

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, BALLINASLOE, CO. GALWAY ON WEDNESDAY 9th APRIL 2025 @ 2.00 p.m.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. M. Connolly

I LATHAIR FREISIN:

Baill: Cllrs. D. Connolly, D. Geraghty, A. Harney, P. Keaveney, E. Parsons

Oifigigh: Mr. Kieran Coyne A/Director of Service, Ms. R. Lowe Senior Engineer, Mr. D. Troy Senior Executive Engineer, Ms. D. Gallagher Staff Officer, Ms. M. McGann Meeting Administrator

At the outset, the Members welcomed Kieran Coyne to the meeting in his capacity as Acting Director of Services and wished him well for his term in the role.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF BALLINASLOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12TH MARCH 2025 AND MATTERS ARISING
MDB 25021

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Ballinasloe held on Wednesday 12th March 2025 were approved by the Municipal District Members and signed by the Cathaoirleach on the proposal of Cllr. Parsons and seconded by Cllr. Geraghty.

Matters arising from the Minutes.

Cllr. Geraghty raised the issue of illegal dumping and the major problem it is becoming particularly at local rural roads areas. Cllr. Parsons concurred with Cllr. Geraghty in relation to the issue of illegal dumping and stated that more funding resources need to be assigned to illegal dumping issues, community clean-ups, and CCTV to enable prosecution of illegal dumping cases, and queried if an application could be made for CCTV to the National Community Safety Fund, in partnership with local stakeholders. Cllr. Harney concurred on the issue of illegal dumping and re-emphasized the need for CCTV and signage to be used to tackle this issue, in areas such as the Hymany Way and Creagh Burial Ground. Cllr. Keaveney concurred with the Members in relation to the illegal dumping issue referring to the need for education as well as prosecutions, and the need to provide proof of receipts for waste collection services as a deterrent to illegal dumping. In response, Mr. Coyne agreed that there is an educational element as well as enforcement through the Local Community Safety Partnership and CCTV and agreed that he will get further information from the Environment Department on key pinch points regarding this issue (MDB25013).

Cllr. Geraghty advised that he has been contacted by numerous tenants who have received Notices to Quit from landlords and stressed that this issue will become an increasing problem and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency, possibly through provision of emergency accommodation options in each Municipal District. Cllr. Parsons also referred to the issue of tenants receiving Notices to Quit and asked for an update on the Tenant in Situ scheme allocation for County Galway. Cllr. M. Connolly stated that an allocation has been announced nationally in relation to the Tenants in Situ Scheme but that this figure has not been broken down per Council and correspondence needs to be sent to the Department asking for this breakdown. Following discussion, and on the proposal of Cllr. M. Connolly, seconded by Cllr. Parsons, and agreed by all, the following resolution was passed:

“In relation to the recent extra allocation by Minister James Browne of €265m for housing acquisitions by local authorities in 2025, Ballinasloe Municipal District Members are requesting that a breakdown of the allocation be given to all local authorities as a matter of urgency.” (MDB25015).

Cllr. Parsons referred to the reply from the OPW (Office of Public Works) regarding the Members Motion on Ballinasloe Flood Relief Scheme, stating that it did not mention a meeting with the Members which had been the subject of the Motion. Cllr. Parsons also requested an update on the letter to Minister Kevin Boxer Moran, and M. McGann advised that no written response has been received to date and both elements of the Motion would be followed up (MDB25013).

Cllr. Parsons asked for an update on the formation of the Local Community Safety Partnership, and a meeting with Mr. G. Scully, SEO Housing, in the interim regarding the Ballinasloe Taskforce. Cllr. Harney stated the learnings from the temporary CCTV in housing estates also needs to feed into the Taskforce, in consultation with An Garda Síochána. In response, Mr. Coyne confirmed that the Local Community Safety Partnership would commence in a matter of weeks, and it was proposed to commence both the Committee and Taskforce in parallel (MDB25013).

Cllrs. Parsons and Harney queried the timeframe for the mid-term review of the Local Area Plan for Ballinasloe, particularly how rezoning of lands for housing would align with the mid-term review of the County Development Plan. Cllr. M. Connolly concurred with the need for rezoning of lands for housing and that all offers of land need to be assessed and stated that he hoped the new planning Guidelines and review of the Local Area Plan and County Development Plan would deliver meaningful results in this regard. In relation to the mid-term reviews of the LAP and CDP, Mr. Coyne confirmed he is awaiting confirmation on these matters from the Planning Department (MDB25013).

Cllr. Harney asked if there was any update in relation to the Creagh junction and an update on the footpath review to be undertaken by the Municipal District Office. In response, Mr. Troy advised that the Roads Section are working on tenders since January 2025 and would carry out the footpath review over the coming months to create a baseline for identification of works across towns and villages and would welcome input from the Elected Members in this regard. In relation to the capacity of the Ballinasloe Town water and wastewater supply, Mr. Troy advised that he contacted Irish Water in relation to this

query will circulate the full response from Irish Water. He also advised that Irish Water have a dedicated Local Representative Support Desk for Elected Members and would circulate the details (MDB25013).

A discussion took place in relation to the possibility of introducing one-hour free parking in Ballinasloe town centre and all Members agreed this was required to support town centre business. Cllr. Harney advised that he has sent this matter as an agenda item to the Roads SPC for their next meeting and the Members also agreed to raise the issue as a Motion at the next Plenary Meeting (MDB25020).

Cllr. Parsons asked for an update on safety access to Ballinasloe Soccer Club and in response, Mr. Troy advised that no formal review has taken place yet and this will likely be considered under a future phase of the Active Travel Scheme (MDB25020).

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE 2025 ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED WORKS OF MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE BALLINASLOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT **MDB25022**

Mr. Coyne presented the Municipal District Schedule of Works for 2025, outlining that it was an overview of the scheduled repairs and maintenance works covering the service areas of Environment, Housing, and Recreation & Amenity.

In response to Cllr. Geraghty regarding the poor condition of pathways in graveyards in the locality, Mr. Coyne advised that such works may be more suited to applications under relevant funding schemes to carry out safety or access works at burial grounds. In response to Cllr. Harney regarding damage to burial grounds following Storm Eowyn, Mr. Troy confirmed he was aware of some fallen trees and other reported issues which had been dealt with. Cllr. D. Connolly thanked the staff for the clean-up carried out following Storm Eowyn. Cllr. Keaveney queried damage to private property caused by fallen trees in burial grounds and Mr. Coyne advised that it may be necessary to clarify this issue with Irish Public Bodies Insurance Company. In relation to a query from Cllr. Parsons, Ms. Lowe confirmed that the allocation for burial ground maintenance had increased from €85,000 to €97,550 over the last year.

Cllr. Parsons queried the low allocation for litter control and in response, Mr. Coyne advised he would seek further clarification on the breakdown of this budget across the Municipal Districts.

Cllr. Harney raised the issue of dumping around the bring banks and clothes banks in the town. In response Mr. Troy acknowledged that there are some issues with bring banks not being emptied as regularly as needed, and issues around the best locations for Bring Banks, however, all issues raised were investigated with clean-ups initiated as required. Cllr. M. Connolly stated the collection schedules at Bring Banks needs to be addressed to counter this issue.

Cllr. D Connolly referred to the lack of housing maintenance staff to implement the budget for housing maintenance and stated this is contributing to low response times on housing maintenance queries raised by tenants.

In relation to concerns expressed by Cllr. D. Connolly in relation to areas identified for rewilding in the town, Mr. Troy confirmed that some changes are being made to areas identified as biodiversity areas.

Cllr. Harney stated that it was very difficult for Community Groups to raise funding for repair and maintenance issues following playground inspections, and that more dedicated funding needs to be made available to them. Mr. Troy advised that the allocation for playgrounds covers the local authority owned playgrounds, and in that regard, an application to upgrade two playgrounds in Ballinasloe Town under the Community Recognition Fund had been successful.

