

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Locha Riach
Municipal District of LOUGHREA**

**Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held in
Council Chamber, 12th November @ 10am.**

I LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach

Cllr. M Maher

Baill:

Cllr's. G. Donohue, PJ Murphy,
J. Byrne, M. Kinane, I. Canning, J. McClearn,
P Hynes, G. Finnerty

Oifigigh:

Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services;
Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer;
Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer;
Mr. M Melody; Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. F. Magillicuddy, Executive Engineer;
Mr. B. Sheehy, Assistant Engineer;
Mr. A. Cunningham; A/Senior Staff Officer;
Ms. F. Holland, Senior Executive Engineer

Apologies from Cllr Curley who was unable to attend.

**Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea
held on 20th October 2020**

LMD 20042

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting for Loughrea MD held on 12th November 2020 were proposed by Cllr Donohoe, seconded by Cllr Canning and agreed and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Arising from the minutes and in response to Cllr Curley's query on the street cleaning allocation for the Loughrea Municipal District, Mr Mitchell had examined the allocation for the Loughrea MD over the last number of years and agreed that it was difficult to find the criteria for the allocation. He will look at undertaking a review but noted the budget allocation had been agreed for this year. The allocation received by the Loughrea MD could be discussed at Plenary level but for a change to occur it would involve another MD having to forego a portion of their allocation which would be unlikely.

Cllr Maher asked that the members get clarity on how the allocation for street cleaning is arrived at and why it appears that the funding is lower for the Loughrea MD in comparison to that of other municipal districts. Cllr McClearn added that the members have a responsibility to their constituents to ensure fair and equitable funding for the Municipal District. He felt that the level of current funding for street cleaning in the Loughrea MD could not be allowed

to continue and that the members should not have to look at taking funding from the other MD's. Cllr Kinane agreed that there is a need for clarification on how the monies are allocated and that it is hard to take monies off another M.D. which would only create a grievance. She stated that it would be a reasonable expectation that all the large towns and villages in the Loughrea MD would expect the same level of service as that of other municipal districts. Cllr Maher stated that it unacceptable that the Loughrea M.D. get 16% of the street cleaning budget allocated for the county and that the members should work toward securing an allocation approaching 20% of the total allocation for the county.

Mr. Mitchell said that he took on board all the comments and concerns raised. He agreed that the funding allocated was not sufficient and that it was necessary to be flexible with the funding available to resolve issues as they arise. He added that funding is also insufficient for other matters such as pothole repairs and hedgecutting and that it is a constant challenge to ensure that there are monies available for such services.

Confirmation of Minutes of Budget Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 20th October 2020

LMD 20043

The Minutes of the Budget Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 20th October 2020 were proposed by Cllr Byrne, seconded by Cllr Donohoe and agreed and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Arising from the minutes raised and in response to Cllr Kinane's query about the budget allocation against the economic subservice D0905 Economic Development & Promotion, Ms Ruane responded that this subservice was the economic development sub-set of the Community Support Scheme. In terms of 2020 there were nine projects in the Loughrea MD supported under economic development category of the GCC Community Support Scheme. The allocation listed in the MD budget was only an indicative spend and it did not reflect the overall spend the last number of years. She agreed that she would make available to Cllr Kinane detail of specific grants funded over the last year.

Burial Ground Draft Bye Laws -Update

LMD 20044

Mr Melody updated the meeting with an overview of progress of the Environment Section in the drafting of new burial ground bye laws. He informed the meeting as follows:

That a draft document in respect of the new Burial Ground Bye Laws was nearing completion. Consultation would be sought with the relevant stakeholders such as the area offices and with the Council Law Agents regarding the legal drafting of the document. Mr. Melody said that the Draft Bye-laws would be advertised for public consultation which will allow for submissions. Following completion of the public consultation the Council will review submissions and the bye laws will go to full council for adoption. The process was expected to take 3 months or more to complete.

