

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara
Municipal District of Conamara

Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held in the
Council Chamber on the 11th of June 2021 @ 10.00 a.m

I LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach:

Cllr. Seamus Walsh

Baill:

Comh./Cllrs. N. Thomas, G. King, T.
O'Curraoin, T. Welby, E. Mannion, D.
Ó' Cualáin, A. McKinstry & P. Mac an Iomaire

Oifigigh:

M. Owens, Director of Service
F. Holland, S.E Infrastructure-Operations
A. Dolan, Executive Scientist, Environment
B. McDonagh E.E Infrastructure-Operations
M. Kerrigan E.E Infrastructure-Operations
N. O' Canola, Area Engineer, S. Conamara
S. Groarke, Meetings Administrator

Apologies:

D. Mitchell, S.E. Infrastructure-Operations

1. Minutes of the MD of Conamara Meetings held on the 21-5-2021 CMD 21030

The adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 21-5-2021 was proposed by Comh. T. O'Curraoin, seconded by Comh. D. O' Cualáin and agreed subject to amendments as detailed by Comh. D. O' Cualáin.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes CMD 21031

The following matters were raised:

Comh. D. O' Cualáin referred to the Consultants reports in regard to Ceantar na Oileáin and the results of the tests on the core samples- he requested changes to the minutes in regard to this and the speed limits. He stated that he received no replies to his e-mails and has a number of questions on this matter. It was agreed that M. Owens would contact D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer and make arrangements for a meeting to discuss Ceantar na nOileáin and that his query in regard to speed limits would be referred to F. Holland. A discussion took place in regard to the provision of sufficient litter bins to cater for the staycation requirements.

A. Dolan advised that Clifden Beach has had a poor Water Quality rating for many years, including from 2016 to 2020. Under the Bathing Water Regulations 2008, it is a requirement to 'declassify' a bathing water that has had a poor Water Quality rating resulting from water sample testing for five consecutive years. As a result, the EPA advised Galway County Council that Clifden Beach must be removed in 2021 from the list of designated beaches. Details are on the EPA's Annual Report for 2020.

She explained that a new public Wastewater Treatment Plant was provided for Clifden Town in 2015 and was fully operational by 2018. Significant upgrade and rehabilitation works were carried out on the network and the ingress of wastewater to surface water discharge outfalls on the Owenglen River and to the bay has been significantly reduced as a result. There is only one storm water overflow (SWO) remaining and this is located at the Treatment Plant. The existing wastewater discharge licence from the EPA does not licence any storm water outflows from the Treatment plant and Irish Water have informed the Council that this will be included in an upcoming application to the EPA for regularisation of same. Risk assessments carried out as part of the development of a Management Plan for the bathing area indicate that this storm water overflow may continue to pose a risk to the bathing area. The EPA are the enforcement authority with responsibility for ensuring compliance with the licence for the public Wastewater Treatment Plant. She stated that Irish Water have a monitoring program and a working group reviewing solutions for this problem and are in contact with the EPA in regard to regularization of the outfall. They are also engaged on checking the pipes and the Council will continue to maintain contact with Irish Water.

She explained that climate change has a major impact and referred to the major flooding at Clifden in September 2020 which is predicted to occur more often and will result in high spikes of bacterial contamination as the heavy rain washes a lot of material into the bay. There had been high bacterial spikes from 2016-2020 with one of the probable major causes being the storm water overflows resulting from the increased heavy rainfall. The bathing season period is the 1st of June to the 15th of September when the quality of water is assessed from samples.

She stated that other potential sources of pollution include discharges from septic tanks in the area. The Council carried out inspections of septic tanks serving domestic and non-domestic premises in the catchment and are working with landowners to address any issues identified.

She stated that there were issues with 10 houses- 7 of the septic tanks have been remediated with 3 remaining- 1 property has to be referred to the Law Agent due to no contact from the owner. She also referred to the checking of the discharges from the septic tanks located at the RNLI building and the Boat Club. She advised that the Council monitor the situation and follow up in relation to any issues identified that may pose a risk to the bathing area.

The meeting was advised of the problems with sewage treatment and disposal at Bearna due to overloading and how the capacity of Mutton Island is insufficient – small sewage treatment systems are required. A. Dolan advised that she was hopeful that the results for the period up to the end of 2022 will be better as there are some indications of better impacts as a result

of the remedial works. Cllr. E. Mannion referred to the need for Clifden to get its Blue Flag Beach status back as soon as possible as it is vital to the local tourism industry.

4. Clifden Flood Relief Scheme

CMD 21033

B. McDonagh E.E provided an updated presentation on the Clifden Flood Relief Scheme which will be progressed by the Council in partnership with the OPW under the CFRAM Program which is the strategy for the reduction and management of flood risk. The OPW is the lead agency for flood risk management under the EU Floods and Water Framework Directives and works in close partnership with local authorities to deliver the objectives of the CFRAM program. He outlined the current work schedule as follows:

Procurement of Engineering and Environmental Consultants

- 1-3-2021: The Council sent Invitations to Tender to various Engineering Consultants.
- The Contract will be procured using 1 Consulting firm to progress both the Engineering and Environmental elements of the project and resulting scheme.
- 2 Tender submissions were received by the deadline of the 12-4-2021.

The Project shall comprise up to 5 stages as follows:

- Stage 1: Scheme Assessment, Development and Design.
- Stage 2: Planning
- Stage 3: Detailed Design & Procurement of Works.
- Stage 4: Construction
- Stage 5: Handover

The objectives of the project are:

- The identification, appraisal and design of a Flood Relief Scheme that is technically, socially, environmentally and economically acceptable and that alleviates the risk of flooding to the community of Clifden to the target standard protection (SoP) OF 1% annual exceedance probability (AEP), often referred to as a 100-yrar flood
- To obtain the necessary planning and environmental consents for the scheme.
- To procure, manage and oversee the construction of the scheme.

Next Steps:

- Complete Contract Award by mid-June.
- Set up meeting with the appointed Consultants.

He advised that the contract will be awarded within the next 2 weeks and provided estimated timelines for the various stages of the project: Stage 1: estimated 9 months to the end of Q1 of 2022, Stage 2: estimated 5 months to the end of Q3 of 2022, Stage: estimated 6 months to Q2 of 2024, Stage 4: construction estimated 12 months. The project is scheduled for completion in 2025. He explained that public consultations will be held as well as discussions

with Irish Water and the Consultants will make a presentation on the scheme to the elected members. In response to a query concerning short time measures- he advised that this will be raised with the OPW but indicated that they may not be viable due to the fact that they will take time to deliver and may impact on the overall designed scheme. Cllr. E. Mannion welcomed the progress report but expressed concern about potential flooding in the meantime as the estimated completion of the scheme is still a few years away. B. McDonagh explained that the design of the scheme will determine whether it will be undertaken by direct labour or contract and advised that he will be available to provide updates on progress at future meetings.

5. Islands Committee -Election

CMD 21034

The election of Comh D. O’Cualáin as Cathaoirleach and Comh. P. Mac An Iomaire as Leas-Chathaoirleach of the Islands Committee was agreed

6. Inis Meáin Harbour/Pier

CMD 21035

M. Kerrigan presented an updated report on the current position in regard to the proposed development of the harbour at Caladh Mór on Inis Meáin. He explained that the National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI) based at Ringaskiddy, County Cork was commissioned by the Council to undertake digital models for a range of designs to assess the operational capability of Caladh Mór and highlight the issues to be addressed as regards harbour access. He advised that a training day/scoping exercise on a simulator has been arranged for the 8-7-2021. The training will be provided for residents/stakeholders who use Caladh Mór harbour including 3 from the ferry companies, 1 from the cargo commercial company and 2 island residents i.e fishermen/mariners. The NMCI will report back to the Council in regard to the outcome of this scoping exercise at a later date.

7. Parking spaces for Caravans

CMD 21036

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting as the Senior Engineer was not available to attend the meeting. The meeting was advised that there should be a national policy on motorcaravans and matters such as the disposal of sewage and that counties such as Donegal are providing parking at community facilities for those vehicles.

8. Cathaoirleach’s Business

CMD 21037

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. S. Walsh outlined his views on the difficulties in certain circumstances of getting planning permission in Conamara and that residents should be entitled to this on their own land. He referred to the need for clarity in relation to the requirements of the current County Development Plan relating to housing need including rural links and suggested a meeting with the Director and Planning staff to assist in bringing clarity to the approach in relation to such requirements.

9. Director’s Business

CMD 21038

M. Owens reminded the members that the Council is required to submit a report to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on the proposed expenditure of the

€1m special allocation for the Municipal Districts by the end of June. It was agreed that the allocation of the funding available to the Conamara MD would be agreed at an online Teams Meeting to be scheduled for 9 a.m on Monday 21-6-2021.

10. AOB

CMD 21039

The following items were raised under AOB.

1. Flooding at Kylemore Bridge.
2. Problems with septic tanks at Kilronan.

11. Date & Venue for next Meeting

CMD 21040

It was agreed that a meeting on Microsoft Teams will be organized for 9 a.m on Monday 21-6-2021.

CHRÍOCHNAIGH AN CRUINIÚ ANSIN

Seamus Walsh

