

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Galway County Council

Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Átha an Rí

Municipal District of Athenry

Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Athenry held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, on Tuesday 10th March 2020.

I LATHAIR:

BAILL: Cllr. J. Cuddy (Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. G. Cronnelly,
Cllr. J. Charity,
Cllr. L. Carroll,
Cllr. D. Collins,
Cllr. S. Herterich Quinn,
Cllr. A. Dolan.

OIFIGIGH: Mr. M. Owens, A/Director of Services,
Mr. P. Gavin, Executive Engineer,
Ms. G. Healy, A/Administrative Officer.

APOLOGIES: Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer,
Ms. P. Higgins, Senior Executive Engineer.

Cllr. Cuddy, Cathaoirleach of Athenry Municipal District Council, welcomed all present at the Meeting.

To confirm Minutes of the Athenry Municipal District Meeting held on 14th January, 2020 AMD 31

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Herterich Quinn, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cronnelly, the Minutes of the Athenry Municipal District Meeting held on 14th January 2020, were **AGREED**.

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.



To confirm Minutes of the Athenry Municipal District Meeting held on 18th February, 2020

AMD 32

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Herterich Quinn, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Collins, the Minutes of the Athenry Municipal District Meeting held on 18th February 2020, were **AGREED**.

Arising from the Minutes, Cllr. Herterich Quinn referred to the repair of the Council's housing stock and she said that since the February Meeting, stormy weather had again caused damage to fences, gardens had flooded and storms drains had been blocked up. She asked when would the results of the Stock Survey become available.

Mr. Owens replied that the information gathered during the Housing Stock Survey, which had been carried out in all of the Municipal Districts, was being compiled at present and would inform the priority works to be carried out to housing stock over the next two years. He said that priority works would include works required in order to bring houses up to standard in terms of Fire Safety and Health and Safety Regulations. He said that the results of the Housing Stock Survey would be brought before the Housing Strategic Policy Committee and then to Plenary Council.

Municipal District Director's Business & Correspondence

AMD 33

Two items of Correspondence were circulated to the Members, as follows:

Email dated 21st January 2020 received from the National Transport Authority and letter dated 26th February 2020 received from Iarnród Éireann, in reply to the Athenry Municipal District Council's Resolution passed at their Meeting of 14th January 2020 requesting an extension of the Christmas free parking at Athenry Train Station.

The letter dated 26th February 2020 received from Iarnród Éireann was also in reply to the Athenry Municipal District Council's Resolution passed at their Meeting of 14th January 2020 requesting that Iarnród Éireann review their staffing levels, pricing and carpark fees at Athenry Train Station.

Cllr. Cronnelly said that the letter received from Iarnród Éireann did not address the issue regarding customer care at Athenry Train Station, such as no toilet facilities not being available when the Station is closed to the public. He also referred to Attymon Train Station and the absence of any signage directing people to the Station which he said should be in place. Cllr. Cronnelly said that the Members wish to promote travel by train and he said Athenry Municipal District is unique in that there are three Train Stations in the Municipal District.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn said that the response received from Iarnród Éireann was poor and she expressed the view that Iarnród Éireann is not prepared to assist the Council in solving the problem of overspill at the carpark at Oranmore Train Station. She said that she would like if Iarnród Éireann would explain to the Council exactly what they are doing for their customers

and she felt that by leaving Train Stations unmanned, this is resulting in the need for security at the station, the cost of which could be better spent.

Cathaoirleach's Business

AMD 34

Cllr. Charity raised the issue of the rural bus service stating that there is a lack of adequate bus services for rural areas. He said there are many GAA clubs in the County with parking areas which are not used to a great extent during the day and he suggested that Park & Ride schemes could be put in place to provide a bus service for people into Galway City, using these carparks. He said the GAA clubs might require a nominal fee for making their carparks available.

Cllr. Charity made the following **PROPOSAL** *"that the National Transport Authority be requested to attend a Meeting of the Athenry Oranmore Area to set out public transport and bus service facilities and future plans for rural North Galway areas including those of Annaghdown, Corrandulla, Bawnmore, Lackagh, Cregmore, Claregalway and Castlegar/Killoughter".*

This proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cronnelly, and **AGREED**.

Cllr. Cuddy expressed the view that there is a lack of communication on the part of Transport Infrastructure Ireland with the Council and this is not acceptable.

The Members raised issues as regards their local areas and Mr. Gavin replied as follows:

In reply to Cllr. Herterich Quinn and Cllr. Dolan, Mr. Gavin said that the lights on the Tuam Road out of Athenry will be operational within the coming weeks.

He also said that he would follow up the issues relating to the condition of the R446 road, Furey's Cross, Frenchfort, and Casey's Cross as raised by Cllr. Herterich Quinn and Cllr. Carroll.

