

Loughrea Area Meeting held on 16th June 2011

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT LOUGHREA REGIONAL OFFICES ON
THURSDAY 16th JUNE, 2011

I LATHAIR

Baill:

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

Oifigigh:

Mr. E. Molloy, S.E., Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. M. Dolly, S.E., Water Services Unit
Mr. U. Finn, S.E.E. Ballinasloe & Loughrea Electoral Area
Mr. E. Mulryan, E.E., Loughrea Engineering Area
Mr. C. Mitchell, E.E., Portumna Engineering Area
Ms. M. Gilchrist, S.O., Loughrea Regional Offices

Apologies:

Cllr. P. Hynes
Mr. J. Costello, E.E. Gort Engineering Area

DEPUTATION KINVARA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The Deputation consisting of Ms. M. Hannigan, Treasurer Kinvara Community Council and Mr. M. Burke, Vice Chairman Kinvara Community Council presented two cases for consideration as follows:

Funding for Road Project

Mr. Burke stated that he understood €600,000 has been allocated to carry out works on a stretch of road at Pollock and he asked that investment be made into the road surface improvement on the entire Ballinderreen to Kinvara Road rather than purchasing land for future widening. He said this road is in very poor condition, has not been surfaced for years and carries a lot of tourist traffic, busses etc.

Following discussion Mr. Finn stated that the NRA granted funding towards this project in 2011 and contract documents are being prepared for horizontal and vertical alignment improvements from Tooreen Cross towards Ballinderreen. A submission was made to the NRA for funding to carry out essential repairs on the 2.25km stretch between Tooreen Cross and Kinvara but no commitment has been given on same.

Mr. Molloy stated that the NRA control this funding allocation and if the Council wish to exercise discretion this will have to be approved by the NRA. He will investigate the matter including details of funding if any used for land acquisition.

Kinvara Sewerage Scheme

Ms. Hannigan outlined the urgency for an upgrade of the Sewerage Treatment Plant at Kinvara. She stated that a foreshore licence has been granted and asked the meeting to exert as much pressure as possible to bring the Scheme to fruition. Mr. Dolly stated that Kinvara Sewerage Scheme is being dealt with as high priority.

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA MEETING HELD ON 22nd FEBRUARY, 2011

On the proposal of Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Finnerty the Minutes of the Loughrea Area Meeting held on 22nd February, 2011 were confirmed.

Matters Arising

Woodville/Ballygarrane Road

Cllr. Willers thanked the roads staff for the excellent work done on this road.

Pedestrian Lights & Works at Athenry

In reply to Cllr. Feeney Mr. Finn stated that it is hoped works at the Post Office will be funded by An Post.

Mr. Mulryan stated that verbal approval has been conveyed to costing submitted for design by M. C. O'Hara Consultants and a Contractor will be appointed following confirmation of same.

Verge Trimming

In reply to Cllr. Maher's request for verge trimming on the Carrabane to Kiltullagh road, Mr. Mulryan stated that due to limited allocations this type of work will be completed at junctions, on bends and to expose road signs only. Verge trimming will be carried out on roads approved for Surface Restoration also.

Cllr. Feeney stated that verge trimming is an issue on a lot of roads and asked if there is a long-term plan. Mr. Mulryan stated that the Council is operating with limited funds and within restrictions imposed by the National Parks and Wildlife. A contractor is on hire for the past four weeks and a tractor owned by the Council is presently under repair and this may be used for such work at some point.

Farmers Market

Cllr. Maher stated that Farmers Market was to be discussed at the Corporate Services SPC. As Cllr. Hynes who is a member of this SPC was unable to attend today's meeting an update on proposals to move the market to the Main Street Car Park was not available. Mr. Dolly suggested that Mr. Mulryan will check out the matter.

