

## **COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**

### **Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara** **Municipal District of Conamara**

#### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held at the Council Chamber, Aras an Chontae, Galway on Friday the 11th of September 2020 @ 2.00 p.m**

#### **ILATHAIR:**

##### **Baill:**

Cllr. G. King Cathaoirleach, N. Thomas,  
S. Walsh, T. O'Curraoin, T. Welby, E.  
Mannion, D. Ó'Cuailáin, P. Mac An Iomaire. A.  
McKinstry

##### **Oifigigh:**

A. Farrell, Director of Service  
D. Mitchell, S.E Infrastructure-Operations  
P. Breathnach S.E.E Infrastructure-Operations  
B. McDonagh, E.E Infrastructure-Operations  
S. Groarke, Meetings Administrator

#### **Apologies:**

#### **1. Minutes of the MD of Conamara Meeting held on the 10-7-2020. CMD 20027**

The adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 10-7-2020 was proposed by Cllr. S. Walsh and seconded by Cllr. D. O'Cuailáin.

#### **2. Matters arising from the Minutes CMD 20028**

A discussion took place in regard to the reactivation of the planning process for the R336 and it was agreed to hold a special meeting to discuss it. The meeting was advised that the elected members are receiving numerous representations from the local community concerning the dangerous condition of the existing R336 which is a major health & safety issue and the fact that it is difficult for traffic to get through urban areas like Spiddal and Carraroe. A request

was made to amend the minutes of the meeting held on the 10-7-2020 to reflect the fact that the Department of Transport advised GCC that the planning process for the R336 cannot be reactivated until the completion of the Oral Hearing of the GCRR, the decision of An Bord Pleanála and the finalization of the appeals process. A query was raised concerning whether there are any plans to improve the existing R336 to make it safer and the need for a dedicated cycle route in Conamara. It was recommended that the Council make the Department aware of the alternative route comprising the Rahooon Road-Golf Club-Paddy's Cross- Spiddal- the advantage of this route is that buildings will not have to be demolished. A discussion took place on whether an executive decision should have been made on the route selection process during the past 10 years as the members had been advised that it was an executive function.

D. Mitchell re-stated that the Department of Transport have advised that it cannot at present consider the reactivation of the planning process for the R336 until the completion of the Oral Hearing on the N6 GCRR and the final decision of An Bord Pleanála & the result of the appeals process-as it would compromise this scheme.

Other items raised included an update on the taking of samples for the causeways at Ceantar na nOileáin, the public toilet at Inishmore Pier and progress in regard to the compilation of funding calls by the relevant Directorates. D. Mitchell advised that the Council has sought quotations in regard to the taking of samples from the bridges at Ceantar na nOileáin. A. Farrell advised that an e-mail has been issued to the Directors in regard to the funding calls.

### **3. Cathaoirleach's Business**

**CMD 20029**

Cllr. G. King welcomed A. Farrell as the new Director assigned to the MD of Conamara and the members thanked G. Mullarkey for his work in the past. The Councillors acknowledged the work done by Council engineering & outdoor staff, volunteers, Galway Fire Brigade, the Gardaí & the RNLI in regard to the unprecedented flooding caused by torrential rain during the 1-2 of September. B. McDonagh E.E presented a report on the flooding and explained how the huge volumes of water caused the Owenglen River to burst its banks- he advised that are concerns about structural damage to the Dooneen Bridge on the Clifden-Ballyconneely Road. He explained that the Clifden Flood Relief Scheme for which the OPW (CFRAMS) is the funding agency is going to tender to appoint Consultants to produce an Engineering Options Report to provide more feasible options considering environmental, engineering and cost benefit aspects. Following the flooding event on the 2<sup>ND</sup> of September the scope of the works and the project brief will be reviewed to:

- Ensure the recent flood event is captured hydraulically.
  - To capture additional properties flooded in Clifden Glen, Riverside and Low Road.
- The next steps for the Council are:
- To survey all properties to review flood levels.
  - Gather photos and videos from residents and the Fire Service.
  - Present the information to the OPW for review (CFRAMS process)
  - Liaise with the OPW to produce an updated scope of the works.

A discussion took place in regard to the use of an alert system, river drainage and the installation of flood gates.

In response to a query from Cllr. G. King -D.Mitchell advised that 4 applicants have been offered posts in regard to vacancies for outdoor staff for Conamara.

#### **4. Director's Business**

**CMD 20030**

A. Farrell referred to recent funding allocated by the Department of Rural & Community Development for projects in regard to the Towns & Villages Renewal Schemes. This includes €36,000 for marketing tourism for Conamara and €25,000 Covid-19 support for street seating to aid social distancing in Clifden. D. Mitchell advised that the Council has received €80,000 to complete the Spiddal promenade, €50,000 for a pedestrian crossing at Rosmuc and €40,000 for improved crossing facilities at Clonbur.

#### **5. AOB**

**CMD 20031**

The members discussed the additional funding of €1 million announced by the Minister of Housing, Planning & Local Government Darragh O'Brien T.D for the Council -this is intended as discretionary funding to be allocated among the 5 Municipal Districts with €200,000 each for projects. Reference was made to the NOAC Report which highlighted the differences with other Local Authorities with significant gaps when per capita averages such as Capital & Revenue Expenditure and staff resources are taken into account- the comparisons indicate that the Council is underfunded and understaffed. A. Farrell advised that this is due to several factors some of which are historical. He noted that the last Council had established a Committee to raise the problem of underfunding with the Government and the Galway Oireachtas members and that they were provided with the significant relevant information highlighting the financial predicament the Council is in. The meeting was advised that there were several meetings and discussions with senior Departmental officials and with Oireachtas members including Minister John Paul Phelan T.D who had attended at meetings in the Council Chamber and received a detailed report from the C.E as well as facilitating discussions with the members. The members agreed that this process should be kept under review by the present coalition Government and the following Notice of Motion was agreed.

“That Galway County Council write to Minister O'Brien to ask that he would continue to fund GCC with the additional €1 million per annum until the serious funding deficiency is resolved for the Council”.

This NOM was proposed by Cllr. Tom Welby and seconded by Cllr. Eileen Mannion.

Reference was made to the Expressions of Interest sought by the Council in regard to turnkey submissions for Social Housing in all towns & villages in Conamara. The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Cllr. Noel Thomas and seconded by Cllr. Seamus Walsh.

“I propose that the Housing Section in Galway County Council will provide the Conamara Councillors with the figures on how many Expressions of Interest they received on the turnkey submissions for Social Housing in all towns and villages in Conamara and also to detail the number of units proposed for each development in each town or village. Submissions were due to the Local Authority by the 20<sup>th</sup> of August 2020 so I would expect that this information would be sent out to the Councillors sometime next week”.

Other issues raised were:

- The sign for the Wild Atlantic Way is facing the wrong way at Báile na hAbhann which is confusing drivers which are diverted towards the pier.
- Query as regards an application for funding for Safe Pass distance signage in regard vehicles overtaking cyclists.
- Concern raised in regard to the waiting time for maintenance and repairs to the Council's Social Housing stock- which includes issues such as fixing back boilers.
- The meeting was advised that Conamara received a lot of visitor on staycation holidays recently -but facilities such as more litter bins and signage are required. There were problems associated with parking along narrow roads and where exactly camper vans are permitted to park. It was recommended that the Council plans ahead for next year and that Ruth Mulhern the Tourism Officer can liaise with Fáilte Ireland on this matter. A. Farrell advised that it would be helpful if the members identified the specific issues and the current parking bye-laws could be considered.

#### **8. Date & Venue for next Meeting**

**MD 20026**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara will be held on Friday 23-9-2020 in the Council Chamber following the Draft Budgetary Plan Meeting which is scheduled for 10.00 a.m. The current duration is 2 hours.

***CROCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN***