



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



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Miontuairiscí Coiste Polasaí Straitéiseach Pobal & Cultúr

Minutes of the Community and Culture Strategic Policy Committee Special Meeting

Dé Céadaoin 13ú Iúil 2022 11:00

Wednesday 13th July 2022 at 11 a.m.

Microsoft TEAMS

Members in attendance:

Cllr. Shelly Herterich Quinn (Chairperson)	Galway County Council
Cllr. Andrew Reddington	Galway County Council
Cllr. Liam Carroll	Galway County Council
Cllr. Padraic Mac an Iomaire	Galway County Council
Helena McElmeel	Business Representative
Máirtín Davy	PPN Representative

Staff in attendance:

Michael Owens	Director of Services
Sharon O'Grady	Arts Officer
Laura Sharkey	Administrative Officer

Apologies:

Cllr. Peter Keaveney	Galway County Council
Cllr. Ivan Canning	Galway County Council
Megan Flynn	PPN Representative

Cllr. Herterich Quinn welcomed everyone to the special meeting of Community and Culture SPC and thanked everyone for their attendance in person and noted the apologies received.

1. Minutes of Community and Culture meeting 5th April 2022.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn asked if there were any matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting of the Community & Culture SPC. No queries arose. On the proposal of Cllr. Liam Carroll seconded by Cllr. Padraic Mac an Iomaire, the minutes were agreed and adopted.

2. Review of Galway County Council Beach Byelaws.

Mr Owens, Director of Services introduced the presentation on the Draft Beach Byelaws 2022 and the accompanying documents:

- Galway Co Co Beach Byelaws 1997
- Beach Bye-Law Policy Paper Review
- Galway County Council Draft Beach Bye Laws 2022
- Beach Criteria and Explanatory Notes 2020

Existing Byelaws pertaining to Beaches have been in place since 1997. They now need to be updated to take into consideration the International Blue Flag Beach Criteria. Mr Owens noted that the introduction of new Byelaws is very timely in the context of the enhanced use of our domestic beaches and waterways over the summer period and their increased use during the Covid pandemic.

The Draft Galway County Council Draft Beach Bye Laws 2022 are to be brought to the Community and Culture SPC to consider and endorse so that they can be presented to Plenary Council for consideration in advance of the Statutory Public Consultation period.

Ms Laura Sharkey, A/O Corporate Service gave a presentation on the key changes proposed with the new byelaws and the impact of the Blue Flag criteria on our Galway County Beaches.

The main points of the presentation included:

- Bye-Law Timelines
- Blue Flag Beach Criteria including
 - Criterion 15 – Litter control of Beaches
 - Criterion 22 – No unauthorised camping, driving or dumping on the beach
 - Criterion 23 – Control of Dogs and other domestic animals
 - Criterion 30 – Management of different users and uses of the beach
- Changes from 1997 Bye-Laws
- Consideration for Control of Dogs
- Bye-Laws apply to only beaches listed in the schedule attached
- Management of Lough Corrib is under the Lough Corrib Navigation Trustees
- Maps for each nominated beach will be prepared before draft bye-laws go for public consultation

The following points were raised by the Members of the SPC in respect of the proposed bye-laws:

- Swimming off piers in North Galway areas e.g., Kilbeg Pier
- Where horses are prohibited on beaches – how would this apply to areas like Omey Beach and pony racing that takes place there
- Include definition of watersports
- To include item in respect of the harvesting of seaweed and shellfish
- Should dog litter also be specifically mentioned in the bye-laws
- Will Exercise classes and bootcamps held on the beach be subject to license under the new draft bye-law
- In relation to inflatables, what is the best practice nationally on this and should there be an outright ban?
- Will there be options to bring dogs onto the beaches to swim.
- Clarification on what if all beaches are covered by the byelaws. Are non-Blue Flag beaches included?
- Is there an option to include areas in North County Galway and is there an option to add additional bathing areas to the list.
- Will Gaeltacht students using the beaches during the summer months need a licence.
- Does the beach/ swimming area directly beside Renville Pier in Oranmore come under these byelaws
- It would be important to be very specific in the byelaws in relation to allowing dogs access to the beaches, so the rules are clearly stated for the public.

In response to the queries raised by the Members, the following responses were provided:

- The new bye-laws will only apply to the beaches that will be listed on the schedule including current blue-flag beaches and in the future any beach that receives a blue flag beach designation.
- Renville Pier would be more appropriately governed by a Piers and Harbour bye-laws as there is a pier adjacent to the swimming area
- Only activities that are looking to gain monetary reward for example exercise classes or surfing lessons would require a license if approved. Any non-commercial use of the beaches by the members of the public for leisure will not require a license.
- Other areas can be added to the schedule, and this can be considered when the draft plan goes out to Public Consultation and if approved by Council.

It was requested that the members select the option for the control of dogs on the beaches

Criteria 23 – Control of Dogs on Beaches

Between the hours of 11am and 7pm each day during the summer season it shall be prohibited to bring a dog onto any part of a beach as delineated, with the exception of any footpath or designated walkway within the inland beach area.

Options proposed for Blue Flags:

- a. Cordon off area of blue flag beaches for dogs for use within the designated times
- b. Designate a walking area/footpath for use by dogs

It was agreed by the Members that Option A would be the preferred and this will be presented in the draft bye-laws for public display.

Mr Owens requested that the SPC members endorse the byelaws with the following amendments to go to Council for condonation in advance of going to public consultation:

- Water sport activity definition included
- Prohibited act of seaweed and shellfish harvesting included complimentary to existing regulations
- Option A in respect of dog control

He also sought agreement from the SPC that the byelaws are also presented at the Connemara MD on 15th July 2022 in advance of going to Council as most of the beaches are in that district. He thanked the Chair and the members for facilitating this special meeting.

This motion was agreed by the SPC and was proposed by Councillor Liam Carroll and seconded by Cllr Herterich Quinn (Chairperson)

3. A.O.B

There were no items under A.O.B.

Cllr. Herterich Quinn thanked everyone for coming and the meeting was concluded.