



**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING OF THE THURLES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT WHICH WAS HELD IN THE DISTRICT CHAMBER, THURLES MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OFFICES, CASTLE AVENUE, THURLES ON 16<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2026**

**Present:** Councillor Peggy Ryan, Cathaoirleach, presided.

Councillors Kay Cahill Skehan, William Kennedy, Shane Lee, Micheál Lowry, Eddie Moran, Jim Ryan, Seán Ryan and Michael Smith.

**Also Present:**

Mark Connolly	Director of Services
Kieran Malone	Senior Engineer
Thomas Duffy	District Engineer
Jim Ryan	Executive Engineer
Enda Walsh	Executive Engineer
Deirdre Dunne	District Administrator
Orla McDonnell	Staff Officer

**1.1 Disclosures/Conflicts of Interest.**

There were no Disclosures/Conflicts of Interest raised at the Meeting.

**2.1 Minutes of the (i) January Monthly Meeting of Thurles Municipal District held on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2026 and (ii) a Special Meeting of Thurles Municipal District held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026 as a mark of respect for Valerie Young RIP.**

It was proposed by Councillor S. Ryan, seconded by Councillor W. Kennedy and resolved:

"That the Minutes of the Thurles Municipal District January 2026 Monthly Meeting which was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026, be adopted as a true record of the business transacted at the Meeting."

It was proposed by Councillor S. Ryan, seconded by Councillor M. Smith and resolved:

"That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Thurles Municipal District which was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2026, be adopted as a true record of the business transacted at the Meeting."



### **3.1 Update from Economic Community and Rural Development.**

Mairead Winters, Tourism Activator, Community & Economic Development Section, was in attendance for this item. Mairead delivered a presentation to the Members on Tourism in Tipperary, which included the following:-

- Funding has been approved for five sites across the County from an accessibility, engineering, safety and public risk perspective under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)
  - Littleton Labyrinth
  - Cahir Castle to Swiss cottage
  - Suir Blueway – Clonmel to Carrick-on-Suir
  - Ballina Amenity Park
  - Fethard Town Park
- Develop and mentor Roscrea and Templemore Tourism Group.
- Caravan and Camping - Repucon Consulting engaged to deliver a countywide feasibility study
- Marketing:
  - Abbey Tours provided a presentation on Tipperary being a place to visit
  - AI Itineraries – helps bring visitors to the website to plan their trip and helps gain insight into visitor behaviour.
  - The Lonely Planet video reel showcasing Tipperary as a place to visit for its food, culture, music and outdoor activities.
- Digital Marketing Activities – focus on short breaks, festival and events, outdoor experiences, food experiences, business spotlight and members spotlight.
- Social Media Influencers
  - *Travel with Wes*, Campervan tour around Co. Tipperary
  - *Explore with Criostoir* – reputable travel influencer with consistent engagement
- Search Engine Optimisation – Tipperary are in the top ten.

The Members raised the following queries:

- It was noted that search engine optimisation should be utilised to promote newer amenities, such as the Littleton Labyrinth, to ensure they are visible and easily discoverable online.
- A query was raised as to whether AI could be used to generate a podcast based on documented material, featuring two speakers discussing a particular amenity in the County
- Concern was expressed regarding the lack of focus on the history of the GAA in Thurles. There is currently no signage, visitor or heritage centre, GAA trail, statues or other features highlighting Thurles as the birthplace of the GAA. This represents a significant missed opportunity, particularly as the 150th anniversary of the GAA's founding is only eight years away. Such an amenity could also be a valuable resource for school tours.



- Clarification was sought regarding the proposed plans for the former Damer Hotel in Roscrea. A feasibility study costing €150,000 identified potential future uses, however, conflicting messages have been received. Some reports suggest the matter has been referred back to the Department for decision while a recent newspaper article stated that TCC does not operate hotels.
- There are still no talks about the provision of public toilets for Templemore Town Park. Many other town parks have this facility and it was noted that such toilets could be opened during the day and closed in the evenings.
- What is the state of our rivers and Lough Derg in relation to fishing. It was noted that Tipperary previously attracted many fishing groups who stayed in B&B's – often historical buildings whose upkeep benefits from this tourism.
- Compliments were expressed in relation to the €135,000 secured for Monahincha which will significantly enhance tourism once the project is complete.
- When will the report on the caravan study be finalised as Thurles MD has been exploring the potential establishment of a caravan park in the District.

