

MINUTES OF MEETING OF
GLENTIES ELECTORAL AREA COMMITTEE
HELD ON 19TH JANUARY 2010, IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE CENTRE,
DUNGLOE

Members Present: Cllr. Marie Therese Gallagher
Cllr David Alcorn
Cllr Pádraig Doherty
Cllr Séamus Ó Domhnaill
Cllr Terence Slowey

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Mc Gill, Area Manager, Housing/Corporate Services
John Gallagher – Senior Executive Engineer, Area Manager
Water & Environment
Brendan Mc Fadden – Senior Executive Engineer, Area
Manager, Roads & Transportation
Frank Sweeney – Senior Executive Planner, Area Manager,
Planning & Economic Development
Charles Sweeney-Area Manager, Community & Enterprise
Claire Mc Callan, Architectural Conservation Officer
Gerard Skehan, Traditional Buildings Officer
Michael Rowsome – Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Cathal Mac Suibhne, Chief Executive Officer, Udarás na
Gaeltachta

APOLOGIES: Seamus Neely, Director of Water Services

**GEA 01/10 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD
ON 10TH NOVEMBER 2009**

On the proposal of Cllr. David Alcorn, seconded by Cllr.
Seamus Ó Domhnaill, the minutes of meeting of the 10th
November 2009 were agreed.

GEA 02/10 VOTE OF SYMPATHY

Members passed a vote of sympathy to Cllr. Ó Domhnaill on
the death of his father.

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GEA 03/10

TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS ON DONEGAL ISLANDS

Gerard Skehan, Traditional Buildings Officer made a presentation to the Committee in relation to the traditional buildings initiative co-funded by the Council and Údaras na Gaeltachta. Members were informed of the following progress to date:

- A detailed survey has been conducted on Gabhla, Inis Bo Finne, Inis Caroch, Inis Fraoigh, Uaigh and Inis Oirthir.
- A preliminary survey has been conducted on Rutland.
- Ongoing liaison with islanders in partnership with Comharchumann na nOileán Bheaga.
- Liaison with An Roinn, Údaras and Comhdháil na nOileán.
- Development of a database of photographs and archival material.

The Traditional Buildings Officer and Claire Mc Callan, Architectural Conservation Officer responded to queries from the Committee and invited Members to a presentation of 'Traditional Buildings of Donegal's Islands – Their Past, Present and Future' in An Chrannóg at 7.30 p.m. on 28th January 2010.

GEA 04/10

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Cathal Mac Suibhne, CEO, Údaras na Gaeltachta made a presentation to the Committee in relation to the role of Údaras in promoting the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht region.

The Committee were informed of the level of employment in Údaras supported projects in Donegal in the areas of manufacturing, aquaculture, engineering, audio-visual activities, internationally traded services, tourism, natural resources and the community sector.

Mr. Mac Suibhne also updated the Committee in relation to:

- Community Infrastructure facilities
- Strategic projects in Gweedore and Burtonport
- Availability of Industrial/Enterprise space
- Members were also informed of the status of approved projects in Dungloe, Annagry, Gweedore, Falcarragh and Fintown which will be progressed over the next 18 months. The Committee expressed appreciation to Mr. Mac Suibhne for the detailed presentation and invited Údaras officials to update the Committee annually.

GEA 05/10**PLANNING STATISTICS**

The Committee discussed the reports circulated with the agenda and presented by the Planning Manager.

The Planning Manager stated that there has been a major decline in the volume of countywide Planning applications submitted, from 4870 in 2008 to 2776 in 2009. Members were advised that 23% of the total planning applications were processed in the Dungloe PSC.

The level of invalid applications submitted to the Dungloe PSC amounted to 11% in 2009 as compared to 14% countywide.

GEA 06/10**PLANNING REFUSALS**

The Committee noted the report on applications refused during the period from 24.10.2009 to 4.1.2010, which was circulated previously.

GEA 07/10**ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS**

The Committee noted the Planning Enforcement report, which was circulated with the agenda.

GEA 08/10**DUNGLOE PLANNING OFFICE**

Members expressed their concerns regarding any proposals to centralise the Planning Service.

The Planning Manager informed the Committee that 2 no. Planners are due to have their contracts terminated within the next two months, leaving 1 no. Planner to service the entire Electoral Area.

The Committee requested the Planning Manager to convey their appreciation to Shane Donaghy and Ciaran Moy for the outstanding service provided to Councillors during their employment in the Dungloe office.

GEA 09/10**N56 DEVELOPMENT**

Cllr. Ó Domhnaill requested a co-ordinated approach from Members and officials of the Council to lobby against ongoing refusals in relation to developments exiting onto the N56.

GEA 10/10**ARD NA gCEAPAIRÍ AREA PLAN**

On the proposal of Cllr. Doherty seconded by Cllr. Ó Domhnaill, the Committee requested the Director of the Planning Service and the CEO of Údaras to convene a meeting to be attended by all relevant stakeholders.

HOUSING & BUILDING

GEA 11/10 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Committee discussed the Housing Capital Programme progress report as at the 23rd of December 2009 circulated with the agenda and presented by the Housing Manager. Members welcomed the completion and letting of the Creeslough scheme.

In response to a query from Cllr. Doherty regarding the Meenanillar scheme, the Housing Manager informed the Committee that the Council intend to have this project completed and ready for letting in May and that additional information will be available at the next area meeting.

The Committee expressed ongoing frustration at the delay in completing the Lettermacaward scheme and requested the Council to issue a Press release detailing the status of the scheme.

The Housing Manager undertook to seek immediate clarification from the Housing Construction Unit and to revert to Members thereafter.

GEA 12/10 SPECIFIC INSTANCE COTTAGES

The Committee welcomed the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the SI Programme.

GEA 13/10 HOUSING GRANTS

Members noted the reports circulated with the agenda and the Housing Manager responded to Members queries in this regard.

GEA 14/10 CASUAL VACANCIES

The Committee considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to casual vacancies as of the 23rd of December 2009.

The Housing Manager informed Members that work is ongoing at a number of locations to repair damage caused by adverse weather conditions and that the Council's primary objective is to let as many vacancies as soon as possible.

GEA 15/10

NEED IN GLENTIES ELECTORAL AREA

The Committee welcomed the report outlining a Housing Need of 421 in the Glenties Electoral Area and the Housing Manager responded to Members queries regarding this issue.

GEA 16/10

BALLINA ESTATE, FALCARRAGH

Cllr. Ó Domhnaill highlighted incidents of dangerous driving on the estate and requested the Council to erect ramps and warning signage at suitable locations. The Housing Manager agreed to liaise with the Roads Service and the Residents group to address safety concerns.

GEA 17/10

LIGHTING ON COUNCIL ESTATES

Cllr. Ó Domhnaill raised concerns regarding the failure of relevant authorities to repair damage to faulty lights and the Housing Manager undertook to investigate this matter.

GEA 18/10

ST. PETER'S TERRACE, DUNGLOE

Cllr. Gallagher highlighted difficulties experienced by residents as a result of non-residents utilising car parking areas within the estate.

The Housing Manager agreed to liaise with the Roads Service to achieve a solution.

ROADS & TRANSPORTATION

GEA 19/10

WINTER MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

The Committee discussed the report circulated at the meeting and presented by the Roads Manager. The Roads Manager informed Members that in advance of and during the cold snap from the 21st December 2009 to 12th January 2010, quantities of sand and grit were placed at a large number of strategic locations in the electoral area.

Members were also informed of extra routes gritted throughout the electoral area in addition to the pre-approved winter maintenance routes and the availability of grit at Council depots for Public usage.

The Committee unanimously congratulated the Roads Manager and Roads Service staff for their efforts to maintain the road network in the face of adverse weather conditions and for their extensive co-operation with Members.

Members highlighted the following issues for the attention of the Roads SPC during the Review of the Winter Maintenance Programme.

- Back of Errigal Road and Ranafast Road to be added to other routes on the Winter Maintenance Programme.
- Local Area Councillors to decide on local gritting programme.
- Procedure to be implemented to engage the services of local Contractors to assist with the Winter Maintenance Programme in situations where the Council do not have sufficient resources to execute necessary works.
- Provision of plastic bunkers for grit in estates.

GEA 20/10

SURFACE DRESSING PROGRAMME 2010

The Roads Manager advised Members that the Surface Dressing Programme has been delayed to ascertain the effect of the recent weather conditions.

The Committee agreed to convene a Workshop at 9 am in the Dungloe PSC on the 23rd of February 2010, in relation to the Surface Dressing and Maintenance Programmes.

GEA 21/10

CLADY FOOTBRIDGE

Members expressed concern at public safety implications arising from delays in proceeding with this project and recommended that the Council liaise with An Roinn to expedite this job. The Roads Manager informed the Committee that the Roads Service have corresponded with An Roinn in relation to additional funding of the footbridge. The Roads Manager also advised that no provision for Council matching money had been made at budget time.

GEA 22/10

BRIDGE STRENGTHENING

The Committee highlighted bridges throughout the electoral area in need of urgent repair. The Roads Manager informed Members that 2 no. bridges have been prioritised for EU funding during 2010 and that parapet repair monies have to be allocated from the maintenance budget. The Committee were also informed that a bridge survey is currently in progress in the electoral area and that it is hoped that the results will be available over the coming months. The Roads Manager also stressed that bridge repair monies are sourced from the same funding stream as road maintenance monies and he hoped that a detailed discussion could be held at the forthcoming Workshop to prioritise Maintenance Works.

Cllr. Ó Domhnaill expressed frustration that on completion of the survey, minimal finance will be available to execute the necessary works.

GEA 23/10

PUBLIC LIGHTING

Cllr. Slowey expressed annoyance at the failure to repair public lights south of the Gweebarra River for in excess of 3 months. The Roads Manager undertook to relay concerns to Senior Management in Lifford, who regularly liaise with the ESB on these issues.

GEA 24/10

UPGRADING OF ROAD – MC GLINCHEY’S SHOP TO CLÓS NAOMH CONAILL

In response to queries from Cllr. Gallagher and Cllr. Slowey regarding non-compliance with planning conditions at this location, the Roads Manager informed Members that the Roads, Housing and Planning Services are in discussions regarding this matter.

GEA 25/10

CAR PARKING - BURTONPORT

Cllr. Alcorn requested the Roads Service to source additional car parking capacity in Burtonport to accommodate traffic utilising the Arranmore ferry and suggested the vacant area opposite the Lobster Pot for development.

CORPORATE SERVICES

**GEA 26/10 REQUEST FOR DEPUTATION – COISTE
MHÍONTHOGRAÍ LOCH AN IÚIR**

The Committee discussed the submission circulated with the agenda and presented by the Corporate Manager. On the proposal of Cllr. Doherty, seconded by Cllr. Ó Domhnaill the Committee agreed to receive a deputation from Coiste Mhíonthograí Loch an Iúir at the March electoral area meeting.

GEA 27/10 PLACENAMES COMMITTEE

On the proposal of Cllr. Alcorn, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, the Committee nominated Cllr. Ó Domhnaill to represent the Glenties Electoral Area on the Placenames Committee.

GEA 28/10 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2010 – AREA COMMITTEE

The Committee agreed the schedule of Glenties Electoral Area Committee Meetings listed hereunder:

<u>Month</u>	<u>Date</u>
March	16 th
May	18 th
July	13 th
September	14 th
November	16 th

**GEA 29/10 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS – 2010 ISLANDS
COMMITTEE**

The Committee agreed the schedule of Island Committee Meetings listed hereunder:

<u>Month</u>	<u>Date</u>
March	16 th
July	13 th
November	16 th

WATER, ENVIRONMENT & EMERGENCY SERVICES

GEA 30/10

WATER SERVICES PROGRAMME IN RESPONSE TO ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS

The Water Services Manager circulated the Committee with a report detailing the Water Services Work programme in response to the adverse weather conditions. Members were informed that water demand increased by 30% resulting in drained reservoirs, and that the water conservation telemetry system was utilised intensively to continuously monitor flows in the networks and reservoirs to ensure that each of the reservoirs had a water supply.

The Water Services Manager informed the Committee that standpipes were provided in estates that were out of water and houses with young families and elderly occupants were supplied with water from a 1400 litre tank with the aid of Grunfos pumps.

The Committee congratulated the Water Services Staff for their commitment, dedication and effectiveness throughout the crisis and for their extensive communication with Members.

The Water Services Manager also commended the media and Radio na Gaeltachta in particular for their public announcements.

GEA 31/10

RETAINING WALL – THORR RESERVOIR

Cllr. Gallagher highlighted the dangerous condition of the retaining wall at this reservoir and requested that immediate remedial works be executed at this location.

