

18th October, 2011

TO ALL MEMBERS OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL
--

The Adjourned September Meeting of Donegal County Council, will be held on Monday 24th October, 2011 at 10.00am, in the County House, Lifford.

Items 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30 – 58

Please ensure that you bring the agenda previously distributed to the meeting.

A/Meetings Administrator

MINUTES OF THE ADJOURNED MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY
COUNCIL, HELD IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD ON MONDAY
24TH OCTOBER, 2011

C/382/11 MEMBERS PRESENT

Clrs. N. Mc Bride, Mayor, D. Alcorn, B. Byrne, J. Campbell, P. Canning, G. Crawford, M. Farren, M. T. Gallagher, M. Harley, C. Harvey, D. Larkin, F. Mc Brearty, M. Mc Bride, I. Mc Garvey, P. McGowan, Jack Murray, Clr. Ó Domhnaill, B. O' Neill, M. Quinn, J. Ryan and T. Slowey.

C/383/11 OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Seamus Neely, County Manager, Mr Liam Ward, Director of Corporate and Housing, A/Meetings Administrator, Mr John McLaughlin, Director of Roads and Transportation, Mr Joe Peoples, A/Director of Water and Environment, Mr Michael Heaney, Director of Community, Culture and Planning, Mr. Garry Martin, Head of Finance and Director of Emergency Services, Ms Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer.

C/384/11 APPROVAL OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE INTERREG IVA
RIVER LINKS PROJECT STEERING GROUP

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

It was unanimously agreed to endorse the nomination of Clrs. Harley, Harvey, McGowan and McBrearty to the River Links Project Steering Committee.

C/385/11 ENDORSEMENT OF THE CONFIRMED MINUTES OF
MEETING OF DONEGAL ELECTORAL AREA
COMMITTEE HELD ON 12TH MAY, 2011

On the proposal of Clr. Byrne, seconded by Clr. Campbell, it was resolved to endorse the Confirmed Minutes of Meeting of Donegal Electoral Area Committee held on the 12TH May, 2011.

C/386/11 ENDORSEMENT OF THE CONFIRMED MINUTES OF
MEETING OF GLENTIES ELECTORAL AREA
COMMITTEE HELD ON 12TH JULY, 2011

On the proposal of Clr. O'Domhnaill, seconded by Clr. Slowey, it was resolved to endorse the Confirmed Minutes of Meeting

of Glenties Electoral Area Committee held on the 12TH July, 2011.

C/387/11 ENDORSEMENT OF THE CONFIRMED MINUTES OF MEETING OF ISLAND COMMITTEE HELD ON 12TH JULY, 2011

On the proposal of Clr. O'Domhnaill, seconded by Clr. Slowey, it was resolved to endorse the Confirmed Minutes of Meeting of Island Committee held on the 12TH July, 2011.

C/388/11 TO NOTE CONFERENCE REPORTS

On the proposal of Clr. McGowan, seconded by Clr. Harley, the following conference reports were noted.

Clr. Patrick McGowan

Rebuilding Confidence in Urban and Rural Communities 24th and 25th March 2011 in Tullamore Court Hotel, Co. Offaly.

Clr. Dessie Larkin

Donegal Live 22nd May 2011 Iveagh Garden Dublin.

Clr. Martin Farren

Elected Members Responsibilities Indemnity from Liabilities of Decisions of the Body Corporate from 10th to 12th June, 2011 in Kingsvalley Hotel Galway City.

Clr. Terence Slowey

Elected Members Seminar from 10th to 12th June, 2011 in Kingsvalley Hotel, Galway City.

Clr. Paul Canning

Local Government Promoting Renewable Energy The Advantages of Solar Power from 19th to 21st August 2011 in the Manor West Hotel, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

Clr. Terence Slowey

The Advantages of Solar Power from 19th to 21st August, 2011 in Manor West Hotel, Tralee.

C/389/11 MAYOR'S BUSINESS

Votes of Sympathy

- The family of the late Gerry O' Doherty, Glencar, Letterkenny (former Senior Executive Engineer)
- The family of the late Jim Breslin, retired Waterworks Caretaker, Mountcharles.
- The family of the late Liam Colhoun, retired Spraybar Operator, Machinery Yard.
- Anthony Mc Grath, Roads, Donegal on the death of his father Francis Mc Grath, formerly Water & Environment, Donegal.
- Rosemary Curran , Housing, Milford on the death of her mother, Anna Clarke, O'Donnell, Creeslough.
- Bridie Mc Brearty, Area Manager, Housing & Corporate, Donegal on the death of her mother, Margaret Doherty.
- Patrick Gibson, Water & Environment, Letterkenny on the death of his father, Joe Gibson.
- Eddie Carr, County Laboratory, on the death of his mother, Rose Carr.
- The family of the late P.J Drummond, Ballyshannon (former Fire Chief, Ballyshannon Fire Station)
- Cllr. Denise Connolly, Bundoran Town Council on the death of the mother Belma McManus.

Correspondence from other Local Authorities

The Mayor noted that correspondence had been received from Dublin City Council and Monaghan Town Council outlining their support for the following motion.

"That this Council act to protect Right of Ways in our County."

The Mayor noted that correspondence had been received from Clonmel Borough Council outlining its support for the following motion:-

"That this Council recognises that the Universal Social Charge is an unjust and regressive tax, bearing down most heavily on those least able to afford it, and calls on the Government to abolish the Universal Social Charge."

Congratulations

Congratulations was extended to

- The Donegal Senior Football Team on winning the Ulster Championship and on reaching the semi-finals of the All Ireland Championships.
- Brendan Boyce, Milford on making the qualifying time for the Olympics in the 50km walk.
- To all associated with the European Surf Championships in Bundoran.
- Niall Campbell on being selected on the Lory Meagher Team of the Year.
- Karl Lacey, Neill Mc Gee and Kevin Cassidy on their 2011 GAA Players All Stars Awards
- James Mc Gee on being crowned World Champion at the 2011 World Championship Sheep Dog Trials.
- Glenswilly on winning the Donegal Senior Football Championship.
- Ardara Minor Football Team on their success in the County Minor Final (Division 1)
- Burt Senior Football Team on winning the Junior A Football Championship.
- Martin Harley, Trentagh on leading the Apprenticeship Jockey Championship Table in Britain.
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology on the successful delivery of third level education in the county over the past 40 years.

Visiting Dignitaries

The Mayor acknowledged that the county had hosted a number of high profile visits over the past months, namely:-

- The visit of Mr. Peter Zingraf, First Secretary, German Embassy in Ireland to the County House.
- Delegation from the University of Massachusetts
- Courtesy Call by Mr. Loyola Hearn, Canadian Ambassador to Ireland.

Members were of the opinion that all Elected Members should be invited to meet with visiting dignitaries.

Donegal Gathering

The Mayor advised that he was placing the development and promotion of tourism at the forefront of his agenda for the coming year. To this end he advised, that he had initiated work on the Donegal Gathering 2012. This he noted would comprise a number of events with the specific aim of attracting people to the County. A range of new flagship events for the County and the branding of existing events would he added be actively promoted. Donegal County Council together with the CDB County Tourism Sectoral Forum, the CDB Culture Forum, and other relevant stakeholders had he advised, already commenced work on the project. Members would he confirmed be further updated over the coming months.

The need to include Island communities when arranging events was also noted.

Visit of New York State Legislature

Members were informed that a group from the New York State Legislature had visited the Letterkenny Public Service Centre on Sunday 16th October, 2011, and met with the Mayor, Clr Dessie Larkin, Chair of the County Development Board and Michael Heaney, Director of Community, Culture and Enterprise.

It was noted that a wide ranging discussion had taken place on areas of common interest and potential partnership, with all involved agreeing to explore further areas of mutual benefit.

Golden Bridges Awards 2011

Members were informed that an invitation had been received for Donegal County Council to participate in this year's Golden Bridges Awards and Enterprise Showcase in Boston. It was noted that this event was a key element of the ongoing Donegal –Derry- Boston Partnership Initiative with the aim of establishing networks and collaboration in the U.S for the benefit of the North West of Ireland, with the Awards Ceremony itself being a high profile event which highlighted

Donegal in a positive manner. The Golden Bridges Showcase Event this year it was confirmed would focus on research and innovation and would be used to highlight the IDA/Invest Northern Ireland North -West Now Project, thus promoting the potential for high tech industries in the North West.

Having noted the revised arrangements under Section 142 5(d) of the Local Government Act, 2001, introduced by the Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations 2006 & 2010 and directives issued by the Minister in that regard, on the proposal of Clr. Mc Garvey, seconded by Clr. O' Neill, it was resolved to authorise the attendance of the Mayor, Clr Noel Mc Bride together with Clr Dessie Larkin, Chair of the County Development Board, and accompanied by the County Manager, Mr. Seamus Neely and the Director of Community, Culture and Planning, Mr. Michael Heaney at the Golden Bridges Awards and Enterprise Showcase in Boston from Tuesday 8th November, 2011 to Sunday 13th November, 2011 inclusive.

Responding to members queries the County Manager confirmed that the approximate costing for the trip would be in the region of €1600 per person including flights and accommodation.

The need to highlight specific tourist enterprises including Slieve League, Glenveagh Castle, the abundance of world class Golf Course in the County together with the promotion of a range of Donegal Events and Festivals was widely acknowledged.

Mr. Michael Heaney, Director of Community, Culture and Planning advised that the Donegal County Council delegation would be taking the lead at these workshops.

Road Safety Show

The Mayor acknowledged the excellent contribution made by Mr. Eamon Browne, Road Safety Officer and his team to the recent Donegal Road Safety Show.

The following Questions and Replies were noted:

C/390/11 TIMEFRAME FOR THE LETTING OF NEW DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HOUSING SCHEME AT NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM

The following question was submitted by Clr. Canning:-

"When will the houses that are being built by Donegal County Council in Newtowncunningham be ready for occupation?"

Clr. Canning was informed that:-

"It is hoped to have this scheme completed prior to Christmas 2011."

C/391/11 INDENTIFICATION OF TENANTS FOR THE NEW DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HOUSING SCHEME IN NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM

The following question was submitted by Clr. Canning:-

"Has a list of people been identified for occupation of these dwellings or is it still open to the public to apply?"

Clr. Canning was informed that:-

"The 12 units in the housing scheme in Newtoncunningham have not yet been allocated as this scheme is still under construction.

In accordance with the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, on receipt of a valid application for social housing support, the Council must conduct a housing needs assessment to determine whether the household has a need for social housing support and the nature of that need. A further assessment must also be carried out at the point of allocation of that support.

Accordingly, when the housing scheme in Newtoncunningham is nearing completion, the dwellings will be allocated in accordance with the Allocation Scheme as adopted on the 30th May 2011, also under the terms of the Housing (Miscellaneous

Provisions) Act 2009, to households who have undergone the application and assessment process and have been assessed as being qualified for social housing support, and/or to households already in receipt of social housing support that have been approved for transfer to Local Authority dwellings in this area.”

C/392/11 FINANCING OF THE UNFUNDED BALANCE OF THE COUNCIL’S HOUSING CAPITAL BUDGET

The following question was submitted by Clr. Larkin:-

Has there been any direction given by Minister Penrose to how Donegal is to finance its unfunded balance in the housing capital budget?"

Clr. Larkin was informed that:-

“There has been ongoing engagement with the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government regarding the shortfall in funding under the Main Construction Programme within the Social Housing Investment Programme in 2011.

Following a recent review of the shortfall involved it is estimated that the shortfall between existing commitments and allocations to date in the Main Construction Programme is of the order of 1.1 M euro. Department officials have recently indicated that given the fact that Donegal has already drawn down in excess of 80% of its allocation to date, that an opportunity does exist for Donegal to benefit from a lack of spend in the programme by other Housing Authorities. It is anticipated that the Department may be in a position to make an additional allocation to Donegal in the next few weeks which will go a considerable way to address the shortfall. This is however not confirmed at this stage and the Council will be advised of any positive developments in this regard.”

C/393/11 ROLE IN THE DECISION MAKING OF COUNTY’S HEALTH SERVICE FOR THE 5 DONEGAL COUNTY

COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON THE HSE REGIONAL BOARD

The following question was submitted by Clr. McGarvey:-

"Will our 5 members appointed to the HSE Regional Board consider non attendance until they are given a role in decision making for Health Service to our County?"

Clr. McGarvey was informed that:-

"As this is a matter for the members involved to consider, a reply from the Executive is not appropriate and therefore no reply is made."

C/394/11 COST AND LEVEL OF SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF LETTERKENNY UNDER THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS IN OUR CIVIC AMENITY SITES

The following question was submitted by Clr. Larkin:-

"What service and at what cost will the people of Letterkenny receive under the new arrangements in our civic amenity sites?"

Clr. Larkin was informed that:-

"A contract notice for the Operation of the Councils Civic Amenity Sites was published on the Etenders website on 23 May 2011. A number of tenders were returned by the tender return date of 17 June 2011 and 2 tenders were returned for the Letterkenny site. Tender assessment has now been carried out and the Council will be appointing the successful contractor shortly. As a minimum the contract requires a level of service at least as favourable as the current service and this will be delivered at costs to the public below the current rates for the normal recyclables."

C/395/11 TIMEFRAME FOR THE COMMENCING OF THE WATER TREATMENT SCHEME AT GARTAN LAKE

The following question was submitted by Clr. Quinn:-

"When does Donegal County Council intend commencing the much needed and long awaited Water Treatment Scheme at Gartan Lake?"

Clr. Quinn was informed that:-

“The Churchill Water Supply Scheme with Gartan Lake as source is included on the Rural Water Programme as a Group Scheme for upgrade and takeover. Substantial physical network improvements have been carried out in recent years and significant design work has been done in connection with the proposed Treatment Plant. Restricted allocations under the Rural Water block grant have impacted on progress.”

C/396/11 ERECTION OF “WELCOME TO DONEGAL” SIGNS AT THE ENTRANCES TO COUNTY DONEGAL

The following question was submitted by Clr. Brogan:-

"Will Donegal County Council erect signs at entrances to the county at Bundoran, Lifford, Bridgend and Muff indicating "Welcome To Donegal" as these signs would send out a message of welcome to visitors and tourists to our county?"

Clr. Brogan was informed that:-

“The implementation of a County wide tourism signage scheme is a priority within the tourism strategy being pursued by the CDB Tourism Sectoral Forum and by Donegal County Council. The Council recognises the need to brand the County in a clear and consistent manner and appropriate signage at the entrances to the County is a key element of this approach. Donegal County Council through its Community, Culture and Planning Directorate will seek to identify appropriate funding and will work with relevant CDB Partners to develop tourism visitor focussed signage to be located at major entry points to the County. Members will be kept updated on progress.”

C/397/11 ANY PLANS FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF TEMPORARY WORKMEN ON THE ROADS SECTIONS TO HELP MAINTAIN OUR ROADS AS AGREED BY THIS COUNCIL

The following question was submitted by Clr. Brogan:-

Has this Council any plans to take on temporary workmen on the roads sections to help maintain our roads as agreed by this Council?"

Clr. Brogan was informed that:-

“The Council manages the level of works that it outsources and carries out using its own staff on an ongoing basis. This is done within the budget available to it from state grants (including discretionary maintenance) and the adopted roads maintenance budget from our own resources. Dependant on the level of funding available the Council has replaced on a temporary basis, retiring members of staff (for example in Stranorlar Roads EA). This is kept under ongoing review in each electoral area by local management. As funding permits and grant conditions allow additional or replacement staff may be taken on.

We applied for Department sanction to do this in early July 2011 and received approval in August for employment of temporary seasonal workers.”

C/398/11 URGENT REPAIRS TO THE FOOTPATHS IN RATHMULLAN

The following question was submitted by Clr. Quinn:-

"Will Donegal County Council as a matter of urgency carry out repairs to the footpaths in Rathmullan?"

Clr. Quinn was informed that:-

“As members will be aware, refurbishment of footpaths has previously been funded by the Council and Department of Transport as capital improvements funded from either development charges or discretionary improvements.

These funding sources have not been available since 2008. In June 2011 the Department of Transport announced a new

“smarter travel” scheme under which the Council have sought to improve and refurbish pedestrian links in our towns and villages. We have obtained the third highest allocation nationally for footpaths in the first round of allocations under this scheme. Rathmullan did not obtain funding at this time. The Council will continue to work to source any available funding to carryout refurbishment and improvement works.”

C/399/11 IMPROVEMENT OF SPACE AT THE BARRACK BRIDGE AND THE REMOVAL OF THE SIGN THAT ALLOWS ONLY ONE VEHICLE AT A TIME TO CROSS

The following question was submitted by Clr. McGarvey:-

"Will our Road Section improve space at the Barrack Bridge and remove the Sign that only allows one vehicle at a time to cross as this is a very busy Road?"

Clr. McGarvey was informed that:-

“This matter has previously been raised at Electoral Area Meetings in 2009-2010 following collisions with the parapet wall of the bridge. At that time a safety check was carried out and following consultation with the members the recommendations of a detailed report (which considered a range of options including replacement) have been implemented. These included the provision of give and take traffic management incorporating a legally enforceable Yield sign. There have been no reported accidents at the bridge since these works have been carried out.

It would be nice if we could widen the bridge such as to allow two vehicles to cross at the same time, however the bridge is structurally sound and the limited resources that are available to the Council must be prioritised on bridges which are not. By way of example in the Letterkenny Electoral Area three bridges have failed in the Drumoghill, Kirkstown and Meenaroy areas this year alone.”

C/400/11 CLARIFICATION ON PERMISSION BY DEPARTMENT TO REMOVE THE MORATORIUM ON RECRUITMENT BY DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

The following question was submitted by Clr. M McBride:-

"I refer to the decision made at the June 2011 Council Meeting to write to Minister Phil Hogan requesting permission to remove the moratorium on recruitment by Donegal County Council, a request which I believe was granted, and now ask for further information and clarification on the matter as Donegal County Council has subsequently only recruited two employees in the Stranorlar Area?"

Clr. M McBride was informed that:-

"The Council sought approval from the Department in early July for the employment of seasonal workers in the Roads Department. The approval was granted in August. Some workers have been employed in Greencastle, Buncrana and Stranorlar. Each Area will decide on their requirements and if they have sufficient monies available. Also, the approval allows for the possibility of seasonal drivers during winter gritting if needed."

C/401/11 REQUEST BY CLR MC ENIFF FOR COPY OF THE LOCAL ROADS NUMBERED LIST FOR THE WHOLE DONEGAL AREA

The following question was submitted by Clr. McEniff:-

"Can I have a copy of the Local Roads (Numbered) for the whole Donegal Area?"

Clr. McEniff was informed that:-

"This will be provided by the Local Area Office."

C/402/11 CLARIFICATION ON WHAT EXTRA PROVISIONS ARE IN PLACE TO DEAL WITH EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS IN THE STRANORLAR ELECTORAL AREA

The following question was submitted by Clr. McBrearty:-

"What extra provisions are in place for SEA if we are hit with extreme weather conditions over the winter months and does the council have sufficient stocks of salt available for the SEA if we suffer similar problems as we had over the past two winters?"

Clr. McBrearty was informed that:-

"The NRA and the Department of Transport will have 200,000 tonnes of salt in stock in the country by the end of October 2011. This compares with 55,000 tonnes which was in the country at the same time last year.

By renting extra storage sheds, it is planned that 10,000 tonnes of this salt will be in storage in Donegal barns by the end of October which compares with 5,000 tonnes that Donegal had last year at the same time which was our full storage capacity. At the moment there is currently about 4,000 tonnes in storage in salt barns in the county. There should be no problems with salt supply for the current winter season. Donegal County Council is in the process of training extra relief winter service operators for lorries for the current season."

C/403/11 DETAILS OF THE SUBMISSION SENT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND MINISTER PHIL HOGAN TD OUTLINING THE SERIOUS CONDITIONS OF THE ROADS IN THE STRANORLAR ELECTORAL AREA AS DISCUSSED/AGREED BY THE FULL COUNCIL

The following question was submitted by Clr. McGowan:-

"Please give details of the submission sent to the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, also Minister Phil Hogan TD outlining the serious condition of the roads in the Stranorlar Electoral Area as discussed/agreed by the Full Council?"

Clr. McGowan was informed that:-

“A Special Report has been prepared and sent to the Minister for Transport and Department staff. A copy is being made available to each of the Stranorlar Elected Members.”

C/404/11 UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE APPLICATION TO IMPROVE FLOOD PREVENTION MEASURES IN RAPHOE

The following question was submitted by Clr. Crawford:-

"What is the present status of the application to improve flood prevention measures in Raphoe?"

Clr. Crawford was informed that:-

“There is no application to improve flood prevention measures in Raphoe. The OPW has taken the lead on the flooding issues in Raphoe and it is expected that any funding will be provided by same. The OPW has advised the Council that it has approved funding for a feasibility study to be undertaken to assess flood relief measures in the town of Raphoe. The OPW intends to appoint a consultant to undertake this work. As of yet, no consultant has been appointed to undertake the feasibility study.

There is no particular application to improve flood prevention measures in Raphoe at this time.”

C/405/11 OUTCOME FOR THE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AT QUARRY ROAD PORTHALL

The following question was submitted by Clr. Crawford:-

"What is the outcome of the investigation into possible road safety improvements at Quarry Road Porthall and what has been the delay in responding to my initial query?"

Clr. Crawford was informed that:-

“Following investigations into possible road safety improvements at Porthall, a Road Safety Report was prepared and issued to the Area Team in May 2011. The report

recommended traffic calming measures (gateway type signage), speed limit repeater signs, cutting away of overhanging trees and bushes, advanced warning signs. While the Area Team has removed/cut away the overhanging trees/bushes. Funding will be required to progress with any of the remaining recommendations. The scheme/location does not meet the criteria for DOT LCA funding and any works would need to be prioritised within the monies made available in the Local Area budgets. This would need to be discussed and agreed at Electoral Area level.”

C/406/11 ERECTION OF PROPER DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE IN DRUMKEEN

The following question was submitted by Clr. Harvey:-

"Is this Council going to erect proper signage in Drumkeen as advised by myself in correspondence with the roads directorate and at recent electoral area meetings- Signs on the main road directing to the chapel, the school and St Bridgets Well, and children at play signs?"

Clr. Harvey was informed that:-

“The provision and erection of signage along National Roads is generally governed by three documents as follows:-

County Development Plan

Traffic Signs Manual issued by DOE

NRA " Policy on the provision of tourist and leisure signage on National Roads Rev 1 dated March 2011"

In general the County Council do not provide or erect signs for Churches, Schools or Visitor Attractions along Roads.

Individual organisations can apply to the County Council for a licence to erect signage. However such signs must comply with the traffic signs manual and the County Development plan. Furthermore if the sign is to be erected along a National Road approval is required from the NRA.

Signage such as "Children at Play" can be considered but only after it is deemed necessary and the most appropriate sign for that particular location."

C/407/11 CURRENT POSITION OF THE STAFFING LEVELS IN THE SEA FOR HOUSING MAINTENANCE

The following question was submitted by Clr. McBrearty:-

"What is the current position with staffing levels in SEA for Housing maintenance and will the council be filling the vacant maintenance craftsman position?"

Clr. McBrearty was informed that:-

"Discussions are presently taking place with staff with regards a realignment within Electoral Area boundaries. The position of the vacant post of Maintenance Craftsman in the Stranorlar Electoral Area will be addressed within these discussions."

C/408/11 PRESENTATION OF PLANS FOR ANY VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEMES IN THE COUNTY AND AN UPDATE ON SCHEMES PRIORITISED DUE TO IDENTIFIED FUNDING

The following question was submitted by Clr. McGowan:-

"I ask that Donegal County present any plans for village renewal schemes in the County and give an update on schemes which were prioritised and due to commence when funding was identified, such as Castlefin and Convoy where public consultation meetings had begun and Draft plans agreed?"

Clr. McGowan was informed that:-

Donegal County Council intend to carry out workshops in each of the five Electoral Area's in the coming months to identify and prioritise projects to be included on the 2012 – 2014 Capital Works Programme. Projects that are included on current priority lists will be presented for inclusion by the Elected Members. It is envisaged that any funding opportunities arising

will be fully exploited, i.e., National Rural Development programme etc.

Current List of Priorities for Urban & Village Renewal / Flagship Capital Programme 2010 – 2012.

Glenties E.A. ·

- Dungloe Foreshore Phase II·
- Bunbeg / Derrybeg Phase III

Inishowen E.A. ·

- Barrack Hill Phase I·
- Buncrana Urban Renewal

Letterkenny E.A. ·

- Letterkenny Gateway Urban Renewal·
- Milford Urban Renewal & Car Park

Stranorlar E.A.·

- Stranorlar All Weather Pitch ·
- Stranorlar Plaza

Donegal E.A. ·

- Killybegs Urban Renewal

C/409/11 APPLICATION TO DEPARTMENT FOR A SEWERAGE TREATMENT PLANT FOR ST JOHNSTON

The following question was submitted by Clr. Crawford:-

"Will this Council make application to the Department of Environment for a sewerage treatment plant for St Johnston?"

Clr. Crawford was informed that:-

“St Johnston is currently not listed as a Major Capital Sewerage Scheme on the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Governments Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2012. The Council has however included the scheme on the Rural Water Small Schemes Programme and works to provide a collection system for St Johnston have been completed under that programme. Although the Council made a comprehensive bid for an increased allocation under Rural Water for 2010 the allocation subsequently received is insufficient to allow construction works to commence on the St Johnston treatment plant in 2011. The Council does however intend to advance the

project to tender stage in 2012 and is at present considering options for tendering and funding.”

C/410/11 PROGRESS ON THE ALCOHOL CHARTER OF RECOGNITION

The following question was submitted by Clr. Harvey:-

"Has this council made any progress on the Alcohol Charter of Recognition and when will the subgroup of the County Development meet to pursue this issue?"

Clr. Harvey was informed that:-

“The NWAFF have been invited to attend the next County Development Board Social Inclusion Measure (SIM) Group meeting in November with a view towards agreeing a framework to advance this key agenda. The SIM group which has involvement of representatives from all relevant agencies is regarded as the appropriate platform through which to advance this initiative. Members will be kept updated on progress.”

C/411/11 ADVANCE NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC BY DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL REGARDING ROADWORK CLOSURES

The following question was submitted by Clr. Alcorn:-

"In view of several road closures recently due to roadworks, mostly on regional roads, what advance notice do the County Council have to give the public when this is happening?"

Clr. Alcorn was informed that:-

“Formalised Notices in relation to closure of roads is done in two parts in accordance with Section 75 of the 1993 Roads Act / Article 12.

Firstly 14 days notice of Intention to close a road is required followed by 7 days notice of decision to actually close the road.

In regard to general roadworks the County Council in most instances temporarily block the road to allow roadworks to be

safely completed. In such cases traffic can normally be accommodated but may be delayed. In these cases it has become normal practice to provide an alternative route, if one exists even though the road is not formally closed.

It is understood that there was quite an amount of discussion in advance of the works this year to try and accommodate local people while still allowing the roadworks to be done as efficiently as possible. Also, sometimes the weather can alter plans for doing roadworks and closing roads and there is a knock-on effect.”

C/412/11 AGE LIMITS ON ADAPTION OR DISABILITY GRANTS

The following question was submitted by Clr. Alcorn:-

"Because of the decrease in housing repair applications, what is the age limit of applicants and their wife or partner when applying for older people grant scheme, and is there an age limit on Adaption Grants or Disability Grants?"

Clr. Alcorn was informed that:-

“The Housing Aid for Older People Grant Scheme is designed to assist older people living in poor housing conditions to have necessary repairs or improvements carried out. The occupant must be 66 years of age or older.

Where there is more than one occupant, one of the occupants must be over 66 years of age and the remaining occupants must be: - :

- over 66 years of age
- Children under 18 or
- Aged 18 – 23 and in full time education or engaged in a FAS apprenticeship*.

In exceptional cases applications may be considered where a person under the age of 66 years resides with the elderly applicant. The criteria requires that the occupant who is under the age limit, is seriously handicapped and is cared for by their

parent(s) i.e. the elderly occupants are the carers looking after a child/younger person who is severely handicapped & totally dependant on the adult for care.

There are no such age limits on the two disability grant schemes.”

C/413/11 NUMBERS OF APPLICATIONS UNDER THE LONGTERM LEASING

The following question was submitted by Clr. M.T. Gallagher:-

"How many applications has this council received under the long-term leasing scheme (in the County and each electoral area)?"

Clr. M.T. Gallagher was informed that:-

“The following table (**Vide Appendix 1**) sets out the number of proposals received in each electoral area together with the outturn thereof. Where proposals are postponed this is primarily due to non-compliance with statutory obligations such as Planning and Building Control or the unit was occupied at time of inspection. The main reason that proposals are rejected are primarily due to no housing need in the area or the type of unit offered is not suitable to the housing demand in the area. In other cases, proposals have been rejected as they relate to green field sites or unfinished estates.

For those proposals accepted, the next step in the process is that the Local Authority issue a Letter of Intent to the owner setting out the documents and works, where necessary, which are required before the Lease can be entered into and the unit allocated. To date, Letters of Intent have issued in respect of 130 units, which are presently at various stages in the process.”

C/414/11 REQUEST FOR DETAILS IN RELATION TO PAYMENTS TO COMPANIES WHO PROVIDED SERVICES TO DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF FORMER COUNTY MANAGER MR MICHAEL MCLOONE

The following question was submitted by Clr. Slowey:-

"Who authorised and signed off on each and every payment to the companies listed below who were employed to provide services to Donegal County Council under the stewardship of former County Manager, Michael McLoone. Please list the date and amount of each payment, a copy of each invoice. Were any payments made in advance, and if so who authorised and signed off on these advance payments, when were they made and what reason is this Council now giving for paying for services in advance. Were invoices subsequently provided to this Council for advance payments and will the Council provide copies of these invoices.

The Companies in question are:

1. One Sigma Ltd.
2. Xtender Teo
3. Agility Ltd.
4. Instream Ltd.
5. Coretech Ltd.
6. Donegal Citizen's Information Service."

Clr. Slowey was informed that:-

"The attached spreadsheet (Vide Appendix 2) sets out details of payments made to the companies as follows:

1. One Sigma Ltd
2. XtenderTeo
3. Agility Ltd
4. Instream Ltd
5. Coretech Ltd
6. Donegal Citizen's Information Service

The two tables include a summary of the total payments made and also the detail of each payment from 2003 to date. The detailed table includes the following information:

Name of Company; Amount of Payment; Date of Payment; Area against which payment was charged.

The above information was obtained from AGRESSO- the Council's Financial Management System in place since 2003. A review of any payments to these suppliers prior to this date, on the financial management system in place at the time, is ongoing and will be made available when review is completed.

Arrangements are being made to provide copies of each Invoice as requested. Given the number of individual payments involved, there is considerable work involved particularly as some of the payments were made up to eight years ago. Notwithstanding this, every effort will be made to provide the copies requested at the earliest possible date.

The additional information requested, i.e., authorizations/sign off, whether advance payments were made , authorization and sign off of same and copy invoices will be clarified on completion of the work as indicated above”.

C/415/11 REQUEST FOR COPIES OF ALL REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS RELATING TO THE PROCUREMENT AND VALUE FOR MONEY: ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following question was submitted by Clr. Slowey:-

“Will Donegal County Council provide copies of all reports and Internal Memos from both the former County Manager, Michael McLoone and Members of Staff of Donegal County Council and or any other parties which relate to the "Procurement and Value for Money: Organisational Development" and the six companies listed in question 1. In addition will Donegal County Council outline where these payments for this project were listed in the Book of Estimates each year, the total cost of the project to date, and why a Councillor like myself was completely unaware of this very significant amount of expenditure despite being a Member of Donegal County Council for the past 10 years?"

Clr. Slowey was informed that:-

‘The Procurement and Value for Money: Organisational Development’ document is a report carried out by the Internal Auditor within Donegal Co. Council which was finalized in October 2009.

The basis upon which this report was prepared is set out in the introduction of the report which states as follows:

- 1.1 This review was initiated as a result of findings in respect an Internal Audit Review of Purchase Order Discipline and Prompt Payment Interest which was provided for in the Internal Audit Annual Audit Plan
- 1.2 Subsequent to commencing the Internal Audit Review, the Local Government Auditor provided details in relation to One Sigma Ltd in 2007 and 2008 and requested that Internal Auditor investigate:
 - (a) The reasons for these payments
 - (b) Details as to how this supplier was engaged by the Council
 - (c) What services is this supplier providing to the Council, and,
 - (d) Does it represent value for money to the Council

The Local Government Auditor provided the following further information relating to his query:

Job Code 788CH003	Organisational Development
Job Code ZHRHR708	Organisational Development

This Internal Audit report was considered by the Local Government Auditor and also by the Audit Committee established in the Council.

The Local Government Audit Report and an Interim Report from the Audit Committee dealing with this matter were considered by Donegal Co. Council in the early part of 2010. To support this consideration, a copy of the Internal Audit Report on ‘Procurement and Value for Money: Organisational

Development' was circulated to all members of the Council at the time.

In addition to the above, Donegal Co. Council held two Special Meetings on 1st March 2010 and 25th March 2010 to consider the procurement of specialist services to research and develop a framework for transforming public services. Detailed documentation was circulated to each Elected Member during the course of the above meetings.

Arrangements are being made to assemble and make available copies of all reports and Internal Memos relating to this matter.

The matter of Budget provision is referenced in the Internal Audit Report at pages 8, 9 and 10, where it points out that a provision was made within the Budget Book each year under the heading of Organisational Development. Any over expenditure on this heading on an annual basis has been included in the Annual Financial Statement.”

C/416/11 REQUEST FOR FUNDING FROM DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL TO ENSURE THE PROGRESSION OF MAGHERAROARTY VILLAGE RENEWAL

The following question was submitted by Clr. Ó Domhnaill:-

“Can Donegal County Council ensure that the Magheroarty Village renewal proposal is progressed with a view to funding or part funding this project?”

Clr. Ó Domhnaill was informed that:-

“Donegal County Council intend to carry out workshops in each of the five Electoral Areas in the coming months to identify and prioritise projects to be included on the 2012 – 2014 Capital Works Programme. Projects that are included on current priority lists will be presented for inclusion by the Elected Members. It is envisaged that any funding opportunities arising will be fully exploited, i.e., National Rural Development programme etc.

Current List of Priorities for Urban & Village Renewal /
Flagship Capital Programme 2010 – 2012.

Glenties E.A. ·

Dungloe Foreshore Phase II·

Bunbeg / Derrybeg Phase III

Inishowen E.A. ·

Barrack Hill Phase I·

Buncrana Urban Renewal

Letterkenny E.A. ·

Letterkenny Gateway Urban Renewal·

Milford Urban Renewal & Car Park

Stranorlar E.A.·

Stranorlar All Weather Pitch ·

Stranorlar Plaza

Donegal E.A. ·

Killybegs Urban Renewal·

Pettigo / Tullyhomin Peace III

Projects that are included on current priority lists will be presented for inclusion by the Elected Members.”

C/417/11

SURVEY TO ENSURE THAT ALL SIGNAGE ON THE
HORNHEAD SCENIC ROUTE IS RENEWED OR ERECTED
WHERE NEEDED

The following question was submitted by Clr. Ó Domhnaill:-

"Can a study be carried out to ensure that all relevant signage on the Hornhead scenic route is renewed or erected where needed?"

Clr. Ó Domhnaill was informed that:-

“In recognition of the importance of tourism to the economy of Donegal and in the context of its role in developing tourism infrastructure, Donegal County Council is in the process of securing investment in the renewal and establishment of touring routes based on the Inishowen 100 and a Letterkenny based route around Fanad Head and the Rosguill Peninsula. If successful in securing this initial funding, Donegal County

Council will work to roll out this pilot project throughout the County, including Horn Head. Members will be kept updated on progress.”

C/418/11 UPDATE ON THE GLENTIES AND DUNGLOE SEWAGE SCHEME

The following question was submitted by Clr. M.T. Gallagher:-

"Has this council had any update on the Glenties and Dungloe Sewage Scheme?"

Clr. M.T. Gallagher was informed that:-

“A contract notice for the pre-qualification of contractors for the construction of the Dungloe Glenties Sewerage Scheme DBO was published on Etenders and the Official Journal of the European Union on 15 July 2011. The last date for pre-qualification submissions was 26 August 2011. 8 submissions were received by the due date and time. The submissions have been passed to the Councils consultants for assessment and tenders will be invited when the shortlisting has been completed and the tender documents finalised. This will take place in the last quarter of 2011 or early 2012.”

This concluded the business of the meeting