Mairead replied to queries raised as follows:

- Twenty hours of work have been allocated through Just Transition Funding to improve search engine optimisation and increase online visibility for the Littleton Labyrinth.
- It was noted that the GAA would need to be involved in progressing the promotion of Thurles as the birthplace of the Association as this matter is on their own agenda. Further discussions will take place with the GAA. In the meantime, collaboration can take place on developing a guided tour.
- The District Director clarified that TCC has no plans to purchase, operate or manage the former Damer Hotel, Roscrea. A feasibility study was undertaken by the Department to identify possibilities for potential future investors. The matter will be discussed with the Director of Planning in relation to dereliction to explore what options may exist.
- The provision of public toilets within the Thurles District is a matter for the Municipal District.
- LAWPRO is working on water quality across our rivers and Community and Economic Development continues to liaise with them. It was noted that self-catering accommodation is the preferred option for many fishing groups visiting the area.
- A draft Feasibility Study by Repucon Consulting regarding potential sites for camping locations will be complete in August at which time consultation with the Members will take place. Overnight accommodation is a key part area of the review.

Mairead left the Chamber.



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### **3.2 Update from Cultural Services/Libraries & Biodiversity.**

Damien Dullaghan, County Librarian; Pat Bracken, Senior Executive Librarian and Ann Marie Brophy, Senior Executive Librarian, Cultural Services/Libraries & Biodiversity were in attendance for this item.

Damien informed the Members about an article published in the *Irish Times Magazine* on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February which featured a project being undertaken by Tipperary Museum. The project centres on an eleven-year-old child who died more than one hundred years ago and many of her possessions were donated to the museum. Damien noted that projects of this calibre are now possible due to a significant capital investment made approximately five to six years ago.

Pat informed the Members about the Tipperary Studies Digitisation Project. He explained that the project began in 2014/2015 when County Final match programmes from Senior Hurling and Football Finals, along with the Tipperary GAA Annual, were first uploaded. Over the past year Pat has sourced a significant amount of additional material and the digitisation project has now been extended to include Divisional League match programmes which will go live this coming Saturday at 4p.m at The Source, Thurles.

Pat noted that the site has received more than five million hits to date. He emphasised that the project is particularly valuable for smaller clubs that may never reach a divisional final. The next phase will involve uploading County Championship programmes.

Damien highlighted that, given the value of the Tipperary Studies project, the overall investment required in terms of costs is relatively modest.

The Members complimented Damien and his staff on such a worthwhile and highly interesting project, noting that it will have a lasting legacy. They raised the following queries:

- An update was sought regarding the reopening of the underground car park at The Source Arts Centre and clarification on who will have access to it (staff, library users and/or show attendees).
- Compliments were paid on the new signage at Thurles Library which has been receiving very positive feedback.
- Will match tickets be considered for uploading to the Tipperary Studies website as they are of historical interest but are now scarce.
- Are there any plans to digitise the Thurles factory league match programmes as these would also be valuable to preserve?



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Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- Damien will check the current status of the works related to the underground car park at the Source. He confirmed that the car park will be open to library staff and members of the community with access needs.
- At present, there are not many tickets available to upload to the Tipperary Studies website. However, any tickets donated will be gladly accepted and uploaded. It was noted that this is an excellent idea as the print on physical ticket fades over time.
- The Bord na Móna Men's Shed in Littleton is doing some work on the factory league. Uploading the Thurles factory league match programmes to the Tipperary Studies website was acknowledged as a very worthwhile idea.

Damien, Pat and Ann Marie left the Chamber.

#### **4.1 District Engineer's Report.**

The District Engineer advised that the District Engineer's Report is not yet available as the Roads Programme is currently being finalised.

The Members raised the following queries:-

- Is there any consideration given as to where the Council places an individual when allocating a house?
- What is the update regarding the vacant house in Derrynaflan Avenue, Littleton, which is in a deplorable condition with all windows broken and images of it circulating widely on social media?
- There appears to be no consequences for tenants who fail to look after their property and allow it to fall into poor condition.
- Councillor Moran suggested that if an Inspector carried out inspections on houses approximately once a year, it would be far more cost effective in the long run in terms of repair costs.

Replies to queries raised were as follows:-

- Derrynaflan Avenue is an extreme case and the MD has already spent a significant amount of money to secure the property properly. Two houses in that estate are currently advertised on e-tenders, with a closing date towards the end of March. For information, the District Engineer will circulate to the Members a report of a typical example of a void returned for re-occupancy.



## 4.2 Update on District Project Pipeline Plan

Project Name & Details	Next Phase Works/Actions
<b>THURLES</b>	
Market Quarter - Thurles	Construction works are progressing. Extension of programme of work to March 2026. Delay in ESB connection.
Liberty Square Enhancement Scheme Phase 2 Design - Thurles	Contracts signed with the successful consultant, Aecom. Detailed design commenced in Q1 2026 with a 12-month timeframe for completion of design. Discussions with the national URDF Team and TII will be required in 2026 when detailed design is complete to finalise costings, funding requirements and gateway/programme status.
Mill Road Footpath (phase 2)	Meet with landowners and Thurles Lions Trust to progress project. Tender of contractor through eTenders Framework.
Redevelopment of Thurles Skateboard Park	Contractor to be appointed.
Development of Mews Building, Slievenamon Road Carpark	
Littleton Labyrinth Walkway and Cycleway - Phase 2	Identify the best routes back into the villages. Landowner approval.
Semple Stadium/Teagasc Offices - footpaths	Works programmed for Q1 2026.
Road Safety Works – Turtulla Junction	Capital Section reviewing options and costings.
Thurles Inner Relief road	Detailed design to be finalised.
Munster Hotel Site Redevelopment	Discussions ongoing with landowner.
Upper River Suir Management Plan – Pilot Project	Discussions ongoing regarding leading out of working group and next steps.
Cycle and Walking corridors – Thurles Town	Await approvals from NTA – currently on a priority list.
<b>ROSCREA</b>	
Gantly Road, Roscrea – <i>an age friendly Neighbourhood</i>	Site surveys completed. Preliminary Design complete. Preliminary design presented to the Elected Members. Detailed design underway, expected to be completed in early Q2 2026. Construction works estimated to commence in Q2 2026.



Main Street Enhancement Works Design - Roscrea	Tender brief to be prepared for Consultants to produce a design and upgrade of Main Street and lane ways, to include public realm works and redevelopment of Walsh's Printers.
Reimagined Castle Street Design - Roscrea	Preliminary design has commenced. Site surveys commenced. Presentation to elected members presented with concept options. Stakeholder engagement completed. Community consultation evening was held on 22 <sup>nd</sup> Jan in Roscrea to present design options. One-way system trial run on Castle Street will take place on w/c 9 <sup>th</sup> February.
Roscrea Biodiversity Looped Walk	Part 8 submission for approval and secure funding stream.
Rosemary Square Footpaths & Pedestrian Crossings	
Installation of Skateboard Park adjacent to the swimming pool	Town and Village Funding Application 2025 unsuccessful. Other funding source to be identified in 2026.
<b>TEMPLEMORE</b>	
Templemore Town Carpark, Dunkerrin Road	Funding application submitted under Town & Village Renewal 2025.
The Mall River – Infill Works	Consultant appointed and draft design plan drafted. Ongoing consultation with landowners in progress.
Templemore Town Park Maintenance Plan	Short, medium and long-term actions identified within the plan for maintenance and future development. Actions will be worked through over the coming years.
Templemore Landbank Master Plan	Consultants appointed. Preliminary Plan to be presented to Elected Members at November 2025 meeting for comment.
Main Street Enhancement Works, Templemore	The Project will be considered for the next round of RRDF Calls. The project will need to be phased. If successful under this funding stream, a brief will be prepared for Consultants to produce a new design and upgrade of Main Street and to include public realm works.



Vacant Housing Units	MD Awaiting receipt of keys to property	3
	At Inspections/Costings Stage	18
	Gone to Tender	4
	Investigate if major Refurb required	1
	In Progress	8
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>

The Members raised the following queries:-

- The LED lights currently installed in housing estates are not providing sufficient lighting. This creates a trip hazard in darkness, particularly for elderly residents.  
Was a survey previously carried out to identify dark areas in towns and if so, what were the findings? The area around Matthew Avenue in Thurles is particularly dark.
- The Cooleenbee Road is in a very poor state of repair with numerous deep potholes and requires urgent attention.
- Traffic-calming measures are needed in Holycross Village from Skehan’s Pub to the Abbey Tavern where numerous complaints have been received regarding speeding.
- What is the update regarding the public lighting in Kennedy Park, Roscrea?
- Some time ago, Members received a presentation on public lighting and how different lighting effects could be used to mark various events. What is the current status of this initiative?
- Is it correct that the new LED lighting is not as cost-effective as originally anticipated as the bulbs do not last as long as expected?

