

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to my newsletter.

I hope you find the contents of interest. The items are a brief glimpse of some of the things which I have been working on.

I welcome back the areas in the east of the county which are now back into the constituency. Areas include **Dunmore, Garrafrauns, Williamstown, Glenamaddy, Clonberne, Moylough, Mountbellew and Kilconnell**, all of which were part of the constituency previously.

The plans for Budget 2025 are being made and I am lobbying for supports for small business which are under pressure, young people who need affordable houses and people with disabilities.

I continue to highlight the issues of concern within the constituency at Government level, in the Dáil and at the Committee on Disability Matters and the Budgetary Oversight Committee, of which I am a member.

Please contact me if you have any issues or concerns. **My constituency office is a one-stop shop where my staff and I can advise and help you. Office hours are Monday to Thursday 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm. Friday 10am to 1pm.**

Best Wishes.
Seán Canney TD

GALWAY EAST AUTUMN 2024



INDEPENDENT

SEÁN

CANNEY TD

HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE



I have called on the Department of Housing to invest in the delivery of wastewater treatment plants in towns and villages if we are to deliver housing. The Government need to invest at least €500 million to provide the necessary infrastructure needed. Funding has been allocated to **Clarinbridge** and **Craughwell**, but work has not yet commenced on these projects. In County Galway we have 30 towns and villages, which are unable to build houses due to the lack of wastewater infrastructure. Places like **Corofin, Abbeyknockmoy, Ardrahan, Labane** and **Kilconnell** are remaining stagnant and will not get planning permission for housing due to the absence of wastewater treatment plants. These same towns and villages are littered with private wastewater treatment plants which are not being maintained and are an environment time bomb.

It is imperative that in a time of an enormous surplus in Corporation tax, that the government invest in infrastructure to create housing which is the emergency of the day. To date investment is only a token and the delivery time involved is too long.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY

As a member of the Disability Matters Committee, I have challenged the Government to provide the services children with a disability are entitled to as a matter of urgency. Last October families resorted to a protest outside the Children Disability Network Team 7 offices in Tuam as they are frustrated and stressed at the lack of services. The Tuam team are falling short of sufficient staff and in most cases the staff complement is less than 50% of what it should be. This is putting enormous pressure onto the staff in place, who are struggling to cope with the demand, and this is not right.

There are over 740 children affected and early intervention is vital to access and provide the supports required. The ongoing lack of Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Psychologists, Social Workers, Behavioural Therapists, Dietitians and Case Workers is a failure of Government to our children, and this has been ongoing for too long. Every child in the state has a right and all children must be treated equally, but this is not happening. I raised the issue recently in the Dáil under Priority Questions and whilst the Minister did indicate that the issue will be sorted, time is of the essence. The time for talk, strategies and policy initiatives is over and the families need to see an immediate improvement in the staffing levels to match the demand. Tuam has one of the lowest staffing levels in the country and this is intolerable.

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AGRICULTURE



The Land Restoration Directive is the single biggest issue that could impact farmers, I am calling on Government to ensure that the plan will be a voluntary scheme and that farmers are properly compensated if they decide to rewet any of their land. They also need to ensure that farmers can still claim their entitlement on the land affected and that they are compensated if rewetting of neighbouring land has a negative effect on them. I have criticised the government and in particular the Department of Agriculture for their failure to pay farmers the entitlements due in 2023. Farmers who were sold on the idea of **ACRES** as a scheme to provide farmers with supports and were promised payment in 2023 have to wait until February 2024. There are 64,000 farmers affected and their cashflow is severely affected by the delay.

Meanwhile **TAMS** payments are also being delayed and my office is receiving many calls from farmers who are awaiting payments for works completed under TAMS. Farmers have taken out loans and struggling financially because the grants amounting to thousands are not being paid out in a timely fashion. Farming is a tough business and cashflow is critical to meet commitments to suppliers and banks, it is shameful that farmers are left waiting for money that they are entitled to. I am calling on the Minister and his Department to work to bring forward the payments and restore farmer confidence in the entire agriculture sector. The Minister and his Department must fulfil their commitments and make payments when due.

