

**CEANTAR BARDASACH BHAILE LOCHA RIACH
MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA**

**Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea
held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices Loughrea, on 8th December 2025**

I LATHAIR:

Cathaoirleach:

Cllr. P. Killilea

Bail:

Cllrs. I. Canning, G. Donohue, L. Harney, G. Finnerty, D. Kelly, M. Kinane (online), M. Maher, J. McClearn, M. Regan.

Oifigigh:

Ms. E. Ruane Director of Services (online), Mr. D Troy A/Senior Engineer, Mr. G. Haugh Senior Executive Engineer, Mr. N. Kennedy Executive Engineer, Mr. D. O'Loughlin Executive Engineer, Ms. M. McGann Meetings Administrator, Ms. O. Cloonan Staff Officer.

**1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL
DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA HELD ON 10th NOVEMBER 2025**

LMD2459

The Minutes of the monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 20th October 2025 were approved by the Municipal District Members and signed by the Cathaoirleach on the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. M. Maher and **SECONDED** by Cllr. M. Regan.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Cllr. Maher queried when works would commence on the traffic lights situated at Westbridge, Loughrea, and in response, Mr. Haugh advised that Cllr Maher's NOM funding has been assigned, and the Active Travel team was awaiting set-up of a job code and appointment of the consultants for that specific element of the works. In response to a query from Cllr. Regan regarding why he had not been contacted about allocating NOM funding, Mr. Haugh advised that Cllr. Maher had confirmed the full allocation of the NOM funding required at the previous MD Meeting and the NOM funding allocation was processed on that basis.

Cllr. Kelly enquired if there was an update on behalf of the residents of Coscorrig Crescent regarding their petition and in response, Mr. Haugh advised that locations for speed surveys have been agreed and once the survey results are available, they will be made available to the Councillors.

Cllr. McClearn questioned if speed ramps could be installed on roads within a 50km/h speed limit as a matter of policy, and in response, Mr. Haugh advised that applications have previously been made for traffic calming measures in various locations under the Low-Cost

Safety Improvement Scheme but several of these were unsuccessful. The current priority under the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) is to consider other measures, e.g. horizontal road realignment, rather than install traffic calming ramps in isolation. An update is expected in early 2026 regarding the reduction of speed limits from 50km to 30km in certain urban centres, which will be accompanied by additional funding measures to implement these changes. Cllr. Regan stated that expenditure on speed limit signage was a waste of resources, and that speed ramps were a better and safer deterrent to speeding. He also raised concerns in relation to visibility issues at nighttime with the new island infrastructure installed at Craughwell Village. In response, Mr. Haugh advised that the works at Craughwell Village were installed due to extremely high speeds identified at this location through a previous speed survey. The measures were implemented as a "first-step" and would likely be added to as resources allowed. He highlighted the role of driver responsibility to keep within the permitted speeds at these locations as the primary requirement to avoid any further issues or accidents.

Cllr. Harney and Cllr. Maher queried if additional speed cameras could be installed as an alternative to speed ramps, and in response, Mr. Troy advised that this is a matter for An Garda Síochána. Mr. Troy added that the installation of traffic calming measures or ramps is subject to public consultation and consultation with An Garda Síochána and will be re-assessed as part of the speed limit review to identify priority areas and will be installed where Low Cost Safety Improvement Scheme applications are successful. Cllr. Killilea praised the recent works carried out at the pedestrian crossing in Gort town and highlighted the fact that they have significantly reduced the speed of cars coming through Gort town. Following further discussion on the effectiveness of measures to reduce speeding in towns and villages, and the related need for enforcement and driver responsibility, Cllr. Regan proposed that an invite should issue to the Superintendent, An Garda Síochána, to attend a meeting of the Municipal District, and this proposal was seconded by Cllr. Harney.

Cllr. McClearn sought an update regarding the appointment of consultants for works at Heathlawn, and in response, Mr. Haugh advised that there were no changes to the timeline previously given by TII which was that a consultant would be appointed in 2025 with works to be carried out in 2026.

Cllr. McClearn and Cllr. Canning highlighted the ongoing issues with reeds at Portumna Bathing Area and the need for clarification regarding the status of the Christmas Day Swim for charity. In response, Ms. Ruane advised that she has asked the Water Safety Officer for details of the risk assessment carried out at Portumna Bathing Area and will forward the information to the Councillors.

Cllr. Canning queried the status on appointment of a Caretaker for Portumna Courthouse, and in response, Ms. Ruane confirmed that an offer has been extended to the next candidate on the panel, and she will update all the Elected Members once a start date has been confirmed.

Cllr. Canning asked for an update on the illegal encampment in Portumna and in response, Ms. Ruane advised that Damien Mitchell, Director of Services, will meet Councillors on-site.

Cllr. Kinane sought an update on the transfer of land at Rinville Coastal Walk to Galway County Council to facilitate funding, and in response, Ms. Ruane advised she would follow up with Michael Owens, Director of Services.

Cllr. Regan enquired about Longpoint project and when it is expected to be advertised and in response, Ms. Ruane advised that she would follow up with the relevant Directors regarding the status of casual trading and the tendering process.

2. GALWAY PUBLIC LIBRARIES 5-YEAR STRATEGY – CONSULTATION

LMD2460

Cllr. Killilea welcomed Ms. Elizabeth Keane, City & County Librarian, to the meeting to present on the new 5-year Galway Libraries Strategic Plan as part of the consultative process. Ms. Keane thanks the Members for the opportunity to present on the strategy for development of the library service. Ms. Keane confirmed that the consultative process had concentrated on capturing feedback across 5 key focus areas to inform the new strategy:

- Community Hubs: libraries as gathering spaces and social infrastructure
- Literacy & Learning: educational support, children's literacy and lifelong learning
- Care & Wellbeing: community nurturing, inclusive services, staff wellbeing
- Digital Transformation: digital services, technology access and skills training
- Cultural Programming: arts, heritage, local history and cultural engagement

Ms. Keane stated that the above focus areas showed that libraries have developed activities far beyond book-lending, and this was also borne out by public feedback on primary uses which also demonstrated that 90% of users are satisfied or very satisfied with services. Respondents stated that the current primary uses of the library service were borrowing books, audiobooks, dvd's, etc.; children's activities & resources; attending events, talks & workshops; digital services, e-books & online services; studying or working; and meeting friends & social contact.

The primary areas for improvement identified through the public consultation to date were developing libraries as community hubs, supporting children's literacy & education, arts & cultural programming, preserving local history & culture, and creating spaces for remote working & study. The primary barriers which were identified to using library services included unsuitable opening hours, lack of awareness of services, and services not meeting identified needs. The next stage of the process was to carry out further analysis of this survey data and feedback from focus groups with a view to developing a strategy which would instill libraries as a civic anchor for communities. Ms. Keane welcomed feedback from the Elected Members on the priorities and issues set out in the consultations to date.

Cllr. Killilea and the Members thanks Ms. Keane for the detailed presentation and the joy which is brought to communities through all the services offered through the library network. Ms. Ruane thanks Ms. Keane and all library staff and stated that the list of activities presented in the Monthly Reports on Council activities demonstrate that libraries are at the heart of communities, and there is a significant evidence base to progress services further.

Cllr. Maher stressed the need for extended opening hours, particularly until 6pm, to build on libraries as an after-school social space and learning environment. In addition, Cllr. Maher

stated that it was important to build on libraries as a cultural hub and base for local festivals. Cllr. McClearn stressed the huge challenge of operating a library service in County Galway within available funding resources and commended the staff on the level of service provided across full and part-time libraries. Cllr. McClearn also stressed the need to continue engagement with young people and to develop a range of suitable activities.

Cllr. Kelly stated that libraries were an important resource for students and drew on the parallels with the Nordic library system in this regard and stressed the need for extending services for students and raising awareness of the existing services such as access to newspaper archives.

Cllr. Donohue welcomed the inclusion of the library strategy as a dedicated agenda item which gave it due importance and stressed the need to celebrate and promote our libraries as safe warm welcoming spaces and highlight the available services. Cllr. Kinane also complemented the library staff on the joy brought to many communities through the services offered by their local libraries. In response to a query from Cllr. Donohue on book exchange, Ms. Keane confirmed that Ireland's library service was the only one in the world where a book could be ordered on the national database and delivered to any library of your choice.

Cllr. Finnerty enquired about infrastructural and accessibility improvements to the library network, and the option of delivering multiple service options at library buildings in the future. In response, Ms. Keane advised that this was part of the Strategic Review, and the library service was currently mapping the library network to identify priority improvements.

Cllr. Killilea stressed the joy brought to children through programmes such as the Summer Readers Programme, and on behalf of all the Members, offered support to Ms. Keane for the development of the Strategic Plan and development of libraries as transformative hubs for communities.

3. LPT NOTICE OF MOTIONS

LMD2461

The allocation of €16,000 from the Local Property Tax Discretionary Capital Fund for restoration and resurfacing works on the L85172 was proposed by Cllr. Finnerty, seconded by Cllr. Killilea and agreed by the Members.

The allocation of €6,450 from the Local Property Tax Discretionary Capital Fund to Kilchreest Castledaly Community Group being the excess cost of conservation works to Kilchreest Old Church funded under the Community Heritage Grant Scheme was proposed by Cllr. Donohue, seconded by Cllr. Kelly and agreed by the Members.

The allocation of €15,000 from the Local Property Tax Discretionary Capital Fund to The Clarinbridge Community Playground Committee being part of the match funding requirement for LEADER funding to upgrade Clarinbridge Community Playground was proposed by Cllr. Kinane, seconded by Cllr. Canning, and agreed by all.

Cllr. Regan suggested that the seconder for a proposal of Local Property Tax Discretionary Capital Fund should be from the same local area as the Member proposing the allocation.

4. MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

LMD2462

No matters arose.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LMD2463

Cllr. Regan raised concerns regarding chip loss at recent works in Derrybrien and queried if there was a post-inspection check before payment issued to the contractor. In response, Mr. Haugh clarified that this was an overlay project, and the contractor will be returning in early 2026, once road surface temperatures rise, to finalise the surface dressing with 10/14mm chips - in the meantime, a certain amount of chip loss is expected as excess chips are applied during surface dressing operations to facilitate the forming of a tight mosaic.

Cllr. Donohue, Cllr. Killilea, and Cllr. Finnerty raised queries in relation to quality of lighting in segments of the Main Street of Gort town, requesting more or better lighting for improved visibility. In response, Mr. Haugh asked that specific locations be reported to the Area Office as Electric Skyline had previously advised that the lighting is sufficient and meets all requirements including Dark Sky Ireland recommendations for reduced light pollution. Mr. Troy added that 97% of the public lighting in County Galway has now been upgraded and the light strength is improved in most cases.

Cllr. Finnerty stated that several cars have hit the traffic calming measures in Labane Village, and while well designed the islands need to be repainted and maintained and he is willing to provide Notice of Motion Funding for same. Mr. Haugh responded to confirm that the repainting element of the work required had recently been completed in Craughwell Village and the Gort Office would enquire further with the contractor involved to determine if they could undertake the required works in Labane. NOM funding support was welcomed.

Cllr. Donohue raised the need for maintenance of drains and culverts to avoid surface water on road surfaces, and in response, Mr. Haugh advised that due to the size of the network and limited crew, it was only possible to do this on a seasonal basis.

Cllr. Kinane queried the protocol for the Christmas period, should the public need assistance. Mr. Haugh advised that an out of hours rota is in place and the public should ring the out of hours phone no 091-509069 if they need assistance.

The Members complimented the Loughrea Municipal District staff for the service provided throughout the year and the extra roads included on the Roads Programme this year. The Members also expressed thanks to Ms. Eimear Dolan for her assistance and diligence in dealing with rural funding scheme applications throughout the year. The Members expressed appreciation to the staff of Galway County Council for their service and also acknowledged the presence and contribution of the media representatives in attendance.

CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN.



Cathaoirleach:

Date:

