

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara

Municipal District of Connemara

Minutes of the Municipal District of Connemara Meeting held on Friday 15th July, 2022 at 10.00 a.m. Council Chamber

ILATHAIR:

CATHAOIRLEACH: Comh Dáithi Ó Cualáin

BAILL: Cllr. G. King, Cllr. E. Mannion, Comh P. Mac An Iomaire, Comh T. Ó Curraoin, Cllr. N. Thomas, Cllr. N. Thomas, Cllr. S. Walsh & Cllr. T. Welby.

OIFIGH: M. Owens, Director of Services, R. Lowe, Senior Engineer, T. Prendergast, Senior Engineer, I. Martyn, Administrative Officer/Meetings Administrator, M. Kerrigan, Executive Engineer, P. Breathnach, Senior Executive Engineer, TJ, Redmond, Executive Engineer, M. Melody, Senior Executive Engineer, Ruth Mulhern, Tourism Officer, C. Wynne, Senior Executive Engineer.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Connemara held on Friday 17th June, 2022. **CMD 21089**

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Connemara held on Friday 17th June, 2022 were **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Walsh, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Thomas and **AGREED**.

Matters Arising:

Comh. Mac An Iomaire congratulated Comh Ó Cualáin on his election as Cathaoirleach of the Connemara Municipal District and thanked Cllr. Walsh the outgoing Cathaoirleach. He extended his apologies for not being able to attend the Annual Meeting.

Comh Mac An Iomaire proposed that an expression of congratulations be extended to the Micheál Breathnach ladies football team on winning the Junior All-Ireland.

Comh. O'Curraoin seconded the proposal.

Cllr. Thomas expressed his concern regarding the dangerous wall on the road at Killeen House and he enquired if Transport Infrastructure Ireland had been notified. He advised that Galway County Council should notify the landowners of their responsibilities regarding the upkeep of the wall on their lands.

Ms. Lowe responded that the National Road Project Office is looking at the area in respect of a road safety project (only at initial stages of consideration) but the walls along the road are the landowner's responsibility. She said that she would advise the National Roads Project Office to investigate the matter.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Municipal District of Connemara held on Tuesday, 21st June 2022. **CMD 21090**

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Municipal District of Connemara held on Tuesday, 21st June, 2022 were **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Walsh **SECONDED** by Cllr. King and **AGREED**.

Cllr. Mannion wished to congratulate Comh Ó Cualáin on his election as Cathaoirleach of the Connemara Municipal District and she thanked the outgoing Cathaoirleach Cllr. Walsh for his work. She extended her apologies for not being able to attend the Annual Meeting.

3. Declaration of a road to be a Public Road

CMD 21091

Road commencing at junction with L-52077(53.242189, -9.451995) in the townland of An Cartúr Leathan and extending North West for a distance of 350m in the townland of An Cartúr Leathan and finishing at (53.2444431,-9.455076) in the townland of An Cartúr Leathan.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh Mac An Iomaire and **SECONDED** by Comh Ó Cualáin it was **AGREED** that the road at Cartúr Leathan be declared a public road.

It was agreed by the Members to take Item 6 as Ms. Lowe had a prior commitment to attend another meeting.

6. Inner Relief Road Cong - Section 85 Agreement

CMD 21092

Ms Lowe briefed the Councillors on a proposed Section 85 Agreement with Mayo CoCo. The purpose of the Section 85 is to facilitate Mayo County Council in designing, planning and delivering (subject to planning consent) a relief road for Cong, including any part of which lies within Co. Galway. It is a function of the Plenary Council to approve the entering into of the Section 85 Agreement, but the matter is being brought before the Conamara MD Councillors for their information. She advised that regular updates would be provided to the Conamara Municipal District. In response to a query from Cllr. Thomas she advised that it is not anticipated that any major complexities were involved but the scheme would follow the relevant statutory planning process which would facilitate public consultation etc.

4. Part 8 Planning & Development Regulations 2001 – 2006 as amended.

CMD 21093

Report was available and circulated to the Members prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. King **SECONDED** by Cllr. Walsh the proposed extension to an existing burial ground at Ballyconneely for an additional 150 plots as outlined in the Report, was **AGREED**.

Cllr. King thanked the Burke family for the provision of the plot of land for the graveyard extension as good dry land was now available for the project.

Cllr. Mannion welcomed the extension and she raised the issue of maintenance of graveyards and the provision of water supply to graveyards.

Comh Ó Curraoin welcomed the extension and conveyed his appreciation of the work being progressed. He said that there is an issue with graveyards and Knock/Inverin was limited in terms of remaining capacity. He advised that a site should be acquired and to bring in fill as there is an issue with shallow ground in the Connemara area.

Comh Ó Cualainn said Knock/Inverin is a huge issue and it needs to be addressed. He said he didn't agree with municipal graveyards as families want their loved ones buried in their locality and he is opposed to any move to privatise the provision of graveyards as the onus is on the Local Authority to provide the services.

Comh Mac An Iomaire echoed his concerns regarding municipal graveyards in the Connemara area and said people have too far to travel. He said that there are serious issues with the graveyards of Lettermore, Lettermullen and Cois Fharráige which need to be addressed and he advised that it is necessary to look at Plan B where sites are available and to bring in the fill. He added that landowners are under the impression that they would not get the value for their land.

Mr Melody responded that ten sites have been examined in south Connemara area but no offers have been made. He advised that a reasonable price will be offered, and he agreed that suitable sites in south Connemara is a huge issue. He said in relation to fill there are environmental and ecological issues involved and it is more expensive to develop a number of smaller sites than to provide one larger regional graveyard. He advised that every effort is being made to find suitable sites and he confirmed availability in the burial ground in Clynagh but it is not the ideal solution for the people in south Connemara.

In response to Cllr. Mannion regarding maintenance of Burial Grounds he advised that there is a funding allocation available and an application form should be completed.

Regarding water supply there is a significant cost if there is a road opening licence requirement where the water supply is on the other side of the road.

In reply to Cllr. Welby, Mr. Melody advised that fill was an issue regarding the burial ground in An Cheathru Rua.

Comh Ó'Curraoin outlined that there was available land in Bealadangan and Trá Bhán.

Comh Ó Cualáin added that a Municipal Graveyard is asking people to travel which is in contradiction to Climate Change and carbon footprint. He said the matter should be raised with the Department of Environment.

Comh Mac An Iomaire recommended that the landowners should be advised that they will be offered the going rate for land and they may come forward.

Cllr. Walsh added that regarding the funding for graveyards sufficient funds will have to be provided.

5. Piers and Harbours

CMD 21094

Mr. Prendergast gave a presentation on Piers and Harbours. He said there are 214 piers and 60 yacht moorings along the coastline. He outlined that there was a budget of €150,000 and there was a national fund (BALAMI) Brexit Adjustment Local Authority Marine Infrastructure 2022 – 2023) set up in the wake of Brexit with a provision of €356,575 for maintenance of piers with fishing related activity.

He detailed the nine projects to benefit from BALAMI funding including Inishbofin Harbour (€76,500), Blackweir (€68,000) Ballyconneely (€59,500) Cleggan (34,000), Aircinn (€31,450) Spiddal (€31,450), Sconnsa (€31,000), Inver (€18,700) and Loughaun Beg (€10,625). Funding for those projects will also be topped up by a 15% contribution from Galway County Council a condition of the BALAMI scheme.

He said that some of the issues and challenges included a lengthy foreshore licence process, BALAMI funding being limited to fishing ports, increasing environmental and

ecological requirements and the fact that many of the piers were listed protected structures.

He advised that Inis Oirr Pier development would commence in 2023 and modelling work on the Caladh Mór facility on Inis Meáin would be completed in August.

Céibh an Chóra, Inis Meáin statutory proceedings were being pursued as regards a Foreshore Licence and floating pontoons would be installed at Kilronan, Inis Mór.

Cllr. King told the meeting that there were safety concerns on some of the piers where access ladders needed to be cut into the face of the structures and slipways needed to be kept clean to prevent accidents from happening. He questioned if there was an annual list for work on piers and the process for acquiring foreshore licences.

Cllr. Mannion thanked Mr. Prendergast for the presentation, and she recommended that funding be included for maintenance works on Inish Boffin pier and Cleggan pier.

Comh Ó Curraoin stated that the only access for fishermen on protected piers was by ropes which was a health and safety issue. He said that ladders must be set into the walls on the piers.

Comh Mac An Iomaire echoed the concerns of Cllr. King and Comh Ó Curraoin and requested an update on Droim Pier.

Cllr. Thomas referring to the number of piers in the Connemara coastline said it was important to have a list of piers in the ownership of Galway County Council.

Cllr. Welby said that an audit on the use of piers on the coastline should be undertaken and having good and well-maintained piers is a vital piece of infrastructure for the County.

Mr. Prendergast replied regarding the issues raised by the members.

He said in relation to the insertion of ladders on protected structures that maintenance work is necessary prior to insertion of ladders and it is necessary to identify the priorities of work that is required.

Regarding Piers there is an annual work plan for the more important piers and there is a programme of works for slipways.

Foreshore Licences is a lengthy process which needs to be streamlined to expedite the process for acquiring a Licence.

In relation to Cleggan Pier a report and recommendations have been made which needs to be re-activated.

As regards Droim Pier funding is approved, planning design being finalised and it will go to construction 2023.

Taken in Charge – 88 piers are in the ownership of Galway County Council and works have been carried out on other piers.

Inis Oir By-laws

CMD 21095

Mr. Prendergast gave a presentation on the Inis Oir by-laws. He advised that a Harbour Master will be appointed to Inis Oir and a re-development of the pier will commence in 2023. He said that the by-laws will be modelled on the by-laws in place in Kilonan Pier on Inish Mór. He said there were 102 submissions and the by-laws will go before the Plenary Meeting.

Cllr. Welby said that the introduction of the by-laws was necessary in terms of safety and to bring staggered arrival times for the ferries.

Cllr. Mannion said that the by-laws were a necessity and especially so in the arrival times of the ferries.

Cllr. Curraoin said the by-laws were controversial at the time with the introduction of charges for the islanders.

Comh Mac An Iomaire enquired if all ferries would have to pay charges including ferries from Clare.

Comh O Cualáin said that there needed to be a plan and schedule in place for the different ferries.

Mr. Prendergast replied that all ferry operators will be liable for charges regardless of where they came from when the new pier is constructed. He advised that the by-laws would also apply to people either touting or trading on the pier and the Harbour Master will be managing this when appointed.

7. Clifden Destination Towns Programme

CMD 21097

Ms. Mulhern, Tourism Officer gave a comprehensive presentation on Clifden Destination Towns Programme which included a programme of works, recommended actions and outcomes of the works.

Clifden Town has been designated Galway's Destination Town with an allocation of €500,000 funding from Bord Fáilte for projects under the Rural Regeneration programme to boost the attractiveness and tourism appeal of the town. The works to be concentrated on three main areas: Town Centre, Harbour Park and Beach Road Quay.

The programme of works which include pedestrian signs, signage for car-parks, gateway signage, visitor information and Greenway readiness.

Recommended Actions to include: review of wayfinding scheme, work with local community groups to develop a plan, improve Greenway access to Clifden town.

Outcomes increased number of visitors to the town and visitors to place Clifden as a destination town within Connemara and the Atlantic Way.

Cllr. Mannion thanked Ms. Mulhern for the presentation and highlighted that consultation with the local community will be the key to the success of the Clifden Destination Town Project. She said that consultation on such issues as car-parking would be hugely important as parking is a huge issue and the plan must include provision for alternative car-parking spaces.

Cllr. King reiterated that local consultation would be the key to the success of the project and he queried the provision for Irish language signs in the scheme.

Ms. Mulhern agreed that detailed consultation with the local community is the key to the success of the project.

She advised that cohesive signage and mapping would be key parts of the project and she would contact the Irish language groups.

Car parks would be around the town and the visitors would walk through the town which is an important priority in the plan. It is all about visitors getting the essence of what Clifden is about and easy access to the greenway would also be a key strategy.

Cllr. Mannion highlighted issues in relation to the disconnect between the town and the coastline, width of footpaths, facilities for camper-vans and the poor sense of arrival to the town.

8. Municipal District of Connamara Director's Business

CMD 21098

Draft Beach By-Laws

Mr. Owens advised the members that in relation to the summer ready programme there is an issue in how to manage our beaches and an updated criteria in relation to Blue Flag Beaches. He advised that Draft Beach by-laws were agreed at the Corporate and Cultural S.P.C. and he wished to afford the Connemara M.D. an opportunity to engage in a briefing in relation to the Draft by-laws. The Draft by-laws would go to the Plenary Meeting for consideration and following public consultation revert to the SPC and Plenary for adoption.

Ms. Sharkey, A.O. Corporate Services gave a presentation in relation to the Draft Beach by-laws. She said the Beach by-laws was necessary in order to meet the Blue Flag scheme and the Draft had been agreed by the Corporate and Cultural S.P.C. She detailed the updated regulations which included that dogs and horses will be banned during certain times during the summer months on Blue Flag Beaches and the playing of football or hurling will be restricted as appropriate to avoid nuisance.

Cllr. Mannion thanked Ms. Sharkey for the presentation and she welcomed the introduction of the by-laws.

Comh Ó'Curraoin expressed his concern with the regulations which includes a ban on the collection of sea-weed. He said it was an old tradition and the people's right to pick seaweed.

Comh O'Cualain raised the issue of shellfish and the use of the beaches by Irish Colleges.

Cllr. King echoed the concerns of Comh Ó'Curraoin regarding the collection of seaweed and questioned when the by-laws will be in operation.

Comh Mac An Iomaire questioned regarding the Irish Colleges and the use of the beaches.

Ms. Sharkey replied that the Draft by-laws will be considered at the Plenary Meeting in July and there will be a one-month consultation period and the Draft by-laws will revert to the SPC and Plenary for further consideration and adoption with or without amendment.

She advised that seaweed and shellfish can be collected for private use and Irish Colleges can use the beaches.

Notice will be displayed on all beaches and the community wardens will control the implementation of the by-laws.

Mr. Owens advised that the collection of seaweed was raised at the S.P.C. and it was included in the Draft by-laws.

9. Municipal District of Connemara Cathaoirleach's Business
21099

CMD

Cllr. Mannion expressed her dissatisfaction with the proposed new Garda operating model and related adverse impact on policing for the Connemara Area.

Cllr. Welby concurred with Cllr. Mannion.

Cllr. Mac An Iomaire stated that there were three Superintendents in Clifden Oughterard and Salthill twenty years ago and it is a long distance to travel from Oranmore to Lettermullen.

Cllr. Ó Cualáin concurred with the members and said it was necessary to have a meeting with the Joint Policing Committee to discuss the new operating model.

Mr. Owens replied that the views of the Connamara Municipal District would be relayed to the chair of the Joint Policing Committee and An Garda Síochána in the context of a request for a special meeting of the JPC.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mannion **SECONDED** by Cllr. Welby it was **AGREED** that a special meeting of the County JPC be convened to discuss/clarify the proposed new Garda operating model for County Galway.

Mr. Owens advised that the agreement of the Chair of the JPC and the An Garda Síochána was required to convene a special meeting of the JPC and the resolution and concerns of the Municipal District would be conveyed.

10. Votes of Sympathy / Congratulations

CMD21100

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Mac An Iomaire and **SECONDED** by Comh Ó'Curraoin it was **AGREED** a vote of sympathy be extended to Tony & Mary Ann Ní Laoi on the tragic passing of their daughter Aoifáinne.

Cllr. Mannion wished to be associated with the sympathies to the family.

11. A.O.B.

CMD21101

Cllr. Mannion raised the issue of lifebuoys and the importance of having lifebuoys in place.

Ms. Sharkey responded that the Council was in the process of implementing a guidance note issued by Water Safety Ireland in relation to inspections.

The next meeting of the Connemara Municipal District will take place on 9th September, 2022.

Dáithí Ó Cuolaín

CHRÍOCHNAIGH AN CRUINIÚ ANSIN