

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, BALLINASLOE, CO. GALWAY ON WEDNESDAY 10th JULY 2024 AT 2.00 p.m.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. M. Connolly

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Cllrs. D. Connolly, A. Harney, E. Parsons

Oifigigh: Ms. J. Carroll Director of Services, Ms. R. Lowe Senior Engineer, Mr. D. Troy Senior Executive Engineer, Ms. E. Murphy Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. P. McLynn Executive Engineer, Mr. B. McDonagh Executive Engineer, Mr. A. Brady Assistant Engineer, Ms. M. Flynn Administrative Officer, Ms. M. McGann Meetings Administrator, Ms. M. Dolan Assistant Staff Officer

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. D. Geraghty, P. Keaveney

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Ms. M. McGann to the role of Meetings Administrator and wished her well, and thanked Ms. A. Spelman for the efficient job she did as Meetings Administrator.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 8TH MAY 2024 AND MATTERS ARISING. MDB24029

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Ballinasloe held on Wednesday 8th of May 2024 were approved by the Municipal District Members and signed by the Cathaoirleach on the proposal of Cllr. D. Connolly and seconded by Cllr. E. Parsons.

Cllr. Parsons referred to the Bus Stop and Shelter Upgrade Programme and asked for an update on the delivery timeline. In reply, Ms. R. Lowe confirmed that Donna Gibbons E.E. had completed the Tender Assessment Report which has been sent to the NTA for approval, and it was anticipated there would be a quick turnaround which would be followed up with the NTA if required.

Cllr. Harney queried the locations for the 9 Bus Shelters and in reply, Ms. R. Lowe confirmed that plans are progressing for bus shelters in Mountbellew and Moylough and may also be accelerated as part of the Active Travel Plan from Bridge Street to Harris Road, and the Marina. Cathaoirleach Connolly stated that bus shelters should be part of Active Travel Plans and thanked Mr. P. McLynn and Ms. D. Gibbons for their work in relation to same.

Ms. R. Lowe confirmed that there would be a wider enhancement programme looking at all 400 bus stops in due course.

Cllr. Parsons stated that the upcoming cessation of an additional multi-stop bus service is a serious concern for Ballinasloe as adequate services are required for the town and to link adjoining areas into the town. Cllr. Parsons stated that this was the third service from Galway to Ballinasloe to be cancelled and resulted in serious accessibility issues from Galway City to Ballinasloe, particularly in the evenings. Cllr. Harney stated it is critical that the NTA come forward in relation to the provision of public transport services, and bus shelters with linked bus services are needed to make the Active Travel Plan viable. In response, Ms. R. Lowe stated that public transport services are a matter for the NTA, however, deficits in services had also been raised as an issue by Loughrea Municipal District and it may be feasible to pursue a joint submission in this regard. Cllr. D. Connolly referenced the bus services in Williamstown and stated he did not get a response from the Minister for Transport about the route and requested this matter be followed up.

Cllr. Parsons queried the timeline for completion of modular homes and arrival of Ukrainians to Ballinasloe. In response, Ms. J. Carroll stated it is hoped that the modular homes will be finished in mid-August and the families would arrive 2-3 weeks after this, and the Local Authority Integration Team were ready to commence coordination of supports and would meet with Tuath and the Department to coordinate same. Cllr. D. Connolly stated that it is critical that funding is available to deliver infrastructure and supports close to the Modular Homes in conjunction with local community groups. Cllr. Harney referenced the need for ancillary services such as public transport and Active Travel and Cllr. Parsons the additional assessment of needs for outreach clinics, GP services, and other supports. In response, Ms. J. Carroll stated that she would update the Municipal District on the work of the Local Authority Integration Team, and also confirmed that eligibility for Window 2 of the Community Recognition Fund would apply from September 2024, and Community Groups in any additional eligible areas would be invited to put forward proposals at that time.

Cllr. Parsons referred to littering and anti-social behavior issues and the need for a CCTV Plan to be put in place and actioned and queried the status of legislation to facilitate this process and in response, Mr. D. Troy confirmed that a local authority CCTV Policy is at draft stage. Ms. R. Lowe added that this would be a matter for the Environment Department as opposed to the Roads & Transportation Department and significant funding is required to upgrade CCTV, which will form part of future discussions. Cllr. Harney queried if funding would be available from the Department of Justice for this purpose, and proposed that the Council seek engagement with An Garda Síochána at this stage to ensure delays are not encountered when rolling out the policy in due course. In response, Ms. J. Carroll confirmed there is an Oversight Board in place in relation to all aspects of developing a CCTV Policy such as procurement, data processing, liaison with the Local Community Safety Partnerships, development of pilot areas or sites, and in this regard, feedback from Elected Members is always welcomed.

