

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

**MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT LOUGHREA REGIONAL OFFICES ON
WEDNESDAY, 22ND JULY 2009**

ILATHAIR

Baill:

Cllr. B. Willers, Chairperson
Cllr. J. McClearn
Cllr. P. Feeney
Cllr. M. Fahy
Cllr. P. Hynes
Cllr. M. Maher
Cllr. G. Finnerty

Oifigigh:

Mr. J. Cullen, D.O.S., Environment & Water Services Unit
Mr. M. Dolly, S.E., Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. S. Breathnach, S.E.E., Loughrea Electoral Area
Mr. A. Raftery, E.E., Loughrea Engineering Area
Mr. C. Mitchell, E.E., Portumna Engineering Area
Mr. J. Costello, E.E., Gort Engineering Area
Mr. M. Lavelle, S.E., Roads & Transportation Dept.,
Mr. P. Ridge, D.O.S, Planning and Economic Development

Cllr. Willers welcomed the councillors particularly Cllrs. Finnerty and McClearn.

ELECTION OF CHAIR OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE

Cllr. Maher was proposed by Cllr. McClearn and seconded by Cllr. Feeney. As there were no other nominations Cllr. Maher was declared elected.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF LOUGHREA AREA COMMITTEE

Cllr. McClearn was proposed by Cllr. Feeney and seconded by Cllr. Willers. As there were no other nominations Cllr. McClearn was declared elected.

MINUTES OF LOUGHREA AREA MEETING HELD ON 14TH MAY 2009

On the proposal of Cllr. Willers, seconded by Cllr. Hynes, the minutes of the Loughrea Area Meeting held on 14th May 2009 were confirmed.

Matters arising from the minutes:

Public Toilets in Gort

Cllr. Finnerty enquired if the final grant of planning permission had yet issued to the Chamber of Commerce for the provision of ladies and gents public toilets in Gort. He said also that the Chamber was prepared to manage the toilets when complete. Mr. Cullen said he was not aware if the final grant had issued yet but welcomed the support of the chamber in the provision of these facilities.

Ganty Road condition

Cllr. Maher raised an issue about potholes at Ganty road. Mr. Breathnach said that this would be examined.

Portumna Primary School Parents Association

Cllr. McClearn enquired if progress had been made on the issues raised by the deputation from the Portumna Primary School Parents Association at the previous area meeting. Mr. Dolly advised that the one way system that was being examined may not be the best solution and that already there was considerable objection to the proposal. He said he would be meeting with the school principals and chairs of the boards of management to explore whether the schools could acquire additional lands and provide appropriate pick-up and drop-off facilities. He said the council did not have funds to address these matters but the council would facilitate the school authorities as best they could. He agreed to look in to the possibility of advance signs to deter HGV's from using the route.

Flooding on the N65

Cllr. McClearn enquired about flooding at a location on the N65 that had been raised at the last area meeting. Mr. Dolly stated that if the landowners in question were prepared to open and clean the drain then the council would arrange for the necessary road crossing. Mr. Mitchell stated that as there was a watermain in the roadway the crossing might be more complicated and costly. Mr. Dolly said that if it was a road safety issue then it would be done.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Review of Speed Limits:

Mr. Dolly gave the background to the detailed discussions that had taken place over a considerable period of time leading up to the presentation of the speed limit reviews that had been on the agenda for the council meeting the previous Monday 20th July. He outlined the process involved in their adoption involving consideration by the council, consultation and publication and finally adoption. He said that they had been deferred at the council meeting so that they could be considered further at area level. He circulated details of the amendments that were being proposed to the existing speed limit byelaws for the Loughrea Electoral Area and said that these had already been considered and agreed.

Each of the proposed revisions was considered by the area committee. Cllr. Hynes requested that a speed limit of 50km/h be applied on the Limehill Road. This was supported by the other councillors and it was agreed that a submission would be made on this by Cllr. Hynes during the public consultation period for the revised speed limit byelaws.

Cllr. Feeney asked if the proposed speed limit on the Ganty road could be extended by a very short distance beyond the entrance to the dog kennels. This was agreed.

Cllr. Hynes asked that the proposed speed limit for kilchreest be extended to the Church. This was agreed.

Cllr. Finnerty noted that there were no changes proposed for Kilbeacanty where the speed limit was set at 60km/h. He suggested that if wasn't possible to extend it then it should at least be changed to 50km/h. this was agreed.

Cllr. McClearn requested that additional signage be put up on the Kilimor Ballinasloe Road to help to have the speed limit observed.

On the proposal of Cllr. Feeney, seconded by Cllr. Fahy the speed limit reviews for the Loughrea Electoral Area were agreed.

Craughwell Local Area Plan:

Mr. Ridge explained that he wished to brief the area councillors, particularly those who hadn't been involved to date on the current status of the local area plan for Craughwell ahead of the proposed council meeting to be held on 7th September. He summarised the statutory process now involved in the making area plans and the implications for the validity of plans where European and National environmental regulations are not appropriately observed. He advised that when the Craughwell Plan was first drafted it was environmentally assessed and it was concluded that a Strategic Environmental Assessment would not be required. However significant amendments were made to the draft plan including land zoning and the situation now is that an SEA is needed. In that case the

current plan process would have to be abandoned and completely restarted if the SEA requirements were to be fully complied with. He advised that the options available to the councillor were 1) to continue with the current process but with the prospect that the plan would be set aside for not complying with legal requirements, 2) revert to the original draft with only minor amendment in which case an SEA would not be required and 3) incorporate the DOE concerns in to the decisions to be taken on the amendments, for example in relation to zoning and development in flood prone areas. He suggested that the most practical solution might be to revert as close as possible to the original draft and allow the provisions of the County Development Plan be used to address development demands that might emerge outside the Town Plan area.

Councillors expressed frustration that they should be left in a situation where having considered the plan and reached decisions that these decisions can then be so easily undone by the SEA requirement process. Cllr. Feeney stated that the process is undermined by the fact that the draft plan is prepared before the councillors have had any chance to have an input in to what it should contain. If they had an input in to the formulation of the draft then it is likely that the possible environmental considerations could have been addressed in sufficient time and it would also make the entire process of public representation on these plans more meaningful. Cllr. McClearn agreed that for all future plans there needed to be much greater dialogue between the councillors and the planners in the formulation of the town plans.

The general view of the members was that it would be important that a Town plan for Craughwell would emerge from this process rather than be left with the possibility of no plan at all. It was noted that the matter would be considered at the council meeting on 7th Sept and that area members would consider their approach to the issue themselves before the meeting.

Deputation from Kinvara:

Cllr. Fahy asked that a deputation from Kinvara be received at the next area meeting in relation to unauthorised parking of camper vans and anti social behaviour. It was agreed that this would be received.

Review of Engineering Area Boundaries:

Cllr. Feeney asked when the engineering area boundaries would be revised to take account of the recent changes to the electoral area changes that had occurred. He also said that he was insisting on an adequate deployment of council resources and staffing to reflect the size and activity in the Athenry engineering area and would not tolerate any reduction.

Mr. Dolly said that work was ongoing at the moment on the engineering area boundary changes and resource deployment and that he would revert to the area committee in due course.

Traffic Lights in Gort:

Cllr Willers asked when the traffic lights in Gort would be provided. Mr. Lavelle said that when Loughrea was completed he would assess what funding then remained for the Gort traffic lights.

The members said that this was contrary to assurances given previously and that a commitment had been made to provide these lights. It was agreed that the matter be raised at a forthcoming meeting already scheduled with the County Manager.

School Bus Route at Clostoken:

Cllr. Maher asked about the redirecting of a school bus route at Clostoken.

Mr. Dolly said that he had examined this and junction improvements were needed at an estimated cost of €9,000 to facilitate the rerouting of the bus route. There were no funds available in the current year for this work but it may be possible if Cllrs. NOM money could be made available.

Industrial Dispute:

In reply to Cllr. Fahy Mr. Cullen stated that the labour Court had issued a recommendation that the management had accepted. He said they were waiting on SIPTU to confirm that they were accepting also and also that they would cease the industrial action.

Chrochnaigh an Cruinniú ansin