of our work with these businesses, we plan to further develop and promote Taste Mid Ulster in this current year and into the future. We have made a good start.



Appendix 2

MINUTES OF COOKSTOWN TOWN CENTRE FORUM MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 23 MARCH 2022 AT 12.30PM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present:

Councillor McNamee	Mid Ulster District Council
Councillor Wilson	Mid Ulster District Council
Sharon McGowan	Department for Communities
Ursula Marshall	Disability Forum
Paul Wilson	Large Independent Retailer
Conall McKee	DRD Roads Service
Mary McCullagh	Mid Ulster District Council

In attendance: Deborah Ewing Mid Ulster District Council

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Joe Connaghan, PSNI and Tom Jebb, Vintners Association.

Cllr McNamee welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF TOWN CENTRE FORUM MEETING 19 JANUARY 2022

It was proposed by U Marshall and seconded by Cllr McNamee to ADOPT the minutes of the Town Centre Forum Meeting held on 19 January 2022.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. UPDATE ON TOWN CENTRE RECOVERY PLAN/MID ULSTER TOWN CENTRE PROJECTS

The Town Centre Managers Progress Report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. M McCullagh provided an update on Mid Ulster Town Centre Projects as follows:

a) Marketing & Promotion

The marketing and promotion planned for the next couple of months includes:

- Promotion of Mid Ulster Gift Card through social media and a leaflet drop to local businesses.
- Cookstown Continental Market – promotion will take place via billboards, radio, local press and social media. This will be the first corporate event to be held in Mid Ulster since March 2019.

b) Business Support

(i) Mid Ulster Gift Card Scheme

Miconex have been employed to develop and deliver the Mid Ulster District Council's Gift Card Scheme for a minimum term contract of 3 years with break clauses annually.

To date 191 businesses/venues have signed up to the Scheme and Council continue to liaise with local businesses encouraging them to sign up and advising on the free participation whilst locking in spend to the local economy. A leaflet drop will be conducted in the town within the next 2 weeks, which will also be used as an additional tool to encourage businesses to sign up.

Cards can be purchased online or blank cards are available from Council venues – namely Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, Cookstown; Ranfurly House, Dungannon; and Bridewell, Magherafelt. Money must be uploaded to the cards online. The cards are for single use and cannot be topped up – if looking for additional value then a new card must be purchased.

To date there has been approximately £24,000 purchased on Mid Ulster Gift Cards.

(ii) Mid Ulster Business Marketing Scheme

M McCullagh advised that the small grants 'Mid Ulster Business Marketing Scheme' closed for applications on Monday 10 January 2021 at 4pm. Council officers are in the process of processing claims which need to be complete by the end of the financial year.

c) Town Centre Events

(i) Cookstown Continental Market

Cookstown Continental Market is returning on Saturday 28 (10am – 8pm) to Sunday 29 (11am – 5pm) May 2022. It will take place on William Street, Cookstown with a road closure taking place from 6.30pm on Friday 27 May 2022 with it re-opening by 10pm on Sunday 29 May 2022.

Specifications are being issued for various elements of the market and regular meetings are being held with Marketplace Europe and MUDC Events Team. There will be a licensed area again this year which is currently going through the process at present.

As per previous years, Council will be providing entertainment alongside the market with additional entertainment being provided on Saturday along James Street to make it more livelier for the regular Saturday market traders.

Cllr McNamee asked what the situation will be for the regular Saturday market traders as Council now have the rights to the market. M McCullagh stated that this will be working the same as previous years with the regular traders being located to James Street. Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing, is currently in the process of requesting Council waive the fee for traders for the Continental Market week as has been done during previous years by Philip Orr.

M McCullagh advised members that she would be able to provide more information on the participating traders at the next meeting.

d) Physical Regeneration/Improving Infrastructure

(i) Rural Regeneration Projects

Under the Rural Development Programme a total of 37 villages accessed funding to develop and deliver projects identified through their respective village plans. To date projects have been identified through the village planning process and consultation with the local community groups to determine projects that can access grant aid through the Programme.

A professional led design consultancy team was appointed to commence design schemes for the various projects identified in the villages. A cross council working group has been established for the lifetime of the project. Economic Development Officers are working alongside Technical Services to deliver the schemes.

36 villages works have been completed. Assistance has been provided to 10 of the 11 villages in the former Cookstown District Council area. Projects have been completed in Ardboe, Ballyronan, Orritor, Lissan, Drumullan, Coagh, Rock, Sandholes, Moortown and Pomeroy. Broughderg is the only outstanding village at present and works are now nearing completion.

(ii) Mid Ulster Town and Village Spruce Up Scheme

Mid Ulster Town and Village Spruce Up Scheme offers discretionary grants of up to 75% eligible costs, capped at £5,000 per property for external and/or internal improvements.

The Scheme was available to both occupied commercial premises and vacant/derelict units within the town centre boundary of each of the towns and development limits of the eligible villages as per the proposed Mid Ulster Settlement Report and the draft Local Development Plan (2030), published in February 2019, under the Mid Ulster Settlement Hierarchy, with the additional village of Moygashel.

Knox & Clayton Architects were appointed to assist in the delivery of the Scheme which is now in year 3, Phase 3. Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects are now complete. In April 2021, 79 Letters of Offer were issued to businesses under Phase 3 to a total value of £250,000. To date 51 have been completed to the value of £188,305.18.

Phase 4, which is the remaining projects on the ranked reserve list will receive Letters of Offer in April 2022. A new Architect has been appointed to deliver Phase 4 as the previous contract period has come to an end. Hamill Architects, Dungannon was the successful tenderer.

(iii) Cookstown Saturday Market

Marketplace Management Limited have been appointed to conduct a scoping study and develop an action plan for Cookstown Saturday Market. The consultation process is near completion with a few remaining consultations to be completed.

It is anticipated that a draft report will be ready within the next few weeks. A presentation on key findings can be provided and a separate meeting can be organised to update members on the report. Overall the consultants have advised that the feedback has been positive and that they are happy with the level of participation.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Cookstown Town Centre Membership

M McCullagh advised members that as per agreement at the previous meeting she had approached the two businesses as per previous meetings request - Julie Black from Blacks Shoes who has accepted membership to the Cookstown Town Centre Forum. Cllr Wilson proposed and P Wilson seconded the acceptance of Julie Black as a new member of Cookstown Town Centre Forum.

It was noted that the other business was grateful for the nomination but at present wished to decline membership.

Cllr McNamee requested that consideration is given to the additional position on the Forum. M McCullagh will forward details to members requesting nominations for additional membership.

U Marshall asked if there was any additional way that members can be encouraged to attend meetings. M McCullagh advised that she had telephoned those members with poor attendance and letters were issued to those who she was unable to speak with. As previously discussed some of those members are unable to attend virtual meetings but are willing to attend meetings in person. Cllr McNamee suggested the possibility of conducting meetings which are a mixture of virtual and in person, similar to the Council meetings. M McCullagh will check if this is feasible with ICT Department and advise members accordingly.

M McCullagh agreed to contact those members who did not attend today's meeting with a follow up phone call to clarify their membership. U Marshall stated that attending one meeting annually is not enough.

(ii) Utility Works

M McCullagh advised that a meeting has been scheduled to take place the first week in April with Fibrus and elected members. Cllr Wilson advised that there has been major issues with the works conducted by Fibrus namely on the Lomond Road, Monrush and Fountain Road. There has been issues around where they have been parking their vehicles which has caused disruptions with residents and the general flow of traffic. C McKee stated that DRD Roads have regular meetings with Fibrus and advised members that DRD Roads only have one officer who is available to review and manage the utility works which take place in the Mid Ulster area. He stated that there is a large programme of work but that the utility companies have to request lane closures and the use of traffic lights in advance. He requested that Cllr Wilson and any other elected members contact himself or Neil Bratton and they will take the issue further. He advised that there should not be any works on main roads during school core times and if this has been happening then members should notify him straight away.

U Marshall stated that she participated on a consultation in relation to pavement parking and Fibrus had been mentioned during this. The vehicles are causing an obstacle for pavement users as well as traffic and this is a major issue. C McKee advised that he will raise this issue with Fibrus, stating that Fibrus currently operate with 4/5 contractors.

Cllr Wilson thanked C McKee for the comments and the availability to inform them of any issues as they arise. He also stated that the meeting with Council members and Fibrus will take place after the issues in Cookstown have been dealt with but is content that they are raised to stop any similar issues in the other Mid Ulster areas.

M McCullagh requested that the contact details for Fibrus are forwarded to her from C McKee. She will also request that the meeting with Fibrus is brought forward if possible.

M McCullagh advised members that there is SGN works proposed to take place on Morganshill Road on Sunday 27 March 2022. The works are to re-tar the top of the mini roundabouts and a stop and go system will be in place. It is anticipated that the works will be completed by lunchtime.

C McKee advised that there is resurfacing work taking place on the A29 Dungannon road (from Loughry roundabout and Drum Road junction) from 7pm – 7am Sunday 3 April. Works should complete by Friday 8 April. Cllr McNamee requested that details on these works are issued to M McCullagh who will advise relevant members.

M McCullagh expressed her thanks to C McKee and N Bratton for their assistance in the road closure to accommodate for the Royal visit.

(iii) Other Business

M McCullagh updated members on the information provided by J Connaghan, PSNI. He stated that there has been a low level of anti-social behaviour within the town centre which they are aware of and are monitoring. He also advised that there has been a few concerns raised from residents regarding the reopening of the night time economy. He advised that licensed premises and bars are working well with the PSNI.

P Wilson advised that there is anti-social issues taking place at the Fairhill park. This has resulted in broken glass and other debris being located throughout the park. Cllr McNamee agreed with this stating that this is an ongoing concern for the area. M McCullagh stated that she will raise this with the appropriate Council officer to take forward.

6. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Cllr McNamee thanked members for attending. The next meeting date has been agreed with members and is due to take place on Wednesday 18 May 2022 at 12.30pm. The venue will be confirmed and a meeting request circulated where appropriate.

The meeting ended at 1.05pm