

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TUAM HELD AT
THE OFFICES OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TUAM, TUAM, COUNTY GALWAY
ON MONDAY 10th FEBRUARY 2025 AT 2.00 pm.**

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Andrew Reddington

I LÁTHAIR FREISIN Cllr. Cuniffe, Cllr. Hoade, Cllr. Killilea, Cllr. McHugh Farag, McHugh Ryan, Cllr. Turner.

AS LÁTHAIR

BAILL OIFIGIH: Mr. Michael Owens, D.O.S., Mr. John Coyle – SEE, Mr. Sean Kennedy – EE, Mr. Tom Regan – EE, Ms. Geraldine Byrne – Meeting Administrator, Ms. Sinéad Naughton – Staff Officer.

Prior to the Municipal District meeting, Michael Hegarty, Manager of Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark along with his colleagues updated the Tuam Municipal District councillors with a presentation about their progress towards achieving UNESCO Global Geopark status for Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark. He advised that they anticipated receiving unofficial designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark at the UNESCO Geoparks Council meeting in September and were well on track to achieve the status.

MDT250008

1. – Confirmation of the Minutes of the Municipal District of Tuam held 13th January 2025.

Cllr. Reddington expressed his condolences to the family of the late Michael Coleman, who had sadly passed, RIP. All of the Elected members wished to be associated with these words of sympathy with Cllr. Turner advising a book of condolences would be opened by Galway County Council for all to sign as he paid tribute to his great sporting achievements.

On the **proposal** of Cllr. McHugh Farag and **seconded** by Cllr. Hoade the minutes of the meeting of the Tuam Municipal District held on 13th January 2025 were **agreed**,

Matters Arising:

Cllr. Killilea requested an update on the Tuam Inner relief road and Mr. Owens advised that an update was available, and he would circulate same to all members. Cllr. Killilea also sought an update regarding a request to be made to the County Policing Committee regarding investment in patrol cars for Tuam/Dunmore/Headford.

Cllr. Killilea asked if an update was received from the GRETB regarding a request for a training course he suggested for General Operative candidates prior to interview. Mr. Owens said he had spoken to his colleagues in the HR Department and there are standard requirements for the post as set by the Department. He said there is also an extensive list in the application as to what additional requirements would be beneficial and advised that this can be circulated to members for their information. Cllr. Killilea requested that a letter was written to GRETB to set up a course with training that applicants would require.

Municipal District of Tuam – 10th February 2025

Cllr. McHugh asked for an update on MDT250006 a request to write to the court services regarding the parking at the front of the building. Mr. Owens advised there was no update at present in relation the parking outside of the courthouse.

Cllr. Hoade thanked Mr. Coyle for recent repair works completed on the N84 and asked for an update on the Court House in Headford and suggested the need to engage with residents. Mr. Owens advised that a costing exercise is to be undertaken, that there were planning implications to be considered and that there would be public consultation in relation to its use and this would allow for feedback.

Cllr. Hoade also asked if NOM monies could be allocated to Sylane. Mr. Owens advised that the previous commitment given to allow NOM to be allocated over a two-year period would be honoured in this exceptional case once the allocation was now given in 2025 and a further written commitment for the allocation in 2026 was also forthcoming. Cllr. Reddington advised that the motion was passed at the previous meeting and Cllr. Hoade advised that each elected members needed to allocate NOM in the usual way. Cllr. McHugh Farag suggested that an e-mail was circulated with the costing agreed and what was required from each Councillor. Ms. Byrne undertook to send a mail with clarification to all Councillors.

MDT250009

2. - Municipal District of Tuam Director's Business

Cllr. Reddington wished to sincerely thank the Councillors, the Executive, Engineering staff and all the outdoor workers for their hard work throughout the storm. He said it was extremely important to recognise the work done by farmers and people in the local community, carers and people providing home help adding that communities really came together.

Cllr. McHugh Ryan commended the council workers for their endless work, with many themselves without power and said that there are still some people without power and thanked those involved in water provision as well. She asked if there were contacts in Eir as there were still businesses and homes without phone lines and broadband.

Cllr. Hoade wished to be associated with the words of thanks in what she described as an unprecedented event, and she said that there are huge lessons to be made from it in particular for the utilities companies when the whole country was at a standstill. She called on the utility companies to make efforts to address these issues going forward.

