

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

**Minutes of Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea  
held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices Loughrea, on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**I LATHAIR:**

**Cathaoirleach:** Cllr. P. Killilea

**Baill:** Cllrs. I. Canning, G. Donohue, L. Harney, G. Finnerty  
D. Kelly, M. Kinane, M. Maher, J. McClearn, M. Regan.

**Oifigigh:** Ms. E. Ruane Director of Services, Mr. C. Harley 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. C. Mc Donagh Executive  
Architect, Mr. K Gavin Senior Executive Technician, Mr. C.  
Lufniak Arch Tech Student, Ms. S. Ryan A/Assistant  
Staff Officer.

**1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL  
DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA HELD ON 9<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2026 LMD2468**

The Minutes of the monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 were approved by the Municipal District Members and signed by the Cathaoirleach on the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Maher and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Finnerty.

**Matters arising from the Minutes:**

Cllr. Donoghue enquired about the proposed closure of Kinvara Pier for structural assessment and asked for an indication of a timeline for remedial work which may need to be carried out as she is concerned about the impact on the Crinniú na mBád festival.

Cllr. McClearn requested an update on the cutting of weeds at the Portumna bathing area and expressed the need for the matter to be addressed as soon as possible. Ms. Ruane advised that the Environment Department has appointed a contractor to undertake the cutting of a section of the reeds in advance of the bathing season beginning in June. Cllr. McClearn reiterated his preference that the works be completed no later than the May Bank Holiday weekend and sought clarification on the extent of the area to be covered. Cllr. Canning also requested that the maintenance works be carried out as early as possible.

Cllr. Regan enquired about the Part 10 planning application for the Long Point Amenity Enhancement Project and the anticipated timescale for the process, and in response, Ms. Ruane confirmed that the application is currently lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála and the

decision of the Board decision is awaited. Cllr. Maher stated that he had been approached by local schools in the area requesting that the changing rooms at Long Point be opened earlier in the season to accommodate Erasmus students visiting the town. Mr. Haugh noted that they receive requests each year to open the Long Point facilities earlier; however, due to limited resources available for cleaning, maintenance and painting, it is not feasible to do so.

Cllr. Finnerty expressed his appreciation that the traffic calming measures and associated works in Labane are proceeding as planned.

Cllr. Canning requested an update regarding the illegal encampment at Dowager House in Portumna and whether the OPW had liaised with An Garda Síochána (AGS). Ms. Ruane advised that the OPW had issued notices on 6 March and two caravans currently remain on site. Ms. Ruane advised that An Garda Síochána and the Housing Department were both available to assist and advise OPW on the process.

## **2. PART 8 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT GROVE HOUSE, GORT.**

LMD2469

Ms. Ciara Mc Donagh, Executive Architect in the Housing Department, gave a brief presentation on the proposed development of four residential units at Grove House, Ennis Road, Gort. Ms. McDonagh advised that the Part 8 planning process involved the renovation and extension of the existing semi-detached unit into 2 x 3 bed houses, and constructing an additional 2 x 3 bed houses on the site.

Cllr. Killilea thanked Ms. McDonagh for the presentation and welcomed the additional housing units for Gort.

Cllr. Finnerty noted that there was a strong sense of relief that this project was now coming to fruition as the site had fallen into disrepair and in recent years. Cllr. Finnerty stated that it was important to complement those who had moved the project forward and commended Tom Baker and former Director of Housing, Michael Owens, for advancing the acquisition and planning of this much-needed development. In response to a query from Cllr. Finnerty regarding timelines, Ms. McDonagh confirmed that the Design Team was lined up, and a contract is expected to be signed within 3 months with a conservative estimate for construction being 18 months. Cllrs. Mc Clearn, Kinane and Maher acknowledged the work done by Cllr. Finnerty in driving this development forward and the positive outcomes achieved.

Cllr. Donohue stated that this was a very welcome development and noted that the issue of dereliction at these sites had been raised repeatedly at Municipal District meetings over several years, and it will be great to see new life injected into the area.

Cllr. Kelly stated that this was a welcome development and queried whether any analysis had been undertaken on the projected costs of knock versus rebuild. In response, Ms. McDonagh stated that it was Government Policy to retain buildings and their character, and in this case, the building was structurally sound and there would have been a significant

additional cost for demolition of the structure.

Cllr. Maher noted the value of having an ATU student on placement with the Galway County Council Housing design team and welcomed the Council's involvement in this great initiative.

