

Municipal District of Tuam – 9th October 2023

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TUAM HELD AT THE OFFICES OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TUAM, TUAM, COUNTY GALWAY ON MONDAY 9th OCTOBER 2023 AT 12:30 pm.

CATHAOIRLEACH:	Cllr. Killilea
I LÁTHAIR FREISIN	Cllr. Hoade, Cllr. Roche, Cllr. Sheridan, Cllr. Reddington, Cllr. McHugh
AS LÁTHAIR	Cllr. Keaveney
BAILL OIFIGIGH:	Mr. Derek Pender D.O.S. - Infrastructure & Operations, John Coyle - Senior Executive Engineer, Paul Connolly – Executive Engineer, Mr. Tom Regan, Executive Engineer, Brendan Dunne – Senior Executive Planner, Ms. Sinéad Naughton – Staff Officer.

Cllr. Killilea welcomed everyone to the meeting giving a special mention to Cllr. Stephen McHugh on his first day as Councillor at a Tuam MD meeting.

He proposed a vote of sympathy and an adjournment of 5 minutes as a mark of respect to Cllr. Keaveney who had lost both his father and his mother within the last two weeks. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Hoade and the meeting was adjourned for 5 minutes and resumed at 12.48.

Cllr. Roche supported this proposal and Mr. Pender wished to be associated with the sympathies. voiced on behalf of the entire staff of Galway County Council and expressed his condolences to the Keaveney family.

MDT230094

1. – Confirmation of the Minutes of Meeting of Municipal District of Tuam held 11th September 2023.

On the **proposal** of Cllr. Sheridan and **seconded** by Cllr. Hoade the minutes of the meeting of the Tuam Municipal District held on 11th September 2023 were **agreed**, (including MDT230086.)

Matters Arising:

Cllr. Reddington requested an update in relation to Systra Traffic Management Plan in Headford with both himself and Cllr. Hoade requesting for engagement with the public and local business' in relation to same. Mr. Pender advised that there will be an opportunity for a public consultation process and engagement regarding the plan and he hoped to have a timeline by the next meeting.

Cllr. Reddington stated the request for a bus shelter in Headford has been raised at every meeting for the past six months and hopes to see a result soon.

Cllr. Hoade said it is disappointing that no bus shelter has been provided as there is an increasing need for one and asked that it be put on record that it was not for the want of trying to find a suitable location. Mr. Pender advised that it was difficult to get the correct location for the bus shelter but that the NTA were prepared to fund same and that he has requested a dedicated resource within the active travel team to deal with bus shelters throughout the county and the CEO has committed to reinforce the active travel team for same.

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Cllr. Reddington advised that Senior Management in Tesco were liaising with GCC in relation to a space for the bus shelter but that it was likely the other side of the road that the shelter was required. Mr. Pender advised that Tesco location was welcome but unfortunately it was not on the side of the road inbound to Galway City but that he will liaise further regarding its location.

Both Cllr. Hoade and Cllr. Roche requested an update in relation to the situation in Corrandrum and the submissions received. Cllr. Hoade advised that the work at the school was moving on in a separate capacity with Paula Higgins under Active Travel, Safe Routes to School Programme. Mr. Pender advised that submissions were received and that they have gone back to the consultants and requested that they engage and go through in detail the submissions where practical and draft a document which will be added as an appendice with his own report on Corrandrum. He suggested holding a workshop with all the Elected Members prior to the November meeting.

Cllr. Roche sought an update on his suggestion of the roundabouts being sponsored on the approach to Tuam Town, highlighting the potential for investment and the benefit to local businesses. Mr. Coyle advised that it is a work in progress, and he was checking what other Councils such as Limerick and Clare were doing. He said that that he met with the maintenance company and will be linking in with the biodiversity officer. Cllr. Roche thanked Mr. Coyle for progressing this matter.

Cllr. Killilea advised the members that there was a public arts fund of €200k and that the Arts Officer was examining ideas for art on the roundabouts. He said that the Art Committee were sitting in November and there would be a further update and that this in conjunction with sponsorship of local business would have a huge impact on the appearance of the roundabouts.

Cllr. Sheridan requested an update on the consultants appointed in Dunmore and enquired if there were any dates for progression. Mr. Pender advised that he has engaged with the consultants and requested that they attend a meeting where there would be a discussion in relation to the services procured and acknowledged that the pace of the scheme is not what Galway County Council, or the members desired. He said he intends to have an update at the next meeting.

Cllr. Sheridan requested an update on the Safe Travel to Schools in particular referring to Milltown National School and the Carrowreagh junction. Mr. Coyle advised that he was scheduled to have a meeting with Paula Higgins, SEE, Active Travel and the NRPO and he would have a further update at the next meeting.