She said the situation of trees along the roads need to be looked at by the landowners and the Government need to examine the issue. Water provision is also a concern with several private schemes unable to obtain a generator.

Cllr. McHugh Farag also called upon the utility companies to have an operational review with a school in Tuam out of power for two weeks. She wished to acknowledge and thank all the workers and other crews on the ground. She said there is a need to future proof, so this does not happen again. Cllr. McHugh Farag suggested training events locally and having an umbrella organisation going forward as farmers and locals acted as a reserve and said that the ESB need to be working towards the undergrounding of cables.

Cllr. Cunniffe thanked everyone for their gargantuan effort in overwhelming circumstances, he said that Galway County Council deserves credit and did themselves proud. He questioned the ESB as to what wind speed is the network designed to take, saying there is an expected standard, and it is their responsibility to tell us how they will deliver. He said there needs to be more public involvement and ESB need to be given feedback from a huge public forum.

Municipal District of Tuam – 10th February 2025

Cllr. Killilea thanked Galway County Council crews and staff for their work throughout and said that access to communication was the biggest factor. He said it was critical that Uisce Éireann managed to role out safe drinking water as approx. 2800 households were without drinking water for almost 4 days and no drinking water was provided.

He referred to Galway County Council's own council stock and lack of heating due to the storm and asked that consideration is given when planning and building for access to turnover switches so there is access to generators. Cllr. Killilea emphasized the critical role of the Federation of Group Water Schemes (GWS) in addressing power supply issues for local schemes. He highlighted that three estates in Corofin village and one in Tuam town were without power for over 13 days, affecting private wastewater treatment. He urged elected members to push for these estates to be taken in charge. He commended wonderful works carried out in hubs such as Tuam Rugby Club and Bru Bride.

Cllr. Turner expressed gratitude to the Tuam MD staff and the Galway County Council members, including the executive, for their efforts during a challenging period. He acknowledged that there was no political point-scoring, with everyone focused on doing the right thing. Councillors were managing hundreds of calls, providing reassurance, and fulfilling their community roles. He also extended thanks to Michael Murray from the ESB for his support. Additionally, Turner identified the ESB power check system as the biggest issue, recommending a review of the system's effectiveness.

Cllr. Turner said it was incumbent on all in Tuam MD to look at solutions to address the differential in areas of rural Galway. He said there is a need to look at grant aid to fell trees and the issues where the ESB are being denied access to cut down trees, there is a need to look at a legislative process.

Cllr. Reddington raised the issue of the government's response to the storm, referring to local farmers out on roads clearing debris. He said if it had happened in Dublin two weeks ago the army would be called referring to a lot of elderly people left on their own.

Mr. Owens advised that the impact of the storm was unprecedented and said there was recognition that Galway County was most impacted. He said Tuam MD was very significantly impacted and wished to echo previous comments and tributes paid to staff of Tuam MD for many hours and days and commitment given when they left their own homes and said this will be acknowledged in a formal way this week.

Mr. Owens said the community response witnessed across county took many forms, with hubs put in place by Galway County Council and led on the ground by local people, to provide support and assistance. He wanted to acknowledge the huge community effort. He also acknowledged the engagement of communities in supporting effort to clearing trees and obstructions and said that it is appreciated and acknowledged by the Local Authority.

Mr. Owens said there are lessons learned from this event and that there will be a review on internal actions to determine an approach to future events. He said this will also identify actions that are required by other agencies where areas of improvement are required and at national level.

Mr. Coyle advised that the workers were prepared on Thursday before the storm and 4 contractors were brought on board to help move fallen trees. He said that 2 weeks on and Tuam MD are still working on the clean-up, hoping to start works on repair in the Palace Grounds this week. He said there will be learnings from it and shortcomings identified. He said the ESB prioritised getting power back in Luimnagh and that once Eir got on board, they became quicker at coming out and moving wires where required.

Cllr. Killilea said he omitted a significant role that was those in Housing Maintenance, he said the crews were out the following day patching up and assessing damage to houses and wished to relay thanks for same as they were excellent in their duties.

Cllr. Reddington enquired re Department funding for the clean-up. Mr. Owens advised that they did receive a request from the Department for high level costing requirements, which was responded to and that in responding they were advised that it was very much a high-level costing as clean-up is still going on and also roadsides were damaged also that will need repair. Mr. Coyle advised that he would also be meeting with TII re damage on National Roads

Cllr. Cuniffe enquired if their LPT and or national roads would be funding the storm cleanup. Mr. Owens advised there was not a commitment from the Department at present, but they had asked for an estimate and a preliminary estimation was submitted. He said there were over 500 properties effected and both the Department of Housing and the Department of Transport would have a role to play.

Mr. Owens advised that 2 properties owned by Council on Vicar Street have stage one approval from the Department with funding allocated to the value of €2.1 million to provide 19 beds, with accommodation comprised of cold weather response and medium term supported accommodation for the homeless and it is the intention to go to tender for a design team.

Cllr. Killilea asked for an update on the fire station site. Mr. Owens advised that there was a preliminary investigation, resulting in a licence being sought for archaeological works and additional investigative works and an excavation will be required on the site.

MDT250010

5. - Municipal -District of Tuam Cathaoirleach's Business

Cllr. Reddington commended the presentation on the Station Quarter which is expected to go to Part 8 at the next meeting. Cllr. Cuniffe agreed and said that it is incumbent that the planners ensure there is a pedestrian walkway on site to tie in the local area and ensure estates have a walkway.

Mr. Owens advised that the current timeline for THRIVE funding is end of May 2025, the Part 8 process for the proposed redevelopment of the station building will require a special meeting on 23rd May to facilitate the timeline of the end of May. He outlined that there would also be a full consultation process and timeline associated with the broader project for the Station Quarter.

Cllr. McHugh Ryan stressed the importance of retaining parking in this area.

Cllr. Reddington asked Mr. Owens regarding the division and spend on the LPT funds and suggested having an in-camera meeting after the MD meeting had concluded. This was agreed by all.

Cllr. Killilea referred to the Palace Ground and requested that any further development in there would first go to public consultation. Mr. Coyle advised that they were 3 projects ongoing the Sensory Garden, the Dog Park and provision of the Basketball Court. He said any further development was unlikely and would need to involve public consultation. Mr. Coyle advised that they would now be looking at the biodiversity within the park and replacing what has been damaged by the storm.

It was proposed by Cllr. Killilea, seconded by Cllr. Turner and agreed to hold a civic reception in Tuam MD to honour the achievements of Rossa Ryan. A date of Sunday 9th March was proposed which is to be confirmed.

Any Other Business

Cllr. McHugh Farag queried if elected members were presented with the new speed signs said she did not recall seeing a sign without numbers. Cllr. Reddington commented re an information session at Plenary meeting regarding same. Cllr. McHugh Farag said the speed limit should have been displayed clearly as

Municipal District of Tuam – 10th February 2025

60kph etc to avoid any confusion. She said that road safety should be plain and simple with no cause for ambiguity on signage.

Cllr. McHugh Ryan referred to the area of ground between O'Toole's Supervalu and High Cross School, which is a large unused space and asked why this area could not be considered as a car park. Mr. Owens advised this was possibly privately owned and therefore it's use was a matter for the owner to be informed by relevant planning requirements including zoning. Cllr. Killilea said it was previously zoned for amenity but is now mixed use.

Cllr. Cunniffe said that a motion was passed in relation to outdoor drinking and asked when the bye law would be passed. He questioned as to why if this was voted on at MD level that it had reverted to the Local Community Safety Partnership. Mr. Owens advised that it was submitted for consideration, however, the Partnership has yet to be finalised. He said that the Plenary has nominated members, that an interview process following on from expressions of interest for the Chair had been held. He said that the Minister for Justice must approve the appointment of the Chair and final guidance was awaited from the Department.

Cllr. Cunniffe asked therefore does the MD not have the decision itself. Mr. Owens advised that it does but it was necessary to consult with An Garda Síochána via the Safety Partnership as they will have a key role in relation to the implementation and enforcement of any bye-laws adopted by the MD.

MDT250011

On the proposal of Cllr. Killilea and seconded by Cllr. Turner the following motion was agreed.

I propose; -

That the Tuam MD would send a delegation of at least 1 elected representative and 1 executive member to the twinning day in Straubing at its festival in August 2025.

It was agreed that Monday 10th March would be the date for the next MD Meeting

Chríochnaigh an cruinniú ansin @ 16:00

Approved by:

 Date: 10/02/2025

Cllr. Reddington