

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Ceantar Bardasach Chonamara

Municipal District of Conamara

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara

held on Monday 11th April 2025 at 10.00am in the Galway Council Chamber.

I LATHAIR:

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. T. Welby

BAILL: Comh T. Ó Curraoin, Comh Mac An Iomaire, Cllr. S. Walsh, Cllr M. Leainde, Cllr. N. Thomas, Cllr Martin Lee, Cllr E Mannion, Cllr G. King.

OIFIGH: U Finn Director of Services, Rachel Lowe S.E, T Prendergast S.E, N O'Conaola E.E, I Martyn A.O. Meetings, T Ryan Climate Action Co-Ordinator, S. Casey A.S.O,

1. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held on Friday 7th March 2025.

On the **Proposal** of Cllr. King and **Seconded** by Comh, O'Curraoin the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Municipal District of Conamara held on 7th March 2025 were agreed.

Matters Arising.

Cllr. Mannion corrected the Minutes to read that she agreed with Cllr. Walsh on one point that the persons most impacted by the Sceirde Rocks Offshore Windfarm should get the most compensation. This was agreed.



Climate Action Conamara Municipal District Funding Upgrade:

Ms. Ryan, Climate Action Co-Ordinator gave a presentation on the Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. The key aim of this plan is to deliver and enable transformative change and measurable climate action across our County and within our own organisation, ensuring a just transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient future.

The Community Climate Action Fund will provide 100% funding and thirty two projects were awarded in 2024. A new fund is to open May/ June 2025 and e Projects eligible must do one or more of the following:

- Reduce emissions
- Increase production or use of renewable energy
- Improve resilience to climate change
- Enhance biodiversity
- Support the low carbon economy
- They must be not for profit organization
- Located in the operational area of the Galway County Council Local Authority.
- Registered with the PPN or connected with other collective like the Wheel, Tidy Towns and/or a community group with Articles of Association or a Constitution that holds AGMs and for which approved minutes are available.
- Only one application per organization will be allowed.
- Cost submitted are for the sole purpose of implementing the project.
- Those that cannot apply:
- Individuals, Schools, commercial entities, national community and environment organisations.

Ms. Ryan informed the meeting that the biggest category for applications was Community/Energy:

- Solar Panels on Community Buildings
- Upgrade of community lights to LED.
- Retrofitting community buildings.
- Strong applications included the following:
- Efficiency first
- Energy audits indicating what retrofitting should be done
- Levels of emissions reductions calculated.
- Low Cost Per Tonne of CO2 reductions.
- 3 quotes and a clear delivery plan.

With regards to Travel, Ms. Ryan notified all that the most popular projects were:

- Bicycle Parking/Racks, bike repair stations.
- Community Cargo bikes.

Strong applications encompassed:

- Good design of bicycle racks that included bus shelters, quality and installation.
-

The members were also advised on Food and Waste project the most popular project in this section were:

- Community gardens, community fridges.
- Composting facilities and anaerobic digester.

Strong applications in this category.

- Demonstration of cross community benefit, good design.

Shopping and Recycling was another theme, and the aim here is to increase recycling facilities and initiatives aimed at reusing and recycling and upcycling.

- Water refill stations.
- Segregated Bins.
- Community repair hubs.
- Swap shops and library of things like toys/ musical instruments, equipment, sports kits.

Strong applications for these include:

- Three quotes and prices indicating good value for money
- Cross community benefit and proposals to generate engagement.
- Maintenance proposals.
- Detail of full cost.

Regarding local climate & environmental action the most popular projects were:

- Mini forests and dispersed orchards.
- Rainwater harvesting.
- Pollinator projects including wildflower meadows.

Strong application would incorporate the following:

- Maintenance of proposals
- 3 quotes.
- Cross community benefit.
- Planting plan with plants of local provenance.

Ms. Ryan informed the members that a decision was made not to fund wildflower seeds on the advice of the Biodiversity Officer.

Ms. Ryan completed her presentation with the Draft Vision Oileáin Árann Decarbonization Zone and its aims.

Matters Arising and Responses:

Cllr. Mannion queried why the Aran Islands had three cargo bikes and Inishbofin had none.

Ms. Ryan replied that these are community run. Aran Islands applied to become a Decarbonized Zone and this was granted by the Department. The cargo bikes can be availed of by anyone during the day or by committees like Tidy Towns.

Cllr. King enquired about the funding and the number of projects.

Ms. Ryan responded that there was no limited amount and it depended on the nature of the project and best value for money.

Cathaoirleach Welby questioned who was responsible for the water filling stations?

Ms. Ryan clarified that some of the groups involved would pay for these themselves.

2. To consider and adopt the 2025 Annual Schedule of proposed Works of maintenance and repair to be carried out in the Conamara Municipal District

Mr. Finn and Ms. Lowe gave detailed breakdowns of works for each grant of the allocations for the Conamara Municipal District Roads Programme 2025. This breakdown also consisted of the following:

Restoration Improvement Grant, Restoration Maintenance Grant and the Discretionary Grant

The Conamara Greenway received an allocation of **€3,355,000** this year from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). This allocation of funds will allow for the works currently in progress to be completed i.e. the Clifden to Recess section, for design works on the section from Recess to Oughterard and progressing the Galway to Oughterard section to planning.

