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MINUTES OF ATHLONE Municipal District **HELD IN THE COUNCIL** Chamber - Áras an Chontae, **ON TUESDAY**, 22nd July, 2025 **AT 10.00** am

PRESENT: Councillor Domnick Connolly **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr V. Duffy, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr J. Keogh and Cllr L. Fallon.

OFFICIALS: Caitlín Conneely, Director of Services
Susan Loughnane, Municipal District Co-Ordinator
David Carty, Executive Engineer,
Shelia Glennon, Staff Officer

Apologies:

47.25 DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST (SECTION 177 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 AS AMENDED)

No Disclosures

48.25 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. D Connolly welcomed everyone to the meeting.

On the **Proposal of:** Cllr. L Fallon
Seconded by: Cllr V Duffy

It was **AGREED** by all the Members to adopt the minutes of the Athlone Municipal District meeting held on 27th May, 2025.

On the **Proposal of:** Cllr E Kelly
Seconded by: Cllr T Ward

It was **AGREED** by all the Members to adopt the minutes of the Athlone Municipal Annual Meeting held on 27th June, 2025

49.25 MONKSLAND SIGNALISED JUNCTION R362/L-75603

John Mockler, Senior Engineer along with John Freeman, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads Department presented the Members with an update on the proposed Signalised Junction in Monksland at the R362/L75603 junction. Following the presentation a brief discussion took place.

The key points from representation are outlined below:

Key features

- Signalised pedestrian/cyclist crossings on all arms.
- Right-turn lanes
- Integration with Monksland Active Travel Scheme

- Enhanced Surfacing, Signage and Lighting

Public Feedback Summary

- 31 submissions received during May 2025 consultation
- Safety improvements welcomed by some residents
- Potential congestion and delays
- Preference for roundabout over traffic lights
- Requests for more safety features and transparency
- **Design feedback referred to engineering team**

Councils Recommendation and Next Steps

- Safer for vulnerable road users
- Aligns with Area Based Transport Assessment
- Operates within the current and future traffic capacity
- Proceed with project in line with design and following review with National Transport Authority to ensure alignment with Monksland Local Transport Plan Scheme and future Joint Urban Area Plan.

The Members thanked John Mockler and John Freeman for their presentation and for addressing concerns raised.

50.25 MATTERS ARISING

No Matters Arising

51.25 DECLARATION OF PUBLIC ROAD WITHIN THE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT THE MILLRACE, MONKSLAND

Section 11 (2) (b) of the Roads Act 1993 and Roads Regulations 1994, Part 2

Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Section 180 Local Government Reform Act 2014 Schedule 3. Declaration of public road within the housing development at The Millrace, Monksland, Athlone, Co. Roscommon.

On the **Proposal of:** Cllr L Fallon

Seconded by: Cllr E Kelly

It was **AGREED** by all the Members to have the road located with the housing development at the Millrace, Monksland, Athlone, Co. Roscommon be declared to be a public road.

52.25 ATHLONE MD FUNDING 2024- TISRARA COMMUNITY SPORTS PARK REQUEST CHANGE OF PROJECT

Tisrara Community Sports Park requested a change of project for the MD Funding of €3,000 granted to them in 2024 to upgrade the Waste Water Treatment system. The funding received was insufficient to enable them to proceed with this project. They now wish to use the funding to assist in providing a concrete path around the exterior of the Astro turf playing surface.

On the **Proposal of:** Cllr E Kelly
Seconded by: Cllr T Ward

It was **AGREED** by all the Members to grant Tisrara Community Sports Park change of project as outlined above.

53.25 COMMUNITY RECOGNITION FUND 2024 - MONKSLAND RECREATIONAL AND PLAYGROUND PROJECT

Susan Loughnane, MD Co-Ordinator provided the following update on the above project:

Athlone MD, with support from Monksland Town Team, were successful in an application for funding through the Community Recognition Fund 2024 - Window 3 for €80,000 for the Monksland Recreational and Playground Permeability Project.

Background

Monksland is part of the of the Athlone Regional Growth Centre and is the second most populated area in County Roscommon, with a population of 4,595 recorded during the 2022 CSO data.

Monksland is a growing area with a thriving industrial area to the south of the R362, developing community facilities between the R362 and Old Tuam Road and established and developing residential areas to the north and east. There are several existing recreational facilities in the more established residential areas to the north, including the Monksland Community Park and Playground and Cushla Greenway, and new and planned recreational developments to the south such as the recently completed Monksland Park and Playground and planned Community Hub. The link between these established and developing recreational areas and residential developments is currently fragmented and unclear with the R362 Regional Road and Old Tuam Road acting as perceived barriers to permeability.

Proposed Project

The Monksland Recreational and Playground Permeability Project aims to link these established and emerging recreational facilities in a cohesive manner through existing and proposed permeability links and way finding signage. The 2.5km route between the start of the Cushla greenway at Ganly's Roundabout on the N61 through the Cushla and Beechlawn housing estates and proposed permeability link at Ceathru Na Gloch provides a safe and cohesive link between a number of established and recently completed recreational facilities including the Cushla Greenway, St. Josephs FC, Monksland Community Park and Playground, Monksland Community Centre and the recently completed New Monksland Park which includes a playground and skatepark.

These facilities will be enhanced by the proposed upgrade of sub-standard footpaths to 3.0m wide shared paths through Monksland Community Park and the provision of a Pedal Park to encourage residents to embrace cycling at a young age. The provision of a pedestrian crossing on the Old Tuam Road will provide a safe link between the established facilities to the north and new and developing facilities to the south.

On completion the project will link 2.5km of free, existing, enhanced, and new recreational facilities within Monksland via a well signed route via the greenway, quiet streets, pedestrian linkages and safe crossings providing a rich recreational experience for the existing and expanding population in the area.

The Members thanked Susan Loughnane for her presentation and welcomed the project for Monksland.

54.25 NOTICE OF MOTION

There was one Notice of Motion for discussion

55.25 (8.25)- CLLR T WARD - TAKE IN CHARGE WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT AT BURNBROOK ESTATE, BEALNAMULLA, ATHLONE

"I am calling on Uisce Eireann to take in charge the sewerage treatment plant that services six houses in the Burnbrook Estate, Bealnamulla, Athlone, Co Roscommon.

REPLY:

The records of Roscommon County Council show that Burnbrook Estate was Taken in Charge in December 2019. During the Taking in Charge process Irish water were consulted and responded in February 2019 with 'No objection except as Noted'. The issues noted were not related to the sewerage treatment plant.

CLlr T Ward thanked the Members for their support, Susan Loughnane, Athlone MD Co-Ordinator informed the Members that she is in communication with Irish Water and will follow up on Members queries.

56.25 QUESTIONS

There were two Questions for noting.

57.25 (4.25) - CLLR T WARD - REQUEST FOR A NEW BUS STOP AT CRANNAGH, ATHLONE, R446

Can the Area Engineer please inform the meeting, the residents of Crannagh, Athlone have requested that Roscommon County Council install a bus stop at Crannagh, Athlone.

REPLY:

Locallink bus service Route 548 was recently extended to include Ballinasloe to Athlone. The enhanced route offers includes a number of bus stops including one at Crannagh / Summerhill.

Details of the location of bus stops can be found at the following link <https://www.locallinkgalway.ie/bus-stop-gallery>

Details of the stops at Crannagh / Summerhill are shown below and can be accessed online here <https://www.locallinkgalway.ie/bus-stop-gallery?pgid=le8fofzg1-42d31b76-5ddc-45b3-a577-5164e985ab930>

58.25 (3.25)- CLLR T WARD - N61 JUNCTION AT ST BRIGID'S GAA CLUB

Can the Area Engineer please inform the meeting if TII have selected the route for the proposed new road and junction down to St Brigid's GAA Centre.

REPLY:

The draft Options Selection Report is currently being finalised and this report will identify the preferred option. Once finalised the Options Selections Report will be submitted to the TII for Phase 2 Gate Review. It is expected that the next stage, Phase 3 Design & Environmental Evaluation, will commence in Q3 2025 subject to Phase 2 Gate Review.

59.25 CIVIC RECEPTION REQUEST

There were two Civic Reception requests for approval

60.25 (3.25)- CLLR J KEOGH- HONOUR U13 DRUM/CLONOWN/MONKSLAND CHESS TEAM

I would like to call on Roscommon County Council to honour the under 13 chess team from Drum/ Clonown/ Monksland for a Civic award after their incredible win at the National Community Games in Kilkenny on Saturday the 5th of July. Members of the team were: Addhrit Bhushan , Adhiraj Bhushan , Aaron Sheehy, Cúan Ryan, Cormac Gallagher, Eleanor Neary

On the **Proposal of:** Cllr J Keogh
Seconded by: Cllr L Fallon

It was **AGREED** by all the Members to honour the Under 13 chess team from Drum/Clonown/Monksland at the next Civic Reception.

61.25 (4.25) CLLR T WARD - HONOUR DARRAGH MURRAY, KNOCKNANOOOL, BRIDESWELL

I am calling on Roscommon County Council to honour Darragh Murray, Knocknanool, Brideswell, Athlone. Co. Roscommon at the next Civic Reception. Congratulations to Darragh on winning his first senior rugby international cap for Ireland.

On the **Proposal of:** Cllr T Ward
Seconded by: Cllr V Duffy

It was **AGREED** by all the Members to honour Darragh Murray, Brideswell, Athlone at the next Civic Reception.

62.25 VOTES OF CONGRATULATIONS / SYMPATHY

No votes of congratulations/sympathy

63.25 A.O.B

A Cllr. Valerie Duffy addressed the meeting regarding Portiuncula Hospital:

“Portiuncula Hospital not only serves the community of Ballinasloe but also the surrounding counties and regions of Roscommon, Westmeath, Offaly, Tipperary, and Galway.

News broke 2 weeks ago regarding the Maternity Services in Portiuncula University Hospital, Ballinasloe and the challenges that have been encountered there.

12 reviews into maternity services at the hospital have been sought – 5 of which have been completed with 34 recommendations.

I am deeply concerned that no high-risk mothers can have babies in Portiuncula Hospital in the long-term. This has potentially huge knock-on implications for Portiuncula Hospital and for the women who currently and in the future will hopefully avail of its services.

It is envisaged that up to 25% of women will now be transferred away from Portiuncula Hospital given their need for specialist services – somewhere between 200 and 300 women. This when in 2024, 1,300 babies were born in PUH and PUH was 11th out of 19 hospitals in terms of births.

My fear is that an initial downgrading will lead to a bigger shift as women and their families who are not at high risk, move elsewhere, just in case their pregnancy status changes. We all know that there are no guarantees with pregnancy. This decision will also force women from Roscommon to travel longer journeys which could see them travel to Dublin, Portlaoise, Mullingar or Galway City.

I completely recognise that women and their babies must be safely cared for and the highest standards should be in place. I sympathise with the mothers and families who are the basis for these hospital reviews, and I hope that they are getting the support that they need.

Everything should and must be done to ensure the highest standards and procedures are in place in Portiuncula Hospital and that the maternity services there continue, for everyone – for all women, regardless of their pregnancy status.

I would ask that full funding be provided by the appropriate authorities to tackle all of the issues identified in the current and past reviews - Clinical care, Governance, Communication, and Infrastructure at the Unit.

I know that my fellow councillors here today are of one mind on this issue, that Portiuncula Hospital must continue to provide the necessary and vital services to meet the needs of our collective communities. We will need to work together as a political group in the Athlone MD and across the county of Roscommon and, work together with our colleagues in Galway, and with colleagues in the HSE West and Northwest area, to ensure this work gets done. What happens in Portiuncula has the ability to inform how government policy develops and is implemented across Ireland."

Cllr V Duffy thanked the Members for their support.

On the **Proposal of:** Cllr L Fallon

Seconded by: Cllr V Duffy

It was **AGREED** by all the Members to bring a motion to the next Plenary meeting, to write to the Minister for Health- Ms. Jennifer Carroll MacNeill requesting that funding be provided to implement the recommendations from the reviews for services upgrade to ensure continued services. Provision of adequate numbers of consultants and staff to facilitate upgrading of the services for the growing population in the surrounding areas adjacent to Portiuncula Hospital.

B Susan Loughnane presented correspondence attached from Greener Ideas limited in relation to road works at Monksland, Athlone on R362 associated with the Monksland Peaker Power Plant.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, 16th September, 2025.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are

Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator



Cathaoirleach



Countersigned



Roscommon County Council
Roads Department & Athlone
Municipal District Councillors
Aras an Chontae
Roscommon
Co. Roscommon
F42 VR98

Greener Ideas Ltd
No1 Warrington Place
Dublin
D02 HH27
Ireland

22nd July 2025

Ref: PD18/256 & PD22/234

Subject: Greener Ideas Ltd (GIL): Construction of a Gas Fired Power Plant at Monksland Athlone Co. Roscommon N37 R9N3 – Roadworks on R362

An Chara,

A Chathaoirligh and members of the council,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. We regret that we are unable to attend in person due to the unavailability of key personnel. In our absence, we have requested that the following statement be read on our behalf.

Greener Ideas Limited (GIL) is currently constructing a new gas-powered peaker plant at Monksland, Athlone. This will provide flexible electricity generation which is recognised as a key part of the transition to net zero and to energy security. This project and the associated works play an integral part in supporting the security of Ireland's electricity supply during periods of peak demand, while also facilitating the integration of greater levels of renewable energy into the national grid.

The project is currently nearing completion and will very shortly connect to the electricity network to enable export of power during periods when it is necessary to ensure the grid has sufficient power to meet demand. The primary fuel source for the Monksland Peaker Plant will be natural gas, which will be supplied from the Gas Networks Ireland's gas transmission pipeline that runs to the south of the site. The pipeline to connect the plant to the existing gas pipeline is presently under construction.

We would like to formally acknowledge and apologise for the extended duration of the roadworks currently taking place on the R362 in Monksland, which are in connection with the electricity grid connection. We understand the disruption this has caused and wish to provide an explanation for the delays, as well as an update on the expected completion timeline. In addition, we would like to take this opportunity to share details regarding the ongoing gas pipeline works on the R446 and in the vicinity of Summerhill National School and & Coláiste Chiaráin Secondary School on the Drum Road.



Electrical Grid Road Works on R362 beside Westpoint Business Centre

Roadworks on the R362, between the Westpoint Business Centre and Junction 13 of the M6, are underway to install high-voltage cables linking GIL's peaker power plant to the Athlone ESB substation.

This phase of work, which includes cable pulling, testing, and jointing, began in May 2025 and was initially scheduled for completion by the end of July. However, a failure of the cable pulling equipment on 9th June halted the final cable installation. Subsequent investigations into the cause of the failure have prevented the resumption of work. However we are now in a position for installation to restart. The resulting six-week delay, along with the need to reschedule overseas specialists, to carry out cable jointing and testing, means the works will now extend into mid to late September.

To reduce public disruption, the work area on the R362 will be temporarily removed in August and reinstated in September to enable the completion of cable jointing and testing.

Gas Pipeline works on R446 in the vicinity of Summerhill National School & Coláiste Chiaráin Secondary School

To supply natural gas to GIL's Peaker Power Plant in Monksland, Gas Networks Ireland is installing a pipeline from its existing gas pipeline at Keelty along the R446, passing Coláiste Chiaráin Secondary School, Summerhill National School and the Drum Community Centre.

Works began on 26th May and have progressed to Summerhill Business Park, before being relocated to the Drum Road at the start of the school holidays. This was to minimise disruption to the schools during term time. These works are expected to be completed before schools reopen. At that point, resources will return to the R446 to complete the final sections of the pipeline, with completion expected by mid to late October.

Gas Networks Ireland will continue to engage with stakeholders along the pipeline route and provide them with updates on any changes to the schedule.

Why is Greener Ideas Limited's Peaker Plant Required?

The development of GIL's peaking power plant in Monksland is in line with the government policy statement published on 30th of November 2021. This policy states that "***the development of new conventional generation (including gas-fired and gasoil/distillate-fired generation) is a national priority and should be permitted and supported in order to ensure security of electricity supply and support the growth of renewable electricity generation***".

As we move towards an electricity grid that is increasingly based on renewable energy, peaker power plants, such as the one presently under construction at Monksland, will be required to ensure security of electricity supply to the national grid.



The availability of renewable electricity, such as solar or wind, can be intermittent in nature and these generation sources may not always provide the power necessary to meet peak demand on the grid. During these periods, EirGrid may request peaker plants like Monksland to come online to make up the shortfall and ensure the grid has sufficient power to meet demand. However, as peaker plants are expensive to run they are typically the last line of defence, dispatched only when absolutely required to keep the lights, refer to Figure 1 below.

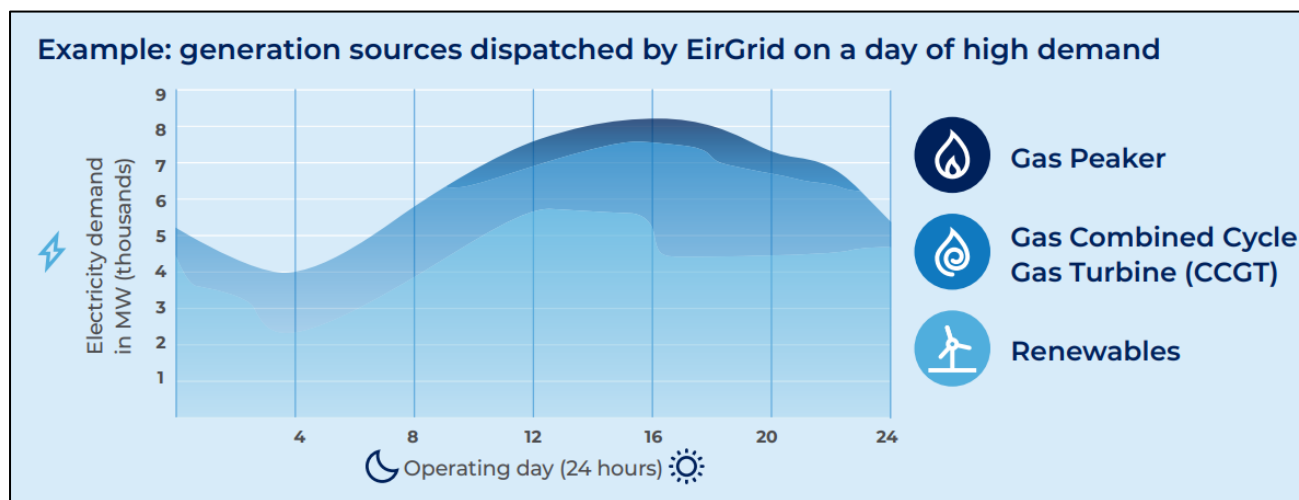


Figure 1 Generation Sources Dispatched by EirGrid on a day of High Electricity Demand

Yours sincerely

Greener Ideas Ltd. | Project Director

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