SCHOOLS

I recently called on the Government to expedite the delivery of the long awaited new **national school for Tuam**. The staff, pupils and parents deserve better and indeed the town of Tuam deserves a modern national school education campus to serve the needs of the national school children in the town of Tuam. I am also working with **Clarín College Athenry** to get more accommodation to meet the present and future demand. **The Gaelscoil campus in Athenry** is also progressing slowly as is the **new Boys and Girls National Schools**. There are many other schools across the constituency that I am working with to deliver **ASD units** and additional accommodation. In particular, I am fighting for a Sports Hall to be added to **Seamount College, Kinvara**.

WESTERN RAIL CORRIDOR



I welcome the publication of the All-Ireland Rail Review by the Irish Government and the Executive in Northern Ireland. The review sets out the strategy by which rail transport on the Island of Ireland will be developed over the coming time. I am particularly pleased that the review calls for the reinstatement of the Western Rail Corridor between Athenry and Claremorris. It is now an accepted fact that the reopening of this line is viable and will have a major positive impact in the entire western region. The rail line will link Ballina, Westport, Castlebar, Claremorris, Tuam, Athenry, Ennis and Limerick to the ports in Foynes, Galway, Cork, and Waterford. In addition, the positive economic effect of the re-opening on Tuam will be enormous and will pave the way to develop the existing station to complement the health campus on the opposite side of the road. The decision by Government to include the Western Rail Corridor as a TEN-T project in their submission to the European Union qualifies the reinstatement of the line for European funding which is available for projects like the Western Rail Corridor and Galway Port. This project is one of many that need to be developed to achieve balance development in this country.

GLENAMADDY HALL REFURBISHMENT

I was delighted to have been able to assist Glenamaddy Heritage Group in achieving funding for the re-roofing of Clondoyle National School, Glenamaddy to create a Heritage Centre in Glenamaddy. The funding application to Galway Rural Development Company (GRD) under the Leader fund was successful and the works are now complete. I believe that LEADER funding is vital for the development of community facilities. I am disappointed that there is a reduction in this funding for GRD and this is a negative decision by Government.

MOUNTBELLEW

The **Wastewater Treatment Plant** is long overdue for Mountbellew, and I will continue to keep pressure on Uisce Éireann. I am also lobbying for the **ATU Mountbellew** to be chosen as a location for a new **Veterinary College**.

GORT TOWN CENTRE

A proposal to revitalise the centre of Gort town is positive but needs full public engagement to ensure the best results and to complement the newly opened **Gort Riverbank Walk**.

ST. BENIN'S NS KILBANNON

I was delighted that funding has been sanctioned for works at St. Benin's NS. The works include the upgrading of the existing septic tank and treatment works and is funded under the Emergency Works funding Scheme.

Seán Canney, Independent TD

WORKING HARD FOR GALWAY EAST

PLANS FOR RESERVE GAS FIRED GENERATOR AND BATTERY STORAGE UNIT

Residents of **Killimor and Portumna** concerned at plans for the construction of a reserve gas fired generator and battery storage unit without any local consultation. I totally support the local people in their fight to stop this project. There has been no consultation and people are very concerned that the proposal will have major negative impacts on their lives. I welcome the decision by Galway County Council to refuse planning permission

WINDFARMS & TELECOM MASTS

Windfarms are being proposed right across the constituency with little regard for the citizens living in the areas. I have raised the issue in the Dáil with the Taoiseach, and I have met with the Taoiseach's officials and the Taoiseach with **CEPA**, the National Group set up by communities to highlight the negative effects of some of the proposed windfarms. **Aughrim and Seefin** residents are presently fighting the proposals to locate large telecommunications masts in their communities and Kilrickle now have a mast located in the centre of their village which is totally out of place. I was also involved the **Gort Biomass** Campaign which achieved a successful outcome for Gort Town.

