
Gort Rural District Council

Archives Collection

1899 – 1924

G01/10



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Introduction

The Gort Rural District Council archives collection consists of minute books (1899-1924), and incoming letters (1912-1917). The collection has been in the custody of Galway County Libraries for many years.

Rural District Councils

Rural District Councils were set up under the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898. Their powers were conferred upon them by Sections 2 to 39 of the Act.

The Council assumed responsibility for the road and public works functions of the Grand Juries where the cost had been borne by the district, and the housing and public health functions of the Boards of Guardians. In the early years of County Councils much of the routine business was transacted through these Councils. The Poor Law Guardians were also the Rural District Councillors; the same individuals but working in a separate capacity.

The Councils played an important administrative role in the period pre-dating the formation of an independent Irish state, and when democratic local government was first established and developing in Ireland. The Councils were dissolved in October 1925 under Section 8, Sub-section (2), (3), and (4) of the Local Government Act of that year. Their functions were transferred, under the Local Government Act of 1925 to the county councils. County councils were in turn required to discharge their new sanitary duties through boards of health and public assistance.¹ These boards also had responsibility for the supervision of county homes, hospitals and dispensaries, housing, water and sewerage, home assistance and a number of schemes including blind welfare, boarded out children, infectious diseases, tuberculosis and the school medical service.

The Boards of Health and Public Assistance survived until August 1942 when the administration of public assistance and sanitary matters came under the direct control of the County Council acting through the new county managers. Medical Health Officers were appointed and were responsible for the effective administration of the legislation for safeguarding public health.

Gort Rural District Council

The Rural District Council meetings were generally held, if the required quorum of Councillors was in attendance, twice a month in either the Broad-room of the Workhouse or the Courthouse in Gort. There were originally in the region of 44 elected and/or co-opted members of Council.

The Council's geographical area of responsibility included the electoral divisions of Adamullivan, Ardrahan, Ballycahalan, Beagh, Cahermore, Cappard, Castletaylor, Dorus, Drumacoo, Gort, Kilbeacanty, Killenavarra, Kilinny, Killeely, Kiltartan, Kiltomas, Kinvarra, Rahasane, and Skehangh.

¹ Department of Environment and Local Government

Guidelines for Local Authority Archives Services, 1996



Much may be learnt about the working of the Council and the development of the district from the collection. In particular the minutes illustrate the range of topics of concern and interest to the Council, and record together with general and financial business proceedings, the minutes of the Sanitary Authority, and the Burial Board, and proceedings conducted under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts. The Council was concerned with a variety of issues from contemporary political and social matters, both local and national, to public health and sanitary issues.

The Council's first meeting was held in the Boardroom of the Workhouse on 15 April 1899. As the prescribed form of minutes was not yet available the minutes for this first meeting, and those up to 29 July 1899, are recorded in the relevant volume of minutes of the Poor Law Union (G01/12/86). Mr Patrick J Nilan was elected the Rural District Council's first Chairman. A contemporary newspaper reported that all the newly established District Councils in Ireland '*appointed their chairmen and ex-officio representatives by law authorised and so far commenced the first chapter of what promises to be a new ere in the administrative life of this country. For good or ill, for better or for worse...the new bodies are launched upon a hitherto stormy sea of Irish life and it is to be hoped that, from a sense of patriotism if from no other consideration, the Councils now commencing their careers will by all classes and at all hands be accorded a fair trial neither condemned beforehand for inefficiency nor unduly commended for efficiency but given full, unprejudiced and honest trial....*'².

The Council was initially quite vocal regarding national political issues, despite a protest from Councillor John Quinn, stating '*we meet to do the business of the District and not for entertaining wild political resolutions*' (G01/10/1, p80). Nevertheless the Council remained relatively political, particularly in its first few years of existence. For instance in January 1900 the Council resolved to express its '*entire satisfaction at the reunion of the Irish Parliamentary Party and pledge ourselves to support them by every means in our power in their united efforts on behalf of the Irish people.*

That we are also glad to learn it is their intention of introducing a Bill into Parliament this Session for improving the condition of Town tenants – a worthy but neglected class – and that in our opinion nothing less than fixity of tenure and fair rents will satisfy their just demands' (G01/10/18, p278).

At its meeting on 9 February 1901, the Council passed a resolution of sympathy to the Royal family following the death of Queen Victoria. However, at the meeting of 23rd February Councillor Michael O' Donoghoe gave notice of his intention at the subsequent meeting to call for a resolution rescinding the resolution of sympathy (G01/10/1, p8170). At that same meeting the Council objected to the phraseology of the Coronation Oath, putting on '*record our vehement condemnation of the bigoted and unchristian phraseology in the succession and Royal Coronation Oath, galling as it has been at all times to millions of His Majesty's subjects it is even now more reprehensible in the full light of the boasted freedom of the 20th century, and we call on the Prime Minister and legislators of England to remove these objectionable and odious expressions from a solemn declaration which we trust is not in its present form congenial to the views and taste of His Majesty Himself*' (G01/10/1, p818).

The Council gave from the outset its backing to the struggle for Home Rule, pledging in 1910 its support

² Tuam Herald, 22 April 1899



for the Irish Party united under John Redmond, and stating that any concessions the Irish people received from an *'alien Government'* were only achieved by the action of a united party (G01/10/6, p1049). In April 1912 it expressed its approval of the Home Rule Bill introduced into Parliament by Mr Asquith and welcomed it *'as an earnest effort on the part of the Liberal Party to settle the grievances which have existed since the passing of the Act of Union'* (G01/10/9, p362). And at the third passing of the Bill in January 1913 the Council resolved its *'heartily rejoice at the passing of the Home Rule Bill for the third time in the House of Common and we offer our congratulations to Mr J.E. Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party, and we desire to thank Mr Duffy, MP. In a special manner for the great help and assistance he gave at all times on its passage'* (G01/10/10, p255). In August 1914 the Council endorsed Redmond's House of Commons statement *'offering the services of our Irish National Volunteers to guard our Irish coasts from foreign invasion'* (G01/10/12, p291), and the following month it congratulated Redmond and his Party on placing the Home Rule Bill on the statute book (G01/10/12, p344).

No mention, condemnation or otherwise, may be found in the minutes of the Easter 1916 Rising. However in October 1916 the Council protested *'strongly against any attempt by the Government in putting in force in Ireland any form of conscription'* and called upon the *'Parliamentary representatives to oppose any such measure'* (G01/10/14, p146). However, despite little or no reference to the struggle against the *'alien Government'* (G01/10/6, p1049) during the War of Independence the Council did in June 1920, like most other local authorities in Ireland, acknowledge *'the authority of Dail Eireann as the duly elected Government of the Irish People, and undertakes to give effect to all decrees duly promulgated by the said Dail Eireann in so far as same effects this Council'* (G01/10/16, p75).

In September 1922 the Council passed a resolution of sympathy *'at the sad deaths of Messrs. Cathal Bruga, Harry Boland, Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins, who gave their lives for Ireland...'* (G01/10/17, p146). From November 1923 onwards the names of Rural District Council meeting attendees is recorded in Irish.

Aside from national political issues the Council was also concerned with the plight of tenants in the district passing several resolutions calling for relief for the district during particular periods of hardship, and for land for tenants from the Land Commission or Congested Districts Board. For instance, in March 1912 it resolved, *'That we...call upon the Congested Districts Board to take immediate steps to relieve the ratepayers of this Rural District of Gort of the heavy burden of tax imposed on them by the persistent refusal and obstinacy of Mr Bagott in failing to come to some reasonable settlement with his miserable congested tenants. We deem it our duty to submit the ratepayers grievance to the parties responsible for this maladministration and urgently press upon them the necessity of putting the Compulsory Clauses of the Land Act into operation against Mr Bagott, not alone on behalf of those wretched tenants (the bill being passed solely for the likes of them) but on behalf of the already overtaxed ratepayers.'*

The purchase money of this miserable congested Estate would be approximately about £6,000 and a couple of years hence that sum will be paid by the ratepayers for extra police in patrol between Mr Bagott and his tenants' (G01/10/9, pp326-327).



In February 1913 The Council requested the *'Estate Commissioners, to deal simultaneously with the Town holdings on the Lord Gough Estate, Gort, Co. Galway, as the agricultural holdings, and give accommodation land to the towns people, of which there is an abundant supply adjoining the town. That inasmuch as Lord Gough is prepared to do everything in his power to complete the sale of the town, we ask the Estates Commissioners not to shirk their responsibility in this very important matter more especially as Mr Commissioner Bailey promised a deputation sometime ago that Gort would be dealt with in conjunction with the lands on the Gough property'* (G01/10/10, p290).

In recognition of changing circumstances in March 1922 the Council called for a revision of land valuation, stating that *'The Gort District was one time a wheat growing district with every facility to the Galway market, and other important mills. When the mills closed down wheat growing became unprofitable, and we were forced to graze our poor sandy land and compete with other parts of the county where the land is naturally fertile, and at a smaller valuation than ours'* (G01/10/17, p39).

Despite the national economic and political evolutions and revolutions of the first quarter of the twentieth century the Rural District Council proceeded with its administrative duties. Duties and responsibilities that primarily involved the provision of labourers' cottages and the monitoring and improvement of public health through the provision of water and sewerage schemes, together with road maintenance.

To assist the less well off in the district the Council adopted in 1908 and 1913 Improvement Schemes under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts 1883 (46 & 47 Vict. c.60) and 1885 (48 & 49 Vict. c.77) to provide housing. Under this legislation the Council applied in the first instance to the Local Government Board, who in turn applied to the Board of Works giving its recommendation that the loan be granted³. The first Scheme was adopted when the Council in February 1907 was satisfied a Scheme was necessary *'to remedy the state of things'*. A Sites Committee was formed to select plots of land proposed to be acquired for building of labourers' cottages in District (G01/10/5, p477). There was some opposition to the building of cottages on the estates of Viscount Gough, Walter Shaw Taylor, Miss M. St. George, Miss June Hynes and John H. Lambert (G01/10/5, p1077).

In early 1908 the estimated cost of the building of each cottage – house plan and design similar to Portumna Rural District Council's No.3 scheme - was £125 inclusive of out offices (G01/10/5, p757). However by September 1908 when the cost had increased substantially the Local Government Board informed the Council that *'£185 per cottage is too high an expenditure to incur in providing house accommodation, and allotment for the needs of an agricultural labourer and his family, and point out that they are not prepared to sanction a greater rate than £170 per cottage...'* (G01/10/6, p217). Many of the cottages were in fact erected at a cost of £122 each (G01/10/6, p837).

In April 1908 the Council confirmed its Improvement Scheme to erect 46 cottages with one-acre plots (G01/10/5, p1097). The Local Government Board sanctioned a loan of £6,830 from the Irish Land Commission for the carrying out of the Scheme (G01/10/8, p57). However, in March 1914 the Board

³ The Archives of the Office of Public Works at the National Archives of Ireland, Dublin contains a substantial quantity of records relating to the various schemes and may be of value to those seeking further information on this topic. See *Guide to the archives of the Office of Public Works*, Rena Lohan, The Stationery Office, Dublin 1994, (pp256-257)



advised the Council that as the erection of 3 cottages had been abandoned the loan was regarded as closed at £6,500 (G01/10/18, 5 March 1914).

Draft regulations for the letting of cottages and allotments under the Labours Acts were provisionally adapted in November 1909. Included in the regulations was the Council's undertaking to keep and maintain the cottages in tenable condition and repair during tenancy, with the tenants obliged not to sub-let the property and to keep the premises in a clean and sanitary state. *'Rent for each cottage and plot of one acre of land attached thereto two shillings per week. Rent of acre plot pending erection of cottage thereon one shilling per week'* (G01/10/6, pp899-900). The Local Government Board was of the opinion that the proposed rents were *'quite excessive'* (G01/10/6, p107). Therefore following this comment and further consideration the Council reduced the rent for a cottage with a one-acre plot to 1 shilling 6 pence, and 9 pence per week for the rent of each acre allotment (G01/10/6, p1039).

The adoption of the second Improvement Scheme was a relatively slow procedure. The Council initially held a special meeting in March 1912 to consider applications for cottages. Though it decided to only accept applications from the Electoral Divisions of Gort, Killeenavara and Kinvara it resolved to postpone adopting a Scheme for the required 29 cottages until a future date (G01/10/9, p323).

The matter was given further consideration in September 1912 when the Engineer submitted plans of various types of cottages, and the Council adopted the Local Government Board plan "D" for Gort at an estimated cost of £130, and his own plan (as in Portumna in scheme 4) for Kinvara and Killeenavara electoral division at approximately £130. Two large single cottages (Local Government Board Plan "K") with lean to addition to be provided in Gort for about £140 each. (G01/10/10/, p89).

In pursuance of Labourers Order 1913 (Improvement Scheme 2) the Council proposed to built 24 cottages. A copy of the Schedule of the improvement scheme is included in the volume of letters from the Local Government Board (G01/10/18, c. October 1913); which provides details such as listing number of cottages to be erected in various townlands, site number and size (in roods).

As the Council was unable to obtain tenders for the estimated cost it resolved in May 1914, subject to the Local Government Board's approval, to accept a tender from James Nestor, for the erection of 10 cottages at £145 each and 2 (large cottages) at circa £165 each, so long as he would complete the remaining 12 at the same cost (G01/10/12, p197). Nestor's Form of Tender (No.28) is attached to a letter from the Local Government Board to the Council (G01/10/18, 18 May 1914). The Local Government Board sanctioned a loan of £4,250 from the Land Commission for the carrying out of the Scheme (G01/10/18, 1 April 1914).

In September 1914 Nestor reported to the Council that owing to the World War I he was having difficulty in procuring staff and material. The Council at the time therefore agreed to allow an increase of 5% on the tendered price, and agreed that Nestor was to have 5 cottages completed by 1 May 1915, and that he be given a period of 1½ years from that date to complete the remaining cottages (G01/10/12, p341). However, the Local Government Board refused to sanction the increase and stipulated the agreement reached in May 1914 stand. As a result the Council and Nestor agreed to sign the contracts at the original price but with a specific conditionally paragraph added stipulating that if the price or cost of



materials varied by 5% from the tender price the schedule of prices would be *'correspondingly increased or reduced and the amount of the contract amended accordingly'* (G01/10/12, p359). Again the Local Government Board objected to this proposal, and advised the Council that it would not accept any variation from the original terms, and requested the Council to re-advertise if Nestor protested. (G01/10/12, p377, and also G01/10/18, 30 September 1914); Nestor agreed to sign the contracts as per the original terms.

In August 1915 Nestor again reported to the Council and advised that *'owing to the enormous increase in prices of material it is almost impossible to carry out this work. Timber has gone up 50 per cent. At the beginning of the War timber was £20 per standard. It is now over £30. Galvanized iron has gone up over 100 per cent, while lead is hardly to be got at any price, and glass the same. Under these circumstances I would respectfully ask the Guardians to consider the case as to allowing extra to meet the enormous increase, and would be glad to leave the case to any competent party to decide what increase or material really is. On the other hand if the Guardians do not see their way to consider this proposition, I would ask them to consider the leaving over of the completing contract until the end of the War, and to finish all the cottages already begun, but not to start any more new ones'* (G01/10/13, pp287-288). The Local Government Board approved of the cancellation of the contract on buildings not yet commenced and the postponement of the construction of houses until after the termination of the War' (GC01/10/13, p305).

In June 1922 the Council ordered its Clerk to point out to the Local Government (Department that 9 cottages remained uncompleted owing to *'the shortage of funds, and request him to state if a Loan for completion of these can now be obtained as they are very much required'* (G01/10/17, p107). The Council was advised by the Department in September that it was endeavoring to secure the issue of the outstanding loans to ensure the completion of the cottages (G01/10/17, p161).

In all the Council provided in excess of 50 labourers cottages over a period of 25 years.

Two areas which preoccupied much of the Council's time in the early years was the improvement of Kinvara Pier and the provision of lighting in the town of Gort. With regard to the latter the Council had much discussion and correspondence with the Local Government Board in 1899 regarding the area of charge for the lighting of the town of Gort. The Council resolved in May 1900 *'That application be made for a Loan of £600 repayable in 30 years for the purpose of lighting the streets of the Town of Gort. The area of charge for repayment being that defined in the schedule to the Local Government Order of 9th April 1900.'* (G01/10/1, p412). In February 1901 the Council received a letter from the Local Government Board requesting a plan of the building proposed to house the gas generating plant, and an ordnance sheet with the site clearly marked (G01/10/1, p805). The Council accepted the tender of The Sunlight Gas Company to light the town of Gort (G01/10/1, p572). In August 1901 the Local Government Board sanctioned a loan of £750 for the *'purpose of lighting the Town of Gort with acetylene Gas.'* (G01/10/1, p 67). There was some debate between the Rural District Council and the Board of Works regarding the period of the loan. However, in February 1902 the Council received a letter from Viscount Gough stating he had considered the *'request made by (the Chairman) the District*



Council ... , that I should support their application for an extension, from 10 years to 35 years, of the period of the Board of Works Loan for the Lighting of Gort.

On the grounds that the Board may under present circumstances decline to make this concession, and being desirous to give every support in my power to the District Council in their enlightened and assiduous labours for the welfare of the Town of Gort, I shall be happy to pay off half the loan (£400) at once, the remaining half to be paid off in ten years by the Council as required by the Board' (G01/10/1, pp337-38). Lord Gough's offer was gratefully accepted and acknowledged by the Council.

The management of business connected with the lighting of the town was transferred to a Lighting Committee in early 1903.

With regard to Kinvara Pier the Council made several requests in the early years to Galway County Council for funding to improve the pier. For instance in December 1903 it resolved that as *'That we....as the elected representatives of the people of 19 of the most important Electoral Divisions in South Galway again call upon the government to at once allocate a grant of £2,200 out of the Marine Works Act to carry out the long delayed and much needed improvement of the Kinvara Harbour. That the Barley Markets for which Kinvara has been famous for over a quarter of a century, and which meant an annual outlay in the District of about £12,000 were not held this year owing to the want of proper Harbour accommodation ;....*

That we call upon the County Council to co-operate in the matter and to urge again upon the Government the urgency and importance of the work as one of the greatest possible utility...'(G01/10/3, p323). In July 1904 the Council again brought the 'deplorable and very dangerous condition' of the pier to the government's attention, and called on the Chief Secretary in the 'interest of the lives of the people to take immediate steps to put the Harbour in proper repair and carry out the recommendations of the County Surveyor' (G01/10/4, p133). Two years later (June 1906) the Council 'Resolved : 'That we...express our strongest indignation at the action of the Department of Agriculture in withholding so long their promised contribution of £1.100 towards the improvement of Kinvara Harbour. That as the owners of the Sharpe Estate assigned over their interest in the Pier and Harbour as a free gift to the County Council forever, on the distinct understanding that a sum of £3,500 would be expended on the improvement of the Harbour and extension of the Pier we now call upon the Chief Secretary to insist without delay on the Department paying over this contribution to the County Council and allow the work to be started at once' (G01/10/5, p129)

The Minutes of Galway County Council reveal that the repairs works on the pier were completed by November 1906 at a cost £1,400, at which time the County Council enquired from the Local Government Board if the extension of the pier could then be proceed with (GC01/1/1).⁴

In addition the Council petitioned for support for the establishment of an Agriculture and Technical Educational facilitate in the district from 1900 onwards. The Council advised the Department of Agriculture and Technical Education in December 1900 that it was *'the first Union in the country to give a grant towards local industry and in spite of all obstacles have succeeded with the help of the Sister of*

⁴ Galway County Council Minutes, GC01/1 /1, p762



Mercy in keeping work going and giving much necessary employment with the limited means at their disposal. Linen and woollen weaving are at present carried on under the charge of the Sisters who have spared neither their own time nor trouble to make it a success. We strongly urge on the Department the great necessity which exists for giving help towards the enlarging and developing of this industry which if properly worked will give very large employment...

The sea board portion of the district is some of the poorest in the west of Ireland, the Kinvarra harbour is in a disgraceful condition and the fishing industry is totally neglected with a result that a large portion of the population are in a half starved condition....'(G01/10/1, p729).

With regard to health issues the Council was involved in the control of disease and in the provision of graveyards, water and sewerage systems. It monitored reports of disease, such as scarlatina, typhoid, and typhus, and attempted to curtail their spread; a letter from the Local Government Board in October 1904, advised the Council it *'would do well to have a supply of placards and leaflets printed and distributed showing the steps that should be taken to prevent the spread of consumption'* (G01/10/4, p265).

In its capacity as Burial Board the Council was involved with the appointment of caretakers, and the provision and maintenance of graveyards, such as at Kiltartan (G01/10/5, p835) and Shanaglish (G01/10/5, p895).

With reference to the provision of water and sewerage schemes the Council was involved in the provision of wells and pumps, and sewers. The provision of the latter at Court Lane, Kinvara involved substantial discussion in the 1920's. With regard to the provision of water the Council in January 1907, for example, received an estimate of £450 for provision of a water supply and sewerage works in the town of Gort. The Council were prepared to proceed with the work so long as the Local Government Board sanctioned that the cost should be a charge on the town not on the whole Rural District (G01/10/6, p375). The Council also submitted an application to Local Government Board for Loan of £370 for sinking a pump well at Caheradine (G01/10/5, p835).

In addition in February 1912 the Council discussed the adoption of a scheme for supply of water to Ardrahan and the surrounding district at an estimated cost of £200-£260, with the area of charge to be the entire Rural District (G01/10/9, pp282-283). However with the sinking of a well in Caherkelly, (approximately two miles from Ardrahan) there was some debate as to whether or not it was necessary for a well in Ardrahan also. The Council decided it was not *'prepared to risk the large expenditure involved, particularly when there is a certainty of obtaining an adequate supply at Caherkelly within one statute mile of the village'* (G01/10/9, p337).

In November 1912 the Council received a letter from the Local Government Board regarding the provision of a water supply at Caherkelly stating that *'from the information furnished it appears that the surface to the passage of the well in Caherkelly will have a slope towards the Well, and in order to prevent contamination from surface drainage, provision should be made, at intervals, to divert the drainage through the fence wall. The proposals to construct the platform of the pump at a height of a 9 feet over the level of the water in the well appears to be objectionable, and would also be inconvenient*



and expensive. It would be advisable that it should be reduced to 6ft. or 6ft 6 inches. Provision should be made in the specification for deductions or extra works, and also for the upkeep of the works for a stated period' (G01/10/10, p156). Thereupon the Council requested their Engineer to have plans amended. They acquired a loan of £150 for the provision of well.

By the early 1920's Rural District Councils were viewed as unnecessary. The Irish Free State government began to consider streamlining local administration and thus the abolition of the Councils. Following their abolition in 1925 Galway County Council set up Public Works Committees *'for the purpose of dealing in the first instance with applications of works and applications for payment, formerly sent to the County Council by the Rural District Councils. The Committees to be known as the Public Works Committees with the addition of the name of the Rural District. Public Works Committees to meet in the towns named and the Clerks of the former District Councils to act as Clerks to the Public Works Committees, pending other arrangements.'* (GC1/4).⁵ There being no permanent Clerk in Gort at that time, Mr John J. Hanafin, former Clerk of Loughrea Rural District Council, was appointed Clerk of the Gort Public Works Committee (GC1/4).⁶

Arrangement

The Council's first minutes, dating from 15 April to 28 July 1899, are recorded in a volume of Poor Law Union minutes (G01/12/86), with an annotation stating the *'Prescribed form of Minutes not yet available'*.

By-in-large the collection is in good condition, though pages 261-280 are missing from the volume of 1903 minutes (G01/10/3). However, the volume of letters (G01/10/18) has suffered severe mould damage. The letters primarily from the Local Government Board support and refer to many items covered in the minutes.

The item reference number (e.g. G01/10/2) should be used in full when citing documents or records, and each reference cited should be preceded by the initial GCCA (Galway County Council Archives, GCCA G01/10/2).

Place names are generally given as they appear in the records.

Overall this collection illustrates the various aspects of local administration and democratic government during one of the most significant periods in Irish republican history. Commencing with records created when the authority and country was under British rule and ending with records recording the authority's recognition of Dáil Eireann. The collection should be of interest to administrative, economic, political, social and local historians. The latter in particular should learn much from the collection about the development of the Gort district's infrastructure, together with provision and growth of various public and health related services, such as water and sewerage schemes.

The extracts from the various minutes listed herewith are intended as a representation of the proceedings. The purpose of their inclusion is to give the reader an indication of the diversity of the Council's areas of concern and responsibility. However, given the volume and multiplicity of the

⁵ Galway County Council Minutes, GC1/4, p4



Council's work it is not practical in this instance to include an extract highlighting every single district, time and aspect mentioned in the minutes.

Readers are also requested not to view as definitive the appended list of District Councillors. Lists of elected members are often found in various contemporary directories such as Slaters or Pigots, or indeed may often be found in local contemporary newspapers

Disclosure Requirement

As much of the information in this collection clearly identifies families and individuals researchers are requested, in order to prevent possible distress or embarrassment to near descendants, to sign a disclosure form prior to consulting the records verifying a willingness not to cite specific names in research work.

Acknowledgment

The microfilming of the collection was facilitated by a grant from the Heritage Council in 2003.

Patria McWalter
Archivist

⁶ Galway County Council Minutes, GC1/4, p21



Related Collections

Records held by Galway County Council Archives (GCCA):

- Gort Poor Law Union, G01/12
- Galway County Council Minutes, GC/1/
- County Galway Board of Health & Public Assistance, GC5/
- Papers of Captain John Shawe-Taylor, Castle Taylor, Ardrahan, 1890 – [1909], G01/4

Records held by the National Archives of Ireland (NAI)

- Office of Public Works

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Appendices



**List of some of the members of the Gort Rural District Council[⊗]**

Lists of members are often found in various contemporary directories such as Slaters or Pigots, or in local contemporary newspapers.

Brennan, Martin	Galbraith, Thomas
Brady Murray, James, W. (J.P.)	Gibbons, J.
Burke, Martin J.	Gill, Fergus
Cahill, J.	Glynn, Martin
Cahill, P.	Glynn, John H.
Carr, William	Glynn, Peter
Callanan, John	Glynn, Timothy A. (+1909)
Coen, Martin (Chairman 1914 – 1919)	Grady, Michael
Coen, William	Greene, T.
Connolly, John	Hallinan, Edward
Connolly, Martin	Hanlon, Michael
Caulfield, Michael,	Hayes, Patrick
Clayton, Thomas	Headd, James (+1918)
Coen, Martin (Chairman 1912-13)	Higgins, Colman
Coen, Thomas	Hynes, Michael (+1905)
Corless, Thomas P. (J.P) (Chairman 1903-06)	Hynes, Thomas
Corgrove, Thomas	Joyce, James (+1920)
Cunningham, James	Kavanagh, James
Curtain, Michael	Kavanagh, John
Daly, J.D.	Keane, James (+1907)
Deely, Thomas	Keely, Bartholomew (aka Bartly)
Donohoe, J.	Keely, John
Fahy, Edward	Keely, Mortimer (+1913)
Fahy, Michael (Chairman 1923-1924)	Kelly, Patrick
Eallraith, T.	Kilkelly, Patrick (1920-
Fallon, Michael	Lafiff, James B. (J.P)
Fallon, Thomas	Lally, Thomas
Feeney, Michael	Lamber, J.
Flaherty, Richard P.	Lambert, Patrick

[⊗] Not to be taken as a definitive list



Larkin, Andrew	O'Donohue, Michael ,J.P.(Chairman, 1908- ?12, +1912)
Lewis, Patrick	O'Donnell, Laurence
Linnane, Michael	O'Donnell, Martin
Linnane, Patrick	O'Donnell, Michael
Loughry, John	O'Flaherty, Richard P.
Markham, Martin	O'Neill, Thomas
Melville, J.	O'Shaughnessy, Patrick
Minogue, Michael	Prendergast, Thomas
Mitchell, Michael	Quinn, Bartholomew (+1918)
Moran, Patrick	Quinn, James
Moylan, Michael	Quinn, John
Murphy, Michael	Quinn, Patrick
Murray, J.W. Brady, J.P.	Rosingrave, William
Naughton, Michael	Ryan, Patrick (+1916)
Nelly, Patrick	Shaw-Taylor, Water, (J.P.)
Newell, John	Spelman, Edward
Newell, Martin	Standford, Joseph
Neyllon,	Sweeney, Owen
Nilan, Patrick.F.	Sweeney, Thomas
Nolan, James	Tannian, Michael
Nolan, Thomas	Tierney, John
Noone, James	Thompson, William
O'Connor, Thomas	
O'Dea, John	

Clerk of Council

Burke, Myles, J. (1899 – 1922, resigned (Poor Law Union Clerk 1879-1922))

Fahy, Patrick, (1923 – 1925)



[Appendix B](#)

Electoral Divisions covered by Gort Rural District Council

Adamullivan,
Ardrahan
Ballycahalan
Beagh
Cahermore
Cappard
Castletaylor
Dorus
Drumacoo
Gort
Kilbeacanty
Killenavarra
Kilenny
Killeely
Kiltartan
Kilthomas
Kinvarra
Rahasane
Skehangh





[Appendix C](#)

Abbreviations

Co.Co.	County Council
C.D.B.	Congested Districts Board
D.C.	District Councillor
I.R.A	Irish Republican Army
J.P.	Justice of Peace
L.G.B.	Local Government Board
M.P.	Member of Parliament
R.D.C.	Rural District Council





Gort Rural District Council

Archives Collection

1899 – 1924

G01/10





A. Minutes of Gort Rural District Council, 1899 - 1924

Volumes of handwritten minutes (following pre-printed format) of proceedings of Council meetings generally held twice monthly. The minutes record attendance, details of correspondence, generally from the Local Government Board, and from the early 1920's from the Local Government Department, and actions required thereafter, together with proceedings of Council business conducted under various legislation relating to the administration of the district under a range of headings such as general, financial, sanitary authority and labourers' cottages. The minutes often incorporate details of reports from various Officials, such as the County Surveyor, Medical Officers of Health, Sanitary Officers, Rent Collectors, Inspectors of Dairies and so on.

The proceedings of the Council acting as the 'Sanitary Authority' or from circa 1920 under the Public Health Acts, relate to health and sanitary matters, such as the prevention of disease, the care and management of burial grounds, and the provision and maintenance of sewerage systems and water supply; the latter encompassed reports from the Loughrea Waterworks Committee and the Athenry Waterworks Committee. The proceedings under the 'Labourers Acts' relate to the provision and maintenance of labourers' cottages and rent collection. The quarterly minutes incorporate details of reports from the County Surveyor pertaining to the district's roads, which included the business of applying for, reviewing and approving tenders for works.

The minutes are generally signed or initialed by the Chairman and witnessed by the Clerk. Average size circa 580pp.

(See also

G01/12/86 Minutes 15 April 1899 – 29 July 1899)

- 'That we the members of Gort District Council, at this our first meeting elected under the extended franchise, declare our unalterable devotion to the cause of National self government for Ireland, and whilst we intend to utilise the Local Government Act to the best of our ability by no means consider it a substitute for Home Rule and are determined to use every legitimate means in our power to secure that National self government' (p624).



1. 12 August 1899 - 29 June 1901

- 'Resolved – That having duly considered representations for the erection of Labourer's Cottages it is hereby resolved that twelve cottages be erected ...'. Includes list of labourers to be assigned a cottage (p33).
- 'That as the majority of the members of this Council paid no attention to the reading of a Resolution at our last meeting sympathising with the Boers, passed by the Borough Council of the City of Limerick and forwarded to us and signed adopted, I give notice that at our next meeting that the adoption of this resolution be upset, for we meet to do the business of the District and not for entertaining wild political resolutions' (p80).
- Extract from the Medical Officer's Return form 'Sanitary condition of District is not good. The yards are not properly drained, not clean and some of them have no closet accommodation, besides some of them are inhabited by pigs and have deposits of manure, which poison the air with foul smells. Some of the inhabitants for want of such accommodation use strict corners, back streets, lanes, passages and other places as closets hereby fouling the air with their various gases and endangering seriously the water supply' (p205).
- 'That we condemn in the strongest manner these burning outrages which are becoming so prevalent in the County. We consider as the occupiers have now to pay the whole of the rates it is a great hardship on them to be burthened (sic) with payment for these outrages which don't tend in any way to elevate the social or political condition of the country' (p242).
- 'Resolved – Having ascertained through the correspondence given to the press on the 23rd ulto. by Edward Martyn Esq. Of Tulyra Castle, the true causes which caused him to resign his position as Magistrate and Deputy Lieutenant of our County, we congratulate him on his spirited action, while deeply sensible of the loss which we and the County at large sustain in being deprived of his enlightened official advocacy of justice to our County and our people. That we stigmatize the insult to his hospitality as an outrage to kindness. That we recognise and appreciate Lord Ashbourne's estimate of Mr Martyn as "the head of an old Catholic family, and now a distinguished literary man" as contrasted with that of Lord Clanbrack who sees in his unwillingness to listen to the strains of "The Absent minded beggar" a violation of the oath of allegiance. That we offer our sympathy all the more willingly and respectfully to Mr Martyn as one of the few Galway Landlords who has disposed of his extensive property to his tenants under the provisions of the land purchase Acts, and on terms satisfactory to his tenants...' (pp350-351).
- 'Resolved - ...place on record our strongest condemnation of the cowardly and treacherous conduct of the voters of Galway Borough who, while professing nationalist sympathies, proved by their conduct at the late election by handing over the representation of the



Borough to an avowed enemy of the National cause, that they were always trading under false pretences, and unworthy of the name of Nationalist' (p620).

- 'That we the members of the District Council and Board of Guardians of Gort assembled this day, desire to express our heart felt sorrow at the death of her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, and most humbly to convey to His Most Gracious Majesty the King, Queen Alexandra, and the members of the Royal Family our sincere condolence and sympathy in their sorrow' (p801).
- 'Resolved : That the names of the Gort streets be put up in Irish letters subject to the decision of the Local Government Board as to the legality of incurring expenditure for this purpose' (p853, see also p871).
- 'That we ...desire to place on record the great loss the Irish race has sustained by the death of the Fenian Chief – James Stephens – that we desire to convey our sincere sympathy to his friends...' (p872).

2. 13 July 1901 –8 June 1903

- 'Having considered the estimate required by the District Council for the year ending 31 March 1903 we hereby agree to demand from the County Council a sum of three hundred pounds, £300, (exclusive of the sums required for “
- 'Resolved – There being not tender for the maintenance of the streets of Gort the Council strongly recommend the County Council to have the work done by means of direct labour and thus afford much needed employment to the local labourers' (p313).
- 'The Council adopted a resolution of the Tuam Town Commissioners protesting against the action of the Directors of the Great southern and Western Railway co. in appointing non Catholics to the most lucrative positions on the Railway to the exclusion of Catholics' (p333).
- 'That we the members of the Gort District Council ...condemn in the most emphatic manner the conduct of the Galway Grand Jury in passing a resolution at the last Assizes calling upon the Executive Government to take steps to suppress the United Irish League' (p404).
- On the release of Patrick Finegan from prison the Council resolved '*our heartiest congratulations on his release from Prison after twenty years incarceration for a crime that we believe he was perfectly innocent of. That we look upon his release as due in a great extent to the untiring zeal and advocacy on his behalf of Mr William Duffy, MP and that we are glad to see his efforts crowned with such success*' (p548).
- The Engineer reported that it is impossible to prevent the flooding of premises at Crow Street by any system of sewerage as the backwater from the River rises higher than the



level of the yards. This can only be remedied by deepening the river at the Island, which would be a very costly undertaking' (p824).

- 'That we the member of the Gort District Council extend to Capt. John Shawe-Taylor, the energetic Secretary of the Land Conference Committee, a hearty good-will on his return to Ireland and congratulate him on the great success that attended his mission to America in securing the powerful support of all shades of opinion in favour of the principles embodied in the report of the Land Conference Committee' (p871).

- 'Resolved...beg to draw public attention to the neglected disgraceful and dilapidated condition of Kinvarra Pier Harbour which is such a very great danger to the lives of the people, and to the boats moored alongside as well as such a serious loss to the trade of the town and district.

That we call upon the Chief Secretary to allocate a substantial grant under the Marine Works Act, to extend the existing Pier and Harbour by which the whole Gort Rural District is served in its trade with the Congested Districts of Carraroe, Rossmuc, Bealadangan and the Arran Islands ...

That it is from the Congested Districts of Connemara that the people within a radius of fourteen miles of Kinvarra get their turf and seaweed supply, and vice versa it is from Kinvarra the Connemara people get their food supply and see for sowing their land we call upon the Government to do something at once to make the Pier and Harbour for its daily increasing trade..'(p871-872).

- 'The Clerk was directed to request the opinion of the Local Government Board as to whether Mr William Rosengrave (a member of the Council), is disqualified owing to the fact that in September last he was brought before the Magistrates in Petty Sessions at Crusheen, Co. Clare, for assault, and sentenced to one months imprisonment with hard labour' (p944, see also p961).

3. 13 June 1903 – 16 April 1904

- Dr Moran called attention to the flooded condition of the yard on west-side of Crow Lane owing to the choking of bridge crossing the street. This bridge at best is unable to take the water in time of flood' (p171).
- 'A letter, signed by several ratepayers in the town of Gort, was submitted asking the support of the District Council in an application to the County Council that suitable provision be made for the accommodation of boys, as well as girls, in the new schools for Technical Instruction which they are about to erect in Gort at a cost of £2,000' (p303).
- 'The Council approved a resolution expressing the opinion that St. Patrick's Day should be observed as a National Festival' (p463).



4. 14 May 1904 – 7 April 1906

- 'That we express our great surprise that the Department has made no provision up to the present for a stallion on the Register visiting this District for the Season. We wish to point out that it is a great grievance particularly to owners of nominated mares, and we feel it will be only necessary to have the Department attention called to the omission to have it remedied immediately' (p8).
- 'That we ...have read with surprise and pain the action taken against the Kilmacduagh tenantry by their Land Agency, Mr Frank Shawe-Taylor, and in the face of the negotiations pending for the purchase of these tenants holdings we regard the Agent's action as absolutely unjustifiable.
That as we believe that the most valuable provisions of the late Land Act and these by which the grass lands may be purchased and allocated amongst the smaller tenants we regard any arrangements of questionable advantage from a fair share of their benefits..' (p97)
- 'Resolved - That in view of the almost complete failure of the potato and corn crops in the Gort Rural District we,hereby impress upon the Government the absolute necessity of carrying out much needed public works such as road making and the improvement of Kinvarra Harbour during the next few months as a means of alleviating the great distress that is bound to exist' (p277, see also p331, p367)
- 'Resolved – We therepresentatives of the ratepayers of the District, respectfully request the Estate Commissioners, in the event of their purchasing any estate in this District on which there is untenanted land, to have regard to the distribution of such land to the requirements of evicted tenants, tenants of uneconomic holdings, farmers sons, and workers skilled or unskilled in the district and to means provided by the Land Act of 1903 for satisfying those requirements without adding to the Rate....' (pp926-7)

5. 31 March 1906 – 18 April 1908

- 'That the thanks of the Council be conveyed to Viscount Gough for his generosity in giving the site of a graveyard at Ashfield, free of charge...' (p255).
- 'That we ...desire to offer to our worthy Parliamentary representative Mr W. J Duffy our warmest congratulations for the able and powerful manner which he introduced in the British House of Commons, a Bill dealing with the expropriation of Lord Clanrickard, a tyrannical Irish Landlord, and we sincerely hope the measure of our trusted friend will meet with the success it so worthily deserves' (p369).



- 'That in view of the partial failure of the potato crop in the district around Kinvara, and the great dearth of employment amongst the labouring population, we ...call upon the Chief Secretary to introduce a short Bill during the present session of Parliament to overcome the legal technicality that prevent the County Council from carrying out the work at Kinvara Harbour during the winter, and give much needed employment in the locality' (p369).
- 'That this Council strongly urge the Local Government Board to push on the Labourers Act in this District, so that that applications now in may be in a position to till their plots next Spring. The Council consider that it is very hard on those labourers who are entitled to cottages under the Act to be deprived of their plots for another twelve months...'.(p377).
- 'That we ...protest most emphatically against the libelous comedy "The Playboy of the Western World", that was belched forth during the past week in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, under the fostering care of Lady Gregory and Mr Yeats. We congratulate the good people of Dublin in howling down the gross buffoonery and immoral suggestions that are scattered throughout this scandalous performance. It is an extraordinary thing that any Christian much less an Irishman should so grossly libel his country, as to suggest that any Irish girl should be found wooing with no trace of modesty a man whose sole claim to affection is that he murdered his father. It is time that we should stop the children of this Union from partaking of the hospitality of Lady Gregory in the future, as a protest against her active participation and co-operation in the libeling of the Irish character' (p449)
- 'Ordered – Write to Mr Kirwan (Sharpe Estate) relative to choking of drains from Connolly's, Hogans, and Lynch's houses, and state that council will require all the houses to be properly connected with the main sewer' (p515).
- 'We hereby direct the attention of the County Surveyor to the dirty and disgraceful condition of the streets of Gort, and to the irregular manner in which the channels are constructed which retain pools of stagnant water to the danger of the health of the inhabitants, and we here by request that this matter be immediately attended to, otherwise we shall order our Sanitary Officers to prosecute whoever is responsible' (p755).

6. 25 April 1908 – 26 March 1910

- 'That we the members of the Gort District Council representing a population of upward of 16,000 people, who are largely Irish speaking heartily support the demand of the great boy of Irishmen that Irish should be made a compulsory subject of matriculation in the new University; and that we call on the County Council of Galway to support the demand by whatever means they may think advisable and thus secure for their countrymen a truly Irish and National University' (p409).



- 'That we... approve of the recommendations made by Mr Roseingrave for sewerage work and water supply of the Town, but that any plan of sewerage should include the proper drainage of Crow Lane..'(p435).
- 'That we...tender to Mr John Redmond, M.P, Chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party, our hearty congratulations on the victory he has achieved by having secured in spite of factionism, and Tory influence, such a staunch body of sound Nationalist to represent us in Parliament.
W recognise the fact that any concession we have got from an alien Government has been achieved by the action of a united Irish Party, and we hereby pledge them our unfailing support ...'(p1049).

7. 5 April 1910 – 10 December 1910

- 'That we... note the contents of the resolution of the Gort Town Tenants League and hereby express our entire willingness to co-operate with Lord Gough in granting him permission to plant trees at Kilmacduagh, and help him to provide a receptacle for broken grass, as well as assist him about the other matter of which he complains provided he acts in the same honest and honourable spirit towards his tenantry.
- And as great and far reaching questions of integrity and principle are involved in the question of "Game Rights" which is holding back the sale of the Estate, and forcing him to see in sections (a dangerous policy to the peace of the District) and inasmuch as his tenants are fully willing to treat him in an honourable and equitable spirit by permitting him to shoot over their lands during his life-time or any member of his family or any friends of his, foreign or otherwise, and to preserve the game for him as a National asset in an honourable way so that no game keepers may be placed over the tenants, thus maintaining peace and orderliness in his Estate and avoiding friction and unpleasantness, and as our love of progress is measured by the amount of honour and faair play we posses which is undoubtedly one of the finest of human characteristics. We now put the whole question to the test to ascertain if these honourable and equitable feelings are mutual (pp146-47, see also p165).

8. 17 December 1910 – 17 June 1922

- 'Read letter from Local Government Board...stating it appears that only 14 Cowkeepers have as yet been registered under the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops (Ireland) Order, of 1908 and requesting that Council to proceed to carry out without delay the Provisions of the Order in question in regard to the Registration of all Cowkeepers, dairymen, and purveyors of Milk in the Rural District' (p71)



- 'Submitted final notice of application by Michael Corless, Kinvara for £80 compensation for the malicious burning of three stacks of Oats at Kinvara on the 29th January, 1911' (p102).
- 'Resolved – That we disapprove of the action of the County Council in endeavouring to change the route proposed by the Road Board from Kinvara to Kilcolgan (through Ballinderreen) and having it changed in another direction from Kinvara to Kilcolgan (through Ardrahan) as we believe the former road is through a congested area, and by the sea, would be more frequented by tourists, and would be the better road to have steam rolled as it is the mail road between Galway and Clare through Ballyvaughan' (p122).

9. 1 July 1911 – 13 July 1912

- 'That wehaving heard of with regret of the demise of Captain Shawe-Taylor do hereby tender to Mr Walter Shawe-Taylor (father of deceased), and the other members of his family, an express of our sincere sympathy in the great loss they have sustained' (p2)
- Letter from the Local Government Board regarding a report from their Auditor on the Council's accounts stating that 'No general Rental has been compiled, and the only book available in connection with cottage rents being a monthly summary of receipts. Without a rental it is impossible to check the accounts of either the tenants, or the collector, and the Auditor declines all responsibility in the matter...
Ordered – General Cottage Rental to be provided ...'(p57, see also p147, p201).
- 'Read letter from Viscount Gough stating he would facilitate the Council in every way should they lay pipes from the well at Rindifin into the Town of Gort. He also complains that some malicious persons recently threw down the wall into the well which will entail some expense to the Council, and deposits of rubbish, particularly broken glass, placed on the old road between Railway Station and Kinincha old mill' (p211).

10. 20 July 1912 – 5 April 1913

- That we...hereby earnestly request the Department of Agriculture to at once press for the removal of the embargo by which the cattle trade of this county is at present crippled, and secure facilities for the free export of cattle from all unaffected areas should be present grave and unfortunate condition of affairs be allowed to continue, the result which is sure to follow threatens to be the most disastrous ever experienced by the Irish farmers' (p92).



- 'The Council requests the Engineer to increase his estimate for drainage at Kinvara, as no tender has been received. We also request he will provide for the continuance of the piping so as to carry off sewerage from the point near Johnston's garden to Pound Gate' (p103).
- 'That we ...respectfully request the County Council to at once take steps to remedy the disgraceful condition of the main road from Ballyturngate Lodge to Kilbeacanty Chapel, as it is of so much importance, as 200 people travel it on every Sunday morning to Mass, and at present it is quite impossible to travel over same, and all the ratepayers in general are complaining of its present disgraceful condition...'(p146).
- 'That we,...desire to express our horror of the harsh and unjust sentence passed on the young Clareman (Arkins), 7 years penal servitude for damage done to 7 yards of stone wall.
That we are of opinion that in no other county in the civilized world would such a sentence be awarded for such an offence, and we call upon the Irish Party to demand the repeal of this iniquitous act, and we desire to associate ourselves with those who are at present working for his release'(p236, see also p272).
- 'Letter from the Local Government Board ... stating it is necessary for the Council to fix a scale of fees for burials in the new Burial Ground at Shanaghish, and to determine the division of the Burial Ground into parts for the burial of members of any particular religious denomination....'(p264).

11. 19 April 1913 – 13 December 1913

- That the County Council be requested to borrow such sum as the County Surveyor thinks will be required for the purpose of repairing the sea wall at Aughnish (Co. Clare) in a way likely to be permanent and to ask the Congested Districts Board to contribute half the entire cost' (p20, see also p182).
- 'Read letter from the Secretary Co. Galway Agriculture and Technical Instruction Committee asking the Council to rent a vacant cottage to the Committee, for the use of an Instructor, whom they propose sending to the District for 10 or 12 weeks, to lecture to persons living in Labourers' Cottages on Cookery, Laundry and Horticulture' (p236).
- 'The Council approved of the Lighting Committee's proposal to provide three lamps outside the Catholic Church and to base the cost of gas consumed on an average of the consumption inside the Church' (p290).
- 'Read letter from Local Government Board ...forwarding extracts from the Medical Officers' Reports, Form L., relating to the several Dispensary districts of the Union for half year ended 30th September last...



A new well is now being provided near Ardrahan. The sewerage of Gort has been improved, cottages are being provided in Gort, Dairies and Cowsheds are registered in Kinvara District' (p318).

12. 13 December 1913 – 12 December 1914

- 'Resolved : That we regret to notice the backwardness of the people of Gort with regard to the establishment of a Branch of the National Volunteer, considering the lead that has been given them by the other towns of the county, and the great importance of the Movement'(p110).
- 'That we, the Gort District Council heartily congratulate the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party Mr John E. Redmond for his having carried the Home Rule Bill through all obstacles to a successful issue and that we hereby wish to place on record our strongest protest against any preposition that would savour of partition as in our opinion it should be Home Rule for a united Ireland or nothing' (p219).
- 'The Clerk reported that Mr Jams Nestor signed this Bond for the erection of 24 cottages in Gort, on the terms approved by the Local Government Board on the 18th May last.' (p395).
- 'The Clerk was directed to make the following entry on the Minute Book:-
The Contractor for building Labourers' Cottages in Gort appeared before the Council, and stated that 4 months of the time allowed for completion of his contract has now expired, and that during this time he has been unable to do any work, as the Engineer refuses to mark the sites' (p468).

13. 9 January 1915 – 8 April 1916

- 'That we urgently ask the County Council owing to the great scarcity of labour and the difficulty farmers find to get labourers to till their farms to postpone direct labour on roads until after the War' (p344).
- 'That we, the Gort District Council approve of the stand made against conscription in this country by the Irish Parliamentary Party, and we promise them our entire support in opposing any such act, considering that Ireland has supplied more men according to her population than England or Scotland' (p345).
- 'Read letter from Local Government Boardforwarding extracts from the report of their Architect Mr Foley, on his recent inspection of certain cottages, in pursuance of the Improvement Scheme of 1908, and stating that the defective manner in which the



cottages provided under this scheme have been built reflects grave discredit on both the Council and the Engineer employed by them to supervise the works' (p395).

- 'Read letter from Revd. J.W. O'Mahon, Kinvara, complaining of the inadequate supply of water for the town of Kinvara, and asking the Council to provide an adequate supply' (p462).

14. 22 April 1916 – 8 December 1917

- 'The Gort District Council desire to press on the County Surveyor the necessity under present conditions of labour and other disadvantages resulting from the War, of giving special consideration to road contractors, and particularly where at all possible to avoid the "striking off" of monies' (p200).
- 'That we, ... request our Irish representatives not to have any further dealing with the Liberal Government at the coming Convention until they first get a guarantee that the finding of the majority will immediately be put into operation; and secondly until such time as the Irish Prisoners are released or treated as Prisoners of War' (p327).
- 'That we... desire to express our alarm at the rumours which are at present gaining currency relative to the hostile attitude of the Irish Parliamentary Party towards the new Franchise Bill now before parliament, as we consider it heir duty to support it in very detail and by every means at their command' (p362).
- 'Read letter from the Local Government Board...stating they will not raise any objection to the proposed increase of salary of £5 a year to the Clerk of the Council in respect of the additional amount of permanent work devolving upon him in connection with the several Improvement Schemes which the Council have been authorised to carry out under the Labourers Act' (p467).

15. 12 January 1918 - 10 January 1920

- 'That we,...desire to place on record an expression of our heartfelt smooth at the death of Mr John E Redmond, whose loss to our country in the present critical juncture, we regard as a National calamity
We have always been his ardent admirers and staunch supporters in his unselfish struggle for the legislative independence of our country and we deeply deplore that the Almighty has seen fit to call him to himself, when his great life's labours were well nigh accomplished...'(p390).



- 'That we...protest strongly against the application of conscription in this country as we feel from the general opinion of the people that if enforced it will result in bloodshed, and stop the cultivation of the land, as labour already is very scarce' (p56).
- 'That Lord Gough be asked to contribute a sum towards the upkeep of the streets of Gort from the monies obtained by him from the new Fairs and Markets, also, that he be compelled to give one entrance to the backyards of tenants of his in town who have to remove manure through their dwelling houses too the public streets...' (p93).
- 'That we...direct the attention of the Great Southern Railway Company to the serious inconvenience inflicted on merchants, farmers and business people of Gort and its surroundings owing to the fact that the evening train presently leaves Limerick at 2.45pm instead of 5.00pm as theretofore, which entails additional expense staying overnight in Limerick, apart from the inconvenience caused to their business owing to the increased trade which will now be carried on during the Christmas season, we, respectfully direct the Company to revert to the old arrangement and change the hour of departure from Limerick from 2.45pm to 5.00pm and thus facilitate the public concerned' (p434).

16. 14 February 1920 – 14 January 1922

- 'The Gort District Council tenders its sympathy to the Mother and relatives of Kevin Barry who was recently executed in Mountjoy Prison, and to the relatives of the late Lord Major McSwiney and his associated in Cork Prison and placed on record its appreciation of the great sacrifice these patriots have made in the cause of Irish freedom' (p183).
- 'Resolved – Owing to the financial position of the Gort Union and District Council, and following the example set by our County Council, we hereby (subject to the approval of Dáil Eireann which is now requested) re-appoint the National Bank Gort Branch, as Treasurers of the Guardians and District Council' (p235, see also p254).
- 'Read letter from Ministry Local Government, Dáil Eireann stating they have received a petition in regard to the insanitary condition of the surroundings of Crow Street pump, and requesting the Council to give the matter prompt attention' (p398).

17. 11 February 1922 – 9 February 1924

- 'That we...strongly disapprove of the action of the Executive Committee or County Homes Committee in proposing to borrow a large sum of money for the enlargement of Loughrea Workhouse, which was only selected as the County home for twelve months, whilst here are several other institutions now vacant which can be utilised for any purpose required' (p39).



- 'The County Surveyor reported that there was a grant of £900 now available, for urgent work in the Districts of Gort and Kinvara, and £300 for constructing a bridge at Rynn....'(p56, see also p74).
- 'The Council are not prepared to take over the old Workhouse Graveyard at Lavally now under the control of the County Board of Hath, as they are of opinion it would not be utilised as a Public graveyard' (p84).
- 'Read letter ...from the Local Government Department stating they have received sworn affidavits showing that Mr James Cavanagh was prevented by force from being present at the meeting of 10th ulto. for the election of Clerk. Under the circumstances they will not take any steps to ratify the proceedings, and accordingly the position should be re-advertised making it clear that candidates will first be examined, and that the Council will then choose their Clerk from those who have successfully passed the examination' (p272).



B. Incoming Letters, 1912 - 1924

(i) Volume of Letters, 1912 -1917

18. 30 October 1912 – 1 May 1917 Letters, including circular letters, primarily from the Local Government Board to the Council relating to its administration and that of the district, with the former relating to issues such as the sinking of a well at Caherkelly (10 January 1913), new burial ground at Shanaglish (22 January 1913); labourers cottages, staffing matters and so on, and circular letters relating to issues such as National Health Insurance, payment of Clerk's salaries, regulations pertaining to the administration of the Labourers Cottages Act, to the registration of motor cars, and co-operation between civil and military sanitary services in Ireland. Includes
- [copy] letter from John Loughrey, tenant of a labourer's cottage to the Local Government Board complaining about the repair of his cottage stating the Council 'pay no heed to my complaint, everybody who has seen the cottage has remarked the disgraceful way the work has been done, and they [say] that there is no use in complaining to the Council, the Contractor and Council or in a manner all one, the Contractor's brother is Chairman of the Board of Guardians and a member of the Council...' with a postscript stating 'I hope it won't be out of place to remark that if [it] is the manner that Acts of Parliament concerning the poor are carried out we have no great reason to be enthusiastic about Home Rule' (G01/10/18 14 January 1913) ;
 - copy letter from the Cyril Browne, Auditor to the Local Government Board stating with regard to expenditure on sewerage that 'The Clerk informs me that the sewerage of the town is in a bad state of repairs, and I submit that it would be more economical and satisfactory to have the entire system thoroughly overhauled than to be spending money in patching the sewers in cases of urgency' (2 August 1913)
 - 'Declarations and Schemes formulated by the County Council for the maintenance of Roads in Ballinasloe No. 1, Glenamaddy, Loughrea and Mountbellew Rural District (September 1916)

Many letters are annotated.

Size c. 600pp



(ii) *Letters, 1923-1924*

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|-----|-----------------|--|----|
| 19. | 9 June 1923 | Covering letter from Brooks, Thomas & Co. Ltd., 4 Sackville Place, Dublin regarding the payment of an account. | 1p |
| | | | |
| 20. | 16 January 1924 | From the County Surveyor, M.J. Kennedy, regarding Gort Roads. | 1p |



C. Contracts for Road Maintenance, 1899 -1902

21. 30 September 1899 - 26 April 1902 Tenders, Bonds and Contracts for the repair and maintenance of roads and footpaths, detailing the area to be maintained in perches, the contractor's name and address, annual cost, period of contract (annually or 5 years), specification of work, conditions of contract, signed by Contractor, Sureties, and Witness.

63 items