In response to a query from Cllr. Harney regarding the level of parking provision, Ms. McDonagh confirmed there was an allocation of 1.5 spaces per unit including provision for a disabled parking space. Cllr. Harney stated that the project represented a strong and positive development for the area but expressed concern that 1.5 parking spaces per unit may be insufficient due to dependency upon cars as a mode of travel.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Finnerty, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Killilea, the Part 8 proposal at Grove House Gort was agreed by the Members.

### **3. ROAD SAFETY / SPEED ENFORCEMENT MEASURES**

**Garda Superintendent Oliver Baker, An Garda Síochána.**

**LMD2470**

Cllr. Killilea welcomed Garda Superintendent Oliver Baker to the meeting.

Garda Supt Baker thanked the Members for the invitation and advised the meeting that he holds responsibility for road traffic legislation and road safety across the Loughrea operational area, including Loughrea, Portumna, Gort, Kilrickle, Kinvara, Eyrecourt, Killimor, and Woodford. Supt. Baker provided an overview of road safety statistics for the 12-month period from February 2025 to February 2026. During this period, the region recorded:

- 4 fatalities from road traffic collisions (rtc's)
- 5 collisions resulting in serious injuries
- 385 material damage incidents (recorded primarily for insurance purposes)

Supt. Baker noted that while the number of fatal incidents remains relatively low, any fatal accident was one too many, and there were ongoing efforts to bring about positive improvements in driver's behaviour.

Supt. Baker also presented other data, including the number of fines issued for speeding, mobile phone use while driving, failure to wear seat belts, driving under the influence and Other Fixed Charge Notices (FCNs). Garda Supt Baker explained that the establishment of checkpoints is evidence-based, guided by local knowledge, data, and risk patterns, and welcomed input from the Members in highlighting their local concerns in this regard. He emphasised that the team's approach is proactive, focusing on prevention rather than detection alone and also highlighted the educational dimension of their work, noting that the team engages with local schools to deliver road safety talks. In summary, Supt. Baker stated that there were over 1,400 proactive checkpoints for enforcement representing 4 interventions per day, with nearly 2,200 road users randomly tested for drink or drugs, and 1,500 tickets for various offences issued last year.

Cllr. Killilea thanked Supt. Baker for the overview of enforcement activity and complemented all emergency services for the exceptional job that they do. Cllr. Killilea welcomed the emphasis on education and the need to focus on road safety and changing driver behaviour

as the way forward.

Cllr. Kelly stated that it was useful to have sight of the road safety figures and stressed that the key issue is driver behaviour. He requested clarification on whether public representatives may request the installation of speed cameras in specific areas and, if so, what the formal process entails. He also queried whether local authority funding has any role in supporting fixed camera infrastructure.

Cllr. Maher commented that financial penalties were, in his view, the most effective deterrent to speeding and stated that GoSafe vans deliver strongest results. He stated he would welcome further updates on road safety in the district, noting his previous experience on the Joint Policing Committee and also expressed interest in understanding how the proposed reduction in speed limits from 50 kph to 30 kph may affect Garda resources and manpower requirements.

Garda Supt Baker advised that areas of concern should be notified to An Garda Síochána. Any applications for GoSafe vans within the district should be referred directly to An Garda Síochána, who will then make the formal application to OSCAM. Once an area is nominated, a covert speed survey is undertaken, as he noted that perception of high-speed areas is often not the reality, and therefore camera installations must be evidence based, and then risk assessed to ensure viability. Where there are problem areas which cannot be addressed through fixed cameras, then other measures such as local checkpoints can be initiated.

Cllr. Regan commended An Garda Síochána for their ongoing work and sought Garda Supt Baker's views on the use of speed ramps at village entrances, stating that he considered them an effective deterrent. Supt Baker responded that he supports any interventions that enhance road safety and noted that engineering solutions—such as speed indicator signs, road narrowing, ramps—need to be looked at in conjunction with the whole suite of solutions for a problem area and discussed with the Roads Policing Unit.

Cllr. Kinane asked for the An Garda Síochána perspective on the forthcoming speed limit reductions and whether there would be sufficient resources to enforce the new legislation, particularly on regional routes where speed limits were being reduced. She also expressed the view that additional ramps and traffic calming measures should be introduced and queried who she should contact to report problem locations. Supt Baker advised that An Garda Síochána will continue to use all available resources to monitor driver behaviour and noted that monitoring 30 kph speeds is very challenging in many settings, with checkpoints being the most effective enforcement approach. Supt. Baker emphasised that the physical environment must be suitable for the measures applied and noted that ramps are generally only suitable in urban areas.

