

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLMHE**

**Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara**

**Municipal District of Conamara**

**Minutes of the Municipal District of Conamara Meeting held on Tuesday  
10<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 at 9.30a.m.**

**ILATHAIR:**

**CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. Seamus Walsh.

**BAILL:** Cllr. G. King, Cllr. E. Mannion, Comh P. Mac An  
Iomaire, Comh T. Ó Curraoin, Cllr. N. Thomas,  
Cllr. T. Welby, Cllr. A. McKinstry, Cllr. D  
O’Cualainn

**OIFIGH:** M. Owens, Director of Services, R. Lowe, Senior  
Engineer, I. Martyn, Administrative,  
Officer/Meetings Administrator, H. Riordan, A.S.O.  
Corporate Services.

**1. Confirmation of Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of  
Connemara held on Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2022.**

**CMD21078**

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Connemara held on  
Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 were **PROPOSED** by Comh Ó Curraoin and **SECONDED** by Cllr.  
King and **AGREED**.

### **Matters Arising:**

Comh. Mac An Iomaire referenced the number of fires in the Connemara Area since the last meeting with the fire-brigade travelling from Galway and Athenry, noting that he considered the time involved was putting people's lives at risk. He said that Carraroe should have a 2-pump station.

Comh Ó Curraoin supported Comh Mac An Iomaire and said that Carraroe is central between Galway and Clifden.

On the proposal of Comh Mac An Iomaire and seconded by Comh Ó Curraoin it was agreed that the Chief Fire Officer review the situation regarding the up-grade of Carraroe Fire Station to a 2-pump station in light of the recent fires in the Connemara Area.

Comh Ó Cualainn said there was a need for a second pump to be provided in the Carraroe station and he said he wished to establish if the Chief Fire Officer had looked for funding for the provision of the second pump. He added that he believed that there would be no problem locally in the recruitment of extra staff for the additional service.

The Members joined in welcoming Ms. Lowe to the Connemara Municipal District as Senior Engineer for Infrastructure and Operations.

Ms. Lowe in reply to a contribution from Cllr. Mannion in relation to the need to advance the provision of bus shelters citing as an example Letterfrack confirmed that a schedule was being prepared and that she was available to liaise directly with the Members prior to finalizing the schedule of locations for bus shelters.

**2. Municipal Districts Allocation – To re-allocate a €5000 contribution towards bus shelters in Moycullen to the Rosscahill / Killanin Footpath / Cycleway Doon East Enhancement Scheme.** **CMD21079**

On the proposal of Cllr. Thomas and seconded by Cllr. Walsh it was agreed the transfer of funding in amount of €5,000 from the Bus Shelters in Moycullen to the Rosscahill/Killanin Footpath/Cycleway Doon East Enhancement Scheme.

**3. Municipal District of Conamara Director's Business** **CMD21080**

Cllr. Mannion enquired about a pedestrian crossing in Letterfrack village as it was one of the busiest villages in the area.

Cllr. McKinstry enquired regarding projects and works being carried out under Active Travel and he requested a presentation for the next meeting. He said that monies allocated for Active Travel initiatives were being spent on repair of footpaths and he expressed his concern regarding the lack of progress in cycleways and referenced the need to improve cycle access to bus-stops. He referenced the number of incidents involving motorists and cyclists on the R336. He requested an update on the provision of a Greenway from Salthill to Bearna.

Ms. Lowe replied that she would have an update on the Salthill/Barna Greenway for the next meeting. She advised that a presentation on Active Travel projects would be provided at the next meeting and the Council would now be in a position to move on to the next phase of the project. She said that the Active Travel measures were limited to works within the speed limit areas but added that National Cycle Network envisaged the provision of a number of link-up routes.

Cllr. McKinstry informed the meeting of a Government announcement to reduce bus fares for persons under 23 years of age travelling on Bus Eireann. Adding that this initiative will help students living in Bearna and travelling into the city but to support this initiative requires the provision of bus stops. While welcoming it, Cllr. Mannion

stated that this will not benefit students from Clifden as the bus service only commences at 9am.

Comh. Ó Curraoin referenced safety concerns in relation to the Coast Road especially around An Spidéal. He expressed the opinion that the offer of a 15m corridor of land for a Greenway from local landowners should have been accepted and if required they could negotiate with the landowners for a further 15metres. He said that the landowners are now fearful that this decision will lead to Compulsory Purchase Order.

In reply, Cllr. Walsh said that land had not been taken, that the County Development Plan sets out aspirations in the form of policy objectives and zoning and these were voted for by the Councillors. Cllr. Mannion pointed out that the 15m set back was in the previous County Development Plan and so had not changed. Comh Ó Curraoin responded that the change to 15m was included but had been omitted from the record in the Bearna Development Plan 2018. Cllr. Thomas expanded that the decision to change the set back and zoning of the lands as recreational, has potentially reduced the value of the land for the landowners. However, the value of the land is also dependent on flood assessments on the land.

A discussion took place regarding the R336. Comh. Ó Curraoin stated that the Greenway would eventually connect Bearna pier to Salthill, however most of the area is subject to Special Area of Conservation (SAC) orders and so will prove difficult to complete. Cllr. Thomas concurred with Cllr. McKinstry in relation to the safety issues associated with the R336 but pointed out that the greenway isn't the solution for all cyclists, that the road needs to be made safer for faster cyclists that cannot use the greenway. Cllr. McKinstry added that the route needs to be made safer not only for leisure cyclists but also to enable students to cycle to school and a 1m wide cycle path is not sufficient, that 5m is necessary and this would facilitate faster cyclists. He noted that in Europe electric bikes are more popular than electric cars, the greenway would facilitate commuting into the future.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire referenced a discussion that took place at the Joint Policing Committee meeting regarding overtaking a cyclist on the continuous white line on the road from An Spidéal to Galway and outlined that he was advised by the Superintendent that it would be an offence for a motorist to cross the white line to overtake a cyclist.

Cllr. Welby said regarding the zoning of lands in Bearna decisions in relation to zoning are inflating land values and then the land is not being developed, and communities are lacking in the provision of amenities. He commented that he is exasperated with landowners lobbying him regarding the zoning of land in the lead up to every County Development Plan with lands zoned not being subsequently developed.

Cllr. King enquired if works can be carried out on piers that are protected structures. He noted that fishermen are climbing from their boats on a line of tyres, which has serious health and safety implications and he requested that ladders be fixed to piers. The recent pontoon presentation given to the meeting highlighted the importance of safety.

He referenced that the carpets of moss currently on slipways will increase with the longer daylight hours and heat and there is an accident waiting to happen if they are not cleared. He enquired if a foreshore licence is required for the extension of a slipway, noting that in Cleggan the ferries are large and require a longer slipway and if it is not extended they will go elsewhere.

In response Ms. Lowe stated that Mr. Prendergast S.E. has been appointed to the Roads Department with responsibility for Piers and Harbours and he will issue a response to the queries raised. She highlighted that process for Foreshore licences is complex and difficult to obtain.

Cllr. Welby welcomed the decision to re-allocate a €5,000 contribution towards the Rosscahill / Killannin Footpath / Cycleway at Doon East Enhancement Scheme and encouraged all Members to contribute additional monies to this Scheme.

Cllr. Welby requested an update on the proposed footbridge in Oughterard.

Ms. Lowe replied that the works would be carried out with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) as it is on a National Road with the following options:

The preferred option is to replace the existing bridge with a sufficiently wide structure to facilitate other users such as pedestrians, but the environmental considerations may prove too challenging. The area is very sensitive ecologically with the presence of the fresh-water pearl mussels. The bridge is also a protected structure.

An alternative option is to leave the existing bridge in-situ and to add a new pedestrian bridge on the town-centre side.

Comh Ó Curraoin supported Cllr. Welby regarding the footbridge agreeing that it is necessary and he supported Cllr. King regarding the cleaning of the slipways to avoid another tragedy like what happened in Buncrana. He commented that regarding the ladders being installed at the piers, that health and safety must be the priority over protected structures.

Comh. Ó Cualainn agreed with Cllr. King that the funding for Piers and Harbours is inadequate.

He concurred with Comh Mac An Iomaire regarding the issue of overtaking cyclists on the continuous white line on the R336 which was raised at the JPC meeting and he requested that the issue be addressed.

He requested an update on the Causeways at Lettermore.

He raised his concern regarding the number of accidents in Baile Aird, Spiddal. He said that the residents are concerned about the gradient of the road and the number of cars that are mounting the footpath.

He highlighted that it was hoped that Inis Oir beach would obtain a blue flag status. However, it is a requirement of blue flag beaches to have lifeguards Monday to Friday.

Cllr. Mannion queried the progress on the bridge in Oughterard in the past year.

Ms. Lowe replied that she awaited approval from TII to appoint Consultants.

Cllr. Mannion enquired regarding the Summer Ready Programme and camping on commonage land.

She said there is a 5-year plan for Piers and Harbours but questioned the current works and the update on Inish Oirr By-Laws.

In conclusion Mr. Owens responded that as issues relating to Piers and Harbours and Protected Structures had been raised, he would invite Mr. Prendergast, Roads & Infrastructure and Ms. Mairin Doddy, Conservation Officer, Planning to address the next MD meeting and that in this regard it would be helpful to have a list of the piers and the nature and type of works required in advance of the meeting to inform the briefing.

He advised that Irish Water Safety had issued a suite of guidance notes in relation to water safety including slipways and they will be implemented. He confirmed that approval had been received for the employment of a full-time Water Safety Officer to assist in the implementation of the guidance.

The Summer Ready Programme 2022 report is being finalised. The draft has been circulated and the Plan will be brought to the Plenary Meeting. The query regarding commonage land will be included and recruitment, additional funding and public conveniences will be addressed.

He indicated that an update on Active Travel and the Greenway would be available for the next meeting.

## **5. Votes of Sympathy / Congratulations**

No votes of sympathy or congratulations were proposed.

## **6. A.O.B.**

The next Monthly Meeting is scheduled for Friday 17th June, 2022.

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CHRÍOCHNAIGH AN CRUINIÚ ANSIN

Submitted Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach: Seamus Walsh  
Date: 17/6/2022