

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**

**MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT LOUGHREA REGIONAL OFFICES ON  
THURSDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2009**

**ILATHAIR**

**Bail:**

Cllr. B. Willers, Chairperson  
Cllr. W. Burke  
Cllr. M. Regan  
Cllr. M. Fahy  
Cllr. P. Hynes  
Cllr. M. Maher

**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 PORTUMNA PRIMARY PARENTS' ASSOCIATION**

The Chairperson welcomed Messrs. U. Hynes, M. Sullivan, N. Kelly, D. Long and Ms. M. Kilkenny to the Meeting. Mr. Hynes explained that they were a delegation representing the parents, management and staff of Scoil Bhreandain, Naofa Primary School and Portumna Community School. He said that they had requested this deputation to express their serious concerns regarding the safety of pupils entering and exiting the schools at school opening and closing times. He presented a petition to the meeting signed by all parents of the school, expressing their concern, anger, fear and frustration at the lack of progress in making this road safe for their children. He explained that at school opening and closing times the road has to cater for 801 pupils being dropped off and collected from Scoil Bhreandain Naofa (230), Portumna Community School (453) and Acorn to Oak Community Pre-School (118). He said that H.G.V.'s frequently use this road thereby adding to the congestion. The deputation proposed the following solutions:

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- (a) Introduction of a one-way system
- (b) Installation of ramps
- (c) Erection of signs diverting H.G.V.s away from St. Brigid's Avenue
- (d) Provision of crossing facilities

The Deputation stated that while they appreciated that all government funding was seriously restricted, they asked the Members to give serious consideration to their proposals. They thanked the Chairperson and Members for allowing them the opportunity to address the meeting.

The Deputation then left the Meeting.

Cllr. W. Burke stated that this situation was an accident waiting to happen. He stated that the proposal for a one-way system would seem to be the solution to the problem at this location. He appreciated that the proposed Traffic Management Plan was a long way off completion and proposed the introduction of a one-way system from St. Brigid's Avenue towards town and this to go ahead separately. Mr. Dolly stated that in order to have an effective system in place, a traffic management plan has to be formally adopted. He stated that diverting the H.G.V.'s would be a difficult task in itself. Cllr. Regan queried what stage the Traffic Management Plan was at. Mr. Dolly advised that they would try and advance it as far as they could from the Area Office and it would be then forwarded to the Road Design section to advance it to the next stage. It was agreed that the issue of a one way system at St. Brigid's Avenue would be further discussed when the Traffic Management Plan for Portumna came up later on the agenda.

## **MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA MEETING HELD ON 18<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2009**

On the proposal of Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. W. Burke, the Minutes of the Loughrea Area Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009 were confirmed.

### Update on Deputation from Kilnadeema/Leitrim Road Improvement Group

Cllr. Maher asked for an update on the request from the Deputation from the Kilnadeema/Leitrim Road Improvement Group in relation to their request for provision of a footpath from Long Point to Kilnadeema turn-off. Mr. Dolly stated that the stretch of footpath in question was about 300m, and he estimated that it would cost in the region of €150/300,000 to complete. He stated monies were not available for this project at this point in time. He stated that it would be kept on the agenda for consideration but presently there was no funding to carry out these works.

Flooding on N65 – Portumna

Cllr. W. Burke asked for update on a flooding issue on the N65 at Thornfield. He advised that it was a low lying area and flooding occurred frequently at this location. He stated that a suggestion had been made that drainage pipes be installed which would involve digging across the N65, which he requested the Council would do and the two families were willing to participate and would deepen the stream appropriately. He asked that this suggestion be considered.

Traffic Lights – Westbridge & Gort

Cllr. Willers asked for the update on same. Mr. Raftery stated that he had recently been asked to price the civil works for the traffic lights at Westbridge. In relation to the possible time-frame for carrying out of these works, he advised that it would be included in their works programme following completion of the Roadworks Programme. Mr. Costello advised that the same time-frame applied to the proposed traffic lights for Gort.

Potholes

Cllr. Fahy stated that the situation in relation to potholes was very serious and commented on how the roads had deteriorated so badly. In relation to the haulage routes, Cllr. Maher stated that a commitment had been given that extra crews would be put on to deal with the potholes on these routes. Mr. Dolly acknowledged that roads had been damaged by haulage trucks using these routes to gain access to the new M6. He stated that he was advised that extra crews were put on around the Athenry and Kilchreest areas to carry out repairs to the worst affected areas. He said that he was in constant contact with the liaison officer requesting the Contractor to repair these roads.

