

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL
Monday, 25th March 2024 at 11.00am

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Cathaoirleach Carroll
Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Comh./Cllr. T Broderick, J. Byrne, I. Canning, D. Collins, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, G. Cronnelly, D. Ó Cualáin, J. Cuddy, S. Curley, T. Ó Curraoin, A. Dolan, G. Donohue, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, S. Herterich Quinn, M. Hoade, P. Keaveney, D. Kelly, M. Kinane, G. King, P. Mac an Iomaire, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, K. McHugh Farag, A. McKinstry, PJ. Murphy, Dr. E. Francis Parsons, A. Reddington, P. Roche, J. Sheridan, N. Thomas, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

Baill ar líne: Comh./Cllr. J. Charity, C. Keaveney, D. Killilea, M. Maher.

Oifigh: Mr. L. Conneally, Chief Executive, Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Mr. M. Owens, Director of Services, Mr. D. Pender, Director of Services, Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services, Ms. J. Brann, A/Director of Services, Mr. U. Finn, Director of Services, Ms. K. O'Connor, Head of Finance, Ms. L. Keady, Meetings Administrator, Ms. M. McGann, Administrative Officer, Mr. M. O'Donnchadha, Oifigeach Forbartha na Gaeilge, Ms. H. Riordan, Assistant Staff Officer, Ms. L. O'Donnell, Assistant Staff Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

The Cathaoirleach began by conveying his sympathies to Cllr. Hoade on the passing of her brother-in-law Mr. Jimmy Scully.

ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

4301

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Ó Curraoín **SECONDED** by Cllr. McHugh Farag the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 19th February 2024 were **AGREED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was asked if the e-mail referred to on page 6 of the minutes, relating to housing allocations in Tuam was sent to the members of the Tuam Municipal District (MD).
- If the Codes of Practice for the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) referred to on page 13 of the minutes had been signed off.
- A request was made for updated list of the register of electors to be made available.
- The sympathies on the passing of former Councillor Pat Hynes were conveyed.
- It was commented that the February plenary and Corporate Policy Group (CPG) minutes did not reflect the discussion that took place regarding the airport site. They should show clearly that a portion of the site should be assigned for ancillary uses, including sport.
- A response to a previous query for a technical report on the webcasting of meetings was requested.
- It was requested that the IT team investigate the cost of providing web cameras and to ascertain if it would be worth the outlay.
- Confirmation on whether consultants have been appointed for the Airport Masterplan was sought.
- A request was made that the air strip be retained in the Airport Masterplan.

- A response to the request that a deputation meet with the Minister regarding the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) was not included with the minutes.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Hanrahan:

- The minutes state the primary use of the Airport site, there may be other uses included in the final plan, when they are agreed.
- Avison Young are carrying out the procurement phase for the development of the Airport Masterplan. It is hoped that advertisements will be placed within the next three months, which will then lead to the Masterplan consultants being appointed.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Pender:

- The decision was made that the LIS delegation request would revert to the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC). It is on the Roads and Transportation SPC agenda. Each MD will be written to, seeking their nomination to go to Dublin to meet Minister Humphreys.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Brann:

- Each Elected Member will receive an electronic version of the register of Electors this evening. If a hard copy is required, it will be made available on request.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Ruane:

- The Code of Practices have been signed by the Minister.
- An Oversight Board within Galway County Council is to be established.
- An audit of CCTV locations and the identification of black spots will be carried out.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

- He has requested the Director of Services give a presentation at the April plenary meeting on the digital strategy including the live streaming of plenary meetings.
- The cost and value of webcasting will be included in the digital presentation.

ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4302

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McHugh Farag **SECONDED** by Cllr. Roche the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group held on 13th February 2024 were **NOTED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Ó Curraoín **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cuddy the minutes of the Transportation & Infrastructure SPC Meeting held on 20th September 2023 were **NOTED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was asked if there were any planned works for a pedestrian crossing and set down areas at the Claregalway Educate Together, Secondary School and the Community Centre.
- If a public meeting could be arranged for the local business and residents in Claregalway.
- If the Council have a formal policy for the flying of flags.
- Eir Coaches have announced the cessation of a multi-stop service between Galway and Dublin. There is a need for a multi-stop service between Ballinasloe and Galway.
- Why it has been five years since the Part 8 was passed for works in Claregalway and works have yet to commence.
- A request for a copy of the finalised drawings of the proposed left-hand turn in Claregalway was made.

