



COMHAIRLE CLARE  
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR COUNTY COUNCIL

Bealtaine/May 2020

## Tuarascáil Mhíosúil ón Phríomhfheidhmeannach Monthly Management Report

Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice

# Coronavirus **COVID-19**

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## A message from the Chief Executive



Since the first case of the Covid-19 coronavirus was identified in the Republic of Ireland on 29th February, 2020, we have been living through what are, by any definition, extraordinary times. Public health measures introduced by Government to combat the spread of the virus have impacted almost every aspect of our lives.

Words like ‘unprecedented’, ‘emergency’, ‘lockdown’ and ‘crisis’ have become commonplace in our everyday conversations. So, too, have words like ‘community’, ‘support’, ‘wellbeing’ and ‘heroic’.

If this crisis has been unprecedented in most of our lifetimes, so too has the response.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of all Council staff, elected members, our partners, the public and everyone who is working to combat Covid-19, including, of course, our frontline healthcare staff. I want to thank you all for your enduring commitment to this unique local, national and global cause.

As we reflect on the past months, we look back on a succession of turning points, of new developments, new information, new restrictions and new challenges.

Today, we find ourselves at another key moment. On 1st May, the Government published a *Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business* to ease the Covid-19 restrictions and reopen Ireland’s economy and society in a phased manner. The roadmap will start from May 18th, from which point our country will re-open in a slow, phased way.

We all welcome this, and we look forward to a time when a degree of normality is restored. However, as we ease restrictions, we must remain committed to the cause and continue to comply with all of the guidelines issued by Government. The rate of the virus in the community will be constantly monitored by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE), and this will be foremost in all our planning.

We can be sure there will be challenging times ahead. It is vital we stick together as a county and as a country to overcome what obstacles arise.

### **Council services continuing through Covid-19 challenge**

Since this crisis first emerged on our island and in our county, Clare County Council’s response has been informed by advice from the HSE, NPHE and public health authorities. We have taken a range of actions to minimise the spread of the virus.

Day-to-day operations of the Council have, of necessity, changed radically for the period.

On 12th March, following the Government’s announcement of a raft of public health measures, Clare County Council closed local authority offices, cultural facilities, and sports and recreation buildings to the public, effective from 6:00pm on that date.

All sections and departments developed business continuity

plans to enable the Council to continue to provide key services. Council staff have ensured continuity of essential and critical services across key operations.

Arrangements have been put in place for designated staff to work from home where possible. In cases where this cannot be facilitated and attendance at work is required, flexible arrangements have been made to ensure compliance with HSE guidelines and social distancing requirements.

All staff have been advised to adhere to public health advice and keep following the five key steps. While they seem simple, they are vital to protect us all: regular hand washing, coughing etiquette, not touching your face, physical distancing, and staying at home if feeling unwell.

The welfare of elected members, staff and their families is a priority to the Council while continuing to provide public services.

### **Crisis management**

A Crisis Management Team (CMT) was formed within the Council in response to the Covid-19 crisis. It has met on an ongoing basis, often daily, to monitor and respond to developments within the county.

The CMT has mobilised Council resources to manage the crisis response and to deliver critical services in light of the restrictions in place. Certain services were agreed nationally as critical services to be delivered by local authorities during this crisis. While the Council adhered in the main to this schedule a practical approach was taken and all urgent issues were addressed appropriately. Areas that have required particular attention include the provision of Homeless services, Traveller accommodation, temporary reassignment of Council staff, health and safety of staff, and mass fatality planning for the region, for the possible eventuality that this would be required – thankfully, it has not.

The CMT has participated in an inter-agency approach, liaising weekly with the Principal Response Agencies (PRAs), which include the HSE, public health, An Garda Síochána, the Fire Service and other local authorities in the region, in response to this crisis.

Council communications staff have coordinated activity with partners regionally to ensure consistent messaging across the region, and nationally with the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and others to enhance public awareness.

The Council continues to issue regular advisory notices, communications and specific targeted campaigns through its various media channels to support HSE and public health guidance in relation to Covid-19.

Clare County Council is acutely aware of the severe challenges facing business as we experience the unprecedented challenges brought on by Covid-19.

The Council will implement the national policy on commercial rates alleviation measures relating to Covid-19 restrictions. This will include a three-month commercial rates waiver beginning on 27th March 2020 for all businesses that have been forced to close due to public health requirements and also the administration of a Restart Fund targeting micro and small business, the details of which will be confirmed over the coming weeks.

## **Council meetings postponed, elected members actively involved**

The elected members of Clare County Council, while for the most part operating via remote access, continue in partnership with Council staff to co-ordinate a range of programmes across the county. Our elected members are fully engaged and have been actively involved in the running of the Council, and in co-ordinating the Council's response to the Covid-19 crisis. They continue to work on behalf of the people of County Clare, supporting ongoing initiatives.

The April Council meeting was convened on Monday, 6th April, in committee with a minimum number of members present to deal with a small number of statutory items, while ensuring social distancing requirements were in place.

It has been agreed to postpone the May meeting of Clare County Council, which was due to be held on Monday, 11th May, in view of the current public health restrictions. This matter will be held under review pending further Government announcements and any revisions of public health restrictions.

Members continue to fulfil their duties via video and teleconferencing with relevant staff on a daily/weekly basis and at Municipal District level.

## **Community Response Forum providing a coordinated response**

'The Community Call' went out in early April. This is the initiative that links local and national Government with the community and voluntary sectors, mobilising state and voluntary resources to combat the effects of Covid-19.

The purpose of the Community Call is to co-ordinate community activity, direct community assistance to where it is needed, and marshal the volunteering energy of the country.

On Wednesday, 1st April, I chaired the first meeting of the Clare Covid-19 Community Response Forum. Since then the Forum and its subcommittees have met on an ongoing basis.

The role of the Forum is to ensure there is a co-ordinated community response and to enable all voluntary statutory agencies to collaborate in support of our communities and particularly our most vulnerable members.

The Forum's work has been invaluable. Along with the Council, it includes more than a dozen agencies and organisations, including An Garda Síochána and the HSE.

A dedicated community support helpline (1800 203600) has been established to assist at-risk members of the public in accessing non-emergency and non-medical supports and advice during the current public health emergency. The freephone helpline is focused primarily on ensuring that vulnerable members of the community can access deliveries of groceries, medicine and fuels. In April, I welcomed All-Ireland-winning hurler Anthony Daly ('Dalo') to the Forum as Clare Community Champion. Anthony has been working with members of the Forum to distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) and supplies to Covid-19 Community Response Forum volunteers across the county.

The Forum is ensuring there is a co-ordinated community



response to the unprecedented crisis through which we are living, enabling voluntary statutory agencies to collaborate in support of our communities.

Phase 2 of the Community Response, the 'In This Together' campaign, has focused on helping our communities and individuals to maintain wellbeing.

As part of the campaign, Clare County Council and its partners are coordinating resources to help people stay fit and active, stay connected and look after their mental health. A list of available resources is available on the Council website ([clarecoco.ie/together](http://clarecoco.ie/together)).

## **Staying the course on the road ahead**

I must acknowledge the many sacrifices made by the people of Clare. The curtailment of normal activities has been sudden and severe. The adjustment has not been easy. I appreciate this is a difficult time for many people.

Our message to the public in County Clare has been consistent with that nationally, and indeed internationally: stay at home, and save lives. Other than in exceptional cases, we have urged everyone to stay in their homes wherever possible.

Staying at home is the best way to minimise the risk of Covid-19 to our friends, families and communities.

The public health measures were introduced, and to varying extents remain in place, because they are making a huge difference in reducing the spread of Covid-19.

Maintaining this effort will be central to the success of the roadmap for recovery. We cannot relax our efforts now, as to do so would risk undoing the progress that has been made to date.

It is not possible to thank everyone here for the work that has been done and the sacrifices made in recent times. Both within the Council and among our partners and colleagues, there has been a tremendous response to a difficult situation.

To those who have been affected personally by Covid-19, I wish you well and hope you make a speedy recovery. I wish to offer our condolences to those who have lost loved ones.

Make no mistake, the road ahead will be hard. We now have a roadmap, but we know the journey will be difficult, and there will be other crossroads ahead.

It is at these crossroads that we must make difficult decisions to do the right thing, and to take the right direction.

We look forward to completing this journey, to making a recovery, to reopening our businesses and schools, our hotels and amenities, to welcoming people back to our beautiful county. Until then, I appeal to everyone to remain resolute in our efforts, to stick together, and to stay the course.

We will get there.

**Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council**



## Shine Your Light

On Saturday, 11th April, as part of the Government's Covid-19 Community Call, and in recognition of the unprecedented times in which we are living, lighted candles, other lights, and symbolic equivalents, were placed in windows across Ireland as part of the national #ShineYourLight campaign.

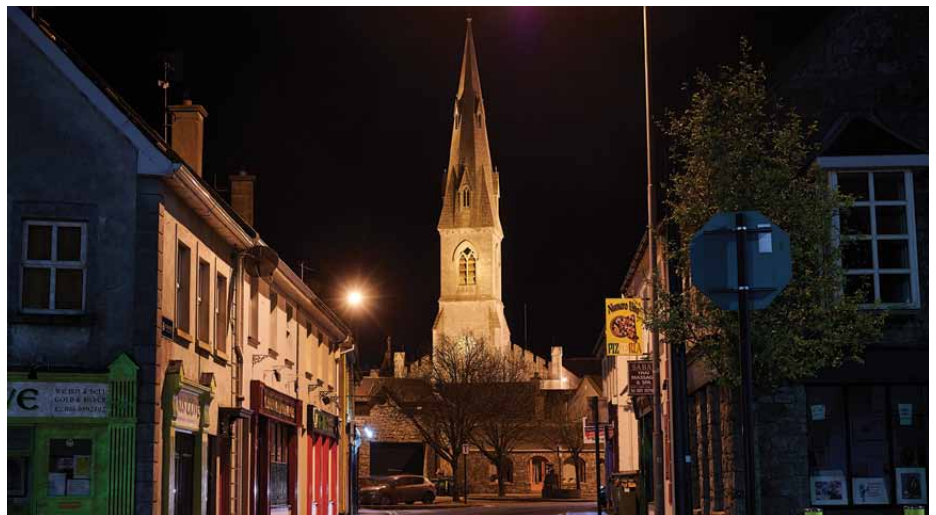
As part of this national initiative, Áras Contae an Chláir and other Clare buildings were lit up, along with a host of national and local public buildings across the country. Irish embassies and missions around the world also participated in this initiative to remember all of those who have lost their lives to Covid-19 and their loved ones, and to remember and thank our key frontline staff for their ongoing crucial work throughout the crisis.

RTÉ broadcast #ShineYourLight, a short live special featuring music performances and spoken word from a number of artists, on 11th April.

Clare County Council shared photos of local buildings on our various channels.



Ennis Courthouse (above) and SS Peter and Paul Cathedral (below).



Áras Contae an Chláir

## Human Resources

Work Area	Update
<b>Recruitment</b>	<p>The following recruitment competitions were progressed to interview stage during March and April:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy Vehicle Mechanic/Construction Plant Fitter</li> <li>• Administrative Officer</li> <li>• Temporary Head of Information Systems</li> <li>• Temporary Assistant Civil Defence Officer</li> <li>• Retained Fire-fighter Kilrush</li> <li>• Acting Senior Planner</li> </ul> <p>Clarification is awaited from Government regarding the budgetary implications as a result of Covid-19 and, in that regard, no new recruitment competitions will be initiated in the short-to-medium term by Clare County Council.</p>
<b>Learning and Development</b>	<p>A number of training programmes were arranged during March and April and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Awareness (60 participants)</li> <li>• Safe Pass (15 participants)</li> <li>• Chainsaw Operation (4 participants)</li> <li>• Microsoft Outlook and Teams (23 participants)</li> <li>• Plain English Writing (16 participants)</li> </ul> <p>Online training modules were also provided to staff and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coronavirus (40 participants)</li> <li>• Pandemic Awareness (46 participants)</li> <li>• Home Working (35 participants)</li> </ul>
<b>Parents Leave</b>	<p>Further information was circulated to all staff relating to Parents Leave. This leave applies to new parents adoptive parents since 1/11/2019 and is legislated for under the Parents Leave and Benefit Act 2019.</p>
<b>Covid-19</b>	<p>Throughout the months of March and April, the Human Resources (HR) Department liaised regularly with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the Local Government Management Agency on various HR-related matters, particularly those relating to Covid-19.</p>
<b>Covid-19 Temporary Assignment Scheme</b>	<p>The HR Department is co-ordinating locally a Temporary Assignment Scheme which is being managed by the Public Appointments Service. The aim of the scheme is to facilitate the assignment of staff on a temporary basis to other organisations across the civil and public service in order to ensure the continuity of essential services to the public.</p>
<b>Employee Welfare</b>	<p>Telephone counselling services have been made available to employees of Clare County Council that may wish to avail of same during the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>
<b>Statistical Returns</b>	<p>The 2019 return in relation to the Report on Compliance with Part 5 of the Disability Act on the Employment of People with Disabilities in the Public Sector for Clare County Council was completed and returned to the Department in March 2020. The Quarterly Staffing Return and End of Year Projection was submitted to the Department in April 2020.</p>
<b>Unions</b>	<p>The HR Department continued to engage and consult with unions on various matters and issues during March and April.</p>



## Commercial Rates

Clare County Council has implemented the national policy of deferring rates payments due from the most immediately impacted businesses until the end of May 2020 and we will continue to implement policy in line with Government advice post-May 2020.

We are acutely aware of the potential issues faced by our commercial rate customers and are also conscious that the impact is not uniform. While there are many commercial sectors impacted due to Covid-19 this is part of an ongoing review by Clare County Council. Customers that have raised concerns are being dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Clare County Council will continue to support all commercial rate customers during this difficult time and has also taken the decision to postpone legal proceedings in respect of ongoing issues related to commercial rates. Commercial rates income for 2020 is budgeted at €44.7m, which accounts for 36% of the council's estimated income in 2020. This is a critical source of income to fund the provision of all Council services.

## Motor Tax

The Department of Transport has confirmed a large and sudden increase in the percentages of people doing their motor tax online throughout the country. In one month, between February and March 2020, there was significant increased usage of [www.motortax.ie](http://www.motortax.ie) in all counties. In Clare, the jump between February and March 2020 was 10% – with the March online statistic at

82%. Eleven counties had an even higher online motor taxing rate, with the top three now at 90%.

## Finance

As Finance is regarded as an essential service, a number of measures have been put in place to enable the section to continue to provide all finance support services during the current Covid-19 restrictions. Remote working has been put in place to achieve social distancing within the finance area. Critical sections such as Payroll and Accounts Payable are set up so as to enable full functionality remotely.

In a short space of time, Covid-19 has resulted in effectively locking down economic activity within the county and country for the vast majority of businesses, and brings with it financial uncertainty and consequences that will be of proportions impossible to estimate effectively at this time. Clare County Council's main income source of commercial rates has seen a significant downturn in payments in recent weeks. Other income sources from parking, tourism sites and Active Ennis facilities have also been eliminated. This is in parallel to additional expenditure incurred arising from the Council responding to this health crisis. An estimate of such costs in terms of dealing with the crisis and the direct impact on other income and expenditure will be estimated over the coming weeks and months and presented to members. The Council is also engaging closely with Local Government Finance section of the department on this impact to inform a national position.

## Corporate Services

### Freedom of Information & Data Protection

#### 2020 Statistics to 24/4/2020

- 32 Freedom of Information Requests;
- 0 Freedom of Information Internal Review applications;
- 2 Appeals to Information Commissioner;
- 3 Access Requests (Data Protection) – Data Subjects; and
- 5 Access Requests (Data Protection) – Third Party Access.

#### Customer Service

As an essential service our Customer Service team continues to engage with all sections of the Council to support them in delivering their services during the current Covid-19 restrictions. With more staff working remotely to achieve social distancing, customer service maintain a weekly contact list of the relevant phone/mobile/email contacts for the major service departments to ensure the customer is responded to in an efficient manner.

The Customer Service team also continue to manage all logged Councillor cases and ensure they are routed to the correct point of contact and actioned appropriately.

The team has witnessed a rise in the number of queries as a result of the changed nature of services. Alternative solutions have been put in place to accommodate people paying housing rents and motor tax. The types of additional queries include: access to parks, opening hours for recycling centres, how to pay housing rents without a bank card, parking fees.

Regular service updates are provided on the home page of the

Council website: [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie)

#### Procurement

The Procurement Unit, in consultation with the Health and Safety Officer, is continuing to source PPE suppliers and process orders for certified PPE to meet the immediate requirements of the Council, in order to reduce the risk to employees and to ensure the continued provision of essential services during these unprecedented times. A further order is also being processed for the Council by the LGMA through the Office of Government Procurement (OGP).

Short description	Response deadline
Construction of double-sided stone wall	18/03/2020
Visitor Experience/Interpretation Consultants Services for Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) Visitor Experience	26/03/2020
Cliffs of Moher Shuttle Bus Service (1)	03/04/2020
Remedial Works to Housing Estates, Tulla Road, Ennis, Co. Clare	08/04/2020
Provision of Services for Pitch Maintenance at Ennis and Kilrush Sports Fields	17/04/2020
Remedial Works to Dún Aras, Dún Aras Avenue, Cluain Alainn & Ballycasey Avenue Estates, Shannon, Co. Clare	15/05/2020
Provision of Services for Audio-Visual Exhibit	29/05/2020
Residential Development of 2 Nr Houses at Maddens Terrace, Clarecastle, Co. Clare	29/06/2020
2-Unit Housing Development at Dun Na Mara, Doonbeg, Co. Clare with revised design for Clare County Council	29/06/2020

## Clare County Council answers the ‘Community Call’



(L-r) John Kerin, Bernie Haugh, Sharon Meaney and Leonard Cleary, pictured following a meeting of the Community and Voluntary sub-committee of the Clare Covid-19 Community Response Forum.

Following the announcement by the Minister of the national Community Call initiative on 27th March 2020, the Clare Community Response Helpline went live on 31st March 2020. Under the management of the Rural and Community Directorate the helpline is focused primarily on ensuring that vulnerable members of the community or those living alone can access deliveries of groceries, medicine and fuels.

The freephone community response helpline is open from 8:00am to 8:00pm seven days a week and an information leaflet advising members of the public of the freephone number (1800 203 600) was distributed to over 36,000 homes around the county via An Post.

In conjunction with the helpline, the National Framework sought the establishment of the Clare Covid-19 Community Response Forum, which includes over 20 agencies and organisations, fully supporting the helpline through a network of local volunteers. Chaired by the Chief Executive Pat Dowling, the role of the Forum is to ensure there is a co-ordinated community response and to enable all voluntary statutory agencies to collaborate



The Clare Community Response Helpline went live on 31st March.

in support of our communities and particularly our most vulnerable members.

Two sub-committees were also established as a mechanism to structure the work of the Forum: an Inter-Agency sub-committee chaired by Leonard Cleary, Director of Service, and a Community and Voluntary sub-committee chaired by former Chief Superintendent, John Kerin.

Four meetings of the Forum structure have taken place to date with the agenda focused on the identification of vulnerable members of the community, purchase and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) to registered community groups/volunteers, the Covid-19 Emergency Fund and formation of an agreement to protect community groups/agencies in the sharing/processing of information in accordance with GDPR requirements associated with the Community Call initiative.

Since its establishment the Helpline has addressed over 535 calls and has a directory of scenarios and appropriate responses based on the collaborative engagement from the agencies and community/voluntary sector.

Nature of calls received	Number of calls
Collection and Delivery Service – Food, Fuel, Meds	140
Meals and Delivery Service	25
Other Medical and Health Needs	71
All Other Requests	271
Garda Síochána Service	10
Social Isolation Service	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>535</b>

Table 1: Nature of calls received from 31st March to 27th April 2020.



## Anthony Daly announced as 'Community Champion'



Anthony Daly has been announced as Community Champion for County Clare. He has committed his energy to support the work programme of the Community Response Forum and the Community and Voluntary sub-committee. Pictured (l-r) are Pat Dowling, Anthony Daly, Cllr Clare Collieran Molloy and Michael Neylon, Clare County Council.

### Helpline trends nationally

Clare County Council is compiling daily returns to the Department of Housing, Environment and Local Government, which in turn is updating the Taoiseach's office on the statistics from around the country. Following three weeks in operation, helplines around the country have responded to 20,524 calls, with Clare's call statistics in terms of call volume/type similar to that of our counterparts in other Local Authorities around the country. A breakdown of the type of calls is outlined hereunder, with "Other Requests" accounting for the highest volume of calls with these relating to:

- a. Offers of help/volunteering;
- b. Related to other LA services;
- c. Related to other government services/services provided by other government agencies; and
- d. Totally unrelated to LA services (for example, cold calls trying to sell something).

Of the overall calls statistics, Wexford accounts for the highest percentage of calls nationally at 12%, with Cork County at 10%, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown at 8%, Cork City, Roscommon at 6%, Dublin, Fingal, Kilkenny, Limerick at 3% and Clare at 2%, similar to many other counties, i.e. Wicklow, Galway County, Kildare, Mayo, Meath and Waterford.

Nationally, calls to the helpline at the weekend remain significantly quieter than weekdays in terms of call volumes which is aligned with our experience in County Clare.

### Covid-19 Emergency Fund

Clare's local community and voluntary sector has taken centre stage in responding to the needs of our communities during the Covid-19 crisis. To support the continued efforts of those

Calls received <b>20,524</b>		Forum meetings 176
Collection and Delivery Calls 5,945	Social Isolation Calls 3,467	Meals Services Calls 1,354
Other Health Service Calls 1,042	Follow-up Calls 9,383	Other Requests Calls 8,398

directly involved in the Covid-19 community response, the Department of Rural and Community Development has put in place a national €2.5m Covid-19 Emergency Fund.

The Rural and Community Directorate has received an allocation for County Clare of €73,704 and, in consultation with the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), funding will be targeted at those groups participating in the 'Community Call' initiative. There are 40+ registered groups (insured via PPN and BHP, Garda vetted specifically for the role, etc.) reflected on Clare County Council's webpage map which will be invited to apply for the small scale current/capital grant funding of €1,000 or less, with larger capital projects greater than €1,000 invited through a closed call to members of the Community and Voluntary Forum.

The closing date for receipt of applications was Thursday, 30th April, 2020, and thereafter all applications will be referred to the LCDC for consideration and approval of the available funding.



## ABC Nutrition donates food pots to Clare Community Response Forum



The Mayor of Clare, Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy, accepting a generous offering of 'Fitfork' food pots donated by Willie Wixted of ABC Nutrition to the Clare Community Response Forum. Also pictured is Noel Carmody of Clare Civil Defence, whose team have distributed these food pots to registered local community groups that are working under the umbrella of the Forum, as well as Sinead Devanny, NPD manager, ABC Nutrition.

ABC Nutrition, a Shannon-based manufacturer of sports nutrition, weight management and lifestyle nutrition products, has made a donation of almost 2,000 ready-to-eat food pots to the Clare Covid-19 Community Response Forum.

The 'Fitfork' food pots are distributed to vulnerable members of the community in County Clare during the current public health emergency. Clare Civil Defence allocates the food pots to registered local community groups working under the umbrella of the Forum.

The Mayor of Clare, Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy, accepted the

generous offering from Willie Wixted and Sinead Devanny of ABC Nutrition on Friday, 17th April, 2020.

"Clare Community Response Forum, via these community groups, will distribute these food pots onwards to the vulnerable in our communities during the Covid-19 crisis. The community groups, which are already providing collection/delivery of groceries in response to calls to the community response helpline, will add these to the bag of groceries as an additional light lunch or generous snack for those who might need it most," Cllr Colleran Molloy said.

The donation from ABC Nutrition includes high-protein porridge/rice in individual meal pots that are ready to eat. New Product Development Manager Sinead Devanny, who developed the range, advises that, in its single-serve format, "our food is hygienic and nutritious in any frontline situation and ideal for vulnerable and isolated elderly people who may not be able to fend for themselves."

ABC Nutrition is working closely with the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) in Clare. Available nationally in Applegreen and Supervalu, the pots in which the meals are packaged are also produced locally by Cup Print in Ennis.

Clare Community Response Forum is chaired by Clare County Council's Chief Executive, Pat Dowling. Mr Dowling welcomed the donation by ABC Nutrition, which has enabled this partnership between this food supplier, the local authority and local registered community groups.

The Community Response Helpline was established in Clare County Council to assist at-risk members of the public in accessing non-emergency and non-medical supports and advice during the current public health emergency. Lines are open from 8:00am to 8:00pm seven days a week. Call freephone 1800 203 600 or email [covidsupport@clarecoco.ie](mailto:covidsupport@clarecoco.ie)

## Comhairle na nÓg presentation to SPC

Comhairle Na nÓg is a voice for young people and represents the youth of County Clare. Comhairle is the preferred consultative option for national and local governmental and administrative bodies such as Clare County Council.

It attends workshops, hold meetings and promotes its Work Plan Actions through events and is funded by DCYA through Clare County Council and facilitated by Clare Youth Service.

Two members of Comhairle go to Clare County Council to meet with members of the Steering Committee to discuss plans and progress for the upcoming year. This includes picking the topics for the year, which starts at the two AGMs in October.

