COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

Held at ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, PROSPECT HILL

Monday, 28th September 2026

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Andrew Reddington
Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Comh. / Cllr. S. Broderick, J. Charity, D. Connolly, M. Connolly, 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, G. King, M. Lee, P. Mac An Iomaire, M. Maher, E. Mannion, J. McClearn, S. McHugh Ryan, M. McNamara, E. F. Parsons, M. Regan, N. Thomas, O. Turner and T. Welby.

Baill ar líne: I. Canning, D. Collins, S. Cunniffe, P. Keaveney, S. McHugh and S. Walsh

Oifigh: Mr. L. Conneally, Chief Executive, Mr. L. Hanrahan, Director of Services, Mr. Uinsinn Finn, Director of Services, Ms. E. Ruane, Director of Services, Ms. K O'Connor, Head of Finance, Mr. D. Mitchell, Director of Services, Ms. L. Keady, A/Senior Executive Officer, Ms. H. Riordan, Staff Officer, Ms. L. O'Donnell, Assistant Staff Officer.

Thosnaigh an cruinniú leis an paidir.

The Cathaoirleach opened the meeting by expressing his condolences to the family of the late Michael Carey, former School Principal and Galway County Councillor. He was joined by the Members, who paid tribute to his commitment and outstanding service to the Headford Drama Group. Condolences were also offered to the family of the late Kay Ryder from Headford. Sympathy was extended to Cllr. Paul Killilea and his family on the recent loss of his cousin, Paul Kelly.

Members observed a one-minute silence, and the meeting was adjourned for five minutes as a mark of respect.

ITEM NO.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

PL.09.2026.01

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Lee **SECONDED** by Cllr. King the minutes of the Monthly Plenary Meeting held on 27th July 2026 were **AGREED.**

ITEM NO.2 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PL.09.2026.02

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. M. Connolly **SECONDED** by Cllr. Regan the minutes of the Corporate Policy Group held on 13th July 2026 were **NOTED.**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. D. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. P. Killilea the minutes of the Joint Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning Strategic Policy Committee held on 25th September 2025 were **NOTED.**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Walsh **SECONDED** by Cllr. Hoade the minutes of the Economic Development, Enterprise & Planning Strategic Policy Committee held on 3rd March 2026 were **NOTED.**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Canning **SECONDED** by Cllr. P. Killilea the minutes of the Climate, Heritage & Biodiversity Strategic Policy Committee held on 25th March 2026 were **NOTED.**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. O Curraoín **SECONDED** by Cllr. P. Killilea the minutes of the Environment Protection & Agriculture Strategic Policy Committee held on 28th May 2026 were **NOTED.**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Broderick **SECONDED** by Comh. Mac An Iomaire the minutes of the Physical Development, Transportation & Emergency Services Strategic Policy Committee held on 15th June 2026 were **NOTED.**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Grealish **SECONDED** by Cllr. Turner the minutes of the Climate Action, Biodiversity & Heritage Strategic Policy Committee held on 17th June 2026 were **NOTED.**

It was agreed by the Members, following a recommendation from the Corporate Policy Group (CPG), that Galway County Council would hold a Civic Reception to honour the:

- Galway Under 20 Ladies Football All-Ireland Champions 2026.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Welby **SECONDED** by Cllr. Turner it was **AGREED** that a Civic Reception will be held.

It was agreed by the Members, following a recommendation from the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) that Galway County Council would hold a Civic Reception to honour the:

- Galway Senior Football All-Ireland Champions 2026.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Mac An Iomaire **SECONDED** by Comh. Ó Curraoín it was **AGREED** that a Civic Reception will be held.

ITEM NO.3 TO CONSIDER THE FILLING OF A CASUAL VACANCY ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CLIMATE ACTION, BIODIVERSITY & HERITAGE SPC, ARISING FROM THE RESIGNATION OF MICHAEL HAVERTY SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE IRISH FARMERS ASSOCIATION (IFA) AND TO

APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF KARINA FINN AS NOMINATED BY THE IFA FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CURRENT COUNCIL TERM. **PL.09.2026.03**

Report dated 21st September 2026 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. M. Connolly **SECONDED** by Cllr. L. Harney it was **AGREED** to appoint Karina Finn as nominated Sectoral Representative by the IFA for the remainder of the current Council term to the Climate Action, Biodiversity & Heritage SPC.

ITEM NO.4 TO CONSIDER OVERDRAFT ACCOMMODATION FOR THE 12 MONTHS 1ST JANUARY 2027 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2027. **PL.09.2026.04**

Report dated 28th September 2026 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

Ms. O'Connor, Director of Finance outlined that the request being made of the Elected Members was to approve a continuation of the overdraft accommodation of €8.5m for the 12 months from 1st January 2027 to 31st December 2027. She advised it is also a requirement to have Council and Ministerial approval for this overdraft facility and indicated that the Council's cash flow is affected by the timing of major state grant recoupments on both the Revenue and Capital accounts. The overdraft is a necessity to fund the costs of work in progress on capital schemes while awaiting Departmental sanction and payment.

Ms. O'Connor clarified that the amount of €8.5m is incorporated into the revenue budget.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Hoade **SECONDED** by Cllr. Feeney the Overdraft accommodation for the 12 months, 1st January 2027 to 31st December 2027 was **AGREED.**

ITEM NO. 5 TO CONSIDER A DATE AND TIME FOR THE BUDGET MEETING.

PL.09.2026.05

Ms. O'Connor, Director of Finance, proposed that the Budget 2027 meeting be held in the Council Chamber on Friday 27th November at 13:00 PM. There is a statutory requirement for the meeting to be held in person and between the 2nd and 30th November.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. D. Killilea **SECONDED** by Cllr. McHugh Ryan it was **AGREED** to hold the Budget Meeting on Friday 27th November at 13:00 PM.

ITEM NO. 6 TO CONSIDER AND IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE AUTHORISE THE ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 142(5A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMNET ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED) **PL.09.2026.06**

Report dated 15th September 2026 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Ó Curraoín **SECONDED** by Cllr. L. Harney it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. Maher, Mc Hugh-Ryan, Mc Clearn, Regan, Welby, L. Harney & Finnerty to attend AILG Autumn Training Seminar 2026 at Clanree Hotel, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal between 30th September and 1st October 2026.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Comh. Ó Curraoín **SECONDED** by Cllr. L. Harney it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllrs. King & Cunniffe to attend LAMA Autumn Training Seminar at The Park Hotel, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford between 21st and 22nd October 2026.

ITEM NO. 7 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). **PL.09.2026.07**

Report dated 16th September 2026 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McClearn **SECONDED** by Cllr. Lee it was **AGREED** to authorise Cllr. Regan to attend Celtic Conferences – A Practical Guide to Budget 2027 at The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth between 16th and 18th October 2026.

ITEM NO. 8 TO CONSIDER THE MANAGEMENT REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2026 IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 136(2) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 (AS AMENDED). **PL.09.2026.08**

Report dated 21st September 2026 was published on the Extranet prior to the meeting.

The Management Report – September 2026, in accordance with Section 136(2) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) was **NOTED.**

ITEM NO. 9 CHIEF EXECUTIVES' BUSINESS & CORRESPONDENCE. **PL.09.2026.09**

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

- Letter dated 24.09.2025 from Galway County Council to Mr. Darragh O Brien, Minister for Climate, Energy & Environment – Resolution – Renewable Energy Development Regulations.
- Email dated 16.09.2026 from Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment - Reply to Resolution dated 24.09.2025.
- Letter dated 07.04.2026 from Galway County Council to Coillte – Resolution – Coillte Financial Contribution.
- Email dated 15.09.2026 from Declan Garvey, Estates Manager, Coillte – Reply to Resolution letter dated 07.04.2026.
- Letter dated 27.05.2026 from Galway County Council to Minister Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, Minister for Health – Resolution Letter – Statutory Medical Appointment Leave.
- Letter dated 28.05.2026 from Galway County Council to Minister Dara Calleary, Minister for Social Protection – Resolution Letter – Statutory Medical Appointment Leave.

- Email dated 10.08.2026 from Patricia Steacy, Private Secretary to Ms. Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD, Minister for Health – Reply to Resolution letter dated 27.05.2026 – Statutory Medical Appointment Leave.
- Letter dated 28.05.26 to Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Ms Helen McEntee- Resolution letter – CETA Trade Agreement.
- Email dated 30.07.2026 from Chris Boyle, Private Secretary to Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ms Helen McEntee – Reply to Resolution Letter dated 30.07.2026.
- Letter dated 08.07.2026 from Daryl Barron, Lord Mayor of Dublin, Dublin City Council – Resolution – Condemn UEFA nations league fixtures.
- Letter dated 15.07.26 from Louth County Council – Resolution – Retail Saturation of Vape shops – reduction in economic diversity.
- Letter dated 15.07.26 from Leitrim County Council – Resolution – Maximise existing social housing stock.
- Letter dated 15.07.26 from Leitrim County Council – Resolution – Dedicated cabinet Minister for Construction & Infrastructure.
- Letter dated 15.07.26 from Leitrim County Council – Resolution – Renewable energy projects.
- Letter dated 16.07.26 from Carlow County Council – Resolution – Respond time to all Notices of Motion.
- Letter dated 16.07.26 from Carlow County Council – Resolution – ESB Connections for Businesses.
- Letter dated 26.06.2026 from Galway County Council to Mr Leonard Cleary, Chief Executive, Galway City Council -Letter re Parking Meters in Galway City.
- Letter dated 17.07.2026 from Patrick Greene, Director of Services, Operational Development Directorate, Galway City Council.
- Letter dated 08.09.2026 from Galway County Council to Mr. Patrick Greene Director of Services, Operational Development Directorate, Galway City Council – Acknowledgement of letter and packs sent & reiterated concerns.
- Letter dated 05.08.2026 from Galway County Council to An Taoiseach Michéal Martin – Resolution – Prepare for Irish Unity.

