

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 12th September 2025 at 10.00pm in the Council Chamber.

I LATHAIR:

CATHAORILEACH: Cllr. G King

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

OIFIGH: U Finn, DOS, I. Martyn Meetings Administrator, T. Prendergast, S.E., D. Troy A/S.E. P. Higgins S.E.E., T.J. Redmond. A/S.E.E. N O'Conaola, E.E., S. Casey A.S.O.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Welby

A Deputation was received from Na Forbacha Community Group ahead of the Meeting.

Tim Folan, Mary Hensey and Sheila Conneely were in attendance.

The Deputation gave a presentation regarding a Pathway in Cuisméigimór, Furbo.

1. MD Chains Of Office:

On the **Proposal** of Mr. Finn the MD chain of office was presented to Cathaoirleach King.

Cathaoirleach King welcomed the honour of the Chain for the Cathaoirleach of Conamara Municipal District.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held on Friday 11th July 2025:

On the **Proposal** of Cllr. Walsh and **Seconded** by Cllr Leainde the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Conamara Municipal District held on Friday 11th July 2025 were agreed.

Matters Arising:

Cllr. Mannion requested a Special Meeting to be held regarding Beaches to plan ahead for the summer programme.

3. Declaration of road to be a public road:

Road commencing at junction with L-51026 (E = 470,191; N = 762,350) in the townland of Tooreena and extending North for a distance of 400 metres in the townland of Tooreena and finishing at (E = 470,141; N = 762,741) in the townland of Tooreena.

The above was **Proposed** by Cathaoirleach King, and **Seconded** by Cllr. Walsh.

4. Active Travel Update:

Ms. Higgins gave a presentation on Active Travel. She explained that Active Travel refers to functional travel for daily commutes, such as:

- Walking
- Wheeling (e.g. cycling, scooting, wheelchair use) to and from school, work, shops, and other everyday destinations.

Design Standards Used by the Active Travel Team

The team adheres to three key design standards:

1. **Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)**
2. **Cycle Design Manual (CDM)**

3. Safe Routes to School Design Guidelines

She shared with members the 2025 Budget Breakdown – NTA Active Travel Allocations. For 2025, the National Transport Authority (NTA) allocated €2.1 million to Galway County Council.

She provided an update on the 2025 Active Travel Programme, specifically focusing on the schools involved in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) scheme and their current progress stages.

Ms. Higgins concluded her presentation by inviting questions from the Members, opening the floor for discussion and feedback.

Matters Arising and Responses:

- Cllr. Mannion sought clarification regarding the cost of the Active Travel works at Scoil Bhaile Nua, Moycullen, noting that the project is operating very efficiently. She commended the project's innovative approach, observing that it had led to a noticeable reduction in vehicle speeds, which she described as a positive outcome for road safety in the area. She expressed concern that schools in North Conamara are currently excluded from the Safe Routes to School scheme, despite evident need. She highlighted Roundstone National School, stating that the school is situated along an extremely busy route and is in urgent need of a pedestrian crossing to ensure the safety of pupils and the wider community.
- Cllr. Mannion further noted that the Safe Routes to School programme appears to be closed to new applicants, which she felt was a significant barrier to addressing safety concerns in underserved areas. She voiced broader concerns regarding pedestrian safety, particularly in relation to playgrounds, road crossings, and the availability of footpaths, and urged that these issues be given due consideration in future planning and funding allocations.
- Comh. Ó Curraoin expressed his delight at the recent installation of bus shelters and stops in the villages of Bearna and An Spideál. While acknowledging that there had been some initial challenges with site selection, he emphasized that the shelters were greatly welcomed by the local communities. He highlighted the importance of bus shelters for commuters, particularly in rural areas where public transport infrastructure is limited and stated his desire to see additional shelters installed throughout the Conamara region.

- Comh. Ó Curraoin also took the opportunity to commend Ms. Higgins on her presentation and expressed his appreciation for the ongoing work of the Active Travel Team, noting the positive impact their initiatives are having on local transport and safety.
- Cllr. Thomas requested further information regarding the Community Transport Study, specifically enquiring regarding what the study entailed and the outcomes expected. He noted that there are gaps in local link services, particularly in rural areas, which are not adequately served by existing public transport options. He proposed the development of a dedicated bus lane from Moycullen to Killeen House, suggesting that such infrastructure would significantly enhance connectivity and commuter safety along that route. Cllr. Thomas expressed interest in receiving more detailed insights into the scope and objectives of the transport study, particularly in relation to how it might address the transport needs of rural communities.
- Ms. Higgins responded to Cllr Mannion's enquiry regarding Scoil Bhaile Nua, Moycullen, confirming that a total of €90,000 had been spent on the project to date, with an additional €5,000 allocated for signage upgrades which are to be completed. She explained that participation in the Safe Routes to School scheme requires assessment and approval by both An Taisce and the National Transport Infrastructure (NTI). She outlined the current status of both South Conamara schools currently being worked as part of Safe Routes To School Round2.
- In response to comments regarding public transport infrastructure, she confirmed that the provision of further bus shelters is on the agenda for future planning.
- Regarding the Community Transport Study for Maigh Cuillin, Ms. Higgins stated that the study, once a draft is available, will be made available to the public for review. She added that the study would be further examined to identify local transport needs, with a view to informing future service improvements.
- Comh. Mac an Iomaire welcomed the installation of bus shelters in Bearna and An Spideál, describing them as a valuable addition to the community. He acknowledged the positive impact of these facilities, particularly for regular commuters. However, he noted the absence of physical timetables at the bus stops and suggested that this issue be addressed, especially in consideration of the older population, who may not have access to digital scheduling tools.
- Comh. Mac an Iomaire also enquired about the typical timeframe required for the Safe Routes to School scheme, from initial planning through to full completion, seeking clarity on the duration and process involved.

