

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL
Held at the Lough Rea Hotel, Loughrea
Monday, 22nd May 2023 at 11.00am

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Michael 'Moegie' Maher
Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

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

Baill ar líne:

Oifigigh: Mr. L Conneally, Chief Executive, Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Mr. M. Owens, Director of Services, Mr D. Pender, Director of Services, Ms. A. Fenton, Head of Finance, Ms. J Brann, Meetings Administrator, Ms L. Keady, Administrative Officer, Ms. B. Ryan, Staff Officer, Mr. M O'Donnchadha, Oifigeach Forbartha na Gaeilge, Ms H. Riordan Assistant Staff Officer, Mr P. Scannell, Clerical Officer

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

The Cathaoirleach was joined by Members expressing condolences to Eileen Ruane, Director of Services, on the recent passing of her mother Esther Ruane RIP.

The Cathaoirleach extended condolences to the family of Christy Corcoran RIP. Christy recently retired as Community Warden in the Tuam Municipal District. Members joined the Cathaoirleach in expressing their sympathies to his family, many friends, and colleagues following his untimely death. Members remembered the great rapport Christy had with the people of the community, how he wore his uniform with pride, how he had represented the council and served his community so well. It was a testament to the Christy that following the recent publication of his book of poetry all proceeds went to Tuam Tidy Towns.

On his own behalf and on behalf of the Management Team and staff the Chief Executive expressed his sincere sympathy to both the Ruane and Corcoran families.

As a mark of respect, a minute's silence was observed.

ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS 4153

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cuddy **SECONDED** by Cllr. C. Keaveney the minutes of Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 24th April 2023 were **AGREED**.

The Cathaoirleach congratulated Mr. Owens, Director of Services, Ms. Jean Brann, County Secretary, and the Corporate Services Team for the programme of events organised for the recent visit of the delegation from Washington County, in honour of the twenty-year Sister Partnership between Washington County, State of Wisconsin, USA and County of Galway. He advised Members the feedback from the Washington Delegation was hugely positive and the week had exceeded everyone's expectations.

Members acknowledged the week has been a huge success and congratulated the Corporate Team for organising the week's itinerary. The Cathaoirleach was commended for attending all events during the week. It was noted the week had also proved to be an excellent team building exercise for the Members and Executive. It served to highlight what the Members and the Executive could achieve when working together, showcasing Galway at its finest.

ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 4154

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McKinstry **SECONDED** by Cllr. Sheridan the minutes of the of Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategic Policy Committee held on 18th January 2023 were **NOTED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Request an update on Galway's EV Strategy.
- A limited number of EV charging points in the county will be funded by the local authority to avoid black spots where it not commercial to provide it. We need to choose those locations carefully in places such as Connemara.
- It is important to remember EV infrastructure is for the people of Galway not just visitors to the region. Proper consultation with communities is required.
- As it is now the preferred option not to use pesticide how does the council propose to deal with the significant vegetation growth particularly at junctions during summer months to ensure road safety and visibility for all road users?
- It is disappointing the OPW have funds and are willing to work with the council on coastal erosion, but we don't have staffing resources to take up the offer.
- The opening of Dexcom in Athenry which has excellent rail and road access will take more cars off the road and improve the quality of lives of hundreds of workers.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Pender

- Galway County Council are the lead authority in the western CARO region to develop an Electric Vehicle Strategy that will help to identify the location, installation, planning, and regulation (through the relevant statutory approval processes) of electric vehicle charging infrastructure'. This will then inform the Local Authorities of the requirements and the number, types, optimal location of chargers required and the best business/operating models applicable. The Strategy is expected to be completed by Q3 or Q4.
- Regarding junctions, hedge cutting is prohibited between November and March, but local authorities are allowed to carry out cutting of hedges and ditches on health and safety grounds during those periods.

