

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE DHUN NA NGALL

Oifig Riarthóir na
gCruinnithe
Áras na Chontae
Leifear

03 Nollaig 2004

FOGRA CRUINNITHE

Beidh Cruinniú Comhairle Chontae Dhún na nGall, a bhí ar athró ó 29 Samhain, ag dul ar aghaidh Dé Máirt, 14 Nollaig 2004, ag **1.00 ag Arás an Chontae, Leifear**

DO GACH BHALL DEN CHOMHAIRLE

A Chara

Iarrtar ort bheith i lathair ag an gcruinniu seo den Chomhairle. Ta Clar an Cruinnithe le seo.

Beidh Clar Orduithe an Bhainisteora Contae le feiceal ag an gcruinniu.

Mise, le meas

A. MacSuibhne

Riarthóir Cruinniu (RÚNAI CONTAE)

DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Office of
Meetings
Administrator
County House
Lifford

03rd December, 2004

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Meeting of Donegal County Council, adjourned from 29th November, 2004 will be held on Tuesday 14th December, at 1.00 pm in the County House, Lifford.

TO EACH MEMBER OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend this meeting of the Council. The Agenda is attached.

Yours sincerely

E. Sweeney

Meetings Administrator

AGENDA

(Please note original item numbers have been retained so as to correspond with reports already issued for November Meeting)

9. *Cathaoirleach's Business*

MOTIONS

- (C) County
- (L) Local
- (O) Other

Planning & Economic Development

14. Clr. L. Blaney
“That Donegal County Council discuss the need to employ a Solicitor to collect outstanding millions of Euro in Development Charges to provide much needed revenue for this years Budget rather than increasing Commercial Rates.” (C)

DONEGAL ELECTORAL AREA

Roads & Transportation

16. Clr. B. Byrne
“That this Council prioritise the need to improve and widen the Carrick to Meenaneary road in order to sustain the employment potential of the Meenaneary area?” (L)

Community, Culture & Enterprise

17. Clr. T. Pringle
“Bearing in mind that the National Childcare Strategy introduced five years ago remains, in the words of the Strategy

“uncoordinated, variable in quality and in short supply” we call on the Government to :

- Provide greater assistance to parents, especially those on lower incomes, with the cost of childcare
- Harmonise maternity leave on an all Ireland basis by increasing maternity leave to 26 weeks paid and 26 weeks unpaid and harmonise paternity leave on an all Ireland basis by introducing paid paternity entitlements of two weeks per child
- Increase revenue for the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme, including capital, staffing and operational funding and immediately expedite all outstanding applications which have been delayed due to the review of the programme
- Reinstate the Creche Supplement and the CTOS childcare supports the cutting of which have caused severe hardship to parents and children in disadvantaged communities
- Review the “Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities” to assess effectiveness of the guidelines and investigate the possibility of introducing legislation in line with Part V of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 to require developers to construct childcare facilities in housing developments and to transfer these to the ownership of the local authority upon completion.

STRANORLAR ELECTORAL AREA

Community, Culture & Enterprise

18. Clr. A. Bonner

“I propose that Donegal County Council adopts the 1890 Public Health Amendment Act. This would allow the awarding of music and singing licence under the Council’s jurisdiction which is a necessary prerequisite for venues such as the The Balor Theatre to obtain a theatre licence.” (L)

Roads & Transportation

19. Clr. Reid

“That the Manager appoint a Clerk Typist to the Ballybofey/Stranorlar Roads Office.” (L)

GLENTIES ELECTORAL AREA

Roads & Transportation

20. Clr. T. Slowey
“That this Council actively support the development of infrastructure that will enhance the development of Killybegs Port and its hinterland.” (L)
21. Clr. Padraig Doherty
“That Donegal County Council will erect proper signposts at the Waterfall Junction Ards, to ensure access and safety for the local people and visitors to the friary,” (L)
22. Clr. D. Alcorn
“That Donegal County Council ensure that all monies allocated from the various agencies be expended within the year it is allocated to enable us to have further funding available from these Departments the following year.” (C)
23. Clr. Pearse Doherty
“That this Council in recognising the importance that Carrickfinn Airport plays in relation to employment, tourism and access to the county, prioritises the surrounding roads network that lead to and from this airport and also conducts without delay a feasibility study of developing a bridge and link road across Gweedore Bay linking Gweedore directly with Carrickfinn Airport. This would be done in full consultation with the public.”

Corporate Services

24. Clr. O’Domhnaill
“That Donegal County Council ensure that our National Flag is flying at the County House and at each Public Services Centre in the county.” (C)

INISHOWEN ELECTORAL AREA

Roads & Transportation

25. Clr. M. McDonald

“That this Council give a full report on traffic management issues including one way system in the Square and the junction at Bonner’s Corner in Moville as promised for the November Meeting and as discussed at public meeting held in McNamara’s Hotel on 26th August, 2004.” (L)

Planning & Economic Development

26. Clr. D. McGonagle
“That the Council immediately implement the Casual Trading Regulations in Carndonagh.” (L)

Community, Culture & Enterprise

27. Clr. B. McGuinness
“That the Council discuss our role in Tourism.” (C)

Corporate Services

28. Clr. F. Conaghan
“That this Council outline in an Annual Report its Programme of Work and the Services that have been delivered for the 12 month period preferably in an Electoral Area basis.” (C)

Miscellaneous

29. Clr. P. MacLochlainn
“That this Council call on the Government to complement plans for a new A&E Department at Letterkenny General Hospital by providing capital funding for an extension to the hospital that would facilitate space for extra beds to ease the ongoing and well documented crisis in terms of in patient beds capacity.”