Cllr. D Connolly queried the spend in relation to Dunlo running track and in response, Mr. Troy confirmed that the budget was primarily for general maintenance and grass-cutting, including 3 biodiversity areas which had seen improvements over the last year.

Cllr. Parsons expressed concern over the new charging system that has been introduced at Dunlo running track and stated it was causing confusion for some members of the public. Cllr. Harney concurred with Cllr. Parsons in relation to the new charging system at Dunlo running track and stated that some tweaks are required to make it more user friendly. In response to Cllrs Parsons and Harney, Mr. Troy advised that the new booking charge of €10 per hour is aimed at groups, clubs and schools and is not intended for individual use, and the track was open publicly the majority of the time for general individual and public use, rather than as an income-generating facility.

In relation to concerns expressed by Cllr. D Connolly and Cllr. Parsons about safety issues at Sarsfield Road, Mr. Troy advised that funding is in place to carry out the road resurfacing aspect of the works and an application has been made under the Community Recognition Fund 2024 for traffic calming / road crossing works.

In response to a query from Cllr. Harney regarding the mechanisms for identifying resurfacing works in housing estates, Ms. Lowe advised that if housing estates are taken in charge they were considered as part of the Roads Programme. Mr. Troy added that when assessing priorities for funding, it was necessary to look at traffic levels in housing estates versus main roads.

Approval of the Schedule of repairs and maintenance for Environment, Housing, and Recreation & Amenity, was proposed by Cllr. Parsons, seconded by Cllr. Keaveney and agreed by all the Members.

Ms. Lowe presented the Annual Roads Programme 2025, covering grant funding of motorways, national roads, regional and local roads, and Council's discretionary funding of regional and local roads. Ms. Lowe referred to the approval in principle of baseline allocations in January 2025, and Mr. Troy confirmed that this has enabled early tendering for the programme with contracts for restoration and improvement works expected to be signed over the next week or so. Mr. Troy also advised that there was potential for extension of existing jobs, or identification of new works, due to cost savings from early tendering. The members welcomed the Roads Programme funding and thanked all the staff involved in the preparation of the document.

Cllr. Keaveney queried the process for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programme, and expressed concerns regarding safety issues at Ballaghlea N.S. In response, Ms. Lowe confirmed that An Taisce meet teachers and parents of school students, and carry out an holistic assessment of the school environment before compiling a report. Once the Council receive this report, they liaise with the NTA to identify the most relevant health & safety aspects for funding.

In relation to a query regarding LIS (Local Improvement Scheme), Ms. Lowe confirmed that the priority list of projects from last year would be carried over to this year to progress. Cllr. Keaveney and Cllr. M. Connolly expressed safety concerns regarding the Castletown Cross junction, stating that there was a need to stagger this junction to properly address safety concerns, in addition to works proposed as Safety Improvement Works. Ms. Lowe advised that the CIS (Community Involvement Scheme) is also a source of funding for setback and safety options at junctions and encouraged the Elected Members to link with local landowners for cooperation in terms of land dedication or a financial contribution to address safety concerns.

In relation to a query from Cllr. Parsons on commencement of footpath repairs in Lawrencetown, Mr. Troy confirmed that funding is in place and a contractor is being sought to carry out the works.

Cllr. Harney welcomed the funding towards the Townspark Relief Road and stated this was a strategic route to open up the town for town centre living. In response to a query from Cllr. Parsons, Ms. Lowe confirmed that the Harris Road and Station Road would be logical next stages for Active Travel considerations.

Cllr. Harney queried if any feedback had been received in relation to the Creagh junction and in response, Ms. Lowe stated that a detailed proposal has been sent to the Department of Transport who had carried out a site visit and the Council were in continued communications regarding this proposal.

Approval of the Annual Roads Programme was proposed by Cllr. Geraghty, seconded by Cllr. M. Connolly and agreed by all the Members.