2. ROADS PROGRAMME & ADDITIONAL GRANTS FOR 2011

Mr. Molloy stated that an additional allocation of funding of €3.3M was received for Restoration Improvement on Regional and Local Roads. It is proposed to allocate this funding on the basis of the original 2011 - 2013 Programme of Works. It is also proposed to allocate up to 20% of the new allocation towards localised repairs. Discussion under this item highlighted contributions as follows:

Cllr. McClearn raised the issue of the Council's policy on awarding road schemes to contractors and asked how this was impacting on our Maintenance Funding. He said he was not objecting to the proposal to allocate 20% for localised repairs but he felt the Council's own staff are capable of such works. Mr. Molloy stated that the Council is limited by our Funding Agencies and the Memorandum on Regional & Local Roads has limited our discretion. The Council do not carry out certain types of works e.g. overlays but our own staff complete the preparatory works i.e. drainage works, verges etc.

Mr. Finn stated that it is important to get the right mix i.e. Regional Roads carrying large volumes of HGV's require overlays which are done by Contract while works on Local Tertiary roads are suitable for direct labour. While there is room for both Models there is not a Model to fit all scenarios and the Council do not have enough workforce to complete all road schemes.

In reply to Cllr. Maher Mr. Mulryan stated that an application has been made to the OPW in connection with drainage works at Abbey Street.

In reply to Cllr. Feeney Mr Mulryan stated that there are no plans for laying a water main at Cullairbaun this year. An overlay will be completed when storm water is addressed.

Cllr. Fahy asked if the stretch from "Cregclare Four Cross Roads" to the Clubhouse in Ardahan Village will be addressed. Cllr. Fahy also requested works on the stretch at Vinegar Bridge towards Martin O'Neill's house. Mr. Finn stated that funding has been provided this year for a section of the R347. Cllr. Fahy also stated that a signpost at Cregclare Cross Roads needs attention and that road lining is also required at the location.

Cllr. Finnerty raised the issue of road markings on the N66 Gort to Loughrea road.

Cllr. McClearn expressed disappointment that Loughrea appeared to receive lower funding than other areas and queried the Model and on which the allocation was based. Mr. Finn explained that the schemes were selected from the 3 year Roads Programme as 2011/2013 as previously submitted for approval.

On the proposal of Cllr. Fahy seconded by Cllr. Maher it was agreed to carry out works under the additional funding as outlined:

Loughrea Engineering Area

Road No	Road Name	Works Type	Length (m)	Estimated Cost
R 350	Benmore, Brackloonbeg	RR	500	€69,817
L 8700	Lissalumma	RR	1400	€85,824
L4197&R350	Mount Carmel	RR	600	€91,960
Localised Repair	Regional Roads			€17,454
Localised Repair	Local Roads			€21,564

Gort Engineering Area

Road No	Road Name	Works Type	Length (m)	Estimated Cost
R 353	Kilbeacanty-Derrybrien	RR	1120	€177,500
R347	Kinvara-Ardrahan-Craughwell	RR	1120	€168,000
Localised Repair	Regional Roads			€90,311
Localised Repair	Local Roads			€136,375

Portumna Engineering Area

Road No	Road Name	Works Type	Length (m)	Estimated Cost
LT 87611	Curraghmore	RR	650	€13,000
L 8214	Knockmoyle East	RR	600	€13,000
L 8227-0-4	Drumkeary west	RR	7500	€48,750
Localised Repair	Local Roads			€15,000

3. UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED BYELAWS PERTAINING TO ILLEGAL CAMPING OF CARAVANS AND MOBILE HOMES IN KINVARA

Cllr. Willers stated that proposed Bye Laws are under consideration by the Council's Law Agent. Draft Bye Laws will be on public display in due course and submissions can be made. Cllr. Fahy raised the issue of a parking prohibition sign being erected at Mrs. Walsh's B & B on an existing pole or even a temporary sign as the drive way to her property has been blocked off on occasion. Mr. Finn stated that he discussed Parking Restrictions with Pauric Carroll A.O. Environment but double yellow lines would not distinguish between cars and campers. He stated that if a private entrance is blocked it is an offence under the Road Traffic Act 1993 and the Gardai may be contacted as the traffic enforcement authority.

