

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA GAILLIMHE

Galway County Council

Ceantar Bardasach Bhaile Átha an Rí

Municipal District of Athenry

Minutes of the Meeting of the Municipal District of Athenry held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, on Tuesday 14th January 2020.

I LATHAIR:

BAILL: Cllr. J. Cuddy (Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. G. Cronnelly,
Cllr. J. Charity,
Cllr. L. Carroll,
Cllr. D. Collins,
Cllr. S. Herterich Quinn,
Cllr. A. Dolan.

OIFIGIH: Mr. M. Owens, A/Director of Services,
Mr. D. Mitchell, Senior Engineer,
Ms. P. Higgins, Senior Executive Engineer,
Mr. P. Gavin, Executive Engineer,
Ms. V. Loughnane, Senior Planner,
Mr. B. Dunne, Executive Planner,
Ms. M. Doddy, Conservation Officer,
Ms. C. Hannon, Assistant Staff Officer,
Ms. G. Healy, A/Administrative Officer,
Ms. G. Cooley, Assistant Staff Officer

Cllr. Cuddy, Cathaoirleach of Athenry Municipal District Council, welcomed all present at the Meeting.

To confirm Minutes of the Athenry Municipal District Meeting held on 11th November, 2019

AMD 22

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Cllr. Herterich Quinn and Cllr. Cronnelly referred to the second paragraph on Page 2 of the Minutes and said they wished to amend the paragraph to read as follows:

“Cllr. Cronnelly welcomed the funding which had been secured under the Rural Regeneration Fund for the Bia Innovator Hub at Athenry. He said this funding also includes an allocation for Athenry Town which will be used for upgrade and improvement works in the town.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn referred to Backlawn Carpark and she stated that the free carparking initiative in place since September has brought about a significant change to on-street parking in the town and 80% of the carpark is now being used. She said that as this was the final Meeting of Athenry Municipal District Council for 2019, she would like to discuss the possibility of extending the free parking for a further term.

Cllr. Cronnelly said he would be in agreement that the free parking initiative be extended at Backlawn Carpark”.

Cllr. Charity referred to Page 7 of the Minutes under the Item Review of Litter Management Plan 2019 – 2022 and he said he wished to record the following in the Minutes:

“Cllr. Charity asked if designated litter pickers are assigned by the Council to cover the litter black spots in the county to clean up the roadsides due to the large scale of the litter problem. He said that littering along the N84 and roads leading off this is a particular problem.

Mr. Melody replied that there are no dedicated litter pickers employed by the Council. The question of supervision, provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other safety issues would need to be taken into account if litter pickers were employed. The Council will continue to investigate measures to best deal with the litter problem”.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Carroll, **SECONDED** by Cllr. Collins, the Minutes of the Athenry Municipal District Meeting held on 11th November 2019, to include the amendments proposed by Cllr. Herterich Quinn, Cllr. Cronnelly and Cllr. Charity, were **AGREED**.

Declaration of Roads to be Public Roads – Section 11 of Roads Act 1993

[Report already circulated to each Member]

AMD 23

The Cathaoirleach referred to the Report, including Map, which had been circulated to the Members and he read the Report into the Meeting, as follows:

Description:

Road commencing at junction with Local Road L-31010-0 (E139,321; N228,358) in the townland of An Carn Mór Thiar and extending East for a distance of 340 metres in the townland An Carn Mór Thiar and finishing at a point 340m from its start point with the L-31010-0 (E139,655; N228,424) in the townland of An Carn Mór Thiar.

Municipal District: Athenry

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Charity and **SECONDED** by Cllr. Cronnelly, the Members **AGREED** the Declaration of Roads to be Public Roads under Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993, as outlined in the Report.

Briefing on the upcoming Review of the Galway County Development Plan 2021-2027 **AMD 24**

Ms. Loughnane advised the Members that the County Development Plan process would commence shortly. She referred to the Planning Seminar which was held in July 2019 for the benefit of the Members where it was agreed that the planning unit would advise at the Municipal District Meetings when the process would commence. She said it was envisaged that the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy comes into effect on 24th January 2020, and that legislation outlines that the Plan must be started within 3 months of this. She advised that objectives from the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy would be incorporated into the County Development Plan. She said that it was proposed to have the Issues Paper completed in March/April which would be the start of the process. She explained that the new Plan would include some topics currently in the County Development Plan and some new topics. She outlined that the process to complete the County Development Plan takes 99 weeks and that the Planning Unit would be engaging with the public as much as possible during this time. She advised that the Planning Unit would provide workshops throughout the county to have as much public consultation as possible and would welcome any suggestions from Members on how best to do this. She outlined that there had been some background work completed and there would be 14 Settlement Areas within the County Development Plan. She said that staff in the Forward Planning Policy Unit would be available to engage with the Members and would answer any queries they may have throughout the process.

Cllr. Cuddy thanked Ms. Loughnane, but said he envisaged there would be difficulty with the Plan. He explained that the Council had met in May 2017 when people were having difficulties securing planning permission, at which time the Minister advised that no changes would be implemented until the County Development Plan was put in place. He said that in 2014 the Members adopted a County Development Plan without being advised of the Flemish Decree. He referred to a reply which he received from the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government recently which was very vague and advised that he was trying for seven years to get a response to his query on this matter.

Ms. Loughnane advised that it was important to start the County Development Plan without looking at just single rural housing. She advised that the Plan should be looked at as a strategic plan for the County. She said that additional funding had been allocated recently and the Council needs to be able to apply for same and therefore needs to have strong strategic objectives in relation to forward planning. She stated that she does appreciate that

there are issues to be ironed out, but there is a need to take a step back and look at the bigger picture for the development of the county. She explained that the County Development Plan would be in line with all regulations and frameworks.

Cllr. Collins referred to the 14 settlement areas and said that if sewerage facilities were not up to standard then it would be impossible get planning permission. In this regard, he asked if consultations had taken place with Irish Water on this matter. Ms. Loughnane confirmed that there was ongoing engagement with Irish Water, who have an investment plan in place so continued engagement with Irish Water will take place. She said that Irish Water is a Prescribed Body so they would be engaged during the Development Plan process. She said the Plan needs to be as deliverable as possible with serviced areas spread throughout the County. She also said that she had raised concerns regarding waste water issues and investigating the possibility of funding being made available through the National Planning Framework in relation to this matter.

Cllr. Collins commented that Irish Water and Broadband providers should link together and co-ordinate work so that works are carried out simultaneously. Mr. Mitchell said that he speaks with service providers in relation to road opening license applications in order to future proof work to be done.

Cllr. Charity also referred to the Flemish Decree and said he considered that concerns in this regard were justified. He also raised concerns in relation to the enurement clauses stating that he considered that due to the housing crisis there should be some leeway and flexibility in this regard. He said that there seems to be a drive towards City centre and larger town living. He agreed that there was a bigger picture to be considered but the concerns of the people regarding planning issues also need to be dealt with. He queried what the status was in relation to the Master Plan for Galway Airport. Ms. Loughnane stated that she appreciates that there were issues to discuss but she said some items are in legislation and need to be implemented. She reminded Members that there was a procedure in place to assist people who are having difficulty regarding enurement clauses. She referred to the airport site and explained that this would be an objective as part of the County Development Plan.

Cllr. Carroll asked if Garraun would be included in the County Development Plan. Ms. Loughnane confirmed it would be as a Framework Plan.

Cllr. Carroll said the airport site is very important and that it should be included in the County Development Plan. He pointed out that a significant amount of investment went into the site and he was happy that Galway County Council and Galway City Council jointly purchased the airport site. He advised that it would be a key objective going forward as it is very close to the proposed ring road. Ms. Loughnane said that the airport site was jointly owned so the Council must work in partnership with Galway City Council on same. She advised that if the

master plan was in place before the County Development Plan is completed then it would be incorporated into same. Ms. Loughnane also said that it was an objective within the National Planning Framework and any framework being prepared would be in partnership with Galway City Council. She explained that as the site was in the County area, it would not be in the Galway City Development Plan. Mr. Dunne said that there was an objective regarding the airport site in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) so until the RSES is adopted by the Northern & Western Regional Authority, which is expected in the coming weeks, no progress can be made on same.

Cllr. Cuddy said that the public would be unhappy if the runway at the former Carnmore Airport site was ever removed as this site belongs to the citizens of Galway. He said that the airport can cater for European flights and he said it is important to note that Galway Flying Club has been in operation for 100 years.

Cllrs. Collins, Cronnelly, Charity and Carroll said they would oppose any suggestion that the runway at the former Airport Site be removed, stating if it was removed it would never be brought back. They expressed the view that the site needs to be further developed and they expressed the view that the flying club, which had been in operation for 100 years, should be accommodated.

Proposed Additions and Proposed Deletions to the Record of Protected Structure's in the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021

[Chief Executive's Report on Proposed Additions and Proposed Deletions to the Record of Protected Structures in the Galway County Development Plan 2015 – 2021 was circulated to each Member].

AMD 25

Ms. Doddy referred to the Report which had been circulated to the Members and outlined that the annual review of the Record of Protected Structures had recently taken place and that there was a proposal to add five structures and to remove two structures from the Record of Protected Structures in the County Development Plan. She said that the two proposals to be removed were originally in the Athenry Municipal District but, due to the recent boundary changes, these structures are now within the Loughrea Municipal District. She said that both proposals were considered at the Loughrea Municipal District Meeting.

Ms. Doddy said that the Chief Executives Report would be placed on the Agenda for consideration of the Members at the January Plenary Council meeting.

Presentation by Galway Volunteer Centre

AMD 26

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Mr. Donncha Foley and Ms. Teresa Butler of Galway Volunteer Centre to the Meeting.

Mr. Foley made a presentation to the Members in relation to Developing Volunteer Services in County Galway. He said that the Services provided to the Community include the following:

- Recruitment of Volunteers/Finding Volunteer Work
- Garda Vetting
- Volunteer Management Training
- Advertising Community Events on Social Media
- Volunteer Management Guidebooks
- Volunteer Role Listings on Galway Bay FM
- Monthly Volunteer Profile (Galway Bay FM) and Podcast

He then gave an overview of the Volunteer Centre, a background to the Centre, details of funding per capita, funding per KM2 and an overview in relation to 2019.

He said that the key challenge to the Volunteer Centre service is insufficient resources and funding.

He outlined the activities and achievements and the benefits of the service. He said that it is not just about volunteerism, it is about job creation, rural development, social capital, sustainability, knowledge building.

Ms. Butler then gave an overview of the activities and achievements of the Gort Resource Centre, stating that links have been developed with the Public Participation Network and Galway Rural Development in order to network and get support for the centre. She said 26 roles had been registered in 2019 over a period of 3-4 months.

Mr. Foley concluded by stating that political support is needed to secure additional funding in order to expand the services of the Galway Volunteer Centre and he asked for the support of the Municipal District Members in this regard.

Cllr. Collins said that the resource provided by Galway Volunteer Centre is invaluable and said he was shocked to see that funding is one of the lowest in the country. He committed to advocate to Minister Seán Canney and other Dáil Deputies on behalf of the Galway Volunteer Centre.

The Cathaoirleach thanked Ms. Butler and Mr. Foley for attending the Meeting and for making the Presentation and he wished them well in their work.

Notice of Motion - Cllr. J. Cuddy

AMD 27

Cllr. Cuddy submitted the following Notice of Motion:

"I will propose that Galway County Council seek immediate funding from the Department of Transport and or the Road Safety Authority for a Traffic Management Plan for the Village of Oranmore and that in the meantime use the Community Warden to visit and take action against motorists parking on Double Yellow Lines, Footpaths and near junctions and corners in the village of Oranmore. I would further ask that Galway County Council write to the Local Gardaí to deal with the spate of illegal parking in the village of Oranmore and carry out speed checks on the Old Dublin Rd, Oranmore from the Bank of Ireland corner to the Oranmore Community Centre roundabout".

The following was the Reply:

"There is no scheme to apply for funding from the Department of Transport and/or the Road Safety Authority for Traffic Management Plans. The budget adopted for 2020 removed an allocation of funding for the provision of Traffic Management Plans. These funds were provided from the Council's own resources. In the meantime, the Council's Community Wardens, in conjunction with An Garda Síochána, will continue to take action against illegal parking in the Athenry/ Oranmore area".

Cllr. Cuddy expressed his dissatisfaction with the reply given to his Notice of Motion and said that the Council should write to the Department, seeking funding to update Traffic Management Plans in the County.

Mr. Mitchell agreed that Oranmore is of high priority, but said that Traffic Management Plans are funded out of the Councils own resources, however this funding was removed from the budget adopted by the Council in November 2019. He said that Traffic Plans in place for a number of towns around the County need to be reviewed and he said no facility is made by the Department to help with the funding of same. He said that the Council needs to use income generated and he said that the Bye-laws for the introduction of paid parking at Oranmore Train Station carpark are currently being processed.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn asked if there was a warden available to monitor illegal parking in Oranmore and Ms. Higgins stated that two afternoons per week are dedicated by the Community Warden to working in Oranmore village. She said that An Garda Síochána also monitor illegal parking.

Cllr. Carroll said that the Community Warden has a visible presence in Oranmore village even up to last Friday afternoon and this is acknowledged by the local people. He said there are financial constraints on the Gardaí in the village, but a new Community Garda will shortly be put in place for Oranmore village.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn said that free parking should be made available at the Irish Rail car park in Athenry to alleviate the overcrowding at the Oranmore railway station and thus encourage more people to use the train.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn made the following **PROPOSAL**:

“That Galway County Council write to Irish Rail/National Transport Authority/Apoca Parking and request an extension of the Christmas free parking at Athenry Train Station until the situation at Oranmore Train Station has been reviewed and a solution to the over crowding found.

People will obviously choose to park where it is free and the difference between the numbers at Athenry and Oranmore train stations clearly demonstrate this.

Climate change directives insist that we take more cars off the roads and indeed out of the cities. Facilitating free parking at train stations, and indeed park and ride services in our area, would facilitate these directives and encourage use of alternative transport”.

This proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Dolan and **AGREED**.

Cllr. Charity said that illegal parking will persist if enforcement is carried out intermittently and he expressed the view that paid parking at the Oranmore Railway Station would be a disincentive for commuters to park at this station. He said that a survey of commuters should be carried out prior to the introduction of paid parking.

Mr. Mitchell said that the Council need funding from paid parking as carparks provided by the Council must be paid for and maintained. He said that free parking initiatives set a precedent for the rest of the County and has a negative effect on revenue generated by the Council.

In reply to a query from Cllr. Cronnelly regarding the need for public lights from Oranmore village to the train station, Mr. Mitchell said that funding will be available under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme for such works and he said that Oranmore is a flag-ship location for funding for street lighting and footpaths.

Municipal District Director’s Business & Correspondence

AMD 28

Mr. Owens referred to the Resolution passed by the Members at the Meeting of 11th November 2019 that Irish Rail review the frequencies of the train stops in Attymon, Athenry and Oranmore Train Stations. He said that a response had been received from Iarnród Éireann, dated 4th December 2019, and this reply was circulated to the Members.

Cllr. Cronnelly acknowledged receipt of the reply from Irish Rail and said that Attymon Station, which has free parking, is under used.

Cllr. Cronnelly made the following **PROPOSAL**: *"that Irish Rail review their staffing levels, pricing and carpark fees in Athenry and in doing so promote rail travel economically for commuters"*.

This proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Herterich Quinn, and **AGREED**.

Cathaoirleach's Business

AMD 29

Cllr. Collins asked if lights could be installed at the bottom of the Racecourse Hill on the Tuam Road, Galway and Mr. Mitchell replied that Galway City Council is the authority in charge of this section of road and they are currently preparing to install traffic lights at this location.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn asked for support for the Walk to School Initiative in Oranmore as she had obtained permission from various private businesses in the town to allow a pick and drop at their businesses for school goers.

Cllr. Collins agreed that this was a very worthwhile initiative and said he would support same.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn made the following **PROPOSAL** *"I wish to propose that Galway County Council work with "School Streets Oranmore" for the trial of the School Streets Initiative for the 4 schools in Oranmore Village.*

The Road Safety Authority recently issued a warning regarding traffic congestion outside school gates, saying the environment is proving "incredibly dangerous" for children. In Oranmore, we aim to make it easier safer and healthier for children, and parents, to travel to school and provide a generally more pleasant environment for everyone.

This initiative is currently being trialled in Malahide, Co. Dublin at St. Oliver Plunkett's School and is gathering support in Galway City too".

This proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr. Collins, and **AGREED**.

Criochnaigh an Cruinniú Ansin

Approved by:


CATHAOIRLEACH

Date: 10/3/20

