

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Galway County Council

Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Átha an Rí Órán Mór

Municipal District of Athenry Oranmore.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Athenry Oranmore held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, on Monday 19th February, 2019.

I LATHAIR:

BAILL: Cllr. F. Kearney (Chathaoirleach)
Cllr. G. Cronnelly
Cllr. J. Cuddy
Cllr. M. Noone
Cllr. J. Charity
Cllr. M. Kinane

APOLOGIES: Cllr. P. Feeney

OIFIGIGH: Mr. M. Owens, A/Director of Services,
Mr. J. Cullen, Director of Services,
Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer,
Ms. P. Higgins, Senior Executive Engineer,
Mr. P. Gavin, Executive Engineer,
Ms. E. Curran, Administrative Officer,
Ms. G. Healy, A/Administrative Officer,
Ms. G. Cooley, Asst. Staff Officer,

Cllr. Kearney, Cathaoirleach of Athenry Oranmore Municipal District Council, welcomed all present at the Meeting.

Item No. 1: To confirm Minutes of the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District Meeting held on 14th January, 2019

AOMD 1855

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Noone and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cronnelly, the Minutes of the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District Meeting held on 14th January 2019, were **AGREED**.

The Cathaoirleach said that Mr. P. Carroll, Administrative Officer Environment Section, had intended to be present at the Meeting to update the Members in relation to Burial Grounds, however he sent his apologies as he was not available to attend. The Cathaoirleach said that

Mr. Carroll would attend a forthcoming Meeting of the Municipal District Council to update the Members in relation to Burial Grounds.

Item No. 2: To Consider and Approve the Municipal District Schedule of Works 2019, including the Roads Programme 2019. **AOMD 1856**

Mr. Cullen, Director of Services, Infrastructure & Operations, presented the Road Works Programme 2019 outlining the grant allocations, national and non-national road allocations and roadworks to be carried out using Galway County Councils own resources. He said there was an increase in funding over the 2018 allocations.

Mr. Mitchell, Senior Engineer, presented the Schedule of Works 2019 for the Municipal District stating that it was no longer possible to transfer monies to discretionary funding.

He said that extra funding will be given to roads reclassified as a result of the M17/M18 Motorway construction.

Mr. Mitchell thanked the Staff in the Roads Department and the Municipal District Office for assisting with the preparation of the 2019 Roads Programme.

Mr. Gavin, Area Engineer, outlined the funding under the various grants for the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District. He said that the issues taken into consideration when deciding what roads to include in the Roads Programme were dependent on the conditions of the roads during the past year.

The Cathaoirleach thanked the staff for their work on the maintenance of the roads, within the resources available.

Cllr. Kinane thanked the roads staff for their work and for the fair distribution of funding to all areas of the Municipal District in the Roads Programme. She expressed her disappointment that 10% of any additional funding agreed to be allocated to the area within 25km of Galway City should be reopened by Members of other Municipal Districts.

Cllr. Charity welcomed the Roads Programme 2019 stating that a good spread of funding to cover all areas of the Municipal District had been achieved, within the available allocation. He expressed the view that there remains a problem of inadequate funding in comparison with the other Municipal Districts which receive 2.8% more funding with less population than Athenry Oranmore. In agreement with Cllr. Kinane, Cllr Charity said he was also disappointed to see the motion of revising the decision to provide extra funding for the Municipal District being raised by other Municipal District Councils. He queried what the revision of boundaries would mean for funding for the Municipal District.

Cllr. Charity welcomed the Baranna project but questioned the quality of surface dressing works carried out in 2018 particularly on the Mace, Corrandulla Road.

Cllr. Cuddy complimented the Local Engineering and Roads staff in facilitating urgent road works in the Municipal District, but expressed the view that the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District was short-changed again as the funding is allocated on the basis of length of road, rather than the volume of traffic. He said that commuters from the north, south and east of the County are using rat-runs in the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District in order to avoid traffic congestion on the main roads leading into the City and these rat-runs are now in a state of disrepair because the funding made available is only covering surface dressing as a temporary means of keeping the roads passable and these roads are not equipped to deal with the volume of traffic. He said the funding allocated was only a drop in the ocean in relation to the funding required.

Cllr. Cuddy queried when the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) would start and how many applications were received for 2019. He expressed the view that roads improved under the LIS should be taken in charge.

Cllr. Cuddy expressed his dissatisfaction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) as he felt they were not listening to the local community in Claregalway when preparing the traffic calming plan for the village. He said TII is not willing to put pedestrian lights at the Claregalway Hotel location.

Cllr. Cronnelly welcomed the spread of planned works for the Municipal District and asked why there was no Specific Improvement Grant funding available for Athenry as works at Ruanmore could be included under this funding. Cllr. Cronnelly also added that an allocation of €15,000 for the Athenry Relief Road was inadequate as the Presentation College was moving to its new location the following week and the Arrabaun Co-op was opening its new building outside the town in the upcoming months. Cllr. Cronnelly also asked what proposals were in place for the new locations coming into the Municipal District following the Local Elections in May 2019. He also questioned the reduction in funding for speed limits in housing estates.

Cllr. Noone thanked the Council staff and, in particular, Mr. Gavin, Area Engineer, for preparing the Roads Programme. He said that the Council is just repairing roads that must be repaired and there is no investment in the long-term future of local roads.

Mr. Mitchell replied to the various queries put forward by the Members as follows:

The distribution of funding is a matter for the Members to approve, and he said he would also like to see more funding become available.

The 2019 Roads Programme was drawn up based on the current Municipal District areas, however an analysis is being carried out at present of the changes to be introduced following the Local Elections in May.

In reply to Cllr. Charity, he said that the 3-year Plans were indicative plans only and the costings on same are only estimates. He said the Council is aware of the surface dressing problems in Mace and this will be addressed by the contractors.

In reply to Cllr. Cuddy, he said there are 200 LIS applications and that the 2018 projects are required to be completed before the end of March 2019, before any further funding becomes available from the Department.

The traffic calming at Claregalway is a matter for the TII and Mr. Cullen added that this matter will shortly be going to a Part 8 Planning Process where the public can have their say, before coming before the Council for a vote. The TII has to maintain certain national standards when preparing the traffic calming project, he said.

Mr. Mitchell said that the Specific Improvement Works funding was for specific projects some of which were ongoing and based on certain safety aspects.

In reply to Cllr. Cronnelly, Mr. Mitchell said that the speed limits funding reduction was for housing estates only and more funding would be made available for the Athenry Relief Road.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cronnelly and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Noone, the Municipal District Schedule of Works 2019, including the Roads Programme 2019, were **APPROVED**.

Item No. 3: Notice of Motion

AOMD 1857

Cllr. Charity referred to the Notice of Motion which he had submitted, as follows:

"Having regard to the numerous collisions with horses sustained by motorists along the N84 Headford Rd over the last year and the urgent need for protective measures to be put in place for the safety and wellbeing of motorists and the prevention of serious injury or death, I propose that funding be allocated under the 2019 roads budget for Athenry-Oranmore to provide for the immediate erection of fencing along the public curtilage of the N84 road at and in the vicinity of Carrowbrowne as an exceptional and once off measure. I further propose that while this funding should be allocated immediately by this Council and fencing erected as a matter of urgency, reimbursement for same or a contribution to such outlay should be sought from Galway City Council, the TII and Department of Agriculture for any costs associated therewith."

The following reply was given:

"Funding for fencing works along the N84 at Carrowbrowne should not be allocated from the 2019 Roads Budget as it is a National Road".

Cllr. Charity expressed his disappointment regarding the reply given to his notice of motion, in light of the recent accidents which had taken place on the Headford Road due to wandering horses. He expressed the view that the various agencies are passing the book in relation to this problem.

He said that the people involved in accidents on this stretch of road wish that a deputation be received by Council staff. He said that fencing is required at Carrowbrowne to avoid any further incidents which could lead to a fatality. He said that a multi-agency approach is needed in this regard and a vote should be taken by the Councillors on this issue.

Cllr. Kinane agreed with Cllr. Charity and acknowledged the work carried out by Mr. Owens in dealing with a similar situation in her area. She said that local people in Clarinbridge were very concerned regarding wandering horses on the road.

Cllr. Noone said the problem of wandering horses was ongoing for years, but the Department of Agriculture, who should be dealing with the problem, is ignoring the situation and not helping. He acknowledged Mr. Owens work in this regard and he said he is now in agreement that a fence should be erected at Carrowbrowne as the problem of loose horses has gone beyond the bounds of the local authority to deal with on its own.

Mr. Mitchell said he has huge sympathies with all involved, and understands the situation, but he said the local authority could not undertake to fence 5 km both sides of the Curragh line. He said the Council had been doing great work in this regard, but TII would need to provide funding if a fence were to be erected.

In reply to Cllr. Charity who said that his proposal was that 200 – 300 metres be fenced, Mr. Mitchell said that the whole area along that route was wide open and the Council could not fence private land or commonage.

Mr. Cullen acknowledged that there are safety concerns and serious issues at this location which are unique, but the Council could not commit to this Motion as it would set a precedent.

Mr. Owens said that at the January Meeting he had given a commitment that staff would engage in discussions with the landowners at Carrowbrowne and he said these discussions had taken place, but the landowners in question said the horses did not belong to them and were on their property without their permission. He said there is no obligation on the landowners to fence this land when the horses are not in their ownership. The land at the halting site is in ownership of Galway City Council, whose representatives inspected the halting site in conjunction with staff from Galway County Council. He said he had received written commitment from the City Council to look at the options for how best to secure the lands in question.

He said responsibility stretches across a number of different agencies and Meetings have taken place with members of various agencies involved, including the Department of Agriculture, Galway City Council and Galway County Council. He said the primary responsibility lies with the owners of the horses and the various agencies agree that the owners of the horses are not meeting their responsibilities.

Cllr. Charity said staff from the Department of Agriculture had been invited to attend today's Meeting but had declined and instead had invited the Members to attend a meeting in the Department of Agriculture Head Quarters in Renmore.

It was **AGREED** following discussion, that the Meetings Administrator would liaise with the Department of Agriculture to arrange a date and time to meet with the Department staff at their offices in Renmore, preferably the following week. Cllr. Charity suggested that the

member of the public who contacted the Department of Agriculture regarding horses left to die be invited to attend the Meeting with the Department and this was **AGREED**.

Cllr. Cuddy referred to Cllr. Charity's Notice of Motion and said he would second the Motion.

Mr. Owens asked the Members if they wished to clarify the Motion regarding the length of road proposed for fencing and if they were satisfied with the inclusion of the sentence "*funding be allocated under the 2019 roads budget for Athenry Oranmore*".

Cllr. Charity said he would amend the Motion to include the words "approximately 300m".

The Cathaoirleach read out the amended Motion as follows:

"Having regard to the numerous collisions with horses sustained by motorists along the N84 Headford Rd over the last year and the urgent need for protective measures to be put in place for the safety and wellbeing of motorists and the prevention of serious injury or death, I propose that funding be allocated under the 2019 roads budget for Athenry-Oranmore to provide for the immediate erection of fencing along the public curtilage of the N84 road at and in the vicinity of Carrowbrowne, for approximately 300m, as an exceptional and once off measure. I further propose that while this funding should be allocated immediately by this Council and fencing erected as a matter of urgency, reimbursement for same or a contribution to such outlay should be sought from Galway City Council, the TII and Department of Agriculture for any costs associated therewith."

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Charity and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cuddy, the Members **AGREED** the Motion.

Item No. 4. Municipal District Director's Business & Correspondence

AOMD 1858

Mr. Owens informed the Members that Galway County Council was successful in its application under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund for the Bia Innovator project at the Teagasc Campus, Athenry together with development works in Athenry town. He said this project will provide a significant regeneration of Athenry and will also complete the existing Bia Innovator Campus and will develop the town into a major food and tourism centre. There will also be works to develop Athenry as a local retail destination, including public realm improvements, which will positively impact shop fronts and the Athenry Town Park. He said the amount allocated for this project, in the sum of €3,554,000, represents a very significant and welcome investment in Athenry and the wider area.

