

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT LOUGHREA REGIONAL OFFICES ON
THURSDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER 2009**

LLATHAIR

Baill:

Cllr. M. Maher, Chairperson
Cllr. J. McClearn
Cllr. P. Feeney
Cllr. M. Fahy
Cllr. P. Hynes
Cllr. B. Willers
Cllr. G. Finnerty

Oifigigh:

Mr. J. Cullen, D.O.S., Environment & Water Services Unit
Mr. M. Dolly, S.E., Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. S. Breathnach, S.E.E., Loughrea Electoral Area
Mr. A. Raftery, E.E., Loughrea Engineering Area
Mr. C. Mitchell, E.E., Portumna Engineering Area
Mr. J. Costello, E.E., Gort Engineering Area
Ms. A. Power, S.S.O., Loughrea Regional Offices

DEPUTATION FROM KINVARA RESIDENTS

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. Marie Hennigan, Claire Meara and Mary Walsh to the Meeting. Ms. Hennigan explained that the residents of the quay in Kinvara have an ongoing and worsening problem relating to campervans using the quay as a caravan park. This problem has grown every year with increasing numbers of campervans blocking up the quay, some of which almost take up semi-permanent residence on the quay. She stated that the quay is a tourist attraction in the heart of Kinvara and is an important amenity used by the locals for relaxing and walking. She said that the problem is at its worst during the summer months. She said that although there are two “No Camping or Overnight Parking” signs in place there was no enforcement of it. She outlined the problems with the campervans parking at this location as follows:

- Limit parking for other visitors to Kinvara
- Blocking access to driveways of neighbouring houses
- Create traffic problems as it is a very narrow area
- Difficult to see cars, cyclists or children on the quay as a result of the parked campervans

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- There are no public toilet facilities on the Quay
- There are no waste facilities on the quay
- Kinvara does not have the bin facilities to cope with campervans and their domestic waste.

She asked that the Council would come up with a solution to this ongoing problem.

Cllr. Fahy stated that this has been ongoing for the past 12 months and the problem was getting worse and asked that the Council would do something to put a stop to this. Cllr. Feeney stated that the quay was an amenity and the local people should be able to enjoy it without having to endure all these problems. Mr. Cullen stated that he would make a recommendation to the Director of Services of the Roads & Transportation Unit to put bye-laws in place that would allow for enforcement of camping or overnight parking in this area. Cllr. McClearn stated that the campervans were causing a traffic obstruction and as such the guards would have sufficient powers under the Roads Traffic Act to deal with this aspect.

MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA MEETING HELD ON 22nd July 2009

On the proposal of Cllr. Fahy, seconded by Cllr. Finnerty, the Minutes of the Loughrea Area Meeting held on 22nd July 2009 were confirmed.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Flooding on the N65

Cllr. McClearn asked for an update on the flooding at a location on the N65 which had been raised at the last Meeting. Mr. Dolly stated that the drain at this location had been deepened and cleaned and that a culvert across the road would be repaired so as to take some of the water from the road. He said that the major problem was that there was a stream/river coming through lands which during heavy rain caused flooding at this location. He said the river had become blocked as a result of development and it would be a big issue to resolve. He said he had made an application to the O.P.W. for funding to deal with the issue of the problems arising out of the flood water but they had advised that they were not in a position to fund same. He said that he made a similar request to the N.R.A. for funding to put in a large culvert with a view to taking as much water from the road but was advised that they had no monies either. He said that the river had been seriously impeded by development and there was a serious issue to be dealt with there.

Mr. Dolly stated that when the flood waters come down the hill, the pipes were unable to take the volume of water involved. However, he stated that he had asked the O.P.W. to revisit it again.

Review of Engineering Area Boundaries

Cllr. Feeney asked if there was an update on the revised engineering area boundaries and when was it proposed to take place. Mr. Cullen advised that the rearrangement of the area boundaries was being finalised and was due to be considered by the County Manager shortly. He said the issues giving rise to the changes were electoral area boundary adjustment and also proposals to separate the operation and maintenance of water services from roads.

School Bus Route at Clostown

Cllr. Maher asked if these proposed works would be going ahead this year. Mr. Raftery explained that the works currently being carried out were grant funded and had to be completed by the end of November and had to be given priority. He said that funding for junction improvements at this location was coming from N.O.M. monies which run until the end of year.

MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA MEETING HELD ON 24th SEPTEMBER 2009

On the proposal of Cllr. McClearn seconded by Cllr. Feeney, the Minutes of the Loughrea Area Meeting held on 24th September 2009 were confirmed.

Matters arising from the minutes:

Roads in South Galway

Cllr. Fahy stated that he had allocated €14,000 Notice of Motion monies towards hedge-trimming in 2009 and queried if it would be spent before the end of December. Mr. Dolly stated that Cllr. Fahy had nominated certain roads to be done and there were still more to be completed. Mr. Costello advised that they were carrying out hedge-trimming on a priority basis and confirmed that the N.O.M. allocation would be spent by the end of December. Cllr. Hynes requested that hedge-trimming be carried out from Tullahill extending out to New Inn on the N66 through the townland of Raheen as a matter of urgency. Mr. Raftery stated he would take note of this.

PROPOSALS FOR RESTORATION IMPROVEMENT GRANTS FOR REGIONAL & LOCAL ROADS FOR 2010

Mr. Dolly stated that they had received a Circular from the N.R.A. seeking proposals from Galway County Council for Restoration Improvement Grants for Regional & Local Roads for 2010. He said that he would arrange to have the circular circulated to the Members also. He said that the proposals had to be taken from the Three Year Plan which had been previously agreed by the Members but advised they were allowed to make some minor amendments to these. He explained that the circular laid out the criteria that have to be adhered to, including that submissions should seek to have a minimum average length of

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1km and that Regional Roads must account for 50% of the total submissions. The proposed submissions were circulated to each Member.

Cllr. Maher proposed that they would arrange a further meeting which would allow the Members time to consider the proposals being made and to come to agreement on. Cllr. McClearn said that they needed to liaise with the Area Engineers in advance of this meeting to consider what changes are to be made. Mr. Dolly advised the Members that they can only make minor changes to the plan and if they proposed to introduce new roads, they would have to include suggested changes of the ones to be excluded.

Cllr. Feeney referred to the R347-303 Tuam Road, Athenry which has been considered for inclusion for a number of years and because other projects were not moved on it was never included and asked that it be included in 2010. Mr. Raftery advised that this road was included in the revised programme circulated to the Members. Cllr. Hynes referred to the L-4218 Ballynacurragh Road and stated that he had made several representations regarding this road and asked that this be included. Mr. Raftery advised that a section of this road is included in the proposals.

It was agreed that a further Area Meeting would be held on Wednesday, 18th November to finalise the proposals for the Loughrea Electoral Area for Restoration Improvement Grants for Regional & Local Roads for 2010.

RESTORATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME EARLY STARTS 2010

It was agreed that this item be deferred until agreement was reached on the proposals for the Loughrea Electoral Area for Restoration Improvement Grants for Regional & Local Roads for 2010.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Loughrea Mart Issues

Cllr. Maher referred to a recent Meeting held with the Mart Committee which the Members attended. He circulated a copy of an email which summarised the issues that had been raised by the Mart Committee.

Cllr. Finnerty stated that there was a downturn in this business and was basically going to continue into the future and that marts work on a non-profit basis. He said that they get no benefit from the rates and that effluent discharge of €15,000 seemed quite high. He said that small business will not survive in the future and this matter had to be looked at seriously. Cllr. Willers stated that the flow measure was not acceptable to the Committee. Cllr. McClearn stated that there were two issues. Firstly there was a belief from the Mart Committee that the Council's own sewerage system was overflowing when there was heavy rain and comes back into their system. The other issue was the fact that this charge was being introduced now and the likelihood that there would be an annual increase in it.

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Cllr. Feeney stated that the actual turnover for marts was 1% commission. He said that mart business was in dire straits and the survival of marts was on a knife-edge. He said that €15,000 charge for effluent discharge was a lot of money based on the fact that they have contributed in terms of facilitating traffic movements in the town and allowed access to Station Road car-park to be widened. With regard to the flooding problem, he stated that it comes up through the sewers and happens on a regular basis. He said that there had to be some sort of compromise.

Mr. Cullen explained that discussions have taken place with the Mart Committee. He said that for many years they have been in complete non-compliance with their Discharge Licence. All of those factors mean that loading from the mart was quite excessive. In relation to backing up of sewers, Mr. Cullen stated that the mart site occupies the biggest hard surface area in Loughrea and the effect of that was that a lot of water would lodge as a result of this. He said they were wrong to imply that all of this has come up through the sewer. He said that he was very much concerned about the business going to the wall but there was no special case being made for mart premises. He said that they had managed so far to have successful dealings with other businesses in relation the imposition of the effluent discharge but not so with the Marts. He said that there was no question but that the marts will have to start to pay for what they discharge. He said that was as much information as he could give the Members on this issue. He said that he knew the Members appreciated the obligations that he faced as Director of Water and Environmental Services, and he asked them to bear in mind that whatever the mart don't pay the others will have to pay for someone else.

Cllr. Feeney stated that they needed to make a special case in this particular instance. He said that the mart required a huge area to operate the business to accommodate pens, parking areas, etc. and the amount of monies in terms of turnover was very low. Mr. Cullen explained that both Athenry and Loughrea Sewerage Treatment Plants had been upgraded in recent times at a cost of approx. €3m in both cases. He said that the upgrading was directly related to what they were taking in by the Marts and was a completely incompatible use of them.

Cllr. McClearn proposed that the matter be postponed until such time as meetings were held between the mart and officials from Galway County Council. This was seconded by Cllr. Fahy. He said that it wouldn't be possible to make any further progress on the matter.

Mr. Cullen advised that there two issues that the Members needed to consider before pursuing this matter any further, namely non-compliance with Discharge Licence by the Mart and charge for discharge to the sewer by the Mart. Mr. Cullen stated that he would have no problem meeting the Manager of the Mart to discuss the issues raised.

Cllr. McClearn stated that there was seriousness to this issue that the Mart Manager and the Committee did not convey to the Members at their Meeting and said that that would want to be made clear. There was a more serious aspect to it that they were probably aware of and neglected to mention to the Members. He said that they were entitled to have all the facts of the situation to be put in front of them. Cllr. Maher stated that he

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would try and organise a meeting with the Mart Manager and Mr. Cullen to see where it could go from there.

Leak at Cullairbaun, Athenry

Cllr. Feeney stated that there was a major water leak in Ruane's land at Cullairbaun, Athenry for the past number of months and asked that it be fixed as a matter of urgency. Mr. Raftery advised that it would be seen to as soon as possible.

Traffic Lights at Westbridge

Cllr. McClearn queried when the traffic lights at the Westbridge were expected to be completed. Mr. Raftery explained that the works currently being carried out were grant funded and had to be completed by the end of November and had to be given priority. He said that it would be December before staff would be available to commence these works. Cllr. McClearn stated that as it was so close to Christmas businesses in town could be affected as a result of these works and suggested that these works be deferred until after Christmas but to be carried out in advance of the 2010 Roads Programme. Mr. Raftery stated that he would talk to Mr. Lavelle, S.E., Roads Department and ask him about timeframe for spending the monies for this project and based on this a decision can be made whether the works can be carried by the Council personnel or let out to contract. Mr. Dolly stated that he would take the matter up with Mr. Lavelle.

Proposed Contract Signing for Gort Plant Upgrade

Mr. Cullen stated that the contract signing for the Gort Water Treatment Plant Upgrade was to take place on 16th November next.

Treatment Plant Athenry

In response to a query from Cllr. Feeney, Mr. Cullen advised that the Athenry Treatment Plant upgrade was almost complete.

Chrochnaigh an Cruinniú ansin