

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF STRANORLAR ELECTORAL  
AREA COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY  
24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2006 IN REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRE,  
STRANORLAR**

**Members Present**

Cllr Alice Bonnar (Chairperson)

Cllr J J Reid

Cllr Patrick McGowan

**Officials Present**

Gerry Gilroy, Area Manager, Corporate Services

Eileen Doherty, Staff Officer, Corporate Services

Anne Harvey, Assistant Staff Officer, Corporate Services

Peadar Thomas, Area Manager, Roads & Transportation

Claire McGeever, Area Engineer, Roads & Transportation

Adrian McCool, Assistant Engineer, Roads & Transportation

Michael Breslin, Area Manager, Water/Environment/Emergency Services

Brendan Porter, Area Engineer, Water/Environment/Emergency Services

Barney McLaughlin, Community & Enterprise Development Officer

Paul Christie, A/Area Manager, Planning & Economic Development

Mary Hannigan, Area Manager, Housing & Building

Tommy Doherty, Area Engineer, Housing & Building

**SEC 01/00 Election of Chairperson & Other Procedural Matters**

**01.01 Election of Chairperson**

On the proposal of Cllr McGowan seconded by Cllr Reid Cllr Bonnar was elected as Chairperson for the period February 2006 - September 2007.

Again Cllr Reid thanked his fellow Members, Officials and the Press for their cooperation during his term as Chairperson and he wished Cllr Bonnar success in her role as Chairperson.

Cllr Bonnar thanked Cllrs McGowan & Reid for proposing and seconding her for the position. She also wished to pay tribute to Cllr Reid in his role as Chairperson.

#### **01.02 Votes of Sympathy**

The Committee wished to express their sympathy to Cllr Reid on the recent death of his brother Neil Reid.

A minute's silence was observed.

On behalf of the family Cllr Reid thanked the Committee.

#### **01.03 Votes of Congratulation**

The Committee wished to congratulate Mary Hannigan and Paul Kilcoyne on the occasion of their recent marriage.

#### **01.04 Adoption of Minutes**

On the proposal of Cllr McGowan seconded by Cllr Reid the minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2005 were adopted.

It was agreed that matters arising would be dealt with under each service heading.

<b>SEC 02/00 Planning &amp; Economic Development</b>
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Mr Christie advised Members that the new Divisional Manager would be taking up her position next week therefore he would be reverting to his former position and Mr Kelly would be back as Area Manager at the next meeting.

#### **02.01 Matters Arising from Previous Meeting**

##### **Local Area Plans**

Referring to the discussion at the workshop held immediately prior to the Electoral Area Meeting Mr Christie confirmed that Mr Kelly would revert

to Members with an extensive report in relation to the Area Plans for Ballybofey/Stranorlar and Castlefin.

### **Casual Trading**

Mr Christie had spoken to the Council's solicitors before the meeting and advised that the case was listed for hearing on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2006. He hoped the Circuit Court hearing would be in early February.

### **02.02 Recent Refusals**

Members noted the report circulated with the Agenda,

### **02.03 Planning Enforcement**

Cllr McGowan again welcomed the appointment of the Enforcement Officer, Mr Michael Hirrell submitting that progress was evident already. He went on to refer to developments in Castlefin and Convoy where planning conditions were not being complied with. Mr Christie advised that the Council was aware of these developments and Mr Hirrell is currently dealing with these matters. He pointed out however that the enforcement procedure could be a slow process.

Mr Christie referred to the new County Development Plan and the opportunity that will be available through this channel to force developers to comply with conditions of previous planning permissions before submitting new applications. He also advised that more emphasis would be placed on assuring that all conditions are complied with in the case of multiple developments. Members welcomed this new approach.

Cllr Bonnar raised a query in relation to progress at Blue Cedars where planning conditions had not been complied. Mr Christie advised that the matter is progressing however a problem still existed in relation to traffic calming. It was agreed that this item be kept on the agenda and a report be available for the next meeting.

### **02.04 Planning Statistics**

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

## **02.05 Other Matters Arising**

### **Farmers Market**

Cllr Reid referred to a 'farmer's market' in Ballybofey each week at the GAA ground and raised a query in relation to the criteria required for setting up a 'farmer's market'.

Mr Christie referred to a similar situation in other Electoral Areas and submitted that a facility would be required for occasional events other than the area for more regular casual trading. Mr Christie advised that an application in writing be made to the Planning Office and the matter will be dealt with accordingly.

Members wished Mr Christie well on his return to the Donegal Electoral Area.

<b>SEC 03/00 Housing &amp; Building</b>
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### **03.01 Housing Capital Programme**

Ms Hannigan apologised to Members, as there was no progress report available on the Capital Programme. She agreed to circulate the report to Members in the post when it was made available to her.

### **03.02 Social Housing**

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

### **03.03 Casual Vacancy Report**

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

Ms Hannigan submitted that if Members had any recommendations for the vacant houses to contact her directly.

### **03.04 Office Accommodation**

#### **One Stop Shop**

Members were advised that no further developments had taken place. Cllr McGowan referred to the undertaking by the County Manager at their last meeting that a further meeting would take place in January 2006, and proposed that this meeting take place at an early date. This was agreed.

The discussion widened and members expressed their frustration and anger at the lack of progress in a number of Capital Projects in the Stranorlar Electoral Area. Members referred to discussions at the recent Budget meeting and in particular to the County Managers commitment that Directors of Service would regularly brief members on progress of Capital Projects within their Directorates and the wider introduction of 'Performance Indicators'.

Members repeated their call that the County Manager and the Directors of Service regularly attend this Electoral Area Meeting to brief and discuss with members progress on Capital Projects within the Electoral Area.

Members went on to agree a list of projects, which they asked be referred to the County Manager with a request that he and the relevant Directors meet with the members and discuss.

- Public Service Centre/One Stop Shop.
- Ballybofey/Stranorlar Bypass.
- Sewage Network upgrade.
- New Library.
- Swimming Pool.
- Stranorlar Car Park.
- New Fire Station.
- Lough Mourne Scheme.
- Completion of Dreenan Bridge.
- Link Road at Mulrine's.
- Playground, Town Park & Skateboard Park.
- Development of 'Brogans Land'.
- Industrial & Enterprise Park Master plan.
- Funding for Bridges.

### **03.05 Other Matters Arising**

#### **Proposed sale of Plot under Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001**

Ms Hannigan advised Members that it was proposed to dispose of a plot of land in Drumkeen and circulated a copy of a formal notice under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001 including a map of the area. She requested Members approval at area level before the matter was brought to the full Council meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr Bonnar seconded by Cllr Reid it was agreed to dispose of the portion of land in question.

<b>SEC 04/00 Community, Culture &amp; Enterprise</b>
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### **04.01 Report on Community & Enterprise**

#### **North West Cycle Trail Route**

Mr McLaughlin advised Members of a joint cross border proposal between Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Derry & Fermanagh Local Authorities to develop a cycle route through these counties. The proposed route is 500km in length and would be mainly developed on back roads away from the main road. The only main road to be used in the route is the road through Barnes Gap as there are no alternative routes in this location. Mr McLaughlin also advised that it proposed the route would go through the Finn Valley area.

The first phase of the proposal is to create a circular route 104km in length through Donegal. Interreg funding of 75% i.e. €1,558,000 of the total estimated cost has been secured with the remaining 25% i.e. €519,000 to be raised between the various Councils. The amount to be raised by Donegal County Council is €28,000 and Mr McLaughlin proposed that this figure be divided equally among the six Electoral Areas.

Mr McLaughlin made reference to the recent allocation from the Tourism Fund received by each area and to the fact that a further allocation was

due from the fund again this year. He therefore recommended that each Electoral area make an allocation of €8,000 for the joint proposal from their Tourism Fund allocation.

Cllr Reid welcomed the initiative but had concerns in relation to the road safety aspect of the proposal given the fact the routes would be mainly developed on back roads. Mr McLaughlin submitted that he would anticipate that the road safety aspect would be dealt with as part of the marketing aspect of the proposal.