LETTERKENNY ELECTORAL AREA

Roads & Transportation

30. Clr. J. Harte
“That a safety barrier be erected on the Cooladerry/Miltown Road, Raphoe as a matter of urgency.” (L)

31. Clr. D. Larkin
“That this Council make a formal proposal to the NRA to put a right turning lane on the Main Letterkenny to Stranorlar Road at the junction into Cullion.” (L)
32. Clr. C. Brogan
“That we discuss the progress on the N56 from Mountain Top to Coolboy.” (L)

Water, Environment & Emergency Services

33. Clr. G. Crawford
“That this Council construct without delay the reservoir at Dooish to facilitate the immediate distribution of the long awaited water supply to Manorcunningham and surrounding areas.” (L)

Community, Culture & Enterprise

34. Clr. T. McDaid
“That this Council calls on the Government to substantially increase the level of funding available to Donegal Domestic Violence Service and to Inishowen Womens Outreach Service in recognition of the valuable contribution both organisations make in addressing the needs of victims of domestic violence in the county.” (O)

QUESTIONS

- (C) County
(L) Local
(O) Other

MILFORD ELECTORAL AREA

Water, Environment & Emergency Services

35. Clr. I. McGarvey
“Is there valid applications with this Council at present for Rareagh and Drumoghill/Labadish Group Water Scheme or is preparatory work ongoing and when may this be concluded?” (L)
36. Clr. I. McGarvey
“I would like information on where Ramelton is on the Priority List for Sewerage Treatment as with additional housing in town and district this is very urgently needed”? (L)

Roads & Transportation

37. Clr. L. Blaney
“When does Donegal County Council intend finalising safety measures at Foxhall Junction where the R250 meets with the R251?” (L)
38. Clr. L. Blaney
“What does Donegal County Council intend doing about the river at Ballymastoker Beach that is changing direction and causing havoc with sand dunes and needs to be rectified immediately?” (L)

DONEGAL ELECTORAL AREA

Roads & Transportation

39. Clr. B. O’Neill
“What works do Donegal County Council plan to undertake on “Connor’s Bridge” on the Main Road from Ballintra to Rossnowlagh and a possible start date?”(L)
40. Clr. B. O’Neill
“Can Donegal County Council carry out necessary road improvements to the Bundoran Pier so as to assist members of Bundoran RNLi Lifeboat in their station development – which is of crucial importance to the region?” (L)
41. Clr. T. Pringle
“What is Donegal County Council’s policy in relation to the installation of speed ramps on Council Housing Estates?” (C)

Water, Environment & Emergency Services

42. Clr. T. Pringle
“What progress has been made on the implementation of the Waiver Scheme, approved in Budget Estimates 2004, for Landfill Charges?” (C)
43. Clr. B. Byrne
“What is the present position on the proposed improvements to the Kilcar Sewerage Scheme?” (L)

Planning & Economic Development

44. Clr. B. Byrne
“What steps are this Council taking to ensure that Kilcar Village Renewal Phase I and Phase II will be finished on schedule and be completed to the highest standard possible?” (L)

STRANORLAR ELECTORAL AREA

Water, Environment & Emergency Services

45. Clr. Reid
“What has been the outcome of my proposal to meet with the Minister of Environment to acquire extra grant aid for isolated areas in Group Water Schemes?” (C)
46. Clr. A. Bonner
“What works have been carried out at the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Convoy and what is the time schedule for the remaining works?” (L)
47. Clr. A. Bonner
“What is the schedule timeframe to completion on the new Civic Amenity Site in Stranorlar and what works are left to be completed?” (L)

Housing

48. Clr. Reid
“What has been the individual cost of each of our Public Service Centres to date?” (C)

GLENTIES ELECTORAL AREA

Community, Culture & Enterprise (D.E.A.T.)

49. Clr. T. Slowey
“Will this Council put in place a comprehensive energy saving policy at its head office and decentralised offices?” (C)
50. Clr. T. Slowey
“What is the status of the provision of a library for the town of Falacarragh?” (L)
51. Clr. B. O’Domhnaill
“Can Donegal County Council give the necessary priority to the provision of a full time library service in Falcarragh and Gweedore?” (L)

Roads & Transportation

52. Clr. Padraig Doherty
“When will Donegal County Council complete the Public Lights Programme for Mullaghduff, Annagry?” (L)
53. Clr. Padraig Doherty
“When will Donegal County Council erect safety barriers on the Errigal Road?” (L)
54. Clr. B. O’Domhnaill
“Will Donegal County Council ensure that adequate financial allocations are made available over the next number of years to improve the Strategic Muckish Road into Falcarragh?” (L)

Housing

55. Clr. D. Alcorn
“Now that the County Council have purchased land for housing in the Lettermacaward area (opposite chapel) when is it proposed to have plans prepared for housing scheme?” (L)

