

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

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

**Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea
held virtually on 9th May 2022 @ 11.00 am**

I LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach

Cllr. G. Donohue

Bail:

Cllr's. P.J. Murphy, D. Kelly, J. Byrne, M. Kinane,
I. Canning, J. McClearn, M. Maher

Oifigigh:

Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services
Mr. D. Pender, Director of Services
Ms. R. Lowe, Senior Engineer
Mr. G. Haugh, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. J. Coyle, Executive Engineer
Mr. N. Kennedy, Executive Engineer
Mr. E. Gallagher, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. F. O'Meara, Senior Executive Engineer
Mr. S. Coogan, Water Safety Development Officer,
Galway
Mr. A. Cunningham, Staff Officer
Ms. P. McHugo, Assistant Staff officer
Ms. S. Cleary, Staff Officer
Mr. C. McGuinness, RPS

Apologies from Cllr. Curley and Cllr Finnerty who were not in attendance.

**Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held
virtually on 11th April 2022** **LMD2220**

The Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 11th April 2022 were proposed by Cllr. Byrne and were seconded by Cllr. Kelly, they were agreed and signed by the Cathaoirleach.

Arising from the Minutes, Ms. Ruane advised Cllr. Byrne that issues that he had previously raised in relation to the responsibility for the operation and direction of the Fire Services is being dealt with through the line management structure.

Cllr. Byrne referred to the previous meeting and thanked Mr. Gallagher for providing an update regarding Lavally flooding.

In response to Cllr. Canning's enquiry, Ms. Ruane advised that Ms. Finn has contacted An Post regarding the postcode in the Coose Area and Ms. Ruane will link in with Ms Finn regarding an update on same.

Cllr. Canning asked if a meeting has been arranged for landowners whose lands are affected by the proposed Greenway, Cllr. Donohue clarified that details were requested during an earlier meeting held via MS Teams on the morning of 9th May 2022 and Mr. Pender will revert in due course.

Flooding Update LMDM 9th May 2022:

LMD2221

Mr. Enda Gallagher updated the meeting as follows:-

South Galway Gort Lowlands FRS – The Environmental Consultant continues to undertake baseline surveys for the production of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The findings from the Marine Institute on the 3D salinity modelling of Kinvarra Bay are now being examined.

The Engineering Consultants continue to examine local hydraulic models, the results from the ground investigation contract and findings from the environmental consultant.

Mr Gallagher confirmed to Cllr Byrne that all reports associated with the South Galway scheme will be published in their entirety at the Exhibition Stage and will not be published individually in advance.

Ballyboy – Mr Gallagher confirmed to Cllr Murphy that the proposed works will be undertaken during the school summer holidays and include the replacement of the culvert deck. Feedback is due from one landowner with regards to works that will be required at his shed and details of the group water scheme mains are being sought, to be included in the contract documents.

Mr Gallagher confirmed to Cllr Byrne that the Drainage District funds have not yet been allocated for 2022 and that works at Lavally can be considered when Mr Tom Prendergast SE is considering the allocations in the near future.

Overview on Water Safety

LMD2222

Mr. Shane Coogan expressed his thanks for the opportunity to make his presentation on Water Safety in Galway.

He advised that Galway County Council provides a shared Water Safety Service with Galway City Council and that there are 16 dedicated bathing areas in Galway; 6 in the City, and 10 in the County including 2 on the Islands (Inis Óírr and Inismór). There are three in the Loughrea MD - Long Pont, Loughrea, Traught Beach, Kinvara and the Swimming Area Portumna .

Mr. Coogan stated that water safety is about engaging with people in the proactive use of water and keeping people safe, he said Galway County Council encourages people to swim in designated bathing areas and that his role is to help people to think about their actions when engaging with water to avoid getting into difficulty. He advised that the Council works closely with the Galway Water Safety Area Committee.

