

**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> February 2026**

**I LATHAIR:**

**Cathaoirleach:**

Cllr. P. Killilea

**Baill:**

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

**Oifigigh:**

Ms. E. Ruane Director of Services, Mr. D Troy A/Senior  
Engineer, Mr. G. Haugh Senior Executive Engineer,  
Mr. N. Kennedy Executive Engineer, Mr. D. O'Loughlin  
Executive Engineer, Mr. Tom Prendergast Senior  
Engineer, Mr. E Gallagher Senior Executive Engineer,  
Ms. M. McGann Meetings Administrator, Ms. O.  
Cloonan Staff Officer, Ms S. Ryan A/Assistant Staff  
Officer.

**1. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL  
DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA HELD ON 12<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2026** **LMD2468**

The Minutes of the monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Loughrea held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026 were approved by the Municipal District Members and signed by the Cathaoirleach on the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. G. Finnerty and **SECONDED** by Cllr. L. Harney.

**Matters arising from the Minutes:**

Cllr. Harney enquired if there was an update on the invitation issued to the Superintendent of An Garda Siochana to attend the Loughrea Municipal District Meeting, and in response, Ms. McGann confirmed that Superintendent Oliver Baker would attend the March Meeting.

Cllr. Maher sought an update on the Westbridge lights stating that the lights sequence was completely out of sync which was creating delays and difficulties with access to the town centre. Mr. Haugh advised that the preliminary report had been received, however, a number of points of clarification had been referred back to the consultants and an update will be circulated to the Members once further information is received. Cllr. Regan expressed agreement with Cllr. Maher concerning the Westbridge lights and proposed that they either be switched off or operated solely for pedestrian use. In response to further queries regarding options, Mr. Haugh responded that both removal and pedestrian only operation had both been previously mooted by the Elected Members, however, he reminded the members of previous deputations from vulnerable road users (VRUs) where the strengthening and improvement of existing pedestrian crossing facilities was strongly

supported. In addition to this point, he also noted that maintaining the current traffic control and management arrangement is essential for effective vehicle and VRU safety. In relation to any proposed future changes, Mr. Haugh stressed that the Municipal District must be guided by the Consultant's advice and take a holistic view of road safety that considered both VRUs and vehicle traffic. Mr. Troy added that it was essential to wait for the Consultant's final report and clarifications regarding safety concerns before discussing trialing any options such as a mini roundabout.

Cllr. McClearn and Cllr. Canning highlighted the ongoing issues with reeds at Portumna Bathing Area and the urgency in dealing with the issue having regard to the imminent Gaelforce event with 500-1000 swimmers registered for the event. In response, Ms. Ruane advised that dealing with the reeds is a priority for Galway County Council and that the approach has now been revised by the Environment Department with the intention of cutting the reeds back 1-2 times per year going forward.

Cllr. McClearn and Cllr. Kelly highlighted issues regarding delays to works at Heathlawn on the N65, noting the impact of the temporary traffic control system and concerns that the road is deteriorating. Cllr. McClearn stated that he was liaising with other Elected Members regarding a potential deputation to TII and urged Oireachtas Members to engage directly with TII to progress the situation. Mr. Haugh advised that, as previously indicated, these works are not being managed by the Municipal District and the most recent update provided by TII was that works are scheduled for completion by the end of 2026. Mr. Haugh further advised that he has contacted the NRPO for an update and is awaiting a response.

Cllr. Canning raised issues with the continuing illegal encampment of caravans in the vicinity of the RV Park in Portumna, highlighting the difficulties with litter and illegal dumping encountered by the Tidy Towns Group. Cllr. Canning stated that the encampment was affecting both residents and visitors to the town and urged the Council to work with the Office of Public Works to take action.

In response to a query from Cllr. Regan regarding the wattage of upgraded public lighting, Mr. Troy advised he will clarify this with Electric Skyline and revert to the Members.

In response to Members requests for an update on traffic calming measures in Labane, Mr. O'Loughlin confirmed that he had carried out an inspection and is currently itemising the requirements and will revert to the Members once costings are available.

## **2. FLOODING UPDATE: ENDA GALLAGHER S.E.E.**

**LMD2469**

Mr. Gallagher gave a short review of the interactions that the project team have had with NPWS since they commenced their most recent consultations in January 2025. While the project team were satisfied that the proposed scheme will not have any significant impact on the integrity of the vast majority of the European sites (SACs), it was felt that a third-party expert opinion was required for the turlough habitats.

It took several months to identify and secure the services of an appropriate specialist. In the

last fortnight, surveys, modelling data, analyses and findings have been shared with the specialist. It is expected that the results from the review will be available within a month. Additional analysis or surveys may be requested. The Options Report, scheme drawings, and other project documents will be updated when the engagement with NPWS has been closed out. In the last fortnight, the project Agronomist has completed talks with all relevant landowners on sites for re-use of excavated materials. It is hoped that planning documents for the scheme will be lodged in 2026.

The South Galway Flood Relief Committee is fully aware of the current status of the scheme, and a presentation will be made to the committee when the current engagement with NPWS has been closed out.

Cllr. Finnerty expressed concern regarding the significant delay of 15 months caused by a Government Agency, noting that this postponement is resulting in additional costs for Galway County Council. Cllr. Killilea agreed with Cllr. Finnerty's remarks and extended his appreciation to Mr. Gallagher for the update, adding that he wishes to avoid further media attention regarding flooding issues in South Galway.

Cllr. Maher noted that, based on discussions with farmers in the Dunkellin River area, it is particularly challenging when adjacent landowners do not consent to dredging activities. Cllr. Donohue queried whether the Council has the authority to enforce access to land where owners have denied entry for works and in response, Mr. Gallagher confirmed that the Council does have powers to facilitate access. Mr. Gallagher noted that it has been over thirty years since comprehensive dredging operations were conducted, additionally, he pointed out that recent light-touch dredging efforts have often proven temporary, as their effects typically diminish within two to three years.

Cllr. Harney noted the potential for flood plains to be intentionally flooded as a nature-based solution, highlighting Lough Funshin as an example where such measures have no impact on a designated Special Area of Conservation.

### 3. NOTICES OF MOTIONS RECEIVED

LMD2470

Cllr. Geraldine Donohue:

To ask Galway County Council to clean, repair and maintain the footpath put in place by Galway County Council on the R380 (N66) from Gort town to Fahys Cross.

*Reply:*

This matter is regularly brought to our attention but, as you are aware, this office has limited access to funding to address footpath repairs outside of certain specific funding streams. The limited discretionary funding that is available to us is generally targeted on a prioritised basis i.e. appropriateness of the location - is it within a reduced speed limit zone, is public lighting available, number of potential users, number of benefitting individuals, age profile of the potential users. Existing footpaths outside of the reduced speed limits are legacy works that do not meet current standards and lack adequate public lighting. This office has no plans in place or funding at its disposal to consider these works at this time.

Cllr. Declan Kelly:

That Galway County Council repair and maintain the footpath on the Loughrea - Tynagh Road (Baunoge) L4213-70 that was put in place by Galway County Council as a lot of walkers use this footpath on a daily basis and it has not been repaired or maintained in years.

*Reply:*

This matter is regularly brought to our attention but, as you are aware, this office has limited access to funding to address footpath repairs outside of certain specific funding streams. The limited discretionary funding that is available to us is generally targeted on a prioritised basis i.e. appropriateness of the location - is it within a reduced speed limit zone, is public lighting available, number of potential users, number of benefitting individuals, age profile of the potential users. Existing footpaths outside of the reduced speed limits are legacy works that do not meet current standards and lack adequate public lighting. This office has no plans in place or funding at its disposal to consider these works at this time.

A discussion took place on the availability of funding for maintenance of footpaths with the Members highlighting the poor condition of footpaths and the huge need for investment in maintenance and upgrades.

Mr. Haugh stated that the footpath network within our town and village centres had to be prioritized for any available funding, given its higher pedestrian traffic. Where proposals were for footpaths where the number of houses served was very low, there was no public lighting, and/or where the footpath could not be installed or upgraded to meet current standards, then the proposal could not be recommended for funding by the Municipal District Engineer. In relation to queries from the Members regarding the allocation of NOM or LPT Funding towards works, Mr. Haugh clarified that any such works were required to be technically feasible and to current standards, or the Council could face potential liability. Mr. Troy added that any funding proposals by Members were subject to an approval and recommendation process by both the Area Engineer and Senior Executive Engineer for the Municipal District, to ensure that funding was feasible and assigned to priority locations.

**4. MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS**

**LMD2471**

Cllr. Killilea noted the proposed temporary closure of Kinvara Pier to facilitate structural assessment and monitoring of Kinvara Pier and stated that he wished to formally express his strong objection to the permanent closure of the pier which would create additional parking restrictions especially at school pick-ups and on Market Days and impact on the economic viability of the village. Cllr. Finnerty supported Cllr. Killilea's position and commented that if public parking in the town is not available, local businesses may be adversely affected as customers could choose to go elsewhere. Cllr. Finnerty queried if the closure was required to be permanent and if a temporary solution which opened the pier to parking after certain

times, subject to weight restrictions, would be a possibility. Cllr. Donohue noted the importance of safety but emphasised the necessity of establishing clear timelines and enquired if these works had been identified as part of an ongoing audit of piers.