Cllr. Fahy asked about the situation in relation to the proposed strike of the Outdoor Workers scheduled to commence on 25<sup>th</sup> May next. Mr. Cullen advised that Council Officials would be meeting with Staff and Union Officials. He said that there were standard procedures for the maintenance of essential services and they would be meeting with them to try and avoid strike action.

Traffic Management Plan for Loughrea

Cllr. Regan asked whether any timeframe could be given as to when the Traffic Management Plan for Loughrea would be put on public display. Mr. Cullen explained that a commitment was given that the plan would be reviewed when the Bye-pass was complete and stated that these commitments were given in good faith. He said that when approval was given to carry out the refurbishment on Main Street, it was agreed that the review should be deferred until this was complete. However, since this was completed circumstances had changed dramatically in terms of the amount of funding available. He said there were many commitments they were unable to honour as a result of the economic downturn and reduction of funding available. Cllr. Regan requested that that a timeframe would be given as to when the Loughrea Traffic Management Plan would be going on public display.

## **PUBLIC CAR PARK PORTUMNA**

Mr. Dolly stated that he had requested that this item be included on the agenda so as to update Members on same. He stated that they had signed up with the local Priest and they now had to go through the Dioceses to get the legal transfer completed. He advised that they were currently going through the Part 8 process and the documents have been lodged with the Planning Department. He said that they would not formally be taking this in charge until the Part 8 had gone through.

Cllr. Burke thanked Mr. Breathnach and the Engineering staff for progressing this matter.

## **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN PORTUMNA**

Mr. Dolly stated that there were two options open to the Members in dealing with the Traffic Management Plan for Portumna:

1. Adopt the Traffic Management Plan to address the issues at St. Brigid's Avenue; or
2. Adopt a Traffic Management Plan for the entire town.

Cllr. W. Burke proposed that the traffic management plan be adopted for St. Brigid's Avenue only due to the urgency of the situation as outlined by the Deputation earlier. This was seconded was Cllr. Maher and agreed by the Members. Mr. Dolly stated that he would check if this could be done. He said that if they were to go this route, it would have to be considered in the context of the overall traffic management plan. He suggested that following this meeting that the Councillors would discuss with him and make their comments on the proposed traffic management plan for Portumna. He again emphasised that if it were possible to adopt the traffic management plan for St. Brigid's Avenue it would have to fit in within the overall traffic management plan for the town.

Cllr. W. Burke gave to Mr. Dolly a map layout of a site which had secured planning permission for a development and 38 no. car-parking spaces in the middle of the town for his information.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### Car-Park Gort

Cllr. Fahy asked if there was any update in relation to acquiring a site for a car-park for Gort Town. He stated that Gort needed a car-park and queried if a suitable site did become available did the Council have the monies available to purchase same. Mr. Dolly stated that the Traffic Management Plan in Gort had identified a number of possible

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locations for car-parks. He said that they were also exploring the possibility of acquiring site at other locations and they were keeping an open mind on it and will continue their efforts on that issue. In relation to how this would be funded, he advised that they would be looking for a cost effective means and it would be funded out of car-parking charges collected.

### **Public Toilet Gort**

Cllr. Fahy stated that at a Chamber of Commerce Meeting held recently, it was indicated that the Chamber of Commerce were going to apply for planning permission for public toilets in the Square in Gort. Mr. Cullen advised that he was unaware at this stage of any proposal by the Chamber. He also said that even if there was a proposal to provide public toilets the Council would not have the resources to maintain them.

### **Notice of Motion Allocations**

Mr. Dolly referred to report dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 2009 circulated to the Meeting which sets out the Notice of Motion allocations since the last report. He urged the Members when allocating their balance of Notice of Motion funding to consider putting it towards road maintenance/road repairs that require to be done.

Cllr. Willers stated that this was the last Meeting of this Council; she wished the Members all the best in the upcoming elections. The members joined in these sentiments and thanked the Officials for all their help during the last five years.

Mr. Dolly stated that it was a pleasure to work with this Committee and wished them well in the elections.

Mr. Cullen stated that the Loughrea Area Committee was probably the most effective of the five Area Committees and had been very productive over the last five years and before. He said issues were discussed frankly and in a business-like way and he thanked the Members for their assistance. He wished them all every success in the forthcoming elections.

**Chríochnaigh an Cruinniú ansin**