

# Clifden Regeneration Meeting

## Town Hall

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023

*"Towards the Alcock & Brown Hotel... the first thing I see difficult here or wrong here is the loading bay directly outside a 20 bedroom hotel that's horrendous in my eyes because there's loading bays at the moment outside old SuperValu and outside EJ kings and if anybody lives in the town and can hear these trucks at 7:00 o'clock in the morning with the refrigeration units on humming from 7:00 until 10:00 o'clock because the restaurant owners and the hoteliers give the keys to the delivery guys, they come and they make their deliveries and they are gone but the noise level on the street is horrendous, so the loading bay there is in my book wrong and if you go up Main Street I think you have three if not four more loading bays up on main street, you've one outside Boyle sports you've one outside EJ kings you've one outside Moran's chemist, so that's four loading bays on that stretch of street alone.*

*If you zoom around Market Street there's one loading Bay to the best of my knowledge on that drawing, just one.. so that's only one loading Bay from Stanley's corner all the way up to EJ King's.. is there no shops down there that needs deliveries? I don't know.. These are practical things that I see wrong with this. The Square area.. I know it's the design mistake here but the turning for the articulated trucks that go in at 8:00 o'clock in the morning into the supermarkets, they can't turn in.. when we did this before and I was very involved with Maddens and the Galway County Council. Maddens with the construction people, we actually laid out on the square with ropes and we got articulated trucks to come in and see could they make the swing, it was a practical feasible way of doing it and that's the way the curve worked that time, that curve there is totally wrong it won't work. The cycle lane going from Stanleys all the way up there to where that car is on the square now I have a problem with this open Main Street because when you were reversing parking you've a cycle lane and then you've footpath, for a car to reverse in or drive in to a footpath into there needs to be a curb because otherwise people won't know how far in they've gone, so a different color texture of the road surface, the cycle lane and the footpath is not sufficient there needs to be curb or else the cars will be going in on top of the cycle lane. So what you have there is a trip hazard, the people get out their cars and they don't see the curb because the curb is separating cycling from the parking area and I'm assuming there'll be another curb from the cycle lane to the footpath... do you understand what I'm saying? It's just it's a simple thing it's a practical thing but all these things have to be spoken about at the meeting because if we let all this go through and whoever gets the contract goes along and puts in all these curbs they're all trip hazard outside our front door, there's elderly people and going back to outside Foyle's hotel you have three parking spaces for invalid parking on a downhill slope outside the front door of the hotel. If any of you have any experience in dealing with persons in wheelchairs helping them in or out or anything like that, it's near impossible to take a person out of the car on a downhill slope into a wheelchair you have the door falling down and the person trying to get out, you're trying to hold the wheelchair. Why is there three of them together? Why don't we move them around the town and make it more accessible. If my memory serves me correctly the one outside Foleys Hotel is impractical at the moment, there was one outside Griffins/Paulines hairdresser just that area there was there another one up the Main Street, there was two on main streets outside the Celtic Hotel, these are things that the planners will have to look at. It's not fair on invalids to be told to park all in one space, if it's wet day like today and they need to go to Morans Chemist or something like that or go down to Mitchell's restaurant wherever they want to go, the downhill slope*

*for a wheelchair user is totally impractical. I'm glad to see the extra parking brought in which we all spoke very strongly about the previous meeting, I don't think they can introduce anymore I've studied this quite a bit on this drawing and it looks ok but all these little tweaks and I'm sure there's other people here at the meeting that have premises or ideas of their own so at that I'll say no more"*

*Gerard King*

*"Most people would know me I suppose with an events hat on we have The Trad Fest coming up in 10 days and looking at the screen there I'd probably be having a few nightmares in the next few nights if this was brought in. I suppose I'm completely positive towards most of the things there and everyone here has their own opinions and would be better spoke on parking and suggestions like Gerard made, I suppose my main concern here that I noticed on the plan, quite a long while ago actually was the cycle way that is proposed to run up along the North End of Market Street so I suppose I'll just put an event hat on and let somebody fight the case down from Market Street from Mitchell's but from Mitchell's upwards there's proposed new cycle way so it would be running along what we call, where we park in our cars there from Mitchells up to all along all the way up to what Gerard mentioned the curve there in the street so I suppose on Saturday week when we pull in our outdoor stage at 6:30 in the morning, we pull it in along across from the Darcy 12 and Tom kings on this plan there would be a cycleway between our outdoor stage and the path, so I suppose if we're having a band we want the gig rig from 11:00 AM on the Saturday morning until 11:00 PM on the Saturday night so there would be a gap of a cycle way with people allowed to cycle between the gig rig and the path so I don't know how that would work.. I suppose my question would be could it be closed off for events I suppose I'm kind of speaking with the arts festival hat on here as well and because they would have the same issue and they have a gig rig I believe on both weekends and so there would be as I said based on that proposal a cycle path between the gig rig, the outdoor stage and the path. The other proposal I'd be saying is can it be stopped for an event, can there be a clause put in that County Council can say well for this event or that event that the cycleway is closed at Mitchell's we'll say or else would it be proposed that the cycleway would be finished at Mitchells because I suppose the other aspect of it I see which is for somebody else to raise, is that there's a market every Friday so managing that somebody selling vegetables there would be a cycle way between the vegetable stall and the purchasers. That's all we seen as a committee and a few of us met on it and we've seen that so we thought we'd raised it"*

*Marie Walsh*

*"I think the reverse parking will be complicated I would imagine I don't know seems like it might be complicated, another thing I think I've been trying to push it for a long time is the possibility of parking at the back of the mill with pile drive, don't touch the river at all just build over the river on beams and there's massive parking there with access to Ballyconneely Rd. And it could be utilized, pile driving is a modern world now with engineering and I wouldn't think that it would cost a lot of money it can be made work it will work someday and it's space there available space, not used, enhance the town, make it look beautiful and I see the rest the plan is great I think that's all the opinions I have"*

*Michael McNamara*

*“On the comments of the reverse parking I'm a civil engineer so I know about this type of work. Have the consultants done the traffic survey management, traffic management plan for the town of itself, because if they haven't actually undertaken any of that work it is more or less wasted. You need separation of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Without a traffic survey, detailed traffic survey throughout different parts of the year which sets out what your traffic flow, is how regular your flow is. Again likewise I think reverse parking is totally unfeasible for this situation because you won't have to many reverse parking into a space which backs up traffic and second of all you will have to get out. It's bad enough as it currently is you're getting out into the traffic and you're driving straight in your new obstruction, but if you think about three or four cars backing up after you and there's another ten cars trying to come out at the same time the entire circulatory system would grind to a complete standstill if they have not done their survey which again there will be various times of the year as we all know Christmas, summer, bank holidays is a nightmare as it is but if you reduce the traffic, reduce the spaces and then you have to reverse in and get out and if they haven't done their figures that is going to be complete disaster. The fact that it's going to back up the system you know if you start two or three cars from at one point everything stops. Where you're already reducing the spaces people have to naturally unless you completely get cars out of the town as I mean obviously that should be the priority in the first place to keep the system working but if that's done right everybody's going to continue to circulate around town trying to find space as it currently works, but then you're coming up with a problem that people then have to stop, cars have to stop and you have to reverse in, the next car is reversing and likewise when you got out you have to obstruct the traffic on your exit again. Unless that's very closely monitored and again unless they have their figures exactly right, which then should be the basis of what their plans and proposals are. Likewise cycle way ending in the middle of the street that's ridiculous and again there needs to be separation of all your types of usage as well which maybe that has but it's not clear. ”*

*Darragh O Donoghue – Engineer*

*“I just might add there because we were talking about before the meeting and I was at the last meeting and listened to the other one last summer, Things will click after a while but there's a massive difference between reverse wishbone parking on Main Street and outside Hehirs, so I think there's wishbone outside Hehirs is it, if you're reversing on a hill into a diagonal parking space that's a different bit of elite parking then it would be let's say outside Upstairs Downstairs so it's just something to point out”*

*Kevin Gavin*

*“A big thing for me I always hear from customers is there is nowhere to park in the high season so a simple way around that with all this amazing things that are happening are alive parking space availability on coming into the main entrance roads so it shows the spaces that were available on that sheet and printed off this from like there is life valley at the top and just Auckland down the bottom just a show of spaces where people can go so they see it when they come in and they're not getting annoyed from straight away. I suppose a lot of people are scared of change and I believe there was a huge concern back in the day when there used to be a two-way traffic system and it was removed. I don't think any of us could imagine that now, so when I initially look at this plan it actually excites me because we're always being compared to Westport you know this kind of I think, raises the game for us and puts us on the map a bit more. Just the Amphitheatre I think that could be a little bit*

*bigger for the likes of events with the arts festival, I think that would be good maybe take away a bit of the skate park a small bit of it. A lot of the cars on the parking images seem to be hatchbacks, there's nothing more annoying than having tight car parking spaces so I'd allow for more family SUV sized spaces than those kind of what's in the image"*

*Jonathan Daly – O'Dailagh Jewelers*

*"We're a group that got set up to look at in time hopefully having a dark sky park in Connemara area, there's one in Mayo and it has brought great advantages to Mayo and they're actually parks that are becoming very important worldwide. On the West Coast of Ireland we are one of the last places in Europe that I actually have what we call pristine dark skies meaning on a night not like tonight now, but on a night when there's no clouds that we can actually see the Milky Way and that's a new type of tourism. It's called Astro tourism and it's a tourism that comes in the off season, because we need it more dark than we have actually during the summer time. So we're trying to develop and involve people in it but it's in this Eileen Mannion has very kindly sent our submission into the designers because we inadvertently somehow didn't get to know the other meeting. But it's really important to know the kind of lighting that Clifden actually puts in and unfortunately these days when any of the County Councils are upgrading lighting they're intending to put in the very white or actually they're blue, but they look white, very high resolution lighting which means that for people living in Clifden, who live there all the time it will be brighter and it'll actually be extremely bright at night time. That's becoming very detrimental for human health but also for the health of the planet and even though people think the leds are in one way cheaper to run but actually in fact we're using much more of them so it's not working out any cheaper, but it's working out very detrimental and for our group if we were able to get designation of a dark sky park it would be over near the National Park area. Clifden has what we call a sky glow, so for any of you that ever drive out from Clifden in all directions, Clifden lights up right out nearly as far as Ballyconneely back to Cleggan way down the Galway Road and that is very bad for us to justify because it would shine out as far as Letterfrack where the National Park is. We just want to be included in looking at the kind of lighting and particularly lighting that would bring in the idea of Astro tourism which would be tourists in the winter and people will be coming and coming into Clifden but coming in to put on different events that can be put on to do it dark skies so I just wanted to actually bring it to your attention, because it's something that most people don't know anything about. Actually even our ordinary lighting and probably when most people notice it is when nowadays you're driving, on the new cars when coming towards you, they all have the very same lighting and for most people they're blinding, so the very same where the lighting that could happen and it would be a awful pity if Clifden got a fabulous regeneration but actually got over lite. Just wanted to add that into the pot"*

*Caithriona Nic Ghiollaphadraig - Connemara Dark Sky Group*

*"Just to go back to the parking on Main Street, I'm saying it all the time but with the parallel parking outside me on Morans Butchers side. How many spaces are you saying in total for Main Street of parking so there's a total of 28 spaces, is there going to be a time frame on any of these parking spaces or can there be cars left from the night before, can feed the measure and blocks it up for the full day, seven days of the week? How many full time residents around Main Street which are entitled to permits, any residents in the town are entitled to go for a permit yeah on a yearly basis for €15 or €20 per year as of is it's two permits per household. There's more apartments on main streets than*

*ever and there can be potential for more to be put there. So even if it's for an Airbnb side if it's not full time they can I know they're not entitled to a permit but it's taking up spaces or so from if that went ahead there be zero spaces on Main Street, that's from EJ King's down to the chemist on Declan Moran's side or Topaz. Personally I think spaces have to be put in place more than taking anything away in this day and age and if you're talking about up at the hospital for parking, an evening like this evening when you all came here would you have walked from the hospital to get here in the rain? And you were coming to a meeting that was organized. If this was a restaurant for example are people going to walk that distance? I can't see personally.. Does anyone else from Main Street who wants to say anything tonight or on the other street. It's the same down Market Street as well."*