GEA 32/10

MAJOR CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Committee discussed the report circulated at the meeting and presented by the Water Services Manager. Cllr. Gallagher requested a definitive response from the DOE and the Council in relation to the status of these schemes and Cllr. Slowey expressed concerns in relation to the compulsory local contribution towards funding of schemes.

The Committee agreed to convene a Workshop on the 23rd of February to discuss the Dungloe and Glenties Sewerage Scheme and Members requested the attendance of the Director of the Water Service at the Workshop or at the subsequent Area Meeting in March.

The Water Services Manager also undertook to arrange a visit to the Crolla Water Treatment plant.

GEA 33/10**SMALL CAPITAL SCHEME PROGRAMME**

The Committee discussed the report circulated at the meeting and presented by the Water Services Manager. Cllr. Gallagher highlighted the necessity to develop pipe infrastructure throughout the County and requested that appropriate applications for funding be made to the DOE in this regard.

GEA 34/10**GROUP WATER SCHEMES**

Members noted the reports circulated at the meeting and presented by the Water Services Manager.

COMMUNITY, ENTERPRISE & CULTURAL SERVICES

GEA 35/10 FUND MANAGEMENT

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

GEA 36/10 MINI PITCH PROGRAMME

The Manager presented a report and updated the Committee regarding development of a multi-use games facility in Dungloe in conjunction with Forbairt na Rosann.

GEA 37/10 COMMUNITY IN TOUCH E-ZINE

The Committee noted the report circulated with the agenda and presented by the Community & Enterprise Manager.

GEA 38/10 REPORT FROM COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE WORKSHOP

On the proposal of Cllr. Alcorn, seconded by Cllr. Doherty, the Committee agreed the minutes of workshop held on 15th December 2009.

GEA 39/10 LIBRARY SERVICE

The Committee discussed the reports circulated with the agenda in relation to the Library Service.

Members were informed that staff are currently working on a solution to the re-establishment of a library service in the Gaoth Dobhair area. The Committee requested the development of a library service in Aislann Gaoth Dobhair as a matter of urgency and requested updated details in respect of funding of this major project.

GEA 40/10 SOCIAL INCLUSION MEASURES GROUP

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

GEA 41/10 UPDATE OF POVERTY PROFILE

Members noted the report previously circulated in relation to the finalisation of the Poverty Profile entitled 'Planning for Inclusion' by the Research & Policy Unit.

GEA 42/10 KEEPING WARM INITIATIVE 2009

The Committee noted the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the delivery of this project to in excess of 600 vulnerable homes in Donegal.

GEA 43/10 DONEGAL CDB INTERAGENCY GROUP ON TRAVELLERS ISSUES

The Committee noted the report previously circulated outlining:

- (i) the 3 year strategic action plan
- (ii) Pavee Pathways Employment Project
- (iii) Pilot Tenant Participation Project

GEA 44/10 DONEGAL COMMUNITY BULLETINS

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda regarding the circulation of the Donegal Community Bulletin to 515 Community & Voluntary Groups.

GEA 45/10 COMMUNITY SMOKE ALARM SCHEME

Members discussed the report circulated with the agenda regarding the success of this initiative, and Cllr. Slowey welcomed the sanctioning of additional funding in 2009 by the DOE.

GEA 46/10 ALL ISLAND PRIDE OF PLACE

The Committee discussed the report circulated with the agenda and commended the success of Oileán Árann Mhóir as overall winner in the Islands Category and the success of Habinteg Housing Association, Lifford in achieving runner-up status in the 'Integration' themed Single Issue Category.

GEA 47/10 IMPLEMENTATION & DELIVERY OF THE DONEGAL PEACE III ACTION PLAN

The Committee were informed that (i) 44 no. grants have been awarded in the sum of €1,071,355 under the Small Grants Programme, (ii) Strategic grants to the value of €324,780 have been awarded to organisations delivering peace and reconciliation projects and (iii) 5 no. Orange Halls have been refurbished in the sum of €236,000.

GEA 48/10 DISABILITY ACCESS

The Committee welcomed the current and capital allocations of funding from the DOE in the sum of €434,480.

GEA 49/10 FAI FOOTBALL IN THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

