

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Gunter-Nix.

"That a wheelchair accessible bus service is provided daily on the Galway/Dublin routes, serving Loughrea.

It was proposed by Cllr. Gunter-Nix seconded by Cllr. Morgan.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said there are about 15 Bus Eireann services going through the town together with private services and none of them are wheelchair accessible. She asked that a recommendation be sent to Bus Eireann and other companies to address this matter.

"That a Disabled Driver parking space be provided near AIB in Loughrea when the Main Street/Dunkellin Street works are completed".

It was proposed by Cllr. Gunter-Nix seconded by Mayor Curley.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that more Disabled Drivers parking spaces are required around the town but particularly at AIB Bank and Station Road.

"That Galway County Council arrange for the removal of the graffiti on The Walks".

It was proposed by Cllr. Gunter-Nix seconded by Cllr. Maher.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that there is graffiti on the limestone pillars and on the trees and back entrance doors of the properties on the Main Street. She said she know a firm in Craughwell who might be able to remove it. She will give the name of the firm to Mr. Raftery, town engineer.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Morgan.

"That planning department of Galway County Council inform Loughrea Town Council why residents at Baunoge, Tynagh Road, Loughrea, were required to build their houses well back from the public road, yet they gave permission to a builder to erect a house within ten feet of same road; and if there is one planning law for some people, yet others are not obliged to the same rule".

This motion was not discussed as it was not seconded. Members awaiting Planners to attend meeting.

"That when the reconstruction of the road at Dr. John Flaherty's house at east end of Main Street north, be given extra careful attention, as there is a tunnel there which runs from Dr. Flaherty's under the road towards Piggott Street, and if found, that it be fully examined and recorded by an archaeologist.

This motion was not discussed as it was not seconded. Members said archaeologist on site.

"That a recommendation be made to the appropriate authority that CCTV cameras be placed at strategic positions to record drivers using mobile phones while driving on our streets".

Cllr. Burke said if he put an amendment to the resolution as follows" That a recommendation be made to the appropriate authority that CCTV cameras be placed in the town to record drivers using mobile phones while driving on our streets". Cllr. Morgan agreed to this amendment.

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Burke.

Any Other Business.

Cllr. Morgan proposed that a letter of thanks be sent to John Hume and Albert Reynolds, for initiating the Peace process in Northern Ireland. This was seconded by Cllr. Burke. Cllr. Morgan said it was a Historic Year and a wonderful achievement. A lot of credit goes out to those two fine statesmen.

Cllr. Bane said since the last Town Council meeting there was a Primetime Programme about Water Pollution in County Galway. In that programme a person from the locality was featured on it in relation to material leaving the Loughrea Sewerage Treatment Plant which was dropped outside her gate into her dwelling house. She said that her child has suffered an illness because of this incident. She asked if Mr. Cullen had any further information on this matter. Mr. Cullen said it was a once off incident and it is being investigated. He said the County Council had direct dialog with the person concerned.

Cllr. Maher asked if the seats at the Fairgeeen, Playground, Corry's Field etc. would be painted this year before the summer season. Mr. Raftery said it would depend on the Road Works Programme and when it will be completed.

Cllr. Regan said that Carmel King, School Warden, has retired and he said the occasion should be marked with a little party before the present Mayor leaves office as she has retired in his time. It was agreed that a presentation will be made to Mrs. King before the Annual meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed this 11 day of June, 2007. Mayor: Michael Maher

Minutes of proceedings of Annual Meeting of Loughrea Town Council held in the Credit Union Offices, Dunkellin Street, Loughrea on the 11th June, 2007.

I lathair;

Mayor: Cllr. Michael Maher.

Members: Cllr. Geraldine Bane, Gabriel Burke, Jimmy Curley, Mary Gunter-Nix, Pat Hynes, Norman Morgan, James Regan, Sheamie Tully.

Officials: Jim Cullen, Director of Services, Adrian Raftery, Executive Engineer, Imelda Deely, Town Clerk.

The meeting opened with prayer.

Cllr. Curley said he was approaching the end of his term as Mayor of Loughrea. He expresses his thanks to the Town Councillors and also to Jim Cullen, Director of Services, Adrian Raftery, Executive Engineer and Imelda Deely, Town Clerk for their assistance during his term of office. He said he enjoyed the year and had attended eight functions on behalf of the Town Council. He said a lot of positive things happened during the year especially the refurbishment of the Main Street and approval on the Swimming Pool. He made a number of presentations such as the Loughrea Hurlers, Credit Union, Carmel King, retired School Warden, Martin Ward and John Greally, retired firemen etc. He said he had attended meetings for improvements in the town. Mr. Cullen, Director of Services, thanked Cllr. Curley for a very good year. He said it was easy to deal with him and he was very fair and impartial. He wished him every success in the future. Cllr. Curley thanked the members and officials for their good wishes.

Election of Mayor.

Mayor Curley said the he would take nominations for the position of Mayor.

Cllr. Burke was proposed by Cllr. Maher seconded by Cllr. Curley.
Cllr. Regan was proposed by Cllr. Bane seconded by Cllr. Morgan.

A vote was taken on the candidates nominated which resulted as follows:-

For Cllr. Maher: Cllr. Burke, Curley, Gunter-Nix, Hynes, Maher, Tully - 6 votes.

For Cllr. Regan: Cllr. Bane, Morgan, Regan. - 3 votes.

The Mayor declared Cllr. Michael (Mogie) Maher elected.

Mayor Maher then took the chair.

Mayor Maher thanked his proposer and seconder and the members who had voted for him. He said that it was a privilege and an honour to be Mayor of Loughrea. He said he was the first Progressive Democrat to be elected Mayor. He said it was a new experience for him as it is his first term on the Town Council. He hopes to do his best

for Loughrea. He hopes to see County Council plans delivered on time: Main Street refurbished and the recycling centre opened on the Rathruddy road. He said he will have other ideas during the year and he hopes that he will have the full support of the members. He is looking forward to a progressive year and working with the members for the good of the town.

Cllr. Regan said it was a great honour to be proposed and great to have democracy. He said today was not my day. He wished Mayor Maher every success and he will give him every support. The members and officials congratulated Mayor Maher and wished him well.

Election of Deputy Mayor.

Mayor Maher said he would take nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor.

**Cllr. Gunter-Nix proposed Cllr. Burke seconded by Cllr. Tully.
Cllr. Morgan proposed Cllr. Regan.**

Cllr. Regan said he did not wish his name to go forward and thanked his proposer.

As there were no other nominations Mayor Maher declared Cllr. Burke to be Deputy Mayor.

Cllr. Burke thanked his proposer and seconder.

This concluded the business of the Annual Meeting.

Signed this 09 day of July, 2007. Mayor: Michael Maher

Minutes and proceedings of Monthly Meeting of Loughrea Town Council held in the Credit Union Offices, Dunkellin Street, Loughrea, on the 11th June, 2007.

I lathair

Mavor: Cllr. Michael Maher.

Members: Cllrs. Geraldine Bane, Gabriel Burke, Jimmy Curley, Mary Gunter-Nix, Pat Hynes, Norman Morgan, James Regan, Sheamie Tully.

Officials: Jim Cullen, Director of Services, Adrian Raftery, Executive Engineer, Imelda Deely, Town Clerk.

Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on the 14th May, 2007.

It was proposed by Cllr. Regan seconded by Cllr. Tully that the minutes of the monthly meeting be adopted.

Matter arising from the minutes.

Cllr. Regan said he welcomed the Blue Flag to Loughrea but he hopes it will not be lost with the abuse of dog owners washing their dogs in the water. He said this is common practise and nobody seems to do anything about it. He understands that prosecutions have been taken but it has not stopped the culprits. He asked if the Community Warden could patrol the area and stamp out this habit. He said if action is not taken immediately the Blue Flag will not be there much longer. He said if dogs are spotted in the water by the adjudicators it will result in loosing the Blue Flag. He requested that the town council write to the incoming Minister for the Environment to ban dogs at Blue Flag beaches. He said cars are driving up on the grass. He asked if bollards could be erected to prevent this happening. He also said that broken glass on the fairgreen and other places is a huge problem and would need to be addressed. Mr. Raftery said that they had sought tenders for bollards and they got quotes of €30,000 to €40,000. He said the decision rests with the Environment Section.

Cllr. Bane said she was contacted by a number of people regarding the consumption of alcoholic at the Long Point over the weekend. She said nobody is enforcing the law.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that signage should be put up in different languages at the Long Point indicating what is acceptable and not acceptable behaviour. She said that fishermen leave fishing tackle unattended and it can be very dangerous if somebody got caught in the hooks

Cllr. Burke said that the town council will have to have another meeting with Superintendent Walsh to discuss those matters. Gardai are the people to enforce the law.

Mayor Maher said he will arrange to meet the Superintendent as soon as possible and report back to the meeting. He said he reported some misdemeanours around the town to the Gardai and when he came back to his car it was vandalised. He said that it will not deter him for reporting bad behaviour around the town.

Mr. Cullen, said that the Bye-Laws were brought in under the Local Government Act, 1994. He said the Bye-Laws were on public display and the public would have been aware of them. He said the law is in force and it is there to be enforced. He said he sought legal advice on this matter recently from the County Council solicitors and their opinion was that signage is not necessary to enforce the law. He said this may have been a once off opinion and may not stand up with other Judges. He said it is difficult to put up signs in one area and 100 metres down the road there is no signs. It would be difficult to implement the Bye-Laws.

Cllr. Morgan said that the Town Council own the Long Point and it is up to them to carry out those works except they do not have the funding. What ever work the County Council do at the Long Point is a bonus and the town councillors should not be critical of it or too demanding.

Cllr. Regan said that work is progressing very well now on the Main Street but some small shops are going through hard times. He said that a reduction in Rates should be considered to relieve hardship when the estimates are being drawn up.

Cllr. Bane said that the Chamber of Commerce are going to hire traffic consultant and urban landscape architects to arrange colour schemes to enhance the town when the road works are finished. Details will be circulated when it is finalised.

Cllr. Burke said he had a letter in his possession dated the 14th May, 2007 saying that there were proposals to make the Main Street one way east to west. The letter was circulated by the Chamber of Commerce with a heading "Open letter to Traders" with suggested proposals as follows: (a) Create a one-way system (east to west) for Main Street. (b) Narrow the carriageway to 4 metres approximately with 2.3 metre parking (parallel) on both sides of the street. (c) Provide traffic lights at the Westbridge. (d) Widen the footpath to facilitate pedestrians and to create a more desirable shopping experience. (e) Provide raised junction at Church Street and pedestrian crossing. (f) Pedestrian Kings Street on Market Days. (g) Discourage HGV's from using Main Street through signage. Your comments on the above proposals and any other suggestions you might have in writing or e-mail to Brenda Winters". He said he asked at the last meeting why was Dunkellin Street narrowed and if there were proposals to bring in a one way system. He was told that there was nothing definite yet and no decision would be made until the Traffic Management Plan was reviewed. Yet this letter was in his letter box the following morning. He said it would seem that the Chamber of Commerce have an open door yet the democratically elected people are not privy to such information. He does not want Council officials going behind their backs. He said they are elected by the people and they should have the information before other communities as to exactly what is happening.

Mr. Cullen said before this matter is allowed to gather momentum or before the wrong message goes out from this meeting he would like to set the records straight. He said he met the Chamber of Commerce with other officials but it was made quite

clear that no decisions will be made until the Traffic Management plan is reviewed. This can not happen until the Main Street is complete. If the Chamber of Commerce want to raise issues with Council officials they are quite entitled to do so. It will be the County Council and the Town Council that will be making the decisions not the Chamber of Commerce. No official wrote this letter so the County Council is not taking responsibility for what happened afterwards.

Cllr. Bane said she was sick of the power struggle between the Chamber of Commerce, County Councillors and Town Councillors. She said they all work for the town.

Mayor Maher said he would meet up with the President of the Chamber of Commerce to see if both groups could work in tandem for the betterment of the town.

Cllr. Morgan said that the contractors do not seem to be digging as deep as Dunkellin Street and wondered why this is. Mr. Cullen said he would have this matter investigated.

Cllr. Burke asked when the railings will be erected at Garrybreeda Park. Mr. Cullen said that the staff is working on the roads programme at present while the weather was suitable. He said the preparatory work will be done by the Council Staff and a contractor will complete it. Cllr. Burke asked will it be July or September. Mr. Cullen said it is more likely September.

Cllr. Bane asked when the opening of the Public Toilet at the fairgreen will be taking place. Mr. Raftery said work is progressing and it is expected to be opened shortly. Mayor Maher asked if it will be finished by the end of June in time for the children summer holidays. Mr. Raftery said it would be.

Cllr. Burke said he is glad to announce that funding has been sanctioned by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism for the much awaited Swimming Pool for Loughrea. He said the committee were nearly giving up hope of seeing a swimming pool in Loughrea. In this context he would like to thank Mr. Cullen for his trojan work in this matter and also the Swimming Pool Committee who stuck with it. He said he was speaking to Brian Shaughnessy before coming to the meeting and he hopes to be ready to start work in August and have it finished in the Autumn of 2008.

Abstract of Accounts for the year ending 31/12/2006.

It was proposed by Cllr. Burke seconded by Cllr. Gunter Nix that the abstract as presented be adopted.

Correspondence.

Letter from Larry Murray, Secretary of St. Brendan's Hurling Club saying thanks for the reception afforded to the Loughrea players.

Letter from Chamber of Commerce stating that there was a sales promotion week from the 18th to 23rd June, 2007. As part of this promotion a request for use of the fairgreen, opposite Super Valu, on the 23rd June, 2007 for Bouncing Castles was

received. The Chamber of Commerce said they would indemnify Loughrea Town Council and Galway County Council to the tune of €6.4 million. This was unanimously agreed provided insurance is lodged in the local office before that date. No bouncing castles to be placed on the re-seeded area of the fairgreen.