SPEED LIMIT REVIEW

A National Speed Limit review with the reduction of the speed limits on all local and regional roads is underway. I expect local roads to have the speed limits reduced from 80kph to 60kph by November 2024. I am also calling for a permanent reduced speed limit at all schools in the County to allow safe access to schools for our children.

BROADBAND

The National Broadband plan is progressing, and to-date €1.2 million premises have been passed. There are still over 700,000 premises to be connected and I am working with the NBI to fast track the areas without a service in Galway East.

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

School transport is a huge issue and I continue to try to find solutions for all children who are entitled to a service, I am calling on the Government to make school transport available to all school goers.

HEADFORD OPW REGIONAL OFFICE

The opening of the €5.5 million OPW Regional Offices in Headford is a great addition. I also welcome the announcement by the Minister for the Office of Public Works, Patrick O Donavan TD of funding for Machinery Stores and ancillary workshop accommodation. The new offices will accommodate up to 60 staff, including engineers, supervisors and administration staff supporting the region. The additional investment embeds the OPW, a state organisation, in the Headford area and will retain jobs and create the potential for additional employment opportunities for Headford and the north Galway area. This is a fine example of regional development and is a project I initiated when I was the Minister for the OPW in the last Government.



ROADS FUNDING

I have raised the issue of the stalling and cancelling of funding for National Primary and National Secondary roads with the Minister for Finance and Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development and Reform at a Budgetary Committee Meeting.

Currently in County Galway there are about €1m worth of defects on the National roads that need to be repaired. Two schemes on the pavement programme have been cancelled, the **N83 Claregalway to Parkmore**. The resurfacing on **N84 from Headford to Shrule** has been cancelled. The funding for the land acquisition for the N17 Milltown scheme is not coming this year. The N83 in Claregalway has been waiting since 2009 for a drainage scheme. Pedestrians cannot access one side of the village when it is flooded. This project was allocated funding of €500,000 this year, but again this project is now shelved. The **Active Travel Scheme** is also stalling due to the unnecessary request for needless paperwork by the NTA.

CARERS

Along with the Regional Group of TDs, I have been leading a campaign to abolish the means test for Carers. Carers save the state up to €20 billion annually and many carers give up work and a career to mind their loved one. The majority of Carers are women, and they should not be subject to a means test which includes their partner's income. I am confident that this issue will be resolved as the present system is wrong.

DUNMORE

I am very disappointed that the works on **Bridge Street** have not progressed, despite my allocation of €500,000 to the Council in 2019 when I was Minister with responsibility for Rural Affairs. I will be taking this issue up with the Council to ensure this project is progressed to make the town safe and remove some of the dereliction in the town.

I welcome the fact that **Friars Walk Estate** in Dunmore has been taken in charge by Galway County Council. This means that Galway County Council now have the responsibility for the maintenance of the roads, footpaths, and public lighting in the Estate. This has been a long journey for the residents. Ignatius Mitchel has done trojan work to see this process completed.

I welcomes the decision by the OPW and Galway County Council to light up **Dunmore Abbey**. I recently received confirmation from the Council that they will be installing lighting to the Abbey in conjunction with the office of Public Works. This is something which I have been working on over a number of years and I thank Dunmore Tidy Towns Committee, especially David McDonagh, who offered their support at all times.

TUAM

The Town Centre First Heritage Revival (THRIVE) strand 1 funding from the Western Development Commission is a game changer for the **Tuam Railway Station Site** and will help develop the plan for the Station Quarter and allow the County Council to apply for the next round of Urban Regeneration funding to build the project. Tuam is one of 10 towns across the region to receive funding. The project will include planning for an intermodal transport hub, including the train station, bus and carpark and a park-and-ride facility. It will also convert the existing Station building for use as a Technology Hub.



The **Health Campus in Tuam** is now up and running with an Ambulance Base, Primary Care Centre, and the refurbishment of the Old Grove site to provide a Mental Day Hospital and Children Disability Network Team centre. I also welcome

the addition of X-ray facilities and diagnostic services to the Primary Care Centre as well as an additional full-time ambulance located in Tuam. I am still working with the HSE to ensure that all facilities are fully staffed to meet the demand.

I received confirmation that Galway County Council have been allocated €3.6 million for the refurbishment of **Tuam Town Hall**. The funding, under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund, will provide for the refurbishment of the iconic Town Hall in the centre of the town as a Community Enterprise Hub, with hot desk facilities. The funding comes for the RRDF fund set up and launched by former Minister Michael Ring TD and I in the last Government.

SPORT CAPITAL GRANTS

The Sports Capital Grants are a vital source of funding for the continued development of our local sports facilities. I continue to work with all organisations to try to maximise the funding available. Leader funding is also a vital component in providing much needed community facilities. I am delighted to see **Tuam Stadium** progressing with their development and the Joe O'Toole stand is completed with additional works planned for the venue.



MEELICK WEIR

I welcome the commitment given by Waterway's Ireland to the committee from Meelick Eyrecourt led by Charlie Killeen and Mark Larkin.



The commitment includes the provision of toilet facilities and universal access for

all at the amenity, including an additional walkway to link to the Martello Tower and to open the tower as a viewing area for tourists. This will create a very unique destination.

ATHENRY

I received confirmation that Galway County Council have been allocated €6 million for the development of **Athenry Town Centre**. The funding, under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund, will provide for the refurbishment of the town centre and the development of a community enterprise hub. Works include restoration of the structures and the creation of community enterprise hot desk facilities. The funding comes for the RRDF fund set up and launched by former Minister Michael Ring TD and I in the last Government.

The new single-storey **Fire Station** is located at Ballygarraun South, Athenry. It consists of a 361 m² fire station building to accommodate three fire tenders, storage areas, equipment storage, watch room, drying facilities, lecture room, compressor room, workshop, toilet facilities, drill yard, drill tower, refuse area and carparking. The building will provide a modern firefighting facility to serve Athenry and the catchment area. I am also working on new **Fire Stations for Loughrea and Ballinasloe**, which are in the development stage.



LOUGHREA

The Loughrea Concerned Citizens Group have welcomed confirmation by the HSE that the purpose-built **Seven Springs Day Centre** is to reopen shortly in Loughrea, phasing up to pre- covid levels. The Chief Officer of CO2 Healthcare West, John Fitzmaurice, has confirmed at a public meeting in the Temperance Hall recently that the Seven Springs Day Centre will be re-opening and will provide day services 5 days each week. I thank the people of Loughrea who signed the petition when over 3,000 signatures were collected and all the people who marched in protest and attended the many public meetings throughout the campaign. I was proud to work along with the Loughrea Concerned Group.

Funding of €1.6 million was allocated for the renovation of the building in the town when I was Minister of State for Rural Affairs in the Department of Community and Rural Development in 2019. I continue to work with Galway County Council to ensure the development of **Loughrea Town Hall** proceeds without any further delay. The works will transform the building into a 158-seater theatre along with a multi-functional space for the arts, culture and community events, a tourism hub, a learning hub and a visual creation space. There will also be a digital and creative enterprise hub on the first floor which will create 74 jobs within three years.

I support the campaign for a **Public Swimming Pool** to be built in Loughrea to serve the needs of Loughrea town and the entire catchment. I have spoken to the Minister for Sports and Tourism in relation to the project. He is supportive and an application for funding needs to come from Galway County Council. This facility is needed to ensure our success in swimming at the Paris Olympics is repeated into the future.

Seán Canney, Independent TD

WORKING HARD FOR GALWAY EAST