

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara

Municipal District of Conamara

**Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara
held on Friday 10th January 2025 at 10.00am in the Council Chamber.**

CATHAORILEACH:	Cllr. T. Welby
I LATHAIR:	Cllr. E. Mannion
BAILL:	Comh T. Ó Curraoin, Comh Mac An Iomaire, Cllr. S. Walsh, Cllr. G. King. Cllr M. Leainde, Cllr. N.Thomas, Cllr Martin Lee
OIFIGH:	U. Finn, Director of Services, R. Lowe, Senior Engineer, T Prendergast, Senior Engineer, T.J. Redmond S.E.E. N.O'Conaola, E.E. L Tierney E. Technician, M. Melody E.E., I. Martyn, A.O. Meetings Administrator, N. Rabbitte, C.O.

1. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held on Friday 9th December 2024

On the **Proposal** of Comh. O'Curraoin and **Seconded** by Cllr. Comh Mac An Iomaire the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 9th December 2024 were agreed.

A presentation was given on the progress of achieving **UNESCO Geopark Status for Joyce County & Western Lakes.**, by Michael Hegarty, Geopark Manager, Benjamin Thebaudeau, Geopark Geologist and Maedbh Seoige, Tourism Manager, Udaras na Gaeltachta.

The Cathaoirleach thanked all involved in the Presentation and noted this is a project of great interest and for Connemara as a Geopark would be a unique area i.e. rock formations.

Matters Arising and Responses

The Members thanked the Geopark Team for the Presentation.

- Mr. Hegarty, Geopark Manager thanked everyone for their support. He noted that funds are ringfenced for the project and signs will be erected on the main entry points in three to four months. Bord Fáilte Ireland are working with Geopark to design and complete the project and there will be information corners in Cong. This will be a global brand which will put Connemara on the Map, therefore attracting different visitors to see Connemara's local culture.
- Cllr. Welby acknowledged the support of Údarás na Gaeltachta for both this project and for the development of a town centre first plan for Carraroe village.

2. Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2000 – 2018 (as amended) for a Burial Ground extension at Leitir Mor, Connemara

Mr. Melody, Environment Section, gave a presentation in relation to the extension to the burial ground inb Leitir Mor.

Plans were circulated to the meeting, with 6 conditions attached.

Matters Arising and Responses

- Comh Mac An Iomaire thanked Mr. Melody for his inciteful presentation and wished to propose that the burial ground go ahead as it is necessary in Leitir Mor. He also thanked Comhairle Ceantair an Oilean for their meeting two years ago when they all got together on the proposed extension to the burial ground at Leitir Mor.
- Comh O'Curraoin thanked everyone involved and welcomed the burial ground extension at Leitir Mor. He noted that the whole of Connemara is in trouble with graveyards from Furbo out West, where there are sites, but the depth of soil is the problem. A cemetery is necessary and works were done at Bealadangan, where fill was brought in and maybe this should be considered for other sites.
- Cllr. Leainde agreed with Comh O'Curraoin and again enquired about any update in relation to the Cille Éine graveyard in Kilronan, Inis Mor.

- Cllr. Lee thanked everyone involved including Comhairle Ceantair na N-Oilean, and noted some places are not suitable and hoped another location could be made available.
- Ms. Lowe responded that there is no new update on the Cille Éine graveyard. It is included in the minor works grant for the island, and the plan is to submit a proposal on costings. Submissions will be made and an appropriate assessment can be made when screening is completed. The Department is compiling a list, more or less ready to go.
- Cllr. Walsh advised that he recently visited Cille Éine, graveyard and he thanked the staff for the work done to date but expressed his concern in relation to the wall surrounding the burial ground and that people need a safe burial ground.
- Cllr. Welby reiterated that it is a serious problem and agreed to keep it on the agenda going forward.
- Mr. Melody mentioned there are other burial grounds in the County. Adverts have been done as an expression of interest for landowners, but there wasn't a great response. Some sites are not suitable and there may be an access issue to the sites with traffic and parking.

The extension to the Burial Ground at Leitir Mor was **Proposed** by Cllr. Iomaire **Seconded** by Cllr Lee and agreed.

3. Connamara Three-Year Roads Programme including 2025 Annual Road Resurfacing Programme.

Ms. Lowe advised the members that it is a requirement from the Department of Transport for the Local Authority to prepare a 3-year Multi-Annual Restoration Improvement Programme and the current programme covers the years 2025 to 2027. She stated that local authorities are required to draft the programme based on the 2024 budget allocation as the budget allocations for 2025, 2026 and 2027 are not confirmed yet. She explained that the multi-annual programme applies to Restoration Improvement Grant works only, which tend to be the more significant road works. She added that roads are prioritised based on their pavement condition ratings, and 15% must be allocated to regional road works. This is in accordance with Department of Transport requirements.

Hardcopies of the 3-year Roads Programme with maps were circulated.

Ms. Lowe then presented a draft of the 2025 Roads Resurfacing Programme in more detail to the Members. This is an early draft of the resurfacing programme, and can be finalised when grant allocations are received from the Department of Transport.

