

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT LOUGHREA REGIONAL OFFICES ON
TUESDAY, 29TH APRIL 2008**

ILATHAIR

Baill:

Cllr. P. Feeney, Chairman
Cllr. P. Hynes
Cllr. M. Fahy
Cllr. M. Regan
Cllr. M. Maher

Oifigigh:

Mr. M. Dolly, S.E., Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. M. Sheil, A/S.E.E., Loughrea Electoral Area
Mr. C. Mitchell, E.E., Portumna Engineering Area
Mr. A. Raftery, E.E., Loughrea Engineering Area
Ms. A. Power, S.S.O., Loughrea Regional Offices

DEPUTATION FROM BAUNOGUE RESIDENTS

The Chairman advised that the Deputation would not be attending this meeting but requested they be received at the next Area Meeting. Cllr. Maher advised that the Secretary of Baunogue Residents had previously sent in correspondence highlighting a number of issues they wanted addressed. They now wanted to get it back on the agenda again and a timeframe put on the outstanding works.

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ON 10TH MARCH 2008**

Swimming Pool

Cllr. Hynes asked for the update in relation to the provision of a swimming pool for Loughrea Town. He asked if a report could be requested from the Department through the Director of Services of Corporate & Cultural Affairs Unit who liaises with the Department. It was agreed that Mr. Cullen would be requested to provide a report for the next Area Meeting.

Leitrim School

Cllr. Maher complimented the Staff on the erection of the school signs at Leitrim N.S. In relation to the School Flashing Lights, he asked that the lights be reprogrammed to the correct time as he said they were out by about 20 minutes. Mr. Sheil stated that he would arrange same.

Outdoor Staffing

Cllr. Regan asked if the staff that had recently retired had been replaced in the Loughrea Electoral Area. Mr. Sheil advised that they had to work within budgetary constraints and it may not be possible to replace all existing staff. Mr. Raftery advised that one member of staff had been replaced and another was about to be replaced. However, he said there was another 6/7 to be replaced. In reply to Cllr. Regan's query, Mr. Sheil advised that there were eighty seven outdoor staff in the Loughrea Electoral Area (including G.S.S.'s & Caretakers). Mr. Dolly stated that the Council were presently carrying out a review of the staff structure within the organisation. He said that they did need more staff but it was a question of whether they could afford them. He said that they were looking at numbers for running the core services and what the Council could afford. He advised that the costs of doing works had quadrupled in recent years and while the monies were more or less the same in the last few years, they were getting less out of the monies provided. He said that he appreciated where the Members were coming from and that they had to utilise the core workforce and the work had to be spread out throughout the year.

Cllr. Fahy stated that two years ago four outdoor staff from Gort was transferred to the Portumna Engineering Area for the reason that there was not enough work for them in the Gort Area. He said with the amount of work going on in the new roadways and the amount of Lorries drawing sand, potholes on the roadways had become much worse. He said that the general public are very dissatisfied at the moment with the state of the roads. He also referred to the fact that some works were contracted out to outside Contractors. He stated that while the jobs might be completed sooner, the standard of work was not as high as the Council would carry out. He referred in particular to works carried out on footpaths in Gort recently.

Cllr. Feeney stated that the staffing issue had been raised at a recent Council Meeting. However, there was no breakdown between technical and area staff and he would have liked more detail such as the age profile of the staff. He also referred to the fact that it may now not be possible to get the works planned for the area completed this year as a result of a depleted workforce in Loughrea/Athenry area. He said that the indoor staff numbers had increased while the number of outside staff had reduced considerably. He said the only way they could survive with reduced staffing was that the outdoor staff be hired for maintenance only and the rest of the works are contracted out. However, he said that the maintenance of towns would suffer if the level of staffing was not maintained. He said that there was no commitment to towns and not enough monies allocated and that the urban centres were a bad reflection on the county. He said that towns should be a social area and more monies needed to be spent on open spaces, streetscapes and pedestrianisation. Cllr. Regan queried that if more monies were being allocated to water

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services, was that going to have an effect on the roads budgets. Mr. Dolly explained that the monies the Council get for water services come by way of grants. He said that the monies for roads have generally remained the same but it was the costs that have risen dramatically. In relation to the comments made with regard to the higher numbers of technical and administrative staff being employed, Mr. Dolly stated that as a result of additional services, Health & Safety requirements, public procurement requirements, etc. there was a need for more technical staff to deal with these additional requirements. He said that they had to have due regard to the budgets they had and they could only take on extra staff if they could afford to do so.

