

Minutes of Donegal Electoral Area Committee Meeting held at 4.00pm  
on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2006 in the Chamber, Civic Offices, Bundoran.

**Members Present:**

Cllr Brendan Byrne  
Cllr Barry O'Neill  
Cllr John Boyle  
Cllr Thomas Pringle  
Cllr Sean McEniff  
Cllr Jonathan Kennedy  
Cllr. John Meehan  
Cllr. Philip McGlynn

**Officials in Attendance**

Gerry Gilroy, Area Manager, Corporate Services  
Enda Monaghan, Senior Staff Officer, Corporate Services  
Sharleen Tinney, Staff Officer, Corporate Services  
Barney McLaughlin, Community & Enterprise Development Officer  
Peadar Thomas, Area Manager, Roads and Transportation  
Joe McNulty, Town Clerk, Bundoran Town Council  
Mary Daly, Town Clerk, Ballyshannon Town Council  
Paul Christie, Area Manager, Planning & Economic Development  
John McCarron, Executive Engineer, Housing & Building  
Paul Lyons, Executive Engineer, Water & Environment  
Caoimhe MacAodh, Chief Executive Officer, DLDC  
Mary O'Neill, DLDC

**Apologies**

Mary Hannigan, Area Manager, Housing & Building Control  
Michael Breslin, Area Manager, Water, Environment & Emergency Service  
Damian McDermott, Senior Executive Engineer, DNRDO,  
Thomas Fox, Assistant Engineer, DNRDO

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>41.00 Corporate Services</b>
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Members were welcomed to Bundoran by Cllr McGlynn.  
Cllr Byrne on behalf of the Donegal Electoral Area Committee thanked the Town Council for their hospitality in hosting this meeting in the Bundoran Town Council Offices and wished everyone present a Happy Christmas.

DEAC	41.01. Consideration of Minutes
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**Consideration of minutes of meeting of Donegal Electoral Area Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2006.**

On the proposal of Cllr Boyle, seconded by Cllr O'Neill the minutes of the meeting of Donegal Electoral Area Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2006 were adopted.

It was further agreed that matters arising from the minutes would be dealt with under the various service headings.

DEAC	41.02 Activity Levels in the Donegal PSC
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**Activity Levels in the Donegal PSC**

Members noted the activity reports for the Donegal PSC as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2006 circulated with the Agenda and presented by Mr. G Gilroy, Area Manager, Corporate Services.

DEAC	41.03 Schedule of meetings for 2007
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**Schedule of Meetings for 2007.**

A Draft schedule of meetings for 2007, which had been circulated with the Agenda, was considered. Members agreed to change the day of meetings from Mondays to Wednesdays and following a short discussion it was agreed that the next meeting of the Donegal Electoral Area Committee would be held on the **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2006** in the Donegal Public Services Centre. It was further agreed that the Draft Schedule be revised to have meetings on Wednesdays and be included on the Agenda for the next meeting for consideration.

DEAC	41.03 Minute Silence
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At the Members request, a minute silence was observed as a mark of respect to the Family's of the following recently deceased;

Ms. Donna Ferguson formerly from Belleek.  
Mr. Bernard Slowey of Ardara.  
Mr. Darren McGinley from Glencolmcille.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>42.00 Attendance of Deputation from Killybegs Group</b>
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**Attendance of Deputation from Killybegs Group**

Cllr Byrne welcomed the deputation from the Killybegs Mast Action Group. The members of the deputation were: Patricia Faherty, Claire Tully, Michael Tully Michael Melly and Joey Murrin. Cllr Byrne outlined the procedure followed in relation to deputations, which involved the deputation making two short addresses and the presentation of a submission, followed by questions from Members. He also confirmed that the Council would respond in due course in writing to the Deputation in respect of matters raised by them.