Conamara received the following allocations in 2025:

- Restoration Improvement Grant of **€4,737,036**.

- Restoration Maintenance Grant **€1,115,169**.
 - Discretionary Grant allocated by the department increased in 2025 to an allocation of **€5,756,500**, which will help to meet the costs of road maintenance and improvement works. The Conamara MD will be assigned **€452,755** for Regional Road Maintenance and **€423,164** for local road maintenance.
-
- Conamara was apportioned **€265,898** of a Discretionary Grant for Tertiary Roads.

Mr. Finn and Ms. Lowe informed members that there was **€1,168,500** assigned to Non-National Road Bridges for all the Municipal Districts based on a priority basis. Sheannagh Croise Bridge is on the proposed bridge repairs program for 2025.

They listed the locations for Safety Improvement Works and Specific Improvement Grants.

Drainage works received **€1,258,0000** this year and Ms. Lowe stated this is critical in terms of Climate Change.

Community Involvement Scheme is not yet finalized but the members were reassured that they would be informed once completed.

There will be a rural speed limit review, and a grant has been provided to assist with this task.

The Department has introduced a Climate Change Adaptation & Rehabilitation Grant of **€1,220,500** and this will be divided between the Municipal Districts to aid with their projects.

Galway County Council funding of Regional and Local Roads will be apportioned in similar format to previous years.

Mr. Finn and Ms. Lowe also shared with members the funds allocated for Greenway Maintenance, School Flashing Lights, Public Lighting, Community Broadband & Wi-Fi, Local Improvement Schemes, NTA funded Active Travel Programme for 2025, General Maintenance and Winter Maintenance.

Ms. Lowe advised that tenders had gone out in advance and there was a discount on the tenders compared to last year's prices.

Matters Arising and Responses:

Cathaoirleach Welby enquired regarding the saving on the tenders?

Ms. Lowe replied that getting the tenders out early allowed extra time and the cost of materials was lower.

Cllr. King queried regarding the allocation for the LIS scheme.

Comh. Ó Curraoin requested an update on the Bus Stop in Bearná.

Cllr. Mannion added that the value for money in relation to the tenders was welcome and she questioned if additional roads can be included in the allocations. She highlighted her concerns regarding a Pedestrian Crossing at Clifden School and a road safety plan for Letterfrack school. She advised that the N59 needed attention and the allocation of funding was very low for this project.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire commented that the Ros a'Mhil road was nearly finished and that the bridges in Seanadh Pheistin Rd were progressing. He expressed his concern regarding a safer route to school to Scoil Furbo and he agreed that a bus shelter is urgently required in An Spidéal.

Cllr. Lee concurred that school safety is a big concern and he suggested that the Council staff should meet with the parents in Scoil Sailearna in Inverin. He queried if there was progress on the LIS Scheme as some applications have been on the waiting list for a long time.

Cllr. Leainde added that Galway County Council should provide funding for school crossings, that it should be a national issue and the Department should allocate funding.

In reply to Cllr. Leainde Cathaoirleach Welby said that the Department of Education do not seem to incorporate the vital importance of road safety when a school is being constructed and he felt that with more forward planning this should not be such an issue in the future.

Mr. Finn stated that the N59 Moycullen Bypass opened and the N59 Maam to Bunnakill opened. The Oughterard Footbridge is progressing and should go to An Bord Pleanála this year subject to land owner agreements, and the N59 Clifden to Maam road was to go back to planning. N59 Bunnakill to Claremont ecological testing will be carried out and tenders will go out for construction. He advised that the T.I.L. budget for national road schemes has been reduced.

Ms. Lowe in reply to the members questions regarding the LIS Schemes, said the LIS scheme is on a two-year basis and the application period for 2025 is now closed. She noted that there is a backlog of applications but they will be considered. She addressed the members concerns about bus shelters/ bus stops and reassured that Galway County Council, along with the Galway City Council and the National Transport Authority (NTA) were allocated funds for these

enhancements but that certain criteria must be met before a shelter/ bus stop is deemed viable for an area. She expressed that Bearna and An Spidéal schools should qualify but the required space might be an issue. In relation to the roads that weren't included in the allocations, she assured that they can be considered and some flexibility applied.

Ms. Lowe informed the meeting that checks and surveys were being carried out at schools located in higher speed areas and speed limits were surveyed on Safe Route to Schools. She advised that a survey on the road in Scoil Bhaile Nua was carried out by the contractor and Galway County Council. Ms. Lowe reiterated that the safe routes was of immense importance and that parents and members will be informed.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire informed that the lights at Newtown School were not working.

Cllr. Mannion requested an update on the Galway City Ring Road.

Comh. O'Curraoin referenced the Safe Route to Schools in Charleville and the safety measures which are in place on a busy national road. He advised that in future schools should not be erected on the side of a road.

Cathaoirleach Welby concurred and in his experience on school Board's of Management he found it difficult liaising with the Department of Education regarding locations and facilities required by schools. He referenced St. Annes School in Oughterard which is located in a highly dangerous location.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire agreed and he added that it is a similar situation with An Spidéal school.

Cllr. King acknowledged what has been achieved by the LIS Scheme but queried regarding funding.

Cllr. Mannion concurred in support of the points raised about Road Safety and it's importance. She stated it was imperative that we come up with a low-cost safety road plan as this is a problem on all routes.

Ms. Lowe re-capped that the LIS scheme was primarily agreed to serve agricultural farms and many applicants for this scheme don't qualify for taking in charge by the Council.

Mr. Finn informed members that there are various methods of traffic calming measures that could be put in place i.e. speed ramps, road narrowing, signs, lower speed limits but each of these has positive and negative aspects depending on the road. He repeated that one solution doesn't fit all.

On the **Proposed** of Cllr. Mannion and **Seconded** by Cllr. Lee the Roads Programme was adopted.

3. Municipal District of Conamara Director's Business:

The Director advised that under Director's Business that he had requested the Climate Action Team to give a presentation in relation to Community Climate Action Funds and that this had been taken at the start of the meeting.

4. Municipal District of Conamara Cathaoirleach's Business:

Cathaoirleach Welby stated he had nothing to raise.

5. Votes of Sympathy/Congratulations:

Comh. O'Curraoin expressed that he would like to offer his condolences and sympathy to the family of Ula Grigaityté, Headford Road, Sandyvale who tragically died in a road accident.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire said he would like to offer condolences and sympathy to the Chief Executive, Liam Conneally on the passing of his mother and to GAA legend Mick O'Dwyer.

Comh O'Curraoin joined in his condolences and sympathy to both.

Cllr. Leainde added that he would like to include the family of Deirdre Ni Thuairsg, who managed An Taibhdhearc in the 80's and 90's to the votes of sympathy.

Cathaoirleach Welby congratulated Ms. Lowe on her move to Roscommon County Council. He thanked her for all her work and commitment. He said that she is a major loss to Galway County Council.

Comh. O'Curraoin echoed the exact sentiments of Cathaoirleach Welby that she was a huge loss to everyone and she was always eager to help and very approachable.

Cllr. King agreed with all the well-deserved praise and said that she was always helpful and open.

Cllr. Lee noted that although he had not worked with her for a long time, he found her so helpful and hands on.

Cllr. Mannion stated that she was going to be a huge loss. She was outstanding in her work, very dedicated and she always focused on the solution of the problem.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire agreed and added that she was a pleasure to work with.

Mr. Finn said he was sorry to see her leave Galway County Council. He said he admired and acknowledged her dedication and commitment in her role.

Ms. Lowe thanked everyone for their kind words and stated that she enjoyed her time working in Galway County Council. She believes the work that Councillors do through their role in democracy is so important. It is Local Government and Democracy in action working well.

6. A.O.B.

Cllr. Lee requested an update on the Paint Box Road in An Maolán estate in Bearná. He questioned if the Thornberry Estate in Bearná has been acquired by Galway County Council and if so the number of dwellings and the number of social units in the development. He re-iterated on the safety problems with schools and road safety, and if it would be possible to employ a Lollypop Person. He thanked the emergency services for their fantastic work in dealing with the gorse fires in Tiernee.

Comh. Mac An Iomaire agreed with Cllr. Lee regarding the gorse fires and he stated that people should be educated in the danger of lighting fires especially at this time of year.

Comh. O'Curraoin approved of the points raised by both Comh Mac An Iomaire and Cllr. Lee but reasoned that perhaps people were more than likely burning gorse because it was overgrown. He queried if Active Travel Grants were available to schools?

Cathaoirleach Welby said that he could not emphasis enough on how concerned he is regarding road safety at St. Annes School, Oughterard. He said that speed limits must be looked at.

Matter Arising & Responses:

Mr. Finn acknowledged all concerns raised by the members, he stated that he would provide an update on the housing in Bearná once he had got the information.

He stated that that the file on the Ring Road would be delivered to An Bord Pleanála on Tuesday 22nd April.

Regarding the danger around the gorse fires he underlined that there was information provided on the website and he thanked the emergency services for their action.

In relation to school safety he advised that there are approximately two hundred and ninety eight schools in the County, and it is imperative that each school communicates with the Council. He said that the Council is working closely with all the relevant groups on school safety and the same solution might not apply to every school.

Ms. Lowe added that there is a process being put in place around school safety.

Mr. Finn in reply to the issue of An Maolán, Bearna said that the Roads section would be working closely with the Planning Department for a successful solution.

Regarding the hiring of a lollypop person, Mr. Finn said that Departmental sanction is required.

7. Notice of Motion

On the proposal of Cllr. Mannion Seconded by Cllr. Welby and agreed.

"That Galway County Council apply to Transport Infrastructure Ireland for funding to upgrade a dangerous section of road from Derrylea to Clifden on the N59 as a matter of urgency."

The next meeting of Conamara MD meeting was scheduled for **Friday 9th May at 10 a.m. in the Council Chamber.**

Críochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin.

Signed: *L. Welby*

Date: *9/5/2025*