Cllrs. Cuddy wished to thank the Staff of the Athenry Municipal District, particularly the outdoor Staff, for the work they carried out during the recent stormy weather. He expressed the view that as the Municipal District boundary had been extended following the Local Elections in 2019, the number of outdoor staff in the Municipal District should be increased.

Cllr. Cuddy made the following **PROPOSAL** *"that the Chief Executive of Galway County Council be asked to provide additional outdoor staff for the Athenry/Oranmore Municipal District".*

Cllr. Carroll said that the Roads Staff are working under severe difficulty due to inadequate numbers and he **SECONDED** Cllr. Charity's proposal and this was **AGREED** by the Members.

Mr. Owens said that the level of funding available to the Council at present limits the Council's ability to employ additional staff.



Cllr. Collins complimented the brilliant work carried out by Community Groups during the recent storm and during previous extreme weather events. He said he had a Meeting with the Turloughmore Community Council recently and it was felt that the Community Council would like to get more involved in relation to providing assistance to people during flood events. He suggested that it would be helpful if a base was set up within the community where the Council would provide sandbags for use by the Community Groups, when necessary. He said that Mens' Sheds could be targeted as a location for storing supplies and also he felt that Community Centres could be used. He felt it would be helpful to have somebody on the ground to give instructions in the event of any emergency. He said he would like if this initiative could be piloted in the Athenry Municipal District and he asked for the Members support in this regard.

Cllr. Collins made the following **PROPOSAL** "*that Galway County Council work with each Councillor to identify a 'Community Emergency Response Base' to pilot the idea of having a base where each community can access emergency equipment and supplies that are needed to respond to flooding and other emergencies*". This proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Charity, and **AGREED**.

Cllr. Dolan raised the issue of the Coronavirus and said it was important to mention that the St. Patrick's Day parades around the Country have been cancelled this year due to the threat of the spread of the virus. He said he empathised with the business owners in the villages and towns around the County as St. Patrick's Day is traditionally a day when footfall increases massively. However, he said that it must be acknowledged that public health is of paramount importance at this time of great uncertainty.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn raised the matter of a number of estates in Athenry which have not been taken in charge by the Council due to the estates not being finished by the developer.

Mr. Owens replied that individual issues can be taken up with the Council's Taking in Charge Unit who will provide an update to the Members, if requested.

Cllr. Cuddy raised the issue of the Taking in Charge of roads and Mr. Owens replied that there is a Policy Document on this which was agreed by the Roads Strategic Policy Committee and he said this Policy Document would be circulated to the Members. He also said that Taking in Charge is a Reserved Function of the Members.

Cllr. Cronnelly referred to the promise in 2019 of an allocation of an additional million euro by Minister John Paul Phelan to be spent in Municipal Districts and he asked when this money would become available.

Mr. Owens replied that the Council is awaiting a response from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government to its proposal for this committed allocation.

Cllr. Charity expressed his dissatisfaction that the Department of Agriculture and the Traveller Movement had not been represented at the Meeting which was facilitated by the Council the previous month to discuss the problem of wandering horses on the Headford Road. He said

there was no lack of will on the part of Galway County Council to deal with this issue, however he said that the Department of Agriculture needs to also act in this regard.

Mr. Owens replied that the Traveller Movement had indicated that they missed the Meeting due to a diary issue and that the Department of Agriculture had indicated that they were not in a position to attend.

In reply to further queries in this regard, Mr. Owens said that the Council has a responsibility to deal with issues of wandering horses on public roads or lands but not on private property. He said that an indication of the Council's commitment in this regard is the level of resources assigned to the issue, significantly exceeded the allocated available budget for the control of horses. Mr. Owens outlined that an effective partnership including the Department of Agriculture and other stakeholders was required in order to appropriately respond to the issue.

He said that the Council's Veterinary Officer is employed to carry out duties under a Service Level Agreement with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland but not in relation to animal or horse welfare.

In reply to Cllr. Cronnelly, Mr. Gavin said that the speed limit at Coldwood National School is 80 kph and this does not reduce at the school. He said the Council will look at this in terms of safety at the school if there is a likelihood of accidents occurring.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn referred to the fact that the St. Patrick's Day parades had been cancelled but she said she wished to invite communities to make recordings and submit their virtual parades to Athenry Community Council for uploading on the internet.

Cllr. Charity asked if there was any notification from the Health Service Executive or the Government for contingency planning in relation to the Coronavirus Covid 19. Mr. Owens said that the Council had prepared a Business Continuity Plan, for submission to the LGMA, and is identifying service areas on a priority basis and how the Council will maintain and manage service delivery through a period of disruption.

The Cathaoirleach said that the next Meeting of the Athenry Municipal District Council was scheduled to be held on 12th May 2020 and he wished everybody well until then.

Criochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin

Approved by:


CATHAOIRLEACH

Date: 2/6/2020