Ms. Patricia Faherty made a detailed presentation outlining the serious concerns the Group have in relation to the masts located on top of the Bay View Hotel, which is situated in the centre of Killybegs. Members noted the lengthy written submission made by the Group, which was circulated with the Agenda, and photographs circulated at the meeting.

Ms. Faherty outlined the background to the masts be erected, the various planning processes through which the masts had gone, including An Board Pleanala. She relayed concerns the group had in relation to the location of the masts, the particular topography of Killybegs, the fact that 80% of the population of the Town are living in close proximity to the mast, and the health concerns in relation to emissions from the masts and the international guidelines for emissions. She requested the Members support for the immediate removal of what they believed to be an 'Unauthorised Development'.

Mr. J Murrin referred to the high incidences of cancer in the Killybegs area. He also referred to the response of Fishermen in Killybegs to public concerns in relation to emissions from radar equipment, which is now turned off once boats dock at the Pier. He suggested that those responsible for these transmitters might respond to a similar request from the public out of consideration for public health and move this equipment to a more suitable location.

Cllr Byrne thanked the group for their detailed presentation and requested contributions from Members which are outlined as follows:

Cllr Boyle, while confirming his support for the group, highlighted the complexities of the issues involved, which he felt would take time to resolve.

Cllr Pringle also confirmed his support. He referred to the changes, which had taken place in regulations dealing with exempt development, which he felt did not take into account the particular topography of Killybegs. He asked, as a first step, that the County Council establish what the maximum permissible emissions output is for such masts, and have this checked, as he felt this may be being exceeded in Killybegs.

Cllr. O'Neill complimented the group on their presentation and confirmed his support to them. He also stated that a wider debate should be held at full Council level, in relation to masts and in particular the role of An Board Planeala, given that the Board had overturned the decision of the local planners and granted the temporary permission for the masts, despite recording their reservations with the developments.

Cllr McEniff also confirmed his support for the group, as did Cllr Kennedy.

Cllr Byrne also expressed his support for the group and pointed out that the Council had refused this application twice.

Cllr Byrne invited Mr. Paul Christie, Area Manager, Planning & Economic Development, to comment.

Mr. P Christie assured the group that the Planning Department are treating the matter very seriously and are considering all the issues involved in great detail. He referred to the complexities in relation to the development including recent changes in legislation since the masts were first erected. He informed the Group that a meeting has been arranged with the Senior Planner and the County Solicitor for early January and reassured the group the Council were treating the matter very seriously. He acknowledged a lack of communication back to the group and the frustrations that the length of time this is taking, however he pointed out that if the matter is to go to Court the Council must be careful in what it puts into the public domain.

Cllr Byrne thanked Mr. P Christie for his contribution.

Cllr Byrne thanked the deputation for their presentation and confirmed that the Council would respond to them in writing in due course.

It was agreed that this matter be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>43.00 Planning &amp; Economic Development</b>
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**Attendance of Planning Officials at meeting of the Donegal Electoral Area Committee.**

Mr. Paul Christie referred to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Donegal Electoral Area Committee, which he was unable to attend. He confirmed that he was unavoidably delayed at an arbitration hearing.

Cllr Byrne confirmed that he had received a detailed letter from Mr. P Christie confirming his reasons for not attending the previous meeting. Cllr Pringle also stressed that he was not being critical of Mr. Christie.

**Appointment of Area Manager, Planning & Economic Development**

Members offered their congratulations to Mr. Paul Christie on his appointment as Area Manager for Planning & Economic Development for the Donegal & Stranorlar Electoral Areas and wished him well in his new position.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>43.01 Consideration of Recent Refusals</b>
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**Consideration of recent refusals**

Members noted the recent refusals report for the period from 28/10/06 to 30/11/2006 circulated with the Agenda.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>43.02 Planning Enforcement</b>
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**Planning Enforcement**

Members noted the Planning Enforcement – current status – summary report as at the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2006 circulated with the Agenda.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>43.03 Planning Statistics</b>
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**Planning Statistics**

Members noted the planning statistics report for the period up to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2006 circulated with the Agenda.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>43.04 Other Planning Matters</b>
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**Proposed Developments at Donegal Town.**

Members welcomed the decision of the Council to grant permission to Keeney Construction for their development at Donegal Town and expressed extreme disappointment that An Board Pleanala had recently decided to refuse permission to Bennett Construction for their development, also at Donegal Town.

Members stressed the need for further development in Donegal Town, in particular given the recent job losses in the area, and expressed their hope that objections to developments in the Donegal Town Area would now stop.

**An Bord Pleanala.**

A lengthy discussion took place in relation to the need for further economic development to take place in the south of the County and the role of An Bord Pleanala. Members were concerned that An Bord Pleanala might not be taking into account the dire need for economic development at this end of the County. Members also expressed their concern that the developers may discontinue pursuing developments in this area if they continue to be refused planning permission, as the planning process is both time consuming and costly.

Concern was also expressed at the number of instances where Bord Pleanala does not accept the recommendation of its own Inspectors and the view was expressed that its membership should be reviewed.

Following further consideration, Cllr McEniff proposed and it was unanimously agreed that the Donegal Electoral Area Committee put forward the following recommendation for debate at the next General Purposes meeting:

***‘That Donegal County Council call on Government to review the membership of An Bord Pleanala’.***

**DEAC 44.00 Community, Culture and Enterprise.**

**DEAC 44.01 Report on Community & Enterprise Services**

**Report on Community & Enterprise Services**

Members noted the update report on Community & Enterprise Services circulated with the Agenda and presented by Mr. B McLaughlin, Community & Enterprise Development Officer. A number of issues were dealt with as follows:

**Community Consultation**

**Ballyshannon LAT – HEART Project**

Mr. McLaughlin advised Members that 22 business people attended the public information session in Ballyshannon on 12<sup>th</sup> December, and 18 expressions of interest had been received with regard to the shop fronts 40% support scheme. Cllr. O’Neill thanked Mr. McLaughlin for meeting with individuals in the area on behalf of the HEART Project.

**Glencolmkille LAT**

Members noted the Glencolmkille LAT Baseline data was being finalised by the Research and Policy Unit.

**DEAC 44.02 Members Fund Allocations 2006**

**Donegal Electoral Area Members Fund Allocations 2006**

Members noted the report for the Members Grant allocations for 2006, circulated with the Agenda and presented by Mr. Mc Laughlin.

**DEAC 44.04 Presentation from Donegal Local Development Company**

Mr. B McLaughlin welcomed Mr. Caoimhín MacAoidh, Chief Executive Officer from Donegal Local Development Company Limited to the meeting to provide a presentation to Members.

Mr. MacAoidh outlined the background of the Company, and advised that DLDC work to address the social and economic development needs of County Donegal as a rural society and also the cultural and environment needs of the County. In line with the Company’s strategy, DLDC seek funding for the Local Development Social Inclusion, LEADER and National Rural Development Programmes. DLDC work in partnership with agencies, such as, FAS, HSE and VEC to help address the needs of the people in the area. He advised Members that either Mr. Jeff Soley or Ms. Mary O’Neill from DLDC would be in attendance at future meetings of the Donegal Electoral Area Committee to provide regular updates to Members.

Members thanked Mr. MacAoidh for his attendance and presentation and complemented him on the work carried out by DLDC.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>45.00 Housing &amp; Building</b>
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Apologies were noted from Ms. M Hannigan, Area Manager, Housing and Building Control who was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. J McCarron attended in her place.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>45.01 Progress Report – Housing Capital Programme</b>
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**Housing Capital Programme.**

Members noted the Housing Capital Programme Progress Report circulated with the Agenda.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>45.02 Progress Report - Social Housing</b>
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**Progress Report - Social Housing**

Members noted the progress report on Loans and Grants circulated with the Agenda.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>45.03 Casual Vacancies</b>
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**Casual Vacancies**

Members noted the Casual Vacancy Report circulated with the Agenda .

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>45.04 Other Housing Matters</b>
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**Housing Need**

In relation to the discussion regarding Housing need in Ballyshannon discussed at the last meeting Mr. John McCarron stated he was aware of the continued high level of housing needs in the Donegal Electoral Area, and in particular the Ballyshannon area and informed Members the Council will continue to pursue the acquisition of land / houses next year.

**Repair work at Ernedale Heights**

Mr. McCarron advised Members he was not aware of any funding being made available to carry out repairs in the car-parking areas behind the houses at Ernedale Heights and advised the matter would be examined and Members advised at the next meeting of the Electoral Area Committee.

**Derelict Buildings**

In response to a query from Cllr. O'Neill, Mr. McCarron advised Members a list of derelict buildings was available, but that the pilot scheme to deal with these buildings had not been implemented as of yet. He undertook to look into the matter further and update Members at the next meeting of the Donegal Electoral Area Committee.

**Site at Killybegs**

In response to a query from Cllr. Pringle regarding the Part 8 process for the site in the Killybegs area, Mr. J McCarron stated it would be brought before Members at the meeting of the full Council in February.

**Ballyshannon.**

Cllr. O'Neill referred to a previous request to have a family in the Ballyshannon area who have a young child recovering from an operation housed as a matter of urgency. He expressed concern the affect the current living conditions were having on the child. On the proposal of Cllr. Boyle, seconded by Cllr. Meehan, Members recommended this family be re-housed as a matter or urgency.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>46.00 Roads &amp; Transportation</b>
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DEAC	46.01 2006 Road Works Programme
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Members noted the Progress Report on the 2006 Road Works Programme circulated with the Agenda as presented by Mr. P Thomas, Area Manager, Roads and Transportation. Members noted the programme for 2006 was complete and work was ongoing on footpaths. Mr. P Thomas informed Members that the winter maintenance programme would be ongoing which limited the Roads section's ability to carry out other works as lorries would be partly tied up with gritting and also the Council had to be aware of the maximum working hours in respect of lorry drivers at this time of year when gritting was carried out outside of normal working hours.

DEAC	46.02 Correspondence regarding NRA Allocations Ballyshannon and Bundoran
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**NRA Allocations for Road Works in Ballyshannon and Bundoran**

Members noted the correspondence circulated with the Agenda regarding NRA allocations for Ballyshannon and Bundoran including the letter from Mr. P Thomas requesting confirmation that allocations totalling €300,000 for Ballyshannon will be available in 2007. Members were advised that a response to this letter is expected in early January. Some Members present advised that they recently been part of a delegation to the National Roads Authority in Dublin and were hopeful of a substantial allocation for Donegal in 2007.

Members stressed the importance of a positive response to the request to the National Roads Authority for the allocation of €300,000 and a number of comments/queries were dealt with as follows:

Cllr O'Neill noted the apologies from the NRDO staff for their inability to attend and expressed his disappointment that they were not present. In response to queries from Cllrs McGlynn and McEniff, Mr. P Thomas informed Members that he was hopeful of a further €100,000 allocation for works within the Bundoran Town Council area in 2007 and confirmed that in 2006 a sum of €200,000 had been spent in the Town area and a further €100,000 had been spend on the approach road to Bundoran. Cllr McEniff expressed his hope that footpath works would be carried out in Bundoran in 2007.

Cllr Meehan expressed disappointment that the proposed works in Ballyshannon had not been able to be undertaken in 2006 and confirmed the importance of these works being carried out in 2007. He acknowledged the requirement to await NRA approval of these allocations.

Mr. P Thomas in response informed Members that it would have been pointless to carry out the works in advance of the Sewerage Scheme works being done as the roads were to be excavated as part of the sewerage scheme.

Ms. M Daly expressed her disappointment that the meeting requested some months ago to deal with issues outstanding in relation to the Bypass had not been held and asked that it could be held in February. It was agreed a meeting be arranged shortly with prior notice given in order for the contractor to be present.

DEAC	46.03 Other Roads Matters
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**N56 Mountcharles to Killybegs (Five Points)**

Members noted the scheme update report on the N56 Mountcharles to Killybegs (Five Points) circulated under separate cover for the Agenda of the meeting.

**Broadband – reinstatement of Road Surfaces.**

Cllr Meehan expressed concern over the poor quality of reinstatement of the roads in Ballyshannon following works carried out by the Broadband Contractors. It was noted at the meeting in some areas of the County, the reinstatement works are being carried out to a high standard. In response to the concerns raised, Mr. P Thomas undertook to refer the concerns to the Council Officials who are looking after the Broadband contracts to ensure the roads are reinstated to the appropriate standard following these works.

**Roads Works on Ballyshannon – Laghey Road**

Cllr McEniff referred to the cones at the road works at Laghey – Ballyshannon, requesting they are removed as soon as possible. Mr. P Thomas informed Members the works were nearing completion and the cones would be removed shortly.

**CPO**

On the proposal of Cllr. McEniff, seconded by Cllr. Meehan, it was agreed to go through the CPO procedures with regard to the carpet factory in Killybegs

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>47.00 Water, Environment &amp; Emergency Services</b>
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Apologies were noted from Mr. M Breslin, Area Manager, Water, Environment & Emergency Services for his inability to attend.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>47.01 South West Donegal Water Supply</b>
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**South West Donegal Water Supply**

Mr. P Lyons referred to the minutes of the previous meeting and clarified that it was the tender process which should be finalised before the end of the year and not the contracts in relation to the South West Donegal Water Supply Scheme. In response to a query from Cllr Byrne, Mr. Lyons informed Members it was the Northern Route, which would be progressed first.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>47.02 Major Capital Programme</b>
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**Major Capital Programme.**

Mr. P Lyons informed Members there was nothing further to report since the last meeting which was attended by Mr. P Donaghy, Water Capital Section.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>47.03 Civic Amenity Site at Laghey</b>
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**Laghey Civic Amenity Site**

Mr. P Lyons informed Members that the Laghey Civic Amenity Site is on target to open early in the New Year.

<b>DEAC</b>	<b>47.04 Other Water &amp; Environment Matters</b>
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**Teelin Road Reinstatement**

In response to a query from Cllr Byrne, Mr. P Lyons undertook to convey to Mr. Bernard Cuning, Senior Executive Engineer, Water Capital, the urgency of reinstating the Teelin Road and to revert to the next meeting of the Donegal Electoral Area Committee in relation to the matter.

**Interruptions to Water Supply at Ballyshannon**

In response to a query from Cllr Meehan regarding the reason for the frequency of interruptions at a particular location at Ballyshannon, Mr. P Lyons informed Members the reasons for this is to repair bursts / fractures in the water main. He confirmed that Water and Environment staff, deal with necessary repairs as quickly as possible to minimise disruption to consumers. He also confirmed that the air in the water gives rise to the white colour for a period after a burst.

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**CPO Site at Ballyshannon/Merrymount**

Mr. P Lyons informed Members the Capital Section is currently sourcing the paper work for the site that was purchased by CPO as referred to in the minutes of the previous meeting of the Donegal Electoral Area Committee.

**Next meeting.**

As agreed the next meeting of the Donegal Electoral Area Committee will be held on **17<sup>th</sup> January 2007 at 2.00 p.m. in the Peter Kennedy Chamber, Donegal Public Services Centre.**

**This concluded the business of the meeting.**

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Gerry Gilroy,  
Area Manager,  
Corporate Services.

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Cathaoirleach,  
Donegal Electoral Area Committee