

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Locha Riach
Municipal District of LOUGHREA**

**Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held
remotely on 10th May 2021 @ 10.30 am.**

I LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach

Cllr. M Maher

Baill:

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

Oifigigh:

Ms. E. Ruane, Director or Services
Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer;
Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer;
Mr. F. McGillicuddy, Area Engineer;
Mr. B. Sheehy, Assistant Engineer;
Mr. E. Gallagher, Senior Executive Engineer;
Mr. J. Kearns, Executive Engineer;
Mr D. Flood, Senior Executive Engineer;
Mr A. O Halloran, Assistant Engineer;
Mr A. Cunningham, Staff Officer;
Ms. M. Finn, Administrative Officer;
Ms. P. McHugo, Assistant Staff Officer.

**Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea
held on 12th April 2021** **LMD 2120**

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting for Loughrea MD held on 12th April 2021 were proposed by Cllr McClearn, seconded by Cllr Donohue and agreed and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Arising from the Minutes, Cllr Canning requested that he wished for the issue of speed ramps at St Bridget's Road, Portumna to be included in the Minutes. Mr Haugh confirmed that St Bridget's Road was part of the Active Travel submission. He also confirmed for Cllr Kinane that a review of the pedestrian crossing in Clarenbridge was a matter for TII to approve and progress further.

Cllr Kinane expressed her thanks to Michael Owens with his help in liaising with the City Council with regard to the bicycle parking infrastructure at Renville Park and the Mor Action Group Deputation also thanked Galway County Council for the opportunity to submit their suggestions with regard to same.

Cllr Curley requested an update on the position regarding the allocation of a technician and 3 outdoor staff to the Municipal District. He added that as new funding streams become available it would be important to have sufficient staffing resources in place to enhance what funding could be applied for. Cllr Maher stated that the 2 new outdoor staff already in place in Loughrea are proving to be very beneficial and the additional works carried out especially in relation the Long Point improvements are evident. Cllr McClearn stated that an additional staff member was promised in April 2020 but did not start until November 2020. He felt that there may be some confusion with the appointment of that individual in that they be deemed part of the recent agreement for additional staff for the area. He believed that there is still an additional staff member required in Portumna. Mr Haugh confirmed that 4 additional General Operatives had started in the Municipal District since 2020 and have been distributed across the three areas of the MD. Of the latest appointments two had been distributed in Loughrea which is reflective of the workforce that are in the Loughrea at present, the age profile and the number of works ongoing in the area. He added that this had been discussed at GSS and Engineering level and they were satisfied that this distribution was appropriate. Ms Ruane confirmed that the technician position for Loughrea was being progressed by Human Resources. In regard to Cllr McClearn's query she agreed that the staff member appointed in 2020 was separate to what was agreed as part of the MD funding agreement but that the allocation of the staff members for that was a matter for the area offices.

Mr Haugh confirmed for Cllr Murphy that with regard to grass cutting and the Pollinator plan, the Loughrea MD biodiversity plan is in draft form and the sourcing of an appropriate machine to cut and collect grass in identified areas is being progressed.

Flooding

LMD 2121

Mr. Enda Gallagher updated the meeting as follows: -

South Galway Gort Lowlands FRS – Covid restrictions have now lifted sufficiently to allow the site meeting with landowners on the proposed scheme. The project team are currently compiling the list of landowners that are to be met on site and they will be contacted in the next week to ten days. Meetings are scheduled to be undertaken from the end of this month. There is a slight delay in getting to site as the consultants must clear their schedule and also arrangements are being put in place for an agronomist to attend selected meetings.

Works on the emergency channel at Cahermore that commenced in 2020, have now been completed.

Cllrs Byrne and Murphy raised concerns over a recent advertisement by the Council for the sale of a flood prone house at Cahermore. Mr. Gallagher will forward details to Housing Section and request direct response to the Councillors on the matter.

Dunkellin – The OPW are continuing to undertake landowner accommodation works. All outstanding works and compensation payments associated with the scheme will be finalised before the end of this year.

Mr. Gallagher gave a brief overview on the contents of the Mannin / Ballyboy report that was circulated in advance of the meeting. The report contains details on previous reports and previous proposals for the Aggard stream in addition to details on the existing dam and issues considered during the development of the current scheme.

The report highlights that proposals for deepening of the Aggard stream to convey water away from Ballyboy are not cost beneficial and would not be environmentally acceptable. These two criteria are the basis for the OPW assessing if schemes are to progress. The report recommends the raising of 250m of the Ballyboy Road by 300mm to secure road access to the local school for residents.

Mr. Gallagher clarified that the existing dam is the responsibility of the OPW and not the Council. Machines currently on site are being used to install two new culverts and mearing walls on the drainage channel and should not interfere with the nesting swans.

Councillors Byrne and Murphy indicated that they wished to examine the report further and will refer back directly to Mr. Gallagher or raise the issue at the next MD meeting.

Access works for the only resident that remains liable to flooding at Rahasane turlough, have now been completed.

Portumna – Councillors McClearn and Canning asked that an update be provided at the next MD meeting, on the flood alleviation proposals for Portumna. It is over two years since the announcement that the CFRAM schemes for Ballinasloe, Clifden and Portumna were to progress. No funding announcement has been received to date for Portumna.

To consider the report under Part 8 of Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), proposed development at Ballyglass East, Ardrahan, Co. Galway consisting of the demolition of an existing dwelling and construction of a 2 bedroom dwelling, together with proprietary effluent treatment plant, percolation area and ancillary site
Works – LA 01/21 **LMD 2122**

Mr Flood presented the members with an overview to the proposed demolition of the existing 2 bed unit and construction of a 2-bed bungalow unit in order to bring it up to the correct standards. A review had been undertaken of the existing building and in order to modernise and bring it up to current building standards, a decision was taken to demolish and rebuild. No submissions were received in relation to the proposed construction.

Cllr Murphy stated that he had a meeting with the local residents, who were happy with the proposed re-building at this location. However, there were concerns regarding the historic building across from the site (1798 rebellion site). Adjacent to this house are 2 operating dairy farms and he requested that the design be altered slightly to allow more space for heavy goods vehicles to turn when coming out in front of the historic cottage. Mr Flood confirmed that the front wall was already set back in the plans but before the design was finalised he

could meet with the concerned residents to make sure they were happy with the proposal. Cllr Murphy proposed the development, subject to the alterations requested, Cllr Byrne seconded, and the members agreed.

Cllr Canning enquired if there were any plans for refurbished social housing stock to be sold to the private market where there is currently a great need. He had received an enquiry from a constituent regarding this. Cllr Byrne stated he was opposed to the selling of existing council stock after upgrading as he felt it was contrary to the social housing delivery programme. He said also that care needs to be taken when there is a decision to upgrade or refurbish a house and consideration given in the event that the previous tenant had passed away or moved on as there may be family owned property in close proximity to the upgraded site. Mr Flood confirmed that the funding received for social housing delivery under the capital delivery programme is based on provision of social housing and not for the private market.

Cllr McClearn requested that consideration be given to local suppliers in relation to the provision of air to water pump systems. Mr Flood stated that the retrofit scheme undertaken by Housing Maintenance on existing social housing units does not specify a particular model for air to water heat pumps but do specify exactly what type of performance is required from the heat pump and then it is up to market to supply the Council with those requirements.

The proposed development at Ballyglass East, Ardrahan was proposed by Cllr. Murphy and seconded by Cllr. Murphy.

To consider the report under Part 8 of Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), proposed development at Creggatlough, Craughwell, Co. Galway consisting of the demolition of an existing dwelling and construction of a 2 bedroom dwelling, together with proprietary effluent treatment plant, percolation area and ancillary Site works – LA 06/21 **LMD 2123**

The proposed development at Creggatlough, Craughwell, Co. Galway was proposed by Cllr Maher, seconded by Cllr Murphy and agreed.

Mr Flood stated that a new 2 bed unit, standard development with wastewater treatment was proposed for this site. The existing unit was a four-bed unit that was burnt out in 2010 and has since been left derelict. He received 3 submissions in relation to this part 8 development, the summary of which was in the Chief Executive Report. The submissions related to (1) traffic and transport, (2) boundary treatments and flood risks and (3) in relation to the past occupants of the house. Mr. Flood stated that they met with the person who had made the submission around the issue of tenancy and had tried to address the issues. It was outlined that they had tried to design out the issue, from reducing the number of units from a 4 bed to a 2 bed unit in line with demand, to remove dense foliage around the site to assist with supervision of site and that changes internally are in place in regard to the management of council properties with the employment of a tenancy enforcement officer. He has also handed all this detail to the allocations team so that they are aware of previous issues when it comes to allocating the property.

Cllr Maher stated that he was aware of this property and confirmed that the last occupants were rehoused elsewhere and alluded to the difficulty locals in the area had with the previous

occupants of the property. He said it was good to see derelict properties tidied up and brought back to into the council's housing stock. He also stated that the cost of damaged Council property should be recouped from the occupants prior to re-housing. He felt a policy should be in place to check on our housing stock every 6 months and would involve confirming that the tenants have a waste collection service and what condition the property was currently in.

Cllr Curley enquired if any occupants had been re-housed without paying for damages to Council property. In reply Mr Flood said he will refer his query to the Tenancy Enforcement Officer for reply.

Mr Flood also confirmed for Cllr McClearn as per the tenancy agreement it was up to the tenant to get their own supplier and that there was no stipulation regarding pay as you go electrical systems if air to water pumps were in use.

Cllr Murphy wished to compliment the D.O.S. Housing for the management of the traveller accommodation site in Craughwell and re-housing of the families after development. Cllr Maher stated that the temporary site was now being proposed for development of housing for the elderly.

Cathaoirleach's Business

LMD 2124

Cllr McClearn requested a progress report on the Loughrea Town Hall development. Ms. Ruane said she would liaise with Mr. Alan Farrell and the regeneration team and that ask that they would have a progress report available for the next meeting. Cllr McClearn also requested that a timeline be put on any contracts going forward to private contractors as there are several projects including the footpaths in Killimor and Portumna that funding was secured for over 2 years ago and the works have not yet started. Mr Haugh agreed that it has been a frustrating year from the perspective of progressing certain projects but that the projects referenced were awarded to a single private contractor and that the issue has been further compounded by Covid-19 and the recent increase in funding availability.

Mr Haugh confirmed for Cllr Kinane that a contractor was appointed for Loughrea and Renville footpath construction works. Works are progressing in Loughrea and the contractor involved was scheduled to proceed with the Renville Road works following completion of same. Mr Haugh hoped to have tenders prepared in the next few weeks for the appointment of a consultant on the L- 4102/N67 (Athenry Road, Clarinbridge) junction.

Mr Haugh confirmed for Cllr Murphy that he would have any issues with traffic bollards in Craughwell investigated and resolved. In regard to Cllr Murphy's query regarding the closing date for the Active Travel scheme, Mr. Haugh said that the deadline for same was a number of weeks ago but if there was a particular scheme that he was interested in he asked that come to him about it after the meeting.

Cllr Byrne welcomed the public notification of the Civic Amenity site for Gort and requested that the councillors be given a pdf copy of the proposed site layout map in the event of any queries from constituents which Ms Ruane will issue. Cllr Byrne also expressed his frustration at the delays in having work done by Contractors especially in relation to the application for Hanleys Corner, Gort and suggested an extended list of Contractors be drawn up from rather

than the current pool. He felt it was very important when tenders are sought there is timeline for the program of works put on it. In response Ger Haugh said steps had already been to address the pool of contractors with the last number of tenders that had been issued from the MD. Cllr Byrne also requested that a plan be put in place for the Summer season to ensure a more frequent collection of waste at our beaches and the appointment of Lifeguards brought forward. Ms Ruane agreed she would look at the waste disposal issue in terms of the allocation of resources aligned with that function and link with Corporate Services in regard to his request regarding bringing forward of Lifeguards appointments.

Cllr Maher agreed that the Lifeguards should be in place earlier and welcomed the opening of facilities at the Long Point earlier this year having had painting and refurbishment works carried out by the local office.

Ms Ruane stated for Cllr Donohue that she will follow up her query regarding turf cutting signage at Derrybrien and revert directly to her.

Ms Ruane replied to Cllr Kinane that advice in relation to the dangerous swim zone at Renville was assessed by the Assessor for Life Saving Federation of Europe and independently looked at by Galway County Council's Safety Officer in which they both concur that it is not a safe designated bathing area. She strongly urged the members to accept the advice from the independent assessment that it not a safe place to swim. Cllr Maher stated that this advice has to be taken and as a Municipal Authority have to be active to ensure it is complied with. Ms Ruane also stated for Cllr Kinane that no water quality assessment would be required when the area is not deemed safe.

Mr Mitchell confirmed for Cllr Curley that the pedestrianisation of King Street is subject to a Section 254 Licence preferably made by a Community Council/Chamber of Commerce and requires assessment by Planning. They then request a roads report from the Roads section and then a determination on the application is made based on that. Cllr Hynes agreed that input from the Chamber of Commerce and engagement with local businesspeople would be required.

Mr Mitchell stated for Cllr Byrne that in relation to the use of hard shoulders for cycling, any further proposals for cycle lanes were postponed pending a national design standard being developed by the NTMA. The NTMA are working on three pilot schemes for this year with a view to progressing that design standard and as soon as it is made available, he would be hopeful of rolling it out then subsequently.

Cllr McClearn asked for a report for the next meeting about the number of historical estates that are still not taken in charge. Mr. Mitchell stated that he would look at what estates that are currently on the list to be taken to charge and clarified there are a number of estates that they would not have received an application to be taken in charge.

Mr Mitchell agreed for Cllr Byrne that he would refer his query regarding the breakdown of the €50,000 allocation for safety measures associated with a number of Piers and Harbours in the area to Ms. Fiona Holland.

Ms. Ruane also confirmed for Cllr Canning that Ms Holland was the contact person regarding swimming locations at Piers along the banks of the Shannon.

Ms Ruane confirmed for Cllr Curley that she would revert to Housing regarding his query in relation to the breakdown of void housing in Loughrea and the locations of same.

Cllr Murphy requested that a cycle lane should be developed on the old N18 from Beagh to Oranmore where no land acquisition would be required, and cyclists should be confined to this section of roadway and off the main carriageway of the road. Mr. Mitchell stated that it was important to bear in mind that a specification was being developed to how cycle lanes can be incorporated into hard shoulders and that it was best to wait until what the makeup of the specification was like. Cllr McClearn stated that it is impossible to abide by the law when trying to overtake a group of cyclists on national secondary roads.

Cllr Maher thanked all for attendance at the meeting and suggested that the next LMD Meeting arranged for 14th June 2021 be held in Loughrea once regulations allowed.

CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CHRUINNIU ANSIN



**CLLR MICHAEL MAHER
CATHAOIRLEACH, LOUGHREA MD**