Cllr McGowan submitted that if the Electoral area was committing funding to the proposal then we must be assured that the Electoral Area will benefit from the proposal and that people will be stopping over in the area rather than just passing through. Cllrs Reid and Bonnar were in agreement with this comment.

On the proposal of Cllr Reid seconded by Cllr Bonnar it was agreed to allocate €8,000 from the Tourism Fund subject to a stop over in Ballybofey/Stranorlar being part of the proposal.

### **Stranorlar Interagency Initiative**

Mr McLaughlin advised that works were ongoing with the various Community Groups.

He also advised that Ms Bryce is currently actively seeking funding for a Resource Centre for the area. Cllr Reid expressed his dissatisfaction at the lack of progress with the Resource Centre submitting that 6 years ago an evaluation was undertaken for the project and now at the Youth Club meeting last week he had learned that a further evaluation was ongoing. He concluded that it was a sad reflection on a town the size of Ballybofey/Stranorlar that no Resource Centre existed where it was desperately needed.

Mr McLaughlin advised that Ms Bryce was actively seeking funding from potential funders and was hoping to secure funding from a number of various sources for the project.

It was noted that Ms Bryce's current contract was due to expire in February and Members expressed concern that arrangements be made to ensure this post is retained.

Cllr Bonnar submitted that the Council was going around in circles. She referred to the land purchased by the Council for amenity purposes a number of years ago yet it is not being used for this purpose. She also referred to the Boxing Club in particular who are currently operating from substandard facilities. She submitted that the Council need to get together and establish what the Community requires and provide the land to the local groups to give them a chance. She submitted that the Council need to progress these projects if local groups or agencies fail to do so.

It was also proposed the Committee consider meeting with local community groups.

### **Peace II Funding**

Mr McLaughlin advised Members that 138 applications had been received. He advised that there was only funding of €2.2m available therefore competition would be tight. Evaluations were currently ongoing and it is hoped that offers will be made by March.

### **Local Area Teams**

Mr McLaughlin advised that a baseline Audit would be commencing in Castlefin shortly to ascertain what the area has i.e. population, number of home/car owners etc.

### **04.02 Cultural Services**

Members noted the report from Joseph Gallagher, Heritage Officer on the 'Care & Conservation of Historic Graveyards' Seminars circulated with the Agenda.

### **04.03 Members Development Fund**

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

### **Community Development Fund**

Members referred to the allocation of €550,000 under the Community Development and requested that it be divided equally among the 6 electoral areas.

It was agreed that this request be submitted for inclusion on the agenda for the next Council meeting.

#### **04.04 Other Matters Arising**

##### **Economic Workshops**

Mr McLaughlin referred to a proposal put before the CPG in relation to economic workshops and advised that a workshop would be organised for the full Council. Members expressed their disappointment at this fact submitting that they requested a meeting at area level, as they need to know what is being done for the Stranorlar Electoral Area.

Mr McLaughlin advised that he had conveyed this message to Mr Coyle. Members requested that the message be relayed again to Mr Coyle.

#### **04.05 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Metropolitan Area Network - Update**

It was confirmed that arrangements had been made for Mr Brian Boyle, Head of Information Systems and Mr Stephen Flynn, Asst Project Manager, to brief members after the meeting.

<b>SEC 05/00 Water/Environment/Emergency Services</b>
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#### **05.01 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Leisure Centre**

Mr Breslin advised Members that discussions were still ongoing with the parties involved.

It was agreed to hold a meeting with the Members on February 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss the legal entities element for the project.

#### **05.02 Capital Programme**

##### **Ballybofey Sewer Network**

Following a query from Cllr Bonnar in relation to the brief already prepared by the Council for the Ballybofey sewer network, Mr Breslin

advised that the Council were currently awaiting the final report from the consultants on the brief. On receipt of this report the brief will then be submitted to the Department of Environment. Members requested that this matter be kept on the agenda.

### **05.03 Group Schemes**

**Upper Corraine** - Cllr Bonnar referred to a request she had made at the previous meeting in relation to a new house at the end of the line requesting a connection to this scheme. Mr Breslin agreed to check and send a report to the Members.

