

DEPUTATION MEETING MINUTES

Date & Time: 27th January 2016 @ 4pm

Deputation Group: Glenasmole Concerned Residents & Farmers Group

Councillors Present:	Mayor Sarah Holland Cllr. Mick Duff Cllr. John Lahart Cllr. Charlie O'Connor Cllr. Dermot Richardson Apologies: Cllr. Paula Donovan Cllr. Anne-Marie Dermody Cllr. Fintan Warfield	Cllr. Deirdre O'Donovan Cllr. Paul Foley Cllr. Colm Brophy Cllr. Ronan Mahon
Deputation:	Ms. Tara de Buitlear (Tallaght Community Council) Mr. Pat Ewen (Environmentalists) Gerry Gunning (IFA Executive) Donie Anderson (Local Farmer and Community Activist) Myles Murphy (Glenasmole community centre)	
Council Officials Present:		
Tony O'Grady	Land Use Planning & Transportation	
Michael Glynn	Land Use Planning & Transportation	
Rosaleen Dwyer	Land Use Planning & Transportation	
Brian Carroll	Housing, Social & Community Development	
Pamela Hughes	Housing, Social & Community Development	

The meeting was **chaired** by Councillor Deirdre O'Donovan.

Donie Anderson began the meeting by saying that the commonage grazing had gone on for generations. There were gates used in the area until the 1950's and in recent years more animals had begun roaming onto the lower lands. There is a need to control this and it can be done though the installation of cattle grids.

Tara de Buitlear from the Deputation group then explained that they were requesting the installation of Cattle Grids in four locations. The commonage grazing is a unique selling point in the Dublin area and the installation would improve road safety and reduce damage to the lowlands area that is caused by grazing sheep. A request was also made for South Dublin County Council Engineers to view Cattle Grids in other areas. The four locations were chosen because the design can be used. Ms. de Buitlear stated that there is cross county support for this initiative with 31 other associations backing the move.

Pat Ewen confirmed that the gates were there back in the 1950's and Mayo County Council have provided Cattle Grids that work well. He does not see the issue of safety.

Gerry Gunning then addressed the meeting to say that the Commonage was a unique situation because it covered such a large area and that Cattle Grids would be an enormous help to Farmers in the area. The issue has been raised in other areas i.e. The Cooley Peninsula. There are benefits to all users in the area and an important development.

Myles Murphy told the meeting that the good community spirit in the area was under threat because of wandering livestock. Mr. Murphy said that farming is important for livelihoods in the area but it is difficult and the number of sheep is reducing. The group have a letter from the Fire Brigade regarding the cost due to gorse fires and there is a need for the Council to assist the residents on the matter of installing Cattle Grids, if it's not addressed there will be irreversible consequences.

Tony O'Grady addressed the meeting to say that while there were some maintenance issues with Cattle Grids it would not be his main objection. The Cattle Grids are dangerous for cyclists and while the design with square bars are safer for those road users, they are easier for sheep to get across and therefore not suitable. He asked the group if fencing of the upland area had been considered. He would not be recommending the installation of Cattle Grids as this would be seen as making the situation more dangerous.

Michael Glynn then told the Deputation meeting that he had attended a site meetings in the area with Mr. Pat Lee. The site meetings took place where the old Cattle Grids were located. Different types of Cattle Grids had been used and they would not have kept sheep out of the lowlands area. The installation of Cattle Grids now could cause dangerous situations and cause Public Liability issues.

Rosaleen Dwyer agreed with the Deputation that the landscape was maintained by the grazing sheep and that the loss of them in the area would have a detrimental effect. She suggested that a different design or an alternative type of barrier would be suitable.

Donnie Anderson replied by saying that the group were prepared to considered other designs and that the Cattle Grids worked in other locations.

Pat Ewen does not see the dangers and there are already a number of irregularities on Roads.

Tara de Buitlear said that she felt that the items had full been fully considered and asked if it was only cyclists that there was issues with. That opinion contradicts Slaney Cycling club who are supportive of the introduction of Cattle Grids. Ms. de Buitlear reiterated that the group were open to the idea of other designs. Ms. de Buitlear also stated that there is no such thing as zero risk and an assessment should be done in the area.

Mayor Sarah Holland said that she was disappointed in the response from Council Officials and that there was a need to protect rural life over cyclists.

Cllr. Dermot Richardson said that the Council had forgotten about the rural community and that Public Liability should not be an issue. Cllr. Richardson also proposed that a trial of Cattle Grids could be put in place.

Cllr. Ronan Mahon said that it was important that the area be looked after and that the reinstatement of the Cattle Grids would show that the area is unique. He also thanked the locals for looking after the area and stated that the grazing sheep were also a Health & Safety issue to road users.

Cllr. John Lahart said that the Deputation group had put forward a compelling argument and that precedence, compliance and success in other rural areas show why the proposal is suitable. Cllr. Lahart also said that Public Liability claims will be made on whatever is done in the area including sheep wandering on the roads and that this issue should be brought forward on the full Council meetings agenda.

Cllr. Paul Foley thanked the Deputation group for their well thought out presentation and their evidence based research. Cllr. Foley also stated that the Councillors would continue to put this on the Council meetings agenda.

Cllr. Charlie O'Connor said he was also supportive of the Deputation groups and said that the answers given by Council Officials on other occasions had been the same and that Council Officials needed to understand the concerns and support that the local community had.

Tony O'Grady replied by saying that there are obvious dangers everywhere but any new items going in need to be safety proof. The cost of Cattle Grids was not an issue here and the installation of fencing would be a safer solution. Mr. O'Grady confirmed that he would examine the booklet presented by the group however he can still see the installation of Cattle Grids causing Health & Safety issues.

Mayor Sarah Holland said that a motion was being presented for the February Council meeting.

Cllr. Deirdre O'Donovan asked that the Council Officials request reports from other Local Authorities that had commonage areas under their control.