

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE CONAMARA ELECTORAL AREA MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 16th FEBRUARY 2010, IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE

I LÁTHAIR:-

Baill:

Comh. S. Ó Cuaig, Cathaoirleach
Comh. S. Ó Tuairisg
Cllr. S. Walsh
Cllr. T. Welby
Cllr. E. Mannion
Comh. T. Ó Curraoin
Cllr. S. Kyne

Oifigh:

Mr. G. Mullarkey, Head of Finance
Mr. F. Gilmore, D.O.S. Roads and Transportation Unit
Mr. T. Kelly, S.E.E, Conamara Area
Mr. F. McGillicuddy, E.E. Oughterard
Mr. T.J. Redmond, A/E.E. Clifden
Mr. R. Mannion, A.E.E. Carraroe
Mr. F. McEvoy, A/Project Engineer, Roads and
Transportation Unit
Mr. S. Groarke, A.O. Roads and Transportation Unit
Ms. N. Heffernan, A. O. Finance Unit

RPS Consulting Engineers: Mr. Cian McGuinness

1. Deputation regarding new Conamara Road

Chuir Comh. Ó Cuaig fáilte roimh na ionadaithe ó na bailte éagsúla idir Bearna agus Carna a bhí i láthair. D'iarr sé ar dhuine ó gach baile labhairt faoi a thuairimí faoin bóthar nua.

a) Park and Lippa Village

Two representatives from the villages of Park and Lippa expressed the opinion that the only viable option, that would be accepted by the people, was the route marked in brown on the map. This goes through a Special Area of Conservation. They confirmed that they had met with staff from the National Parks and Wildlife Service regarding lands in National Heritage Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. They said that the boundaries for SACs and NHAs should be revisited with a view to changing them as comparable areas in other parts of Ireland are not of similar designation. They stated that they had been advised that an appeal could be made for NHAs but that there was limited option to appeal an SAC designation. Cllr Welby advised that as far as he was aware there was no option to appeal an SAC.

b) Sheehaun Village

The representative from Sheehaun Village confirmed that lands North-East of Spiddal are classified as NHAs and lands North-West of Spiddal are classified as SACs. He confirmed that all routes other than the brown route divide villages and homesteads and that the people of Sheehaun would not be in favour of this.

c) Carna

Chinntigh on ionadaí ó Charna go raibh muintir Charna i bhfábhar an bóthar donn. Dúirt sé go raibh sé níos fearr ón taobh teicniúil an bóthar donn a thógáil freisin.

d) Baile an tSagairt

The representative from Baile an tSagairt stated that the designation of areas as SACs was unjust. He said that people who were aware in advance of the implications of the designation had had their lands removed from the designation. He said that the brown route, of which the people in Baile an tSagairt were in favour, would not affect the integrity of the SAC.

e) Na Forbacha

The representative confirmed that the only option was for the new road to follow the brown route. Any other route would detrimentally affect the local school population as it would be easier for parents to bring their children into a school in the City as road would divide the village in half.

f) Ceantair Coill Rua

The representative from Ceantair Coill Rua said that no route would be acceptable other than the brown route. He stated that the cheapest place to build a road is through a bog.

g) An Spidéal/Cois Fharraige

Aodán MacDonnacha, Community Development Officer in Spiddal spoke on behalf of the communities in Spiddal and Cois Fharraige. He said that each farmer has a small number of acres and that each plot of land is important to them. He requested that the Councillors oppose any route other than the brown route. If no alternative route could be agreed on he requested that the Council await the construction of the new bypass which should alleviate traffic in the area. He also asked that there be no change in speed limits until the road is built.

h) Baile an Domhnailláin

The representative from Baile an Domhnailláin said that his community were in agreement with the others – the brown route is the only acceptable route.

i) Baile an tSléibhe

Dúirt an ionadaí go raibh muintir Baile an tSléibhe i bhfábhar an bóthar donn amháin.

j) Sean an Mhóinín

The representative of Sean an Mhóinín said that they were particularly against the orange route as it would have a negative impact on the language in the area.

A representative of Park/Lippa villages made specific reference to the constraints study and said that it was appalling. She said that it made no reference to the Irish language or the geographical boundary defined for it. Any of the routes but the brown route would be a threat to the language, folklore and cultural heritage of the area. She stated that there had been no consultation with Údarás or Roinn na Gaeltachta. She also stated that Údarás had confirmed in writing to the consultants that they were in favour of the brown route.

Dúirt Comh Ó Tuairisg go raibh cás maith déanta ag na grúpaí ó na sráidbhailte éagsúla. He confirmed that the Conamara Councillors would be unanimously supporting the construction of the brown route. He said that at a meeting between representatives of the NPWS and the Council last year, it was stated that there would be no possibility of changing the designation of SACs or NHAs. He said that a coastal route should have the value as an SAC or NHA.

Comh Ó Curraoin said that any new route constructed should serve all the people in Conamara including Carna and Clifden. He stated that he was in favour of the brown route.

Comh Ó Cuaig outlined that he had been advised, at a previous meeting with an t-Aire Ó Cuiv, to always dispute any statement that a route could not go through an SAC.

Cllr Walsh confirmed that he is in favour of the brown route. He stated that it is necessary for the National Government to agree a policy on SACs, both for cases where derogations can apply and for review of them.

Cllr Kyne confirmed that he is also in favour of the brown route. He said that the Galway City Outer Bypass has been referred to the Supreme Court regarding it being built over an SAC, the result of which should provide guidance as to whether or not the building of the brown route would be acceptable.

Cllr Welby said that he was in favour of the brown route but that he believed it would not be constructed for two reasons, that it is in an SAC area, and for political reasons, as the Green Party would not support it. He said that the constraints study to be completed should be weighted heavily in favour of the local communities.

Cllr Mannion said she was also in favour of the brown route and that the rights of the people in the area are important and that they should be looked after.

Mr Gilmore said that any proposal to build a route through an SAC would have its objectors. He said that it was the role of the Councillors to create policy for Galway County Council.

2. Vote of Sympathy

A vote of sympathy was expressed for Evan Molloy, Senior Engineer, Conmara Area on the passing of his mother.

3. Presentation regarding Western River Basin District Management Plan

This item was postponed to the next meeting due to the relevant staff having to attend a national meeting.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting 17th November 2009

On the proposal of Cllr Kyne, seconded by Cllr Walsh the minutes of the meeting of 17th November 2009 were approved.

5. Commencement time of meetings

On the proposal of Comh Ó Curraoin, seconded by Cllr Kyne it was agreed to schedule future Conamara meetings at 10.30a.m.

6. Review of Restoration Improvement Grants Requirements – Regional and Local Roads 2010

Mr Kelly advised the meeting that a list of revised proposed early starts had been circulated to the Councillors. He confirmed that the allocations had been altered to allow for roads damaged by the frost and floods to be repaired as a matter of priority. He said that smaller sections of the roads on the original programme would be restored, due to the emergency situation. This programme refers to Local and Regional Roads only.

Cllr Walsh said that the road to Paschal McDonaghs house, opposite the old Post Office was in a bad condition. It was agreed that the Area Engineer, Mr McGillicuddy would investigate it.

In response to a query from Comh Ó Curraoin, Mr Kelly confirmed that it was intended to repair a section of the road in Leitir Mór from Plunketts to Leitir Caladh in the next few weeks.

Mr Kelly confirmed to Cllr Kyne that the L5371 was included in the Early Starts Programme. Cllr Kyne also made reference to the Leagaun to Ballinahalla Road, and requested that the road be raised to prevent water lodging.

Comh Ó Tuairisg made reference to insufficient funds being allocated in the Early Starts to the Screebe to Maam Road and the Derrough Road. Mr Kelly

said that the work would be completed, but not all funding would be provided through the Early Starts programme.

Mr Walsh made reference to the Barna to Moycullen road bridge, at Poll na gCloch. Mr McGillicuddy said that some work will be done on it under the Early Starts Programme. Mr Kelly confirmed that the funding available for bridges has been allocated to specific bridges and that this one has not been included in it for replacement.

Mr Kelly said that Mr Evan Molloy, the Senior Engineer for the Conamara Area, has requested that Councillors advise him of roads that are in a particularly bad state of repair, when they become aware of them.

In response to a query from Cllr Mannion, Mr Redmond confirmed that a substantial part of the Early Starts Programme has been completed in the Clifden area and that the Sky Road would be completed next week.

Mr Kelly, in response to a query from Comh Ó Curraoin, confirmed that a pedestrian crossing is to be installed in Barna, during the Summer months. He also said that ducting is to be put in place at the Twelve in Barna at this time. Cllr Kyne said that the traffic lights were inappropriately placed in Barna, making it impossible for a buggy or wheelchair to get passed.

Mr Kelly said that a traffic management plan is being drafted for Barna Village, by Mr Alan Brogan.

Cllr Kyne made reference to the condition of the Gortacleva to City Boundary road and Mr McGillicuddy agreed to take a look at it.

Cllr Walsh asked Mr McGillicuddy to inspect the road from Glan to the Fisheries in Oughterard, with a view to carrying out essential repairs.

Mr Gilmore said that it was hoped to secure funding from the NRA for the junction at Recess later in the year.

Mr Kelly said that significant funding for repairs had been received from the NRA for the N59 and the work was currently being carried out.

Cllr Kyne commended the staff on their response to the difficulties over the Christmas. This was seconded and agreed by all.

7. Aon Ghnó Eile

a) N59 upgrade

Mr Gilmore advised the meeting that the Department of Transport are funding a pilot programme for Secondary routes, commencing with the N59. It is intended that Secondary routes be brought up to a new standard of 6.5m width, with a running strips and a cycle track each side. It is hoped to have tender documents prepared in 2010, with a view to going to construction in 2011. He confirmed that the NRA office in County Roscommon will be

running and supervising this project. Cllr Mannion requested that viewing areas be considered for inclusion along the route. Mr Gilmore said that a preliminary design of the route would be presented to the Conamara area within 3 to 4 months.

b) Pier at Pointe, Carraroe

Cllr Walsh proposed that a public-right-of-way be specified for access to the pier at Pointe, Carraroe and that it be taken in charge. This was seconded by Comh Ó Cuaig.

c) Camera at Baile an tSagairt

Mr McGillycuddy advised Comh Ó Curraoing that the Planning Enforcement Section were dealing with the matter of a camera on the roadside at Baile an tSagairt.

d) Fire Service

Mr Gilmore advised the meeting that a review process was being carried out on the Fire Service in County Galway. The Chief Fire Officer is currently preparing a draft brief for the review process. It is intended that this brief should be completed within a month. Mr Gilmore said that the analysis in the review will be based on risk criteria, as per the UK standards, and that a proposal should be prepared within six months.

e) Graveyards in Conamara area

Comh Ó Tuairisg made reference to the limited allocation in the budget for graveyards, with no funding available for Conamara area. He said that a plan needs to be put in place for the development and extension of graveyards in the Conamara area. Mr Kelly asked that the Councillors advise him of graveyards in their area which have limited or no space available.

Chríochnaigh an cruinniú ansin.