- All rural schools should be provided with a pedestrian crossing in the interests of safety.
- Concern was raised regarding the progress of the Milltown to Gortnagunned scheme.
- Clarity was sought on the Bridge Street project in Dunmore.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Pender:

- The National Roads Project Office (NRPO) oversee traffic calming measures. For a pedestrian crossing to be installed, a pedestrian and vehicle count and a speed survey would be required. The results of these will determine the next course of action.
- The possibility of carrying out works by night will be explored. The onus will be on the contractor to keep businesses up to date on works, this will form part of the consultation process.
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) have allocated €2.5m to Claregalway. The drainage issues need to be addressed first. It is hoped that the main works contractor will be appointed later in the year.
- He will circulate the finalised drawings of the junction in Claregalway.
- Unfortunately, not all schools will receive funding under the Safe Routes to School Scheme.
- He will revert to the MD to provide an update on the above in respect of the queries raised in relation to Claregalway.

The Cathaoirleach paid tribute to the late Councillor Pat Hynes, who had also served as a Town Councillor. He was very popular amongst his constituents, colleagues and Council staff. He described him as welcoming, uplifting and a hard worker.

The Members gave their own tributes. Describing him as a gentleman, supportive, helpful, friendly, respectful and a strong statesman. The people of Loughrea were very dear to him. He was still concerned about local issues, such as the closure of Seven Springs Nursing Home, even after he stepped down as an Elected Member.

Cllr. Donohue thanked the Members for attending her uncle the late Councillor Pat Hynes's funeral and to Cllr. Kelly for giving the eulogy. She thanked the Cathaoirleach for his tribute and to the Council for the support given to him during his time as a Member of Galway County Council.

Cllr. McClearn spoke of the late Pat Hynes as being very receptive and supportive of all policies that would enhance Loughrea and requested that the meeting be adjourned as a mark of respect, for five minutes.

**ITEM NO.3 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE, THE
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEMES 2024
PROPOSED LIST OF APPROVALS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
PERFORMANCE OF ITS FUNCTIONS UNDER SECTION 67 OF THE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 AS AMENDED.**

4303

Report dated 25th March 2024 was published on the Extranet and circulated at the meeting.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was acknowledged that there was a great dispersion of funding between the MDs.
- It was asked why Tuam MD only received 12.5% of the funding. An explanation for and means of addressing this was requested.
- The work of the team in producing the scheme was acknowledged and their manner in dealing with the applicants was commended. The provision of online meetings and the feedback provided to unsuccessful applicants was praised.
- The digital application process was welcomed.
- The importance of this funding for community groups was highlighted.
- It was requested that Fáilte Ireland explain the rationale of the distribution of the €18,000 funding and why the MD's of Tuam and Ballinasloe were excluded.

- The point was raised that Athenry / Oranmore MD cannot receive Just Transition funding.
- A request was made that the Palestinian flag be flown, as a message that we stand with the people of Gaza.

The Cathaoirleach said that a draft policy is being drawn up in relation to the flying of flags from Council buildings. It was clarified that if another flag is being flown then it is flown alongside the Tri-colour.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Brann:

- Thanked the Members for their comments and gave a breakdown of the allocations by economic development, community development and cultural development categories.
- She clarified that the spread of funding is determined by the applications that were submitted. There was a low non-success rate in Tuam MD as compared to other MD's.
- Unsuccessful applicants were provided with feedback and re-directed to other funding schemes where appropriate.
- Explained that online Workshops were already provided, the team will look at addiways to connect going forward.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Broderick.

'I propose that Galway County Council write to Fáilte Ireland and detail the rationale behind the non-allocation of any of their €18,000 Regional Festivals Funding towards two of the five MDs namely Ballinasloe and Tuam.'

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Broderick **SECONDED** by Cllr. McHugh Farag the above motion was **AGREED**.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Reddington **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kinane the Galway County Council Community Support Schemes 2024 proposed list of approvals, in

accordance with the performance of its functions under 67 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) was **AGREED**.

The meeting was adjourned for five minutes as a mark of respect for the late councillor Pat Hynes RIP.

ITEM NO. 4 TO CONSIDER THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC) ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE OF FUNCTIONS FOR 2023, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 128B (1) (I) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ACT 2014.

4304

The LCDC Annual Report was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

As chairperson of the LCDC, Cllr. Thomas thanked all the members of the committee and acknowledged the level of work involved. He also thanked the local development companies involved and the work carried out by Ms. McGann.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Thomas **SECONDED** by Comh. Ó Cualáin the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Annual Report on performance of functions for 2023, in accordance with Section 128b (1)(i) of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 was **NOTED**.

ITEM NO. 5 TO CONSIDER THE AUDIT COMMITTEE 2023 ANNUAL REPORT UNDER SECTION 15 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AUDIT COMMITTEE) REGULATIONS 2014.

4305

The Audit Committee Annual Report was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning the Audit Committee 2023 Annual Report under section 15 Local Government (Audit Committee) Regulations 2014 was **NOTED**.

ITEM NO. 6 TO FIX A DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE MAY ORDINARY MEETING OF PLENARY COUNCIL.

4306

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Ó Cualáin **SECONDED** by Cllr. King it was agreed that the May Ordinary Meeting of Plenary Council will be held on the 20th May at 11am in the Oranmore Lodge Hotel, Oranmore.

ITEM NO. 7 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE TO AUTHORISE THE ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES, MEETINGS, OTHER EVENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142(5) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED)

4307

Report dated 19th March 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Maher to attend The Celtic Conferences – The First Home Scheme – Helping Homeowners get onto the property ladder at McKevitt's Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth on the 23rd to 25th February (*Retrospective Approval*)

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. King **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Maher to attend The Celtic Conferences – A Practical Guide to Personal Taxation in Ireland at O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork on the 1st to 3rd March (*Retrospective Approval*)

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. D. Connolly **SECONDED** by Cllr. M. Connolly it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Hoade to attend The 2024 Suck Valley Way Conference at Hannon's Hotel, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon on the 13th to 14th March (*Retrospective Approval*)

ITEM NO.8 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE AUTHORISE THE ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142(5A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).

4308

Report dated 19th March 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finnerty **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Roche to attend AILG Module 1 'Elected Members Briefing: Annual Declarations, Donations, Code of Conduct and Local Representation Allowance Update.' at The Fairways Hotel, Dundalk on 25th January 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Herterich Quinn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Hoade and Herterich Quinn to attend AILG WoMeN's Caucus Training & Development at The Northwest Business Park Collooney, Co. Sligo on 30th January 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Herterich Quinn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Curley to attend AILG Annual Training Conference at The Arklow Bay Hotel, Arklow, Co. Wicklow on 14th & 15th of February 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Curley to attend AILG Module 2 'Local Election 2024 Preparation – A Briefing from the Electoral Commission at The Hotel Kilkenny, Kilkenny on 21st March 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to authorise Comh. Ó Curraoín to attend AILG Module 2 'Local Election 2024 Preparation – A Briefing from the Electoral Commission at The Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone on 23rd March 2024. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to suspend Standing Orders to bring forward item 10 on the agenda.

ITEM NO. 10 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – MARCH 2024 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).

4309

Report dated 20th March 2024 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

The Management Report – March 2024, in accordance with Section 136(2) of the Local Government Act 2001 (As Amended) was **NOTED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- When will funding for the Feasibility Study for the R336 be received.
- Do the Council have the staff and resources to carry out the Feasibility Study of the R336.
- If a site for the new Fire Service Headquarters has been identified. If the site is on the East of the County has a report on response times to Conamara been carried out.
- Clarification was sought on whether an application for a septic tank grant is dependent on the septic tank having been inspected. It was requested that Government be asked to consider all applications for septic tank inspections.
- If septic tank upgrades could be included in the Housing Aid for Older People grant.
- A clear one-page document on the septic tank grant application process was requested.
- It was asked if Council inspections were carried out after planning permission is granted, to ensure that the installed drainage system is compliant.
- It was asked if applications for the septic tank grant were means tested. It was suggested an income bracket system, similar to the Housing Grants scheme could be implemented.

- It was stated that if septic tank inspections could be requested it would lead to more people availing of the grant.
- The bus shelters in Cashla and Inverin were welcomed.
- Bus shelters in Bearna and Spiddal are needed.
- It was noted that no housing has been built in the Athenry area over the last 5 years. Phase 2 of Gort Mhaoilir, Athenry and new homes at Cullairbaun, Athenry were welcomed.
- The Active Travel team were thanked for their work in the Safe Routes to School Scheme.
- Feedback on the Chief Executive and Cathaoirleach's trip to New York was sought.
- It was stated that landowners in the Loughrea MD have not been updated on the Galway to Athlone Greenway route.
- A preventative and not reactive approach to road maintenance was requested. An MD 12-month preventative maintenance roads programme was motioned. With funding to be taken from the €7.2m allocated budget. Which in the long term would provide a cheaper solution to constant refilling of potholes.
- There should be a dedicated team for road maintenance.
- There are not enough staff to carry out road maintenance. More funding is required from central government.
- A bus Shelter is needed in Shrue.
- When do the Council expect a response to the Further Information request on the Ring Road.
- It was asked that the Council ask the Office of Public Works (OPW) to prioritise the study on flood protection in Clarenbridge. The village is still vulnerable and cannot wait another 18 months, flood gates are needed.
- It was asked when the Greenway restarts, that a commitment is given to speak to the consultants involved to not go into Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).
- The signing of contracts to deliver new homes on brownfield site at High Street in Tuam was welcomed.
- Castlerea is still without adequate Fire Service cover.

- Over 100 acres of flooded agricultural land needs to be addressed.
- How is it proposed to bring the identified 44 derelict houses back into use.
- The lack of progress on the Bearna greenway was mentioned.
- A definitive date for the handover of keys for the Ahascragh housing development was requested.
- Further to the Geo-directory vacancy survey it was asked if the homes can be purchased and whether they are in urban or rural settings.
- If there are plans for affordable housing schemes in Conamara.
- When the Just Transition Officer will be appointed.
- The Ballinasloe relief road was not mentioned in the report.
- The public lands along the Athlone to Ballinasloe Greenway could be developed.
- Affordable housing schemes are moving too slowly.
- Buggy Buddies initiatives in Tuam and Athenry were welcomed.
- Lack of baby changing facilities in County Hall.
- Timeline for when the identified vacant houses will come back into stock, was requested.
- It was queried if a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) can be issued on a private property.
- What the consequences are for an owner if a derelict notice site is issued on their property.
- If there were any Health Service Executive (HSE) properties on the vacant properties list and if CPOs can be issued.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Pender:

- The R336 is an objective in the County Development Plan. The Government will not provide funding until a decision is made on the Ring Road. The Council will provide funding for works, which are expected will commence Q2 or Q3 of 2024.
- The Active Travel team are the dedicated resource for bus shelters.
- An Bord Pleanála have been written to regarding the Ballinasloe Relief Road, the requested information will be with them by September 2024, if not earlier.

- He will speak to the OPW to prioritise works at Clarenbridge following Storm Debi.
- Mr. Finn will have up to date information on the Salthill to Bearna cycleway.
- Ballinalsoe Relief Road is part of the Strategic Workforce Plan. It is a capital project to be funded by the Department.
- The Greenway has not been abandoned; new design consultants are required. RPS Consulting Engineers were commissioned until December 2023. New consultants could not be engaged until after this date. Documents have been drafted to procure new consultants through e-tenders. Project Liaison Officers are in continual contact with the landowners. When an appointment is made this will be communicated to the public and Elected Members.
- He will write to the Department requesting more money for roads maintenance.
- A preventative road maintenance team is aspirational. There are five MDs, each would need a team of one supervisor and four crew, which would cost a minimum of €300,000 per annum per MD, with facilities provided in addition to this. Additional traffic management would be required, the cost would be multiples, which will have to be taken from other road programme budgets. The Council do not have the financial nor staffing resources to create these teams.
- The Council has discretionary funding of €5.6m of which €1.7m is for the regional road network across the entire County.
- We will write to the City Council requesting an update on the Bearna to Salthill greenway.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Ruane:

- The Septic Tank scheme is a national scheme, for which the Department issue guidelines.
- There is no geographical restriction on applications.
- The scheme is not means tested.

- She undertook to correspond with the department to request that the scheme perimeters be broadened.
- The Just Transition Officer interviews took place the previous week. The appointment will be made this coming week.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens:

- The Geo Directory Vacant Survey was carried out between September 2023 and February 2024. 43 settlements were identified by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to be surveyed within the urban settings of Galway County Council and a perimeter of 1km from a central hub point. 7 large towns, 11 major settlements and 25 minor settlements were selected. Of the 1708 properties surveyed, 817 properties were deemed vacant / derelict of which 44 were considered derelict. The property owners will be engaged with to encourage them to bring them back into use.
- CPO Activation Programme is the funding mechanism to acquire the units for Council use or to sell. The loan draw down will be brought before the Council. These will be predominately private units. Council units will be looked at separately. A presentation will be made to the SPC.
- Additional funding and staff have been sought.
- There will be a number of information sessions in the MDs to take place in early April.
- Five housing projects have received approval in Tuam, Athenry and Portumna.
- Regarding the development in Ahascragh, snagging is expected to be completed over in the next 7-10 days. With tenancy's to be ready in April.
- The Affordable Housing Scheme requires amendments.
- There are four categories of vacant housing condition Good, Fair, Poor and Uninhabitable. The first focus will be on the Good category and then we will work down through the other categories.
- The owners will be encouraged to upgrade with grant aid support to bring them back into use.
- CPO can be used on private vacant properties.

- The funding stream will be loan, a proposal will be submitted to the Council in the second half of the year.
- Two administrative and two technical staff have been requested from the Department.
- The HSE were made an offer, and this is being reviewed by the Property Review Group.

ITEM NO. 9 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM THE IRISH FARMER'S ASSOCIATION (IFA).

4310

Mr. Canavan Chairman, of the Galway Irish Farmers Association (IFA) gave a thorough and informative presentation on the IFA's 'Enough is Enough' campaign. Over the past number of weeks, farmers across mainland Europe have been voicing their anger and frustration at the ever-increasing administrative burden being placed on farmers which have had a major impact on farm family incomes.

These frustrations have broadened into anger with European and National lawmakers over the massive increase in regulations relating to Agriculture. The European Union, the Irish Government and local Government are devising policies far from the farm gate with little or no consideration of the direct impact on farmers.

He described the problems facing farmers such as the transformation of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), being asked to do much more to receive a lot less, the proposed Mercusor Trade Deal, widespread delay in payments and reductions to the Nitrates derogation.

He described in detail the number of issues that are impacting farmers at a local government level:

- Delays in the farm planning process which is hindering on-farm investment.
- The implementation of the Zoned Residential Land Tax – a completely unfair tax which places a penal charge on farmers with land on the outskirts of towns and villages. All genuinely farmed land should be exempted from this tax.
- County Councils will be doing an increasing number of inspections on farms. There needs to be a clear protocol in place as regard how these inspections

are conducted. IFA to have representation on the relevant committee with responsibility for administrating these inspections.

- There are huge issues with ash trees suffering from ash dieback on rural roads. Each County Council needs to come with a strategy and funding to remove these trees. Where there are significant dangerous cases, a special fund should be set up within the County Council for landowners to access.
- A lack of dog wardens in many counties to deal with dog attacks on sheep flocks.
- The proposed increase in water charges will place an unfair burden on farmers, in particular those with fragmented holdings. The standing charge for multiple connections should be replaced with one customer charge. Water charges for agriculture use must be frozen and ring fenced going forward.
- Galway County Council to allow the burning of cutaway green waste.
- Galway County Council to uphold the right of property owners by adopting fully the use of voluntary land acquisition as opposed to CPO for the construction of Greenways.
- The maintenance of rural roads across the county.
- Galway County Council to draft a code of conduct to reduce the indiscriminate roaming of the public onto private lands in Connemara.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- There was overwhelming support given to the farmers, the IFA and the proposed motion.
- A long-term strategy is required for the farmers.
- Nature Restoration Law was passed by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) without consultation with local representatives.
- Consumers are ill informed on the quality of produce they are buying.
- The consequences of lands being split to accommodate Greenways.
- Inheritance tax laws need to be reviewed.
- The Council needs to address the areas it can control and lobby MEPs and Government Ministers. This should be the start of a campaign for improvement.
- CPOs should be taken off the table.

- Duplication of inspections.
- Crippling regulations and paperwork.
- Greenways can lead to bio security issues, tracking of bacteria between farms.
- Age profile of farmers increasing.
- Young farmers can only afford to farm part-time; they also need a full-time job to supplement.
- It was suggested that a committee or SPC be set up between the IFA and the Council, where these issues can be discussed and addressed.
- The problems outlined by the IFA are felt by every sector.
- The Planning & Climate Action SPCs have members of the IFA on their committees.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:

The Chief Executive thanked Mr. Canavan for his presentation. He assured him that the involvement of IFA members on the Council SPCs will continue. From a Planning Authority perspective, he advised that there is a pre-planning service available that farmers should avail of as a matter of course.

The IFA proposed the following motion:

'The Council calls on the Government to introduce no further regulations on farmers or any measures that may increase costs on farms without full negotiation and agreement with the Irish Farmers Association (IFA). The Council calls on the European Union and the Irish Government to provide additional stand-alone funding, separate to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), to support farmers to undertake climate and biodiversity measures.'

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Reddington **SECONDED** by Cllr. Collins the above motion was **AGREED**.

ITEM NO. 11 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE.

4311

The following items of correspondence which were published on the extranet prior to the meeting were **NOTED**:

- Letter dated 08.02.24 from Cork County Council. Resolution – VAT rate for pubs.
- Letter dated 08.02.24 from Cork County Council. Resolution – Hospitality VAT rate.
- Letter dated 19.02.24 from Louth County Council. Resolution – Proposed legislation to abolish the JPC's.
- Letter dated 12.03.24 to Eamon Ryan T.D. Minister for Transport. Resolution – Additional roads funding.
- E-mail dated 12.03.24 from Private Secretary to Minister Ryan. Resolution – Additional roads funding. Acknowledgement.
- Letter dated 13.03.24 from Clare County Council. Community Employment Schemes, Rural Social Scheme and Tús Programme.
- Mayors for Peace Joint Appeal, February 22, 2024.
- Mayors for Peace News Flash February 2024.

ITEM 12. QUESTION

4312

Cllr. McKinstry submitted the following Question prior to the meeting:

"The Climate Action Plan requires a reduction in car-km driven of at least 20% by 2030;

- *What is the baseline against which this will be measured, in terms of Km driven per MD.*
- *Given population growth in our current County Development Plan, what are the expected changes in car traffic expected in the "No Action/Business as Usual" scenario.*

- *What breakdown of Public Transport and Active Travel measures are planned to bring the traffic down, in terms of bus routes, km of cycle paths and footpaths?"*

The following reply issued:

- *What is the baseline against which this will be measured, in terms of Km driven per MD?*

The Climate Action Plan 2023 (and 2024) target is to achieve a 20% reduction in car vehicle kilometres travelled, **at a national level**, when compared against the 2030 Business as Usual scenario. That's what the country is required to do. It's unrealistic to think that a 20% reduction per MD level is attainable or achievable as the majority of western seaboard MDs are so rural, the requirement for car-km will remain in the absence of suitable, sustainable and reliable public transport measures by NTA and others. To clarify, the target is that the overall number of car vehicle km travelled in 2030 **at a national level** (not solely in Galway) should be 20% less than it would have been, had the various measures in CAP not been introduced, i.e., in a 2030 "business as usual" scenario.

- *Given population growth in our current County Development Plan, what are the expected changes in car traffic expected in the "No Action/Business as Usual" scenario.*

Irrespective of Climate Action Plan measures, the planned increase in population and employment (more people will be travelling from neighbouring counties to work in Galway) will increase the demand for travel across all modes (including freight). It is anticipated that this will be by over 20%, thereby exacerbating the transport capacity issues being experienced today.

- *What breakdown of Public Transport and Active Travel measures are planned to bring the traffic down, in terms of bus routes, km of cycle paths and footpaths?*

The Council is working with the NTA in relation to the rollout of Active Travel measures across the County. The insertion of Local Transport Plans into the recently adopted Local Area Plans for the more urban areas is helpful as Active Travel measures will follow as a result. However, the more rural settlements across the County are now at a disadvantage as the focus of the NTA becomes more urban centric. In terms of Public Transport, the Council will work with all service providers and the NTA (authority with responsibility) to deliver a more sustainable, suitable and reliable Public Transport network across the entire county.

Cllr. McKinstry called for the Active Travel and Public Transport agenda to be moved forward. The number of people using cars needs to be reduced and the number of footpaths and cycle lanes increased.

ITEM 13. NOTICE OF MOTION

4313

Cllr. McHugh Farag submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:

'We propose that Galway County Council condemn the unparalleled destruction of Gaza and the mass slaughter of innocent civilians, babies, children, women and men of Palestine. These acts must be called out in every political forum across the globe for what they are: genocidal acts masquerading as legitimate warfare. In light of these atrocities, we call on Galway County Council to suspend the purchasing of any goods and services from Israel, and we call on the government to do the same as they did following the Russian invasion of the Ukraine.'

The following reply issued:

This Notice of Motion should not have any significant implications on the day to day running of the Council's business, as we confirm that there are no known contracts or payments made to any Israeli Bank Accounts or purchase of any goods and services from Israel, which would be impacted by the content of the motion.

However, as we are governed by the Central Procurement Arrangements, including the fact that Ireland is part of the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) means that no Local Authority have the capacity to exclude a customer on the basis of where they are from, to do so would be contrary to EU Law.

In terms of calling on the government to suspend the purchasing of any goods and services from Israel, if the Council vote for a letter to be issued to the Department on this matter we can then address this at that juncture.

Cllr. McHugh Farag thanked the Executive for the response. She expanded that the United Nations Security Council needed to be called upon to call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. A message needs to be sent to both National and EU representatives to try and force action from Israel as there are people starving in Gaza.

The occupation and supply of ammunition was condemned with widespread support within the Chamber for the motion and it was agreed by the Members present.

ITEM 14. NOTICE OF MOTION

4314

Cllr. Finnerty submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:

'Regarding Dietary Supplement Payments and due to the cost-of-living crisis, special diet and health foods are extremely expensive and are on the increase.

This was suspended in February 2014 and no new applicants were accepted since. While anybody who was on this payment before then, is still receiving the payment.

This dietary supplement is very important for Cystic fibrosis - Diabetic sufferers - Coeliac disease - Dairy free diets and many other food intolerance specialised diets.

I request this be forwarded to the Minister for Health.'

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finnerty **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade the forwarding of the above motion to the Minister for was **AGREED**.

ITEM NO.15 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

4315

The Cathaoirleach announced that nominations for the Cathaoirleach Awards are now open and that the Awards and Ball will take place on 16th May at the Clayton Hotel. The charities that the ball will support are ACT for Meningitis and i4life.

He informed the Council that during his time in New York over St. Patrick's weekend, himself and the Chief Executive had very successful and productive meetings with the Industrial Development Agency (IDA), Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland and the Irish Consulate. They reached out to the Galway diaspora through the Galway Association of New York and joined with the Galway Association in the St. Patrick's Day parade down 5th Avenue.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It was asked what the expected attendances at the Galway Airport summer concerts are and to whom the hospitality rights have been given.
- A previous request for a legal opinion on there being no Traffic Management Plan for Ballinasloe and the potential impact that could have on parking fines, was repeated.
- It was asked why the Residential Zoned Tax has been parked.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Mr. Hanrahan:

- The number attending concerts will depend on the number of tickets sold, it is expected that it will be in excess of 100,000.
- Food stalls at the event will be operated by local operators.
- He will revert with the legal advice before the next Ballinasloe MD meeting.
- Not all of the Residential Zoned Tax land applications came through on time. Once the LAP is reviewed it will be more accurate.

The members present agreed at 5:00pm Standing Orders were suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It needs to be established as soon as possible what the Council will gain from the running of the concerts.
- It was requested that a motion be sent to Government before the Residential Zoned Tax is implemented, asking that it be deferred until after the next County Development Plan.
- Lack of bus service between Galway and Loughrea after 6pm.
- Huge increase in rates for some small rural businesses.
- Information on the rates appeals process was sought.
- It was asked if there will be an increase in the bad debts provision.
- A rate payer with a history of non-payment should not receive the same benefit as people who have always paid their rates and now find themselves in difficulty resulting from the rate increases.
- It was asked if businesses in Clarinbridge could be granted a waiver on rates.
- Update on water situation in Clifden was requested.
- The meeting was informed that it could be 2025 before the new water pipeline is laid in Clifden.
- The Local Authority Members Association (LAMA) awards were received as positive news for the Council.
- Lack of Electronic Vehicle (EV) charging points between Spiddal and Galway.
- If a civic reception could be held for Ireland Women's Darts team that won the World Darts Federation World Cup.
- A request for the flooding in Tuam graveyard to be addressed was made two years ago, no works have yet been carried out.

Thanks were expressed to Mr. Pender on his last Plenary meeting with Galway County Council. His work notably on the outer ring road was acknowledged and his valuable contribution to Tuam both in his engineering role and Director of Services.

He was described as approachable, progressive, supportive, fair, and always helpful and possessed a great knowledge & skill, he will be a huge loss to Galway County Council.

Mr. Pender responded by thanking the Members for their words. He has worked in the Council for 25 years and enjoyed every minute of it. He noted some of the challenges ahead for the Members including, The National Planning Framework, the effect of the expected population increases over the next 25 years and their impact on employment, education and housing. He will take many friendships with him. He hopes that the Members found him fair and everything he did was for the betterment of the County.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. McClearn

'We the undersigned propose that our Chief Executive and Cathaoirleach engage with the Department of Transport and Local Government concerning the allocation of additional roads funding to Galway County Council. Galway County Council require an additional 20 million Euro if we are to make any reasonable attempt at resolve the crisis that we are experiencing right now.'

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Murphy the above motion was **AGREED**.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Byrne.

'Our 2024 Roads Programme includes an allocation of €7.27m for maintenance of our Local and Regional roads including drainage works.

This motion calls on Galway County Council to appoint a preventative maintenance crew in every local area office who will be dedicated to providing preventative measures all year, and we discontinue, where possible, the 'reactive' measure of repeatedly filling potholes.'

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr. Mannion the above motion was **AGREED**.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Parsons

'I propose that the Galway County Council (GCC) urgently correspond with the Minister of Transport and the National Transport Authority (NTA) to advocate for the reinstatement of a multi-stop bus service along the Galway to Ballinasloe to Dublin route. This service should be supported by a Public Service Obligation (PSO), irrespective of its commercial viability, to address the pressing need for public transportation in the towns, villages, and communities along the route.'

'It is imperative to recognize that transportation plays a pivotal role in sustaining rural communities, supporting local businesses, and facilitating the overall development of the region. Therefore, advocating for the reinstatement of the bus service is vital for addressing the multifaceted needs of our rural constituents and fostering sustainable growth within Galway, Ballinasloe, East Galway & the region.'

'The absence of adequate transportation infrastructure has profound and far-reaching consequences on our communities, extending beyond mere economic considerations. The lack of transport leaves individuals stranded and isolated, adversely affecting social cohesion and community well-being. Without reliable connectivity, our communities are deprived of essential services, hindering access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Lack of transportation has negative impacts for the local economy, and small local businesses as it curtails consumer footfall and economic activity. The negative environmental implications associated with limited transport options is unacceptable.'

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Parsons **SECONDED** by Cllr. Broderick the above motion was **AGREED**.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Donohue.

'I propose that Galway County Council write to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and seek agreement that any homeowner that is forthcoming and expressing a concern with their septic tank system be supported financially with the grant and their application.'

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Donohue **SECONDED** by Cllr. Parsons the above motion was **AGREED**.

The following amended motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Broderick.

'We propose that a letter is written to the Minister asking that the Residential Zoned Land Tax is not implemented until after Galway County Council next County Development Plan (2027-2032).'

Cllr. McKinstry wanted it noted that he did not support this motion.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Broderick **SECONDED** by Cllr. McHugh Farag the above motion was **AGREED**.

Cllr. McHugh Farag proposed a motion that was seconded by Cllr. Parsons to install baby changing facilities in County Hall to be available for parents and guardians. The Chief Executive said that this matter was noted would be addressed by the Executive without requirement for a motion. Cllr. Parsons was happy with the Chief Executives response and withdrew the motion.

The Chief Executive acknowledged the work that Mr. Pender has done for Galway County Council. He thanked him for his professionalism and extensive knowledge and the manner in which he imparted knowledge. He especially noted his work on the City Ring Road. He concurred that our loss is Galway City Council's gain and added that the move will be of benefit to his career.

ITEM NO.16 VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS

4316

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Mr. John Joyce, Carramanagh, Oughterard, Co. Galway
- Padraig King, Corrafaireen, Ballyglunin, Tuam, Co. Galway
- James Keaney, Canrower, Cashel, Co. Galway
- Ann Gordon, 2 Springview, Gort Road, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Siobhan O'Shaughnessy, Mirah, Turloughmore, Co. Galway
- Sheila Hughes, Knockdoe, Claregalway, Co. Galway
- David Hurney, Cregmore, Claregalway, Co. Galway
- Frank Forde, Lisheenavalla, Cregmore, Co. Galway
- Brian House, Caislean Oir, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Ollie and Roseanna Ruane, Kiltullagh, Athenry, Co. Galway
- Breda Gardiner, Clarke Street, Athenry, Co. Galway

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach:



Date:

