

MINUTES OF MEETING OF ISLANDS COMMITTEE

HELD ON 9th OCTOBER 2018 IN THE DUNGLOE P.S.C

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllr. John Sheamais Ó Fearraigh (Cathaoirleach)
Noirín Uí Mhaoldomhnaigh (Leas Chathaoirleach)
Cllr. Terence Slowey
Cllr. Enda Bonner
Cllr. Marie Therese Gallagher
Cllr. Michéal Choilm Mac Giolla Easbuig
Eamonn S. Mac Aoidh
Séamus Mac Ruairí
Mairín Uí Fhearraigh
Roseleen McShane

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Diarmuid Ó Mórdha - An Roinn
Michéal Mac Giolla Easbuig - Údarás na Gaeltachta

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Michael McGarvey - Director of Water & Environment Service
Cathal Mac Suibhne - Marine Engineer
Dermot Brady - Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer
David Friel - Coastal Officer
John Hegarty-Executive Engineer, Roads Service
Eamonn Brown-A/Area Manager, Housing & Corporate
Carol Margey - Senior Executive Planner
Michael Rowsome-S.S.O, Corporate & Motor Tax

APOLOGIES: Eamonn Bonner
William Boyle
Marjorie Uí Chearbhaill

IC 25/18 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12TH JUNE 2018

On the proposal of Mairín Uí Fhearraigh, seconded by Seamus Rodgers, the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th of June 2018 were confirmed, subject to the following addition to Minute IC 15/18; "On the proposal of Cllr. Mac Giolla Easbuig, seconded by Seamus Rodgers, the Committee elected Noirín Uí Mhaoldomhnaigh as Leas Chathaoirleach".

IC 26/18 SYMPATHY

A vote of sympathy was passed in respect of Hughie McBride, brother in law of William Boyle.

IC 27/18 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In response to a recommendation from Cllr. Mac Giolla Easbuig that the CEO of the Council visit the offshore Islands, Michael McGarvey, Director, stated that he represents the Senior Management Team at Islands Committee Meetings and that the Senior Management Team are kept abreast of all issues pertaining to the Islands.

IC 28/18 ROADS SERVICE

28.1 Roads Report

The Committee discussed the report circulated at the meeting and presented by the Roads Engineer in relation to the status of ongoing roadworks:

- (i) Ballard Road Bridge, Screig Road and Playground Road on Arranmore.
- (ii) Tory Island Snagging.
- (iii) Island Roy pointing of the causeway.

Mairín Uí Fhearraigh expressed frustration at the state neglect of smaller islands and queried the omission of roads on Gola from An Roinn allocations.

Eamonn Mac Aoidh advised Members of increasing numbers of tourists to Gola and the necessity to repair roads to accommodate visitors and locals.

The Roads Engineer informed Members that:

- (i) all Island roads were prioritised by the Committee and submitted to An Roinn for funding.
- (ii) The Council is unable to fund non county roads but will continue to make representations to An Roinn for funding.
- (iii) Local Improvement Scheme funding is an option for upgrading non county roads on Islands.

Cllr. Gallagher advised Members that during recent budget meetings in advance of the 2019 Revenue Budget, that the Glenties Municipal District Committee have requested a 'stand alone' Island fund in addition to a separate fund to match any grants allocated by An Roinn. Cllr. Gallagher also requested earlier notification from An Roinn in relation to potential allocations under the 2019 Island Programme to aid the Budgetary process.

Cllr. Ó Fearraigh requested that a meeting be sought with Minister Ring and Minister Mc Hugh to request additional resources to upgrade the Island road network. Cllr. Mac Giolla Easbuig requested the Roads Service to upgrade the road on Inishboffin.

28.2

Arranmore Roads

Seamus Rodgers (i) informed the Committee of representations that he has received regarding the urgent necessity to maintain the Doctors Road on the Island, (ii) requested the Council to revise the guidelines for takeover of Island roads and (iii) highlighted safety issues at Pollowaddy crossroads and the road leading from Leabgarrow Quay to the main road.

On the proposal of Seamus Rodgers, seconded by Cllr. Gallagher, the Committee recommended that Minister Ring be requested to make a special Island Road allocation in light of additional costs on offshore Islands.

IC 29/18 PLANNING SERVICE

The Senior Executive Planner updated the Committee in relation to the ongoing enforcement proceedings on Gola Island. Members were advised (i) that in response to submitted complaints that 10 no. investigation files were opened and are currently being progressed under Part VIII of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended), (ii) that the Planning Authority do not have any discretion when a complaint is submitted in relation to unauthorised development, (iii) to liaise with the Planning Service prior to commencement of any works on Islands and (iv) updated the Committee in relation to EU Legislation and Departmental designations of Islands as Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

Eamonn Mac Aoidh informed the meeting of the contrast between the abandonment of Gola in the 1960's and the recent boost to Island life notwithstanding the challenges posed by a lack of infrastructure and employment. He expressed serious concern that recent planning issues will have a detrimental effect on any future developments on Gola.

Cllr. Mac Giolla Easbuig criticised the lack of support available to Gola residents wishing to reside in mobile homes and to Islanders attempting to renovate older properties.

Cllr. Gallagher (i) outlined the background to the special designations attributed to Islands and the connection to the Rural Development Funds, (ii) recommended that the Department of Rural and Community Development be invited to visit Coastal and Island Communities to listen to the concerns and problems experienced by Islanders as a consequence of special designation status.

IC 30/18 MARINE SERVICE

30.1 The Marine Engineer updated the Committee on the status of ongoing Marine projects at Magheroarty and Tory and informed Members of the minimal Department of Marine budget in the sum of less than €300k for the maintenance of all piers and harbours in the County. The Marine Engineer acknowledged the necessity for works to Gola Pier, Inis Oirthear & at Kitty Archies Pier in Magheragallen.

30.2 Rutland

In response to queries from Roseleen McShane regarding (i) the provision of a pontoon at Rutland, the Marine Engineer highlighted the lack of funding and necessity to prioritise projects based on available resources and (ii) health and safety concerns arising from the placement of pots by crab fishermen, the Marine Engineer undertook to liaise with the Harbour Master in this regard.

Roseleen McShane also requested the provision of additional berthing areas at the pier in light of the presence of permanent residents on the Island.

30.3 Burtonport Harbour

The Marine Engineer informed the Committee of the scheduled public consultation in Burtonport in relation to proposed Harbour developments and invited all stakeholders to attend on the 11th October at O'Donnell's Bar. Cllr. Ó Fearraigh requested the provision of a light on the pier.

30.4 Tory Island

Cllr. Mac Giolla Easbuig requested the Council to submit an application for provision of a winch to assist fishermen.

IC 31/18 ENVIRONMENT

31.1 Inishboffin Public Convenience

The Coastal Officer informed the Committee of positive developments in relation to the ecological and septic tank assessments and that plans are being drafted for submission to Planning.

31.2 Gola Portaloo

In response to a query from Mairín Uí Fhearraigh regarding the provision of an additional portaloo on Gola, the Coastal Officer advised that a permanent solution is a more favourable option and that the utilisation of an existing septic tank would be advantageous in gaining the approval of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

31.3 Arranmore

The Coastal Officer commended the success of the recent beach clean up on Arranmore.

Cllr. Mac Giolla Easbuig recommended that the toilets on Arranmore be upgraded to incorporate facilities for children and disability access.

31.4 Tory Island

The Coastal Officer updated Members on the submission of plans by the Co-op for the development of a recycling centre.

IC 32/18 FIRE SERVICE

32.1 Fire Safety Packs

The Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer circulated a report outlining the work in progress in relation to the delivery of fire safety packs to all Island homes.

32.2 Fire Safety Training

The Committee welcomed the report circulated at the meeting in relation to the provision of fire safety training to Island residents. The Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer invited suggestions from the Committee in relation to the most suitable method of communication with Islanders in terms of training and distribution of online safety tips.

32.3 Review of Fire Service

Cllr. Bonner and Cllr. Mac Giolla Easbuig highlighted the unacceptable facilities and equipment available on Arranmore and Tory respectively.

Cllr. Gallagher stated that Members will not accept any curtailment in services in the context of the ongoing fire service review.

The Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer responded to Members queries in relation to retained fire fighters and informed the Committee of ongoing work in progress in respect of the review.

IC 33/18 Small Ferry Service

Cllr. Mac Giolla Easbuig and Mairín Uí Fhearraigh reiterated previous recommendations for the provision of a ferry service to the smaller islands on a couple of occasions annually. Eamonn S. Mac Aoidh stated that ferries currently transport freight between Tory and Arranmore and should be in a position to accommodate smaller islands that the ferry is bypassing at present.

IC 34/18 Committee Membership

In response to a recommendation from Cllr. Mac Giolla Easbuig and Cllr. Gallagher for the addition of Cruit, Tearmann and Oileán Treora onto the Islands Committee, the Corporate Manager advised that decisions in this regard are a matter for the full Council at the AGM.

IC 35/18 **Tourism**

Mairín Uí Fhearraigh requested statistics from Barney McLaughlin, Tourism Officer regarding the number of visitors to Gola Island during 2018.

Cllr. Bonner recommended the development of Arranmore Lighthouse as a strategic tourism initiative similar to the upgrading of Fanad Lighthouse.

Noirín Uí Mhaoldomhnaigh informed Members of ongoing lease negotiations with the owner of the lighthouse keepers cottage.

IC 36/18 **Island Report**

Cllr. Gallagher requested the Council to prepare a report outlining all works carried out during the year on all Islands.

IC 37/18 **Date of next meetings**

The Committee agreed to schedule 2019 Island Meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of February, April, June and September with the June meeting to be arranged on Inishboffin.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.