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**GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**National Monuments Advisory  
Committee**

**1947 - 1995**

**GC/5/**

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Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe  
Galway County Council

**GC/5/**

Galway County Council/ National Monuments Advisory Committee

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## Identity Statement

<b>Reference Code:</b>	IE GCCA /GC/5/
<b>Title:</b>	National Monuments Advisory Committee
<b>Dates:</b>	1947-1995
<b>Level of description</b>	Series
<b>Extent:</b>	2 volumes
<b>Context</b>	
Creator(s):	Galway County Council

## Archival History

Galway County Council Archives acquired this collection by official transfer from Galway County Council in 2000.

## Archivist's Note

Descriptive list prepared by Patria McWalter, Archivist, 2012.

## Scope and Content

The collection consists of two volumes of minutes of county Galway's National Monuments Advisory Committee meetings. The National Monuments Act, 1930 stipulated that every Local Advisory Committee should consist of not less than three nor more than five members, however as time passed the number of full members permitted grew.

The Committee gave advice on the care, protection and maintenance of national monuments in County Galway, and submitted proposals for vesting monuments in the Council.

Membership was made up of full and honorary members. Initial members for instance included Rev. Fr Crehan, Rev. Monsignor Hynes, Fr Egan (Chairman for many years), Lord Killanin, Dr T.B. Costello, Professor M Duignan, P Fahey, and H.P McGlory. Members in the early 1970s included for instance Rev. Egan, Cllrs J Donelan, and P Fahey, Fr Coen, D. J. Murphy (+1990), Martin Joyce, N.T. (+1991), M. J. Molloy (playwright, + 1994), Etienne Rynne (UCG) (+2012). In the 1980s membership also included P. Holland, Tom Fanning (UCG) (+1993), Dr A Claffey and Paul Gosling (UCG), James Joyce (Chairman 1991, appointed to National Heritage Council & the National



Wildlife Advisory Council in 1992), and in the 1990s also included Mrs Anna McHugh (Caherlistrane), Michael Mullens, Pierce Joyce, Erin Gibbons (Clifden), and Evelyn Varley. From the 1980s onward membership was made up of 10 members, together with at least 15 honorary members.

Full lists of members should be found in the minutes of the Annual Meetings of Galway County Council each year.

For the purpose of preservation and to enhance access the collection was digitised in 2017.

## **Arrangement**

Chronological

## GC/5/ National Monuments Advisory Committee, 1947 - 1995

Volumes of minutes of meetings, generally held four times a year, on typed sheets pasted or sellotaped into volumes, recording details of attendance and business transacted by the Committee, relating to advice given on the care, protection and maintenance of national monuments in County Galway, proposals for vesting monuments in the Council, details of correspondence, such as from Bord Fáilte, received and dealt with. Monuments receiving ongoing attention from the Committee included the Belleview Gates in Laurencetown, Athenry Town Walls, Clonfert Cathedral, Clontuskert Abbey, and Ross Errilly (Headford).

Signed and dated by the Chairman.

Average size 500pp.

1. 12 March 1947 - 14 February 1989 Includes:-
  - 'It was decided that a report be obtained from the County Engineer on the condition of the monuments which are at present vested in the Council and that consideration of what further monuments should be so vested be placed on the Agenda for next meeting' (12 Mar 1947).
  - 'That the Committee whole heartedly endorses the County Manager's recent suggestions to the County Library Committee for a new Civic Centre, including a Museum and Art Gallery' (19 Jun 1947).
  - 'A letter dated 30 June from the Irish Tourist Board was read and considered. In the Committee's view the substance of the letter was to the effect that National Monuments were of no interest to tourists. With this view the Committee strongly disagreed. The Hon. Secretary was instructed to write to the Irish Tourist Board inviting the Board to reconsider the matter' (26 Aug 1947).
  - 'Kiltiernan Church: Prof Duigan pointed out that the task of conserving Kiltiernan Church was too big for the committee since any repairs should only be carried out in conjunction with scientific excavation of the entire site. He informed the Committee that, in consequence of recent appointment of Dr Benu to a professorship of archaeology in the Royal Irish Academy at the insistence of An Taoiseach, state funds were now once more available for such excavation; that he had been informed that a due proportion of such funds would be allocated to work in the West....' (26 Aug 1947).
  - 'The 'Spanish Arch', Galway: The County Manager drew the attention of the Committee to the question of ownership of the Spanish Arch. The adjacent premises had been purchased by Miss Claire Sheridan who claims thereby ownership of the Arch. The Arch was not vested in the County Council. The Harbour Board disclaimed ownership. Miss Sheridan has expressed orally her intention of preserving the Arch...' (26 Aug 1947).
  - 'Portumna Castle & Dominican Friary: Lord Killanian drew the Committee's attention to the announcement that the Harewood estate Portumna was to be sold and drew attention to the importance of the Clanricarde Castle and the Dominican Friary there. The Chairman under

took to raise the matter at the forthcoming meeting of the National Monuments Advisory Council...' (26 Aug 1947).

- 'High Cross & St. Jarlath's Church Tuam: The Hon. Sec drew the Committee's attention to the "Journal of the Galway Archaeological & Historical Society" II, 1902, p125 from which it appears that the County Council has assumed the custody of these monuments about 1901/02, and had carried out repairs to them at that time. He also drew attention to the bad condition of the Cross today....' (1 Jun 1948).
- 'Gateway at Belleview, Laurencetown: Fr Egan proposed and it was agreed that this historic Gateway, with an inscription commemorating Irish Parliamentary Independence, 1783, should be preserved. The County Manager to be requested to have necessary inspection carried out and estimate submitted' (9 Feb 1950).
- 'CLAREGALWAY CASTLE: Dr Costello stated that ivy is threatening to damage the Castle. The Hon. Secretary pointed out that Claregalway Castle is a private residence and that it was a matter for informal personal representations to the owners' (9 October 1951).
- 'CLONTUSKERT ABBEY, ETC. BALLINASLOE: Prof Duignan reported that Clontuskert Abbey is remarkable for a number of interesting rare architectural features, that he believed the work of repairing it is beyond the technical and financial resources of the County Council, and recommended to the County Manager be requested to address an urgent plea to the Office of Public Works inviting them to assume responsibility for the repair and maintenance of this monument, and pointing out to them that the monument is in urgent need of attention...' (6 May 1952).
- 'SPANISH ARCH, GALWAY: The Committee considered a verbal report to the effect that Mrs Claire Sheridan had sold the Spanish Arch and that the purchaser proposed to set up a "Spanish Tea Garden" thereon. The Secretary was instructed to write to the Mayor and Corporation to urge that everything possible be done to preserve the Monument and to safeguard it from inappropriate utilization' (16 Sept 1952).

'LETTER FROM AN BORD FÁILTE : The Hon. Secretary reported that for the adequate discharge of its functions, An Bord Fáilte had appointed an Archaeological Officer, Mr Hartnett, The National Museum; that he, the Secretary, had recently been invited to a Conference with Mr Hartnett and other persons concerned, but owing to absence in England had been unable to do so. He had since received a communication from Mr Hartnett outlining the sort of steps which the Board had under consideration with a view to improving attractions and facilities of national monuments from the point of view of the Tourist trade. The Bord is anxious to make the fullest possible use of its powers under the 1952 Act and drew attention to the fact that the Bord is empowered to undertake the repair and conservation of ancient monuments...' (2 Mar 1953).

- 'Spanish Arch, Galway: A report dated 2253 from the Borough Surveyor, Galway, who stated that the estimated cost of putting this structure into a good state of preservation would be

- £200, was read. This estimate was conveyed to An Bord Fáilte on 4/12/53 and a reply is awaited' (9 Dec 1953).
- 'Clontuskert Abbey: It was reported that the County Manager had made an Order authorising the expenditure of a sum of £680, as per County Engineer's estimate of 3/12/1953, on repair work to this Abbey and such work on the access road as may be agreed on with An Bord Fáilte - which has undertaken to pay the cost...' (2 Mar 1954).
  - Aughnaure Castle: The preservation of this national monument which is in State care was taken up with An Bord Fáilte who are going to spend a certain amount of money on cleaning up same and fencing it in. The Acting Hon. Secretary reported that Mr Le Clere, together with Mr Harbison (Archaeological Officer, Bord Fáilte ) of An Bord Fáilte , inspected the monument on the 27<sup>th</sup> February and a report is still awaited' (2 Mar 1954).
  - Tempull Beag na Naomh and St Breacan's Church, Killanin: The Acting Hon. Secretary reported that the County Manager had made an Order authorising the carrying out of work on Tempull Beag na Naomh at an expenditure of £25 and on St. Breacan's Church at a cost of £20...' (2 Mar 1954).
  - Athenry Town Walls (2 Mar 1954).
  - 'Bellevue Gate: Fr Egan reported that this gate was to be taken over by the State as a National Monument' (6 Dec 1954).
  - 'Folklore Museum:....'"That the County Manager be asked to consult with the Corporation, County Council, National Monuments Advisory Council to the Board of Works, the Irish Folklore Commission, An Bord Fáilte, the Galway Archaeological Society and this Committee, with a view to the immediate establishment of a folklore museum in County Galway' (6 Dec 1954).
  - 'Addergoole Cross: This cross has not yet been found. It was decided to ask Lord Killanin if he has been able to find out anything about it' (12 Jun 1956, see also 12 Aug 1960 & 16 Nov 1960).
  - 'Dunsandle: Professor Duignan stated that the National Monuments Advisory Council have made exhaustive efforts to get a new owner and have set up a sub-committee to investigate the whole problem including taxation, maintenance, etc...' (12 Jun 1956).
  - 'GRAVEYARD AT ROSSERRILLY: Mr Murphy stated that tombs had been broken into some years ago through vandalism, and that they were now in a very dilapidated condition. It was decided to write to the Commissioners of Public Works drawing their attention to this fact' (12 Aug 1960).
  - 'ABBEYNOCKMOY CHURCH: Mr Murphy said he was informed that the stone taken to Dublin from the east window of the church at this Abbey in 1853 was not back in Ballyglunin...' (12 Aug 1960).



'LION'S TOWER, GALWAY: Motion received from Professor Hayes McCoy was read. It was agreed by the members that this monument was primarily of interest to Galway and to the people of Galway, and that if they want it preserved they should be prepared to help to pay for it.

Professor Hayes-McCoy's motion was amended slightly, and the following motion was carried unanimously, on the suggestion of Mr Joyce:

"That the Committee deplores the threatened destruction of the Lion's Tower bastion in Eglinton Street, Galway, built in 1646, and trusts that steps will be taken by the Corporation and citizens of Galway to preserve this historic memorial' (12 Aug 1960).

- 'YEAT'S CASTLE, BALLYLEA: Mr Dolan told the meeting of the vandalism which has been the cause of continued deterioration of this castle, and it was decided to write to Mr Yeats asking him if he would have any objection to the Committee's approaching the Commissioners of Public Works to take over the Castle...' (12 Aug 1960).
  - 'CONGRATULATIONS: Mr Joyce congratulated Fr Egan on the publication of his book on the *History of Ballinasloe*, and said he was honoured to have been associated with Fr Egan. The vote of congratulations was enthusiastically endorsed by all the members' (12 Aug 1960).
  - 'MILE-STONES, ETC: Mr Murphy said that many of the old mile-stones were destroyed during the course of road works, and it was decided to write to the County Secretary requesting that road workers be informed that these mile-stones should be preserved...' (16 Nov 1960).
  - 'LYNCH WINDOW, GALWAY: A letter from Bord Fáilte was read recommending that something should be done about this monument. Bord Fáilte stated that the Committee should get in touch with Mr Wilfrid Cantwell, Architect, who would give advice on the Lynch Window. The Committee decided to explain to Bord Fáilte that it had no connection with the Galway Corporation and that it was not responsible for the ancient monuments in Galway City which are under the authority of the Corporation. The Committee recommended that Bord Fáilte should write to the Corporation on the matter' (10 Dec 1962).
- 'ADDERGOOLE CROSS: Mr Murphy stated that the old church at Addergoole had recently been demolished and that His Grace, the Archbishop of Tuam, had protested about its demolition to the County Council. The proposal now is that the cross should be removed from its present position (in a field adjacent to the Cemetery) and erected in the cemetery itself. The Committee approved of this arrangement...' (26 Mar 1963).
- 'TUROE STONE: The way of access to this monument was discussed. Lord Killanin stated that he had visited there recently and that the driveway was in good condition. There was discussion as to whether the stone was the property of the Office of Public Works or not...' (26 Mar 1963).
  - 'KILCORNAN: Prof Duignan reported that this ruin is of a simple rectangular church of the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century, with a partly restored East window. He considered it worth preserving, but for County Council preservation the object would have to be made over to them. The Secretary



- was instructed to write to the Superior of the Brothers of Charity there and explain how simple it would be to keep it in repair, and that Prof. Duignan would be prepared to go out and advise on it by appointment' (13 Sept 1965).
- 'CORRESPONDENCE: The Secretary read a letter from the National Monuments Branch, Office of Public Works to the Secretary of Galway County Council informing him that Clontuskert Abbey had been placed in the guardianship of the Commissioners of Public Works for preservation as a National Monument' (14 Mar 1966).
  - 'MONUMENTS IN ARAN: Deputy Molloy stated that the Council were neglecting the monuments in Aran. Dun Aengus and the Seven Chapels in particular. They also suggested that the existing paths to Dun Aengus be improved and better signposting be provided. Fr Egan to write to County Council and Bord Fáilte regarding this' (16 Oct 1967).
  - 'Protestant Church in Gort: Father Coen said the difficulty here is that there is a Catholic graveyard on one side and a Protestant graveyard on the other. The Protestant Rector would be willing to have it used as a cultural centre. The Committee thought it did not come under their terms of reference' (8 Jun 1971).
  - 'Kilmacduagh: Fr Coen referred to projected renovation by local effort. Mr Rynne said the road making would be in order but the ruin is a National Monument and may not be interfered with. Secretary to write to parish priest and County Council' (14 Dec 1971).
  - 'Galway Town Wall in Corbett's Yard: Suggestion that National Monuments Inspector be asked to excavate on both sides of it' (13 Jun 1972).
  - 'Architectural Heritage Year, 1975: It was suggested that the Committee advise the County Council to do something and members were asked to have proposals for next meeting' (8 May 1974).
  - Athenry Town Walls: Mr Rynne stated that the National Monuments Council has recommended that the Commissioners of Public Works put the walls in repair. This being so, the Secretary is to recommend to the County Council that it forego any rights it may have in parts of the walls in favour of the Commissioners' (12 Mar 1975).
  - County Archaeologist: Councillor Ryan said that the matter was being considered by the County Manager. He and Councillor Morgan agreed to try and get even a limited sum made available, say £1,000 for a trial period of four months' (12 Sept 1975).
  - 'Lydican Castle: This is vested in the County Council. The Secretary to request that the protection wall which a farmer knocked to let this cattle in be replaced' (12 Mar 1976).
  - 'Monument at Monivea: Mr Rynne said it is a National Monument and the finest mausoleum in Ireland. Secretary to write to National Monuments Council requesting that it be recognised as a National Monument and included in this list of National Monument' (12 Dec 1975).



- 'Appointment of Co. Archaeological Officer: Mr Rynne reported that Co. Manager was satisfied to sponsor a baronial survey carried out by students of Dept. of Archaeology, U.C.G. (14 Apr 1978).
- 'Terryland: Secretary instructed to write to Mr G Lee, B.E., U.C.G., and to President, U.C.G. asking that consideration be given to preservation and if not possible, to have its historical significance recorded' (16 Jun 1978).
- 'Athenry Walls: Secretary, Councillor Ryan and Fr Coen met County Manager before Meeting. Mr Joyce made the case for consultation with National Monuments Advisory Committee where planning permission was sought in proximity to historic and archaeological sites....' (12 Jan 1979).
- 'Athenry Walls: Fr Fanning reported a change of Office of Public Works Policy in regards to National Monuments. They were now prepared to grant money for "rescue-operations"" (12 Feb 1981).
- 'Inscribed Stone and Cross Head (Tuam): Dr Claffey said this was a subject of dispute. Stone and Cross Head were in possession of Member of Old Tuam Society. Diplomacy required. Undertook to have matter solved locally' (11 Feb 1982).
- 'Bellview Gate: Profession Rynne submitted report which stressed the architectural, historical and touristic value of Bellview. Secretary asked to send (copy) copies of report to County Council and Bord Fáilte asking that they give the matter special attention as this (1982) is bi-centennial year of its erection... ' (24 Apr 1982).
- 'Clonfert Cathedral' Agreed to offer advisory help to Bishop Empey re restoration of Clonfert Cathedral' (12 Jul 1984).
- 'BALLINDOOLEY CASTLE: A letter was received from the County Secretary, stating the position as regards Ballindooley Castle. In January, 1986, the Council was notified by the OPW that the building had been listed pursuant to Section 8 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1954. Prior to this the Co. Co. had taken proceedings against the owner who was fined but had appealed to the Circuit Court. ...' (10 April 1986).
- 'Clonfert Cathedral: Chairman informed the meeting that Mr T Fanning had told him that he and Mr Maurice Craig were trying to have Clonfert Cathedral declared a national monument thus become eligible for an E.E.C. grant' (11 Feb 1988).

500pp

2. 18 April 1989 17 January 1995 Includes:-
- **FÁS:** details of meeting which included representatives from FÁS and from the Dept of Archaeology, UCG...’Dr Gosling said that in June, 1988, Co. Co. had agreed to contact the Dept of Archaeology before schemes involving the cleaning of graveyards were started. Headstone should not be cleaned.’  
Ms Cait DeHora said there had been some improvement in the last few years but she felt the Archaeological Report had not received sufficient attention as regards notice beforehand of location of schemes’ (19 Sept 1990).
  - ‘...case involving the Gardai, where a medieval Castle at Cahernamuck West, near Loughrea, was blown up by its owners, using legally held explosives. It appeared that the permit issued in respect of the explosives was for the demolition of “an old house”, but that the actual permit was not in the possession of the Gardai who attended on the demolition work. Thus, they were unaware of the discrepancy between the licence and the actual character of the remains....’ (5 Nov 1991).
  - **Lighthouse at Ballycurran:** Cllr Varley said that the Lighthouse at Ballycurran, Headford was in bad condition, and it was agreed to contact the Lough Corrib Navigation Trustees in relation to this matter’ (11 Dec 1991).
  - **Correspondence:** The Secretary reported that two further submissions had been received for inclusion on the proposed list of estate gateways in Co. Galway. These were from Mr Kilcummins, and from a Mr Cronin listing examples in north-east Galway (no address given). Mrs McHugh states that a list of submissions was being compiled by Mr J Higgins<sup>1</sup>, and would be forwarded to the Secretary’ (8 Dec 1992).
  - ‘The situation with regard to Tyrone House was discussed and it was stated that stones were being taken from the buildings on the site. It was proposed by An t-Uasal Breathnach, and seconded by Mrs McDonagh, that a letter be written to the OPW, asking that Tyrone House be listed for preservation as a National Monument or that it be listed for protection’ (27 Apr 1993).
  - **‘Other Business:** The Chairman referred to letters he had received from the Minister, Mr Ml. D. Higgins, and the Minister of State Mr Noel Dempsey, regarding Inchagoill. Both stated that the developments taking place are on land owned by Coillte, and are a matter for Coillte, but that the developments do not pose a threat to the National Monument whose conservation and protection are matter for the OPW. The large tree overhanging (sp) the 12<sup>th</sup> century church was a unique evergreen oak which was preserved by Coillte...’ (3 May 1994).
  - ‘Mrs McHugh gave a brief outline of the events planned worldwide in connection with the Famine Commemoration which will be held from December 1995 to 1997. She also mentioned that GCC failed to pay a contribution of £100 to the Famine committee...’ (7 Jun 1994).

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<sup>1</sup> Archaeologist, appointed first Heritage Officer in Ireland to Galway City Council in 1999.



- Minutes of the meeting attended by the Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, Mr Michael D. Higgins at Athenry Castle (24 Sept 1994).
- **'Heritage Bill:** The members were informed by the Chairman that under the Heritage Bill, sites and monuments such as those listed by Paul Gosling would be protected...' (17 Jan 1995).

150pp