

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**  
**MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL**  
**Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026**

**CATHAOIRLEACH:** Cllr. D. Collins  
Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

**I LATHAIR FREISIN:**

**Baill:** Comh. /Cllr. S. Broderick, J. Charity, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, S. Cunniffe, T. Ó Curraoin, G. Donohue, P. Feeney, G. Finnerty, D. Geraghty, T. Grealish, A. Harney, L. Harney, M. Hoade, C. Keane, D. Kelly, D. Killilea, P. Killilea, M. Kinane, M. Lee, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, S. McHugh Ryan, E. F. Parsons, A. Reddington, M. Regan, N. Thomas, O. Turner, S. Walsh and T. Welby.

**Baill ar líne:** Comh. / Cllr. I. Canning, P. Keaveney, M. Leainde, P. Mac An Iomaire, M. Maher, K. McHugh Farag, M. McNamara,

**Oifigh:** Mr. L. Conneally, Chief Executive, Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Mr. Michael Owens, Director of Services, Mr. Uinsinn Finn, Director of Services, Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services, Ms. A. Fenton, Financial Accountant, Mr. D. Mitchell, Director of Services, Ms. J. Brann Meetings Administrator, Ms. L. Keady, A/Senior Executive Officer, Mr. M. O Donnchadha, Oifigeach Forbartha Gaeilge, Ms. H. Riordan, Staff Officer, Ms. L. O'Donnell, Assistant Staff Officer.

**Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.**

The meeting commenced with the Members expressing their sympathies to Cllr. Gerry King on the passing of his sister Anne, to Cllr. Ivan Canning on the passing of his Uncle PJ Lynch, the family of the late Michael O'Neill former Galway County Councillor, remembered as a trailblazer for his lifetime of community service and to the family of the late Harry Collins, Galway County Council employee, who gave 55 years of service to the Council.

As a mark of respect, the meeting was adjourned for 5 minutes.

**ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS**

**4675**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kelly **SECONDED** by Cllr. McHugh Ryan the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January were **AGREED**.

**Members raised the following points and queries:**

- A suggestion was made that receptions be held in the foyer of County Hall and not in front of the Chamber.
- The Council were called upon to act to address a rat infestation in a derelict house in Loughrea.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Ruane**

- Committed to discussing the derelict house matter with Cllr. Regan following the meeting.

**ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS** 4676

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. D. Killilea **SECONDED** by Comh. Mac An Iomaire the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 were **NOTED**.

**ITEM NO.3 TO CONSIDER THE AUDIT COMMITTEE'S 2025 ANNUAL REPORT UNDER SECTION 15 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AUDIT COMMITTEE) REGULATIONS 2014.** **4677**

*Report was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Feeney **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn the Audit Committee 2025 Annual Report under section 15 Local Government (Audit Committee) Regulations 2014 was **NOTED**.

**ITEM NO.4 FILLING OF A CASUAL VACANCY ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE REGIONAL HEALTH FORUM WEST AND NORTH WEST.** **4678**

*Report dated 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. P. Killilea it was **AGREED** to appoint Cllr. Laurie Harney to the membership of the Regional Health Forum West and North West.

Cllr. L. Harney thanked the Members for the nomination and looked forward to serving on the committee, he confirmed his commitment to restoring maternity services at Portiuncula Hospital.

**ITEM NO. 5. TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE AUTHORISE THE ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142(5A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED)** **4679**

*Report dated 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Walsh **SECONDED** by Cllr. McHugh Ryan it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Regan, Parsons & Welby to attend LAMA Spring Training Seminar at The Connaught Hotel, Old Dublin Road, Galway on 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026. (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Walsh **SECONDED** by Cllr. Lee it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Mc Clearn, Hoade, Mc Hugh-Ryan & King to attend AILG February Training Module – “From Policy to Practice: What Local Authorities in Ireland can offer to support disabled people and an ageing population” at The Fairways Hotel, Dundalk on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2026 (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Walsh **SECONDED** by Cllr. Lee it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Kinane & Maher to attend AILG February Training Module – “From Policy to Practice: What Local Authorities in Ireland can offer to support disabled people and an ageing population” at the Hotel Kilkenny on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2026 (Retrospective Approval).

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. L. Harney **SECONDED** by Cllr. McClearn it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs/ Comh. Cunniffe, Ó Curraoin, McHugh-Ryan, Kinane, D. Killilea, L. Harney, King & Welby to attend the Association of Irish Regions Training Seminar 2026 at Inishowen Gateway Hotel, Bunrana, Co. Donegal on 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Ó Curraoín **SECONDED** by Cllr. P. Killilea it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Hoade & Donohue to attend AILG Annual Training Conference 2026 at Hotel Minella, Coleville Road, Raheen, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary on 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026.

**ITEM NO. 6 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE TO AUTHORISE THE ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCE, MEETINGS, OTHER EVENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142(5) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).**

**4680**

*Report dated 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Donohue **SECONDED** by Cllr. L. Harney it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Donohue, Parsons, Mannion, Hoade, Turner & L. Harney to attend COPE Galway – Domestic Abuse Seminar at Galway County Council Chambers on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026. (Retrospective Approval).