**Halftown/Skelpy** - Cllr McGowan referred to a recommendation that a new 5-house development in the area connect to this proposed scheme. As the estimated cost of this scheme was previously considered prohibitive Cllr McGowan requested that the viability of the scheme be re-examined again with the additional new houses in mind.

**Liskeeran/Meenavoy** - Mr Breslin confirmed that no plans had yet been received from the group.

**Corradoey** - Members referred to problems being experienced by householders along this line. Mr Porter advised that there was a problem with the pump and agreed to follow up.

**Meenlaught/Meenreagh** - Following a query from Members Mr Breslin agreed to examine the matter and revert to Members.

### **05.04 Civic Amenity Centre**

Members welcomed the opening of the civic amenity centre.

Following a query from Cllr McGowan regarding the operation of the centre Mr Breslin advised that 2 - 3 personnel from Water Services were working at the centre depending on how busy it was. Cllr McGowan submitted that the Water Services section was already a very busy section and could not afford to release staff on an ongoing basis to work at the amenity centre.

Following a query from Members regarding the operation contract for the centre Mr Breslin advised that it appeared contractors were not interested in tendering for the operation of one centre. Works would be commencing on civic amenity centres in other towns shortly and all the operational contracts would be advertised together at that stage.

Members submitted that the centre appeared to be a success to date and that it was being operated very efficiently. Mr Breslin advised that he would pass Members' comments back to the staff.

#### **05.05 Restoration Programme**

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

<b>SEC 06/00 Deputation from Glenfin Area Council</b>
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Cllr Bonnar welcomed John Gallagher and Seamus Sharpe to the meeting.

The Deputation thanked the Committee for the opportunity to deliver the following submissions and Mr Gallagher outlined their concerns as follows.

#### **Ardlaghan Road**

Mr Gallagher referred to the local importance of this road, as it was an alternative route to Letterkenny for locals. The road was currently in a bad state of repair due to the recent increase in the volume of traffic as a result of roadworks on the main road. A tip head had been opened up for gravel and there was also an increase in the volume of lorries using the road as a shortcut to gain access to the road works at the main road. He also referred to a weight restriction that had been placed on a small bridge at Carrickalangan a number of years ago after the Council had replaced the bridge. This restriction was currently being ignored. Road edges have collapsed, fences/ditches have been pushed back and the potholes have been filled 3 times since November however they are in need of repair again due to the large volume of traffic.

#### **Letterbrick Group Water Scheme**

Mr Gallagher referred to an area within a 4.7-mile radius comprising of 43 houses that had no water. Houses on either side of this 4.7 mile radius do have water from the Fintown Supply on one side and the Lough Mourne Supply on the other side however this group's group water scheme application has been put on hold at there is no water available to serve the scheme until such times as the Lough Mourne supply is upgraded.

**Development Charges Levy on Cloghan Day Care/Health Centre**

Mr Gallagher referred to development charges of €61,000 levied on the Day Care/Health Centre and felt that these high levies were very unfair.

€5,000 bonds

€5,000 Street lighting & Footpaths

€11,000 Water Charges

€40,000 Pump

In response to the deputations concerns Mr McCool advised lorry drivers used the Ardlaghan road during the road works on the main road, as there was a one-way system in operation to and from Churchill quarries.

He advised that the roads section would make an application for Clar funding for the road. If unsuccessful the Council could carry out temporary works under their surface dressing programme until such times as there was funding available under the road strengthening works programme. The road was actually on the road works programme for 2005 -2008.

In relation to the weight restriction on the bridge Mr McCool advised that he was not aware of its existence however he would follow up on the matter.

Mr Breslin advised the Deputation that there was currently a problem with water capacity on both sides of this proposed group water scheme. There is currently a problem with the network from Ballybofey to the Glenfin area as the existing pipes are not big enough to carry the volume of water required. After the Lough Mourne system is upgraded an infrastructure upgrade is then required on the network from Ballybofey to Glenfin.

