

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**

**MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT LOUGHREA REGIONAL OFFICES ON  
FRIDAY, 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2008**

**LLATHAIR**

**Baill:**

Cllr. B. Willers, Chairperson  
Cllr. W. Burke  
Cllr. P. Feeney  
Cllr. M. Fahy  
Cllr. P. Hynes  
Cllr. M. Maher

**Oifigigh:**

Mr. J. Cullen, D.O.S., Environment & Water Services Unit  
Mr. M. Dolly, S.E., Roads & Transportation Unit  
Mr. M. Lavelle, S.E., Roads & Transportation Unit  
Mr. M. Sheil, S.E.E., Loughrea Electoral Area  
Mr. C. Mitchell, E.E., Portumna Engineering Area  
Mr. A. Raftery, E.E., Loughrea Engineering Area  
Ms. A. Power, S.S.O., Loughrea Regional Offices

**DEPUTATION FROM PORTUMNA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

The Chairperson welcomed Messrs. T. Walsh, Chairperson and F. Coughlan, Secretary of Portumna Chamber of Commerce to the Meeting. Cllr. W. Burke introduced the Deputation and stated that the Chamber was set up a year ago and was a very active group. The Deputation stated they were a newly formed group and their main aim was to enhance the town and there were a few issues they wished to raise at this meeting. He said that parking was a major issue and that a Traffic Management Plan was required for the town. He referred to a piece of ground belonging to the Church that they were willing to offer to the Council for a car-park and asked for an update on this. Another issue they wished to raise was the state of the footpaths on Main Street after the pavement overlay works carried out last year. He stated that they were informed that monies had been made available to reinstate the footpaths back to their original state and wanted an update on this. They also requested that decorative lighting would be put in place on Main Street. They stated that they were led to believe that the ducting was in place when the footpaths were reinstated for the lighting. They stated litter in the town was another problem and that the Road Sweeper operates in the town on Mondays mornings only. They requested to know what options were available to solve the litter problem in the town.

## Loughrea Area Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Cllr. Willers thanked the Deputation for coming and advised that an update on the issues raised would be issued to them through Cllr. W. Burke in due course.

Mr. Dolly advised that he would be meeting members of the Development Company to discuss the issues raised shortly. He queried if the Chamber had done any fund-raising to go towards the decorative lighting requested. He explained that something similar was done in the Square in Clifden in a joint co-ordinated effort between the Chamber of Commerce and the Council. With regard to the car-park, Mr. Dolly advised that plans were being drawn up for this piece of ground and the Council were in the process of drawing up an agreement between the Church and the Local Authority. He stated that there was an issue with planning as it was a protected structure but that it was being pursued.

The Deputation then left the meeting.

Cllr. W. Burke requested that consideration be given towards this request for funding for decorative lighting in Portumna and stated that the footpaths were in a terrible state. Mr. Lavelle advised that the N.R.A. policy towards funding was that they concentrate their funding on road pavement. In response to Cllr. W. Burke, Mr. Cullen advised that the N.R.A. have responsibility for maintenance of all national roads, but the Council could add to those monies but the ultimate responsibility is with the N.R.A. Cllr. W. Burke proposed that a letter be sent to the N.R.A. congratulating them on the new pavement that has been laid in Portumna town and to make them aware of the poor condition that the footpaths were left in following completion of the roadworks. He said that Portumna is the tourist town of South East Galway and they needed to do something about the Main Street. Cllr. Willers seconded that proposal.

## **DEPUTATION FROM RESIDENTS OF GEORGES STREET/ENNIS ROAD, GORT**

The Chairperson welcomed Messrs. S. Killeen, F. Kiely and P. Loughnane to the Meeting. Mr. Kiely stated that they had requested the Deputation because of the condition of the road from the Square to the town boundary on the Ennis road. They stated that part of the reason was as a result of developers building housing estates and driving on the roadway with large dumpers, etc. They asked if the Council could make the Developers reinstate the road to its original state and resurface the road. They also complained that those new developments had also caused a decrease in the water pressure in the town. They referred to the lay-by on the Ennis Road, especially from the Lakefield Road joining the N18 which they stated was in a very bad state. They referred to the footpath in the Rindifin area that was in a very dangerous state and had cracked and sank as a result of the new developments. Mr. Killeen referred to the junction at Canahown Road which has poor sight lines. He stated that the pole across the road needed to be moved as there have been several accidents in this particular area.

## Loughrea Area Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Mr. Dolly indicated that the Ennis Road is included in the Council's submission to the N.R.A. who is the funding agency responsible for the resurfacing of the roadway and footpaths referred to. He stated that they were in consultation with the Water Services Department in relation to laying the main on that stretch of road and they were awaiting approval from the Department on this and the likelihood was that it would start next year. He said that they had made another submission to the N.R.A. for funding for Main Street and they would continue to seek funding for these works. He agreed that the state of the footpaths in question were very poor. Mr. Kiely asked if the road and footpaths were going to be left in this state until such time as funding is made available. Mr. Cullen explained that funding comes from the N.R.A. and could not be paid for by the Council because it was the responsibility of the N.R.A. He explained that they were awaiting approval for the laying of the water main from the D.O.E. and that they were hopeful there would be movement on that before the end of the year. Mr. Kiely queried if they could lay the water main from Hawkins corner to the Punchbowl as this was the worst part. Mr. Cullen advised that they had included this section as part of the advanced scheme to deal with the problems of water pressure.

Cllr. Feeney stated that they recently had a meeting with the Minister for the Environment and Officials from the N.R.A. He said that they advised at the Meeting that Gort was one of their top priorities and they requested that the advance works for Gort be prioritised.

Cllr. Willers thanked the Deputation for coming and advised that an update on the issues raised would be issued to them through Cllr. Fahy in due course.

The Deputation then left the Meeting.

Cllr. Willers queried if funding could be acquired under Disability Funding for repair of the more dangerous footpaths. Mr. Dolly advised that the contact is Mr. Dermot Mahon, Community & Enterprise Section regarding availability of this funding. He said that the Ennis Road was the number one priority and that they were looking for approval for advance works on the Ennis Road. He said that when approval was got from the Department, they would hope to lay ducting for the gas main also. Cllr. W. Burke stated that the message needed to go out that the Council was not to blame for the delay in these works being carried out. Cllr. Fahy suggested that a Deputation would meet with the N.R.A. regarding this issue. Mr. Lavelle advised that the N.R.A. was aware of the state of the footpaths and the pavement. He stated that they wanted to put in a road that will last for more than 20 years and will do so when the services are in place and that was dependant on the approval from the Department for laying of the water main. Cllr. Willers asked Mr. Lavelle to impress on the N.R.A. to put funding in place in conjunction with the funding for laying of water main in 2009. Mr. Cullen advised that the catalyst would be approval for laying of water main.

### **DEPUTATION FROM RESIDENTS OF CAHERTINNY, CARROWBAUN**

This Deputation did not attend.

## **MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>th</sup> JULY 2008**

On the proposal of Cllr. W. Burke, seconded by Cllr. Fahy, the Minutes of the Local Area Committee Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2008 were confirmed.

### **Matters Arising**

#### **Oxgrove Bridge**

Cllr. W. Burke suggested that if the Council were not in a position to commence the works approved for Ballynagar, Loughrea that this funding is reallocated for improvement works at Oxgrove Bridge. He suggested that these monies could go towards a new design for this bridge which would help to advance the project. Mr. Dolly advised that the C.P.O. for Ballynagar had been approved that week and it involved a lengthy process to go through. However, funding for Ballynagar would be required in 2009 though he said that it was unlikely that any works would proceed on this project this year but they would be ready to commence works in 2009. He advised also that works had to be done at Lisheen junction in Tynagh and that they were proceeding with some of this work at the moment. In relation to Oxgrove Bridge, he advised that the local community wanted a design prepared for the widening of the bridge but there was no design done as yet. However, he stated that he had put forward a scheme of works to the value of €90,000 to do certain works on this bridge, i.e. parapet wall, road resurfacing, etc. and suggested that they go ahead with these works. Cllr. W. Burke stated that he wanted to impress on the Council how critical it was that the design needed to be moved on quickly and that this be made an absolute priority. This was seconded by Cllr. Maher. Mr. Lavelle advised that he could not give a time-frame on when the design on this bridge would be prepared. Cllr. W. Burke asked that the project be moved along as the Elected Members had made this a huge priority. He queried if outside Consultants could be employed to prepare the design if it were not possible to be done by the Council's Design Team. Mr. Cullen stated that Mr. Dolly had made a good submission and had successfully secured €90,000 towards improvement works. Mr. Dolly proposed that they would proceed with the works approved, i.e. parapet wall, road resurfacing, etc. and this was agreed by the Members.

#### **Pay & Display Athenry**

Cllr. Feeney stated at the last Area Meeting he had indicated that he would be opposed to the implementation of the Pay & Display Parking in Athenry until such time as a long-term car-park was in place. He stated that work had not yet commenced on the proposed car-park at Backlawn and it would be a number of months before that was complete. He said that a private car-park was opened but was operating on the basis that individuals could only purchase a monthly ticket and did not provide for a daily or weekly rate. He stated that he wanted that issue sorted before the implementation of Pay & Display in Athenry. Mr. Lavelle stated that they were still waiting for the transfer to go through on the lands at Knockaunglass from the O.P.W. He advised that work on the Backlawn car-park would be carried out by direct labour but would not be ready for another few months.

**Deputation from Baunogue Residents**

Cllr. Maher stated that no response had been given in relation to a number of items that were raised by the Baunogue Residents delegation received at the June Area Meeting and he requested that this be done immediately. Mr. Sheil advised that he would give a response in the next few days.

**SCHEME OF GRANTS FOR SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT WORKS ON NON-NATIONAL ROADS – PROPOSALS FOR FUNDING IN 2009**

Mr. Dolly advised that the Department of Transport had invited applications for the Non-National Road Specific Improvement Grants for consideration for funding in 2009. He said that as in previous years, the scheme would support the following priorities:

- Balanced Regional Development
- Development of Economic Infrastructure
- Local Enterprise Development
- Rural Development

He stated that the combined cost of grant applications in 2009 cannot exceed 120% of the Specific Improvement Grant Allocation notified for 2008 in Circular RLS 3/2008 on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2008 (€5,000,000). Therefore an upper limit of €6,000,000 has been specified as the total cost of the works to be included in the Council’s application.

He outlined details of the draft proposal to be considered by the Members and asked for their comments on same:

**LOUGHREA ELECTORAL AREA**

Road No.	Location	Description of Works	Estimate	Total
R351	Loughrea/Woodford (Ballinagar)	Road Realignment	€300,00	
L4312	Lisheen Junction, Tynagh	Road Widening, Road Drainage & Road Resurfacing (cont. of 2008 work)	€300,000	
	Athenry	Athenry Inner Relief Road	€100,000	
		<b>Total</b>		<b>€700,000</b>
<b>Galway East</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>Bridges – Strengthening/ Repairs to Defective Bridges</b>	<b>€200,000</b>	

Mr. Dolly advised that there were a lot of defective bridges in the Loughrea Electoral Area

**Loughrea Area Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

and they were currently carrying out an assessment of these bridges and would be coming back to the Members about this in due course. He proposed that they include a sum of €200,000 for that proposal.

Cllr. W. Burke stated that this scheme had served them well over the years and they had made huge progress on certain roads/schemes over the years. He stated that he had made a commitment to the people in Killimor that Oxgrove Bridge would be given priority and he proposed that Oxgrove Bridge would be identified as a project for funding under these proposals. Cllr. Maher seconded this proposal. Cllr. W. Burke stated that he was quite disappointed that the proposals for the Loughrea Electoral Area totalled only €700,000 and that he was not happy with the proposals presented. Cllr. Fahy stated that he was unhappy with the proposals also and highlighted the fact that Gort had been totally excluded in these proposals. He said that the general public can see that the roads around Gort are deteriorating and there seems to be a total fall-off in monies and neglect for Gort Engineering area. Cllr. Hynes stated that they had a Deputation from the Earlsparck Residents in at an Area Meeting previously regarding the dangerous bend on the Loughrea/Woodford Road and this was excluded in the proposals to be considered for funding for 2009. Cllr. Maher stated that it was unfair that they seemed to be getting less and less monies each year. Cllr. Willers also queried why the Loughrea Electoral Area was getting such a low proportion of the funding. Mr. Dolly explained that there was provision included for repairs to bridges (which were in the Loughrea Electoral Area) for €200,000 which brings the total allocation for the Loughrea Electoral Area to €900,000. He stated that choosing the projects for inclusion was a very difficult decision. Cllr. Feeney asked if there was any provision being made for the devastation being caused to the roads by the M6 construction. Mr. Sheil stated that a submission had been made to the NRDO on this issue. Cllr. Feeney suggested that whatever was not included could be made as a separate submission to the Department. Mr. Dolly stated that funding under this heading was based on the length of roads in the area and also the needs of the area are taken into account. On the proposal of Cllr. W. Burke, seconded by Cllr. Maher, the following proposals were agreed by the Members:

<b>Road No.</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Description of Works</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Total</b>
R351	Loughrea/Woodford (Ballinagar)	Road Realignment	€300,00	
L4312	Lisheen Junction, Tynagh	Road Improvements	€100,000	
	Oxgrove Bridge	Completion of Oxgrove Bridge	€200,000	
	Athenry	Athenry Inner Relief Road	€100,000	
		<b>Total</b>		<b>€700,000</b>
<b>Galway East</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>Bridges – Strengthening/ Repairs to Defective Bridges</b>	<b>€200,000</b>	

## **DRAFT SPEED LIMIT REVIEW**

A copy of the Draft Proposed Speed Limit Review 2008 for the Loughrea, Portumna and Gort Engineering areas were circulated to each Member. Mr. Dolly explained that the process had been going on for quite some time and that a decision had been made to review the speed limits for the towns and villages in the County. He stated that it was being discussed at the next Council Meeting and he wanted to bring it before the Area Members in advance of that Meeting. He stated that the Draft Proposals are then forwarded to the Gardai and the N.R.A. for their comments. He stated that proposals had to be realistic and had to be enforceable. He explained that the N.R.A. had the final say on the National Roads and for all Non-National Roads, the decision was the prerogative of the Elected Members. He advised that a new schedule would be prepared once the comments were received from the Members, the Gardai and the N.R.A.

The Members then went through the proposed changes for each of the Engineering Areas.

### **Portumna Engineering Area**

The changes as proposed for Abbey, Duniry, Tynagh, Killimor, Portumna, Woodpark, Ballycrossaun were agreed by the Members. There were no changes proposed for Gurteeny, Ballinakill or Woodford.

### **Gort Engineering Area**

On the proposal of Cllr. Willers, seconded by Cllr. Fahy, it was agreed to (a) extend out the 60 km speed limit beyond Glenbrack past the second junction on right hand side and that the 50 km speed limit to be extended out to the existing 60 km speed limit on the N18 North in Gort town and (b) to extend the 50 km speed limit to Eileen Cunningham's house. The other changes as proposed were agreed by the Members.

### **Loughrea Engineering Area**

On the proposal of Cllr. Maher, seconded by Cllr. Willers, it was proposed that (a) the 50km speed limit in Craughwell be extended out to the existing 60 km speed limit on the Loughrea side of the N6 and that the 60 km speed limit be moved out a further 100 yards. Mr. Raftery advised that the surface was the difficulty here and not the speed limit. (b) 50 km speed limit in Kilchreest be extended out further on the Gort side of Kilchreest (N66). The other changes as proposed were agreed by the Members.

## **CASUAL TRADING BYE-LAWS**

Report dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 2008 with maps attached was circulated at the Meeting. It was explained that the current Casual Trading Bye-Laws were in place since 1998 and needed to be updated. Draft new Bye-Laws had been prepared and the following changes are proposed in the Loughrea Electoral Area:

## **Kinvara**

The Council proposed to designate an area at the Quay in Kinvara to facilitate 10 no. casual trading bays which will cater for casual trading, including the Farmers Market. Under the existing Bye-Laws, there is one bay designated for casual trading at the Square but this location is not included in the revised proposal.

## **Loughrea**

In the existing Casual Trading Bye-Laws there are 11 no. casual trading bays designated at Barrack Street and 7 no. bays at the Westbridge between the old Galway Road and the Athenry Road. However, the Area Engineer has stated that Barrack Street and Westbridge were no longer suitable locations as there were issues regarding pedestrians walking along a live carriageway adjacent to these trading bays. The Area Office has proposed that the Casual Trading Bays be relocated from Barrack Street and Westbridge to the Main Street Car-Park and this proposal has been endorsed by the Roads Section and the Loughrea Town Council. The Westbridge location is not included in the revised proposal.