**ITEM NO. 7 TO NOTE THE SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF CONFERENCES ATTENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142(5F) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).** **4681**

*Report dated 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Comh. Ó Curraoin the Summary of Proceedings at conference attended were **NOTED**.

**ITEM NO. 8 TO APPROVE THE ATTENDANCE OF A DELEGATION FROM GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL TO ATTEND THE ST. PATRICK'S DAY ENGAGEMENTS IN NEW YORK AND BOSTON AND ASSOCIATED BUSINESS MEETINGS AND EVENTS.** **4682**

*Report dated 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. P. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. Geraghty it was **AGREED** to authorise the attendance of a delegation from Galway County Council to attend the St. Patrick's Day engagements in New York and Boston and associated business meetings and events.

**ITEM NO. 9 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – FEBRUARY 2026 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED).** **4683**

*Report dated February 2026 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.*

**Cllrs. Kinane, Keane, Reddington, McHugh Ryan, Cunniffe, Mannion & L.**

**Harney raised the following points and queries:**

- Further information and clarity were sought on the proposed wastewater treatment plant for Craughwell and Clarenbridge.
- Clarity was sought regarding the Active Travel works in Oranmore. Safety concerns were raised around vehicular entry and exit of the estate.
- It was asked that the National Transport Authority (NTA) be contacted to review their specifications relating to Active Travel projects.
- Alternative methods of informing the public of Section 38 works were requested.
- It was enquired if there is a plan and a budget for pothole maintenance.
- It was asked if extra staff will be provided to manage the new 'Vacant Above the Shop Grant.'
- The 'Inclusive Triathlon Programme' and its partnership with Ability West and the 'Her Moves Schools Programme' were welcomed.
- The Equalisation Fund and Galway County Council's lack of funding must be addressed to progress projects.
- It was asked when the Active Travel scheme will be re-opened, as there are no schemes in North Conamara.
- An update was requested on the progress of the Ballinasloe Fire Station.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:**

- A meeting was held last week between the Department of Housing & Local Government, Uisce Éireann and the Council regarding the proposed wastewater plant in Craughwell and Clarenbridge. It was a positive meeting and an update on the project is included in the Management Report. He undertook to update the Loughrea Municipal District when he has further information.
- Extensive hedge cutting works have been carried out.
- As far as he is aware, the Safe Routes to School Scheme was opened last year. The scheme is operated by An Taisce and the NTA. They provide the

Council with the list of works to be carried out. He undertook to follow up with Cllr. Mannion.

- While the contractor may not be on site in Oranmore at the moment, the Active Travel works are still progressing. He will follow up with the Active Travel Team.
- The Council goes beyond statutory requirements in carrying out Section 38 projects. The Council's online consultation portal receives a high volume of submissions.
- Loughrea Fire Station has been brought to tender for construction. The Athenry Mechanics Workshop is progressing to Part 8 planning consent. Galway City Fire Station is included in the capital programme and is currently at the site selection and preliminary design stage. In addition, upgrade works for the fire stations at Ballinasloe, Inis Mor and Portumna are included in the current capital plan and will progress subject to funding approval.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Mitchell:**

- Additional staff in the housing unit to administer the 'Vacant Above the Shop Grant' will be sought. It will be looked at in the context of the workforce plan.

**Cllrs./Comh. Geraghty, Mac An Iomaire, Feeney, D. Killilea, Hoade & Welby raised the following points and queries:**

- It was asked that leniency be shown by the Environment section, to farmers spreading slurry, due to the recent heavy rain.
- Issues relating to road conditions, repeated potholes, and speeding outside schools were highlighted.
- The introduction of stage payments under the Croí Cónaithe grant was called for.
- The Part 8 planning notices for 2 affordable housing schemes in Athenry was warmly welcomed.

- More Affordable Housing schemes are needed, and the grant must be increased. Neither Letterfrack nor Clonbur have Local Area Plans, rural areas must not be forgotten.
- The works at Kilbannon National School were welcomed.
- The launch of Seachtain na Gaeilge and upcoming programme of events was welcomed.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:**

- At the Galway Housing Taskforce the Executive has sought increased discretion within the Affordable Housing Scheme.
- Discussions are taking place between the Department and Local Authorities on introducing phased payments for the Croí Cónaithe grant.
- There will be Affordable housing schemes in each MD.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by Ms. Ruane:**

- The Environment section works closely with farmers on a local level. She took on board the comment on the amount of recent rain and added that water quality must be maintained.

**Cllrs. Regan, Parsons, Leainde, Donohue, D. Connolly, McClearn, Keaveney & Kelly raised the following points and queries:**

- Funding for the repair of footpaths was called for.
- Road pavements should be lower than the footpaths.
- Installation of speed ramps at Kilrickle and Carrabane national schools was welcomed. It was added that they should be present outside every school.
- A Domestic Abuse refuge is required in the County.
- The lack of Elected Member representation on the newly formed Outdoor Recreation Team was noted. It was asked how Elected Members can engage with the team.

- The change in the structure of the Regional Health Forum was highlighted. This change will lead to the diminishing of local powers.
- The recent COPE Domestic Abuse training was complimented.
- Staffing levels in the Ballinasloe MD must be restored.
- The Executive were congratulated on being one of only 3 Local Authorities nationally to rezone land for residential development.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Mitchell:**

- Acknowledged the urgency of providing a domestic refuge and confirmed that the issue is being examined.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:**

- National Oversight and Audit Commission indicators show that Galway County Council performs above the national average in road condition surveys. Our investment in hot-mix pothole repairs has contributed significantly to this improvement.
- The recent wet and cold weather has affected the condition of the roads. We will write to the Department for an increase in funding for discretionary spending for roads and footpaths.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:**

- In line with our strategic workforce plan we are seeking to increase staffing numbers, which have increased by over 90 from last year.
- He thanked the Planning Team and Elected Members for passing of Variation 1 of the County Development Plan.
- The Council is doing significant work in the provision of social, affordable and cost rental housing and the CE acknowledged the work of the Housing Team.

**ITEM NO. 10 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE. 4684**

The following items of correspondence which were published on the extranet prior to the meeting were **NOTED**:

- Letter dated 25.06.2025 from Galway County Council to Department of Education and Youth – Resolution – Guidelines for Bus Drivers.
- Letter dated 26.06.2025 from Niamh Kelly, School Transport Section, Department of Education and Youth – Reply to Resolution letter dated 25.06.2025
- Email dated 05.02.2026 to Niamh Kelly, School Transport Section, Department of Education and Youth – Follow up email to Resolution Reply dated 26.06.2025
- Letter dated 24.09.2025 from Galway County Council to Mr. James Browne, Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage – Resolution Letter – Renewable Energy Development.
- Letter dated 28.01.2026 from Eoin Colleary, Private Secretary to Minister of State John Cummins – Reply to Resolution Letter – Renewable Energy Development.
- Letter dated 26.11.2025 to Minister Darragh O'Brien, Department of Transport – Resolution Letter – Dedicated Funding for Footpath Repair.
- Email dated 21.01.2026 from Gordon Ryan, Private Secretary to Minister O'Brien, TD – Reply to Resolution Letter – Dedicated Funding for Footpath Repair.
- Letter dated 02.12.2025 from Galway County Council to all TDs – Resolution Mercosur Trade Deal.
- Email dated 20.01.2026 from Deputy John Connolly, TD – Reply to Resolution Letter to all TDs – Mercosur Trade Deal.
- Email dated 23.01.2026 from Aisling O'Boyle Private Secretary to Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister McEntee – Reply to Resolution – Mercosur Trade Deal.
- Letter dated 16.12.2025 from Galway County Council to Commission for Communication Regulation – Resolution – Issues with mobile phone coverage.

- Letter dated 30.01.2026 from Garrett Blaney, Chairperson, Commission for Communication Regulation – Reply to Resolution – Issues with mobile phone coverage.
- Letter dated 16.12.2025 from Galway County Council to Mr. Patrick O Donovan, Minister for Culture, Communications & Sport – Resolution – Issues with Mobile Phone Coverage.
- Letter dated 04.02.2026 from Darren Clarke, Private Secretary, Department of Culture, Communications and Sport – Reply to Resolution letter – Mobile phone issues.
- Letter dated 15.01.26 from Sligo County Council – Resolution – ratify CETA and the Investor Court System.
- Letter dated 22.01.2026 from Offaly County Council – Resolution – Oppose Mercosur Trade agreement.
- Letter dated 22.01.2026 from Tipperary County Council – Resolution – E-scooter and E-Bike Legislation
- Letter dated 30.01.2026 from Galway County Council to Mr. James Browne, Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage – Resolution – Housing for Older Person Grant.
- Email dated 04.02.2026 from Jack Savage, Private Secretary, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage – Acknowledgement of Resolution letter – Older Persons Grant.
- Letter dated 03.02.2026 from Galway County Council to Rural Water Unit, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage – Resolution – Extend Deadline in funding for Measure A8.
- Email dated 04.02.2026 from Jack Savage, Private Secretary, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage- Acknowledgement of Resolution letter – Extend Measure A8 Funding.
- Letter dated 03.02.2026 from Galway County Council to Mr. James Browne, Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage – Resolution – Increase in Additional needs payment.
- Email dated 04.02.2026 from Jack Savage, Private Secretary, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage – Acknowledgement of Resolution letter – Additional Needs payment.

- Letter dated 10.02.2026 from Clare County Council – Resolution – Irish Beekeepers.
- Letter dated 10.02.2026 from Wexford County Council – Resolution – Outlaw the use of anonymous social media accounts.
- Email dated 10.02.2026 from Wicklow County Council – Resolution – CETA and the Investor Court System.
- Letter dated 17.02.2026 from Wexford County Council – Resolution – Irish Public Bodies – Provision of Insurance.
- Letter dated 20.02.23 from Galway County Council to Ms. Fiona Quinn, Assistant Secretary, Local Government, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage – Resolution – Request for increased Baseline Funding for Galway County Council (GCC).

