

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

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

**Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea
held in the Council Chamber, Loughrea on 10th March 2025**

I LATHAIR:

Leas-Cathaoirleach

Cllr. G. Donohue

Baill:

Cllr's. M. Maher, G. Finnerty, D. Kelly, P. Killilea, I. Canning

Remote:

Cllr. J. McClearn

Oifigigh:

Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. E. Gallagher, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. P. Higgins, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. N. Kennedy, Executive Engineer
Mr. D. O'Loughlin, Executive Engineer
Ms. D. Feeney, Administrative Officer
Ms. S. Cleary, Staff Officer
Ms. C. Kennedy, Clerical Officer

Apologies:

Cllr. M. Kinane
Ms. Eileen Ruane, Director of Services
Ms. Rachel Lowe, Senior Engineer

**Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of
Loughrea held in the Council Chamber, Galway County Council on
10th February 2025**

LMD2412

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 10th February 2025 were **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Kelly, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty and agreed and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

In response to Cllr. Kelly's request for an update on the provision of ramps at Abbey Street, Mr. Haugh stated he expects to receive a costing for the works on 27th March as these works have been included in the 2025 overlay contract for the MD, so as to deliver best value for money. He advised that these works would only proceed once Cllr. Kelly, or others, had allocated the required Notion of Motion (NOM) funding for the works. Mr. Haugh added, from a pedestrian and road safety perspective the provision of a footpath is the much-preferred option, and, in his opinion, ramps are not the solution. He stated, at a recent meeting, unfortunately the residents and local businesses had made it very clear that they were unwilling to sacrifice the required car parking spaces to deliver a footway and on this basis ramps, subject to funding, would be considered. He also stated that in compliance with TII guidance ramps must be located 100 metres apart. Cllr. Maher stated, he has raised concerns regarding pedestrian safety at Abbey Street for 20 years and was advised

speed ramps are not the safest solution. He stated, if NOM funding is utilised for speed ramps in Abbey Street, Councillors will be inundated with requests for NOM funding for these works in other areas. He stated, if speed ramps are not the solution, speed within Loughrea Town should be reduced to 30 kph. He also queried why he had not been informed of a public meeting to discuss this issue. The Leas-Cathaoirleach enquired in relation to public consultation. Mr. Haugh advised that it wasn't a public meeting but that he met with Cllr. Kelly on Abbey Street with the intention of speaking to one or two residents but over twenty residents attended. He stated that prior to implementation of any traffic calming measure the agreement of the majority of the residents and businesses on the street would be sought and that he had clarified this to Councillor Kelly in his allocation of NOM response.

Cllr. Canning stated he is delighted to hear ramps can now be installed at locations and he understood previously this was not an option. He stated, he is aware of areas in which ramps should be located, such as the swim area in Portumna as a priority. Mr Haugh advised that traffic calming measures can take various formats but must be appropriate to the location, funded and consider other road users e.g. ambulances etc.

Cllr. Canning referred to speed surveys carried on roads, he enquired of the benefits and improvements accruing from them and asked if they lead to positive changes. Mr. Haugh responded the information generated is communicated to An Garda Síochána and used as the basis for funding requests to the various Department. Cllr. Maher stated unless a speed van is in an area in which speeding occurs, and unless people who breach speed limit regulations are hit in the pocket, nothing will happen. He added An Garda Síochána should be present at locations where speeding occurs and be equipped with speed detection devices.

Cllr. Maher thanked the MD staff for works completed at King's Entry, Main Street and the Lake Road, Loughrea on foot of his request.

Cllr. Kelly requested an update on the repair of the road and bridge at Heathlawn on the N65 and the removal of temporary traffic lights. Mr. Haugh responded a meeting was held on site between Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the National Roads Project Office (NRPO) and discussions regarding overlay works, costings and funding of the works have taken place. He referred to an email update he issued to the members earlier this morning. Cllr. Canning stated, the bridge needs to be repaired as a priority as people are experiencing significant delays at this location daily.

Cllr. McClearn stated, TII should not be permitted to control works at Heathlawn, he added, it is a national route which should be kept open as it is so busy. He stated local families have experienced difficulties in achieving planning permission along this route due to safety concerns, yet temporary traffic management was allowed to stay in place for months. He added, if this was a regional route, immense pressure would be put on Galway County Council to source funding to repair the road.

Cllr. McClearn stated people are extremely frustrated due to delays experienced and added there is no timeline for when repairs will be completed. He added he has no confidence in TII dealing with this as it is not a priority, which is a disgrace.

In response to Cllr. Finnerty, Mr. Haugh responded, it wasn't intended to provide an update on the Roads Programme at today's Municipal District (MD) meeting as funding has not issued from TII as of yet. He advised a Roads Programme meeting is scheduled to take place in April. Mr. Haugh stated, recently announced additional funding enabled the inclusion of additional roads on the

Roads Programme and all Councillors have been made aware of the changes. Cllr. Finnerty stated that roads are in very poor condition and the Council should acquire additional patching units.

Cllr. Canning sought an update on Woodpark. Mr. Haugh stated that the vehicle and speed survey was arranged, and the results would issue to all Councillors in due course.

Update on The Community Transport Study for Kinvara

LMD2413

Ms. Higgins provided the members with an update on the Community Transport Study for Kinvara. She advised that the study is the first of its kind nationally and, while it is not a statutory document, it is not lightweight Study. She highlighted the importance of it being a strategic and meaningful document. She added, the NTA Land Use and Planning team has advised the completion of an environment Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report which would strengthen the document. She stated it is hoped the Study will go on public display next month on consult.ie and copies will be available in the local area office for inspection. Ms. Higgins requested the members to publish it on their social media also.

She stated, the National Transport Agency (NTA) and TII have expressed their satisfaction overall with the Study adding, it addresses submissions and local issues highlighted. She added, the document will focus on schools and tourism in the town. She stressed, one piece that emerged from the study was to make the area safer for pedestrians to include pedestrian crossing measures. Ms. Higgins stated funding is always a challenge and efforts will be made to ringfence funding for next year.

Cllr. Maher enquired if funding will be available for Active Travel projects in Loughrea, such as Caheronaun. Ms. Higgins responded the Active Travel team is working towards a Design Scheme proposal for Loughrea and securing funding for other applications.

In response to a query from Cllr. Canning, Ms. Higgins responded the NTA will cover the costs of providing the AA Screening Report for the Community Transport Study. She stated, it makes the study more robust, and the cost is minimal in the context of the overall project.

Responding to Cllr. Donohue, Ms. Higgins advised it is hoped that funding will be considered for the progression of the Pedestrian Crossing in Portumna and the Glenbrack Road in Gort.

Ms. Higgins advised that under the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, there are 4 schools in the Loughrea MD that will be worked in SRTS Round 2, with an additional 4 schools included in SRTS Round 3.

Ms. Higgins stated that site visits to the SRTS schools have been taking place where school locations were being assessed during school opening and closing times. She stated Bride Street in Loughrea is one of the Walking and Cycling routes identified in the Loughrea Local Transport Plan and is currently under consideration and assessment. A proposal for Loughrea Town will be presented to the NTA for consideration in the coming weeks.

In response to Cllr. Kelly's query regarding funding for the pedestrian crossing at Portumna, Ms. Higgins responded that the NTA have allowed us progress work on the project and that a Grant

Funding Application has been submitted to the NTA Active Travel Investment team. It was noted that there is no specific funding allocation for this in 2025,

The Leas-Cathaoirleach and Members thanked Ms. Higgins for her informative presentation.

Flooding Update

LMD2414

Mr. Gallagher updated the meeting as follows:

An initial meeting was held in mid-January between the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) and the flood relief project team where the project team presented a project overview. One of the main issues raised by the project team was the option to include flow control structures on the channels. The project team were asked to provide NPWS with a formatted hydrological report.

A follow up meeting was held the end of February at which the project team presented the requested hydrological report to NPWS. Following the meeting and further to discussions in the meeting, NPWS has requested details on the ecological surveys used to establish upper turlough habit levels, shapefiles (mapping information) on the upper habitat levels and shapefiles of the proposed scheme outline.

Feedback from NPWS is expected in the next fortnight. This level of engagement with NPWS has been very welcomed by the project team.

The agronomist on the project has held site meetings with several landowners on the scheme in the last month, to discuss possible locations for the deposition of material generated by the scheme.

On the Oranmore to Kinvarra, Storm Debie project, topographical surveys and surveys of debris lines and finished floor levels of houses at flood risk were undertaken last week. The surveys lasted the entire week, and the survey data will be made available to the consultant this week.