In 2019, links were developed with the Clare Public Participation Network and the Clare Children and Young People's Services Committee who now sit on the Steering Committee.

Members of Comhairle listed topics that were chosen for 2019 as follows:

- Mental health including cyber safety;
- Discrimination;
- Teen friendship club for young people with autism;
- Alternative to mainstream sports;
- 5-a-day for positive mental health; and
- Age Action project.



## Extension to Illaunmanagh Burial Ground, Shannon



A contract was signed by Clare County Council and Custy Construction Ltd on Tuesday, 10th March, 2020 for the construction of an extension to the existing burial ground at Illaunamanagh, Shannon, County Clare.

Illauanamanagh means “Monk’s Island” and is a former island which arose from the mudflats. The town shares a graveyard with the village of Newmarket-on-Fergus and now needs an extension.

The site for the extension measures 1.75 acres and will be developed in two phases. The contract with Custy Construction has been signed for the first phase of development which will involve site clearance and site preparation works for the entire site along with the development of the site to facilitate 594 single burial plots.

The works will also include footpaths, plinths, composting area, shed, composting area, drainage works, landscaping, and a number of benches. Based on current demand, phase 1 will meet the needs of the community for at least 16 years. Provision will be made for the construction of a columbarium wall should there be demand for same into the future. Works are set to begin at the end of March and will take approximately eight months to complete. The expansion is very welcome as the current burial ground is nearing capacity.

Mr Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, confirmed that the extension to the burial ground consolidates Clare County Council’s commitment to providing burial space for the people of Clare in an environmentally and ecologically sustainable manner.



### Clare Joint Policing Committee

The Clare Joint Policing Committee (JPC) held its first meeting of 2020 on 17th February, 2020. The Chief Superintendent, Sean Colleran, provided a comparison of crime statistics from 2018 to 2019, highlighting the increases and decreases per category over the 12-month period. John Tracey, Clare County Council, gave a presentation to the JPC on the Property Marking Scheme. He outlined the benefits of marking property with a unique identifier, which is etched onto the item, and how this can help the Gardai return stolen property to its rightful owner. A demonstration was provided to the Committee. The machine was purchased by the Rural Directorate and is available free of charge to the Gardai and community to promote its use.



Clare Garda Youth Awards.

Members of the JPC also represented Clare County Council at the recent Clare Garda Youth Awards on 22nd February. This is an annual event, which recognises the achievements of young people, both individually and/or as part of a community group.

### Ennistymon River Walk

Works have been completed on the Ennistymon River Walk which received funding of €69k under the Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme. The works involved upgrade and resurfacing works along with repairs to bridges and the inclusion of safety rails/fencing along the existing trail. The trail is approximately 3km in length and follows a path alongside the River Inagh. The walkway is an attractive amenity for both the local community and visitors to the town. The works were delivered by the Ennistymon District Community Organisation (EDCO) with assistance from the Rural Development Directorate.

### Cragg Looped Trail, Tulla

Tulla United AFC received €75k under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme to develop a looped trail through the woods at their soccer grounds in Tulla. The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme is a national funding scheme which forms part of the Government’s Project Ireland 2040 programme for rural regeneration and is administered locally by the Rural Development Directorate. The overall objective of Tulla project has been to create a fully-comprehensive amenity park where



all members of the community and surrounding communities, irrespective of age, would be able to participate in physical activity. The club are formally launching the walk at their 50th anniversary celebrations in July of this year.

## Aviation Museum Shannon

Work has been completed on the construction of a new extension to the Shannon Aviation Museum. The extension greatly increases the indoor exhibition area making the entire museum an all-weather and all-season attraction in an exciting aviation-themed environment. In addition, a small retail and food offering has been provided. The works were made possible from a grant of €160k received under the Town and Village Scheme which is part of the Government's Project 2040 programme that is administered locally by the Rural Development Directorate.

Shannon is synonymous with the airport and the expansion of the museum reinforces its aviation-related connections and history. The expansion of the Museum creates opportunities for cultivating an environment that encourages, empowers and incentivises people to consider, engage with and participate in aviation-related learning opportunities, regardless of their age - via school tours, birthday parties, summer camps and other groups and individuals with an interest in aviation.

## Building Healthy Minds: Healthy Ireland and CYPSC bring Imagination Playgrounds to Clare schools and preschools

Healthy Ireland has funded an Imagination Playground initiative in County Clare schools, which has been introduced in response to concerning trends in childhood obesity and cognitive development.

The Imagination Playground is a modern resource that assists in the development of children's motor and cognitive skills. A recent Dublin City University (DCU) study entitled 'Moving Well, Being Well', reported that a large proportion of children under 10 had not mastered essential fundamental movement skills. In an age of childhood obesity and children tethered to electronic



consoles, playgrounds have rarely been more important.

Imagination Playground contains a wide variety of giant-sized loose parts, including cubes, bricks, cogs, curves, and cylinders. They have holes and shapes that fit together in ways that allow the continuation of a child's idea. Stored in large specialised containers, the playgrounds are mobile and can be transferred to create both indoor and outdoor play spaces.

Schools with on-site preschools, were invited to apply for an Imagination Playground and each application was assessed on its merits by an independent appraisal group. The most recent delivery of seven units, which arrived in Clare on 26th February, 2020, brings the number of children accessing an Imagination Playground in the county to over 7,000.

"In order for children to thrive and learn we need to provide them with opportunities to play and to engage their imaginations. The Imagination Playground is a wonderful example of how children can be supported creatively and practically to do this. Tusla is grateful for the time that the County Clare CYPSC has invested in this project and for the funding provided through Healthy Ireland," said Dr Caroline Cullen, Area Manager, Tusla Mid-West.

"The Clare Local Community Development Committee is delighted to support the Imagination Playground initiative. The Healthy Clare Strategic Plan 2019-2021 has prioritised two key themes of Physical Activity and Mental Health and Wellbeing for Clare. The Imagination Playground allows children to develop their fundamental movement skills and social connectedness through play which is a wonderful concept," said Karen Fennessy, Healthy Clare Co-ordinator, Clare County Council.

## Cliffs of Moher

The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience closed to the public on 14th March as a result of Government guidelines to close tourism facilities. Since then the site has been kept secure and maintained seven days per week, turning our staff focus to maintaining the upkeep of the iconic site and infrastructure at a social distance. Customer service staff have been redeployed to form part of a bigger team to assist the Clare County Council-led Community Helpline for County Clare.

Administration staff are continuing with committed projects and ongoing administration and preparing a marketing plan for re-opening. The Cliffs of Moher will re-open to the public as soon as restrictions are lifted for the sector.



# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

We are all adjusting to the realities of Covid-19 and, with most of the Directorate staff working remotely the office is a very strange place.

The reality of Covid-19 truly hit with the untimely passing of our friend and colleague, Colm O'Mahony. We have not as yet had an opportunity to come together to remember Colm, that said he is remembered every day by his friends in Clare County Council. Ár dheis Dé do raibh a anam dilis.



Colm O'Mahony.

## Covid-19

Clare County Council continues to deliver housing services despite the offices being closed to the public. Staff are available and are responding to customer complaints and queries.

In particular, the Covid-19 response has focused on protocols to protect vulnerable groups and in this regard we have developed Covid-19 response protocols to address accommodation and isolation requirements in Traveller accommodation and Homeless services. We are working closely with the HSE in the development of these protocols and in relation to Traveller accommodation we are working with the Irish Traveller Movement and the HSE Traveller Health Unit to address public health concerns.

## Housing Options Information Workshop

On 5th March last Clare County Council hosted its second Housing Options Information Workshop in the Buttermarket Building in Ennis. Despite the emerging Covid-19 scenario the event was greatly supported with significant interest in the event and many enquiries on housing options. The event was drop-in style with personnel from the Bank of Ireland, AIB, PTSB, EBS, Ulster Bank, MABS, Threshold, Revenue and Clare County Council available to answer queries on the night.

We hope to complete this series of workshops later in the year.

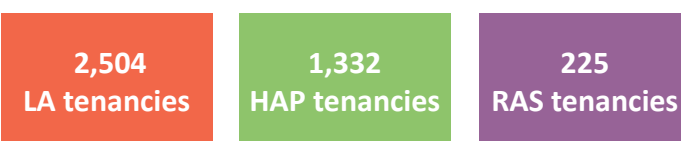


Housing Options Information Workshop.

## Housing in numbers:

### Breakdown of tenancies by municipal district (including RAS and leasing):

	Social Housing*	HAP
Ennis	1,137	612
Shannon	628	142
West Clare	925	377
Killaloe	332	168
Inter Authority HAP		33
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,022</b>	<b>1,332</b>



## Summary of activity during March and April

Activity in relation to housing allocations, returning voids and inspections for private house grants and private rented inspections were impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions. Current restrictions are necessary to protect staff and in this regard we have had to alter our work practices to deliver services in this new reality. All services areas are impacted by the reduced interface with customers and this is reflected in the numbers hereunder.

### Housing allocations

Offers issued	20
Offers accepted	-
Offers refused	9
AHB nominations	7
Tenancies signed up	36
Tenancies terminated	9

### Voids work programme

Voids/casual vacancies	43
Acquired properties	22
Average vacancy period	137 days
Number voids returned to stock	12
Average spend	€43,827

Position at the end of April.

### Housing maintenance calls

March	378
April (to 24/04/2020)	185



# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Private rented inspections	
March	20
April	0

## Homeless

The Clare Homeless Action Team (HAT) provides services to anyone who is homeless or at risk of losing their home. The HAT office is currently closed to the public but staff are available during office hours and can be contacted on 065 684 6291. Due to the volume of calls it may be necessary to leave a message and one of the team will return the call.

We continue our focus on exits from homeless services and during March and April there have been 17 households exit from homeless services; of this 17 households; eight were housed in own-door properties through HAP, leasing, AHB and local authority allocations, three self-discharged and left homeless services, two returned to family, three were discharged from the service and one was admitted for treatment. The inter-agency Homeless Action Team continues to support clients in the transition from homeless services to accommodation.

Status as of 24th April 2020:				
	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	12	0	1
Cusack Lodge	2	2	4	1
Westbrooke	1	16	1	1
Ashford Court	5	12	7	1
EA Families	6	8	17	4
EA Individuals	0	10	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>

Housing grants		
Grant type	Number of approvals	Value of works €
Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability	10	86,230
Housing Aid for Older People	9	36,625
Mobility Aids Grant	10	48,185
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>171,040</b>

## Rebuilding Ireland home loan

<b>11</b> Applications	<b>2</b> Approvals	During March and April
<b>73</b> Loans approved	<b>46</b> Loans drawn down	Cumulative to date: 21/04/2020

## Update on capital programme

All construction sites are currently closed due to Covid-19 restrictions, we are continuing to work with the Housing Delivery office to plan for the return of construction activity in the County.

The delivery timeline for all projects is impacted by the closure of sites but we remain hopeful that projects due for completion in 2020 will be delivered before the end of the year.



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Quilty	18	Construction suspended 27.03.2020	Q2 2019	Q3 2020
Roslevan, Ennis	8	Construction suspended 27.03.2020	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Sixmilebridge	2	Construction suspended 27.03.2020	Q1 2020	Q3 2020
Kilmihil	2	Construction suspended 27.03.2020	Q1 2020	Q3 2020
Shannon PPP	51	Construction suspended 27.03.2020	Q4 2019	Q1 2021
Ashline, Ennis	40	Stage 3 approved by DHPLG. Tender process nearing completion.	Q2 2020	Q4 2021
Milltown Malbay	27	Stage 3 approved by DHPLG.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Tulla	25	Part VIII - March 2020. Stage 2 approved by DHPLG.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Newmarket on Fergus	18	Part VIII - March 2020. Awaiting Stage 2 approval from DHPLG.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Scarriff	18	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Design Team Appointed.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Roslevan, Tulla Rd.	8	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Design Team Appointed.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Doonbeg Lands	8	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Clarecastle	2	Single Stage approved. Part VIII approved. Design Team appointed.	Q2 2020	Q1 2021
Ballaghboy TAU	5	Design Stage	Q4 2020	Q2 2022
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>232</b>			
CAS - Cahercalla Phase 2 (Cuan an Chlair)	15	CAS Construction. Construction suspended 27.03.2020	Sept 2019	Q4 2020
Bruachlan, Westbury (CoOperative Housing Ireland)	22	CALF - Property transfer complete, CHI to commence procurement of design team.	Q3 2019	Q4 2021
Gleann Cora, Newmarket on Fergus (CoOperative Housing Ireland)	31	CALF Acquisition approved, construction suspended 27.03.2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
Edenvale (Newgrove Housing Association)	3	CAS – Stage 2 to be submitted to DHPLG	Q3 2020	Q2 2021
Sycamore Drive, Ennis (Cluid)	2	Part V	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
Ballymacaula, Ennis (Cluid)	4	Part V	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
Crusheen (Cluid)	2	Part V; 2 delivered in April 2020	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>AHB delivery</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>			



## Sports & Recreation



### Active Ennis John O'Sullivan Park, Lee's Road

The park is open to those who reside within 2km, the car parks and main gate are closed to ensure compliance with Government restrictions. Throughout the park there is signage to remind users to adhere to social distancing guidelines. Also throughout the park there is significant increase in visible wildlife activity.

It is our experience that generally people are adhering to social distancing guidelines, however there have been instances where it has been necessary to disperse groups.

To continue to ensure the safety of all users of the park we request the following:

- Cyclists – please use cycle ways and do not cycle in the woodland walk areas;
- Cars – the park is open to those who reside within 2km of the facility. Parking on the public road at the entrance is prohibited.

### Active Ennis Leisure Complex Pool & Gym

Active Ennis pool and gym are currently closed to the public in line with Government restrictions. Routine maintenance is being undertaken to ensure the premises can reopen once restrictions are lifted.

While the bottle banks on site are open Monday to Friday from 10:00am to 4:00pm the public are reminded to ensure no rubbish is left on site.

The Management Team continues to work together remotely, by Skype, to progress projects, administration and communication.

### Clare Local Sport Partnership Activities

Our offices may be closed to the public during this period of uncertainty, Clare Sports Partnership are working from home to bring opportunities for participation in exercise to residents of Clare.

#### Exercise from home

We have been busy working with tutors and staff to bring people a variety of exercise opportunities and ideas that can be completed at home.

We have dedicated a page on the Clare Sports Partnership website (<http://www.claresports.ie/get-active/covid19exercise/>).

Here is a snapshot of the programmes we have developed and which are available on our website.

### 3k Walk to Jog Programme

You may have noticed the surge in people out walking throughout the county during this pandemic. While it is fantastic to see so many out walking, our Sports Development Officer, Pat Sexton, felt that many people may be ready to increase their walk to a jog; so, with that in mind, he designed an eight-week walk to jog programme suitable for complete beginners and designed to fit within the Government's 2km-radius restrictions of their homes. It can even be completed indoors or in the garden by jogging on the spot. This programme is free and once people register on: <https://register.primoevents.com/ps/event/Couchto3kmWalktoJogProgramme>

People receive their first podcast to follow at their leisure. Each week (for eight weeks) participants will receive three podcasts to follow, bringing them from the couch to being able to jog 3km in just eight weeks. The programme has proved hugely popular with currently 351 participants registered. The added beauty of this programme is that it can be started at any time.

Feedback after day 1 has been extremely positive. This programme was advertised through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter initially and then by mass email on Monday afternoon to the Clare Sports Partnership database.

#### Active Story Time

Our Sports development officer Marian has developed two active stories that take you and your children on adventures with Buddy the Dog. Two further stories are currently being created.

#### Outdoor Active Adventure

There are resources to download to enable families to complete a treasure hunt at home, or alternatively a blank template can be downloaded for families to create a treasure hunt of their own. There is also an indoor version for when the weather isn't quite so good.

#### Older adult activities

We have worked with tutor John Conroy, Fitness4Fun, to develop seated exercises for older adults to do from the comfort of their homes.

#### Activities for people with a disability

Suitable for people with disabilities, Tracy Guilfoyle brings you gentle exercises to be completed in your sitting room. There will be further video for wheelchair users uploaded.

Further detail and exercise tips can be found on Clare Sport Partnership website [www.claresports.ie](http://www.claresports.ie).

## Cultural Services – Library, Arts, Museum, Archives

### Covid 19 – Wellbeing response

National and Local Government have come together with the voluntary and community sectors on a wide range of wellbeing initiatives to help the public in three ways – help with mental wellbeing, help to stay active and help in staying connected. A cross-directorate working group has been established within Clare County Council chaired by the County Librarian with the aim of coordinating initiatives in the area of sport, recreation, culture and enterprise. A national advertising campaign commenced on 24th April which will continue during this period of Covid-19. Initiatives to date include: Clare County Library has launched a housebound service to people cocooning and has compiled an activity booklet for parents to download for children; the Arts Office is developing a number of online capacity-building initiatives with artists in collaboration with Clare LEO; and together with Clare Sports partnership a series of videos online has been uploaded for all ages to get active. The community helpline continues to be the first point of contact for members of the public.

### Capital project update

The construction of the new county library and art gallery commenced on site at glór on 6th January, 2020 – progress on site clearance and ground work preparation had advanced up to 28th March when Government announced a stoppage of work on construction sites. A new roadway creating access to glór and the site has been completed.

### Clare County Library

Clare County library supported and participated in the Ennis Bookclub Festival at the beginning of March through volunteering and sponsoring a number of sessions including Caroline Foran who spoke on anxiety.

Seachtain na Gaeilge, World Book Day and Teen Week were all celebrated by the library service in March with several events taking place throughout the branch network. Galway author Patricia Forde visited Ennis and Shannon libraries to discuss her new novel, *Ar Strae*, for children in the Irish language. Through her latest book children from Gaelscoileanna in Ennis and Shannon had an opportunity to talk about the challenges faced by young Syrian children arriving in Ireland to begin a new life. Library staff member Aidan Courtney visited libraries all over the county entertaining children with his illustration workshops delivered through Irish. Aidan's drawings were based on popular books for children, the names of which the children had to guess through Irish. Maire Falsoy delivered four Seachtain na Gaeilge storytime sessions for young children in the libraries in West Clare: Kilrush, Kilkee, Kildysart and Kilmihil.

World Book Day was marked by a visit from one of Ireland's most successful authors Judi Curtin to Kildysart and Shannon libraries. Judi's presentation at Kildysart library was a collaboration with St John Bosco Community College for the school's literacy week. Students had read many of Judi's books before her visit and were excited and delighted to meet the best-selling, award-winning writer. Judi also visited Shannon Library and met with 5th and 6th class children from St Conaire's National School. Kilrush Library hosted a start your own business session, "Ideas



Work Matters at Kilrush Library.

to reality", with Dianne Hassett as part of Work Matters at the library.

The library's annual Teen Week in collaboration with the Ennis Book Club Festival in Ennis and Scariff libraries began with an unforgettable presentation by Everest summiteer John Burke at De Valera Library on 3rd March. John left his Transition Year audience with many memorable stories of his physical and emotional journey to the top of the world's highest mountain and advised on the simplest of coping mechanisms for life's everyday challenges for young adults. Teenage author Brian Conaghan visited Ennis and Scariff libraries on 4th March. This was another excellent event perfectly pitched at Secondary School audiences. Through his award-winning novels Brian illustrated to school audiences how he copes with living with Tourette's Syndrome and shared his experiences of writing and the resilience necessary to become a published author.

Sarah Webb visited Scariff Library on 6th March where she delivered an inspiring writing workshop to teenagers from Scariff Community College. Sarah is the author of many books for children, teenagers and adults. Book Club Festival in March: the Clare FM bookclub read *A Very English Scandal* by John Preston – a number of book, film, children's clubs and computer classes were held in Clare Libraries.

With the onset of Covid-19, usage of Clare County Library online services have been very active throughout April while the libraries remain closed. Many members of the public have accessed e-resources including ebooks, e-magazines, e-newspapers, language courses and training courses. Clare County Library has also provided information services, story time sessions and virtual competitions through social media channels.

Clare County Library Photographic Archive has uploaded photos to the Graveyard Inscriptions Collection for Drumcliff Graveyard (Section B). This photo collection has been fully catalogued and transcribed. A War of Independence Exhibition is in development – researching Clare events of 1920 for an upcoming library exhibition. The Creative Ireland Portal is being updated with details of proposed events scheduled for the latter half of 2020 including Project Awards and liaising with CI staff on plans for Cruinniú na nÓg, which is scheduled for Saturday, 13th June, and which may proceed in an online format.

The National Right to Read "Spring into Storytime" is accessible to families all over County Clare despite the current closure of branch libraries. The stories can all be accessed from the library



website. Young children can listen to local librarians as they bring storytimes into their homes. Libraries may be closed but in partnership with a range of writers and publishers we can celebrate the joy of storytelling online instead of at the local branch. Librarians from the Clare library branch network have created story videos, arts and craft demos, nature walk trails and step-by-step cartoon drawing guidelines to keep children entertained while schools are closed.

In addition, Clare County Library, in collaboration with the LCETB's Local Creative Youth Partnership, has compiled an activity booklet for parents to download in its entirety or as individual pages for children to work on at home. Each themed page of activities is based on places of interest in County Clare. Clare County Library Service is grateful for the generous permission of publishers O'Brien Press for allowing us to share it with our readers.

Clare Library continues to link to the best of children's book news, the best websites for children and parents to check out and educational and cultural activities on a daily basis through its website and social media channels.

### Clare Arts Office

A site meeting for artists took place at Cuan an Chláir Housing Scheme in Ennis as part of the commissioning process through the Per Cent for Art Scheme. Three exhibitions took place county wide – Henry Butler in the County Museum, Philip Brennan in Scariff and Astrid Adler in Kilkee – all were cut short due to the onset of Covid-19.

Filming of "Smother" continued in Lahinch until mid-March and assistance is currently being provided to a German film looking to shoot in Kilkee, Bunratty and Shannon. "Calm with Horses", supported by the WRAP FUND and shot in Kilkee, was released nationwide.

An artist residency had begun in Bodyke NS in March before

being discontinued while a further six were paused county wide. Nine residencies with disability organisations were also paused throughout the county. Clare Youth Theatre performed at the Ennis Book Club Festival and the "spoken word" project, with five secondary schools in the county, "New Word Order", also took place as part of the Festival. A public celebration of the Gaining Ground Shannon project, Clout 9 by Godknows, took place in Hope Cafe in Shannon. The Gaining Ground International Public Art Symposium was re-scheduled to take place in September. Throughout April, some programming has continued with St Joseph's Hospital in Ennis and with Clare Youth Theatre. The Arts Office is presently reviewing how it can work with artists in building capacity and in particular in supporting older artists.

### Clare Museum

The curator has invited members of the public to record their experiences of this historic pandemic for posterity and to submit any photographs or items they may have to the museum once the pandemic is over via a press release in local media.

Other duties carried out in April include: proof reading the 2017 Accession Register, updating the museum's Disaster Plan, and researching the museum's new Strategic Management Plan. Co-ordination of essential maintenance visits by service providers has also been taking place.

The curator is currently putting in place a plan to ensure the security and environmental monitoring of the collection is maintained during this period. This will require a presence in the museum on Mondays and Thursdays going forward.

### Clare Archives

Archives is now part of cultural services since March. A new archives@clarecoco.ie email has been setup to reflect this. Any historical archive queries will now be dealt with by staff of the Local Studies Centre. Any queries for Clare County Council records can be emailed to records@clarecoco.ie.

## Killaloe Municipal District

### Flood Response – Springfield

Staff of Killaloe Municipal District were involved in the pre-flood planning and the operational management of flooding at Springfield Clonlara, where heavy rainfall and river surges resulted in widespread flooding of lands in the area. It also involved data gathering to assist in potential future events by feeding data back to the EU Copernicus Project via the Fire Service.

Killaloe Municipal District engineers and staff working with other agencies such as Civil Defence, soldiers from the Sarsfield Barracks in Limerick and ESB sought to protect up to 17 homes from flooding during the course of a two-to-three-week period. Killaloe MD worked with the local Springfield community to ensure agricultural businesses could continue to operate and the local community could access and egress safely from their homes. The response included the building of sandbag protection walls, a pumping plan and the use of specialist access vehicles.



### Covid-19

The Killaloe MD office in Scariff remains closed to the public. The team are delivering essential services in the area and are providing support to reinforce Covid-19 advice, in this regard we have installed large Covid-19 signs at each large living cluster and large amenity area in the district. This signing is to raise public awareness and ensure adherence to guidelines throughout this crisis.

We live in strange times. The Covid-19 pandemic is sweeping through our world indiscriminately. In Ireland, due to the cooperation of the majority and the excellent work of our medical people, we are managing our way through this crisis and local government is playing its part. In the weeks and months ahead our economy will be depressed because demand will stay low and people will spend more conservatively, that is until our scientists make the Covid-19 vaccine.

In Clare County Council, remote working has become normal and, fortunately, we have the resources to allow us to be productive in this way. The Economic Development Directorate staff have approached this change in work circumstances in a pragmatic and flexible way and we thank them for that.

Last week I communicated the changes forced on the planning code to Elected Members and this statutory function will remain under review in the weeks ahead.

The day-to-day work of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) has increased significantly as businesses plan for the recovery. The National Business Continuity Support Scheme has a high take-up rate, as do the Trading Online Vouchers. Currently, we are conducting a survey of our business clients to ascertain their trading capability and, due to the popularity of online training, we continue to add more courses. In total, 114 have participated to date and 41 of our clients have availed of free business mentoring.

Looking towards the future, work on the preparation of a Clare Economic Recovery strategy has commenced and, as this work progresses, we will keep Elected Members informed.

## **Change to staff structures**

Work on a number of strategic economic projects for the county is continuing and, in order to have a singular focus on the delivery of a number of strategic projects, Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner, has been tasked to lead this work area while Helen Quinn has been promoted to the Acting Senior Planner position in the Planning Department.

## **Strategic economic projects**

### **Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Plan**

Work continues on the drafting of the Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Plan with the initial draft of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) provided in early April 2020. On completion of the Ennis 2040 Flood Risk Assessment and SEA/Appropriate Assessment the Plan can move forward to finalisation at end May/June 2020.

### **UL/SDZ**

The Council's law agent is at an advanced stage in legal negotiations on the setting-up of a designated activity company (DAC) for the purpose of the SDZ application and the Planning Scheme (Masterplan) design.

### **Data Centre**

The Art Data Centre Company behind the Ennis Data Centre is in the process of preparing a planning application for the development. The Council continues to work with the company

to market the Ennis Data Centre, especially to US data centre developers. This work is being done in partnership with the IDA.

### **Spatial and Economic Masterplan for Shannon Town Centre**

The preparation of this Masterplan is funded under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) and Clare County Council. In February 2020, an Integrated Design Team (IDT) of spatial and economic consultants (BDP and McCabe Durney Barnes) were appointed for the preparation of an Economic and Spatial Masterplan for Shannon Town.

The purpose of the Masterplan is to focus and agree an economic future and spatial pattern for the centre of Shannon Town. On completion, the Masterplan will unlock the town's development potential and guide and stimulate its development into the future. The Masterplan will plan Shannon Town's growth potential, the use of under-used, derelict and vacant sites in the area, and development potential of key sites at the entrance points to the town. Crucially, the Masterplan will be based on an Economic Viability Assessment.

### **Roche Masterplan**

The Council will continue to work with the Roche management to Masterplan the future use of the Clarecastle site. This forward planning work will continue in parallel with Roche's proposals to clean the site.

### **Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan**

The Covid-19 virus has resulted in this plan being 'paused'. Meanwhile, background desktop work is underway until the consultant's appointment is activated.

## **Forward planning**

### **Variation No. (2) to the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (as varied)**

In accordance with Section 27(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, Clare County Council is proposing to make Variation (No. 2) to the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (as varied), in order to achieve the objectives of Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES). This statutory variation will incorporate work underway on the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan in addition to minor amendments to text and objectives in the written statement to align the current County Development Plan with the objectives of the NPF and RSES.

In April, consultation commenced with the relevant statutory environmental authorities and adjoining Planning Authorities in relation to the findings of the SEA Screening Report and whether the proposed Plan Variation would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

### **Cappa Enhancement Strategy**

The 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 presentation to the West Clare Municipal District Elected Members was made on 3rd March in Ennistymon. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be finalised in the coming weeks.

## Development management

The table below summarises the activity in relation to planning applications and enforcement during the months of March and April and also gives the year-to-date totals.

Development Management	March 2020	April 2020	Year to date 2020
<b>Planning applications</b>			
No. of planning applications received	80	63	290
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	20	15	86
No. of Section 5 applications	3	4	14
<b>Planning enforcement</b>			
No. of new complaints received	7	9	49
No of Files Opened	7	7	36
No. of Warning Letters issued	4	7	29
No. of Enforcement Notices served	2	1	5
No. of Enforcement files closed	12	1	13

## Taking in charge

The Taking in Charge Team are continuing to progress remedial works contracts on a number of housing estates, as outlined in the table below. It is planned that all these contracts will be completed before the end of the year. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, site works on these projects are temporarily suspended.

Estate	Update regarding Remedial Works
Mount Clare, Claremount, Clarecastle	A contractor was appointed on 22nd April 2020.
Craglands/Crag Ard, Ballynacally	A contractor was appointed on the 24th March 2020.
Manor Grove, Ardnacrusha	A contractor was appointed on 24th March 2020.
Boheraroan, Newmarket on Fergus	Closing date for receipt of tender documents was 6th March 2020. An assessment of tenders is still ongoing.
Gort na mBláth/Rathban/Lios Ard, Tulla Rd, Ennis	Closing date for receipt of tender documents was 3rd April 2020. The contractor with the lowest tender is currently being assessed.
Dun Aras/Cluain Alainn/Dun Aras Ave/Ballycasey Ave, Shannon	Tender were put up on E-Tenders on 19th March 2020 with a closing date of mid-May 2020.

## Heritage and biodiversity

### Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN)

- The planned launch of the Clare iCAN in collaboration with Shannon, Clarecastle, Kilkee and Scattery Island heritage groups and with support from the National Museum that was scheduled for the 24th of March in Clarecastle was postponed due to Covid-19.
- The students from Reading your local Landscape course (including participants from Miltown Malbay, Kilrush, Scarriff and Killaloe) have also prepared their course material to go onto the Clare iCAN website to be made available to their relevant communities.
- The National Museum has commissioned Garry Kelly of GK Media Ltd to undertake an online social media training course via workshop/webinar and this is being offered to all the Clare iCAN participants.
- The first iCAN National Network meeting was hosted by the Shannon Historical Society and Dúchas na Sionna, at Treacys Oakwood Hotel, Shannon. Olive Carey and John O'Brien spoke about their work to preserve and share the history and heritage of the Shannon region, with a focus on the Hastings Farmhouse preservation project. The meeting was followed by a site visit to Hastings Farmhouse and the Shannon Town Community Wetlands.
- Heritage and biodiversity pop-up banners are being printed and we are at present working with Clare iCAN communities to assist in the production of pop-up banners for their individual projects.
- The website may be viewed on <https://heritage.clareheritage.org/>

### All Ireland Pollinator Plan

The Heritage Officer continues work to implement the Pollinator Plan within the Council and assist with biodiversity initiatives.

### Funding Applications to the Heritage Council under the Clare Heritage Plan 2017-2023

An allocation of €23,000 has been approved from the Heritage Council to implement the following Clare County Heritage Plan projects in 2020:

(1) Clare Holy Wells Audit: A tender brief has issued for this project on the Holy Wells in County Clare, to survey, compile data, gather information and to document the location and condition of a number of less well-known or un-recorded Holy Wells or those not in present use. The audit will raise awareness and knowledge of the rich heritage associated with Holy Wells and their settings.

(2) Demonstration Sites for Biodiversity Management: A tender brief has issued for this project to plan for the implementation of best practice in biodiversity management in Clare County Council-owned public sites. Biodiversity enhancements are being planned in consultation with the Municipal Districts.

### Biodiversity Resource Manual for all Local Authority Staff

A draft gap analysis has been written up and is currently under review. The Biodiversity Resource Manual is at present being drafted, with anticipated roll out of staff training in the autumn.



## Local Enterprise Office

### Covid-19 Supports

LEO Clare continues to support our local businesses through what is an unprecedented economic challenge. Supports include:

- A Business Continuity Voucher, aimed at providing consultancy to the value of €2,500 to struggling businesses. These businesses can use the voucher to hire a consultant to assist with business continuity planning, implementing remote working practices and assessing their current financial health, among other options. This option is available to all businesses employing less than 50 people.
- A new Trading Online Voucher scheme was launched on 17th April 2020 to assist businesses enhance their capacity to sell online and/or develop a new online platform. Businesses that employ less than 10 and have a turnover of less than €2m can avail of 90% funding up to a maximum €2,500.
- A new range of online webinars and training courses, including information on remote working and getting paid online, are on offer from LEO Clare and are provided free of charge to applicants.
- A free three-hour mentoring session, where a member of the LEO Clare mentoring panel is assigned to an applicant to mentor them in areas ranging from financial review to starting a food business to digital marketing, among others.
- A special Covid-19 support loan from Micro Finance Ireland (MFI). MFI is providing loans of up to €50,000 to businesses affected by the current crisis. These loans are interest free for the first six months and businesses who apply through LEO Clare can avail of an interest rate of 4.5% for the remaining duration of the loan.
- Our range of grant supports (including Feasibility, Priming and Business Expansion and our TAME grant for micro-exporters) remain available to eligible businesses to apply.

As new supports are announced, these will be advised through our social media channels, website and local media.

### Training programmes

The restrictions placed on public gatherings led to a significant change in our planned training schedule. LEO Clare reacted swiftly to the new restrictions placed on the general public by the Covid-19 crisis, reorganising courses and moving them online. We also added extra courses to assist struggling businesses to upskill. Since 31st March, LEO Clare has run 15 online events up to the end of April with more planned for the month of May. Demand has exceeded expectations with many courses being sold out in a short period of time. We will continue this programme of free online webinars and training for the foreseeable future.

### Local Enterprise Week

Prior to the implementation of restricted movements, Local Enterprise Week took place from March 2nd–6th and included 17 events across the county. Events included 'Start Your Own Business Programme', Website Grant Information Evening (Ennistymon), Business Advice Clinic (Killaloe) and the launch of our 2020 LEAN Programme. We also collaborated with

Ennis Chamber, Shannon Chamber, Clare Local Development Company and Intreo to provide a wider range of events with topics of interest to many different groups and individuals.

The week also included the finals of our Student Enterprise Awards which took place in Treacys West County Hotel.

Local Enterprise Week 2020 concluded with a gala event of the County Final for the National Enterprise Awards on Friday evening. Áine Gleeson of Wowwee was the overall winner of this event and will represent Clare at the National Finals in Dublin.



Pictured (l-r) are: Emre Uzun, Sean Torpey, Áine Gleeson, Padraic McElwee, Anke and Eugene McKernan.



Pictured (l-r) are: Liam Conneally, Mayor of Clare Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy, Áine Gleeson and Minister of State Pat Breen.

### Submit.com

LEO Clare is preparing to launch its new online grant acceptance portal, powered by Submit.com. This new online application system will eventually replace the current paper-based application process. It will also allow for the secure sharing of information and the system can be modified to allow us to issue surveys and questionnaires to clients. With the acceleration of businesses needing to utilise digital platforms, the introduction of this new online facility will make it more convenient for businesses to apply for financial supports.

## Property Management

### Quin Road Campus

The substantial completion of Phase 1 of this project would be a time for celebration for Clare Civil Defence and the wider Council but, due to the current restrictions, the final works and fit-out of the completed area has been delayed. The work done to date by Jada Construction/Kelly RAC is of high quality under the supervision of Michael Corey, Design Office Team Lead on this project. Every effort will be made to progress the fit-out so that the Civil Defence offices, meeting rooms, etc. can be occupied over the coming months. Construction work on the remainder of the project will recommence when the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted with a view to having all of the Civil Defence operations on site as soon as possible.

### Refurbishment of Beach Huts at Kilkee

A contract was entered into for the refurbishment of the three beach huts at Kilkee, one of which is used as the lifeguard station. The work includes the refurbishment of the hut beside the Lifeguard Station for the provision of toilet facilities and the improvement of the hut at the West End, which is licensed to a water sport activity provider. Regrettably, the work was suspended due to the Covid-19 restrictions but will recommence when these are lifted.

### Casual trading

Due to the restrictions imposed to control the spread of Covid-19, all casual traders who were issued annual licences or licences for events such as the Kilrush Horse Fair were asked to suspend trading. Contacts were made with all individual traders.

### Property transactions

The table below shows the number of property transactions completed by the Property Management Unit in March and April this year, together with the totals for 2020 to date.

Transaction	March 2020	April 2020	Year to date 2020
Lease of property/building	0	0	4
Licence to use property/building	3	0	1
Grazing Agreement for Lands	6	1	18
Deed of Transfer signed	2	0	2
Deed of Rectification signed	0	1	1



## Shannon Municipal District

In March 2020 the operating structure of Clare County Council was amended with regard to Municipal District structures. The structure has been adjusted with each MD Office now reporting directly into one of the four Directors of Service. The Shannon MD office and all staff now report to the Director of Economic Development, Liam Conneally.

To further strengthen the structure, a Senior Executive Officer has been assigned to the Municipal District structure with the objective of identifying and delivering new strategic opportunities within each Municipal District and beyond. In this regard Jason Murphy has been assigned to the Shannon Municipal District and has been delegated the role of Meetings Administrator.

The impact of the pandemic has been severe across the country and the operations of the Municipal District Office have been impacted. Further to guidance through the Crisis Management Team of Clare County Council, the Shannon MD Offices closed to the public on 9th March but service continues to be delivered within the parameters of that guidance.

