

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara Municipal District of Conamara

Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held at the Petersburg Outdoor Center, Clonbur, County Galway on the 26th April 2016 @ 2.00 p.m

ILATHAIR:

Baill:

Cllrs. E. Mannion Cathaoirleach,
S. Walsh, S. Ó Tuairisg, N. Thomas,
S. Ó Cualáin, T Ó Cuarraoin, T. Healy,

Oifigigh:

L.Gavin , Director of Services
J. Leahy, Senior Engineer Roads
P. Breathnach, S.E.E Conamara
J. Coyle, Area Engineer, S. Conamara
T. J Redmond Area Engineer, N. Conamara
S. Groarke, Meetings Administrator
K. Lydon, Technician Grade 1
C. Joyce, Executive Engineer.

Apologies:

M. Mullarkey, Head of Finance.
Cllr. T. Welby
Cllr. N. Byrne

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on the 12-2-2016

CMD 16010

On the proposal of Cllr. S. O'Tuairisg and seconded by Cllr. N. Thomas, the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 12th February 2016 were adopted.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

CMD 16011

Cllr. E. Mannion requested a correction to the last sentence of the first paragraph of page 5 of the Minutes with the omission of the word "School ". The sentence should read "reports that Citylink were withdrawing Bus services due to the condition of the roads. "

3. Severe Weather Allocation 2016 –Schedule of Works.

CMD 16012

J. Leahy presented Schedule of Works for North and South Conamara amounting to €517,835 and associated maps outlining the proposed repairs to 21 Regional and Local roads in Conamara which had sustained damage as a result of the stormy weather between November

2015 and January 2016. The damage was due mainly to flooding, blockage of culverts, scour damage and part of roads being washed away. He advised that the Council had made an initial claim for storm damage to the Department of Transport which amounted to €8.5million and has received €6 million. He advised that most of the storm damage affected the southern part of the County from Loughrea to Gort. The initial allocation received for Conamara was €500,000. He stated that another application was been prepared and would be sent to the Department by the end of April. The Council will prepare another Schedule of Works for Conamara and a Schedule of Bridge repairs at a later date. The works associated with the claims for storm damage would form part of the 2016 Roads Program which will have to be completed by October and the funding drawn down by November. Cllr. Mannion stated that a lot of storm damage was caused to the N59 between Clifden and Cleggan and enquired about funding for the repairs. J. Leahy advised that the Council made a separate application to T.I.I (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) in regard to the N59 –but had not received a response to date. He stated that the Council was also awaiting a response from the Department of the Environment in regard to the claim for storm damage sent in November 2015. Cllr. Thomas enquired as to whether the Homefarm road would be repaired. J. Leahy advised that claims for damage to the Cloonliffe (Homefarm) and Eanach roads would be included in the second application. Comh. O’Tuairisg enquired about funding for storm damage to the Aran Islands including Inis Meain. He also referred to the road adjacent to Siop an Phobail and Coláiste Lurgan, Inverin. L. Gavin advised that most of the damage to the Aran Islands comes under the heading of Coastal damage and this is a matter for the OPW. He stated that Uinsinn Finn, S.E.E was dealing with non-coastal minor works including drainage and these should be referred to him. Comh. O’Cualáin referred to the flood damage to the Gowla and Cashel roads and stated that funding was required for the damage to the bridge at Lettermullen Camus. P. Breathnach advised that this was included in the application and that there was similar damage to other bridges in Conamara which would need to be surveyed. Comh. O’Cualáin referred to the clearing of streams vital to alleviate flooding and enquired as to whether Uinsinn Finn or the OPW was the point of contact. P. Breathnach advised him to contact Uinsinn Finn. L. Gavin requested the Councillors to notify the engineers of any concerns they have as regards bridges in Conamara. Comh. O Tuairisg referred to streams that were blocked by fallen tree branches and L. Gavin advised that this was a matter for the landowner if located on private property. Cllr. Healy complimented the Area Engineer on the work done in Streamstown and Inisnee. Cllr. Mannion thanked J. Leahy for the presentation and she anticipated that further funding would accrue to the Council as a result of the new application.

4. Letterfrack Village Road Safety

CMD 16013

L. Gavin advised that he contacted TII in regard to a road safety scheme for Letterfrack. It requested the Council to provide a feasibility report in regard to this- outlining the need for the scheme and the safety crossing and criteria associated with traffic and pedestrian numbers. He advised that T.J Redmond would undertake a traffic count within the next 2 weeks. This will be included in the feasibility report. He stated that ducting was installed when the Council previously undertook works on the road. Comh. O’Tuairisg advised that the community had sought the implementation of safety measures for years and Cllr. Healy advised that the parents of the primary school children had raised this during the election. Cllr. Mannion also requested L. Gavin to assess the situation as regards improving the footpaths in Letterfrack.

Comh. O’Tuairish advised that a delegation from Inis Meáin had met Joe McHugh the Minister for the Gaeltacht in regard to the completion of the Harbour at Inis Meáin. There was also a meeting arranged by Derek Nolan TD on the 20-1-2016 with Brendan Howlin, Minister for Public Expenditure who it appears was not prepared to sanction funding for An Caladh Mhóir as it did not have planning permission and would contact the Council in regard to this. L. Gavin advised that decisions regarding Piers and Harbours were traditionally a matter for the Minister for the Gaeltacht and there is now an element of confusion as regards responsibility. He stated that Inis Meáin and Inishere harbours were co-joined in 2006/2007 but in the Capital Program announced by the Government in 2015 funding of €8 million was announced for the harbour at Inishere –but there was no mention of the harbour at Inis Meáin and the Council has not received any contact from any Government Department in regard to this. Comh. O’Tuairisg enquired if there was any issues to be sorted in regard to the pier at Inishere and was advised by L. Gavin the planning permission has been in place for years but the level of local funding from the Council has to be clarified. He stated that funding for the pier at Inishere appears to be part of the Dept of the Environment’s Capital Program. In regard to the harbour at Inis Meáin he advised that the Council requires clarification from the Department of the Environment as to the status of the scheme. Comh. O’Tuairish suggested that a motion passed at the next Council meeting may be necessary.

It was proposed by Comh. O’Tuairisg, seconded by Comh. O’Curraoin and agreed “ that the Municipal District of Conamara request Galway County Council to pass a motion requesting the Minister of the Environment to expedite the development of Phase 3 of the Caladh Mór Harbour on Inis Meáin “

6. Update on the Wild Atlantic Way and the Derrygimlagh Project

The presentation on the Wild Atlantic Way was given by Cathal Joyce E.E He stated that the Wild Atlantic Way is a major tourism initiative for the western seaboard. It is in essence a long-distance coastal touring route from Donegal to West Cork (Kinsale) with a total length of up to 2,500km showcasing Ireland’s coastline and traditional culture and heritage. It has been developed by Fáilte Ireland as an “experience brand” to present the West Coast of Ireland as a tourism product of scale and singularity to gain cut through in a very cluttered international marketplace and simultaneously to give the tourism industry in the West of Ireland an overarching “umbrella” brand under which to mobilise and develop compelling visitor experiences.

The Programme of works with photo-friendly marker points and interpretation panels will improve visitor experiences all along the route of the WAW Galway, with the intention of bringing each site in Galway to life and encouraging visitor engagement, it is planned to have photo-friendly marker points and interpretation panels - explaining the significance of each point - installed at each of the Wild Atlantic Way’s Discovery Points as out lined below.

The location of Discovery Points in Co. Galway will include the following:

- Killary Harbour
- Islands View
- Cleggan Harbour
- Inishbofin

- Omey Island
- Sky Road
- Derrigimlagh
- Bunowen Bay
- Port na Feadóige
- Glinsk
- Teach an Phiarsaigh
- Droichead Charraig an Logáin
- Trá an Dóilín
- Calafort Ros an Mhíl
- Inis Oírr seaport
- Inis Oírr airport
- Inis Meáin seaport
- Inis Meáin airport
- Inis Mór seaport
- Inis Mór airport
- Céibh Bhaile na hAbhann
- Aerfort Réigiúnach Chonamara
- Seanchéibh an Spidéil
- Trá na gCeann
- Salthill Promenade
- Rinville Park
- Traught Beach

Fáilte Ireland has been working with Galway County Council, to complete this crucial upgrade of the Wild Atlantic Way's designated Discovery Points. This work involved the installation of Photo Points at all sites which are designed to literally 'frame' the photographs taken by visitors at beauty spots and scenic views along the route. The work will also involve the erection of sturdy weather-proof interpretation panels at each point to tell the relevant stories for each particular area and Fáilte Ireland & Galway County Council Co has worked with a number of communities along the route to bring these stories to life. The interpretation panel will also include information advising visitors of other things to do and see in the area and will also include an orientation map of the immediate surrounding area.

The investment for the Wild Atlantic Way also includes a remedial works programme which will entail the repair of surfaces, boundary walls and fencing and the general tidying up and presentation of these sites. During the original development of the Wild Atlantic Way route, a number of existing viewing points and lay-bys were identified and established as Wild Atlantic Way Discovery Points – including those designated as such in Co. Galway. Fáilte Ireland worked with Galway County Council along the route to carry out remedial works for each of these points to ensure that the sites were presentable for the tourist season.

The contractors involved in the works are Pdraig Folan Civil Engineering & Building & the contractors involved in the installation of the Signage were Martin Contracting Services Ltd.. Galway County Council are the Project managers for both of these contracts and were involved in the design of the remedial works programme.

Conamara Infrastructure and Interpretation Plan.

He advised that Failte Ireland had appointed the Paul Hogarth Company and Elspeth Wills to develop an integrated Infrastructure and Interpretation Plan for Conamara entitled “Discovering Connemara “ The plan identified a structured approach to exploring Connemara and some of the sites are also stop points along the Wild Atlantic Way. Connemara is at the hearth of the Wild Atlantic Way which will link regions and places which already have a strong brand such as the Ring of Kerry and Connemara. The plan estimates visitor numbers to the Wild Atlantic Way at 3.8 million and visitor numbers to Connemara will continue to grow as it becomes established. Failte Ireland has projected strong growth for the tourism sector in 2016.

The Plan has identified 4 Gateway Sites with suggested locations at North of Leenane, Cong, Maigh Cuillin and Bearna. The Gateways are designed to make a bold welcome statement and to stake out the territory that is Connemara. They are intended to create a mood of anticipation and the feeling of arrival and will incorporate the new Connemara logo. The Plan has 5 Orientation Points which will be located at the first suitable lay-by after the gateway signage. Their primary function is orientation - helping visitors to plan their trip. This will be achieved mainly by clear maps of the driving routes. The aim is to welcome visitors, help them plan their route and introduce them to stories about the locality which support broader themes. The Plan also incorporates 27 Discovery Points designed to engage visitors with the history, culture and wildlife of the locality. These will consist of lay-bys where visitors can linger and are encouraged to explore the locality through a map of the immediate area. They will have standard 250 word long electronic information panels covering 3-5 stories with strong imagery.

He then outlined details of the Programme of Works and advised that 9 of the Discovery Points have been substantially completed. The preparation of design and contract documentation is ongoing for other sites. The fabrication of Discovery and Orientation markers has commences with Kent Stainless. Contract documents is also being prepared with regard to the interpretative elements of the project such as graphic design, content, layout and printing for the Gateway, Discovery and Orientation markers. He stated that the anticipated cost of the program was €850,000 and is expected to be completed in 2017. There are ongoing consultations with NPWS in regard to sensitive sites and also with landowners in regard to access, permissions and land transfer. The Council is also seeking support from community groups to facilitate development of some of the sites. He outlined details of some of the sites currently being developed which included the Marconi Site car park, Derrygimlagh, Killary Harbour, Pirates Castle at Renvyle, Sean Ceibh An Spiddeal and Derryinver Bridge.

Derrygimlagh Project

The presentation on the Derrygimlagh Project was given by Kurt Lydon, Technician . He stated that the site will be a significant Discovery Point on the Wild Atlantic Way and will be a main beneficiary of the €3.5 million marketing budget that Failte Ireland will spend on promoting the WAW in 2016. The Derrygimlagh Project will offer a 6 km looped walk through the site of 2 technological breakthroughs that transformed the modern world. The Marconi Wireless Radio Station established by Guglielmo Marconi, a young Italian-Irish scientist in 1905, was the first commercial transatlantic radio link that revolutionised communications and has led to the wireless technology that we now take for granted. It was also the landing site where Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Whitten Brown of the

RAF completing the first non-stop transatlantic on the 15-6-1919 in a Vickers Vimy airplane-which was a key moment in the evolution of international air travel. The Radio Station led to the establishment of a thriving rural industrial community on the Derrygimlagh blanket bog site at the western edge of Europe at the beginning of the 20th century. It was a most singular occurrence at the time in Ireland-an island of industry and innovation in a sea of agriculture. A Power Station, Condenser House & Water Tower were built on the site to provide electricity for the Radio Station. Rail tracks were laid through the bog to enable rail cars to be loaded with turf in order to provide a source of fuel for the Power Station.

He then described the background to the project. The Connemara Chamber of Commerce approached Failte Ireland for funding to develop the site. Following discussions it was agreed that Galway County Council would be approached to facilitate the drawdown of funding and to manage the project. In November 2014 the Council applied to Failte Ireland for funding amounting to €990,000 and this was granted in December. The Council prepared tender documentation for 2 aspects of the project.

1. The procurement of a contractor to undertake the carpark and interior site construction- Kesel Construction were appointed in August 2015.
2. The procurement of a design interpretation team to design the interpretation element of the project-Denis Byrne Architects were appointed in July 2015.

The Marconi and Alcock & Brown site is being developed to provide an interpretative experience for visitors who will visit this historic site to learn about those historic events. The project will restore the original pathways of the Wireless Station to provide a looped walk following original walkways that will bring visitors around different sections of the site. The routes will be stone based and wooden walkways will be introduced. Explanations of the history and the human interest stories connected with this historic site will be shown through descriptive and informative photographic elements along the near 6 km looped walk. Further details will be incorporated into 6 structures that will provide resting points, shelter and seating. He described some of the artwork installations which include optical devices such as a Historioscope, Photoscope, Hyperstereoscope and a Panaramascope.

He stated that the interior site is owned by NPWS and the Connemara Chamber of Commerce is negotiating a 999 year lease on the lands. The site insurances will be covered by the Chamber of Commerce once the project is completed. The week commencing the 23-5-2016 has been initially selected for the opening of the project but it may be subject to a delay of a week or so from that date.

Cllr. E. Mannion stated that these were great initiatives and positive developments as regard tourism promotion for Connemara. She thanked Cathal Joyce and Kurt Lydon for their presentations and complimented L. Gavin and his staff for their work. She advised that Failte Ireland will engage with the local community in regard to developing initiatives for the Wild Atlantic Way which even in its infancy was attracting a lot of tourists. Road maintenance will be essential as regards the anticipated 3 fold increase in tourism traffic. Cllr. N. Thomas stated the projects were a great boost to Connemara and enquires about sites with diamond marks on maps. He enquired if any site was earmarked on the N59 AT Maam Cross. C. Joyce advised that the Connemara Infrastructure and Interpretative Plan will try to implement all of the sites that tourists which have stopped to photograph in the past. He advised of a site earmarked at the Quiet Man Bridge. He explained that in regard to some sites there were ongoing consultations with landowners and statutory bodies. L. Gavin advised that there can

be a progression in the future once the initial sites are completed. Comh.O’Tuairisg stated that this was a very positive development which was coming to fruition. It was essential for the local economy to get tourists to stay in Connemara. He advised that Connemara had one of the richest geological areas in the world which requires UNESCO recognition. He raised the issue concerning the lack of signage for Cornamona on existing sign posts and that there was no facility to stop at the Quiet Man Cottage. He mentioned the planned new walk from Cornamona to Cong and the ancestral home near Spiddal of Sean O’Fearna better known as the Film Director John Ford. Comh. O’Curraoin enquired about the lack of toilet facilities for visitors to the Derrygimlagh site. K. Lydon confirmed that these were not planned by the Council but there was an opportunity for the Chamber of Commerce under the site lease to permit a café or shop on the site which could have toilet facilities. He stated that chemical toilets could be a consideration but the site was in an SAC designated area. It was anticipated that the average visitor stay would be in the region of 3 hours. Comh. O’Cualáin agreed with the need to provide toilet facilities at the site and advised of the lack of indoor facilities for visitors to Connemara. He complained of the lack of directional signage for Rosmuc on the N59 at Maam and Costello. L.Gavin advised him to raise the matter with T.J Redmond. K. Lydon advised that there was signs for Rosmuc further on the route. Cllr. Healy stated that it was a good, positive presentation and advised of the need for the toilet facilities. He stated that motor tourism was a reality which will add extra value to the facilities. He queried the status of the site in regard to the Quiet Man Cottage. C. Joyce confirmed that the site was in private ownership and the Council has to negotiate with the landowner. L. Gavin advised that Fáilte Ireland would be in contact with the Council in regard to the other Discovery Points.

7. 3 Notices of Motion –Cllr. Noel Thomas

CMD 16016

Cllr. N. Thomas referred to his first NOM whereby he proposed that the Council request TII to re-design 2 sections of the bypass of Moycullen i.e the entrances to the village from Roscahill and Tullykyne. He referred to the guidelines set out in the 2013 DMURS manual in regard to the scope of the design which specify concentration on the streetscape aspect especially from a landscaping perspective. He advised that the current design has no landscaping features incorporated into it and the entrances to Moycullen had an “industrial look” which he found totally unappealing as a landscape gardener. He referred to his second NOM whereby he proposed that the Council request TII undertake a quality audit in regard to the roadworks in Moycullen village in accordance with the 2013 DMURS manual as he was concerned that the current works were not meeting the very well illustrated streetscape designs laid out in the manual. He stated that he was trying to prevent something similar happening in the future. The Council missed a golden opportunity by not incorporating streetscape and landscape designs. He then referred to his third NOM and the letter received in response from TII. He proposed that the Council request TII to alter the design of the new junctions in Moycullen where current works are taking place in order to make them safer for motorists and road users as they are not fit for purpose. He stated that particular attention be placed on the junction at Killagoola which had the highest volume of traffic. He stated that the road width stood at 5.3 m and that there was scope to make it wider at 5.5 m. He advised that there was a need for consultation on the matter and requested the Council to contact TII to source funding in order to rectify some of the things done- €4 million was spent with no regard for the streetscape of Moycullen.

In response- L. Gavin advised that that the DMURS manual applies to works undertaken within the speed limit and what is designed refers to areas outside the speed limit. He stated that the works were done in accordance with DMURS as the Tullykyne & Roscahill N59

junctions are outside the 60km zone and there was nothing wrong with the road design. He advised that all of this went through the planning process including public consultation and an Oral Hearing. He confirmed that the Council will request TII to undertake the Quality Audit which will incorporate details such as landscape, speed restrictions and safety. A letter dated 14-3-2016 was received from TII in response to the proposal contained in the third NOM . It stated that the new junctions at Moycullen were designed in accordance with DMURS and that an independent preliminary stage 3 Road Safety Audit was undertaken and did not recommend any changes to the layout of the junctions including Killagoola. It stated that compliance with the DMURS manual is mandatory for all improvement works within the 60km/h urban speed limit zone and its aim is to end the practice of designing streets as traffic corridors and instead focus on the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

Cllr. N. Thomas enquired if the Quality Audit Report would be made available to him and L. Gavin confirmed that it would, when available.

8. Date and Venue for the next Meeting

CMD 16017

Following a discussion-it was agreed that the date and venue for the next meeting would be Thursday 2nd of June at 1.00 p.m at the Community Centre in Inishboffin. The ferry departs from Cleggan at 11.30 a.m

9. Municipal District Director's Business

CMD 16018

L. Gavin referred to the Cleggan Carparks Bye-Laws 2015 which was circulated to the Councillors and advised of the current position as regards the charges and permits. He stated that the proposed charges for the carparks (Cleggan carpark and the Head of the Pier carpark) would be €1 per hour from 9.30 a.m to 6.30 p.m , €5 for a full day, €10 for up to 3 days, €15 for up to 5 days and €20 for up to 7 days. There would be a charge of €3 per day from day 8 onwards. He advised that there will be 2 pay & display parking ticket machines installed which will have a coin and credit card payment facility. He advised that the Council proposes to reduce the time permitted for parking outside the shop from 2 hours to 30 minutes. He stated that residents of Cleggan can apply for parking permits if they do not have parking space around their residences. He explained that he would assess the situation as regards permits for the residents of Inishboffin who park their cars in Cleggan by ascertaining what they are already paying in the carpark. He advised that 14 spaces will be provided at the Head of the Pier carpark which will be reserved on a permit system basis for people working on fishing vessels and the ferry. The application system will require evidence of boat ownership and crew status. Cllr. E. Mannion expressed her appreciation for the work done on the carparks which benefits Cleggan and Inishboffin. She also referred to the funding for the harbour road at Cleggan and was advised by L. Gavin that Ciaran Wynne was working on this at present.

On the proposal of Cllr. E. Mannion, seconded by Comh. S.O'Tuairisg it was agreed to implement the proposed changes to the Bye-Laws.

10. Cathaoirleach's Business

16019

Cllr. E. Mannion advised of a forthcoming 2016 ceremony to be held at Rosmuc on Tuesday 3-5-2016 which will include a mass. She also advised that the delegation from Washington County, Wisconsin was presently conducting a tour of Conamara and that the Galway 20:20 City of Culture team were in Clifden last week and would be in Oughterard this week- the final bid process will take place in July. Comh. S.O'Tuairisg advised that there is a problem with the Recess side of the access road to the Mámeáin pilgrimage site-as there is no room for 2 cars to pass and no proper exit in the event of an accident. T. J Redmond advised that he will arrange to meet Comh. O'Tuairisg at the site. Comh. O'Cualáin advised of the failure by Irish Water to properly reinstate the site on the N59 at Bealadangan where they were in the process of laying pipes. J. Leahy stated that he will investigate the matter. Cllr. Thomas referred to the newspaper report regarding the 152 fines issued by the Community Wardens for litter/illegal dumping offences in Conamara –there appears to have been no convictions and they were written off. He enquired as to how he could obtain further details. L. Gavin advised him to contact the Environment Section.

11. AOB

16020

Comh. O'Curraoin proposed that a letter be sent on behalf of the Municipal District of Conamara to Pat Faherty, Overseer, Conamara Area expressing sympathy on death of his sister. This was seconded by Cllr. E. Mannion.

CROCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN