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**PORTUMNA**  
**RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**ARCHIVES COLLECTION**

**1899 – 1925**

**G01/3**

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## INTRODUCTION

This archives collection consists of an incomplete series of Portumna Rural District Council minute books (1900-1925), together with one minute book of the Public Works Committee established to take over its administrative duties immediately after the dissolution of Rural District Councils in 1925, and one incoming letter book (1899).

### RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILS

Rural District Councils were set up under the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898. Their powers were conferred upon them by Section 27 to 39 of the Act.

The Council assumed responsibility for the road and public works functions of the Grand Juries where the cost had been borne by the district, and the housing and public health functions of the Boards of Guardians. In the early years of County Councils much of the routine business was transacted through these Councils. The Poor Law Guardians were also the Rural District Councillors; the same individuals but working in a separate capacity.

The Councils played an important administrative role in the period pre-dating the formation of an independent Irish state, and when democratic local government was first established and developing in Ireland. The Councils were dissolved in October 1925 under Section 8, Sub-section (2), (3), and (4) of the Local Government Act of that year. Their functions were transferred, under the Local Government Act of 1925, to the county councils. County councils were in turn required to discharge their new sanitary duties through boards of health and public assistance.<sup>1</sup> These boards also had responsibility for the supervision of county homes, hospitals and dispensaries, housing, water and sewerage, home assistance and a number of schemes including blind welfare, boarded out children, infectious diseases, tuberculosis and the school medical service.

The Boards of Health and Public Assistance survived until August 1942 when the administration of public assistance and sanitary matters came under the direct control of the County Council acting through the new county managers. Medical Health Officers were appointed and were responsible for the effective administration of the legislation for safeguarding public health.

### PORTUMNA RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Rural District Council meetings, commonly held in the Boardroom of the Workhouse but on some occasions in the Courthouse at Portumna, were generally held twice a month and then only if the required quorum of Councillors was in attendance. There were usually 35 elected and/or co-opted members of Council. Lists of elected members are often found in various contemporary directories, such as Slaters or Pigots, or in contemporary local newspapers.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for Local Authority Archives Services, 1996



The Council's geographical area of responsibility included the electoral divisions of, Abbeygormacan, Abbeyville, Ballyglass, Coos, Derrew, Drummin, Eyrecourt, Killimore, Kilmalinogne, Kilquain, Meelick, Moat, Pallas, Portumna, Tiranascragh, and Woodford.

This incomplete collection consists primarily of minute books recording the proceedings – with gaps - of Council meetings held between 1900 and 1925. The minutes illustrate the range of topics of concern and interest to the Council, and record together with general and financial business proceedings, the minutes of the Sanitary Authority, and proceedings conducted under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts. The Council was thus concerned with a variety of issues from contemporary political and social matters, both local and national, to public health and sanitary issues.

The Council held its inaugural meeting on 22 April 1899. A contemporary newspaper reported that all the newly established District Councils in Ireland *'appointed their chairmen and ex-officio representatives by law authorised and so far commenced the first chapter of what promises to be a new ere in the administrative life of this country. For good or ill, for better or for worse...the new bodies are launched upon a hitherto stormy sea of Irish life and it is to be hoped that, from a sense of patriotism if from no other consideration, the Councils now commencing their careers will by all classes and at all hands be accorded a fair trial neither condemned beforehand for inefficiency nor unduly commended for efficiency but given full, unprejudiced and honest trial....'*<sup>2</sup>.

Though it normally refrained from making extensive comment on national political events the Council did, in accordance with most Rural District Councils in the county, condemn the execution of the leaders of the 1916 Rising. Its resolution on the matter stated *'That we the Members of the Portumna Rural District Council condemn the action of the Authorities in shooting the innocent people without any form of trial during the recent disturbance in Dublin, and we further condemn them for depriving us of the youth and manhood of Ireland by deportation and whose sympathies were heartily in accord with the wishes of the Government as far as recruiting is concerned. That a Committee of the whole Board be appointed to collect funds for the dependents of those noble Irishmen who were shot during the disturbance.'* (G01/3/18, p60)

The appointment, or co-opting, of Councillors and chairmen and vice chairmen to the Council is duly recorded in the minutes, as are the postponements of local elections during the war years (1914-18).

Under the Labourers Acts the Council was heavily involved in the provision and maintenance of labourers cottages, taking early advantage of the various housing loan schemes available under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts 1883 (46 & 47 Vict. C.60) & 1885 (48 & 49 Vict. C.77). Under this legislation the Board of Guardians of the Poor Law Union applied in the first instance to the Local Government Board, who in turn applied to the Board of Works giving its recommendation that the loan be granted<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Tuam Herald, 22 April 1899

<sup>3</sup> The Archives of the Office of Public Works at the National Archives of Ireland, Dublin contains a substantial quantity of records relating to the various schemes and may be of value to those seeking further information on this topic. See *Guide to the archives of the Office of Public Works*, Rena Lohan, The Stationery Office, Dublin 1994, (pp256-257)



The proceedings of the minutes recorded under the Labourers Acts are extensive and detailed. They relate to the acquisition of sites, design and building of the cottages, their letting, and the collecting of rents. By the early 1920's the Council had provided 131 cottages.

For a substantial period, circa 1911 – 1920, the Council was in dispute with its Engineer, William Roseingrave, who demanded additional compensation for the extra work involved to inspect cottages prior to the issue of Certificates of Completion where a builder had defaulted in meeting the specified completion date. In a transcript of a report to Council Roseingrave stated '*...That the Council may rest assured he would fulfil his engagements to superintend the erection of any cottages for which they had entered into, an agreement to have the work done in six months from the date of signing bonds in the first instance ; but of course the Council can understand he was not bounded to superintend in the case of any revived contracts or where the Council made a second contract for the same cottage after the expiration of the time limit of six months set out in the first bond. Accordingly from this date he declined to issue Certificates for defaulting contractors unless he was paid by the Council for their extra service.*' (G01/3/14, p16-17). A further letter from Roseingrave advised that '*I have already notified the R.D.C. of Portumna that I will not issue any more Certificates for contracts where the time limit for completion has expired unless the Council compensate me for my service.....*' (G01/3/14, p115).

The Council often encountered difficulty in collecting rents from the tenants of Labourers Cottages, and at various times come under pressure from the Local Government Board to reduce the outstanding arrears. For instance in April 1916 the Board wished to know what '*...steps if any are being taken by the Council to reduce the large amount of arrears of rent due in respect of the cottages provided in the District under the Acts (Labourer's Acts), a sum of £117.5.2 or over three months rental of all the cottages being due at the end of January last....*' (G01/03, p13-14). When the Council was disbanded in 1925 the arrears had, following an extensive collection campaign, been substantially reduced.

In addition to the provision of housing the Council was responsible for the building, maintenance and repairs of local roads, and as Sanitary Authority it was responsible for the erection and maintenance of water pumps.

When the Council was dissolved in 1925 the administration of its' duties was resumed by the County Board of Health which appointed three County Councillors to act as the Public Works Committee for the district '*to also discharge the duties heretofore performed by the Rural District Council, under the Sanitary, Labourers and Burial Grounds Acts ...*' (G01/3/26, p117). There being no permanent Clerk to the Portumna Council Mr John J Hanafin, former Clerk to the Loughrea Council, was also appointed to act as Clerk to the newly established Portumna Works Committee. Hanafin was also appointed Clerk to the Gort and Ballinasloe Committees.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Galway County Council Minutes GC1/4, p21





### ARRANGEMENT

Overall this collection illustrates various aspects of local administration and democratic government during one of the most significant periods in Irish republican history. Commencing with records created when the authority, and county, was under British rule, and ending with records recording the authority's recognition of Dáil Eireann. It should therefore be of immense interest to administrative, economic, political, social, and local historians. The latter in particular should learn much from the collection about the development of the Portumna district's infrastructure – the building and maintenance of the roads and bridges - together with the provision and growth of various public and health related services, such as water and sewerage schemes.

The item reference number (e.g. G01/3/15) should be used in full when citing documents or records, and each reference cited should be preceded by the initial GCCA (Galway County Council Archives, e.g. GCCA G01/3/15).

Place names are generally given as they appear in the records.

The extracts from the various minutes listed herewith are intended as a representation of the proceedings. The purpose of their inclusion is to give the reader an indication of the diversity of the Council's areas of concern and responsibility. However, given the volume and multiplicity of the Council's work it is not practical in this instance to include an extract highlighting every single district, time and aspect mentioned in the minutes.

Readers are also requested not to view as definitive the appended list of District Councillors. Lists of elected members are often found in various contemporary directories, such as Thoms, Slaters or Pigots, and in contemporary local newspapers.

### DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT

As much of the information in this collection clearly identifies families and individuals researchers are requested, in order to prevent possible distress or embarrassment to near descendants, to sign a disclosure form prior to consulting the records verifying a willingness not to cite specific names in research work.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The microfilming of the collection was facilitated by a grant from the Heritage Council in 2003.

**Patria McWalter**  
**Archivist**



## Related Collections

Records held by Galway County Council Archives :

- Ballinasloe No.1 Rural District Council, G00/6
- Ballinasloe No.2 Rural District Council, G00/7
- Portumna Poor Law Union, G01/4
- Galway County Council Minutes, GC/1/
- County Galway Board of Health & Public Assistance, GC5/

Records held by the National Archives of Ireland

- Office of Public Works, NAI, OPW

## Further Reference

Barrington, T J	<i>The Irish Administrative System</i> , Dublin, 1980
Burke, Helen	<i>The People and the Poor Laws in Nineteenth Century Ireland</i> Dublin, 1987
Ferriter, Diarmaid	<i>'Lovers of Liberty?'</i> <i>Local government in 20<sup>th</sup> century Ireland</i> National Archives of Ireland, Dublin 2001
Kavangh, M.	<i>Galway – Gaillimh A Bibliography of the City and County</i> Galway County Council, Galway 2000
Lohan, Rena	<i>Guide to the Archives of the Office of the Public Works</i> The Stationery Office, Dublin, 1994
Meghen, P J	<i>The Development of Irish Local Government</i> in Administration Vol.8., No.4, Winter 1960
Murray, P James	<i>Galway : A Medico Social History</i> Kenny's Bookshop & Art Galleries Ltd., Galway, c 1996
Nicholls, George	<i>History of the Poor Laws in Ireland</i> , London, 1856
O'Connor, Gabriel	<i>A History of Galway County Council</i> , Galway County Council, 1999
Roche, Desmond	<i>Local Government in Ireland</i> Institute of Public Administration, Dublin 1982
Spellissy, Sean	<i>History of Galway</i> , Celtic Bookshop, (c.1999)
Woodford Heritage Group	<i>Clanricarde County and the Land Campaign</i> Woodford Heritage Group, 1987



# Appendices



## List of some of the members of Council<sup>⊗</sup>

Lists of elected members are often found in various contemporary directories such as Slaters or Pigots, or indeed may often be found in local contemporary newspapers.

Abberton, Thomas (Junior)	Gorman, R.
Abertron, T. (Senior)	Hanny, M.
Blakes Forster, F.	Haverty, P.
Brennan, Tom (+ Feb 1905)	Hayes, M.
Brien, M.	Hardiman, Patrick
Broderick, M	Hogan, Charles
Burke, Patrick	Hickey, E
Burke, Stephen P.	Hobbs, Martin
Canning, James	Hobbs, J
Carolan, John	Hogan, Charles William
Carr, P. Joseph	Hynes, M.
Carroll, M.	Kelly, Thomas
Chevers, G, JP	Kelly, James
Coghlan, P	Kemple, P
Cosgrave, J	Kirwan, J
Cowan, S G	Larkin, E
Curley, P.C. (disqualified 1916-1917)	Loughnane, R.
Daly, John	Lyons, Michael
Dermody, John /h,	Mahon, Martin
Dillon, M.	Malone, M.
Donnelly, C.	Martin, J.P. (Chairman 1924)
Donnelly, J.	Meara, John
Fahy, A.	Moran, T
Fahy, M	Morrissy, John (Chairman 1916-17)
Felle, F.	Mullen, John
Gibbons, James	McDonagh, J.
Gibbons, John	Nevin, Patrick
Glynn, Patrick A.	Nugent, C. JP
Glynn, W. G.,	O'Brien, J

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<sup>⊗</sup> Not to be taken as a definitive list



O'Hara, Peter  
O'Kelly, J.D.  
O'Meara, Patrick  
Pierce, P.  
Quinn, J  
Ryan, Thomas  
Ryder, J  
Sellars, Capt. P.

Stone, Michael  
Taylor, J.  
Taylor, L.  
Tenor, E S, JP  
Tully, Corueluis  
Tuohy, J.J.  
Tuohy, M

### Clerks of Council

Lavan, M.            1900 – [1915]  
Hynes, T.            [1915] - 1921  
Donohoe, M.        1921 - 1925



Appendix B

**ELECTORAL DIVISIONS COVERED BY**

Abbeygormacan

Abbeyville

Ballyglass

Ballynagar

Coos

Derrew

Drumkeary

Drummin

Eyrecourt

Killimore

Kilmalinogne

Kilquain

Marblehill

Meelick

Moat

Pallas

Portumna

Tiranasragh

Tynagh

Woodford



## Abbreviations

Co.Co.	County Council
C.D.B.	Congested Districts Board
D.C.	District Councillor
I.R.A	Irish Republican Army
J.P.	Justice of Peace
L.G.B.	Local Government Board
M.P.	Member of Parliament
R.D.C.	Rural District Council



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## A. Minutes of Portumna Rural District Council, 1900 - 1925

Volumes of minutes of proceedings of Council meetings generally held twice monthly. The minutes record attendance at the meetings, together with proceedings of Council business conducted under various legislation relating to the administration of the district under various headings such as general, financial, sanitary and labourers' cottages. The proceedings of the Council acting as the 'Sanitary Authority' relate to health and sanitary conditions, such as the prevention of disease and the care and management of burial grounds, sewerage systems, and water supply. The proceedings under the 'Labourers Acts' relate to the provision and maintenance of labourers' cottages. The minutes record resolutions proposed and resolved or rejected by the Council. They also include details of correspondence received, generally from the Local Government Board and actions required thereafter.

Minutes are generally signed by the Chairman and witnessed by the Secretary.

Average size circa 420pp

(1-2)

3. 13 July 1900 – 14 September 1901 Matters and issues discussed include;
  - 'Resolution of the Nenagh Rural District Council to the effect that as the prosperity and welfare of the Country depends to a great extent, on the Tenant Farmers becoming owners of the soil and with the view of promoting this laudable object that the Council communicate with the various owners of property in that Rural District and request them to state whether they would be willing to sell to their tenants under the Land Purchase acts and if so on what terms...' (p87)
  - Report from County Surveyor, J Smith, stating that 'There are several roads in the District that have not been kept in good order during the past quarter, and I have therefore recommended some payments to be struck off and a good many to be deferred - the prosecutions against defaulting contractors will be heard during the ensuing Quarters Sessions'. (p95).



- 'Resolution of the Gort Rural District Council desiring to place on record its strongest condemnation of the cowardly and treacherous conduct of the voters of Galway Borough who while professing Nationalist sympathies proved by their conduct at the late election by handing over the Representation of the Borough to an avowed enemy of the National cause and who were always trading under false pretences, are unworthy of the name of Nationalist having been read its adoption was proposed by Mr Morrissy seconded by Mr Hogan and carried...' (p191-120).
  - 'Letter from Mr Smith Architect, Ballinasloe dated 9th January 1901 desiring to forward original drawing; specification and Estimate for Labourers Cottages, also new plan and specification approved of by the L.G. Board as per their letter of 18th ult, cop of which he enclosed and stating that it will be observed that he has followed as far as possible the remarks and pencil alternations, shown on original drawing, at the same time incorporating the requirements of the L.G. Board, as stated in their letter of 26th last. He also enclosed two new plans, specifications and Estimates' (p189).
  - 'Letter from Mr T R Gill, Secretary, Irish Agricultural Dept. were read as follows.... 19<sup>th</sup> March 1901, stating that application should be made to the Co. Council with a view of having Portumna included amongst the centres in the County at which it may be decided to have a series of lectures delivered on agricultural and technical subjects, and stating that that Dept. are willing to make a contribution towards the expenses of any lectures of this nature which may be arranged for by the Council.' (p263)
  - Report from Sanitary Officer stating that 'some of the lodging house Keepers in Portumna and Eyrecourt have not their houses registered, nor the proper notice Boards exhibited, as required by the Public Health act, and some of them keep lodgers in their houses which are totally unfit for the purpose...' (p299)
4. 28 September 1901 - 3 January 1903 Matters and issues discussed include:
- 'Circular letter from the L.G. B d no. 127 dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 1901 subject "Tuberculosis" and sending copy of poster and leaflet containing suggestions as to precautions to be taken to guard against this infectious disease and suggestion that copies thereof would be printed posted and circulated through the district'. (p11)
  - 'Proposed by Mr Morrissey Seconded by Mr Hardiman and unanimously resolved that we the Portumna District Council call on the National Electors of the City of Galway to vote and use their influence for the National candidate fearless Arthur Lynch who fought so bravely for the freedom of the Boers in the present war, in placing humbly by a large majority at the head of the poll, the Electors will show to Ireland and the world over that the stain which was cast on the City of the Tribes at the recent Election will be wiped out, and that no other but honest



- Arthur Lynch will be the man for Galway, and that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Galway Urban and District Councils' (p39).
- Letter from the Local Government Board entitled "Temporary Regulations", Notification of Cases of Plague with reference to the appearance of Bubonic Plague 'in Glasgow, and Liverpool and stating that the Sanitary Authority should forthwith cause notice to be give by advertisement in one or more newspapers circulating in their districts and by handbills and otherwise as the Sanitary Authority think sufficient, notice thereof be given to all persons who have or may have duties under the Regulations, and that it shall be the duty of every Medical Officers of Health to forthwith report to them any cause of Plague which may come to their notice' (p43).
  - 'Resolution of the Roscommon District Council stating that having learned with pleasure of the intention of the Government to introduce into the coming session of Parliament a Land Bill, which should provide for the compulsory sale of land to tenant farmers of this Country – condemnatory of the 11 months grazing system – that not more than 100 acres of land should be sold to any individual and no sale of land made to graziers and condemning the recent action of the Land Courts selling large tracts of land to graziers, to the exclusion of poor tenant farmers anxious to give current prices for such portions of these lands was unanimously approved of. (p71).
  - 'Resolution of the Louth Rural District Council to the effect that they consider the proposed Land Bill of no practical value save in the removal of difficulties to Landlords in making title, and they deem it destructive of a tenant's right to have a fair rent fixed every fifteen years, and so objectionable in its encouragement of companies of speculative land jobbers to purchase Estates and charge premiums on resale of same to tenants and desiring to call upon the Nationalist Party and Mr J W Russell, M.P., to resist the passing of this Bill unless clauses 16 and 36 be elements or effectually amended in the interest of the tenants, and furthermore they consider compulsory purchase of the landlords interest at a price not exceeding 15 years purchase of 2<sup>nd</sup> term rents the only real solution of the Irish Land Question, was unanimously approved of' (p199).
  - 'Resolved that this Council heartily approve of the action of the Irish Parliamentary party led by Mr John E Redmond relative to the English Education Bill in whose wisdom in the matter this Council places the utmost reliance and confidence and strongly condemn the Irish Daily Independent, Mr J M Healy and his Backs; in their action in this matter by striving to get up the apple of discord against our United Irish Party...' (p375)
  - 'That this Council at its first meeting since the imprisonment of our worthy M.P. Mr John Roche heartily congratulate him on the manly patriotic and fearless stand he made before the removable magistrates at Roscommon Court House in refusing to give bail when asked to do so, but preferred instead a months imprisonment in jail for his country's cause. That is would be creditable to all the Irish representatives were as sterling as Mr Roche who has never



flinched when his services were needed, on behalf of the down trodden tenantry of Ireland ...'  
(p407)

5. 15 January 1903 – 27 February 1904 Matters and issues discussed include:-

- 'Letter from Mr John Claffey, Portumna dated 27<sup>th</sup> March 1903 stating that during the recent rain fall all the houses in the part of the town as well as the yards were flooded owing to want of a proper outlet, the only one at present being to let it out on the public street, which being higher than the yards the flow is stopped in consequence...'(p107).
- 'Resolved that the Labourers get possession of their Cottage plots for the purpose of enabling them to put down a crop without further delay, and who will be required to sign a caretakers agreement therefor at 1d per week and until the cottages are built and without waiting for the agreements to be received from Mr Golding, the Council's Solicitor, who is to be again applied to for them, ....' (p125).
- 'Letter from the L.G. Board no. 19,625 dated 9<sup>th</sup> April 1903 desiring to refer the Council to their letter of 5<sup>th</sup> December last on the subject of areas for sanitary charges, and stating in reply to the Council's resolution of 28<sup>th</sup> ultimo. That they are prepared to fix the area of charge for Expenses for sewerage works in Portumna on the old area of charge on the townlands of Attygara, Fairhill, Portumna, Portumna Demesne, Gouril, and Gortnacloghy and enclosing form of descriptive list of particulars as to the work referred to,...' (p139).
- 'Resolved that We the Members of the Portumna Rural District Council desire to bring under the notice of Galway County Council the scarcity of labour in and around the towns of this District and with a view of improving the unhappy lot of the labourers of these town, we wish to point out that there is no employment whatever, and now desiring to bring the matter before the County Council, we earnestly request them to consider the matter as other Co. Councils have done viz to give direct labour on roads within 1 mile of the towns in the District as they fall out of contract as this would materially reduce the burden on the rates by out-door relief and the shelter of the Workhouse' (p161-162).
- 'Resolved that we congratulate the Irish Party on their successful efforts at the National Convention and in the House of Commons to effect a satisfactory solution of the Irish Land Question, ...' (p162)
- 'Proposed by....resolved that we the District Council of Portumna respectfully beg to call the attention of the Pivie and Iveagh syndicate to the suitability of Portumna as a depot for their motor cars in connection with the transport scheme now in contemplation. Portumna is the centre on the Shannon for Tynagh, Killimore, Abbey, Newbridge, Ballycrissan which includes a large grain, wool and poultry district, and for Lorrha, Rathcabbin, Eglis, Carrigahoarig, Terryglass in north Tipperary the largest grain district in Ireland....'(p232).



- 'Circular letter from the L.G. Board No. 116 dated 6<sup>th</sup> October 1903 subject "Tuberculosis" (consumption) and stating that in view of the high death rate from this disease, they desire to re-issue their circular letter of 16<sup>th</sup> September 1901, on the subject which they forward together with further copies of posters and leaflets etc...' (p331).

6. 12 March 1904 – 7 July 1905

Matters and issues included

- 'Resolution of the south Dublin Rural District Council to the effect that Co. Councils having regard to the fact that under the provision of the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891 and 1896, the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898 and the Irish Land Act of 1903 the position and liabilities of the rate payers of the County at large may be seriously affected through non payment of installments by tenants making improvident bargains in the purchase of their holdings and desire to impress upon the tenants the necessity in the interests of themselves and their fellow rate-payers to postpone buying their holdings unless they obtain reasonable reduction...' (p132).
- Submission from the Secretary of the Portumna branch of the United Irish Leagues was read advising that 'at a meeting of the Committee of the United Irish League held on Sunday last the following resolutions proposed by Mr William Flannery and seconded by Mr John Molloy (Evicted Tenants) were unanimously adopted. 1<sup>st</sup> that having learned that a motion is to be brought before the Portumna District Council on Tuesday for the making of a road into Cappadsale, we direct the attention of the Council to the fact that only two men in the whole townland are members of the National organisation and we put it before the Council as a National body the question, are they worthy of such a concession from the National representatives of the people.  
  
2<sup>nd</sup> – that we protest against cottages being granted to labourers under the Scheme about to be brought into operation who are not members of the United Irish League, as it was by the National agitation the labourers gained so many concessions in the past and the least they should do now is to support the organisation which has conferred so many benefits on them.  
  
3<sup>rd</sup> – that we direct the attention of the Council and Guardians to the fact that many people seek contracts from both bodies, such people often not being members of the United Irish League, we trust that where it can legally be done that preference will always be given to a member of the national organisation.' (17 January 1905).
- Report of Mr J. Smith, County Surveyor was read stating 'The Roads of this Rural District have not been kept in proper order and have not been maintained up to their recently good condition during the past quarter and I am unable to certify payments to the extent that I could desire in the interest of the travelling public, Contractors should now understand that any monies deferred this quarter for neglect of their duties will not be again deferred nor will any monies be



deferred at the next quarterly meeting as the new Public Bodies Order distinctly stipulate that monies for road maintenance contracts must be either paid in full or struck off. Under these circumstances it is to be hoped Contractors whose names are now deferred will embrace every suitable opportunity of putting their roads into proper and sufficient repair before the next quarterly meeting....' (p300E-F).

(7.)

8. 22 September 1906 – 22 June 1907 Matters and issues discussed include:-

- 'Letter from the L.G. Board no. 53214 dated 18<sup>th</sup> September 1906 requesting to be furnished with full particulars of the extra duties performed by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk for which the Council proposed on 8<sup>th</sup> inst. to pay them sums of £60 and £20 respectively as extra remuneration.

Ordered to be informed that from the many changes and alternations in the selection of sites before the holding of the Local Inquiry and other delays in carrying into execution that scheme, taking a period of seven years to do so, and notably owing to the change of site of the Boleynanollog cottage after the Provisional Order had been issued throwing a great amount of extra labour on the hands of the Clerk and his Assistant as well as the taking up of possession of plots and then given to the labourers as caretakers over a scattered area and drawing agreements therefore subsequently giving possession of the plots to the building contractors, taking possession of the cottages from them and giving them to the labourers and drawing agreements therefor, and drawing subsequent agreements therefor on a reduction being made in their rents and under these circumstances, the District Council are of opinion, that the Clerk and Assistant Clerk are entitled to the sums granted them unanimously by the Council who pray for the Local Government Board's sanction under all the circumstances to the payments of the amounts'. (p29-30).

- 'Resolved That we the members of the Portumna District Council desire to all the attention of the Estate Commissioners to the present condition of the Evicted Tenants in this District, and desire to point out that an Inspector from their Department visited the locality a short time ago to enquire into the condition of the evicted, but did not interview several of the evicted tenants who had to approach him, and they were informed by him their names were not supplied him. The Council are of opinion from information to their knowledge, that the names of al the Evicted Tenants were supplied to the Estate Commissioners, and they hope the matter will receive the attention of that body.'(p131)

(9.)



10. 18 July 1908 - 10 July 1909 Matters and issues discussed include :-
- 'The Clerk reported that in accordance with the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milk-shops order he got posters circulated, and also advertisement inserted in the local press, calling on cow-keeper etc to be registered, and that only one person was registered up to the present' (p83).
  - 'Dr Kelly, Medical Officer of Health Portumna No. Dispensary District reported that a case of Typhus Fever occurred in the village of Derryvunlan, the patient being a woman \_\_\_\_\_, 26 years, the steps he took to prevent the spread of the disease being Removal to hospital, Isolation and disinfection' (p191).
  - Letter from the Local Government Board No. L20 835/176 stating that 'they have sanctioned a loan of £11,300 for the purpose of carrying out part 1 of the Schedule to the unopposed order of 1905, the first instalment of the loan to be £3,000 and that they will make the necessary recommendation to the Irish Land Commission that this loan is at the rate of £170 per cottage and also includes a sum of £250.10 for the acquisition and securing of the five allotments of land, included in this portion of the Order....'(p247)
  - 'Ordered that the Local Government Board be informed that the Council have repeatedly advertised for Contractors for building the Labourers Cottages and cannot get tenders with very few exceptions at the Engineers Estimate, all being over it with the exception of Messrs. Mullins tender from who the Council cannot get a bond or guarantee that they would erect the cottages, and that the Local Government Board be asked to allow the Council to alter the present plan so as to get tenders at a price not exceeding the present estimate £122.10.0' (p446).

(11.)

12. 17 September 1910 - 7 October 1911 Matters and issues discussed
- Transcript of letter from Dr Kennedy, Medical Officer of Health stating that 'It gives me pleasure to inform you that the epidemic of Typhus fever with which we were threatened some short time ago has now practically abated, and owing largely to the minute precautions which Colonel Coates and the Nurses under his charge adopted, especially against the further spread of this dire disease. I have every confidence in asserting that unless some very unforeseen circumstances arises, there is very little likelihood of any further cases arising. At the same I would like to point out for the information of the general public that a great amount of assistance can be given, in the attempts to stamp out this infection by strict attention to the proper ventilation, cleanliness, and above all, avoidance of overcrowding in the homes of the poor....I have made an inspection of many of the houses in Portunma within the last few days, and as a result I have come to the conclusion that there is great room for improvement in the manner under which the people conduct their homes at present, and in addition, I am





compelled to state that the hygienic conditions existing therein are worthy only of more ancient times. As an example I visit one house (\_\_\_\_) where I found that one of the bedrooms had been converted into a stable. IT was full of straw, manure and filth of all description and as an explanation of such an abominable exhibition I was informed that a donkey had been housed there the night before ....on the other hand I do not wish for a moment to lay all the blame at the door of the poor, as I consider that the Landlords in some cases have neglected their duties as to the proper repair and upkeep of their property. I say that the property of Lord Clanricarde – such as I have visited – and also of the late Major Bulles, is at present in a very un-kept state, and the fact is so patent as to lead one to believe that the lack of property accommodation for the poor is the only excuse there is for living under such circumstances....’ (p11-12, 16).

- Transcript of letter from Tynagh rate-payers, Athletic Clubs etc regarding the proposed recreation ground at Springarden, Tynagh stating ‘...As already intimated to you an excellent opportunity now presents itself to provide a recreation ground owing to the sale of the Springarden Estate which adjoins the town of Tynagh. The site on which we seek to secure a recreation ground is within about 200 yards of the town and adjoins the public road and which has heretofore afforded us the necessary facility for recreation, sports and other pastimes. It is now in the lands of the Estate Commissioners pending division into small holdings. If it shall so happen that these lands were divided, we would be deprived of the only available or suitable recreation ground in the neighbourhood of Tynagh, or within any convenient distance, and even at an inconvenient distance, it depended on the generosity of some sport loving farmer or Landowner. The want of such grounds would be keenly felt by the Athletic Clubs and Athletes existing in the locality, and by the inhabitants in general, and if provided it would be a venue for important matches, between other teams, or clubs for which Tynagh would be central and also the encouragement of the many other recreative, and health giving pastimes which the facility would offer....(p119-120).
- ‘Letters from Mr Roseingrave, Engineer were read, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1910...As you have decided by resolution that all cottages to be built in No. 4 Scheme in future shall be single cottage I don’t think it would be in order to act on Mr Martin’s suggestion in uniting two single cottages and thereby form a double cottage. The result would be a double cottage of a design not yet approved by the L.G. Board, and the sanction of the Board is necessary. The L.G. Board have approved of a special design of mine for a double cottage in Scariff (county Clare) R.D. giving the same living accommodation, but not as much out office accommodation as my town single cottages. The design of this cottage is being built in Scariff R.D. for £216. Your town single cottages will cost £260, less the cost of one gable say £15...’(p124).
- ‘Resolved unanimously – That the Local Government Board’s attention be drawn to the fact that only three Rural Districts in the country took advantage of the Labourers Acts prior to the Act of 1906, and the Council consider it only fair that the Exchequer Contribution should be distributed amongst those Districts, having regard to their liabilities to the Board of works from





whom the loans were obtained, and not amongst the other Rural Districts who only erected cottages under Act of 1906 and we consider we are entitled to a larger share of the contribution of £5,131.14.9 than any other District we having erected more cottages under the Acts previous to the passing of the Act of 1906.' (p302-303)

13. 21 October 1911 – 19 October 1912                      Matters and issues discussed included
- 'Resolved – That we learn with surprise of the action of the Secretary of the Galway County Council in suggesting an increase of 4d in the £ in the District rate for this Union for the ensuing year, in the absence of our representative (Mr J Cosgrave) who took it for granted that the Estimate (a copy of which he was supplied with) would be adopted, more especially when he wrote approving of said Estimate, and if the Co. Council persist in levying this increased rate we authorise that a chartered accountant be employed to inquire into the accounts of the County Council with reference to the Portumna District....'(p165)
  - 'Resolved – That we the members of the Portumna Rural District Council condemn in the strongest manner the recent outrage perpetrated on the property of Mr James Cosgrave, Co. Co (County Councillor) Portumna, when his cow was shot. We desire to assure him of our entire confidence as our Representative on the County Council and we hope that the parties who committed this crime will be brought to justice' (p346).
  - Clerk of the Council confirmed that Certificates of Completion of Works (Form No. 34) dated the 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1912 were issued as follows, cottage No. 147 completed 18<sup>th</sup> July 1912 ; cottage no. 148 completed 4<sup>th</sup> July 1912 ; cottage 149 completed 18 July 1912; and cottage no. 59 completed on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1912 (p377).
  - Transcript of a letter from Roseingrave, Council's Engineer regarding his promise to attend 'Council's meeting to be held on the 7<sup>th</sup> proximo he begged to say, that he was advised by his Solicitor to withdraw that promise on the following grounds, viz :- "that you have fairly and independently accessed what is due to me, owing to the default of certain defaulting contractors and that such is sufficient proof of my claims. Moreover, my case is already prejudiced by the action of the Council in backing up these defaulters against their Engineer on whose shoulders so much responsibility is thrown without the least assistance from the Council. The situation of a number of contractors, most of whom have from time to time been convicted by me for bad work and bad materials, is too tragic and humiliating for a professional man to endure. In short, it is like going to law with the devil and the court in hell. Besides there is another and a much better court open for me, and if the amount of your fair, independent, and carefully prepared award is not paid to me at next finance day, I will avail myself of the latter court".'( p394, see also pp470, 473-474))



- 'The Council unanimously adopted the resolution of the Castlerea (county Roscommon) District Council "condemning the cowardly and brutal treatment Catholics and Liberal Protestant workers are subjected to in Belfast by the Orange Mobs, incited by the speeches of Carson, Campbell, and Craig & Co".' (p453).
  - Council adopted the resolution of Dublin County Council "trusting that no truth in the report recently published that an English Official was about to be appointed to the Secretary-ship of the Post Office in Ireland and informing that Postmaster General that such an appointment would be strongly resented in Ireland" (p453).
14. 16 November 1912 - 18 October 1913 Matters and issues discussed included
- Report from Mr Roseingrave, Engineer stating '...That he could not see his way to superintend revived contracts for the sum of £2.10.0 per cottage as stipulated by the Council.... That the Council may rest assured he would fulfil his engagements to superintend the erection of any cottages for which they had entered into, an agreement to have the work done in six months from the date of signing bonds in the first instance ; but of course the Council can understand he was not bounded to superintend in the case of any revived contracts or where the Council made a second contract for the same cottage after the expiration of the time limit of six months set out in the first bond. Accordingly from this date he declined to issue Certificates for defaulting contractors unless he was paid by the Council for their extra service.' (p16-17).
  - 'That we the members of the Council of the Portumna Rural District request the Galway County Council to repair by steam rolling the roads No.s. 44, 50 & 50A (which include the streets of Portumna and are presently being made by the County Surveyor) and we hereby consent to the borrowing of the sum of £900 for carrying out the said work, the amount to be repaid within a period of seven years'. (p21).
  - 'Submitted Notification from Mr P.S. Golding, Solicitor, Ballinasloe that an application will be made by or on behalf of the Rt. Hon. Earl of Westmeath to the County Court at the Session to be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1913, at Loughrea, for compensation amounting to £409, for the loss sustained by the said Rt. Hon. Earl of Westmeath, by reason of the malicious burning of a hay shed and about 51 tons of prime hay, a smaller shed, a cattle float, a quantity of manufactured timber and four sheep troughs, his property' (pp40-41).
  - Report of Mr S P Burke, Inspector of Dairies and Cowsheds stating 'That he had ordered all registered Cow-Keepers to have their cowsheds lime washed during the month before housing their cows for the winter months and also to make a general cleaning of adjoining yards' (p106).
  - Includes letter from Thomas William Roseingrave...to Thomas Rodgers, Eyrecourt, dated 6 January 1913 advising that 'I have already notified the R.D.C. of Portumna that I will not issue



any more Certificates for contracts where the time limit for completion has expired unless the Council compensate me for my service.

The Council and the Contractors must arrange between themselves that I be paid £6.6.0 for each and every future inspection I make to the Portumna R.D. Council on behalf of defaulting Contractors or in the case of revived contracts' (p115, see also p145).

- 'Rural District Council unanimously adopted the resolution of the Oughterard Council, dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1913, viewing with deepest concern the frequent recurrence of Fever in the Union, and calling upon the Congested Districts Board, the Local Government Board, and the Irish National Health Insurance Commissioners to form a Committee of Inquiry to investigate the conditions which prevail in that Union with a view of having proper remedial measures taken to put an end to the deplorable condition. (pp154155).
- 'That we the members of the Portumna Rural District Council join with the National Bodies throughout the country in congratulating Mr Hogg, in his victory over the Union candidate at the recent Derry Election, which shows clearly that Ulster is not opposed to Home Rule, as has been represented by the Unionist Press' (p155).
- Letter from the Local Government Board...referring to the minute of the Council of the 14<sup>th</sup> ultimo, relative to their proposal to pay their Engineer a sum of £2.10.0 per cottage in connection with the revived contract for the erection of six cottages at Eyrecourt under the Labourers Acts, and the Board directed attention to their letter of 20<sup>th</sup> of March, 1908, in which the Council were informed that payments of this nature should be satisfied by corresponding deductions from the balances otherwise due to the defaulting contractors. That on this assumption the Board, who do not consider it right that the rate-payers should be mulcted in the payment of such expenses, acquiesced in the allowance proposed to be granted to Mr Roseingrave, and they would always be disposed, when possible, to approve of the application of portion of any penalties imposed on dilatory contractors in compensating Engineers who have proved satisfactory and diligent in the execution of their duties.  
That the Board, however, had now received a report on the condition of the work from their Architect, Mr Harbinson, and they were forced to conclude from the unsatisfactory state of affairs disclosed by that report and the many and serious defects existing in the cottages that the works had been inadequately supervised during progress. That they did not, therefore, consider that the Council would be justified in making the proposed payment to Mr Roseingave, even if recovered by way of fine from the defaulting contractor....' (p184-185, see also p433).
- 'Letter from Mr Patrick Hogan, Portumna dated the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1913, reporting that he had completed the contract for the erection of 14 cottages in the field adjacent to the Workhouse and requesting that he be paid for same together with retention money on ten of the cottages which were certified as fit for occupation on the 21<sup>st</sup> December last, not later than next Finance meeting' (p226, see also p244 & 317).



(15-17)

18. 1 April 1916 – 8 December 1917 Matters and items discussed included

- 'Letter from the Local Government Board...requesting to be informed what steps if any are being taken by the Council to reduce the large amount of arrears of rent due in respect of the cottages provided in the District under the Acts, a sum of £117.5.2 or over three months rental of all the cottages being due at the end of January last referred to in Financial Minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> inst.  
Ordered to be informed that Notices to Quit have been served on a good many tenants, and two tenants have been summoned for possession of cottages, and the above arrears includes a sum of £35 or about one months rent which was surcharged against the late Rent Collector against whom proceedings have been instituted for recover; the case to be heard at Ballinasloe Quarter Session on 6<sup>th</sup> inst.' (p13-14)
- 'That we the Members of the Portumna Rural District Council condemn the action of the Authorities in shooting the innocent people without any form of trial during the recent disturbance in Dublin, and we further condemn them for depriving us of the youth and manhood of Ireland by deportation and whose sympathies were heartily in accord with the wishes of the Government as far as recruiting is concerned. That a Committee of the whole Board be appointed to collect funds for the dependents of those noble Irishmen who were shot during the disturbance.' (p60, see also p156)
- Transcript of letter from James Cosgrave, MP, to the Council stating 'I beg to acknowledge receipt of your Council's resolution of confidence in Mr Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party. It is indeed a consolation to me as your representative to know (no matter what the cranks and critics say) that the members of the Portumna District Council are keeping up this good reputation of loyalty to the Irish party. As it has been pointed out to you in the manifesto of the Party of 9<sup>th</sup> May last, the constitutional movement inaugurated by Butt (Issac) and Parnell (Charles Stuart) and renewed by Redmond (John), Dillon (John) etc has not only won everything that programme demanded but a great deal more, and here in your midst, is there not evidence of its great power, when it defeated the late Lord Clanricarde, one of the most tyrannical landlords in Ireland. To-day thank God that property is in the hands of the C.D.B. which was created by the Irish Party, the planters are with a few exceptions removed, and the farms they grabbed are once more in the hands of the evicted tenants – who fought as glorious a battle as any ever fought by Irishmen for the land they loved. All this good work was won under the constitutional movement, which your Council in its wisdom has always approved of...' (pp97-98)



- Details of circular from the Local Government Board was read drawing attention to the resolution of the House of Commons in favour of the Daylight Saving Scheme passed on 8<sup>th</sup> May and to the Summer Time Bill which received Royal Assent (p117, see also p192, p249).
- Resolved that the Council 'most humbly beg to offer to His Most Gracious Majesty King George the fifth our best and devoted loyalty and we sincerely supplicate clemency for Mr Roger Casement, now condemned to death, we believe that now is a time at which the exercise of His Majesty's Royal prerogative would do much to accentuate the friendship and devotedness of our native land to the Throne' (p118, see also 156 4A).
- 'Resolved - That the council advertise for a competent tradesman to supervise repairs to all cottages in the District. That the appointment be for one year only and that the salary be at the rate of £20 (twenty pounds) per annum, and that the following be the duties to be discharged...make a general inspection and report on all cottages in the District, submit estimates and specifications for those requiring repairs, to afterwards superintend repairs and certify for payment if the work is done according to specification and to his satisfaction, to inspect and report to the Council quarterly on the state of all cottages, and at all other times as may hereafter be required by the Council during his term of office, and draw up specifications, estimates, and supervise repairs as aforesaid when required to do so....' (pp150-151, see also p172).
- 'Circular from the Acting Secretary Co. Council... calling attention to the great injury which is being done to Irish Agricultural interest by the unfair restrictions imposed in regard to shipping trade via the Port of Dublin etc' (p154).
- 'Resolution of the Ballinasloe No.1 District Council protesting against any further imposition on the lands of Ireland as the rate-payers are already over taxed since the outbreak of the war (World War I) owing to the high cost of provisions etc was adopted' (p156).
- 'Letter from Mr Kearns, Solicitor, stating that he advised the Clerk (of Council, T Hynes) to produce the necessary books and documents in the case of King v Curley (District Councillor, charged with being an alien), and that the attended and gave evidence at Petty Sessions on 4<sup>th</sup> inst. (September) when the case was dismissed without prejudice.  
The Clerk stated that he was asked in Court to produce the minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> June 1915 and which date was not specified in the previous summons served on him and that he produced same, and he now submitted a summons which was subsequently served on him requesting the production of these minutes' (pp173-174, see also p191, p210, p212, p305, p384B, & p421).
- 'Letter from Mr Michael Duffy, Killimore...stating that the sewerage in front of his business place in Killimore is in a defective way, any time heavy rain falls his drain gets choked and the water comes through the grating in front and flows into both his shops, causing trouble to customers and damage to goods, he regards this as dangerous to the health of his family and assistants, and hoping this matter will receive attention' (p182).



- 'Circular from the County Council ...transmitting copy of a Sealed Order of the Local Government Board ...approving with modifications the Declarations and Schemes formulated by the County Council for the maintenance of roads in the Ballinasloe No.1, Glenamaddy, Loughrea, and Mountbellew Rural Districts by a system of direct labour under the charge of the County Surveyors...' (p211).
  - Resolution of the Nenagh (county Tipperary) Urban District Council was adopted 'congratulating the Irish Party on the political sagacity they displayed in dealing with the recent proposals for the settlement of the Irish Question etc' (pp249-250).
  - Resolution from the Carrickfergus Urban District Council was adopted 'on the subject of conserving grain and sugar by the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of drinks during the war' (p403).
19. 22 December 1917 – 21 June 1919                      Matters and issued discussed included
- Letter from the Local Government Board 'stating in reference to minutes of 2<sup>nd</sup> inst. containing a Notice of Motion proposing to pledge the rates for the purchase of food, that there is no legal authority for such a course. They fail to see any reason why the Council should anticipate a famine or even scarcity of essential foodstuffs, having regard to the fact that the crops of home grown oats and potatoes are of the largest on records....' (p98).
  - 'Resolution of the Tralee (county Kerry) District Council protesting against conscription was adopted and the paragraph calling on Irish MPs to return to Ireland, and calling on every public body in Ireland to cease administering the Local Government until the Conscription Bill is withdrawn, was marked "Read"' (p175B).
  - '...The Clerk further stated that the Labourers Cottages Scheme No. 4 was anything but in a satisfactory state. That 43 or 44 cottage sites were not registered and that the wrong areas were registered in some cases as far as he Clerk can ascertain they have no title for some plots, the Land Registry have sent tracings through Mr Kearns, Solicitor, which requires to be compared etc with the Council maps for the purpose of ascertaining where the discrepancy is, and for which purpose an Engineer will be required' (p204, see also p223).
  - 'Resolution of the Naas (county Kildare) Board of Guardians protesting against the outrageous and unwarranted treatment of the political prisoners in Cork Jail, and requesting the Lord Mayor of Cork to have the facts investigated , was adopted' (p325).
  - 'Letter from the Local Government Board ...stating they have had before them the application of the Galway County Council for an extension of the limit of expenditure on roads in the District and they have given instructions for the preparation of an order assenting to an



extension of the limit of expenditure on roads in the Rural District to £4,375 for each of the three years ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 1920, 1921, 1922' (p353).

- 'Resolution of the Antrim District Council protesting against the transfer from District Councils to County Councils of local control and administration, as such has neither been in the interest of economy, efficiency, or satisfaction to the people, and strongly protesting against such matters as public health administration, hospital control etc being centralised under the Co. Councils, or any other new authority which may be established was adopted' (p364).
- Letter from the Local Government Board 'stating they have received the Descriptive List containing particulars in relation to the proposed area of charge for expenses in connection with the works which the Council propose to carry out with a view to improving the water supply at Portumna, and in reference thereto they will be glad to learn whether the pump when provided will be available for use by the general public, as well as the inhabitants of the Labourers Cottages in the vicinity, ....  
Order to be informed that the pump when provided will be available for use by the general public as well as the tenants of cottages, and that when the estimate is received from Mr Felle (overseer of repairs to cottages) the estimated cost will be inserted in the list and returned to the Local Government Board' (p372).
- 'Letter from \_\_\_\_\_ tenant of Labourers Cottage at Fairyhill, asking the Council to board up the front of the shed attached to his cottage in order that his sons can sleep in it. He has been sleeping in the shed from fifteen years and it is most uncomfortable and inhuman. There is no room in the cottage for his family, and when his two sons came home from the front they had to sleep on the kitchen hearth. It could be made a sleeping apartment for a small amount, and trusting the Council will do it for him.  
The Council refused to board up the place, but allowed the tenant to do so at his own expense' (413).

(20-23)

24. 9 April 1923 - 20 December 1924 Matters and issues discussed included

- Transcript of letter from the Sisters of Charity, Blind Asylum, Merrion, Dublin requesting that 'If you come across or know of any blind or defective sighted children, especially between the ages of 3 & 7 would you kindly use your influence to send them to our school which is the only one for Catholics in the this County. Only those who have had experience with the blind can have any idea of the advantage of early training to these children and on the other hand the great difficulty of developing mentally and physically – older children...' (pp97-98).





- 'That owing to the heavy duties and small salaries of the Home Assistance Officers Council as District Home Assistance Committee request the County Board of Health to again bring forward the adjourned application of 18 December 1922, and grant them a living wage' (p98).
- 'Circular letter from the Secretary County Council Galway...requesting to be sent immediately a statement of any expenditure actually incurred to the late Board of Guardians of Portumna Union as a result of the occupation of the Workhouse or other Union property by the British Authorities.....  
The Clerk stated he informed the Secretary... that Buildings here were not at any time occupied by the English Army but owing to their occupation of Ballinasloe Workhouse the Inmates from there were transferred here (Portumna) for twelve months and a debt of £470.7.10 for their care, clothing etc still remains due by Ballinasloe; and also the further sum of £11.15.0 "Augmentation Grant" paid (as was the custom to Mrs Tully, the then Union Teacher --by the Guardians and which should have been refunded by the English Local Government Board' (p174, see also p191, p287).
- Dr Kelly, Medical Officer of Health.. reported that 'some tinkers on the last Fair Day let lose an old Stallion on the Commonage, Portumna where the animal got drowned in a drain. The carcass now lies in the Commonage – decomposed, and the stench therefrom is a danger to Public Health. I recommend that it be covered with Quicklime on Monday and buried a few days after. As the place has become a dumping ground for Nuisances etc I also recommend that a Notice be put up threatening prosecution to all future offenders; and that the Civic Guards be asked to be on the look-out for such offenders with a view to prosecution' (p182).
- 'Circular letter from the Ministry ...with copy of the President's Circular... regarding the employment and settlement of Demobilised Officers and men from the Army; and trusting that the Local Authorities without exception will re-instate those men who left their employment to join the Army; and asking that as vacancies arise preference will be given to such men' (p230).
- 'Circular letter from the Secretary Galway County Council .... Re Direct Labour Scheme, stating that the County Council adopted the Direct Labour Scheme in the Portumna District subject to the following changes re wages ; viz Labourers 4/2 per day ; the Gangers 5/2 per day ; and the carters 8/4 per day ; and that these rates shall be liable to modification from time to time' (p241).
- Transcript of copy of letter from Minister to Mr Kearns, Solicitor, Portumna...'relative to the proposed public lighting of Portumna, I am directed by the Minister of Local Government to point out that reference to the expenses of lighting contained in Section 232 of the Public Health Act (Ireland) 1878 is qualified by the words "where duly authorised". It will be noted that the lighting powers given by Section 80 of the Act are confined to Urban Authorities; but provision is made by Section 1 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act 1896 for the conferment of such powers on Rural Authorities. In cases of this kind it is the usual practice for the Rural District Council to advertise the substance of the proposal, giving particulars of the incidental





