

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 8th November, 2024 at 11.00am in An Cromptán, An Cheathrú Rua.

CATHAORILEACH:

Cllr. T. Welby

BAILL:

Cllr. G. King, Comh. M. Leainde, Comh. M. Lee, Comh P. Mac An Iomaire, Cllr. E. Mannion, Comh. T. Ó Curraion, Comh, Cllr. N. Thomas, Cllr. S. Walsh

OIFIGH:

U. Finn, Director of Services; T. Prendergast Senior Engineer, T.J. Redmond, Senior Executive Engineer, D. Gibbons, Executive Engineer, D. O'Droighneain, Executive Technician; I. Martyn, Meetings Administrator/Administrative Officer; S. Murray, Staff Officer.

Údarás na Gaeltachta & University of Galway:

- Seán Ó Coisdealbha (Bainisteoir Réigiún an Iarthair, Údarás na Gaeltachta),
- John Caulfield (Stiúrthóir Cur i bhFeidhm Straitéise, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe),
- Rónán Mac Con Iomaire (Stiúrthóir Forbartha Réigiúnaí, Pobail & Pleanála Teanga, Údarás na Gaeltachta),
- Ultan Ó Fatharta (Feidhmeannach Forbartha, Údarás na Gaeltachta)
- Kevin Ó Flatharta (Bainisteoir Cumarsáid)
- Ava Ní Loingsigh (Údarás na Gaeltachta)
- Niamh Ní Dhubhaigh (Údarás na Gaeltachta)

Apologies:

1. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held on Friday 18th October 2024

On the **Proposal** of Cllr. G. King and **Seconded** by Comh T. Ó Curraion the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 18th October 2024 were agreed.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Budget Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held on Friday 18th October 2024

On the **Proposal** of Cllr. E. Mannion and **Seconded** by Comh T. Ó Curraion the Minutes of the Budget Meeting held on 18th October 2024 were agreed.

Matters Arising & Responses:

- Comh P. Mac An Iomaire enquired if a traffic counter has been installed on the approach roads to An Spidéal as there will be a new school and hotel in Baile Eamon, An Spidéal. Mr. Redmond replied that a traffic count has been completed and the figures are being analysed.
- Mr. Finn added that the speed limits review is on the agenda of the next SPC meeting being held on Monday 11th November 2024. The rural speed limit default has been commenced by the Minister and is due to commence on the 7th of February 2025. Associated speed limit signage will be changed from 80km to 60km and will be a big change to rural speed limits. Following on from this, a review of 30km zones in towns and villages will be on the agenda of the SPC.
- Cllr. G. King enquired regarding maintenance of the N59 Galway to Clifden.
- Mr. Finn clarified that Galway County Council is the roads authority and therefore is liable for maintenance of the N59, however, TII are the funding agency for such maintenance and 90% of funding comes from the TII and is allocated per kilometre of national roads in each county. There is some discretion on how to spend this allocation but advised that funding from TII next year is limited.
- Comh. T. Ó Curraion enquired about pedestrian crossings at Furbo and Bearna schools and if the pedestrian lights can be battery operated.
- Mr. Redmond confirmed that pedestrian crossing lights are connected to electricity mains, however a new standard provides for an option for a pedestrian crossing that is signage only and no longer have flashing lights at these crossings going forward.
- Mr. Finn advised that Active Travel funding is being sought for pedestrian crossings at Furbo and Bearna National Schools.
- Cllr. E. Mannion queried the responsibility for school flashing lights as some lights are not working.
- Mr. Redmond responded that there is a contractor in place to maintain the school flashing lights and to report any lights not working to the local area office.

- Cllr. E. Mannion enquired about provision for parking for campervans.
- Mr. Finn replied that this matter is on the programme in conjunction with the Environment SPC.
- Cllr. Welby enquired if Notice to Treat had to landowners and if it is the landowner's responsibility to maintain them on these lands.
- Mr. Finn replied that a Notice to Treat is an acquisition process, and until a Notice To Enter is served, it remains the responsibility of the landowner.

2 Údarás na Gaeltachta in collaboration with County Council Regeneration Team, in the development of a Town Centre First Cheathrú Rua.

Mr. Ó Fátharta, Údarás na Gaeltachta gave an overview on the development of a Town Centre First Plan for An Cheathrú Rua. The Town Centre First Policy aims to create vibrant, attractive town centres that serve cultural, economic, and recreational hubs.