Cllr. Cronnelly welcomed this funding announcement for Athenry and he hoped that signage indicating that Athenry is a Heritage Town will be erected at the exit from the Motorway in the near future.

The following items of correspondence were circulated to the Members:

- Email dated 23rd January 2019 from the Department of Agriculture

- Letter dated 1st February 2019 from Deputy John Paul Phelan, Minister for Local Government and Electoral Reform
- Letter dated 13th February 2019 from Deputy Seán Kyne, Minister of State for Gaeilge, Gaeltacht and the Islands.

Mr. Owens outlined the email received from the Department of Agriculture, which had already been discussed under the Notice of Motion Item submitted by Cllr. Charity

Mr. Owens outlined the contents of the letter received from Minister Seán Kyne which indicated that, having regard to legislation, it is difficult to accommodate the Members request that the Languages Act be amended so that the directional signs for Gaeltacht Placenames, located outside the Gaeltacht, be bilingual. Minister Kyne also indicated that he would consider the Members correspondence in the context of the ongoing examination of the Official Languages Act 2003.

Cllr. Cuddy said that businesses in Baile Chlair (Claregalway) are losing out due to the signage for the village being in Irish coming off the Motorway resulting in people getting lost. He said with all due respect to Minister Kyne, he should be aware of the impact of the signage and he expressed the view that the Languages Act can be amended.

Cllr Noone suggested erecting a separate sign in English as the sign coming off the Motorway is not located in a Gaeltacht area, even though Baile Chláir (Claregalway) is in the Gaeltacht.

However, Mr. Cullen said he did not interpret the reply from the Minister in the same way as Cllr. Noone and felt that Council official signs for locations in the Gaeltacht are required to be in Irish regardless of the location of the sign.

The Cathaoirleach said the absence of a sign for Baile Chláir (Claregalway) in English coming off the Motorway is causing serious problems to members of the public and must be addressed.

Mr. Owens outlined the letter received from Minister Phelan which indicated that the Minister is satisfied that the current funding model is enabling local authorities to meet an appropriate level of service provision across the State, from the most rural and sparsely populated to the large urban centres.

Cllr. Cuddy said it is obvious from Minister Phelan's letter that he does not understand the extent of the problem of under-funding for the Municipal District and Cllr. Cronnelly said the Minister is out of touch with rural areas.

Item No. 5 Cathaoirleach's Business

AOMD 1859

Cllr. Kinane made the following **PROPOSAL** "that the Athenry Oranmore MD seek funding from the OPW (under cost for the Dunkellin Bridge unplanned works) in order to support the resurfacing of the Stradbally East Road that has been damaged due to extreme volumes of traffic that use the road as a detour due to road closures caused by the collapse of a section of the Dunkellin Bridge". This proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cuddy, and **AGREED**.

Cllr. Kinane made the following **PROPOSAL** *“that the Athenry Oranmore MD make an immediate application to the ESB to seek that a public electric car charger port be installed in Clarinbridge, Co. Galway”*. This proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cronnelly, and **AGREED**.

Cllr. Kinane made the following **PROPOSAL** *“that the Athenry Oranmore MD seek for an invitation be issued to Alliance for Insurance Reform (namely Mr. Peter Boland in his capacity as a director of Alliance for Insurance Reform) in order for him to make a presentation to the Councillors of Athenry Oranmore MD. Insurance Reform is extremely important matter for civic and business organisations in the Athenry Oranmore MD. I believe a presentation/Q&A, highlighting the negative impact of persistently high premiums and calling for real action to tackle the issue would be very beneficial for all”*. This proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kearney.

A discussion took place regarding this proposal and it was agreed that a letter be issued to Alliance for Insurance Reform from the Municipal District Council, inviting them to make a submission in relation to the aims of their group so that the Members could be briefed before they are invited in to a Meeting of the Municipal District Council.

Criochnaigh an Cruinniu Ansin

APPROVED BY: Frank Keane

DATE: 11th March 2019