Replies to queries were as follows:-

- The new LED lights are somewhat dimmer than the previous lighting in order to minimise light pollution. If Members submit a list of the problematic estates where the lighting is insufficient, they can be investigated.  
Similarly, any dark areas in towns should be submitted to the Roads Section and they will be examined.
- The Cooleenbee Road is included in the proposed Road Improvement Programme this year.
- The MD is very hesitant to introduce speed ramps within villages, as doing so may contribute to the proliferation of traffic-calming measures across our villages. In the first instance, any speeding incidents should be reported to An Garda Síochána.  
Road signage in the area will be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- The matter of public lighting in Kennedy Park, Roscrea will be referred to the public lighting section for an update.



- Lighting capable of changing colour for special events was installed, however there is an issue with that particular function which is currently under review.
- TCC is mid-way through the process of converting all public lighting to LED. Energy consumption has already decreased as a result. While definitive cost figures are not yet available, an increase in overall expenditure is possible due to rising energy prices.

### **5.1 Notice of Motion in the name of councillor K. Cahill Skehan ID 3102.**

Councillor K. Cahill Skehan formally moved the following Notice of Motion in her name:

That NTDC SICAP Support be reinstated for all Men's Sheds in North Tipperary.

Reply to Notice of Motion was as follows:-

Tipperary Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) oversees the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) in Tipperary. The programme is delivered locally by the relevant Local Development Companies (LDCs) in accordance with national guidelines issued by the Department of Rural and Community Development and through approved annual work plans.

The LCDC and North Tipperary Development Company (NTDC) acknowledge the positive contribution made by Men's Sheds across North Tipperary, including Borrisokane, Moycarkey/Borris/Littleton, Silvermines and Thurles. Their role in promoting social inclusion, wellbeing and community participation is recognised.

Under the SICAP 2024–2028 framework, and in line with 2026 planning guidance, programme delivery must place a stronger emphasis on measurable impact, inclusive targeting and reaching groups experiencing the greatest barriers to participation. LDCs are required to allocate finite SICAP resources equitably across disadvantaged individuals and marginalised communities within their areas.

Men's Sheds have benefitted from substantial SICAP developmental support in recent years, particularly in governance, capacity building and collaborative initiatives. For 2026, however, the agreed delivery approach broadens outreach to ensure that groups and areas with fewer existing support structures or deeper levels of disadvantage — including locations such as Kilcommon and Toomevara — can also access structured SICAP supports. NTDC also plans to explore additional inclusive community responses, including the development of a Women's Shed model in Roscrea and Thurles, where aligned with programme objectives.



Men's Sheds remain eligible to engage with SICAP actions where these align with programme goals and approved targets. However, having regard to national programme requirements and available resources, the reinstatement of a dedicated Support Worker model for the North Tipperary Men's Shed Network is not provided for within the 2026 SICAP delivery plan. NTDC will continue to support the North Tipperary Men's Shed Network at a network level in 2026, consistent with SICAP guidance and the requirement to distribute resources fairly. While individual long-established Sheds will not receive one-to-one developmental support, an NTDC worker will continue to sit on the Network and represent all Sheds in an advocacy capacity. NTDC will deliver short capacity-building workshops for both Men's and Women's Sheds. These sessions will cover areas such as grant applications, tutor bookings and governance requirements. Each Shed will be invited to nominate one representative to attend the workshops.

All NTDC-linked community groups will continue to receive regular updates on funding opportunities through the NTDC mailing list.

Councillor Cahill-Skehan stated that the standalone sheds do not have any paid staff. They are operated by volunteers who feel they cannot continue without additional resources and she expressed hope that support would be reinstated.

Councillor W. Kennedy supported the Motion.

### **6.1 Correspondence.**

There was no correspondence.

### **7.1 Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations.**

A vote of sympathy was extended to:-

- The family of the late Councillor Michael Creed, RIP, Carrigaphooca, Clondrohid, Macroom, Co. Cork. Michael was a serving member of Cork County Council and late of the Department of Agriculture.

A vote of congratulations was extended to:

- Deirdre Dunne, who has just commenced with the MD as the District Administrator.



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## 8.1 Any Other Business.

It was proposed by Councillor J. Ryan and seconded by Councillor E. Moran that the Municipal District write to the Minister for Justice seeking clarification as to why County Tipperary received only one new Garda recruit following the recent passing out ceremony at Templemore Garda College and to express disappointment at the lack of support being provided to Tipperary.

That concluded the official business of the February Meeting.

SIGNED:   
CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE: 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026

SIGNED:   
MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR

DATE: 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026

