

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 Loughrea Office on 10th July 2023 at 11.00 am.**

I LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach

Cllr. Jimmy McClearn

Baill:

Cllr's. G. Donohue, M. Kinane, I. Canning, PJ
Murphy, G Finnerty, D. Kelly, M. Maher, J.Byrne

Oifigigh:

Ms. R. Lowe, Senior Engineer
Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. N. Kennedy, Executive Engineer
Mr. E. Gallagher, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. M. Flynn, Administrative Officer
Mr. M. Molloy, Assistant Environmental Awareness
Officer
Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services
Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer
Ms. E. Murphy, Senior Executive Engineer
Ms. E. Dolan, Administrative Officer
Ms. S. Cleary, Staff Officer
Ms. C. Kennedy, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies:

Cllr. S. Curley
Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services

**Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held in
the Loughrea Chamber on 12th June 2023** **LMD2305**

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 12th June 2023 were proposed by Cllr. Finnerty seconded by Cllr. Maher and agreed and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. Finnerty requested an update on the Gort Enhancement Scheme and advised that a meeting was held in the Lady Gregory Hotel recently which was very positive. He stated that response to issues raised is awaited. Cllr. Murphy stated he is aware that Galway County Council are actively engaged regarding the car park site. Ms. Flynn stated she will follow up regarding progress on the Gort Scheme. Ms. Lowe advised that aside from the specific

enhancement scheme there will also be an opportunity to consider transportation measures in Local Transport Plan, which will align with the Local Area Plan and there will be an opportunity to make submissions on this. The LTP will then form the basis of submissions for proposals for Active Travel for Gort into the future.

Cllr. Kinane thanked Ms. Flynn and the Environment team for their engagement on matters raised regarding Renville Graveyard and stated that she understands due to budgetary constraints further works will not take place. She raised safety concerns regarding the condition of footpaths in the graveyard and stated that the issue is caused by the materials used, i.e., large stones. She requested that an inspection of the pathway and remedial works be carried out. Ms. Flynn responded she would follow up regarding this matter.

A discussion took place regarding the traffic lights at the Westbridge, Loughrea which Cllr. Maher stated is a disaster and is causing significant delays in traffic moving through the town. He stated he is inundated with complaints from the public and he only received one positive call regarding the change implemented. He requested a commitment to have the sequence of the lights changed to deal with the bottleneck at this location. Ms. Lowe stated that the sequence of the lights at the Westbridge will be reviewed in September when the schools return as it will provide a more accurate picture of the situation at the junction. Cllr. Maher stated that the review needs to take place immediately. Mr. Haugh added that the Council received multiple requests over many years from several elected members and members of the public regarding the sequence of the traffic lights at the Westbridge. The complex geometry and traffic patterns that exist at this location makes it impossible to provide a perfect solution without radical changes to the junction design. He acknowledged that the current configuration was causing some infrequent issues – as the previous configuration had also done – but highlighted the fact that pedestrian safety had now been improved and that prioritisation of the most vulnerable road users should be a priority. He added that carrying out a survey of traffic at the Westbridge in September will give a more accurate reflection of the situation.

Cllr. Donohue wishes to extend her compliments to the members of the Concerned Citizens Group on their efforts to have the Seven Springs Day Care Centre reopened she referred to a public meeting which took place recently in Leinster House.

Cllr. Byrne stated he is pleased to advise that the annual declarations are now updated on the Council's website. He enquired regarding hedge cutting at junctions and referred specifically to safety concerns on the N67 where there was a near fatality between Drumacoo and Kilcolgan. He stressed that this matter should be treated with urgency.

In response to Cllr. Kelly's enquiry regarding training of Community Wardens on enforcement of legal proceedings for traffic management offences and in particular illegal parking in disabled parking bays, Ms. Lowe advised that training is given to all new community wardens which includes training on road traffic regulations and enforcement, and the recent new recruits have already received this training. Ms Lowe added that the Council is currently seeking to recruit a Senior Community Warden who will have overall responsibility for Wardens, instead of their reporting to the SEEs, and that this person would amongst other

duties coordinate training. Cllr. Kelly stated consultation with drivers who have disabilities should be had.

