



The Local Government Board for Ireland.

URBAN DISTRICT OF BUNCRANA, IN THE COUNTY OF DONEGAL.

To the Council of the Urban District of Bunrana; and to all others whom it may concern:

WHEREAS by section 2 (1) of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1914, it is enacted in effect that where a town has a population exceeding one thousand five hundred according to the last published census of the town being not an urban sanitary district, any order of the Local Government Board for Ireland constituting such town an urban sanitary district shall, unless within three months after the publication of the Board receive a petition against it from at least one-fourth of the local government electors within the town, or from the guardians of the union, or consent of the rural district comprising the town or any part thereof, the effect without the authority of Parliament; and that a certificate of the Board that no such petition has been received, and that the order has taken effect, shall be conclusive evidence of those facts:

AND WHEREAS We, the said Local Government Board for Ireland, in pursuance of the power given us by section 2 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1875, do by the Bunrana Urban District Order, 1912, published in the Dublin Gazette on the 23rd day of December, 1912, constitute the town of Bunrana an urban sanitary district as from the first day of April, 1914:

NOW THEREFORE, We, the Local Government Board for Ireland, do hereby certify that within three months after the said 23rd day of December, 1912, no petition against the Bunrana Urban District Order, 1912, was received by Us either from one-fourth of the local government electors within the town of Bunrana, or from the guardians of the Inishowen Union, or from the council of the rural district of Inishowen; and that the Bunrana Urban District Order, 1912, has taken effect.

Given under Our Seal of Office this Fourteenth day of March in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Fourteen.

(Signed)

T. J. Stafford.



BUNCRANA URBAN DISTRICT/TOWN COUNCIL

A Short History

1912
New Council Office
Bunrana
23rd December 1912

Dear Sir
You are requested to attend the Council Meeting of Bunrana Urban District Council which will be held in St Mary's Hall on Monday the 30th day of January 1913 at the hour of 8.30 A.M. P.M.

Yours
1. B. B. B. Chairman of Council for second year
2. B. B. B. Vice-Chairman for second year
3. B. B. B. Members of Committee
4. B. B. B. Members of Committee
5. B. B. B. Members of Committee
6. B. B. B. Members of Committee

Your Obedient Servant
(Signature)



JOHN DUFFY & SONS
Ireland's National Circus and Zoo
GROUND AGREEMENT

I We agree to let to John Duffy & Sons Circus my own Ground or Field known as ...
John Duffy & Sons agreeing to pay the sum of £ ...
if used or occupied by the above Establishment for the term of ...
... of said Grounds for their Circus and hence the grant on above-
... I We also agree not to be any ground to any other Circus, similar Exhibition,
... Holiday Homes or Gardens, seven days before the visit of John
Duffy & Sons Circus.
Should circumstances arise John Duffy & Sons reserve to themselves
the right to change date of visit or terminate this agreement.
If permission is not taken by John Duffy & Sons Circus there is no letting.
Should Circus arrive or remain over nightly to be allowed to occupy said





Buncrana Urban District Council members and officials, 1945 - 1950:
Front Row, left to right: P. Doherty, J. McLaughlin, F. J. Kildea (Chairman),
W. J. Kavanagh, S. D. MacLochlainn (County Manager). Back Row,
left to right: W. J. Doherty, M. Gallinagh, E. Doherty, P.J. Doherty (Town
Clerk), C. McNulty, E. Doherty, W. Doherty (Town Surveyor).

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Buncrana Main Street, May 2014

FOREWORD

Buncrana Town Council celebrated its 100th anniversary in March this year, two months prior to its dissolution. The last century and the first decade and a half of this century have seen huge changes in the country and in our county, socially, politically and economically. Buncrana Urban District Council/Town Council has played a very significant role in effecting growth, development and positive change in the town of Buncrana and its hinterland. Buncrana, the principal town in the Inishowen peninsula, is today an attractive and bustling seaside town with a thriving tourism industry. The town enjoys a wealth of amenities and natural attractions and regularly hosts a variety of cultural activities and events.

The Buncrana Urban District/Town Council Archives collection, listed and maintained by Donegal County Archives, is one of the most important of such collections in the country. It is of local and national historical significance, and it is vital that the collection should be preserved and made accessible to the public, present and future generations. This publication summarises the early history of the Council, showcases some of the most historically interesting documents from the Archives Collection, and gives the reader some idea of the huge variety and extent of the work of Buncrana Council members and staff for the benefit of Buncrana over more than a century.

Peter McLaughlin

Peter McLaughlin

Buncrana Town Mayor, 2013 - 2014

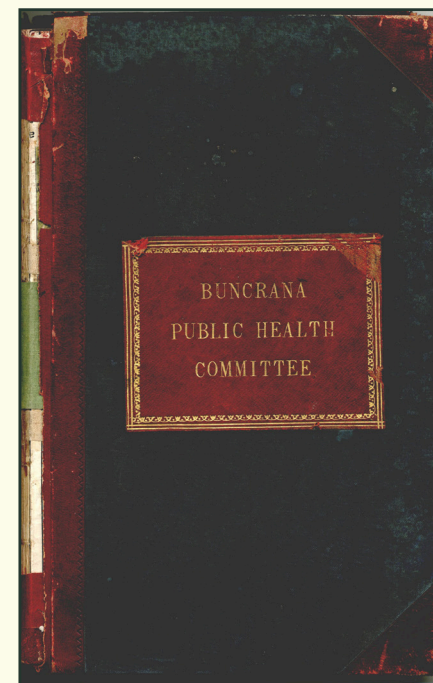
ESTABLISHING AN URBAN COUNCIL

The reforming Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898 was historic for a number of reasons. Under the Act County Councils were established, including Donegal County Council, and also Rural and Urban District Councils. The old Grand Juries, regarded as corrupt, inefficient and elitist, were

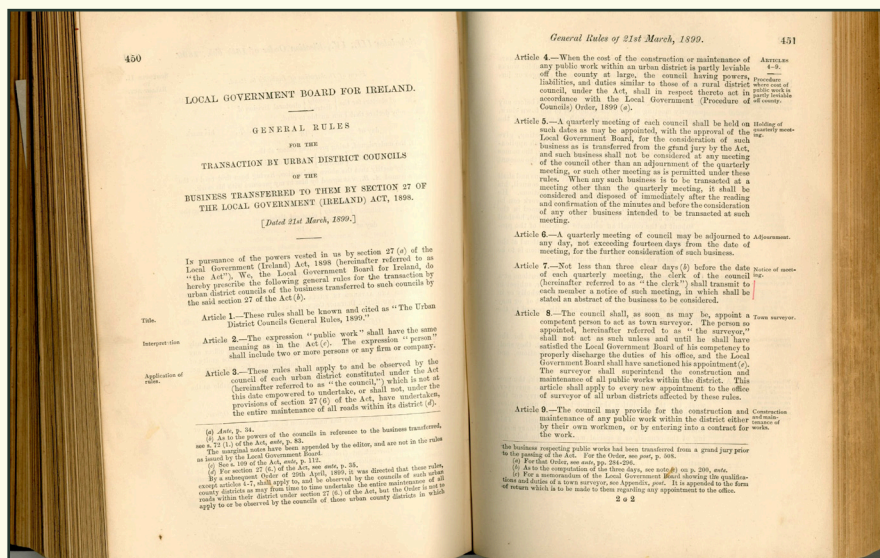
abolished. For the first time, under this new legislation, the general male population could vote and stand for election. Even women gained a modicum of the franchise, they were now allowed to stand for election and to vote, though only in district council elections, not yet in county

council or parliamentary elections. Overall the Act was a positive development, handing to general ratepayers- farmers, merchants, shopkeepers etc, the power to run local matters, to develop their own towns, villages, townlands and rural districts.

However, the town of Buncrana did not have its own full local authority until January 1913. Prior to this, operating under the 1878 Public Health (Ireland) Act and the 1898 Local Government Act, Buncrana Public Health Committee, a subcommittee of Inishowen Rural District Council, was the sanitary authority in the town. The Public Health Committee was busy, its main duties including the establishment of Buncrana Main Drainage Outfall Works, monitoring and restriction of water supply, maintaining of water pipes, water connections, repair of roads, streets and footpaths, sewerage works, street lighting and dealing with public health 'nuisances' or 'sanitary defects' on private property.

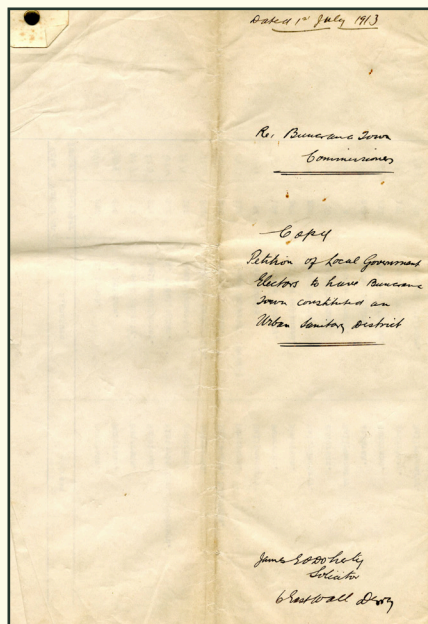


Buncrana Public Health Committee Minute book front cover



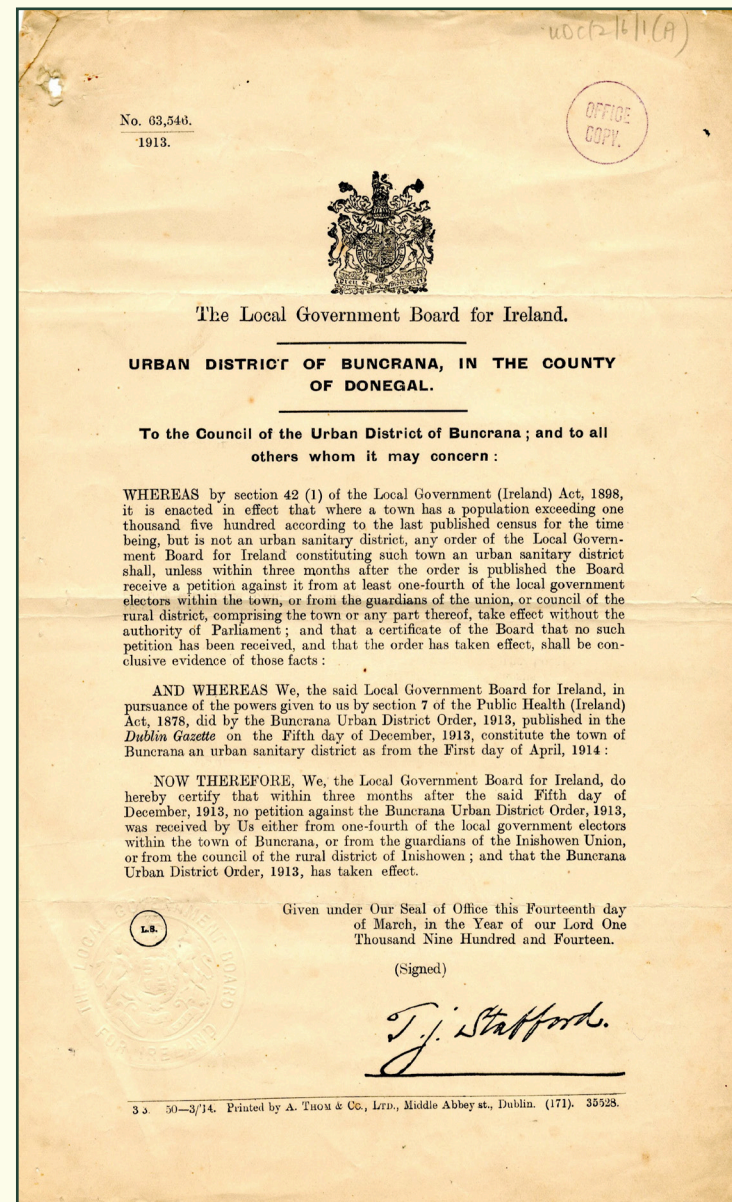
Local Government Board Rules governing the management of Urban District Councils, 1899

Buncrana Town Commissioners was a short-lived public authority. It held its inaugural meeting in January 1913 and its final meeting in March 1914. During its brief existence, it dealt with town valuation and rates, establishing a town court, salaries and accounts, local elections, street cleaning and, above all, making a case for full urban status. The campaign to improve Buncrana's urban status was similar to the campaign in Bundoran at the same time. A petition by local government electors to have Buncrana constituted as an urban sanitary district, along with a resolution passed on the issue by the Town Commissioners, was submitted to the Local Government Board of Ireland. This overseeing body agreed to hold a local inquiry on the matter. The inquiry took place in Buncrana on 14 August 1913, following which a decision was made to grant Buncrana the much coveted urban status.



Petition to establish Buncrana Town Commissioners as an Urban District Council, 1913

A Provisional Order establishing the Urban District of Buncrana and transferring powers from Donegal County Council and Inishowen Rural District Council to the Urban District Council was made on 5 December 1913. Three months later, on 14 March 1914 an Order was made constituting Buncrana as an urban authority. (These documents are now part of the Archives collection.)



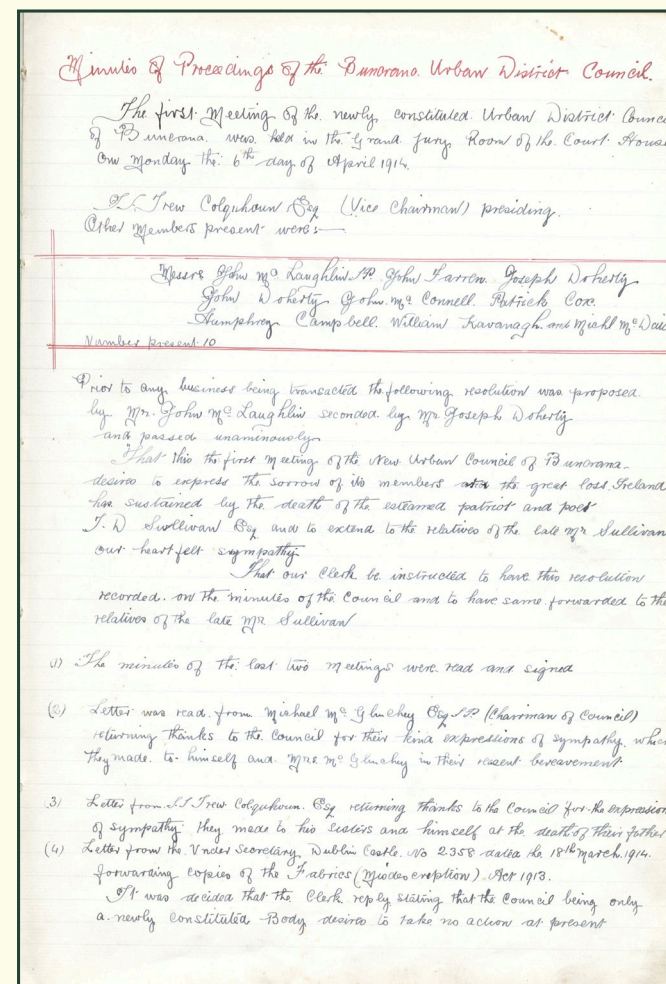
Local Government Board Order establishing Buncrana as an Urban District, 14 March 1914

FIRST MEETINGS OF THE NEW URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

The inaugural meeting of the newly established Buncrana Urban District Council was held in the Grand Jury room of the Courthouse in Buncrana on 6 April 1914, a Monday. Members at the meeting were Isaac John Trew Colquhoun who was Vice Chairman, John McLaughlin, John Farren, Joseph Doherty, John Doherty, John McConnell, Patrick Cox, Humphrey Campbell, William Kavanagh and Michael McDaid. Other members not present that day were William Doherty and the Chairman was Michael McGlinchey. All were formerly members of the predecessor body, Buncrana Town Commissioners. An election would not be held till the

following year. Their first resolution was passed unanimously, it was announced:

'that this the first meeting of the new Urban Council of Buncrana desire to express the sorrow of its members after the great loss Ireland has sustained by the death of the esteemed patriot and poet T. D. Sullivan [Nationalist MP] and to extend to the relatives of the late Mr Sullivan our heartfelt sympathy.'



Minutes of the first meeting of Buncrana Urban District Council, 6 April 1914

Assistant County surveyor Edward O'Callaghan was appointed Buncrana Town surveyor at a salary of £20 per annum. The sitting clerk, Charles P. O'Callaghan was appointed

clerk of the new Council at a salary of £50 per annum. He was also appointed executive sanitary officer at a yearly salary of £10 (though the latter post subsequently had to be

advertised by order of the Local Government Board.) Denis Doherty was appointed caretaker of water works and sewerage for £24 per year and sub sanitary officer for the urban district at £10 per annum. Dr Neil Nelson was to be appointed Medical Officer of Health 'for portion of the dispensary district inside the

urban district at a salary of £8 per annum.' Dr Nelson died later that year and was replaced by Dr James McCormick. For practical reasons, the UDC shared some posts with Inishowen Rural District Council, including Dr McCormick's position.

No. 167.—M. 1919.—Misc.—Enc.

Buncrana Urban District.

STATEMENT of Salaries paid to Officers appointed under the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, for the Year ended the 30th of September, 1919.

| Office | Name of Officer | Date of election or appointment | Salary | Amount of Salary for the Year ended the 30th of September, 1919, to which was paid at the date of completion of the account | | | Amount claimed as reimbursement | | |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|--|----------|----|---------------------------------|----|----|
| | | | | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. |
| Executive Sanitary Officer. | <i>Charles Callaghan</i> | <i>15 June 1919. No. 30900</i> | <i>£10</i> | <i>10</i> | <i>0</i> | | | | |
| Consulting Sanitary Officer. | | | | | | | | | |
| Medical Superintendent } Officer of Health, | <i>Dr James M. McCormick</i> | <i>8th October 1914. No. 51895</i> | <i>£18</i> | <i>18</i> | <i>0</i> | | | | |
| Medical Officer of Health. | | | | | | | | | |
| Do. | | | | | | | | | |
| Do. | | | | | | | | | |
| Do. | | | | | | | | | |
| Do. | | | | | | | | | |
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| Do. | | | | | | | | | |
| Do. | | | | | | | | | |
| Sanitary Sub-Officer. | <i>Denis Doherty</i> | <i>15 June 1919. No. 30899</i> | <i>£10</i> | <i>10</i> | <i>0</i> | | | | |
| Do. | | | | | | | | | |
| Do. | | | | | | | | | |
| Do. | | | | | | | | | |
| Do. | | | | | | | | | |
| Do. | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | TOTAL, <i>£38</i> | | | <i>38</i> | | |
| | | | | Deduction under Section 6 (1) of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1902, which will be made in the Office of the Local Government Board. | | | | | |
| | | | | Amount allowed to be recouped, <i>£</i> | | | | | |

We certify that the above is a true statement in all respects regarding the salaries of the officers therein named, and that the sums set forth in the 5th column have been duly paid to the officers against whose names they are respectively set and their receipts obtained.

Chairman of the Council

Statement of salaries paid to staff of Buncrana Urban District Council, 1919

A Committee was appointed to estimate the rates for the ensuing year. The 'total consolidated town rate' made for 1914 – 1915 was 59 pence in the pound. The rate was adopted formally on 11 May 1914. A rate collector, Alex Cassidy was appointed on 2 June.

agreed to refund 'irrecoverable rates' to the rate collector. The first water supply request (of many more), in this case to have a water pipe brought from the main water pipe to the centre of the new tennis court was granted to Captain W. D. Wall, at the expense of the Tennis Club.

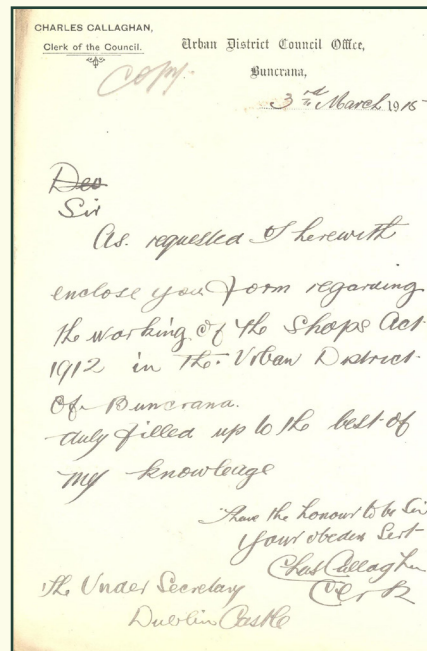
The Council's first meeting included a decision not to participate in the County Donegal Joint Committee for Technical Instruction scheme for the academic year August 1914 to 31 July 1915. The Council 'did not wish to take action, being only a newly constituted body but would like to know if they could participate in the scheme at a future date should they desire to do so.' Also at this meeting, the Council received from the Local Government Board the 'Certificate under Seal' constituting the Town of Buncrana from 1 April. The new Council also received a letter from the Local Government Board with its revised Valuation lists for the year for the urban district. It was also

At the second 'ordinary' meeting of 2 June it was decided to try to acquire the greens on the foreshore ('known as the hut green and the fishing green') and to employ bathing boxes attendants. (Interestingly it was also decided that no action was required to be taken on implementing compulsory education.) At this meeting it was decided to take over the 'dumping ground' at Inch View, and an agreement was entered into with the landowner on 6 July. One of the Council's first Roads functions was, following a request from Captain McClintock, to agree to take over the road in Victoria Park. It was also decided to appoint a shops inspector under the Shops

Act of 1912. He was Peter McLaughlin, appointed before the July 1914 meeting, and ordered to enforce the closure of shops 'of the unexempted trade' from one pm one day of the week. By all accounts Mr McLaughlin went about his duties diligently, for at a meeting on 10 May 1915 he reported that the former chairman Mr Michael McGlinchey (who attended at this meeting) had violated the Shops Act law on three occasions. The inspector recommended prosecution of all defaulters under the act. The Council agreed.

Immediate action taken by the new Council included the appointment of a subcommittee to work with the Town Surveyor. Their duties included cleaning and repair of streets, water works and sewerage works.

Given the proliferation of local authorities at that time - Buncrana Urban District Council, Inishowen Board of Guardians, Inishowen Rural District Council, Donegal

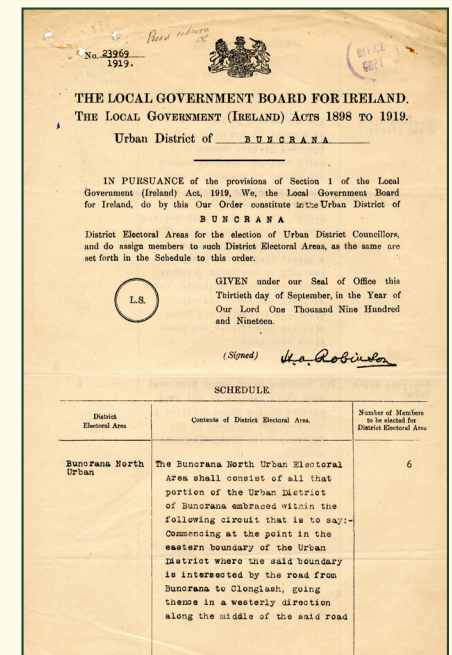


Letter from Town Clerk, Buncrana Urban District Council, regarding the Shops Act, 3 March 1915

and Londonderry County Councils, there were inevitably a number of issues relating to one another's boundaries, some of which resulted in arbitration. Several months after the establishment of the new Urban Council, and following several meetings between the new Council and Inishowen Rural District Council, agreement on major issues could

not be reached. One of the more difficult problems was the 33 labourers' cottages built within the urban area by the RDC. The new UDC now had responsibility for maintenance and rent of these homes, though in its earliest meetings it had resisted this. Another issue was the lighting of Buncrana's town streets, which Buncrana UDC eventually agreed to take over. The matters in dispute went to arbitration at the end of 1914.

The divvying out of Roads responsibilities was also an issue, not it seems resolved till 1919 when an agreement was made between Donegal County Council, Letterkenny UDC, Buncrana UDC and Bundoran UDC to 'maintain and keep in good order and repair to the satisfaction of the county surveyor all such main roads within their own district as set down under Public Bodies Order 1904 and Order 1906'. Ordnance Survey map extracts



Local Government Board Order regarding Buncrana's boundaries, 1919.

which accompany the agreement set out each district's area of responsibility. (These maps form part of the Archives collection). A document issued by the Local Government Board in 1919 in preparation for the local elections of the following year details the area which the urban district encompassed.

FIRST ELECTION OF BUNCRANA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

The first Annual Meeting of the UDC was held on 23 January 1915. At this meeting a new Chairman, a solicitor working in Derry and member of the Church of Ireland, Isaac John Trew Colquhoun, was elected. In terms of the elections it was reported by the Returning Officer:

‘That a no contest election took place this year, the members who retired by rotation [were] Messrs Humphrey Campbell, Isaac J. T. Colquhoun, John Farren and John McConnell. That the candidates that were duly nominated for the election were George Baldrick, Campbell, Isaac J. T. Colquhoun, John Farren, and John McConnell and Patrick Porter and that the

said John McConnell and Patrick Porter withdrew their candidature and the number of remaining candidates being equal to the number of persons to be elected namely four. Therefore the candidates declared duly elected as Urban District councillors for the urban district of Buncrana in the year 1915 were J. T. Colquhoun, Humphrey Campbell and John Farren. The new members made their Declaration of Acceptance of Offer with the exception of George Baldrick who failed to do so.’

There was a three year rotation on local authority elections.

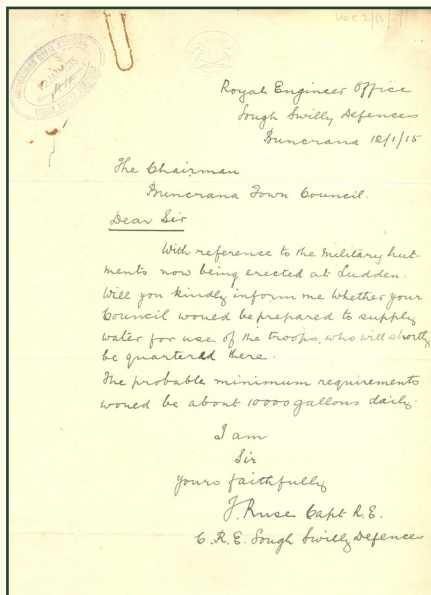
WAR AND POLITICAL ISSUES

World War One broke out in August 1914. Buncrana UDC did not appear to take an active interest in the war in its early stages though the UDC agreed in late September 1914 to assist in the accommodation of Belgian refugees (Council minutes of 5 October 1914 refer). The importance of Lough Swilly and the seaside resort of Buncrana during World War One became evident when Admiral Jellicoe moved his British grand fleet HQ from Scapa Flow to Lough Swilly. Also during the early stages of the War the Local Government Board informed Buncrana UDC (and other local authorities) that cooperation was expected between military and civil authorities during the war in areas

where troops were stationed. The LGB also deemed it a responsibility of each sanitary authority and the medical officers of health to ‘see to the sanitary arrangements of the district and troops in order to prevent any infectious diseases that might arise.’ (Minutes, 7 December 1914).

During 1915 officers and soldiers of the Dublin Royal Fusiliers and the Royal Engineers were stationed at Luddan Camp and Swan’s Mill, Buncrana, and during that time Buncrana UDC had reason to serve notices on their Commanding Officer to ‘abate nuisances on the White Strand.’ (Minutes of 1 November 1915). The UDC was also informed that Luddan Camp personnel had been

dumping rubbish in its own dumping ground which was outside its jurisdiction, and warned that prosecution would follow should this practice continue. (1 May 1916). Tensions also developed over problems such as over use by the military of water and excessive speed of military vehicles.

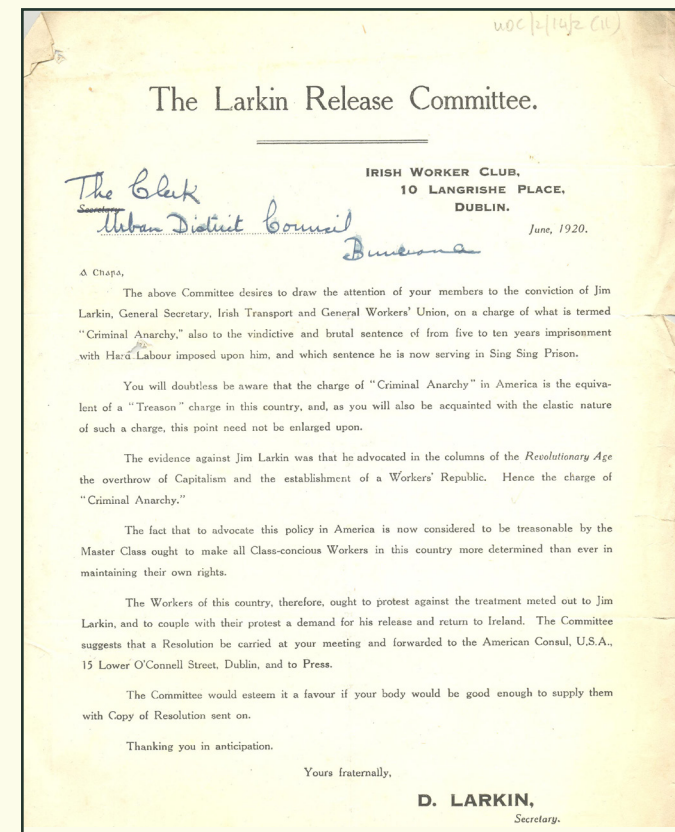


Letter from Royal Engineer Office, Lough Swilly Defence Forces, to Buncrana Urban District Council, requesting supply of water to the military base, 1 January 1915

However it was not just general cooperation that was expected by the military during their time in Buncrana. In its first couple of years before the extent of the horror and bloodshed of the battlefields was understood and before efforts by the British government to impose conscription, support for the war was strong in Ireland. For many nationalists, support for the war meant the attainment of home rule after the war. On 22 October 1915 Major Bailie, whose headquarters was now Lough Swilly Garrison, Buncrana, wrote to the Buncrana UDC, stating that he was placed in charge of military recruiting arrangements for Donegal, and requesting the UDC to bring the matter as a resolution to their next meeting, so that he could 'secure the warm cooperation of the councillors each in his own district, in order that they may personally visit and talk to the eligible men and explain this fearful war and Ireland's share therein..... letters are being sent to every man from the Central Office...'