Cllr. Harney stated that speed surveys have shown that the speed limit is being exceeded in certain locations on a constant basis and stated that fixed speed cameras are a more effective measure than traffic calming in these circumstances. He expressed the view that a camera is required at Ardahan village and sought information on installation costs and monitoring arrangements. Supt. Baker responded that the costs of fixed cameras are not

the issue but the evidence base and suitability of the location are the prerequisites, and traffic calming such as signage and ramps may be more effective in certain situations.

Cllr. Donohue commented on the loss of rural Garda stations and asked whether there were any plans for their reopening. She commended those who attend road traffic collisions and queried why there is seldom public feedback regarding the causes of near misses to inform the public. She remarked on the significant costs associated with becoming a driver—lessons, insurance, and related expenses—yet noted that driver behaviour remains problematic. Garda Supt Baker responded that the closure of rural Garda stations stemmed from the need to redeploy personnel and emphasised his concern regarding staffing levels nationally, with some parts of the country now isolated as a result. He noted that station houses provided an important community connection and stated that increased recruitment will ultimately benefit the Galway East Division. Mr. Harley expressed the view that the penalty points system is the most effective deterrent, as it requires drivers to always remain conscious of their speed and suggested that a Road Safety Working Group could provide a valuable resource for addressing road safety issues in partnership. Mr. Harley also noted that speed limit reductions should be supported through appropriate engineering measures.

Cllr. Canning stated that speed detection measures should be implemented in all areas of noncompliance, citing Woodpark in Portumna as an example. He asked whether avenues of communication between An Garda Síochána and the Local Authority could be enhanced to discuss progress on speed surveys and concerns which are submitted to An Garda Síochána. Cllr. Canning commented that the figure of 466 GoSafe speed van detections over 12 months appeared low and supported the view that education is essential, suggesting that Transition Year students should be specifically targeted. Mr. Haugh added that survey results previously submitted to An Garda Síochána were generally acknowledged.

Garda Supt Baker advised that he would follow up on the query regarding fixed cameras, noting that their function and operation differ from GoSafe vans, and that not all locations are suitable for fixed installations. He clarified that GoSafe is a contracted private operator under An Garda Síochána enforcement and also clarified that he would be happy to attend a future local meeting and would circulate a dedicated email address to all councillors for meeting related requests.

Cllr. Finnerty thanked Garda Supt Baker for his contribution, noting that most fatalities occur in rural areas and asked whether the Garda app can detect all vehicles without insurance and reiterated the importance of early education for young people, including those as young as 13. Supt Baker confirmed that accident causes cannot be disclosed publicly while cases remain before the courts and highlighted a significant and growing concern regarding pedestrians and cyclists using roads without any reflective gear, noting that these incidents are particularly distressing yet avoidable. He encouraged all road users to use footpaths where available and to wear reflective clothing for visibility.

**4. LPT (LOCAL PROPERTY TAX) FUND NOTICES OF MOTIONS RECEIVED LMD2471**

On the proposal of Cllr. McClearn, seconded by Cllr. Kelly, an allocation of €24,000 was approved from the Local Property Tax Discretionary Capital Fund towards the supply and installation of public lighting at Duniry, Kylebrack, Loughrea (L8779).

**5. MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS LMD2472**

In response to Members queries regarding the status of the Local Improvement Schemes (LIS), Mr. Haugh advised that the scheme was not currently open for applications as there were a significant number of applicants for non-public roads on hand. Cllr. Kelly stated he had been informed that LIS won't be open this year or in future years as there is €5 million worth of works in a waiting list of between five and eight years based on the current allocation of €1.4m per year. He stated that representations should be made to central government regarding the funding shortfall and this was reiterated by Cllr. Donohue. Cllr. Kelly proposed the following Motion which was seconded by Cllr. Harney and agreed: *"That Loughrea Municipal District write to Minister Calleary's Department to request additional funding to expedite the Local Improvement Schemes lists."*

Cllr. Kinane enquired whether the LPT Discretionary Capital Fund could be utilised to fund a non-public road improved under the LIS scheme which subsequently deteriorated, and in response, Mr. Harley advised that public funding cannot be used to match-fund works under the Local Improvement Scheme.