Mr. Coogan acknowledged the good work performed by Lifeguards and advised the meeting that in 2019 Rescue 115 expressed their acknowledgement of a Galway County Lifeguard who rescued 2 people from the water at the same time. Mr. Coogan provided statistics on incidents that occurred in swimming areas and expressed the need to invest in educating the public, including children and parents, to take responsibility for water safety.

Mr. Coogan informed the meeting that the Council provides public rescue equipment, such as ring buoys which are inspected on fortnightly/monthly basis depending on location and in compliance with water safety guidelines. He informed that the ring buoys are currently being upgraded with Galway City complete and will now be doing so for the county. He advised that the Water Safety Development Officer provides information and talks to groups on Water Safety when requested. Ms. Ruane confirmed that the role of Water Safety Development Officer was a seasonal role, but agreement has been reached with the Chief Executive for the appointment of a full time Water Safety Officer. Ms. Ruane stated the application for the appointment of Water Safety Development Officer has been submitted to the Department for sanction and that the HR Department of Galway County Council will advertise the position in due course.

The Councillors expressed their gratitude to Mr. Coogan for his informative presentation and a discussion took place regarding the provision of information to schools and demonstrations for water safety at swimming and bathing areas.

Cllr. Byrne stated that there are locations in the County where people traditionally swam but where 'No Swimming' signage has been erected. He stated that it was important to respect the traditions of people who swim in such areas and that the signage erected had caused upset. Mr. Coogan clarified that such signage was erected by the Council to inform the public that the location may not be suitable for swimming. Mr. Pender advised that a review and audit will be carried out and a blanket prohibition of swimming was not intended.

Cllr. Byrne called on Galway County Council to open toilet facilities at Traught Beach and to provide Beach Lifeguards at the beach. He raised a concern regarding wages rates paid to Beach Lifeguards in Galway in comparison with other Local Authorities. In response Ms. Ruane advised that with respect to pay scales for local authority staff, there are national pay scales that cover all the different grades for staff but there is not a standardisation with respect to lifeguards. She has raised this matter with the LGMA and a review will be carried

out of pay scales for beach Lifeguards which will also take into consideration seniority and experience. This will then be put before the members as part of the Budget 2023 timeframe.

Cllr. Byrne requested that a review of signage located at Traught Beach be carried out.

Cllr. Kinane raised a concern on the provision of lifebuoys by local community groups at piers or traditional swimming areas outside of designated bathing areas. She advised that local community groups purchase lifebuoys which may not be up to the required standard and stated information and financing for these items should be provided by the Council. She also concurred with Cllr Byrne's concerns regarding the rate of pay for lifeguards in Galway. Mr. Coogan advised that a set inspection is carried out by the Community Wardens on lifebuoys and any issues regarding the provision or standard of life boys should be directed to him. He stated that he meets with groups when requested and advises on standards set out by Water Safety Ireland.

Cllr. Kinane asked Mr. Coogan if it is possible to provide a Water Safety Social Media Campaign targeted at children and parents, Mr. Coogan stated that Water Safety Campaigns could be considered and expanded going forward when the new Water Safety Officer has been appointed.

Cllr. Maher acknowledged the works carried out by Gerard Haugh and his team on the installation of handrails to aid access at Loughrea Lake and making the area more accessible for wheelchair users and buggies. He also acknowledged the provision of new table and chairs at the site. He stated that, for health and safety reasons, facilities at the Long Point in Loughrea should remain open throughout the year as opening facilities from June to the end of August is not enough, he asked the Director if it is possible to extend the timeframe beyond June to August. Cllr. Maher advised that during periods of good weather there is a need to have lifeguards present and facilities opened. Ms. Ruane responded that she will liaise with the Corporate Services Section regarding the extended duration of time for opening facilities and extending the duration of the presence of beach lifeguards.

Mr. Coogan advised that, with respect to extending the duration of time for which beach lifeguards are appointed, consideration should be given to the fact that lifeguards are students who may be required to sit exams.

Cllr. Canning asked if the attachment of a tubular pipe along the wall at the Lake in Portumna can be progressed and enquired if NOM funding would help progress the matter. He welcomed the return of the boat to Portumna and stated he is hopeful that it will be back in the water for the summer.

Cllr Kelly supported Cllr Byrne's comments regarding the parity of pay for lifeguards in Galway and stated that there should be no reason that lifeguards in Galway should be paid less than lifeguards in any other area of the country. Cllr. Kelly also wished to support Cllr Byrne's comment regarding the re-opening of toilet facilities at Traught beach and to ensure they are open when crowds of swimmers are present.

Cllr Donohoe enquired as to whether approval had been granted for the upcoming Atlantic Lifeboat Swim. In response Mr Pender informed that he had been in touch with the local Superintendent this morning and would confirm approval once he has spoken with him.

**An Chrannóg and Loch na hOileann Estates, Loughrea – Taking in Charge LMD2223
(Declaration of a road to be a public road)**

The taking in charge of the Road at An Chrannóg and Loch na hOileann Estates was proposed by Cllr. Canning and seconded by Cllr. Donohue and agreed by the Members.

Details as follows:-

Point A-B-C-D on TIC Map:

1. Road commencing at its junction with L4224 in the townland of Pollroebuck and extending North for a distance of 115m to Point C, turning West for a distance of 25m, turning South for a distance of 24m, turning East for a distance of 17m and ending outside house No.6 in the townland of Pollroebuck.

Point B- E on TIC Map:

1. Road commencing at its junction with A-C and extending East for a distance of 73m and ending outside house No. 28 in the townland of Pollroebuck.

Point C-F on TIC Map:

1. Road commencing at its junction with A-D at point C and extending East for a distance of 58m and ending outside house No.21 in the townland of Pollroebuck.

Cllr. Byrne expressed his thanks to Ms. Edel Hourigan, Administrative Officer and the Roads and Transportation section for their work on Taking in Charge.

Responding to Cllr. Byrne's query, Ms. Lowe confirmed that she would seek clarification on the requirement of residents to have public liability in place for green areas in the estate. Ms. Lowe stated that where an estate is taken in charge, maintenance and cutting of grass remains the responsibility of the residents or Management Company. Cllr. McClearn asked if an estate is Taken in Charge, can the Management Company be dissolved where there is a functioning residents committee in place. Ms. Lowe advised that the establishment of the Management Company is generally a statutory requirement, under the Multi-Unit Development Act but she will check to see if at a later stage they can be dissolved. She advised it is not really a matter for Local Authorities directly.

Update on Greenway Project

LMD2224

Mr. Cian McGuinness of RPS made a presentation to the Meeting on the progress of the Greenway Project and advised on the number of land agreements agreed and yet to be agreed. He advised the Members that the Athlone to Dublin leg of the Greenway is complete and that the project will continue from the Bridge in Athlone to Galway. Mr.

McGuinness advised that public consultations on the Greenway were held in August 2020, February/March 2021 and December 2021. He advised that in April 2022 it was established that the preferred route is Corridor No. 5. Mr. McGuinness, in response to Cllr. Byrne query stated that only landowners directly affected by the project will be contacted when the route is developed. Mr. McGuinness advised that land agreements can vary in width from 5 meters to 8 metres resulting from various issues such as fencing requirements.

Cllr. Maher enquired if there are many landowners not in favour of the Greenway and if a meeting can be arranged to consider the inclusion of a spur to Loughrea Town. Mr. Pender advised Cllr. Maher that a spur to Loughrea is being looked at under the National Cycle Network but it does not form part of the current project. He advised that a team is being put in place following which consideration of a spur to Loughrea can be considered further.

Mr. McGuinness advised that a significant number of landowners are involved in the Greenway to different degrees and there are approximately 30 landowners from whom agreement is yet to be achieved. Cllr. Kinane enquired if the cycle way can progress along part of the main road in cases where landowner agreement cannot be reached or if this is ruled out, Mr. McGuinness advised that it is not categorically ruled out but will be considered only as a last resort and after exhausting all other options. Cllr. Murphy agreed with Cllr. Kinane's comment that ruling out cycling along the main road in Kinvara, Kilcolgan and Oranmore could prove problematic, he stated that there is a cycle lane needed in these locations. Cllr. Byrne asked that better consideration to be given to the provision of crossing points for cyclists and pedestrians than what was incorporated into the new N67 project. Cllr. Donohue advised that a National Cycle Network linking all towns and cities will be opening for submissions in June and encouraged the lodging of submissions, she stated that Loughrea is earmarked in the project and is linked to Athenry and Oranmore. Mr. Pender advised that the National Cycle Network project is a TII project.

Cllr. Murphy enquired as to the specifications of fencing to be used along the Greenway in locations where there are traditional stone walls in place and stated that locals have stated that modern fencing may be inappropriate. Mr. McGuinness advised that he is cognizant that stone walls are an attractive feature and stated that boundary treatment will be carried out on a case-by-case basis. Cllr. Donohue agreed that there is further discussion required regarding fencing. Mr. O'Meara added that safety issues must be considered where stone walls are replaced.

Cllr. McClearn referred to a meeting which took place earlier in the morning regarding progress on the Greenway and asked if similar meetings will take place in future to which Mr. Pender advised it is the intention to hold meetings every 2/3 months.

Cathaoirleach's Business

LMD2225

Cllr. Kinane expressed her concerns regarding the layout and safety of the Athenry Junction in Clarinbridge and stated she received a significant number of calls from people concerned about large vehicles which travel that junction daily. Cllr. Kinane requested Mr. Haugh to carry out an audit of the junction and that an electronic sign be erected advising that works are ongoing, she requested a statement from the Engineers on what is happening with the

works at the junction. Cllr. Byrne stated that he has received similar calls and requested an AutoTrack analysis be carried out in respect of larger vehicles using the junction and making a left turn. He stressed that the situation is very unsafe and suggested kerbs be removed and that some members of the public are fearful of using this junction.

Mr. Haugh advised that he is aware of the issues raised and that works are being undertaken in consultation with TII. He stated that there was a minor alteration to the junction to avoid cars blocking visibility and that the completion of the works should improve when works are completed, and the Temporary Traffic Management measures are removed. He advised that a Road Safety Audit will be completed at Stage 3 of the works but highlighted that the motivation for these works and the final outcome will be an improved safety situation for all road users but particular the most vulnerable. Ms. Lowe stated that she will inspect the location directly and discuss with Mr. Haugh.

Cllr. Maher requested an updated on Kilmeen Junction and if a roundabout or lights will be located at this area. Mr. Pender advised that the preferred option is a rural roundabout. The standard design of a rural roundabout does include the provision of public lighting, he stated that offers have issued to Executive Engineers for appointment following which progress on the Kilmeen Junction can commence.

Any Other Business

LMD2226

Cllr. Maher asked Ms. Ruane if there is any update on chainsaw training for Fire Services personnel as Galway is the only Local Authority where this is not in place. Ms. Ruane stated that she will follow up with the Fire Service.

Cllr. Kinane welcomed the funding for Blackweir Pier and asked if there is a commencement date for works, Mr. Pender stated he will revert with a timeline.

Cllr. Kinane asked for clarification on funding for walking trails in Clarinbridge and when the walking trails will be opened, she also enquired if a Maintenance Plan can be put in place going forward. Ms. Ruane advised that she follow up and revert.

In response to Cllr. Canning's query on a caretaker for Churchill Graveyard, Ms. Ruane will enquire regarding the situation and advise.

Cllr. Murphy stated that the Graveyard Committee at Kiltartan Burial Ground requested the provision of a water tap, Cllr. Byrne advised that this was raised previously but no connection could be provided at that time. Mr. Pender advised he would clarify the issue.

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on 13th June 2022 at 11.00 am in the Loughrea Municipal District Chamber.

CHRIOGHNAIGH AN CHRUINNIU ANSIN


CLLR GERALDINE DONOHUE
CATHAOIRLEACH, LOUGHREA MUNICIPAL DISTRICT