

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLMHE**

**Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara**

**Municipal District of Conamara**

**Minutes of the Municipal District of Conamara Meeting  
held on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2023 at 10.00 a.m. Council Chamber**

**ILATHAIR:**

**CATHAOIRLEACH:** Comh. Dáithi Ó Cualáin

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

**OIFIGH:** M. Owens, Director of Services, R. Lowe, Senior Engineer, I. Martyn, Administrative Officer/Meetings Administrator, TJ, Redmond, Senior Executive Engineer, C. Wynne, Senior Executive Engineer, B. McDonagh, Executive Engineer, H. Riordan, Assistant Staff Officer,

**1. Confirmation of Minutes of the Budget Meeting of the Municipal District of Connemara held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2022. CMD 21130**

The Minutes of the Budget Meeting of the Municipal District of Connemara held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 were **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Walsh, **SECONDED** by Cllr. McKinstry and **AGREED**.

**2. Confirmation of Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Connemara held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2022.**

**CMD 21131**

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Connemara held on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 were **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Walsh, **SECONDED** by Cllr. King and **AGREED**.

**Matters Arising:**

Comh. Ó Cualáin enquired regarding Part 8 public consultation prior to the installation of traffic lights on the bridges and he requested an update regarding a feasibility study on the R336.

Ms. Lowe replied that the design stage is in progress and all options will be considered to ensure the speed on the bridges is moderated. She said that the project will either be Part 8 or An Bord Pleanála and there will be a public consultation process. Regarding the R336 she advised that an update will issue.

Cllr. Welby enquired regarding the Part 8 process for the Traffic Lights on the Oughterard Bridge.

Cllr. Mannion informed the meeting that following the presentation from Coillte a public meeting was held in Recess in relation to the proposed project at Derryclare.

Cllr. Mannion advised the meeting that the water restrictions had been lifted in Inishboffin.

**3. Declaration of a road to be a Public Road**      **CMD 21132**

*Road commencing at junction with L-52183 in the townland of An Cheathrú Rua Theas and extending West for a distance of 80 metres in the townland of An Cheathrú Rua Theas and finishing at E491647.233 N722375.98 in the townland of An Cheathrú Rua Theas.*

The declaration of the road as detailed to be a public road, the statutory requirements having been met, was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Mannion, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Thomas and **AGREED**.

*Road commencing at junction with L-12016 in the townland of Na Doiriú Theas and extending North for a distance of 60 metres in the townland of Na Doiriú Theas and finishing at E498633.99 N725946.267 in the townland of Na Doiriú Theas.  
Municipal District:*

The declaration of the road as detailed to be a public road, the statutory requirements having been met was **PROPOSED** by Comh. Ó Curraoin, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Thomas and **AGREED**.

*Road commencing at junction with R340 (E485019.468 N732888.354) in the townland of Chill Chiarán and extending south-east for a distance of 45metres in the townland of Chill Chiarán and finishing at entrance gate to Páirc na Mara and redesigned junction with L-52542 (E485036.057 N732884.303 and E4855056.446 N732879.783) in the townland of Cill Chiaráin.*

The declaration of the road as detailed to be a public road, the statutory requirements having been met was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Walsh, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Thomas and **AGREED**.

*Intention to Extinguish a Public Right of Way along a section of the L-52452 in the townland of Cill Chiaráin,*

The extinguishment of the public right of way along a section of the L-52452 in the townland of Cill Chiarán, the statutory requirements having been met, was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Welby, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Thomas and **AGREED**.

**6. Briefing An Garda Síochána Operating Model – Keeping People Safe (by Superintendent Paudie O’Shea, Galway County West Community Engagement Area)** **CMD 21133**

Superintendent O’Shea gave a briefing to the Members on the operating model in Galway County West. He discussed the change of base for Conamara to Oranmore Garda Station and the concerns on the level of drug use and the rejuvenation of

community alerts. He described the different challenges in rural communities, staffing, rotas, Garda station in An Spideál, staffing levels, new CAD system.

Following the briefing there were a number of queries from the elected members. Cllr Welby enquired regarding the footprint in Oughterard division and the staffing levels. He raised the issue regarding the community text alert scheme number and the cost of procurement of signage. Superintendent O'Shea responded that the footprint of the division has not changed and a Sergeant will be in place before the summer. He advised that there will be a new central number for the community text alert which will be communicated once the new CAD system is in place and stickers will be provided with the new number to cover the old number on the signage.

Cllr. Mannion enquired if the Clifden Garda Station will remain open 24 hours a day and if Inspector Adrian O'Neill will be covering Clifden and Carraroe. She raised concerns over camping at beaches during the summer and she enquired regarding the number of detectives in Clifden and on the manning levels at Garda stations in Recess, Roundstone and Letterfrack. Cllr King enquired if the position in Recess will be filled. Superintendent O'Shea replied that Inspector O'Neill will cover both stations and once the vacancy is filled he will remain in Clifden.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire raised the issue of speeding lorries in Rossaveal. Inspector O'Shea replied that a meeting was held with the company and the situation is being monitored.

Comh. Ó Cualáin expressed his concerns regarding the speed limit of 80kph at the school in Rossaveal.

He told the meeting that the position of Inspector was to be filled in the Carraroe Garda Station which was to be the Gaeltacht headquarters but it appears to have been downgraded. He expressed his concern that there are only two Gardai covering the Connemara Area and there is no sergeant in An Spideál which is a safety concern for the Connemara area.

Inspector O'Shea replied that the constraint in Carraroe Station is the lack of space and there is ample capacity in Oughterard Station.

## **7. Winter Plan / Cold Weather Response**

**CMD 21134**

Cllr. King said that he was very thankful for the efforts of staff in gritting the roads during the harsh weather and he advised that there should be a provision of road salt in a range of locations across Conamara. He called for the location of a Council salt truck around the Maam Cross area which would have access to a local salt supply to ensure the roads could be gritted faster across the Connemara area.

Cllr. Mannion highlighted her concerns that the roads were unsafe to travel into Clifden for 2 weeks before Christmas and more certainty is required as to whether roads have been gritted or not. She acknowledged that the local staff provided a 24/7 service.

Comh. Mac an Iomaire said that some of the local roads in South Conamara were being left behind when it came to gritting.

Ms. Lowe replied that every effort was made to get to as many roads as possible during the periods of harsh weather and she confirmed that the Council tries to have salt available at various locations to have the gritting easily assessable.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire enquired regarding gritting of the roads in Seanafeistin.

Mr. Wynne said regarding communications the winter plan is available on the Council's website. He said that the winter plan is available from October to April with national routes being the priority followed by the local roads. He said that at times the salt can be washed off the roads during mixed conditions, but the policy is to send out the salt trucks before the temperatures reach zero.

Ms. Lowe added that the Winter Maintenance Plan is available on Galway County Council website which includes a map. She continued that there are two types of treatment, precautionary and reactive and when the temperature meets the thresholds the Council makes every effort to get to as many of the areas as resources allow.

**5. Election of Chair of the Island Committee and election of vice-chair of the Island Committee.**

**CMD 21135**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Welby **SECONDED** by Comh. Ó Curraoin Members **AGREED** to elect Comh. Mac An Iomaire Chair of the Island Committee.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Ó Cualáin **SECONDED** by Cllr. Walsh Members **AGREED** to elect Cllr. King Vice-Chair of the Island Committee.

**8. Bus-Parking Oughterard**

**CMD 21136**

Ms. Lowe informed the meeting that progress was being made with the project which involved the Part 8 planning process. She advised that funding of €200,000 was available for the project and that drawings were being prepared for lands owned by Galway County Council to the rear of the existing carpark.

Cllr. Walsh recommended that the drop-off point for busses should be as close as possible to the town centre and the issue of the provision of public facilities should be considered. He said that €200,000 funding had been ringfenced for the bus park project which would be a major boost for the town that has a great range of facilities to offer visitors.

Cllr. McKinstry welcomed the new bus-park facility.

Cllr. Mannion said the new bus-park is a great step forward for the town of Oughterard but the provision of public facilities and a traffic management plan are necessary for the town.

Cllr. Thomas enquired regarding the number of car parking spaces that will be lost with the provision of the bus-park.

Ms. Lowe replied that an estimated eight to ten spaces could be lost but the detail has not been finalised. She said the project is funded by the NTA and the design of which will include a Traffic Management Plan.

## **9. Bus-Shelters.**

**CMD 21137**

Comh. Mac An Iomaire enquired regarding the provision of bus shelters and when they will be erected.

Ms. Lowe replied that she is liaising with the NTA on providing bus shelters in two locations, at Maigh Cuilinn and Bearnna and a decision from the NTA on locations is imminent. Quotes received for the works were high so to get better value a decision was made to go out to tender again to get more cost effective quotes.

Comh. Ó Curraoín said that a number of bus shelters are required between Bearnna and Spideál.

Comh. O Cualáin added that there are not enough seats on buses along the R336 which results in people being left on the side of the road, an issue that needs to be addressed with Bus Eireánn.

## **10. Municipal District of Conamara Director's Business**

**CMD 21138**

### **Update Clifden Flood Relief Scheme**

Mr. McDonagh gave an update as regards the Clifden Flood Relief Scheme.

He said the OPW had approved funding of €530,000 for the project. He informed the meeting that a public consultation day had taken place in April 2022 and another day is scheduled for Quarter 2. 2023. He said that ground investigation works was due to be completed shortly while an assessment report had indicated no likely impact of the scheme on the local environment. He advised that the OPW would meet the full cost of the completed scheme.

Cllr. Mannion said it was very important to have public information days to keep local people informed and there has to be more than one option provided.

Cllr. McKinstry said that all options need to be looked at in relation to resolving the issue.

Cllr. Welby added that the option of providing a dam should be considered.

Mr. McDonagh replied that all options are being reviewed and considered and that each feasible option will be reviewed under technical, economic, social and environmental.

He advised that a presentation would be made to the members as regards the emerging options with planning due to be completed Quarter 4, 2023. Detailed design and procurement work should be completed by Quarter 3, 2024 and the construction work due to be completed by Quarter 3 2025 and handed over Quarter 1 2026.

### **Update Rural Regeneration and Development Fund Funding**

Mr. Wynne introduced the RRDF update by informing the meeting that Clifden had been successful in being awarded Category 2 funding from the RRDF. The initial conceptual design was completed and there was a public meeting in July 2022, the second stage of public consultation was in November.

A detailed presentation was given on-line by Mr. Johnson of LUC – a consultancy firm specialising in environmental planning and design. He advised that it is hoped a Part 10 planning application will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála in Q3 of this year after further consultation with all the stakeholders.

Mr. Johnson informed the meeting that one of the aims of the plan was to introduce greener areas in the town centre and more off-street parking was being provided.

Cllr. Mannion described the project as a fabulous project for Clifden and Conamara which had taken a number of years to get to this point added that the new car -parking spaces should allay the concerns previously raised about this issue. She said that Market Street needs a plan and it is important that the skate park is retained in Harbour Park. She highlighted that the 'Cheese grater' and 'Alcock and Brown' sculptures need to be retained in prominent positions.

Cllr. King welcomed the project said that it will be a huge transformation for the town. He agreed that the huge level of consultation with the local community was very beneficial, and he had a concerns with the car-parking.

Cllr. Welby said that parking spaces was very important for the town and he said that everyone is looking forward to the development.

Mr. Wynne said that the next stage of the process would be further public consultation with the local stakeholders on the preferred design option.

Mr. Johnstown told the meeting that the project would be in a position to achieve all of the initial aims including business, active travel and recreational goals and it is now onto another public consultation process over the next four to six weeks.

## **11. Municipal District of Conamara Cathaoirleach's Business      CMD 21139**

Comh. Ó Cualáin enquired regarding the filling of the position of Executive Engineer in Carraroe office and the opening hours of the library in An Spideál which was open Tuesday to Saturday and is now only open on Friday and Saturdays.

Ms. Lowe responded that filling the position in Carraroe office is a priority.

Mr. Owens responded that he would follow-up regarding the library opening hours.

Cllr. Welby enquired regarding the 2023 Annual Schedule of proposed works of maintenance and repair to be carried out in the Conamara Municipal District that was on the agenda for this meeting. Also, if there was a timescale for the Part 8 for the potential bridge in Oughterard and if there were plans for any public information meetings in Oughterard.

Ms. Lowe responded that the allocation for the roads programme was only received two days ago and a draft will be distributed to the MD in the next week or so and she advised that she would revert regarding the bridge in Oughterard.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire relayed the concerns of the people of Rossaveal as to the number of trucks travelling the local road in Seanafesisteen every day and the responsibility of the re-instatement of the road. He requested that the issue of the road markings and cats-eyes which are not visible on different parts of the R336 be addressed.

Cllr. Thomas expressed his satisfaction that the road works in Moycullen have resulted in minimum delays but raised concerns that Clooniffe, Homefarm and Ballyquirke roads are being used as rat runs and reports from residents that traffic is travelling too fast and he requested that signage be erected to slow down traffic on these routes.

Cllr. McKinstry requested an update on the timetable for the Salthill to An Spideál greenway.

In response Ms. Lowe stated that the Council have the power to pursue damage done to roads and said the situation will be monitored. She advised that the area office should be contacted with specific locations where the roads require maintenance and in relation to the traffic speeding in Maigh Cuilinn she said that the provision of extra signage has been addressed with the Contractors.

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

**CMD 21140**

Comh. Ó Cualáin wished to convey his sympathies to Deirdre Caulfield on the passing of her father Mairtín.

Comh. Ó Curraoin offered his sympathies to Comh. Mac An Iomaire on the passing of his aunt Brid Quinn.

Cllr. Mannion offered her sympathies to the 3 young men that lost their lives at Menlo Pier recently.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire expressed his sympathy to Comh. Ó Curraoin on the loss of his brother Peter.

### **13. A.O.B.**

**CMD 21141**

Ms. Dolan advised that she was available after the meeting to discuss the Community Regeneration Fund.

It was decided to revert to the members of the Municipal District on the next meeting on the Conamara MD at a later date.

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**CHRÍOCHNAIGH AN CRUINIÚ ANSIN**

*Dúithí Ó Cualáin.*