- Letter dated 27.08.2026 from Amy Mahon, Assistant Private Secretary to the Taoiseach – Reply to Resolution letter dated 05.08.2026.
- Letter dated 05.08.2026 to the Northern & Western Regional Assembly – Resolution letter – Regional Spatial Economic Strategy RSES.
- Letter dated 12.08.2026 from T Whyte, Assistant Director/Senior Planner Northern Western Regional Assembly – Reply to Resolution letter dated 12.08.2026.
- Email dated 02.09.2026 from Community Engagement Team, International Protection & Integration, Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration – Update from Community Engagement Team.
- Letter dated 17.09.2026 from F. Byrne, Senior Executive Officer, Carlow County Council – Resolution letter – Reform current admission policies.
- Letter dated 17.09.2026 from Claire Gavin, Head Secretariat, NOAC – Local Authority Performance Indicator Report.
- Mayors for Peace dated 06.08.2026 from Matsui Kazumi, President of Mayors for Peach, Mayor of Hiroshima – Letter of Acknowledgement.
- Mayors for Peace dated 06.08.2026 from Matsui Kazumi, President of Mayors for Peach, Mayor of Hiroshima – Letter of Remembrance.
- Mayors for Peace dated 09.08.2026 from Matsui Kazumi, President of Mayors for Peach, Mayor of Hiroshima – Letter of Remembrance.

Cllrs. McNamara, Regan & M. Connolly raised the following points and queries:

- Reference was made to the response contained in the Correspondence from the Renewable Electricity Section to the Council's Resolution on Renewable Energy Development Regulations. A request was made for more information on the accumulative impact to the environment of renewable energy development. Effects of these developments are not felt in isolation; the full impact must be considered. This information will inform good planning practices.
- Galway County Council engineering staff were asked to seek a financial contribution from Coillte towards repairs to roads damaged by heavy Coillte traffic, rather than the cost being borne by County Galway taxpayers.

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

- Mr. Finn asked Members to identify any roads of particular concern and undertook to follow up with Senior Engineer Conrad Harley.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Hanrahan:

- The Department are conducting a review of the 2006 Wind Energy Development Guidelines.
- Renewable energy applications are assessed under Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Rating System (LARS) and the County Development Plan and where applicable Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) reports.
- The 2006 Guidelines are only one element of the overall Planning assessment process.

ITEM 10. QUESTION Cllr. Martin Mc Namara **PL.09.2026.10**

Cllr. Mc Namara submitted the following question to the meeting:

'To ask the Chief Executive to provide the following information in relation to households currently on the social housing waiting list and the allocation of social housing in County Galway:

The current number of households on the social housing waiting list, broken down by:

- *total number of households*
- *nationality or citizenship, where this information is lawfully collected and held*
- *household size*
- *age profile of the main applicant*
- *length of time on the waiting list*

For the past three calendar years, the number of social housing allocations made by Galway County Council, broken down by the same categories where the information is held.

For the same period, the percentage and number of successful housing offers accepted by applicants, broken down by nationality or citizenship where this information is recorded.

The number of housing offers refused or declined, together with the recorded reasons for refusal, and whether these figures can be broken down by nationality or citizenship.

The average and median waiting time for households who received an allocation during each of the past three years, and whether waiting times are monitored according to nationality, household type, housing need category or other demographic characteristics.

The proportion of social housing allocations made directly by Galway County Council compared with allocations or nominations involving Approved Housing Bodies, and whether the Council monitors the outcomes of these nominations.

Where Approved Housing Bodies are involved, the number of nominations made by Galway County Council which resulted in an accepted tenancy, a refusal, or no tenancy being created, together with the reasons recorded for unsuccessful nominations.

If Galway County Council does not currently collect or monitor allocation outcomes, waiting times, refusals or other relevant indicators by nationality or citizenship, could the Council state this explicitly and explain what demographic information it does collect and use when monitoring the operation and fairness of the social housing allocation system?

Finally, could the Council confirm what data it regularly publishes comparable to an analysis of social housing waiting times, allocations, refusals and successful nominations, Or if it would consider publishing such information in an anonymised and aggregated form?

The purpose of this request is to establish whether the Council has sufficient data to assess waiting times, allocation outcomes and demographic changes within the social housing system, while ensuring that any information provided is aggregated and does not identify individual applicants'.

The following reply issued:

The Housing Section propose to organise a workshop for all the Elected Members to inform and update the members on the availability of information relating to the provision of social housing in Co. Galway. The workshop will address the available Housing Supports and qualification for same, the process of Housing Delivery, Housing Applications, Housing Allocations and will address any questions raised by the Members.

Mr. Mitchell, Director of Services, confirmed that he has spoken with Cllr. McNamara and it was agreed that a workshop will be held to further inform the Elected Members on a range of housing-related issues

Cllr. McNamara added that analysing this information will support longer-term planning for services, facilities and supports in increasingly diverse and multicultural communities. Cllr. Parsons welcomed the proposal to facilitate a workshop.

ITEM 11. NOTICE OF MOTION **PL.09.2026.11**

Cllr. David Collins submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:

'Joint Bid to Host Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann

That Galway County Council supports the submission of a joint bid, in partnership with Galway City Council, to host a future Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Galway County and City.

This annual celebration of Irish music, song and dance was last held in County Galway in Loughrea in 1955.

In 2026, Belfast hosted a hugely successful Fleadh, attracting over 1.6 million visitors to the city, with more than 1.7 million public transport journeys recorded during the week.

I believe the success of the Fleadh in locations around Galway would demonstrate what can be achieved when local authorities and communities come together with ambition.

It would bring huge Social, Cultural, and Economic value to Galway.'

The following reply issued:

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is widely recognised as Ireland's premier festival of traditional music, song, dance and culture and has consistently delivered significant cultural, social, tourism and economic benefits for host locations.

County Galway possesses a rich cultural heritage, a strong tradition of traditional music and the arts, vibrant Gaeltacht communities, and an established reputation as a leading tourism destination. Hosting Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann would provide an opportunity to showcase these assets, enhance Galway's national and international profile, strengthen community participation, and generate economic activity across the region.

However, the delivery of an event on the scale of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann would require substantial planning, resources and coordination. In recent years, the event has evolved into one of Ireland's largest cultural festivals, requiring an extensive programme of competitions, concerts, céilithe, Scoil Éigse activities, fringe events and supporting infrastructure. Any proposal to host the Fleadh would therefore require detailed consideration of venue capacity, accommodation availability, transport and mobility arrangements, event infrastructure, governance structures, financial implications and stakeholder commitments.

A successful bid would depend upon the availability of a substantial inventory of suitable venues capable of accommodating competitions, performances, educational programmes, administration functions and ancillary events. While Galway County benefits from a number of strong cultural and community venues, the geographic spread of facilities and distances between locations may present challenges. Consequently, a significant proportion of activity may need to be centred within Galway City, where venue capacity and supporting infrastructure are more readily available.

Accommodation capacity would represent another key consideration. As the Fleadh traditionally takes place during August, the event coincides with the peak tourism season. The ability of Galway City and County to accommodate competitors, performers, volunteers and visitors at a time of already high demand would require careful assessment. Similarly, transport planning would be critical, including traffic management, parking provision, public transport services and the efficient movement of visitors between venues. The walkability and connectivity between event locations has been a feature of many successful host centres and would need to form part of any feasibility assessment.

The financial implications of hosting the Fleadh would also be significant. Experience from recent host locations demonstrates that delivery requires substantial investment from a range of partners, including local authorities, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Fáilte Ireland, relevant Government Departments, commercial sponsors and community stakeholders. Accordingly, any future proposal would require a clear understanding of the funding model, the level of commitment expected from participating agencies and the potential return on investment

The successful delivery of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann depends heavily on a well-resourced and committed local volunteer network working in partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders. The readiness and capacity of local Comhaltas branches within Galway to undertake such a role would require careful consideration and early engagement.

While the potential benefits of hosting the Fleadh are acknowledged, a key consideration from both an Arts and Tourism perspective would be the extent to which those benefits could be realised across both Galway City and County. Experience from other host locations suggests that visitor activity, programming and economic impacts are often concentrated within the principal host centre. Accordingly, any future joint bid would need to demonstrate clear opportunities for county-wide participation and benefit, including cultural programming, tourism promotion, visitor dispersal, accommodation utilisation and community engagement throughout County Galway. We need to plan for these costs in the current budget process. The distribution of

costs, responsibilities, risks and benefits between Galway City Council and Galway County Council would also require careful consideration.

Should the Council wish to progress the proposal, it is recommended that a detailed feasibility study be undertaken in collaboration with Galway City Council and relevant stakeholders. Such a study should examine the operational, financial, governance, infrastructure, transport, accommodation and community capacity requirements associated with a potential bid and assess the likely cultural, tourism and economic benefits that could be achieved for both Galway County and City. Any decision to proceed with a detailed feasibility study will require the allocation of an appropriate financial and staff resource by means of the budgetary process.

The benefits arising from hosting the Fleadh in Galway should be distributed equitably between Galway City and the County Galway, ensuring that the economic, cultural and social opportunities generated by the event are experienced throughout all of Galway.

Cllr. Collins spoke on his motion, noting that hosting Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann would require three to five years of planning and detailed consideration of transport, accessibility, parking, infrastructure, finance and organisational capacity. Having considered the Executive's response, he amended his motion to seek a feasibility study in the first instance on the potential for a joint bid with Galway City Council.

Cllr. Collins submitted the below amended motion:

'That Galway County Council undertake a feasibility study to consider a joint bid, in partnership with Galway City Council, to host a future Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Galway County and City.

This annual celebration of Irish music, song and dance was last held in County Galway in Loughrea in 1955.

In 2026, Belfast hosted a hugely successful Fleadh, attracting over 1.6 million visitors to the city, with more than 1.7 million public transport journeys recorded during the week.

I believe the success of the Fleadh in locations around Galway would demonstrate what can be achieved when local authorities and communities come together with ambition.

It would bring huge Social, Cultural, and Economic value to Galway.'

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Collins **SECONDED** by Cllr. D. Killilea the above amended motion was **AGREED.**

Cllrs. D. Killilea & D. Connolly raised the following points and queries:

- The motion was praised for its forward-thinking vision.
- It was suggested that a Working Group be established through the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) in advance of conducting a feasibility study.
- It was asked that support be extended to the Connacht Fleadh when next hosted in Galway. This would show the Council's support of the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, which would strengthen our bid.

The Chief Executive welcomed the motion and supported exploring the feasibility of a joint bid. He stressed the need to balance the positive benefits of hosting the Fleadh Ceoil na hÉireann event between Galway County & City as well as the cost and effort to achieve a successful event.

ITEM 12 NOTICE OF MOTION **PL.09.2026.12**

Cllr. Geraldine Donohue submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:

'I propose that Galway County Council opposes planned fare increases for public transport and calls on this Council to meet with the Minister for Transport to express the strong opposition of Councillors to these changes and to request that the proposed price increases are halted'.

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

Cllrs. Donohue & Parsons raised the following points and queries:

- Concerns were expressed that an increase in fares would adversely affect those who rely on public transport.

- The contribution of the Galway Commuter Coalition on this motion was acknowledged.
- Concerns were raised that the increases would affect all age groups and further exacerbate accommodation affordability challenges.

ITEM 13. NOTICE OF MOTION **PL.09.2026.13**

Cllr. Gerry King submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:

'I propose that Galway County Council engage with the Department of the Marine and the Department of Rural Affairs and Islands for design plans to be progressed for Improvements works at Cleggan Pier, County Galway.

This 1800's pier is no longer viable as it needs to safely accommodate 2 larger ferries and a cargo boat servicing the island of Inishbofin, which is also a growing tourist destination. Along with this it is used daily by local fishermen who find it very difficult to manoeuvre and moor their boats in tight spaces. It has great potential to be a safe harbour for Marine traffic also.

Higher tides are flooding the top of the pier and there is no disability access on an old, cobbled stone surface.

Existing data from a major survey carried out a number of years ago can be utilised.

This is a hugely important piece of infrastructure to be progressed and modernised for the next generation.'

The following reply issued:

Galway County Council recognises the importance of Cleggan Pier to the Inishbofin ferry service and cargo boat, the fishing community and other harbour users.

The Council will engage with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht to consider options for the future development of Cleggan Pier. This engagement will include consideration of the previous feasibility work and the appropriate next steps.

We will report back on progress following that engagement through the Conamara Municipal District meeting.

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

Cllrs. King, Mannion & Lee raised the following points and queries:

- Emphasised the importance of Cleggan pier as a lifeline to the islands. A feasibility study was carried out in 2006 which would inform an updated study.
- The pier has old cobblestone lining and lacks disability access.
- The pier is important from transport, fishing and tourism perspectives.
- The pier was earmarked for works 20 years ago. Members emphasised the need for all relevant departments to work together and make a start on progressing the matter.

The Chief Executive acknowledged the importance of the proposed works and confirmed that previous studies would help inform the next steps. He advised that engagement with the relevant Departments and Ministers would be required, commended the Elected Members' work in support of island piers and undertook to provide a further update.

ITEM 14. NOTICE OF MOTION **PL.09.2026.14**

Cllr. Geraldine Donohue submitted the following Notice of Motion prior to the meeting:

'That Galway County Council call on the Minister for Housing to ensure in the forthcoming budget that:

1. Carer's Allowance should be disregarded at the basic social welfare rate for the purposes of rent assessment;
2. Half-rate Carer's Allowance should be fully disregarded;
3. Disability Allowance received by children aged 16 to 18 should be fully disregarded, in line with the existing uniform disregard of Domiciliary Care Allowance for children under 16 years.

The standardisation of the Differential Rent Scheme was committed to in the previous Programme for Government; however it was not delivered.

Subject to Council approval, this motion will be referred to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage James Browne. T.D.'

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

Cllr. D. Connolly raised the following points and queries:

- Asked that the Differential Rent Scheme be included in the upcoming Housing workshop.
- It was noted that local authorities differ in the social welfare payments they include or disregard when assessing rent, resulting in variations in rent calculations across local authority areas.
- Clarification was sought as to whether the Department is considering the standardisation of rent schemes at a national level.

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

- Confirmed that the Differential Rent Scheme will be included as a topic in the upcoming Housing workshop.
- The department have indicated that a review of the scheme is to be carried out, however he has not yet seen the final document.
- The making of a Differential Rent Scheme is an Executive Function.

ITEM NO. 15 CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS **PL.09.2026.15**

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Feeney **PL.09.2026.15a**

"I propose that Galway County Council;

- acknowledges the success of Phase 1 of the Western Rail Corridor between Galway and Limerick, including the construction and extension of the Oranmore station,

- welcomes the decision to reopen the line from Athenry to Claremorris and the plans to extend platform lengths of the stations on Phase 1,

- and calls for the reversal of the deplorable decision to make the railway alignment from Bellaghy to Colooney available for a greenway, thus depriving Sligo

and the North-West of a vital, sustainable transport link to the rest of the West and South."

The Cathaoirleach outlined as per Standing Order 28 that it shall be necessary for a majority of the Members present to approve the taking of the motion.

It was **AGREED** by the majority of Elected Members present to approve the taking of the motion.

Cllr. Feeney spoke on his motion. He explained the success of phase one of the Western Railway Corridor project has resulted in the expansion of the train station at Oranmore and increased demand for parking provision. Progress in the phases between Athenry and Claremorris has the potential to provide a significant boost to Tuam. There is a strong campaign to extend the line to Sligo, however Iarnród Éireann have agreed to licence the railway lands along the disused railway alignment between Collooney and Bellaghy for greenway development.

He asked that this motion be sent to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Iarnród Éireann, the Minister of Transport Darragh O'Brien TD and Minister of State Seán Canney TD.

Cllrs./Comh. M. Connolly, Ó Curraoín, D. Killilea, Cunniffe, Keane, Geraghty, McClearn, McNamara & Feeney raised the following points and queries:

- The rail line and greenway can co-exist.
- The railway line should not be removed.
- It was queried if Iarnród Éireann could be requested to rescind their decision.
- The railway line has been a victim of its own success. Current platforms are not long enough and there are not sufficient passing loops.
- There is no tea and coffee service on the Westport to Dublin line.
- All stakeholders must work together to come to a solution.
- The railway line should extend to Letterkenny, to support those that rely on University Hospital Galway as a regional centre hospital and those studying in Galway.

- It was suggested that the motion be amended to state that both the Greenway and the rail line are considered as complementary co-existing projects.

The Chief Executive said that the motion should be framed in the context of the 2024 All-Island Strategic Rail Review and Government policy for Greenways and that the possibility of both rail and greenway corridors side by side be explored.

Cllr. Feeney agreed that if the engineers deem it possible, an ideal solution would be that the greenway could be provided without lifting the rail track and that they both co-exist.

Cllr. Feeney submitted the below amended motion:

'I propose that Galway County Council;

- acknowledges the success of Phase 1 of the Western Rail Corridor between Galway and Limerick, including the construction and extension of the Oranmore station,

- welcomes the decision to reopen the line from Athenry to Claremorris and the plans to extend platform lengths of the stations on Phase 1, as outlined for in the All-Island Strategic Rail Review, and, pending a review of the Review which we expect will include the extension of the redevelopment of the Western Rail Corridor to Sligo

- calls for the reversal of the deplorable decision to make the railway alignment from Bellaghy to Collooney available for a greenway, thus depriving Sligo and the North-West of a vital, sustainable transport link to the rest of the West and South and if possible from and engineering point of view to develop a greenway alongside or adjacent to the railway alignment.'

The amended motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Feeney **SECONDED** by Cllr. Harney and **AGREED** unanimously.

The following motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Regan **PL.09.2026.15b**

'I propose that Galway County Council take the necessary steps to introduce Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in County Galway, working in partnership with Galway Libraries and relevant organisations to secure funding and put the necessary arrangements in place.'

The Cathaoirleach outlined as per Standing Order 28 that it shall be necessary for a majority of the Members present to approve the taking of the motion.

It was **AGREED** by the majority of Elected Members present to approve the taking of the motion.

Cllr. Regan explained that the programme provides children from birth to five with one free, age-appropriate book every month, delivered directly to their home, encouraging a love of reading from the earliest age. In Ireland, the scheme was introduced in 2019 through the Childhood Development Initiative in Tallaght. It now operates in selected communities in Dublin, Cork and Kildare, with deliveries supported by An Post. More than 6,500 children are receiving books through Irish schemes, supported through local partnerships, grant aid, sponsorship, fundraising and community contributions. Galway libraries already do tremendous work promoting early literacy and access to books, so I believe that Imagination Library could complement and build on that work.

The motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Regan **SECONDED** by Cllr. D. Killilea and **AGREED** unanimously.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the motion would be considered by the Director of Services, Ms. Eileen Ruane and by the County Librarian. Ms. Ruane, Director of Services, advised that the Library Service would review the programme with potential partners, subject to available budget.

Cllrs./Comh. Mac An Iomaire, Ó Curraoín, M. Connolly, Finnerty, Geraghty, Donohue, Keaveney, Thomas, L. Harney & Welby raised the following points and queries: **PL.09.2026.15c**

- Homeowners willing to upgrade their septic tanks should be supported with grant aid, even if they live outside the High Status Objective Catchment Area.
- Older septic tanks were built under lower quality standards.
- Party governments need to amend the policy.
- It was understood that the support scheme for septic tanks was to be reviewed.
- It was noted that grant funding is targeted towards areas identified as being at greatest environmental risk.
- Grants are generally available in areas of small and scattered populations.
- Upgrading septic tanks is vital for water quality.
- Housing estates cannot be built in places such as Clarinbridge and Craughwell as they do not have wastewater treatment facilities.
- The restrictive eligibility areas are a consequence of limited available funding.

Ms. Ruane, Director of Services undertook to write to the Minister on behalf of the Elected Members outlining the range of concerns and requesting a more positive approach to septic tank upgrade grants by the Department.

Cllrs./Comh. D. Killilea, McHugh Ryan, Keaveney, McClearn, M. Connolly, Geraghty, Finnerty, O Curraoín & Charity raised the following points and queries:

- The rejection of the proposed windfarm in Caherlistrane and Kilconly by An Coimisiún Pleanála was welcomed.
- Clarification was sought on where queries in respect of Municipal District Capital Budgets should be correctly channelled.
- An update was sought on the Dunmore Regeneration Project.
- It was asked that the update on the Dunmore Regeneration Project be provided to the Ballinasloe Municipal District (MD) as well as the Tuam MD.

- Clarification was sought if a road that previously received a Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) grant could now be taken in charge by the Council.
- An update on the number of LIS applications on the waiting list and when the scheme will re-open was asked.
- It is not acceptable that where a private road previously received LIS funding, it is then not deemed of a good enough standard to be taken in charge by the Council.
- Query on where adjoining roads of different categories meet, who is responsible for repairing the LIS road.
- A road that previously received LIS funding should not be prohibited from being taken in charge. The road may have only had 2 houses on it at the time, an increase in houses should not result in the road now being ineligible to be taken in charge.
- The Cathaoirleach suggested that a workshop be provided for both the Tuam and Ballinasloe MDs to discuss the Dunmore Regeneration Project.

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

- Advised the Councillor to discuss his specific budget query with the Director of Finance.
- If a decision has been made at Municipal District level, then a response will issue from the MD.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Hanrahan:

- He will request the Tuam MDs Meetings Administrator to place the Dunmore Regeneration Project on the agenda of the next MD meeting.

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

- Mr. Finn undertook to clarify the LIS and Taking in Charge schemes, noting that LIS supports access to rural homes and farms and is not intended to bring private roads into Council ownership.
- Mr. Finn confirmed that the LIS scheme would be included on the SPC agenda, with a further update provided to Members in the October Management Report.
- The 2027 Roads Allocation will provide more clarity on the future roll out of the scheme.

Cllrs./Comh. Donohue, Parsons, Keane & Thomas raised the following points and queries:

- Swim Ireland and Swim Active are requesting a multi-annual and ringfenced budget. The Chief Executive was asked to consider including this in the upcoming budget.
- Clarity was sought on who the present owners of Dunguaire Castle is.
- It was asked if consideration has been given to retaining the Galway airport site for medical transfer use. If there will be an opportunity for the Medical Emergency group to provide an input into the expert report or the final decision of the future of the site.
- It was requested that a workshop be provided for the Members on the expert report on the Galway Airport Site.
- It was asked if the final decision on the future of the Galway Airport Site is a Reserved Function and if the Members will be given sufficient time to make an informed decision.
- It was asked what the consequences are if Galway County and City Councils cannot agree on the future of the Galway Airport site.
- That the Elected Members should be provided with all the information contained in the expert report on the Galway Airport site.

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

- The Chief Executive requested that Swim Ireland's correspondence be forwarded to the Executive Team for consideration. He noted that, while there

is an existing budget provision for swimming pools, any new infrastructure, as well as requesting the capital from Government, would require a significant increase in the revenue budget for operation and maintenance. High loan repayments on capital infrastructure would also require careful consideration at Budget time.

- Discussions are taking place between the Office of Public Works and the Department of Housing on Dunguaire Castle, with ownership still being with the Shannon Development Group. The Council will assist where possible.
- 6 Expressions of Interest were received last year in respect of the Carnmore site, none of which related to med evacuation or medical emergencies. The Chief Executive noted that the executive had not received a copy of the letter referenced by Cllr. Parsons as received from the HSE.
- Members were advised to await the completion of the Expression of Interest process before considering any further action on the Carnmore site.
- The expert report is due by the end of September and will include an expert group recommendation, however commercially sensitive information will not be made available.
- Confirmed that the disposal of land is a Reserved Function of the Council.
- Agreed that a workshop or working group would be a good forum for discussion on the future of the site.
- Both Councils will have to reach on agreement on the future of the site.

Cllrs./Comh. Cunniffe, Kelly, McClearn & M. Connolly raised the following points and queries:

- An update was requested on the Kilbannon Group Water Scheme.
- The new Council website was welcomed, particularly its local history and genealogy content.
- Members were invited to attend the second day of the Council of Europe ECON Conference at Dexcom Stadium on the morning of Wednesday 7th October; the jointly hosted event will run on 6th and 7th October and include panel discussions, a site visit to Bia Innovator and a conference dinner in the

Connemara Coast Hotel. The event is supported by Galway County and City Councils.

