

**MINUTES OF THE INISHOWEN ELECTORAL AREA
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11th MAY 2009 IN THE
CARNDONAGH PUBLIC SERVICES CENTRE**

Councillors Present:

Councillor Francis Conaghan

Councillor Rena Donaghey

Councillor Marian McDonald

Councillor Denis McGonagle

Councillor Bernard McGuinness

Councillor Dermot McLaughlin, Mayor Buncrana Town Council

Officials Present:

Community, Cultural & Enterprise Services:

Aideen Doherty, Administrative Officer

Corporate Services:

Eunan Kelly, Area Manager

Una Cresswell, Staff Officer

Housing & Building Services

Patsy Lafferty, Area Manager

Planning & Economic Development Services:

Paul Kelly, A/ Area Manager

Roads & Transportation Services:

Stephen Flynn, Senior Executive Engineer/ Area Manager

Water, Environment & Emergency Services:

Con McLaughlin, Senior Executive Engineer/Area Manager

Apologies

Seamus Canning Town Clerk, Buncrana

Marie Deeney, A/Senior Staff Officer

Councillor Pdraig MacLochlainn

Laura O'Connell from the Youth Council was present for part of the meeting

09/16 YOUTH COUNCIL

Cllr Bernard McGuinness on behalf of the Committee welcomed Laura O'Connell from the Youth Council to the meeting

Laura summarised the role of the Youth Council to the Members. She advised the Members that the Youth Council's aim is to improve facilities for young people in the Inishowen area particularly in the Carndonagh and Buncrana areas. Its two main projects at the moment were alcohol awareness and mental health issues. She outlined details of the Concerned about Suicide Initiative in Buncrana and added that there was a meeting taking place that evening in this regard.

Laura said the Youth Council were concerned with looking at ways of improving facilities for young people and giving young people a voice. Drop in Centres and the provision of sports facilities were an excellent way of giving young people positive things to do in their free time. Laura concluded by saying that she wished all the Councillors well in the forthcoming elections and looked forward to working with the newly elected Council in June.

Cllr Bernard McGuinness congratulated Laura on her presentation, as did all the other Members at the meeting. Cllr Francis Conaghan stated that all the items she had mentioned were very important and stated that the new pitches in Carndonagh and Newtowncunningham were examples of social infrastructure that could deflect young people away from anti social activities.

It was agreed by the Members that the Youth Councillors would be invited to meet the new Inishowen Electoral Area Committee after the elections.

17.1 Consideration of Minutes of Meeting held on 26th March 2009,

On the proposal of Cllr Francis Conaghan, seconded by Cllr Rena Donaghey, the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2009, were agreed.

17.2 Report on Community, Culture & Enterprise Services

A Progress Report was circulated along with the Agenda.

17.3 Mini Pitches at Newtowncunningham and Carndonagh

Aideen Doherty, Administrative Officer, expressed her appreciation to the Members for their support leading up to the official opening of the mini pitches in Carndonagh and Newtowncunningham.

17.4 Barrack Hill Playground

Aideen Doherty advised the Members that the playground was advertised for tender and that she would keep the Members updated.

17.5 Clós Padraig Playground

Aideen Doherty informed the Committee that discussions were ongoing between the Housing Service and the local residents association with regard to a design and location for a playground at Clós Padraig and that it was hoped to be in a position to go to tender soon..

17.6 Donegal County Childcare Committee

Aideen Doherty informed the Members that Donegal County Childcare Committee have organised an all day conference called "The Colour of my Dreams "to take place on 28th May 2008 at An Grianan Hotel, Burt. She added that one of the lecturers on the day was Professor Diane Levin and recommended that some of the Councillors attend.

17.7- Outreach Centre for Newtowncunningham

Cllr Francis Conaghan requested that the provision of an Outreach Centre in Newtowncunningham be kept on the Agenda. He suggested that an information desk be available one day a week to begin with on a pilot basis. He added that due to the changes in the electoral area boundaries an outreach centre was even more important. It was agreed that Aideen Doherty would explore options in conjunction with the Community Group in this regard.

17.8 Foyle & Swilly Ferries

Cllr Bernard McGuinness expressed his concerns over the tendering process of the ferries particularly Magilligan Ferry. He stated that there were issues that he would like to be clarified such as the issue of security being included in the Tender Documents. He stated that there was a meeting scheduled for the following day at three o'clock and that it was important that a Councillor from the Cross Border Group attend the meeting. Aideen Doherty advised the Members that the two councils, Donegal County Council and Limavady Borough Council, now managed the ferry. Previously a private company managed the Magilligan Ferry. She further advised that the tenders for the ferries had to be submitted by 12.00pm the following day.

17.9 Public Toilets at Playgrounds

The Members expressed their concerns over the lack of public toilets at playgrounds. Aideen Doherty agreed to explore options for the provision of public toilets at playgrounds in conjunction with other services.

Cllr Denis McGonagle joined the meeting at this stage.

09/18 PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

18.1 Consideration of Minutes of Meeting held on 26th March 2009,
On the proposal of Cllr Francis Conaghan, seconded by Cllr Rena Donaghey, the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2009, were agreed.

18.2 Update Report

Members noted the update report as circulated with the Agenda in relation to matters arising from the Inishowen Electoral Area Committee held on 26th March 2009.

18.2.1 Cassey Road/Rockytown

Paul Kelly, Acting Area Manager in his report updated the Members on the status lands at Cassey Road/Rockytown and clarified who was involved in the project at the moment.

18.2.2 Refusals of Planning Applications.

Paul Kelly, Acting Area Manager provided a report on statistics of recent planning refusals for the Members to consider. This followed on from a discussion at the previous meeting regarding planning refusals. Members had expressed their concerns over some recent refusals. Cllr Bernard McGuinness stated that if matters were pertinent when making a planning decision, the same matters should be pertinent at a pre-planning meeting.

18.3 Unfinished Works at Multiple Developments

Some discussion took place by the Members about the problems of works not being completed in some housing estates such as public lighting and Sewerage Treatment Works. Paul Kelly advised the Members that planning conditions, as set out in the planning approval would illustrate how multiple developments should be finished. The developer or management company are responsible for ensuring these conditions are met. He further added that should it become apparent to the Planning Authority that the terms of the planning conditions are not being met an investigative process would take place. The issues would be discussed with the developer/management company and if this did not solve the problems enforcement may be necessary. Paul Kelly stated that if any Member had any query in relation to unfinished estates that they should contact him to discuss it.

18.4 Cornfield Housing Estate, Newtowncunningham

Cllr Francis Conaghan highlighted the problems associated with the flooding in the Cornfield Estate, Newtowncunningham. He stated that two properties at the bottom of the site had been flooded. It was agreed that the Planning Service would look into the case and check that all the planning conditions had been adhered to

09/19 WATER, ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

19.1 Consideration of Minutes of Meeting held on 26th March 2009,

On the proposal of Cllr Francis Conaghan, seconded by Cllr Rena Donaghey, the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2009, were agreed.

19.2 Follow Ups from Previous Meeting

Con McLaughlin, Senior Executive Engineer/Area Manager, circulated an Update Report dated 11th May 2009 (Appendix 1) on issues raised at the previous meeting

19.3 Tooban Sewerage Scheme

Con McLaughlin advised the Members that Part 8 for the Waste Treatment Plant for Tooban is currently at the public consultation phase. He advised the Members that the latest date for submissions/observations from the public and statutory bodies was Friday 15th May 2009 at 12.30 p.m.

Cllr Francis Conaghan stated that the Part 8 was causing a lot of tension in the area. Cllr Conaghan proposed that Part 8 be deferred until all viable alternatives and possibilities for Burnfoot/Bridgend/Tooban were examined. Cllr Bernard McGuinness seconded this proposal.

19.4 Provision of Toilets at Beaches

Cllr Marian McDonald expressed her dissatisfaction with the lack of toilet facilities in Moville. She stated that when bus load of visitors arrive in Moville, that the public toilets are often not open. A lengthy discussion ensued where there was a consensus by the Members that the provision of toilets in beach areas should be progressed.

Con McLaughlin, Senior Executive Engineer stated that there had been problems with vandalism in the Moville area, which resulted in restricted opening hours for the toilets. He stated that he would look at the possibility of opening the Moville Public Toilets for longer periods.

19.5 Provision of Facilities at Piers

Some discussion took place on the lack of toilet facilities and water supply at Bunagee Pier, Leenan Pier and other locations. Cllr Bernard McGuinness stated that these areas were promoted for activities such as sea angling yet there were no facilities available.

Con McLaughlin said that he would look at options for the provision of temporary toilets and a water supply in these areas.

Cllr Dermot McLaughlin joined the meeting at this stage.

19.6 Carndonagh Civic Amenity Site

A discussion took place concerning the charges at the Civic Amenity Site in Carndonagh. Cllr Denis McGonagle stated that he was concerned about the high cost of depositing furniture and other items at the site. Cllr Bernard McGuinness stated that generally the public were pleased with the Civic Amenity Site but he believed the charges for some items would deter the public from disposing of their items in an environmentally way and lead to illegal dumping. This in turn causes a hazard to wildlife and the environment, he stated. The Committee recommended that charges for larger items being deposited at the C.A.S. be examined.

Con McLaughlin advised the Committee that the reporting of illegal dumping should be encouraged and reminded the Members that covert surveillance cameras are being used in the area as one measure to address the problem of illegal dumping.

19.7 Litter Warden

Cllr Dermot McLaughlin expressed his concerns about the ongoing problems associated with litter and illegal dumping and queried if there still a Litter Warden in the area and the number of prosecutions to date. In response Con McLaughlin confirmed that the Litter Warden was still active in the area and agreed to get information on fines issued year to date. (That information was later passed to the Councillor and acknowledged to the meeting).

19.8 Non- Domestic Water Charges.

A lengthy discussion took place on Non Domestic Water Charges. The Members agreed that there was obviously a huge volume of work in installing metres and setting up new customers. However, the Members expressed their concerns over some customers who were residential only having metres installed and receiving invoices for non-domestic water. Con McLaughlin advised the Members that if a connection is clearly identified as non domestic its status will be amended accordingly. Eunan Kelly, Area Manager, Corporate Services advised that Laing O' Rourke had been out on the ground speaking to customers about their non-domestic water supply when installing the metres. He further advised the Members, that in four months, Corporate Services had received a thousand queries and that these queries have to be referred and dealt with, which is taking a considerable amount of time.

Con McLaughlin reiterated that if the water supply is for non-domestic use, the Council will be pursuing payment from all these customers. Eunan Kelly, Corporate Services Area Manager, advised the Standing Charge was an issue for a lot of customers but had been reduced from €350 to €290 this year along with a reduction in the water charge. The Members were further advised that shops using wash hand basins and toilets were classified as non-domestic users of water and therefore were eligible to pay water charges.

20.1 Consideration of Minutes of Meeting held on 26th March 2009,

On the proposal of Cllr Francis Conaghan, seconded by Cllr Rena Donaghey, the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2009, were agreed.

20.2 Updates and Various Issues

Patsy Lafferty, Area Manager, updated Members in relation to various issues previously raised and drew the Members attention to Loans, Grants and the Casual Vacancy Reports.

20.3 Affordable Housing in Carndonagh

Patsy Lafferty, Area Manager, advised the Committee that it is expected that five units under the Affordable Housing Scheme in Buncrana will be available subject to some contractual issues being dealt with.

20.4 Social Leasing Initiative

Cllr Marian McDonald queried the level of interest in the Social Leasing Initiative Scheme. Patsy Lafferty stated that a substantial volume of submissions were submitted to the Construction Department in Lifford and were being considered

20.5 Social Housing - Purchase of Houses in Rural Areas

Cllr Bernard McGuinness queried the number of social housing units made available in rural areas since 2006. Patsy Lafferty advised the Committee that, land had been purchased in Carrowmena and Gleneely areas.

20.6 Housing Loan Legislation

Patsy Lafferty advised the members that the criteria for eligibility for Housing Loans are being revised. He summarised that some of the changes include the income threshold being increased to €50,000 and a new credit policy being introduced. Additional information will be required from the applicants for Housing Loans, which he will outline line to the Members at a later date, he added.

20.7 Housing Grants for Older People

Cllr Bernard McGuinness queried a case of a Housing Grant for Older People not being allowed. Cllr McGuinness wanted clarification on why an applicant who had applied for replacement windows had their application turned down. Patsy Lafferty stated that the grant was for repairs to existing windows. He explained that repairs are always considered as an option as opposed to the provision of new windows. If the windows had however deteriorated to such an extent that replacement was the only option, a grant may have been approved. The existence of soft wood/single glazed windows in its own right does not automatically qualify for grant assistance, he explained.

Patsy Lafferty further advised the Members that there is an appeals mechanism if the applicant is dissatisfied with any decision made on their grant application.

20.8 Public Lighting at Trá Breaga Estate

Following on from a request from Cllr Bernard McGuinness, Patsy Lafferty agreed to look into any action that needs to be taken regarding the lack of public lighting at Trá Breaga Estate. He stated that he was unsure as to whether the delay was due to the contractor or due to the ESB, but that he would follow up on same.

20.9 Flooding at Lower Ard Colgan off the Tiernaleague Road Buncrana

Cllr Denis McGonigle expressed his concerns over the recent flooding at Lower Ard Colgan off the Tiernaleague Road and stated that it appears that the pipes in the area are blocked. Patsy Lafferty agreed have the matter investigated.

09/21 ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

21.1 Consideration of Minutes of Meeting held on 26th March 2009,

On the proposal of Cllr Francis Conaghan, seconded by Cllr Rena Donaghey, the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2009, were agreed.

21.2 Consideration of Report of Workshop held on 5th May 09

Stephen Flynn, Senior Executive Engineer circulated the Report of the Roads Workshop held on 5th May 2009. On the proposal of Cllr Francis Conaghan, seconded by Cllr Marian McDonald, the Report of the Roads Workshop held on 5th May 2009 was agreed.

21.3 Update Report /Roadworks Programme 2008

An Update Report on issues raised at the previous meeting was circulated along with the agenda.

21.3.1 Pier in Buncrana

Concerns were raised at the previous meeting regarding the condition of the pier in Buncrana. Stephen Flynn agreed to arrange a clean up of the pier prior to the National Tidy Towns Competition in June. Cllr Dermot McLaughlin stated the he was concerned the Harbours Dues were not being collected from people who use the services such as water at the pier, yet small business in towns have to pay for these services.

21.4 Take Over of Roads - Road at Newtowncunningham National School

Stephen Flynn presented the Committee with a report on the takeover of the road at Newtowncunningham N.S. The report outlined observations, responses and recommendation for the Members to consider.

21.5 Roads Projects 2005 -2009

Stephen Flynn advised the Committee that over forty million Euro has been spent in the Inishowen Electoral Area since 2005. A list was provided of the various roads projects carried out between 2005 and 2009 and how they were funded.

21.6 White Wall, Merville

Stephen Flynn expressed his gratitude to the Members, volunteers and all who were involved in the reconstruction of the White Wall in Merville. Cllr Marian McDonald requested that letters be sent to Michael Gillen from FAS and to the Inishowen Development Company expressing the

Council's appreciation to all who helped in reconstructing the White Wall in Moville.

21.7 Surface Dressing of Roads- Restoration Improvement Grants

Stephen, Flynn in his report outlined how the Restoration/Improvement Grants had been reduced by forty three per cent. Cllr Bernard McGuinness expressed his concerns over the fact that some roads that had been prepared for surface dressing but had not been completed. Stephen Flynn agreed that works had been started on many roads however he confirmed no funding was available to complete these roads this year.

A lengthy discussion took place and it was noted that roads were graded several years ago so some roads would not even be considered for improvement works. Stephen Flynn stated that if the Department agree that Restoration Grants can be used to do maintenance works that this could be discussed. Stephen advised that members of the public completing works such as potholes were not an option due to health and safety and public liability concerns. The roads would be maintained as well as possible. Work would be prioritised in consultation with the Members, he stated.

Cllr Bernard McGuinness proposed that a letter be sent to the Department seeking flexibility in the spending of the Restoration/Improvement Grants. Cllr Marian McDonald seconded this.

21.8 Cockhill Foot Bridge

Following the discussion relating to the building of a footbridge at Cockhill at the previous Inishowen Electoral Area Meeting Stephen Flynn advised the Members that work was ongoing in this regard. Proposals for the original design were being used to give projected costs for construction.

21.9 Cassey Road Junction

Stephen Flynn advised the Members that there was some local opposition to the recommended works at Cassey Road and that appropriate safety measures would have to be put in place along with considering the residents concerns.

21.10 Low Cost Accidents

Cllr Bernard McGuinness queried the allocation for Low Cost Accidents. Stephen Flynn advised the Members that the allocation for Low Cost Accidents for 2009 was as agreed last year

21.11. Traffic Calming Measures at Urrlereaigh and Rasheeney National Schools

Cllr Bernard McGuinness stated the Urrlereaigh and Rasheeney National schools were both looking for traffic calming measures. Stephen Flynn stated that unfortunately even with speed limits in place, driver behaviour was often a major problem that was difficult to deal with.

22.1 Consideration of Minutes of Meeting held on 26th March 2009,
On the proposal of Cllr Francis Conaghan, seconded by Cllr Rena Donaghey, the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2009, were agreed.

22.2 Retirement of Cllr Dermot McLaughlin and Cllr Denis McGonagle
Cllr Bernard McGuinness, on behalf of the Inishowen Electoral Area Committee expressed his thanks and sincere good wishes to Cllr Dermot McLaughlin, Mayor of Buncrana Town Council and to Cllr Denis McGonagle on their retirement.

Cllr Dermot McLaughlin and Cllr Denis McGonagle both thanked Cllr McGuinness for his good wishes and wished success to all the Councillors who were seeking re-election. They both stated that they had enjoyed their work on the Inishowen Electoral Area Committee and thanked the other Members and staff for their assistance over the years.

22.3 Cllr Francis Conaghan

Cllr Bernard McGuinness, on behalf of the Inishowen Electoral Area Committee expressed his thanks and sincere good wishes to Cllr Francis Conaghan who is not seeking re-election to the Inishowen Electoral Area Committee. Cllr Conaghan thanked Cllr McGuinness for his comments and expressed his good wishes to the incoming committee and thanked all the staff and Members for their co-operation during his time on the Council.

09/23 DEPUTATION FROM INISHOWEN RUGBY CLUB

Cllr Bernard Mc Guinness on behalf of the Committee welcomed Sean Craig, Mick Mc Garry and Conor Kelly from the Inishowen Rugby Club to the meeting.

The deputation explained that they had a short-term lease from the Council for land at the Moss Road, Carndonagh as the Council wished to hold these lands in reserve. They use the land for a Rugby Pitch and use the changing facilities etc at the Community School.

They have plans to develop a playing pitch, a training pitch and car parking at the Moss Road at a total cost of €120,000. However, in order to get funding from the I.R.F.U. they require a 30-year lease. They have some funding in place and a number of fund raising events planned to raise the balance. The I.R.F.U. has indicated that it will approve an interest free loan repayable over 10 years provided a 30-year lease is in place for the facilities. The I.R.F.U. would accept a 30 year lease with a clause included that the Council recoup any money spent developing facilities by the club in the event of the Council requiring the lands for any reason prior to the expiry of the lease.

The Carndonagh Rugby Club requested that the Council lease the lands for a period of 30 years and include a clause that in the event of the Council requiring the land in the future that any money spent by the club will be recouped.

The deputation then thanked the Committee for the opportunity for making the presentation and then withdrew.

The Committee was supportive of this request and recommended that details be forwarded to Francis Coyle, Director of Services in Planning for consideration.

**09/24 PRESENTATION BY KATHELEEN GILL, MARKETING
MANAGER, INISHOWEN TOURISM**

Cllr Bernard Mc Guinness on behalf of the Committee welcomed Kathleen Gill, Marketing Manager, Inishowen Tourism to the meeting and invited her to make her presentation.

Kathleen Gill thanked the Committee for the opportunity to meet the Committee. She stated that she has been in the job six weeks and would like to meet the Committee on a regular basis going forward. Inishowen Tourism would like to foster better relations with the Council and Failte Ireland. Inishowen Tourism is also looking at a fresh approach to the tourism product in Inishowen and to maximise opportunities to promote Inishowen.

The priorities of Inishowen Tourism are:

- Looking at rebranding Inishowen Tourism
- Reviewing their website to become a one-stop-shop for Inishowen selling a destination, a lifestyle, scenery and amenities. The web site needs to be clear, and give concise details of what is available. They plan to entice people to book on-line
- Preparation of a new catalogue of photography
- Develop the Tourist Office to include a retail base to showcase local arts and crafts.
- Developing an approved format for unapproved accommodation
- Extending tourist season to 52 weeks
- Heritage Trails to be promoted
- Caravan & camping to be promoted
- Promote Green Box Philosophy
- All weather facilities
- Standardisation of signage

She requested Council/s assistance with the product in Inishowen including:

- Preserve and Maintain Inishowen 100 Signage
- Walking routes to be mapped and marked
- Improving beach management and access to beaches, maintenance of lay byes and public toilets, improving litter management, improved environmental education.

These all need to be improved if Inishowen is to become a world class product.

Con Mc Laughlin advised Kathleen Gill that WEES was responsible for litter management and advised Kathleen to contact him any time to discuss this.

The members of the Committee were very supportive of Inishowen Tourism's priorities and mentioned the ferries, Inch Lough, Mamore Gap and a number of other attractions that could be promoted.

Cllr Bernard Mc Guinness on behalf of the Committee thanked Kathleen Gill for her presentation and suggested that Inishowen Tourism establish links with Donegal Tourism and Failte Ireland.

09:25 DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the IEAC will take place in the Carndonagh P.S.C. on Monday 13th July 2009 commencing at 10.00 a.m.

Appendix 1

WATER & ENVIRONMENT SERVICES Report to Inishowen EAC Meeting 11th May 2009

1.0 Consideration of Minutes of Inishowen Electoral Area Committee meeting held on 26th March 2009

2.0 Update reports where required from previous meeting:

John McElwaine, Capital Design office has advised

09.2.1 Tooban Sewerage Scheme:

The Part 8 for the Wastewater Treatment Plant for Tooban is currently in the public consultation phase. The latest date for submissions/observations from the public and statutory bodies is 12:30 on Friday 15th May 2009. All technically and financially viable alternatives for dealing with wastewaters arising in Tooban will be considered including the possibility of treating the Tooban and Burnfoot wastewaters in one plant.

09.2.4 Malin SS

The contractor will be starting to make connections live next week.

09.4 Glengad & Culdaff SS

There is no work taking place on either of these schemes as neither is on any Programme, nor is there any significant special development levies gathered.

09.2.3 Civic Amenity Site in Buncrana

At the March meeting, the Members recommended that the public be advised of the private Recycling Facilities that were available in Buncrana at present and the materials that are being accepted by them. This has been arranged with Suzanne Tinney, Waste Awareness Officer.

3.0 Progress Reports (Rural Water Programme)

See updated progress reports circulated with agenda for

- Small Capital Programme**
- Group Schemes Programme**

*Con McLaughlin, Senior Executive Engineer,
Water and Environment Service,
11th May 2009*

