

**LIMAVADY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE BHUIRG LÉIM AN MHADAIDH**

**DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
9 MARCH 2005**

Minutes of a meeting of the above Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, 7 Connell Street, Limavady at 7.30 pm on the above date.

PRESENT:

Aldermen M Carten G Robinson, Councillors A. Brolly (in the chair), B Brown, B. Chivers, L. Cubitt, M. Donaghy, B. Douglas, D. Lowry, G. Mullan, J. Rankin, E. Stevenson.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Chief Recreation/Tourist Officer, Acting Economic Development Officer, Countryside Recreation Officer and the Committee Clerk.

WELCOME:

Members welcomed the return of Alderman Robinson to the chamber following a period of illness. Alderman Robinson thanked members and officers for their support.

APOLOGIES:

Alderman J Dolan, Councillor M Coyle, Councillor M McGuigan and the Town Clerk.

MINUTES:

The minutes of Development Committee meeting held 9 February 2005 were approved and signed on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Alderman Carten.

MATTERS ARISING:

Lottery Funding: The Chief Recreation & Tourist Officer confirmed that he had written to Irish Football Association to seek clarification on grant aid from DCAL.

Kite-bugging at Benone: The Chief Recreation/Tourist Officer advised members that he would investigate complaints of verbal abuse from those who were kite-bugging at Benone.

TRANSLINK – ACCIDENT AT WOODTOWN RAILWAY CROSSING:

The Chair welcomed Mr Ian Morrow and Mr Alistair Kitson, Translink to the meeting.

As Deputy Chairman of the Health & Safety Committee for Northern Ireland, Councillor Lowry disclosed an interest and took no part in the discussion.

Mr Morrow explained that there were 382 railway crossings across Northern Ireland, with a high concentration of these being private crossings within Limavady Borough Council area.

Mr Morrow highlighted that recommendations for improvement were put forward when the crossings were inspected every six months and that over the past two years 50 crossings had been refurbished, which included replacement of fencing, new cattle grids and resurfacing.

Mr Morrow said that whilst Translink provided information on risks and use of crossings by pedestrians, consultation with crossing users were important as Translink relied on people letting them know of problems.

Mr Kitson voiced regret that an accident had occurred at Woodtown railway crossing in which Mrs Jean Irwin had tragically died. He said that Translink had investigated the incident and that the report by the independent inquiry was with the coroner.

Councillor Cubitt suggested that Translink had a lot to answer for as they had been informed that the crossing was dangerous and ignored requests for lights to be erected. He further suggested that the house located alongside the crossing should be demolished as it blocked the view of approaching trains.

Mr Morrow responded that Translink could not demolish the house as they were not the owner and said that assessments pointed to vegetation growth blocking sighting distance rather than the property in question.

Councillor Mullan suggested that a combination of factors may have contributed to the accident, including inadequate approach surface, severe incline and lack of visibility. He said that the lady who had died had been concerned for the safety of others at the crossing and that it was ironic she was the one killed there.

In conclusion, Mr Kitson said that Translink were looking for long term solutions regarding the safety of all high risk crossings and in the interim, Mr Irwin had been supplied with a direct line for contact to the signal office when using the Woodtown crossing. He added that over the next three weeks, a permanent telephone would be located at the crossing for users to call Castlerock signal office on train running times.

The Chair thanks Mr Morrow and Mr Kitson for attending the meeting and answering members' queries.

Councillor Brown requested that it be noted that the presentation by Translink lasted 35 minutes.

MINUTES OF DANNY BOY SUB-COMMITTEE:

The minutes of the Danny Boy Sub-Committee meeting held 1 March 2005 were approved and signed on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Councillor Mullan.

Members endorsed the Progress Report from CW Events Management Company.

CHIEF RECREATION/TOURIST OFFICER'S REPORT – MARCH 2005:

The Chief Recreation/Tourist Officer presented his report and enlarged thereon. The report was adopted on the proposal of Councillor Lowry, seconded by Councillor Rankin subject to the following:

Options for Forestry Consultation: The Countryside Recreation Officer referred to the Options for Forestry Consultation document and implications for local councils. He said that given the substantial amount of forest within Limavady Borough Council the proposed transfer of responsibility for maintaining and development access to forests to local government would have a major impact for Council. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Rankin, seconded by Alderman Robinson that Council would respond requesting additional detail and highlight Council's disappointment with the limited public consultation.

North Sperrins Heritage Trial: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer recommended that the Countryside Recreation Officer sit on the selection panel for Feeny Community Association for the selection of a Project Officer for North Sperrins Heritage Trail project. Members noted that the Association had confirmed that a full funding package was now in place and agreed to take responsibility for the elements agreed at a meeting between Heritage Lottery Fund, Feeny Community Association, Town Clerk and Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer in April 2002.

