
CLIFDEN
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
ARCHIVES COLLECTION

1899 – 1925

G01/7

A Descriptive List Prepared by Galway County Council Archives



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INTRODUCTION

This archive collection consists of an incomplete series of Clifden Rural District Council minute books, (1899-1925), one damp-press copy outgoing letter book (1917-1924), and an abstract of accounts (1915).

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 2 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.¹ 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.

¹ Department of Environment *Guidelines for Local Authority Archives Services*, 1996

Cartlann Chomhairle Contae na Gaillimhe '*...cuimhne dhoiciméadach chontae na Gaillimhe a shealbú, a chaomhnú agus a dhéanamh inrochtana*'
Galway County Council - Archives '*...to acquire, preserve and make accessible the documentary memory of county Galway*'



Clifden Rural District Council

The Rural District Council's meetings were generally held monthly and then only if the required quorum of Councillors was in attendance. The meetings were initially held in the Courthouse, however following a dispute in 1902 with the Local Government Board and Court authorities Galway County Council resolved '*...That we refuse to pay for the maintenance of the Court Houses of Galway, Clifden, and Oughterard on the ground that these Court Houses are at present used as rent offices...*'². As a result subsequent meetings were held in the board-room of the Clifden Workhouse. There were usually 41 elected and/or co-opted members of Council; from the early 1920's this number was reduced to 22. 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.

The Council's geographical area of responsibility included the electoral divisions of, Ballyinakill, Bencorr, Bunowen, Cleggan, Clifden, Cushkillery, Derrycunlagh, Derrylea, Doonloughan, Errislannon, Illion, Inishbofin, Kilcummin, Knockboy, Moyrus, Oughterard, Owengowla, Renvyle, Roundstone, Silerna, and Skannive.

This incomplete collection consists primarily of minute books recording the proceedings, with gaps, of Council meetings held between 1900 and 1925. The minutes record general and financial business proceedings, together with the proceedings of the Burial Board and Sanitary Authority, and proceedings conducted under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts. The minutes illustrate the range of issues dealt with by the Council and its concern 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...*'³.

² Galway County Council Minutes, GC01/1/1, p375

³ Tuam Herald, 22 April 1899



The Council's main priorities in its first ten years of business was the provision of water supply to Clifden town and other areas in the district, such as Carna, Roundstone and Letterfrack.

Under the Labourers Acts the Council was 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) and 1885 (48 & 49 Vict. c.77).

Under this legislation the Council 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 granted⁴.

From about 1907 it became involved in the provision of housing under these Acts. The Council appointed a Committee to select the plots of land to be acquired in March 1907 (G01/7/5). A letter from the Local Government Board '*approving of the plans, specification and estimates adopted by the Clifden Rural District Council for the erection of cottages under the Labourers Acts etc...*' was received in July 1908 (G01/7/6, p478). Progress was slow in every respect and ceased altogether for a time during World War I (G01/7/11, p514). By 1925 the Council had provided 12 labourers' cottages in the district. While in relative terms this was a mediocre performance, the scale of poverty in the district hindered a great building drive. While other wealthier Rural District Councils did provide a greater number of cottages, several did not do so on any great impressive scale. In particular, for instance, Galway Rural District Council provided only 40 cottages, 31 of which were provided, with the assistance of the Congested Districts Board, on the Aran Islands⁵.

The Council regularly expressed concern about the deplorable conditions of dwellings in the district, and petitioned the Congested Districts Board to address the matter, particularly in 1912 and 1913 when it passed the following resolutions :

'Resolved - That we the members of the Clifden Rural District Council strongly condemn the action of those landlords who at the Quarter Session processed their tenants and got decrees against them for rent which we think they are not entitled to on the grounds that through the disease in cattle (foot & mouth) which has broken out in Ireland its impossible for poor tenants to pay a fair rent notwithstanding that the majority of them pay rack rents. We hope the Congest Districts Board will turn their attention to the distress and poverty of Connemara and relieve them from the tyranny of landlordism.' (G01/7/9, p421) and

'That we strongly condemn the action of the Congested Districts Board in their carelessness by leaving Connemara in its present condition, now it is as bad as in the worst days of the old

⁴ 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).

⁵ Galway Rural District Council Collection, G01/9



landlordism, more shame to the Congested Districts Board having a vast amount of money at their disposal spent on officials that are not competent for their duty.

It is too bad after the Board being so long in existence that fever and other outbreaks of disease are more numerous than before they were created.' (G01/7/10, p25).

By the early 1920's living and sanitary conditions had not improved greatly. Dr Casey, Medical Superintendent Officer of Health had made various reports on the sanitary condition of the Rural District in 1919 which the Local Government Board summarised as follows '*...Houses in Clifden without water-closets – byreing of cattle in dwellings ; accumulation of rubbish and manure heaps in some of the passages and lanes in Clifden; a few houses unfit for human habitation ; keeping of pigs by some persons in Clifden without proper piggeries ; neglected condition of all the cemeteries except Ardbear ; shortage of milk ; urgent necessity of carrying out the provisions of the Dairy and Cowshed Order...*' (G01/7/13, p191).

The Council was also involved with the provision of local roads such as from Carna to Recess (G01/7/11, p82), and bridges such as at Kylemore (G01/7/14, p548). It was also heavily involved in the provision and maintenance of graveyards (G01/7/11).

Unlike many other Rural District Councils in the county the Clifden Council did not appear to be particularly political. It expressed and passed few opinions or resolutions relating to national political issues. While many other Rural District Councils in the county made some reference to the 1916 Easter Rising and the subsequent civil unrest, Clifden Rural District Council did not.

However, in June 1920 the Council formally recognised the authority of Dáil Eireann (G01/7/13, p182). Nevertheless it did continue to liase with the Local Government Board with the result that in September 1921 it received a strongly worded condemnation of its actions from Dail Eireann ; '*...that by the Decrees of Dáil Eireann dated 17th September 1920 all local bodies were directed to sever connection with the English Local Government Board but that the Clifden Rural District Council continued intercourse in violation of said Decree and as such have been guilty during the intervening months of treasonable and illegal communication, and as late as the 25th May last they gave directions for submission of their books to audit by English Officials. The Ministry considers the Council's request for sanction to this payment as audacious and the Council must act in this matter on their own responsibility and take whatever consequence which may follow as a result of their action'* (G01/7/13, p442).

Later the Council protested against the suggested abolition of Rural District Councils. In October 1923 it passed a resolution denouncing the proposal stating '*That this Council view with grave suspicion and call the attention of the public to the suggested abolition of Rural District Councils.*



That we believe this action on the part of the Government to be subversive of democratic government and not in the best interests of the Ratepayers, is tantamount to disfranchising them and giving them no control of their Finances.

That we believe those schemes of amalgamation and abolition which tend towards centralisation will leave vast areas of this large county in the hands of a few officials who are too distant and lack knowledge.

We further believe that those schemes of amalgamation and abolition of Rural District Councils (if carried out) are not in accordance with the wishes of the Ratepayers who are the individuals who pay and who consequently should have a voice in this matter – are a direct interference with the liberty of the citizen, are a subversion of Democratic Government and if submitted to the electoral would not receive their assent’ (G01/7, 14, p268a-b).

Nevertheless the Council was abolished in 1925. The administration of work under the Sanitary Acts, Labourers Acts, Burial Grounds Acts and so on was transferred to the Board of Health which established a Connemara Committee, comprised of the former Rural Districts of Clifden and Oughterard, to administer its business. It retained a permanent office in Clifden and appointed the Council’s former Clerk, F King, as Clerk to the Committee. (GC5/3, p172)⁶

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 Clifden district’s infrastructure, 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. G01/7/15) 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, GCCA G01/7/15).

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

The extracts from the various Minute books 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. 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, item and aspect mentioned in the minutes. However it is hoped that the extracts will clearly and fairly reflect the Rural District Council's work, development, and dedication to the district of Clifden and to the county of Galway.

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 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.

Patria McWalter
Archivist

⁶ Board of Health and Public Assistance archive collection, GC5/ at Galway County Council Archives

Cartlann Chomhairle Contae na Gaillimhe '*...cuimhne dhoiciméadach chontae na Gaillimhe a shealbhú, a chaomhnú agus a dhéanamh inrochtana*'
Galway County Council - Archives '*...to acquire, preserve and make accessible the documentary memory of county Galway*'



Related Collections

Galway County Council Archives (GCCA):

- Clifden Poor Law Union Collection, GPL3/
- Galway County Council Minutes, GC/1/
- Galway County Board of Health & Public Assistance, GC5/

National Archives of Ireland:

- Office of Public Works (NAI OPW)

Further Reference

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Dublin, 1987
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Robinson, Tim ed., Lilliput Press, 1995
- Ferriter, Diarmaid *'Lovers of Liberty?' Local government in 20th century Ireland*
National Archives of Ireland, Dublin 2001
- Kavangh, M. *Galway – Gaillimh A Bibliography of the City and County*
Galway County Council, Galway, 2000
- Lohan, Rena *Guide to the Archives of the Office of the Public Works*
The Stationery Office, Dublin, 1994
- Meghen, P J *The Development of Irish Local Government*
in Administration Vol.8., No.4, Winter 1960
- Morrissey, J. *On the Verge of Want*, Crannog Books, Dublin 2001
- Murray, P James *Galway : A Medico Social History*
Kenny's Bookshop & Art Galleries Ltd, Galway, c 1996
- Nicholls, George *History of the Poor Laws in Ireland* London, 1856
- O'Connor, Gabriel *A History of Galway County Council*
Galway County Council, 1999
- Roche, Desmond *Local Government in Ireland*
Institute of Public Administration, Dublin 1982
- Spellissy, Sean *History of Galway*, Celtic Bookshop, (c.1999)
- Villiers-Tuthill, K 'The Clifden Union' in *Galway Roots* 3 (1995)
- Villiers-Tuthill, K. *History of Clifden 1810-1860*, Dublin 1981
- Villiers-Tuthill, K. *Beyond the Twelve Bens. A history of Clifden and District 1860-1923*
Dublin, 1986





Appendices

Appendix A**1. List of some of the members of the Clifden Rural District Council[⊗]**

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

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Acton, M. | 27. Donagh, P.M. |
| 2. Alies, Cyril | 28. Faherty, John |
| 3. Burke, John | 29. Fitzgerald, Patrick |
| 4. Canavan, Thomas | 30. Fogarty, Patrick J. |
| 5. Cashel, Miss | 31. Gorham, Joseph (J.P.) |
| 6. Clancy, William, A. | 32. Gordan, Anthon |
| 7. Cloherty, Joseph | 33. Gordan, Mrs |
| 8. Cloherty, Thomas | 34. Grealish, Patrick |
| 9. Connelly, Edward | 35. Hanlon, John |
| 10. Connelly, Frank | 36. Hearvy, Richard |
| 11. Conneely, Michael | 37. Hynes, R.J. |
| 12. Connelly, J.J. (Chairman 1899 - | 38. Hynes, Patrick, J. |
| 13. Connolly, John, | 39. Joyce, Festus |
| 14. Connolly, Michael | 40. Joyce, James B. |
| 15. Conroy, Patrick | 41. Joyce, Michael |
| 16. Conroy, Patrick, J. | 42. Joyce, Myles |
| 17. Cooke, John F. | 43. Joyce, Tobias |
| 18. Cooke, Martin J. | 44. Kane, John |
| 19. Cottinghaam, Thomas | 45. Kearney, Richard |
| 20. Coyne, John | 46. Kelly, Bernard |
| 21. Coyne, Martin | 47. Kelly, M.J. |
| 22. Coyne, Patrick | 48. Kelly, Thomas |
| 23. D'arcy, John | 49. King, Bartly |
| 24. D'arcy, J.J. | 50. King, Edward (Chairman 1913 - |
| 25. Davis, John | 51. King, John J. |
| 26. Diamond, William J. | 52. King, M.J |

[⊗] Not to be taken as a definitive list



- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 53. King, Stephen | 74. McDonnell, Joseph (+1900) |
| 54. King, Thomas | 75. McDonnell, Harry (+1913) |
| 55. Kneafsey, M. | 76. Nee, Thomas |
| 56. Lacey, John | 77. O'Connor, Christopher S. |
| 57. Lavelle, Edward | 78. O'Donnell, P. |
| 58. Lavelle, Michael | 79. O'Flaherty, Patrick |
| 59. Lee, Bernard J. (+1915) | 80. O'Flaherty, Thomas |
| 60. Lee, James J. | 81. O'Hara, Patrick |
| 61. Lyden, Andrew | 82. O'Laghlin, John J. (J.P.) |
| 62. Lyden, James J. | 83. O'Malley, M.J. |
| 63. Lyden, Patrick | 84. O'Neil, Michael |
| 64. Lyden, William | 85. O'Toole, Peter |
| 65. Mannion, Michael | 86. Reidy, John |
| 66. Mongan, Martin | 87. Sweeney, James |
| 67. Moran, Martin A. | 88. Thomson, Capt. |
| 68. Morris, James T.A. (J.P.) | 89. Vallely, James J. |
| 69. Mullen, Michael | 90. Vaughan, Matrin |
| 70. Murphy, Stephen | 91. Wallace, Patrick J. |
| 71. McDonagh, James | 92. Walsh, Anthony |
| 72. McDonnell, Miss | 93. Walsh, John |
| 73. McDonnell, Patrick | |

Clerk of Union

King, Festus 1899 – 1925 (Remained on as Clerk to the Connemara Board of Health Public Assistance Committee formulated in September 1925 when the RDC was abolished)



Appendix B

2. Electoral Divisions

Ballyinakil
Bencorr
Bunowen
Cleggan
Clifden
Cushkillery
Derrycunlagh
Derrylea
Doonloughan
Errislannon
Illion
Inishbofin
Kilcummin
Knockboy
Moyrus
Oughterard
Owengowla
Renvyle
Roundstone
Silerna
Skannive



Appendix C

3. 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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CLIFDEN
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A. Minutes of Clifden Rural District Council, 1899 - 1925

Volumes of minutes of proceedings of Council meetings, generally held monthly. The minutes record attendance, details of correspondence received, generally from the Local Government Board and actions required thereafter, together with proceedings of Council business conducted under various legalisation relating to the administration of the district under a range of headings such as general, financial, sanitary authority 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.

Minutes are generally signed or initialed by the Chairman. Average size circa 420pp

1. 13 September 1899 – 27 February 1901 Includes partial index to main topics discussed. Matters and issues discussed included,
 - 'Resolved – That we the members of the Clifden Rural District Council place on record our heartfelt sympathy with the "Boers" of the Transval Republic in their fight against English aggression and wish them every success in their sturdy fight to maintain their independence (p29)'.
 - The Council '...respectively call the attention of the County Council to the great inconvenience and great irregularity and the great loss to owners of pigs for the want of fixed days for the sale of pigs in the town of Clifden. In the opinion of this Council the most suitable days would be the day before the existing fair days and if a fair day falls on Monday the pig fair be held on the previous Saturday, and we respectfully call upon the County Council to fix those days as pig fair by a Resolution of the Council as we understand the Council has power to do so' (p30).
 - Details of proposed extension to Ballyconnelly Burial Ground (p93, see also p141, p322).
 - Letter from the Local Government Board noting that they observe in Medical Officers' returns relative to 'Roundstone No. Dispensary District for quarter ended 31st ulto. an entry to the effect "the people continue to house pigs and cattle in their dwellings" and requesting the subject may receive the attention of the Clifden Rural District Council' (p1907-108).
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- Transcript of a letter from the Medical Officer (McDonnell, J.J) regarding the supply of water to Letterfrack wherein he states 'I have already twice reported that the supply of pure water was inadequate for the requirements of the villagers and I beg to state it is still inadequate; the few surface wells have been filled by the recent heavy rains but I do not consider the water fit for drinking purposes' (p123).
 - Details of suggested resolutions regarding the proposed purchase of the Waterford and Limerick Railway by the Great Southern & Western Railway or the Midland Great Western Railway Co. (p131-132).
 - 'Resolved that we hereby call upon the Government of this country to construct a harbour and pier at Dooghbeg near Clifden in order to facilitate the landing of mackerel from the numerous boats engaged in the fishing industry which are at present greatly inconvenienced for want of such accommodation, and we are fully aware that the few boats calling there now would [be] increased four fold if a suitable pier were erected; that as this harbour would be within a mile of Clifden Railway Station the fish would reach there in far better conditions than they do by the present arrangements of conveying them long distances by road' (p178a, see also p196).
 - Transcript of letter from the Congested Districts Board, Dublin to Council advising that the Board has 'agreed to grant one third of the cost of the waterworks at Roundstone provided their contribution does not exceed £200' (p188, see also p235, p251).
 - Transcript of letter from Medical Officer of Health, R C Gorham, to the Council stating 'With regard to the statement of Mr J.J. D'arcy concerning the sanitary condition of Clifden, I beg to state that since the year 1886 I have forwarded numerous reports complaining of the in-sanitary state of Clifden; I have frequently brought under the notice of your board the very in-sanitary condition of the road leading to Powladulla and the embankment leading from the bridge at the Police Barrack along the river, which is even at the present moment a receptacle for filth of all kinds – and nothing has been done to remedy this state of affairs...' (p283).
 - Proposed extension of numerous burial grounds in the district (p379).
 - Adopted resolution 'Requesting His Most Gracious Majesty King Edward VII to signalise his accession to the Throne by ordering the Release of all the Irish Political Prisoners confined in the Jails of the United Kingdom' (p435).
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2. 13 March 1901 - 20 August 1902 Includes partial index to main topics discussed.

Matters and issues discussed included

- Letter from the Local Government Board regarding the application, by the Council, for sanction a loan of £500 for the purpose of providing 'a water supply to Roundstone expressing sanction to the loan in question, repayment to be spread over a period of 30 years and the loan to be issued in two installment of £400 and £100...' (p71, see also p91, p171, 191, 211, 251, 271).
 - Includes submission signed and dated (4 May 1901) by the residents of Clifden town, to the Council agreeing to the 'Electric lighting scheme as adopted at public meeting held at Clifden Court House....said lighting to consist of five arc lights each representing 1,000 candle power placed in positions agreed upon. The lighting to be for eight months of the year from sunset until 12 o'clock at the cost of £50 per year from 15th August to 15th April in each year....' Includes stamp of Clifden Poor Law Union (p72. See also p111).
 - 'Resolved - That we as a public body in appreciation of the services of the R. I. (Royal Irish) Constabulary, a force for which we as Irishmen feel bound ask our Representative in Parliament, William O'Malley, Esq., when the subject of the increase of pay and pensions of the R.I.C. comes on for discussion in the House of Commons to support the measure in every possible way so as to secure justice for them and to put them on at least an equal footing with the London and other police forces in Great Britain whose pay far exceeds that of the Irish Policemen.....' (p92).
 - As a special meeting of Council called to discuss the area of charge for the cost of the Roundstone waterworks the following resolutions was passed 'That in incurring any expense for Sanitary purposes within the Rural District of Clifden the area of charge in all cases be either the Electoral Division or Dispensary District proposed to be benefited by such expense, and in the case of the proposed construction of waterworks in Roundstone, the area of charge be Roundstone No.1 Dispensary District' (p231, see also p 311, p351).
 - 'Resolved – That in view of the high rates of this Union and the poverty of the district, we cannot see our way at present to adopt the suggestion for a local hospital at Carna; but in view of the desirability of such a house in that remote district to meet emergencies such as has now arisen there (outbreak of Typhoid Fever), we respectfully suggest to the Congested Districts Board the advisability of applying a portion of their funds for the erection of a small hospital at Carna' (p471).
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- 'Resolved – That our best thanks be given to our Medical Officer Dr P C Gorham for the very efficient steps he took to confine the recent outbreak of Fever that occurred in the Industrial School and the Clifden Fever Hospital in these institutions, and the precautions he adopted to prevent the spread of the disease to the town of Clifden. We have the fullest confidence in Dr Gorham who is the Senior Medical Officer of this large Union and whose kindness, skill, and attention to the sick poor of the Union has been well known to us and we beg to place same on record' (p553-554).
3. 17 September 1902 – 6 July 1904 Matters and issues discussed included,
- 'That at this the first meeting since our eviction from the Clifden Court House wherein up to this business of the Council at Quarterly meetings were transacted, we desire to place on record our entire disapproval and dissatisfaction with the reaction of the Sheriff in closing the doors of the Court House against the representatives of the ratepayers who are obliged under penalties to discharge the duties cast upon them under the Local Government Act, and considering the great inconvenience caused to the general public, who are entitled to be present at such meetings, the Board Room wherein the meeting is now being held being barely roomy enough to accommodate the Members of the Council (consequently the public must be excluded) we request the County Council insofar as Clifden is concerned will make no provision in their estimate for the up keep of Clifden Court House till such time as direction is given to the Sheriff that the Court House is at our disposal for the transactions of public meetings' (p83).
 - 'Resolved – Having had before us a copy of the estimate of rates as furnished by the County Council of Galway required to provide for the requirements of the Rural District Council and Guardians for the year ending 31st March 1904 we hereby give notice that it is our intention to appeal in the event of a rate being made based on said estimate inasmuch as proper credits are not given and said estimate is entirely excessive and we direct our Clerk to give notice of this our intention to the Secretary of the County Council and instruct our Solicitor to lodge the necessary appeal' (p103, see also p124).
 - 'Resolved – That in view of His Majesty the King visiting the Congest Districts of the West on his visit and tour through Ireland, we the Clifden Rural District Council and Board of Guardians beg cordially to invite His Majesty to Clifden the
-

capital of Connemara and it is further resolved that an address of Welcome be presented to His Majesty by the Rural District Council and Board of Guardians as the representative of the people of this Congested District ...' (p202).

- 'Resolved – That we the members of the Clifden District Council request the Congested Districts Board to expend the sum granted under the Marine Works Bill for the improvement of the Harbour at Clifden; employment being much needed at present in the District to prevent the emigration of our young able-bodied people..' (p402).
- Transcript of letter from Michael Canavan, Sanitary Sub. Officer, to the Rural District Council stating 'I beg to state for the information of the District Council that the epidemic of Typhus Fever which existed in the Carna District has been completely eradicated since January last not a single case to be found there since that time. I disinfected their houses burned their beds, bed-clothing etc. In compliance with your letter I made a thorough inspection of the District and furnished several reports regarding existing nuisances to the Sanitary Officer and in many cases where the nuisances were not abated I prosecuted the parties in default' (p491).

4. 31 August 1904 – 20 June 1906 Matters and issues discussed included,

- In reply to queries raised by the Poor Law Reform Commission the Rural District Council advised that they 'consider from the decreased population and the economic condition of the County of Galway that it would be advisable to dissolve wholly some of the Unions therein by amalgamation, and we consider there a workhouse is dissolved that the hospital attached to such should also disappear if a saving of rates is to be effected' (p22).
 - 'Resolved that we request the Local Government Board will allow the approach roads to Burial Grounds and the walls around the Burial Grounds to be repaired under the Relief Works now about being opened in the Union and we request the Committee and Guardians will take these works into consideration when formulating schemes under this head' (p142).
 - Transcript of report from the County Surveyor's Office to the Rural District Council stating 'I regret to say that I am compelled on this occasion to have an unusual number of disallowance and strike offs. Many of your roads have been very much neglected, at this inspection your roads ought to have their best possible appearance from every particular point of view, they ought now to show that the
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metal put on during the winter has been fairly incorporated and they ought (for the most part) to show as if they could do for six months without any further metal, they are very different from this.....Hitherto there has been no custom of deferring payments on contracts for maintenance under the new order it will be made I understand imperative to either allow the payment or strike off the amount ; this rule will very much simplify our proceedings but road contractors will require to be extra careful to have their work in good order for each inspection.

The amount struck off on this occasion is serious but having in every case personally seen the work I cannot help but rule as I have done' (p183).

- 'Resolved – That as the parents appear of late to have got indifferent in the education of their children, and the children being free to act as they please, generally roam about in idleness in preference to attending school, and feeling that those very fine schools so well equipped and under such able managers should not be allowed to go into disuse, and that the children may not be allowed to grow up in ignorance. We desire to express an emphatic opinion that it would be in the best interests of this district that the Compulsory Clause of the Education Act be put into immediate force in this Clifden Union' (p323).
 - 'Resolved – That to promote agricultural industry and to encourage the breeding of a good quality of stock etc in the Clifden Union we consider that some inducement ought to be held out to the small farmers of this Union. With that end in view we are of opinion that it is highly desirable and would be eminently conducive to this purpose that an annual show be held in Clifden, and to insist in the advancement of the scheme we hereby earnestly request the Galway County Committee of Agriculture will be pleased to further this matter by taking such steps as may be necessary to procure a subsidy from the Agricultural Department. There can be no question but that Clifden is the most central and it being the terminus of the Railway is therefore the most convenience place for holding such a show for the Western portion of this county' (p343).
 - 'Resolved – That having hearing that the Congested Districts Board have refused to make any grant in aid towards the construction of a pump at Carna, we respectfully request the C.D. Board to reconsider their decision with regard to Carna and hope they will see their way to make a grant towards the improvement of the Carna water supply as they have already done in the case of the Roundstone water works especially as the people of the townland of Carna are tenants of the Congests Districts Board. (p351).
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5. 11 July 1906 – 10 April 1907 Matters and issues discussed included,
- 'Resolved – That in view of the great distress that prevails and the great need for employment that exists we again earnestly impress upon the Authorities the necessity of at once commencing the building of the Clifden Pier, a work so much needed and by successive governments so long and often promised.' (p142).
 - 'The Galway County Council notified the temporary appointment of Miss Perry as County Surveyor (p162).
 - Letter from the Local Government Board 'Transmitting draft deed of guarantee entered into between the Clifden Rural District Council to Council and the Postmaster-General in connection with the extension of the postal telegraph service to Inishboffin' (p222, see also p242).
 - 'The Council proceed in pursuance with Rule 10(i) of the Labourers (Ireland) Order, 1906 by taking into consideration each of the representations (111) received by Council up to the 1st February with the result that they were satisfied that 87 of the entire number were labourers and entitled to cottages and suitable plots of land. Of the remaining 24 two were withdrawn, ten refused, as not coming within the scope of the Acts and 12 were duplicate applications' (p234).
6. 24 April 1907 – 6 January 1909 Matters and issues discussed included,
- 'Resolved - That we the Clifden Rural District Council beg to request that the Local Government Board Inspector when holding the Sworn Inquiry into the Labourers Cottages Scheme promoted by the Council will give the note taking of the said Inquiry to Mr Jas. A Butler report of Galway who as attended these meetings from time to time and who is the nearest reporter there being no qualified one resident in Clifden. We think from his reports when present that he is a most competent and capable shorthand writer' (p126).
 - 'The Council proceeded in pursuance with Rule 10(1) of the Labourers (Ireland) Order 1906 by taking into consideration each of the representations (38) received by the Council from the 1st February to 30th September 1907 with the result that they were satisfied that 24 of the entire number were labourers and entitled to cottages and suitable plots of land' (p216).
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- 'Resolved – That the Letterfrack Fairs will in future be held on the streets of the village of Letterfrack for the following reasons namely: It is the most convenient place to hold same as buyers and sellers can get ample accommodation there viz.: Post Office, Hotel, Licensed premises stabling etc and the Letterfrack traders are entitled to the trade created by the holding of such fairs as there is no accommodation whatever to be had at the place it's proposed to hold the fair (at the place known as the Old Fair Green) the Council representing the people of the several Districts consider that Letterfrack for all purposes is the proper place to hold the fairs' (p266).
- Letter from the Local Government Board 'approving of the plans, specification and estimates adopted by the Clifden Rural District Council for the erection of cottages under the Labourers Acts etc ...' (p478).
- 'Resolved – That owing to the strictly peaceable condition of this Rural District and the extreme poverty of the great majority of the Ratepayers we consider it a great injustice that we should be called upon to pay any portion of the cost of extra police in other parts of the County when cost we say should be borne by the District necessitating the employment of extra police...' (p486).
- 'Resolved – That we the Clifden Rural District Council support the demand of the Gaelic League that the Irish language, both oral and written be made an essential subject for matriculation and up to the point where specialisation begins in the new Universities, and that proper provision be made for the teaching of Irish in all the Colleges of the Universities' (p532).

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8. 26 January 1910 – 23 August 1911 Matters and issues discussed included,

- 'That considering the Congested Condition of all the villages throughout this district of Connemara we express deep disappointment that Connemara has no representative on the Congested Districts Board. Therefore we beg to respectfully request the Chief Secretary for Ireland to give Connemara representation on that Board, and as one whom we are confident would satisfactorily represent the interest of this large district...' (p2).
- 'Resolved – We the Clifden Rural District Council approve of Her Excellency (Isobel) Lady Aberdeen (Vice Regal Lodge, Dublin ; President, Women's National Health Association of Ireland) in her exertions to procure from the Admiralty Beyleek Coast Guard station for a Sanatorium and trust she may be successful' (p211)

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- 'Resolved – That we, the Clifden Rural District Council, hereby declare that in our opinion the present unsatisfactory system of Irish Primary Education is mainly due to the parsimony of the British Treasury, which, while overtaxing this country to the extent of some millions per annual, has for a number of years, in defiance of justice and constitutional right, withheld from this county an average annual grant of nearly half a million sterling...' (p268).
 - 'Resolved – That in face of the many applications from the tenants of the several Estates in the Clifden Union for purchase, we have a view to express our surprise and disappointment at the delay and inaction of the Congested Districts Board in putting the clauses of the recent Land Act into operation all the more as in some instances landlords and tenants have agreed to leave the terms of the purchase to the Board' (p289).
 - Transcript of a letter from G. R Emerson, Engineer stating 'I have had the Labourers Cottage at Tully examined and find that there are two slates loose under the chimney shaft. I would suggest having the roof pointed in mastic as the site is a very exposed one. The window on the south east gable is letting in water between the cement sill and sill of frame. This should be stopped with putty and painted over.....' (p373).

9. 27 September 1911 – 9 April 1913 Matters and issues discussed included,

- 'Resolved that this Council having applied for a Certificate of Exception under schedule 1 Part II (b) at the National Insurance Act 1911, hereby undertake to guarantee as a condition of the contract of service with our employees that pensions shall be granted (subject to the various statutes applicable to the Superannuation of Poor Law District Officials) and that such pensions shall be computed at the rate of not less than one-fifteenth of the salary or wages or emoluments at the time of retirement for each completed year of service, with a minimum pension of £13 per annum and a maximum of two-thirds salary or wages and emoluments and further undertake to pay full wages during sickness for a period of not less than six months and to grant a sum equal to the "Capital" sum referent in Section 9 (4) of the National Insurance Act to any person leaving our service and becoming a member of an Approved Society' (p332 ; see also p 547).
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- 'Resolved – That we request the English Board of Agriculture to open the English ports as there was no case of foot and mouth disease amongst cattle or swine in Connemara or the West of Ireland, and as the pig fairs were now opening in this district the deadlock should be removed at once, otherwise the people will be unable to pay the landlord his rent or the shop-keeper for his goods' (p377).
 - 'Resolved - That we the members of the Clifden Rural District Council strongly condemn the action of those landlords who at the Quarter Session processed their tenants and got decrees against them for rent which we think they are not entitled to on the grounds that through the disease in cattle which has broken out in Ireland its impossible for poor tenants to pay a fair rent notwithstanding that the majority of them pay rack rents. We hope the Congest Districts Board will turn their attention to the distress and poverty of Connemara and relieve them from the tyranny of landlordism.' (p421)
 - Transcript of letter from P.C. Gorham, Medical Officer, to the Rural District Council stating 'With regard to the water supply in Ardbear the want of which I report to your Council many months ago recommending the main pipe ear the Forge be tapped and water supplied to the District. This it appears did not meet with your approval. In my next report I suggested as an alternative that a supply of pure water could bee procured from Betty White's well. This suggestion was not approved.
I don't know of any other place in the neighbourhood where wholesome water can be. I visited the houses in Ardbear on yesterday and the dwellers in the houses complained to me their difficulty in procuring pure water' (p541).
 - 'That we consider the present condition of the roads in this district as scandalous in the extreme, and highly discreditable to Surveyors, to contractors and all concerned' (p549).

10. 23 April 1913 – 25 November 1914 Matters and issues discussed included,

- 'That we strongly condemn the action of the Congested Districts Board in their carelessness by leaving Connemara in its present condition, now it is as bad as in the worst days of the old landlordism, more shame to the Congested Districts Board having a vast amount of money at their disposal spent on officials that are not competent for their duty.
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It is too bad after the Board being so long in existence that fever and other outbreaks of disease are more numerous than before they were created.’ (p25)

- ‘That an expert be employed to examine the Clifden Water Supply and that a Committee meeting be summoned ...as regards the condition upon which the proposed extension should [be] given...’(p145).
- The Council strongly condemned the action ‘and language of Resident Magistrate Hill from Clifden Bench ..., inasmuch as he has publicly given gratuitous and gross insult to the Council by stating that the members were “Ignorant and still worse they did not know it”. Such language is more in keeping with that of an innate street preacher than that of a man whose position is such as to discharge legal duties only on the Bench for which he was appointed and we now demand from him a public apology’ (p179-180).
- ‘That we direct such steps to be taken as may be necessary for the purpose of obtaining an Order from the Local Government Board investing us with the powers of an Urban Authority under the Public Health (Ireland) Acts and for the purpose of such other proceedings as may be necessary to enable us generate or manufacture electricity and supply for the same for the public lighting of the town of Clifden and the approaches thereto, as well as to sell and supply the same for the use of private consumers within the district’ (p233; see also p255).
- ‘That we condemn in the strongest manner the action of the would-be agent on the Eyre Estate in processing the poor people for one year’s rack rent. We in consequence of this just demand namely the sale of the Estate to the Congested Districts Board’ (p244).

11. 23 December 1914 – 25 October 1916 Matters and topics discussed included,

- That we the Clifden District Council and Board of Guardians call on Mr Moran, County Surveyor to give his immediate attention to the employment of all available hands on the Carna-Recess Road in carrying out the operations on a more liberal scale in connection with the stream-rolling...a job like the steam-rolling of the Carna-Recess Road will go a long way to add to the comforts of some hundreds of poor in the thickly populated districts along the road from Recess to Carna if properly and liberally handled...’ (p82).
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- Includes printed list of member and addresses (p161).
 - Letter from Sanitary Sub-Officer, Prendergast in which he states 'that he expended a sum of £6.10.0 in connection with the funeral arrangements of the Chief Officer of the *Lusitania* whose remains had been washed ashore at Inishbofin for coffin charges, carpenters fee, disinfectants and stimulants etc...'(p232).
 - '...beg to tender to the relations of the late Lieutenant Commander Morris of the "*Black Prince*" who lost his life in the recent naval engagement in the North Sea and to the relatives of Able Seaman Berry who lost his life in the same engagement an expression of our heartfelt sympathy in this sad bereavement ...' (p423).

12. 22 November 1916 – 9 July 1919 Matters and topics discussed included,

- 'That we place on record our appreciation of the action of the Government in seeking to have as much of the available grass lands in town and county throughout Ireland brought into cultivation during the coming spring so as to provide an adequate supply of food stuffs during the trying time that lie ahead as a result of the present great war crises...' (p55).
 - Report from Dr. Casey, Medical Superintendent Officer of Health for year ended 31 December 1916 advised that 'the large number of cases of consumption or tubercular disease the chief cause of which due to wretched housing, overcrowding, want of ventilation, damp earthen floors with swampy surroundings, byering of cattle in dwellings, and the absence of isolation of consumptives from the younger members of their own families. And again recommending the opening of the two top wards of the fever hospital for isolation of advanced and hopeless cases etc' (p191).
On foot of such report it was resolved 'That the scheme be approved of provided the Sanatorium Committee contribute ^s13/ per head weekly for each case treated, an estimate for carrying out the necessary repairs and alterations to be made by Mr Emerson (engineer) towards which the Council request the Sanatorium Committee will give a grant' (p191).
 - 'That all roads in the Rural District of Clifden bee declared suitable to be maintained by Direct Labour under charge of the County Surveyor. That the Surveyor be instructed to prepare a scheme to be considered at next Quarterly meeting' (p321).
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13. 27 August 1919 – 18 January 1922 Matters and topics discussed included,
- 'We have considered the need of the various heavy traffic roads in the Clifden Union and we have come to the conclusion that the sum of £1,340 available would be most advantageously expended in strengthening and improving those roads which have to accommodate the heavy and increasing fish traffic, we have accordingly allocated the money as follows....'(p83).
 - 'That this Council of the elected representatives of the Clifden Rural District at a duly convened meeting hereby acknowledge the authority of Dail Eireann as the duly elected Government of the Irish People, and undertake to give effect to all decrees duly promulgated by the said Dail Eireann in so far as same effects this Council...'(p182)
 - Letter from the Local Government Board to the Council 'Forwarding extracts from the report of Dr Casey, Medical Superintendent Officer of Health on the sanitary condition of the Rural District for the year 1919 viz:- Houses in Clifden without water-closets – byreing of cattle in dwellings ; accumulation of rubbish and manure heaps in some of the passages and lanes in Clifden; a few houses unfit for human habitation ; keeping of pigs by some persons in Clifden without proper piggeries ; neglected condition of all the cemeteries except Ardbear ; shortage of milk ; urgent necessity of carrying out the provisions of the Dairy and Cowshed Order; and regretting that up to the present most [of these] matters have not received attention' (p191).
 - Letter from the Local Government Board 'calling attention to the series of resolutions passed by certain Local Authorities in Ireland repudiating the authority of the Imperial Parliament and declaring this instruction to place very obstacle in the way of existing administration under Her Majesty's Government; (p242).
 - 'Read letter from the Secretary of the Galway County Councilstating that in consequence of the stoppage of the Government Grants in aid of local taxation the County Council are unable to pay in full the Demands of the Boards of Guardian and Rural District Councils for the year ended March 1921...(p302).
 - 'Received from the Department of Dail Eireann referring to the Minutes of the Council on the 24th ultimo when it was decided to pay a fee of £6.6.0 claimed by the english Local Government Board for audit expenses subject to the sanction of Dail Eireann – pointing out that by the Decrees of Dail Eireann dated 17th September 1920 all local bodies were directed to sever connection
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with the English Local Government Board but that the Clifden Rural District Council continued intercourse in violation of said Decree and as such have been guilty during the intervening months of treasonable and illegal communication, and as late as the 25th May last they gave directions for submission of their books to audit by English Officials. The Ministry considers the Council's request for sanction to this payment is audacious and the Council must act in this matter on their own responsibility and take whatever consequence which may follow as a result of their action' (p442).

- Includes letter from J Casey, Medical Officer of Health advising the Council of a flu epidemic stating that 'the decease may possibly become as dangerous as it was in 1918.

The poorer families as usual have been the greatest sufferers and many cases of great hardship have been caused by want of nursing, nourishment, and isolation which in the past was obtained at the Union Hospital.

I have attended over two hundred poor persons at their own homes during the past month – none of whom brought me a ticket from the Relieving Officer – and I presume the functions of Guardians in this respect has ceased

Some of the inmates of the workhouse are still wandering about begging and obtaining shelter in poor tenement houses – where they must very soon become verminous and no amount of home assistance will make those people clean and comfortable as they have been in the past...'(p517)

14. (8 October 1921 - 16 November 1921) Includes printed copy of various Galway
22 February 1922 - 15 April 1925 County Council minutes and the County
Hospital, and Home Assistance

Committee, together with printed material relating to amalgamation and abolition of Poor Law Unions, and the Scheme for the Administration of Home Assistance.

Matters and topics discussed include,

- Includes printed copy of minutes of the Executive Committee for the Administration of Poor Relief Scheme (p5).
 - 'That we call upon the Midland Great Western Railway Company to give Clifden better train service. That we strongly protest against the proposed change in the time of arrival of the mail train as we consider the mail train is already too late...'(p157).
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- Transcript of letter from the Clerk, Festus King advising that for the second time his 'office was raided and looted, stationery and office requisites carried away, vouchers and documents scattered and strewn about, I cannot say what are missing but two small bunches of keys have disappeared'. King's letter proceeds to inform that Council of his question of the resident former workhouse porter who said he heard "'Fairies"' overhead the night previous', and that several weeks later the porter and his family 'left the workhouse denuding the apartments occupied by them of all furniture bedding and utensils the property of the late Board of Guardians which they have taken away with them to Bofin Island. With the exception of whatever furniture there is in the Board Room and office there is not a stick of furniture bedding clothing or utensil in the Workhouse, at present, everything looted – doors and window frames carried away. The slates and roofing will be the next thing to disappear' (p181).
 - 'That this Council view with grave suspicion and call the attention of the public to the suggested abolition of Rural District Councils.
That we believe this action on the part of the Government to be subversive of democratic government and not in the best interests of the Ratepayers, is tantamount to disfranchising them and giving them no control of their Finances. That we believe those schemes of amalgamation and abolition which tend towards centralisation will leave vast areas of this large county in the hands of a few officials who are too distant and lack knowledge.
We further believe that those schemes of amalgamation and abolition of Rural District Councils (if carried out) are not in accordance with the wishes of the Ratepayers who are the individuals who pay and who consequently should have a voice in this matter – are a direct interference with the liberty of the citizen, are a subversion of Democratic Government and if submitted to the electoral would not receive their assent. (p268a-b)
 - 'Resolved – This Council is of unanimous opinion that that attitude of the Government towards the poor people in the Clifden Union based on false prosperity reports in respect of seed potatoes is extremely unfair.
Unless the Government heeds the information supplied to them by the Clergy and representatives of the people it is feared that the people, clergy and representatives will look on the Government as a body not having the interests of the people at heart.
Starvation in this Union is inevitable and we warn the Government that the quilt
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of such will be laid on their apathy to the appeals of the peoples representatives' (p377).

- Includes report from the County Surveyor, M.J. Kennedy to the Council advising that 'Substantial repair work was done on all district roads during the quarter ended December 31st 1924, and I have had to defer money in very few cases where the amount of sheeting was insufficient... All damaged bridges in your district are now restored and, in addition, a new bridge has been built at Kylemore' (p548).
- 'That we beg to draw the attention of the Minister of Irish Land Commission to the flooding of the lands at Ballyconnelly on the O'Flaherty Estate – about 100 acres of the best land in the district is made useless which the tenants got as extensions to their holdings as good land, its now important something should be done at once' (p574).

15. 7 May 1925 – 14 October 1925 Matters and topics discussed included,

- 'We earnestly request the Local Government Department to send their Engineer at once to inspect the graveyards of the Union and not to wait for the pipeline of the waterworks to be laid as we are anxious to have the work on the graveyard started before the District Council passes out of existence. No one can know as well as we do the necessity there is to enlarge many of the graveyards and the very great necessity there is for employment the fencing and road making would give' (27 May 1925).

B. Outgoing Letter Book, 1917 - 1924

16. 26 January 1917 – 2 April 1924 Damp press copy outgoing letter book of letters generally from the Clerk to Council, Festus King on behalf of the Rural District Council to various institutions and individuals relating to Council business, such as to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction ; Local Government Board ; Galway County Council ; Inspector of Taxes ; Relieving Officers, relating to various issues and business such as the supply of seed, Clifden waterworks, electric lighting, registers of births and deaths, compilation of voters list; home assistance
- Also includes letters from the Clerk on behalf of the Clifden Poor Law Union

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C. Abstract of Accounts, 1915

- 17 29 July 1915 Printed *Abstract of Accounts and Clerk's Half-Yearly Statements* for year ended 31 March, 1915, together with Auditor's report.