Cllr. Canning queried the provision of additional signage on the N67 at the Green Door, Portumna, and enquired further in relation to the provision of a wheelchair accessible ramp at the Bank of Ireland Portumna. Mr. Haugh stated that he will follow up on both issues directly with Cllr. Canning.

Cllr. Canning referred to the Forest Park area in Portumna and enquired regarding a meeting on site to discuss what safety measures can be put in place with respect to the presence of deer on roads in the area which is a health and safety concern. Ms. Lowe responded that following today's meeting she would meet him on site to assess the matter.

Cllr. Finnerty sought clarification on cleaning of road signage within the Municipal District. He stated that signage is a problem as signs are covered by bushes and briars creating a safety issue. He sought clarification on the appointing of a contractor to deal with this. Mr. Haugh responded that a tender competition has been run in recent weeks and works will commence in compliance with the regulations having regard to the season.

In response to Cllr. Kinane's request for updates on the Greenway, Ms. Flynn stated an update will be provided in the next Municipal District meeting scheduled for September. Cllr. Kinane requested Ms. Flynn to issue invitation to Mr. Derek Pender to attend the meeting. She sought clarification on who carries out the surveys of the lands.

Confirmation of Minutes of Annual Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held in the Loughrea Chamber on 12th June 2023 **LMD2306**

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 12th June 2023 were proposed by Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Byrne and agreed and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Approval of Draft Litter Management Plan 2023 – 2025 **LMD2307**

Ms. Flynn advised the meeting that the Draft Litter Management Plan 2023 – 2025 was circulated to all members and went on public display on 2nd June 2023 and stated that feedback received was very positive and some changes have been made. She sought the Members approval of the draft plan.

The members thanked Ms. Flynn for her presentation and thanked the Environment Team for the work in preparing the Draft Litter Management Plan.

Cllr. Donohue raised concerns regarding areas within the Municipal District in which access to waste collection services is not provided, she stated that Waste Permit Collectors should not be able to cherry pick the areas they service as certain areas have up to four collectors while others are without. She submitted a submission for the National Waste Management Plan and requested that a condition on the granting of a Waste Permit to Waste Collectors is included and that Waste collectors are not allowed to cherry pick what areas they will service.

She said this is not acceptable. As part of the submission Cllr. Donohue requested also that Waste Collections be brought back into Local Authority Level in the areas of County Galway where private waste collectors will not service.

Cllr. Donohue added that illegal dumping is a major issue in the Municipal District and advised that 14 tonnes of waste was taken off Slieve Aughty following which illegal dumping commenced in other locations.

Cllr. Byrne enquired if Galway County Council has the resources in place to deliver and enforce the plan. He sought clarification on the requirement at S2.2 of the plan requiring business to maintain up to 100metres of the area from their business, Ms. Flynn is to follow up on same. Cllr. Byrne complimented Kinvara Tidy Towns on their submission to the plan and stated that the Council needs to consider further supports which could be given to groups to keep towns and villages tidy.

Cllr. Kinane enquired if a workshop through the Public Participation Network could be arranged to include one member of each Tidy Towns Committee, she stated members of these groups are Ambassadors for all villages and towns. She stated that 30% of litter pollution is caused by passing motorists and pedestrians and asked if there are measures to address this issue, she said that this is causing a significant issue for local community groups and is a financial burden on Galway County Council.

Cllr. Kinane acknowledged that a solar powered bin will be installed in the Cowpark and stated her understanding of the lack of personnel within the Council to service them. She advised solar powered bins are located on one side of the street in Craughwell and traditional bins which were overflowing are located on the opposite side where household rubbish has been dumped, she enquired if a survey of these bins can be undertaken and asked what the Council can do to deal with this illegal dumping. She enquired regarding an update of her report on 9th May 2023 of illegal dumping at a very scenic area. Cllr. Kinane requires a dedicated e-mail address where she can receive clearer quicker responses and updates when a complaint is closed off. Ms Flynn advised that email queries can be sent to environment@galwaycoco.ie.

Cllr. Finnerty referred to excellent works being undertaken by Tidy Town Committees and enquired if the Council will spray weeds and grass growing on footpaths. He enquired if the Council could use CCTV footage at bring banks to deal with dumping and acknowledged GDPR Regulations in place. He complimented the Warden and team who recently dealt with illegal dumping in Craughwell. Cllr. Maher agreed that CCTV footage should be made available to identify and hold responsible persons causing illegal dumping. Cllr. McClearn stated a blueprint is now in place to deal with illegal dumping issues and required staffing levels.

The Draft Litter Management Plan 2023 – 2025 was proposed by Cllr. Canning and seconded by Cllr. Donohue and agreed by the Members.

Flooding Update

LMD2308

Mr. Enda Gallagher updated the meeting as follows: -

Following the stakeholder meeting in Gort Fire Station, several actions have been undertaken by the Project Team:

In response to queries from Cuan Beo, the final salinity report has been amended to confirm that peak flows from the Dunkellin River were considered in terms of salinity in Kinvarra Bay. The assessment determined that the Dunkellin flows would not impact Kinvarra Bay and as such did not warrant inclusion in the salinity model. Cuan Beo have been informed of this.

At the meeting, potential works in the Slieve Aughty's were put forward as potential flood alleviation measures for the Lowlands. TCD has prepared a comprehensive report on this issue, which shows that no feasible works in the Slieve Aughty's will provide flood relief for the Lowlands. This report will be made available during the Exhibition.

LAWPRO raised the issue of pollution control for Kinvara Bay, if an extensive network of channels is constructed under the scheme. A Water Quality Risk Assessment is being prepared to address this issue. The preliminary review indicates an improvement in the quality of the discharge waters to Kinvara, when the scheme is in place, due to the reduced number of septic tanks and slurry pits that would flood and contaminate flood waters during an event. Farming activities have been identified as the main contributor to water quality levels in the catchment. Slurry / fertiliser spreading directly prior to the flood season and the placement of feeding troughs in lands prone to flooding, are likely contributors to water quality levels.

The ecological findings for Termon were presented at the stakeholder meeting and no flood alleviation works are now proposed within the scheme for this location (minor flood water conveyance works are proposed). The project team were asked to review the ecological findings at the meeting. The findings were reviewed and have been confirmed as accurate. This feedback has been provided to the SGFRC representative.

Landowners will be informed about proposed interferences on their lands prior to the proposals going on public display.

On the 20th of June Minister Patrick O'Donovan along with Deputies Sean Canney and Ciaran Cannon attended a meeting with members of the SGFRC and elected members of the Loughrea MD. At the meeting the Minister reiterated his support and the support of OPW to the scheme. He confirmed the OPWs willingness and ability to fund the scheme that proceeds through Confirmation. The Minister highlighted to the attendees that the M18 issue does not impede the scheme getting to the Confirmation stage and that the scheme is to progress while the M18 issue is being resolved between Galway County Council and TII.

At the meeting with the Minister, Mr. Gallagher confirmed that the scheme is now likely to go to Exhibition in January 2024. Mr. Gallagher confirmed to the Loughrea MD that there were a few issues responsible for the delay in getting to Exhibition, including:

- difficulties procuring additional environmental surveys and EIAR photomontages.
- extension to OPW periods to review documents.
- additional flow modelling required around Ballinastaig Woods
- requirement to consult with Greenway and Active Travel teams on N67 culvert proposals

Regarding the M18 culverts, Mr. Gallagher confirmed that a meeting took place in June between senior representatives of Galway County Council and TII. The meeting was very productive with both parties engaged in progressing a solution for the M18 issue that would not impact on the flood project objectives or business case. The resolution of the M18 issue has now been taken outside the scope of the flood project. Derek Pender DoS is dealing directly with this issue.

Mr. Gallagher confirmed to Councillors Murphy and Finnerty that water course recommendations from the project would be contained in land management recommendations for the entire study area. Some landowners are simply not aware of the impact of their farming practices can have on water quality, especially in areas with karst landscapes and widespread underground river networks. An information programme may form part of the final recommendation.

Mr. Gallagher confirmed to Councillors Murphy and Donoghue that he will seek updates from Derek Pender before each meeting of the Loughrea MD and will provide these at the MD meetings. The Public Exhibition phase of the flood project is not dependent on the M18 issue being fully resolved. A level of certainty will be required before progressing to the Confirmation stage of the project.

In response to a query from Councillor Kinane, Mr. Gallagher confirmed that it was impossible to give a timeline for construction works to commence, due to the uncertainty over the Confirmation phase of the project. The extent of environmental issues and objections that will be raised at that time are unknown. These unknowns will greatly affect the timelines of the process.

Part 8 – Housing Development at Caislan Raithin, Ardrahan, Co. Galway

LMD2309

Ms. Eithne Murphy, Senior Executive Engineer made a presentation to the Members on the Part 8 Housing Development at Caislean Raithin, Ardrahan for which approval is sought for the construction of 10 housing units. The development contains 3 single story two-bed dwellings, 1 two-storey three-bed dwelling and 6 two storey two bed dwellings. It includes car parking spaces and connects to existing service and all ancillary site development works. The Planning Reference for the development is LA01/23 and the site inspection took place on 30th March 2023. The site containing circa 1.125ha is situated in a greenfield site to the northeast of the existing housing estate 'Caislean Raithin and is accessed using existing road infrastructure which is accessed off the R347 approximately 0.6km from the centre of Ardrahan Village.

A discussion took place regarding the need for housing in the area. Cllr. Joe Byrne proposed the Part 8 development which was seconded by Cllr. Kinane and approved by the members. The members stressed the need for increased development within the county, Cllr. Finnerty stated that there is a requirement for additional sites to be made available for development. He stated there is no shop in Ardrahan but in Labane there is a pub, undertaker, shop and creche which is less than a half mile away. Cllr. Finnerty stated that access via a footpath/cycle path needs to be provided between Ardrahan and Labane.

Cllr. Murphy stated that he is disappointed with the scheme as this was an opportunity for people from the area to live within Ardrahan, he stated the development does not make provision for Affordable Housing Applications and it is specifically social housing resulting in a 70/30 social housing ratio in the area, he added that he made a request for a change in the development. He stated that Ardrahan is an unserviced settlement and private development is off the table. At present, he stated, there is only one development in the area and the Wastewater Treatment Plan (WWTP) cannot support further development as it is. Cllr. Murphy stated local people cannot get planning permission within the area and speed limits need to be considered. He said he cannot support the development adding there is no shop in Ardrahan, he proposed that a footpath/cycleway is provided between Ardrahan and Labane prior to further housing developments taking place, the proposal was seconded by Cllr. Finnerty. Cllr. Murphy stated that the development does not serve the local people.

Cllr. Kelly echoed the need for the provision of affordable housing and serviced sites. Cllr. Donohue stated that she has discussed housing difficulties with members of the public and added that housing loans will help people get on the property ladder. Cllr. Kinane welcomed the news that ten families will be getting a roof over their heads and supported Cllr. Murphy's concerns and requested clarification on opportunities to provide further housing in the area adding that the issue regarding the WWTP needs to be addressed. Cllr. Canning expressed his dissatisfaction with the proposal, he enquired if 5 houses in the scheme can be allocated as Social Housing and 5 allocated for Affordable Housing as the current plan is relevant for a small group of people and this would give people a chance to get on the property ladder. He asked what options are available for people who cannot secure planning permission on their own land to build a home.

Cllr. McClearn stated that the proposal for 10 social houses has been approved as the proposal has secured a proposer and seconder. Mr. Hanrahan thanked the members for the vote. He stated that the scheme is a drop in the ocean of what is required regarding housing provision. He clarified that the 10 houses will be allocated to people on the housing waiting list for Ardrahan. Mr. Hanrahan provided the members with statistics of housing provision in the Area, he added that tenants have the option to purchase their home under the Tenant Purchase Scheme. Mr. Mitchell stated that representations have been made to the Department regarding the lack of WWTP services in the area and is presently under consideration. He added that limited land banks are available, and the Council is assessing other locations for development. Mr. Mitchell discussed the Council's targets of provision of social housing and affordable housing. Cllr. McClearn stated that when the Members approved the County Development Plan provision was included for planning permissions however, he stated planning permissions are now being refused.

To consider Report on implementation of Portumna Streetscape Scheme

LMD2310

Ms. Eimear Dolan, Administrative Officer made a presentation to the Members on the Portumna Street Scape Scheme. She advised the members that the scheme, which is due for allocation this week, provides significant potential to contribute to the attractiveness of Portumna and is aligned to the regeneration vision for Portumna and its tourism objectives. The Scheme for Portumna has been development in consultation with Mr. Ronan Conway, Executive Engineer who is part of the Council's Regeneration Team.

Ms. Dolan advised that Our Rural Future is the Government's five-year strategy to revitalise rural Ireland and it includes a commitment to upgrade and enhance shopfronts and street facades in rural towns and villages to improve the visual appearance of urban streetscapes. She explained that the scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and is implemented by Galway County Council with the involvement of local property owners, tenants, tidy towns, businesses and community developments organisation. She advised that the total allocation for Portumna is approx. €96,000. She explained that applicants submitted their applications to the Council together with quotations for eligible works. Ms. Dolan advised that 41 applications were eligible under the scheme and the grant rate is at both 80% and 70% with the majority of offers for façade painting. She stated the average grant is approximately €2,300. She thanked the Elected Members, Portumna Chamber of Commerce, Portumna Tidy Towns, Mr. Ronan Conway and Carmel Egan Assistant Staff Office for their support and was pleased that the feedback on the scheme has been positive.

The members thanked Ms. Dolan for her informative presentation. Cllr. Maher stated in 2021 the scheme made a job of the town, and it was refreshing to have a good news story, Cllr. Canning stated that huge work has been done adding that this is very positive, he enquired if applicants did not accept the offer under the scheme can it be diverted elsewhere in Portumna. Ms. Dolan responded that the uptake rate is 75% and clarified that any funding remaining will be made available for other successful applicants in the area. Cllr. Canning sought clarification on whether applicants who were not successful following their initial application would have a further opportunity to apply and Ms. Dolan confirmed that this is correct. Cllr. Kelly expressed that it is disappointing that the scheme does not extend to B&Bs and food producers who are employers and taxpayers. Cllr. McClearn welcomed the enhancement scheme and stated it will work well in Portumna and he welcomed the provision of funding for businesses in the area which will make a positive difference.

One nomination from the Loughrea MD required to sit on a Public Art Selection Panel on Friday 15th September at 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. in Centrepont, Lisoban Office **LMD2311**

In respect of a request for a Member of the Loughrea Municipal District to sit on a Public Art Selection Panel on Friday 15th September at 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. in Centrepont, Lisoban Office, Cllr. Donohue proposed Cllr. Kelly to sit on the panel on 15th September, Cllr. Byrne seconded the proposal. The members agreed.

Cathaoirleach's Business **LMD2312**

Cllr. Maher proposed the Taking in Charge (TIC) of a road in Kiltullagh, he stated he had a meeting with Mr. John Coyle, Executive Engineer regarding this matter. He stated, if necessary, he would contribute NOM monies towards the cost. He said he wants approval today on the matter and he has discussed the matter with Mr. Derek Pender, Director of Services. Cllr. Maher stated he was advised that the TIC process is a function of the elected members to decide upon and as is the way NOM monies are spent. Cllr. Maher stated that

people want to build houses in the area and currently cannot, he reiterated he wants it to be TIC. Ms. Lowe acknowledged that TIC matters are reserved functions. She added she will look at the road in question on site in consideration of the proposal and advised she will discuss the matter with Cllr. Maher further following the meeting. Ms Lowe advised that prior to the Councillors taking a road in charge notice of the intention must be advertised to the public and an opportunity provided for people to make submissions. When this is concluded a report is prepared for the Councillors to consider.

Cllr. Donohue requested an update on the provision of a footpath linkage at the Glenbrack Road, Gort which she raised 4 years previously. Ms. Lowe responded that funding was sought from the NTA under Active Travel last year but was not granted. Funding will continue to be sought from the NTA. She noted that due to the size of the project Part 8 planning consent may be required.

In response to Cllr. Byrne's query on the taking in charge of LIS roads, Ms. Lowe suggested that it be raised with the Road & Transportation Strategic Policy Committee as has relevance to all Municipal Districts.

Cllr. Byrne requested that water samples at beaches should not be taken following torrential rainfalls, he explained that this occurred at Traught Beach resulting in the beach losing it's the blue flag status. Ms. Lowe responded that the feedback can be brought to the attention of the Environment Section.

In response to Cllr. Byrne's comments regarding the pedestrian crossing at Hennelly's Corner, Gort, he stated this matter could be resolved by the installation of traffic lights, Ms. Lowe stated this can be looked at under the Gort LTP.

Cllr. Finnerty referred to the changing of traffic wardens within the Municipal District and stated they are doing great work regarding illegal dumping. He referred to traffic offence fines and enquired if tickets are now being placed on cars where fines are issued and stated this should be the case in fairness to motorists. Ms. Lowe stated that the wardens carry handheld printers and tickets are issued on the day.

Cllr. Kinane expressed her concerns regarding the lack of staffing in the Municipal Districts which impacts on the Council's ability to deal with works such as cleaning of gullies and opening water tables. She asked for a date when gullies can be cleared in Clarinbridge. She also sought clarification on when tree cutting along the N67 and hedge cutting in the Clarinbridge/Kinvara area would commence.

Cllr. Byrne and Cllr. Murphy stated that works carried out at the Killeenavarra to Ballinderreen crossroads is not working and stated that a staggered crossroads should be put in place instead. He stated that the signage and road markings are perfect, but drivers are not paying attention to them.

Cllr. Canning enquired if any progress has been made regarding the works required on the road to the swimming area in Portumna and if traffic calming measures have been progressed, he stated 100 children use the swimming area daily. Cllr Canning also added that there is a special needs centre on that road. Cllr. Kelly raised concerns regarding wheelchair users who use the footpath every day which is made difficult due to the condition of the paths, he stated

these people need to be taken into consideration. Ms. Lowe stated that she would follow up on the matter and it was hoped the project would be progressed under Active Travel funding. She advised that Active Travel may not fund measures to amenities only and added she will research further where the funding can be sourced.

Cllr. Canning enquired where material milled from roads being resurfaced is transported to and asked if it can be used to resurface other roads in the MD such as the road in the old dump in Portumna as, he said, this could be a cost saving measure. Ms. Lowe responded that RAP (Recycled Asphalt Planings) can be used on other areas and advised that re-use of this material is very topical in the industry in respect of sustainability and environmental impact.

Cllr. McClearn stated that realignment works took place along sections of the N65 but that a section of road at the Green Door was not realigned, he said that this is a pinch-point in both directions as cars travel at high speed, he said this needs to be addressed and signage should be erected.

He requested that the grass be cut on the R446 from Cappataggle to Aughrim prior to the Galway Races, he added it wasn't done last year but it was an arrangement in place when the area was contained in Ballinasloe. Mr. Haugh stated that this section of road was reviewed annually, and it would be addressed in line with all other Regional and National routes in the MD.

CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN



**CLLR JIMMY MCCLEARN
CATHAOIRLEACH, LOUGHREA MD**