The CE and Mr. Owens reminded the Members that the deadline for submitting Ethical Framework, Annual Declarations is Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

**Cllrs. L. Harney, Regan, Reddington, Geraghty, Cunniffe, McHugh Farag, Welby & Hoade raised the following points and queries:**

- Disappointment was expressed at the correspondence received from ComReg in response to a Notice of Motion from the Members, which is included in the correspondence. There is a lack of accountability from the sector.
- Disappointment and lack of accountability from ESB was spoke of.
- The condition of roads and footpaths following utility works was raised. The responsibility and cost of repairs should not rest with the Council.
- It was asked if any requirements, such as road opening licences, are placed on utility companies when carrying out works.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:**

- Undertook to revert to ComReg on their response.

- Where possible Galway County Council will assist the ESB to improve network provision.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Finn:**

- The Road Opening Licence system is fully online. It provides a level of income. There is a new NOAC indicator for the number of inspections for road opening licences. Currently, approximately half the licences are inspected. There are exemptions for state agencies, however Uisce Éireann are included in the system.

**ITEM 11. QUESTION Cllr. Geraldine Donohue**

**4685**

**Cllr. Donohue submitted the following question to the meeting:**

*'To ask the Chief Executive has Galway County Council applied to Central Government for the funding required for the purchase, restoration and reopening of Dunguarie Castle and to provide a copy of same.*

**The following reply issued:**

Galway County Council has sought support from Central Government for the funding required for the purchase, restoration, and reopening of Dunguarie Castle. The Council has been in active contact with Government Departments, Ministers, the OPW, Failte Ireland and the NPWS to progress the project, and a comprehensive and evidence-based case was prepared highlighting the scale of restoration needs, the strategic tourism value of the site, and the necessity of State financial support. All relevant public and State bodies have been formally contacted, and the required correspondence, including the Chief Executive's submissions, has been issued. Galway County Council now awaits a positive response from the respective Departments and agencies.

## Overview

Galway County Council has undertaken extensive engagement with Government Departments, Ministers, Failte Ireland, OPW and NPWS regarding the transfer, restoration, and reopening of Dunguaire Castle.

Financial support has been sought by the Chief Executive from Central Government, supported by technical, financial and operational documentation prepared across Corporate Services, Tourism and Finance.

## 2. Comprehensive Timeline of Communications, Engagements and Key Actions

### 2023 – Initiation of Feasibility Work

- Galway County Council commenced formal consideration of Dunguaire Castle as a potential acquisition and public tourism asset.
- Initial engagement took place with procurement and technical advisers to scope the due-diligence requirements necessary to assess the condition, safety and viability of the asset prior to any transfer.

### 2024 – Technical Due Diligence, Statutory Engagement and Early External Queries

#### January – February 2024

- Galway County Council commissioned a comprehensive suite of external technical reports, including building condition surveys, structural and engineering assessments, fire safety reviews and preliminary cost estimates.
- These reports confirmed that significant capital investment would be required to address structural, safety and compliance issues prior to any reopening.

#### February – March 2024

- Galway County Council responded to external tourism and public enquiries regarding the reopening of Dunguaire Castle, confirming that the Castle remained closed and that reopening was contingent on completion of due diligence, securing funding and resolving ownership matters.

- Engagement took place with external tourism bodies and local authority counterparts to inform operational and comparative assessment.

April – June 2024

- Galway County Council initiated engagement with planning, heritage and conservation stakeholders, including internal heritage and planning functions, to confirm statutory obligations associated with works to a protected structure and national monument.
- Early consideration was given to requirements for Ministerial Consent and engagement with National Monuments authorities.

Late 2024 – Development of Funding Case and Government Engagement

November 2024

- Galway County Council engaged Grant Thornton to prepare a Funding Requirement Memo, setting out:
  - Capital restoration costs
  - Operational projections
  - Cash-flow requirements
  - Long-term sustainability considerations
- This document formed a core element of the evidence base supporting requests for State funding.

December 2024

- Galway County Council prepared briefing materials and draft correspondence for engagement with Government Departments, outlining:
  - The national and regional significance of Dunguaire Castle
  - The scale of deterioration and risk associated with continued closure
  - The inability of the Council to proceed without Government capital support

2025 – Escalation of External Engagement and Political Support

May – July 2025

- Galway County Council engaged directly with Shannon Group / Shannon Airport Group, the current owners of Dunguaire Castle, regarding:
  - The conditions and feasibility of transfer
  - The urgency expressed by Shannon Group in progressing a resolution
  - The risks associated with delay or alternative disposal
- A site visit was undertaken involving senior GCC officials to assess access, safety and condition issues.

#### July 2025

- Galway County Council issued formal correspondence to Central Government seeking capital funding support for the restoration and reopening of Dunguaire Castle.
- This correspondence explicitly stated that, without Government funding, Galway County Council would not be in a position to proceed with acquisition or works.

