

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara **Municipal District of Conamara**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held at the Parish Rooms, Oughterard, Co Galway on the 4th of May 2018 @ 2.30 p.m

ILATHAIR:

Baill:

Cllr. N. Byrne Cathaoirleach,
S. Walsh, S. Ó Cualáin,
T. Ó Cuirraoin, N. Thomas, E. Mannion
T. Welby, S. O'Tuairisg.

Oifigigh:

G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance
M. Owens, A/DOS Housing
D. Mitchell, S.E Roads & Transportation
P. Breathnach, S.E.E Conamara
T. J Redmond, Area Engineer, N. Conamara
M. Kerrigan, Area Engineer, S. Conamara
S. Groarke, Meetings Administrator

Apologies:

Cllr. T. Healy

1. Minutes of the MD of Conamara Meeting held on the 23-2-2018 **CMD 18011**

The adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 23-2-2018 was proposed by Comh. T. O'Curraoin and seconded by Comh. S. O'Tuairisg.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes **CMD 18012**

Comh. S. O'Tuairisg referred to page 3 of the Minutes (Gaeltacht Plan) and requested a correction to state that it was a Government T.D and not a Minister he was referring to on the Radio na Gaeltachta program. He also enquired about the €690,000 grant for water drainage. D. Mitchell advised that the Council will be co-ordinating a program to open up the watercourses. Cllr. N. Thomas referred to the dips in the roads at Clydagh and the Barna Road junction. D. Mitchell advised that the matter has been referred to John Coyle. Cllr. E.

Mannion referred to the slow progress in getting funding from TII in regard to repairing parts of the N59 between Leenane –Clifden which were damaged as a result of severe weather conditions which caused subsidence-she stated that the delay will affect the tourist season and the community are losing patience. D. Mitchell advised that TII have agreed to provide funding to repair the affected sections of the N59. He referred to the fact that the Council had to provide ecology and method statement reports. He advised that a Coastal Protection Plan is required for the coastal erosion caused near Leenane and this will involve the OPW and the Department of the Marine. Cllr. E. Mannion advised of the meeting held with Shane Ross T.D Minister for Transport at the Council on the 1-2-2018 where 6 projects in regard to the N59 were outlined. D. Mitchell advised that a portion of the €727,000 budget provided for the Scrim testing/overlays on the N59 Eastern approach to Oughterard will now be diverted to Recess. Cllr. E. Mannion welcomed the funding for Recess. Cllr. N. Byrne sought an explanation for this and D. Mitchell explained that this reallocation is a result of the outcome of the Scrim tests. Cllr. S. Walsh referred to the condition of parts of the N59 and its side roads with potholes and loose tar and chips at the Roscahill and the Glann roads. He stated that the County clearly was not getting its fair share from the Equalisation Fund and the suggestion made by Cllr. Mannion that the Council had the opportunity to raise the LPT was just blackmail. D. Mitchell stated that problems with potholes was prevalent throughout the country and that there is no indication of supplementary funding from the Department yet-the Council has put in a request for €10.5 million. Comh. T. O’Curraoin referred to his disappointment at the fact that the proposed hotel has been turned down for planning permission in Spiddal. Comh. S. O’ Cualáin referred to the fact that there has been no response to date from the Department of the Gaeltacht in regard to the resolution he proposed at a previous meeting concerning the establishment of a taskforce to deal with the unemployment problem in the Gaeltacht areas.

3. Management of Invasive Species-Janice Fuller Consultant Ecologist CMD 18013

The presentation on the management of invasive species was given by Ms Janice Fuller Consultant Ecologist who referred to the previous presentation provided by Ms Elaine O’Riordan of the Applied Ecology Unit NUIG in 2017. She stated that part of her remit is to provide training to Local Authorities and Community groups in regard to biodiversity and heritage. She advised that a new invasive species working group has been established in Galway County Council which is comprised of staff members from the Environment and Roads sections and also Ms. Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer. She described the 6 main plant invasive species which affect County Galway as follow:

1. Japanese Knotweed
2. Himalayan Knotweed
3. Gunnera (Giant Rhubarb)
4. Giant Hogweed
5. Himalayan Balsam
6. Rhododendron

She advised that the procedure in regard to the reporting, mapping and management of invasive species on public roads is as follows:

1. Reports of possible invasive species on Council property including public roads should be e-mailed to invasivespecies@galwaycoco.ie or reported by phone to 091-

509309. Reports can also be sent by post to the Roads Department by completing the hard copy report form which is available from Council Offices and Libraries.

2. The relevant Community Warden will be notified by the Roads Department of the reported sighting.
3. Reported sightings will be investigated by the Community Wardens.
4. Confirmed sightings of an invasive species will be mapped by the Community Wardens and advisory signage put in place by Council staff.
5. The funding available to the Council for the treatment of invasive species is very limited.
6. A 4 year contract was awarded by TII for the treatment of invasive species on National Roads –it is currently in year 3 of the cycle.
7. Detailed information in regard to invasive species is available to the public on leaflets published by Galway County Council which are available at its offices and libraries. This information is also available at <https://biodiversity.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/category/places/invasive-species>

Information on invasive species is also available on the websites www.galway.ie and www.invasivespeciesireland.com She also advised that the Community Wardens have received training in regard to invasive species. She distributed information booklets and leaflets in regard to Biodiversity Guidelines and the recommended treatment of 4 types of invasive species at the meeting. The treatments vary in accordance with the species type and would include root cutting, grazing by animals, stem injection and other treatments by herbicides. She referred to the fact that Japanese knotweed can grow through concrete. Comh. T. O’Curraoin referred to the problem with Japanese knotweed on the Barna-Moycullen road near the Golf Club. Cllr. T. Welby referred to a recent TV program on invasive species and enquired if Japanese Knotweed originated in Japan and how they manage to deal with the problem. Cllr. N. Thomas advised that a species of beetle eats it in Japan. He also stated that he does a lot of treatments for Japanese Knotweed as part of his landscaping work and referred to the different effects of each type of invasive species. Cllr. N. Byrne thanked Ms. Fuller for her presentation.

4. Presentation by Galway Rural Development Co Ltd-SICAP Team CMD 18014

The presentation which included slides was given by Gearóid O’Fátharta, Mícheal Mac Dhonnchadha, Deirdre Ní Dhonncha and Nórah Ní Cheannbháin who are members of the SICAP team based in Rosmuc. They advised that Galway Rural Development was established in July 1994 as one of 50 Local Development Companies in Ireland delivering a range of EU and National programmes over a large part of County Galway. It is a limited company and its directors represent statutory agencies, social partners, business, farming, community and voluntary sectors. Staff are based in Athenry and other parts of the County. GRD administers the SICAP Program (Social Inclusion Community Activation Program) and also the LEADER, RSS (Rural Social Scheme) and the TÚS Program. It also acts as a sponsor of a Community Employment Scheme providing maintenance work for local communities and clerical and administrative support. The GRD funded 320 separate projects in County Galway which amounted to over €9 million in grants in regard to the Rural Development Program 2007-2014.

Gearóid O’Fátharta advised that the 4 of them are employed in the Rosmuc office where the GRD delivers targeted intervention and courses under the SICAP programme. He stated that the aim of the program is to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long term unemployment through local engagement and participation with people from disadvantaged areas, local community groups and organisations working in the public sector. He advised that the courses provided by the GRD included Governance for Local Community Groups, Personal Development, Manual Handling, Safe Pass, HACCP, Occupational First Aid, Child Care Train the Trainer, Forklift, Dumper, Teleporter, machine 360, Farm Safety, Start your own Business, CV and Interview Preparation and Accounting. He advised that in 2017 the GRD commissioned a needs analysis in 2 areas of the Conamara Gaeltacht: Scainimh and Garmna –both areas had been classified in the Pobal HP deprivation Index as extremely disadvantaged. He distributed copies of this Needs Analysis at the meeting. The issues highlighted by the needs analysis were;

- High unemployment
- High emigration rate
- Lack of Broadband.
- Poor Road infrastructure
- Poor Public Transport Service
- Lack of tourist facilities such as Tourist Information Office, hotels and B &Bs
- Lack of educational opportunities including part time courses
- Lack of investment in fishing and fishing related businesses in the area.
- Lack of Library services
- Need for a dedicated Outreach Officer in the areas
- No Bank services

The beneficial programs identified by the survey are:

- Part time evening and weekend courses
- Local Enterprise Courses
- Computer courses for older people
- Water safety courses
- Sport/Recreational facilities

He stated that as part of its work the SICAP team collaborate and engage with Udarás na Gaeltachta , FORUM Chonamara, Muinteras, Department of Social Protection, Galway City Partnership, Local Enterprise Office (LEO) and Outreaches in Ceantar na nOileá/An Cheathú Rua/Carna, Oileáin Arann/Inishbofin, Cois Fharráige/UachtarArd/Ros Muc, Ceantar Dhuíche Sheógeach and Tullycross/Cleggan/Clifden. SICAP aims to reduce disadvantage and poverty in Ireland by offering a number of supports to individuals and groups such as the unemployed, people living in disadvantages communities, people with disabilities, socially isolated rural dwellers and those disengaged from the labour market. He advised that the GRD and the SICAP teams delivered 69 training courses in County Galway in 2017. The GRD promotes the Learning for Life program which showcases training courses and workshops for communities and individuals provided by Galway Rural Development, GRETB, VTOS (Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme), post Leaving Cert courses,

Department of Social Protection, Adult Literacy, NUI Galway, GMIT and other colleges in County Galway. These courses include:

- Start your own Business
- Retail Skills
- IT and Smartphone Skills
- Online e-Learning Courses
- Working with Food
- Administration & Accounts
- Beauty, Hair & Makeup
- Carpentry, Engineering & Welding Skills
- Childcare
- Gardening & Growing Vegetables.
- Safe Pass

He also explained how the SICAP teams provide support in regard to the Back to Work Enterprise Initiative which is administered by the Department of Social Protection. This includes support and guidance in regard to the application process, liaison between the clients and the Department, advice on grants and the provision of advice from a professional accountant in regard to the Business Plan and Cash Flow. They also offer support in regard to Community led Social Enterprises. He advised that SICAP arrange a number of information seminars including those in regard to training and jobs.

Cllr. S. O'Tuairisg advised that the presentation was very informative but the Need Analysis in regard to Scainimh and Garmna made for depressing reading. This indicated an unemployment rate of between 30%-40% in contrast to the national average of 6.7% He explained how there was a major loss of jobs in Udarás backed enterprises in Carraroe up to 15 years ago and a Center is required there for jobs. He stated that lack of Broadband inhibits the creation of employment and the development of deprived catchment areas and it is hard to prevent the movement of people to the city-some of the best schools have closed down. He advised that LEO do not cater for the Gaeltacht and that the SICAP team do positive work. Comh. S. O'Cualáin spoke of the supports required by the farming and fishing communities in Conamara and the difficulties associated with poor land, BREXIT and constant bad weather. He advised of the need for SICAP to have more of an input as regards this and the need for training programs for farmers similar to the KT schemes especially in South Conamara. Cllr. T. Welby enquired about participation on the training courses, the SICAP budget and the membership of the GRD Board who represent Conamara. Gearóid O'Fátharta advised that anyone interested in applying for the training courses should contact SICAP and that the GRD requested the Council to nominate members for their Board –but no nominations as regards Conamara were received. He stated that the SICAP administration and project budget is €1.6 million and approx. one third of this is related to Conamara. Cllr. N. Thomas advised that he was a member of an LCDC and enquired if there was a good uptake in Conamara in regard to SICAP programs. He referred to the fact that the main GRB offices are based in East Galway and not in Conamara. Cllr. S. Walsh stated that nominations for the GRB board came up at a Council meeting but there was no specific request for Conamara representation. He requested the SICAP team to refer the matter again to their Board. He also referred to the need to set up more LCDCs in County Galway which is a reserved function but requires Ministerial approval-County Cork has 3LCDCs. Cllr. T.

O'Curraoin stated that while he complimented SICAP on its work-we are swimming against the tide and need to go back to basics. He complained that EU rules have had a terrible effect on the Irish fishing industry with factory ships off our shore and on Communities with the migration of rural people to towns and cities. Cllr. E. Mannion referred to the Needs Analysis and the requirement for Outreach services, tourist facilities and the role of Udaras. Cllr. N. Byrne referred to the 69 training and workshop courses provided by SICAP last year and enquired about the accreditation available. G. O'Fátharta advised that there was a very positive uptake as regards the courses but the emphasis this year will be on quality and not on quantity –he stated that SICAP was not a training agency and is not obliged to give accreditation on courses such as safe pass. He advised that it was important to SICAP to engage with the Councillors and requested that they refer relevant persons to them as regards their programs.

Cllr. N. Byrne thanked the SICAP team for their presentation.

5 Re-establishment of the Islands Committee

CMD 18015

Comh. S. O'Tuairisg advised that the Comharchumann have been contacted in regard to nominations for membership of the Committee and the final date for receipt of responses is Friday 11-5-2018. He also proposed that the Committee should have representatives from the GRETB and this was agreed.

On the proposal of Cllr. T. Welby, seconded by Cllr. E. Mannion it was agreed Comh. Seán O'Tuairisg would be the Cathaoirleach of the Islands Committee.

On the proposal of Cllr. T. Welby, seconded by Cllr. N. Byrne it was agreed Comh. Seosamh O'Cualáin would be the Leas-Cathaoirleach of the Islands Committee.

6 Proposed Footbridge/s at Oughterard

CMD 18016

Cllr. N. Byrne referred to the €250,000 allocated by the Council in 2015 to be drawdown in 2019 in regard to the proposed Footbridge in Oughterard. She advised that the matter has not progressed over the past 4 years-the Councillors appeared to have been given contradictory information concerning the discussions with TII and the NPWS. She enquired as to the position with the footbridge and spoke of the considerable risk to school children. She stated that it is unacceptable that there is no progress following 4 years of discussions. D. Mitchell advised that he spoke to Derek Pender about this and that TII are now engaged in consultations with NPWS in regard to its feasibility. Cllr. E. Mannion stated that this was raised at the recent meeting with TII and they were supportive but require formal approval from NPWS before proceeding to the design stage. She stated that this issue concerns the rights of people in particular children to safety versus protecting the environment. Cllr. S. Walsh advised that the Footbridge is basic infrastructure but a vital issue –it required a commitment from the local T.Ds to get progress including highlighting the matter through Dáil questions-he questioned if the Government will find a way to do it when one considers the forthcoming elections. He stated that the Councillors still have no answer after 4 years. Comh S. O'Cualáin agreed that it was important to get the T.Ds involved as the Footbridge is vital to Oughterard. Cllr. T. Welby stated that the €250,000 allocation was ringfenced for the Bridge at Oughterard 4 years ago by the 39 members- this money will need to be spent soon as 9 of the 10 projects will have progressed. He advised that TII should have a timescale of 4-

6 weeks to report on progress. D. Mitchell advised that the Council is not party to the current consultations on the matter between TII and NPWS- he reminded the meeting of the difficulties the Council experienced with NPWS in the past. He advised that the Council is concerned that TII will provide funding for the Bridge. Cllr, N. Byrne stated that while she accepted that due process is required for planning- the Councillors want to get progress to the design stage for the Footbridge.

7. Strategic Development Plans for Social Housing at Oughterard

MD 18017

M. Owens referred to Rebuilding Ireland the Government Action Plan for the needs of Social Housing and tackling the Housing shortage crisis. He stated that the Council has been in consultation with the Department of Housing concerning the proposed development of its land at Oughterard in 3 phases for Social Housing. He advised that the Council has produced an Indicative Site Layout Plan for this and he circulated this at the meeting. This envisages the development of a total of 157 Housing residential units on this site together with amenity walkways and landscaping as follows:

Phase 1 65 units consisting of 5 Semi-Detached 3 Bed (2 Storey) Double-Fronted, 13 Semi-Detached 3 Bed (2 Storey), 29 Terrace/Semi-D 2 Bed (2 Storey), 18 Apartments (3 Storey) Units.

Phase 2 36 units consisting of 1 Semi-Detached 3 Bed (2 Storey) Double-Fronted, 11 Semi-Detached 3 Bed (2 Storey), 23 Terrace/Semi-D 2 Bed (2 Storey), 1 Semi-Detached 3 Bed (2 Storey) Double-Fronted

Phase 3 56 units consisting of 8 Semi-Detached 3 Bed (2 Storey), 25 Terrace/Semi-D 2 Bed (2 Storey), 21 Apartments (3 Storey), 2 Semi-Detached 3 Bed (2 Storey) Double-Fronted

He explained that a master plan will be produced at a later stage for the Oughterard and Moycullen sites. He advised that consultations will be held with Irish Water in regard to the water and wastewater capacity considerations and that an approved Housing Body will be sought by the Council as regards a partner for the development of the apartments. Cllr. N. Byrne advised that the site was across the road from the Church and expressed her wish that the Council can deliver this project of 157 mixed residential units to Oughterard which would cater for a lot of young people as private contractors are not building at present. She raised concern in regard to the appropriate mix and demography of the tenants and if it will be reviewed. She referred to the fact that 10 Social Housing units were approved for Oughterard in December 2017. Cllr. T. Welby referred to the lack of affordable Housing schemes and advised that there is a major issue concerning flooding close to the proposed Apartment blocks and there is concern regarding the displacement of water and the need for attenuation at the hardcore area-there will be a requirement for a pipe to be laid down the road to take away the water. Cllr. N. Thomas stated that the wastewater pipe is in bad condition and the quality of the existing pipe system will be an issue. He also enquired about the feasibility of using private developers to construct the phases. Cllr. S. Walsh advised that 2 pipes are required- one for sewage and the other for rainwater-an escape outlet for the water is also needed and it cannot be the river due to the pearl mussel habitat-which NPWS will not allow. He stated that he spoke about this on Radio na Gaeltachta. Cllr. E. Mannion welcomed the plan and enquired as to when the Council envisaged Phase 1 will commence. M. Owens explained that Irish Water have to revert back in regard to the capacity issue and it was envisaged that Phase 1 will commence around 2020. He advised that the Council may review

the proposed tenancy mix and it is envisaged there will be an affordable scheme. He stated that the proposed development will be in accordance with Housing guidelines for sustainable communities. He referred to the expertise of approved Housing bodies in regard to the development of apartments and that the Council will be taking elements of these units. He also advised that he had a meeting with Damien English T.D Minister of State for Housing a fortnight ago.

8. Declaration of Roads to be Public Roads-Section 11 Roads Act 1993 **MD 18018**

On the proposal of Cllr. N. Thomas, seconded by Cllr. S. Walsh the road at Cartoor, Moycullen was declared to be a Public Road.

On the proposal of Cllr. N. Thomas, seconded by Cllr. S. Walsh the road at Cloonmore, Moycullen was declared to be a Public Road.

9. Annual Report 2017–Municipal District Of Conamara **MD 18019**

On the proposal of Cllr. N. Byrne, seconded by Cllr. N. Thomas the Annual Report 2017 for the Municipal District of Conamara was approved. This will be included in the Annual Report for Galway County Council 2017.

10. An Spidéal –Shore Walk **MD 18020**

Cllr N. Byrne advised that the Community Council in Spiddal wanted to highlight this ongoing issue which concerns the completion of 100 m of the shore walk at Spiddal between Trá Bán and Trá na Ceibhe. Comh. S. O’Tuairisg stated that it is a lovely walk but there are problems in regard to securing agreement with the landowner- he enquired as to what the Council can do to progress the matter. P. Breathnach advised that attempts were made to secure agreement with the landowner but these were not successful. D. Mitchell stated that he did not consider that acquisition of the land by CPO is an option and advised that the Community in Spiddal should try and get the landowner to agree to donate the land.

11. Cathaoirleach’s Business **MD 18021**

Cllr. E. Mannion thanked the Councilors and Officials for attending the meeting at Oughterard and advised that it was vital to highlight the issue concerning the Footbridge.

12. AOB **MD 18022**

Cllr. E. Mannion welcomes the Flood Risk Management under €1 million scheme for Clifden. She also wished Ger King, former Fire Officer with Clifden Fire Station well on his recent retirement. She advised that the Fire Station staff in Clifden provided valuable assistance in regard to the setup of Carraroe Fire Station. Cllr. N. Thomas raised the issue concerning the flooding outside the Nursing Home at Moycullen and the damage to cars-he advised that the landowners will cooperate. P. Breathnach confirmed that the landowners have given permission and the matter will be examined. Comh. S. O’Cualáin advised of the development of a Wind Turbine at Rossaveal and the concerns raised in regard to the laying of the cable along the Seanapheastín road. He stated that planning permission has been

granted for this but advised that it was not a good time to dig up the road between June-August when Rossaveal Harbour is busy. D. Mitchell advised that the Council do not have details regarding this until it receives the application for the road opening licence. M. Kerrigan advised that the construction company have yet to submit this.

13. Date & Venue for Next Meeting

MD 18023

It was agreed that the Annual Meeting and the next Ordinary Meeting would be held on Thursday 7-6-2018 at 11.00 a.m in Aras an Chontae, Galway.

CROCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN