

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Locha Riach
Municipal District of Loughrea**

**Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea
held in the Council Chamber, Aras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway,
on 14th July 2025.**

I LÁTHAIR:

Cathaoirleach

Cllr. P. Killilea

Baill:

Cllr's. M. Maher, G. Finnerty, J. McClearn, L. Harney

Remote:

Cllr's. G. Donohue, M. Kinane, I. Canning, D. Kelly, M. Regan

Oifigigh:

Ms. A. Dolan, A/Director of Services
Ms. V. Loughnane, Senior Planner
Mr. T. Prendergast, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. E. Gallagher, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. E. Murphy, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. M. Melody, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. B. Corcoran, Senior Executive Planner
Mr. M. Kerrigan, Executive Engineer
Ms. A. Galligan, Assistant Engineer
Ms. D. Feeney, Administrative Officer
Ms. M. McGann, Administrative Officer
Ms. S. Cleary, Staff Officer

Apologies:

Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. N. Kennedy,
Executive Engineer, Mr. D. O'Loughlin, Executive Engineer

Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Municipal District of Loughrea held on Monday 9th June 2025 **LMD2433**

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 9th June 2025 were **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Maher and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Harney.

Cllr. Donohue enquired if there is an update on how many landowners are affected by works on the Dunkellin river and if any have been contacted. She **PROPOSED** landowners be contacted, Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** the proposal. Cllr. Regan agreed, adding it is crucial to get agreement from landowners.

Cllr. Donohue referred to an update given by Ms. Paula Higgins to the Members at the June MD meeting on the Safe Routes to School Scheme. She stated Kinvara school did not apply under the scheme, and it is not possible for them to make an application now. She **PROPOSED** the Municipal

District issue correspondence to the Department of Transport (DOT) requesting the scheme remain open for schools, the Cathaoirleach **SECONDED** the proposal.

Cllr. Maher requested a map showing where planned works along the river will start and end in 2025 adding that landowners of affected land should be contacted to ascertain if the Council can gain access to the lands.

Cllr. McClearn stated the ongoing situation since September 2024 on the N65 at Heathlawn is unacceptable, he said he raised this matter a number of times as have other Councillors and there is no update. He **PROPOSED** a member of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) should attend the September Municipal District Meeting. Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** the proposal. Cllr. McClearn stated, he requested crash barriers be erected at the location on two occasions however TII had said this was unnecessary. Cllr. Canning stated Council employees inspect the location daily as bollards are regularly moved, he requested the cost to the Council, including overtime costs. Cllr. Regan stated, if the matter is not resolved by September, a Stop-Go system should be implemented. He continued, if TII don't do anything about it, the Council should.

**Part 8 Development of Extension to existing Burial Ground at Rinvile (LA
04/25) – Mike Melody, Senior Executive Engineer & Angela Galligan,
Assistant Engineer, Environment Section**

LMD2434

Mr. Melody advised the Members regarding the extension at Rinvile Burial Ground. He stated the current facility will reach its capacity within two years. He added, the proposed extension will take place on Council owned lands of approximately three acres providing up to 1734 single plots and 68 Urn Plots.

The Cathaoirleach and Members thanked Mr. Melody for his informative presentation.

Cllr. Kinane queried if consideration has been given to municipal district only usage at the location. She also raised matter of paths in existing burial grounds which was previously raised with Ms. Maria Flynn and added, additional funding should be sought for this. Mr. Melody responded, the burial ground is shared between the City and County Councils adding, the Galway City Council has also a planning application for a burial ground in the East of the City which could in time reduce the demands on Rinvile. He stated, in the short term the County Council will continue with current arrangements with the City. He added the Council did not get a submission on traffic issues. He stated, internal pathways will be upgraded.

Cllr. Donohue asked if burial plots or a wall will be provided for urns, Mr. Melody responded that an area for urn plots will be made available.

Cllr. Maher stated additional burial plots are essential for Kilconieron and Mount Pleasant Graveyards as soon as possible, he stated Mount Pleasant Graveyard is the largest in the County and is almost full. He requested a response be provided before September. Mr. Melody responded the Council is waiting for the Kilconieron parish committee to revert with a preferred location, he added the Council has met with the committee. Mr. Melody stated there are lands outside the boundary walls at Mount Pleasant Cemetery and has met with the owner of these

lands. Following on and for costing reasons he suggested that lands may need to be sought elsewhere for a cemetery and the Council will look to the community for suggestions.

Cllr. McClearn stated the Council need to enforce byelaws relating to cemeteries or introduce new byelaws. He referred to monuments being erected adding, the responsibility lies with the Local Authority. He asked that the Council review their graveyard byelaws or introduce new ones.

Cllr. Regan requested a survey of burial plot allocations in each cemetery and byelaws regarding height restrictions. He stated the Council should ensure those who erect high headstone should remove them. In response, Mr. Melody stated that communication was issued to memorial contractors stating the necessary requirements, i.e. height restriction of 5ft, he stated all caretakers have been issued with plans to issue to families. He added, in some cases, barriers have been erected at entrances to cemeteries.

Cllr. Kinane stated, the Members should have discussions regarding burial ground budgets at the budget meeting. She stated that a wall needs to be removed at Clarinbridge burial ground which would facilitate an additional 8/10 burial plots. She stated the cost of removing the wall is approximately €5,000 and added it is one of the projects she will be requesting a portion of additional LPT funding be set aside for. Mr. Melody welcomed the offer and in general stated that when it comes to approving funding for burial ground projects it is on a needs basis and not a cost benefit analysis.

Cllr. Finnerty requested a member of the Environment Team to visit the graveyard at Rakerin to review the layout of the footpaths. Mr. Melody responded, there is a small capital maintenance fund available to deal with such works. He stated, the cemetery would be added to the register, he clarified the budget is fully allocated this year, but the requirement would be logged. He stated, the Council also manage similar works with communities who contribute towards costs.

The members agreed to the Development of Extension to existing Burial Ground at Rinville.

Flooding Update – Enda Gallagher – Senior Executive Engineer, Roads & Transportation Section

LMD2435

On the Gort Lowlands Scheme, Mr Gallagher confirmed that the project team have not yet received feedback from the National Park and Wildlife Service (NPWS) on the material submitted for their consideration (scheme and turlough habitat shapefiles, hydrological report and ecological survey methodologies). The current holiday period is impacting on the availability of their key staff but a response to the submission is expected in the near future.

On the Oranmore to Kinvarra flood study (Storm Debie), Mr Gallagher confirmed that the consultants have met with every household and business owner that was known to have flooded during Storm Debie. Threshold surveys have been completed at each of the flooded properties and additional topographical surveys have been completed on the Oranmore Coast Road, Maree Road and Clarinbridge Business Park. Draft flood extent maps have been prepared and are expected to be finalised in the coming weeks. Additional properties have been identified in the maps, that appear to have been at flood risk during Storm Debie and follow-up surveys may be required. The consultants have commenced engagement with the suppliers of flood doors. Due to delays in procuring surveyors, acquiring the appropriate format of LiDAR mapping of the study area and

changes in the consultant's personnel, the final report for the study will not now be available until January 2026.

In response to queries from Cllr Kinane, Mr Gallagher confirmed that an interim report should be available in September. Mr Gallagher's contact details should be made available to any member of the public that is seeking an update. Mr Gallagher also confirmed that there will be no flood measures incorporated into the scheme proposals to prevent flooding of the Moneyduff lands (at Oranhill), recently acquired by the Council. The lands in question are within a SAC and any plans to develop the lands into an amenity area will need to consider environmental restrictions.

Mr Gallagher confirmed to the meeting that he would seek clarification from the Area Office on the proposed annual maintenance works on the Dunkellin Drainage District, he will email an update to the Councillors when he has received the information.

Applications for Planning Permission (via Part 8 process) - Cottages at St. Bridget's Road, Portumna – Eithne Murphy, Senior Executive Engineer

LMD2436

Ms. Murphy made a presentation to the members on the Part 8 Application at St. Bridget's Road, Portumna. She advised that the Development comprises a partial demolition of 11 detached dwelling houses and complete refurbishment and extensions to provide 11 x 2-bedroom single-storey detached dwellings along with external site works and services. She stated the units will have an overall internal area of 67 square metres. She advised, an AA Screening Assessment was carried out by Enviroplan Consulting Limited and determined that "no significant effects are expected on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the surrounding Natura 2000 sites, as a result of the proposed development in question, alone or in combination with the other plans and projects in the area, and therefore, a Natura Impact Statement is not required in this case." She added, an EIA Screening Assessment was also carried out by Enviroplan Consulting Limited and determined that "the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and that the preparation and submission of an environmental impact assessment report (EIAR) is not required in this case." Ms. Murphy thanked the Members for the opportunity to present the Part 8 and stated she is seeking their approval to proceed.

The Cathaoirleach and members thanked Ms. Murphy for her presentation adding it is a very welcome development.

Cllr. Kelly enquired if footpaths outside the properties would be upgraded to ensure they are suitable for use by elderly persons and those who use wheelchairs. Ms. Murphy stated the footpaths outside the property will be 'made good.'

Cllr. Canning stated the development is badly needed and sought a timeline on completion. Ms. Murphy stated the development is scheduled to go to tender in September and it is hoped the development should be completed within 14 to 18 months. In response to Cllr. Canning's query, Ms. Murphy responded elderly members of the community will benefit from the development. In response to a further query from Cllr. Canning she responded, the original plan was to knock the existing buildings however having regard to retaining the character of the area, the climate change action plan, assessments completed by architects and engineers, refurbishment was pursued as

opposed to demolition. She added, project funding was being pursued through Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) and the Council has had to reapply for funding.

In response to a query raised by Cllr. Finnerty, Ms. Murphy stated 8 out of 11 properties were vacant and the others have been recently acquired. She advised 3 tenants will be moved to alternative accommodation when works commence.

Cllr. Maher requested a costing for the development and a timeframe for completion. He enquired if the Council could apply for the €70,000 retrofit grant to renovate the properties.

Cllr. McClearn queried the cost of refurbishment against new builds. He complimented the work done by the Council adding the properties will be very welcome. He enquired if issues such as dampness have been addressed due to refurbishment of old buildings. Ms. Murphy advised she will revert regarding the cost of renovation compared to new build.

Cllr. Donohue enquired if the refurbishment is value for money, she stated it is good news to see new homes being made available, she enquired regarding the rating of the properties. Ms. Murphy stated the properties will be brought to A3 standard.

Cllr. Harney enquired regarding the heating systems for the properties and what is proposed for the green area behind the property. Ms. Murphy stated, the properties will be damp-proofed and insulated.

Cllr. McClearn **PROPOSED** the Part 8 Application at St. Bridget's Road, Portumna and requested a figure for the development. Cllr. Canning **SECONDED** the Part 8. The members Agreed.

Ms. Murphy thanked the members for approving the Part 8. She requested a further meeting on 29th July to discuss a residential development at St. Joseph's Road, Portumna comprising 38 units. She added, the development is available on Consult.ie for perusal.

The members agreed to have a Special Meeting of the Loughrea MD on 29th July at 11.00 am which will be a hybrid meeting.

Cathaoirleach Business

LMD2437

Cllr. Maher stated there is still an issue with the traffic lights at the Westbridge, Loughrea and stated one of the in-ground loops was cut resulting in only 5 cars getting through the junction. Ms. Dolan read aloud an email response issued to the members by Mr. Haugh regarding traffic lights at the Westbridge.

Cllr. Maher sought an update on speed cameras. The Cathaoirleach responded Mr. Haugh provided an email response to the members on these matters.

Cllr. Harney requested maps of Renville Park, Oranmore

Cllr. Finnerty stated a lot of people are dissatisfied with the quality of hedge cutting works in the Municipal District (MD). He referred to contracts awarded recently for hedge cutting on National

and Regional roads and also made reference to a request from Mr. Haugh for NOM allocations for hedge cutting.

Cllr. Finnerty **PROPOSED** that hedge cutting in Loughrea commence on 1st September 2025 and concludes on 31st December 2025. The €3,000 request for same be honoured by all ten Councillors and that €1,500 of same be held until a later date until Councillors are satisfied with progress of works. This request was on Safety Grounds as, he stated, there is massive growth this year and Councillors are not happy with works over the last number of years. Cllr. Maher **SECONDED** the proposal. The Cathaoirleach and Members agreed with the proposal.

Cllr. Kinane stated she would like clarity on motion regarding hedge cutting for which members allocated €30,000 towards hedge cutting. She referred to another local authority who provides €50 per kilometre to landowners who apply under the scheme to cut hedges along their land. Cllr. Donohue stated the scheme is in place in Cork County Council, she said it had been raised at a Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) meeting approximately 6 years ago. She stated the matter would need to be included as an item for discussion at a Roads SPC meeting.

Cllr. McClearn stated, there are very restrictive practices in hedge cutting. He stated the same people cut hedges every year adding, other persons have the machinery but we don't appear to be able to facilitate them.

Cllr. McClearn stated he raised the issue previously regarding the extension of the campervan park in Portumna and enquired if someone from enterprise can come and talk to the Members. Ms. Dolan stated, the cost of running the campervan park is greater than the income generated, she stated, at present it is not on the table to extend the Portumna Campervan Park.

Cllr. McClearn stated he does not agree as, a lot of people do not pay for the facility as they cannot access it. He stated the caretaker for the campervan park engages in other works in Portumna and his wages should not be solely charged to the campervan park. He **PROPOSED** that someone attends the September meeting to discuss the campervan park. Ms. Dolan stated she will raise the issue with Mr. Haugh. Cllr. Canning agreed with Cllr. McClearn stating that business generated at the campervan park is the life blood of Portumna and **SECONDED** Cllr. McClearn's proposal to have a presentation at the next MD meeting.

Cllr. McClearn stated the new Courthouse in Portumna is locked and enquired when it will be open. Ms. Dolan responded the Courthouse is not open at present but can be opened by appointment. She added, when staff are in situ the Courthouse will be open.

Cllr. Kinane stated Oranmore-Maree Coastal Search Unit are looking for a home for the search unit, she stated she believes there is an opportunity for a handover of a piece of land or outdoor building at Renville Park. She enquired if a Councillor could put in a submission. She stated she intends to discuss further this matter at the September meeting.

Cllr. Kinane stated to Mr. Prendergast, a submission was put in two years ago regarding speed reductions in the County, she added that the matter was to be brought before the members at an MD meeting for discussion. She requested this item be included in the September meeting stating

it is a piece of work that needs to be looked at now. She raised concerns regarding road safety in Kilcolgan village.

Cllr. Finnerty raised safety concerns resulting from motorists overtaking between Hennelly's Cross to Gullanes. He **PROPOSED**, where a continuous white line exists from Fahy Cross, Raherin to Gullanes Service Station, Cloone, signs be erected stating 'Please Do Not Overtake.' The Cathaoirleach **SECONDED** the proposal.

AOB

LMD2438

Ms. Loughnane provided the members with a copy of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held at the Loughrea Council Offices on 6th May 2025 at 10.00 am to consider the Chief Executive's report on submissions received on the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 and subsequently to consider the proposal to make, amend or revoke the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031.

Ms. Loughnane stated there was a number of material alterations (MA's) to the plan. She stated there were 11 submissions to the MA's that went on public display, included in that, was the submission from the Office of Planning Regulator (OPR). She stated the closing date for submissions and observations was 20th June 2025. She advised the members, she was present today to adopt the Minutes. She stated the members will have an opportunity at a meeting to be agreed in order to consider the Chief Executive's (CE's) Report on the Material Alterations and adopt the Gort Local Area Plan (LAP) in due course.

She stated at a Special Meeting on 29th July 2025 the planning team will go through the CE Report on the Gort Local Area Plan for adoption with it coming into effect if adopted on the 29th July in early September 2025. Ms. Loughnane stated, a workshop can be arranged for next week if requested by the Members.

The Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held at the Loughrea Council Offices on 6th May 2025 at 10.00 am to consider the Chief Executive's report on submissions received on the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 and subsequently consider the proposal to make, amend or revoke the Gort Local Area Plan 2025-2031 were **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Finnerty and **SECONDED** by The Cathaoirleach and agreed by Members.

Cllr. Donohue enquired if the Section 28 Review by Minister Browne will affect all Development plans and the Area Plans, Ms. Loughnane responded it is possible but it is dependent on the content of the circular. She stated, the Minister will issue new regulations and if there is an increase in population, how the Council is required to use the allocation. She stated, LAPs become urban area plans which will be incorporated into any future County Development Plans.

Ms. Loughnane concluded by thanking the Members and stated she will be available on 29th July to attend a special meeting to go through the CE Report on the Gort Area Plan.

Motion:

I, Cllr McClearn **PROPOSE** and Cllr Kelly **SECONDS** the motion that the Municipal District Members of Loughrea approve allocation of €2,500 of Local Property Tax (LPT) discretionary funds to cover 10% of the cost of a feasibility study for the development of a swimming pool in Loughrea. The community of Loughrea has long expressed a need for enhanced recreational facilities, particularly a swimming pool, which would serve as a valuable resource for residents of all ages. A feasibility study is a critical first step in assessing the viability, potential locations, costs, and benefits of such a project.

The Motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Maher and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Killilea.

Cllr. Maher stated he welcomes the motion and it is vital for Loughrea, and everyone will support this motion. He complemented Ms. Loughnane, Mr. Corcoran and the Planning staff on the Gort LAP stating, it is a great opportunity for people in Gort to say how they would like the plan.

Cllr. Kinane sought clarification on the correct procedure for the utilization of additional LPT funding. She stated, she understood it was necessary to submit a community application. She added, she has an application from Clarinbridge and she understood she would have to bring that forward in September. The Cathaoirleach stated he would seek clarification on the procedure. Ms. McGann stated the procedure must be agreed by the Directors, but an application form has been drafted and is awaiting approval.

In response to Cllr. Kinane, the Cathaoirleach stated that the Motion put before the meeting today will be required to have the application form submitted.

Expressions of Sympathy were issued by The Cathaoirleach and Members to families of Michael Moran (RIP), Brian Tuohy (RIP) and Brendan Donnellon (RIP).

The meeting concluded at 1.07 p.m.

CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN



Cathaoirleach

08th September, 2025

Date