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The Kerryman

Heated words over Gleansharoon viewing area funds

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THERE was a heated exchange at the recent Castleisland-Corca Dhuibhne Municipal District Meeting between MD Manager John Breen and Independent Councillor Jackie Healy-Rae, who proposed that some of the €315,000 from the municipal allocation be used for the enhancement of Gleansharoon Viewing Area, Castleisland.

An unsuccessful funding application for €100,000 was made under the Town and Village Renewal Programme. Mr Breen said the council was committed to reviewing the application, seeing where it could be improved, and looking into what funding options could be available.

Cllr Healy-Rae said he could not stress enough the importance of the project, suggesting it was such a priority that Municipal Allocation funds should be used.

“If we can’t [get a grant] we should

press ahead and use our own funds,” he said. “I understand the €315,000 is there at the discretion of the members...Why can’t we use that if that’s the will of the members?”

Mr Breen said it would be inappropriate to use €100,000, almost a third of the Municipal Allocation, on one project. He repeated that the funding application would be reviewed at the end of quarter one.

“You still haven’t explained what you’re using the €315,000 for,” Cllr Healy-Rae said.

“You’re talking about footpaths, roads, drainage,” Mr Breen said. “I can’t see any value in spending one third of your entire MD allocation on one project.

“I’d argue I could see great value in it,” Cllr Healy-Rae interjected.

Mr Breen added that the €315,000 was for match funding.

“The position is outlined in the budget that this is a strategic fund used in terms of match funding, an increasing requirement for any application,” Mr Breen said.

When told again that the application would be reviewed, Cllr Healy-Rae interrupted: “That’s not what I asked, you’d be a better politician than myself... If we want to allocate funding from the €315,000 [to Gleansharoon] can we do that, yes or no?”

“You can do that,” Mr Breen said. “My understanding was that we had an allocation in our overall budget of half a million,” Cllr Healy-Rae said. “Broken down into that was €50,000 set aside for match funding to gain a yield of nearly €200,000 in grants, and that the €315,000 was totally discretionary. I refute, unless

I’m proven wrong, that I’m looking to rob Peter to pay Paul. I understand we’ve already set aside money that we want to use for match funding for any potential grants.”

Mr Breen reiterated that the council is committed to looking at securing funding for the viewing point and will review it to see what options are available for the project.

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