

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE
GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE CONAMARA ELECTORAL AREA MEETING HELD
ON MONDAY, 15th JUNE, 2009, IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE**

ILÁTHAIR:-

Baill: Comh. S. Ó Tuairisg, Cathaoirleach
Cllr. S. Walsh
Cllr. S. Kyne
Comh. S. Ó Cuaig
Cllr. E. Mannion
Comh. T. Ó Curraoin

Oifigigh: Mr. J. Morgan, Director of Services, Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. M. Owens, Senior Executive Officer, Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. E. Molloy, Senior Engineer, Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. M. Lavelle, Senior Engineer, Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. T. Kelly, S.E.E. Conamara Area
Mr. F. McEvoy, A/ S.E.E. Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. T. J. Redmond, A/Executive Engineer, Clifden Area
Mr. P. Clarke, Executive Engineer, An Cheathrú Rua

RPS Consultants Mr. Gerry Carty
An tUasal Conall MacAongusa
Mr. Cian McGuinness

Comh. Ó Tuairisg welcomed the two newly elected Councillors, Cllr. Eileen Mannion and Comh. Tomás Ó Curraoin, to the meeting.

1. Minutes of Meetings

On the proposal of Cllr. Kyne, seconded by Cllr. Walsh, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th December, 2008, were approved.

There was no matter arising from the meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr. Kyne, seconded by Cllr. Walsh, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th January, 2009, were approved.

There was no matter arising from the meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr. Kyne, seconded by Cllr. Walsh, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th January, 2009, were approved.

There was no matter arising from the meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr. Kyne, seconded by Cllr. Walsh, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th February, 2009, were approved.

There was no matter arising from the meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr. Kyne, seconded by Cllr. Walsh, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th March, 2009, were approved.

There was no matter arising from the meeting.

2. Presentation by RPS Consulting Engineers in relation to the R336

An tUasal MacAongusa gave a Presentation to the Meeting in relation to the R336 Bearnna to Scríb, via Ros an Mhíl Road Improvement Scheme. He advised that the second public consultations will take place between 17th to 22nd June, '09, at four locations, and staff from both Galway Co. Council and RPS Consulting Engineers will be present to provide information on the project. A number of route options will be available and the public are invited to make comments and submissions in relation to the route options.

The meeting was advised that over the period June to December, 2009, the route options will be examined in detail. Ecological and other environmental surveys and ground investigations will be carried out to inform the route selection decision. Further consultation with interested parties will also be ongoing in this period

The major constraints to the development of a new route in the area are the houses along the R336 corridor and the Connemara Bogs Complex cSAC and Moycullen Bogs NHA which are afforded very strong statutory protection from development.

A lengthy discussion arose in relation to the 4 main corridors identified on the map. Comh. Ó Tuairisg was advised that a preferred route would be identified by end 2009 and further consultation would then take place. Mr. Morgan stated that even when a route is identified, it does not necessarily mean that restrictions on planning would be lifted, as the route identified may not proceed if An Bord Pleanála objects to the route and an alternative route would have to be chosen.

Comh. Ó Curraoin stated that the proposed road should not be held up due to input from the National Parks & Wildlife Department as was the case for the Galway City Outer Bypass due to bog cotton on a certain area of the route. The meeting was also advised that a public meeting held in Indreabhán recently with approx. 20-40 locals present was very much against the route identified along the coast road.

Cllr. Walsh enquired in relation to funding of the project and Mr. Lavelle confirmed that all research and folio works carried out by the Council was given to the Consultants and was part of the tender process. Mr. Morgan advised that the Department of Transport provided funding for planning and route selection due to the high accident profile on this road, with over 100 by-roads.

Comh. Ó Cuaig stated that a new road was very important for Conamara and that we must plan for the future development and employment of the area. He stated that a direct route should be considered. Mr. Morgan advised that if a straight line was drawn from Bearna to Scríb highlighting this type of route with no houses on it, that it would not receive funding from the Department as the road would be of no benefit to established communities. Mr. Morgan emphasised that the construction cost of each route was a major factor in getting funding approved for the project.

Comh. Ó Cuaig referred to ‘overriding public interest’ concept and Mr. McGuinness advised that this is only applicable if ‘no alternative’ route was available.

Comh. Ó Tuairisg enquired in relation to the possible route to Ros an Mhíl Harbour and Mr. McGuinness advised that a route has been identified but that consideration must be given to either upgrade the existing route or build a new route.

The Chairperson thanked the Consultants for the presentation.

Chríochnaigh an cruinniú ansin.