

**CEANTAR BARDASACH BHAILE LOCHA RIACH
MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGREA**

**Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea
held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, on 20th October 2025**

I LATHAIR:

<u>Cathaoirleach:</u>	Cllr. P. Killilea
<u>Baill:</u>	Cllrs. I. Canning, G. Donohue, G. Finnerty, L. Harney, D. Kelly, M. Kinane, M. Maher, J. McClearn, M. Regan.
<u>Oifigigh:</u>	Ms. E. Ruane Director of Services, Mr. D. Troy A/Senior Engineer, Mr. E. Gallagher Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. G. Haugh Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. N. Kennedy Executive Engineer, Mr. D. O'Loughlin Executive Engineer, Ms. M. McGann Meetings Administrator, Ms. O. Cloonan, Assistant Staff Officer

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA HELD ON 9TH JUNE 2025 LMD2447

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 9th June 2025 were approved by the Municipal District Members and signed by the Cathaoirleach, on the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finnerty and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Killilea.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA HELD ON 8TH SEPTEMBER 2025 LMD2448

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 8th September 2025 were approved by the Municipal District Members and signed by the Cathaoirleach on the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Killilea and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Donohue.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Cllr. Donohue requested an update on the preparation of a report on ash dieback for the Strategic Policy Committee.

Cllr. Kelly stated he was very uneasy about the possibility of a mini-roundabout being installed at Westbridge and had a lot of responses from constituents who were concerned that any proposed works would adequately protect vulnerable road users. In response, Mr. Haugh stated that a mini-roundabout was one of seven options being considered for

modeling at this junction. The Municipal District received costings for these various options, but the mini-roundabout option required a preliminary design in advance of modelling, and this necessitated additional funding. The MD/Active Travel section is currently reviewing these costs, considering funding support options for the progression of the required preliminary design etc. and will revert to the Members on progress at a future date.

Cllr. McClearn referred to the ongoing works at the N65 at Heathlawn and the invitation which issued to TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) to attend the September Municipal District Meeting, and following their unavailability, to attend the October Municipal District Meeting. He stated that it was unacceptable that a reply was not received to date, and that the road was in the same situation for 14 months at this stage. In response, Mr. Haugh advised that the latest update from the National Roads Project Office (NRPO) advised that a consultant was to be engaged in 2025, with a view to carrying out works at this location in 2026.

Cllr. Harney requested an update to the invitation to Uisce Éireann to attend the October Municipal District Meeting, and in response, Ms. McGann advised that the revised protocols introduced by Uisce Éireann regarding attendance at Municipal District and Plenary Meetings had been circulated to the Members several weeks ago.

Cllr. Canning referred to his previous request to install push button controls on the pedestrian crossing at Main Street, Portumna, and stressed the need to upgrade the pedestrian crossing to a push-button controlled crossing to reduce speed, referencing recent damage to the pole by a speeding motorist. Cllr. Canning also stated that there was a need to review signage on the N65 which was not fit for purpose and ensure there was adequate signage across the full stretch of dangerous bends. Cllr. Canning stressed the need for action at the Green Door where a recent crash resulted in closure of the road for a 6-hour period. Mr. Haugh responded that, in relation to the pedestrian crossing in Portumna, Cllr Canning had previously been provided with indicative costs in this regard but that the incident that had recently occurred was a "loss of control" type of incident and unrelated to the type of pedestrian crossing that was in place. Mr. Haugh confirmed that the additional signage on the N65 that had been installed was as per the Traffic Signs Manual, and these signs were installed following engagement with TII on foot of concerns raised by Cllr. Canning on previous occasions. He confirmed that he would review the specific issue raised, i.e. supplementary plates, and revert to Cllr. Canning separately.

Cllr. Kelly referenced the need for traffic calming at Cos Carraig Estate, Loughrea, and a petition he was to submit seeking actions to address excessive speed in the housing estate. Cllr. Kelly stressed the need for bespoke actions in Traffic Management Plans to deal with issues of speed and driver responsibility in housing estates. Mr. Haugh advised that he will review this location and arrange for a speed and traffic volume survey to be completed.

Cllr. McClearn stated that every Elected Member was raising the issue of speeding and this issue, particularly the area of driver behaviour, needed action, as many incidents were as a result of drivers taking chances rather than due to the configuration of the junctions or lights.

Cllr. Finnerty referenced the delays in commencing hedge-cutting which had been raised at the last Municipal District Meeting and complemented the Area Office on the hedge-cutting works on national routes and the more recent local roads programme and confirmed that he was satisfied to commit further N.O.M. funding on foot of this progress.

Cllr. Kinane referred to the request for an update on the proposed cycle lane between Oranmore and Clarinbridge, and in response, Mr. Haugh advised he would seek an update.

Cllr. Maher referred to the traffic lights at Westbridge and stated that they were resulting in up to 4 minutes of a delay at the lights. He also queried why there had been no progress on a project to divert traffic flow from this location, such as a continuation of the Loughrea Bypass. In reply, Mr. Haugh confirmed that the Traffic Lights are being routinely maintained, and a specialist contractor was scheduled to inspect this location next week. He also pointed out significant roadworks on the Athenry Rd. and the Green had taken place in recent weeks, and these activities undoubtably resulted in unavoidable delays. He agreed that consideration of the completion of the Loughrea Bypass to connect the Gort, Tynagh and Woodford roads, had significant merits given the increased traffic volumes and medieval street layout in Loughrea Town and encouraged the members present to seek to have this option investigated further.

In response to a query from Cllr. Regan regarding the installation of signage restricting parking at the parking bay at Londis, Mr. Haugh advised he would need to check if parking restrictions at this location complied with the Traffic Management Plan and would revert to Cllr. Regan in this regard.

In response to a query from Cllr. Regan regarding the relocation of Bottle Banks from their current location at the Station Rd. Carpark, Mr. Haugh advised that this matter had been reviewed previously by the Environment Section, and from memory, no suitable alternative location was available. He would confirm this and revert to Cllr. Regan in due course.

3. FLOODING UPDATE

LMD2449

Mr. Gallagher confirmed that the project team are still preparing the updated report in response to the comments received from NPWS in late July. To fully address the comments, TCD have been asked to provide information from their own long-term studies on four turloughs in South Galway. The information relates to eight different vegetation communities and the suitable turlough depths to support these communities in the four turloughs. The information has now been provided to the environmental consultant. This will assist the environmental consultant in assessing the ecological impacts of the scheme on turlough habitats and Galway County Council expect a response to issue to NPWS before mid-November.

The project team continue to examine sites for the re-use of excess material from the channel works. The project agronomist will be visiting a number of landowners and sites in the coming fortnight.

On the Oranmore to Kinvara Storm Debie Study, the topographical survey results for the 45 additional properties identified as being at possible flood risk, have been provided to RPS. The first draft of the Interim Report has been reviewed and is being updated at present. It is anticipated that the Interim Report will be completed before Christmas and that we will engage with the OPW in January 2026.

Cllr Finnerty asked Mr Gallagher if he is satisfied that the consultants on the South Galway scheme are providing value for the works they are undertaking, giving the example of the sluice gates / flow controls that were proposed for the scheme and then discounted from the scheme, after a considerable length of time and associated costs. In response, Mr Gallagher stated that he completely understood the frustrations being experienced, both by the elected members and members of the public, in relation to progress on this scheme. Unfortunately, given the size and environmental sensitivity of the scheme, every small enquiry or study takes an extraordinary effort to bottom out, and at an expense. Although flow controls will not be incorporated into the scheme, they will be detailed in the Options Report and full details of the examination will be provided as part of the environmental submission for the planning process. It is a good example of works that had to be undertaken to satisfy environmental considerations, incurring time delays and expense, but are not being incorporated into the scheme. Cllr Finnerty also asked if the level of consultant's costs being incurred could have an impact on the scheme's progress. In response, Mr. Gallagher confirmed that the engineering and environmental costs incurred during the project development stage will not impact on the scheme Benefit to Cost Ratio (economic feasibility assessment).

In response to queries from Cllr Kinane, Mr Gallagher confirmed that the Interim Report for the Storm Debie Study (Oranmore to Kinvara) will form the basis for engagement with the OPW early next year. The Council will be proposing the development of long-term solutions to flood risks in the study area. As the Interim Report will likely remain in a draft format for some time to come, it will not be published or readily available to the public in its entirety. Mr Gallagher advised Cllr Kinane that his contact details should be provided to any member of the public or property owner seeking updates, and he would provide relevant information on a case-by-case basis.

4. LOUGHREA SIGNAGE INTERPRETATIVE PLAN – DRAFT REPORT

LMD2450

Cllr. Killilea welcomed Lucy O'Connor and Patrick Tyrell from Howley Hayes Cooney Architecture who had joined online to make a presentation on the Loughrea Signage Interpretative Plan.

Ms. O'Connor stated that this was a short overview of the work carried out to date, since the company had been appointed during the summer to develop this report on signage, which was part-funded by the Heritage Council. Ms. O'Connor stated that the company had previously carried out a Conservation Management Plan on Loughrea and therefore, had an understanding of the key assets of the town to feed into this report.

Ms. O'Connor stated that the initial review of signage focused on understanding the current signage strategy, and there were 4-5 different types of signage in use across the town, being a combination of heritage trail signage, tourist and common signage, tidy towns and biodiversity signage. Ms. O'Connor stated that the new signage would combine all these elements into a new wayfinding route, with the identification of St. Brendan's Cathedral as a key focal starting point, and incorporation of other key amenity and heritage areas in outlying areas of the town.

Ms. O'Connor stated that updating the structure of signage would be a key element of the final report, and it was proposed to incorporate the stained glass of the cathedral as a visual marker within the various signage elements such as directional signage, finger post signs, and information panels. Other additional elements would also be considered such as linking QR codes to existing materials and 3d mapping.

Cllr. Donohue acknowledged that much of the current signage was old and worn out, and welcomed the development of plans which would enhance signage in our towns. Cllr. Kelly stated that the heritage and archaeological aspects of towns were under-funded and welcomed the Signage Plan to develop this aspect of our towns.

In response to a query from Cllrs. Maher & Regan, Ms. O'Connor confirmed that this was just an initial update to the Elected Members and the Heritage Office would in due course circulate the final report on the evaluation of signage, and proposals for integrated signage strategy. In relation to the value for money in developing a Signage Plan, Ms. O'Connor stated that much of the existing signage was poor and there were many types of signage, which did not create a strong identity for the town. In response to queries from Cllr. Maher & Cllr Regan regarding tourism signage, Ms. O'Connor clarified that research shows that the majority of visitors to the town were locals rather than tourists, but this did not imply that there was not tourism potential which could be further developed through the signage plan.

5. KINVARA COMMUNITY TRANSPORT STUDY

LMD2451

Cllr. Killilea noted that the closing date for submissions on the Kinvara Community Transport Study was 8th August 2025, and Ms. P. Higgins, Senior Executive Engineer Active Travel, was doing great work to progress the study. Cllr. Killilea noted that since the last Municipal District Meeting, there had been four accidents at the location, and there needed to be greater urgency to progress the report and identify short-term as well as long-term fixes to address safety issues around access to the school and community centre.

Mr. Troy advised that the final draft of the study is due by the end of October, and it would be circulated to the Elected Members. Mr. Troy advised that action items will need to be referred to the NTA for consideration in terms of addressing speeding, identifying suitable crossing points, and other funded actions to promote safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

In response to a query from Cllr. Donohue regarding the extent of consideration for a Boardwalk through this study, Mr. Troy confirmed that access to the Castle will form part

of the report, however, the main priorities will be addressing mobility and transport within the village centre and taking relevant measures forward for further assessment and design, sourcing of funding, and delivery.

In response to a query from Cllr. Canning, Mr. Troy confirmed that the Council received funding from the NTA to undertake this study. Mr. Troy advised that Kinvara will be the first community transport study to be published nationally, therefore, this has necessitated agreement at national level on the format of the report.

6. NOTICES OF MOTION

LMD2452

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

I will propose allocation of €4,994 from the Local Property Tax Discretionary Capital Fund for “removal of a wall and pillars at Clarinbridge Cemetery to create 18 additional double burial plots”.

Cllr. Kinane referred to this funding proposal under the LPT Discretionary Fund and stated that there were positive outcomes from such a small outlay of funding through the creation of 18 additional double burial plots. Cllr. Kinane stated that it was a huge decision for the Elected Members to increase the Local Property Tax, and it was important for the Members to identify small projects which would be of benefit to local communities which wouldn't otherwise receive funding.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kinane, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Canning, the above Motion was agreed by the Members.

Cllr. Maher stated that he was fully behind the allocation of LPT monies for Loughrea Swimming Pool, and his subsequent query had related solely to the correct process to be followed in allocations from the LPT Fund. Cllr. Kelly stated that he wished to place on record that proper protocols had been followed in allocating monies from the LPT Fund, and he resented any questioning in this regard and the manner in which it had been put at the previous meeting. Ms. Ruane stated that it was acknowledged that Members had queries regarding the LPT allocations for local authority infrastructural projects and community capital projects and stated that a separate briefing can be arranged for the Members in this regard.

7. MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

LMD2453

Cllr. Killilea welcomed Ms. Olivia Cloonan to the meeting, and advised the Members that Ms. Siobhan Cleary was being re-assigned from the Loughrea Municipal District. The Members welcomed Ms. Cloonan and expressed their appreciation to Ms. Cleary for her support and hard work over the years.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LMD2454

Cllr. Donohue raised the need for traffic calming measures at Kilricle N.S. due to a reported near miss at the location and advised that she had forwarded a report on this issue to Mr. Tom Prendergast, Senior Engineer. Cllr. McClearn added that substantial monies had been spent to date on traffic calming measures, and these current issues were as a result of driver behaviour.

Cllr. Maher sought an update on the amenity project at the Long Point Loughrea, and Loughrea Town Hall at the next Municipal District Meeting.

Cllr. Regan stated that he was awaiting replies on a number of matters from the Municipal District Office. Cllr. Kinane stated that her experience was very removed from this and had found her engagements with all staff to have been responded to 110%. She referred to the level of activity on the ground since the Municipal District boundaries were adjusted and the need for more staff to cover the huge amount of work being done and the geographical range of the area.

VOTE OF SYMPATHY:

Cllr. Finnerty proposed a Vote of Sympathy to the family of Dr. Martin Mansergh and the Cathaoirleach and all Members extended their condolences to his family at this time.

CHRIODHNAIGH AN CRUINNUI ANSIN.


Cathaoirleach:

Date:

10th November 2025