Mr. Prendergast confirmed that following local concerns regarding potential subsidence, it was necessary to immediately cease all heavy loading on the 5m strip from the quay face which would allow investigation and assessment of structural conditions. Mr. Prendergast stressed that in its current state, it may pose a risk to health and safety, therefore, the proposal to close the pier will allow for assessment and monitoring of the issues highlighted at the location. Mr. Prendergast clarified that the proposed restrictions will not prevent Kinvara Pier from being a working pier, which was its primary function rather than a parking area. In relation to timelines, Mr. Prendergast advised that he couldn't give a definitive indication of the timelines, as it will very much depend on the outcome of the assessment. In this regard, he assured the Members there would be no delay in appointing consultants to assess the situation and it was expected that this would be completed within 6 months, and the outcomes in terms of any underpinning or other remedial work would then need to be carried out. Mr. Prendergast advised that an audit of piers was carried out in the last 2 years and maintenance requirements of the significant asset base of 200 piers were actively assessed on an ongoing basis. Mr. Prendergast advised there is a budget available for maintenance of piers and harbours, and depending on the outcome of the assessment, Galway County Council may be in a position to fund the works otherwise an application may be required to be made to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Mr. Prendergast confirmed that he will revert to the Members with an update once it is available. Cllr. Kinane sought an update on the vacancy for a Senior Engineer post in the Piers and Harbours post and Cllr. Killilea undertook to request an update.

As the meeting was now at its maximum duration of 2 hours, Cllr. Killilea proposed that the Standing Orders be suspended to allow the meeting to continue for a further period of 1 hour, and this was agreed by the Members.

**5. PRESENTATION ON RECOMMENCEMENT OF COUNTYWIDE SPEED LIMIT REVIEW –  
TOM PRENDERGAST S.E. LMD2472**

Mr. Prendergast delivered a presentation regarding the preliminary draft proposals for the Countrywide Speed Limit Review, advising members that a separate workshop could be arranged to discuss detailed proposals whereas this initial presentation would focus on the methodology and process. Mr. Prendergast outlined the activities which formed part of the review:

- 1) Identifying Urban Centres within Galway in accordance with Guidelines
- 2) Confirm which Urban Centres have '30km/h Cores'
- 3) Identify number of schools within core areas and urban areas and quantify the number of periodic signs required.
- 4) Review all speed limit submissions received since the last review (2019)
- 5) Undertake high-level assessment of Regional Road network
- 6) Review appropriateness of existing speed limits

Mr. Prendergast clarified that national routes outside of existing speed limits were excluded from the review, as were the introduction of speed limits at schools in rural locations.

Mr. Prendergast stated that 7 villages in the Municipal District satisfied the criteria for Urban Centres, i.e., Craughwell, Clarinbridge, Killimor, Portumna, Kinvara, Gort and Loughrea – with the latter 4 also containing urban centres with proposed 30km/h cores.

Mr. Prendergast confirmed that a total of 289 speed limit submissions had been received since 2019, with 60 of these relating to national routes and 44 relating to rural schools, which were not therefore considered as part of this review. This left 199 submissions which were examined under this review with 49 of these submissions relating to Loughrea MD.

In relation to reviewing the appropriateness of existing speed limits, Mr. Prendergast confirmed that the attributes which were considered included road width, traffic volumes, geometry, number of access points (houses and junctions with other roads), and known accident histories.

Cllr. Killilea thanked Mr. Prendergast for the very informative presentation and recommended a workshop for the Members to discuss the proposals in detail, and it was agreed to schedule this workshop for Monday, 9th March 2026, prior to the March Municipal District meeting.

In relation to concerns and queries expressed by Members, Mr. Prendergast clarified that the local authority was required to implement the countywide review of speed limits, and it was a reserved function to accept or reject the overall proposals, and in instances requiring clarification to ensure that the proposals for these locations were in line with the national guidelines. Mr. Prendergast acknowledged the additional need for engineering and enforcement measures to combat speeding and driver behaviour issues.

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**LMD2473**


Cllr. Regan brought attention to a concern raised by one of his constituents regarding rodent infestation due to an adjacent derelict property and in response, Mr. Haugh acknowledged that Galway County Council was aware of the issue and advised that he will request an update on the matter from the Environment Department.

Cllr. Kelly sought an update on the 2025 Community Involvement Schemes. In response, Mr. Haugh advised that no funding has been allocated yet.

### **Expression of Sympathy:**

Cllr. Donohue expressed condolences to Mr. Enda Moloney, former employee of Galway County Council, on the passing of his mother, Mrs. Patsy Moloney.

### **CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN.**

  
Cathaoirleach:

  
Date: