

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**

**MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT LOUGHREA REGIONAL OFFICES ON  
WEDNESDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2009**

**ILATHAIR**

**Bail:**

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

Cllr. G. Burke, Mayor of Loughrea Town Council

**Oifigigh:**

Mr. J. Cullen, D.O.S., Environment & Water Services Unit  
Mr. M. Dolly, S.E., Roads & Transportation Unit  
Mr. M. Lavelle, 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 KILNADEEMA/LEITRIM ROAD  
IMPROVEMENT GROUP**

The Chairperson welcomed Messrs. Staunton & Hesnan to the Meeting. Mr. Staunton explained that they had requested this Deputation to detail the need to upgrade and improve safety of the road from Long Point to Kilnadeema turn off as a matter of urgency. He said the reason for the urgency of the proposal was to prevent needless injury or loss of life, to children and people of the community and using the road on a day-to-day basis. They requested that due to the high level of risk in using this stretch of road that the following be done:

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- Widen road between Long Point and Kilnadeema turn off and provide a footpath to ensure the children of the community can go to and from school and sporting activities etc. without any danger to their lives.
- Straighten the “bend” at the Kilnadeema turn off to prevent the need for motorists to hope they get across without getting hit by a car approaching from the Woodford direction.
- To utilise the “temporary” Council Yard as an Astro Pitch facility for the entire Loughrea Community to use as was originally intended by Tynagh Mines when originally provided.

Cllr. Hynes referring to the proposed Lake Walkway, stated that he would keep the Deputation informed how the consultation with the landowners was developing. He advised that it was a slow process and because the area was an SAC area it added to the process. Cllr. Regan stated that their first request to widen road between Long Point and the Kilnadeema turn off and request for provision of a footpath was the main one that could be addressed without too much monies being involved. Cllr. Maher stated that they were all well aware of the dangerous junction at Earlsparck and they needed to put it back on the Roads Programme. Cllr. Willers thanked the Deputation for coming in. She advised that that after they left further discussion would take place and that Cllr. Maher would inform them of the outcome of those discussions. The Deputation then left the Meeting.

In relation to the request for improvements to the junction at Earlsparck, Mr. Dolly stated that a Design had been prepared at one stage and it was considered with other projects to be put forward to the Department for funding under the EU Co-Financing proposals. However, it did not go forward to the Department because of other needs. He advised that it was going to be very expensive to realign that junction and that it was not on the programme for 2009. Regarding the request for road widening, he advised that there were no plans for this. He stated that they needed funding and he could not see this happening in the foreseeable future.

Cllr. Maher stated that the junction referred to was very dangerous and he requested that it be included in the 2010 Programme. In relation to the road widening from Long Point to the junction, Cllr. Regan stated that all that was required was the removal of the stone wall and replacement with Post & Wire fencing. Mr. Dolly referred to recent road improvements at Coscorrigh and stated there was strong local opposition to replacing the stone wall with post and wire fencing. He also advised that putting in footpaths was very costly work. Cllr. Feeney proposed that instead of putting in a footpath that a hardcore area could be put in adjacent to the road at a much reduced cost. Mr. Dolly stated that something similar had been done recently in Clarinbridge and advised that a costing would be prepared to see if anything can be done to help the situation. He said that while it was desirable and needed to be done, they needed funding by way of grant-aid. He again advised that widening of the road where the Council didn't own it and the junction would be very expensive options. Cllr. G. Burke suggested that as the Council owned the lands from the Long Point out as far as the Pumping Station, that a footpath be installed

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inside the wall. Cllr. Hynes stated that they were trying to progress the Lakeshore Walkway and he asked Mr. Dolly to talk to the relevant personnel in the Corporate and Cultural Affairs Unit to see if a path could be brought eastwards along the Woodford Road. He asked that he liaise with Mr. Lally, S.E.E. and use all avenues to bring this walk along as far as possible on Council property. Mr. Dolly advised that he would get a costing and come back to the Members with same.

In relation to the proposal to utilise the Council Yard as an Astro Pitch facility, Cllr. Willers stated that these lands were left as an amenity area. Mr. Breathnach advised that this area was being cleaned up at the moment and Galway Metal Company were removing as much metal as possible.

### **DEPUTATION FROM BULLAUN RESIDENTS GROUP**

The Chairperson welcomed Messrs. Corcoran, Mitchell and Hynes to the Meeting. Mr. Corcoran explained that they had requested this Deputation to highlight the chronic condition of the roads in their area. He stated that the deterioration of the road was contributed by lorries using this road as access to the proposed new N6 Motorway and also the recent upgrade of the Group Water Scheme in their area. He stated that they were confused as to who was responsible for what. He referred particularly to the four routes out of Bullaun:

1. Bullaun – Loughrea Road – it was stated that from Bullaun out to the Loughrea Golf Club was one of the most dangerous stretches of road. He stated that the entire verges have been cut away and there was rocks protruding right on to the roadway. He stated that there have been many accidents there already. They suggested that road markings be continued from the Golf Club to Bullaun.
2. Main Route to Kilrickle – It was stated that the roadway was in a very bad state.
3. Main Route to New Inn – They referred to an area north of Bullaun N.S. right up in front of school the road which has collapsed and the drain has closed in. They stated that the Contractors for the GWS had done some repairs already, but repairs to the tarmac were sinking at an alarming rate already.
4. Kiltulla Road to Athenry – this road is also very bad. It was stated that the contractors of the Water Scheme that were responsible for these works. They stated that they were very disappointed at the way the works were carried out and the lack of respect that there shown to the local people.

They also referred to four cul-de-sac roads that required some maintenance, i.e. pothole repairs and hedges/ditches cut back.

Cllr. Willers thanked the Deputation for coming in and advised them that a discussion would take place after they leave on the issues raised by them. The Deputation then left the Meeting.

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In response to the damage to the road near the school, Mr. Dolly advised that he had travelled that road some months back and he agreed that the roads were in a bad state. He said that he raised the issue with the Water Services Section. He advised that when laying services on the road, the road will deteriorate afterwards and this was an ongoing issue throughout the county. He said that they would have to enforce the standards and he would work with the Water Services Section in this regard. He said that apart from the laying of the main, the road and road edges are falling apart as it was being used as a Haul Route for the N6 roadway. He stated that they would get back to the N6 Construction about reinstatement of the roads. He stated that they would look at the area around the school and they would get in contact with N6 Construction about it again. Cllr. Hynes stated that he had received multiple complaints about damage to local roads. He stated that there was a serious problem regarding traffic off the N66 coming in from Kilchreest, turning left in Kilchreest and he queried how they could be stopped. Mr. Dolly advised that they were looking to put a weight restriction in place and it would be up to the Gardai to enforce it. Cllr. Willers referred in particular to a large pothole in Kilchreest, near the junction at Fishpond. Mr. Raftery stated that this had been highlighted to the N.R.A. on a few occasions. In relation to the four cul-de-sac roads referred to earlier, Mr. Dolly stated that they would be considered in the course of routine maintenance only. In response to Cllr. Regan, Mr. Dolly advised that if there are roads of particular interest, i.e. access to Turoe Stone, this would be taken into consideration. He stated that the request for cutting of hedges can only be done in consultation with the Local Ranger for Parks & Wildlife. He advised that it would be looked at from a road safety point of view.

In relation to the query regarding the speed limits, Mr. Dolly stated that these were temporary speed limits put in place for laying of the water mains. Mr. Raftery advised that they would look to have these temporary speed limit signs removed and contact would be made with the Contractor to take these down. Mr. Dolly advised that an inspection would be carried out around the school to see who is responsible and look to have the work done.

## **MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA MEETING HELD ON 3<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2009**

On the proposal of Cllr. Regan, seconded by Cllr. G. Burke, the Minutes of the Loughrea Area Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2009 were confirmed.

### **Potholes**

Cllr. Fahy stated that at the Area Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, he had highlighted some locations where potholes were particularly bad and they had not been filled to-date. Mr. Dolly advised that the N.R.A. and N6 Construction Company were put on notice that they must comply to repair the damage caused to the roadways as a result of haulage of material to their sites. He advised that all claims are being passed on to the N6 Construction Company.

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Cllr. Feeney queried whether anything further had happened regarding the purchase of a hot-mix unit for repair of potholes. He had stated that it was thought that pothole repairs may last longer with the use of a hot-mix unit. Mr. Breathnach stated that nothing further had happened on this issue.

### **Junction Definition Bollards**

Cllr. Feeney thanked Mr. Raftery for arranging the erection of the junction definition bollards on the N6 from Loughrea to Craughwell as requested by him.

### **Knockaunglass & Backlawn Car-Parks**

Cllr. Feeney stated that having made representations to the OPW, the Minister has agreed to give a long-term lease on Knockaunglass car-park. He queried if anything further had happened on this matter. Mr. Lavelle stated that they had received correspondence on this. He advised that Mr. Kelly, Director of Services would be preparing a further report and a Part 8 Planning Report would be coming before the Members in due course.

With regard to progress on Backlawn Car-Park, Mr. Lavelle advised that were awaiting submissions from Mr. Conneely, Oyster Homes Ltd., in relation to the road into the car-park. He said they would then prepare contract documents if it was found that the Council staff were unable to do the works themselves. Cllr. Feeney advised that the private car-park may be closing down and if that were to happen there would be no long-term parking in the town. He said that as a result there was an urgency to ensure that Backlawn was constructed as soon as possible.

### **Traffic Lights – Westbridge & Gort**

Mr. Lavelle circulated to the Meeting copies of map layout for traffic lights locations for the towns of Loughrea and Gort. In relation to the traffic lights for Gort at the Loughrea Road junction (N18/N66), Mr. Lavelle advised that the Stop Lines were back quite far from both the N18 and N66 junctions to enable lorries turning at this junction. He stated that there would be car-parking losses as a result. He advised that the funding was there and this would be done when the areas are able to fit it into their Works Programme.

In relation to the Westbridge junction, Mr. Lavelle advised that articulated trucks would not be able to turn left on the Old Galway Road and stated that they would have to turn right out on to the Fair Green. He advised that the civil works would have to be done first and this was being done by the local area. Mr. Raftery advised that his staff would be working on the Roads Programme and it may be some time before his staff was available to carry out these works. Cllr. Maher stated that he was told that this would be delivered by the end of February. Mr. Lavelle stated that if the Area were unable to do it, it would have to go out to contract. Cllr. Regan stated that some lorries accessing the Gort Road were coming down Main Street and could a restriction be put in place to prevent them from using Main Street. Mr. Dolly stated that it was an enforcement issue and stated that

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they would see how the weight restriction works out in Kilchreest. He said that it was an effort they were making to try and control the movements in the area.

### **Traffic Management Plan for Loughrea**

Cllr. Regan stated that they were given a commitment that a review of the Traffic Management Plan for Loughrea would be carried out when the works on the Main Street were completed and it was still not ready to go on public display. Mr. Lavelle explained that they had a certain resource of staff and a certain work-load commitment and that they did not have the staff resources to deliver on the review of the Loughrea Traffic Management Plan. In response to Cllr. Regan, Mr. Breathnach confirmed that a map with proposals that were discussed at a previous meeting was passed on to the Road Design Section. Cllr. Regan queried why the plan could not be put on public display. Mr. Dolly stated that there were a number of towns that required new traffic management plans and reviews of existing ones and he was unable to give a commitment as to when the review would take place. He acknowledged that the Road Design Section had a huge workload on hand and that the problem was how to deal with this issue within the resources they had. In response to Cllr. Regan's query as to why it could not be done from the Loughrea Office, he stated that they needed to have a consistent approach to the preparation of traffic management plans throughout the county. Mr. Dolly stated that he would raise the issue with Mr. Morgan, Director of Services.

### **Main Street, Loughrea**

Cllr. Maher stated that there were some outstanding minor works to be completed on Main Street and queried when these would be carried out. Mr. Lavelle advised that the contract on Main Street was open-ended and he just had not got the staff to complete the snag list with the Contractors at the moment.

Cllr. Feeney stated that for the last few Area Meetings have been dominated with issues in relation to Loughrea Town, i.e. Westbridge, review of Traffic Management Plan, Main Street. He said that he would be looking for a totally different structure for the Area Meetings so that issues from each Area and not just Loughrea Town are dealt with at each Meeting. He said that there was a Town Council in existence in Loughrea and many of the issues raised at today's meeting should be dealt with by the Town Council. Cllr. G. Burke stated that as Mayor of the Town Council, they have only one meeting a month and these issues have been requested to be brought up by the Town Council Members. Cllr. Feeney stated that he appreciated what he was saying but the Area Meetings should be dealing with issues for the Electoral Area as a whole. Mr. Cullen advised that commitments were given in good faith and that it was inevitable that some things would remain outstanding. In relation to having the review of the Traffic Management Plan carried out, he said he would talk to Mr. Morgan and see what can be done. He said that there was too much work to be done with the funding that was available. He reminded Members that no town in County Galway had the level of investment that Loughrea has had in recent times and it was sometimes forgotten about the level of improvement that had occurred.

## **MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA MEETING HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2009**

On the proposal of Cllr. Fahy, seconded by Cllr. Maher, the Minutes of the Loughrea Area Committee Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009 were confirmed.