- A draft Sustainable Plant Protection Plan which aims to reduce the use of pesticides is currently being prepared. The draft plan will be brought to SPC for consideration.
- Regarding coastal erosion we need to increase capital funding for proposed works.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Chief Executive:

- The location of Dexcom in Athenry is a significant investment for Galway. It will benefit the wider region with employment opportunities extending beyond Galway facilitated by the ease of access by road and rail.
- Dexcom is a significant addition to the med-tech space in Galway. It shows Galway is open for med tech investment business.
- Acknowledge the preparatory work and role Mr. Cullen, Mr. Farrell and their teams played in advance of the Dexcom decision to locate in Athenry.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Carroll **SECONDED** by Cllr. Byrne the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group held on 20th March 2023 were **NOTED**.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- In terms of the County Development Plan when a couple breaks up there is ambiguity regarding the housing need if both wish to stay in the area. If the home is sold the couple's housing need has already been met. The issue may need to be re-examined as a material alteration.
- Applicants showing "Rural Links or Need" should be applied in all areas of the county.
- The existing policy serves to stop irresponsible development. These types of cases have been dealt with in Connemara for years.
- If the policy is to be changed robust criteria will be required to prevent abuse.
- Enurement Clause Agreements should be considered in the case of relationship breakdowns. In the past in areas outside the GTPS area people were never required to substantiate a housing need. It has now become a common requirement.

- Applicants who submit a housing need are also getting Further Information requests enquiring if they owned or disposed of property.
- Every applicant should have an opportunity to have a pre-planning meeting considering the cost of preparing a planning application. Proper advice in advance of applying may reduce the number of refusals.
- Planning Agents often discourage clients from the pre-planning process.
- Is it a reflection of how the County Development Plan is being interpreted that Galway has the highest refusal rate on planning?
- During a housing crisis it is disappointing four major applications have been refused Oranmore in the past year.
- We should be encouraging people to build their own homes during a housing crisis. Refusals are too common for one off housing for families on family-owned lands. There is a problem when people can't build on their own lands.
- In South Connemara there are no estates being built. The young people are moving to Moycullen or Oughterard as it is very difficult to build beside parents or on family lands. Young families are needed to keep communities alive and keep schools' shops and other facilities open in South Connemara.
- There are too many outside bodies such as Irish Water, TII etc involved in the planning process. Local Authorities should be allowed to do their work.
- Dexcom intend to create 1,000 full time jobs in Athenry with a further 500 created during the construction phase. The Planning Authority must take this into account when preparing Local Area Plans for Athenry – Oranmore prior to presenting them to Members.
- It is easy to be critical of planning and Galway County Council. While Dexcom will put additional demands on housing in surrounding areas, we need to take a more positive view. The County Development Plan may need to be re-examined to allow more rural housing and development in towns, but Dexcom is good for Galway.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr McClearn:
"That a variation be considered to the Galway County Development Plan 2022 2028 to accommodate persons who due to a marriage breakdown request to built a new family home noting that their housing need was previously met."

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

- There is no specific provision in the County Development Plan in relation to marriage breakdown. The plan came into effect last year, the mid-term review may result in a variation of the plan. The variation of the County Development Plan is a statutory process with specified timelines. It is important to note a variation will impact on the existing work programme and commitments of the Planning Unit including the timelines for the local area plans. In addition, further guidelines are anticipated from the Department on the Residential Zoned Land Tax.
- There are further requirements to "Rural Links or Need" contained in the County Development Plan. Applicants are also required to substantiate housing need.
- The requirements for housing need arising from a number of distinct policy objectives including:
 - RH1 Rural Housing Zone 1(Rural Metropolitan Area)
 - RH2 Rural Housing Zone 2 (Rural Area Under Strong Urban Pressure-GCTPS-Outside Rural Metropolitan Area Zone 1)
 - RH4 Rural Housing Zone 4 (Landscape Classification 2,3 and 4)Applicants seeking to construct individual houses in the open countryside in areas located in Landscape Classification 2, 3 and 4 are required to demonstrate their demonstrable economic or social Rural Links or Need.
- Regarding previously owned property, applicants are now required to provide supporting evidence they never owned a house or received planning permission previously for a house.
- The value and importance of pre-planning meetings to frame advice is not disputed. All Development Management Planners allocate time for pre-planning meetings. Pre-planning meetings are currently based on available resources. Meetings are available where there has been a change in the County Development Plan or Local Area Plan or where a person has not had the benefit of assessment by way of a previous planning permission on the particular site.
- The role of the Planning Agent is very important both in terms of submitting applications and engaging with the applicant. A Planning Seminar was held in late 2022 in Claregalway was very positive in terms of feedback from the approx. 100 planning agents in attendance. On the 8th June the planning

authority will host a planning webinar for agents and will once again use the opportunity to further engage with agents. Future webinars based on feedback from the information day are also planned.

- Regarding refusal of developments in Oranmore or on regional roads, every planning application is approached on the basis of a positive outcome in the context of proper planning and sustainable development. The number of further information requests and clarifications on further information requests are indicative of the approach taken by the planners to afford a planning application every consideration. Galway County Council does not have the highest planning refusal rates in the country.
- The Development Management Standards outlined in chapter 15 of the County Development Plan, adopted by the Members, reflect national guidelines where applicable.
- The Local Area Plan for Athenry will be published later in the month. There will be a workshop held in due course and the Draft LAP will be open to submissions.

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

- The staffing levels are an issue for the organisation as a whole. A Strategic Workforce Plan has been initiated to examine this. The planning department is one of the stress points.
- The staffing issue in the planning department is being dealt with as a priority but currently it is an employee's market. The positions are being offered but there's a poor response. It will take some time to solve.
- Until the outcome of the Baseline Funding Review the Department have informed us that any additional posts will have to be funded by the Council's revenue account. The baseline funding working group continue to work on finalising the proposals for the Department. Galway County Council have stated that there is no point in dividing the existing local authority funding but instead counties such as Galway need to be properly funded out of additional resources.
- Pre- planning service should be available to all. Agents are paid significant fees to make planning applications. As such agents should be familiar with local

development management standards for the different areas within the county and also national planning guidelines. It's incumbent on agents to familiarise themselves with the different policy areas within County Galway as outlined in County Development Plan and advise applicants accordingly.

- Should a variation of the Development Plan be required, the Chief Executive would have to give careful consideration on how planning staff resources are deployed.

Cllr. Byrne withdrew his motion. He asked that the Director of Services and the Chief Executive to consider the proposal submitted, for discussion at the next CPG meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Killilea the recommendation from the Corporate Policy Group that Galway County Council hold a Civic Reception to honour Mr. Eamonn Burke, National Ploughing Championship Winner was **AGREED**.

Cllr. Donohue voiced concerns about the holding of plenary meetings in venues outside of the Council Chamber. She queried the cost and told Members service users in an adjoining room from St. Brendan's Centre, Loughrea had been requested by the hotel to keep the noise down as a meeting of Galway County Council was taking place. Cllr. Donohue requested CPG put an end to the practice of plenary meetings being held in venues outside of Áras an Chontae.

In response, the Cathaoirleach advised it was a tradition for over 20 years that one plenary meeting was held in the Cathaoirleach's local area during their term of office. He stressed Galway County Council had made no request to the hotel regarding other service users. Cllr. Mannion considered it was an honour and a privilege for a Cathaoirleach to bring a plenary meeting to their local area. She noted it was a matter for the hotel to make any necessary arrangements regarding bookings.

ITEM NO.4 TO FIX A DATE & TIME FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PLENARY COUNCIL. 4155

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Byrne **SECONDED** by Cllr. Reddington it was **AGREED** to convene the Annual Meeting of Plenary Council on Monday 19th June at 11:00am in Áras an Chontae.

ITEM NO. 8 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM MUSIC GENERATION. 4156

Mr. Eric Cunningham gave an overview of the work of Music Generation in Galway.

- Music Generation is built on partnership with Galway County Council and GRETB as the dominant partners in terms of strategy. He noted Forum Connemara, Galway Culture Company, SICAP and Galway Rural Development were among other partners.
- The aim of Music Generation is to empower children and young people to realise their full potential through access to and participation in high quality performance music education.
- Music Generation is based on three main pillars – access, equity diversity inclusivity and opportunity.
- Music Generation offers instrumental and vocal music to children and young people from 0 to 18 years of age. Group tuition is provided for multi genre music. Tuition is delivered at no cost where needed or otherwise at a subsidised fee. Access to instruments and equipment is provided to ensure access and opportunity for all.
- The programmes are implemented through educational settings in primary and post primary schools, youth reach centres, preschool and after school bespoke programmes. The programmes are also implemented in community settings including Youth Services music hubs, music clubs and camps etc. pathways to development bands, ensembles, orchestras, master classes, workshops performance opportunities and festivals.

Mr. Cunningham advised Members Galway faced challenges other areas of the country didn't for a number of reasons. It is the second largest county in Ireland with

77% of the population living in rural areas. It includes four islands and it has the largest Gaeltacht region and has the largest traveller community in Ireland.

He noted Music Generation Galway is currently involved with:

- 48 schools 15 community music hubs clubs and youth service programmes.
- multiple camps master classes ensembles and orchestras.
- 40 plus musician educations.
- 4000 children and young people.

The funding model for Music Generation matching funding model. Locally raised monies are matched nationally up to €200,000 annually.

Mr. Cunningham gave an overview of the annual events plan and their priorities in terms of development for the year ahead. He highlighted “Geata” the festival of traditional arts in Galway in November serving to allow Galway’s young performers access high level tuition at in Galway becoming an annual event. He also noted the plan for a library instrument bank which would make instruments available through the county library system.

Mr. Cunningham stressed the impact of Music Generation which had transformed young people’s lives and communities around the county. He noted it could not have happened without the partnership of Galway County Council. He acknowledged the support of the Executive Team and thanked Cllr. Maher as Cathoirleach and Chair of GRETB for his continued support.

The Cathoirleach thanks Mr. Cunningham and advised members that the money invested in Music Generation to date had been very well spend and he recommended the allocated budget would be doubled at the next Budget meeting.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Commend Mr. Cunningham and Music Generation for their impressive work. It is easy to support funding when you have the right people in the right posts.
- Excellent group for Galway County Council to work in partnership with.

- Music Generation are doing excellent work and are having a huge impact - Windfield school is a good example of the huge impact Music Generation are having in peripheral areas of the county.
- Other areas such as Inishbofin and Ballinasloe who otherwise would not get a look in are also included.
- Great to see kids at DEIS schools being included.
- Considering the role music plays in supporting people with dementia this is another reason why projects such as this deserve funding.
- During Covid musicians lost out in many ways. We need to invest in our great talent for the future.
- The presentation has given food for thought. The question for the Council is not "can we afford to support it" but rather "we can't afford not to support it".

ITEM NO.7 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM FÁILTE IRELAND IN RELATION TO REGENERATIVE TOURISM SCHEME 2023-2026 UNDER THE EU JUST TRANSITION FUND (EU JTF).

4157

Mr. Paddy Matthews, Fáilte Ireland made a presentation on the EU Just Transition Fund 2023-2026 Regenerative Tourism Scheme. He advised Members that the EU and the Government had established a €169m Just Transition Fund for the period 2023-2026. As part of this fund, the EU has awarded Fáilte Ireland €68m for a Regenerative Tourism Scheme to invest in the sustainable development of tourism in the Midlands with the aim of creating jobs and sustaining communities.

The fund will support the transition of the Midlands to a carbon neutral destination through funding of sustainable tourism projects that are designed to have significant regenerative impacts on local communities and peatlands.

He advised members that Fáilte Ireland would launch the Regenerative Tourism Scheme later in the year. In advance of this Fáilte Ireland would engage with businesses and communities with project ideas to identify how the fund could help to develop tourism in the Midlands in a sustainable way.

He outlined the key priorities for Fáilte Ireland

- generate employment for former peat communities by investing in the diversification of the local economy
- Support the regeneration and repurposing of peatlands and related lands.
- Provide former peat communities with smart and sustainable mobility options to enable them to benefit directly from the green transition.

He outlined the types of enterprises under the four strands of the regenerative tourism scheme Fáilte Ireland would be supporting and the monies allocated of each :

- Strand 1 Midlands trail network - deliver strategic network of connected walking cycling and water trails across the Midlands. €30m
- Strand 2 amenity development and support small medium enterprise businesses in tourism sector - Support amenity development and businesses in tourism sector to develop new or expand existing sustainable tourism infrastructure €.25m
- Strand 3 alternative low carbon accommodation - Small developments at key locations along trails. Carbon neutral or low carbon developments, aligned to trail and loops - example glamping camper vans log cabins etc €.3m
- Strand 4 smart solution development - provide a range of skills capability development supports for smart digital transformation, support intrapreneurship, enhancing and digitalization. Appointment of tourism Activators. €10m

Mr. Matthews noted that between strand 2, 3 and 4 the funding is fluid and can be moved.

Regarding Galway he advised Members that the geography of the scheme and the extent of the Just Transition Boundaries, Bord Fáilte had no role in deciding the boundaries. He noted he would like to have seen other areas included.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- It's disappointing the scheme relates only to one particular area of the county.
- Would like to see Fáilte Ireland look at Headford and other areas on their own. It's a real issue that tourists are passing through Headford on their way to Cong but not stopping despite the significant site of Ross Errilly on its doorstep.

- The focus on Ballinasloe is very welcome as it is a peripheral area. Hopefully there will be a significant budget for Ballinasloe.
- East Galway is the poor relation in Galway in terms of tourism. Would like a Fáilte Ireland to set out their plans to the Ballinasloe MD for the area.
- The Aughrim site is one of the most significant battle sites in Irish history. We can see what has been done regarding tourism on such battle sites in the US.
- Welcome the funding but it's a small amount of money for communities devastated by the loss of jobs from Bord na Mona.
- Concern that the Hidden Heartlands will be a let-down in the long-term. When the Wild Atlantic Way was developed initially it was great, but such projects need ongoing investment. Does Fáilte Ireland have a vision for this scheme for the next 20 years?
- The scheme should be extended further west. Two bogs in Attymon and Killeen are being re-wetted and the railways have been taken up. The trails were used during Covid. It would be great opportunity to put something in there.
- A presentation from Fáilte Ireland on what's happening in the county as a whole would be welcomed.

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

- The EU Just Transition Fund 2023-2026 Regenerative Tourism Scheme is just one of one of five tourism plans incorporating East Galway. The scheme provides an opportunity for Fáilte Ireland to work with elected members and other stakeholders to set a clear vision for East Galway. The Strategic Framework has been set out in the Hidden Heathlands with the aim of converting existing assets into visitor experiences.
- Regarding the future vision there are meetings scheduled to meet with people and communities to ensure Fáilte Ireland are not missing out on anything.
- €68 million is a drop in the ocean for the overall region, but it will get projects started and we will need other funding to keep it going.
- There is a strategic partnership between Fáilte Ireland and Galway County Council. Discussion have commenced with the Chief Executive and his team on the portion of Just Transition Funding available for Galway. An Just Transition Enterprise Officer will be appointed in Galway.

- Any successful tourism destination such as Killarney, Westport etc are all built on strong tourism networks within the area. It is clear there is a great energy in Ballinasloe from the well-attended meetings to date.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive

- EU Just Transition Fund 2023-2026 Regenerative Tourism Scheme was just one piece of work Galway County Council was involved with Fáilte Ireland. It happens to be focused in East Galway. He noted that Galway's first Tourism Strategy would be presented to Members soon which will take a countywide perspective. He advised there had been significant engagement with a number of stakeholders in terms of tourism strategy and noted one of the key objectives was to develop the differentiation of tourism zones in the county.
- The EU Just Transition Fund investment will add value to Active Travel work and other measures Galway County Council are involved in.
- The Tourism Activator will be located in Galway County Council to assist businesses claim funding under the Just Transition scheme.

ITEM NO.3 TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT THE UNAUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 2022. 4158

The Unaudited Annual Financial Statement for Galway County for the year ended 31st December 2022 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Ms. Fenton, Head of Finance gave an overview of the Unaudited Annual Financial Statement for Galway County for the year ended 31st December 2022.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Why is there no item line in appendix 2B for Active Travel? It appears there has been a massive underspend in past few months while we are struggling to get projects completed. What was allocated versus what was spent under Active Travel.
- Clarification sought on service division HO3 showing the administration of rates at €6.69m.
- Are there monies due from Galway City Council for shared services?

- Galway Airport site it's a strategic site. Consideration should be given to enter into negotiations to buy it out.
- How is the capital account?
- An investment in council vehicles is long overdue, current fleet not fit for purpose.

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

- Active Travel doesn't have a separate heading as it does not have continuous source of funding. The income for Active Travel appears under the "State Grants and Subsidy" heading.
- H03 rates for quarter one we had €1m extra in waivers. That was revenue neutral exercise for the organisation. The headings in the report are pre-set. This heading includes the adjustment for vacant properties of €4.3m.
- The reconciliation is not yet complete, but it is not expected that there will be monies outstanding from the city for shared services.
- The capital account is showing a balance of €31m.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Pender

- We draw down funding for Active Travel projects on completion. It's a revenue neutral exercise.
- Regarding the council fleet there was a framework agreement in place nationally which expired last December. We had permission to procure five lorries but with increasing costs we could not get quotations. It appears they were waiting for the framework agreement to expire. We will be going to the market for five new trucks soon.

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Unaudited Annual Financial Statement for Galway County Council for the year ended 31st December 202:

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Carroll **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty it was **AGREED** to adopt the figures as detailed in the Unaudited Annual Financial

Statement for Galway County Council for the year ended 31st December 2022 to formally close the accounts for 2022.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Carroll **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade it was **AGREED** to approve the transfers to / from reserves as detailed in Note 14 of the accounts

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Carroll **SECONDED** by Cllr. McKinstry it was **AGREED** to approve the over / under expenditure by division as noted in Note 16 of the accounts.

ITEM NO.5 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE TO AUTHORISE THE ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142(5A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED). 4159

Report dated 12th May 2023 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

- (a) On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Killilea it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Welby and O 'Curraoin to attend the AILG Module 3 '*Overview of Existing and Emerging Planning Legislation and Policy Guidance*' at Mullingar Park Hotel, Westmeath on 15th June 2023.
- (b) On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Killilea **SECONDED** by Comh O'Curraoin it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. C. Keaveney, Hoade and Sheridan to attend AILG '*Annual Conference 2023*' at Hotel Kilkenny, Kilkenny on 19th-20th April 2023. (Retrospective Approval).
- (c) On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Herterich Quinn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Hoade and Herterich Quinn to attend AILG '*WoMeN's Regional Caucus Training & Development*' at Westmeath County Council, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath on 5th May 2023. (Retrospective Approval).

ITEM NO.6 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – MAY 2023 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED). 4160

Report dated 18th May 2023 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Members raised the following points and queries:

- Connemara is heavily dependent on tourism. We need more lifeguards for the beaches in during the summer. Currently there is only one lifeguard for weekends in North Connemara.
- Welcome the listing of beaches with toilets and facilities – we need toilets and facilities on more beaches.
- Welcome the addition funding for Tuam Palace Grounds.
- Request an update on the Greenway feasibility study.
- Galway is a vast county - one Tourism Officer for the county is not enough.
- Athenry Oranmore has only one Community Warden. What is being put in place to cover this area. Commend the Tidy Towns Committee for their work.
- Updated requested on cemeteries in the county. the last report showed a third of cemeteries around the county needed expansion. The burial ground issue in Annaghdown has not been resolved.
- Concerns raised regarding talks of Galway City Council considering the Galway Airport site as a possible location for a burial ground.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Farrell

- Regarding the position of Tourism Officer the Tourism Strategy together with the Strategic Workforce Plan will inform the requirements for additional staff.
- The Tourism Activator will be a huge benefit to Galway

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Owens

- The Palace Grounds in Tuam have retained their Green Flag with the input of Mr. Paul Connolly and his team in the Tuam Office acknowledged.
- A Water Safety Awareness and Development Officer has been appointed on a full-time basis and will help to increase awareness.
- Regarding the recruitment of lifeguards, the number of lifeguards has been impacted to a certain extent by the impact of COVID-19 on training and accreditation.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr Pender:

- Regarding the provision of temporary toilets at beaches we have a budget, but we don't have resources to provide them at all beaches.
- The Feasibility Report for the Athenry to Milltown Greenway is now with the TII. The TII has indicated it will not sign off on the Report until such time as the outcome of an All-Ireland Railway Review is known.
- Regarding Community Wardens there is a panel already in place and a review of existing workforce is being carried out.

The Chief Executive advised Members he had seen no proposal regarding location of a burial ground at the Galway Airport site.

ITEM NO. 9 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE. 4161

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

- Letter dated 28.03.23 to Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D. Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage; Resolution – Election poster legislation
- Letter dated 19.04.23 from Danielle McDonnell, Private Secretary to Minister Malcolm Noonan T.D. Response – Election poster legislation.
- Letter dated 20.04.23 from Wexford County Council. Resolution – Roll out of the Able Disabled campaign.
- Letter dated 25.04.23 from Westmeath County Council. Resolution – Immediate construction of affordable housing units.
- Mayors for Peace Newsflash April 2023.
- Mayors for Peace Open Letter Reaching the G7 Hiroshima Summit

Mr. Owens In response to a query from Cllr. D. Connolly advised Members the Gender Pay Gap Report 2022 was published and available to view on the Council website. He advised the Blended Working Policy had also been approved by the Management Team.

ITEM NO.10 NOTICE OF MOTION

4162

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

“That Galway County Council erect Lyme disease information and warning signage in all public parks and playgrounds to advise of the dangers Lyme disease can cause and the measures to minimise the risk of contracting this chronic condition.”

The following reply issued:

“*Galway County Council will arrange to erect Lyme disease information and signage as appropriate in Council owned park and playground locations across the County.*”

ITEM NO.11 NOTICE OF MOTION

4163

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

“That this council bans the use of Glyphosate pesticide by the council and its contractors, with the exception where necessary for invasive species”

The following reply issued:

“*Galway County Council is currently drafting a Sustainable Plant Management Plan 2023-2025 for adoption.*

It is not proposed that the Council would ban the use of glyphosates completely at this current point in time but rather it would work towards a reduction in pesticide use across the board and seek to trial and increase the use of sustainable methods of treatment.

The aim of this Sustainable Plant Management Plan is to work towards a reduction in use of pesticides throughout the county in-line with the following:

- *Relevant National and EU Legislation for the use of pesticides,*
- *National Biodiversity Action Plan, and*
- *All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2022-2026.*

The document seeks to outline the relevant legislation regards use of pesticides at a national and European level and proposed targets and requirements set within national plans.

It also provides a desk study of alternative methods and solutions regards use of pesticides and appropriate recommendations to be applied at county level.

Creating an existing baseline of pesticide usage is the first step to identifying opportunities where the use of pesticides can be reduced and removed from our public spaces.

It is important to acknowledge that the reduction in use of pesticides in our environment is an overall objective of many National and European plans and policies.

To meet these aims and objectives Galway County Council (GCC) will have to address its current pesticide usage and establish sustainable solutions to weed control within the county, solutions that offers protection not only to our local environment but to those that work, live and play in these areas.

The following are recommendations which will aid GCC in reaching a reduction in pesticide use and a transition away from pesticide use entirely within the county:

- *Establish a baseline use of pesticides currently within GCC managed areas, in all sectors including usage by GCC operatives and contractors in GCC managed areas.*
- *Identify potential viable alternative solutions to pesticides.*
- *Conduct alternative solutions trials to establish the most viable solution.*
- *Establish strict criteria during the tendering process for the awarding of contracts requiring the management of GCC owned lands through the use of pesticides.*
- *All staff both in-house and contractors must attend pesticide usage training in line with GCC pesticide usage protocol.*
- *Explore the idea of developing an app for GCC staff to populate with pesticide usage data within each Municipal District.*
- *Conduct a yearly review of data gather within the periods of March-November 2023 and March-November 2024.*

- Any updates to GCC pesticides protocol should be issued prior to March of each year i.e. before the growing season and pesticide usage commences.
- An overall review of GCC Sustainable Plant Management Plan and data gathered should be conducted on an annual basis. Armed with the knowledge of up-to-date data on pesticide usage in GCC managed areas, suitable and realistic targets for pesticide reduction can be established in line with National and European legislation and policies.”

Cllr. McKinstry sought further clarification on the response. Members agreed to move the item to the June Plenary Meeting for further discussion.

ITEM NO.12 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

4164

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mannion **SECONDED** by Cllr. Mac An Iomaire the Members **AGREED**:

“That the CEO and Cathaoirleach write to Minister Ryan and Minister Donohue seeking additional funding for local roads for this year, with the surplus in funding available to government. Galway County Council would be in a position to spend funding on roads this summer/autumn.”

ITEM NO.13 VOTES OF SYMPATHY / CONGRATULATIONS

4165

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Judy Collevy, Tuam Road, Mountbellew, Co. Galway.
- Bríd Corcoran, St. Joseph's Park, Tuam, Co. Galway.
- Paul Courtney, Castlelambert, Athenry, Co. Galway.
- Mary Costello, Ballinderry, Cummer, Tuam, Co. Galway.

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach: Liam Carroll

Date: 26/6/2023

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