- poundage rate on the contemplated area of charge, and of the area to be lighted, the latter being precisely defined in a deposited map which is open to inspection at the Clerk's Office, by interested parties. After a reasonable interval for the lodgment of objections, if any, the application for Urban Powers together with the map and a copy of the Public Notice is transmitted for the Minister's decision. I am however, to add that in view of the present necessity for strict economy in local expenditure it would be advisable that the Council before incurring any expense in connection with the preliminaries explained above should furnish a satisfactory statement of the grounds of the urgency of the proposal' (pp268-269).
- 'Order : Ministry to be informed that the street of Portumna are lighted for the past few years – and expense hereof met by public subscription of people residing in Portumna and townlands of same, with Portumna Demesne, who are now anxious to levy a rate to help them meet said expense' (p269).
  - 'Letter from Ministry...requesting that all Books, Minutes, Records and Documents relating to the business of the late Board of Guardians should be forwarded to the Secretary County Board of Health, Galway to be retained by him in the offices of that Board for future reference. And that any Title Deeds and Leases be sent to the Secretary of the Co. Council, to be kept therein safe custody' (p306, see also pp344-345).
  - 'Letter from \_\_\_\_\_ tenant of a cottage at Springarden, Tynagh saying he got a Notice to give up possession of cottage he holds from Council for the past seven years and for which he paid rent and taxes regularly, on plea that he's not in occupation of same. He says he sleeps there regularly except on rare occasions when his employer, Lord Westmeath, requires him early on urgent business when he sleeps in his yard. He kept his plot tilled regularly till it "ran out" when he let it out into grass to renew it.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 's explanation considered satisfactory; cottage therefore left to him' (p320).
  - Letter from Ministry dated 12 May 1924 Ref. No. P21226/1924, stating, with reference to Clerk's letters of the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. that under the circumstances stated therein, the Ministry directed that the Minute Books of the late Board of Guardians of Portumna Union containing records relating to Public Health matters may be retained in the Rural District Office for the present' (p345).
  - 'Letter from Organising Librarian Carnegie Trust (Co. Galway Carnegie Libraries) dated 25<sup>th</sup> August 1924 – stating that on notification of appointment of a Representative Local Library Committee for the purpose of establishing a branch (other than a school library) in this district he'd be pleased to forward Form of Application' (p421).
  - 'Letter from Ministry dated 11<sup>th</sup> October 1924 Ref. No. P45408/1924, Galway County as under "A Chara, With reference to your letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> inst. relative to the question of payment in respect of provisions etc supplied to the I.R.A. while in occupation of Portumna Workhouse in 1921-1922 I am directed by the Minister of Local Government and Public Health to state that a copy of your communication is being sent to the Auditor as the Minister desires that the matter be





- The Clerk advised the Council that 'he notified all the D.C.s (District Councillors) to attend the meeting to-day (20<sup>th</sup> June 1925) as it is to be the final for legal transactions of business by the Councillors, whose functions cease on the 23<sup>rd</sup>...' (p96).
- Circular letter from the Ministry regarding the Local Government Act, 1925 're. Transfer of business from Rural District Councils, drawing attention to the provisions of Section 8, Sub-section (2), (3), and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1925, where it is the present Rural District Council will cease to function on 23<sup>rd</sup> proximo, and their powers and duties thereafter administered by the County Boards of Health, pending arrangements to be made by the County Councils, after the appointed day (1<sup>st</sup> October next) when Rural Councils finally cease to exist.

As a matter of administrative convenience the Minister considers that the existing Rural District Councils may arrange for the payment of full salaries of Officials due for the period ending the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1925 at their Financial meetings in this month, subject to the Paying Orders being dated 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1925'. (p97).



## B. Minutes of Galway County Board of Health acting for Portumna Rural District Council/ Public Works Committee, 1925

[25.] 20 June 1925 - 14 December 1925 Proceeding of Galway County Board of Health acting for Portumna Rural District Council and from August 1925 minutes of the Public Works Committee meetings, both of which deal with the various duties and responsibilities inherited from the disbanded Rural District Council. The minutes record attendance at the meetings, together with proceedings of business conducted under various legalisation covering general, financial, and labourers' housing issues.

108pp

Matters and issues discussed included

- Circular letter from the Local Government Department stating that '...the Financial Minutes of the Council shows that no serious attempt has been made by the Rent Collectors to collect current rents regularly or to reduce the outstanding arrears. While there is little doubt that at one period the accumulative of arrears in many districts could properly be attributed to the difficulty then found in collecting the rents regularly, this excuse cannot be advanced as a reason for the failure during the past 12 months of Rent Collectors to recover outstanding arrears (standing at £177.18) p103). ...' (p109).
- 'Letter from the Secretary County Board of Health Galway...stating his Board at their meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst. decided to appoint the members (3) of the County Council, already selected to act as Public Works Committee for the Rural District (Portumna) to also discharge the duties heretofore performed by the Rural District Council, under the Sanitary, Labourers and Burial Grounds Acts until the appointed day, ....'(p117).
- 'Sealed Order from Minister of Local Government and Public Health ... determining Townlands of Portumna and Portumna Demesne in the Rural District of Portumna as "area of charge" for the lighting of public lamps on streets of Portumna, rate thereon not to exceed 3d (pence) in the £ in any Financial Year' (p163).



## C. Incoming Letter Book, 1899

26. April 1899 – December 1899                      Circulars letters, letters and Orders from the Local Government Board to the Rural District Council
- On a variety of matters and issues relating to the administration of the Council, such as procedures relating to road maintenance, repairs to Labourer's cottages, and administration of Dairies, Cow-sheds and Milk-shop orders and acts. Also includes circular letter from Board regarding convening of the 1<sup>st</sup> meetings of Council stating that 'The Board consider that the most convenient place for the first meeting of each Rural District Council would be the Workhouse of the Union in which their District is situated ...(5 April 1899); and circular letter advising 'The powers of Rural District Councils are conferred upon them by Section 27 to 39 of the Act (Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898), and their procedure is governed by the Orders in Council of 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1898, and 30 January, 1899. The Board do not think it necessary to refer at any length to the duties under the Sanitary Acts, and Labourers Acts transferred to the District Council, as you are already familiar with the provisions of these Statutes, and it will be your duty to submit to the Council the ordinary business under these heads from the point at which it passed out of the hands of the Guardians at their last meeting....' 11 April 1899); circular stating that 'Whereas, under "The Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878", each poor law union, with the exception of such portion of its area as might be included in an urban sanitary district, as defined by the said Act, was constituted a rural sanitary district, and the guardians of the union were, as such, declared to be rural sanitary authority:.....
- AND WHEREAS, by the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898.... It is enacted that for every rural sanitary district there shall be a rural district council whose district shall be called a rural district;.... and that the business of the rural sanitary authority in each rural district shall be transferred to the district council of that district....' (May 1899).