ClIr Donohue asked Mr. Gallagher if the South Galway Flood Relief Committee were being kept updated. Mr. Gallagher said he kept David Murray from the Committee updated.

Cathaoirleach's Business

LMD2415

ClIr. Donohue read aloud to the members an update on the Galway to Athlone Cycleway provided by Mr. Uinsinn Finn, Director of Service. She expressed her disappointment with the update provided.

ClIr. Maher stated, the Director was requested to attend the MD meeting at the previous MD meeting. He stated, landowners have not been approached in six months and he cannot understand how it can be said that the scheme is continuing to progress with liaising with landowners. He stressed, nobody wants this to go ahead, except for Westmeath County Council.

Cllr. McClearn stated, he set out in favour of the cycleway but now finds it difficult to have confidence in it, he asked what is happening with it and stated, farmers are being treated poorly. Cllr. Kelly agreed with Cllr. McClearn regarding the treatment of farmers and asked why millions of euros are being put into a Cycleway when there are difficulties in funding for repairing potholes.

Cllr. Donohue stated she was contacted by a landowner last week who was approached regarding an early sign-up pay deal, she stated the landowner hasn't heard from anyone in over two years. She stated a lot of people, especially young couples, are having sleepless nights over this. She requested an update on works completed and costs associated with the scheme. She requested that the Project Manager to attend the April meeting.

Cllr. Maher sought clarification on what works are taking place.

Mr. Haugh stated, Mr. Finn has confirmed works are continuing and a Project Manager will attend the meeting. Cllr. Canning requested details of what works are taking place.

The members put forward a motion requesting clarification on works going forward and, requested the attendance of a member of the Cycleway Team to attend the next meeting. Cllr. Maher stated an update should be given at every second MD meeting.

This motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Donohue and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning.

In response to Cllr. Finnerty's query, Mr. Haugh responded all queries relating to cemeteries can be addressed to Mr. Mike Melody, Senior Executive Engineer.

The Leas-Cathaoirleach extended her good wishes to Ms. Agnes Geoghegan who recently retired from Galway County Council and thanked her for her dedicated service.

Cllr. Maher invited the Members to attend the Loughrea St. Patrick's Day Parade which commences at 1.00 pm.

CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN

Martina Kinane

CLLR MARTINA KINANE

14/4/25

DATE

Motion: Cllr. Gerry Finnerty and Cllr. Ivan Canning

We request Galway County Council to ask the ESB for the total cost of repairs to the ESB Network and all other associated works caused by Storm Éowyn. We also request that Galway County Council ask Uisce Éireann for a breakdown of their operational costs associated with Storm Eowyn.

The Leas-Cathaoirleach read aloud the response issued by Ms. Denise Feeney, Administrative Officer as follows; Uisce Éireann and the ESB are currently unable to provide details on the cost of the damage caused by Storm Éwoyn. According to the Head of Finance, it is still too early to determine the full extent of the damage. However, a preliminary estimate puts the cost at €4,939,448.

The Leas-Cathaoirleach stated there is still a lot of poles down and poles damaged around the county following storm Éowyn.

Cllr. Canning enquired of the cost if Local Authority staff were responsible for cutting ash die-back trees, topping trees and hedges on every road together. He added, he is amazed the cost of works carried out by ESB and Uisce Éireann are only €5,000,000. The Leas-Cathaoirleach stated if trees were maintained, repairs after Storm Éowyn would not have been such a mammoth task. She stated, she wrote to Minister Hayden who advised the tree and hedge maintenance responsibility falls to landowners. Cllr. Killilea stated, the Minister for Transport will not provide grant aid for tree and hedge maintenance. The Leas-Cathaoirleach urged members to write to their parties as the 1993 Roads Act is not fit for purpose.

Cllr. Finnerty referred to a constituent whose roof came down and was told by the ESB that they would cut the power to enable him to remove the fallen tree himself. He added, people were without power for two weeks. He continued, it was a waste of time contacting ESB and Eir.

Expressions of Sympathy

The Leas-Cathaoirleach expressed her sympathy to Mr. Mattie McMahon, General Services Supervisor in the Gort/Kinvvara area on the death of his mother. Sympathies were extended to the family by the Members.

The Leas-Cathaoirleach expressed her sympathy to Ms. Agnes Geoghegan on the death of her brother-in-law. Sympathies were extended to the family by the Members.