On 1 November 1915 the Council resolved to support the recruitment campaign of Major Baillie.

The military huts were eventually taken over by the new Free State Department of Defence in the 1920s. In May 1953 victims of a fire were housed there for a time.



Circular letter appealing for release from prison of James Larkin, June 1920

Dail Eireann.
TRADE DEPARTMENT.
Exclusion of British Goods.

| Order Issued | Class of Goods | Order Operative | Prohibition |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| No. 1. March 23rd 1921 | Agricultural Machinery : Binders Mowing Machines Horse Rakes Swathe Turners Hay Trolleys (Rick Shifters) .. Ploughs Harrows Corn Drills Root Cutters | March 31st 1921 | Importation |
| No. 2. April 14th 1921 | Biscuits Boot Polishes (including Boot Creams and Preparations for Suede and White Shoes) Soap (including Soap Powders of all kinds, Monkey Brand, Lux, Rinso, etc.) | May 14th 1921 | Importation and Sale |
| No. 3. May 5th 1921 | Margarine | May 26th 1921 | Importation and Sale |
| No. 4. May 18th 1921 | Pictorial Calendars (whether for sale by retailers or for presentation to customers) | May 18th 1921 | Importation, Sale and Stocking for Sale |
| No. 5. June 1st 1921 | Preserves (Jams, Marmalades, etc.) Medicated Wines (e.g. Wincarnis, Hall's Wine, Winnox, etc.) Proprietary Ointments (e.g. Zam Buk, Germolene, Harrison's Nursery Pomade, Proprietary Veterinary Ointments, etc.) | Sept. 1st 1921 | Importation and Sale |

Order issued by Dáil Éireann banning importation of British goods, 1921

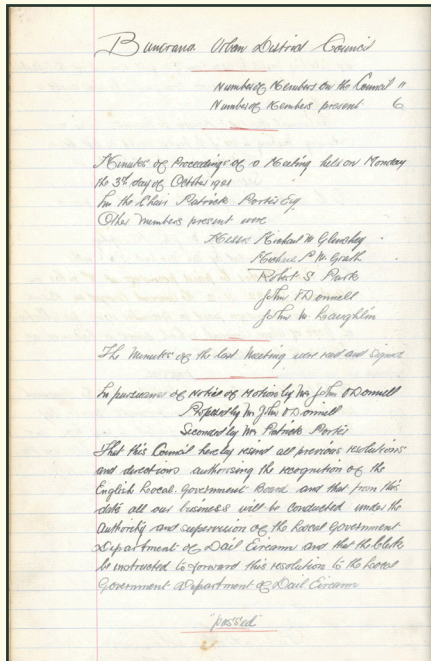
During Ireland's War of Independence local authorities were urged by the revolutionary government in Dublin to recognise it and to cease associating with British governmental departments.

At a Special Meeting held on 12 January 1921, Buncrana Urban District Council could not decide *not* to send minutes to the Local Government Board, and the resolution was split. Some time later, rate books and financial documents were stolen from the clerk of the Council by masked men, and the Council was threatened and told not to support Britain (1 May 1921). No meetings were held between May and October during which a Truce was declared between Britain and Ireland and preliminary talks held in London between Eamon de Valera and Lloyd George.

At the next meeting of the Council on 3 October 1921 a letter from the Department of Local Government, Dáil Éireann, urged

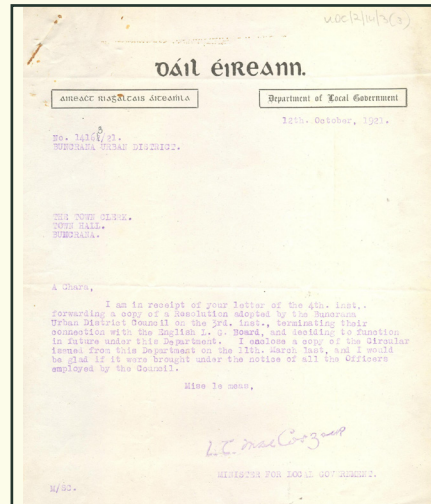
the UDC to declare allegiance to the Dáil, stating that if it does 'it will become the duty of the Department to give all the assistance in its power towards remedying the existing condition of its affairs and to supervise and control its activities in the future.'

At the same meeting the Council opted to 'rescind all previous resolutions and directions authorising the recognition of the English Local Government Board and that from this date all our business will be conducted under the authority and supervision of the Local Government Department of Dáil Éireann and that the clerk be instructed to forward this resolution to the Local Government Department of Dáil Éireann.' The Council had finally decided to reject the authority of the Local Government Board and embrace the revolutionary government in Dublin.



Minutes of Buncrana Urban District Council, resolving to support Dáil Éireann, 3 October 1921

A letter from Dáil Éireann to Buncrana UDC on 12 October acknowledged the Council's decision to terminate its connection with the Local Government Board 'and deciding to function in future under this Department.' The battle of wills between the two bodies was over though by this stage the War of Independence itself had in effect ended with the July Truce.



Letter from Dáil Éireann to Buncrana Urban District Council, acknowledging its support, 12 October 1921

However Buncrana UDC was still unhappy about the seizure earlier that year by the IRA of its records. At the Council's meeting on 23 November the clerk reported that the books seized by the IRA had been returned by the IRA and that an inspector from Dáil Éireann had been present to examine them. The clerk reported that the returned items 'were in a very bad condition... some of them with the backs off and leaves torn out.' Unfortunately some had not been returned at all, including rate

collectors' books and documents, bank receipts and a Council 'ledger'.

In October a delegation of TDs went to London to negotiate a full settlement with the British Government. After protracted talks, the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed on 6 December. Three weeks later, at a special meeting on 28 December 1921 Buncrana UDC emphatically declared for ratification of the Anglo-Irish Treaty as the resolution passed at this meeting indicates:

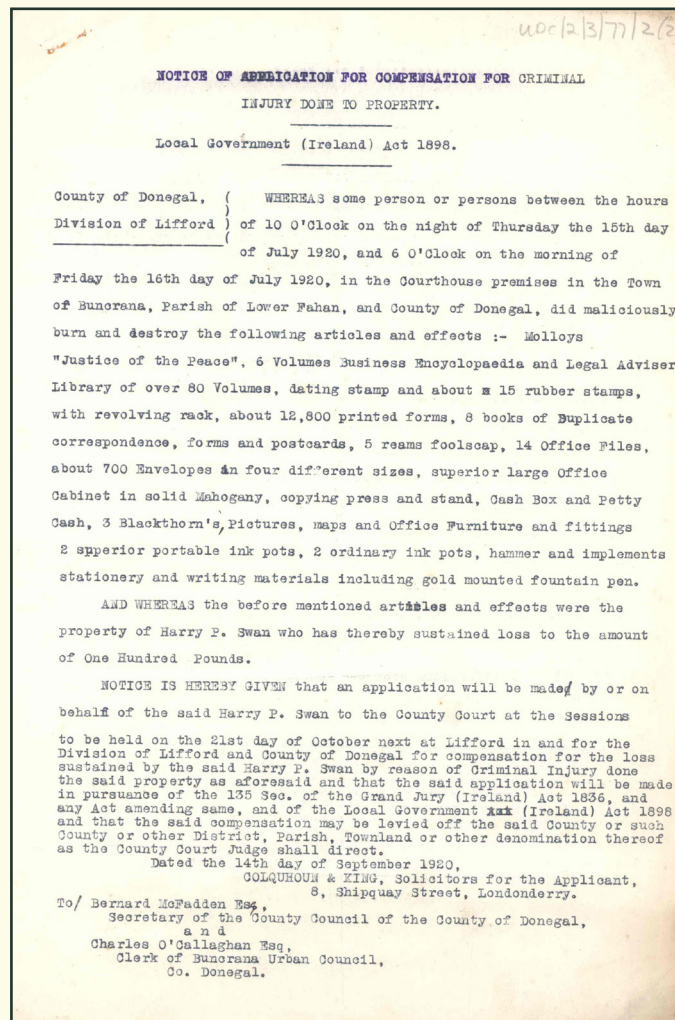
'That this Urban Council, believing that the plenipotentiaries secured all that was essential and more than was thought possible at the conferences in London, declare for the ratification of the Treaty without further delay and urge An Dáil to establish forthwith the Provisional Government provided for thereunder and get to business without further delay [sic] speech making and we hereby direct our six deputies to

record their votes in favour of such ratification.'

The new regime in Ireland included the disbandment of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) and the creation of Ireland's Civic Guard. A dearth of effective communication between local authorities and the new government on what exactly the latter's role was in relation to local authorities is evident by the request to the town clerk in February 1923 to 'interview the Civic Guards and ascertain if they would enforce the Council Bye Laws and also...regulations of traffic and the selling of sheep on the public street.' Execution of rates decrees was another issue of controversy in 1923, as the Minister for Home Affairs felt it was not a duty of the Civic Guard to enforce such decrees but the district justice believed it was, and that 'special bailiffs do not do such work properly.'

One of the main legacies of the War of Independence/Civil War period for local authorities was dealing with malicious injury claims by individuals and institutions.

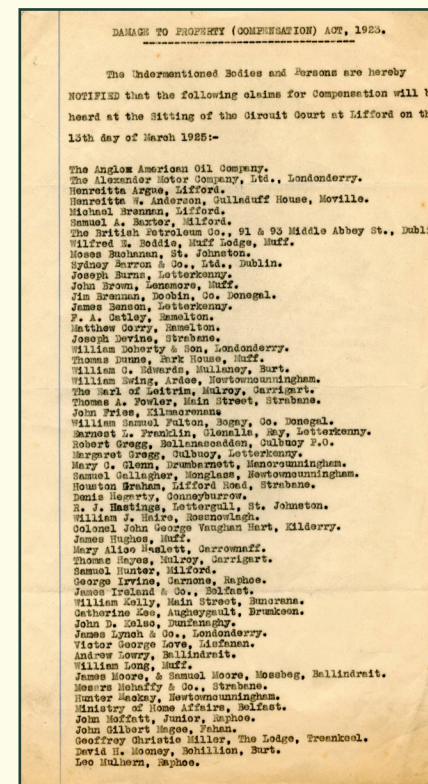
Malicious injury claims came under the remit of the Council anyway but increased greatly during the revolutionary period.



Application for compensation for damage to property by Harry P. Swan, 14 September 1920

For example, Harry P. Swan, the renowned historian from Buncrana and clerk of Buncrana Petty Sessions, claimed compensation for destruction to an encyclopaedia and library following a fire which destroyed the courthouse in Buncrana on 16 July 1920. His case was to be heard on 21 October. Interestingly, he was represented by Colquhoun and King, solicitors, Derry. Colquhoun was also a Councillor on Buncrana UDC. An application was also made to the county court in Lifford by Thomas Swan for compensation for loss sustained as a result of damage to furniture in the courthouse and premises in Buncrana on the same night.

Applications for damage to property during this period also included a claim for compensation for criminal injury to the property of the North West Golf Club in Buncrana. More seriously a farmer, Owen McCarron of Hilltown, Ballymacarry, Lower Fahan, was murdered at his home

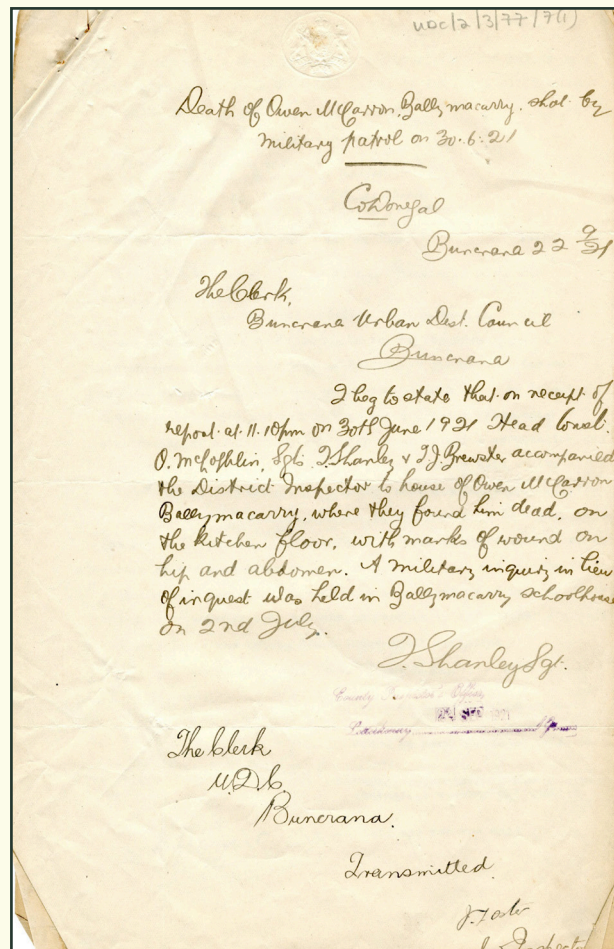


Partial list of claimants for compensation under the Damage to Property Act 1923

on 30 June 1921. Documentation surviving in the Archives relating to this unfortunate man's murder includes an application for compensation for 'murder of a judge, magistrate, police constable of the naval, military or air force or civil service or other person'. The application was to the

head constable, R.I.C. Barracks, Buncrana, to Bernard McFadden, Secretary, Donegal County Council and to Charles Callaghan, Clerk, Buncrana UDC. The case was to be heard at the County Court

on 17 October 1921. Documents also include the statement of Sergeant T. Shanley to the Clerk, Buncrana UDC, stating that Mr McCarron was 'shot by military patrol on 30 June 1921'.

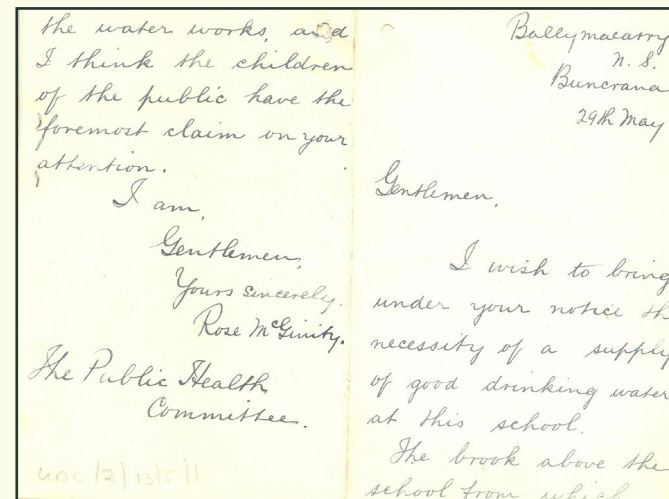


RIC Report on death of Owen McCarron of Buncrana, 22 September 1921

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SANITATION

One of the main issues of the new UDC was the improvement of public health and public facilities, as it had been for its predecessor Buncrana Health Committee. The Public Health (Ireland) Act of 1878 gave urban authorities power to improve living conditions through the implementation of better access to clean water, sewerage schemes, street cleaning,

collection of refuse (known initially as 'domestic scavenging'), provision of regulated burial grounds, and abatement of local domestic or commercial environmental hazards described as 'nuisances'. Buncrana Urban District Council was involved from the start in all of the above and in fact these matters formed the major part of its activities.