#### November 2025

- A full schedule of records was compiled, including all external correspondence, technical reports and funding documentation.
- Elected members were provided with factual updates and, where appropriate, access to due-diligence material on a confidential basis.

#### December 2025

- Galway County Council attended a Ministerial-level meeting with the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment.
- The meeting acknowledged the strategic importance of Dunguaire Castle and the scale of capital funding required.
- Follow-up actions included preparation of formal submissions and requests for inter-agency support.
- Post-meeting correspondence issued by Galway County Council thanked Ministers and officials and reiterated the Council's funding position.

## 2026 – Formal Chief Executive Submissions and Democratic Reporting

January 2026

- The Chief Executive of Galway County Council issued formal correspondence to:
  - The Office of Public Works (OPW)
  - The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)
- These letters sought formal support for the acquisition, restoration and reopening of Dunguaire Castle and requested engagement on potential funding and statutory pathways.

### 3. Detailed Review of External Correspondence Seeking Support

Galway County Council has consistently and formally sought external support for the Dunguaire Castle project. All correspondence was grounded in technical, financial and operational evidence and issued at senior management or Chief Executive level.

Support sought included:

- Capital funding for restoration and compliance works
- Political and departmental support to progress inter-agency coordination
- Statutory and technical engagement with OPW and NPWS

### 4. Table of External Correspondence Issued by Galway County Council

<b>Date Issued</b>	<b>Issued By</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Purpose of Correspondence</b>	<b>Response / Current Status</b>
13 Nov 2024	Jacqueline Carroll, Director of Services, GCC	Government Departments (via draft "Letter to Government")	Preparation and circulation of formal funding request letter seeking State capital support for the acquisition, restoration and reopening of Dunguaire Castle	Draft finalised and prepared for issue; subsequent CE-level issuance followed

17 Dec 2024	Jacqueline Carroll, Director of Services, GCC	<b>Office of An Taoiseach</b> (via John Kelly)	Direct request for An Taoiseach's support to secure €5.18m State funding for Dunguaire Castle; submission of full funding documentation and invitation to visit site	Email issued; no written response on record at time of review
13 Dec 2024	Jacqueline Carroll, Director of Services, GCC	Chief Executive (for onward issue to An Taoiseach)	Drafting and recommending formal submission to An Taoiseach following confirmation that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage had no available funding stream	CE approval process referenced; subsequent submission issued
19 Feb 2025	Jacqueline Carroll, Director of Services, GCC	Sean Canney, TD	Request for political support and assistance in securing Government funding; attached business case previously submitted to relevant Departments; request for meeting	Email issued; meeting sought; no positive funding response recorded at time of issue
17 Feb 2025	Jacqueline Carroll, Director of Services, GCC	Government / Fáilte Ireland context (reply drafted for CE)	Formal acknowledgement that GCC is seeking national funding; confirmation that transfer cannot proceed without State capital support; reference to potential Fáilte Ireland capital programme as fallback	Position articulated; no confirmation of funding support recorded
July 2025	Galway County Council	Central Government / Relevant Departments	Formal request for capital funding support to enable acquisition, restoration and reopening of Dunguaire Castle	Acknowledged; matter progressed to further engagement

				and Ministerial meeting
16 Dec 2025	Galway County Council	Minister for Enterprise, Tourism & Employment (meeting)	Presentation of funding case and strategic justification	Positive engagement; support acknowledged; follow-up actions agreed
Dec 2025 (post-meeting)	Director of Services, GCC	Department of Enterprise, Tourism & Employment	Written follow-up confirming funding request and agreed actions	Awaiting formal written response
22 Jan 2026	Chief Executive, GCC	Director General, NPWS	Request for support for acquisition and restoration of Dunguaire Castle	Issued; response awaited
22 Jan 2026	Chief Executive, GCC	Office of Public Works (OPW)	Request for OPW engagement and support in progressing the project	Issued; response awaited
Ongoing 2024–2025	Galway County Council	Fáilte Ireland	Engagement regarding potential visitor experience and tourism supports	Indicative support expressed; no financial commitment confirmed

## 5. Current Position

- Galway County Council has completed extensive due diligence and external engagement in relation to Dunguaire Castle.
- Formal requests for State funding and agency support have issued.
- The Council is awaiting formal responses from Government Departments and State bodies.
- Galway County Council will continue to engage proactively to progress the project, subject to securing the necessary funding.

Cllr. Donohue asked why there was no correspondence between 2021 and the closure of Dunguaire Castle in 2023. She noted that the Dunguaire Castle website

references Galway County Council. No funding has been set aside in the National Development Plan for the Castle.

Cllr. P. Killilea added that he attended a recent meeting with Minister Burke, Fáilte Ireland, the Chief Executive, Director of Services Mr. Owens and Oireachtas Members, at which Minister Burke gave a commitment on the future of the castle.

The Chief Executive stated that the correspondence as provided by Mr. Owens shows the work that has taken place to date. The Members will be notified as soon as there is an update.