Correction to Minutes

Referring to Page 7 of the Minutes of the Loughrea Area Meeting, Cllr. Hynes requested that the following correction be made to the Minutes to read as follows:-

“Cllr. Hynes asked for approval to spend his unspent Councillors Notice of Motion Monies on the provision of stone name-plates at townland boundaries.”

The correction was noted.

On the proposal of Cllr. Regan, seconded by Cllr. Maher, the Minutes of the Local Area Committee Meeting held on 10th March 2008 were confirmed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Review of Speed Limits

Mr. Dolly informed the Meeting that following on from comments made at Meetings of the different Electoral Areas on the Review of Speed Limits; a decision has been taken now to review the speed limits in the towns and villages. He said that it had gone out to the Areas to get their proposals having due regard to submissions received since the last review. He said that it was his intention to bring it back to the Area Committee shortly. He invited the Members to submit any further submissions they would like included in the review. He advised that the 16th May was the closing date for submissions from the Area Offices.

Pay & Display for Gort Town

Cllr. Fahy queried when Pay & Display parking would be up and running in Gort Town. Mr. Dolly advised that Pay & Display parking would be introduced to Gort Town as soon as the relevant signage, lining, parking restrictions and Pay & Display machines were in place. Cllr. Fahy stated that the Church was prepared to enter negotiations with the Council in the provision of lands for a car-park within the town.

Illegal Parking in Loughrea Town

Cllr. Hynes referred to the situation in Loughrea town where there was illegal parking occurring outside people's residences, he referred particularly to the Gort Road and asked when the Council were going to deal with that situation. Mr. Sheil said that the areas referred to were just outside the boundaries of the current Traffic Management Plan and that people were not parking illegally by parking their cars at these locations for extended periods of time. Mr. Sheil advised that it would be dealt with when the review of the traffic management plan was taking place. He advised that they could not put in yellow lines outside people's residences that were not in the current traffic management plan as they would not be enforceable. Cllr. Hynes asked that this problem be dealt with in the review and that the review be carried out as soon as possible. Cllr. Regan asked if there was any indication when the review would be happening. Mr. Dolly advised that the Area had forwarded their submissions to the Road Design Section for inclusion in the review of the plan. He said that he would follow up with the Director of Services on this issue and would pass their comments to him. Cllr. Regan requested that they receive a copy of the Area's submission for the next Area Meeting and he said that they would forward same to the County Manager. Mr. Sheil said that he would have this available for the next meeting. Cllr. Regan again voiced his frustration at how long it was taking to carry out the review given that they were promised that it would take place after the bye-pass was complete. Mr. Dolly stated that he would follow it up with the Director for Roads & Transportation.

Definition Bollards

Cllr. Feeney stated that in some areas of the County junction definition bollards were in place at the end of most bye-roads, however this was not the case in the Loughrea Electoral Area and he asked what the protocol was for the erection of these bollards? Mr. Sheil stated that 8" junction definition bollards were required on the national routes and 6" junction definition bollards were required on the regional routes. He said that a decision was taken in the Loughrea Electoral Area to replace them on the N65, N66 and N67 routes. He said that there were doing the national routes firstly and they would try to upgrade markings on regional roads on the basis of funding becoming available.

Pay & Display Athenry

Referring to the proposed introduction of Pay & Display in Athenry town, Cllr. Feeney stated that people in Athenry will not adhere to the restrictions of Pay and Display until a Long Term Car Park is provided. He said that they were still waiting for the site for the car-park beside the Boy's School to be signed over and there was no sign of anything happening at the site for Backlawn and it was completely unacceptable to be introducing Pay & Display when there were no long-term parking facilities available. He said that he was advised that a design for the new entrance had yet to be prepared for Backlawn and he feared that this would take a considerable length of time.

Mr. Sheil advised that in relation to proposed Knockaunglass car-park, they were awaiting for the site to be transferred to the Council's ownership and they had no control over the

length of time that this took. In relation to Backlawn, Mr. Sheil stated on the basis of Health & Safety a decision was taken not to proceed with Backlawn car-park until development on the site was complete.

Cemetery Cross, Athenry

Cllr. Feeney stated that improved visibility was required at Cemetery Cross, Athenry as there had been a few minor accidents there recently. He also said that there were concerns that the Council were building Council houses in this area and the N.R.A.'s road crossing there and no provision has been made for pedestrian access via the R348 into the town.

N6 Construction Traffic

Cllr. Feeney stated that the N6 construction traffic was causing a lot of chaos and havoc and there were no bridges in place yet on the project.

Meadowcourt Cross

Cllr. Maher referred to the condition of the Meadow Court Cross. He referred to flooding that took place there in February and as a result there were numerous potholes on this roadway and green definition bollards were left on the side of the road.

Mr. Sheil advised that there was a plan in place to provide a ghost island for traffic turning at this junction. The Design Section is dealing with this however there may be difficulties with land acquisition.

Connection of Loughrea Water Scheme to Craughwell

Cllr. Maher queried when Cloonoo would be connected to the Loughrea Water Scheme. Mr. Shiel stated that he would make enquiries and get back to him on same.

Path at St. Brendan's Home, Loughrea

Cllr. Maher referred to works that were being carried out to the Loughrea Walk. He referred particularly to a kerb at the end of the pathway at St. Brendan's Home. He stated that the kerb was 3" high. He stated that a wheelchair user has to physically go on to the public road as they could not access the footpath at that location. Mr. Sheil stated that he would check it out with the Project Engineer over the project.

Rafford Bridge

Cllr. Maher stated that the Rafford Bridge was in a very bad state and queried if there was any funding provided for this bridge. Mr. Raftery stated that they had included that bridge in their submission for funding but were still awaiting approval on same.

N66 – Works on Cuscorrick

Referring to the works being carried out on the Gort Road, Cllr. Regan queried when the kerbing and footpaths would be completed. Mr. Dolly stated that the Council had made a submission to the N.R.A. to complete and extend those works.

Cllr. Hynes queried if the footpath was being extended out to Coscorrig? Mr. Dolly advised that a separate submission had gone to the N.R.A. on that. He said that the funding sought was to complete works and extend back towards the town (140 metres).

Road Surface in Gort Town

Cllr. Fahy stated that people living in Gort Town are annoyed over the state of the roadway. He said that he had received complaints from people being awakened by traffic travelling on the rough surface. He said that the roadway had been dug up for water schemes and needed to be resurfaced again. Mr. Dolly stated that a submission had been made to the N.R.A. for reconstruction/resurfacing of Main Street Gort and stated that the Council would continue in their efforts to get funding.

Damaged Light on Ennis Road, Gort

Cllr Fahy stated that the light outside Eamon Melvin’s house is damaged. He asked that it be reported to the relevant authority as soon as possible. Mr. Sheil stated that the E.S.B. would be notified about it.

Surface Dressing Works 2008

Mr. Sheil advised that there were three proposed changes being made to the 2008 Surface Dressing Works for the Loughrea Engineering Area as follows:-

	Original Project	Amount	Substituted Project	Amount	Reason
1	Bullaun Road – R350	€108,405	Woodford Road – R351	€108,405	GWS proposed for this road in 08/09
2	O’Donnells Road, Gloves South L71572	€8,627	Raford, Hardys Cross	€14,716	Included as part of 2009 Road Reconstruction Programme
3	Carnakelly – L3112	€17,545	Killariv – L71821	€11,456	Included as part of the Ballinasloe West Roads Programme 2008

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On the proposal of Cllr. Regan, seconded by Cllr. Fahy, the Members agreed to the above changes.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF JOINT MEETING BETWEEN LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE AND LOUGHREA TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 10TH MARCH 2008

On the proposal of Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Regan, the Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Loughrea Electoral Area and Loughrea Town Councillors held on 10th March 2008 were confirmed.

Traffic Lights at Westbridge

Cllr. Regan asked for the update in relation to the proposed provision of traffic lights at the Westbridge junction. Mr. Sheil advised that he and Mr. F. McGillicuddy recently met with a supplier of traffic lights. He said that they were looking at getting funding from the N.R.A. and some Disability Funding also. He said that the Control Unit would be outside Mulhollands. He advised that there was a small bit of ducting and trenching to be done. He said that if these works could be done under an extension of the contract for Main Street, it would not have to be tendered out again.

Chríochnaigh an Cruinniú ansin