Cllr. Hoade requested an update on the Mass Rock Road in Sylane, and asked if given the commitment made by the elected members at last month's meeting if it could be prioritised and moved on. Mr. Pender advised that he is to write to the heritage council but was not expecting a positive response. He acknowledged the €10k commitment made by Cllr. Killilea and said that the formal paperwork needed to be completed for the taking in charge process and the allocation of monies will also have to be done. He said he will engage with John Coyle to get the paperwork moving.

Cllr. Hoade requested an update on the implementation of the new Tuam Local Area Plan and asked Mr. Dunne to go through steps of the remaining process. Mr. Dunne advised that the plan was adopted at the last MD meeting on 11th September 2023 and that it would come into force on Monday 23rd October 2023.

He advised that to date there had been no correspondence from the Office of Planning Regulation but believed that from previous meeting a lot of issues have been addressed. Mr. Dunne advised that there will be an advert in next week's paper and the plan will be in effect for 6 years.

Cllr. Hoade asked if it was now outside the timeframe for ministerial direction and Mr. Dunne advised that technically was not out of time for a ministerial direction until tomorrow 11th October 2023.

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Cllr. Roche wanted it noted his dissatisfaction and to distance himself from adopting one item in the minutes and wanted it noted for the record.

Cllr. Hoade clarified with Cllr. Roche that it was not the accuracy of the minutes that he was not happy with but concern with one decision within which she echoed.

Cllr. Killilea commended the work being done on the LIS scheme at Knockma for being a huge scheme with Philip Keane GSS and his team on site interacting well with local landowners and great local knowledge being shared and thanked them for great works being carried out. Cllr. Reddington praised Philip Keane for his engagement with the landowners on a Saturday regarding the ongoing works.

Cllr. Sheridan enquired if it would be possible to arrange for hedge cutting between the pitch and the national school at Kilbannon. Mr. Regan, EE, advised that hedge cutting was all complete on the junctions on the National Roads and it was pencilled in to commence on the regional roads next Tuesday.

Cllr. Hoade reminded Mr. Pender that the Headford area are still one resource down and made a plea to fill this vacancy before the end of the year.

Cllr. Roche complemented John Coyle for his report and extraordinary works on the schemes which involved a lot of extra interaction and said it was great to have him back in Tuam MD.

Cllr. Sheridan enquired if there were any reports received back on trials on ragwort control that were carried out last summer and questioned if there may be an imbalance between treatment of ragwort and Japanese knotweed. Mr. Pender advised that GCC do not choose one over the other they try to treat all invasive species and said he would speak to Rachel Lowe, SE and if there was any update would pass it on. He advised that there was an allocation for treating invasive species from the TII for National Road Networks only GCC uses its own discretionary funding for Regional and Local Roads.

Cllr. Sheridan asked if there are hot spots that have been identified and discourage people to cut in these areas. Cllr. Reddington advised of a farmer that had ragwort on N84, it was spreading in from the roads and a danger that it was getting into his fodder which would be dangerous for his stock. He said it is particularly bad from Cong to Headford and suggested that maybe it should be treated earlier in the year not in August and September.

MDT230095

4. - Municipal District of Tuam Director's Business

Mr. Pender advised that on the requests of previous meeting he contacted Eileen Ruane, DOS regarding the dereliction notice of the courthouse and that he will have an update at the next meeting.

Cllr. Killilea commended GCC on the work that has taken place over the last number of weeks in relation to vacant properties and commented that 4 landowners own 90% of the property in town and this initiative may make them realise that should use it or lose it, with Shop Street a disgrace with derelict buildings.

Cllr. Sheridan advised that some notices being put on property doors were being moved to other neighbouring properties and queried if a leaflet drop could also be done. He also enquired if there was any update on the engagement of the property owners. Mr. Pender advised that he liaise with Ms. Ruane, DOS regarding same.

Cllr. McHugh enquired what is the next step if property owners are not engaging with GCC following on from the notices. Mr. Pender advised he has a meeting with Ms. Ruane next week and he will give an

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update following on from same. Cllr. Killilea advised that in general terms if you are served a dereliction notice you may start to be charged within 12 months.

Mr. Coyle gave an update of ongoing works to the Elected members with Restoration improvement programme for 2023 88% complete, direct labour 100% complete and 100% of Surface Dressing programme for 2023 complete.

He advised that in relation to Kilbannon he had a meeting scheduled with the consultants this week and that the acquisition of lands is ongoing. He said that all the documents for acquisition have been finalised and that the law agents are sending them on to the landowners' legal firms. He said that currently the tender pack is being finalised and will then be sent to the Department of Transport for approval and once the land acquisition process is complete the tenders can be submitted for pricing on eTenders.