Extract from letter from Rose McGinity, school teacher, to Buncrana Public Health Committee concerning clean supply of water for Ballymacarry national school, 29 May 1913

Monitoring the sanitary conditions in which people lived was a major and continuous task in the earliest years of Buncrana UDC. Both landowners and tenants of properties in the town were often called upon both formally and informally to remedy matters which were of a public health concern. The UDC's duties included receiving complaints, following up with inspection of properties, negotiation with landlords and tenants, and enforcement of 'abatement of nuisances' orders. Descriptions of nuisances reported at meetings tended to be graphic, for example, 'accumulation of manure and garbage in connection with the keeping of pigs', 'accumulation of manure, dung, soil or filth or other offensive or noxious matter', 'accumulation of pig manure and other filth e.g. decomposing food in yard', 'yard is unsanitary owing to the fact that hens are kept in the house night and day', 'yard is extremely dangerous to the public health of the town', 'human excrement and

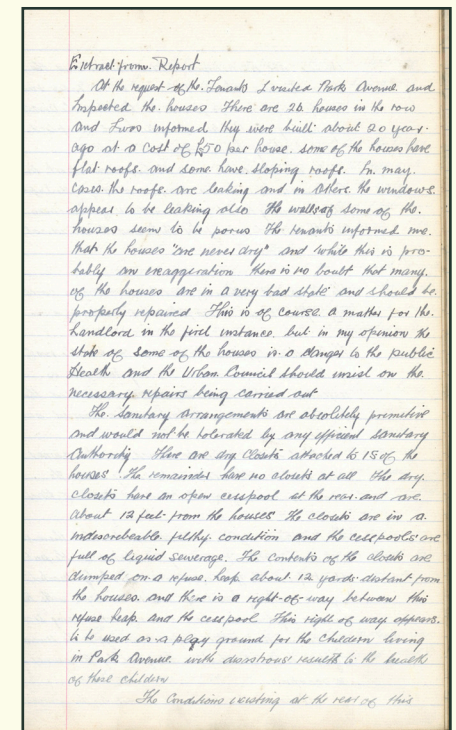
other refuse is deposited in a corner without a cover.' The unsanitary condition of the Market Square was a major public health issue for the new Council in 1914. But the living conditions in housing, mostly privately owned, was of paramount importance.

On 7 January 1924 a report from a Local Government inspector Mr Sean O'Farrell on 26 houses built '20 years ago' in Park Avenue was read out at the monthly Council meeting. He reported that he had visited the estate at the request of tenants there, that the 'roofs are leaking', 'windows appear to be leaking' in some, walls of some 'seem to be porous', 'tenants informed me that the houses were never dry'. He completed a report that was frank and unambiguous in its message to the UDC:

'Many of the houses are in a very bad state and should be properly repaired. This is of course a matter for the landlord in the first

instance but in my opinion the state of some of the houses is a danger to the public health and the Urban Council should insist on the necessary repairs being carried out. The sanitary arrangements are absolutely primitive and would not be tolerated by any efficient sanitary authority. There are dry closets attached to 15 of the houses. The remainder have no closets at all. The dry closets have an open cesspool at the rear and are about 12 feet from the house. The closets are in an indescribably filthy condition and the cesspools are full of liquid sewerage. The contents of the closets are dumped on a refuse heap about 12 yards distant from the houses and there is a right of way between this refuse heap and the cesspool. The right of way appears to be used as a playground for the children living in Park Ave with disastrous results to the health of those children.

The conditions existing at the rear of these houses are a disgrace to civilisation and the Urban Council should be called upon to take immediate steps to safeguard the health of the district by having the public health laws complied with both by landlord and tenant.'



Extract from Minutes of Buncrana Urban District Council, inspector's report on housing estate, 7 January 1924

Mr O'Farrell's report was referred to a sub committee. The subsequent minutes reflect how closely the UDC monitored the improvement in the conditions on the estate. In March that year, the Council, following another strong letter from Mr O'Farrell, decided to inform the Department that the landlords of the premises in question were erecting earth closets as ordered by the Council and that the Council had passed bye-laws on the building of toilets in houses. Also it was decided to serve seven day notices on tenants and landlords to enforce the cleaning and emptying of closets and ashpits.

Other public health issues dealt with by the medical officer and sub sanitary officer were unauthorised burial of animals, unauthorised dumping grounds, regulation of burial grounds, running sewers, the extension of Buncrana's sewerage system, proposals for and maintenance of public lavatories, responsibility for water fountains, inspection of milk and meat

supplies and inspection and registration of slaughter houses. Monitoring and regulating slaughter houses were great problems in the early years of the Council. For example on 5 February 1923 the medical officer of health reported one such slaughter house as being 'unsanitary and defective, it is kept in a filthy condition, blood and excrement being allowed to accumulate inside and outside'. The officer reported that 'this house is entirely unfit for the slaughtering of animals unless the place is repaired, lime washed and kept in a sanitary state'. It was ordered that a Notice be served and seven days allowed to carry out the recommendations of the medical officer.

The duties of the local Councils' medical officers included the prevention, notification and isolation of infectious diseases. Buncrana UDC noted, more than a year after its own establishment, that the Infectious Disease Notification and Prevention Acts

Town Surveyor's Report

I measured the proposed new drain sewer, behind the four Houses in Victoria Road, which measures about 1½ lineal perches, from Mr. McCorinck's front Garden Gate to the mearing between Mr Crawford's yard, & Mr. McQuade's yard, in the New's Lane. Behind the 4 Houses. if this new 6" sewer is properly laid and the owners of the Houses would connect to it & use a modern intercepting trap in connecting up to the new main in my opinion if this is done it will relieve any further trouble in this Town.

My Estimate for the work amounts to £ 29 14 0

E. O'Callaghan
Town Surveyor
March 4th 1935

Town Surveyor's Report on proposed new sewer, 4 March 1935

of 1889 and 1890 had been adopted by Inishowen RDC and now 'continued in force in the Buncrana Urban District since constituted and comprised in the original area.' (Minutes of 5 July 1915).

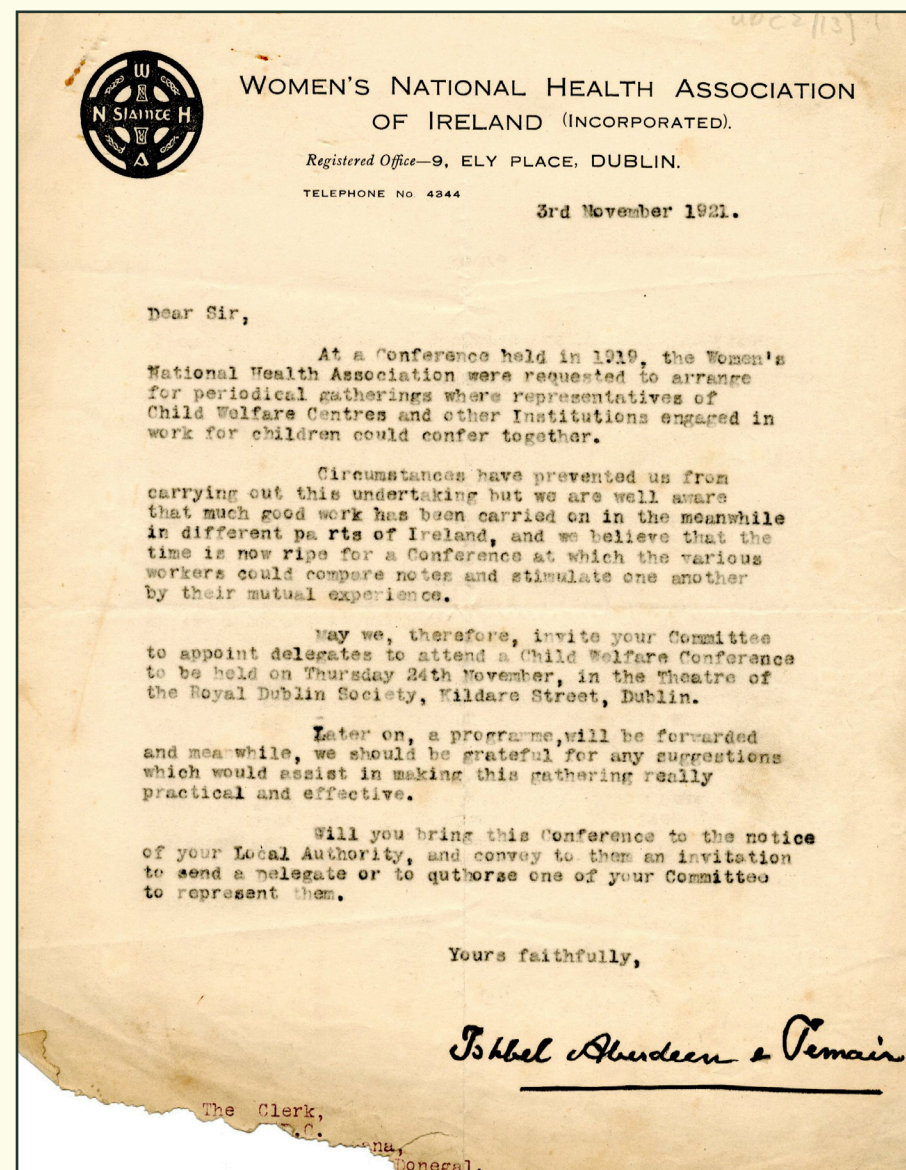
Infectious diseases still extant in the early years of the 20th century included typhus, TB and diphtheria.

It was agreed with Inishowen RDC to transfer the 'Union fever hospital to the RDC to be used

as an isolation hospital for consumption' (6 July 1914). The Union fever hospital was in Carndonagh and it was to here that patients with infectious diseases could be transferred by order of the local authority. An early such case occurred in the local RIC barracks in Buncrana, from where a person who had contracted diphtheria 'from an unknown source' was transferred to Carndonagh hospital and his family 'isolated' (2 Nov 1914). Such cases were notified regularly at monthly meetings.

Buncrana UDC took part in maternity and child welfare grant schemes which were established to assist in funding local nursing associations under the Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1918. The Archives collection includes letters from Annie Callaghan, Buncrana Nursing Society, Heatherlea, Buncrana (later Ardcaein, Buncrana), to the town clerk, Charles O'Callaghan, requesting funds under the Child

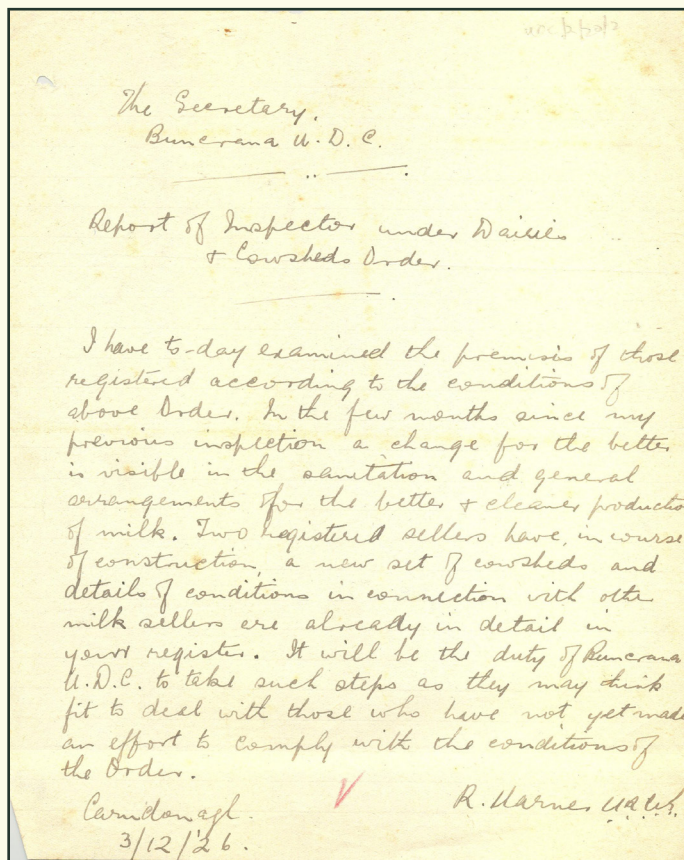
Welfare scheme and reminding him that the child welfare scheme funds were due to be paid (October 1918 and November 1920.) The clerk of the Council also received regular letters from the Local Government Board, reminding him of the deadline for participation in this scheme (e.g. 24 January 1920), authorising recoupment of funds expended, and also seeking information on which nursing association the funds went to. The scheme was monitored closely by central government, whether British or Irish, as is evident from a letter sent on 19 February 1925, from J. W. Martin, Local Government Auditor, Ministry of Local Government, Dublin, to the town clerk, Buncrana UDC, stating that he was directed by the Minister to examine and certify the maternity and child welfare scheme of Buncrana for the year ended 31 March 1924, stating that he intended going to Donegal and asking that the accounts and vouchers be ready for checking.



Letter from Women's National Health Association to Buncrana Urban District Council, regarding child welfare, 3 November 1921

Buncrana Urban District Council had an overseeing role in ensuring safe practice with regard to production of dairy farms. Dairy inspectors reported to the Council on the condition of premises utilised by 'cowkeepers and dairymen'. A register of the

numbers of dairymen had to be kept and information passed on to the Local Government Board. Other related issues included ensuring the prevention of sale of 'unsound eggs' and milk.



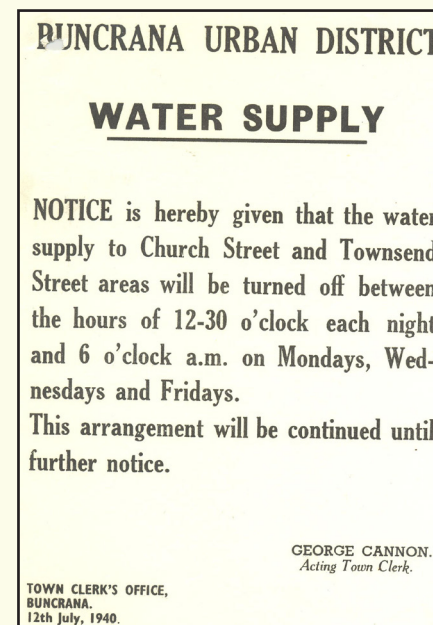
Report by inspector for dairies and cowsheds, Buncrana, 3 December 1921

WATER SUPPLY

Buncrana UDC was responsible for the supply of clean water to the town and district. This included the routine tasks of laying (bringing water for domestic purposes in pipes from the main supply) and repair of pipes.

The Council also had the unwelcome task quite frequently, particularly in the early years, of rationing water in the town, and later during the 'Emergency' (World War Two) years. The Council regularly issued notices and warnings regarding perceived misuse of water supplied. It also had to deal with complaints regarding inadequate water supply. For example, a petition from ratepayers Eliza Kelly, Thomas Burns, William Doherty, Philip Friel, Thomas Kelly, Charles Doherty, Milltown, Buncrana, was

received by the UDC on 2 April 1936, complaining of water being turned off all day every day from 10 am.

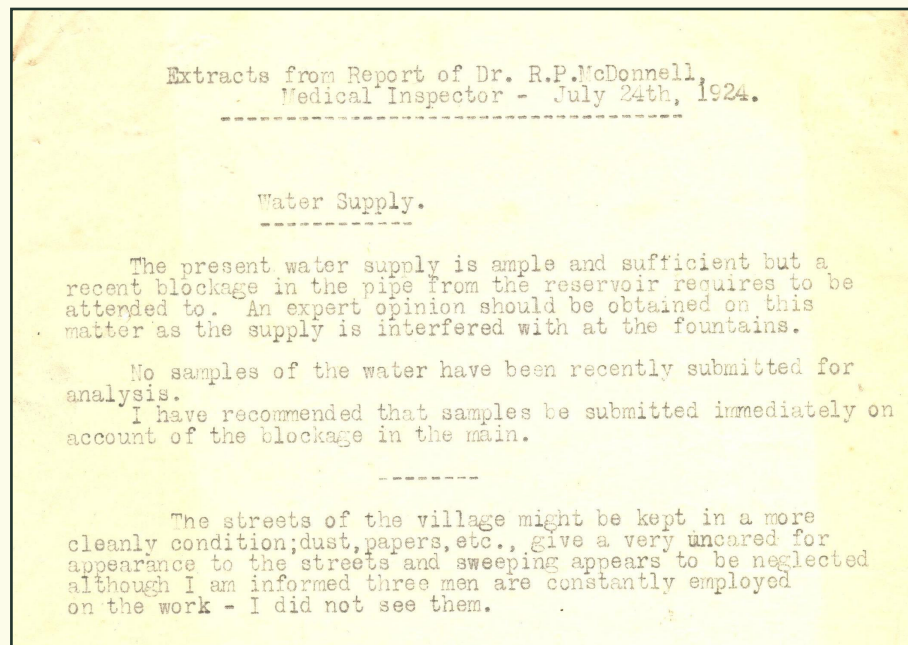


Water shortage Notice, 12 July 1940

One of the Council's first duties, due to scarcity of water supply in the reservoir, was to hold a Special Meeting to draw up an agreement with the local landowners, Hugh McCarrow and Hugh Doherty, to allow the UDC to put pipes in their field 'and give them the use of the spring and all facilities' (19 June 1914). The early days of the Council

concentrated on the problems of the water pumping engine, it kept breaking down at a time when water reserves were particularly low; sometimes additional men had to be employed to work it day and night. On 7 September 1914 it was decided to analyse other areas for a new water scheme, including at Slavery.

The Council took the lead role in instigating water improvement schemes, gaining loans from the Local Government Board in 1915 for the first of these, which was at Lough Doo. This was during the World War One years, a time when the British Admiralty fleet was based at Lough Swilly, and the water improvement scheme took place with the aid of the British admiralty. Later improvement schemes followed, such as again at Lough Doo in 1944. Grants or loans were received from the Department of Local Government for such large scale schemes including during the 1950s. The UDC would make regular written applications for instalments of the loan that had been sanctioned. The Archives holds an extensive file of correspondence relating to the acquisition and development of land at Slavery, Buncrana, for the purpose of a water improvement scheme in the 1950s - 1960s.

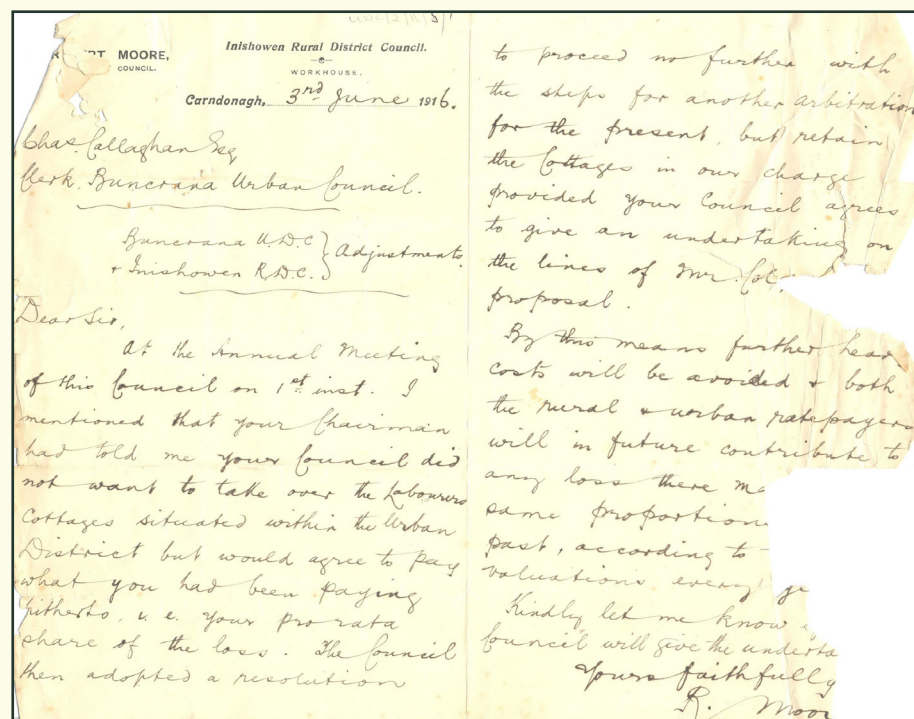


Buncrana UDC Medical Inspector's Report on water supply, 24 July 1924

HOUSING

Buncrana Town Commissioners, by its own admission at one of its last meetings in December 1913, had not had an opportunity to undertake any public housing scheme since becoming Commissioners the previous

January. From the commencement of urban status however, public housing became one of the new Council's main responsibilities. Inishowen Rural District Council had built 33 cottages in Buncrana. These cottages, at Ardaravan,



Letter from Inishowen RDC to Buncrana UDC regarding 33 labourers' cottages, 3 June 1916

Ballymacarry and Tullyaravan were finally passed to the newly formed UDC by agreement in October 1916 'under terms of award viz to pay to the Rural District Council the sum of £120.18.8 per year.'

Even before the UDC accepted it was to inherit responsibility for these properties, Inishowen RDC began passing on problems and issues associated with their maintenance, and the UDC then began dealing with them. Maintenance, payment of rent, vacant cottages, tenant lease queries and difficulties with tenant behaviour were some of their newly inherited duties. For instance in September 1914 it was reported by Inishowen RDC that one tenant was 'in the habit of keeping lodgers of a very bad class'. The Council pointed out that the man 'violates one of the conditions of his agreement' and wished to know if the Urban Council would like to have him served with a notice to quit. The UDC agreed that it would.

Tenant purchase schemes became common from the 1950s - 1960s. The Archives collection includes correspondence in the 1950s between Buncrana UDC and the Department of Local Government regarding a tenant purchase scheme for some of the above 33 labourers' cottages.

The Urban District Council's efforts to purchase private land for the purpose of building public housing was often fraught with difficulties, sometimes ending in compulsory purchase as allowed under law. In 1922 there were protracted discussions between Mr Colquhoun, solicitor and land agent (also an Urban District councillor) and General William Kerr McClintock who owned land in Buncrana which the Council wished to take for housing. McClintock offered the land to the Council for £200 plus costs but the Council was unhappy with this offer. (Its original offer had been £200 in total). On 4 December 1922 it passed a resolution to

'hereby withdraw their offer of £200 to General McClintock for an acre of land on this site'. In accordance with a resolution passed by the Council on 7 August 1922 the Council initiated compulsory purchase proceedings.

This was not as easy as it sounds though, for on 7 May 1923 the UDC reported that it still had no housing scheme in progress and that it was still attempting to compulsorily purchase land from General McClintock.

BUNCRANA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ERECTION OF WORKING CLASS HOUSES

The above Council will, at their Meeting to be held on Wednesday, the 18th day of May, 1932, consider Tenders for the Erection of 22 Houses in accordance with Plans and Specifications prepared by Mr. J. P. McGrath, M.R.I.A.I., Architect, Newmarket Street, Derry.

Plans and Specifications can be seen at the Office of the Architect, or at the Office of the undersigned.

Parties tendering on this work to have all workmanship for the erection of the buildings prepared in the Free State.

Contractors tendering will give preference to the employment of local labour.

Tenders are to be delivered at this Office not later than 12 o'clock, noon, on the 18th day of May, 1932, and endorsed "Tenders for Buncrana Housing Scheme"

The lowest or any tender not necessarily accepted.
Dated this 18th day of April, 1932.

Chas. Callaghan,
TOWN CLERK.

Town Clerk's Office,
Buncrana.

PRINTED AT THE "DERRY JOURNAL" OFFICE

Poster issued by Buncrana UDC seeking tenders for building of houses, 18 April 1932

FORM OF TENDER.

HOUSING SCHEME for BUNCRANA URBAN COUNCIL, Co. Donegal, at St. Mary's Road Site.

NOTE: Contractors tendering must submit their tenders on this form. If the scheme includes more than one site separate forms must be used.

I/WE Messrs Crawford & Coker, Victoria Road, Buncrana.

HEREBY undertake to carry out for the sum of £2,000 two thousand one hundred and sixty four pounds one shilling and ten pence only (including all provisional sums mentioned in the Specification) the works specified in the Contract Drawings and Specification which have been examined by me/us, such work to be executed in accordance with the conditions set out in the said contract and Specification and S/WE name:

A. P. Swan Esq.

of Mill Street, Buncrana, Co. Donegal

and Mr. Mr. Gleiney Esq.

of Provision 7 General Merchant, Main St. Buncrana

WHO ARE WILLING TO enter into bond with me/us equal to contract amount for due performance of work.

Building cost in Concrete brick.

Houses of Plan Type 1A, modified - 30 Houses in concrete brick viz.

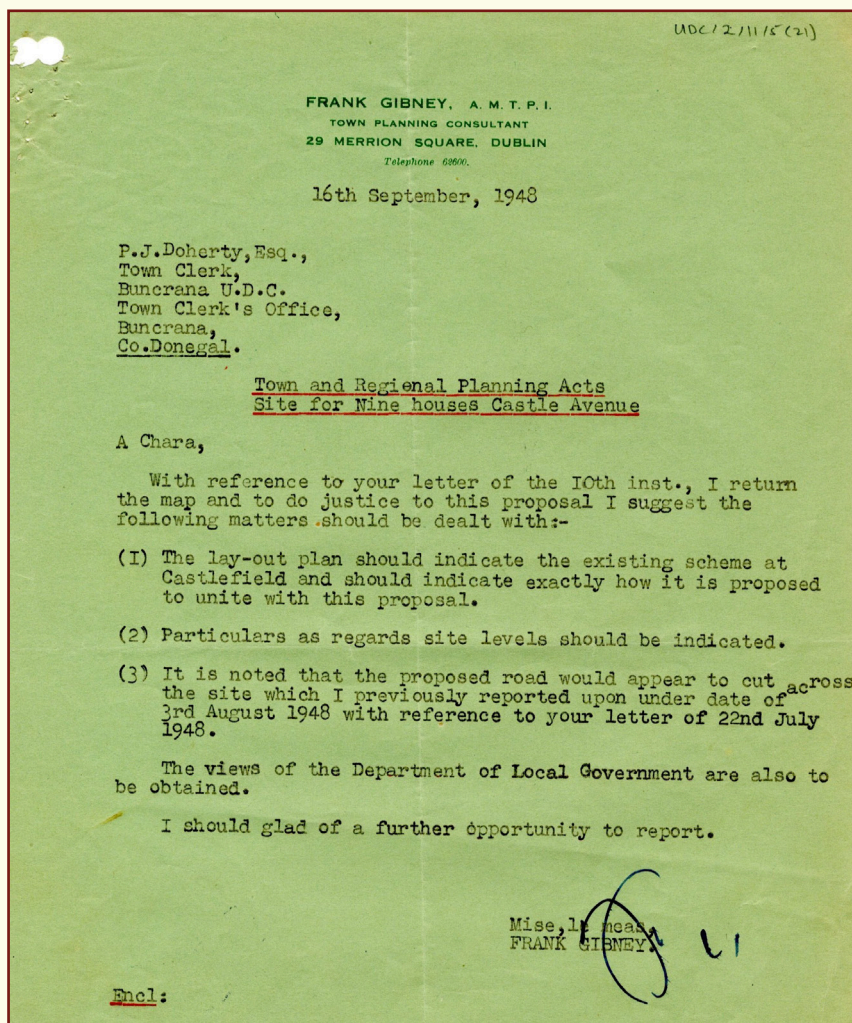
| | |
|--|---------------------|
| No. 5 blocks A, and B, of three houses each hipped roofs | Est: - 1- |
| No. 5 blocks B, C, D, E, and G, stopped | Est: - 1- |
| No. 1 block D, hipped roofs | Est: - 1- |
| Garden Paths and Fencing. | £ 250 17 6 |
| House House Drains. | £ 74 4 1 |
| | £ 1,052 10 0 |

OVER

Tender document for St Mary's Road housing project, 1932

Throughout the 20th century Buncrana Urban District Council played an important role in sourcing and building what was known as 'housing for the working classes' of the district. Specific housing schemes included Castlefield, St Egney's Terrace,

St Mary's Road, St Columba's Ave, Ferris Lane, Ardaravan, Maginn Ave, the McClintock estate, Cluain Mhuire. The development of Castlefield took place in 1947 and interestingly, included a strike by workers during building work.

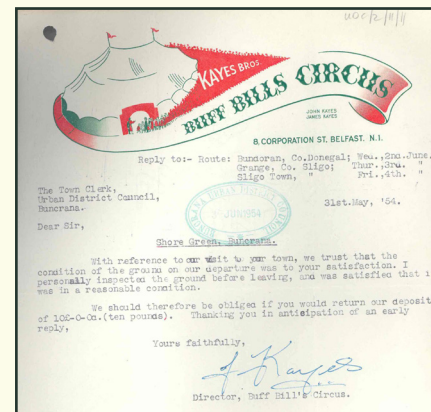


Letter from Planning consultant to Buncrana UDC, regarding the building of houses at Castle Ave, 1948

Buncrana UDC was also responsible for maintaining and letting land owned or inherited by itself. The

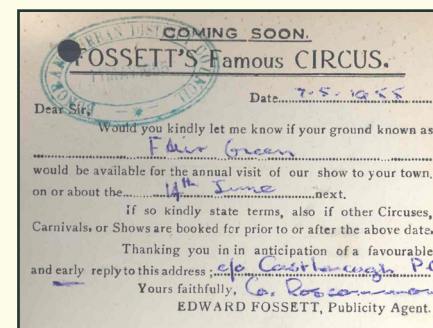
Archives Collection includes correspondence relating to the letting of land at the shore greens

and elsewhere. Land and property were let long term and short term for a wide variety of purposes such as circus performances, dances, and even the grazing of sheep (the golf links was regularly let for grazing.) Circuses such as the famous Fossetts and Duffys rented land in Buncrana. The UDC negotiated agreements with many people and organisations



including amusement proprietors, business men and women, the local ballrooms and dancehalls, Buncrana Hearts Football & Athletic Club, Buncrana Industrial Fund, the Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA), Bord Fáilte, the GAA and Buncrana Town Development

Committee. During the late 1950s, the Town Council appears to have acted as mediator between Association Football Buncrana Summer Cup and League and the Plaza and Broadway ballrooms, resulting in an agreement by the Football Association to forego marquee dancing at the shore greens and instead to hold their dances in one of the ballrooms.

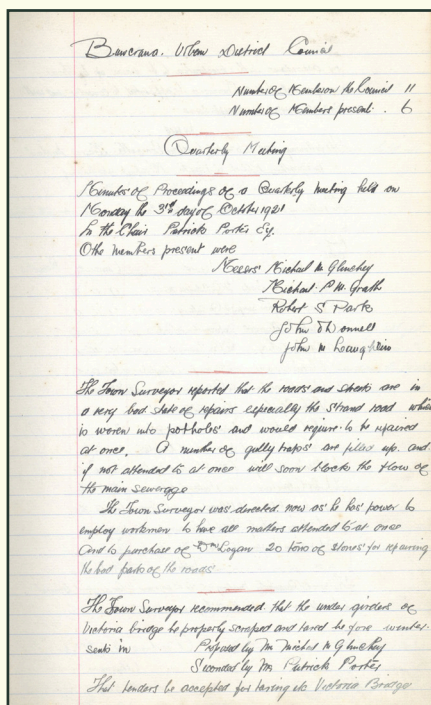


Correspondence between Buncrana UDC and circuses coming to Buncrana, 1954 - 1955

The UDC and County Council negotiated financial terms for the association's rental of the ballrooms.

ROADS AND TRANSPORT

In the early years the town surveyor served as the main Roads manager with the duties of developing and maintaining the roads and streets of Buncrana. The surveyor reported regularly to the UDC at quarterly meetings. For example at the meeting on 5 July 1915 he reported that the roads in the urban area 'have been kept in fair order', that he had ordered a steam roller at work for 27 days during the quarter, that '895 tons of stones and 96 tons of grit have been rolled', and he also recommended that Victoria Road be taken over by the Council as it 'is in fair order and suitable for traffic.' It was also recommended that the 'road between the Military road and end of the road at Farmer Lynch's house in Lisnakelly be repaired'. On 3 April 1916 the quarterly report of the town surveyor stated that 'the



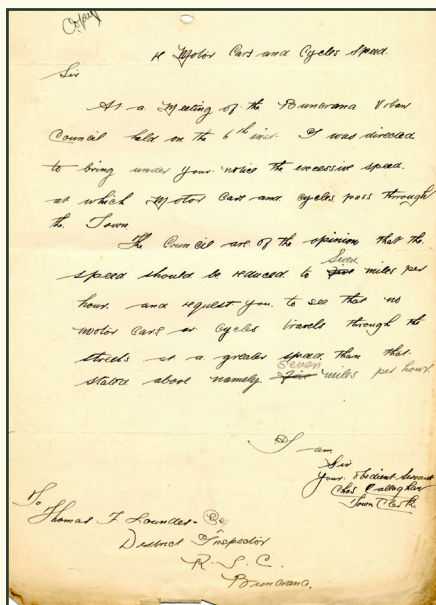
Quarterly meeting of Buncrana UDC with Town Surveyor's roads report, 3 October 1921

roads and streets have been kept in fair order during the past quarter and all the gateways and the main street have been repaired'. He

also reported on 'the payment of £5 to Daniel Friel for a hand cart for scavenging purposes and the payment of the sum of £27 4s 4d to the Donegal County Council for the maintenance of roads within the urban area since 1 April 1914.'

Roads issues from the earliest days of Buncrana UDC included issues that are still very relevant today. Traffic calming measures through towns became necessary once motor cars became the main mode of transportation. The problem is reflected in a letter of 9 July 1914 from the town clerk, Charles O'Callaghan to Thomas T. Lander, district inspector with the Royal Irish Constabulary, commenting on the excessive speed of cars and motor bicycles through the town, suggesting a speed reduction to seven miles per hour, and requesting RIC assistance in the matter. A few days earlier the Council had passed a resolution to allow motor cars to travel no faster than seven miles per hour (6 July 1914). The issue of speed became

more serious during World War One and generated tensions between the Admiralty, the RIC and the UDC. A UDC motion was drafted on 5 August 1918, objecting to the speed of military, Admiralty, public and private motor vehicles within the urban area. The motion stated that such speed was endangering lives and alleged that an Admiralty vehicle had 'injured a horse which had to be put down, and a fifteen year old rider had a miraculous escape'. The UDC ordered a new speed limit in the urban area of 10 mph. However, the RIC district inspector replied that while he had already instituted proceedings with regard to the Admiralty car he believed that under the 1903 Motor Car Act the UDC had no power to reduce speed limits. He stated that only the County Council had such power (12 August 1918). A more conciliatory letter from Rear Admiral [], RN Base, to the town clerk stressed that necessary orders had been given and 'it is trusted will remove all cause



Letter from Buncrana UDC to RIC concerning road speeds, 9 July 1914

of complaint in future.’ (13 August 1918).

Traditionally, local authorities invited private contractors to tender for repair of roads, footpaths, streets and bridges, with the town surveyor preparing the specification. Buncrana UDC made a decision to employ direct labour at a quarterly meeting of the Council on 6 July 1914. Direct labour meant that men

would be directly employed by the Urban Council as labourers on specific roads projects. This was a popular decision in the locality as it meant that it was now far more likely that local men would be given employment.

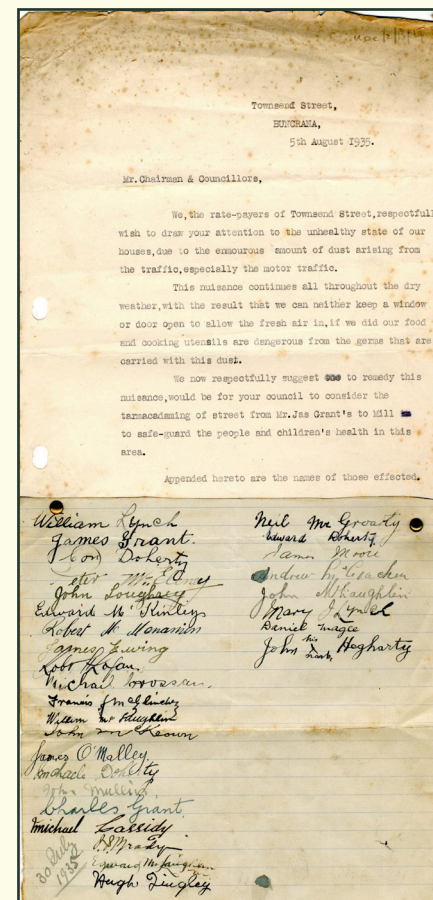
Occasionally, from the 1920s onwards, men were employed on ‘unemployment relief’ schemes. In 1922, for example, following a deputation of unemployed men to the UDC offices, and correspondence between the Ministry (Department) of Economic Affairs, the Department of Transport, Buncrana Urban District Council and Donegal County Council, a sum of £300 was granted to the UDC for a road relief scheme for the employment of men in the district.

Road works often took place following allocations of Departmental grants. At a Council meeting on 3 March 1924 it was reported that the Department of Local Government had awarded

the Urban Council £400 for the improvement of ‘trunk roads’ and added that the County Council could supplement this amount if it so wished from grants allocated to it. Buncrana UDC resolved to ask the County Council to supply the UDC with the broken stones ‘that will be necessary to carry out the work of improving the main roads’ from the local quarry, stating that ‘by the County Council supplying the stones from the quarry more employment would be given to the men they have employed under the grant allocated to them.’

Other responsibilities for Roads personnel included the maintenance of bridges, the harbour, footpaths and greens, traffic and automobile signage, the railway route, quarrying, handling complaints on the condition of roads and regulation of traffic.

Organisations often lobbied by Buncrana UDC included the Londonderry & Lough Swilly



Petition from Buncrana residents regarding the condition of local roads, 5 August 1935

Railway Company, mainly due to the difficulties experienced with transport in early 20th century Inishowen, in spite of the existence of a railway network.

A Council minute of 4 June 1923 notes: 'The clerk was directed to request the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway Company to run an ordinary train to Buncrana on Sunday evenings during the summer months and to point out that owing to motor cars being prohibited from Derry to Buncrana

on a Sunday an evening train would facilitate a number of people wishing to visit Buncrana'.

On 2 May 1932 the Council asked the company to reduce fares to members and day members of the Municipal Golf Links on trams and buses from Derry to Buncrana.



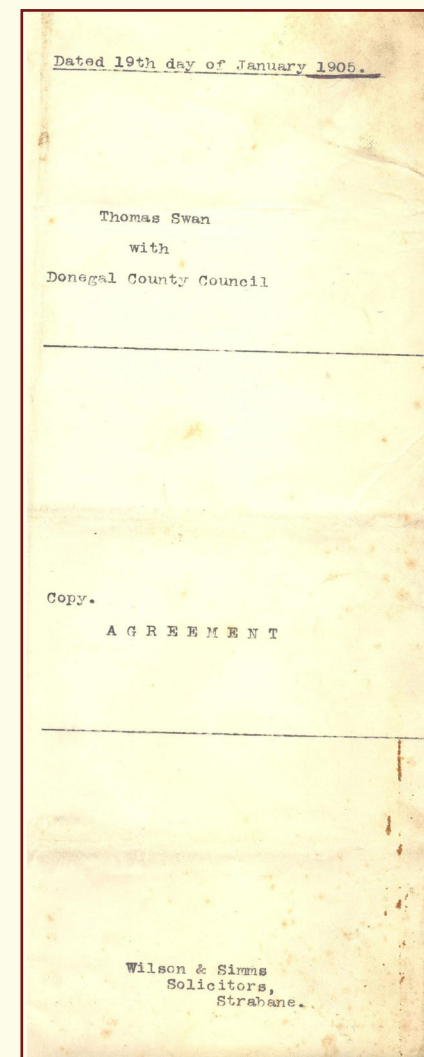
Buncrana Railway Station, 1959

PUBLIC LIGHTING

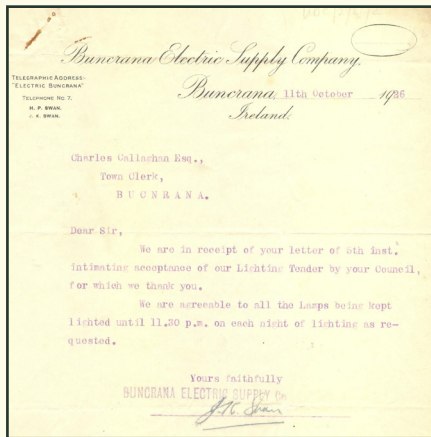
In 1905 Buncrana had become the first town in County Donegal to use electricity for public lighting purposes. A surviving legal agreement between Donegal County Council and Thomas Swan, dated 19 January 1905 refers to the erection of poles or wires for the purpose of an electric lighting scheme, on any land under the control of Donegal County Council.

Subsequently Buncrana Electric Supply Company became the supplier of lighting for the town. Its contract was renewed by the Urban Council on an annual basis. Documents in the Archives include the Company's contracts. There are also letters from members of the public and

Agreement for Lighting of town of Buncrana, between Thomas Swan and Donegal County Council, 19 January 1905



business people in Buncrana requesting increased lighting hours or improved lighting of parts of the town, their own townland, areas or housing estates. People sometimes signed petitions seeking lighting for specific areas.



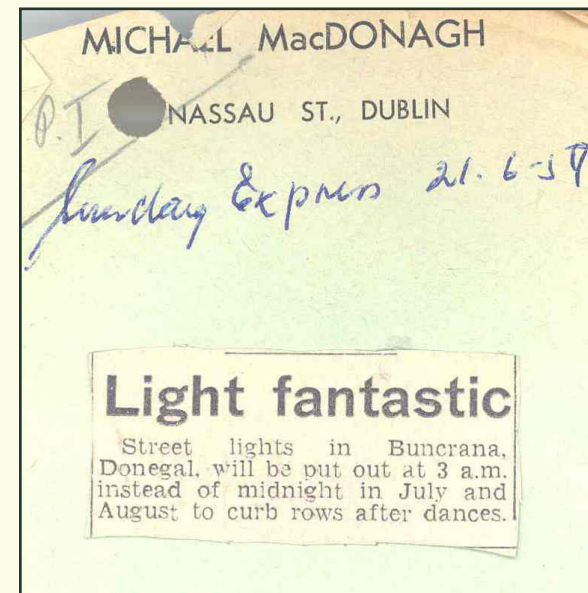
Letter from Buncrana Electric Supply Company to Buncrana UDC, regarding the former's tender for lighting of the town, 11 October 1926

Buncrana UDC and Buncrana Electric Supply Company corresponded during the Emergency/World War Two years regarding lighting restrictions deemed necessary due to the war. On 21 August 1941 some months after the destructive and

fatal Luftwaffe bombings in Belfast and Dublin the Council ordered that:

'Owing to the position arising from the Emergency it is necessary that public lighting shall cease as from the 31st next. The contractor, however, has agreed to serve the town with six pilot lights during the winter months as far as his plant is capable of so doing.'

There were many requests from members of the public and businesses for improved public lighting during the War years. The Archives collection includes correspondence in November 1944 regarding a petition from local residents to turn lighting on in the town from 6.30 to 8.30 AM for workers travelling by train to Derry. When asked by the UDC if this was possible, Buncrana Electric Supply Company refused permission for such early morning lighting due to 'emergency' conditions which included fuel shortages.



Notice regarding lighting restrictions in Buncrana, 1959

On 1 April 1954 the Electricity Supply Board (of Ireland), (ESB) took over the public lighting of Buncrana. It was the end of an era.

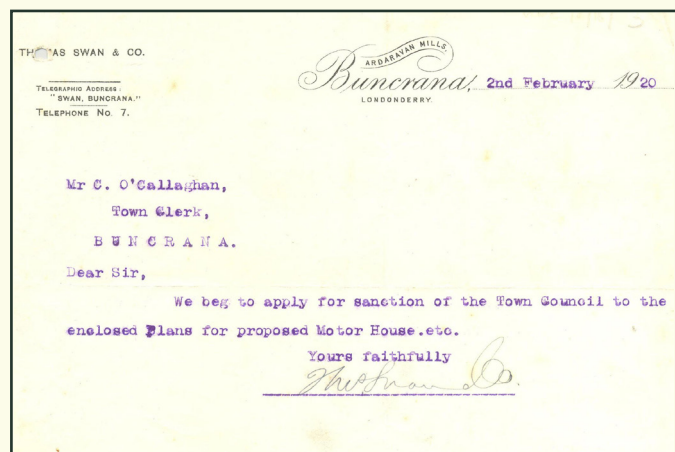
In the years after the war, disappointment was expressed in Inishowen at what was believed to be the by-passing of Inishowen by the Rural Electrification Scheme; protest meetings took place and the Department of Industry and Commerce and ESB were lobbied on the matter from 1949 to 1950.

The erection of electricity or telegraph poles can be controversial as we know even today. The Archives collection includes documentation regarding disapproval expressed in May 1954 by the Buncrana 'Commissioners discharging the affairs of the Buncrana Urban District Council' of the way in which the town is being wired for electricity with 'unsightly poles being erected in our main street.'

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Although there was no specific legislation backing the planned development of towns until the non compulsory Town and Regional Planning Act of 1934 (which became law in 1939), Buncrana Urban District Council, like other local authorities, did have responsibility for overseeing private building works in its district. The Council minutes reflect

this, with permissions frequently being sought by individuals and developers for building works such as the erection of petrol pumps, hoardings, or to renovate or construct buildings. For example, on 7 July 1930 Council minutes record that David Allen & Son were refused permission for a hoarding at West End while on the same day Colhoun and



Letter from T Swan to Buncrana UDC, requesting permission to build, 2 February 1920

Co Contractors were granted permission to repair and alter the Bank of Ireland branch building in Buncrana. There was no planning appeals process and if an applicant wished to reapply for permission refused he or she just reapplied to the Council itself. The lack of direction by national government sometimes led to frustration and to legal wrangles with applicants and their lawyers. For example an application by Henry Doherty for erection of a 'petrol standard' on the main street in 1924 led to the Council passing a resolution requesting the Department of Local Government to:

'inform the Council if they are within their rights in granting permission for the erection of a petrol pump on the main street and also if they are right in permitting a petrol tank (which feeds the pump) to be sunk underneath the floor of the garage, which garage adjoins dwelling houses and abuts the main street.' (Minutes of 13 February 1924 refer.)

With the gradual development of the town over time and the strengthening of national legislation on planning matters, the Council commenced the process of registering Planning applications and the Archives collection includes original Planning registers and files dating from 1947.

It was only in later years, under the more comprehensive 1963 Planning Act that pre-planning of the development of towns became official policy and Buncrana's first town plan was made in 1967/68. Subsequent variations of the plan were made in 1973 and 1974. These Development plans included a survey and analysis of the town, a history of planning in the town and the present position and status, a preview of future trends, major policies, basic objectives, development objectives, plans for future provision of services and facilities, land use zoning and development standards, a feasibility study and maps of the town.

VALUATION AND RATES

The making of a rate and the collection of rates are fundamental duties of local authorities and often among the most controversial. The difficulties sometimes experienced in reaching an agreement on striking a rate on an annual basis, employing rate collectors and securing the collection of rates are represented in the Buncrana UDC minutes and correspondence from its earliest years.

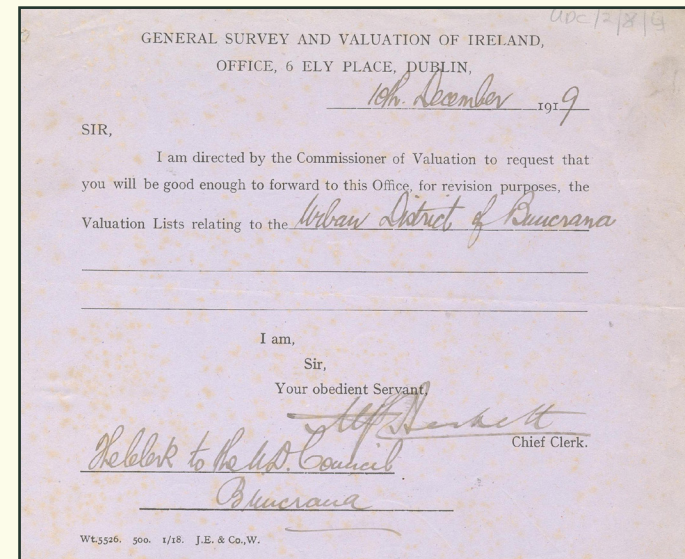
Buncrana UDC itself frequently objected to the rate demand of Donegal County Council upon it. For example, on 2 April 1923 the UDC passed a resolution to: 'enter our strongest protest against the Demand of the Tirconaille County Council for poor rates for the year ending 31 March 1924

including as it does an increase in Buncrana UDC rates of 4 shillings in the pound and we call upon the government to revise the financial relations existing between county and urban district with a view to place them on a more equitable basis and we also ask the government to institute inquiries by Commission or otherwise into the enormous increase... over last year's estimates as many of the charges now payable by Urban authorities are unfair and curtail them in promoting of several necessary schemes for the benefit of their districts and in order to remedy this grievance we request the government to introduce legislation which will end this state of affairs.'

The UDC received a letter from the government stating that the matter was under consideration and on foot of this letter, on 25 April, a special meeting of the Council decided to approve of the annual estimate and levy for rates for the year ending 24 March 1924.

The problem with collection of rates was always an issue with the UDC and a source of frequent complaint to the overseeing

governmental dept. Members of the public often wrote complaining that they could not afford to pay the rate demanded of them. Rate collectors never collected the full amount of rates due. In September 1923 a letter from the Department stated that it did not object to 'the council striking off items of arrears of rates as irrecoverable but it must be prepared to satisfy the Auditor on the point.' (17 Sept 1923).



Letter from Valuation Commissioners to Buncrana UDC regarding valuation revision, 10 December 1919

The years 1952 - 1953 saw a protracted controversy in Buncrana on the issue of the town's valuation. This followed a 100% revision of valuation of the town in 1951, which Buncrana UDC felt was 'out of all proportion to the increase placed on the other urban areas

of county demands regarding health, roads, the mental hospital charges, public assistance and salaries of Donegal County Council staff' and requesting the minister to inquire into the circumstances and to make an order to Donegal County Council to alter

LIST OF TENEMENTS AND HEREDITAMENTS requiring revision, viz. : altered, Buildings, Fisheries, Railways, Canals, Tolls, Mines, Gas and Water subject to frequent alteration.

(15 & 16 Vic., Cap. 63—17 Vic., Cap. 8—as amended by Local G

County Donegal Urban District of Buncrana

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Electoral Divisions or Ward | No. and Letter of "Reference to Map" in Valuation Lists | Townlands, Towns, Streets, &c. | Occupiers | Immediate Lessors |
| | | | | |

Extract from Buncrana Urban Valuation Document, 1937.

in the county.' (UDC Town Clerk's Memo, 1951). Correspondence includes a petition to the Minister for Local Government issued by Buncrana UDC complaining of the 'heavy burdens imposed on the urban district of Buncrana by reason of the inequitable financial relations existing..... between Donegal County Council and Buncrana UDC in respect

this situation. The Department of Local Government replied on 16 August 1952 that it was not possible for the minister to do as requested by Buncrana UDC.

RECREATION

From its earliest years, Buncrana UDC was responsible for building and maintaining 'bathing boxes', public huts at the beach which were to allow people to change into and out of beachwear. A notice issued by Buncrana UDC in June 1917 stated that the Council was seeking

'a competent person to take charge of gentlemen's bathing boxes for the season'. The Archives collection includes applications from the 1920s for posts as caretakers of the boxes- gentlemen's and ladies'. As in Bundoran, beach guards to oversee swimmers were also employed.

Buncrana Urban District

TENDERS WANTED

The Buncrana Urban District Council will, at their Meeting to be held on Monday the 7 day of May, 1934, consider Tenders for the following works:-

Letting of Ladies & Gents Bathing Boxes for the Season

The work to be done in accordance with Plans and Specifications which can be seen at the office of the undersigned.

Tender Forms can be had on application at this office and will be received up to the hour of 4 o'clock on Monday, the 7 day of May, 1934.

The lowest or any Tender not necessarily accepted.

Dated this 25 day of April 1934

CHAS. CALLAGHAN,
Town Clerk.

Town Clerk's Office, Buncrana.

Buncrana UDC Poster requesting tenders for building of bathing boxes, May 1934



Aspect of Swan Park, April 2014

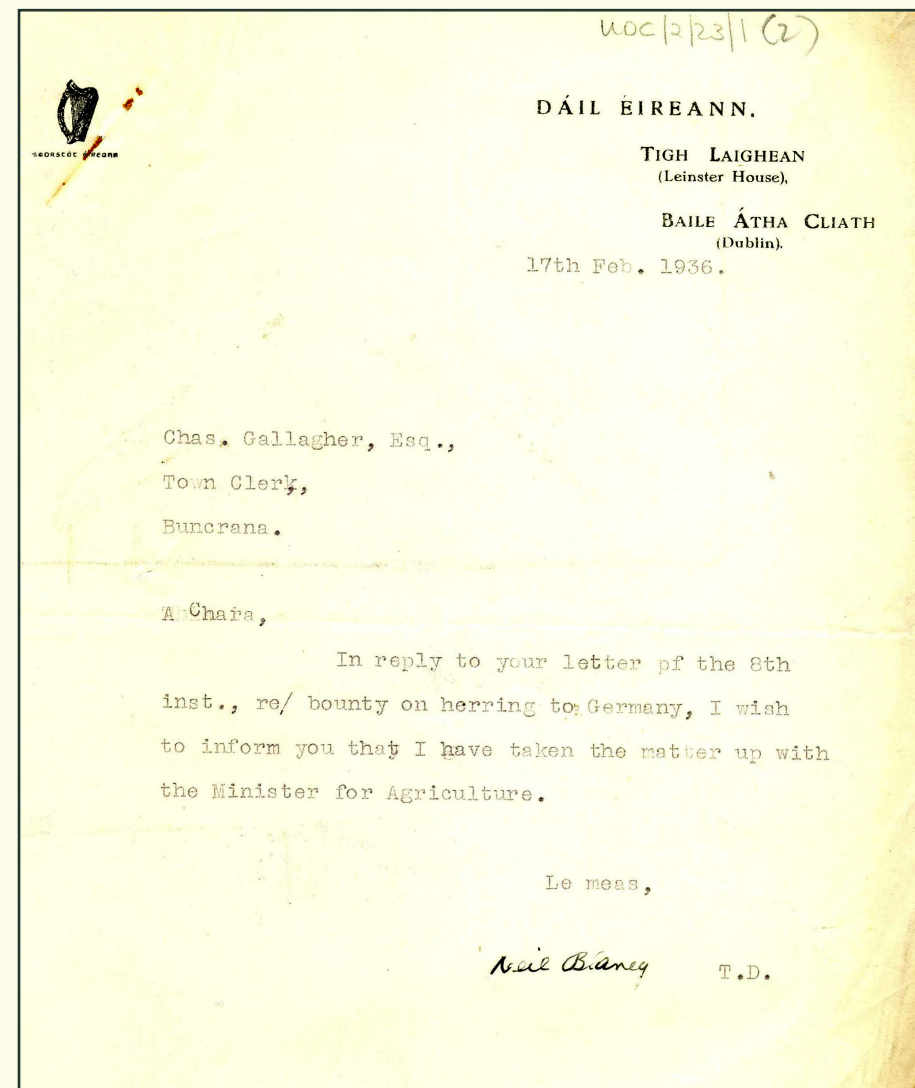
In 1965 Harry P. Swan donated land along the river Crana to the town for a public park, and the beautiful and unique Swan Park has been cared for by the UDC/ Town Council ever since as have the shore greens and other green spaces and playgrounds in the town.

FISHING AND HARBOUR MATTERS

Buncrana Harbour Commissioners was a separate body to the Urban District Council, though there was frequent interaction between the two. Through official minutes the Council sometimes lobbied the Commissioners to get works done. For example on 25 February 1931 the minutes record the Council's concern that work being done at the river side of the harbour would not be completed in time for the May fishing, fearing that if the work was not completed in time 'there will be no fishing which means loss of revenue to the harbour which is a matter of importance to the Council.'

Donegal County Council and Buncrana UDC lobbied the Irish government in 1936 in relation to the import duty imposed by

Germany and Poland on all Irish cured herrings 'which is quickly and effectively killing our cured herring industry' and requesting the assistance of the Department of Industry and Commerce in this matter. A letter from the town clerk, Charles O'Callaghan, to the Minister for Industry and Commerce, on 8 February 1936, asked the minister to 'get the restriction regarding export of Irish herrings to Germany removed' and stated that the 'industry is now at a dead end until trading conditions are revised.' TDs including Neil T. Blaney also lobbied the government on the matter and the Minister for Agriculture, Dr James Ryan agreed to try to negotiate a deal with Germany and Britain on herring exports.



Letter from Neil Blaney, TD to Buncrana UDC, regarding herring exports, 17 February 1936

CURIOUS FACTS GLEANED FROM THE ARCHIVES

Location: In 1923 Council meetings were being held at St Mary's Hall, which at this time was also being used as a national school. At that time meetings were usually held in the Courthouse, but this suffered damage during the Civil War.

Compulsory Education: Following legislation in 1892 to increase school attendance and raise the school age, local authorities could legislate for compulsory education in their localities, although many local authorities did not see the benefits of this at the time. The legislation was itself not compulsory, but 'permissive', meaning that there was no means of actually enforcing it. A letter from Buncrana's town clerk to

the Commissioners of National Education on 17 June 1914 stated that the Council was of the opinion that compulsory education was not necessary in the urban area. Buncrana was not unique in this, Letterkenny UDC had agreed two years earlier that compulsory education was not necessary in its district.

Further Education: In April 1924 Buncrana struck a rate of one penny in the pound for the year ending 31 March 1925 for technical instruction purposes and suggested to the Tirconaill Joint Technical Instruction Committee that the Masonic Hall was available for such a school. The UDC played a strong role in the

establishment of a new Technical school in Buncrana in 1935.

Beach: Occasionally, over the years, the beach's public bathing boxes maintained by the UDC were discovered to have been used by courting couples at night for purposes not related to sea bathing, much to the chagrin of the Council who liaised with the local Garda Superintendent on the matter in the 1940s.

Farming: Sheep farmers needed to apply to the Town Council if they wished to rent Urban land for grazing. The Buncrana Golf Links was continuously let out for grazing, to a variety of individuals and organisations.

Trade unions: In 1918 the National Amalgamated Union of Labour negotiated with Buncrana UDC for an increase in salary for members of the union. Among the other trade unions Buncrana UDC negotiated with in its first few decades were the

Amalgamated Society of Wood Joiners, the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, and the Local Government Officials (Ireland) Trade Union.

Role of Women: The first woman chairperson of the Council was Ms Bried Bonner in 1976.

Employees: In the early years of the 20th century employees had to apply directly to the UDC itself (rather than their line managers) for increases in pay or for annual leave. Council members' decisions on the sanction or refusal of leave or increase in wages were duly recorded in the monthly minutes.

Customs: As Buncrana was so proximate to the border at Bridgend, there were often contentious issues regarding customs. A resolution of Buncrana UDC on 30 January 1936 called on Donegal County Council to 'assist us with all their strength to have the custom borders into the six counties declared open to

outgoing private vehicles up to 11.30 pm free instead of as present 9.0'. The resolution was copied to various organisations, including the Irish Tourist Association which replied on 25 February 1936 that 'the association will do all it can to cooperate with the UDC in securing the arrangements suggested'. The Department of Finance also responded, stating that the suggestion had been forwarded to the Minister for Finance.

Donegal County Council supported Buncrana UDC's motion (as did Bundoran UDC) agreeing with the issue and suggesting that a letter from both be sent to the Revenue Commissioners. Buncrana wrote to Revenue but Revenue denied the request on 25 February 1936.

Elections: Organisation of the Ballot in national and local elections was part of the duties of the Council. Due to the War of Independence and Civil War, local elections, planned under the new Free State Government for 1922, were

The Town Surveyor recommended that a second year post be made on the main street between the Post office and the main street and that the road be widened to 20 feet.

It was suggested that the road be widened to 20 feet to the junction of the main street by means of a concrete bridge over the canal at this junction to be done on 1st June 1915 with to be done in accordance with the plans and specifications of the Town Surveyor.

Proposed accounts were drawn to be paid

| No. | Name | Particulars | Amount | Remarks |
|-----|---------------------|-------------------|--------|---------|
| 10 | John Tierney | Watchman's salary | 12 0 0 | |
| 11 | Edward O'Donnell | Surveyor's salary | 12 0 0 | |
| 12 | Henry Pedersen | Surveyor's salary | 12 0 0 | |
| 13 | Michael O'Connell | Surveyor's salary | 12 0 0 | |
| 14 | Michael O'Connell | Surveyor's salary | 12 0 0 | |
| 15 | Dr. James O'Connell | Salary | 12 0 0 | |
| 16 | John O'Connell | Salary | 12 0 0 | |
| 17 | John O'Connell | Salary | 12 0 0 | |
| 18 | John O'Connell | Salary | 12 0 0 | |
| 19 | John O'Connell | Salary | 12 0 0 | |
| 20 | John O'Connell | Salary | 12 0 0 | |

The next quarterly meeting of the Buncrana Urban District Council to be held on Monday the 5th day of July 1915.

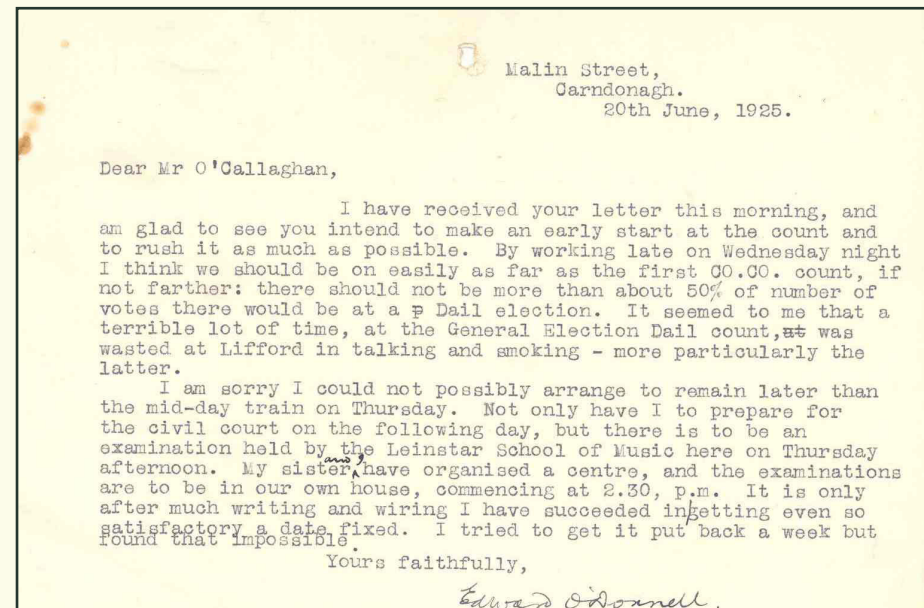
John Farran (Chairman)
 Charles O'Connell (Secretary)
 20th June 1915

List of the staff of Buncrana Urban District Council, 3 May 1915

postponed till 1925. Election by proportional representation means that time and patience is required in the count process, as is reflected in this intriguing letter from Edward O'Donnell to Charles O'Callaghan on 20 June 1925, regarding the next day count, in which O'Donnell states that he hopes that: 'By working late on Wednesday night ...we should be on easily as

far as the first count..... it seemed to me that a terrible lot of time, at the General Election Dáil count, was wasted at Lifford in talking and smoking- more particularly the latter.'

Fire fighting: In 1930 a committee was set up under the aegis of the Council to report on the possibility of purchase of fire fighting equipment. The Committee recommended that the Council



Letter regarding election count process, 20 June 1925

Golf: In November 1950, the Department of Local Government granted £350 to Buncrana Urban District Council, 'being full amount of grant allocated towards coast erosion protection at Buncrana Golf links.'

procure a 'small trailer fire pump' and new fire hydrants, hose and other equipment (4 May 1931). It was agreed that the Committee be empowered to purchase the necessary requirements once it had obtained a loan for same.

BUNCRANA'S ARCHIVES COLLECTION

The Buncrana Town local authorities Collection dates from the inception of Buncrana Town Commissioners in January 1913 to approximately 1999/2000. The collection also includes archives dating back to 1905 during the existence of Buncrana Public Health Committee (the subcommittee formed under Inishowen Rural District Council).

The extant Archives are varied and extremely comprehensive, and comprise Council minutes, agendas, legal deeds, and managers' orders, as well as detailed correspondence files on housing, roads, water supply, sewerage, public and environmental health, personnel, financial matters, rates and valuation, planning and

town development, elections and electoral issues. The collection includes general Local Government Board Orders, Departmental Orders, circulars and Acts, as well as correspondence on specific town issues such as posts and telegraphs, education including the Vocational Educational Committee, the development of tourism, agriculture, the situation during the War of Independence and Civil War, the dissolution of the Poor Law Union system and the abolition of workhouses, poverty in the early 1920s, Buncrana Harbour, fisheries, and military matters. The UDC corresponded with a great number of organisations and individuals, such as the other UDCs, Donegal County Council,

Inishowen Rural District Council, the Local Government Board, Department of Local Government, Department of Environment and Public Health, and various other government departments, and other state organisations, Councillors, members of the public, businesses, the press and interested parties.

It is worth noting that the archives of Inishowen Rural District Council,

a body which had its existence from 1899 to 1925, are also available for viewing at Donegal County Archives. The remit of the RDC included the more rural townlands of Buncrana and outskirts.

Access to the Archives is by prior appointment with the Archivist. Some material is of a private nature but the majority of records are open to the public for viewing.



Buncrana Town Council Members and Staff, 2014. From Left to Right: Joe Doherty (FF), Michelle Bradley (FG), James Gill (FF), Nicholas Crossan (Ind), Michael Grant (Ind), Fiona Doherty (Staff), Donal Walker (Town Engineer), Seamus Canning (Town Clerk), John McLaughlin (Town Manager), Peter McLaughlin (Last Mayor of Buncrana Town Council), Mary Kelly (SF), Ciaran McLaughlin (SF)

CHAIRPERSONS/ MAYORS OF BUNCRANA URBAN DISTRICT/TOWN COUNCIL SINCE 1914

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Michael McGlinchey | 1914 – 1915 |
| Isaac John Trew Colquhoun | 1915 – 1919 |
| Patrick Porter | 1919 – 1925 |
| Michael McGlinchey | 1925 – 1928 |
| Patrick Porter | 1928 - 1930 |
| Patrick Hugh Doherty | 1930 – 1931 |
| Michael McGlinchey | 1931 – 1932 |
| John Porter | 1932 – 1933 |

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Patrick Hugh Doherty | 1933 – 1934 |
| Michael McGlinchey | 1934 – 1938 |
| Daniel Friel | 1938 – 1939 |
| Seamus McLysaght | 1939 – 1942 |
| Francis O’Loughlin | 1942 – 1945 |
| Francis Kildea | 1945 – 1950 |
| John McLaughlin | 1950 – 1952 |
| Sean MacLochlainn | 1952 – 1954 |
| John McLaughlin | 1954 – 1955 |
| Edward Doherty | 1955 – 1957 |
| W. P. McCarter | 1957 – 1958 |
| A. C. Bateman | 1958 – 1960 |
| John Grant | 1960 – 1962 |

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Giacomo Centra | 1962 – 1963 |
| Sean McLaughlin | 1963 – 1964 |
| Kevin B. Cutliffe | 1964 – 1965 |
| John McLaughlin | 1965 – 1967 |
| A. C. Bateman | 1967 – 1968 |
| Kevin B. Cutliffe | 1968 – 1969 |
| Harry McLaughlin | 1969 – 1970 |
| Sean Friel | 1970 – 1971 |
| Dermot McLaughlin | 1971 – 1972 |
| Sean McLaughlin | 1972 – 1973 |
| George McGroarty | 1973 – 1974 |
| Dermot McLaughlin | 1974 – 1975 |
| Sean McLaughlin | 1975 – 1976 |

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Bried Bonner | 1976 – 1977 |
| Hugh Henderson | 1977 – 1978 |
| Dermot McLaughlin | 1978 – 1979 |
| Tony Gill | 1979 – 1980 |
| Bried Bonner | 1980 – 1981 |
| Dermot McLaughlin | 1981 – 1982 |
| Joseph Doherty | 1982 – 1983 |
| Bried Bonner | 1983 – 1985 |
| Joseph Doherty | 1985 – 1986 |
| Dermot McLaughlin | 1986 – 1988 |
| Sinead Nic Lochlainn | 1988 – 1989 |
| Sean McLaughlin | 1989 – 1990 |
| Joseph Doherty | 1990 – 1991 |

| | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Dermot McLaughlin | 1991 - 1992 |
| Joseph Doherty | 1992 – 1993 |
| Sinead NicLochlainn | 1993 – 1994 |
| Philip Diggin | 1994 – 1995 |
| Patrick McMyler | 1995 – 1996 |
| Nicholas Crossan | 1996 – 1997 |
| Peter McLaughlin | 1997 - 1998 |
| Jim Ferry | 1998 - 1999 |
| Joseph Doherty | 1999 - 2000 |
| Jim Sheridan | 2000 – 2001 |
| Philip Diggin | 2001 – 2002 |
| Dermot McLaughlin | 2002 – 2003 |
| Peter McLaughlin | 2003 – 2004 |

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Philip Diggin | 2004 – 2005 |
| Padraig MacLochlainn | 2005 – 2006 |
| Joseph Doherty | 2006 – 2007 |
| Paul Bradley | 2007 – 2008 |
| Dermot McLaughlin | 2008 – 2009 |
| Lee Tedstone | 2009 – 2010 |
| Padraig MacLochlainn | 2010 – 2011 |
| Michael Grant | 2011 |
| Nicholas Crossan | 2011 – 2012 |
| James Gill | 2012 – 2013 |
| Peter McLaughlin | 2013 – 2014 |

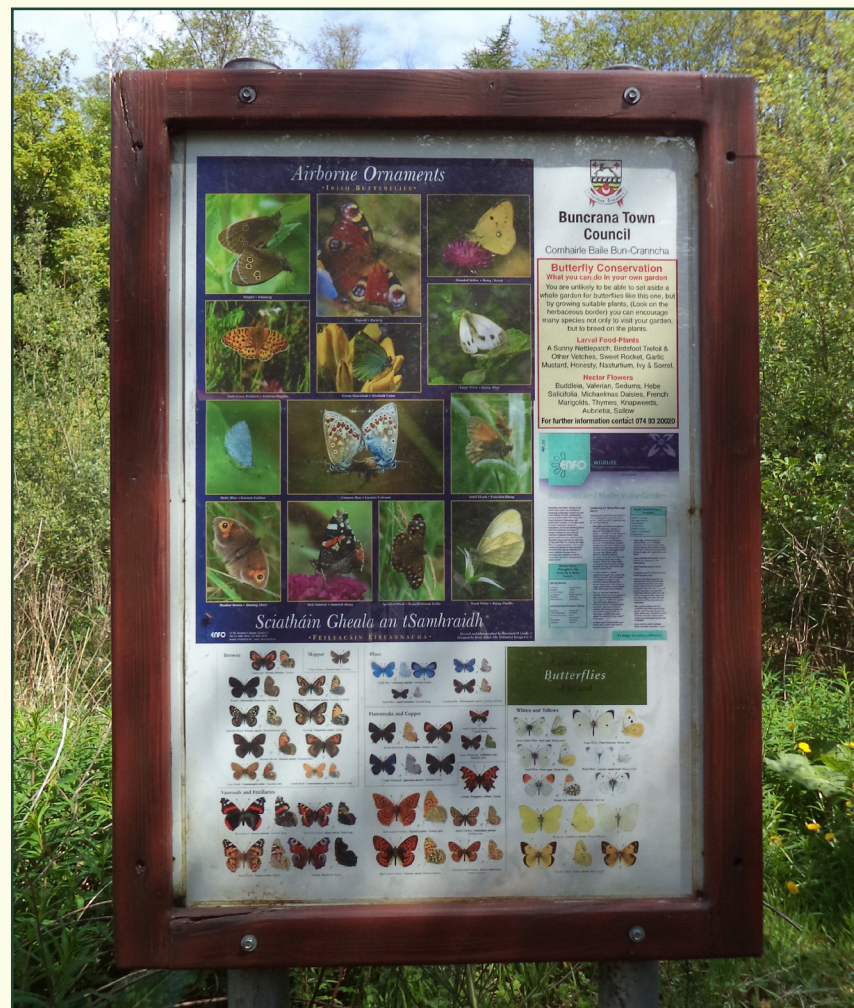
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All archives referenced in this publication are from Donegal County Archives' Buncrana Local Authorities Collection.

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Produced by Dr Niamh Brennan for The Archives Service, Donegal County Council, June 2014.



Information Sign on wildlife in Swan Park, May 2014

CONTACT DETAILS

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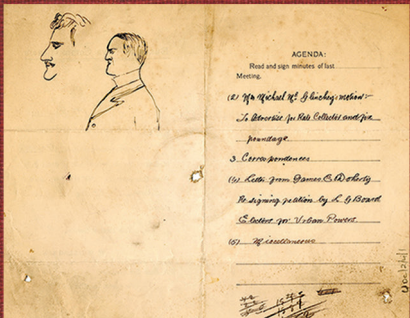
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Buncrana shore front, May 2014.



Castle Bridge, Buncrana shore front, May 2014.




BUNCRANA TOWN COUNCIL

Comhairle Baile Bun Cranncha

CIVIC OFFICES