Mr. Melody informed the meeting that the introduction of the Bye Laws sought to bring greater regulation to such matters as;

- Assist in the regularisation of the plot allocation, restrictions on headstones, kerbing, monuments etc
- Management of waste generated within BG.
- penalty mechanisms for non-compliance/breach of bye laws.
- Introduction and operation of Columbarium walls/urn towers

Cllr Maher welcomed the proposal for the introduction of new bye laws and that it was critically needed, citing issues such as anti-social behaviour and the size of headstones erected in some burial grounds in the municipal district. He expressed concern at the length of time it may take to introduce the bye laws once sent for legal verification.

Cllr Finnerty commented on the huge spread that that the bye laws would have across the many burial grounds across the county. He expressed concern at some burial grounds in regard to wheelchair accessibility and the difficulties presented for burial ground committees in maintaining grounds and suggested that there is a need for greater support for them from initiatives such as Community Employment Schemes.

Cllr Canning added that not all burial grounds are the same especially those in rural areas and that there needed to be some consideration given to this. He hoped that the proposed bye laws did not result in extra difficulty for burial ground committees in performing their duties.

Cllr McClearn welcomed the proposal for new bye laws especially in regard to restrictions on height and size regulations for headstones He added the importance of the enforcement of the bye laws should issues of non-compliance arise. He asked for greater flexibility from the Council in regard to the pre purchasing of plots in some cases. He also noted the importance in ensuring the protection of historical monuments in burial grounds that had fallen into disrepair and said that a discussion was needed around the preservation of such monuments at these graveyards and what could be feasibly done.

Cllr Kinane welcomed the introduction of the bye laws and the discussion on the introduction of urn towners. She pointed to the introduction of a pilot project in Rinville burial ground and asked for feedback from councillors on their thoughts on this project. She outlined that costings of such projects would need to be looked at in detail but that the introduction of such projects will be more common in future.

Cllr Murphy welcomed the proposal of draft bye laws and that there would be restrictions on headstones size. He asked that there be consideration given in regard to the permitting of Celtic crosses and that they were part of the landscape and asked that the bye laws respect tradition.

Cllr Donohoe welcomed the preparation of the bye laws. She asked that the Heritage and Conservation sections of the Council to support local community groups who wished to

take on projects in some graveyards especially those in which boundary walls may have fallen into disrepair. She also asked that the wording on the draft bye laws be simpler to assist the public in making submissions.

Cllr Byrne reiterated the importance that the tradition of the erection of Celtic Cross be maintained within the bye laws He felt that a number of issues would need be addressed within the bye laws such as accessibility for the elderly, need for a water supply for watering of flowers on graves and dealing with waste issues that may arise in the burial ground. The introduction of columbarium's would need to be looked at in more detail especially in regard to their funding. In regard to public submission he said there would be need for consultation with caretakers and burial ground committees and ask them what they feel should be in the bye laws.

Ms. Ruane thanked the members for their contribution and said the bye laws were very much a work in progress. She acknowledged the importance of inviting the community to make submissions on the bye laws and the importance of the being able to enforce the bye laws once introduced. The council would continue to work with families in regard to situations as they arise and understood the emotive nature of burials. She also paid tribute to the ongoing work of the burial ground caretakers and maintenance committees.

Road Traffic (Special Speed Limits) County Galway Bye-Laws No. 1-2020 (Housing Estates Slow Zones) LMD 0045

Ms Holland explained that the Draft Bye-laws had been notified to the Garda Síochána. She said that they related to a 30km/h speed limit for mechanically propelled vehicles on the roads as follows;

- the estates in Bhaile Chlair: - Summerfield, River Oaks
- the estate in Gort – Burren View
- the estate in Portumna – Cois an Eolais.

Ms Holland said that the Draft Bye-laws would be advertised for public consultation which will allow for submissions. Following completion of the public consultation the Council will review submissions and the bye laws will go to full council for adoption.

Cllr Byrne asked that consideration be given to speed ramps in some estates as he noted a continued disregard to speeding signage. Cllr Canning thanked Ms Holland for the presentation and said that the design of some estates in Portuma had contributed to speeding issues. He added that the introduction of speed ramps would act as a deterrent to speeding in estates. Cllr Finnerty added that there is a need for more signs in some estates and that enforcement of the bye laws would be needed. Cllr Murphy raised the point that unwanted speed ramps have consequences for businesses carrying delicate loads and that speed ramps should have a safety design alert in place.

In response Mr. Mitchell said that there wasn't the necessary funding for the introduction of speed ramps adding that speed ramps had been responsible for a number of insurance claims and would require consultation with emergency services. He said there were a

large number of estates in the county and that an analysis of them would require resources and funding mechanism for same. It would be better to choose specific estates where speeding issues have arisen rather than across the entire county.

Cllr Byrne proposed that the matter be raised with the relevant engineer for estates identified with speeding issues – Cllr Canning seconded the motion.

Cathaoirleach Business

LMD 0046

Cllr Maher informed the meeting that due to Covid 19 Galway County Council had to adopt new systems to deliver projects to the community. A report was distributed to the members outlining a number of heritage initiatives that had been delivered digitally this year in Loughrea such as the Loughrea Medieval Festival and the Loughrea Memorial Group's Virtual Conference. Both events had gained significant traction online and on social media platforms. Cllr Maher praised the work of the heritage committee and in particular the outstanding work of heritage officer Ms Mannion and her team in this regard.

Ms Ruane concurred with Cllr Maher and thanked Ms Mannion for all her hard work done in this area.

Cllr McClearn informed the meeting that design consultants have been appointed to progress work on Loughrea Town Hall. He praised the work of LARC who have been working with the Municipal District members in helping to drive this initiative. He asked that a group approach be taken to ensure consultation with local community partners. Cllr Maher agreed with such an approach and that the consultants engage with LARC on the project. Ms Ruane agreed to speak with Mr Farrell, DOS on this.

A discussion arose on staffing numbers in the Loughrea Municipal District.

Cllr McClearn felt that there was an imbalance in staffing in the Portumna area in comparison to that of Loughrea and Gort. He felt that commitments made in regard to staff had not been made. In response Mr Haugh said that a vacant post in Portumna had been filled in November following a retirement earlier in the year.

Cllr Byrne acknowledged the work of council staff but stated that despite the increase in the road allocation since 2015, there had not been an increase in staff numbers. He asked that this be put on the agenda for December.

M Kinane agreed with Cllr McClearn and Cllr Byrne in regard to the imbalance in staffing levels. She thanked the work of area engineer Mr McGillycuddy and his staff but that staffing numbers are an issue in meeting the expectation of the work arising.

Cllr Donohoe acknowledged the work of the council staff and the efforts during the Covid pandemic. She asked that consideration be given to those outdoor staff that had worked additional time such as weekend work during the pandemic, and that the Human Resources section of Galway County Council allow staff them to carry over any additional

leave not taken as a result. Cllr Donohoe also asked for an update on the Kilchreest GWS project.

Cllr Canning referred to staffing matters within the council and the need for further engagement with organisations such as GRD and use of CE schemes. He felt there was too much red tape in order to get such assistance and a change of mindset was needed to engage with voluntary organisations.

In response Mr Mitchell said that grants for roads allocation are for that purpose alone and cannot be used to recruit staff. He added that the allocation of funding available for staffing would have to be looked at nationally.

Cllr Byrne expressed his disappointment that Flooding matters were not on the agenda – He asked that an update on these matters be got from Mr Gallagher.

The MD asked that Ms Doddy be present to attend the next MD meeting in regard to a general overview of conservation issues in the MD especially in regard to walled buildings and structural issues arising such as boundary walls at graveyards.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Loughrea MD would be held on Monday 14th December at 10am.

CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CHRUINNIU ANSIN

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Maher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**CLLR MICHAEL MAHER
CATHAOIRLEACH, LOUGHREA MD**