Mr. Coyle advised that hedge cutting has commenced on National and Regional Roads and local roads reporting that he had sent an email to each of the elected members requesting financial support of €4,000 each and to date is still awaiting a response from 5 councillors.

MDT230096

5. - Municipal -District of Tuam Cathaoirleach's Business,

Cllr. Killilea advised that the open day for Ellen and Joe O'Toole Community Nursing Unit would be open for public viewing from 10am to 2pm on Friday 13th October 2023 and encouraged people to go along to see the fantastic facility that was a credit to all the people involved.

Bridge
Cllr. Killilea reported that the Bridge into the swimming pool was very narrow, and many busses were finding it difficult to take the turn. He enquired if it were possible to remove the existing footpaths and install a footbridge. Mr. Pender advised this would be examined.

Cllr. Killilea referred to the significant confusion over the 30-minute set down period for parking on Shop Street in Tuam, advising that some people are of the opinion it is free for the first 30 minutes and others with the fact that the minimum payment you can make being for an hour. He called for a local awareness campaign in line with local businesses which would save some confusion and said that he understands there is a lot of ticketing activity in the town that could also be addressed.

Cllr. Roche referred to the impact, effect, and hardship that members of the public getting tickets is having on local business. He advised that both himself and Cllr. Reddington visited local businesses in the town regarding the matter and said that for business particularly in the centre of town felt as it was like community wardens have a vendetta against them, with very little sympathy and empathy shown. He said that GCC have a duty to have reasoning as to what is appropriate ticketing or otherwise and that businesses have spoken to him about the negative connotation it is bringing to the town.

Cllr. Reddington stated that customers are the lifeline for local businesses, and it is unfair to enforce tickets one minute after the ticket runs, giving an example of a businesswoman in the town paying 30K in rates and constantly looking out the door in the fear of getting a ticket. He advised that no businessperson had an issue with the Community wardens and traffic management but asked for fair play.

Cllr. Hoade advised she had received several calls regarding the parking tickets and that there needs to be clarity in relation to the 30-minute set down as it is very challenging and queried if there will be free parking for the month of December.

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Notes
Cllr. Sheridan referred to the rates for some businesses having increased by 400% and that we have ample parking in and around Tuam if it was managed in a more efficient way. He queried the parking metre in the shambles not taking cash and Mr. Pender clarified that all parking metres in the town were dual pay and accepted both card and cash.

Mr. Pender clarified that there was a 30-minute set down period that was not free on Shop Street and promised to do an awareness campaign. In relation to comments made on parking in the town he expressed his dissatisfaction with words used in referring to employees of GCC such as vendetta, little empathy, and ticket happy.

Mr Pender advised that these employees are implementing the byelaws that were adopted by the members of Tuam MD and that he would not allow this language to be used against any employee of GCC in his directorate. He stated that the wardens face conflict in their jobs on a daily and hourly basis. He said that if analysed he imagined would find that 95% of the tickets would be justifiably given and that he was not comfortable with the language that was used but that he will take comments on board regarding the grace period. Mr. Pender advised that GCC will be doing free parking initiative for December 2023.

Cllr. Killilea advised that over the years the town has lost a couple of loading bays and that maybe GCC could look at installing some more around the town for specific time periods, and that he would be happy to walk through the town with the engineering team regarding same.

Ticketing
Cllr. Sheridan enquired if there was a lead out time for the period of grace allowed on a ticket and if someone could be appended minutes could it be looked on positively. Mr. Pender wasn't aware of each Local Authorities policy but agreed it was a reasonable comment. Cllr. Sheridan enquired is there was an increase in revenue from the ticketing. Mr. Pender responded advising that this time last year at MD Meetings he was being requested to put the full complement of wardens in place and now have a full complement across the county therefore all MDs have had increase in revenue.

Cllr. McHugh enquired if the existing ticket machines could be collaborated for 30 minutes Mr. Pender said they were new machines and expected so and an awareness campaign would be done.

Cllr. Killilea referred to the laneway between Shop Street and O'Toole's Car Park and stated that it has become more ghetto like and requested that the MD install lighting. He said that the building nearby is the responsibility of the Peter McVerry Trust, and the building is monitored by the alleyway is not. Cllr. Roche said local businesses are concerned over the increased anti-social behaviour in the alleyway.

Cllr. Reddington advised that local businesses are afraid to speak out and Cllr. Roche said that anti-social behaviour is encouraged with the lack of lighting. Cllr. Roche stated that as a group of Councillors they cannot be running away from bad or unruly behaviour and cannot let businesses be intimidated. He said GCC need to take ownership of the situation and act accordingly.

