

North Connacht Community Forum

Minutes of Meeting 12 on the 20th of November at 7pm via Zoom

Attending:

Philip Durkin (Swinford Amenities Development CLG), **Kieran Gallagher** (Swinford Amenities Development CLG and Athletic Club), **Pat Towey and Tom** (Ballaghaderreen Mens Shed), **John O Hara** (Councillor)

Also in attendance –

Bobby McCormack (Development Perspectives and Chairperson of the Forum), **Eoghan O Sullivan and Avril Wilson** from EirGrid.

Apologies: **Lorna Dennehy** (Mayo County Council),

Bobby started the meeting at 7.06 and welcomed people.

Minutes

Bobby reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting on May 29th, which included discussions on the community benefits strategy and a project update presented by Eoghan. The attendees approved the minutes with Philip proposing and Kieran G seconding.

Matters arising. – Philip D brought up the timeline

Agenda:

Bobby presented the agenda and running order of the evening.

Project Updates and Fund Distribution

The meeting focused on updates regarding the project and the Community Benefit Fund. Eoghan highlighted that construction is set to commence in Q1 next year, with 97% of landowners agreeing in principle to the project, though one remains difficult to communicate with. Philip raised concerns about the timeliness of updates and the status of the Community Benefit Fund administrator, which Avril clarified is still SECAD. The group discussed the project's progress, including completed GSI surveys and advanced ducting, as well as the distribution of the Community Benefit Fund into thirds, with the first third to be allocated soon.

The Community Benefit Fund was reviewed, with \$1.53 million allocated, 40% of which will be released for applications imminently, followed by two equal 30% releases in 2027 and 2028, split equally between community, sustainability, and biodiversity streams. Applications will open for two months, with information available on a dedicated EirGrid webpage, and SECAD will provide assistance throughout the process.

Community Benefit fund

Kieran inquired about available documentation and examples of previous applications, which Avril and Bobby addressed by offering to share relevant materials, including examples from other community benefit projects and the EirGrid website. Avril emphasized the importance of preparing for the fund's launch and expressed gratitude for the forum's long-standing support and involvement. The Fund will open for applications soon. The exact date and timing has yet to be confirmed.

Next steps and meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting take place in March 2026 or earlier if necessary. Bobby will circulate a doodle poll in early Jan 2026 to help inform the choice of the date.

Eoghan and Avril mentioned upcoming information clinics in Ballaghadreen and Swinford, with dates to be announced soon.

AOB

No AOB.

Bobby thanked people for attending and the meeting was ended at 7.45pm