

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Locha Riach *Municipal District of LOUGHREA*

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held in the Council Chamber, Aras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway on 1st November 2021 @ 11.00 am.

LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach

Cllr. G. Donohue

Baill:

Cllr's. P.J. Murphy, M. Maher, J. Byrne, M. Kinane,
I. Canning, J. McClearn, S. Curley, G Finnerty.

Oifigigh:

Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services
Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer
Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. N. Kennedy, Executive Engineer
Mr. E. Gallagher, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. M. Finn, Administrative Officer
Ms. G. Quirke, Staff Officer
Ms. P. McHugo, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies from Cllr P. Hynes who was not in attendance.

Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 11th October 2021

LM D 2149

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 11th October 2021 were proposed by Cllr Kinane, seconded by Cllr Canning and agreed and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Matters arising from previous meeting held on 11th October 2021

Cllr Byrne requested an update on the installation of Pedestrian Crossings in Gort and reiterated the issues associated with One off Housing with reference to the need for consistency in what is regarded as acceptable and not acceptable.

Cllr Curley requested an update on the opening of Long Point 12 months of the year and whether this can be included in the next Budget.

Cllr McClearn expressed disappointment with the progress being made on the Portumna Flood Relief Scheme and stated that there appears to be no urgency to address the matter.

Cllr McClearn highlighted that he requested the Resourcing of the Loughrea MD to be included in this month's meeting agenda and that it had not been noted.

Cllr Kinane thanked everyone for their support in relation to the Clarinbridge Oyster Themed Experience Project. She expressed disappointment with the interim CEO's comments on the project and requested that when the agenda item comes up for discussion at the Galway County Council Draft Development Plan 2022-2027, it will be fully supported.

Cllr Maher apologised for being unable to attend the Budget meeting earlier in the morning. He stated he also agrees with all Councillors to reject the budget proposal as this sends a clear message to the Department that the Loughrea MD is underfunded.

Cllr Maher highlighted that the current outdoor facilities opening hours at Long Point from 09:00 – 16:00 (Monday to Friday) is sufficient and it is at no additional cost to the Council.

A detailed discussion was held between Cllr Maher and Cllr Curley regarding the proposed Garden of Remembrance at the Fair Green. Cllr Maher highlighted budget and potential planning issues that need to be addressed. Cllr Maher stated that currently there is a 6-foot Celtic Cross at St Brendan's Cathedral, and that there is no requirement for a separate Garden of Remembrance. Cllr Maher requested a report on the costings of this initiative before any works commenced and Mr G Haugh agreed to issue an outline of costs to all Councillors.

Flooding Update

LMD 2150

Mr Gallagher updated the meeting as follows:

South Galway Gort Lowlands FRS – The Environmental Consultant continues to undertake baseline surveys to produce the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). Specialist consultants are being employed as necessary to undertake additional environmental works.

The Engineering Consultants continue to examine specific issues that were raised during the Public Consultation. The Irish Drilling site investigation contract is due to commence on site this week with a fulltime resident engineer being employed on the project. The RE will liaise with all landowners being affected. The works will involve a total of 1,500 bore holes, trial holes and slit trenches over the length of the proposed 16km of channel works. Ground works are scheduled to be completed before Christmas and the results will further inform engineering design.

Works on road raising at Owenbristy are continuing. Locals are being consulted on the treatment of local historic landmarks.

Further to queries from Cllr Canning on CFRAM works in Portumna, Mr Gallagher confirmed that the reference to resources in the recent correspondence from the OPW referred to both OPW in-house staff and consultancy resources. Tranche 1 projects must reach specific stages before current resources allocated to those projects can be released and reallocated. The €3.65M OPW allocation for Portumna will be available if the scheme progresses to construction. The scheme has only passed a preliminary high-level assessment at present and must pass in-depth engineering and environmental assessments before proceeding to planning / exhibition.

Cllr Finnerty requested that preparations are commenced at local area level for the upcoming flood season. The issue of rainwater ponding on public roads and causing a hazard to motorists was raised.

Cllr Byrne requested a programme for the project is provided to the elected members and that a further consultation briefing is held with the Councillors and the South Galway Flood Relief Committee. Mr Gallagher confirmed to the meeting that alternative routes proposed by landowners are being investigated and will be accommodated where feasible within the scheme, however, not all requests have been feasible. Where alternatives are not taken on board, landowners will have every opportunity at the statutory Exhibition stage to re-state their case.

Cllr Finnerty highlighted concerns in relation to Winter Flooding and stated emergency plans need to be in place in the event of flash flooding, for example the Gort to Loughrea road. He queried the possibility of appointing someone to deal with the flash flooding issue i.e. the ability to quickly close the roads in such events.

Update: Meeting with LARC and Community and Enterprise

LMD2151

RE: Loughrea Town Hall

Ms E Ruane briefed the members on the meeting held between Community and Enterprise and representatives from LARC, Credit Union and Chamber of Commerce. Update as follows:

- There was some confusion amongst the group as they did confirm that they have been getting updates from Brent via email on all aspects. There were a few group representatives who thought a 'project board' had been set up, but it was later confirmed that this was not the case.
- Brent will continue to liaise with the working group via email and provide updates on timelines and dates.
- Part 8 drawings are being prepared and will be lodged with Planners in Q4 2021.
- Public consultation events will be undertaken with the drawings and plans in the Library and other suitable locations and the working group will be to be consulted in relation to this.
- The Pre-contract tender is on e-tenders. This is a screening exercise only (preferred experience in working on regeneration works like Town Hall & budget size etc).

Cllr Maher, Cllr McClearn, Cllr Curley and Cllr Donohue congratulated the Executive team on their work to date on this project. Cllr Curley queried the level of overspend to date on the project and Ms Ruane advised she would investigate this matter further and provide an update. Cllr Donohue suggested an inventory be completed on the contents with the restoration of items to be put on display. Cllr. McClearn stated that the project is ongoing since 2020 and there is a level of urgency attached to this project and it needs to be progressed. Cllr Curley also queried if the asbestos on the roof been investigated.

Cathaoirleach's Business

LMD 2152

Cllr Finnerty made a request for a representative from Connecting Ireland, National Transport Authority to attend the next MD meeting to outline the decision-making process in deciding what routes will be included in the connecting Ireland programme. All Councillors concurred with Cllr Finnerty in this request. Cllr McClearn said that clarity is required and there is more withdrawal of services in rural Ireland than enhancement of routes. Cllr Murphy made the comment that the service needs to be increased and the 17 km between Gort and Rusheen has no bus stop. Cllr Curley made the comment that the service for Galway to Dublin is reduced.

Cllr Donohue provide the following invitation issued from the National Transport Authority to all Councillors:

“The National Transport Authority would like to invite you to a Connecting Ireland virtual briefing which will take place through Zoom on Wednesday 3rd November at 11am.

The briefing will give us an opportunity to fill you in on our plans for the Connecting Ireland and the type of consultation process we wish to conduct.

Connecting Ireland is the National Transport Authority's plan to increase public transport connectivity between cities and towns and their surrounding villages and rural areas.

Under the proposals, the number of services is set to increase, and so too will overall capacity, making bus transport more useful to more people than ever before.

It was clarified that separate webinars will be held for the public later”.

Cllr Kinane requested a timeline update from the Economic Unit regarding the walking trails in Clarinbridge. There was an allocation of €80,000 and clarification is sought how much money has been spent to date.

Cllr Byrne requested to have it noted that he sent an email to Mr Haugh and Mr Mitchell the previous evening regarding a request to review the sequence of years when certain roads on the Roads Programme 2022-2024 are scheduled to be completed.

Cllr McClearn requested an update on the Greenways preferred route. Mr Mitchell stated that there is no formal route set to date, however he will seek an update on the matter.

Cllr Murphy raised the issue of the uniqueness of roadside stone walls in relation to C.I.S. Cllr Murphy referenced a C.I.S in Coole and stated that landowners willingly offer their land in the

widening of roads or removing of corners and exchange it is only reasonable for the stonewall to be retained. Cllr Murphy requested an exceptional funding submission to be made to the Department of Environment or appropriate body in relation to this matter. Cllr Donohue seconded this proposal.

Cllr Donohue queried the timeframe on when works were completed on Local Improvement Schemes 15 or 20 years ago and what the process is with regards to conducting further improvements in the same scheme location. Mr Mitchell stated that a further LIS application is required. Mr Mitchell added that Local Improvement Schemes are assessed and given priority against set criteria for example road usage. Cllr Kinane queried whether Councillors can use their NOM to conduct repair works on previous LIS and Mr Mitchell confirmed NOM can only be used on Public roads. Cllr Kinane stated she understood the position.

Cllr Finnerty queried the position on contacting Galway County Council staff in County Hall Buildings. Ms Ruane stated that as current staff office attendance levels are 75%, meetings are advised to be scheduled via prior appointment.

Cllr Maher raise the issue of fobs not working on GCC doors to access buildings. Eileen will raise this matter with the County Secretary.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Loughrea MD will take place on Monday 13th December at 2.30pm in the Council Chamber. (It is now agreed that the meeting will be held online via Microsoft teams).

CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CHRUINNIU ANSIN



CLLR GERALDINE DONOHUE
CATHAOIRLEACH, LOUGHREA MD