Corporate Services

56. Clr. D. Alcorn
“How many of the Sub Committees of Donegal County Council for which members were appointed at A.G.M. of County Council, have had meetings to date?” (C)

Water, Environment & Emergency Services

576. Clr. Pearse Doherty
“Does this Council acknowledge that parts of the preliminary report of the Gweedore Sewerage Scheme in particular, Section 9: site selection 9.5: Site no. 4 is untrue and misleading. These items are:
- | | |
|-------|--|
| 61656 | Houses less than 200 meters |
| 61656 | Houses overlooking or on a level with the site |
| 61656 | Conifer planting around the site |

58. Clr. Pearse Doherty
“Can this Council explain when the decision to select the site for the Gweedore Sewerage Scheme Treatment Plant was decided and why planning permission obtained by Údaras Na Gaeltachta from Donegal County Council in 1999 for the development of factory units (ref no 99/2513 Manager’s Order 2000/P4364) contained a condition in the Schedule stated that Údaras Na Gaeltachta would not develop a certain piece of land the reason given:

“To ensure that the development does not prejudice the provision of the public mains sewerage system for the area.”

INISHOWEN ELECTORAL AREA

Housing

59. Clr. M. McDonald
“To ask this Council what efforts have been made to draw down extra funding from the Department of Environment for DPG’s and ERG’s prior to the end of the year?” (C)

Water, Environment & Emergency Services

60. Clr. M. McDonald
“To ask this Council further to Deputy Cecilia Keaveney’s question in 2001, what funding has been sought to address the long

term needs of Moville and what interim measures have been taken since the question was previously tabled?" (L)

61. Clr. D. McGonagle
"What is the up to date position regarding Malin Sewerage Scheme?" (L)
62. Clr. P. MacLochlainn
"What is the status of the sewerage scheme for Cleagh, Clonmany and can it be progressed in 2005?" (L)
63. Clr. P. MacLochlainn
"Is it possible to upgrade the water supply to Moville in the near future to allow multi unit residential developments to progress and how can a town of this size be brought to a standstill in terms of residential housing and not be prioritised." (L)
64. Clr. R. Donaghey
"When will work begin on Phase 3 of Desertegney Water Supply i.e. building of reservoir etc. in Aughaweel?" (L)
65. Clr. F. Conaghan
"What action is being taken to enforce the law regarding unauthorised dumping around the county?" (C)
66. Clr. F. Conaghan
"When will the Newtowncunningham Sewerage Scheme (extension & upgrading) be commissioned?" (L)

Roads & Transportation

67. Clr. D. McGonagle
"What plans has the Council to deal with the erosion problems at Lagg Strand, Malin?" (L)
68. Clr. B. McGuinness
"What was the outcome of the meeting with the Department of Environment Inspector regarding regional roads speed limits?" (C)

Planning & Economic Development

69. Clr. B. McGuinness

“How much money was collected in Development Charges in the Inishowen area and how much of this was returned to the area?”
(L)

LETTERKENNY ELECTORAL AREA

Road & Transportation

70. Clr. D. Larkin
“Have Road Design scheduled the preparation of alternative solutions for the junction at Murlog as given in the answer to myself in July?” (L)
71. Clr. D. Larkin
“What is the latest development with regard promised speed calming and associate works at Lurgybrack School?” (L)
72. Clr. G. Crawford
“Will the Council provide a Disabled Parking Space at the Pharmacy in Lifford?” (L)
73. Clr. C. Brogan
“When does the County Council think that the new Relief Road from Carnamuggagh to Lisnennan will be opened.” (L)

Water, Environment & Emergency Services

74. Clr. G. Crawford
“What is the delay in progressing the much needed Sewerage Scheme in St. Johnston?” (L)

Community, Culture & Enterprise

75. Clr. T. McDaid
“In light of the recent announcement by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment that he will be introducing changes to the FÁS Employment Schemes, will this Council urge the Minister to consider lowering the present age eligibility criteria from 25 years of age to 21 to allow those young people in the 21-25 age bracket to access Community Employment Schemes?” (C)

Planning & Economic Development

76. Clr. T. McDaid
“Is it the policy of the Planning Section of this Council to inspect building works that are subject to objections prior to the granting of permission for retention?” (C)

MOTIONS FROM OTHER COUNCILS

77. KERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
“That any objections to planning permission can only be made by a person or persons living or having an interest (like ownership of land, buildings or business) within a radius of 3 miles of the location of the site for which planning is applied for.”

“That the Council calls on Rialtas na hEireann to re-introduce the House Improvement Grant.”
78. NENAGH TOWN COUNCIL
In light of the fact that there are 45 undetected cancers in women over 50 in North Tipperary every year, this Council calls on the Minister for Health to ensure that breast check is given the funding necessary to immediately begin to roll out the screening program for the women of North Tipperary.”
79. FERMOY TOWN COUNCIL
“That we as a Local Authority call on Minister for the Environment to enact legislation where taxation on waste can be at the point of entry rather than the point of disposal to enable us as a society to realistically face up to our National and International obligations in the area of waste management.”
80. LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL
“That local elected representatives have the determining role in deciding road speed limits within their jurisdiction, subject to consultation with the Gardaí Síochana.”
81. CLONMEL BOROUGH COUNCIL
“That all elected local Government members be provided with equal status to each other, to include equivalent treatment and privilege in all and every assistance available to them from either Central or Local Government.”

82. KILARNEY TOWN COUNCIL

“That Kilarney Town Council call on the Minister for the Environment to use the same colouring and logo on disabled parking bays, in uniformity with other EU countries.”

83. KILARNEY TOWN COUNCIL

“That we Kilarney Town Council call on the appropriate authorities to make the banks responsible for the payment of the movement of monies throughout the country, in view of the vast profits they are making and remove all the burden of payments from the taxpayer”

“That we Kilarney Town Council ask the relevant Government Department to subsidise the increase in diesel and heating oil, until the price drops again. This increase is affecting the cost of living and putting a burden on people.”

84. OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL

“That Offaly County Council call on the Department of Foreign Affairs to increase substantially its Overseas Aid this year, and that a multi year agreement between the Department of Finance and Department of Foreign Affairs is reached, to ensure gradual aid increases for the coming three years, in order to fulfil the Government’s commitment the 8 Millennium Development Goals”

85. BUNDORAN TOWN COUNCIL

“That Donegal County Council call together Bundoran and Ballyshannon Town Councils and all parties involved i.e. Anglers, Inshore Fishermen, Farm Fish Operators and the Tourist Sector with a view to setting up a Coastal Zone Management Plan that could be adopted into the County Development Plan.”

MINUTES OF ADJOURNED MEETING OF DONEGAL
COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNTY HOUSE,
LIFFORD ON 14TH DECEMBER, 2004

C/

MEMBERS PRESENT

Clrs. P. McGowan, Cathaoirleach, Clr. D. Alcorn, L. Blaney, A. Bonner, E. Bonner, J. Boyle, C. Brogan, F. Conaghan, G. Crawford, Pdraig Doherty, Pearse Doherty, R. Donaghey, D. Larkin, M. McDonald, S. McEniff, I. McGarvey, D. McGonagle, B. McGuinness, P. MacLochlainn, B. O'Domhnaill, B. O'Neill, T. Pringle, J.J. Reid and T. Slowey.

C/

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Liam Kelly, Assistant County Manager/Director Housing, Mr. John McLaughlin, Director Roads & Transportation, Mr. Francie Coyle, Director Planning, Mr. J. Holohan, Director Water, Environment & Emergency Services, Mr. Sean Sheridan, Director Corporate Services, Mr. Eunan Sweeney, Meetings Administrator, Ms. AnnMarie Crawford, S.O. Corporate Services.

C/

CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

- The Cathaoirleach informed members that the official opening of Dreenan Bridge would take place in the New Year with the bridge itself being open for use on the 23rd December.
Clr. A. Bonner enquired as to whether or not there was an issue in relation to height on the Dreenan side.
- Members were reminded that the Budget Meeting would be held on the 07th January, 2005 at 10.00am, in the County House, Lifford.
- Members agreed to hold a Special Meeting on the 10th January, 2005 to consider the following:-
 - The County Manager's Report on the Review of the County Development Plan.

- To consider Manager's Report on the proposed material alterations to the Donegal Town Local Area Plan and to make the plan
- To fix a date for the holding of Consultation Meeting prescribed in the Vocational Education (Amendment) Act, 2001 and regulations made thereunder, in relation to the appointment of four persons (two male and two female) to County Donegal, Vocational Education Committee.

C/

COLLECTION OF OUTSTANDING DEVELOPMENT CHARGES

On the proposal of Clr. Blaney, seconded by Clr. Larkin, the following motion was adopted:-

“That Donegal County Council discuss the need to employ a solicitor to collect outstanding millions of euro in development charges to provide much needed revenue for this years Budget rather than increasing commercial rates”

Members were informed that in 2004, to date, in excess of €4.3million had been collected which represented an increase of €1.1million for the same period last year. This was a significant increase in view of the fact that the 2003 collection figures included a “once off” payment of €500,000.

In addition to this exercise the Council had adopted an inter-service approach to the collection of development charges. Before an application is granted a service connection, i.e. water connection, road-opening, etc. a check is carried out to ensure that the development charges had been paid or an agreement had been made to pay the charges. At present the Council issue monthly invoices in respect of developments which had submitted a commencement notice. In the future, the Council will also be monitoring developments which had been granted permission but which no commencement notice had been submitted to date. This would ensure that all developments commenced were invoiced for the charges due.

The development charges unit had further been strengthened in the recent past with the appointment of a number of staff to target the collection of development charges in each Electoral Area. The Council were satisfied with progress

made this year. Any cases which merited legal proceedings would be dealt with by the Council's own Solicitors. As the Council had previously been advised development charges could only be used to fund capital works and cannot be used to fund revenue expenditure. Accordingly, the collection of development charges would not have an impact on any rates increase.

Members acknowledged that there had been a vast improvement in the collection of development charges, but agreed that there was a need to review the development contribution scheme again.

It was essential they advised that a level playing field be provided and enquired as to the amount of monies currently outstanding in development charges.

Mr. Francie Coyle, Director of Planning & Economic Development said that €4.3m had been collected in 2004. There was no need, he advised to employ a solicitor as a dedicated team was now in place to collect such monies. Many developers were now paying by instalment, he added, and it was hoped that this would continue in 2005. A report on the issue was being prepared, he confirmed for the Budget Meeting on the 07th January, 2005. During the coming year, Mr. Coyle advised that a cross-service approach would be taken.

A number of queries were raised namely:-

What impact a cross service approach would have on rates.
Whether or not planning permission was still being granted to developers with outstanding development charges
Whether or not development charges were spent in the area collected

Mr. Francie Coyle, Director of Planning & Economic Development advised that it was not possible to prevent a developer applying for planning permission and that under the Development Contribution Scheme monies had to be spent on the county as a whole.

Clr. Blaney requested that a report be brought to the Electoral Area Meetings detailing the amount of outstanding charges and a record of those collected to date.

C/

WIDENING OF CARRICK TO MEENANEARY ROAD

Clr. Boyle proposed, seconded by Clr. Alcorn, on behalf of Clr. Byrne that the following motion be adopted:-

“That this Council prioritise the need to improve and widen the Carrick to Meenaneary Road in order to sustain the employment potential of the Mennaneary area.”

Members were informed that the Council had been pressing the Department of Gaeltacht for funding for this local road for the past few years. However, the Department would like to see the works on the nearby R263 Regional Road from Carrick to Kilcar substantially completed firstly.

C/

NATIONAL CHILDCARE STRATEGY

On the proposal of Clr. Pringle, seconded by Clr. Larkin, the following motion was adopted:-

““Bearing in mind that the National Childcare Strategy introduced five years ago remains, in the words of the Strategy “uncoordinated, variable in quality and in short supply” we call on the Government to :

- Provide greater assistance to parents, especially those on lower incomes, with the cost of childcare
- Harmonise maternity leave on an all Ireland basis by increasing maternity leave to 26 weeks paid and 26 weeks unpaid and harmonise paternity leave on an all Ireland basis by introducing paid paternity entitlements of two weeks per child
- Increase revenue for the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme, including capital, staffing and operational funding and immediately expedite all outstanding applications which have been delayed due to the review of the programme
- Reinstate the Creche Supplement and the CTOS childcare supports the cutting of which have caused severe hardship to parents and children in disadvantaged communities
Review the “Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities” to assess effectiveness of the guidelines and investigate the possibility of introducing legislation in line

with Part V of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 to require developers to construct childcare facilities in housing developments and to transfer these to the ownership of the local authority upon completion.

Members were informed that Donegal County Development Board had been given responsibility for co-ordination of the National Children's Strategy (NCS) at county level.

The Donegal Childcare Committee was a working group of the Donegal CDB and dealt directly with a range of childcare related issues throughout the county.

The Community & Enterprise Division had undertaken work over the past year with regard to the provision of playgrounds in the county, which the local authority had been designated to do in the context of the NCS.

Arising from this motion, the Community & Enterprise Unit could raise the issues highlighted with the relevant bodies at county, regional and at national levels, and would revert at a later stage with replies received in relation to these issues.

Clr. Pringle advised that the current National Childcare Strategy was uncoordinated and in need of serious review. A number of members were in agreement with this suggestion and calls were made for greater consideration of the following issues:-

- The need for greater assistance with childcare costs for those parents in the low income bracket.
- The provision of up to date creche facilities particularly at local level
- The pursuit of a proper support system for those parents

Clr. Pringle requested that a copy of the motion be forwarded to the Minister for Children & Minister for Justice.

C/

TO ADOPT 1890 PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT ACT
TO ALLOW THE AWARDED OF MUSIC AND
SINGING LICENCE

The following motion was submitted by Clr. A. Bonner.

“I propose that Donegal County Council adopts the 1890 Public Health Amendment Act. This would allow the awarding of music and singing licences under the Council’s jurisdiction which is a necessary prerequisite for venues such as The Balor Theatre to obtain a Theatre Licence.”

Members were informed that the dual mandate, whereby Oireachtas members could also be members of a local authority, was abolished with effect from June, 2004. In this context, the Minister had made Regulations to provide for effective continuing relationships between local Oireachtas members and the local authority. The Regulations provided, inter alia, that the County Manager and the Cathaoirleach should arrange to meet collectively at least once a year with the Oireachtas members to facilitate good communications and to review developments.

The first such meeting took place recently and was attended by Ministers Mary Coughlan and Pat the Cope Gallagher. The Council was represented by the Cathaoirleach, County Manager together with Directors of Service. Comprehensive briefings were presented to both Ministers on all key aspects of the Council’s work programme and priority issues. Because the timing and location of the meeting was not suitable for the other Oireachtas members, it was expected that the second meeting would be arranged in the near future.

C/

APPOINTMENT OF A CLERK TYPIST TO THE BALLYBOFEY/SRANORLAR ROADS OFFICE.

On the proposal of Clr. Reid, seconded by Clr. McGowan, the following motion was adopted:-

“That the Manager appoint a Clerk Typist to the Ballybofey/Stranorlar Roads Office.”

Members were informed that this issue was being examined by the Council’s Corporate Services and Road Section. It was hoped that a solution could be found shortly.

Clr. Reid stated that a Public Service Office meant that an adequate and efficient service should be provided to the general public.

Mr. John McLaughlin, Director of Roads & Transportation, advised that he was aware of the situation but that a permanent staff complement did exist in the Stranorlar Office and that there were no plans employ extra staff at present.

Mr. Sean Sheridan, Director of Corporate Services affirmed that every public representative was entitled to a prompt response to his representations. He agreed to talk to Clr. Reid's office in relation to the situation and reminded those present that the Customer Action Plan would serve to address many of the issues outlined.

Clr. Reid stated that he was not encouraged by the reply and said that the problem must be solved by Council Officials. The Cathaoirleach requested that the matter be discussed at the next Corporate Policy Group Meeting.

C/ DEVELOPMENT OF KILLYBEGS PORT

The following motion was submitted by Clr. Slowey:-

“That this Council actively support the development of infrastructure that will enhance the development of Killybegs Port and its hinterland.”

Members were informed that Killybegs Port had a major investment made in it in the past few years and the potential capacity of the facility was enormous.

In relation to roads infrastructure, Donegal County Council was actively seeking funding which would benefit the Killybegs Area. It was hoped to secure funding of approximately €1 million in 2005 for improvements on the N56 between Donegal Town and Killybegs. An application has also been made to the DOE through the EU Co-Financed Scheme to begin construction on the Killybegs Industry Park Road in 2005.

In addition, plans were well developed for upgrading/realigning sections of the N56 Malin Road from Mountcharles to the Five Points area near Killybegs.

C/ ERECTION OF PROPER SIGNPOSTS AT THE WATERFALL JUNCTION, ARDS.

On the proposal of Clr. Pdraig Doherty, seconded by Clr. O'Domhnaill, the following motion was adopted:-

“That Donegal County Council will erect proper signposts at the Waterfall Junction, Ards, to ensure access and safety for the local people and visitors to the Friary.”

Members were informed that an appropriate suite of signage had been ordered for this location and were scheduled to be erected during December.

Clr. Pádraig Doherty highlighted the fact that this well known junction was very busy, particularly in the summer. It was essential, he stated, that a one two way system remain and that the junction was properly signposted. The needs of the local community must be respected, he added.

Mr. John McLaughlin, Director Roads & Transportation stated that he would let the members know when the signage was erected.

C/

TO ENSURE ALL MONIES ALLOCATED FROM THE VARIOUS AGENCIES BE EXPENDED WITHIN THE YEAR IT IS ALLOCATED.

On the proposal of Clr. Alcorn, seconded by Clr. Pádraig Doherty, the following motion was adopted:-

“That Donegal County Council ensure that all monies allocated from the various agencies be expended within the year it is allocated, to enable us to have further funding available from these Departments the following year.”

Members were informed that in relation to roads, this happened for the vast majority of grants. The Council would continue to make every effort to have grants allocated spent in that financial year. This would involve as much forward planning as possible to ensure items such as Land Acquisition, Planning, Utility Services etc. were dealt with to allow construction to proceed.

Quite often the single year cycle of funding was restrictive in that road grants were typically announced at the end of January with the expectation that designs, planning, land purchase, procurement and construction would be completed before the end of November. The NRA had moved towards a multi annual plan method of funding and this afforded better advance planning.

In addition, some agencies announced funding late in the year and required the Council to provide matching monies. This could be difficult in that the Council would already have prioritised the years spending and it may not be possible to counter-fund in that same year.

Clr. Alcorn commented that failure to spend funding in 2004 had debarred funding for various island projects. He called for all sections to investigate the possibility of implementing work programmes early in the New Year.

Members also requested that matching funding be made available from marine projects.

One area of concern was deemed to be that of Group Water Schemes.

Clr. Larkin asked that the County Secretary write to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and local Government, requesting whether or not new legislation was available on the sealing of Group Water Scheme fees.

Clr. E. Bonner stated that the Glenties Electoral Area was unable to carry capital works on the islands out of its own budget.

Individual programme groups, he added, needed to be more efficient in billing Government Departments. Clr. E. Bonner also affirmed that it was essential all members were informed when monies were being returned to the various Government Departments.

Clr. Slowey called for more efficient forward planning in the draw down of Government grants. He called on the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to publish a list of payments allocated to all local authorities and a subsequent report on the utilisation of such monies.

Mr. John McLaughlin, Director of Roads & Transportation confirmed that there was a need to prioritise the monies available and then it would become a matter for the members to decide how it should be allocated.

Clr. Alcorn in thanking members for their support, asked the individual Directors of Service to take the members comments on board.

C/

CARRICKFIN AIRPORT

On the proposal of Clr. Pearse Doherty, seconded by Clr. Alcorn, the following motion was adopted:-

“That this Council in recognising the importance that Carrickfinn Airport plays in relation to employment, tourism and access to the county, prioritises the surrounding roads network that lead to and from this airport and also conducts without delay a feasibility study of developing a bridge and link road across Gweedore Bay linking Gweedore directly with Carrickfinn Airport. This would be done in full consultation with the public.”

Members were informed that the Council would do an evaluation of this proposal. It was anticipated that a few options would be examined at a conceptual level to consider the broad parameters of the scheme and determine the feasibility of the new link. This would be followed by a presentation to the Glenties Electoral Area Committee. At that stage, it could be decided to proceed to public consultation to gather input from the general public. Due to the current workloads in our Road Design Office, it was anticipated that it would be well into next year before this study would be completed, however, if an opportunity arose to fit it in before that, this would be done.

Clr. Pearse Doherty stated that this proposal would benefit the whole county and enable locals to get to the Airport in four to five minutes not twenty to twenty five as was the case at present. He noted that at present there was only one sign promoting the airport and that this was in Dunlewy. He called for the initiation of a feasibility study, examining traffic levels on the road to the Airport.

Clr. Alcorn paid tribute to the committed staff at Carrickfinn. Clr. E. Bonner advised that real support was needed in relation to the acquisition of P.S.O. Licences and called on Donegal County Council to exert the appropriate pressure on the Department of Transport.

Mr. John McLaughlin, Director of Roads & Transportation agreed to examine the possibility of providing extra signage to the Airport.

C/

FLYING OF NATIONAL FLAG

On the proposal of Clr. O’Domhnaill, seconded by Clr. MacLochlainn, the following motion was adopted:-

“That Donegal County Council ensure that our National Flag is flying at the County House and at each Public Service Centre in the county”

Members were informed that Facilities Maintenance Section was currently seeking prices for the provision of flag poles at County House and all new Public Service Centres. This would accommodate the flying of the National Flag outside on special and nominated occasions subject to normal protocol.

Clr. O’Domhnaill proposed, seconded by Clr. MacLochlainn that Donegal County Council call on the Minister for Education, Ms. Mary Hanifin to introduce a civics module into the Junior Certificate Course thus, teaching young people values and an appreciation for their civic heritage. A number of members supported the motion and advised that a sufficient number of flags should be available for use by the Council, with the county flag also being flown.

Clr. Larkin proposed, seconded by Clr. Blaney, that proper etiquette and protocol be observed when flying the flag.

Clr. Pringle requested that a copy of the 1916 proclamation be mounted on the walls of the Council Meeting Rooms in all the Public Service Centres.

Clr. Conaghan enquired as to the whereabouts of the Donegal flag which had previously been situated in the Council Chamber.

Clr. O’Domhnaill thanked members for their support and called for Council officials to ensure that the National Flag was flown with pride and respect in each of the Public Service Centres.

C/

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ISSUES

On the proposal of McDonald, seconded by Clr. McGuinness, the following motion was adopted:-

“That this Council give a full report on traffic management issues including one way system in the Square and the junction at Bonner’s Corner in Moville as promised for the

November Meeting and as discussed at public meeting held in McNamara's Hotel on 26th August, 2004."

Members were informed that the Road Design Department had carried out a Traffic Assessment at the Junction. Details of the assessment were included with the Planning Part 8 Report on today's agenda for the Council Meeting.

The traffic study factorised an increase in the level of traffic to allow for summer months and also to allow for several years traffic growth. The data from the survey was inputted into a traffic model that evaluated the level of traffic using a junction to ensure that there were sufficient gaps in traffic to allow vehicles to make turning manoeuvres without experiencing long delays and excessive queues, for long periods of time.

Inspections on site showed that the current layout operated efficiently most of the time. Short queues did occasionally develop but these cleared in a short period of time.

Conclusions

The results showed that as traffic levels increased vehicles entering Merville from the Carndonagh arm of the junction could experience significant delays, whilst the rest of the junction operated satisfactorily.

Delays occurred because vehicles waiting to turn right from the Carndonagh arm may have to wait for a gap to occur in both directions of traffic. This blocks vehicles waiting to turn left to Greencastle which might otherwise be able to complete the left turn manoeuvre.

The construction of a designated left turn lane at the junction should help reduce delays and queues. This revised layout at the junction would be incorporated in the contract for this EIS project. The length available for the left turn lane was restricted due to the proximity of the nearby buildings.

A further examination of the one-way system would be carried out by the Road Design Department in the near future.

Members of the Inishowen Electoral Area were in agreement that traffic jams were currently causing chaos in Merville and called for the implementation of a traffic management system. Clr. Donaghey advised that the matter should be discussed at the next round of Electoral Area Meetings.

C/

CASUAL TRADING REGULATIONS IN
CARNDONAGH

On the proposal of Clr. McGonagle, seconded by Clr. McGuinness, the following motion was adopted:-

“That this Council immediately implement the Casual Trading Regulations in Carndonagh.”

Members were informed that the provisions of the Casual Trading byelaws were begin implemented in a systematic manner which had involved the serving of notices to all Casual Traders in Carndonagh outlining that it was an offence for trading to take place outside the designated Casual Trading area. Inspections had been undertaken periodically and upon the most recent inspection on the 23rd November, 2004 no traders had been present. The position shall be continuously monitored.

Clr. McGonagle noted that traders had not yet moved into the designated trading areas. It was time, he added, to start seriously implementing the regulations. Calls were made for more stringent regulations particularly in relation to parking. Mr. Francie Coyle, Director Planning & Economic Development, confirmed in reply to a number of queries that a progress report in relation to all Casual Trading locations would be presented to members as part of the Budget Report.

He informed Clr. McGonagle that it was perfectly legal for the Gardai to move traders from undesignated areas. Mr. Coyle also asked members to note that a number of Casual Trading Licences had not yet expired but when this did occur they would have to trade within the designated areas. There were, he added, also a number of exemptions to be taken into consideration:-

A clear need to provide ample signposting for visitors to the county

Room for more interaction with Bord Failte, particularly in relation to the provision of grant aid, and,

More consideration required by the various tourism agencies

Examine the whole area of Angling Tourism whilst ensuring that the interests of anglers in the county were taken on board

Room for the development of niche market products

A need for a Special Meeting or workshop to bring the various tourism agencies together and focus on the tourism development of the county as a whole.

The County Manager suggested that this was an issue which could be dealt with in the context of the back to basics budget 2005.

The Budget Strategy, he advised would have three aspects:-

1. Marketing
2. Tourism Product and
3. Physical Infrastructure,

with a clear emphasis being placed on reducing the amount of money invested in direct marketing.

C/

DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCILS ROLE IN TOURISM

On the proposal of Clr. McGuinness, seconded by Clr. Conaghan, the following motion was adopted:-

“That the Council discuss our role in Tourism”

Members were informed that tourism had been recognised as a key natural resource for County Donegal. This had been recognised in documents such as the Donegal Employment Task Force Report, in An Stratéis – The Donegal County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development and in the County Development Plan. The Council had responded to deal with perceived gaps and areas of opportunity wherever possible with a view towards maximising this resource.

Donegal County Council had been active in promoting tourism for the past number of years-initially in terms of marketing, later in terms of product development. The Council had been actively involved in Donegal Tourism Ltd., and over the past number of years has made an annual contribution to this company (€12,000 in 2004) to assist in

the marketing of the county as a tourism destination. In 2004 €100,000 was provided for the marketing of Derry City Airport. The Council also made an annual allocation to North West Regional Tourism (€35,000 in 2004).

An amount of €41,000 was allocated towards tourism technical assistance in 2004 and facilitated a number of research and development projects associated with the tourism sector.

A Tourism Development Co-ordinator and a marketing officer were appointed in 2000 to progress work with regard to product development and support of the Tourism Sectoral Forum. Other C& E staff eg. CEDO's also supported this sector on an area basis.

The Council had, in partnership with Limavady Borough Council, initiated and provided financial support for the Foyle Ferry. It had also supported the pilot Swilly Ferry Project. A Cross-Border Tourism marketing initiative (with €350,000 of Interreg Funding) had been initiated to promote the region from the Causeway Coast to the Offshore Islands.

The County Council led Taskforce had just approved Peace funding of €600,000 towards tourism marketing in the county.

Donegal County Council had also been active in the whole area of Marine and Water Based Leisure addressing areas such as Marina Development, Angling, Coastal Walks, Beach Management, Coastal Zone Management and an Erne Canal Study.

The Council had been active in supporting tourism-related arts and culture initiatives through its Cultural Services Division e.g. Eargail Arts Festival, Donegal Bay and Bluestacks Festival and Festival of the Peninsulas. It also assisted events such as the Magill Summer School, which was a flagship event for the county.

The Council had been active in attracting major outside events to the county e.g. Oireactas na Gaelige, Fleadh Ceoil na hEireann and the Pan Celtic Festival. These events brought direct and indirect benefits to the county.

A major research project into some of the county's main tourism attractions was being undertaken by the C&E Research and Policy Unit.

The Council was actively involved in walks development and maintenance e.g. Bealach na Gaeltachta. It also supported projects such as Fort Dunree and Ramelton Ancestry Centre.

The Council would work even more closely with Donegal Tourism Ltd. and with North West Tourism and other organisations with a specific tourism remit, in a County Development Board context. This work would be carried out with a view towards ensuring a coordinated and integrated approach with the Council only being involved in areas where it could add value and not duplicate existing provision.

It was intended to address the County Council's broad role with regard to tourism (in common with other sectors) in the new Corporate, Community and Culture SPC, which would deal with CDB and Community and Enterprise related matters. A discussion document would be prepared for the SPC with a view towards agreeing a sustainable Council Policy with regard to this sector for the future.

Clr. McGuinness advised that too much emphasis had been placed on tourism marketing. The time was ripe, he added to concentrate on product development and the provision of the appropriate infrastructure.

A lengthy debate ensued with members agreeing that there was:

- A need to prioritise the Council's role in tourism
- Establish exactly who was responsible for the maintenance and promotion of a number of tourist sites in the county
- Operate a back to basics approach and examine just how the matter can be progressed through the various Council programmes
- A need for Donegal County Council to get involved in the development of the tourism product.

C/

ANNUAL REPORT IN RELATION TO WORK PROGRAMMES DELIVERED OVER 12 MONTHS.

On the proposal of Clr. Conaghan, seconded by Clr. Crawford, the following motion was adopted:-

“That this Council outline in an annual report its programme of work and the services that have been delivered for the 12 month period preferably on an Electoral Area basis.”