Cllr. Finnerty stated that the development of a Caravan Park would alleviate the problem but the lack of an updated sewerage scheme would prohibit same.

4. SWIMMING POOL IN LOUGHREA & OPENING OF PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO THE SHOPPING CENTRE ON THE ATHENRY ROAD FROM LAWRENCE'S FIELDS

Cllr. Maher stated that this matter was discussed at the Loughrea Town Council Meeting recently where Cllr. Gabriel Burke stated the Developer cannot access the €7M funding required to complete the project. He stated the hoarding is being pulled down and the site is unsightly and hazardous. Cllr. Willers also stated that a pedestrian access to the shopping centre is urgently required. Cllr. McClearn stated that he understood from enquiries to Kevin Kelly Director of Services that monies assigned for this project were ring-fenced for this particular location and this particular Developer. Mr. Dolly agreed to check out the possibility of having the allocation transferred for provision of a swimming pool at an alternative location. Members suggested a site adjacent to the schools in the town.

5. A.O.B.

Deputations

Cllr. McClearn proposed that in future Deputations to the Area Committee should be organised through the Chairperson.

Cllr. Fahy stated that today's Deputation from Kinvara Community Council was organised by him with the best interests of the Elected Members and the Area Committee system at heart. He stated that he had reason to believe the Community Council were being "short-circuited" to a meeting with the County Manager by a Dáil Deputy thus undermining the local representation and the role of the Councillor.

Good Wishes

Cllr. Willers congratulated Ms. Anne Monaghan on the birth of her baby boy and she wished Ms. Lorraine Cooney well for her forthcoming happy event. She also wished Mr. Lavelle success in his new posting to the Water Services Department.

Works at Roo Craughwell

In reply to Cllr. Feeney Mr. Mulryan stated that he met with Iarnród Eireann and their contractors regarding then upgrade of the Bridge at Roo, Craughwell. Their proposals have been approved by the Council and we will seek clarification on re-instatement etc.

Gort Management Plan

Cllr. Finnerty stated that Gort Chamber of Commerce and Gort Accessibility Group met with Mr. Costello, Executive Engineer in connection with Parking Areas, Re-Alignment, Pedestrianisation or One-Way Traffic in Boland's Lane and problems in the Square,

Crowe Street and Loughrea Road areas. He said people are parking on Boland's Lane as there is no charge there.

Mr. Finn stated that the Council needs to weigh up the commercial operation in Boland's lane and closing it off to traffic might not be the answer. He said there may be some commercial units in the new development on this street and it may be prudent to regularise the traffic as a "one-way" street rather than closing it to traffic completely.

Staffing Issues

In reply to Cllr. Finnerty Mr. Finn stated that it is not proposed to move staff out of Gort. The Council is working towards having a dedicated crew engaged on Water Services functions in the area and over all there should not be a reduction in staff. He said a similar arrangement has been working well in the Ballinasloe Area.

Cllr. Finnerty also raised the matter of restrictions on travel payments to Supervisors and in this regard Mr. Molloy stated that travel rates will continue to be paid for essential journeys. He stated that staff must operate with greater flexibility and due to our financial situation the Council must adopt a business ethic and control costs including travel payments.

Meadow Court Cross

Cllr. Maher requested road lining be provided at this location.

Craughwell to Kilconieron Road

Cllr. Maher stated the above mentioned road is in poor condition due to laying of water pipes in the past twelve to 18 months. Mr. Mulryan will examine same.

Féile na nGael

Cllr. Maher stated that the Mart Road which is a private road will be used extensively during the Féile weekend of the 24th to 26th June and requested verge trimming be carried out on same. Mr. Finn stated that assuming the owners give permission the Council will oblige on this occasion as the owners have accommodated us in the past by allowing through-traffic during periods of road works operations.

Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for Thursday 8th September at 10.00 a.m. in the Loughrea Regional Offices.

Chrochnaigh an Cruinniú ansin