- It was enquired if a review will take place on the Casual Trading bye laws.

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

- An update on the Kilbannon Group Water Scheme will be provided to the Tuam MD Members.

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

- Acknowledged the significant body of work by Director of Finance/Head of IT and Directorate staff to create the modern customer facing website.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Hanrahan:

- The Minister has announced a review of the Casual Trading Act on a national level. The local bye laws will be addressed following their publication.
- He will revert to the Members when he has more information.

Cllrs./Comh., D. Killilea, Grealish, Kelly, Thomas, McNamara, Keane, Welby, Donohue, O Curraoín, Parsons, M. Connolly, King, Grealish, Geraghty & Hoade raised the following points and queries:

- The presence of the Oakwood Residents Group at the meeting was acknowledged.
- It was asked if the Council can introduce a moratorium on adjudicating solar farm planning applications until government guidelines are updated.
- It was enquired whether the Government has a strategic framework or policy guidance in place regarding the location of solar farms.
- Nationally, 23% of electricity is used to power Data Centres. Going forward Data Centres are to obtain 80% of their energy from renewable sources. Data Centres should be built by the state and in remote areas.

- The overall impact of a development to the community and society should be evaluated.
- The role of the Elected Members in zoning and planning was questioned.
- It was said that landowners should be made aware of any designations or classifications applying to their lands and there should be a mechanism for them to opt out of it. This would inhibit developers from contacting landowners.
- We should be able to vary the County Development Plan (CDP) if landowners are under pressure to sell land to a developer.
- The closure of the windfarm at Derrybrien was a significant loss.
- It was asked if solar farms will continue to be erected until there is no arable land left.
- A timeline on when updated guidelines will be issued and clarity if decisions can be put on hold until they are, was enquired of.
- Multi-national companies bring economic benefit to Galway.
- The scale of the nature of these renewable energy developments is alarming.
- The zoning of land does not determine what is developed on it, the decision lies with the landowner/developer.
- Decisions on applications should not be made until updated renewable energy guidelines/legislation is issued.
- Members expressed the view that a 10-year County Development Plan is too long a timeframe.
- Members sought clarification as to when they would have an opportunity to review the current CDP.
- It was asked if the Executive have received guidance on the mid-cycle review of the CDP.

Members Queries were responded to as follows by Mr. Hanrahan:

- The Council do not have the right to introduce a moratorium on planning applications. Everyone is entitled to lodge a planning application.

- Renewable energy applications are assessed under Local Authority Renewable Strategy (LARS), Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), CDP, national policies and guidelines.
- The Minister is reviewing the guidelines. Public consultation will take place. Members were advised that there sufficient provisions under the current guidelines exist to assess an application, therefore all applications will be assessed in line with existing local, regional and national policy.

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

- The role of the Members is a policy making one. Members will have an opportunity to look at the new County Development Plan within the regional and national planning framework.
- Concerns in respect of large-scale Renewable energy planning are country wide.
- Developers cannot make planning applications on land without sufficient interest/a letter of consent from the landowner.
- The 10-year CDP was established under the 2024 Planning and Development Act. He anticipates that the facility for Members to vary the CDP will be used more frequently in the context of this longer plan period.
- He expects the department to issue guidance on best practice in Development Plan making.
- Members were advised that they will have appropriate opportunities to inform and shape policy, and that the process is a reserved function and will remain so.

ITEM NO. 16 VOTES OF SYMPTAHY/CONGRATULATIONS. PL.09.2026.16

A resolution of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Carmel Rushe, Tuam Road, Mountbellew, Co. Galway
- Lucy Lloyd Keighery, St, Brendans Terrace, Poolboy, Ballinasloe, Co Galway
- Deirdre Holmes, Goulane, Clifden, Co. Galway

- Ollie Keane, Ramore, Killimor, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- Mary Burke, Garbally Drive, Ballinasloe, Co Galway
- Carmel Hawkins, Killure, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- John Staunton & Family, Kylemore, Co. Galway County
- Tia & Jana Kelly, Clostoken, Loughrea, Co. Galway
- Mary Coughlan & Family, Clonmoylan, Ballyshrule, Portumna, Co. Galway
- Tom Keane, Cloughroak, Ardrahan, Co. Galway
- Ann Mahon, Loughcutra, Gort, Co Galway County Council
- Frances Ryder Boland, Main Street, Headford, Co. Galway
- The family of Michael Carey, Lettera, Headford, Co Galway
- The family of Eoin Doyle, Gurrane, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo
- Tom King, Bray, Co Wicklow

A resolution of congratulations was extended to the following:

- Béibhinn Parsons – Ireland Women's all-time leading try scorer.
- Cillian Hirst – US Kids under 9 Golf World Champion

Chriochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Submitted, Signed and Approved

Cathaoirleach: _____

Date: 19/10/2026