The team in the MD have taken steps to close the public

playground in Shannon and have placed Covid-19 notices across the district relating to social distancing and the risk to public health. We appreciate the support of our Elected Members and the public in this work. We have also engaged with our partner organisations such as the Shannon Leisure facility, Shannon Group, Coillte and the various community groups across the Municipal District to assist in meeting the challenge.

The flood defence works at Gort Na nUll, Sixmilebridge and civil works for the installation of public lighting at Cratloe are substantially completed. The contract for 'Regional and local roads overlay project 2020' is due to go out to tender shortly – this tender for the county is being managed through the Shannon MD office this year. On 10th March the Municipal District adopted the 2020 Schedule of Municipal District Works. The outdoor team continues to provide essential public realm maintenance works in line with national guidance, including the repair of potholes and road damage, collection and maintenance of public bins and the clean-up of illegal dumping.

We continue to attend to all queries, including those from our Elected Members, through the phone line and to our email address ([shannonmunicipaldistrict@clarecoco.ie](mailto:shannonmunicipaldistrict@clarecoco.ie)).

## Transportation

### Roadworks Programme and Operations

The Roadworks Programme for 2020 was adopted as part of the SMDW for 2020 by each of the Municipal Districts in March and went before the full Council for information in April. Roadworks are not deemed an essential service in the advice which has issued from the Government regarding Covid-19 restrictions. Essential work only is being delivered, however Clare County Council are continuing to prepare for the delivery of the Roadworks Programme by procuring stone, preparing tenders etc.

An allocation of €480,811 was approved by the Department of Rural and Community Development for the Local Improvement Scheme for 2020 and this will facilitate the completion of some of the projects previously prioritised and submitted to the Department in 2019.

### Strategic Transportation

#### Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy

The Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) is being developed at present by the National Transport Authority (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 and County Council.

As part of the Steering Group Clare County Council has fed into the draft LSMATS document, which is currently being finalised and will go before the NTA board shortly. The Physical Development SPC met on 19th February to specifically discuss the draft LSMATS in advance it going on public display. It has been further agreed with the NTA that a workshop with the SPC will be held (post-Covid-19 restrictions) when the draft strategy is prepared and that all Clare County Council Elected Members be invited to attend same. Following on from this it is anticipated that the public consultation phase will commence.

### Public lighting

At the April meeting of Clare County Council the Members approved a Section 85 (of the Local Government Act 2001) Agreement between Clare County Council and Cork County Council for the Public Energy Efficiency project. This will entail Cork County Council managing the relevant statutory procedures, procuring the necessary design, and managing the carrying out of the construction works for the project within County Clare.

Also at the at the April meeting of Clare County Council the Members approved the Raising of a Loan Facility to fund the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project in County Clare.

Regarding the contract itself, the RMO is close to having the contract documents for Region 1 completed and it is presently proposed to publish the tender by the end of May with a contractor to be appointed and on site before the end of the year.

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](http://www.airtricitysolutions.com);

[airtricitysolutions.com](http://www.airtricitysolutions.com);

- Phone: Airtricity Utility Solutions dedicated call centre – 1850 372 772;
- Local Authority Identification – via Local Authority’s website or contact number.

### Road Design Office

#### Current Projects – Monthly Update

It should be noted that the monthly project update is relevant only to the current period and the milestone progressions during that period.

In response to Covid-19 the Road Design office, in conjunction with the Management Team, has acknowledged that fundamental changes to working practices are necessary to combat Covid-19. New operating procedures have been put in place which enable staff to work from home while at the same time facilitating transition to a changing working office environment.

In addition, new risk assessments have been prepared for Site Visits which are required for surveying and all work-related journeys out of County buildings. These risk assessments have been prepared while taking on board the latest advice from hse.ie or gov.ie/health-covid-19 along with guidance issued on an ongoing basis by the Clare County Council Crisis Management Team.

Project	Monthly Update - April 2020
N85 Clareabbey Roundabout	Design and road safety audit discussions ongoing, during March and April, with the TII.
Bunratty Castle Junction	Pedestrian options have being reviewed in conjunction with the District Engineer in April
EuroVelo 1	EuroVelo Evaluation Report (as per ECF requirements) is now completed for the revised 321km route through County Clare. The report has been submitted to Sport Ireland and EuroVelo (April 2020). An Action Plan is to be produced as per European Cyclist Federation/EuroVelo Requirements. Priority road resurfacing works to be identified along the route. Liaising with Limerick and Galway Local Authorities is required. Funding source to be established now in order to procure signage/services for the route.
Knockanean NS	Road Improvement scheme – design drawing and land maps prepared and issued to Ennis MD. Cost estimate prepared. Knockanean NS draft Mobility Management Plan 2020 is being reviewed.



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TII HD 17 Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority list is prepared.</li> <li>• Conceptual design commenced in April.</li> </ul>
N85 Shanaway Rd Junction, Ennis	Manual traffic turning count is completed. Topographical survey completed. Drawing completed and issued to TII Road Safety Engineer. Awaiting TII input in relation to access to the filling station/One Mile Inn property. Feasibility Report completed but cost estimate to be finalised. Landowner meetings have taken place. Awaiting feedback from landowners before feasibility report is issued to TII. A draft Roundabout design has been prepared and alternative options are been considered.

Round 4 Clare Noise Action Plan	Traffic surveys for Round 4 Local roads have been completed. A number of Regional roads, not completed, will be carried out at a later date subject to Covid 19 restrictions being in place.
Roche API Site – Traffic and Transport aspects	Liaison/meetings with Roche and their Consultants - ongoing
Liaison with NTA regarding bus stops	Wheelchair accessible bus stop on Bothar Linne, Shannon Town: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The design is completed and has received NTA approval.</li> <li>• Costing and Draft Application have been forwarded to NTA.</li> </ul>
Liaison with NTA regarding bus shelters	List of proposed locations has been forwarded to NTA. NTA to assess and revert.
N19 extension	Liaison with Consultants - ongoing
N68 investigation of provision of pull in areas	Initial approach made to TII - ongoing
R463 Cycle lane scheme	Request for a cycle lane scheme from Ard-nacrusha towards Limerick City.

### Low Cost Safety Schemes – Monthly Progress

Project	Monthly Update - April 2020
R463 junction at Westbury	Proposal to upgrade the existing signalised junction to MOVA system and add additional exit lane from the Westbury estate. The draft design is completed and is awaiting approval from the TII. AA screening is completed. Programmed for Part 8 going before the Elected Members at the June meeting.
Bridge CL R483 -003.00 and approaches in Cree village	Topographical survey completed and initial contact with land owners initiated. Hedge clearance identified in order to improve sight distance. Final design to be completed once hedge clearance is completed.
L2034/L2032 Moanmore Crossroads on the Kilrush to Doonbeg road	Survey completed and design commenced in April.

### 2020 Bridge Rehabilitation – Monthly Progress – April 2020

- AA Screening tender issued for 2020 grant funded bridges: The consultant is appointed. Bridge inspections will progress when Covid 19 restrictions permit.
- New Bridge (Scarriff): To be completed when water levels allow and when Covid-19 restrictions permit.
- Sixmilebridge Bridge: Consultant appointed design of repair works commenced
- Bunratty Bridge (Low Road): Consultant appointed. The design of the repair works has commenced. A survey is required in order to progress.
- Carrownisha Bridge: Contractor appointed. Works commenced and were suspended due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- Gillogue Bridges: Letter of Intent to appoint the contractor is on hold from being issued (awaiting further clarity on Covid-19 restrictions).
- Stonepark Bridge: Design of repair works is continuing.
- Kilmacduane East Bridge: Tenders returned.
- Breaghva Bridge: Contractor to be appointed (Letter of Intent on hold).

### Other Projects – Monthly Update

Project	Monthly Update - April 2020
Larkins Cross/Gillogue Bridge improvement works	Traffic signals at Larkins Cross and Gillogue Bridges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design is progressing and is at an advanced stage.</li> <li>• AA screening is completed.</li> <li>• Programmed for Part 8 going before the Elected Members at the June meeting;</li> </ul>
Clare Noise Action Plan 2018	Clare County Council Noise Action Plan Annual Report for 2019 has been submitted to the EPA.

## General Design Office

### Quin Road Campus

Phase 1 of the project is now at 'Practical Completion' stage with the 'Certificate of Compliance on Completion' received from the Building Control Authority so it can now be occupied. Phase 2 has been put on hold due to the Government restrictions Covid-19.

## Health and Safety

The main focus of the Health and Safety team over the past month has been to provide support and guidance to the Crisis Management Team and staff of Clare County Council in order to deliver essential services while protecting the safety, health and welfare of staff during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A range of essential services have been risk assessed in order to implement control measures to ensure compliance with HSE guidelines on Covid-19 while protecting the safety, health and welfare of staff and members of the public during the delivery of these services.

The Health and Safety team is also working with the Procurement Section in order to ensure an adequate supply of Covid-19 personal protective equipment (PPE) is available to Local Authority staff where required.

## Fire and Building Control Section

### Recent Training Courses

The following brigade training courses were held during March and April:

- Community First Responder (CFR) for all personnel in Killaloe Fire Brigade;
- Emergency First Responder (EFR) for all personnel in Killaloe & Shannon Fire Brigades; and
- Compartment Fire Behaviour course in Sligo.

### Ennis Fire Station Redevelopment Works

Contracts were signed on 25th March, 2020, for the construction of a new maintenance facility and spare appliance storage building at Ennis Fire Station. Gildoc Limited was appointed as the main contractor and the expected contract duration is 10 months. Steril Koni, MAHA, PF Fallon and Top Part have been appointed to supply the garage equipment. Work is expected to commence in the very near future.

### Covid-19 – Operational Control Measures for the Fire Service

Significant time and resources have gone into procuring and providing all seven stations with PPE, equipment and training in order to minimise their exposure to Covid-19 and preparing crews for responding to incidents where the Covid-19 virus may be present. Specific risk assessments have been carried out in conjunction with the latest advice from the HSE and Local Authority Crisis Management Team.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, all visits to Fire Stations have been postponed including attendance at community events, charity events, etc. All non-essential training and drill nights have also been postponed until further notice.

All personnel have been provided with the latest advisory notices and posters from the HSE advising on Covid-19 public health advice on social distancing, hand hygiene, etc.

Fire & Building Control Section Main Activities	Feb 2020	March 2020	April 2020 (Up to 21.04.20)	Year to date
Number of Emergency Calls Attended	117	82	40	326
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received	5	10	2	25
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted	3	11	2	30
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	0	0	0
Number of Disability Access Certificates Received	3	10	2	20
Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted	2	8	2	20
Number of Commencement Notices Received	38	34	8	106
Number of Dangerous Structures/ Places Complaints	3	4	0	12

(Note: In the March Monthly report, the February figures related to 1st-26th February due to timing of report.)

## Clare Civil Defence



### Operational duties

Civil Defence provided the following operational duties:

- Civil Defence provided transport facilities and medical cover for residents and Clare County Council staff in Springfield, Clonlara during severe flooding in March. Members transported residents to and from their homes to work, college, etc. They also transported food, fresh water, fuel and fodder for livestock into and out of the flooded areas. Transport was also provided to Clare County Council staff



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into and out of the area to inspect and operate pumps and deliver sand bags.

- Members of the Search and Rescue Team, Drone Team and Swiftwater Rescue Team assisted An Garda Síochána with a search for two members of the public who were lost in Dromore Woods in an area surrounded by flood waters. Both missing persons were successfully rescued and medically assessed.
- Members of the Swiftwater Rescue Team and the Drone Team provided assistance to An Garda Síochána with the retrieval of evidence from the River Fergus.
- Members participated in a joint initiative between Clare County Council and An Garda Síochána at Lahinch and Kilkee beaches issuing leaflets to members of the public in line with Government/HSE recommendations during the Covid-19 crisis.
- Each Monday and Wednesday, members deliver meals to elderly and vulnerable persons in the Shannon area. They also deliver medicine and groceries as part of an initiative supported by both the HSE and An Garda Síochána.

- Members assisted the Irish Blood Transfusion Board with their blood donation clinics in Ennis.
- Members are currently providing transport for patients to clinic and hospital appointments.
- As part of Clare County Council's Community Response Forum, members delivered boxes of information leaflets to An Post Distribution Centres in Kilrush and Shannon for delivery to Clare homes.

Civil Defence also provided medical cover for the following events:

- Clare vs Dublin National Hurling League Match in Cusack Park.

### Members Training and Professional Development

- Various members successfully completed a Swiftwater Instructors Re-certification Course in Galway.
- Members attended a HSE Training Day in Limerick and were trained as swab testers for HSE swab testing clinics.

## Capital Delivery/Project Management Office update

### Project Management Office update

Despite the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, significant progress was made through the months of March and April on a number of our main capital projects. These include the following:

- Access to and from UL – The legal agreement which will enable us to carry out the enhancement works to the toe path along the Errinagh Canal was drafted and forwarded to the landowner for signing.
- Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme – On 27th March, 2020, the Government announced public health measures to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic and as a result of these measures the site was closed on Monday, 30th March. The contractor made safe and secured the works areas at St Flannan's, the Fergus embankment and the site compound on the Quin Road. The site is visited daily to monitor the embankments, check security and inspect the site. Emergency contact numbers have been provided to Clare County Council to deal with any issues that may arise during the closure. The St Flannan's section was 75% completed and two weeks from completion of pipe work on the public roadway. The public road remains closed at St Flannan's View. The public health measures have since been extended to 5th May, after which we will review the programme impacts and the necessary measures to get us back on track.
- Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake's Corner) – Weekly virtual meetings have taken place over the past month to finalise the compulsory purchase order (CPO) suite of documentation required. This includes the Schedule, Deposit Maps, Landowner and Public Notices, Certificates, etc. and has now been completed by Clare County Council in conjunction

with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), Mid West Regional Road Design Office and ROD Consulting Engineers. Given the statutory requirement for public engagement in the process, we are holding off on the publishing of same pending the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions.

- Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass – The Project Steering Group led by Clare County Council and comprising representatives from Tipperary County Council, RPS Consulting Engineers and the Department of Transport Inspector met via video conference in late April. A number of advance works contracts have now been identified which will address and de-risk some seasonal constraint elements identified within the main contract works. These will be carried out as part of separate advance works contracts in the coming year. A number of technical and procurement issues are being progressed with a view to having the detailed design completed in late April, after which we will be in a position to go to tender in late Summer 2020. Following receipt and evaluation of tenders, we would expect to award the contract early in 2021 subject to Department approval. The main construction period is expected to take three years thereafter. Concurrently, work is continuing on finalising the various landowner agreements where possible by letter and phone given the current restrictions on face-to-face meetings.
- Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme: A briefing was given by the Senior Engineer to the West Clare MD Members at their meeting in early March. Since then, a number of project team meetings have taken place with work continuing in the preparation of the draft Constraints Study; the draft Hydrology Method Statement; the draft CCTV Survey tender documents and the draft Topographical Survey tender documents for review. A hydrology workshop took place in late April and an enhanced

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social and print media campaign of public engagement is being prepared due to us not being in a position to host a Public Consultation Day currently due to Covid-19 restrictions.

- **Liscannor Bay:** Clare County Council has submitted a revised Coastal Flooding and Erosion Risk Management Study to the Office of Public Works. The study comprehensively addresses issues highlighted by the Office of Public Works (OPW) in its response to the draft study. The issues relate mainly to benefit-to-cost ratios, rates of erosion, flood damages and technical issues around the preferred option. Clare County Council consulted with stakeholders and property owners prior to the submission.

- **Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) –** Following our meeting with Department officials in February this year we have been assessing options as to how the housing element of the project could be delivered. The supporting information required as part of the Part VIII Planning Application has been hampered due to the Covid-19 crisis, however following consultation with the Planning Authority this has now been completed and we would expect to submit the Part VIII planning application in the coming weeks following internal review.

- **Asbestos Remediation Programme –** Clare County Council has completed its review of the draft Phase 2 report prepared by our specialist consultants RPS. We requested some additional clarification and detail be included and now expect that the final report to be issued by the end of April.

- **N19 Shannon Airport Access Road –** The Project Team of Clare County Council, Midwest Regional Road Design Office, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Shannon Airport Authority, Fehily Timoney and Associates and Clandillon Civil Consulting held a number of virtual Meetings in March and late April. Work continues in compiling the Options information required and works has now progressed to Phase 2 – Options Selection to determine the Preferred Option. In parallel, discussion continued with representatives of the Shannon Group (Airport & Commercial Properties) regarding the lands necessary and the identification of services impacted. Procurement of the Traffic Survey specialist has been put on hold due to the Covid-19 restrictions. 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.

- **Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme –** The standstill period expired in mid-March and we submitted the Tender Assessment Report to the OPW for approval to appoint RPS

Consulting Engineers as Technical advisors for the scheme. At our Project Team Meeting in late April, the OPW sought some additional clarification which we have now returned. Following discussion with the OPW and the Airport Authorities, we have agreed apportionment of the fees involved and therefore expect to be in a position to formally appoint RPS in the coming week or so.

- **Spanish Point Minor Works Scheme:** In recent weeks, the OPW assessed the application for a minor coastal protection scheme at Spanish Point submitted by Clare County Council. They have sought clarification regarding the methodology used to calculate the benefits to costs ratio and have asked us to reassess this aspect of the submission. Our consultants are currently examining this matter with a view to responding at the earliest juncture.

- **Springfield, Clonlara:** The amended final report has been submitted by Consultants Byrne Looby and Partners to Clare County Council and the Office of Public Works. It is currently being assessed. Once the flood waters receded in late March/early April, it enabled us to complete the onsite inspection and walkover in order to finalise the Environmental Assessment and report. Subject to approval from the OPW, the detailed design can be completed and we would expect to submit the Part VIII planning application in mid-May.

- **West Clare Railway Greenway –** In March, we ran a tender competition for the appointment of Consultants to carry out Phases 0 and 1 (Scope and Pre-Appraisal/Concept & Feasibility) of the entire West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 1 Kilrush to Kilkee and Section 2 Ennis to Moyasta). The Project Phases are in accordance with the Project Management Guidelines produced by the TII and are in accordance with our requirements under the Public Spending Code and associated documents. Adhering to these phases will ensure that we comply with the requirements of prospective funding authorities (NTA/DTTAS) and statutory bodies such as An Bord Pleanála. AECOM were the successful tenderers for both sections and were appointed in late March/early April. Their commission will take 12 weeks to complete and as a significant portion of the works is desktop, it can proceed despite the Covid-19 restrictions. Following completion of Phases 0 and 1, it is hoped to initiate the next phases of Section 1 (Kilrush to Kilkee) which involve the statutory consents phase of development, namely Planning Permission, Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design. However, this will depend on receiving a favourable response to our recent funding applications (RRDF and Carbon Tax Fund). Landowner meetings have been temporarily suspended until the Covid-19 situation improves.

## Environment

### Covid-19

In mid-March the Covid-19 coronavirus spread to County Clare and since then has affected the services provided by the Environment Section.

Early in the outbreak the Environment Section developed a

Business Continuity Plan that would enable us to continue to provide the community with essential services such as Waste Management, Pollution Incident Management, Monitoring and Sampling, where required, of Water and Wastewater systems. A list of essential services was identified and appropriate resources allocated to ensure continuity.



## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

### Clare Green Festival Initiative

The EPA Local Authority Prevention Network have approved funding of €15,000 for the development and provision of a Green Festival kit for the festivals participating in the Clare Green Festival initiative. Our Environmental Awareness Officer is currently working with the Green Festival Network coordinator on the development of this kit. The Green Festival kit will include reusable cups, plates and cutlery as well as reusable signage that can be shared by festivals and events. This ties in to the philosophy of eliminating the use of Single Use Plastics.

### An Taisce Green Schools Programme

Due to current situation with Covid-19 An Taisce postponed all Green School renewal and first flag visit assessments that were scheduled to take place from 6th March 2020. An Taisce advised that schools should submit their application online by the renewal deadline of 27th March if they had not been visited. Schools are being reassured that all their good work will be rewarded.

### National Tree Week

National Tree Week was due to place this year from the 21st to 27th March 2020. The Tree Council of Ireland in partnership with Coillte made the decision to postpone National Tree Week until further notice. The provision of free native trees to voluntary community will be reviewed in September 2020 by the Gardening Section.

### An Taisce National Spring Clean

Due to Covid-19 National Spring Clean activities, due to take place during April, are currently postponed until 5th May 2020. An Taisce are continuing to take registrations for clean ups. Outside of the National Spring Clean initiative the Waste Enforcement Team and the Waste Management Team have assisted community groups that undertook voluntary clean-ups during this period.

### Covid-19 Waste Management Campaign

Clare County Council are linking in with the national [www.mywaste.ie](http://www.mywaste.ie) campaign in promoting good waste management during Covid-19. This campaign included "Using Civic Amenity Sites" during Covid-19; "Putting out your Bins" during Covid-19

and "How to Manage Your Waste if you are Tested Covid-19 positive". Additional supporting social media promotions advising public on using our Civic Amenity Sites and Bring Banks during Covid-19 were also undertaken in conjunction Clare County Councils Communications Department.

### Covid-19 Illegal dumping and littering

Ongoing promotion that Clare County Council's Waste Enforcement Team is working on the ground through regular posts on social media. Campaigns highlighted illegal dumping incidences and raised awareness of littering of single use plastic gloves at retail outlets.

### The Clare Echo Green Page initiative

The beginning of March saw the publication of a Repair My Stuff.ie advert and an article by Cian O Broin on the circular economy. Due to Covid-19 the printing of *The Clare Echo* ceased during March 2020. A second advert and article on managing Green Waste was advertised online on *The Clare Echo*. It was agreed that the Green Page would be deferred and the initiative reviewed at a later date.

### Community Waste Prevention Grant

Through our Greener Clare programme funding was awarded to 35 community waste prevention projects from an available fund of €18,000. This year saw a 100% increase in the number of applications received from across the county under this Waste Prevention Grant Scheme.

Successful applicants included festival organisers, Tidy Towns groups, environmental groups as well as primary schools and secondary schools.

## RECOMMENDED MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INSPECTIONS (RMCEI)

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects it has had on routine inspections and operations it has been agreed that allowances will be provided for completion of 2020 RMCEI plan. The EPA has confirmed that "all good plans are made to change" and it expects to see many changes and innovations in how the RMCEI plans evolve over the year.

## LABORATORY AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

### General

To ensure continuity of business and continued operation of laboratory services during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Laboratory and Technical Support team has been split into two groups with no direct physical contact. The two sub-teams coordinate and schedule work so as to maintain social distancing as per Government advice. The Laboratory and Technical staff have developed protocols for sampling so as to protect staff and limit the possibility of being an agent for spreading the Covid-19 virus. This process will continue as long as is required.

### River Monitoring Programme 2020

Clare County Council is required to collect 295 river water samples in 2020. The calendar for sampling was agreed with the EPA in December last with the sampling spread evenly over the 12 months. Sampling in April was suspended due to Government advice. Any shortfall may have to be made up later



in the year with the agreement of the EPA.

## **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. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in agreement with Irish Water and the EPA, monitoring has been limited to essential operational and investigative analysis. Protocols have been developed so as to ensure social distancing and health and welfare of staff and public at all times.

## **Group Water Schemes (GWS) and Small Private Supplies**

Clare County Council is the competent authority for regulating private water supplies and undertakes in excess of 270 samples from these supplies each year. The sampling and analysis will be ongoing throughout 2020. Previous aluminium exceedances in the Kilmaley Inagh GWS had been detected and Clare County Council, in consultation with the HSE, placed a Drinking Water Restriction Notice advising not to use the water. As a result of improved water quality being produced in March, this notice was removed on the advice of the HSE on 1st April. The Group Scheme will continue to be monitored so as to ensure customers receive safe drinking water.

## **Wastewater treatment plants**

Laboratory staff, in conjunction with area-based technicians, monitor all Licensed and Certified discharges for compliance with their discharge limits. In Clare, monitoring varies from monthly to twice-yearly, based on population served. In agreement with IW and the EPA, all non-essential monitoring has been suspended until at least the 5th May. The shortfall will be required to be made up later in the year when Government advice permits.

## **Bathing waters**

The bathing water sampling calendar was submitted to the EPA in March, with sampling programmed to commence in mid-May and running through to September. In 2020, 14 designated bathing areas will be monitored for compliance with the Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008.

## **WATER AND SCIENTIFIC SERVICES**

### **Water pollution complaints**

A total of 25 complaints have been received to date in 2020. Enforcement notices/letters were issued where required under the Water Pollution Acts and further inspections will be carried out to ensure that actions recommended in the notices are carried out.

### **National Inspection Programme of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (DWWTS-Septic Tanks)**

Thirty-nine inspections are required in 2020. Of those, five inspections have been carried out in Ballycullinan catchment for March and April and the other inspections are now suspended until the Government restrictions are lifted.

### **Planning referrals from Planning Department**

Compliance with the EPA Code of Practice for Single Houses 2009 is achieved through inter-department referrals of planning reports. To date in 2020, 38 reports have been prepared and

submitted by environmental staff to the planning section. Assessment and recommendations were made in order to minimise potential water pollution. Four forestry applications have been processed.

### **Lake Sampling Programme 2020**

TMS Environmental had commenced the lake monitoring programme but have to suspend it due to the restrictions. The restart of the programme will be reviewed as per guidance from Government.