The goal is to support future development, investment, and enhance the local community, tourism, and businesses in An Cheathrú Rua.

The Town Centre First plan focuses on a collaborative approach by forming a Town Team. This team, consisting of residents, business community representatives and external stakeholders, will lead development and act as 'local experts'.

This team works with the Galway County Regeneration Team and Údarás na Gaeltachta. The community plays a crucial role in identifying key issues and plans for their town, aiming to include a series of projects in the Town Centre First Plan. Once projects are identified, funding will be sought for them.

Mr. Ó Fátharta emphasised that the support of Members would be greatly valued and beneficial for the success of the Town Centre First Plan and invited questions on his presentation.

Cllr. Welby thanked Mr. Ó Fátharta for the presentation.

The members welcomed the Town Centre First Plan.

Matters Arising:

Comh O' Curraoin, Mac an Iomaire aide welcomed the initiation of a Plean Lár Baile for An Cheathrú Rua. They requested that consideration be given to the development of paths outside of An Cheathrú Rua village from the lake onwards to ensure safety of the community and visitors. They also highlighted that parking facilities should be provided adjacent to there.

Responses:

Mr. Ó Fátharta advised that there are defined areas where the plan will be applicable which will include Pedestrian Crossings and pathways.

Ms. Fox explained that when projects are identified, they can make an application for funding.

3 Coastal/Marine Projects Update

Mr. Prendergast presented an update on several coastal and marine projects within the Conamara Municipal District. Key highlights included the Inis Oírr Pier Redevelopment, which aims to add 135 meters of berthage and enhance storm protection, with construction expected to start in 2025 and completed by the end of 2026. The Inis Meáin Marine Infrastructure Improvement project is set to address accessibility issues for cargo ferry services, with a strategic assessment of options underway. Inishbofin, a Coastal Erosion and Flooding Risk Management (CEFRM) study has proposed transforming the former East Pier into a breakwater and installing gabion baskets along the coastline. Additionally, an annual budget of €389,500 was allocated for piers and harbour maintenance, with significant projects completed in 2024, including upgrades to Trá Teach Pier on Inis Oírr. The council also secured approximately €200,000 in funding for various coastal infrastructure projects, all of which were completed by the November deadline.

Matters Arising & Responses:

- Cllr. M. Leainde enquired on the status of Cill Éinne graveyard on Inis Mór, that is deteriorating due to coastal erosion.
 - It was confirmed that this project is being progressed by the Environment Section and an update will be provided.
- Cllr. E. Mannion questioned if North Beach is liable to sustain further storm damage.
 - Mr. Prendergast confirmed that an economic assessment was carried out on potential works at all study locations in accordance with OPW funding parameters. The works at Cloonamore Bay were recommended by the report as meeting the required BCR requirements. Maintenance of existing defences at North Beach and Southern Shore is the recommended mitigation in these locations.
- Comh. P. Mac An Iomaire enquired if works will progress in 2025.
 - In response it was confirmed that, pending OPW funding, a consultant will be appointed in 2025 to bring a project through the design and statutory permission phases. Thereafter a construction project could commence in 2026.

- Comh. T. Ó Curraion enquired if an increase of costs was accounted for as it is on an island.
- In response it was confirmed that costs would be greater for an island project of this nature given the remote location but this is not allowed for in the economic assessment model.
- Cllr. G. King asked if the total funding for Inishbofin works was €1.2m.
- Mr. Prendergast confirmed that this is the estimated cost of the recommended works. OPW funding will be sought in the first instance to facilitate the appointment of a consultant to bring the project through the design and statutory permission phases.
- Cllr. T. Welby enquired if there are any issues with the cost estimate for Inishbofin and if there is additional funding available for works on Islands. He also queried if Galway County Council receives an income from yacht mooring fees.
- In response it was confirmed that funding will be sought through the OPW Minor Works scheme. The final CFERM report will be the basis for the funding application. The OPW have been centrally involved in the development of that report and are aware of its recommendations. It was confirmed that Galway County Council do not get an income from yacht moorings.
- Cllr. T. Welby enquired regarding the definition and criteria for a habited island and specifically Turbet Island.
- Mr. Prendergast replied that there is a specific criteria and he will provide an update.

4. Bus Stop Enhancement Programme

Ms. Gibbons presented an update on the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme (BSEP) focusing on the Conamara area. The programme aims to improve bus stop infrastructure across County Galway, with a focus on enhancing accessibility and usability. Key initiatives include the installation of flagpoles, bus stops in verges, and bus shelters, particularly in rural areas. The programme is part of a broader effort to increase public transport usage, which saw a 24% rise in passenger numbers in 2023. Galway County Council is collaborating with the National Transport Authority (NTA) to deliver these improvements, ensuring consistency across all Transport for Ireland (TFI) bus stops. The council highlighted the importance of providing shelters at key locations and the challenges of implementing these upgrades in complex areas. The BSEP is expected to significantly enhance the public transport experience for residents and visitors alike.

There are approximately 120 bus stop locations in the Conamara MD, out of 430 across the County. These are categorised into primary settlement locations and rural locations. The criteria for bus shelter provision requires a bus service along the route at least 5 times a day, 5 days a week. If this criterion is not met, the location qualifies for a bus stop flagpole with hardstanding instead. Some locations are complex, with issues with road

safety, visibility, drainage, narrow road geometry, no verges etc. All locations require a road safety audit before approval is given by the NTA.

Ms. Gibbons reported that construction of the Maigh Cuillin bus stops are expected to begin in early December 2024.

Matters Arising & Responses:

- Cllr. E. Mannion asked why Letterfrack is a primary settlement location and if Ballyconneely will also receive a bus shelter. Both areas need bus shelters.
- Ms. Gibbons confirmed that Letterfrack is a primary settlement location due to its population and catchment & that Ballyconneely does not meet the criteria required to allow for a bus shelter to be installed.
- Cllr. N. Thomas asked if landowner permission was required for Maigh Cuillin bus shelters.
- Ms. Gibbons reported the Maigh Cuillin bus stops are going to construction early December and landowner permission was received for the Galway-bound bus stop.
- Comh P. Mac An Iomaire mentioned that bus shelters in An Spidéal and Bearna are crucial and if the locations have been identified.
- Ms. Gibbons replied that suitable locations were being identified for An Spidéal and Bearna.
- Cllr. M. Lee asked if Leitir Mealláin is included for a bus shelter.
- Ms. Gibbons replied that Leitir Mealláin is included in the programme. It does not meet the criteria for a bus shelter but will get a bus flagpole.
- Cllr. T. Welby enquired whether landowner permission was required for the potential site in Rosscahill. He highlighted safety concerns with blind spots and speeding traffic and there had been fatalities on the route in recent years.
- Ms. Gibbons noted that all locations require a road safety audit to be carried out.
- Cllr. E. Mannion asked if Notice of Motion funds could contribute towards bus shelters.
- Ms. Gibbons confirmed that Notice of Motion money can be used for bus shelters.
- Comh. T. Ó Curraoin expressed the view that bus shelters should be placed every mile and to consider smaller bus shelters similar to Scotland. He suggested that lay-byes be provided for the bus to pull in off the road.
- Ms. Gibbons agreed but can only provide the bus shelters if the location meets the criteria.

5. Municipal District of Conamara Directors Business

No items were raised by the Municipal District Director.

6. Municipal District of Conamara Cathaoirleach's Business

Cllr. Welby announced that Galway County Council won the Age Friendly Transport Award for the Cnoc (Indreabhán) and Casla Bus Shelters. The Annual National Age-Friendly Recognition

and Achievement Awards ceremony took place in the Crown Plaza Hotel in Dublin on 07th December 2024. He mentioned that Comh Ó'Curraoin, Comh Mac An Iomaire and Daithí Ó Cualainn provided funding for the project and he thanked the Carraroe Area Office staff and Roads Department staff for this great achievement.

Comh Mac An Iomaire and Comh O'Curraoin joined in the sentiments.

7. Votes of Sympathy / Congratulations.

Cllr. M. Lee congratulated the An Cheathrú Rua team on winning the Primary Junior Football championship title against Killererin at the Tuam Stadium recently.

8. A.O.B.

Cllr. T. Welby reminded the members that Sunday 10th November is the closing date for submissions on the Local Economic Community Plan which was presented at the previous meeting.

Cllr. E. Mannion highlighted that the National Broadband Plan has indicated that broadband cables will be overground through the scenic Inagh Valley which should be underground. Cllr. T. Welby advised Cllr. E. Mannion to raise this issue at the Plenary meeting.

Cllr. M. Leainde requested that the footpaths in An Cheathrú be upgraded.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on Monday 9th December 2024 at 10.00 a.m. in County Buildings.

Críochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Cllr. Tom Welby

Cathaoirleach

Conamara MD