- Cllr. Lee expressed his satisfaction with the progress made on the installation of bus shelters, noting that the recent developments were very welcome. However, he emphasized that the area remains in need of additional shelters to adequately serve the commuting public.

He queried whether collaboration with Údarás na Gaeltachta might facilitate greater access to funding, suggesting that their involvement could strengthen future proposals and support infrastructure expansion.

- Cllr. Lee also reiterated the critical importance of pedestrian crossings at all schools, citing the high volume of traffic in the Conamara region as a growing concern. He stressed that such safety measures are now essential to protect schoolchildren and pedestrians and should be prioritized in future planning.
- Ms. Higgins welcomed the positive feedback received from members and expressed her appreciation for the continued support of the Active Travel initiatives. She informed the Council that plans for the expansion of bus shelter infrastructure had progressed, with the potential for five additional shelters to be installed, subject to the availability of funding in Gaeltacht areas in Co. Galway.
- In response to concerns raised regarding the absence of physical timetables at existing bus shelters, Ms. Higgins confirmed that she would follow up on this matter and explore options to improve accessibility for all users and particularly for older members of the community. She assured that she would keep the Council informed as planning submissions are progressed and reviewed.

5. Municipal District of Conamara Director's Business:

Mr. Finn informed the members that public consultation on the Oughterard Footbridge had been completed and period for submission closed. It was considered positive in that the key landowners did not object to the CPO and it is hoped that the issues raised in the other submissions can be mitigated.

In relation to a query regarding access to beaches and associated infrastructure, Mr. Finn noted that this matter requires further consideration regarding the appropriate action and clarified that it falls across a number of Directorates including Tourism and Environment and a number of Municipal Districts not just Conamara. He advised the members that he would raise the issue at the Management meeting for further discussion.

Mr. Finn, informed the members that a potential deputation to France is currently under consideration. He reminded members of the delegation from France that visited Clifden and the Conamara Greenway in June 2024. Mr. Finn advised that the Mayors of the local authorities have extended an invitation to visit their region and learn from their similar

experience in developing a tourism greenway with proposed travel dates in November, February, or March. He further clarified that the French Mayors' have offered to cover accommodation and TII will cover travel costs. It will be a valuable opportunity to share knowledge and experience and work in collaboration.

Once more details are available and proposed dates we will seek 2 or 3 nominations from the Conamara MD members whom are interested in the delegation trip.

Matters Arising and Responses:

Comh. Ó Curraoin enquired if pedestrian crossings would be installed at all schools in the future, and if these crossings would be located in close proximity to bus shelters to enhance safety.

Cllr. Mannion highlighted the importance of improving safety measures and facilities at local beaches. She emphasized the urgent need for adequate parking and broader infrastructural enhancements to support public use and tourism.

Cathaoirleach King concurred with Cllr. Mannion's remarks, acknowledging the necessity for improvements at beach locations and supporting the call for enhanced amenities and safety provisions.

6. Municipal District of Conamara Cathaoirleach's Business:

Cathaoirleach King stated that he had nothing to add under Cathaoirleach's Business.

7. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations:

All the members expressed their heartfelt condolences to Cllr. Walsh on the loss of his uncle Eamon King.

Sympathies were extended to the families of the late Richard McDonagh, Kilkerrin, and Daniel Salmon, Renville, on their recent sad passing.

Comh. Mac an Iomaire extended his congratulations to the Clifden Committee on the successful organisation of the Clifden Pony Show, noting that this was the first time the event had been co-ordinated by a locally based committee. He commended their efforts and acknowledged the significance of the achievement for the community.

8. **AQB:**

Comh. Mac an Iomaire expressed concern regarding progress on Cul na Loinge and the impact of high tides leaving the community marooned.

Mr. Ó Conaola, replied that an application had been submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála on 14th July and he noted that the volume of submissions received appeared to be positive.

Cllr. Mannion raised the issue regarding the withdrawal of the provision of hot meals in schools in North Conamara. She **Proposed a Motion** to write to the Minister for Social Protection, Dara Callery requesting that the provision of hot meals be restored in schools in North Conamara.

The proposal was **Seconded** by Comh. Mac an Iomaire, who supported the need for a review to ensure broader inclusion.

The **Motion** was Agreed.

Mr. Finn informed the members of recent staff changes within the department. He advised that Mr. Redmond would be leaving his current role and moving to Senior Executive Engineer in Active Travel Unit and Mr. Ó Conaola would be replacing him as A/S.E.E. for the Connamara Area

All the members expressed their congratulations to Mr. Redmond, noting that it had been a pleasure working with him. His approachable and helpful manner was widely acknowledged, and Cllr. Mannion remarked that he would be a significant loss to both the Conamara region and the Clifden office.

Mr. Ó Conaola was warmly welcomed to his new role by all present, and best wishes were extended to both Mr. Redmond and Mr. Ó Conaola in their respective future endeavours.

Conclusion:

Constructive discussions on a range of local issues, including school safety, coastal safety, and social supports. The Cathaoirleach thanked all present for their participation and closed the meeting.

The next Meeting of Conamara MD will take place on ***Friday 10th October at 2.00pm.***

Cathaoirleach King then formally concluded the meeting.

Críochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Signed:

Sony King

Date :

28/11/25
