

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara

Municipal District of Conamara

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara

held on Friday 11th July 2025 at 10.00am in the Council Chamber.

I LATHAIR:

CATHAORILEACH: Cllr. G King

BAILL: Comh T. Ó Curraoin, Comh Mac An Iomaire, Cllr. S. Walsh, Cllr. E. Mannion, Cllr M. Leainde, Cllr. N. Thomas, Cllr Martin Lee.

OIFIGH: T Prendergast A/Director of Services, Ita Martyn A.O Meetings Administrator, Sara Duffy S.E.E, Naoise O Conaola E.E, Liam Tierney E.T , S. Casey A.S.O.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Welby

A minute's silence was proposed by the Cathaoirleach Cllr. King in honour of the late Colm Conroy, husband of Máire Áine Ní Chuaig a journalist and presenter for Raidió na Gaeltachta, following his sad passing on July 8, 2025.

1. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held on Friday 20th June 2025:

On the **Proposal** of Cllr. Walsh and **Seconded** by Cllr. Thomas The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Conamara Municipal District held on Friday 20th June, 2025 were agreed.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held on Friday 20th June 2025:

On the **Proposal** of Comh Mac An Iomaire and **Seconded** by Cllr. Leainde The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Conamara Municipal District held on Friday 20th June, 2025 were agreed.

A minute's silence was proposed by the Cathaoirleach Cllr. King in honour of the late Colm Conroy, husband of Máire Áine Ní Chuaig a journalist and presenter for Raidió na Gaeltachta, following his sad passing on July 8, 2025.

2. Update N59 Oughterard Pedestrian Bridge.

Ms. Duffy S.E.E. gave a presentation on the N59 Oughterard Pedestrian Bridge as part of the broader infrastructure developments in the County.

- Funding Allocation: €125,000 has been allocated for the N59 Oughterard Bridge Rehabilitation under the 2025 Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Grant Allocation.
- Project Scope: The project includes the development of a protected or segregated pedestrian zone across the bridge in Oughterard. The plan also involves installing traffic signals on either side of the bridge to manage vehicle flow and ensure safe pedestrian crossings, particularly near the church access and the N59.
- Application to An Coimisiún Pleanála for Planning Permission was made on 4th July 2025.
- Public Submission Period is open until 1st September, 2025 and submissions can be made to An Coimisiún Pleanála.
- Compulsory Purchase Order N0.3/2025 N59 Oughterard Footbridge was published on 4th July 2025.
- Tender Stage Q4 2026
- Construction Stage Q3 2027
- Completion 2028

Matters Arising and Responses:

Cathaoirleach Cllr. King thanked Ms. Duffy for her presentation and welcomed the development. He added that the bridge has been part of the Local Area Plan for over twenty years, with strong community advocacy for safer pedestrian access, especially for schoolchildren.

Cllr. Walsh thanked Ms. Duffy and expressed his appreciation and acknowledged that the bridge is a very welcome development for the community. He stressed the importance of protecting the nearby children's playground, which is a vital amenity for local families.

Cllr. Walsh also criticised the lack of maintenance, noting that no effort had been made to clear overgrown foliage in the area. He further questioned the necessity of the number of trees planned for the site, suggesting that while greenery is important, the current plans may not truly serve the needs of the local community. Despite these concerns, he remained strongly positive about the bridge itself, reiterating its value and the sense of progress it brings to the area.

Cllr. Mannion thanked Ms. Duffy for her presentation and she emphasised that consultation and communication is essential when it comes to any plans affecting the local area, stressing that the community must be kept informed and involved throughout the process.

While she welcomed the new bridge as a positive development, Cllr. Mannion also highlighted a pressing need for an additional access route between Clifden and Oughterard. She pointed out that the existing bridge is extremely narrow and no longer fit for the volume of traffic it handles, making a new vehicular crossing a priority for the area.

Comh. Ó'Curraoin thanked Ms. Duffy for her presentation and expressed his agreement with the concerns raised by Cllr. Walsh. He emphasised that the green area and the children's playground must be preserved, as they are essential for the wellbeing of the local community.

While he acknowledged the importance of bio-diversity and supported the replacement of mature trees where necessary, he stressed that this should not come at the expense of the playground or green space. He recommended that a meeting with Ms. Joyce, Biodiversity Officer, would be beneficial.

He also echoed Cllr. Mannion's call for an additional access route between Oughterard and Clifden, stating that an alternative bridge should be considered to help future-proof traffic infrastructure in the area.

Cllr. King welcomed the great progress made on the project and acknowledged the positive steps taken so far. However, he emphasised that common sense must prevail in the planning process. He urged decision-makers to remain practical and community-focused as the project moves forward.

Cllr. Walsh raised a question regarding land ownership between Clifden and Oughterard, asking specifically who owns the land along the proposed route. He pointed out that the Council owns land in Seaniphéistín and he urged that the Council should consider developing the land that benefits the community and supports broader infrastructure goals.

Ms. Duffy responded by assuring the members that residents would be closely engaged regarding the use and future of the space. She noted that her team is currently working with the Council's Taking-in-Charge team, which she said would be a valuable support in the process. She emphasised that the team are open to all suggestions and are committed to working collaboratively with the community.

3. Municipal District of Conamara Director's Business:

Mr. Prendergast, who is currently serving as Acting Director of Services, stated that he had nothing further to add to the discussion at this time.

4. Municipal District of Conamara Cathaoirleach's Business:

Cathaoirleach Cllr. King stated that he had nothing to add under Cathaoirleach's Business at this time.

5. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations:

All councillors expressed their heartfelt condolences to Máire Áine on the sudden and sad passing of her husband. Their thoughts and sympathies were extended to her and her family during this difficult time.

6. AOB:

Cllr. Walsh raised a concern on behalf of residents in Glengowla, who are increasingly worried about the overgrowth of foliage and hedges along the N59. He noted that the vegetation is now spilling out onto the main road, posing a risk to vehicles. He urged that these shrubs be removed as a matter of safety and maintenance.

Cllr.Thomas voiced his support regarding the overgrowth at the junction near Glengowla, stating that the situation is very dangerous and needs urgent attention. He stated that a contractor should be sent out to address the issue promptly.

He informed the members that this concern is raised at every Tidy Towns meeting he attends in the locality. He noted that while the residents of Moycullen take great pride in their village, the current state of overgrowth makes the area look like a jungle.

Cllr. Thomas also highlighted the poor condition of the first section of the bypass leading into the village, calling it a disgrace. He questioned whether Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) or Transport Network Ireland (TNI) had been approached about the issue and whether they had been formally informed. He concluded by stating that a structured programme needs to be put in place to manage and resolve these recurring problems.

Cllr. Mannion thanked the Council for their ongoing efforts in maintaining toilet facilities at local beaches, acknowledging the positive impact it has. However, she raised concerns about the parking of camper vans creating congestion and blocking roads in popular coastal areas. She suggested that a policy be put in place to better manage camper van parking, particularly during the busy summer months. She also proposed the idea of appointing beach wardens to help oversee activity and maintain order during peak tourist season.

While she emphasised that tourists are very welcome, she stressed that the natural environment must also be protected. She expressed concern about rubbish being dumped by some visitors and re-iterated the need for balance between tourism and environmental care.

Cllr. Leainde thanked Mr. O'Conaola and his team for all their work but he expressed his concerns regarding the overgrown greenery, and questioned if it could be cleaned up and properly cut back, particularly in areas where it poses safety or visibility issues.

Comh Ó'Curraoin agreed with earlier comments regarding the need to tidy up footpaths and kerbs, and recalled that in the past, such work was often carried out through FÁS schemes.

Cllr. Walsh raised further concerns about the section of road from Bunnakill to Oughterard, noting that landowners have been complaining about the overgrowth along the route. He stressed that maintenance needs to be carried out as the current state of the road is unacceptable.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. King supported this concern, adding that he received several calls from members of the public regarding this issue. He emphasised the need for prompt action to address the problem.

Cllr. Lee added his voice to the concerns raised about vegetation, stating that shrubs and hedges are severely overgrown, creating a dangerous situation for road users. He also noted that the current state of the area looks terrible and urged that action be taken to address the issue promptly.

Cllr. Walsh expressed concern that the tractors currently being used to cut hedges are not performing effectively. He suggested that the foliage should be cut right back to the butt and then treated with weed killer to prevent regrowth and improve long-term maintenance.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. King agreed, noting that the current system is simply not working and that the issue is now becoming a serious safety concern. He wondered whether Galway County Council and Eir could collaborate to address the problem more effectively, particularly in areas where overgrowth is impacting visibility and road safety.

Cllr. Mannion suggested that the ongoing issue of overgrown greenery might be more effectively addressed if it were brought forward to the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC). She suggested that this would be a more structured way to develop a long-term solution.

Cllr. Lee raised concerns regarding a foul smell wafting through Carraroe Village. He described the odour as appalling, and said he was unsure whether it was coming from drains, sewers, or another source. He noted that he had received numerous phone calls from the public about the issue and urged that pressure be put on Uisce Éireann to investigate and resolve the problem as soon as possible.

Cllr. Leainde added that he had received numerous calls from residents in Carraroe regarding the foul smell in the village. He echoed the concerns raised by Cllr. Lee, noting that the issue is clearly affecting the community.

He also commented on the ineffectiveness of the tractors currently used for hedge cutting, stating that they are unable to access narrow boreens. He suggested that alternative methods or equipment may be needed to properly address overgrowth in these areas.

Comh Ó'Curraoin requested that a deputation from Na Forbacha be allowed to attend the next meeting to present their case regarding the continuation of the footpath in dNa Forbacha.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. King agreed and advised that Ms. Martyn, Meetings Administrator will liaise with the deputation.

Matters Arising and Responses:

Mr. O' Conaola responded to several queries raised during the meeting, beginning with an update on the Cuan na Loinge project:

- A Notice of Application has been submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála for approval of the proposed road improvement and coastal flood mitigation works at Cuan na Loinge, Ceantar na nOileán, Conamara, Co. Galway.
- The application was advertised in the Connacht Tribune and is being formally issued on 11th July, 2025.
- There will be a six-week public submission period, during which members of the public can inspect a hard copy of the application at the following locations:
 - An Coimisiún Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D01 V902
 - Galway County Council Offices, An Cheathrú Rua, Co. Galway
 - Galway County Council, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway
 - Online at consult.galway.ie

Additional updates:

- Hedge-Trimming at Junctions: The Tuam Municipal District manages the county-wide contract for hedge trimming at national road junctions. The Council will liaise with Tuam MD again this year to ensure value for money in Conamara and will explore the possibility of issuing the tender earlier.
- Slotted Drainage Kerbs in Moycullen:
 - A total of 3,500 metres of drainage kerbs have been put out to tender for jetting and suctioning.
 - A submission has been made to the National Roads Project Office (NRPO) for additional funding from TII.
 - The area office is not in favour of this drainage system due to higher maintenance costs, despite it being an approved TII detail.
- Vegetation Growth on Footpaths: The area office will liaise with Údarás na Gaeltachta to explore the use of Scheme workers to assist with this work.

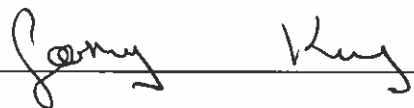
- Kerblin Growth on the R336:
 - The spraying of weedkiller over long stretches is no longer favoured due to biodiversity concerns.
 - However, alternative methods are more costly and less effective, presenting a challenge for ongoing maintenance.

Mr. Prendergast acknowledged Cllr. Mannion's concerns regarding beach parking and camper van management, particularly during the busy summer months. He advised that he would refer the matter to Mr. Finn, Director of Services with a view to having it raised at the relevant Strategic Policy Committee (SPC).

Regarding the safety concerns on the R336, Mr. Prendergast confirmed that Mr. Finn has liaised with both the Active Travel Team and the National Roads Project Office (NRPO) and is currently awaiting a detailed response on the matter which will be circulated to the members.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. King then formally concluded the meeting.

Críochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Signed:  _____

Date : _____