

Submission to Galway County Council on the Review of Kinvara Local Area Plan:

At the launch of the present Kinvara Local Area Plan in 2005 it was stated by Paul Ridge, the then Director of Services, that he was committed to having a Sewage Treatment plant operational in Kinvara before the end of the period of that plans life. The original plan states under objectives; 'Ensure that the Kinvara Sewage scheme is completed during the lifetime of this Plan'. (P30 WS1)

Despite an active campaign here in Kinvara since 1997 and earlier, we still pipe our unfiltered, untreated in any way, residential and business sewage from the village, directly into Kinvara Bay through a pipe whose open end is clearly visible at low tide.

A beautiful amenity sits on our doorsteps, underused because it is visibly polluted. A growing population is forced to live ever further into the countryside because no new development can take place within the town boundaries as no sewage disposal exists and new town buildings have been rightly precluded from piping into the existing archaic system.

The main employment in Kinvara is tourism and from March to November tour buses pass through our town, stopping to photograph the picturesque castle and ancient island ruins, and the little pier clinging to the Bay. But if they choose to stay overnight and suggest paddling or swimming in the waters, or even taking a small sailing boat out for a spin, they soon realise what lies beneath.

Restaurants, cafes, pubs, arts and crafts shops all vie to make a living but sadly it could be so much better.

During festival time at Cruinniu na mBad the towns population swells as visitors from far and near come to admire the old boats and the old ways being re-enacted. But in a warm Summer, as this year, when we should all be enjoying the fresh sea air the only smell along Kinvara Bay was the stench of rotting sewage.

How long should citizens, taxpayers, wait for what is a basic piece of infrastructure? How long should it take in a modern first world country? How long is too long?

Therefore any changes to the LAP should emphasis the overriding importance of the provision of sewage treatment. This really is the bottom line and should be the plan's first and core priority because

1. The pollution levels in the bay are a public health hazard. Your own survey shows that in many parts of the bay the e-coli levels exceed 10,000 per millilitre of water – **five times the statutory level**. Samples taken from the pier have exceeded 20,000.
2. Sewage treatment is the pre-condition for many of the plans other proposals. Even modest developments in Main Street, for example, are forbidden pending its provision.
3. It is simply not acceptable that there is visible and smell-able pollution in a tourist seaside town in the West of Ireland. Not only does it compromise the tourist business in the town but also seriously damages Ireland's image as a green and pleasant place in which to take a holiday.

Submission to Galway County Council on the Review of Kinvara Local Area Plan (contd.):

At our meeting with Jim Cullen in June of this year we were told that the County Council has now sent the Detailed Design proposals to the Dept.of the Environment for its approval. We ask you and expect you, as the provider of basic infrastructure in County Galway and as the body to whom business rates and water charges are paid, to ensure that the government is giving this urgent attention and that it is approved within weeks. We can see no reason why this should take more than two to three months and since it was sent in July we expect it to be returned by October.

In the past the Department of the Environment has taken an inordinate amount of time to grant such approval, up to 18 months and more. **This is not acceptable and we will not accept it.** Already the Community Council has voted at a meeting in May 2010 to lead a campaign of refusal to pay these monies which are being requested although the services are not being provided. We see no reason to pay for services that are not provided.

What other options do we, as a Community, have to press home to you whose paid obligation is the provision of services?

This submission is simply stating the obvious.

Each and every other statement of intent, suggestion, proposal for development, the way forward, what our priorities are, all of these are totally and exclusively dependant on the provision of a Sewage Treatment Plant. Those other priorities for the record are:

- ...Public Car Park and Public Toilet
- ...Maintenance of Pier
- ...Traffic Management Plan
- ...Redevelopment of Market Square as a shared space

Yours faithfully,

Dominic Gallagher.....Chairperson

Clare Mara.....Secretary

Maria Hannigan...Treasurer

Officers of Kinvara Community Council.....17th September 2010.