Agenda for Chamber of Commerce meeting on the 12th June, 2007 at 9.00 p.m. in O'Dea's Hotel.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Morgan.

"I will propose that the seats, picnic tables and wooden sign, in Corry's Field, be treated with preservative and painted this year, as the seats especially will not last another year if not treated this year".

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Burke.

Cllr. Morgan said if this matter is not attended to straight away the seats will rot. He asked if this matter could be addressed straight away. Mr. Raftery said that the roads programme will have to be finished first before any work can be done on the seats.

"That the grass which remains uncut in the middle of the west field at Corry's Field be offered free, if necessary, to any farmer who would be willing to cut and remove the cut grass".

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Regan.

Cllr. Morgan said that Joe Griffin might be interested in cutting this area. Mayor Maher said he would check out this matter. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that a plan was drawn up by the Tree Council of Ireland in relation to Corry's Field and perhaps it should be re-visited and see if this area could be improved. She also said that John Convene, Birdwatch Ireland did a report on the different species of birds to be found in this area. Cllr. Morgan said that the hedge is in need of cutting as it is too near the footpath and people are getting bites from the flies lodging in the bushes. Mr. Raftery said that there is no funding for this area at the moment.

Any Other Business.

Cllr. Bane said she would like to congratulate Mayor Maher on his appointment. She asked if he would consider having a Mayoral Ball and what ever funds are raised it could go towards improvements at the Long Point and Corry's Field. Mayor Maher said he has just been elected but if he were to organise a Mayoral Ball he would need the support of all the members.

Cllr. Morgan said that a contractor applied weed killer to the Donnellan Drive area of the town and it burned the grass in the Estate. He asked if this contractor was employed by Galway County Council and if the product was a health hazard. Mr. Raftery said it is a private contractor who is on the tender list for all Local Authorities and his product is in keeping with all regulations.

Cllr. Regan asked if a School Warden has been appointed yet. Town Clerk said it was advertised again and the closing date is the 3rd July, 2007.

Cllr. Burke asked who is responsible for cutting grass on the Bypass. Mr. Raftery said that the roundabouts have been cut. They only can cut 1 metre strip on the National Route under the Wildlife Act. They will look at it outside the nesting season and see what can be done.

Cllr. Regan said that the bottle banks are a disgrace and asked when they will be moving to Rathready. Cllr. Burke asked how many prosecutions have been taking and what amount of revenue has it generated for the town. Mr. Cullen said he would try and have the information for the next meeting.

Mr. Raftery said that he had received a circular regarding the identification of locations for Low Cost Safety Improvement Works on Non-National Roads. He asked that the members look at this circular and draw up a list for consideration before the next meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed this 09 day of July, 2007. Mayor: Michael Maher

Minutes and proceedings of Monthly Meeting of Loughrea Town Council held in the Credit Union Offices, Dunkellin Street, Loughrea, on the 9th July, 2007.

I lathair.

Mayor: Cllr. Michael Maher.

Members: Cllrs. Geraldine Bane, Gabriel Burke, Jimmy Curley, Mary Gunter-Nix, Pat Hynes, Norman Morgan, James Regan, Sheamie Tully.

Officials: Adrian Raftery, Executive Engineer, Imelda Deely, Town Clerk.

Apologies for Jim Cullen, Director of Services, who was unavoidably absent.

The meeting opened with prayer. A minutes silence was observed as a mark of respect to the late Paul McNamee, Lake Road, Loughrea, who was tragically killed in a plane crash at Inverin on the 5th July, 2007. The sympathy of the Town Council was extended to his wife and family.

Confirmation of Minutes of Annual Meeting held on the 9th June, 2007.

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Burke that the Minutes of the Annual Meeting be adopted.

Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on the 9th June, 2007.

It was proposed by Cllr. Tully seconded by Cllr. Gunter-Nix that the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting be adopted.

Matters arising from the minutes.

Cllr. Regan asked Mayor Maher if he met Superintendent Walsh regarding drinking at the Long Point, illegal parking and law and order around the town. Mayor Maher said he spoke to the Superintendent and he will meet with the Town Council members in the near future. He would let the members know when it is arranged. He said the Superintendent intends to put more Gardai on the street to deal with this problem.

Cllr. Bane asked when the public toilet will be completed and ready for use. She said they were informed at the last meeting that it would be ready for the end of June. Cllr. Regan asked what is the final cost of providing the toilet. Cllr. Morgan asked why every job in Loughrea seems to take so long. This would seem to be a simple task and yet it goes on for months. Mr. Raftery said that the County Council has finished work on the toilet. There are just waiting for the E.S.B to produce the final certificate.

Cllr. Curley asked if the grass will be cut along the By-pass road. He said it is into the tourist season and the sides of the By-pass road is in deplorable condition. He asked if it will be cut before the Galway Races. He asked if any plants or shrubs will be put at the roundabouts. Mayor Maher said there is an acre of ground at the Monearnmore roundabout and something less at the other ones and it is difficult to maintain them. Cllr. Burke said that some money is retained from the scheme to put artistic features at the roundabouts. He said when the Sewerage Plant was completed

an artistic feature was put in the park at the end of Mount Carmel Crescent so he expects that something similar will happen at the roundabouts. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said a piece of sculpture or some decorations needs to be put in place at the roundabouts to make it more attractive

Mayor Maher said he had arranged to meet the President and the incoming President of the Chamber of Commerce on the 10th July, 2007 in relation to matters around the town.

Mayor Maher said he had attended the Area Committee meeting in the new Council offices in the afternoon. He said Mr. Lavelle had proposals in relation to the adopted Traffic Management Plan for Loughrea Town. Mr. Lavelle said that if the members were to consider alternative traffic and pedestrian options for Main Street, there were alterations that could be made that would create more car parking spaces on the Main Street. He said if a one way system was introduced on the Main Street parallel parking could be provided on both sides of the street which would create 125 spaces. He outlined the new plan on a drawing. Mayor Maher said there was a budget there presently to provide this system but there would not be monies available at a later stage if the members decided to change their minds. Mr. Lavelle said that the contractors would be laying the footpaths in the coming weeks and a decision had to be made. Mayor Maher said Cllr. Hynes had asked that a decision be deferred for one week in order to discuss the matter with the Town Council members at their meeting later on in the day. He displayed a map to the members which was out of date. He said that Mr. Lavelle was to forward an up to date copy, by post, to the Area Councillors and the Town Council members. Cllr. Hynes said that Mr. Lavelle made a presentation to the members at the meeting in the afternoon stating that funding was available on the day if the Main Street was made a one way system. He said the traffic would move east to west on the Main Street and then exit the town by Barrack Street onto Cross Street. He said that the Developer at Cross Street has put in a roundabout to facilitate this road. The link road would continue on to meet the By-pass road near Schlegal. He said the Chamber of Commerce had employed a Consultant about this matter while the road works were ongoing. He said his report had indicated that there was an increase in turnover if a one way system was introduced. Cllr. Regan said he was totally opposed to traffic going up Barrack Street as it would not be able to take it. He said the Main Street should maintain a two way traffic flow. Cllr. Bane said that the traffic management system would merit a one way system but it would be difficult to implement. She said the Chamber of Commerce had held a meeting at which 60 members attended and the decision was rescinded and it was agreed by all that the Main Street maintain the two way traffic system. Cllr. Burke said that Cross Street is already congested with all the schools and if extra traffic was introduced it would be a complete bottle neck. Cllr. Morgan said he would consider it a great move to have a ring road around the town and open up the Coursing field road onto Kincullia and onto the Bypass road. It would keep the traffic moving. Mr. Raftery said Mr. Lavelle just wanted to throw out the idea so as people can comment on it. Agreement would have to be reached now so as the services would be put down properly if it is going to be left a two way system. Cllr. Burke said he had a plan of the original document and there was no question of a one way system. Mayor Maher said that the Traffic Management Plan will not be reviewed until April of 2008. Cllr. Bane said that the review of the Traffic Management Plan keeps being pushed out which is totally unsatisfactory. Mayor Maher proposed that an informal meeting take place on

Wednesday to discuss this matter. It was proposed by Cllr. Burke that Mr. Lavelle attend this meeting to discuss this matter. This was seconded by Cllr. Curley. Mr. Raftery said the decision will be made by the County Councillors.

Cllr. Regan asked when the bottle banks will be moved to the new depot. He said he understands that the banks were for household bottles but he notices commercial people using the facilities. He asked if the Community Warden could address this matter. Mr. Raftery said that the ground is water logged at Rathruddy and it will require a large amount of ground works before work can commence on it. He said that the Community Warden has just returned from annual leave and he was not aware of how many prosecutions were taken. He would check it out and have the information for the next meeting. Cllr. Burke asked what items can be disposed of at the new depot. Mr. Raftery said it was not decided yet. Cllr. Gunter-Nix proposed that the Environmental Education Officer be invited to a meeting to discuss this matter. She requested the Town Clerk to write to her and see when she will be available.

Correspondence.

A letter from Director of Services in relation to the use of the Old Council Offices at Barrack Street, Loughrea. Cllr. Burke said that he did not consider this a satisfactory reply from Kevin Kelly and Colm Wallace. He still reiterates that the old building should be used for housing for the elderly. He said that elderly people are living in Fahy Gardens and have to get a taxi to get to the Bank, Post Office, Doctor Dentist Shops etc. which is adding a lot of expense on them. He said if there were housed in this area they would be near the Church and all the other facilities. He considers this is an ideal opportunity and one that will not come up again ever. He said that if it is properly planned it could cater for a large number of the elderly people. He said that the County Council would not be at a loss as there would be 100% funding from the Department of the Environment for Housing. Cllr. Regan said the market value of this property, in the centre of town, could not justify the use of the old offices for housing for the elderly. Grants for housing from the Department of the Environment could not compensate for the value of this property on the open market. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that this property should be looked at by the Housing Section of Galway County Council with a view to providing housing for the elderly. She says that a number of those people would have no close relatives and would have to depend on a taxi service to do business in the town as there is no public service. She says that the elderly should not be forgotten in the Community. Cllr. Morgan supported the other speakers. He said the opportunity should be seized right away. Commercial interests should not be put before the rights of the elderly.

Low Cost Remedial Measures Programme 2008. Mr. Raftery said that the following is a list of proposals to be done in order of priority –

1. Junction of Courthouse Road and N. 66 Gort Road, Loughrea.
2. Entrance to the Long Point, Loughrea from R351 – Loughrea Woodford road.
3. Junction of Athenry Road, Loughrea & Mount Carmel Crescent.
4. Junction of Danesfort Road and The Hill, Loughrea.

He said the submission was forwarded to Damien Mitchell.

Cllr. Regan said that he could not agree to close the Gort Road as it would put smaller shops out of business. Cllr. Tully supported Cllr. Regan. Cllr. Morgan said if the moot at the side of the road was cut away it would prevent people parking at this location. He said this area should be looked at when the Traffic Management Plan is being reviewed. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that the members should go by the professional opinion of the town engineer. She said that this area has been mentioned several times as being dangerous. She said that motorists should be compelled to park in the car park provided beside the playground and not on the road. Cllr. Bane said that there was an accident at this location a few years ago. She said some measures should be implemented to prevent this happening again. Mr. Raftery said that only one area would be selected. He said the final decision will be with the NRA.

Letter from Planning Section in relation to Retail Strategy/ Review of the County Development Plan. Mayor Maher said the members could discuss this matter at the Special Meeting on the 11/7/2007 as well.

Department Circular in relation to plebiscite.

Letter from Chamber of Commerce stating agenda for next meeting to be held on the 10/7/2007 in O'Dea's Hotel at 9.00 p.m.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Norman Morgan.

"I will propose that Galway County Council be called on to honour their commitment given to the Church of Ireland in their legally binding agreement to maintain the grounds of Loughrea Library; and that the said Galway County Council set a sum aside each year for purpose referred to, so that the grounds would be kept in harmony with this library of learning and culture"

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Mayor Maher.

"That a recommendation be sent to Galway County Council to provide Traffic Lights at Westbridge multi junction, Loughrea, similar to those at Galway Shopping Centre".

Cllr. Burke said that the Main Street is now a Regional Road and the Westbridge is a National Secondary Road. He said people would have to stop at the end of Dunkellin Street before entering the national route. He could not agree to have lights at this location similar to the Shopping Centre as it would only cause more problems. He said the traffic lights at the Shopping Centre are constantly on the traffic news.

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Mayor Maher.

Cllr. Morgan said that he considers that traffic lights at this location would improve the traffic flow.

"That Galway County Council is called on immediately to stop cars and other vehicles illegally double parking at Barrack Street, Loughrea".

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Tully.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Gunter-Nix.

"That the wall plaque "Loughrea Town Commissioners" be moved from the old Council Offices in Barrack Street to the new offices further down the street".

It was proposed by Cllr. Gunter-Nix seconded by Cllr. Burke.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that she noticed that Loughrea Town Council logo or name is not on the new building. She asked if this matter could be addressed. She said that Loughrea Town Commissioners has been in existence since 1826 and she feels that they should get recognition in the new civic offices. Cllr. Burke said if visitors come to Loughrea looking for the Town Clerk's office they will not be able to find it as it does not exist. He said while the sign on the old office would not fit in with the new building it indicated where to find the Town Clerk and the Town Council offices. He fully supports Cllr. Gunter Nix on this matter. He said it does not show much respect for the elected members of Loughrea Town Council. Cllr. Morgan said Loughrea Town Council is under the same County Manager and should be given recognition.

"That this Council condemn in the strongest possible terms the wanton vandalism which occurred recently when two copper beech trees were cut down at the Hill".

It was proposed by Cllr. Gunter-Nix seconded by Cllr. Tully.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that a number of trees were cut down with a saw up near Garrybreeda playground recently in the middle of the night. She says that the rigours of the law should be shown to the culprits. Cllr. Morgan said maybe the County Council Staff cut them if there were dangerous. Mr. Raftery said that the County Council Staff were not working at this location.

"That this Council send a welcome letter to the Department of Transport Staff, who has recently moved to Loughrea, and invite them to attend a meeting"

It was proposed by Cllr. Gunter-Nix seconded by Cllr. Burke.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said the Town Council had set up a working group to make a case for decentralisation of a Government Department to Loughrea. She said they were lucky enough to be successful in their bid to relocate a Government Department to Loughrea and they should acknowledge this by inviting them to the next Town Council meeting. It was unanimously agreed that the Town Clerk invite them to the next Town Council meeting.

Any Other Business.

Cllr. Burke asked what is the black tank on Danesfort Drive and what is the purpose of it. He said it has been there for the past few months. Mr. Raftery said it may be a holding tank before the surface water goes into the network. He said he would investigate it.

Cllr. Bane said that a note of congratulations should be sent to the Creative Writers Group on their recent award.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed this 10th day of September, 2007. Mayor; Michael Maher

Minutes of proceedings of Monthly Meeting of Loughrea Town Council held on the 10th September, 2007 in the Council Chamber, Barrack Street, Loughrea

I lathair.

Mayor: Cllr. Michael Maher.

Members: Cllrs. Geraldine Bane, Gabriel Burke, Jimmy Curley, Mary Gunter-Nix, Pat Hynes, Norman Morgan, James Regan, Sheamie Tully.

Officials: Martina Moloney, County Manager, Jim Cullen, Director of Services, Adrian Raftery, Executive Engineer, Imelda Deely, Town Clerk.

The meeting opened with prayer. Mayor Maher proposed that a minutes silence be observed as a mark of respect to the late Michael Moloney, who died tragically since the town council's last meeting and anyone else who died in Loughrea area. M.Moloney was an employee of the County Council in Loughrea.

Mr.Cullen, Director of Services, welcomed the County Manager, Ms. Martina Moloney to the town council meeting. .

The County Manager said she was delighted to take up the role and is looking forward to working with Loughrea Town Council. She said that Mr. Cullen had given her a mini tour of the town before the meeting. She said it has grown and progressed enormously since she was last in Galway. She said since the By-pass was open there has been a high-level of investment in its housing market and commercial infrastructure which gives the town a chance to progress. She said it is rich in natural heritage and a strong retail base.

Confirmation of Minutes.

It was proposed by Cllr. Gunter-Nix seconded by Cllr. Morgan that the minutes of the July monthly meeting be adopted.

Matters arising from the minutes.

Cllr. Curley asked for an update on the progress on the Main Street refurbishment. He asked if the buses will be going two-way through the Main Street. Mayor Maher said it look like the buses will be at Station Road car park. He said work is progressing well and it should be complete in another month. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that the bus stop will have to be looked at immediately as people use this service for hospital appointments and also students going to third level colleges and they are soaked wet before they get on the bus when there is no bus shelter. Cllr. Burke said that a bus shelter will have to be looked at whether it is Dublin road or Station Road car park. Mayor Maher said that the buses will still be going through the Main Street. Cllr. Tully said that the Main Street seems very narrow and he would find it hard to believe that it is a two way traffic system especially outside Supermacs. He said that he has received representations from the public in relation to traffic flows and safety if it is a two way system with cars backing out of the parking area. He said that Heavy

Goods Vehicles would also be entitled to use the Main Street, as they pay road tax the same as any other vehicle, adding to the danger. He said that car parking spaces was available at the Arcade in Loughrea if the County Council were interested in it. Mayor Maher said that the Main Street will take a two way system. Cllr. Regan said that the area outside Cunnane's jeweller's needs to be tapered as it is very narrow at Piggott Street onto Main Street and he considers the right angle too sharp. Mr. Raftery said that this area meets all the standards and he considers there is no reason to change it. Cllr. Burke asked why the gullies were not wheelchair friendly at Dunkellin Street or at least covered. Mr. Raftery said that the path was overcrowded with services and rock and it could not be piped under the path. He said the Resident Engineer had met with wheelchair users and they were satisfied with them as they were. Cllr. Curley asked if traffic lights will be erected at the Westbridge. Mr. Raftery said that it would not be feasible to put traffic lights at this junction because five roads meet.

Cllr. Regan asked if the bottle banks were being left on Barrack Street. Mr. Cullen said that the planning process has gone through for the recycling centre, animal shelter and depot for materials. He said it is gone out to tender and Consultants have been appointed to view them and their report is awaited. He said he would be looking at an alternative site for the bottle banks in the meantime.

Audited Annual Financial Statement for 2006.

It was proposed by Cllr. Gunter-Nix seconded by Cllr. Burke that the Annual Financial Statement as presented by the Auditor be approved.

Correspondence.

Letter from Baffle Poetry Group seeking funding for the upcoming festival on the 26th October, 2007. Mayor Maher said they had agreed at the Estimates meeting that there be no funding to any group.

Letter from AMAI regarding Annual Conference for 2007 in New Ross. Two delegates will attend.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Burke.

"I will call on Galway County Council to convert the Old Pound in Loughrea into a Park. (See plan). This Park to be called Stoney Brennan Park"

It was proposed by Cllr. Burke seconded by Cllr. Gunter-Nix.

Cllr. Burke said for some years Stone Brennan's plaque has come up at Town Council's meetings and where it should be sited. He said this area was submitted as an Urban Renewal Project but was not successful. He said he had done some work on this project since the last Town Council meeting with a competent engineer who came up with this idea as circulated to the members. He said some of the features which could be incorporated is Stoney Brennan's plaque, disused water pump at the Westbridge, which could be a water feature in the centre, greenery 2 metres high and lower shrubbery, rockery, bandstand, natural stone steps/seating and cobble stones. He said it would be maintenance free. He said that they had done an estimate of the

cost and it was in the region of €80,000. He said he contacted a prominent builder who is prepared to do the labour on the scheme, free of charge, provided the material is supplied. He said that the building is in the ownership of the Department of Justice and a request was forwarded to Minister McDowell to have it decommissioned. Unfortunately the Minister did not regain his Dail seat. He said if it is not decommissioned the County Council can not lease it. He requested Mr. Cullen to take up this matter with the County Council to have it decommissioned. Mr. Cullen agreed to this. Cllr. Regan said he asked the owner of Millennium House if he would erect Stoney Brennan as near as possible to where it was originally sited at the Westbridge and he agreed to this. Cllr. Bane said that the Pound is an eye soar and there should be a focal point in the town and this area would be ideal whether Stoney Brennan goes there or not. She said nothing has been done with the fairgreen in years. Cllr. Tully said he also supported this motion. Mr. Cullen said he would submit it to the County Council for consideration but financing it could be another problem.

"I will propose that Galway County Council designate Trading Areas for Street Traders on trading days".

It was proposed by Cllr. Burke seconded by Cllr. Curley.

Cllr. Burke said it is time to regularise the Trading areas in Loughrea. At the moment they are scattered all over the town i.e. Kings Street, Barrack Street and the Westbridge. It is time to pick a trading area and stick to it. He said it is very dangerous for people trying to use the streets and the traders are trading on private property. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that Barrack Street was the traditional area for trading and we should stick to that area. Cllr. Regan said that there is a Doctors surgery on Barrack Street and it would be difficult for patients attending there. He said that this matter should be discussed at a special meeting. Cllr. Curley said that they had held a previous meeting on this matter and a decision was deferred pending the completion of the Main Street and the traffic flow and review of the Traffic Management Plan. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said the Town Council should arrange a date and time for the special meeting. Mayor Maher said he was available on the 24th September and it could take place then. This was agreed. Mr. Raftery to get information on existing designated areas before the meeting. Cllr. Burke said it is time to deal with this matter and let the Traders in to do business.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Morgan.

"I will propose that a recommendation be sent to Galway County Council – That the Walks, which were pedestrianised by Galway County Council, be strictly maintained as per that directive. That on occasions when maintenance work is being carried out there that the gate be opened to allow equipment onto the site, then closed: and when equipment is being taken from the area, that the gate be re-opened and locked immediately after the equipment has left the site. That the Walks be kept locked every night. That the County Council take into account that there is no proper foundation under the walkway: and that parts of the banks of the moat have fallen into the moat"

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Maher.

"That when the Council cut the grass in our public parks that the edges also be cut. The edges in the Green, Loughrea, which are not cut, look most unsightly".

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Tully.

"That Loughrea Town Council sends a recommendation to the Minister for Justice that no religious or sect identification be part of the Garda uniform: as such would automatically entitle all religious and sect groups to add their insignia to the uniform".

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Burke.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Bane.

"That the E.S.B. be requested to maintain their building on Piggott Street, Loughrea, to a reasonable standard i.e. the shrubbery and the accumulation of litter on the site, be removed until such time as it is sold".

It was proposed by Cllr. Bane seconded by Cllr. Burke.

"That monies be sought to improve and maintain the site of the pump house on Coy's Boreen which is currently in bad repair"

It was proposed by Cllr. Bane seconded by Cllr. Curley.

Mr. Rafter said that he will try and secure funding from the Health and Safety Officer for this purpose. Pumping Station is in use to pump the sewer from two sides. Cllr. Bane requested that a proper gate be erected in the meantime. Mr. Rafter agreed to this.

"That we recommend to Galway County Council that they investigate any possibilities of widening the Gort Road, from the entrance to Corry's field towards Gort".

It was proposed by Cllr. Bane seconded by Cllr. Hynes.

Cllr. Bane said that this area is very dangerous and is badly in need of widening. Cllr. Hynes said that €200,000 has been allocated for the realignment of a short portion of this road. It starts at Ryan's land and comes back to Corry's field towards the speed limit. Mr. Rafter said the County Council are in negotiations with the land owner with a view to reaching agreement. When agreement is reached works will start immediately.

Another Other Business.

Cllr. Regan asked for an up date on the junction at Earlsparck, Loughrea. He is aware that it is gone to design stage and he wants to know when work will commence on this scheme. Mr. Rafter said that preliminary documents have been prepared and a survey will be carried out this year. He has no idea when construction will start.

Cllr. Regan asked if car tax will be issued in the New County Council offices. Mr. Cullen said that the office in Loughrea was planned since 2001 and circumstances have changed since then. He said with improved technology people can do it on line and there is a 20% take up on this option. He said the facility is available in Ballinasloe which covers east of the County. He said there is an embargo on recruitment in local authorities. When the Council decide to offer this service elsewhere it needs to be maintained in two places. It is not as simple as taking staff from H.Q. and placing them somewhere else. Additional staff will be required if this service is offered in Loughrea. He said it is intended to provide simple transaction type services as soon as possible not complex ones. He said the first objective is to get the place up and running. Cllr. Gunter-Nix asked for the Town Council logo and a sign for Town Clerk's office be indicated on the building.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said she noted that the Tidy Towns awards were announced this evening. She said that Loughrea had not entered this competition this year in view of the road works on the Main Street. She said the Loughrea Environmental Group will apply for the local and national competitions next year and she would like to see the County Council and the community working together for the betterment of the town. She also requested volunteers to come on board with the Loughrea Environmental Group to help with the clean up.

Cllr. Bane asked if the School Warden will be replaced. The Town Clerk said that the position had been advertised twice and the position offered to the successful candidates but they declined to take up the position. Cllr. Regan asked if this position could be incorporated with the General Operatives position or another position like Caretaker in the new building and increase the hours and it may make it more attractive. Cllr. Tully said that the Board of Management had circulated the parents with a note about the vacancy if anyone is interested in it. Mr. Rafter said a staff member had carried out the duties of School Warden until the end of last term but it is not feasible to continue because of the shortage of staff in Loughrea Engineering area. Mr. Cullen said the position is for 10 hours and we can not exceed those hours. He said the position will be advertised again and see the outcome.

Cllr. Bane asked if the pedestrian crossing on the Gort Road could be burned off as it is causing confusion. Mr. Rafter said he would look into the matter.

Cllr. Burke said he would like to compliment Cllr. Gunter-Nix and the Burial Ground Committee on the restoration of the Children's burial ground at St. Laurencefields and also receiving the Heritage Award in Kilkenny.

Cllr. Burke asked what is the legal position with the transfer of land in relation to the Swimming Pool Committee. He said the contractor has not got possession of the land. He said he spent 11 years getting this far and he does not want to see it fall at the last hurdle. Mr. Cullen said it is either with the Department or the County Council and he would check it out and let him know.

Cllr. Tully said that there is a triathlon at the Long Point from the 22 to 23 September 2007 and he requested that the toilets be left open until after that date. He said there are contestants coming from all over the country and it is terrible that the changing

rooms and toilet are not open. Mr. Raftery said that he would give a key to one of the organisers and they could open and close them.

Mr. Cullen said he would like to welcome the Town Council members to the new offices and he said that finally they had got a home after being nomadic for a number of years. He said previously they were accommodated in O'Dea's Hotel then to the Credit Union and finally to this office. He said the present accommodation is the superior one. He looks forward to working with the members for the good of the town. Cllr. Hynes said he would like to thank Jim Cullen and John Diskin for securing the premises which was formally an education centre. He would like to pay tribute to the De La Salle Brothers and the lay teachers who were on the staff. He would like to pay a special tribute to John Quinn and John Hynes outstanding lay teachers who worked tirelessly for the good of the pupils. He suggested that a plaque be erected on the building in recognition of the De La Salle Brothers and the lay teachers.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said she would like to thank the Credit Union for facilitating the Town Council meetings over the last few years and requested that a thank you note be sent to them.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said she would like to congratulate Galway under 21 Hurling team for winning the Tommy Mahon cup and she hopes it will bring success at senior level. She said that they should get recognition by the Town Council members in due course.