River Roe Disabled Angling Access: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer explained that a number of sites were identified as being suitable for the development of simple infrastructure to improve access to and from the River Roe. It was agreed that further investigation be carried out in conjunction with Department of Agriculture and Rivers Agency into the development of both disabled angling and canoe access points along the Roe.

In response to Alderman Robinson, the Countryside Recreation Officer said that he would investigate with the EHS the possibility of providing additional disabled angling spaces at Roe Valley Country Park.

Irish Power Kite Association: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer advised that a request for financial assistance had been received from the Irish Power Kite Association for two events, the Supercup to be held on 26 & 27 March 2005 and the North Coast Challenge to be held on 23 & 24 April 2005 at Benone Beach. It was agreed that Council support this request and made a contribution of £150.

Child Protection Policy: The Child Protection Policy October 2004 was adopted on the proposal of Alderman Robinson, seconded by Councillor Cubitt subject to the following:

- causal staff being employed at holiday periods being made aware of the policy;
- that each organisation which use Council facilities be made aware of the policy on Child Protection.

Western Education Board: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer informed members that information had been received that the Common Funding Formula would definitely proceed with effect from April 2005 and accordingly it was necessary to resume consideration of issues relating to the WELB swimming programme with Board officials. He said that if the School Swimming Programme ceased at the end of the year, he would have concerns as to the repercussions for the Leisure Centre. It was agreed that Council would forward a letter of support for the work of the Board and its efforts to secure sufficient resources for the learning needs of the communities which it serves.

Limavady Jazz & Blues Festival: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer informed members that an application had been received for funding of the 2005 Festival from the organising committee of the Limavady Jazz & Blues Festival. He said that in past years Council had provided a contribution of £5,000, however this year the application was for £30,000, which was to enable the committee to build on previous successes and take the Festival on the next level.

Members voiced their concern at the amount requested as there were no additional allowances made within the Rates Estimate for such a contribution. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Councillor Douglas that Council continue to support the festival by contributing £5,000, payable 50% prior to festival and 50% on receipt of satisfactory audited accounts.

NEXUS: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer explained to members that Nexus operated on an one day per week outreach basis from Limavady. He said that clients were given long term therapy which lasts six months and that there was a waiting list for the service in Limavady.

Members voice their appreciation of the work undertaken by Nexus Institute and it was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lowry seconded by Alderman Carten to increase the annual contribution from £250 to £500 in this instance.

Mullagh House: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer detailed correspondence received from Mullagh House enquiring if Council would consider contributing toward the purchase of a mini-bus. He said that while acknowledging and applauding the excellent work undertaken by Mullagh House, it was not within the remit of Council to fund such a request.

Members agreed that all avenues should be explored to find ways of supporting the residential home and that Council staff would provide moral and practical advice on fundraising. It was also agreed that a letter of support be forwarded to the Western Health & Social Services Board.

Councillor Brown left the meeting at 9.50 pm

Drumboaghil Community Association: Whilst being sympathetic to the request by Drumboughil Community Association for funding towards the building a Community Resource Centre, members agreed that the request for £20,000 should not be endorsed as there was no provision for this type of Capital Expenditure within the Rates Estimates for 2005/06.

Hands That Talk: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer reminded members that at a previous meeting a request had been made by Hands That Talk for a contribution for an economic appraisal, which was required to enable the group to access funding. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Councillor Chivers that Council contribute £5,000 plus VAT to allow the group to engage Helm Consultants to carry out the work.

The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive informed members that Hands That Talk had pointed out in letter dated 11 February 2005, that they had been advised that the current funding from the Executive Programme Funds for staff and running costs would not be continued beyond the end of March 2005 and that the reason given was that the breadth of services offered by the group did not fit into any one department.

The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive said that the group intended to actively target all potential funding bodies, requesting support to continue contracts with Foyle Health and Social Trust and Sperrin Lakeland Trust. The Funding Officer for the group had requested Council's support, either financial by providing gap funding or by lobbying other bodies on their behalf.

It was agreed that the Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive would respond to the letter advising that whilst Council was not in a position to provide gap funding as requested, it would be willing to lobby other bodies as suggested.

Alderman Carten left the meeting at 10.05 pm.

Gortnaghey Community Association: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer informed members that further to his report of 12 January 2005, a meeting had taken place with Gortnaghey Community Association regarding funds for the building of the new Community Hall. He said that confirmation had been received from funders regarding grants awarded, however, a decision was awaited from the Big Lottery Fund meeting on 23 March 2005 and the Association would be grateful for a positive indication from Council as to its level of funding.