In the meantime Mr Breslin advised that he would discuss the matter with his colleagues in the Glenties Electoral Area to consider the possibility of taking water from the Glenties source through Fintown. Following a query regarding Clar funding Mr Breslin advised that funding would be available from this source however the group would have to be at an advanced stage with plans prepared. This was not the case for this group as they were still at the water availability stage.

Mr Christie advised that there were exemptions in the Development Contribution Scheme for water charges for voluntary non-profit making organisations. The matter would be examined further and contact made with the group in relation to the bond of €5,000 and water charges of €11,000 respectively.

In relation to the levy imposed for Street lighting & Footpaths Mr McCool advised the deputation that since the time the planning permission had been granted for this development the street lighting and the footpath at this location has been completed under a Community Assisted Scheme in the area therefore he would be fairly confident that these charges wouldn't apply.

Mr Breslin advised the deputation the €40,000 pump charges will have to be retained. As the demand will be high at the day care/health centre this will put pressure on the existing Glenfin Group Water Scheme which is already experiencing problems therefore a pumping station will be required on the site to alleviate problems elsewhere on the scheme. Mr Breslin confirmed to the deputation that although Glenfin Group Water Scheme is a private scheme the scheme is still being supplied with Council water.

Members thanked the deputation for their presentation submitting it was good to hear first hand of the problems being experienced out in the Communities and to discuss the resolutions the Council had to some of these problems.

Cllr Bonnar thanked the deputation again submitting that they had the Members full support and that all issues raised would be kept on the agenda.

Cllr Bonnar proposed and it was agreed that progress reports on issues raised by Deputations to the Area Committee Meetings be included on all future agendas.

<b>SEC 07/00 Roads &amp; Transportation</b>
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### **07.01 Road Works Programme**

Mr Thomas advised that all work has been complete under the 2005 programme. At present the roads staff are completing outstanding footpath works and carrying out general maintenance.

Work will be commencing shortly on the preparation of the 2006 draft road works programme.

Mr Thomas also advised that it is hoped that funding will be available shortly for the 2006 surface-dressing programme. He was currently preparing a draft programme of works that would be brought before Members at a later stage for approval.

### **07.02 N13/N15 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Bypass**

Cllr Bonnar read out correspondence from Minister Mary Coughlan advising of an allocation of €200,000 from the NRA for the Ballybofey/Stranorlar Bypass for 2006. Members expressed their frustration at the scale of the allocation for 2006 as this allocation represented only a fraction of what was required to progress the project. Members unanimously expressed the view that this was confirmation that the bypass was no longer a priority for the NRA.

Following a number of exchanges Members went on to agree that a further meeting be requested with the NRA, and that the County Manager, the IFA Valuation Officer and the two Government Ministers also attend.

It was also agreed that a copy of each of the three reports regarding the valuation of the land be requested from the NRA.

### **07.03 Other Matters Arising**

#### **McClay's Corner**

Members expressed their dissatisfaction at the lack of progress at this location. Cllr Reid referred to a decision taken at an earlier meeting to put in an extra lane at this junction for vehicles coming from the Lifford

direction wanting to turn right however there is no sign of these works progressing. He submitted that the Council will have to go back to the drawing board at this stage to consider proposals to alleviate the traffic problems at this location particularly now as it would appear the bypass will not proceed in the foreseeable future. It was agreed that this matter be put on the agenda for the forthcoming meeting to be arranged with the NRA.

Cllr Reid also referred to the fact that there were no parking facilities at the top of Stranorlar. Members submitted that the development charges due from the development currently underway at this location should go towards providing a proper Car Park.

### **Funding 2006**

Cllr McGowan requested a list of all possible sources of funding that could be applied for the roadwork's programme 2006 for the next meeting. He also requested details of all applications made to date for funding for 2006 as the Stranorlar Electoral Area always appears to get less than the other electoral areas.

He also referred to the road network in the Gaeltacht that was in need of repair and requested that funding be sought from Clar.

### **Roads Safety Programme**

Members referred to the €12,000 allocated under this programme for the Lough Mourne road. Mr Thomas advised that Mr Stephen Lambert was dealing with this allocation. As Members had queries in relation to a number of roads within the electoral area, it was agreed to invite Mr Stephen Lambert to the next meeting to update Members on this Road Safety Programme.

### **Navenny Bridge**

Following a query from Cllr McGowan regarding the improvements works at this bridge Mr Thomas advised that he had hoped the works would have been started at this stage however they would be commencing soon.

### **Road at back of McElhinneys**

Following a query from Cllr McGowan regarding the condition of the road from the back of McElhinneys to Dunfril House Mr Thomas agreed he would check the position and forward a report to the Members.

### **Classification of Roads**

Cllr Reid referred to the back road between Castlefin and Letterkenny that had been reclassified from a regional road to a county road and queried who was responsible for classifying roads.

Mr Thomas advised that it was the responsibility of the Members to classify the road network and the last classification of roads was approved by Members 5 years ago and no changes had taken place since.

Following a query from Cllr Reid regarding the procedure to have the road reclassified back to a Regional road Mr Thomas advised that he would have to put a motion forward at a full Council meeting.

### **Link Road from Mulrine's to Glenfin Road**

Cllr Reid submitted that following the announcement regarding the allocation for the proposed bypass it was more important than ever now that the link road between Mulrine's and Glenfin Road be developed to relieve the traffic situation on the Donegal road. Cllrs Bonnar and McGowan were in agreement that this project must now be developed regardless of whether the bypass proceeds or not. It was imperative that funding was sought to purchase the land for the link road and that the construction of the road commence as soon as possible.

### **Footpath at Trusk Road**

Cllr Bonnar again referred to the uncompleted works on the footpaths at this location. Mr Christie submitted that there was an obligation on the developer to complete the works. He advised that the matter would be followed up and a report be available for the next meeting.

### **Stranorlar Car park**

Following a query from Members Mr Thomas advised that it is proposed to fund this work from pay & display proceeds in Ballybofey. Members requested that a schedule of works be available for the next meeting.

Cllr Bonnar referred to a new proposal being introduced by the County Manager where he would allocate discretionary funding to individual sections for proposals that are deemed as innovative projects for their areas. She recommended that a proposal be submitted in this regard for the upgrade of Stranorlar Car Park.

### **Proposed Community Assisted Funding Allocation**

Members noted the report circulated at the meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr Reid seconded by Cllr McGowan the Community Assisted Schemes programme was agreed.

### **Street Signage**

Members noted the report circulated at the meeting proposing the new format to be used for street signs within the town. Members were in agreement with the proposal subject to the crest on the sign being changed to the Donegal County Council crest.

### **Maintenance Money**

Cllr McGowan raised a query in relation to the amount of maintenance monies transferred to the Machinery Yard for the use of lorries and other machinery each year. Mr Thomas submitted that this figure was not readily available. Cllr McGowan requested that a report be available for the next meeting, and Mr Thomas confirmed he would endeavour to prepare the report.

### **Funding for Castlefin Bridge**

Cllr McGowan referred to a small amount of funding received for Castlefin Bridge. He submitted that this bridge was condemned in 1994 and the matter must be kept on the agenda and efforts redoubled to acquire the necessary funding.

### **Dromore Bridge Walkway**

Following a query from Cllr Reid regarding the lack of progress of the works at this location Cllr McGowan submitted that he had negotiated special funding for this project during his time as Chairperson of the Council, adding that the matter was being dealt with by the County Manager.

<b>SEC 08/00 Schedule of Meetings for 2006</b>
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Members considered draft schedule circulated which was prepared in accordance with the Meetings schedule agreed by the full Council. Members expressed their wish to continue with the existing arrangement of holding meetings every 6 weeks.

Mr Gilroy circulated a second draft schedule based on meetings taking place ever six weeks. On the proposal of Cllr Bonnar seconded by Cllr Reid the revised meeting schedule was agreed subject to the next meeting being on the 14<sup>th</sup> March and as set out below.

<i><b>Month</b></i>	<i><b>Agreed Dates</b></i>
January	Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>
February	
March	Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup>
April	Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup>
May	Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup>
June	
July	Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup>
August	
September	Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup>
October	Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup>
November	Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup>
December	

**This concluded the business of the meeting.**