

# COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Minutes of Ballinasloe Electoral Area Committee held at the Civic Offices, Ballinasloe on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

## **I Láthair:**

**Báill:** Cllr. T. Broderick  
Cllr. P. Connaughton  
Cllr. D. Connolly  
Cllr. T. Mannion  
Cllr. M. Mullins  
Cllr. P. O'Sullivan, Mayor, Ballinasloe Town Council

**Oifigigh:** Mr. J. Cullen, Director of Services  
Mr. M. Lavelle, Senior Engineer  
Mr. U. Finn, Senior Executive Engineer  
Mr. M. O'Donnell A/Town Clerk  
Mr. A. Headd, Executive Engineer  
Mr. E. Mulryan, Executive Engineer  
Ms. M. Gilchrist, Staff Officer

## **1. Consideration and Adoption of Minutes of Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010**

Minutes of Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. Mannion seconded by Cllr. Connaughton.

### **Matters Arising**

#### Footpath at Shannonbridge Road

In reply to Cllr. Connolly Mr. Finn stated the sum of €60,000 discussed at the last meeting of the Committee has been paid to the HSE for Land Acquisition and is no longer available to progress works on the footpath.

## **2. Ballinasloe Regional Water Supply**

Regarding disruption to water supply in Ballinasloe and surrounding areas Mr. Finn outlined the problems experienced which led to water shut-offs following the severe weather event prior to Christmas and ensuing thaw. He stated that the reservoir level could not be allowed drop below 3.5m so as to ensure a supply to the hospital and the town centre core area. He stated that the crisis was country-wide and not confined to Ballinasloe.

Mr. Headd presented a hand-out outlining details of in excess of 140 leaks identified in the town and regional area. He stated that internal leaks in private properties accounted for approx. 40% of all leaks in Ballinasloe town. Immediate emergency works were carried out with meter boxes being replaced and owners notified. The problem in Kiltormer was exasperated when air valves blew off with the frost. Eyrecourt Village had problems with internal

leaks and connections to houses. He stated that Contractors and Council staff are engaged on emergency leak repairs and leak detection and associated traffic management for the past three weeks and works are on-going. He stated that permanent re-instatement to footpaths, valve replacement etc. will warrant some outages to water supply at night time over the coming weeks.

Cllr. Mullins noted from the documentation presented that burst meter boxes accounted for much of the disruption and asked if they were of inferior quality or incorrectly fitted. Cllr. Mannion noted that many were in the same development i.e. Cúl na Cannálach. Mr. Finn stated that similar problems arose in Loughrea and other towns and that the meter boxes were not designed to withstand temperatures of minus 17 degrees. Mr. Headd stated that meter boxes presented varying problems i.e. pipes in, actual meters and pipes out.

Cllr. Connolly stated that the council should plan ahead for similar occurrences in the future and asked if there was adequate supply in the reservoirs at Sheepwalk and Redmount Hill to satisfy demand to the outlying areas covered by the Regional Scheme. He asked who is responsible for costs involved in repairing meter boxes etc. in Cúl na Cannálach which is not taken in charge. He also referred to water shut off at the Library in Eyrecourt and asked if the moratorium on recruitment had an effect on service.

Mr. Headd stated that the Corporate Affairs Unit is aware of the problem in Eyrecourt Library and Stephen Lally S.E.E. is dealing with the matter. He outlined details of water pumped and required levels and Mr. Finn indicated the reservoirs in Sheepwalk and Redmount Hill have one and a half days storage approx. which is very important for the chlorine residual levels. Mr. Headd referred to the staffing arrangement and stated that a package was put together with approval from Water Services whereby Galway County Council staff, Ballinasloe Town Council staff and Contractors were engaged each day except for Christmas Day to expedite the process. He also stated that on agreement with Water Services, Council staff repaired meters in the private estates and this was necessary to avoid water wastage.

Cllr. Mannion raised the issue of the approach to planning of water schemes and stated that the outlying rural areas suffer as part of the bigger networks. He stated that communication was also a problem during the latest crisis. Mr. Cullen stated that the regionalisation policy envisages a network of regional schemes whereby if a problem arose on one supply there would be an alternative. He stated that provision of smaller supplies posed problems with inadequate supplies and additional operational costs i.e. provision of caretakers etc. He stated that in cases like the recent crisis huge volumes would have to be re-directed to provide a supply to the outreach areas of the regional scheme thus making it unjustifiable.

In reply to Cllr. Broderick, Mr. Headd stated that the Council supplies the Kiltormer GWS which feeds the Clonlahan Scheme which is now a Council Scheme. The Council had to repair valves in the Kiltormer scheme to get a supply to Clonlahan but this was important as water being lost was Council water. In the normal course the Council would have reduced pressure to the

GWS or turned off the supply pending network repairs. Cllr. Broderick asked if the meter boxes were inadequate and should this be raised before estates were taken in charge. Mr. Finn stated that there is a Taking in Charge Policy and it would be difficult to make new stipulations at this stage. Mr. Cullen stated that meters are manufactured to a standard and any modification would have to be looked at nationally and the Dept. would have to re-evaluate the costs of replacement versus cost of repair etc.

Cllr. Mullins highlighted the advantages of Water Harvesting citing significant savings in investment etc. He stated he felt it appropriate to take up the matter of the meter problems with the developer of Cúl na Cannálach. He also stated that there were problems with supply to the new Town Council houses at St. Grellans which was noted for investigation by Mr. Headd.

In reply to Cllr. Connaughton Mr. Cullen stated that the Council will be submitting a claim to the Department which he expected to be sizable. If funding is not provided by the Dept. the cost must be bourn by the Councils Revenue Budget. He stated that works carried out in Ballinasloe under the Conservation Programme proved valuable in the current crisis as did new technology in the detection of leaks.

Each Member and Mr. Cullen paid tribute to the tremendous efforts and level of commitment made by Mr. Headd E. E., Noel Casey G.S.S., and all the outdoor staff of Galway County Council and Ballinasloe Town Council during the crisis. Cllr. Mullins highlighted the fact that some salaried personnel are not entitled to payment for the overtime worked.

### **3. Representation on Sub-Committee of County J.P.C.**

Cllr. Broderick was nominated to represent the Ballinasloe Electoral Area Committee on the Sub-Committee of the County J.P.C. on the proposal of Cllr. Mannion, seconded by Cllr. Connaughton.

### **4. Any Other Business**

In reply to Cllrs. Mullins and Connaughton Mr. Finn stated that temporary repairs will be made to roads damaged by recent adverse weather. The suppliers of hot road-making materials are due to re-open on Monday next and works will commence when material is available.

**Criochnaigh an Chrinniu ansin**