The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised that any funding given would have a direct effect on the rates as Council could not obtain loans for this purpose and had not made any provision for this within the rates estimate. He suggested that Council should develop a proper funding strategy for community groups, with criteria and capping level being agreed for various items.

Councillor Douglas suggested that Council contribute £10,000 to help the Association secure funding.

The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive pointed out that Council had reserves and suggested that the Chief Finance & Administration Officer would explain the use of these at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting, to take place on Monday 14 March 2005. Agreed.

Alderman Robinson and Councillor Chivers left the meeting at 10.20 pm.

Illegal Trading at Benone Beach: IN COMMITTEE: The Chief Recreation/Tourist Officer informed members that summonses had been issued and court proceedings were pending in relation to illegal trading at Benone Beach in the

summer of 2004. Councillor Cubitt voiced his opposition to legal proceedings taken place.

Councillor Donaghy left the meeting at 10.25 pm.

Lease of Foreshore from Crown Commission: The Chief Recreation/Tourist Officer informed members that a draft lease had been received from the Crown solicitors in relation to the foreshore at Benone and it was hoped that this would be expedited without delay. **OUT OF COMMITTEE:**

Tourism Strategy: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer said the following four tenders for the development of a tourism strategy for the Borough:

- Price Waterhouse Cooper £25,145.00
- Colin Buchanan £25,000.00
- TTC £14,900.00
- Alan Balnaves £19,320.00

After careful appraisal it was recommended that the second lowest tender of £19,320, submitted by Alan Balnaves be accepted.

The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer highlighted that an application had been made to NITB under the Tourist Development Scheme – Technical Assistance for grant aid. He said that it was anticipated that grant aid up to approximately 40% (£7,728) would be forthcoming from NITB, leaving Council with a balance of £11,592. It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Cubitt to accept the tender submitted by Alan Balnaves, subject to grant approval from NITB.

Bullocks Lane – Ramps & Signs: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Councillor Mullan that Council would erect ramps and signage as traffic calming measures in Bullocks Lane at a cost of £2,200.

Causeway Coast & Glen Heritage Trust - Conference: It was agreed that Alderman Dolan, the Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer and the Countryside Recreation Officer would attend the Causeway Coast & Glen conference, Scenic Views, to be held at Radisson Roe Park Resort on 26 & 27 April 2005 at a cost of £75 per delegate.

St Canice's Accordion Band – Request for Funding: The Chief Recreation & Tourism Officer explained that St. Canice's Accordion Band had requested £410 funding towards costs relating to the St. Patrick's Day parade.

Members voiced their concern that approval of funding could open the floodgates for similar requests and it was agreed that Council could not accede to the request at this time.

Councillor Stevenson left the meeting at 10.45 pm.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT – MARCH 2005:

The Acting Economic Development Officer presented the Economic Development Report for March 2005 and enlarged thereon. The report was adopted on the proposal of Councillor Cubitt, seconded by Councillor Lowry subject to the following:

Invest Northern Ireland – Draft Corporate Plan Consultation Roadshows: The Acting Economic Development Officer advised that a consultation roadshow for the Corporate Plan for Northern Ireland would be held in the Everglades Hotel on Monday 21 March 2005. He said that the roadshow would be an ideal opportunity to discuss issues such as Invest Northern Ireland plans for rural businesses, inward investment timetable and targets for the forthcoming five years.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Western Education & Library Board Financial Position: The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive informed members that Derry City Council resolved to affirm its report for the work of the Western Education & Library Board and deplore the lack of sufficient funding for further education. He said the Derry City Council called upon the Minister with responsibility for education to meet a delegation from the five constituent district Councils to discuss the educational budget for the next three years. It was agreed that Alderman Robinson, Councillor Stevenson and the Town Clerk & Chief Executive would participate in such a delegation.

Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015: The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive explained that 4 members from Council were invited to the official launch of the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015, to be held at Lagan Valley Island Conference and Business Centre, Lisburn on Tuesday 22 March 2005. It was agreed that attendance would be confirmed nearer the event.

Consultation Documents: The Acting Town Clerk & Chief Executive tabled the following consultation documents:

- 1. Proposed Transfer of Management of the Social Housing Development Programme to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.*

It was agreed that members would forward comments to the Corporate Policy Officer by 16 March 2005 who would present a response paper at the Monthly meeting of Council on 23 March 2005.

- 2. Laying of Public Processions (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and Publication of Consultation Paper on Mediation.*

It was agreed that political parties would respond individually to the consultation document deadline of 31 May 2005.

NEXT MEETING:

It was agreed that the next Development Committee meeting could take place after the Annual General Meeting to be held in May 2005.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting ended at 11.00 pm)