Cllr. Maher stated that the locals in Kinvara were against this proposal as they wanted it located in the Square. Mr. Sheil explained that the recommendation of locating the casual trading area to the Quay in Kinvara was made for the following reasons:

1. Health & Safety – The quay provides a safe location for pedestrians to access the casual trading bays and separates casual trading activities from road traffic. There is also ample parking at the Quay.
2. The Square is used as a private access to a farm yard. Locating casual trading bays at this location would compromise access.
3. There is insufficient access for parking for traffic in the vicinity of the Square.
4. The Quay provides casual trading bays at the most prominent location in the Village with ready access for vehicles, pedestrians and car-parking and is highly visible to approaching traffic.

Following a discussion, the Members stated that they would have reservations about the proposed location of the Casual Trading Bays at the Quay in Kinvara. There was no opposition to the relocation of the trading bays to the Main Street Car-Park in Loughrea. The Members noted the report.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Fixed Price Contracts**

Mr. Lavelle stated that the Council was obliged under the Department of Finance guidelines to engage fixed price contracts and the guidelines were very strict. He

## **Loughrea Area Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

explained that the tenders that came in this year were about 70% of what was allocated towards National Road Contracts. He said that as a result there was a balance for 2008 and they were proposing allocating some of this excess funding towards the following schemes in the Loughrea Electoral Area:-

1. N65 – Heathlawn
2. N65 – Ballydavid Bridge
3. N66 – Cuscarrick
4. N66 – Loughrea approach to Gort

He advised that the works had to be done by the end of November. The Members welcomed this allocation.

### **Workforce in Gort Engineering Area**

Cllr. Fahy raised an issue regarding three roadwork employees that were being transferred to the Portumna Engineering area because there was not enough work in the Gort area. He stated that over five years ago, four workers were transferred to the Portumna Engineering Area from Gort and were not transferred back. He stated that there was only a skeletal workforce in Gort at present and he did not want to see any more workers leaving the Gort Engineering Area.

Mr. Dolly stated that this matter was being considered. He stated that there was monies to be spent in the Portumna Engineering Area at Ballynagar; Lisheen Junction, Tynagh and Oxgrove Bridge in Killimor and that the Maintenance monies were depleted in the Gort area. He advised that there was nothing unusual about transferring staff for a period of time to ensure that the monies were spent before the end of year. He appreciated that there was a need for them in Gort but explained that they did not have the required monies in Gort. Cllr. Fahy stated that a number of the workforce had retired and that the workforce was very small. Cllr. W. Burke stated that the fact was that these people were only being transferred temporarily until these works were complete. Mr. Dolly stated that it was expected that the temporary arrangement would be in place for approx. two months. Cllr. Fahy asked if consideration could be given to the proposal of three different men being transferred every two weeks and a rotation system be put in place. Cllr. Willers stated that they would look for a written agreement in two months time that these workers would be transferred back to Gort. Mr. Sheil stated that when the engineering areas were redrawn over five years ago, a number of staff was transferred to work in different areas at that time, and this was done on a permanent basis. He stated that the current situation was down to the fact that there was no maintenance monies left in Gort and there was quite an amount of work to complete in Portumna. He said that the issue of bringing in different men each week would not work as it would be an inefficient way of doing things. He said that it was important to have flexibility within the workforce. Cllr. Fahy stated that if a guarantee would be given that the men would be back in Gort Area in two months time then there wouldn't be a problem. Mr. Sheil stated that this would happen.

**Approaches to Ballyglass School**

Cllr. Willers stated that she had allocated monies on the approach to Ballyglass Road/School and she queried when these works would be done. Mr. Sheil stated that there were a number of issues on that approach road. The road was to be widened to create passing bays. In reply to Cllr. Willers' query regarding a bend on that road, Mr. Sheil stated that there was a commitment from the local community that a 2m high double stone wall would be rebuilt locally and he said the he would come back to Cllr. Willers on this issue.

**Car Park (Church Street, Athenry) Bye-Laws 2008**

A copy of Public Notice and Car Park (Church Street, Athenry) Bye-Laws 2008 were circulated to each Member. It was noted that the Bye-Laws had gone on public display and the last date for submissions was the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2008. It would then be going before the full Council for consideration.

**Update on Traffic Management Plan for Loughrea**

Cllr. Maher asked if there was any update on the review of the Traffic Management Plan for Loughrea. Mr. Sheil advised that it was included in their work schedule for the coming months but was unable to give a time-frame on when it would be before the Members for consideration.

**Chríochnaigh an Cruinniú ansin**