

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE DHUN NA NGAIL

Oifig Riathóir na
gCruinnithe
Aras an Chontae
Leifear
6 Deireadh Fómhair 2022

FÓGRA CRUINNITHE

DO GACH BHALL DEN CHOMHAIRLE

A Chara,

Beidh Cruinniú Speisialta de Chomhairle Contae Dhún na nGall ar siúl **Dé Céadaoin 12 Deireadh Fómhair 2022 ag 10.00am in Ionad Fóillíochta an Aura, Salach an Ghráin, Leitir Ceanainn.** Tá Clár an chruinnithe leis seo. Seolfar nasc leictreonach chuig an chruinniú i gcomhfhreagras eile.

Mise, le meas



Pádraig Ó Laifearthaigh
Riathóir Cruinnithe

DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Office of Meetings Administrator
County House
Lifford
6th October 2022

NOTICE OF MEETING

TO EACH MEMBER OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Dear Councillor,

A Special Meeting of Donegal County Council will be held on Wednesday 12th October, 2022, at **10.00am in the Aura Leisure Centre, Sallaghagrane, Letterkenny.** The agenda for the meeting is attached. An online link to join the meeting will issue separately.

Yours sincerely



Patsy Lafferty
Meetings Administrator

AGENDA

1. **Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2022-2028**

Update re Technical Reports, and to decide whether or not to proceed with the publication of the Draft Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2022-2028.

2. **Taking of decision pursuant to the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (Part XI), and the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001**

To approve the carrying out of works so as to facilitate the development of the “Letterkenny 2040 - Reimagined Market Square” at Market Square, Castle Street and Main Street, Letterkenny.

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD
ON 18th OCTOBER 2022 IN THE AURA LEISURE CENTRE LETTERKENNY**

C/388/22

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs L. Blaney, Cathaoirleach, K. Bradley, C. Brogan, P. Canning, T. Conaghan, D. Coyle, N. Crossan, A. Doherty, M. Farren, M. T. Gallagher, M. Harley, N. Jordan, D. M. Kelly, N. Kennedy, M Mc Bride, M. Mc Clafferty, M. McDermott, I. McGarvey, P. Mc Gowan, J. Mc Guinness, G. Mc Monagle, A. Molloy, M Naughton, J. O Donnell, and B. Sweeny.

Online: G. Crawford, T Crossan, R. Donaghey, N. Mc Garvey, J. Murray, and J. S O' Fearraigh.

C/389/22

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

John Mc Laughlin, Chief Executive, Paul Mc Gill, Meetings Administrator, Garry Martin, Director of Economic Development, Information Systems & Emergency Services, Michael Mc Garvey, Director of Water & Environment, Michael Scott, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Frances Friel, Communications Officer, William Colvin, Assistant Communications Officer, Seán O' Daimhin, Rannóg na Gaeltachta, Róise Ní Laifeartaigh, Rannóg na Gaeilge, Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer.

C/390/22

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRAGIC EVENTS IN
CREESLOUGH ON FRIDAY 7TH OCTOBER, 2022**

The Cathaoirleach informed members that the meeting had been called to acknowledge the tragic events that had unfolded in Creeslough on the afternoon of the 7th October, 2022. It was, he said, an afternoon that had shocked the entire nation and further afield, with tributes coming in from across the globe for all whose lives had been shattered by this tragedy.

Cllr Blaney addressing the meeting paid tribute to all impacted and involved in the tragedy and advised of the following:

"It is with heavy hearts that we are gathered here this afternoon for a Special Meeting of Donegal County Council to acknowledge the tragedy that unfolded on the Cresslough community on Friday, 7th October, 2022 - an afternoon that shocked the entire nation and further afield with tributes paid across the world to the Creeslough tragedy victims.

It is very difficult for us all to comprehend as people go about their daily lives on a Friday afternoon that something so tragic could happen. The bustling petrol station and shop on a busy Friday afternoon is something that people in almost every town can identify with.

Our thoughts, our hearts and prayers to go out to the people of the Creeslough Community and in particular to the families of those who have lost lives, those who have been injured as well as to the entire community who are numbed and shocked by what has happened.

We will be forever indebted to our Emergency Services that rushed to the scene, working throughout the night, at times in danger, to rescue people and to do everything they could to comfort people. With the official emergency response led by Donegal County Council, we pay tribute to our own staff, in particular our Chief Executive, John J. McLaughlin, our Director of Emergency Services, Garry Martin and his team including our Chief Fire Officer, Joseph McTaggart and Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Michael Scott. The response of all of the response agencies, including our own Fire Service, aided by our Structural Engineer's advice and Civil Defence was exemplary, in what were very difficult and challenging surroundings. We pay tribute to all of the essential services including our Major Emergency Management colleagues in the primary response agencies of the Gardai and the HSE.

A special thank you to all staff and medical teams at our Letterkenny University Hospital who operated in extremely difficult circumstances and who continue to support the bereaved families and the Creeslough Community through wider community support services in response to this tragic incident.

We acknowledge the willingness and invaluable assistance of our colleagues in Northern Ireland and to all the state and voluntary services that provided invaluable support including the;

- *National Ambulance Service*
- *Irish Coast Guard*
- *Irish Coast Guard Rescue Helicopter 118*
- *Irish Air Corps Mini Vac 112Northern Ireland Ambulance HEMS Service*
- *Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue*
- *Mevagh Fire Service*
- *Donegal Mountain Rescue*
- *Northern Ireland Ambulance Senior Hazardous Area Response Team*
- *Donegal County Council Civil Defence*

But most of all we acknowledge the huge input from the local community who attended in large numbers and contributed so much to the emergency efforts at the site including local contractors, farmers and volunteers. To those who opened up their businesses to provide the cup of tea and a place for the community to come together for consolation - you too provided an invaluable service.

As Cathaoirleach of Donegal County, I personally offer my deepest sympathies to the families of the bereaved, to their friends and to the entire community of Creeslough. The effects of this tragedy will be felt for years, and no doubt, the weeks and months ahead will be difficult. However, the last week has shown the huge strength, resilience, and unity of how a community can come together to help and support one

another in the face of tragedy. People in Donegal have been united in grief this past week and as a county we will continue to be united and on behalf of Donegal County Council, I wish to pledge our continued support and solidarity”.

The Cathaoirleach then acknowledged the following who had perished in the tragedy:

- Shauna Flanagan Garwe
- Robert Garwe
- Catherine O’ Donnell
- James Monaghan
- Leona Harper
- Jessica Gallagher
- James O’ Flaherty
- Martin Mc Gill
- Martina Martin
- Hugh Kelly

A minute’s silence was held as a mark of respect to the 10, men, women and children who lost their lives, and whose memories it was acknowledged would forever live in the hearts of the people of this nation.

Sympathy was extended also to the family of the late Seamus Rodgers, Gortnabarde, Carraigart, who had died following a tragic accident.

Cllr Blaney then invited the Chair of the Glenties Municipal District, the Party Whips and Cllr Michael Mc Clafferty, to offer their condolences, followed by contributions from any member who wished to do so.

Cllr Molloy in his capacity as the Cathaoirleach of the Glenties Municipal District offered deepest sympathy to the bereaved families and wished all those that had been injured a swift recovery. He sympathised with the Lafferty family, the Cresslough community and those in the surrounding areas severely impacted by the tragedy. He said that the events of the 7th October had changed things forever for the people of Cresslough. It had been, he acknowledged, a humbling week and one in which severe sorrow had been met with an abundance of love and support. He paid tribute to the exemplary way in which the state, semi-state and local voluntary bodies had helped with the rescue and recovery.

Cllr Molloy noted that the response from all the services within Donegal County Council led by the Chief Executive, Mr John Mc Laughlin had been excellent. He thanked the Glenties MD members, especially Cllr Michael Mc Clafferty who had worked tirelessly over the weekend in question. He thanked the Health Service Executive, all the ancillary services, the Gardai and the community organisations involved for their

input. The magnificent role played by St Michael's GAA Club was also acknowledged. He said that it was not possible to thank everyone individually, but that the effort and empathy shown by all involved would never be forgotten.

Cllr Mc Clafferty said that he had seen at first hand the devastation caused and noted that the emergency services north and south had done an excellent job. He thanked the Chief Executive, the Director of Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services, and Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer for their help and assistance in what had been a seamless operation. A special word of thanks was extended to Fr John Joe Duffy for his words of comfort and support. His thoughts and prayers were, he said, with all the families impacted by the tragedy.

Contributions were then made by the Glenties MD members, the Party Whips and the remainder of the members of Donegal County Council.

Sincere thanks were extended to all the emergency services who had been involved in the operation with special words of thanks for those who had travelled from Northern Ireland to assist.

Members thanked the Chief Executive, Mr John Mc Laughlin, the Director of Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services, Mr Garry Martin, the Chief Fire Officer, Mr Joseph Mc Taggart and the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Mr Michael Scott for the work carried out by their respective teams.

There was acknowledgment also of the contribution made by members of An Garda Síochána, the National Ambulance Service, the Coastguard Helicopter Service, Mulroy Coastguard, the Mevagagh Family Resource Centre and the staff of Letterkenny University Hospital. The efforts of Dr Gerry Lane, retired Emergency Consultant were also acknowledged.

Members commended the local community and all voluntary organisations who had assisted in any way, many with no thought for their own safety. The acknowledged the impact of the tragedy on the Lafferty family and wished them well going forward. Tribute was also paid to the President, Michael D Higgins, the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, T.D, the Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar, T.D and the President of Sinn Féin, Mary Lou Mc Donald, all who had travelled to Creeslough as a gesture of solidarity.

There was appreciation also for the communities all over Donegal and worldwide who had come together and organised vigils in solidarity with the people of Creeslough.

Tribute was paid to Fr John Joe Duffy, who it was noted, had been a tower of strength, had shown great leadership, and whose words of support had been of so much comfort to the local community. There was acknowledgement also of the support and assistance provided by Bishop Alan Mc Guckian, SJ, Bishop Andrew Forster and clergy of all denominations who had assisted in any way.

They outlined the fact that all Government departments needed to come together now to ensure that a new public centre was provided in Creeslough.

Condolences were extended to all those who had lost loved ones in the tragedy. Words of support and encouragement were offered to all who had been injured and impacted in any way.

There was unanimous agreement that every practical support and assistance needed to be put in place to assist the community in Creeslough. Members asked that every effort be made to facilitate same so that Creeslough could become a vibrant community hub once again.

Poetic contributions were made by Cllr Mc Guinness and Cllr Kennedy.

Members highlighted the need to ensure that a fitting memorial was erected at an appropriate time in the future.

Mr Garry Martin, Director Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services, said that all were appreciative of the sentiment and goodwill that had been so clearly evident. His thoughts and prayers, he said, were with the families and friends of the deceased who had displayed such dignity, on what had been the worst days in their lives. The response of the community in Creeslough, he noted, had been something to behold and the care that they tendered before the first ambulances arrived would not be forgotten.

Mr Martin acknowledged and commended all the emergency response organisations and in particular the Council Fire Service who had control of the scene until late Saturday afternoon. He thanked Michael Scott, Assistant Chief Fire Officer who as Incident Commander had displayed exemplary leadership over the 25-26-hour period. All the officers under his command, he said, had carried out their job with dignity, in conjunction with the Civil Defence team and the other agencies involved. He thanked the HSE staff, the hospital staff, medical staff of all descriptions who had made themselves available.

The services of the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade had been most beneficial, he added, and alluded to the fact that a specific agreement had been in operation since 1965 which provided for cross-border co-operation in emergency situations.

Thanks, was extended to the Chief Fire Officer, Joe Mc Taggart for his support and guidance.

All involved, he stated, had done their very best in what had been a difficult and challenging situation and that collaboration had ensured that the crisis had been dealt with in an appropriate and dignified manner.

The Chief Executive expressed condolences and sympathy to the families of the dead and injured together with the wider Creeslough community. The community, there, he said, should be very proud of their response. He acknowledged, the input of the Cathaoirleach, Cllr Liam Blaney, the Chair of the Glenties Municipal District, Cllr Anthony Molloy, the members of the Glenties MD and Cllr Michael Mc Clafferty in particular for their support over the period of the tragedy.

He thanked the Director of Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services, Mr Garry Martin, the Incident Commander, Mr Michael Scott, the Chief Fire Officer, Mr Joe Mc Taggart, and Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer for their contribution. He said that he was very proud of what had been achieved as a public body, and that was testament to the commitment of the staff involved.

There was acknowledgement of the input of all the other agencies involved and the seamless co-operation and dignity in which the rescue and recovery had been carried out.

He welcomed the support and empathy shown by the office of the President, the various political leaders, all of which had been of great comfort to the Creeslough community. Thanks, was extended to all the various Government Departments who had sent messages of support.

It was important, he added, that the community in Creeslough were supported in the months and years ahead. To this end, he confirmed, that consideration had been given to setting up a dedicated working group comprising three councillors, three staff and three community leaders who could make recommendations on what was needed for the betterment of the local community. This was something, he advised, which would be discussed further by the Corporate Policy Group. It would not, he confirmed, replace the interventions by the other agencies involved but would serve to look at what could be done outside of the assistance that was already in place.

Concluding the meeting the Cathaoirleach thanked the Chief Executive, and the Senior Management Team for the work carried out by their respective departments.

This concluded the business of the meeting.