### **Shannon Estuary Anti-Pollution (SEA-PT) training**

Clare County Council was due to host the annual training exercise with the first inter-agency meeting scheduled for April. This has now been deferred until later in the year.

### **Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan**

The South West Region meeting was held on April 6th using the Zoom video call system. The catchments unit of the EPA gave a presentation of the 3rd Cycle Characterisation process. They will be sending findings of water quality status of each county from the Water Quality Report 2015 to 2018 for assessment and comments to all Local Authorities in May 2020 in order for the characterisation process to proceed.

### **BallyduffBeg Waste Landfill Licence Monitoring Requirements**

Comprehensive reports have been collated of monitoring results of suspended solids, noise and PAH monitoring over the last 10 years at the landfill site. The reports have been sent to the licensing section of the EPA. Based on the data collated a request has been made to reduce number of monitoring locations and frequency of monitoring for each parameter at the site. If the EPA gives approval for the reduced monitoring request it will significantly reduce monitoring costs at the site. A weekly update on green waste processing at the CWMF is submitted to Cré (Composting Association of Ireland). This feeds back to the Government on how Covid-19 is affecting processing.

## **GARDENING**

Staff from the Gardening Team presented to a number of community groups at a Council-hosted workshop in early March at the Vandeleur Gardens, Kilrush. The event was organised by Rural Development, to provide advice and assistance to community and development groups in West Clare on techniques to enhance public spaces through gardening and selecting plant species to promote local biodiversity and encourage pollinating insects.

Springtime is traditionally a busy time for the Gardening Section, with works well underway to prepare and plant early flowering plants such as tulips, daffodils and primroses. However, with the arrival of Covid-19 and the widespread disruption that ensued, the baskets were not installed at their usual locations around the town, and remain in the gardening depot.

With this unforeseen obstacle, the Garden Section has reviewed its seasonal work plan and focused all current efforts on preparing for the summer planting regime. The planting and care for these young plants began in mid-March, and continues throughout April. The Gardening Team will continue this work

for the coming weeks, with the aim to begin planting of summer flowers in late May and early June.

To assist the Council in continuing to provide the essential services, we have re-assigned since early April most of the gardening team to provide support to our five Civic Amenity Sites. This will continue until normal service resumes.

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

### Bring banks

Bring banks were operating at normal levels in early March. However, since various restrictions were imposed due to Covid-19, Bring bank sites around the county have seen a large increase in the amount of Glass bottles being recycled in particular. Glass collection rates are now equal to or above Christmas period levels which would normally be the busiest time of year. An extra weekly collection has been necessary for the Tesco bring bank site in Ennis. Unfortunately, the increase in glass recycling has also coincided with an increase in illegal dumping at these sites also.



### Civic Amenity Sites

All Civic Amenity Sites have remained open as normal and have continued to provide an important service to members of the public during the Covid-19 pandemic. Sites continue to be used on a regular basis by the public with certain sites seeing continued high levels of usage. The public are being encouraged to only bring essential waste at this time and to handle their own waste when they come on site. Social distancing is being implemented and cash register screens have been erected at a number of centres.

### Doora Landfill

Ennis Men's Shed group have been looking for a new premises to operate from. Roche Ireland who have recently closed their doors have linked up with the Men's Shed group and have donated a prefabricated office and storage container to the group. A hard standing area within Doora landfill was identified as a possible location for the prefabricated unit and container. Following cross-functional co-operation between a number of departments within the Council, a proposal was submitted to the EPA for approval. The EPA granted approval on 3rd April 2020. Any site works required will take place when restrictions on such activity are lifted. Roche Ireland are providing funding for this initiative.



## WASTE ENFORCEMENT

### Dog fouling

In March/April there has been a marked increase in people walking their dogs in the County. The Waste Enforcement Team are patrolling particular areas where dog-fouling is known to be a problem and have increased their use of the dog-fouling stencils.

A comprehensive print and social media campaign continued on promoting good owner responsibility during March. A footpath stencil was designed and developed and used at locations where dog fouling is a significant problem. This initiative was received very positively by the public.

### Environmental Monitoring (Illegal Dumping/Litter)

The Waste Enforcement Team continues to respond to waste and litter related complaints with a total of 232 complaints received in March and 158 complaints received up to 20th April, of these complaints 217 have been closed.

The scheduled inspection and monitoring of authorised waste facilities within the county have not taken place due to Covid-19 restrictions. Once the restrictions are relaxed, it is planned to resume these inspections.

The Waste Enforcement Team continues to investigate ongoing illegal dumping in various locations throughout the county and to put measures in place to combat this. The Environment Team would like to acknowledge the work of the Municipal Districts through their assistance in clean-ups and the removal of larger waste items. The nature of these larger dumping incidents requires machinery and additional resources.

The application form for the Anti-Dumping Initiative Funding 2020 has been completed. This application includes a number of projects which are targeted to eliminate illegal dumping at particular black spots.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, controlled burning has been

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

prohibited at this time. The Enforcement Team attended a number of burning incidents throughout the County and follow-up monitoring is being carried out at present.

A total of 25 litter fines were issued in March, of which five have been paid. The remaining litter fines are still within the allotted timeframe for payment and we will continue to monitor this to ensure compliance.

The Environmental Wardens assisted the Municipal Districts on the Bank Holiday weekend in monitoring and adhering to HSE

social distancing guidelines at beaches and lakes throughout the County.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

A climate change workshop was held on 25th February with management team to progress the various objectives outlined in the climate change adaptation strategy.

The workshop was facilitated by the Climate Adaptation Regional Office (CARO).

## Water Services

### Annual Service Plan

The Covid-19 emergency has proved a challenging time for the delivery of the essential front-line water services sector across the county. Additional vans have been hired to ensure social distancing can be maintained when travelling to worksites. Personnel have also been issued with the required personal protective equipment (PPE) to allow them work in close proximity to each other when carrying out repairs. A suite of risk assessments has also been developed to address the challenges posed by Covid-19 and ensure the health and safety of staff.

We have also developed business continuity plans to ensure our water and wastewater treatment plants will continue to operate across the county during the current pandemic.

The Water Services Department of Clare County Council continues to deliver the water services function as per the Service Level Agreement with Irish Water. The monthly key performance indicators (KPIs) continue to be monitored by all of the water services teams to achieve required targets.

### Water conservation

- Irish Water initially suspended water conservation work in order to protect water services staff and the public in general due to Covid-19.
- However, on 7th April the Tulla Reservoir experienced headroom issues. The Water Conservation Find and Fix crews were redeployed to the Tulla District Metering Area (DMA). Four leaks were found and repaired in Tulla in advance of the Easter Bank holiday. Capacity in the Tulla Reservoir is now fully restored.
- The Water Conservation crews have been deployed again by Irish Water to ensure continuity of service across the network.

### Water and 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 1st March 2020 up to and including 16th April 2020. The figures do not, however, reflect the time invested by the teams which is required to resolve each complaint/issue.

- 25 customer complaints were dealt with to date;
- Two Emergency Work Orders during the timeframe;
- 402 Reactive Maintenance Work Orders were dealt with and closed out;
- Three Customer Asset Flooding Work Orders were received;

- 172 Service Requests (SRs) were raised for Field Requests and Follow-On Work Orders for Reactive Maintenance work;
- 46 Outage Notices were placed on the IW portal during the period.

The main issues relating to water during the past two months were as follows:

- A plant outage at the Montpelier/O'Briensbridge Water Supply Zone which was related to the increased water levels in the area following high rainfall. A number of customers were without water for periods during the interruption which lasted approximately three days and an alternative water supply was put in place by means of tankers in Bridgetown and Broadford which were serviced as required.
- A large watermain burst on the 375mm main in Ennis on Palm Sunday morning, 5th April. An alternative supply was put in place via the 450mm main. The Barefield/Crusheen area experienced a loss of supply for approximately two hours prior to provision of the re-routed supply. The supply was restored to all customers by 6pm.
- A watermain burst also on the 300mm main in Ennis in the Tobertaiscain area on Thursday morning 19th March. A crew was mobilised and the pipe repaired by 4pm.
- A number of significant outages due to watermain bursts occurred in East Clare and in the Shannon area also during the period.

### Capital programme

Although physical works have been suspended on a number of sites across the county there is still active engagement with the various capital programmes in conjunction with Irish Water and its consultants. By utilising a variety of IT solutions such as video team meetings and conference calls etc we have continued to progress the projects which are still in their design phases.

### 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. Due to the extremely unfavourable weather and Covid-19 restrictions works have been suspended in the short term.



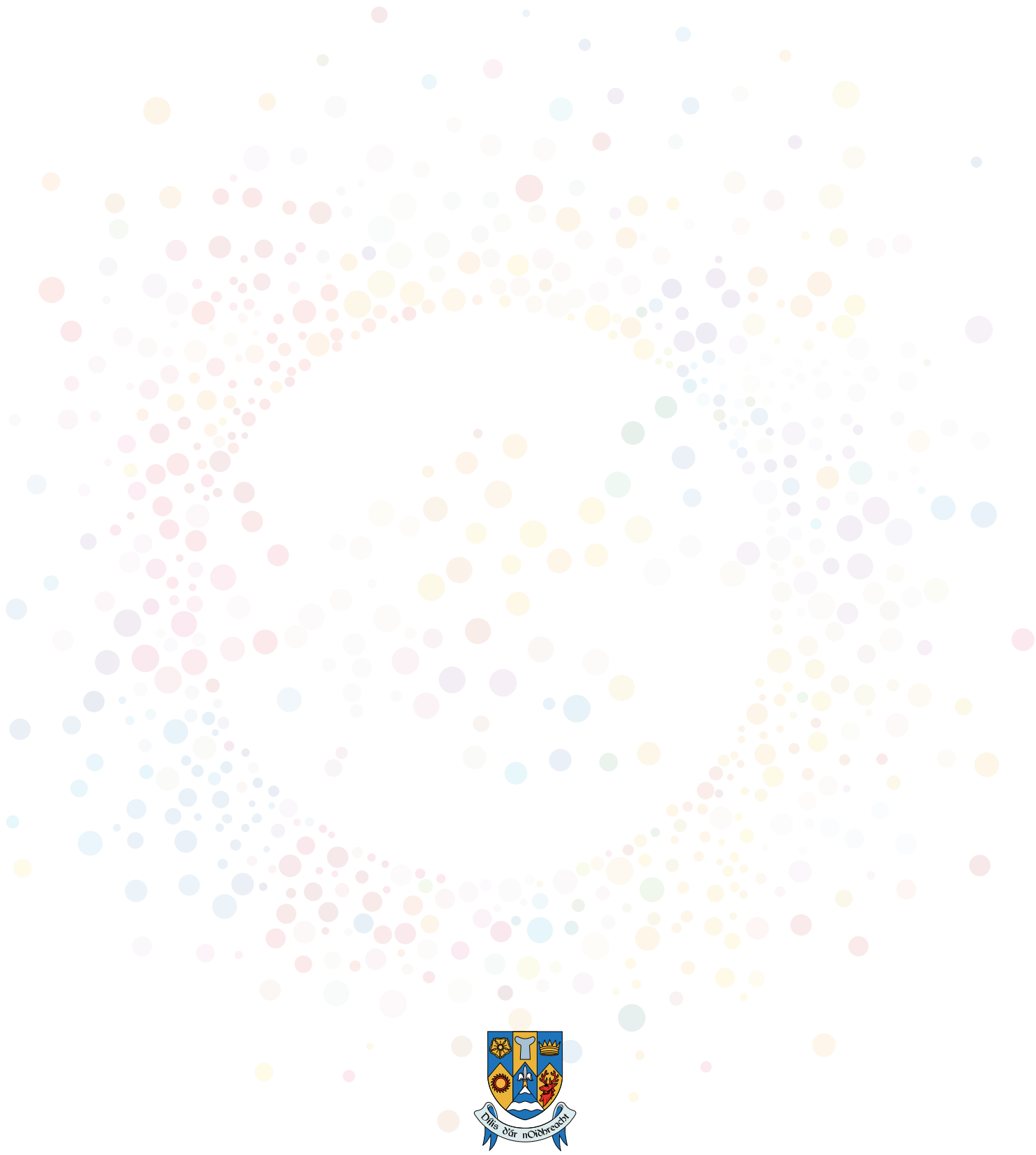
# Social distancing in Clare

Well done to all



It was quiet around County Clare as the vast majority of the public complied with public health measures introduced to minimise the spread of Covid-19. Pictured are three Traffic Wardens who were working in Kilkee over the Easter weekend making sure all was ok: (l-r) Frank Gormley, JJ Coughlan and Malty McDonagh. Additional photos from around the county provided by Gerry Murphy.





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