Mr. B. McDonagh noted the Members frustrations, however, he advised that the range of environmental studies required cannot be avoided. He advised that the initial €9m cost evaluation was developed as part of a nationwide survey, whereas the current cost allocation was developed at individual project level, taking into account cost increases in the intervening period as well as other factors such as the necessity for further works, studies, and bridge works. In relation to the delays since the original timeline, he advised that this was a combination of COVID-19, the requirements for additional environmental and archaeological reporting requirements, and the limited number of consultants in the country available to carry out these works, and in this respect, delays were not unique to this project but reflected across the board at national level. The issue of minor works had been raised with the OPW but the overall response was that when a scheme is in progress, funding will not be committed for interim works. On a positive note, Mr. B. McDonagh stated that completion of Stage I is imminent and there had been extensive landowner engagement and he welcomed further feedback in this regard from the Elected Members.

SECTION 179A FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT DUNLO HILL

MD824032

A presentation on the housing development at Dunlo Hill was given by Ms. Eithne Murphy, Senior Executive Engineer in the Housing Unit. Ms. E. Murphy outlined the S. 179A process under the Planning & Development Regulations 2023 whereby prior to undertaking public notice and screening, there was provision for informing the Elected Members of the proposed housing development. In this regard, Ms. Murphy confirmed that the original Part 8 included 13 Units and a Community Centre, however, there was now scope for an additional 3 units on a site acquired from the OPW, bringing the full development to 16 Units and a Community Centre.

Cllr. D. Connolly said the site of the housing development is in the heart of the town and will benefit the Ballinasloe area greatly, and the proposal for the additional units made sense and would complete the development in an orderly manner. Cllr. Connolly welcomed the next stage of the process and stated that the assessment process for selection of tenants would be crucial to identify housing applicants who would benefit most from proximity to services. In response, Ms. E. Murphy advised that the allocation of the properties will be dealt with by the Allocations Unit within the Housing Department.

Cllr. Parsons welcomed the development and its focus on renewing an under-utilised area in the town centre. Cllr. Parsons queried whether the 3 additional Units would significantly delay progress on the housing development and if vehicular access for all Units was accommodated. In response, Ms. E. Murphy confirmed that no delays were envisaged and that detailed design of the additional Units will continue in tandem with the award of the Tender for Build and it is envisaged to appoint a contractor by Oct/Nov 2024 with works to commence on site by year-end. In relation to vehicular access, Ms. Murphy confirmed that on-site parking will not be provided but provision for residents to park on the street will be investigated in consultation with the Active Travel Unit. Cllr. Parsons also queried if there had been any changes to the Community Centre as the original facility was very small and Ms. E. Murphy confirmed that the Community Centre will be the same size as in the original plans, however, there will be additional storage capacity for groups in the basement area.

Cllr. Harney commended the work done to date and stated that it was very positive the additional Units would result in no timeline delays and that the housing development was tackling dereliction which was a key issue. He suggested that the lack of on-site vehicular parking should be considered at allocation stage and in response, Ms. E. Murphy confirmed that all relevant factors such as size of Units and parking availability would be considered by the Allocations Department. Cllr. Harney enquired regarding the process for utilising the storage space in the Community Centre, and Ms. E. Murphy confirmed that an Expression of Interest process would issue regarding potential uses of the Community Centre and storage areas, which would be compatible with the needs of the residents.

Cathaoirleach Connolly thanked Ms. E. Murphy for her presentation and reiterated the views of the Municipal District Members stating that this housing development was very positive news and would breathe new life into the town centre area.

CONSIDERATION OF DECLARATION OF A ROAD TO BE A PUBLIC ROAD: BOVINION MDB24033

ROAD COMMENCING AT JUNCTION WITH L-72451 (568431, 745700) IN THE TOWNLAND OF BOVINION AND EXTENDING NORTH FOR A DISTANCE OF 67 METRES IN THE TOWNLAND OF BOVINION AND FINISHING AT CONNEELY'S HOUSE (568393, 745755) IN THE TOWNLAND OF BOVINION.

The taking in charge of a public road at Bovinion, County Galway was proposed by Cathaoirleach Connolly and seconded by Cllr. D. Connolly.

CONSIDERATION OF DECLARATION OF A ROAD TO BE A PUBLIC ROAD: MOYLROUGH MORE – TOMREE MDB24034

ROAD COMMENCING AT JUNCTION WITH R364 (562363, 749477) IN THE TOWNLAND OF MOYLROUGH MORE AND EXTENDING FOR A DISTANCE OF 57 METRES IN THE TOWNLAND OF MOYLROUGH MORE AND TOMREE AND FINISHING AT CUMMINS'S HOUSE (562416, 749461) IN THE TOWNLAND OF TOMREE.

The taking in charge of a public road at Moylough More - Tomree, County Galway was proposed by Cathaoirleach Connolly and seconded by Cllr. A. Harney.

CONSIDERATION OF DECLARATION OF A ROAD TO BE A PUBLIC ROAD: WOODVIEW CRESCENT, CLONBERN MDB24035

HOUSES NOS 1 TO 9 (INCLUSIVE)– POINTS A TO B (INCLUSIVE) ON TAKING IN CHARGE MAP ROAD COMMENCING AT ITS JUNCTION WITH THE R-328 ADJACENT TO HOUSE 1 AND EXTENDING IN A WESTERLY DIRECTION FOR APPROXIMATELY 36M TO A POINT ADJACENT TO HOUSE 3, THEN EXTENDING IN A SOUTHERLY DIRECTION FOR APPROXIMATELY 79M TO A POINT ADJACENT TO HOUSE 7 AND EXTENDING IN AN EASTERLY DIRECTION FOR

APPROXIMATELY 47M ENDING ADJACENT TO HOUSE NO. 9 FOR A TOTAL DISTANCE OF APPROXIMATELY 162 METERS (ALL IN THE TOWNLAND OF CLONBERN).

The taking charge of Woodview Crescent, Clonbern, County Galway was proposed by Cathaoirleach Connolly and seconded by Cllr. D. Connolly.

ANTI-LITTER AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME

MDB24036

Ms. Maria Flynn, Administrative Officer introduced the members to the Anti-Litter Ambassador Programme and advised that it was intended to engage individuals, groups, communities, and businesses in the fight against litter. She stated that Anti-Litter Ambassadors will be central to the promotion of anti-litter initiatives in the County and invited the Municipal District Members to act as Ambassadors for their local areas.

Cllr. Parsons stated she will support this programme in any way she can and encourages the use of community initiatives to combat ongoing issues such as littering and environmental dumping. Cllr. Parsons welcomed the improved ranking of Ballinasloe Town under the most recent IBAL Survey and stressed the importance of CCTV in order to prosecute offenders and serve as a stark reminder to others to reduce offences. Cllr. Parsons also asked that dog fouling markings be put on new footpaths and replaced on footpaths where they have worn away and Ms. M. Flynn advised she would follow up on this request.

Cllr. Harney welcomed this very positive initiative and confirmed he is happy to support the programme. He commended the Council staff, CE workers, and Community Groups on the excellent work they do to tackle littering and agreed with Cllr. Parsons in relation to markings on footpaths and added that mutt mitt dispensers needed to be refilled frequently. Ms. Flynn asked the Members to inform the Environment Department of any areas particularly affected in this regard.

Cllr. D. Connolly thanked the Community Wardens, who do great work in dealing with issues as they arise, in particular, fly tipping and illegal dumping in bogs. Cllr. Connolly highlighted the importance of CCTV to deal effectively with illegal dumping black spots and the need for clear messaging that illegal dumping will not be tolerated. Cllr. Connolly also requested that an audit of bins be carried out to ascertain if there is a need for more bins in some certain areas, and Ms. Flynn said she will follow up on this proposal.

Cathaoirleach Connolly welcomed the anti-litter ambassador initiative and added his support, stressing that there was a responsibility on everyone in tackling these issues. He added that the situation in relation to littering and illegal dumping is improving over the years and stressed the importance of education and environmental awareness as part of the response.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE DIRECTOR'S BUSINESS

MDB24037

Ms. J. Carroll advised that under Just Transition funding, €123,000 was awarded towards an upgrade of Aughrim Interpretative Centre and the next stage was the detailed submission of works.

Ms. Carroll advised that a new Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) is being formed which will replace the Joint Policing Committee. This represents a new multi-agency approach to community safety, and the Committee will consist of a maximum of 30 members, which will include a maximum of 7 Elected Members. The position of Chairperson, which is a voluntary role, is currently advertised and the closing date is 25th July 2024. The Chairperson will be responsible for governance and leadership of the Partnership structure and Ms. Carroll encouraged Members to advise any suitable person to apply for the role. An Assessment Board will be put in place in due course to assess applications for the role. Cllr. D. Connolly suggested there is a need for an engagement process with Residents Associations to highlight ongoing estate management issues, and to build capacity through the establishment of additional Residents Associations. Cllr. Parsons enquired if the LCSP will be more aligned with policy or actions and if there was scope for a structure such as the Multi-Agency Taskforce which existed previously in Ballinasloe. In response, Ms. Carroll confirmed that the Chairperson of the LCSP can set up sub-committees to ensure a local focus and once the Chairperson is selected, work will begin to appoint all Committee Members including Elected Members through plenary processes. Ms. Carroll welcomed the potential for a pilot area to shape responses to locally identified priorities.

Ms. Carroll referred to the upcoming Ballinasloe Horse Fair which is due to commence on 29th September and welcomed any feedback and learnings from last year's Fair. Cllr. A. Harney asked if there would be a mix of street stalls, and to ensure there was no conflict in the placement of catering stalls such as coffee docks or ice cream vendors with existing businesses. Cllr. D. Connolly concurred with Cllr. A. Harney and suggested that a food corner be set up in the Square. Cllr. E. Parsons also concurred with the request to place vendors in appropriate locations. In response to a query from Cllr Parsons, Ms. J. Carroll confirmed that an Event Manager will be appointed to engage with the Fair Committee and the Council would concentrate on ancillary issues such as traffic and waste management. Ms. Carroll noted the Members concerns about stalls and confirmed there will be a mix of stalls and they will be cognizant of local businesses throughout the process.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

MDB24038

Cathaoirleach Connolly referenced correspondence he received regarding rezoning of lands in Ballinasloe which may have been circulated to all Municipal District Members. Ms. J. Carroll advised that the proper vehicle for consideration of this matter was through the mid-term review of the Local Area Plan and submissions in relation to this would be sought in late 2024/early 2025. This would enable ample opportunity for any party to make submissions regarding zoning in the local area.

VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS

MDB24039

Votes of Sympathy were extended to the following:

Ms. J. Carroll on the recent passing of her brother, Mr. Kevin Carroll, RIP.

The Wall family on the recent passing of Tommy Wall, RIP, who was employed as a Road Sweeper with Galway County Council.

The Black family, Ashfield Drive, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

The Rynne family, Pollboy, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.

The Healy family, Deerpark, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.

The O'Mahony family, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Mayo.

Cllr. D. Connolly extended congratulations to the Ballinasloe U14 and U15 teams on their county title successes. He also wished Beibhinn Parsons well in the Rugby Sevens during the Paris Olympics. All members concurred and expressed their best wishes to the Galway Senior Football team. Congratulations were also extended to the Galway Ladies Football team and the Galway Camogie Team.

TO FIX A SCHEDULE OF DATES FOR BALLINASLOE MD MEETINGS

MDB24040

Cathaoirleach Connolly stated that he had engaged with all members regarding fixing a schedule of dates for Ballinasloe MD meetings and it was agreed by all Members to leave the dates and times as they are for consistency purposes.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

MDB24041

Cllr. A. Harney proposed that engagement was needed with the HSE regarding St. Brigid's Hospital which was in a poor state of repair and required a multi-disciplinary board to be put in place to oversee action on the site and prevent further significant deterioration. All Members agreed and Cathaoirleach Connolly confirmed that he was prepared to facilitate a meeting of the Municipal District with the HSE to further discuss the matter.

Cllr. D. Connolly proposed that a Safety Audit be carried out on the stretch of regional road between Harris Road and Deerpark to the Town Boundary at the Train Station / Derrymullen Estate and Cllr. Parsons seconded this motion stating that the stretch of road was used by young pedestrians and safety is paramount. Cllr. D. Connolly referred to the number of fatalities on the stretch of road between Bothar Harris and Deerpark. Ms. Lowe stated that a list of projects for consideration under the low-cost safety schemes will be compiled by September and submitted to the Department of Transport in October and any Safety Audit or design needs to be aligned with this scheme. Mr. D. Troy mentioned that Mountbellew and Creggs would be included in this submission and the Area Offices would collate all requests as part of the process to prioritise all proposals for funding.

Cllr. E. Parsons proposed that a meeting be organised with the NTA to discuss gaps in public transport services and the recent withdrawal of services. While infrastructural improvements such as bus shelters were welcome, there was a need for services to match

local needs. Cllr. D. Connolly seconded the motion and suggested that the Loughrea MD be included in this process. In response, Ms. R. Lowe confirmed that the NTA had indicated they will attend a plenary meeting of the Council, however, they will highlight to the NTA the issues raised in the Loughrea and Ballinasloe Municipal Districts and will liaise further with the Director of Services regarding proposed actions.

Cllr. E. Parsons proposed improvements to the town playground located to the rear of Coral Leisure Centre stating that better play facilities were required including specific attractions for youth such as a skate park. As a result of the lack of equipment and other issues such as litter, deterioration of the surfacing and equipment, people were leaving town to visit playgrounds in other areas. Cllr. Parsons proposed an upgrade of facilities and regular maintenance and the incorporation of improvements into the Feasibility Study at the River Suck.

Cllr. E. Parsons proposed that parking in the town be provided free of charge for a few hours each morning and stated this had previously been raised at the plenary meeting but received a negative reply. Cllr. Harney supported this motion stating it would increase footfall in the town and suggested removing paid parking in the 2 pay and display car parks to improve access to the town. Ms. R. Lowe stated that this would be a matter for the Roads and Transportation SPC to consider when it was established.

CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN

Signed: Michael Connolly
Dated: 11/9/2024