*Laurence McGonagle – Morans Butchers*

*"We're just losing all our spaces, being in retail you know you just to have that space free, if someone's coming along at the moment they shoot in and you get them in the door hopefully, retail is fickle enough. Clifden is like an overflowing bucket for those peak period times, two laps of the town and you're gone, they're gone somewhere else, we're just losing it, we're giving it away constantly. That's my only comment it's a bit of a gripe really but I think it's just lethal losing"*

*Mcdarragh Stanley*

*"I am a homeowner and a business owner on Main Street, I'm just following on Lawrence said there's I reckon there's about 10 residents on the street so that's an underestimation in a big way. They might not all have permits, they could get permits so then you're 20 is down to a minimum of 10 anyway I know that because we lived there. There definitely seems to be too many as Gerard mentioned, too many loading bays, too many disabled parking spaces on Main Street to the detriment of parking spaces for whether it be business owners, customers and residents so Main Street definitely seems to lose out, there seems to be a higher concentration of parking space on Market Street as opposed to Main Street I know it's a big longer road but it seems to be an over concentration of loading bays and disabled spaces on Main Street. Also I'm concerned that the lack of a real plan is where the additional parking spaces are going to go? Is that confirmed that the car park is going into the hospital? I think we need to get that done before any of these progresses, there's no point losing spaces and then hopefully the car park comes further down the line."*

*Wayne Baylis – Upstairs Downstairs*

*The parking is the lower part of hospital road it's not the actual hospital, we fought hard to retain that with a big meeting here. It's the lower part of the hospital road, there's land in there which is in ownership of the county council so thats largely part of the planning application. It'll all be one application and there's 53 spaces there"*

*Councilor Eileen Mannion*

*"2 main points really, I second it obviously is an exciting project to improve Clifden would be the key and will be everyone's ambition and that's the most important thing we want to take on board. It clearly needs more consultation that is seems very important to me today. Looking at it I suppose without an alternative in parking we have a big problem because the objectives of the project are increased people's time in the town and reduce traffic in the town but they're kind of contrary to without the parking you can't produce that. Couple of things.. the Greenway is still not linked, the*

*Greenway goes around the town but it doesn't link to the Greenway going out on the railway line, this is the big problem really that the bottom end of town really needs to be looked at, I said in the last meeting to relationship to school, that the secondary school is linked to the cycle lane it's very important but the bottom end of town that's not happening, doesn't seem to be linked properly at all yet. The harbour park which looks fantastic, the only thing I would say is that which was mentioned last time too both the playgrounds and the Astro pitch from a practical perspective it would seem mad to move the astro pitch, surely that's a lot of money waste that could potentially go into producing some parking or something else likewise the playground potentially to leave those two structures, improve the rest of the park which clearly needs the development and take that money and use it elsewhere potentially parking solution"*

*Steven Foyle – Foyles Hotel*

*"There's a lot of things people talking about the removing of car parking spaces but one thing that I think people aren't taking into consideration is the expansion of the footpaths so the expansion of the footpaths means that all the outdoor spaces that are currently being taken up by restaurants and food seating which to my count off the top of my head on Main Street is about 8 to 10 possible car parking spaces on Main Street at the moment, those spaces will be reopened particularly on the left hand side of Main Street but if we widen the spaces of the footpaths up because that outside eating area will be moved on to the footpaths, so yeah you're losing car parking spaces but if you calculate it throughout the entire town you're probably not losing quite as many as you think because of the outdoors eating spaces at the moment"*