She confirmed that the roads budget is allocated by the Department in February or March of each year and presenting an early draft of the 2025 programme to Councillors may facilitate earlier tendering. She advised the members that the complete roads programme (containing many more grant categories) will formally be presented for adoption in February or March when the actual allocations are issued to local authorities. She reiterated that at present the Roads team is just presenting an early draft of the 2025 resurfacing programme to show councillors the intended direction of travel. The full 2025 Roads Programme (with all grant categories included) will be presented as part of the Schedule of MD works in due course and the adoption of this is a reserved function.

Hardcopies of the draft 2025 Road Resurfacing Programme were circulated.

Matters Arising and Responses

- Comh O'Curraoin welcomed the plan and thanked the roads staff for the great work in the improvements to the roads. He noted that black top is great and has longevity, but there are places where there is bog which has been repaired by the Council.
- Comh. Mac An Iomaire welcomed the Roads Programme and stated that more funding would be great and the roads have improved a lot. He highlighted that Cuan na Loinge is not on the Roads Programme. Ms. Lowe confirmed in response that it is part of another scheme.
- Cllr. King also welcomed the Roads Programme and that black top is a big improvement. One kilometre of the R340 is currently being worked on.
- Cllr. Leainde mentioned that gritting of the roads during cold spells was a big issue and only the main roads were being done.
- Cllr. Lee welcomed the Roads Programme, good improvements have been made and commended the works and team involved for the works done. Also he noted it was great to get the list early in the year.
- Cathaoirleach Welby mentioned that with tenders going out early, there might be better value for money.
- The Councillors confirmed their approval of the Three Years Programme and their agreement in principle to the draft 2025 Road Resurfacing Programme. This was **Proposed** by Cllr. Lee and **Seconded** by Comh O'Curraoin.

4. Municipal District of Connamara Directors Business

Mr. Finn noted that at the Council's Budget Meeting the councillors increased the LPT and part of the funding goes back to the Municipal Districts and to the works programme. Grants will be announced in February/March for roads and in the meantime, it can be on the agenda for the next MD meeting.

5. Municipal District of Connamara Cathaoirleach's Business

Cllr. Lee thanked Galway County Council staff for their work on gritting the roads during the recent cold spell. However, he noted the Tiernee road was not gritted. On the road named L523, second, he mentioned an area in Carraroe at the turn at Ostan na Droilean, where there is a steep hill, thirdly there is a section in Leitir Mor where a smaller gritter would be useful.

Cllr. Leainde agreed with the road at Ostan Droilean and also the crossroads at the Windfarm in Oughterard.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire agreed with the roads as mentioned also Seanphaistin roads, an ambulance would not travel. Also, an area of interest is the Oughterard to Bunangippaun needs to be reviewed.

Comh O'Curraoin noted people need to be careful of the thaw, as there was frost underneath and they need to slow down., where it rained on top, there was frost underneath.

Cllr. Walsh thanked the winter maintenance crew for their taking and returning of calls and suggested that other councillors allocate their NOM monies to salt barns.

Cllr. Thomas also thanked the staff for the Roads Programme, and noted roads are improving and with the black top tarmacden it last for years. Need to look at the Moycullen to Spiddal road and the Seanaphaistin to Bunnagippaun Road.

Cllr. King mentioned that school bus routes should be priority.

Mr. Prendergast, gave his response in relation to the Winter Service Maintenance Plan as follows:

That some routes are a priority during the period of adverse weather. From the 1st of January 3 thousand kilometres of road, 24 hours of working, 3 thousand tonnes of salt and 3 salt bins. Noted that every road can't be treated. Requests are constantly coming in., there are 15 different routes throughout the county. Routes will be reviewed going forward.

Cllr. Lee suggested a salt depot in Connemara for example and asked when the route review would be done.

Cathaoirleach Welby said this item be put on the agenda for next June or July.

Mr. Prendergast, noted that a salt bin in Connemara would be desirable, a site would need to be identified and it would be something to look into and there will be a review of the routes ahead of the 2025 Winter Service Plan.

Mr. Finn, acknowledged the winter maintenance team during the cold spell and the worked they carried out. He said the main focus would be on the priority routes i.e. regional and national routes and that they are assessable.

6. Votes of Sympathy / Congratulations.

Cllr. Lee spoke ás gaeilge to congratulate the Carraroe (An Cheathrú Rua) Junior Football Team on reaching the All-Ireland Final to be held in Croke Park on Saturday 25th January next.

Comh. Mac Iomaire expressed sympathies on the passing of Mattie Joe Sheamus

Cllr. Walsh again mentioned and sympathised with Cllr. Thomas on the passing of his father Noel.

Comh. Ó'Curraoin sympathised with Cllr. Thomas on the passing of his father and sympathies on the passing of Mattie Joe Sheamus and Tina Nestor of Ragoon.

He mentioned the upcoming junior club final for An Cheathrú Rua Football Team.

7. A.O.B.

Mr. Finn, mentioned the reduction of speed limits is to be reviewed on 20th February and an update will be given at the next meeting.

Cathaoirleach Cllr Welby concluded the meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

h Welby 7/8/2025