

**COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE**

**Galway County Council**

**Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Átha an Rí Órán Mór**

**Municipal District of Athenry Oranmore.**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Athenry Oranmore held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2018.**

**I LATHAIR:**

**BAILL:** Cllr. M. Noone (Cathaoirleach)  
Cllr. J. Cuddy  
Cllr. P. Feeney  
Cllr. M. Kinane  
Cllr. F. Kearney  
Cllr. J. Charity.

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr. G. Cronnelly

**OIFIGIUGH:** Mr. M. Owens, A/Director of Services.  
Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer,  
Ms. M. Ní Chionna, Senior Engineer,  
Ms. P. Higgins, Senior Executive Engineer,  
Ms. R. Joyce, Community Warden,  
Ms. G. Cooley, Assistant Staff Officer,  
Ms. G. Healy, A/Administrative Officer.

Cllr. Charity proposed a vote of sympathy to Cllr. G. Cronnelly on the recent passing of his mother, Mrs. Mary Cronnelly and he also extended his sympathies to the extended Cronnelly family on their sad loss.

Cllr. Feeney also extended his condolences, stating that the Cronnelly family was very well respected in Athenry and by the wider community because of their work for charity and he said that the passing of Mrs. Cronnelly was a huge loss for the community.

Cllrs. Cuddy, Kinane, Kearney and Cathaoirleach Noone also extended their sympathies to Cllr. Cronnelly and the Cronnelly family.

**Item No. 1: To confirm Minutes of the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2018**

**AOMD 1811**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cuddy and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kinane, the Minutes of the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2018, were **AGREED**.

### **Matters arising from the Minutes:**

In response to a query from Cllr. Charity regarding progress of works at Bawnmore, Mr. Mitchell said that negotiations had commenced with the landowner and that formalities would be completed once the landowner reverts to the Council, allowing the Council to proceed with the works as part of the 2018 Roadworks Programme. He said that the Area Engineer, Mr. Gavin, had the location marked in advance of the proposed works.

### **Item No. 2. Presentation on Invasive Species – Monitoring, Recording and Management.**

[Report entitled *Reporting, Mapping and Management of Invasive Species on Public Roads* was circulated to each Member]

**AOMD 1812**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Ms. Rosina Joyce, Community Warden with Galway County Council, to the Meeting, and he invited Ms. Joyce to make a Presentation on Invasive Species to the Members.

Ms. Joyce said that there are four main species which affect County Galway, as follows:

- Japanese Knotweed
- Giant Hogweed
- Giant Rhubarb
- Himalayan Balsam

She said that in addition to these, there are other invasive species which include Himalayan Knotweed and Rhododendron.

Ms. Joyce informed the Members that a Working Group had been set up by Galway County Council to deal with the threat of non-native plants to the environment. She said that while there is no significant problem in the Athenry-Oranmore Municipal District area, there are some pockets in the Connemara and Tuam Municipal Districts that are affected.

Ms. Joyce then outlined the following:

Phase one of the process to deal with invasive species is to make the public aware of the threat of invasive plants. She said this is being done through the issuing of information leaflets, making information available on the Council's Website, Galway.ie, and also by providing training, including training for each Community Wardens in relation to invasive species. She provided information packs for the Members, which included Biodiversity Guidelines and a number of leaflets outlining the treatment methods for managing the spread of the various invasive plants.

A dedicated phone number – (091)509309 and email ([invasivespecies@galwaycoco.ie](mailto:invasivespecies@galwaycoco.ie)) had been set up by the Council and any reports of possible invasive species on Council property, including public roads, should be reported so that the Community Wardens can investigate. She said that areas of the County where invasive species have been located have been mapped and signage has been erected at these locations to alert the public. She said that those engaged in hedge cutting must be particularly vigilant, as cutting back invasive plants results in multiplication of the plants which would exacerbate the problem.

The Working Group liaises with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and a 4-year control programme for the treatment of invasive species on National Roads is currently on year 3. She said that the aim is to develop a database showing the location of invasive species along the roadside. She also informed the Members that under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats)

Regulations 2011, it is an offence in the Republic of Ireland to plant, disperse allow or cause to grow the invasive species she had listed in her presentation.

A spraying schedule will be set up for the next 4 – 5 years with spraying commencing in the month of September.

Cathaoirleach Noone thanked Ms. Joyce for the very informative presentation and he said he was aware of a case ongoing at present against a quarry in Mayo regarding an alleged offence in relation to invasive species.

Cllr. Kinane queried if the Tidy Town Groups in the Municipal District had been made aware of, or been given any training on, invasive species and Ms. Joyce said that Tidy Towns Groups in the Tuam area had been spoken to and that information packs could be sent to any groups interested in same.

Also in reply to Cllr. Kinane, Ms. Joyce said that a treatment programme had been put in place at Rinville Park which had curtailed the growth of invasive species through the woods and the pond and was successful in reducing the invasive plants and keeping them under control.

Cllr. Kearney also thanked Ms. Joyce for the informative presentation and he enquired as to the method of treatment and disposal of invasive plants.

Ms. Joyce replied that invasive species fall under the category of hazardous waste and therefore a specific licence is required in order to transport the waste to a permitted site by a specialist waste collector. She said that the utmost caution must be observed when moving invasive species from any site. She said the preferred method of dealing with invasive species is by means of a planned schedule of spraying appropriate for the individual plant.

**Item No. 3. To approve the proposed One-Way Traffic System at the New Line, Athenry**

[Report entitled *Proposed alterations to the existing Traffic Management Layout of L7124 (New Line) Athenry*, dated March 2018 was circulated to each Member].

**AOMD 1813**

Mr. Mitchell said that, having carried out detailed assessments of pedestrian movement along the Monivea Road, Athenry, it was decided to proceed with a proposal to make an amendment to the existing traffic system along a section of the L7124, the New Line Road, Athenry. He said the proposal was to change the most northerly section of the New Line Road, between its junction with Bridge Court Estate and its junction with the Monivea Road, from a two-way system to a one-way system. He said this arrangement would allow for the construction of a footpath along this section of road in order to provide safe pedestrian passage and connectivity from the Monivea Road. He said the proposal was advertised and the submissions received were considered by the Council and the decision was that the overall factor in favour of the proposal was road safety.

Cllr. Feeney welcomed the proposed changes to the traffic system at the New Line, Athenry. He said that in excess of 1,000 people reside out past the New Line Junction and they do not have a safe pedestrian access to the town. Cllr. Feeney added that planning permission had been granted in the past for 300 houses on that stretch of road but no footpath had been provided and he said that the problem at the railway bridge on the Monivea Road was a very difficult and expensive one to solve. He said that C.I.E. had laid foundations for a path some years previously, but this did not progress as it would have necessitated the construction of a high stone wall in front of a housing estate and also it would have resulted in making the bridge too narrow. He said in his view the only viable solution was the proposal to make the New Line Road one way from the Bridge Court Estate, as per the proposal. While some people were against the proposal, the majority were in favour, he said. Cllr.

Feeney thanked the Athenry Engineers, Ms. Lowe and Mr. Gavin for their work in progressing this proposal and said that this would be a positive move for the safety of pedestrians, even if it caused a degree of inconvenience for motorists. However, he said that as the two second-level schools on the Monivea Road would be moving out within the next few years, and with the construction of the new ring road, there would be less traffic coming through the town.

Cllr. Kearney also welcomed the proposal, stating that the resulting improvement in relation to road safety was most important.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Feeney, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kearney, the Members **APPROVED** the One-Way Traffic System at the New Line, Athenry.

**Item No. 4. To approve the Annual Report of the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District 2017**

[Annual Report 2017 was already circulated to each Member]

**AOMD 1814**

Ms. Healy presented the Annual Report to the Members, stating that the Report outlined the activities of the Municipal District Council during 2017.

Cllr. Kinane raised two issues based on presentations made to the Members in 2017. She sought the support of the Members on her proposal to lobby Irish Rail to include a stop on the Dublin – Galway train at Oranmore. She said she had been informed that a timetable review was due to take place by Irish Rail in May.

Cllr. Kinane made the following **PROPOSAL** *"I wish to propose that the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District would write to Iarnród Éireann seeking a review of the Dublin to Galway train timetable. The aim of this request is to seek for the last train leaving Dublin to stop at Oranmore train station"*.

The proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Feeney, and **AGREED** by the Members.

Cllr. Kinane enquired about the roll-out of broadband in rural areas by EIR stating that a number of houses were excluded from the broadband link-up in her area. She asked what role Galway County Council's Broadband Officer had in such a roll out.

Mr. Mitchell confirmed that Mr. Noel Madden had been recently appointed as Broadband Officer with the Council. He said Mr. Madden's role included the area of road opening licences and facilitating providers such as Virgin in the roll out of broadband in towns. He said the decisions made by EIR were made on a commercial basis and Mr. Madden was not in a position to negotiate with EIR in relation to broadband provision.

Cllr. Charity said he fully supported Cllr. Kinane's views in relation to broadband provision in the County and expressed the view that EIR was creating a two-tier system in rural areas where only 50% of homes were being connected.

Cllr. Feeney said that the Fibre-to-Home Plan is a proposal by EIR in its own right to bring broadband to 300,000 homes and that EIR was not carrying out works as a result of a tender of the Government. He said he also was not happy with the current level of broadband provision to rural areas.

Cllr. Kearney said that the provision of broadband was similar to the provision of electricity in former years and that, eventually, all homes would be linked up but that it could take some considerable time.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cuddy, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Kearney, the Members **APPROVED** the Annual Report of the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District 2017.

**Item No. 5. To discuss taking-in-charge of road leading to Gaelscoil de hÍde, Ard na Mara,**

**Oranmore**

**AOMD 1815**

Cllr. Kinane said she wished to commence the process of taking in charge the stretch of road leading to the Gaelscoil in Oranmore because she felt that the road was very dangerous during icy weather, and the Council could not grit the road as it was a private road. She said that a Group had been established to sub-lease a site on the road to set up an Enterprise Pod.

Mr. Mitchell said the proposal would be investigated.

Cllr. Cuddy and Cllr. Charity expressed the view that private roads which have been improved under various schemes such as the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) and brought up to a good standard should be taken in charge by the Council and added to the kilometres of road in the Municipal District. He said that because the roads budget was divided out between the Municipal Districts on a per kilometre basis, this help to get more of a maintenance budget for the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District. Cllrs. Cuddy and Charity was there a policy adopted in relation to taking in charge of roads.

Mr. Mitchell replied that there was no formal policy in place for taking in charge of roads and stated that the maintenance of the public road network was challenging for the Council at present, due to funding constraints and the deterioration of the roads due to the severe weather conditions encountered during the previous winter. Mr. Mitchell said that it would be difficult to justify the taking in charge of all of the private roads the Members of the Council were lobbying for, due to current funding constraints.

Cllr. Charity expressed the view that it would be the logical process to take a road in charge once it was brought up to standard, given that residents pay road tax and planning contributions.

**Item No. 6. Update on the Speed Limit Review for the National Primary, National Secondary, Regional and Local Roads within the Athenry Oranmore Municipal District**

**AOMD 1816**

Ms. Ni Chionna presented an update to the Members on the progress of the Speed Limit Review stating that the National Route Review has been completed, and she also said that changes in road classification in County Galway were made due to the opening of the new motorway.

In 2017, submissions were received and put forward at the Municipal District meetings and arising out of these submissions, proposals were made and amendments agreed with the City Council and TII.

Maps were prepared and the consultation with the Gardaí is now progressing and any comments received will be reviewed in June. A public consultation process will then follow with a draft map on display and any submissions will be reviewed in July, with September being the earliest a presentation can be made at the Municipal District Councils.

Following the Municipal District Meetings, the draft proposal will go to the Plenary Council.

In reply to Cllrs. Cuddy, Kinane and Feeney, Ms. Ni Chionna replied that any roads submitted would be reviewed and that certain roads would be prioritised following the process. She also said that National Guidelines are in place in regard to speed limits, based on road safety and consistency.

**Item No. 7. To Fix a date for the Annual General Meeting of the Municipal District Council**

**AOMD 1817**

It was **AGREED** by the Members that the June Meeting of the Municipal District Council be held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at 10 a.m. and that the Annual General Meeting take place directly afterwards.

**Item No. 8. Municipal District Director's Business & Correspondence**

**AOMD 1818**

In reply to a query regarding directional signs for locations in the Gaeltacht, it was confirmed by Mr. Owens that any signage for Gaeltacht locations were required to be *As Gaeilge*, regardless of whether the directional signs were placed in a Gaeltacht area or not.

Cathaoirleach Noone said that the Municipal District Council was awaiting a response from the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht regarding the Resolution passed at the April 2018 Meeting as follows: *"that the Languages Act be amended so that the directional signs for Gaeltacht Placenames located outside of the Gaeltacht be bilingual"*.

**Item No. 9. Cathaoirleach's Business**

**AOMD 1819**

Cllr. Cuddy asked for an update on the Lisheenkyle flooding issue.

Ms. Higgins said that a solution was proposed with certain landowners at that location with the assistance of Cllr Feeney.

Cllr. Feeney said that he and Mr. Gavin, Area Engineer, had met with a landowner at the location who expressed a willingness to help solve the flooding problem and Cllr. Feeney said he was hopeful that works could commence, once funding was provided.

Mr. Mitchell said that a number of solutions had been suggested and that Notice of Motion monies had been allotted for such works by the Members and thanked Cllr. Feeney for his involvement in this project.

Cllr. Noone said he was happy to support the project through Notice of Motion monies as it would result in improved safety at Lisheenkyle Primary School and he was confident that Notice of Motion monies promised by other Members would be forthcoming.

**Criochnaigh an Cruinniu Ansin**

SIGNED:



Cllr. M. Noone,  
Cathaoirleach.

19<sup>th</sup> June 2018