APPROVAL OF INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE ANNUAL REPORT 2024 IN RELATION TO THE PERFORMANCE OF FUNCTIONS BY THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE MEMBERS

MDB25023

Mr. Coyne advised the members they would receive an overview of the full Annual Report at the plenary meeting in April, however, in the meantime, the extract on Ballinasloe Municipal District activities was being circulated to the Municipal District Members for approval. Approval of the information for the Annual Report 2024, was proposed by Cllr. Harney, seconded by Cllr. Geraghty and agreed by all the Members.

Cllr. D Connolly asked that the Council revisit staffing levels in Ballinasloe Municipal District. In response, Mr. Coyne advised that this was being dealt with through the Workforce Plan.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE DIRECTOR'S BUSINESS

MDB25024

Mr. Coyne advised the Members that 170 recommendations for approval under Local Enhancement Programme 2025 have been forwarded to the Department of Rural and Community Development for final approval, with grants ranging from €1,000 - €5,000.

Mr. Coyne stated that Clár 2025 funding has just been announced and the closing date for applications to Galway County Council is 13th June.

Mr. Coyne advised that the Town & Village Scheme 2025 is now open with a closing date of 25th July.

Cllr. D Connolly queried if there was a reopening date for the library gallery which was currently out of commission, and Mr. Coyne confirmed he would raise the matter with Corporate Services.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

MD825025

Cllr. M Connolly and the Members agreed to invite Louise Ward and Niamh McGrath to Civic Receptions at the next Municipal District Meeting, in recognition of their recent sporting achievements.

VOTES OF SYMPATHY/CONGRATULATIONS

MDB25026

Votes of Sympathy

Mr. Liam Conneally, Chief Executive, on the passing of his mother, Elizabeth Conneally.
The O'Dwyer family on the passing of Mick O'Dwyer, Football Player and Manager.
The Grehan family on the passing of Bridget Grehan, Ballinasloe.
Fr. John Garvey, on the passing of Julia Garvey, Ballinasloe.
Joe Molloy, on the passing of his sister Geraldine Finneran, formerly of Clontuskert.

The members expressed concerns over the lack of development of the St Brigid's Hospital site and the need to retain the site in public ownership. Cllr. D Connolly referred to its inclusion in the RSES as an opportunity to re-imagine Ballinasloe Town and bring vibrancy to its core through multiple uses such as cultural, commercial, educational and residential purposes, rather than being the site of dereliction and decay as it currently sits.

Cllr. Harney expressed his thanks to officials for moving the building towards the Derelict Sites Register, and stressed the need for immediate emergency works to the roof following Storm Eowyn, as well as a cohesive plan to ensure the entire site served the whole community.

Cllr. M Connolly also welcomed progress in adding the site to the derelict sites register and stated that the Members had to ensure provision for proper zoning of the site, which may need to be reviewed as part of the review of the Local Area Plan and County Development Plan.

Cllr. Parsons requested clarity on whether the HSE were required to offer the site for sale initially to the Land Development Agency or local authority and queried the status of residential land zone tax and valuation of the site for sale purposes. Cllr. Parsons also stated that a commitment was required from the HSE regarding the provision of a permanent ambulance base at the site. Cllr. Parsons also queried the next steps in relation to the Dereliction Order and whether it would proceed to CPO following the expiry of the 21 days or what other sanctions would be imposed upon the HSE. Cllr. D. Connolly stressed the need for a whole-of-complex approach and the need for the DOS Ballinasloe & DOS Planning to work in partnership to agree a Masterplan and vision for the future of the site. Mr. Coyne confirmed that he would revert to the Members on these issues.

The Members all expressed that it had been an absolute pleasure to work with Ms. Lowe and thanked her for her ultimate professionalism and efficiency in all dealings with the Municipal District and wished her well in her new post with Roscommon County Council. Ms. Lowe thanks the Members for their best wishes, and the courtesy and respect always shown to her in all dealings with the Municipal District.

CHRIOCHNAIGH AN CRUINNIU ANSIN**Signed:**Michael Connolly**Dated:**14/5/2025