This concluded the business of the Town Council Meeting.

Signed this 8th day of October, 2007. Mayor: Michael Maher

Minutes of proceedings of Monthly Meeting of Loughrea Town Council held on the 8th October, 2007 in the Council Chamber, Barrack Street, Loughrea

I lathair:

Mayor: Cllr. Michael Maher.

Members: Cllrs. Geraldine Bane, Gabriel Burke, Jimmy Curley, Pat Hynes, Norman Morgan, James Regan, Sheamie Tully.

Officials: Jim Cullen, Director of Services, Adrian Raftery, Executive Engineer, Imelda Deely, Town Clerk.

Apologies for Cllr. Gunter-Nix who was unavoidable absent.

The meeting opened with prayer. Mayor Maher included all the people who died in Loughrea since the last meeting and also the two firemen who lost their lives tragically in Bray, Co. Wicklow, in the course of their duty.

Confirmation of Minutes.

It was proposed by Cllr. Curley seconded by Cllr. Regan the minutes of the monthly meeting held on the 10th September, 2007 be adopted.

Matters arising from the minutes.

Cllr. Curley asked for an up date on the refurbishment of the Main Street. He asked when it is proposed to complete this work. Mayor Maher said he had attended the Area Meeting the previous Thursday and Mr. Lavelle, Senior Engineer, said that the Main Street will be getting the first coat of tar on 14th October, 2007. He said it is hoped to have the Main Street complete on the 15th November, 2007. Cllr. Curley asked if the buses will be returning to the Main Street as heretofore. Mayor Maher said that there is no provision for the bus stops on Main Street unless an extra loading bay is put in. He said there would be a further area meeting within the next two weeks and a decision will be made on this matter.

Cllr. Hynes said that he had a letter from Peggy Loughlin, 6 Ashlawn, Loughrea, representative from the Active Retirement Association regarding this matter. She has collected signatures from over 60 people all expressing the wish to retain the bus stops on the Main Street. He said he has also written to the Regional Manager regarding this matter. He said he had got a reply from the Manager of Bus Eireann, similar to that circulated by the Town Clerk to the members. He outlined a few points from the letter as follows –
Numerous complaints had been received from customers during the works regarding inconvenience of the location of the temporary bus stops and asking when the service will be returning to the original location.

He said that Bus Eireann has also experienced a decrease in patronage since the works started because of the remoteness of the bus stop resulting in loss of revenue.

Locations of stops at original points were safe and central.

He said if it was moved to Station Road that people would feel more vulnerable, particularly the elderly and people with disabilities because it is more remote and poorly light.

It would be totally unacceptable from a health and safety point of view.

Bus Eireann said it has received no communication from the County Council since January 2007 before the works started. Cllr. Hynes said that the public have been lobbying all politicians because nobody can give them the information. They heard rumours that the bus stop would also be sited at Barrack Street. He said there will have to be public consultation on the issue of the bus stops and let the people speak.

Cllr. Regan said the County Council members must have turned a blind eye on the plan because there is no way that a two way system will operate on the Main Street. He said it is bolting the door when the horse is gone.

Cllr. Burke said that the Bus Drivers did not use the bus stops provided for them prior to the refurbishment so there is no point in Bus Eireann and private buses crying wolf now. He said that he had recommended to the County Council to remove the buses from the Main Street because they were only causing traffic jams. They would not pull in collecting and letting off passengers. He said it will create more parking spaces on the Main Street if there are no bus bays.

Cllr. Bane said that the letter from the Active Retirement Association highlights in print what the public have been saying to the members for months. She said that the buses could not use the bus bays because motorists were parked in them. She said it is a major issue for people and should have been planned from the beginning.

Mayor Maher said it would seem that the County Councillors were conned when they were informed that it was a temporary arrangement to move the buses off the Main Street. He does not think it feasible for a two way system to operate on the Main Street with the present layout. Mr. Lavelle said that a bus shelter and toilet could be provided if they were moved to Station Road.

Cllr. Tully said that people had requested Bus Eireann to provide bus shelters for passengers at Dublin road but they ignored them. He said now Bus Eireann is pressing the panic button when it is too late.

Mr. Cullen said he does not know what the final decision will be made in regard to this matter. He agrees that the main users of the buses are the elderly and the young who do not have access to independent travel. He said that most people live on either side of the town and not on the Main Street. He said that they have to travel to a central location from either side of the town which is a long distance. He said perhaps a stop on either side of the town might be more practical but Roads and Transportation would be making the decision in the near future.

Cllr. Bane asked if any response had been received regarding the old E.S.B. offices. She said that the area was still littered and students converge at this area making it

worse. She asked if any action could be taken on this matter. Mr. Cullen said there is a law to combat littering. He said that the Community Warden would get onto it if no response is received from the E.S.B. Manager.

Cllr. Regan asked for an update on the Bottle Banks at Barrack Street. He said it seems that another set of bottle banks are going in and he wants this matter clarified. He asked if they can be moved to Station Road car park where there are no residents until they move to Rathruddy. Mr. Raftery said his information is correct. Environment Section has arranged for another set of banks to be put in at this location.

Cllr. Burke said they were told at the last meeting they would be moved to another location until the Rathruddy area is ready. He asked when the Rathruddy recycling centre will be ready.

Mr. Cullen said he was not aware that more bottle banks were going in at this location. He said the Town Engineer got a call from the Environment Section of the Council that extra banks were going in at this location. He said he has sympathy for anyone living near bottle banks. He does not consider the car park a suitable alternative because they need to be quite public so as to control illegal dumping. He said they may have to take them out entirely if they are creating problems. He said they have been told by the Consultants that it is going to be very expensive to develop the Rathruddy depot as it is a difficult site. He can not say for definite when it will be ready for use.

Cllr. Bane said the Loughrea Environmental Group fought tooth and nail to get them into the town so it might be worth trying an alternative venue like the car parks. She said there would be more mobility in the car parks and less dumping.

Cllr. Morgan said that the recycling unit could be sited at the Long Point near the waterworks until the Rathruddy unit is ready. The area could be fenced off.

Mr. Raftery said there would be no cameras at the other locations and it would be difficult to monitor the situation. Cllr. Regan said that you would need a camera in your hand 24 hours a day to get the culprits. Mr. Raftery said that there would be a loss of 6 or 7 car spaces and also access to empty the bottle banks would be another issue.

Cllr. Tully said that it would give 6 – 7 additional parking spaces on Barrack Street if the bottle banks were removed from this location.

Cllr. Bane asked for an update on the position of the School Warden. The Town Clerk said that the closing date for receipt of applications was the 29th September, 2007. She said that Human Resources were arranging to hold the interviews. No date has been fixed yet for the interviews.

Cllr. Burke asked for an update on the Swimming Pool. He said he made several calls to County Hall and left messages to return his call but nobody replied. Mr. Cullen said there was some issue between the Chief State Solicitor in Dublin regarding the lease which he understands is now sorted. He said while there was a public announcement on the funding being forthcoming the County Council has received no

communication to this effect. Cllr. Burke said that if everything else is sorted the funding will not be a problem.

Presentation by the Department of Transport.

The Town Clerk said that the representative from the Department of Transport regretted he could not make the meeting because of an urgent meeting with the Minister. He said he will come to the November meeting. Mayor Maher said that the starting time will be 7.30. p.m. It is too difficult to make the 7.00 p.m. deadline.

Fix date for Annual Budget Meeting

The Town Clerk said that the statutory time for holding the annual budget meeting for the Town Council was between the 15th November, 2007 and 16th December, 2007. It was proposed by Cllr. Regan seconded by Cllr. Morgan that the annual budget meeting be held on the 10th December, 2007.

Correspondence.

The Town Clerk said that the late Michael Maloney, who died tragically on the 14th July, 2007 was a tenant of 4 Lakeview, Loughrea. His wife died some weeks later. Brian Maloney has requested to take over the tenancy of his father's house as he resided with him. This arrangement is agreeable to his brothers and sisters (letter attached). Cllr. Burke said to draw up a legal agreement and make sure everything is in order.

It was proposed by Cllr. Regan seconded by Cllr. Morgan that Brian Maloney be allowed to take over the tenancy of 4 Lakeview Loughrea.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Curley.

"In order to bring business back into our town following the roadwork's for the past nine months I propose that Galway County Council would allow free parking in all designated parking areas on Saturdays.

It was proposed by Cllr. Curley seconded by Cllr. Regan.

Cllr. Curley said it might improve morale in the town if free parking was permitted for the next year in all areas of the town. The businesses and the public have suffered for the last two and a half years with roadworks on Main Street and Barrack Street. This could be a gesture from the Town Council to bring business back to Loughrea. Cllr. Morgan said that Galway County Council could not be at the loss of a year's revenue from paid parking after 2.5 years with interrupted parking. Cllr. Regan suggested that the free parking be for the month of December 2007 and January 2008. Cllr. Burke supported this suggestion. He said it would be a great bonanza for the town. Mr. Cullen said he would have reservations about this gesture as would the business people of the town. It could defeat the object of the paid parking which is the turnover of spaces. If people can park for hours on end, some will win but more will lose. When paid parking was introduced the turnover increased. He said he would refer this matter to the Roads & Transportation Unit of Galway County Council.

(ii) In view of the recent sudden death of young people in our schools I want to call on the Minister for Education to provide defibrillators in each school and the appropriate training. This will help to save lives and cherish our children".

It was proposed by Cllr. Curley seconded by Cllr. Morgan.

Cllr. Curley said that a number of young people have died in our schools recently around Ireland. He said if a defibrillator was on stand by it might have saved some lives. He proposed that a letter be written to the Minister for Finance to abolish V.A.T. on defibrillators so as to defray the cost on the schools. He said the defibrillator is about €3,000 and V.A.T. is €500 - €600. All the members supported this idea.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Morgan.

"That Galway County Council be requested to inform Loughrea Town Council why they insist on maintaining Cunnane's corner, at the junction of Main Street and Piggott Street, Loughrea, as a street lighting "Black Spot"; in spite of the fact that Loughrea Town Council passed a resolution, on two occasions recommending that the matter be corrected".

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Tully.

Cllr. Morgan said that the area near Cunnane's shop is very dark as the light is blocked. The light is too high on the pole. He said if it was focussed on the ground and lowered it might improve the situation. Mr. Raftery said there is no funding for public lighting in this area. He said the programme for 2007 is lights at Danesfort road. He said the allocation for new public lighting is €10,000.00 per annum.

"That Loughrea Town Council asks why Galway County Council discourages preservation work in Garrybreeda Cemetery yet the Council do not carry out the work themselves".

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Burke.

Cllr. Morgan said a number of people had come together to cut the ivy back from the old church in Garrybreeda and from the stone walls. He said they were stopped by the Heritage Officer. She said she would meet them to guide them on the removal of the ivy but she never returned. Cllr. Regan said that the Deputy Heritage Officer had outlined at a recent meeting the guidelines and procedures to deal with this matter. Cllr. Burke said that the community refer to this matter each year at the cemetery service. He asked how they could secure funds to carry out this project. Mr. Cullen said he would investigate this matter with the Environment Section and see what can be done. The Town Clerk said that she spoke to the Heritage Officer and she said she would forward information to the members on the procedure for securing a heritage grant to carry out this work. She said she will meet the committee as soon as she could.

"That a recommendation be sent to Galway County Council to have the wall by the footpath from Loughrea Westbridge to start of McNerney's re-built, as it is a serious cause of danger to children and others using said footpaths.

It was proposed by Cllr Morgan seconded by Cllr. Bane.

Cllr. Morgan said that an individual had built a bridge over the moat at this location and knocked the wall in two places. He said it is very dangerous for people using this area as it is not properly secure. Cllr. Regan said that the applicant had been granted planning permission and this should be checked to see if it is in compliance with safety regulations. Mr. Cullen said he would investigate this matter with the Planning Section and if it is in breach of planning conditions set out he would have the Enforcement Officer deal with it.

Another Other Business.

Mayor Maher said that he had correspondence from the Cosmona Residents concerning the condition of the area after the construction of the By-pass. He said they are looking for landscaping to be done and picnic seats installed at this location before it is handed over to the County Council. He said he spoke to Mr. Raftery about this matter and he sent in a submission to the NRA regarding this. He said the NRA has stated that this was not included as part of the accommodation works. It was proposed by Mayor Maher seconded by Cllr. Morgan that this area be brought up to an acceptable standard. Cllr. Burke asked if Wills Brothers has finished with the Bypass or who will cut the grass along it including the roundabouts. He said there is nothing but long grass, thistles, litter, weeds etc along the whole route. It is a disgrace after spending so much money on it. He said farmers land have been left in a mess with drainage problems and ground damaged by machinery. He asked if there is funding to carry out this work and who has the responsibility for it. Mr. Raftery said that Wills Brothers has left a small sum of money to cover minor defects but not enough to do all that needs to be done. Cllr. Regan said that this will become a Halting Site if some security is not put along this route. He said that there is a lot of waste land left along the corridor. Cllr. Hynes said he spoke to Jack Eising about this matter and the Cosmonaut Residents previously and he thought it was all sorted.

Cllr. Bane said that the equipment in the Playground at the Gort Road is dangerous and she asked how often is a safety audit done on it. She said one of the swings had the safety device at the side of it removed and it was also damaged. She asked if there a safety audit done who carries it out and is there evidence that it is carried out regularly. She said she got a complaint from a parent on the previous Thursday evening and she rang Michael Kelly, Community Warden. He informed her he was not in the area and could not attend to it. She lodged a complaint with the office the following morning. Mr. Raftery said that the equipment is inspected on a weekly basis as stipulated by the insurance company. The weekly reports are filed away. He said that the Community Warden and another employee are trained in the playground inspection. Cllr. Bane said she failed to understand how the equipment could have deteriorated so badly if weekly checks are carried out. She also asked for the signs to be lowered so as people can read the age groups the equipment is catering for. Cllr.

Burke said he has mentioned several times that the playground needs to be fenced off and made secure in order to prevent adults using it. He also said there needs to be opening and closing times and this be adhered to strictly. He said that the fencing is very poor and not safe for children playing there and it should be attended to as soon as possible. Mayor Maher said that Loughrea Town Council has €10,000 allowed in the estimates and Galway County Council is giving €40,000 to build walls and erect fencing. Cllr. Burke asked when the contractor can be expected to carry out the work or is there a time frame set out. Mr. Raftery said he spoke to the contractor before he came to the meeting and he expected to be starting within two weeks. Cllr. Regan said if it is fenced off the Gardai will be able to take action if vandalism continues and make an example of the culprits. He said that the town council members should meet the Superintendent of the Garda before the Main Street opens to the public in relation to drinking on the streets and open spaces and law and order around the town. Mayor Maher said that the meeting should take place on the 15/10/2007 at 8.00 p.m. This was agreed.

Cllr. Tully said that the litter around the town and near the schools is a disgrace. Cllr. Burke said that students complain that there are not enough of litter bins near the school or around the town. Cllr. Tully said that the Community Warden should visit the schools and educate the students in litter management and they might impart it on the adults. Cllr. Bane said that the litter bins are not emptied on a regular basis because of staffing problems. She requested that this matter be looked at to see if any improvement can be made. Mr. Raftery said he was looking at this matter at the moment. Cllr. Regan said that household waste is being put into the bins including ashes and it very difficult to maintain them.

Cllr. Burke asked if there has been any development with the acquisition of the house and land at Fitzzy's corner. Mayor Maher said that this property had been purchased from the funding collected from Pay and Display. Mr. Cullen said that funding will now be required to carry out the necessary works.

Cllr. Regan said that there was a report, on local radio, of ivy dumped on the Walks for some time. The caller said that he would bring it to the attention of the press if it was not removed within the next 24 hours. He asked that this matter be addressed.

This concluded the business of the Town Council meeting.

Signed this 12th day of November, 2007. Mayor: Michael Maher

Minutes and proceedings of Monthly Meeting of Loughrea Town Council held on the 12th November, 2007 in the Council Offices, Barrack Street, Loughrea.

I lathair

Mayor: Cllr. Michael Maher.

Members: Cllrs. Geraldine Bane, Gabriel Burke, Jimmy Curley, Mary Gunter-Nix, Pat Hynes, Norman Morgan, James Regan, Sheamie Tully.

Officials: Adrian Raftery, Executive Engineer, Imelda Deely, Town Clerk.

Apologies for Jim Cullen, Director of Services, who could not attend the meeting.

Mayor Maher said that, Micheál Ó Méalóid Assistant Principal Officer, Department of Transport, Loughrea, would be addressing the meeting in relation to the Road Transport Licensing Unit. He asked if the members were agreeable to allow this item be dealt with first. This was unanimously agreed.

Micheál Ó Méalóid said he was delighted to be invited to the Town Council Meeting, by the Town Clerk, at the request of the members. He said he would like to thank the working committee on decentralisation for bringing them to Loughrea. He said he was sorry for not having the presentation sooner.

The Department of Transport is responsible for Roads and Land Transport; Aviation: Rail and Public Transport; Maritime and Coast Guard. He said the present Minister is Noel Dempsey. It has nine name changes over the years and various Ministers.

He said that their offices are in Clonfert House, Bride Street, Loughrea. They hope to relocate to long term offices elsewhere in Loughrea in the future. They share Clonfert House with the Road Safety Authority. He said the RSA occupy the first and second floor and Road Transport Licensing Unit are on the top floor. He said he was Head of the Unit and had overall responsibility for management, policy and operation of the Unit. He moved from Dublin in late 2006 to set up the office in Loughrea and the rest of the staff relocated in 2007. Training started in March 2007 and the Department went "live" on the 21st May, 2007. The Units Principal Officer is based in Dublin. He said there is 60 staff between Road Transportation and the Road Safety Authority. They will be recruiting additional staff in the near future. He said meetings and conferences take place in their own offices in so far as possible. He said the Road Transportation Unit has opened an account in a number of shops in the town and intends to keep their business in Loughrea.

He said he worked in Aviation, Electricity Regulation, Minister's Office and a brief spell in the Road Safety Office.

He gave an outline of the work undertaken by the Department of Transport on slide and presented each member with a copy of it. Hereunder is a brief synopsis of work undertaken by the Department of Transport in Loughrea. They issue Road Transport Operator Licences, for the haulage and passenger transport industries. A Licence is required for any bus that carries 10 or more people including the driver. If an

Operator is carrying for reward or hire they need a licence. If an operator has a truck over 3.5 tonnes weight bigger than a van or if they are carrying other people's goods for hire or reward they need a licence.

The licences issued are National for use in Ireland, International for use in the E.U and Foreign for use outside the E.U. When a valid application is received the applicant receives the licence with the vehicle marked on it. A transport disc is supplied by the Road Transport Office which can be displayed on the windscreen like the tax disc. If a licence holder wants to change a vehicle on their licence it can be done by adding, removing or swapping vehicles. Once the original Licence is submitted it can be amended in line with the documentation i.e. Insurance, Tax, Tachograph, Calibration, etc. They also issue certificates to the Gardai indicating who is licensed and who is not licensed and issue letters of attestation.

He said the Driving Test Centre, which is run by the Road Safety Authority. (RSA) is on the ground floor of the building. His colleague Ms. Denise Barry, Director for Standards and Enforcement is head of the Road Safety Authority office and is also on the Management Board. The Roads functions include Policy Development and Safety Promotion. Promotion of legislation and negotiating for National and EU funding; Overseeing activities of implementing agencies i.e. Road Safety Authority, Dublin Transportation Office and National Roads Authority. The overall objective of the Roads function is to provide a balanced and integrated transport policy, for the safe, efficient and cost effective movement of persons and goods by road. They also do advertising and promotions for Road Safety, Traffic, Road signs, Alcohol limits, Traffic measures and decide what roads to build and what improvement works should be carried out. They also produce legislation on Motor Insurances. The RSA Transport Officers do regular check points to verify that operators are properly licensed and have the appropriate tachograph records. He said that more than 30% of freight operators are not licensed and do not meet the licensing and safety criteria needed to be a legal operator. He said the number of licences has increased by over 30% in the past ten years.

He thanked the members for their successful promotion of Loughrea and he hopes it goes from strength to strength. He said if any of the members wish to visit the offices they can make contact with the Town Clerk who will arrange a meeting with him.

Mayor Maher thanked Micheál Ó Méalóid for his presentation and he said it should improve the economy of the town with all the extra people around. He said he would take questions from the members on any issues or concerns the members had in relation to the presentation.

Cllr. Morgan asked if they were responsible for licensing the taxi service and checking cars for road wordiness. Mr. Ó Méalóid, said that they have no control over the taxis unless they have a mini bus carrying more than nine passengers. He said the Taxi Regulator has responsibility for the taxis.

Cllr. Regan asked what action has the Road Transport office has taken in relation to operators who do not hold the appropriate licence. He said 30% is very high figure for non-compliance with the regulations. Mr. Ó Méalóid said that the number of Enforcement Officers has increased from 9 to 18. He said the Traffic Core also set up

check points to find the culprits. He would hope that this figure will be reduced shortly.

Cllr. Burke said he is delighted that the Department of Transport has relocated to Loughrea and he hopes their presence will be felt around the town and improve the economy of it. He said he was on the working group on decentralisation and he was glad Loughrea was successful in their bid to relocate a government department.

Cllr. Tully asked if the public are aware of the facilities available in the town and if they intend to do an advertising campaign or put notices around the town. Mr. Ó Méalóid said that the members of the Town Council could inform the public of their presence. They have notified all the hauliers concerned where the office is located.

Cllr. Hynes said that he was delighted that the Western Rail Corridor from Athenry to Ennis was opening again for public use. He asked if a light rail system service could be provided from Loughrea to Attymon in order to facilitate passengers travelling to Galway and Dublin. He said the Department of Defence owns 600 acres of land around the Oranmore area and he asked if this property could be looked at with a view to extending Carnmore Airport. He said the existing service is not capable of taking big carriers. He said the air service from Shannon to Heathrow should continue as it very important to business in the West of Ireland. He has made his feelings known on this matter as a member of Galway County Council and he wants Mr. Ó Méalóid to take back the message to his Minister the feelings of the community in the West of Ireland. Mr. Ó Méalóid said he would convey his message to Minister Dempsey.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said she too was on the working group and she was glad there were successful in bringing the Department of Transport to Loughrea. She said she hopes the staff will be very happy with their new surroundings.

Mr. Ó Méalóid then left the meeting.

Confirmation of Minutes.

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Burke and agreed the Minutes of the Monthly Meeting held on the 8th October, 2007 be adopted.

Matters arising from the minutes.

Cllr. Bane asked if any reply had been received from the Electricity Supply Board in relation to litter on the premises. The Town Clerk said she had not got a reply. She said she understands this property has been sold and is in private ownership now. If this matter persists she will write to the new owner.

Cllr. Bane asked for an update on the appointment of a School Warden. The Town Clerk said that the interviews were held and a candidate selected. Her credentials are at present being vetted by the Garda Unit in Templemore to determine her suitability. Cllr. Regan asked if a temporary person could be appointed pending the filling of the vacancy. He said if a General Operative was recruited some of their duties could be part-time School Warden. He asked if one of the existing staff could cover until the Warden is appointed. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that the Gardiner could do with assistance

with all the green areas around the town and the bypass. This position could be incorporated with the School Warden. Cllr. Tully said that the remuneration or the hours are not attractive to applicants and that is why there is no interest in it. He said the hours should be increased to take on Council Work as well. Mr. Raftery, Executive Engineer, said that no personnel from the outdoor staff could do School Warden duties as there are currently 9 staff members absent due to long term sick leave and retirements. He said that there are a number of jobs on hands at the moment and it is very tight from a health and safety point of view to get them done.

Cllr. Curley asked if a decision had been made on paid parking for December, 2007 and January 2008. Mayor Maher said he had received correspondence from the Chamber of Commerce pertaining to this matter. He said he would bring it up under correspondence. Cllr. Curley agreed to this. He asked if any decision was made on the buses returning to the Main Street when it opens. Mayor Maher said that he was informed by the Resident Engineer on the scheme that the buses would be returning to the Main Street as soon as it was ready. There would also be a taxi rank on the Main Street when it is opened. Cllr. Regan said it would not take two buses with the way it is designed. Cllr. Burke said there will be traffic jams again if the buses are allowed back to the Main Street. Cllr. Hynes said he welcomes the decision to bring back the buses to the Main Street which will facilitate the elderly and the students. It will alleviate a lot of hardship on the most vulnerable citizens. Cllr. Tully said he had tabled a Notice of Motion on this matter and asked if it could be taking now. Mayor Maher said he would take Notice of Motion as well.

Cllr. Bane asked why the playground was shut down the day after the last meeting on the 8th October, 2007. She said she had brought this matter to the attention of the Council and there was no mention of the equipment being unsafe. She asked how often is the equipment inspected and if there is a paper trail of it.

Cllr. Regan said if this was not brought to the attention of the County Council a serious accident could have happened. Mr. Raftery said that a weekly inspection is carried out as stipulated by the insurance company. He said two people are trained to carry out the inspections. He said the Community Warden, on a routine inspection, found a lot of the equipment was defective because of vandalism and a decision was taken to remove it in the interest of safety. He said there is funding for provision and improvement of equipment but none for maintenance. He said he has written to the Director of Services, Cultural and General Services, Galway County Council, for funding to carry out the following works - Site preparation: Wall & Railing; Drainage: Re-sodding. He said the town council will be giving a contribution of €10,000 and the balance will be coming from the County Council.

Cllr. Tully asked if there is a guarantee with the equipment or was it inferior when it was put in. Mr. Raftery said the equipment was top of the range and an independent audit was done on all the equipment and signed off as being perfect. He said the ground works has commenced for the wall and railing.

Cllr. Morgan asked if the Playground Committee was still in existence and what is their role on this matter. Mayor Maher said that the committee was set up to raise funds for the provision of the playground but the book stopped there.

Cllr. Burke said that they would be requesting monthly reports and they would be ticking the boxes as the work is done. He said they will be requesting that funding be made available from the Pay & Display takings.

Cllr. Hynes asked what type of fence was going to be provided in the playground. Mr. Raftery said it will be low stone wall and railing on top.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said once the fencing is done it might be easier for the public and the Gardai to monitor it. She said it is obvious that the equipment is being abused by adults. She hopes once this work is finished that the access gates will be closed every night and opened again in the morning.

Cllr. Regan asked for an update on the Bottle Banks at Barrack Street. He said that his mother is kept awake at night with the banging of bottles, in the early hours of the morning, when the public are dropping them into the containers.

Cllr. Bane said that the publicans are using the facilities at night and this matter should be investigated.

Cllr. Tully said he was of the opinion that the containers were going to be removed to Station Road car park until the facility on the Rathruddy Road is ready.

Cllr. Burke said he met the engineer from the Environment Section and requested him not to put extra bottle or can banks at Barrack Street. He agreed to put them at Station Road car park instead.

Cllrs. Regan & Tully said they have been requested by the Residents to remove them to Station Road and they want this done immediately.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that she travels around the country frequently and the recycling units are all placed in car parks and there is never litter around. She said maybe this option should be looked at.

Mr. Raftery said they will take them out completely if they are causing so much hassle.

Cllr. Morgan said he was glad to see the light at Cunnane's corner sorted and he thanked Mr. Raftery for doing the work.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter from Senior Citizens Organisation seeking funding for the Christmas Party. Mayor Maher said that a decision was taken at the estimates meeting that no funding would be given to any organisation. Cllr. Burke proposed that each councillor would give €10.00 towards this fund. This was agreed. Money to be given to the Town Clerk to forward to the committee.

Letter from the Fahy family requesting a pedestrian crossing on Barrack Street, Loughrea, near the Cathedral. The letter stated that their father had been involved in an accident crossing the road outside the Cathedral and died some months later from

the injuries. Mr. Raftery said he also had received a letter from this family and he had forwarded it to Roads & Transportation Unit to see if it would qualify for a low accident scheme. He is awaiting a decision.

Free parking in Loughrea for December, 2007 and January 2008. Mayor Maher read an extract from letter received from Brenda Winters, Chamber of Commerce as follows:- "As regards Cllr. Curley's request for free parking for the Christmas period perhaps you would inform your meeting that the Chamber has requested and have been granted this facility in the long term car park at Station Road for the past 2 Christmas Periods on every Saturday. The traders close to the Main Street Car Park do not feel that there is any benefit from free parking - in fact some of them can not wait for this facility to be finished. At present it is been totally abused by people leaving their cars there all day and this does not facilitate business in any manner. Much of the same would apply to Barrack Street Car Park - We had actually requested that the daily rate be taken away and just allow hourly parking - this would stop people leaving their cars there all day - at present it only costs €3 per day".

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Burke.

"I will propose that Loughrea Town Council demand that Turoe Stone be retained at its present location and the Office of Public Works takes steps to protect it"

It was proposed by Cllr. Burke seconded by Cllr. Morgan.

Cllr. Burke said that the Office of Public Works want to re-locate Turoe Stone to the Museum in Galway City to protect it from weathering. It is proposed to replace it with a plastic replica. He said if it was suggested to move Padraic O'Conaire from Galway city to the County there would be uproar. He said it is a great boost to tourism in East Galway bringing up to 100,000 visitors a year to the area. He said a Heritage Centre should be built around it with Turoe Stone as the focal point. He said that the owners of the land would have no problem with putting up a structure, free of charge, to protect it. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that this stone is internationally known and it would be a shame to remove it to Galway city. She said there is such a tourist trail around Loughrea with the Lake, St. Brendan's Cathedral, The Carmelite Abbey, Dartfield Museum, Turoe Stone, all of which compliment each other as regards tourist attractions. She thinks it should be retained in its present location in its natural environment.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Maher.

(a) That a recommendation be sent to Galway County Council to put a footpath from Mount Carmel Crescent to Mount Carmel Road as this is a danger to the public who have to walk onto the road to attend mass etc.

It was proposed by Cllr. Maher seconded by Cllr. Hynes.

Cllr. Maher said that this is important to have a footpath in the interest of safety. He said the Carmelite nuns were willing to taper in the wall when it was built to accommodate this footpath. Unfortunately the Council did not bite the bullet so there was no footpath put in. Cllr. Morgan said that the house on the corner would have to be taken away to facilitate this project and the owners consent would have to be given to this. Mr. Raftery said he would investigate this matter.

(b) That Galway Council advertise, the opportunity to members of the public, to come on board and develop a theme and design for the three roundabouts on the Bypass.

It was proposed by Cllr. Maher seconded by Cllr. Burke.

Cllr. Maher said submissions should be invited from the community to develop a theme/feature for the three roundabouts on the bypass in order to improve them. He said it would be an opportunity to develop it altogether and the successful bidder would probably fund it.

©" That Galway County Council erects signs on both sides of the roundabout identifying to motorists that there are a number of roundabouts over the mile of roadway and that these roundabouts would be clearly marked with directional arrows and line painting".

It was proposed by Cllr. Maher seconded by Cllr. Burke.

Mayor Maher said the three roundabouts are very badly signposted with no directional arrows or line painting and he requested that this matter be addressed. Cllr. Burke said that there are no white lines and the directional signs are not in order with the result that motorists are missing their turn and ending up turning on private property to re-trace their tracks. He said the signs for Mountbellew, New Inn and Bullaun at Monearmore Roundabout are not in the correct order and asked that it be addressed. He said that the motorists and lorries are driving across the green areas ignoring the road because of bad signage. Mr. Raftery said that the Council has spotted the defects and requested the Consultants to re-design the roundabouts. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that the lighting needs to be improved at Eden Park/Carraig Mor Housing Estates. It is very dark and motorists are inclined to miss the stop turning off the bypass into the Housing Estates. Mr. Raftery said that eight lights will be erected on the Danesfort Road but it will not go as far as the bypass.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Regan

(a)" I will call on Galway County Council to construct a pedestrian crossing on Barrack Street near the Cathedral to ensure the safety of mass goers and the public at large".

It was proposed by Cllr. Regan seconded by Cllr. Curley.

Cllr. Regan said that a lot of elderly people live in this area and find it very difficult to cross to the church. Cllr. Hynes said to investigate this matter and get an estimate to put this facility in place. Mr. Raftery said he has forwarded a similar letter to Roads and Transportation Unit to see if it will qualify under a low accident scheme.

This was also dealt with under correspondence from the Fahy family.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Tully.

(a)" I ask Galway County Council to give a commitment to Loughrea Town Council that in the event of the two-way system on Main Street not working properly, due to

its present design that they will ensure the NRA will provide funding in the future to make it work efficiently".

It was proposed by Cllr. Tully seconded by Cllr. Maher.

Cllr. Tully said that the plan for the Main Street seemed to change bit by bit as work progressed. First it was a one way system then a two way system and there did not seem to be any proper thought put into it or else it was interference from other groups in the town. He said now it is planned to bring back the buses to the Main Street and also have a taxi rank. He said he did not think there was proper consultation on the whole plan. Mayor Maher said he attended a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce and the resident engineer on the 9/11/2007 and it was stated at that meeting that the buses were coming back to the Main Street and also a taxi rank. He said it would be open for use on the 16/11/2007. Cllr. Regan said that the taxi rank will reduce the parking spaces on the Main Street. He said the Town Council were not consulted on the matter. He said that the footpath is very narrow outside Killian's Pharmacy and Supermacs and asked if this matter could be addressed. Cllr. Burke said that Maddens were not consulted in relation to a one way system. He said he would have to agree with Cllr. Regan that the footpath outside Supermacs can not take a wheel chair and a buggy or two pedestrians if they meet at this location. He said there was space wasted on the opposite side of the street which could have been used outside Supermacs. He said he would have to compliment the Council Staff on a fine job apart from one or two snags. Cllr. Regan said that the Area Councillors agreed to the plans before Maddens took the contract and the book stops with them. Cllr. Hynes said with the scheme almost complete it is quite obvious it can not accommodate a two-way traffic system. He said that the councillors had seen draft plans and other plans but he did not expect that the foot paths were so wide and the road so narrow. Cllr. Regan asked Mr. Raftery if the plan for the Main Street is the same as was shown on the drawing before work commenced. Mr. Raftery said it was not his project but he is sure that it is the same plan as seen on the first day. He said funding was there to make the Street one way but if that was not acceptable to the community it ends there. No further funding will be allocated. Cllr. Bane said if the buses use the bus stop and not pull out in the Street there will not be a major problem. Mayor Maher said that Bord Gais were putting a gas line along the Main Street. Mr. Raftery said the ducting is down it is just a matter of making a few connections at the junctions.

b)" I ask Galway County Council to give Loughrea Town Council assurances that the diving board at the Long Point will be in place before the Spring".

It was proposed by Cllr. Tully seconded by Cllr. Morgan.

Mr. Raftery said that the County Council is currently carrying out improvement works at the Long Point and putting in decorative bollards around the lake. Once this is complete the diving board will be put back.

(c)" I ask Galway County Council that the junction at Cahernaun Road and Drom na Cille estate is made safe".

It was proposed by Cllr. Tully seconded by Cllr. Regan.

Mr. Raftery said that there is a Court case pending at this area because the Developer did not adhere to conditions set down by the Planning office.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. Morgan.

(a) "That due to the large quantity of broken glass regularly on the road way in the Walks that Galway County Council be requested to have the mechanical sweeper includes the Walks on its rounds".

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Burke.

Cllr. Morgan requested that The Walks area of the town be included in the sweeping programme. Mr. Raftery said it is intended to purchase a sweeper for the Electoral Area of Loughrea and The Walks can be included for sweeping when it is in the area.

(b) "I will propose that Galway County Council be requested to inform Loughrea Town Council, and the general public, of its intention regarding a permanent Bus Stop in Loughrea".

Mayor Maher said that this matter was dealt with earlier and they would move onto the next Notice of Motion. Mr. Morgan agreed.

(c) "I will propose that Galway County Council be requested to have the few bollards of the chain and bollards fence along the roadway in the Green, which has been pushed over, put back up right".

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Tully.

Any Other Business.

Cllr. Regan asked where the stones were moved to on the Gort Road at Mr. Ryan's land. Mr. Raftery said the owner is using them. Cllr. Regan asked if the land acquisition included the stone wall, if so Mr. Ryan had been paid for the stones and should not take them. A timber post and rail fence will be erected along the frontage of Mr. Ryan's land. There will also be a hedge planted behind the fence. He said Eircom will be moving the pole back in line with the fence.

Cllr. Burke said that the Social Welfare Branch Office has moved back from Loughrea to Galway after several years in Loughrea. He said he was on the working committee on decentralisation and they were successful on bringing another government department to Loughrea. He said that the present building did not comply with Health & Safety and staff had to move back to Galway. He hopes that this will not be a permanent arrangement as it is important to have this office sited in Loughrea to facilitate the less well off people. He requested that a letter be sent to the Minister to clarify the matter. Cllr. Tully said he understands that the Department of Social Welfare has purchased a building on Bride Street and they are awaiting planning permission for change of use of the premises.

Cllr. Burke asked if the I.D.A. have vacant sites in Loughrea Industrial Area at the moment. He requested that this matter be investigated and let him know the outcome.

Mayor Maher said there will be a presentation to Superintendent Enda Walsh and Detective Ciaran McNamara for receiving the Scott's Medal Award for bravery. Also Kevin Hardiman who won bronze medals at the Special Olympics and Eugene McGhee who retired from the fire services recently. He asked Cllr. Morgan if he would do a scroll for the recipients. Cllr. Morgan agreed.

He said the Budget Meeting will be held on the 10th December, 2007, at 7.30 p.m. followed by the Monthly meeting. He requested that no Notice of Motion be submitted for the monthly meeting as is the norm every year.

This concluded the business of the Town Council meeting.

Signed this 10th day of December, 2007 Mayor: Michael Maher

Minutes of proceedings at the Annual Budget Meeting of Loughrea Town Council held on the 10th December, 2007, in the Council Offices, Barrack Street, Loughrea.

Mayor: Cllr. Maher

Members: Cllrs. Geraldine Bane, Gabriel Burke, Mary Gunter-Nix, Pat Hynes Norman Morgan, James Regan, Sheamie Tully.

Officials: Jim Cullen, Director of Services, Adrian Raftery, Executive Engineer, Imelda Deely, Town Clerk.

Apologies for Cllr. Curley.

Mr. Jim Cullen, Director of Services, presented the Annual Budget for the year 2008. Mr. Cullen stated that the expenditure for 2008 is estimated at €85,060 with income at €9,503. The amount of the demand to be submitted to Galway County Council for 2008 will be €75,556 and the multiplier will be €3.01 which represents an increase of 6% on last year. He recommended the Budget be adopted.

Cllr. Morgan said that he had no problem with the budget as presented. He said that vandalism in the Parks and playgrounds will have to be addressed as the Town Council can not keep replacing equipment in those areas. Cllr. Regan said that he could not accept a 6% increase in the town rate and asked for it to be reduced. Mr. Cullen said that most of the expenditure is statutory and can not be reduced. He said he would have to reduce the contribution to the Chamber of Commerce and other bodies in order to bring the rate down. Cllr. Burke said he would like to compliment the Manager on the budget and recommends that it be accepted. He said that it was reduced two years ago on the recommendation of the town council and the deficit has to be made up some time.

On the proposition of Cllr. Gunter-Nix seconded by Cllr. Burke and resolved that the Budget of the Loughrea Town Council for the Financial Year ending 31st December, 2008, as set forth at A, B, C. on the Form of Budget be adopted and the Form of Annual Budget be signed by the Mayor and by the Town Clerk.

It was also resolved that the Demand be made on Galway County Council by the Loughrea Town Council for the sum of €75,556.58 for the Financial Year ending on the 31st December, 2008, and that the Form of Demand be signed by the Mayor and by the Town Clerk.

This concluded the business of the Annual Budget Meeting.

Signed this 14th day of January, 2008. Mayor; Michael Maher

Minutes of Proceedings of Monthly Meeting of Loughrea Town Council held on the 10th December, 2007 in the County Council Offices, Barrack Street, Loughrea.

I lathair

Mayor: Cllr. Michael Maher.

Members: Cllrs. Geraldine Bane, Gabriel Burke, Mary Gunter-Nix, Pat Hynes, Norman Morgan, James Regan, Sheamie Tully.

Officials: Jim Cullen, Director of Services, Adrian Raftery, Executive Engineer, Imelda Deely, Town Clerk.

Cllr. Curley apologised for not attending the meeting.

Thosnaigh an crinniú leis an paidir.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on the 12th November, 2007.

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Burke and agreed that the minutes of the monthly meeting be adopted.

Matters arising from the minutes.

Cllr. Regan said he would like to thank Mr. Raftery, Executive Engineer, for removing the bottle banks from Barrack Street. He asked if the site could be made available to the Fire Service for an emergency tender. Cllr. Burke said the Fire Service in Loughrea has two tenders and it is unlikely that they would require another one. Mr. Cullen, Director of Services, said the cover in Loughrea and other parts of Galway are excellent. He said that the County Council is on the look out for a suitable site but has not been successful to date. Once a site is secured a new Station will be built and all the services will be moving to that location.

Cllr. Morgan said he had submitted a resolution, at the last meeting, regarding the location of bus stops on the Main Street and is awaiting a reply.

Mayor Maher said that this matter was discussed at the Area County Council meeting held on the 11/12/2007 and it is proposed to have two bus stops in Loughrea. There will be one at Station Road car park and another on the Athenry Road near Wards Filling Station.

Cllr. Bane said another month has gone by and no decision made on the bus stops. She said that this matter will have to be addressed immediately as the public are left standing on the side of the road in terrible weather conditions waiting for buses. She said the County Councillors are letting the community down because they are not making any provision for bus users. She said they are being fobbed off month after month with no decision being made.

Cllr. Hynes said that the decision is not the responsibility of the County Councillors but the officials of Galway County Council. He said he had received numerous representations requesting that the service be returned to the Main Street in the interest of Health & Safety. He said he resents the remark that he took no action on the matter.

Cllr. Burke said it was never on the drawing submitted to the town's people that the bus stops would be returning to the Main Street. He said the design of the Main Street does not lend itself to buses collecting and letting off passengers.

Cllr. Regan said the blame rests with the Area County Councillors for the lay out of the Main Street. He said he did not see any map of the proposed works for the Main Street and was not aware of what was going on until the last few weeks when it became obvious that there was no provision for buses. He said he would like to see the buses returning to the Main Street as heretofore but the road is too narrow.

Cllr. Morgan said the road from Station road car park is privately owned and negotiations will have to take place with the Mart Committee. He said he heard rumours that it is proposed to have one bus stop at Station Road and the other at the fairgreen. He said the decision is an executive one and can not be made by the County Councillors so it is not fair to blame the members of the Area Committee.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said she lives in the area where the temporary bus stop was sited and she said it is very exposed and bleak and they can not remain there. She said there is no shelter and people just stand out on the street waiting for the buses to come which can be delayed for up to 30 minutes in peak times. She said that most of the people using this service are the very elderly attending hospital appointments or students attending colleges. She said they are wet by the time they get on the bus and have to sit in wet clothes for the journey because there is no bus shelter. She said a decision has to be made on relocating the bus stop and erect a bus shelter and toilet to cater for the public as soon as possible.

Mr. Cullen said that a decision will be made by the Director of Services, Roads & Transportation Unit, in regard to this matter.

Cllr. Regan asked what improvement works are being done at the Long Point. Mr. Raftery said that this area is getting a complete revamp. He said the County Council has ordered gates which will be erected at the main entrance to try and stop vandalism. He said there has been a lot of damage done to this area since work started with wheelies being done late at night. He said bollards were erected at this location at the end of November but they have been pulled out of their foundations in the past few days.

Cllr. Hynes said that this is the start of phase 1 of the walk way around the Lake which he got approval for when he was County Mayor in 2005/2006.

Cllr. Burke said that the annual swim will be taking place on the 25th December, 2007 and he hopes that the Long Point will be ready by then. He said that the Gardai will have to be more vigilant and see if they can catch the culprits and throw the law at them. He said that there are some slates gone from the roof of the changing rooms

which needs attention. He was glad to hear that gates will be erected at this location. He hopes that they will not be vandalised.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said she attended a Heritage meeting at Coole Park, Gort, recently and one of the speakers said that certain species of wildlife is nearly extinct at the Loughrea Lake and other areas because of human trespass. She asked if this matter could be addressed when the walk way is being constructed. She said there is some rare species of duck around the Lake which are irreplaceable. She asked if a copy of the map for the walkway could be given to the members for the next meeting. She asked who has the contract for this work and if it had gone through the planning process.

Cllr. Hynes said that Part 8 of the planning regulations was fully adhered to and the plans were on public display for the statutory period.

Cllr. Bane said that the closing of the Long Point is welcomed but the opening and closing times would need to be advertised for the regular genuine patrons who appreciate such a valuable amenity and visits it.

Cllr. Burke asked if there are any plans to improve the public lighting at Caheronaun as it is very dark exiting from the by-pass onto the Housing Estates. He said Cllr. Tully had a resolution at the November meeting of the Town Council regarding this matter. He said that the wall near Oliver Barrett's house needs to be removed and he asked if this could be looked at as soon as possible because there is very poor visibility at this location. Mr. Raftery said he has sent a design to upgrade the public lighting in this area into Roads & Transportation Unit which shows a 250 watt high column E.S.B. pole. He is awaiting approval and funding for the project..

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said the Gort Road, where the road works are being done, is very dangerous and was particularly bad over the week end with the wintry conditions. She said she would like to thank the Council staff for making it safe and releasing the floods at the week end.

2. Correspondence.

An acknowledgement from the Department of Finance and Department of Education regarding reduction of V.A.T. on defibrillators for use in schools.

An acknowledgement from the Department of Social Welfare regarding the closure of the branch office in Loughrea.

Documentation from Failte Ireland West Region regarding funding under the National Development Plan to provide a range of tourist signage, interpretive and information boards in the town to improve the tourist potential of Loughrea. Mr. Cullen suggested that one of the staff from the Community & Enterprise Board should also sit in with the members, to help with the submission, something similar to the Decentrallisation Committee, to progress this matter. Mayor Maher said that an informal meeting would be held on the 19th December, 2007 at 7.00 p.m. to discuss this matter and put a plan together.

Correspondence from Community & Enterprise to select a candidate from Loughrea, Ballinalsoe and Tuam to sit on the Galway Rural Development Board. This position would be on a two year rotational basis and would have to be vacated after that term. It was unanimously agreed that The Mayor of each town would meet and decide which town will be first, second and third and nominate a member to sit on the Board. Cllr. Burke said that he had nominated Cllr. Bane to the County Development Board and she should now be attending the meetings from 2008 onwards. He proposed that she continue on the Galway Rural Development Board when ever the time comes. The members agreed to this arrangement.

3. Notice of Motion - Cllr. Regan.

(a) I propose that Loughrea Town Council write to the HSE to ask them to confirm when the forty bed unit, which is the first phase of a two phase 80 bed project, will start and finish.

It was proposed by Cllr. Regan seconded by Cllr. Hynes..

Cllr. Regan said that the number of beds are being reduced weekly. He wants clarification on the number of beds that will be available in St. Brendan's Home and when work will commence on phase 1 of the scheme. Cllr. Hynes said that the bed counts are down to 100 and he has concerns the way the HSE do business. He said if this trend continues it will be downgraded gradually and eventually closed down and the property sold. He requested that a letter be written to the Minister for Health to get the up to date position on this matter. Mayor Maher, said it is planned to build a new facility in the near future. He said there is no danger of this facility closing down. Cllr. Burke said that the accommodation on the top floors in St. Brendan's Home has closed down in the interest of Health & Safety which has reduced the number of beds. He said it is only scaremongering by some members. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that it will never close as the demand is there to keep it open. She said that the members should be putting the pressure on the Minister for Health and the HSE to proceed with this project as quickly as possible and get the 40 or 50 bed units up and running. She said that a big number of people from Clifden and such places have relocated nearer to their homes and that is why there is a reduction of beds.

(b) I propose that Galway County Council put a wheelchair access for people coming out of St. Brendan's Home, Loughrea.

It was proposed by Cllr. Regan seconded by Cllr. Bane.

Cllr. Regan said if a wheelchair user is leaving St. Brendan's Home they have to go into a grassy area before they get to the footpath. He said the wheels of the chair get stuck in this area and the operators find it difficult to get out of it. Mr. Raftery said the contractor doing the walk way will address this matter and put in a wheelchair access as part of the project.

(c) I propose to call on the County Council to look at Caheronaun road regarding stop signs at Housing Estates.

It was proposed by Cllr. Regan seconded by Cllr. Morgan.

4. Any Other Business.

Cllr. Morgan said the public are finding the Westbridge end of the town confusing with the "Stop" sign outside Morrissey's public house. Mr. Raftery said it will remain that way. He said the Main Street is a regional road and the Athenry road is National Secondary road so that takes priority over the Main Street.

Mayor Maher wished the members and officials a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

This concluded the business of Loughrea Town Council meeting held on the 10th December, 2007.

Signed this 14th day of January, 2008. Mayor: Michael Maher

Minutes and proceedings of Monthly Meeting of Loughrea Town Council held in the County Council offices, Barrack Street, Loughrea, at 7.30 p.m. on the 14th January, 2008.

I lathair

Mayor: Cllr. Michael Maher.

Members: Cllrs. Gabriel Burke, Jimmy Curley, Mary Gunter-Nix, Pat Hynes, Norman Morgan, James Regan, Sheamie Tully.

Officials: Adrian Raftery, Executive Engineer, Imelda Deely, Town Clerk.

Apologies were received from Jim Cullen, Director of Services and Cllr. Bane who were unable to attend the meeting.

Thosnaigh an crinniú leis an paidir.

A minutes silence was observed as a mark of respect to the late Bill Malone, former town engineer of Loughrea, who had passed away on 14/1/2008.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of Annual Budget Meeting held on the 10th December, 2007.

Cllr. Morgan said he had proposed that the Annual Budget be adopted and not Cllr. Nix. He wanted an amendment in the minutes as follows:-

On the proposition of Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Burke and resolved that the Budget of the Loughrea Town Council for the Financial Year ending 31st December, 2008, as set forth at A,B,C, on the Form of Budget be adopted and the Form of Annual budget be signed by the Mayor and by the Town Clerk.

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Burke and agreed that the minutes of the annual budget meeting be adopted subject to this amendment.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on the 10th December, 2007.

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Regan and agreed that the minutes of the monthly meeting be adopted.

Matters arising from the minutes.

Cllr. Regan asked for an update on St. Brendan's Home and the number of beds to be provided under the new capital programme project. The Town Clerk said that she had written to the HSE and is awaiting a reply from them.

Cllr. Regan asked the present position regarding the School Warden. He said

he did not like the report on the local paper on the position of the School Warden. He said that the media were requested to keep this information in camera but they did not adhere to this. He said councillors have no say in relation to the employment or recruitment of staff in the County Council. He said that is the function of officials from Galway County Council. He said Jim Cullen, Director of Services, and the Mayor of the Loughrea Town met with representatives from the Parents Association and outlined the position to them. Cllr. Hynes said that Galway County Council has made a decision on the appointment of a school warden. He said it was advertised three times and interviews held but people turned it down because it was just 10 hours a week. He said he made a recommendation to make it a full time job and incorporate other duties as well. Cllr. Morgan said that the people protesting outside the County Council building, because there is no school warden, should be allowed into the meeting for five minutes to state their case. Cllr. Regan replied that he was trying to hold a placard saying "I am the saviour of the town". He said he did not raise any objection to the proposal that Jim Cullen and the Mayor of the town meet them at the December meeting and explained the position. Mayor Maher said that he had spoken to Colm Flannery at least five times in relation to this matter and he can not understand why he has arranged this protest. Cllr. Burke said that everybody wants to see a warden in place but those matters take time. He said the members have raised this issue at each meeting and have the concerns of the parents at heart. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that the issue of staff being replaced in the Loughrea area has been an issue for some time. She said that this might be an opportunity now to look at the whole staffing situation including this one. Cllr. Curley said he was not at the last meeting held on the 10th December, 2007, but he like the other speakers want to see the school warden replaced as soon as possible. It is not a pretty sight to see a protest outside any public office. Cllr. Tully said the interviews were held in October and why has it taken up to this time for somebody to be appointed. Mayor Maher said there is only one area in the country that deals with the applicants so everybody has to wait their turn. The Town Clerk said that a contract had issued to the successful candidate and the appointment will be made as soon as this form is returned to the County Council.

Cllr. Curley asked if it is intended to remove the concrete slab from outside the Fire Station now that the bottle banks have been removed to Station Road car park. He said there are over 20 part time fire men and they would need this area for parking. Mr. Raftery said that he would be meeting the Fire Officer to discuss this matter and other issues pertaining to the fire services in Loughrea.

Cllr. Morgan said that he had tabled a Notice of Motion some time ago in relation to the buses returning to the Main Street but still has got no decision on the matter. Cllr. Burke said that some motorists are getting parking tickets for parking illegally while those driving buses were being treated differently. He said that a member of the Chamber of Commerce had stated, on local radio, that the buses would be using Station Road car park but there is no bus shelter or toilet and it will be at least another year before that is provided. He asked the number of tickets issued to motorists since the Main Street opened for business and the number of tickets issued to the bus drivers. Mr. Raftery stated that the Superintendent has stated that they will be issuing fines from the 18th January, 2008 to the bus companies if they stop to pick up passengers or let off passengers on Main Street. He said he does not have the figure for the number of fines issued but he would find out before the next meeting.

Cllr. Hynes said that this matter is an executive function and is outside his remit. He said he has had several representations on this matter and the preferred option is the Main Street. He has made recommendations to the relevant personnel, in Galway County Council, as outlined. Cllr. Regan said it would be easier to get Bin Laden than the Engineer from Galway County Council in charge of the Main Street project. He said the Council designed the scheme and forgot about the buses or bus stops. He said the blame rests with the County Councillors who did not bring it to their attention. He said it was not value for money the way the Main Street is finished. He asked if it was legal to park a car on the Main Street with the present design of the parking spaces. Mr. Raftery said it was not his project but he checked out the car parking design with the local Superintendent and he said if it was a 90° angle kerb to kerb they were not breaking the law. Cllr. Tully said that a member of the Chamber of Commerce, made the remark on local radio, that she had made contact with Council officials twice during the week on this matter, yet the town councillors can not get a meeting or a telephone call to them for months. He said that Martin Lavelle be asked to attend the next town council meeting to answer the questions. He asked if there is any provision for a taxi service in the town. He said he had representations from some members and he wants to know the position. He also asked if there would be facilities for parking bikes in the town. Cllr. Curley said there is no taxi service in the town. He said there is a hackney service and they do not need a rank. He said he did not want to see their business jeopardised as they are finding it hard to make ends meet with all of the overheads they have to pay. Cllr. Hynes said that the owners of the hackney services had made representations to him regarding their business. He said he supports them a 100% as it is their livelihood and does not want to see taxi ranks in the town.

Mayor Maher left the meeting and Cllr. Burke, Deputy Mayor, took the chair. Cllr. Hynes left the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Extract from letter received from the Department of Social Welfare in relation to the closing of the branch office in Loughrea. Cllr. G. Burke, Deputy Mayor had raised this issue at a previous meeting. "It is intended to continue this service in Loughrea but we are awaiting suitable accommodation for our staff and we hope this comes to hand soon".

Extract from letter from the Chamber of Commerce stating that they will not be organising the St. Patrick's Day festival in 2008. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said she thinks that there should be something organised for this day, even though, there is very little time left to organise it. She suggested that a public meeting be held and see what interest is in it. She thinks that the parade seems to have lost interest and some other form of entertainment should be organised. The Deputy Mayor asked if anybody was interested on being on the committee. Cllrs. Gunter-Nix and Curley said that they would volunteer to go on the committee to see if they can organise some kind of a festival to mark the occasion. It would probably be held on Sunday 16th March, 2008.

Cllr. Burke said that all the members had received a copy of a letter from The Department of the Environment in relation to funding for footpaths in former town commissioner areas. Mr. Raftery, said that he had some proposals in relation to the

footpaths to tie in with the historical walks proposed in Loughrea and being funded by Failte Ireland. He said the councillors had met and identified the historical areas around the town. He said that Eimear Dolan, Community & Enterprise Unit had also met with them informally in relation to another project which could tie in with the signage. He said he had identified six walkways and the footpaths could be done in conjunction with those if that was acceptable to the members. Cllr. Burke asked if the councillors wanted to see a draft of the proposals before the final copy is submitted. He said the closing date is on the 29th of January, 2008. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that Mr. Raftery had done a lot of work on the project and it should be left with the expert to finish the submission and apply for the grants. This was agreed.

1. Starting at Mount Carmel Road near the park taking in St. Joseph's Monastery, Carmelite Monastery, St. Joseph's Church, Friary graveyard, The Walks, Old Catholic Cathedral and former Station House.
2. Bride Street and The Hill - start at Station Road taking old Catholic Church, The Old Weir, O'Dea's Hotel, Brodericks, St. Brigids Well, Garrybreeda Cemetery.
3. Starting at Main Street car park taking in Church of Ireland Library, Old Market Place, St. Brendan's Cathedral, Town Gate, St. Ita's School, Convent of Mercy, St. Raphael's College, Town Hall, Temperance Hall.
4. Moat Walk - start at Barrack Street car park taking in Victoria Terrace, Former Barracks, Courthouse, Old Bridewell, Town Moat, Stoney Brennan Plaque, Mount Carmel amenity area.
5. Long Point and Lake Road area - start at the Long Point amenity area, the Grove, Union Workhouse, St. Brendan's College, St. Brendan's monastery.
6. Corry's Field and Laurencefield burial ground - enter at Corry's field then onto the children's burial ground at Caher.

Councillor Gunter-Nix thanked Mr. Raftery for putting the walkways together and she hopes that funding will come to hand to cover the project.

Any Other Business.

Cllr. Burke, Deputy Mayor, said that he had been informed by an auctioneer earlier on in the day that a private housing estate, (around 40 houses) under construction, was being purchased by the Moyross Housing Estate area of Limerick City for use by them. This is being done under the Regeneration Project programme while the houses are being demolished and re-built in Moyross. He said there are 600 houses being knocked in Limerick City. Cllr. Regan said that the dogs in the street knew that as it was circulating around the town since before Christmas. He said he rang the County Council Housing Unit and was informed that they had not purchased them. Cllr. Burke, Deputy Mayor, said that Fr. Joe Young from Limerick had an article on Saturday's Irish Independent (12/1/2008) stating that the residents of Moyross should not be taking people out of their own environment and spreading them all over the country during the construction work. He said that the owners of the houses were

offered €20,000.00 to vacate them. He said they can select the tenants who will return to Moyross when it is refurbished. He said he understands that five houses have been bought in County Galway already and there has been a lot of unsocial behaviour in the Estate. He said that probably 95% of them are hard working and we can not paint them all with the same paint brush. He said Limerick's problem should not be foisted on Galway people. Cllr. Curley said that the town councillors have no say who is housed but he would not like to see Limerick's problem becoming Loughrea's problem. He wonders why they would by-pass County Clare and other neighbouring counties and house them in Loughrea. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that it might be a government department like the Department of Justice or some such department. Cllr. Tully said that it is capital funding from a Government Agency and it should be checked out with them. It was proposed by Cllr. Regan seconded by Cllr. Morgan that the County Manager be invited to a special meeting as soon as possible and certainly within the next seven days to clarify this matter. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said the Area County Councillors, Deputies and Senators should also be present to stop the rumour if it is not true and deal with it if it is true. Cllr. Burke, Deputy Mayor, asked the Town Clerk to follow up this matter and see what information is available in Galway County Council and Limerick City Council.

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that the number of people on the live register has increased by 35 at the last count. Cllr. Burke asked if there was any reply from the I.D.A. on the amount of land remaining in the Industrial Estates in Loughrea. Town Clerk said she had written to the I.D.A. and had not received a reply. He asked for a reminder to be sent to see the current position.

Cllr. Tully said that there seems to be a problem with the sewage on Cross Street and it is causing problems for the residents there. Mr. Raftery said that there is a small section getting blocked because the pipe is fractured. It is gathering material at this area and the sewage can not flow which affects some of the residents along the line. He expects to have it repaired in the near future.

Cllr. Burke, Deputy Mayor, said there are problems on the Gort Road with the kerbing. Mr. Raftery said that the County Council have sent in an estimate to have road improvements carried out on another stretch of this road leading towards the town and a decision is awaited from the National Roads Authority. If sanction is received to go ahead with this work the kerbing will be fitted to suit the road.

This concluded the business of Loughrea Town Council meeting held on the 14th January, 2008.

Signed 11 day of February, 2008. Mayor: Michael Maher

Minutes and proceedings of Monthly Meeting of Loughrea Town Council held on the 11th February, 2008 in the County Council Offices, Barrack Street Loughrea

I lathair.

Mayor: Cllr. Michael Maher.

Members: Cllrs. Geraldine Bane, Gabriel Burke, Jimmy Curley, Mary Gunter-Nix, Pat Hynes, Norman Morgan, James Regan, Sheamie Tully.

Officials: Jim Cullen, Director of Services, Adrian Raftery, Executive Engineer, Imelda Deely, Town Clerk.

Thosnaigh an crinniú leis an paidir.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of Monthly Meeting held on the 11th February, 2008.

It was proposed by Cllr. Morgan seconded by Cllr. Regan and agreed that the minutes of the monthly meeting be adopted.

Three members from the Parents Association from St. Ita's and St. Brendan's National School came to the meeting requesting permission from the Mayor to address the members of Loughrea Town Council regarding the provision of a School Warden. This request was granted by the Mayor.

Here is extract from statement read by Mr. Flannery. "A School Warden has been appointed but the issue is not resolved. The Parents Association is not interested in the recruitment process adopted by Galway County Council or how it does its business. We are interested in the services it provides particularly when they affect the safety of our children. Were the parents of Loughrea expected to wait until the inevitable accident occurred before the public outcry would ensure that our public representatives forced the issue with Galway County Council? I am sure at that point in time we would have had the usual platitudes and crow thumping. These are things we can do without. It appears to us who are not privy to how the wheels of local government work that Galway County Council have succeeded in keeping a lid on this issue by manipulating the situation at every twist and turn. We call on you to pass a motion which states that "Loughrea Town Council awards the highest priority to the provision of Council services to ensure the safety of the children of Loughrea above all other services." It is not our business or right to propose motions to you as a Council and therefore, you may wish to use wording of your own. The objective is to give you, our local representatives the opportunity to put on the record that each and every one of you put nothing above the safety of the children of Loughrea.

To Galway County Council Management, particularly Director of Services, we wish to state for the record that while we accept your wish to operate within your employment ceiling and its head count, we do not accept that it is at the expense of the safety of the children of Loughrea. It is clear that you are reducing the number of staff employed in the provision of services in Loughrea and while this is a concern to us all it is not our business tonight.

Tonight we are demanding a guarantee from Galway County Council, through Loughrea Town Council, that a school warden will be provided in Loughrea on a continuous basis into the future. It will not be left abandoned should the position fall vacant for any reason, annual leave, retirement etc. It is not acceptable that an organisation with resources, such as the county council, have at their disposal would continue to ignore children safety while placing parking fines or hedgerows above it on their list of priorities.

We request that you our representatives pursue this guarantee from council officials until it is given.

Finally we wish to thank you the members of Loughrea Town Council for receiving us here tonight and allowing us the opportunity to address you in the chamber. It is a privilege we do not take lightly."

Cllr. Morgan told the Parents Association that most of what was said was not accurate. He said that the Town Council or the County Council have not neglected the safety of children. He said if the Parents Association were so concerned about the safety of their children they could have done it on a rota basis and provided cover until the warden was appointed. They could also have applied for the position if they had children attending the schools.

Mr. Flannery replied that a substitute school warden was provided for a month and no cover has existed since the 1st September, 2007 until 25th January, 2008.

Mayor Maher said that the discussion had finished on this matter. He said he would discuss this issue with the members when the three members of the Parents Association left.

Mr Colm Flannery, Mrs. Carmel Griffin and Mr. Sean Cunney left the meeting.

A general discussion took place on the allegation made by the Parents Association. Cllr. Regan said that the members had highlighted this matter night after night at the Town Council meeting. He said this matter was not on the agenda and the Mayor should keep to Standing Orders. He said that some of the allegations made by the Parents Association would need to be questioned by the Mayor.

Mr. Cullen, Director of Services, said that they were a lot of allegations made by the delegation which can not go unchallenged. He said the first priority lies with the parents of the 400 children, attending the schools, to ensure the safety of their children. He is horrified that any group would come to the town council meeting stating that the health and safety of children or adults is the Council's lowest priority. The County Council has won awards of excellence for safety. He said that Loughrea Town Council has been pro-active for a number of years with the provision of a school warden. There are only two areas in County Galway who provide this service. A school warden is provided by Ballinasloe Town Council, recently, and Loughrea Town Council for years. Loughrea schools were privileged to have such a service over the years. He said if the school warden is not available for any reason there is also a junior warden scheme which would give cover in their absence. He said this scheme is in several schools around the country and works very well. He said the

senior classes would carry out the duties and help smaller children cross the road. He said training would be given to the wardens with the assistance of the Gardai, Teachers and County Council staff.

Matters arising from the minutes.

Cllr. Burke said that a number of staff in Schegal factory is in danger of loosing their jobs because the factory is closing down. He said he had raised this matter at a previous meeting on the number of acres available in the industrial estates in Loughrea. He asked if a reply had been received from the I.D.A. The Town Clerk said she had received a reply from the I.D.A and would read it under correspondence. Cllr. Burke requested this information while this matter was being discussed. Here is extract from letter received from letter dated 14th January, 2008. "I have checked with IDA's Property Division and whilst there is a site of 2.9 acres unoccupied at present in Loughrea; IDA is in discussion with a client in relation to it and so it is not available for marketing purposes."

Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that the town council should request the Regional Manager from the IDA to address the meeting to high light this matter. There is sufficient land zoned industrial on the Loughrea plan and the IDA should go about procuring it. The town council should be pushing for more industries to be set up in Loughrea and not having people travelling to Galway, Athlone etc. seeking employment.

Cllr. Bane said that the buses are back in the town again and asked if any decision has been made on this matter. She asked if a bus stop will be provided at Station Road. She asked if there was a time scale for this project or will it go on for a few years. She asked what is the purpose of the ramp at Mob Hill and if it will be signposted. She said the new directional signs are very nice but there is no mention of Bride Street at the one at Main Street/Station road. Cllr. Gunter-Nix said that the disability signs in other towns are painted blue and asked if it is intended to do this. She said that bus shelters have been provided in Kilrickle village in the heart of the country and she can not see why they can not be provided in Loughrea. Cllr. Burke said that the parking bay for the people with disability near Dolan's Electrical shop is stuck in a corner and is not very accessible. He asked if this could be addressed before the contractors finish. Cllr. Curley said that several people have approached him in relation to the chaos at the Westbridge with the new traffic flows. He requested that traffic lights be erected here in the interest of safety. Cllr. Tully asked if the bus shelter will require planning permission. He asked if it is the Bus Company or Galway County Council who will construct them. Mr. Cullen said this work is carried out jointly by the Bus Company and the County Council. Cllrs. Hynes and Morgan also voiced their concerns with the signage at the Westbridge. Cllr. Regan proposed that Martin Lavelle be requested to meet the Town Councillors, Area County Councillors, Gardai and officials to discuss the many issues along the Main Street. This was seconded by Cllr. Burke. The Town Clerk requested to follow up this matter. Mr. Raftery, Executive Engineer, said the ramp referred to is a table top and it is a designated pedestrian crossing instead of flashing beacons. He said the designated disability areas will have signs painted blue. Mayor Maher said he would raise the issues of the Main Street and the bus stops at the Area Meeting which will be held on the 14th February, 2008 with a view to getting a meeting in motion.