### **Waste Oil Depot, Kinvara**

Cllr. Fahy stated an Action Committee has been set up in Kinvara and their prime objective was that the Waste Oil Depot would not be located at the Pier in Kinvara. Anger was expressed at that meeting that no consultation took place with locals on the issue. He said that there was unanimous agreement that it be relocated and it would be left to the Council's prerogative to where this would be located. Mr. Breathnach advised that Mr. Kevin Finn was the contact person in relation to this issue. He explained that this came about as a result of an E.U. Directive. Cllr. Feeney stated that there were other more suitable locations for this and these should be looked at immediately. After discussion it was agreed to ask Mr. Finn to meet with the Area Councillors in advance of the Council Meeting on Monday to discuss the matter.

### **Country Market, Kinvara**

Cllr. Willers stated that legal advice was sought from the Law Agent on this issue. She advised that it would be coming up again at the SPC Meeting to be held in April and it was hoped to have a more definitive response from the Law Agent at that stage. She stated that the process was very slow and it would be quite a while yet before it was sorted out. Cllr. Willers asked for a copy of map of the area where it is proposed for the Country Market in advance of the SPC meeting and this would show why the entrance to Kavanagh's Field was unsuitable. Mr. Costello explained that the Market Square had a limited place for expansion. He stated that he was asked to select a suitable location in Kinvara for this market and his suggestion was down by the Pier. However, this suggestion was not acceptable to the County Market Committee. The reasons for selecting this location were explained to them at that time. Mr. Dolly stated that a map would be prepared showing a possible layout of the Square and the Quay and this drawing would indicate whether it was suitable or not.

## **EARLY STARTS FOR NON-NATIONAL ROADS RESTORATION MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2009**

A copy of the proposals for Early Starts for Non-National Restoration Maintenance Programme 2009 for Loughrea Electoral Area had been circulated to each Member in advance of the Meeting. On the proposal of Cllr. Regan, seconded by Cllr. Fahy, the proposals for Early Starts as circulated were agreed.

## **ROADWORKS PROGRAMME 2009**

A copy of the Draft Roadworks Programme 2009 was circulated to the Meeting. Mr. Dolly stated that there were some minor changes to be made to the document before it was presented to the full Council at the March Meeting. He said that the Programme required the approval of the Members so that job codes could be set up for the works to commence. Mr. Dolly then went through the document with the Members.

Cllr. Fahy referred to Notice of Motion funding allocated by himself and Cllr. Willers on Ballyglass Road for road widening, provision of passing bays and removal of clay banks. He queried was there any provision in the Roadworks Programme to surface and tar the area that was widened. Mr. Dolly explained that this was not included in the works in 2009.

Referring to proposals for Specific Improvement Grants on page 11, Mr. Dolly explained that Department of Finance approval was required for certain schemes and these schemes cannot proceed without their approval. He advised that the CPO has been approved for works at Ballynagar and they would be proceeding with this once they got Department approval. In relation to works on Oxgrove Bridge, Mr. Dolly advised that the prefabricated units were purchased, land had been acquired and they were in negotiations with the Fisheries Board as to when the works could commence.

Referring to Page 15, Council funding of Regional and Local Roads, Mr. Dolly explained that there was a huge shortfall in this area in 2009. He explained that there was a 25% decrease from the 2008 allocations. He said that this was going to have huge implications for both regional and local roads. Referring to the €500,000 allocation for Implementation of Speed Limit Byelaws, Cllr. Feeney queried whether this allocation could be redirected to Maintenance funding for 2009. Mr. Dolly stated that he had consultations with the Gardai on this and stated that there was a need to extend out the bye-laws in certain areas, i.e. built up areas, where there was a lot of turning movements and pedestrians. Cllr. Feeney stated that in the current economic climate and with the state of the roads that it would make more sense to defer implementing these bye-laws until a later stage. He said that any monies that could be put towards road maintenance were very worthy. Mr. Dolly advised that they could raise the matter again at the Council's Monthly Meeting. Mr. Dolly again advised the Members that the maintenance monies had been considerably reduced in 2009 and the costs had continued to rise. He said that they may have to look at their practices and they would have to scale back their road maintenance operations. He advised that they had over-spent on some of these budgets already. He asked the Members to consider and bring it forward to the Council Meeting on Monday.

It was proposed by Cllr. Feeney, seconded by Cllr. Willers and agreed that the Roads Programme as circulated be approved.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Dumping**

The Members mentioned an area at Ballycuddy, Kilchreest where dumping had taken place and asked when it would be cleared up. Reference was also made to a burnt out car at Ballynagrieve, Kilnadeema. Mr. Raftery explained that the allocation for clean-ups in the Loughrea Electoral Area had been used to go towards lights for CCTV cameras at the bottle banks in Loughrea. Mr. Cullen stated monies just weren't available to do these clean-ups. He said that they were providing monies to carry out under cover operation at different black spots throughout the county.

### **Chríochnaigh an Cruinniú ansin**