4. - Any Other Business

MDT230096

Cllr. Sheridan called for an update on ZEVI Zero Emissions Vehicles Ireland and the Electric charging point for Dunmore as there is a spot allocated but no wires connected. Mr. Pender advised this was an issue across the county and will get Rachel to circulate an update to members regarding same.

Cllr. Roache wished to express his thanks to Frank Dolly, GSS, for relief of drainage works on N17.

Cllr. Roche referred to the planned surface dressing job that was taken off TII programme for the road from Belclare to Corrandrum when it was downgraded from N17 to N83. He requested that this be put

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back on the programme and that when these upgrading works are being done it would be the optimum time to develop a cycling infrastructure if the road lends itself to such development.

Mr. Pender responded advising that the Road surface at Corrandrum had been on the programme and that John Coyle was engaging with the TII re getting it back on the programme and at this point would be obliged to look at the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure – a complete modal analysis where all modes of transport would be considered.

Cllr. Roche referred to GCC's Bridge Rehabilitation scheme and a project planned at Ballybanagher/Mahanagh rural bridge on the N63 which services Tuam town and Corofin and said that currently modern machinery cannot get by. He requested that if GCC are planning to modernise it they need to look at how it can be widened as opposed to strengthened and look for extra funding to be made available as there was a number of serious accidents over last few months and requested that if funding was not available to hold off.

Cllr. Reddington spoke of a bridge recently completed in Kilbannon with funding provided through GCC, which has been knocked several times because the contractor just replaced the walls and did not make the bridge wider and as a result local farmers are frustrated as they cannot get through with their machinery. Cllr. Reddington called for the widening of bridges being reinstated on narrow roads to accommodate traffic when they are being rehabilitated/replaced.

Mr. Pender advised that the Kilbannon bridge is complete now but pointed out that the funding provided is from a rehabilitation fund replacing what's there, widening or provision of new bridge would have more funding requirements but will speak to Tom Prendergast, SE and Conor Quigley, EE and see what the proposed works are.

MDT230091

On the proposal of Cllr. Roche seconded by Cllr. Hoade the following motion was agreed.

I propose; -

That Galway County Council engage with TII to secure funding for surface dressing works, drainage and the development of public walkway and cycling infrastructure on N83, "previously N17" as part of any investment on this section of road (approx. 10km). Current road condition is poor for long sections.

Cllr. Killilea excused himself from the meeting at 13.57 and Cllr. Hoade took over as Chair.

Cllr. Sheridan requested an update on the Milltown to Gortnagunne Scheme. Mr. Pender advised that the relevant paperwork regarding the Gortnagunne scheme was gone to the TII and that engagement with landowners was ongoing with some agreements in place. He said that GCC will have all in order for permission to advertise for tenders and were hoping to go to the market Q1 of next year.

Cllr. Sheridan requested an update on the pedestrian lights at Bishop Street, Tuam. Mr. Connolly advised in relation to Bishop Street Tuam lights were due to be updated over the Halloween Holiday period when schools were off.

Cllr. Sheridan queried if there was a plan B for Bishop Street traffic lights if issue persists do we turn them off until can be repaired. Mr. Connolly said if needed they would put temporary flashing lights and would monitor them today. Cllr. Sheridan asked what it would take to get works expedited and Mr. Connolly advised he will investigate same.

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Cllr. Reddington and Cllr Hoade expressed concern regarding the sequencing of the traffic lights at Headford and requested that someone look at them as it is not just in the evening that traffic is backed up it is throughout the day backed up as far as Joyces hardware. Mr. Connolly requested that both councillors email him the exact details regarding issue and times so that he had the information he needed, and he would go back to traffic solutions regarding the problem.

Cllr. Reddington referred to the Low-Cost Accident funding and asked John Coyle, SEE and Paul Connolly EE to examine the entrance to Cross village advising that a similar measure was needed on the Cong Road for traffic calming.

Mr. Connolly was pleased to hear the Elected members acknowledge the works of the staff on the ground which is very important. He referred to a Job in Caherlistrane completed by Philip Keane, GSS and crew placing a concrete foundation on a kerb that was an exceptional standard and finish and acknowledged the community employment scheme for great works done throughout the town.

Cllr. Hoade advised the next meeting would be held in County Hall and would be awaiting confirmation of the date from Finance regarding the budget. She advised that they Cllrs would meet for an hour before the meeting to have the workshop on Corrandrum.

Chríochnaigh an cruinniú ansin @ 14:12pm

Approved by:



Cllr. Killilea, Cathaoirleach.

Date:

13/11/2023