



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Eanair/January 2020

Tuarascáil Mhíosúil ón Phríomhfheidhmeannach Monthly Management Report



ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
Pg. 12-14



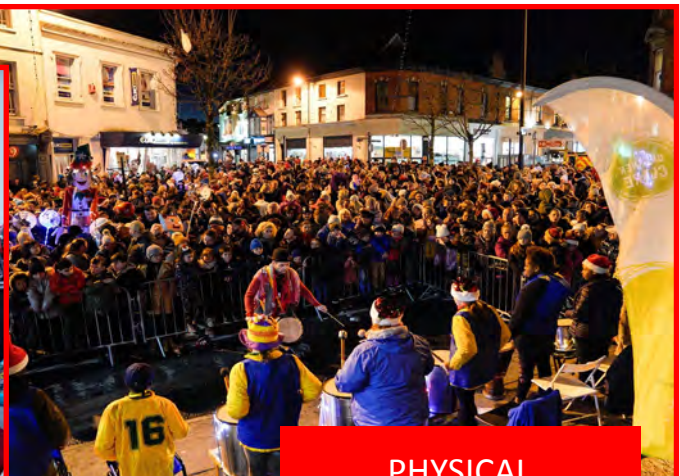
FINANCE &
SUPPORT SERVICES
Pg. 6



RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
Pgs. 2-5



SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT
Pgs. 7-11



PHYSICAL
DEVELOPMENT
Pgs. 15-29

Official Opening of Ennistymon Digital Hub and Multi-Service Centre

Minister Michael Ring Opens Ennistymon Digital Hub & Multi Service Centre on Parliament Street, Ennistymon, Co.Clare. Minister Michael Ring was joined by Mayor Cathal Crowe at the opening of the Ennistymon Digital Hub & Multi Service Centre in Ennistymon, Co.Clare Friday afternoon.



This facility is the fourth instalment of its kind under the DigiClare initiative of Clare County Council as part of its Rural Development Strategy to support rural communities by providing access to facilities and services in rural locations in the County.

This centre is a combination of a digital hub and a multi service centre which blends social and community services upstairs, with the downstairs suite of enterprise and digital clients - all in one building.

Clare County Council's Digital Hub not only provides a community with access to broadband but it also provides the facilities to enable communities to exploit the potential of same. The services provided in the digital hub are business incubation units, Hot Desks, Meeting Rooms, Full Audio Visual facilities etc. with Hi Speed Wi-Fi Connectivity.

The facilities are available to:-

- Local residents and communities
- Local Enterprises, entrepreneurs and for businesses who need space to work and collaborate
- E-Workers and commuters who want to reduce commuting time by working closer to home – occasionally, regularly or even on a daily basis
- Visitors who need office space and internet connectivity during their stay in our county.

In providing these services the key ethos is to offer our users and business community flexibility by facilitating arrangements to suit varying requirements – thereby enabling communities to get connected.

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, said the Digital Hub and Multi Service Centre has been developed in line

with our policy of utilising broadband and digital technology as a key enabler of Rural Development.

He continued, "The users of these hubs are the lifeblood of the local community and it is in their interest and in the interest of job creation that Clare County Council is committed to further expanding its network of digital hubs."

Mayor of Clare Cathal Crowe Welcomed today's event in Ennistymon, 'Days like this do not come around too often in West Clare, so it is important that we mark them appropriately and celebrate their significance for the local area.'

He also commended Clare County Council for the work and dedication put into delivering these Digital Hubs and our new Multi-Service Centre facility. 'I want to acknowledge the Local



Authority for committing the necessary time and resources to deliver these Digital Hubs and our new Multi-Service Centre facility.

I wish to acknowledge the related match-funding invested by the Council.

For more information on the Digital Hubs, visit www.DigiClare.ie or contact DIGICLARE, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare V95 DXP2 on Tel: 065 6846336 / Email: hubs@clarecoco.ie.



OPENING OF CLARECASTLE PEOPLE'S PARK

Grant received under ORIS 2018: €49,500.

In December, Minister Michael Ring, Minister for Rural and Community Development, officially opened the newly upgraded People's Park in Clarecastle.

The works in the Park were funded from monies received under the Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme 2018 following the submission of an application for funding from the Rural Development Directorate. The works undertaken had been identified in consultation with the local community and were subsequently carried out by staff from the Ennis Municipal District Office.

The park is a significant amenity for the local community and visitors to the village and the works carried out have greatly improved the facility. In particular, the upgrading and maintenance works on the existing walkway have greatly enhanced the accessibility of the parks for all users. In addition, a beautiful multi-coloured wave bench made from recycled plastic was installed as a feature piece.

The overall proposal will have significant community benefit and the Council acknowledge the input from the local community and the funding from the Department which has made this possible.

Clare Local Lift

Clare Local Lift is being piloted on the Loop Head Peninsula as a new solution for rural transport

During 2018, Clare County Council was successful in securing funding from Enterprise Ireland under the Small Business Innovation Research fund. The purpose of the fund is to drive innovation across the Irish public sector by solving age-old societal problems in new ways. It enables engagement between the public sector and technology rich companies who join forces to work on competitive challenges.



Pat Breen, T.D., Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, today formally launched the operational phase of Clare Local Lift at an event in Carrigaholt, Co. Clare.

Minister of State, Pat Breen said, “I am delighted to be in Carrigaholt today to launch this pilot project and commend Carrigaholt Development Association for their interest in it. Justification for the pilot in this area is borne out by the fact that CSO statistics tell us that 18.7% of households on the Loop Head Peninsula are without a car.

The Minister continued, “I am pleased that Enterprise Ireland had the vision to jointly support this project with the Council by providing 50% of the funding for the development of this idea through the Small Business Innovation Research fund.

Mayor of Clare, Councillor Cathal Crowe, commented, “This is an innovative solution and the technology developed by Arvoia (an Intelligent Mobility Solutions company) has the capability of helping to improve people’s lives by connecting communities. This technology is the first solution to provide a social rideshare platform that is designed with artificial intelligence at its core.

The solution connects passengers to drivers within the community willing to provide a lift. Using a mobile app to match drivers to passengers, the solution will optimise the efficiency of private car use while at the same time strengthening connections between people in their community.

Commenting on the background to Clare Local Lift, Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, said “the Android mobile app is free to download, the local lift scheme is free to use, and it is available to anyone 18 years or older who signs up to participate. The app will make it possible for people to notify others of intended journeys, make requests for a lift and to accept or decline lift offers simply and discreetly. The non-commercial, community-based initiative aims to match those in need of transport with private drivers who have available transport capacity and is among the actions identified in the Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026.

Ireland has the highest length of road network per capita in

the EU and the most dispersed pattern of rural dwelling. Rural isolation is a consequence,” he explained. “This project aims to address these challenges by way of leveraging community-based goodwill and supporting it with appropriate IT applications. If this three month pilot is successful, it could be replicated in other areas”.

Tony Lynch, Chairperson of Carrigaholt Development Association, added: “This is a fantastic opportunity for our community to engage in this voluntary initiative. We were delighted to be asked by Clare County Council to pilot Clare Local Lift on the Loop Head Peninsula and we encourage everyone in this area to use the service and support it as we believe that it has the potential to solve transport problems particularly in rural areas.

If you need a lift to the local doctor’s surgery or shop or post office or you may be a third level student trying to get a lift home from the bus stop to Loop Head after a week at college, then please use the App in order for this pilot to be implemented. I ask all interested drivers and passengers to sign up today on Google Play and be part of it”.

Manager of SBIR Ireland, Marguerite Bourke said, “The Small Business Innovation Research Fund, as administered by Enterprise Ireland, helps the public sector to address the variety of Challenges that affect the everyday lives of citizens nationwide. In partnership with Irish Contracting Authorities such as Clare County Council, innovative pilot projects to solve these Challenges have been identified and we are delighted to be associated with it”.

The mobile app for this initiative, which has been developed on an Android platform, is now available for download on the Google Play store (search for Clare Local Lift). Voluntary drivers and passengers can phone Margaret: 087 1089847 or e-mail: clarelocallift@clarecoco.ie for further information.



UNESCO Global Geopark

Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism Awards with members of the Burren Ecotourism Network celebrating their awards. 46 members of the Network completed the Geopark Code of Practice in 2018/2019.



RURAL DEVELOPMENT

IPB Pride of Place awards

Ennis town was honoured at the annual Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place awards in Kilkenny on Saturday evening.

Ennis placed runners up in the Best Town with a population over 5000. Sponsored by IPB, the Pride of Place competition was initiated 18 years ago though a Co-operation Ireland programmes to acknowledge the invaluable work undertaken by volunteers and those involved in local community development. It has grown into the largest competition recognising community development achievements on the island of Ireland.

Two separate projects had been nominated by the Rural Development Directorate of Clare County Council (Bunratty Local Development Association, Ennis Tidy Towns) to participate in annual all-island competition, which is run by Co-operation Ireland and aims to recognise and celebrate the vital contributions that communities make to society.

Ennis Tidy Towns had been nominated to participate in Category 5, for towns with a population of over 5,000 people. Now one the longest serving Tidy Towns groups in the country, the group has for 30 years championed community-led projects which foster a sense of place, promote engagement, all of which makes Ennis a wonderful place to live, work and visit. Current activities include community arts initiatives, clean-ups, climate change campaigns, sustainability and waste management projects and enhancing local green spaces for pollinators and biodiversity. Mayor of Clare Cathal Crowe after being at the event has said that Ennis tidy towns should be so proud to be recognised at

such a prestigious award' he hopes that they 'continue their hard work and dedication to their town as it brings the community together in making their town a home'.

Pride of Place founder and Chairman Tom Dowling said; "These Awards continue to be as important as ever after all these years and the purpose of the awards has never changed. They are about recognising and celebrating the extraordinary, inspirational tireless work being done by communities all over the Island of Ireland as they strive to make their place a better place in which to live."



Cnoc na Gaoithe

In December, Minister Michael Ring, Minister for Rural and Community Development paid a visit to the newly opened tea-rooms in the Cnoc na Gaoithe Cultural Centre in Tulla. The tea-rooms were funded from a grant received (€200k) under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2018 which is operated by the Minister's Department and which is administered locally by the Rural Development Directorate.

The Centre has also received €900k in funding under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund 2019. This money will be used to complete the Cultural Centre in Tulla through the refurbishment of the adjoining convent school building and developing it into a multi-functional performance space which will be used to preserve, showcase and promote the cultural heritage of East Clare.



Scenic Calendar

The newly formed Tourism Department of Clare County Council is delighted to announce its first ever Experience Clare 2020 Scenic calendar. The calendar is specifically targeted at overseas markets and trade shows. It is a business-to-business tourism promotional tool that will help drive business into County Clare.

Mayor of Clare, Cllr. Cathal Crowe, commented "I am delighted to launch this scenic calendar of Clare that is winging its way to markets and tour operators overseas. It captures the two Fáilte Ireland Tourism brands covering County Clare -the Wild Atlantic Way and the newer brand , Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, which covers East Clare".



World Health Organisation recognises Ireland as a leader in Age Friendly Programmes

An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, commends 31 local authorities on internationally recognised leadership in Age Friendly policies and practices.

In April this year, Ireland became the first country in the world to be recognised as a leader in Age Friendly Programmes and have full membership across all administrative areas to this significant World Health Organisation (WHO) initiative.

On Monday 16th December 2019, representatives of all 31 local authorities in Ireland gathered for a formal ceremony in Slane Castle to receive their charters from the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, T.D. and Alana Officer of the World Health Organisation, as part of a special recognition ceremony. Clare County Council's Chief Executive Pat Dowling attended on behalf of the Clare Age Friendly Programme. Each local authority in Ireland is leading on the implementation of a local Age friendly Programme, in partnership with multiple stakeholders in the public, business

and community/non government organisation sectors



Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

Clare	Bridges of Ross Walkway	Resurfacing and maintenance works on existing walkway, additional works on path where it diverts slightly off main trail. Addition of public seating.	Ross, Loop Head	€19,600.00
Clare	Marketing and promotion Programme	Develop a suite of designed print, broadcast and social media pieces.	Countywide - Clare	€20,000.00
Clare	Tim Smyth Park	Upgrade of footpath.	Ennis	€18,399.27
Clare	Doora Remediated Landfill	Extension and upgrade of trails including signage, benches, picnic tables, a Fairy Trail, cutting back of overgrowth, repair to chambers and manholes and installation of counters.	Doora Remediated Landfill - Ennis	€15,922.00
	Clare Total			€73,921.27



Procurement

The following tender competitions were published in December 2019:

Tender Description	Tender Deadline
Design / Consultancy Services for Inis Cealtra Visitor Experience, Scarriff Bay, Lough Derg, Co Clare.	24/01/2020
Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme, Clare County Council Integrated Engineering and Environmental Consultancy Services	20/01/2020
PIN Notice: Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing & R494 Improvement Scheme	31/03/2020
Cliffs of Moher Path Upgrade - Cliffs of Moher Path Upgrade	10/01/2020
Ennis Public Realm Regeneration - Parnell St and the Lanes and Bow-Ways, Ennis	08/01/2020
Provision of Services for Design and Development of cliffsformoher.ie website	17/01/2020

Freedom of Information & Data Protection:

2019 Statistics to 31/12/19:

- 166 Freedom of Information Requests
- 15 Freedom of Information Internal Review applications
- 3 appeals to Information Commissioner
- 33 Access Requests (Data Protection)



Human Resources

Under the umbrella of HR responsibilities are several key areas that have a particular focus that drive value for the Council. These include:



Recruitment and Selection

Ongoing recruitment continued in December 2019 and some of these competitions included the final interviews for general operatives, senior general services supervisor, fitter plumber, co-op students and many more. A total of 113 new starters commenced work with Clare County Council during the year and we cordially welcome each and everyone to this Organisation.

Learning and Development

Various e-learning modules continue to be rolled out to all staff targeting various training requirements e.g. resilience training, manual handling, mental health awareness, disability awareness, children first, etc. First Managing People 2 day programme was held on 12th & 13th December 2019. Outdoor staff received training in load securing, abrasive wheels, occupational first aid, safe pass and location of underground services. Training continues to be provided nearer the employee i.e. in the various municipal districts.

Employee Welfare

The well-being of staff continues to be a priority and initiatives include safe talks, health talks and health screening, flu vaccinations and information sessions targeted to a cohort of staff within the fire service.



Housing

As 2019 drew to a close the staff of the Housing Department were working diligently to complete the 2019 work programme in order to achieve targets set by the DHPLG. At this juncture we have not tallied progress against targets however during 2019; 138 households were appointed tenants of Local Authority properties with a further 17 households appointed tenants of leased properties. In addition just shy of 50 households were nominated and allocated properties by Approved Housing Bodies.

Demand for social housing remains high as is evidential in relation to homeless households accommodated in emergency accommodation in the County. We remain focused and committed to delivery of additional housing units to address the demand and in this regard we look forward to working with the elected members during 2020.

The following table indicates the number of people accommodated in social housing in Clare by municipal district:

	Social Housing*	HAP
Ennis	1136	638
Shannon	626	149
West Clare	894	370
Killaloe	337	175
Inter Authority HAP		34
TOTAL	2993	1366

*Includes RAS and long term and short term leased properties

The table above does not include properties made available by Approved Housing Bodies in the County.

Update on Capital Projects:

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Commencement Date	Completion Date
Quilty	18	Under construction by Martins Construction Ltd.	25 th April 2019	Q3 2020
Roslevan, Ennis	8	Under construction by K&D Whelan Construction Ltd.	25 th April 2019	Q2 2020
Ashline, Ennis	40	Stage 3 app. submitted to DHPLG. Part VIII approved. Stage 1 Tenders assessed.	Q2 2020	Q4 2021
Ballaghboy TAU	5	Design process ongoing	Q2 2020	Q1 2021
Miltown Malbay	27	Stage 2 submitted to the DHPLG. Part VIII approved.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Shannon NDFA	51	Under construction by TORC.	Q4 2019	Q1 2021
Tulla	25	Stage 2 approved by DHPLG. PCD complete. Part VIII in Feb. 2020.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Newmarket on Fergus	18	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Stage 2 app. being prepared. PCD complete.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Kilmihil	2	Single Stage approved by DHPLG. Part VIII approved. Contract about to be awarded.	Q1 2020	Q3 2020
Sixmilebridge	2	Single Stage approved by DHPLG. Planning in place. Contract about to be awarded.	Q1 2020	Q3 2020
Scarriff	18	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Design Team currently been procured. Flood Risk Ass. Consultants appointed.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Roslevan	8	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Design Team currently been procured.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021.
Doonbeg Lands	8	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021.
Clarecastle	2	Single Stage approved by DHPLG. Part VIII approved.	Q2 2020	Q1 2021
Subtotal	232			
Cahercalla Phase 2 (Cuan an Chlair)	15	CAS - Stage 4 approved. Contract signed in August and construction ongoing.	Q3 2019	Q4 2020
Bruachlan, Westbury (CoOperative Housing Ireland)	22	CALF - Property transfer complete, CHI to commence procurement of design team.	Q4 2019	Q4 2021
Tullyvarraga, Shannon (CoOperative Housing Ireland)	47	CALF Acquisition application approved works nearing completion.	Q2 2018	Q4 2019
Gleann Cora, Newmarket-on-Fergus (Co-Operative Housing Ireland)	31	CALF turnkey. To be delivered in 2020.	Q3 2018	Q4 2020
Edenvale, Ennis (Newgrove Housing Association)	3	CAS Construction	Q2 2020	Q1 2021
Limerick Road, Ennis (Cluid Housing Association)	3	CALF Turnkey (Part V)	Q4 2018	Q4 2019
Limerick Road, Ennis (Cluid Housing Association)	2	CALF Turnkey (Part V)	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
Ballymacaula, Ennis (Cluid)	4	CALF Turnkey (Part V)	Q2 2019	Q4 2020
Crusheen, (Part V) (Cluid)	4	CALF Turnkey (Part V)	Q2 2019	Q4 2020
Subtotal	131	AHB delivery		
Total	363			

Acquisitions

The emphasis during December was to close as many transactions as possible, to this end 8 number purchases by the Housing Department was finalised during the month and 1 number by an Approved Housing Body. We endeavoured to maximise the drawdown of funding for purchased properties in 2019 as it is expected that in 2020 the number of acquisitions permissible for funding by the DHPLG will be further reduced. The Council will be informed of our targets for house purchases early this year.

Homelessness

The Clare Homeless Action Team (HAT) provides services to anyone who is homeless or at risk of losing their home. The HAT office is open to the public from 10.00am to 1pm Monday to Friday, in the Housing Section, Clare Co Council headquarters on New Road and the HAT team can also be contacted on 065 684 6291. All people presenting to the HAT office as homeless

are being met, their needs assessed and appropriate supports will be offered where possible.

In December a rough sleeper count was undertaken, this reported two rough sleepers in Ennis and while we are aware of rough sleepers in Kilrush they were not seen on the date of the count. Despite progress in exits from homeless services (26 households have exited since 1st February 2019) the demand for service remains high. On 3rd January 2020, the homeless figures indicate occupancy of 12 adults at Laurel Lodge, 14 adults and 6 dependents in Westbrook Lodge, 5 adults and 8 dependents in Cusack Lodge family hub and 41 adults and 41 dependents across 24 hotel and B&B providers. (Overall total 72 adults and 55 dependents). The interagency Homeless Action Team is focusing on pathways and exits from homeless services to accommodation.

Rebuilding Ireland Affordable Loan

50 number 'Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan' applications were

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

received in 2019 up to 31st December 2019 and 29 loan applications were granted provisional approval up to this period. 41 loans were drawn down since the introduction of the Scheme in February 2018. The loan scheme offers a fixed interest rate for credit worthy low to middle income first time buyers with a view to making home ownership more affordable. Under the Mortgage to Rent Scheme a new private company called Home for Life (HFL) has entered the market for acquiring houses which have loans in distress with private financial institutions. They will purchase the relevant dwelling subject to

approval of the financial institution, the borrower and also the Housing Agency who co-ordinate the Scheme. The borrowers will become tenants of the Council and will remain in their home and pay a rent to the Council. Home for Life will be responsible for maintenance. The Social Development Directorate will enter into a Lease Agreement with Home for Life over a 25 year period. There is an option for the occupants to purchase back their dwelling after five years if their circumstances improve. We currently have 12 such referrals from the Housing Agency that we are processing.

Housing Refurbishment and Maintenance

The management and turnaround of our housing stock to minimise voids is continuously assessed and hereunder is the activity in this regard:

Period	No. of voids/casual vacancies	No. of voids returned to stock	No. of properties undergoing refurbishment	Average vacancy period (days)	No. of maint calls
Dec	55*	5	96	127	424

* This figure does not include properties which have become vacant after 1st January nor does it include acquisitions and long-term voids

Planned Maintenance

This project is continuing at pace with four works contracts tendered and under assessment. Works under these contracts will be awarded and commence during Q1 2020.

Clare County Council is to the fore in relation to the Planned Maintenance of Council stock and in this regard we are working with the DHPLG in the development of the sectoral model for national role out. We continue to pursue the DHPLG in relation

to the expected shortfall in funding for the completion of this project.

Grants

The three grant schemes reopen to all in January 2020. A new single application form and revised guidelines were issued by the DHPLG in late December. This will introduce a streamlined and more standardised approach to processing applications across all local authorities. The objective of the changes is to make the process more user friendly and accessible and to standardise the individual local authority approach to the processing and administration of the schemes. The transition to the new form and guidelines will now take place with full implementation by 31st January next. New timelines are also being introduced whereby Local Authorities should endeavour to decide on applications within six weeks of receipt of a fully completed and valid application and applicants should complete works within six months following written approval from the Council.

The focus of the grants team during December was maximising drawdown of approved grants and subsequent claims to the DHPLG.

Cultural Services

Clare County Library

Clare County Library held two Open days, in De Valera & Scariff Libraries, in December. This was to highlight to the public the many free services provided by Clare County Library service and launch a new library booklet. There were also talks on e books, local history & craft events for families. Staff also provided one-to-one sessions with members of the public. Local groups and members of the public who do not use the service were invited to attend. Haven Horizons also donated a set of books to Clare County Library service as part of their 16 Day Campaign of awareness on domestic abuse at the Open day in De Valera Library.

The new library booklet was part funded by a grant from the Dormant Accounts Fund



Clare Haven service also provided an Information stand in Shannon Library as part of their 16 day campaign. Healthy Ireland events took place in Clare Libraries in December, including yoga in Scariff Library and tai chi in Sixmilebridge Library. There were thirty "Family time at your library" events



programmed in Clare libraries in December. Events included seasonal storytelling, Christmas crafts, cupcake decorating and more. Local students from the LCETB supported the storytelling event in Kilrush library as part of their studies.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



There were also adult & children's book club meetings in December including a book folding workshop in Kilmihil library. There were also many film club gatherings in Clare Libraries



Keating Construction Ltd signed the contract for the construction of the new County Library at glór on 17th December, 2019. Minister Michael Ring officiated at the turning of the sod of the new County Library project on Friday 20 December. Work will begin on site on 6th January 2020



Clare Arts Office

The Arts Office was invited to meet the Japanese Ambassador Kitano at the launch of an exhibition of art by students at Barefield NS on December 13th, 2019. Speaking at the event, the Arts Officer complimented the talented artist Carmel Madigan, who was engaged at the school through the Artist in Schools Scheme. Carmel explored Japanese art techniques with the students as well as teaching them about famous Japanese artists. Also in attendance was Junior Minister Pat Breen as well as Cllr. Norton and Cllr. Garvey.



The annual Embrace Christmas Concert took place in cois Na hAbhna, Ennis on December 18th. Disability and mental health groups from all over the county attended the concert led by Eleanor Feely who introduced a wide variety of musical acts. The day ended in a lovely sing song raising Christmas spirits. Exhibitions by Philip Brennan, Brian O'Shaughnessy and Patrick Kenneally took place in Ennis, Scariff, Kilkee and Shannon and Clare Youth Theatre hosted a drama morning for Syrian children.

Clare Museum

School workshops were programmed in Clare Museum, exploring Christmas in different countries, during the week before Christmas. Take up was low, and feedback from schools suggest that holding the workshops a week earlier would be more suitable for them next year.

Ned Kelly, formerly of the National Museum, presented on the Winter Solstice on Thursday 19th December. This was the final talk in the series of public talks held in Clare Museum in 2019. Interest in this seasonal topic was high. The Museum curator has begun planning the 2020 programme of series of public talks.

Sports & Recreation

The 9th 'Annual Irish International Christmas Tree Throwing Championships' was held on Sunday 5th January 2020 in Tim Smyth Park, Ennis.

Organised by Clare County Council the event is a novel way to turn Christmas tree recycling into a sport, while at the same time raise funds for a needy cause with this year's proceeds going to the Elevate Foundation.

The Championship, which is based on age-old lumberjack traditions, sees members of the public competing to achieve the longest distance for throwing a standard 1.5 metre tree. Prizes were awarded for the longest throw in various age categories with a trophy for the overall champion. Each participant was entered into a draw to win one year family membership at Active Ennis Leisure Complex.

Tim Forde, General Manager Active Ennis/Kilrush described the Championship as "a sporting charity event with competitors from the four corners of Ireland and further afield being invited to take part. The event is open to men; women and children, with each contestant afforded two attempts at throwing the Christmas tree."

"Disposing of the Christmas tree is often an arduous task for many so this event allows people to do so in style and with relative ease," stated Karen Foley, Environmental Awareness Officer for Clare County Council.

Please find below the 2020 results.

Competition	Name	Result
Boys Juvenile	Bruno Sanchez	2m 62cm
Girls Juvenile	Muireann Donavan	2m
Ladies	Audrey Kavanagh	3m 40cm
Male	Clem McInerney	6m
Overall	Clem McInerney	

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

POOL EVENTS

- In partnership with Swim Ireland – Annual ‘Swim a Mile Event’
- In Partnership with Clare LSP – ‘Train & Swim’ 12 Week Course begins 12th January
- ‘Munster Swim’ – hosting with Swim Ireland – 70 Swimmers from Munster Area

embark on a healthy 2020 to assist here are the opening times for Active Ennis Leisure Centre:

Gym Opening Hours

Mon 7am - 9.45pm	Fri 6.30am - 9.45pm
Tues 7am - 9.45pm	Sat 8am - 7.45pm
Wed 6.30am - 9.45pm	Sun 10am - 5.45pm
Thurs 7am - 9.45pm	Bank Hols 8am -3.45pm

ACTIVE ENNIS JOHN O’SULLIVAN PARK, LEES ROAD EVENTS

- Parkrun on New Year’s Day, 165 participants
- Cyclocross race on 4th of January, 60 participants

Teen Gym Hours (11 – 15 year olds)

Wed & Fri: 4 - 5 pm
 Saturday: 5 - 6 pm
 School Holidays: 11 am - 1pm (Mon – Friday)

LEISURE CENTRE ACTIVITIES

We welcome new and returning customers of Active Ennis to

Gym Class Programmes 2020

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
10am -11am BODY BLAST	7.30am-8am HIIT Aerobics	10am-11am BODY BLAST	7.30am-8am HIIT Aerobics	10am-11am BODY BLAST	8am-11am UNISLIM	
11am-12pm CHAIR FITNESS	10am-11am AQUA AEROBICS	11am-12pm Brothers of Charity	8.30am-10am TAI CHI	10am-11am AQUA AEROBICS	9am-10am CARDIO TONE	
1.15pm-1.45pm LUNCH CRUNCH	10.15am-11.15am Mum & Baby YOGA	11.30-12.30pm ROCK & ROLL (dance/yoga)	10am-11.30am YOGA	1.15pm-1.45pm LUNCH CRUNCH	BIRTHDAY PARTIES	
2pm-3pm MS SOCIETY	1 hour (varied time) CLEB Fitness Instructor Course	1.15pm-1.45pm LUNCH CRUNCH	11.30am-12.30pm ROCK & ROLL (dance/yoga)	6pm-7pm ACTIVE BODY BOOTCAMP	BIRTHDAY PARTIES	
6pm-7pm ACTIVE BODY BOOTCAMP	6.15pm-7pm HITT	6pm-7pm ACTIVE BODY BOOTCAMP	1 hour CLEB Fitness Instructor Course	8pm-9.30pm KARATE	BIRTHDAY PARTIES	
7pm-8pm POUND & POSE	7pm-8pm YOGA	7pm-8pm UNISLIM	4pm-6pm THEATRO	SWIM CLUB (Workshop/ Meetings)		
8.45pm-9.45pm AQUA AEROBICS	8pm-9pm PILATES	7pm-8pm ZUMBA	7pm-8pm ZUMBA			
SWIM CLUB (Workshop/ Meetings)	SWIM CLUB (Workshop/ Meetings)	8.45pm-9.45pm AQUA AEROBICS	8pm-9pm YOGA			

Economic Development

Ennis 2040: Work on the Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Plan continued in December with the consultants engaged in the preparation on a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, an Appropriate Assessment and a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the plan. Once this stage of preparatory work is complete, it is intended that a Draft Plan will be available for consideration.

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy: Following on from the Southern Regional Assembly adopting the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 in November the Planning Department is considering what consequent changes will be required to the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 and to ensure that the strategic objectives contained in the RSES are brought forward into the County Development Plan. This work will be ongoing over the coming months and the co-operation of various directorates across the Council is appreciated. The early CDP review in 2020 will be required to take the RSES objectives into the Clare CDP.

Forward Planning

Shannon Town Centre Masterplan: The procurement process for the preparation of a Shannon Town Centre Masterplan is currently underway. The closing date on eTenders for tender submissions was the 19th December 2019 and a number of submissions were received. A tender assessment panel will now be put in place to adjudicate on the submissions and it is anticipated that a preferred tender will be identified in January 2020.

This plan will be delivered on foot of funding secured under the URDF stream in late 2018. The purpose of the Masterplan is to guide the development of Shannon Town into the future and to influence and deliver on real change for Shannon Town in order to make Shannon a more attractive destination in which to live, work and do business. The master planning exercise will look at growth potential, use of derelict and vacant sites within the town centre, development potential of key sites at the entrance points from the road network and will seek to create a vibrant place for people to meet, recreate and connect with their area. It is intended that the Masterplan will enable the delivery of a high-quality town environment through sustainable economic growth catering for an expansion of services, retail and residential demand to meet the growth that the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan and the National Planning Framework have identified for Shannon. It is intended that the Shannon Town Masterplan will underpin and act as a catalyst for change adding a new focus to the creation of a strong urban space within the town centre

Cappa Enhancement Strategy: The Forward Planning Section and Helena McElmeel Architects are preparing an Enhancement Strategy for Cappa, Kilrush focusing on its connection to the sea, the pier and the beach. A second public consultation event was held on the 27th November in the Kilrush Hub where members of the local community were invited to help inform the next stage of the strategy. It is anticipated that a Draft Strategy will be available in early 2020. It is anticipated that a presentation on the strategy will be made to the West Clare Municipal District elected members in March.



Ballyallia Lake Amenity Enhancement Plan: In December 2019 the final Draft of the Enhancement Plan was produced by the Paul Hogarth Company to Barefield Tidy Towns. The Planning Authority continued to act in an advisory capacity to the Tidy Towns Group to assist in the finalisation of this plan. It is anticipated that the final plan will be launched in January 2020.

Development Management

- 77 planning applications were received during the month of December, bringing the total number for 2019 to 1024.
- 11 pre-planning applications were received during the month of December, bringing the total number received to date for 2019 to 309.

Planning Enforcement

- During the month of December there were 9 new complaints received, 7 warning letters issued, 1 enforcement notice was served and 17 files were closed.

Taking in Charge

24 estates were taken in charge in 2019.

Three Taking in Charge applications were received from developers in December 2019 and 1 Section 180 request was received from residents.

Remedial works in Abbeycourt and Abbeyville, Ennis were completed in December 2019.

A contract for remedial works in Tir an Fhia –Teeronea, Kilkishen was signed in December 2019.

Conservation, Archaeology and Built Heritage

Historic Towns Initiative - The Turret Lodge Kilrush: Recoupment of €190,000 from the Heritage Council under the Historic Towns Initiative in 2019 has been secured for the restoration works carried out at Turret Lodge in Kilrush. Construction works continue with a hand over to Clare County Council expected in January 2020

Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2020 (BHIS) and the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) 2020: The 2020 Built Heritage



Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) conservation grant schemes were announced by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in November. Full details and application forms for applicants and owners of protected structures in Co Clare are available on www.clarecoco.ie with a closing date for receipt of applications to the Planning Department of 24th January 2020.

Heritage and Biodiversity

Biodiversity Resource Manual for all Local Authority Staff:

The Planning Department are currently developing a bespoke Biodiversity Resource Manual for local authority staff and elected members. This is innovative in its approach and is capable of being updated over time. The project and manual, which is the first of its kind in Ireland, can be replicated by other local authorities across the country. This initiative is part-funded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service under the National Biodiversity Action Plan Grant (NBAP) 2019-2021.

In December work continued in identifying functions of the local authority that impact on biodiversity, meetings with staff across all directorates continued looking at establishing a gap analysis. A questionnaire has also been drawn up to obtain the views of Clare County Council staff on their requirement for training on biodiversity generally.

The aim is to provide guidance on best-work practices for the organisation, by implementing adaptive management to prevent nature deterioration, ensuring that biodiversity is a core consideration in the work practices of our staff and the implementation of our local authority functions into the future. The manual and subsequent training will cover all relevant practices and work carried out by the local authority, aiming at its widespread adoption throughout the organisation. It will allow Clare County Council to adopt locally attuned management systems to ensure that the environment and biodiversity is safeguarded.

Clare Community Heritage Archive Website: The Heritage Officer participated in a short film on the Clare Community Heritage

Archive Website, Clare ICAN together with the Clarecastle community group in order to promote the Heritage Website to other communities in Clare and elsewhere.

Local Enterprise Office

Training Programmes: LEO Clare published their 2020 Training and Development Programme for January to June on their website. 30 programmes in total have been announced. Programmes include Start Your Own Business Programme, Complete Digital Marketing and Primary Food Safety Workshops.



LEO Clare held two training programmes throughout the month of December which were attended by 19 participants. **Evaluation Committee (EVAC):** LEO Clare held their sixth EVAC meeting on 10th December. Three businesses were approved in principle grant aid totalling €97,250. In 2019 LEO Clare approved grant aid of €687,865 to 33 businesses. LEO Clare has paid out €575,357 in grant aid to 33 businesses across the county.

Trading Online Vouchers: In 2019 LEO Clare approved 34 businesses for Trading Online Vouchers to the value of €72,959. €48,399 in total was paid out to 22 businesses across the county in 2019 to help them develop or upgrade their website into an e-commerce

Chambers Ireland: Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise attended the Chambers Ireland awards in Dublin on 12th December on behalf of the 31 Local Enterprise Offices around the county where he was presented with an award for 'Local Government Supports to Business'.

National Enterprising Town Awards: Congratulations to Kilrush Town on winning 'Town Initiative of the Year' and to Ennis, who won the 'Munster Regional Winners' in population greater than 12,000 category at this year's Bank of Ireland National Enterprising Town Awards.

Property Management

LIT Campus Ennis is officially opened by Minister Pat Breen:



PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Limerick Institute of Technology's newest campus, situated on Bindon Street, Ennis was officially opened on Monday, December 16th by Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Pat Breen.



LIT, Ennis Campus has been a centre of learning for students in disciplines as diverse as Social Care Work, Early Childhood Education and Care as well as Marketing and Management since it opened its doors in September, 2019.



Clare County Council has invested approximately €1 million on the vacant building in the town's historic centre to bring it to the standard required by a modern education campus. Refurbishment work was carried out by Jada Projects Ltd.

Speaking at the opening, LIT President, Professor Vincent Cunnane said LIT's offering in Ennis will reflect demand locally. "This is a sign of our commitment to Ennis, and we are delighted to be able to progress our plans in Clare. We intend to provide an expanded level of daytime undergraduate education through the CAO, as well as opening up the possibility of new evening courses and professional education. Crucially, by allowing us to broaden our offering, this new facility adds to the educational options available to people locally, while at the same time enabling us to respond to the needs of business and industry in Clare. As those needs grow, so too will our response."

Officially opening the new campus, Minister Breen said, "The new campus is a welcome addition to the county town. LIT is not just a provider of an internationally recognised third level education, but is a driver of economic development.

Jimmy Browne, LIT's Vice President for Corporate Services & Capital Development said, "The new LIT Campus in Ennis came

about as a result of a strong working relationship between Clare County Council's Economic Development Directorate and LIT. I would like to commend the Council for its foresight in prioritising the attraction of a Third Level Institution to Ennis as a key objective. The local authority's investment in the facilities on Bindon Street, enabled LIT to deliver the education programmes and drive activity."

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, said, "This new LIT campus will complement our objective of increasing third level educational activities in the county, while our partnership with LIT will continue to promote the advancement of educational opportunities for people in Clare and the Region. This in turn will sustain population growth and new employment opportunities."

Deputy Mayor of Clare, Cllr Clare Collieran Molloy said, "I am delighted that this new third level educational campus in Clare will open up new opportunities for school leavers and mature learners in Clare and the Mid West. LIT, Ennis Campus is also having a significant, positive economic impact for Ennis, contributing to greater foot fall in the town centre and the regeneration of a building that has been vacant for over a decade.



Gort Road Business Park: New signage has been erected in the Gort Road Business Park to reflect that the site is in Clare County Council's ownership. The previous sign, which has been removed, indicated that it was managed by Shannon Commercial Properties. Some new directional signage has also been erected.

Casual Trading: During December, the Economic Development Department arranged for the renewal of the licences for the annual casual trading licences for Ennis and the other casual trading areas. Some licences were also issued for trading for the Christmas period.

Strategic Policy Committee: The inaugural meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee was held during December. The Chairman, Cllr. Pat McMahon welcomed all members and with Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development briefed them on the workings of the Committee. Presentations were given by the Senior Team in the Directorate of the current range of projects and work programmes. A good discussion was held on the programme of work for the SPC for the year ahead and a training session will be organised for early 2020.

Water Services

The Water Services Department of Clare Co Council continues to deliver the water services function as per the Service Level Agreement with Irish Water. The monthly KPI's continue to be monitored by all of the water services teams to achieve required targets.

Water Conservation

In December, The Operations team continued water conservation activity throughout the county reacting to various increases in demand primarily in Ennis areas Shannon Areas. The Find and Fix Team worked in the Tulla Rd, Ennis DMA and repaired leaks found in East Clare. A number of major leaks were identified and repaired in Ennis town. This resulted in significant reduction in production levels at Ennis Water Treatment Plant.

Asset Transfer Project

375 water & waste water assets, in Co Clare, have been identified for potential transfer to IW to date. Of these 50 are non operational assets (prior to January 2014) and as such will not be transferring to Irish Water leaving 325 for transfer. Of these 325 assets 169 have been surveyed and assessed for transfer. CE orders have been prepared and issued to IW to be included within ministerial orders. To date 169 assets have transferred to IW.

The remaining 156 assets are broken down as follows:

- **Pending** - 19 assets are being prepared for transfer to Irish Water in the coming months – these consist of straight assets some of which will have to be subdivided by map/plan. Once a consensus has been reached with both IW and Clare County Council on the asset a CE order will issue thereafter.
- **National Special Projects Office (NSPO)** – This is a department within Irish Water dealing with special projects which includes facilitating the Asset Transfers from Local Authorities - 6 assets are with the NSPO for investigation to ascertain if they are to be considered as underground assets. Underground assets are transferred by S.I. 13 of 2015.
- **Property Registration Authority Ireland** – 13 assets have gone to the PRAI to be subdivided.
- **3rd Party/Unregistered assets** – Of the 156 assets 118 have been identified as 3rd Party Registered lands (102) and Unregistered Lands (16). Work on these assets is ongoing which will require first registration initially before they can be transferred to Irish Water.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

IW's & (CCC's) Capital Section is broken down into the following sub-sections;

- Infrastructure Programmes: (major infrastructure projects)
- Capital Programmes: (minor projects)
- Network Programmes: (mains replacements / find and fix)

Irish Water refers to the different phases of a project as Gates.

- Gate 1. Concept Design and data gathering.
- Gate 2. Environmental Studies Detailed design and planning.
- Gate 3. Construction stage and handover
- Gate 4. Contract closeout

Infrastructure Programmes (Capital Projects) - Clare Capital Investment Plan (CIP) 2014–2016 Projects: (continuing from 2016)

Kilfenora Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade:

Planning Permission has been granted by Clare County Council but is currently subject to an appeal to an An Bord Pleanala.. The expectation is to go to Gate 3 (Construction Stage) in Q1 2020 once budget approval is received (by Q4 2019). IW has confirmed that this contract will be awarded under IW ECI (Early Contractor Involvement) framework.

Quin Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade:

This contract has been awarded under IW ECI (Early Contractor Involvement) framework and is currently under way.

Clonroadmore Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade:

A pricing document with drawings for replacement screens including dewatering equipment at both pumping stations has been submitted by MEVA (screen supplier) to IW. These are currently under review by IW.

Clare Capital Investment Plan 2017–2021 Projects

Lahinch Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade:

Currently at Gate 1: Concept design report at draft review stage. Progressing to Gate 2 detailed design and environmental evaluation, thereafter advancing to planning in 2020. Gate 3: the construction stage, expected to commence before the end of 2021.

Ennistymon Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade:

Currently at Gate 1: Concept design report at draft review stage. Progressing to Gate 2 detailed design and environmental evaluation, thereafter advancing to planning in 2020. Gate 3: the construction stage, expected to commence before the end of 2021.

Newmarket on Fergus Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade:

Currently at Gate 1: Concept design report at draft review stage. Progressing to Gate 2 detailed design and environmental evaluation, thereafter advancing to planning in 2020. Gate 3: the construction stage, expected to commence before the end of 2021.

Shannon (2no projects):

a) Interim upgrade of the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The contract is expected to be awarded in Q1 2020 with budget approval expected to be announced shortly. Construction expected to commence in the Q2 2020.

b) **Gate 1 studies**, for the agglomeration, have commenced. Priority has been the interim upgrade of the WWTP.

Progressing to Gate 2 - detailed design & planning thereafter. Expectation to go to Gate 3 – construction stage – not determined at this stage.

Clare Untreated Agglomerations Study (UTAS) Projects - (Project period 2017-2021)

RPS is the appointed Consulting Engineer. The projects under UTAS are progressing through detail design and planning. Public information sessions were held in Clarecastle, Kilrush and Kilkee during May 2018, and Ballyvaughan and Liscannor were completed in September and October 2018 respectively. Land and wayleave acquisitions processes are at an advanced stage for each of the projects within the UTAS programme.

Kilrush Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade:

Gate 2: Planning was granted by Clare County Council on the 1st October 2019.

Landowner/wayleave/CPO process is near completion. EPS have been awarded the contract with the expectation it is to go to Gate 3, the construction stage, before the end of 2020 and to be completed by end 2021. IW has confirmed that this contract will be awarded under IW ECI (Early Contractor Involvement) framework.

Clarecastle Agglomeration Upgrade:

Under Irish Waters UTAS the waste water collected at Quay Rd pumping station will be diverted via a new waste water pipeline to Clareabby WwTP.

It was considered but determined not feasible to construct the proposed rising main to Clareabby WWTP in conjunction with the flood relief scheme works.

Gate 2 – detailed design is near completion.

Site Investigation works have been completed. Landowner/wayleave/CPO process was concluded via an oral hearing. However a section 5 (Planning Act) referral was lodged with the Planning Department. The Planning Department has recently assessed that the proposed works constitute exempted development. The expectation is to go to Gate 3, the construction stage, in Q1 2020 and to be completed by Q3 2020.

Liscannor Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade:

Gate 2 – detailed design near completion.

Planning submission was lodged in late December 2019 for the proposed works. Landowner/wayleave/CPO process is ongoing. The expectation is to go to Gate 3, the construction stage, before the end of 2020 and to be completed by end 2021. IW has confirmed that this contract will be awarded under IW ECI (Early Contractor Involvement) framework.

Ballyvaughan Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade:

Gate 2 – detailed design ongoing due to site selection considerations which have not yet concluded. Planning submission is expected to be lodged in Q2 2020. Landowner/wayleave/CPO process is ongoing.

The expectation is to go to Gate 3, construction stage, before the end of 2020 and to be completed by end 2021.

Kilkee Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade:

Gate 2 – detailed design cannot be completed until the outcome of the environmental assessments which are completed are known. Planning submission is delayed until the environmental studies have been concluded. Landowner/wayleave/CPO and site selection process is ongoing.

The expectation is to go to Gate 3, construction stage, before

the end of 2020 and to be completed by end 2021.

Capital Programmes: (minor Capital Works wastewater)

Inlet Works Project:

This is a national project reviewing and ultimately upgrading various inlet receiving structures including storm tanks and sludge handling. In Clare the following are within this project;

- Inagh WwTP
- Clareabbey WwTP
- Miltown Malbay WwTP

The Clareabbey WWTP inlet works project has been granted planning and has moved onto detailed design stage.

National Certificate of Authorisation (NCAP):

This Programme will review all EPA Certified Wastewater plants with a P.E. of less than 500 and their impact on receiving waters. Ballycannon and Kilmihil WWTP's in Co. Clare have been included in the first round of assessments. RPS has prepared Site Option Reports for both plants which are currently under review.

Ballycannon PS to Elton Court (Meelick) Waste Water Pumping Rising Main

A new rising main linking Ballycannon WWTP to Elton court Pumping station is now at route selection stage.

Sludge Satellites:

Clareabbey WWTP will not be considered under this programme.

Capital Programmes: (minor Capital Works- Water)

Network Programmes Mains Replacement Works

1. Mullagh -Miltown Malbay Watermains Rehab

The site investigation works are completed and the design is now being progressed. The contractor is finalising road opening details with the MD office. It is expected to progress to construction in Q1 2020.

Shareridge, working on behalf of Irish Water, have provided the following information for watermains replacement works;

1. **Doonbeg Watermains Rehabilitation:** This contract is currently on hold by Irish Water due to technical and cost issues associated with the road reinstatement. We hope to progress a solution in the coming months.

Castlecrine to Kilmurry

Road opening licence has been paid for this project. No start date has been advised to CCC as yet but it is expected to now commence construction in Q1 2020.

Main rehabilitation 2020 Programme of Works

A priority list of projects is now being compiled and CCC are working with IW to prioritise essential projects for Tranche 5.

Castlelake WTP

IW have confirmed that, the Full Options Assessment for Castlelake is due to commence later this year. The 25-year plan for Castlelake WTP should be complete by end Q1 2020

Remedial Action list (RAL).

3 No. sites have been selected in Clare for upgrades Ballymacraven WTP, New Doolough WTP and Corrofin WTP. Irish Water should issue Tenders for these plants by the end of 2019.

Water & Waste Water Operations

The following statistics provide an indication of the level of activity / work being carried out by the water and waste water teams throughout the county from 26th November 2019 up to and including 31st December 2019. The figures do not however reflect the time invested by the teams which is required to resolve each complaint /issue.

- 23 Customer Complaints were dealt with to-date
- 2 Emergency Work Orders during the timeframe
- 266 Reactive Maintenance Work Orders were dealt with and closed out
- 2 Customer Asset Flooding Work Order was received
- 138 Service Requests (SR's) were raised for Field Requests and Follow On Work Orders for Reactive Maintenance work
- 63 Outage Notices were placed on the IW portal during the period

A number of significant leaks occurred in Shannon over the Christmas break. The leaks were dealt with by the Shannon Team and no outages to customers resulted from the leaks.

Rural Water Programme

The Rural Water Programme are working with schemes in progressing works under the 2019-2021 Rural Water Programme in early 2020 with works to a number of schemes due to take place throughout the year. The details of the impending new

conditions associated with the 'Grant for the Provision of or Necessary Improvement of an Individual Supply Water Supply to a House' are still awaited.

Whilst Irish Water placed a temporary suspension on the Taking in Charge of Group Water and Sewerage Schemes in Sept '19 it is hoped that they will now re-commence the taking in charge of Group Water and Group Sewerage Schemes in 2020. 4 No. schemes were submitted to Irish Water for taking in charge in December and it is hoped that these schemes will be taken in charge in the coming weeks. The Rural Water Team is currently working with a number of Group Water Schemes with a view to progressing the taking in charge of acceptable schemes.

49 No. applications were received in 2019 with respect to the 'Grant for the Provision of or Necessary Improvement of an Individual Water Supply to a House'.

The Rural Water Team continues to work with group water schemes to ensure their members have a robust and sustainable quality and quantity supply of water available to them.

Non Service Level Agreement Works.

We have completed our review of the design options for our remediation works for the old Ennis Water treatment works at Gortaganniv. The preferred option is to remove a section of the 140 year old dam to prevent further deterioration of the structure and works have now commenced. To date the old filter beds have been in-filled which has now made them safe



Gardening The Gardening section will be taking in and mulching Christmas trees in late December and early January. The mulch when suitably seasoned will be used in gardening operations to suppress weed growth. Remedial works were also completed in December in the Public Park in Drumbiggle to improve the general amenity of the area. Additional works will involve planting grass seed in early Spring to revitalise areas of the park.

Environmental Awareness

Environmental Information Sessions

4 No. environmental workshops for children and their families were delivered ahead of the Christmas season at Shannon Library, DeValera Library, Ennis, Scariff Library and Miltown Malbay Library. These were delivered in conjunction with the "Family time At Your Library" initiative. Participants learnt what they can do at home and everyday to take better care of the environment and at the same time combat climate change by eliminating single use plastics, preventing waste and recycling. The MyWaste.ie resource was promoted as part of this initiative.

Green Christmas Campaign

A comprehensive Green Christmas media campaign, was delivered with a strong focus on the prevention of waste generation including food waste and promoting mywaste.ie. A Greener Clare Green Christmas guide was also developed.

Haven Horizons Skill Share Group

In the week leading up to Christmas there was a display in the foyer of Áras Contae an Chláir by Clare Haven Horizons Skills Share Group displaying Christmas decorations that they made from unwanted waste. Clare County Council support this group with their upcycling and repair initiatives through funding provided under Local Agenda Environmental Partnership Fund 2018/2019.

EPA Stop Food Waste Training –

Clare County Council staff participated in an online "Stop Food Waste" Training initiative during December. The "Stop Food Waste" training aimed to help staff reduce food waste in the home. The topics covered included planning and shopping, storage, cooking and reuse, food preservation and home composting. The EPA "Stop Food Waste" programme supported this training initiative.

Leave No Trace

Shannon Town Park was opened mid November and is a "Leave No Trace" park. In conjunction with the Planning Department the Environment Section supported and facilitated Leave No Trace workshops with Transition year students at local schools. The workshops, led by a trained facilitator from Leave No Trace Ireland, aim to raise waste awareness. These workshops were also supported by County Council staff

Laboratory & Technical Support

River Monitoring Programme 2019

The Environment Laboratory completed its River Monitoring Programme this month with the collection and analysis of 299 samples throughout the year. The EPA will publish a report on river water quality for the Country in due course, which will include monitoring data for County Clare.

IW SLA

Clare County Council is required to sample and analyse all public water supplies. The level of monitoring required is agreed with Irish Water and is based on the population served. The monitoring is spread evenly throughout the year. The analysis results are forwarded to IW in agreed format. In total 223 compliance samples were taken in 2019 from public water supplies. Irish water will issue a compliance level report on the data in 2020.

Under the IW SLA Clare County Council monitors all discharges from public wastewater treatment plants. The larger population agglomerations have Discharge Authorisation Licences with the smaller plants having Certificates. In total 873 samples were taken and analysed covering compliance and operational monitoring.

Group Water Schemes and Small Private Supplies.

Clare County Council is the Competent Authority for oversight of private water supplies. These include private group schemes and commercial supplies. In 2019, the Environment Laboratory collected and analysed 248 samples. The compliance rate was in excess of 95%.

Discharge Licences.

A total of 66 licensed discharges under the Water Pollution Act were monitored in 2019. To date 95 samples have been analysed in our in house Laboratory. The discharges monitored include quarries, hotels, housing estates and factories.

Water and Scientific Services

Water Pollution Complaints: Environment staff have dealt with 89 pollution complaints in 2019. The complaints have been investigated and 90% to date have been closed out. Enforcement notices/letters were issued where required under the Water Pollution Acts and further inspections will be carried to ensure that actions recommended in the notices are carried out.

Section 4 Discharge Licensed Premises: Inspection reports which include monitoring data are issued for all premises that are monitored by the laboratory section with four licensed premises being audited up to the end of December 2019. A Section 12 enforcement notice under the Water Pollution Act 1977/1990 was issued due to non-compliance of licence conditions to one licenced site.

National Inspection Programme of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (DWWTs-Septic Tanks): In total, 41 inspections have been completed in 2019 of which 41% were compliant and 59% failed. Approximately 32% of the failures were due to a failure to de-sludge the DWWTs. Advisory notices were issued to owners of all non-compliant systems. Re-inspections will be carried out to ensure that recommended actions in notices are carried out.

Planning referrals from Planning Department: A total of 90 Planning Referral reports including inspections have been prepared to date this year. In addition 82 forestry reports were submitted to the Forestry Service via Planning up to the end of December 2019

Farm Inspections under the Good Agriculture Practice (GAP)

Regulations 2017: Clare County Council carries out inspections to ensure compliance with the GAP Regulations. A total of 30 farm inspections have been carried out by the end of December 2019 in the Ballycullinan lake and Cloneen River catchments. Of the farmyards inspected 93% were compliant with the GAP Regulations. Advisory letters were issued to the remaining 7% to notify them of non-compliances. Re-inspections of non-compliant farms and Department of Agriculture referrals were inspected in December 2019.

County Clare Lake Sampling Programme 2020

A tender was prepared and uploaded to e-tenders seeking a contractor to do the required lake sampling programme in the county in 2020. Three submissions were received for the tender which were opened in mid December and are currently being assessed.

Waste Management

Bring Banks

A monitored CCTV system has been erected at the Francis Street Bring Banks beside Tesco to ensure compliance with the waste management and litter pollution Acts.

Textile Banks

A total 16.44 tonnes were collected in the textile banks this month. This represents a 100% increase in usage from the same period last year.

Recycling Collection

Recycling Waste streams collected at the Bring Bank sites and Civic Amenity Sites remains consistent with the same period last year. The most recent figures show a 2% increase in tonnages to 209 tonnes collected versus 205 tonnes for the same month last year.

Limerick Clare Energy Agency

Clare County Council is participating in an ISO 50,001 certification programme in partnership with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO). Certification to ISO 50,001 will provide a structure for energy and emissions management with continuous improvements towards targets.

A Stage 1 audit was successfully completed in October and a Stage 2 Audit was completed in early December. We have received notification that we have been successful in achieving ISO 50,001 accreditation for our Energy management system.

Waste Enforcement

The enforcement team continue to respond to waste and litter related complaints with a total of 116 complaints received in December 2019. Of these complaints 58 have been closed and 58 continue to be investigated. Illegal dumping and fly tipping remain the persistent offenders.

The Waste Enforcement Team supported the Gumdrop initiative which involved launching new gumdrop bins at the Queens Nightclub. These bins will be stationed at future discos and on a trial basis initially at St. Flannan's College.

The scheduled inspection and monitoring of authorised waste facilities within the county continued as planned during December.

We have issued 28 fines in December relating to non-compliance with the Waste Management Bye-laws. A total of 424 households were surveyed in 2019, with a compliance rate of 76% to date. The project has been successful in advising homeowners and businesses of their obligations in ensuring that waste is stored, managed, presented and collected in a manner so that any risk to the environment is minimised.

Smoky Coal

An awareness campaign in the local press, social media and radio continued during December relating to the "smoky coal" ban in Ennis, Clarecastle and parts of South-East Clare. The advertisements notified the public and fuel suppliers of their obligations under the Air Pollution Act, 1987 (Marketing, Sale and Distribution of Fuels) (Amendment) Regulations 1998 to 2011. In addition letters also issued to retailers and distributors advising them of their obligations in relation to the sale and supply of solid fuel within Low Smoke Zone Specified areas. In December 23 inspections were carried out by the Waste Enforcement Team to check for compliance with the Air Pollution Act 1987 and relevant regulations.

Of the 23 inspections carried out, 15 were identified as being non-compliant and 8 were compliant or did not sell prohibited products. As a result of these inspections 3 Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued and 12 advisory notices issued. Further inspections will be undertaken in the coming months.

TRANSPORTATION

1. Roadworks Programme and Operations

Clare Co Councils Roadworks Programme for 2019 has been completed and all road grants recouped from both the TII and Dept of Transport, Tourism and Sport. This includes Pavement Overlays of the National Secondary road network at:

- Henry St. Kilrush
- Killimer Rd, Kilrush
- Moyasta, Kilrush,
- Bealaha, Doonbeg
- Ennistymon,

The Roadworks Programme for 2020 will be prepared as part of the SMDW for 2020 in the coming weeks as soon as we receive our road grant allocations.

2. Winter Maintenance

The status of the Winter Maintenance is that we currently have 2,721 tonnes of salt in Beechpark, with a further 170 tonnes currently being collected from Cobh. There is also a further 405 tonnes of salt available from the TII for national roads should we require it to be collected for this season. Currently we have enough salt for approximately 54 treatments of all planned routes.

3. Public Lighting

The key priorities in relation to public lighting include complete changeover to LED technology, achievement of the 2020 Carbon footprint reduction target and replacement of supporting infrastructure where required.

It was announced in late 2018 that the Road Management Office (RMO) have been successful in securing €17.5 million in support from the Climate Action Fund for the LA Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project nationally. This will form part of the funding necessary for the delivery of the project. ARUP were appointed in February 2019 and are currently working on the contract documents for Region 1. Clare has confirmed its participation and has signed up to be included in Region 1 of the Local Authority Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project.

For the benefit of Councillors, the following are the options available to facilitate reporting of public lighting faults:

- Internet: Direct reporting on our website – www.airtricitysolutions.com
- Phone: Airtricity Utility Solutions dedicated Call Centre – 1850 372 772
- Local Authority Identification – via Local Authority’s website or Contact number

4. Strategic Transportation

- Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS)

The Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy is being developed at present by the NTA and the Strategy is to cover all modes of land transport 2018 to 2040. A number of meetings have been held with the Consultants, NTA, TII and Limerick City & County Council. Clare Co Council has supplied background data to the Consultants and the NTA eg a list of Stakeholders to be consulted, traffic data, the Clare Noise Action Plan. Comments have also been returned by the Transportation and Planning sections on the Baseline Conditions Report and the Demand Analysis Report. The NTA has sought transportation issues from various stakeholders that they would like addressed by the LSMATS

1. Road Design Office Projects being developed in 2020

CURRENT PROJECTS

Project	Update as of 3 rd January 2020
N85 Clareabbey Roundabout	Drawings and Feasibility Report for traffic calming and pedestrian/cyclist facilities issued to TII. Three options considered. A fourth option of Traffic signals to be investigated.
N68 Fahy’s Rd Kilrush Pedestrian Crossing	Report on Section 38 submissions was presented to the May 19 West Clare MD meeting. Scheme was not approved.
N68 Shaughnessy’s Cross	Feasibility report and costing forwarded to TII. Awaiting response.
R458 Newmarket	Partially complete on site
Bunratty Castle Junction	Draft Drawings and preliminary cost estimates prepared in April. Options include repairing/widening the existing arch bridge, traffic calming, provision of pedestrian crossing and new footpath connection to the main Shannon Heritage carpark on Low Road. Road Design Office staff met with Shannon Heritage and their Consultants. Report prepared on Planning Application P19 365. Five options considered and Option B has been selected by Road Design Office. Low Road Bridge to be repaired in 2020. Funding source to be identified for traffic calming, pedestrian crossing and footpaths. Part 8 to be progressed in early 2020.
EuroVelo 1	Design of signage scheme and cost estimates complete. Map and cost estimate available for discussion. EuroVelo1 is a 317km route along existing roads in Clare. The route includes coastal , inland, Burren section, Shannon Estuary section and also travels through Clarecastle, Quin, Sixmilebridge, Meelick and onwards towards Limerick. It has the potential to be a significant tourism generator for County Clare. Consultation has taken place with reps of various cycling clubs. Funding source to be identified.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Knockanean NS	Road Improvement scheme – design drawing and land maps prepared and issued to Ennis MD. Cost estimate prepared.
TII HD 17 Sites	N67 Drainage works complete. N67 Public Lighting upgrade costs have been forwarded to TII Engineer for review. Site visits ongoing on N67, N68, N85. Survey, Design , Costings and Feasibility reports required for all sites. N67 Galway border to Ballyvaughan – topographical surveys substantially complete, design commenced.
N85 Shanaway Rd Junction, Ennis	Manual traffic turning count is complete. Topographical survey complete. Drawing complete and issued to TII Road safety Engineer. Awaiting TII input in relation to access to the filling station/One mile Inn property. Feasibility Report complete but cost estimate to be finalised. Landowner meetings have taken place. Awaiting feedback from landowners before feasibility report is issued to TII.
<u>Low Cost Safety Schemes 2019 - Progress</u>	
L4010/ L8022 Y junction on a bend L4010 south of Flagmount	Completed
R478 St Brigid's Well	Substantially complete.
L4506 Kilrush rd to Limerick Rd Traffic calming	Some landscaping works to be completed in February. Cycling Bus to Ennis National School commenced on the 8 th of November.
R458 Carmody St/Drumbiggie Rd, Ennis Pedestrian crossing	Substantially complete. Belisha beacons to be installed.
R469 Ballymacahill Cross Pedestrian crossing	Substantially complete. Belisha beacons to be installed.
R462 Sixmilebridge	Some signage outstanding.
R474 Kilmaley	Completed
Application for Low Cost Safety Schemes 2020	Lodged with DTTAS on 3 rd October 2019
Application for Bridge Rehabilitation Schemes 2020	Lodged with DTTAS on 3 rd October 2019
Application for Specific Improvement Grant 2020	Lodged with DTTAS on 3 rd October 2019
Development – Planning Apps	Ongoing reports/meetings/correspondence
Pre-Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Pine junction, Tulla Rd, Ennis • Ballyallia • R471 Junction Shannon • Housing at Newpark/Cappahard, Ennis • Part 8 Parnell St • Gaelscoil , Ennis • Gaelscoil , Shannon • Housing ,Knockaderry, Ennis • Kilrush Sports Facility
Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy	Data issued by RDO to Consultants Jacobs Systra. A Cronin reviewed the Baseline Conditions and Policy Context Report and Demand Analysis Report and reverted to the NTA.
University of Limerick access from the Clare road network	Preliminary design and cost estimate complete for works at Larkins Cross and Gillogue Bridges. 2020 funding awaited.
Milltown Malbay relief Road	Part 8 report complete on housing project
Ennistimon Relief road - tie in to N85	Liaison with Planning section
Proposed demolition and remediation of the existing Roche API Manufacturing plant – Traffic and Transport aspects	Liaison/meetings with Roche and their Consultants - ongoing

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Liaison with NTA regarding bus stops	Design of a wheelchair accessible bus stop on Bothar Linne, Shannon town is complete and NTA has approved design.
Liaison with NTA regarding bus shelters	Locations/details to be agreed
Drehidnagower road roundabout	Report complete on consultants roundabout design.
N19 extension	Liaison with Consultants

OTHER PROJECTS on the 2020 Work Programme

Clare Noise Action Plan 2018	Priority locations identified. Noise monitoring may be needed at some locations.
Update of the Road Schedule	Housing estate roads to be added
Review of Traffic signals at R463 Westbury Junction	LCS 2020 applied for
N67 Killimer Church - Review of Traffic Calming	
Doonbeg village Traffic Calming	
Car park at Lemanagh Castle	
R469 - Keevagh road realignment, Quin Road	
R352/Corrovorrin Junction , Ennis	Review of junction options. Application sent in to DTTAS early October for 2020 funding for signalisation of the junction.
L4176 Ballybeg Road, Ennis	Survey, design of realignment and provision of footpaths – to be commenced.
N68 Wilson road and Monvana junctions	Request from Area for input
N68 McNamees Shop/Garage	Request from Area for input
N68 investigation of provision of pull in areas	Initial approach made to TII
R463 Cycle lane scheme	Request for a cycle lane scheme from Ardnacrusha towards Limerick City.

Road Safety Remedial Measure 2019 to be commenced

- N67 Hospital Cross Ennistimon to Lehinch
- N68 Beneden
- N67 Bend at Lisdeen

Bridge Rehabilitation – Progress

AA Screening by Doherty Environmental completed on 2019 grant funded bridges

- Latoon Bridge - Completed
- Inghid Bridge - Completed
- Quin Bridge- Completed
- Ballycorrack Bridge - Completed
- Pollagh Bridge - Completed
- Annagh Bridge - Completed
- Doorus West Bridge - Completed
- Kelly's Pass Bridge - Completed
- Aghy Bridge - Completed
- Caherbarnagh Bridge - Completed
- Goleensallagh Bridge - Completed
- Cloonanaha South Bridge – Completed
- Breaghva Bridge - Completed
- New Bridge - Substantially complete
- Mountievers Bridge - to be repaired in 2020
- Sixmilebridge Bridge - to be repaired in 2020
- Aughaglanna Bridge - Substantially complete
- Barony Bridge - Substantially complete
- Ballyvohan Bridge - Completed

Additional bridges

- Stonepark Bridge - Now in 2020 funding application
- Bunratty Bridge (Low Road) - Now in 2020 funding application
- Gilloge Bridges (three structures) Now in 2020 Specific Improvement funding application
- Bridges notified to RDO by MD Engineers - Inspections ongoing

General Design Office

Ennistymon Innovation Centre

This development, part of the Digiclaré Initiative, provides high speed broadband, office and hot desk facilities to rural Clare and is part of a programme to deliver for the needs of small/start-up businesses and individuals who require state of the art digital facilities by providing Digital Hubs located around Co. Clare. Officially opened by Minister Michael Ring T.D., the Minister for Rural & Community Development on 20th December, 2019



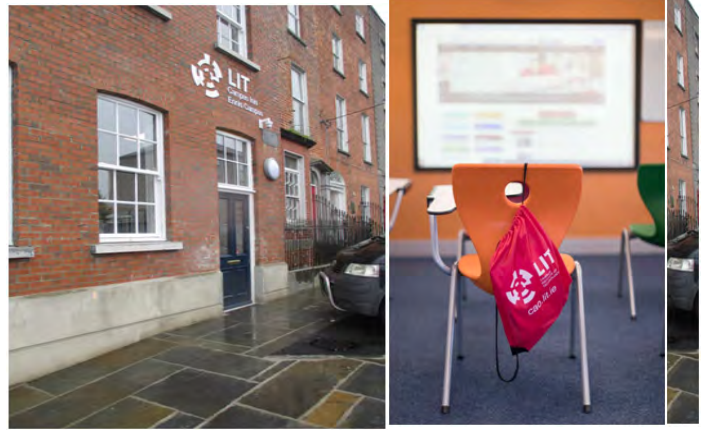
Brookville House Demolition

Located adjacent to the Educate Together National School on the Gort Road, Ennis the demolition of Brookville House was required due to its precarious state. After demolition of the house the site perimeter was fenced and adjacent sheds were re-roofed for use by the Clare County Council Gardening Depot. Works were completed in December 2019



Bindon Street LIT Campus

This development was required to accommodate the needs of Limerick Institute of Technology who wished to expand their higher education provision in Ennis. The Ennis Campus and facilities delivered a high quality education environment in-keeping with the educational philosophy of active learning. Formerly two independent office buildings the works included carrying out alterations to the existing building units to amend the internal layout, install a platform lift within new entrance foyer and entrance door off Bindon Street - the North West building elevation. It was important on this project to ensure Universal Access to and within the building.



Clare Beach Bye-Laws

A draft copy of the Clare Beach Bye-Law drawings have been issued to The Environment Section who are currently updating the maps section of 2016 Co Clare Beach Bye-laws to correct and upgrade these maps, to provide clarity of the restricted areas and to provide clarity of areas suitable for power craft launch.

Burial Ground and Recreation Park at Ballaghafadda, Ennis, Co. Clare

In 2018, Clare County council purchased a 50 acre site at Ballaghafadda on the Kildysart Road on the outskirts of Ennis. 38 acres of the site are on land with the remainder being part of Ballybeg Lake. The initial rationale for purchasing the site was with the intention of developing a new county Burial Ground as the existing Burial Ground in Drumcliff is nearing capacity.

Burren Discovery Trail

As part of Failte Ireland's 10 year vision/5 year strategy 2018-2023, The Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme provides for the opportunity for a series of drives off the Wild Atlantic Way. The Burren Discovery Trail is one such proposal provided for in the programme. The scheme identified locations where Failte Ireland would fund the provision of new directional signage and interpretations. These locations are along routes that are already used by visitors in order to view the landscape. The proposed interpretations consist of an upright Doorway Frame in Corten Steel. The project was granted planning permission through the part VIII process on 9th December 2019.

Lough Derg Amenity Trail

This proposed development will result in the creation of an



amenity path between Tuamgraney and Bealkelly along the Southern verge of the R463 and R463 at Bealkelly. The project is set to be completed within a period of six months. The proposed development improves the recreational amenity and accessibility between Killaloe and Tuamgraney for both residents and tourists with minimum intervention or visual impact on this scenic route. The project was granted planning permission through the Part VIII process on 9th December 2019.



Ennis West Men's Shed

The General Design Office was approached to provide assistance in preparing a planning application for retention permission of a Timber Shed that had been put in-situ by Ennis West Men's Shed. The required maps and drawings were prepared and also advice given in relation to fire certificate and disabled access certificate required. A Decision is due by the planning department on 09/01/2020.

Quin Road Campus

The 2,637 square meters (28,390 square feet) building in Clare Co. Council's ownership was formally a large kitchen / fitted furniture manufacturing facility and consists of a large industrial type steel clad structure with a flat roofed concrete office / display area.

The current building's layout is being redesigned to accommodate facilities which will include the following:

1. A new state of the art Head Quarters for the Branch of Clare Civil Defence.
2. Facilities for various departments within Clare County Council.

Following an open tender process a joint venture of Jada Projects Ltd. and Kelly RAC Ltd. commenced construction in September, 2019 to a cost of €2.75M. The fit-out works involve changing the use of areas into vehicular storage, employee welfare, and storage along with office and lecture / training / briefing rooms.

Office spaces are to be fitted out to Clare Co. Council standards. New mechanical/electrical / data systems are proposed.



Project Management Office update

The updated status of the main projects being worked on in the past month is as follows:

- **CFRAMs:** JBA Consulting have now been appointed as Consultant Engineers to design and develop the Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme and work is progressing well on same with Project Team Meetings having been held in December. Clare County Council published the Tender Competition for the appointment of Consultant Engineers for the Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme in early December. The closing date is January 20th. It is expected that we will be in a position to appoint the Consultants in late February.
- **Doolin Pier Visitor Services Building** – Work continued over the past month in advancing the Visitor Services Building project at Doolin Pier. Meetings continued with some key stakeholders including Landowners, Ferry Operators and the Marine Survey Office who has a particular role in the safe and efficient operation of the Pier Activities. We are now nearing the stage where we will be able to develop the detail design with the intention of submitting a planning application in the coming months.
- **Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme** – The Contractor has substantially completed the Ballybeg section of the scheme and following a number of rainfall events since its completion, it has worked effectively as per the design expectations. The second culverted section (St Flannan's College to the River Fergus) is completed from Torbarteascain almost to the Clare Road Roundabout. The Contractors return to site on January 6th and will shortly be commencing the very difficult road crossing through the roundabout towards St Flannans College. The depth of the pipe coupled with the presence of rock makes this crossing particularly difficult. The Traffic Management Plan was advertised as required in local media and was on public display. The date for completion of the pipe work in this section is scheduled for Feb/March 2020. The third element of the works, the embankment along the River Fergus from the Quin Road Bridge towards Clareabbey/N85, is progressing. The Contractor has completed the section of piling in soft ground at the Doora Bridge end of the embankment and Ryan Hanley are currently developing a revised design solution for the other location at the Clareabbey end where poor ground conditions have also presented difficulties which merited a redesign from that originally intended.
- **Ennistymon Inner Relief Road & Bridge Crossing (Blakes Corner)** – A significant milestone was this project was reached in mid December with the approval from TII of the Total Scheme Budget. This enabled us to complete the Business Case and submit same to TII for their approval now to publish the CPO. This is expected in the coming weeks with publication of same expected immediately thereafter.
- **Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass** – The detail design phase is currently ongoing with works significantly progressed on the Ground Investigation contract and Phase 1 of the Archaeology Survey contract. Work is continuing on finalising the various Landowner deals by agreement where possible, while others are being processed through the Arbitration process. Another positive milestone was reached in this project when on December 20th last, Clare County Council issued a Prior

Information Notice (PIN) to commence the procurement process with the scheme expected to go to tender in early Summer 2020. Following receipt and evaluation of tenders, we would expect to award the contract in late 2020 subject to Department approval. The construction period is expected to take 3 years thereafter.

- **Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)**

– The design of the link road between the N85 Roundabout at Claureen and the Lees Road/Drumcliff Road Intersection has now been completed and following engagement with the necessary stakeholders we will be in a position to submit for Part 8 Planning Permission in the coming week or so. As previously advised, an application has not yet been submitted in terms of the Housing Element of the proposal but we are exploring all possible options and working with the Landowner and other interested parties to prepare a proposal for the Departments consideration.

- **Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR) (Phase 2)** –

The Project Team are working on the additional information sought by the Department in relation to the Appraisal phase. Furthermore, we continue to work with the NTA and other stakeholders in the drafting of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (L-SMATS). Of significant importance is that LNDR emerges as an urgent requirement for the Region in the Transport Strategy, a draft of which is expected to be available in late January/early February.

- **N19 Shannon Airport Access Road** – Following the appointment of Fehily Timoney & Company as Consultants to the scheme in mid October, the first phase of “Scheme Concept & Feasibility” is now nearing completion. The Project Team have completed the relevant data gathering to inform this phase of the project through a number of workshops with various stakeholders such as the Utility companies, the Airport Authorities, Industry representatives, the OPW along with the Councils own Planning, Environment and Roads Sections during November and December 2019. Phase 2 “Options Selection” will commence in the coming weeks where consideration of the alternative route options will be analysed in order to determine a Preferred Option for the scheme. Once completed, the Project will provide a high quality road improvement scheme on the N19 National Primary Road between Drumgeely Roundabout and Knockbeagh Point Roundabout (for a distance of approx 2.2km) on the approach to the Airport and it will add significantly to the infrastructure facilitating Shannon Airport, Industry in the Region and the wider Shannon community.

- **N85 Kilnamona Realignment Scheme** – Members will be aware that following ground investigation and survey work, the original scheme of circa 3km of road realignment is now being extended to include an increased length of 4.5 km. While TII had previously approved the appointment of Technical advisors, the scope increase now necessitates the re-procurement of Consultants. We are engaging with TII in this regard and would be confident of an early favourable response in this regard.

- **Access to and from UL:** – Members will be aware of the two elements to this work. Firstly, the University is exploring a possible new exit onto the Garraun Road from the Clare Campus and we are engaging with them in regard

to considering their plans re same. In addition, the Council has a contractor in place to carry out proposed works that will enhance the toe path along the Canal Bank to facilitate Pedestrian and Cyclists under the Hinterland programme. We are engaging with the Landowner involved and should agreement be reached, we would hope to commence the works at the earliest juncture.

- **West Clare Railway Greenway** – Work continues in carrying out a high level feasibility study on the 88 KM long West Clare Railway Greenway. Clare County Council is very mindful on how such works can impact on landowners and as proposals develop, we will be holding public awareness and consultation meetings in the communities affected to see how we can move forward with minimum disruption and taking all the views of the stakeholders involved. The initial focus is on the circa 20km length between Kilrush and Kilkee via Moyasta and to end, Landowner consultation has commenced along the Kilrush Kilkee section. Furthermore, as requested at a recent meeting of the recent West Clare MD, a fact finding visit to the Waterford Greenways was arranged for a representative group of Councillors, IFA reps and officials. This exercise was hugely beneficial and included meetings with Elected and Executive members of Waterford County Council, Farmer Representatives and Business Representatives.

- **Asbestos Remediation Programme** – The results of the further sampling and survey work by our specialist Contractor, Safeway Environmental is currently with our specialist Consultants RPS for evaluation. Their Report on same will be finalised in late Jan/early Feb which will allow us to engage further with the EPA in terms of what permanent remediation measures may or may not be required. Following EPA advice/ approval, the necessary actions will be taken.

Project	
Lough Donnell	A meeting was held in December between Clare County Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to discuss the draft report on the status of Lough Donnell. It was agreed that the best way of protecting the Conservation objectives of the habitat was to replace the original culvert that was significantly damaged/destroyed by a series of storms over recent years. A methodology for achieving this was also agreed and Clare County Council will now begin to prepare a part 8 application to carry out the necessary works.
Liscannor Bay	Clare County Council is consulting with stakeholders on the amended proposals prior to submission to the Office of Public Works. It is expected to resubmit the amended study in late January.
Whitestrand (Miltown Malbay)	Clare County Council has submitted some further information as requested by the Office of Public Works. We are awaiting a decision on the provision of funding to take the scheme to Detailed Design and Planning.
Kilbaha	Our Consultants Malachy Walsh and Partners are working on a detailed submission to the Office of Public Works in response to issues raised in the previously submitted Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Management Study by Clare County Council. The additional work required by the OPW is substantial. It is intended to resubmit in February 2020.
Quilty	Following an OPW request, Clare County Council commissioned Byrne Looby Consultants to prepare a detailed response to the information sought. This has now been submitted by Clare County Council to the OPW and they are assessing same. We are awaiting their observations and recommendations.
Spanish Point	Clare County Council has submitted a response to the OPWs request for clarification on a number of issues, including tourist numbers and some technical design aspects of the proposal. We are awaiting their response which we expect to be positive.

Flood Relief Schemes:

The up to date position in relation to each of the areas where we have been progressing flood relief schemes is as follows:

- Springfield, Clonlara: A meeting was held to agree the hydrology for the Springfield catchment. This will allow the pumping requirements and the cost benefit ratio to be calculated. Work is continuing on the calculation of the volume of materials required to construct the earthen embankment. It will now be February before we can submit a planning application subject to the proposed scheme being economically viable.
- Miltown Malbay: We have raised this matter again at a recent meeting with the OPW and eagerly await their final response to same.
- Murtyclough: Members will be aware of while the scheme has been approved by ABP, there is an issue in regard to the funding of same. Given that the Road (N67) will be a major beneficiary of the works, it will be necessary for TII to part fund the works. An application in this regard is being prepared.
- Thomond Villas: An application for funding was submitted to the OPW and a response is awaited. Screening for Appropriate Assessment is scheduled to be carried out in

January. The location of the proposed works is in a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA). It is intended to submit an application for permission in the first quarter of 2020 subject to funding being provided and environmental issues being addressed.

- Quin Flood Relief Scheme: Clare County Council and our Consultants Malachy Walsh & Partners held a series of meetings with landowners recently to brief them on progress and to seek opinions on the preliminary designs. Following these meetings we are carrying out a number of minor amendments to the proposal. It is expected to proceed to Planning stage in February 2020.

Fire & Building Control Section

Christmas Fire Safety Message

A Christmas Fire Safety message highlighting the potential fire risks around Christmas time was promoted on Clare FM.

Fire & Building Control Section Main Activities	December 2019	Year to Date
Number of Emergency Calls Attended	109	1046
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received	4	106
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted	3	94
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	6
Number of Disability Access Certificates Received	5	79
Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted	6	69
Number of Commencement Notices Received	14	429
Number of Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	1	16

Clare Civil Defence

Operational Duties

Civil Defence provided medical cover for the following events:

- Teenage Discos held in the Queens Hotel as part of a joint initiative between Clare CD and An Garda Siochana
- Ennis Sub-Aqua Club's Annual St. Stephen's Day Swim of the River Fergus
- Charity walk in aid of Cancer Research in Doora.

Civil Defence also provided the following operational duties:

- Assisted with the Older Person's Christmas Party hosted by An Garda Siochana in the Woodstock Hotel. Members provided transport for people to and from hospitals, nursing homes and private residences as well as providing medical cover at the party.

Members Training & Professional Development

Various members successfully completed a Severe Weather and 4 x 4 Off Road Driving Course. Members of the Swift Water Rescue Team and the Boat Crew conducted a night time exercise of the River Fergus.

Ennis Municipal District

Christmas In Ennis 2019

Ennis MD ran a bumper package of events for Christmas 2019 over four consecutive weekends commencing with the turning on of the Christmas light, which attracted a record breaking crowd of over 4,000 to the Town centre. Old favourites like **Christmas Street Radio** and the hugely popular **Express Train**

also made a return with five charities benefitting from same. A number of new initiatives took place, including 'The Speks' a kids Christmas themed sing-along at Glór, 'Music in the Market' a fun filled family day at the Market Building, and Retro Drive-in Movies which screened festive classics such as Home Alone and Elf on the 'world's biggest LED screen' at Clare Marts car park for two evenings as well as the 'Ennis Christmas Village'.





The Ennis Christmas Market located in Abbey Street car park attracted in excess of 10,000 to a festive wonderland, featuring a large Vintage Carousel and showcased creative crafts, food stalls, an illumination show, and other festive surprises.

Christmas in Ennis 2019 was very well received by the general public and the business community. The business community in particular acknowledged that the footfall in the Town was noticeably improved as a result of the schedule of events. Social Media was also very active throughout the Christmas period and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.



Bank of Ireland National Enterprise Awards

At a gala awards night in Lyrath Estate, Kilkenny on Thursday 5th December, Ennis was selected as the overall Regional winner in Munster in their category of towns with a population greater than 12,000. This is the second year Ennis has achieved this accolade which is a strong endorsement of the continuing ambition of Ennis to grow and develop its economic base across a wide cross section of different enterprise categories.



Historic Structures Application

The O'Connell Monument is an impressive Doric column erected on the site of the old courthouse where Daniel O'Connell was declared M.P. for Clare in 1828. The statue of the Liberator with a shamrock scroll around the base was executed by James Cahill of Dublin, completed in 1867 and is considered to be his finest work.

The monument is now considered to be suffering from significant weather related damage. Ennis MD has appointed a consultant to carry out an assessment and to prepare a comprehensive method statement for the refurbishment and conservation of same. It is envisaged that the appropriate assessment and method statement will form the basis of a future application under the New Historic Structures Fund 2020, launched on November 14th 2019 by Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. If Ennis MD are successful in securing funding, works will be undertaken in 2020 / 2021.

