

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Report of Oranmore Area Committee Meeting held at Áras an Chontae on the 23rd September 2010

I LATHAIR:-

Baill: Cllr. J. McDonagh (Chairperson)
Cllr. J. Cuddy
Cllr. L. Carroll
Cllr. M. Noone

Oifigigh: Mr. A. Comer, Senior Executive Officer, Planning &
Sustainable Development Unit
Mr. Sean Breathnach, Senior Executive Engineer,
Roads & Transportation Unit
Mr. John Maloney, Chief Technician, Roads &
Transportation Unit
Ms. Liadhan Keady, Assistant Staff Officer, Planning &
Sustainable Development Unit

The Chairperson suggested that Standing Orders would be suspended until after the deputation had been received. This was proposed by Cllr. Carroll and seconded by Cllr. Cuddy.

1. Proposal for Safety measures @ Cregmore Crossroads – Deputation by Cregmore Residents Association

The Chairman welcomed the deputation of Pat Forde, Joe Kennelly, Liam Higgins, Jimmy Haran, John Mulroy, Tom Jinks & Pat Hannon from Cregmore and introduced the members of the meeting to them. He then called on the deputation to make their presentation to the meeting. Mr. Higgins stated that in October 2009 a deputation was made to the Oranmore Committee at which time the safety issues at Cregmore Crossroads was raised as an area of huge concern. He stated that after the meeting the Residents Association received a letter from Galway County Council stating that upgraded signage would be installed at this location, which he stated has never happened. In April this year an articulated lorry crashed into the school car park and due to this fact action must be taken to prevent the loss of a life in Cregmore. He informed the meeting that it had been indicated by Galway County Council that action would be taken before the school reopened. He stated that 2 and not 4 flashing signs had been placed on the road before the junction and that the proposal for a staggered junction in his opinion would only increase the hazard at the crossroads. He asked that the

County Council would reconsider and give the proposals being put forward by the resident's serious consideration.

Joe Kennelly, Principal of Cregmore School, introduced himself to the meeting and stated that the proposal as being put forward by Galway County Council which staggers the road actually brings the traffic closer to the school to a greater extent and further still has a negative impact on the schools plans for development which aims to cater adequately for the 240 pupils presently enrolled.

Jimmy Haran introduced himself to the meeting and stated that his profession was that of an Engineer and in his experience Staggered Junctions were avoided and even taken out where possible due to their negative impacts on sightlines and their attraction to young boy racers. He stated that it was in his professional opinion that rumble strips acted as an advisory precaution only, they were not a deterrent to speed and the only real deterrent would be road humps together with other speed calming measures such as signs and road markings, this would be the solution that the residents proposed.

Mr. Jennings added that the field to be used to create the proposed stagger was flooded last year and the residents were concerned as to where the water would go if the stagger went ahead. Mr. Mulroy acknowledged that there is a traffic count presently taking place in the area and welcomes the results but stated that if the staggered junction goes ahead as proposed it creates a hazard whereby a car could possibly go straight through the school wall while it would also force high volumes of traffic onto the Grange Road which at present is the quietest of the 4 roads at this junction. He further added that there were no yellow lines/markings on the road edge which was a safety hazard for the children of the area who walk to school. Mr. Forde informed the meeting that the school received planning permission for a school hall but that all the safety measures being put in place by the school would be diminished if the staggered junction, as proposed, went ahead the hazard it placed of the possibility of a car going through the school wall and for this reason was not an option.

Cllr. Carroll stated his support for the Cregmore Residents regarding their concerns with the proposed staggered junction. He stated that a practical approach was needed to solve the problem and that it was vital for Galway County Council to take on board the views of local people who have local knowledge and stated that in his opinion a combination of rumble strips with adequate signage would be a practical and reasonable solution.

Cllr. Cuddy stated that the Cregmore School was doing its best to provide good amenities for its pupils and the fact that if the proposed stagger goes ahead it will place a road in the schools playground which

in his opinion was not a good enough solution to the problem. He acknowledged the locals concerns over flooding and felt the stagger would make this situation worse. He agreed with Cllr. Carroll in that a combination of rumble strips with adequate signage would be a practical and reasonable solution but added that a vital issue was a reduction in the speed limits so that the issue of speed could be properly enforced. Cllr. Noone stated that the biggest issue with the stagger in his opinion is where it faced the traffic. He stated that he felt it would be better to create a stagger on the Cashla side therefore pulling the traffic away from the school and if an accident should occur any car would be directed at an empty field. He further enquired that if the traffic count currently being undertaken suggested that this was a feasible option could it be looked at?

The Chairperson agreed with all the concerns raised by the Cregmore Residents and stated his support against the proposed stagger as outlined. He stated that a satisfactory solution would need to be found.

Mr. Comer thanked the deputation for attending the meeting and stated that their concerns would be taken on board. He added that the technical staff of Galway County Council would now liaise with the NRDO regarding the proposal to ensure a solution that would make the crossroads a safer place.

Mr. Breathnach informed the delegation that their proposals would be looked at in conjunction with the NRA but stated that NRA would not give approval for ramps on a country road so therefore that would definitely not be an option.

The Chairman thanked the deputation and informed them that a formal response to their proposals would issue and they then left the meeting.

Cllr. Cuddy enquired as to whether placing the stagger on the Cregmore side had been considered and if not could it be.

Mr. Maloney informed the meeting that the NRA were not in favour of putting ramps or roundabouts on country roads as they were a hazard due to the fact that people particularly when travelling in the dark did not expect to meet them and therefore they would not be an option. Mr. Maloney stated that he would assess the traffic count figures and based on these reassess the location of the proposed stagger, discuss same with Lucy Curtis of the NRA and provide an update for the next meeting. It was proposed by the members to hold a committee meeting on Monday the 11th October at 9am so as to facilitate the update.

2. Minutes of Meeting dated 9th September 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on the 9th September 2010 were proposed by, Cllr. Carroll and seconded by Cllr.Cuddy.

Matters Arising:

Cllr. Cuddy stated that at the meeting of the 9th September the members were informed that Speed Limits would be on the agenda for the full council meeting but that on inspection of the said agenda it didn't appear as an item. In reply, Mr. Comer stated that a request had been sent to the SEO of Roads and it was up to them to place it on the agenda as an item but that he would follow-up the matter.

3. A.O.B

Cllr. Noone requested clarification regarding the issue of no longer being able to use monies from the Maintenance Budget for the purpose of road sweeping, cleaning etc. In response, Mr. Breathnach stated that the Department has stipulated that the Maintenance Budget can no longer be used and that all monies put forward for this type of work had to be outlined precisely from now on.

Cllr. Noone enquired as to whether the land for the purpose of staggering the crossroads in Cregmore had been purchased by the Council. Mr. Maloney stated that a deal had been done with the landowner but that the process to purchase had not yet been completed and therefore other options could still be explored.

Cllr. Noone requested that a yield right of way on the Cregmore Bridge be put in place. In response, Mr. Breathnach stated that he would have no problem with this but would have to look as to where he could pull the funds required. Cllr. Noone stated he would put Notions of Motion Monies towards the request which Mr. Breathnach accepted.

Cllr. Carroll requested an update on the issue of flooding at the roundabouts in Oranmore. In response, Mr. Breathnach stated that it was a matter for the Area Engineer who was not present. Mr. Comer stated that an update would be provided for the next meeting.

Criochnaigh an Chruinniu Ansin