Cllr. Kinane acknowledged the substantial work undertaken by the Active Travel team to redesign two major junctions at the entrances to the Beech Grove and Beech Park housing estates. However, she expressed concern that the works had been paused since Christmas and whether the works were addressing the significant concerns regarding traffic flow at the junctions and requested an update on the status of the project which Mr. Harley agreed to progress. In response to queries from Cllr. Kinane regarding the Coill Clocha housing estate, Mr. Haugh advised that a review of the Coill Clocha estate has been completed and further engagement with the Taking in Charge and the Active Travel teams would be progressed and the Council will write to the Members outlining the position.

Cllr. Donohue referenced the signing of contracts for Gort Civic Amenity Site and expressed appreciation to Ms. Maria Flynn, former Administrative Officer, and to Ms. Ruane and the Environment Department, for securing the funding to develop this important facility.

Cllr. Canning expressed his appreciation for the installation of the new pedestrian crossing in Portumna and thanked all those involved in delivering the project. He noted, however, that he had some reservations regarding its location, observing that it appears to be situated quite close to the junction. Cllr. Canning further highlighted that the road markings on St. Bridget's Road in Portumna, in the vicinity of both schools, have significantly faded and requested that they be reviewed and refreshed as necessary. Mr. Haugh advised that these would be refreshed.

Cllr. Regan noted that the recent heavy rainfall had contributed to the deterioration of the road network and proposed the following motion which was seconded by Cllr. Killilea.

*“That Galway County Council write to the Department to provide extra funding for our roads in County Galway. An allocation of approximation €60m has been provided but this is totally unacceptable due to the bad weather and the state of our roads deteriorating in the county”.*

Cllr. Mc Clearn stated that many roads not included in the three-year roads programme have now deteriorated significantly, and he noted that the Local Authority has limited resources available to address these issues-. Mr. Haugh stated that roads identified as being in urgent need of repair would be prioritised and advanced onto the roads programme.

Cllr. McClearn advised that he had been contacted by several elderly residents in Loughrea who are concerned about the future of the Post Office on Main Street. He proposed the following motion which was seconded by Cllr. Donohue.

*“That Loughrea Municipal District write to An Post seeking assurance that there is no threat to the Post Office Services at Main Street Loughrea”.*

Cllr. Kinane highlighted the importance of the Post Office to the local community, noting its value in rural areas. She advised that the Clarinbridge Post Office will not be closing and confirmed that it will instead be relocating to Londis in the Bridge Centre.

Cllr. Maher stated that there is currently no budget available for footpath grants and indicated his intention to submit a Notice of Motion on the matter to Plenary. Cllr. Maher also advised that he is continuing to seek a resolution regarding the traffic lights at Westbridge and emphasised that closing Dolphin Street is not a viable option and welcomed the opportunity to discuss the matter further at the April Meeting. Mr. Haugh advised that the option to close Dolphin Street is not being considered.

Cllr. Maher stated that there is an insufficient number of parking bays and on-street parking to adequately support businesses in the town, noting that some businesses are unable to access parking due to bays being obstructed. Mr. Haugh responded that the parking arrangements are per those introduced in 2004 under the Loughrea Traffic Management Plan and acknowledged that this document does need to be updated.

Cllr. Maher requested clarification on whether a manager has been appointed to oversee the operation of the Town Hall and sought an update on the anticipated reopening date.

Cllr. Regan raised queries regarding staffing levels in the Loughrea and Portumna areas. Mr. Haugh advised that the Loughrea area is currently understaffed due to unplanned leave and a pending retirement and advised that the Municipal District Office may look at redeployments in the short-term. Cllr. Finnerty queried whether there was currently a panel of staff already in place to be recruited, and Ms. Ruane confirmed that a panel was in place.

Cllr. Harney stated that the footpaths in Craughwell and Ardrahan are in a very poor state of disrepair and that the available budget is insufficient to carry out the necessary works. He further noted that there are numerous roads in similarly poor condition which are not

included in the current roads programme.

**6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

LMD2473

Cllr. Canning raised an issue regarding public lighting in the Cnoc na Sí estate in Portumna, noting that the estate consists of both privately owned and Galway County Council owned properties. He stated that he has been approached by a number of residents there about the matter and that the lighting requires urgent repair.

**CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN.**



**Cathaoirleach:**



**Date:**