## **ITEM 12. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**4686**

**Cllr. Karey McHugh Farag submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:**

*'Galway County Council calls on the Government to amend the Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Prohibition of Importation of Goods) Bill to include the prohibition of trade in service.*

*The inclusion of services is in accordance with the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice and the Resolution which Ireland co-sponsored at the United National General Assembly.*

*Furthermore, this Council urges the Government to enact the legislation in full before the end of Spring 2026.*

Cllr. McHugh Farag spoke on her motion, thanking the Local Palestinian Action Group for the work they have carried out. She explained that trade in services should be prohibited along with that of goods.

Cllrs. Kelly, McClearn, Leainde, D. Connolly, Geraghty supported Cllr. McHugh Farag's motion. Cllr. D. Connolly outlined that while Comh. Ó Curraoin had left the meeting momentarily, he had also indicated that he was in support of the said motion. It was asked that the delegation travelling to New York raise this issue during their trip and that the motion be copied to the Oireachtas Members.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McHugh Farag **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly the above motion was **AGREED**.

**ITEM 13. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**4687**

**Cllr. Declan Kelly submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:**

*'That Galway County Council Executive write to the Minister for Housing and ask that the new guidelines on modular homes be expedited, as many families are contacting Councillors as to where it is at'.*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Kelly **SECONDED** by Cllr. Geraghty the above motion was **AGREED**.

**ITEM 14. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**4688**

**Cllr. Alan Harney submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:**

*'That Galway County Council notes the importance of protecting and enhancing the character and appearance of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), and reaffirms the role of the Shopfront Design Guide, produced by the Regeneration Team in 2023 in achieving this objective.*

*This Council should proactively engage with business owners and occupiers within ACAs to encourage awareness of, and compliance with, the Shopfront Design Guide, including the provision of guidance and advice where appropriate.*

*Furthermore, where such engagement does not result in compliance, that this Council examines and, where necessary, pursues appropriate enforcement options under the Planning and Development Acts to address non-compliant shopfronts, in order to protect the architectural and visual integrity of ACAs''.*

**The following reply issued:**

Galway County Council is committed to protecting and enhancing the character and appearance of the Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's). The below policy objectives in the County Galway Development Plan 2022-2028 commits to this.

**AH 1 Architectural Heritage**

Ensure the protection of the architectural heritage of County Galway which is a unique and special resource, having regard to the policy guidance contained in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011 (and any updated/superseding document).

**AH 4 Architectural Conservation Areas (Refer to Appendix 7)**

Protect, conserve and enhance the special character of the Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) included in this plan through the appropriate management and control of the design, location and layout of new development, modifications, alterations or extensions to existing structures, surviving historic plots and street patterns and/or modifications to the character or setting of the Architectural Conservation Area. Works within the ACA shall ensure the conservation of traditional features and building elements that contribute to the character of the area. The special character of an area includes its traditional building stock and material finishes, spaces, streetscape, shop fronts, landscape and setting. New proposals shall have appropriate regard to scale, plot, form, mass, design, materials, colours and function.

This will be achieved by;

- (a) Protecting all buildings, structures, groups of structures, sites, landscapes and all features which contribute to the special character of the ACA from demolition and non-sympathetic alterations.
- (b) Promote appropriate and sensitive reuse and rehabilitation of buildings and sites within the ACA.

(c) Ensure new development within or adjacent to an ACA respects the established character of the area and contributes positively in terms of design, scale, setting and material finishes to the ACA.

(d) Promote high-quality architectural design within ACAs.

(e) Seek the repair and reuse of traditional shopfronts and where appropriate, encourage new shopfronts of a high-quality architectural design.

(f) Ensure that all new signage, lighting, advertising and utilities to buildings within ACA are designed, constructed, and located in such a manner that they do not detract from the character of the ACA.

(g) Protect and enhance the quality of open spaces within ACAs and ensure the protection and where necessary reuse of street furniture and use of appropriate materials during the course of public infrastructure schemes within ACAs.

(h) Prohibit development proposals, either in whole or in part for the demolition of a structure within an Architectural Conservation Area that contributes to the special character of the area.

(i) Protect structures in ACAs from non-sympathetic alterations and encourage appropriate infill developments.

(j) Works materially affecting the character of a protected structure or the exterior of a building/ structure within an ACA will require planning permission;

(k) Any works carried out to a protected structure or the exterior of a building/structure within an ACA shall be in accordance with best conservation practice and use sustainable and appropriate materials.

(l) Ensure that any development, modifications, alterations, or extensions materially affecting the character of a protected structure, or a structure adjoining a protected structure, or a structure within or adjacent to an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), is sited and designed appropriately and is not detrimental to the character or setting of the protected structure or of the ACA.

In line with the policy objectives above, Galway County Council will commit to engaging with the business community with respect to encouraging the enhancement of the ACA's and will empower such business communities to

enhance and develop their business to the benefit of the built heritage in towns and villages across the County.

Cllr. A. Harney spoke on his motion, he is concerned in instances where new businesses do not conform to the requirements of the Shopfront Design Guide, especially in Architectural Conservation Areas.

**Cllrs. Feeney, Geraghty, L. Harney & Regan raised the following points and queries:**

- Noted that not all architectural buildings can be preserved. The guidelines should not inhibit good development.
- Concerns were raised about the potential loss of rates revenue when short-term businesses close and subsequently reopen in different locations.
- Information on unpaid rates was requested.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:**

- A balanced and reasonable approach will be taken in relation to this issue.
- It is the responsibility of the owner of the building to notify the Local Authority in relation to rates. The Council are proactive in this area. We receive information from Revenue and our Revenue Collectors.
- He will revert to Cllr. Regan on his query regarding rate collection. The collection rates of the Council are very good, we lie in the top half in the NOAC Indicators.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. A. Harney **SECONDED** by Cllr. Turner the above motion was **AGREED**.

**ITEM 15. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**4689**

**Cllr. Evelyn Parson submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:**

*'That this Council call upon Government to enact legislation to systematically, sustainably and steadily increase the provision of Irish-medium education so that future generations of Irish children will have the opportunity to be educated through their national language, if they so desire.*

*Further, that this Council-*

*Requests that this motion be circulated to the Minister for Education, the Taoiseach, the Minister for the Gaeltacht, all Oireachtas members in the constituency, and the other local authorities for their information.*

*Rún:*

*Go n-iarrann an Chomhairle seo ar an Rialtas reachtaíocht a achtú chun a chinntiú go mbeidh an deis cheart ag glúnta páistí agus teaghlaigh amach romhainn oideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge a fháil ina dteanga náisiúnta féin, más mian leo é.*

*Ina theannta sin, iarrann an Chomhairle seo go seolfar an rún seo chuig an Aire Oideachais, an Taoiseach, Aire na Gaeltacht, agus gach ball den Oireachtas sa dáilcheantar, agus chuig na húdaráis áitiúla eile mar eolas dóibh'.*

Cllr. Parsons added that plans need to be put in place now to increase opportunities for children to be educated in their national language. The revival of the Welsh language is a prime example of how successful this can be.

Cllrs. Donohue, Mannion, L. Harney and Hoade spoke on the motion and added that the Chamber should lead by example in the use of Gaeilge.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Parsons **SECONDED** by Cllr. Donohue the above motion was **AGREED**.

#### **ITEM 16. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**4690**

**Cllr. Máirtín Lee submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:**

*'Tá mé ag moladh go cuirfidh Comhairle Contae na Gaillimhe litir ag MARA, maidr leis na hiarratais atá deanta chun Ceadunais chun feamainn a bhaint sna cladaigh ar chósta Contae na Gaillimhe, ag insinnt dóibh go bhfuil cearta bainnte feammaine ag fórmhór mhuintir na haite sna gceantair ina bhfuil siad ag deanamh iarratas iontú. Iarraimid ar MARA breithniú cuí a dhéanamh ar na cearta seo sula gcinnefar na hiarratais agus aird a thabhairt ar na gnáthchearta seanbhunaithe agus cearta príobháideacha seo atá ag muintir na háite chun feamainn a bhaint.*

*I am recommending that Galway County Council write to MARA, regarding the applications made for Licences to harvest seaweed on the shores of County Galway, informing them that the majority of the local people in the areas where they are applying for consent have seaweed harvesting rights. We call on MARA to give due consideration to these rights before determining the applicaitons and have regard to the long established and customary and private sea weed harvesting rights of the local people.'*

**Cllrs./Comh. Lee, Keane, D. Connolly, O Curraoín, Thomas, Mannion, Mac An Iomaire, Welby, L. Harney & Kinane raised the following points and queries:**

- Local seaweed farmers have been farming for hundreds of years without causing detrimental effect to the environment.
- If allowed, this could in time affect all the County's coastline.
- Mairéad Farrell, TD has raised this issue in the Dáil.
- There have been public meetings and the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) must take on board the views of the seaweed farmers.
- The licence applications should be withdrawn and the current system should remain in place.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Lee **SECONDED** by Cllr. Keane the above motion was **AGREED**.

**ITEM NO. 17 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS**

**4691**

The Cathaoirleach drew the attention of the Members to the calendar of events as previously circulated that are taking place for Seachtain na Gaeilge.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Cunniffe **SECONDED** by Cllr.

Thomas:

*'We propose that Larry Murrin stand-down from his position within Bord Bia Organisation; as double standards are not acceptable when the focus should be on Irish produce.'*

**Cllrs. Cunniffe, Thomas, Finnerty, Reddington, Kelly, McClearn, Geraghty, Welby, Hoade, D. Connolly, Kinane, Keane & M. Connolly raised the following points and queries:**

- A Chairperson must uphold and enshrine the values of a company.
- There is a direct conflict of interest in this case.
- Removing him from office will not address the problems that Irish farmers face, such as CAP post 2027 and LEADER programme.
- Irish farmers are subject to extensive inspection requirements and continue to produce top-quality produce
- Dialogue and negotiation are needed to address these issues. Disputes cannot be resolved without dialogue.
- Traceability and honesty are needed. Consumers are trying to buy and support Irish produce. It is not acceptable that imports display the Irish flag. Faith in the Bord Bia logo is lost.
- This motion has been passed at the Ballinasloe MD. Confidence needs to be restored.
- Of the 15 members of the Bord Bia board, 12 voted in confidence of the Chairperson. The views of the board must be respected.
- Bord Bia is about food production not solely farmers.

A counter motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade:

*'I propose that Galway County Council write to all parties concerned, Farm Organisations, Bord Bia, and the Minister for Agriculture, to convene an urgent*

*meeting to instigate dialogue and a clear process to resolve the existing impasse. This is required to protect farm incomes, the integrity of Bord Bia, the future CAP Negotiations and their impact on communities.*

*The current Bord Bia Farm inspection regime also needs to be examined.'*

A discussion took place in the Chamber with regard to the counter motion, as put forward by Cllr. McClearn. Members expressed their concerns as to whether it should be considered as a new motion or a counter motion. In accordance with Standing Orders the Cathaoirleach confirmed that he was dealing with it as a counter motion and that it was being taken first and that he was putting it to a vote.

A vote was taken on the counter motion.

The following was the result:

**For 24**

Cllr. S. Broderick	Cllr. J. Charity	Cllr. D. Collins
Cllr. M. Connolly	Cllr. G. Donohue	Cllr. P. Feeney
Cllr. G. Finnerty	Cllr. T. Grealish	Cllr. A. Harney
Cllr. L. Harney	Cllr. M. Hoade	Cllr. C. Keane
Cllr. D. Killilea	Cllr. P. Killilea	Cllr. M. Lee
Comh. Ac an Iomaire	Cllr. E. Mannion	Cllr. J. McClearn
Cllr. S. McHugh Ryan	Cllr. Dr. E. F. Parsons	Cllr. A. Reddington
Cllr. M. Regan	Cllr. O. Turner	Cllr. T. Welby

**Against 2**

Comh. Ó Curraóin	Cllr. K, McHugh Farag
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**Abstain / No Vote 12**

Cllr. D. Connolly

Cllr. S. Cunniffe

Cllr. D. Geraghty

Cllr. D. Kelly

Cllr. M. Kinane

Cllr. M. McNamara

Cllr. N. Thomas

Cllr. S. Walsh

Cllr. I. Canning

Cllr. P. Keaveney

Cllr. M. Leainde

Cllr. M. Maher

As per the result of the vote, the County Secretary deemed the motion as carried and it was adopted.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Comh. Mac An Iomaire **SECONDED** by Cllr. Reddington:

*'That Galway County Council writes to The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and ask for the*

*The implementation of a phased payment system for the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund Scheme.'*

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Mac An Iomaire **SECONDED** by Cllr. Reddington the above motion was **AGREED**.

**Cllrs. Thomas, Kelly & Grealish raised the following points and queries:**

- Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of regulation governing solar farms.
- It was asked if the renewable energy status section of the County Development Plan can be reviewed.

**Members Queries were responded to as follows by the Chief Executive:**

- There is provision to vary the County Development Plan under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have issued guidelines regarding lithium battery storage and the

Council adhere to these guidelines. The Amendment or Variation of a County Development Plan is a Reserved Function of the Members.

**ITEM NO. 18 VOTES OF SYMPATHY/CONGRATULATIONS.**

**4692**

- Siobhán O Neill, Tully, Renvyle, Co. Galway
- Paraic Lowery, Tiernea, Cornamona, Galway
- Michael Kane, Mullaghgloss, Renvyle, Co. Galway
- Esther, Denny, Declan, Donnacha & Marie Flaherty, Waterdale, Claregalway, Co. Galway.
- Robyn & Theo O Brien C/O Esther & Denny Flaherty, Waterdale, Claregalway, Co. Galway
- Theresa, Eoin, Adam, Lisa & Bronagh Kelly, Lydacan, Oranmore, Co. Galway.
- Damian McGrath, Church Street, Gort, Co. Galway
- Pat Kearney & Niamh Kearney, Maree Road, Oranmore, Co Galway
- Cllr. Gerry King, Errislannan, Clifden, Co. Galway
- Linda Ní Chonchubhair, Leitirmóir, Co. na Gaillimhe
- Michael Collins, Terryland, Co. Galway
- Pdraig Lohan, Claggernagh East, Portumna, Co. Galway
- Nora McHugo, Feagh, Duniry, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Edward Corban, Shragh, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Anne Marie Seymour, Upperforge, Woodford, Co. Galway
- Kieran Fahey, Barrack Street, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Pat & Mary Quinn, Dunkellin Street, Loughrea, Co Galway
- The Family of PJ Lynch, Toomard, Newbridge, Co. Galway

**Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.**

**Submitted, Signed and Approved**

**Cathaoirleach:**

  
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**Date:**

23-3-2026