*Hannah Nagel – 12 Pins*

*"This really goes on to an extension of the harbor park and I wanted to bring it up, you talk about the dark skies project which I think is a wonderful idea but I wanted to talk really about as you've got the chamber here just to remind them about the lack of parking on the green space back to sky road next to the entrance to Clifden castle, following on from this could they please try and do something about that because we've already lost one house from the village and another house, another family threatening to go because of the mess with the green, which was our village green and the land owners of the village have agreed to let the visitors down into the castle grounds because it's a private road and all of that and that's fine, but we really then need to be reciprocated by some form of parking and some kind of restoring of the village green that was, rather than now it's a total mess with debris and people parking and just general junk thrown on it so it that really doesn't say much for the area because that's really a big plus to tourism and to have access to Clifden castle and we don't wish that it would be denied anybody but just a little bit of leeway maybe with parking down the beach that was promised by various groups in the past, that maybe it encouraged people just to walk there but something needs to be done so i would just like to put that on the record"*

*Carmel Lydon*

*"I'm just concerned that there are no cars on the diagram on the proposal and we really need to keep our parking so can you tell me what their intent to do beach road and parking"*

*Julia Foyle – The Quay House*

*“I know that the fisherman and yourselves weren't consulted yet but that's going to happen and because in relation to that I checked with them today, they met the Chamber of Commerce, The Tidy Towns and The Community Council but they didn't meet anyone related to the harbor down there so they will maybe a zoom meeting or something, I'll set that up”*

*Councillor Eileen Mannion*

*“Is it possible for us to see the criteria requirements for the funding just to see what we need to do parking wise”*

*Steven Foyle – Foyles Hotel*

*“The first time I heard about this was at the last meeting a few weeks back and they said the background to this is we have to do XY and Z in order to have a successful plan with the funding in the first place. I e-mailed him today if he could send down the four criteria that they're working on, that they have to do. I may have it already in an e-mail but very good point”*

*Terrence O Toole – Connemara Chamber of Commerce*

*“Matter of interest just so it is on the record where is the funding coming from”*

*Kevin Heanue – Mediator*

*“It's coming out of a Rural Regeneration Development funds, there's a billion euro allocated over the next number of years for projects like this. It is sort of national policies plan for the government as well so that's where funding is coming from, I think 7 or 8 million allocated so far to this the way it is to get the plan together and the surveys and things like that”*

*Councillor Gerry King*

*“The Regeneration fund was set up by I think Minister Rynne was the first minister in that department and for across the country to regenerate rural areas they have this fund that was back in I think 2019 it was first announced. So in June 2019 in the middle of the Marconi Festival which the Chamber of Commerce organized and the county manager was out so they planned to put in the town but the community council just did such huge work on the amenity park, but it was difficult to get funding, they got permission for a lovely plan, there was public consultation, they got planning permission. The department of communications own part of the land so it took us several years to sort out a sub lease and that by the time that was done I think people had run out of steam so the community council did huge works so I really wanted that included. Back in 2019 they agreed include the harbor park and the harbour so we got funding then for that, it's public consultation was in 2022 this stakeholder engagement 2023 and hopefully go for planning this year so that's where the money is coming from but there is criteria and it has to be transformational, we can't just go in for a plan to do good paths or just digging up things it has to be a transformational plan to get funding. The Chamber of Commerce were very brave back in the day when they put a one way traffic system in*

*Clifden it's was a huge engagement we couldn't imagine what the town would be like without a two way system so I think we have to be brave and be forward thinking and look to the future of the town. The engagement here and the comments are very informative and they will go back to the design team and treat them as its not gone for planning yet and they will go to An Bord Pleanalla, there will a be consultation process and people can engage with us. What you want is a plan that is working for the town, for the people living in the town, for the people living in the town and to enhance our businesses. The most concern is during the winter when the town is quiet, we don't want to stop people coming, we want to grow the town, make it all year round and make business accessible and for people to stay and spend more time in the town, it's our plan it's for the town and the main thing is that everybody is largely happy with what goes forward for planning."*

*Coucillor Eileen Mannion*

*"I don't see any reference made down towards the beach, as anybody walks down that road and an ordinary day driving down during tourism it's constantly being walked by people going to the beach as irrespective of whether it is good beach or bad beach there's no facilities on the road, like a foot path or something to actually help them go along, I see them with prams walking and everything else and it's impossible for them and especially if this is if it says Beach Road people will walk that road"*

*Peter Carey*

*"Checking out the figures you have there, the SuperValu I would have thought it was a private business, how are they getting permission to use the SuperValu, at the moment they're saying SuperValu has 42 on level one, 52 on level two and 52 on level three. I just want to know when they did that survey because of last Friday week you had to go to Level 3 to get parking. The other question was that the church there's also mass time, they come for funerals and all that so they there is 43 in the church 28 spaces available. Hard to see them at times and the tourist information place I take it they're talking about the public car park. At the moment they say that there's 57 spaces available, 10:00 o'clock in the morning during the summer there's nothing available"*

*Gerard Conneely*

*"On the church yes they do seem to be relying on private business a lot for the car parking here and while we've seen the 30% reduction, the on street public parking 30% reduction they've sort of from what I can see are trying to mitigate this to somewhat degree by relying a little bit on the private sector there. I'm not sure what they introduced with the church there but that's church lands I imagine and SuperValu level 1-2 and 3 it was raised at the last meeting that will they be entering some sort of arrangement with SuperValu to compensate them for the service that they're giving."*

*Terrence O Toole – Connemara Chamber of Commerce*

*"I'd like to compliment you guys at the top table for the work and efforts that you're putting into this and the Councilors for coming to here tonight. I've been involved in the Chamber of Commerce and various different committees throughout the town for numerous years going back to somebody mentioned about the two way traffic and we change to introduce the one way traffic system we try to*



*get the N 59 to go around the town all various things but this is one of the better meetings I've been at where consultation is going to the people of the town, this is our second meeting here it's well attended I'd say if the night was a little bit better it would be better attended. The comments coming back from the floor are very positive and practical, I don't hear anybody being negative about the project which is great because if you have negativity you'll never get progress so it's all coming good and if we can keep our ship sailing and get our money and get the work done I did speak to John and Terrence there before the meeting started, people might not realize the ball alley project, the harbour project and the town project won't be all done under the one scheme because the funding won't be enough to do it I think we're allocated about 7 million to do, that 7 million would be taken up just doing the town scheme alone, so don't let people think these 3 projects would be done at the same time and the town would be brand new, I don't think that's the way it's going to happen and correct me on that if I'm wrong, but I think that's the way it's going to be but again I'd like to thank you guys for the time and effort you're putting into it and the consultation is excellent, thank you very much"*

*Gerard King*

*"just briefly there and parking maybe it's a thing going forwarding into the plan maybe that we could have a look at the tourist office parking there and maybe get an upper floor into that ground and it's a chance it's in the criteria somewhere that's I know they're saying taking out the Town Center the cars but you have to get them into somewhere as well so I might think there's a chance there to maybe incorporate that into the plans and just very briefly on the whole thing concerns there, let everybody speak because you know there are people that are living in the business in the town are the probably the more effected but in general, I think when we started this process and we have ironed out a lot of stuff in two or three meetings and again the guys at the top table have done a lot of work with the background to get it this far. I think any of the issues tonight I think can be worked on again for the final before it goes to the final submission, there is definitely a couple of things there just with the one on the number of loading bays and the disability parking where you have slopes and that now there was the general chat at the at the last meeting I think where depending on ground surface then the slopes could be taken out of some of the streets depending on what type of, that would probably take another bit of a ground survey to be done to level out the streets abit. The disability accessibility spread that out abit and loading bays on Main Street obviously can be cut down, one or two and that would make further parking on that street, as it's the main I suppose thoroughfare for pharmacies there and the shops there so maybe a couple extra places to get in there. Overall I think the project and the meeting has been very positive and I certainly think anything that's coming out of it is good vibes, even with the concerns that are there I think they can be certainly worked on and the top table are talking to the councillors, we will certainly do our best to bring it to the next stage"*

*Councillor Gerry King*

*On the SuperValu car parking I think the discussions were that it would be the same price as the on Street car parking because they will bring in a charges against SuperValu at some point, I think they just have to work on the software or something but it should be the same as the on street parking that's my understanding"*

*Councillor Eileen Mannion*

*“The one little thing I know it was mentioned very well I listened to meeting last summer away holidays in France and looked at everywhere over there holiday eyes on and I've been looking at this town ever since with holiday eyes one very good point, I think Steven made it that day and other people have made it as we go into the busy season over Easter and the summer, it's very important telling our staff not to be taking up spaces car parking spaces that we need for our customers and it's one thing straight away that we can fix without any building or any planning or anything like that so the car park in super value think it's the third level is open for that. Some days you're loading and unloading or picking somebody up but when you start doing an 8 hour shift and there's a parking space taken upside that's an absolute no brainer”*

*Kevin Gavin*

*“In relation to the harbor park area there I think in the previous options there was plans for skate park, I think was option three on the on the previous plan I just think that would be, now it does have a pump track there which would be great but I think it would be a great idea to incorporate the skate park facility it just has more option for younger kids to have down there it would be easier to maintain as well as because of concrete, maybe we could incorporate more parking down there so it's closer to town”*

*Toby Foyle*

*“On behalf of the chamber I would like thank everybody for coming out tonight, everybody has their own particular concern and particular to their own businesses and to their own space. The overall theme here that The Chamber is trying to embrace the change that will make the town a far better place. This particular Chamber got involved more than two years ago when the stated objectives of The Chamber is to extend the season of the town so the town can become more of a year round destination to do business. Anything that can foster a business in the town throughout the 12 months of the year, one of the real concerns of The Chamber is that we all talk about parking, about July and August and the concerns there are about that our biggest concerns is not just July and August.. it's October, November, December, January, February and March when there's no shortage of parking spaces in the town and you want people to come to town and it's not just an eating and drinking emporium town, all the other businesses the retail business, the post office, the pharmacy, the butcher, the Baker and all those businesses are really vital to the ongoing day-to-day commerce and business to town. They are the businesses that need to be nurtured and they're the business that need to be supported by way of parking and that nobody going to go and carry their leg of lamb from Morans over to the hospital, business like those need to be nurtured and supported. Paddy Casey at the last meeting he made a point that pharmacy and a lot of elderly people use the pharmacy and they want to park outside and his particular business is squashed between an outdoor dining area and the loading bay, they're the detail that I think will be ironed out in the final planning and consultation with the County Council and so on and so forth. The overall theme and the overall trust of what The Chamber is trying to do, is to nurture and foster continuation of the business throughout the year and to extend the season and make the town center a center of commerce and business all year round, so it just doesn't become a July and August type of situation where it's all outdoor dining and so on so forth, I think that's a key factor anything that kind of nurture, develop and foster the continuation of the fundamentals of the principles that founded the town 200 years ago. Not to drive*

*all the business of the town over the Galway road which would be a disaster, we're fortunate that one of the main supermarkets in town is in the town center so that is bringing a lot of business in. There's a balancing act you between winter and summer so let's not lose sight of the winter business which is key and anything that can continue to keep more businesses open throughout the winter months. July and August are well capable of looking after themselves and they do. I'm more concerned about the winter and having a full 12 month business in town. I think that's a key factor and a key objective of this particular Chamber from the very outset. I think we have everybody's concerns here, The Chamber think creating the forum so that absolutely everybody can voice their opinion, we have had quite a few consultations great credit to the Galway County Council and to our local Councillors here Eileen and Jerry. There was a two day event here followed up by the day down in the station house, I think 80 different submissions were forwarded to Galway County Council and to the designers on the back of that meeting, so we can't say that we haven't had adequate and enough consultation from the designers and from Galway County Council and there certainly has been indeed great feedback from all the businesses and the towns people so I think the level of engagement and the level of consultation has been second to none thanks to Eileen & Jerry for fostering that and developing it"*

*John Sweeney – President Chamber of Commerce*

*"There should be a walk right up there for people to get up onto the main road and cross into the hall which there's a little flower going just under the statue, there should be a walkway up from there so people could park on the left hand side down there and walk up to the hall because it's a nightmare now back there when there's bingo with traffic and there's a whole main road down underneath which people can't get up to the hall you could consider that in your plan if it is possible"*

*Peter Carey*

*Not enough parking outside AIB Bank could do with disability space. There is always cars parking on double yellow lines outside AIB - no easy place to park for disabled drivers close to Bank.*

*Josephine DeCoursey*