



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Meán Fómhair / September
2020



RURAL DEVELOPMENT p6



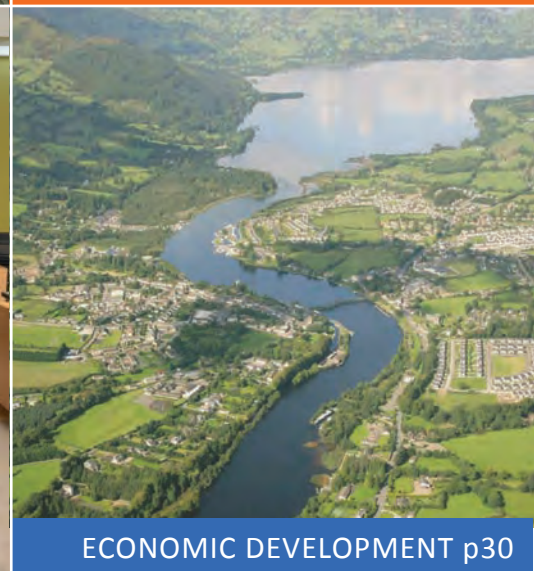
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FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

HUMAN RESOURCES

Work Area	Update
Recruitment	<p>The following recruitment competitions were progressed during July and August:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Staff Officer (desktop short-listing and interviews)• Accounting Technician Apprenticeship (interviews)• Assistant Engineer (eligibility exercise)• Co-Op Student Limerick IT (interviews). <p>The following competitions were advertised with a view to forming panels in order to fill approved vacancies as they arise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Library Facilities Attendant (open and confined)• Retained Part-time Fire-fighter Shannon and Kilkee Fire Stations (open)• Burial Ground Caretaker Burrane (Killimer) Burial Ground (confined).
Learning and Development	<p>A number of training programmes were held in July and August and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CPC Driver Training (48 participants)• Safe Pass (8 participants). <p>Online training modules were also provided to staff and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children First (8 participants)• Manual Handling (21 participants)• Working in a Covid Era ([employees and manager course] 49 participants)• School Warden Covid Inductions• Health and Safety Induction. <p>Covid-19 Induction Training has been delivered to 850 staff and is based on the Return to Work Safety Protocol and the Council's Covid-19 Response Plan.</p>
Employee Welfare	<p>Ongoing supports and assistance were made available to staff as and when required. Extension of parental leave from 22 to 26 weeks from 1/9/2020 notified to all staff.</p>
Covid-19	<p>Covid-19 related documentation from the Department and the Local Government Management Agency was circulated and the Human Resources Department continued to liaise as necessary.</p>
Unions	<p>The HR Department continued to engage and consult with unions on various matters including the Return to Work Protocol and the appointment of Lead Worker Representatives.</p>

Visit of Ambassador of India to Ireland



The Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, and Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, officially welcomed the Ambassador of India to Ireland, Sandeep Kumar, to Áras Contae An Chláir in Ennis on Friday, 4th September, 2020. Their discussions included the potential for future partnership on cultural and economic activities.

FINANCE

Restart Grant Plus

The Finance team has been facilitating the Restart Grant scheme announced by the Government. This scheme allows for €300m to be invested in helping certain businesses to meet the costs associated with reopening and re-employing workers due to the significant challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. A total of 1,030 applicants, with businesses across County Clare, were paid €3.71m in phase 1 of the scheme.

Phase 2 – the Restart Grant Plus – is now open and online applications are being processed.

Six-month waiver of commercial rates

A 100 per cent waiver, in the form of a credit in lieu of commercial rates, will be applied to the rate accounts of all businesses, for a six-month period (27th March to 27th September), with a small number of categories excepted. This is in recognition of the fact that not only have many ratepayers been forced to close business due to the public health requirements, but many others who remained open have suffered significant reductions in turnover.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Register of Electors

The draft Register of Electors for 2021/2022 is currently being compiled. Advertisements were inserted in *The Clare Champion* issue dated Friday, 21st August, 2020, advising that anyone who will have reached the age of 18 years of age on or before 15th February, 2021, can now apply to have their details registered on the Draft Register 2021/2022 which will be published on 1st November, 2020, and will follow onto the final Register effective from 5th February, 2021. Special and postal voter categories may also now apply for registration on the 2021/2022 Register of Electors. Similar advertisements are appearing on social media and on the Clare County Council website. All application forms are available online or email franchise@clarecoco.ie or Freephone 1800 24542. In-house IREG system has been upgraded to version 4.0 by the LGMA.



Procurement

The following tender competitions were published in August 2020:

Tender competitions

Short description	Response deadline
Provision of archaeological consultancy services required in advance of construction of the proposed Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 improvement	31/07/2020
Sixmilebridge Bridge and Mountievers Bridge	07/08/2020
Footpath refurbishment works 2020 Shannon Municipal District	20/08/2020
Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 improvement scheme	26/08/2020
Remedial works to Woodstock View and Woodstock Hill housing estates, Shanaway Road, Ennis, Co. Clare	31/08/2020
Lough Derg Amenity Trail – Walk Tender	11/09/2020



An online book of condolence was opened for John Hume (1937-2020).

Customer Services

Revised opening hours and procedures remain in place at customer service desks at Clare County Council office locations from Monday to Friday as follows:

- Áras Contae an Chláir, Ennis – 9:00am to 1:00pm, and by appointment from 1:00pm to 5:00pm
- Killaloe Municipal District (MD) office, Scarriff – 9:30am to 1:00pm, and by appointment from 1:00pm to 4:00pm
- West Clare MD offices, Ennistymon and Kilrush – 10:00am to 1:00pm, and by appointment from 1:00pm to 4:00pm
- Shannon MD office – 9:30am to 1:00pm, and by appointment from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.

Customer access is managed at all times to control numbers in the building and a queueing system at the entrance doors and public counters is in operation to ensure physical distancing in

accordance with public health guidelines. The public are asked to comply with all measures in place and to be mindful of the public health guidelines when visiting Council offices. Queueing and appointment systems are being managed effectively on a daily basis.

In July, all members of the public attending the local authority offices were requested to wear masks and continue to hand sanitise upon entry. To date, there has been a high level of compliance with this request. Where services can be delivered by telephone, email, post or online, Customer Services are strongly encouraging people to avail of these options to reduce the numbers attending at Council offices.

From 1st September, 2020, the revised opening hours for Motor Tax are 9:00am to 1:00pm, Monday to Friday. Queries can be directed to 065 6844661 and customers who do not wish to use the online service may drop or post completed applications to the Áras.

Online book of condolence

In keeping with HSE guidelines in relation to Covid-19 and in order to curtail visitors to the Áras during the current pandemic, Clare County Council has launched a new online book of condolence using the host, submit.com. Submit.com is a cloud-based software solution that streamlines the collection of online condolences. This online facility will allow members of the public to pay their respects through Clare County Council's website. Details of the opening of any online book of condolence will be advertised on Clare County Council's social media platforms.



COMMUNICATIONS

More than 25 media releases and notices were issued by the Communications Office during July and August, 2020, in relation to a range of Council activities. Topics included updates on access to Council services and amenities, funding announcements for key projects such as the West Clare Railway Greenway, and opportunities for public participation in Council plans such as the Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan for Killaloe-Ballina.

As the point of contact for all media queries, the Office has coordinated Council communications with *The Irish Times*, *The Clare Champion* and *The Clare Echo*, and on Clare FM and RTÉ, in recent weeks.

The Communications Officer, as a member of the Severe Weather Assessment Team (SWAT), assisted the SWAT to provide important information and advice to the public through media and social media channels before and during Storms Ellen and Francis. Communications included details of the response of Clare Fire and Rescue Service, which attended to call-outs at various locations in the county in the aftermath of the storms.

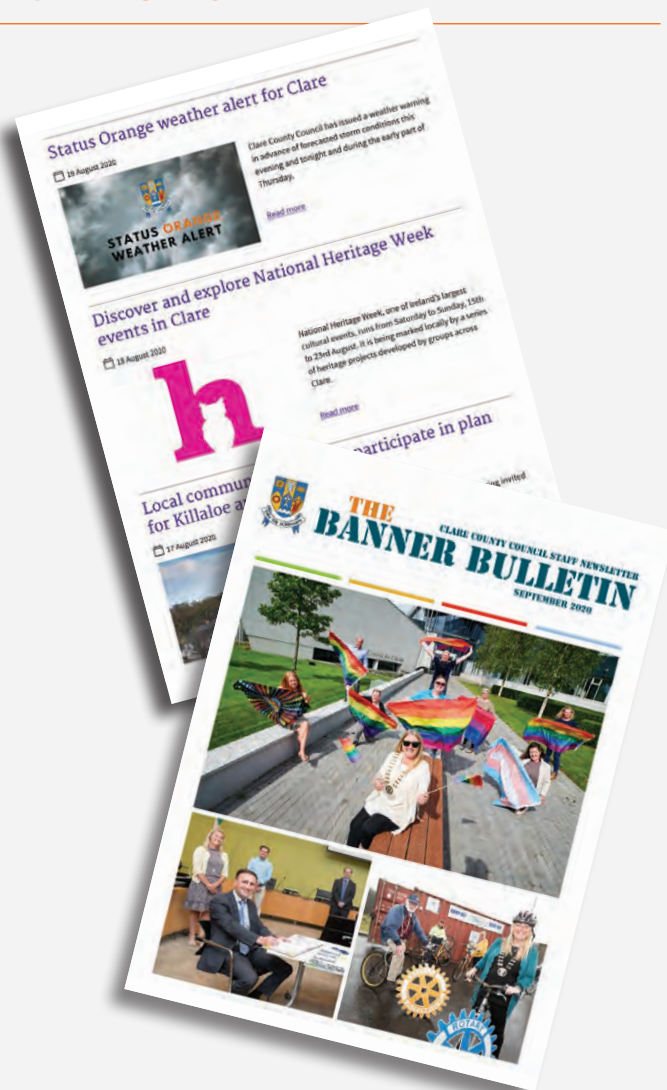
Print and Graphic Design

The print and graphic design service continues to provide services including layout and production of posters and signage, forms, certificates and booklets.

Irish Language Department

This month has seen the beginning of an historic project, telling the story of Carrigaholt Irish College via a 15-minute audio piece for National Heritage Week.

The Irish Language Development Officer has been proposing names for new developments – currently in discussion is a housing project in Newmarket-on-Fergus at a site of great relevance to local and national heritage.



Records management

The Records Management Team continues to facilitate daily requests from all departments for file storage and retrieval from the record centre.

- Implementation of the ADLIB Archives and Records Management database system is ongoing, with testing taking place. The remaining data regarding file records will be transferred in the next quarter.
- Records management is progressing with the mapping of file references and retention periods per the National Retention policy to the Service Catalogue.
- Works are progressing in the fit out and layout of the Quin Road Records Storage facility.

Service Catalogue

Our Business Review Team continues to work with the LGMA project team in the development of a Clare County Council Service Catalogue. To date, 767 public-facing services across Housing, Environment, Veterinary, Planning, Building Control, Roads and Transportation, Economic Development, Tourism, Local Enterprise, Parks, Open Spaces and Public Realm, Community and Library departments have been defined, categorised and catalogued.

The LGMA project team carried out a successful pilot project with our Business Review Team to monitor how services could be integrated from the catalogue to a newly introduced Dynamics 365 CRM system within the Housing Department in Clare. Testing regarding the functionality of integration with the CRM system proved very informative and beneficial in determining a technological solution for hosting the catalogue moving forward. Phase 2, development of an ICT solution, has commenced in conjunction with the Architecture and Standards Group.

A small number of service areas remain to be analysed and catalogued. In complying with public health guidance, engagement processes between service practitioners and the LGMA project team moving forward will use email, MS Teams and cohesion with the nominated SPOC from each Authority.

Freedom of Information & Data Protection

2020 statistics to 31/8/2020:

- 116 Freedom of Information requests
- 2 Freedom of Information Internal Review applications
- 2 Appeals to Information Commissioner
- 5 Access Requests (Data Protection) – Data Subjects
- 17 Access Requests (Data Protection) –Third Party Access

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Clare Tourism Recovery Taskforce



Pictured (l-r) are: Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council; Deirdre O'Shea, Head of Tourism (Acting), Clare County Council; Leonard Cleary, Director of Service for Rural Development and West Clare Municipal District, Clare County Council; Miriam Kennedy, Head of the Wild Atlantic Way; and Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard. Inset: Meeting of the Clare Tourism Recovery Taskforce in progress.

Clare County Council in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland has established a Clare Tourism Recovery Taskforce to guide the reactivation of Clare as a tourism destination in a tactical response to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Commenting on the establishment of the taskforce, Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, said: "I am pleased to announce the formation of a dedicated Tourism Recovery Taskforce, made up of key innovative representatives and leaders of the tourism industry and community tourism networks in Clare, who will work together to deal with the many challenges ahead in a dynamic manner."

Cllr Howard added: "I wish all of the Taskforce members and the wider stakeholders the best in the challenging times ahead so that Clare can emerge from this crisis stronger than ever."

Chief Executive of Clare County Council, Pat Dowling, highlighted that this taskforce brings a unique expanse of tourism experience from across the county, which will assist the Council in its role as a tourism enabler and will help to generate confidence in the local economy. Mr Dowling added that tourism in Clare plays a vital role in providing employment opportunity. This Taskforce will work to ensure that Clare tourism recovers strongly.

Head of the Wild Atlantic Way at Fáilte Ireland and Co-Chair of the Clare Tourism Recovery Taskforce, Miriam Kennedy,

said: "Fáilte Ireland has been working closely with the tourism and hospitality industry to navigate the Covid-19 crisis and support businesses to re-open safely and effectively. The new Clare Tourism Taskforce will engage with stakeholders across the tourism sector in Clare to ensure that we are all working as collaboratively as we can for the recovery of the sector."

Acknowledging the forerunner steering group to this new Taskforce, Deirdre O'Shea, Head of Tourism (Acting) and Co-Chair, noted the work completed by the Clare Tourism Steering Group. Chaired by outgoing Mr Eoin O'Hagan, the Clare Tourism Steering Group put in place an integrated approach to tourism promotion in the county and facilitated the ongoing development of the Clare Tourism brand. "The work of this group throughout the 15-year period was of immense value in placing the Clare Tourism brand in a strong marketplace for the future."

Ms O'Shea added: "This new Clare Tourism Recovery Taskforce will work towards positioning Clare as a destination to be recognised nationally and internationally for its commitment to responsible tourism."

The inaugural meeting of the Clare Tourism Recovery Taskforce was held on 7th July, 2020, and a second meeting was held on 6th August, 2020. In due course in 2021, it is envisaged that the Council will establish a committee/structure to support the implementation of the Tourism Strategy.

Minister Malcolm Noonan visits Killaloe and Lough Derg



Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, with responsibility for Heritage; and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, with responsibility for Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD, recently visited Killaloe and Lough Derg to view the opportunities for outdoor water-based activities and heritage sites as part of the Irish Hidden Heartlands Tourism product brand. Also pictured are Senator Roisin Garvey and Brian Leddin TD, O'Briensbridge Activity Kayaking Group, Leonard Cleary, Director of Service, Eanna Rowe and Waterways Ireland colleagues.

Grant for Covid-19 adaptation

Fáilte Ireland has announced a new €26m Covid-19 Adaptation Fund. The Fund will help offset some of the costs incurred in adapting premises and operations for safe re-opening. Expenditure on items such as protective screens, outdoor areas, PPE, online apps, technology and sanitisers are all covered.

Fáilte Ireland expects up to 12,000 tourism businesses will be eligible to receive financial support, making it their largest funding programme to date in terms of the number of businesses that will directly benefit. Minister for Tourism Catherine Martin TD secured the funding as part of the Government's July Stimulus package. Fáilte Ireland's Covid-19 Adaptation Fund has been designed to help support tourism businesses, through grants of between €500 and €15,000, to make either the structural adaptations required for fixed, visitor-facing premises, or to cover the costs of things such as personal protective equipment (PPE) or sanitiser for those businesses which provide a visitor experience but do not have significant visitor-facing premises.

To qualify for Fáilte Ireland's Covid-19 Adaptation Fund, eligible businesses must comply fully with Fáilte Ireland's Guidelines for Re-opening and have completed the Fáilte Ireland COVID-19 Safety Charter. Applications are open until October 8th. For more information on the Fund and to check if your business is eligible to apply, visit www.failteireland.ie/covid-19-adaptation-fund

Covid-19 Safety Charter

Several Clare tourism businesses have already signed up to the Covid-19 Safety Charter. To qualify for Fáilte Ireland's Covid-19 Adaptation Fund, businesses will be required to complete the Fáilte Ireland Covid-19 Safety Charter. The Covid-19 Safety Charter is designed to boost public confidence in the safety of tourism businesses. Almost 1,500 businesses have already completed the Charter!



Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020 Round 1 (Accelerated Measure)

Funding in the amount of €114,274 has been granted in respect of five applications which were submitted under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020 (Round 1 – Accelerated Measure):

1. Tulla – Social distancing community meeting space
2. Tuamgraney – Improvements to East Clare Memorial Park including footpaths, seating and boundary wall
3. Kilkee – Reconfiguration of playground layout to allow for social distancing
4. Carrigaholt – Provision of outdoor tables and seating with temporary awnings
5. Killaloe – Provision of measures to promote social distancing in main pedestrian areas.

Round 2 (Accelerated Measure)

A further five proposals have been submitted under Round 2 of the Accelerated Measures and a decision on these applications is expected in early September. The proposals related to projects in Cross, Bunratty, Tulla, Ballynacally and Kildysart.

Round 3 (Accelerated Measure)

In addition to the above, Minister Heather Humphreys TD recently announced additional funding of €10 million for the Town and Village Renewal Scheme as part of the Government's July Stimulus Package. This increased funding has facilitated a further round of funding under the Accelerated Measure element of the Scheme. This round of funding – Round 3 – allows for the submission of six applications in addition to an application for large towns – in this case, Ennis. As a result, seven applications have been submitted under Round 3 for various projects in the towns and villages of Miltown Malbay, Lissycasey, Inagh, Crusheen, Scarriff, Lisdoonvarna and Ennis (large town)

Main Scheme

Under the Main Scheme, the number of applications the Council can submit increased from six to 10. Applications for funding are currently being prepared in respect of projects under this element of the scheme.

Progress on Council-led repairs to Coastal Walk at Cliffs of Moher



Initial works to the South walkway are now complete with the flagstone walls repaired, stiles lowered and widened to prevent congregating of people and the path resurfaced for up to 800 metres. Land drainage was also installed in certain sections to prevent washing out and flooding of the path, which has previously been a recurring problem. Work to the remaining 300-metre section will commence shortly with extension of the flagstone wall, land drainage and resurfacing of the path. Clare County Council's General Design Office has designed the works and is undertaking the role of PSDP on the project. The project is being fully funded by the Council's managed Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience.



Works to reinstate the original limestone wall to the North walkway have now commenced with over 300 metres of the wall and path cleared and prepared for repairing of the wall. Installation of land drainage to prevent flooding of the path and washing out of the path surface is also underway. Clare County Council's General Design Office has designed the works and is undertaking the role of PSDP on the project. The project is being fully funded by the Council's managed Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience.



Reinstatement of the original limestone wall to the North walkway has commenced with an initial 75-metre section of the wall now complete and resurfacing of the path to now commence. Installation of land drainage to prevent flooding of the path and washing out of the path surface is also underway. The 150-metre section known as 'Surfer's Path' has also been resurfaced along with access accommodation works and land drainage. Clare County Council's General Design Office has designed the works and is undertaking the role of PSDP on the project. The project is being fully funded by the Council's managed Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience.

Community Enhancement Programme 2020 provides €201,000 in small grants to enhance facilities in urban and rural communities



From 2018: Parteen St Nicholas Men’s Shed members with equipment funded under the Community Enhancement Project, 2018.

Following an announcement in June by Michael Ring TD, (former) Minister for Rural and Community Development, of details for the 2020 Community Enhancement Programme (CEP), €2 million of grant funding is being provided towards enhancing the facilities available to communities. The programme has a focus on supporting groups in disadvantaged areas.

The CEP is administered by Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each Local Authority area. The fund allows for a response to local needs and therefore it also provides some funding towards larger projects where needed. Typical enhancements under this programme include the renovation of community centres and community amenities, and the purchase of equipment for community usage. The programme has also supported energy efficient upgrades to buildings, accessibility improvements and the development of community spaces.

In 2020, the LCDC is focusing the funding on specific issues that have arisen from Covid-19 challenges in communities and a much more targeted approach is being taken to benefit those

most in need this year.

Clare LCDC has received an initial fund of €60,265, which has been targeted towards Mens’ and Women’s Sheds, youth centres, a countywide wellness programme for communities and schoolgoers, and provision of study tools to young learners in disadvantaged areas.

In August, a further CEP fund of €5 million nationally for community centres and community buildings has been launched by Joe O’Brien TD, Minister of State for Community Development and Charities, at the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Clare LCDC has received €140,810 for community centres and community buildings in the county. A third of this funding will be allocated to small grants to a maximum of €1,000 and the remainder of funding will be allocated to larger projects in developing community buildings.

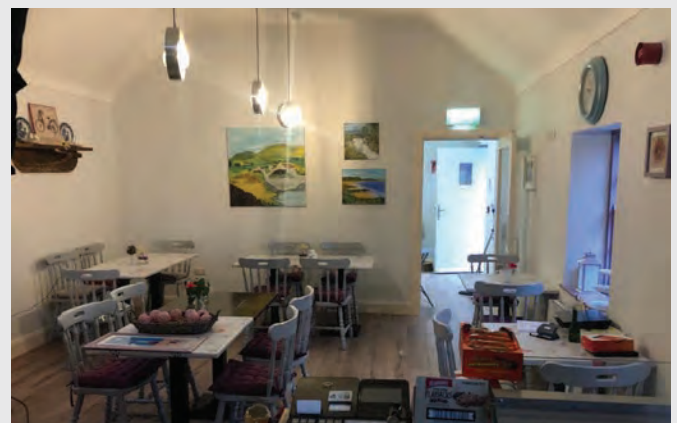
A list of all successful applications will be available in late September.

Works completed on Estuary Way Cafe

Works have been completed on the “Estuary Way Cafe”, which received funding of €96k under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2018.

The works involved the refurbishment of a number of cottages in the centre of Ballynacally and has resulted in the creation of two permanent and two part-time jobs in the cafe/shop.

The remaining two cottages are to be developed into self-catering accommodation which will be let as tourist accommodation upon completion. The works were delivered by the Ballynacally Development Association with assistance from the Rural Development Directorate.



Estuary Way Cafe – Ballynacally

2020 IPB Pride of Place Awards

On 26th and 27th August, three community groups from County Clare participated in the remote judging calls for the 2020 IPB Pride of Place Awards. Covid-19 has had a significant effect on the conduct of the competition this year and, as face-to-face judging is not possible, judging was carried out by Zoom video conference. This presented both challenges and opportunities to spotlight the excellent work being done by the groups.

Labasheeda le Chéile, Broadford Community Action Group and Clare Youth Action all responded with innovative and engaging virtual presentations that greatly impressed the judges.

Labasheeda le Chéile used a comprehensive presentation package which was screenshared to the judges and narrated by the group participants.

Broadford Community Action Group gave an excellent presentation into the background of the group and its accomplishments to date before being brought on a virtual tour of

Broadford and its environs from the summit of Knockiseby Padraig Gunning via video link.

Finally, Clare Youth Action impressed the judges with a highly visual and interactive display of images and video of their youth work on mental health and environmental advocacy. Assisted by their Community Leader from the North West Clare Family Resource Centre, Emma Louise, Clodagh and Caitlin gave a stunning account of the scale of the work carried out by the group since 2014.

The wait is now on for the results of the competition in November. Sadly, the current pandemic will preclude attendance at the awards ceremony which had been planned for the INEC in Killarney. However, Cooperation Ireland is planning a virtual award ceremony in place of the live event. Congratulations to all the County Clare finalists who put significant effort into showcasing the best of County Clare's community and voluntary in 2020.



Broadford Community Action Group take the judges on a virtual tour of Broadford from the summit of Knockiseby.



Labasheeda le Cheile explain their recent work to the judges.



Using a drone camera, Clare Youth Action send a powerful message to their community from Lahinch beach.

Dormant Accounts Funding 2020

Last November, Mr Seán Canney TD, Minister of State for Community Development, Natural Resources and Digital Development, published the Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2020 providing funding to address disadvantage right across the country. This includes the provision of €200k to support LGBTI Community Organisations.

County Clare was selected as one of 8 organisations nationwide and has been awarded €35,000 from the Dormant Accounts Fund. The funding is based on expressions of interest received from organisations around the county who are seeking to complete projects which ensure that existing community infrastructure is inclusive and welcoming to LGBTI+ people.

Following a call for expressions of interest, 10 organisations across the county will benefit from the funding including: Clare Women's Network, Clare Haven, Clare Youth Services, North West Clare Family Resource Centre, Ennis Musical Society, Fishbowl Youth, Burren Art Gallery, Scarriff Foróige Youth Club and Killaloe Ballina Family Resource Centre.

The funding will also support GOSHH in providing services to Clare people. GOSHH is a charity which provides a safe, confidential, welcoming environment for everyone availing of their services with a focus on the promotion of equality and wellbeing of all with a positive and respectful approach to sexual orientation and gender diversity. For more information on the service provided by GOSHH visit www.goshh.ie



Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, at centre, with: (at front) Brian McManus, Clare Youth Services; (back from left) Emma Sams, North West Clare Family Resource Centre; Kees Duson, Killaloe Ballina Family Resource Centre; Cillian Flynn, GOSHH Operations Manager; Patrick McElligott, GOSHH LGBT Support Worker; Ann Mason, GOSHH General Manager; Deirdre Power, Rural Development Department, Clare County Council; and Yvonne McElligott, Clare Haven Services.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

HOUSING

As many prepare for back to school, staff of the Social Directorate are continuing to adjust to the 'new normal' in the delivery of the services and functions. In this changed environment, remote working and virtual meetings are the order of the day to ensure compliance with Covid-19 guidelines.

All housing services are available albeit the delivery mechanism has changed in some instances. The housing public counter is opened daily to the public from 9:00am to 1:00pm and by appointment from 1:00pm until 5:00pm (Monday to Friday).

Choice Based Letting is proving very popular for those on the social housing list. The number of properties available to put on the system remains low; however, as schemes are completed additional properties will be advertised on this platform. We are also working with approved housing bodies with a view to advertising their properties on this platform.

Contracts were signed with M Fitzgibbon Contractors Ltd for the construction of 40 social houses in Ashline. This development will provide much needed homes for those on the social housing waiting list and is scheduled for completion by the end of 2021.

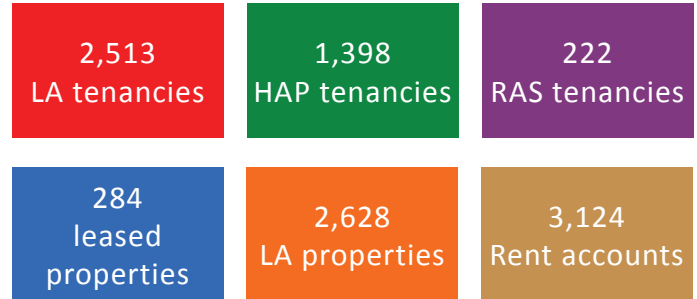


Pictured following the appointment of contractors for the construction of a new social housing development in Ashline, Kilrush Road, Ennis, County Clare, are: (front row, seated, left to right) Leonard Cleary, Director of Service, Rural Development; Mary Howard, Mayor of Clare; and Michael Fitzgibbon, Director, M Fitzgibbon Contractors Ltd; (back row, left to right) Anne Haugh, Director of Service, Social Development; Caimín Dillon, Executive Engineer, Clare County Council; James O'Donoghue, Director, Tom McNamara & Partners, Quantity Surveyors; Michael Landers, Managing Director, eml Architects; Ruairi McNamara, QS, M Fitzgibbon Contractors Ltd; and Cllr Gerry Flynn, Chair of Clare County Council's Social Development Strategic Policy Committee.

Housing in numbers

Breakdown of tenancies by Municipal District (including RAS and leasing):

	Social housing*	HAP
Ennis	1,141	648
Shannon	631	149
West Clare	906	388
Killaloe	338	168
Inter Authority HAP		45
TOTAL	3,016	1,398



Summary of activity

Covid-19 restrictions continue to impact service delivery, particularly services in occupied properties. In this regard, there has been limited activity in inspections for private house grants and private rented inspections. Other business areas have returned to a new normal level of service and this is reflected in the numbers hereunder.

Housing allocations	
Offers issued (from 22nd June to 20th August)	63
Offers refused	11
AHB nominations	1
Tenancies signed up	37
Tenancies terminated	17

Voids work programme	
Voids/casual vacancies	44
Acquired properties (works on-going)	22
Average vacancy period	140 days
Number voids returned to stock	10
Average spend	€26,320

Position at the end of August.

Housing maintenance calls	
July and August	889

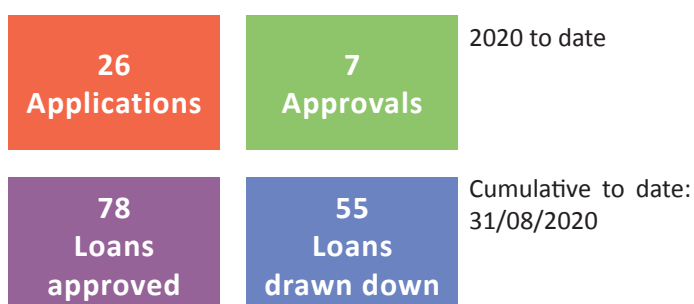
Private rented inspections	
July*	2
August	21

*Inspections in private occupied properties recommenced in late July, tenants are not comfortable with inspections with >50% of scheduled inspections cancelled by tenants.

Housing grants		
Grant type	Number of approvals	Value of works €
Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability	42	731,844
Housing Aid for Older People	42	177,385
Mobility Aids Grant	43	193,420
Total	127	1,102,649

Grants processed during July and August 2020.

Rebuilding Ireland home loan



Homeless

We continue our focus on exits from homeless services and during the period 20th June to 21st August, 2020, 10 households exited from homeless services; of these 10 households, seven were housed in own-door properties through HAP, leasing, AHB and local authority allocations; three self-discharged and left homeless services; two were discharged from the service.

The Clare Homeless Action Team (HAT) provides services to anyone who is homeless or at risk of losing their home. The HAT office is open by appointment during office hours and can be contacted on 065 684 6291.

Homeless presentations to 21st August, 2020	
New presentations	62
Repeat presentations	339

Status as at 21st August, 2020				
	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	13	0	1
Cusack Lodge	5	6	10	1
Westbrooke	0	12	0	1
Ashford Court	5	13	5	1
EA families	5	7	6	2
EA individuals	0	9	0	5
TOTAL	15	60	21	11

KILLALOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Road works programme 2020

Despite a delayed start, the road works programming is continuing, under the supervision of technical staff in the Municipal District (MD). The surface dressing 2020 programme is now complete, with works ongoing on the restoration, improvement and drainage programmes.

Grants

Town and Village Renewal

Killaloe: Killaloe MD has been successful in acquiring funding of €30,000 from the Town and Village accelerated measure initiative. Works will be aimed at the provision of pedestrian and Covid-19 friendly environments in specific areas of Killaloe Town. Works will be undertaken before December 2020.

Clooney: Killaloe MD's submission for funding to the amount of €100,000 has been chosen as one of the county's submissions for adjudication by the Department in the next few months. Works are aimed at the provision of infrastructure through the village along with traffic calming measures.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

Works are ongoing on a blue-way trail linking Tuamgraney to Ogonnelloe. It is hoped that the project will be substantially complete by the end of 2020. Works are being carried out by contract in one section and also using Council direct labour in another section.

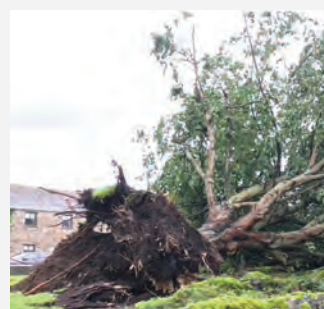


Active Travel and Climate Change

As part of the Government's July stimulus programme, Killaloe has made submissions for funding for multiple projects in the MD under the Active Travel and Climate Change categories.

Storm Ellen and Storm Francis

Killaloe MD crews were busy in the aftermath of recent storms which resulted in many impassable roads in East Clare due to fallen trees. Crews were deployed at first light following both storms to clear the debris and remove trees in a safe and managed environment.



Blue Flag amenities

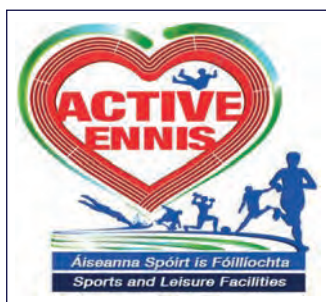
Large numbers visited the amenities of Ballycuggeran and Mountshannon over the Summer period 2020, where Killaloe MD had resources deployed to ensure that these amenities were maintained to a high standard during the Summer season.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Update on capital programme

SHIP capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start date	Completion date
Quilty	18	Const. recommenced 18.05.20	Q2 2019	Q4 2020
Sixmilebridge	2	Const. recommenced 18.05.20	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
Kilmihil	2	Const. recommenced 18.05.20	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
Shannon PPP	51	Const. recommenced 18.05.20	Q4 2019	Q3 2021
Ashline, Ennis	40	Contract in place. Work due to commence.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Milltown Malbay	27	Await Stage 4 approval from DHPLG. Contract ready to be awarded.	Q3 2020	Q1 2022
Tulla	25	Stage 3 approved. Stage 4 to be submitted to DHPLG.	Q3 2020	Q1 2022
Newmarket on Fergus	18	Await Stage 4 approval from DHPLG. Contract ready to be awarded.	Q3 2020	Q1 2022
Scarriff	18	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Design Team appointed.	Q4 2020	Q1 2022
Roslevan, Tulla Rd	8	Await Stage 2 approval from DHPLG. Part VIII lodged.	Q4 2020	Q1 2022
Doonbeg Lands	8	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Procuring Design Team.	Q4 2020	Q1 2022
Clarecastle	2	Await Rev. Single Stage approval from DHPLG. Contract ready to be awarded.	Q3 2020	Q3 2021
Drumcliff Rd. Ennis	26	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Procuring Design Team.	Q1 2021	Q2 2022
Subtotal	258			
CAS - Cahercalla Phase 2 (Cuan an Chlair)	15	CAS Construction. Under construction	Sept 2019	Q4 2020
Bruachlan, Westbury (CoOp-erative Housing Ireland)	22	CALF – Property transfer complete, planning permission to be re-applied for.	Q4 2021	Q4 2022
Gleann Cora, Newmarket on Fergus (CoOperative Housing Ireland)	31	CALF Acquisition approved, construction recommenced 18.05.2020	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
Edenvale (Newgrove Housing Association)	3	CAS – Stage 2 with Dept. for approval	Q3 2020	Q2 2021
Sycamore Drive, Ennis (Cluid)	2	Part V	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
Ballymacaula, Ennis (Cluid)	2	Part V	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
	2	Part V	Q3 2020	Q3 2021
Crusheen (Cluid)	2	Part V	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
Subtotal	79	AHB delivery		
Total	337			

SPORTS & RECREATION



New booking system

The booking system in place has received positive feedback with positive customer feedback. Facilities can be pre-booked and pre-paid by calling 065 6821604. It is hoped to move this to an online booking system in the near future. Full details on www.activeennis.ie

Tim Smythe Park

JADA Construction has commenced works on the new dressing rooms project. The MUGA has been relocated and is expected to reopen in the coming weeks, once line marking has been completed.

A biodiversity survey of the park was undertaken, on foot of recommendations from this report a works plan for the enhancement of biodiversity in the facility is to be developed in conjunction with Congella McGuire, Heritage Officer, and staff of the Gardening section.

John O'Sullivan Park, Lees Road

Necessary maintenance works were undertaken on the athletics track during July. This deep clean will enable the track to continue to drain away surface water efficiently.

Pitch maintenance works were also undertaken in July. The pitches in Lees Road will be over seeded in September to maintain a healthy grass sward on the playing surfaces through the winter.

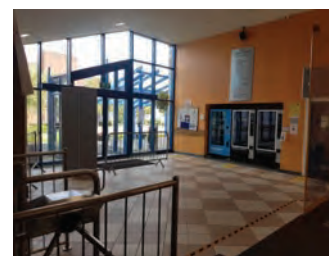
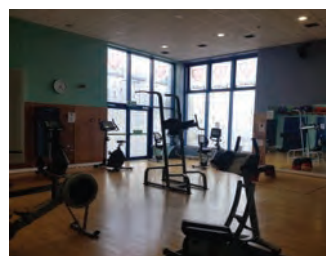
Works for the installation of an automatic entrance gate is due to be completed this week. This will allow for an earlier opening time and alleviate the parking problem on Drumcliffe Road in the mornings.

Active Ennis Leisure Complex

Seven weeks ago activities in Active Ennis pool and gym returned with new Covid-19 protocols. There is a pre-book/pre-pay system in place with restrictions on numbers in both areas within the facility. Each session is an hour in duration with 30 minutes between sessions for cleaning and sanitising of equipment and changing areas.

The complex has separate entrances and exit for gym and pool area. The gym side is train only and poolside is swim with short shower.

There are no current plans for the return of activity for clubs, organisations, groups, or a return to programmed activities, classes, birthday parties/camps. We continue to review operations based on updated public health guidance.



Active Ennis Leisure Complex.

Clare Sports Partnership

Club Small Grants Scheme

Sports clubs in Clare can now apply for Covid-19 Club Small Grants of up to €1,500 through Clare Sports Partnership. Full details of this scheme are available on www.claresports.ie

The Covid-19 Club Small Grant Scheme is part of a series of Covid-19-related funding schemes from Sport Ireland, following the announcement of €70 million of funding by the Government to support the sports sector in response to the Covid-19 crisis.

The Covid-19 Club Small Grant Scheme will be implemented by Sport Ireland's network of Local Sports Partnerships and will provide assistance to local clubs with covering costs associated with the reopening of sports clubs. This scheme is separate to the Sports Club Resilience Fund, which will be delivered through national governing bodies.

The closing date for this scheme is 4pm on Monday, 7th September, 2020.

Safeguarding 1

Safeguarding 1 courses will be available online in the coming weeks. The course is now being run through the Zoom app so if you are interested in taking part you will need to have this app on your phone or laptop. Please email cathy@claresports.ie to register your interest.



CULTURAL SERVICES – LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM, ARCHIVES

Clare County Library

There are 13 library service points open to the public since July – 12 of the 15 library branches and the Local Studies Centre. Both the book delivery service to cocooning adults and the “contact & collect” branch services continue to be available to members of the public as well as a range of in-branch services. Over 661 deliveries (10,766 items of stock) have been made in the past four months by the book delivery service and 1,244 items of stock collected from branches by the public using the “contact & collect” service up to August.

Public usage of online resources has increased monthly since the start of the year as follows:

	E-books	E-audio-books	E-magazines	Online courses
January	595	1,010	542	399
February	662	903	710	750
March	1,145	1,202	934	577
April	1,891	1,776	1,059	1,925
May	2,013	1,881	1,204	2,861
June	1,927	1,600	1,290	1,350
July	1,546	1,709	1,134	560
	9,779	10,081	6,873	8,422

Marketing

Please see below Clare Library social media activity for July with similar activity for August.

	Posts	Likes	Shares/retweets	Comments
Facebook	97	826	117	39
Twitter	95	258	153	6
Instagram	95	650	24	8



A selection of books on display in Miltown Malbay for Heritage Week in August.

Summer Stars

Summer Stars, the annual children’s reading programme, is underway in all branches in Clare County Library. Support events for the Summer Stars reading programme moved online and included two new initiatives for children. In July, writer and workshop facilitator Maeve Devoy led a children’s creative writing workshop via Zoom. Over a series of five weekly webinars, Maeve invited participants to write about an imaginary journey

to an imaginary planet. Feedback comments from parents include this one:

“My son really enjoys the workshops. He has been doing a lot of writing due to the webinars. He has been writing since very young and really enjoys it. I have been looking for a creative writing workshop for children for a while with not much luck, so was delighted when the library offered one and, as I predicted, he loves it.” Summer library events are accessible through the library’s website and social media platforms.

Renowned storyteller Niall de Búrca presented a series of online tales in August. Niall’s Summer Stars selection includes a fascinating array of stories of County Clare based on heroes, legends and places. The tales are available on Clare Library’s YouTube Channel or on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram every Tuesday at 11.30am. The stories are family friendly and encourage engagement with books in libraries. Linked to this initiative children and young people of all ages are invited to share their own stories, riddles and photographs with a County Clare theme, for publication on the library website and social media platforms.

Clare Arts Office

The Arts Office exhibition programme resumed with an exhibition by Henry Butler in the Clare Museum. The per cent for art commission for Cuan an Chláir Housing Development in Ennis was awarded to Peter McMorrow.

Assistance was provided with filming locations for a German film shooting in Kilkee over the summer months.

Work is progressing on the publication of the Culture Night programme for 2020 – a mix of over 20 online and public events which will take place county wide. In conjunction with LEO, Clare Arts Office provided online digital training and tutorials for more than 60 artists in Clare. The Arts Office is currently working with 18 artists to provide Zoom Art Experiences for schools in addition to the Artist in Schools Scheme programme. Magpie Media Film Company was welcomed as new tenants to the EASI studios and the external painting of Tulla Stables Studios has been completed.

Clare Museum

Clare Museum reopened to the public on the 16th July. The museum is operating summer opening hours until the end of September, Monday to Saturday inclusive. Clare Museum featured on RTÉ’s Nationwide programme in July in a documentary on “Clare under Covid”.

A TV production company including Former Taoiseach Enda Kenny filmed at the museum for a documentary on the West Clare Railway. The temporary exhibition on the 1914 hurling team was replaced with items related to Clare during the War of Independence. Forty items were catalogued into the museum collection.

Clare Archives

Work has been progressing on inputting the following archive records:

- Electoral registers
- Ennis Club Visitors Book
- Ievers Collection.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



Pictured at the launch of the draft Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy were: Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council, and Dr Pat Daly, Chief Executive, Limerick City and County Council.

TRANSPORTATION

Roadworks Programme and Operations

Work is ongoing on the Roadworks Programme for 2020 with significant progress being achieved in each area under the Restoration Improvement, Restoration Maintenance, Drainage and Discretionary Maintenance grant categories. Work is also progressing on the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) approved for 2020.

Following applications seeking funding being sent to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport additional grant funding has just been allocated in respect of Active Travel (€1.264m) and Climate Change Adaptation (€0.581m). These welcome grant allocations will facilitate significant additional works being carried out in each Municipal District before the end of the year.

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 to 2040. A number of meetings have been held with the consultants, NTA, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Limerick City and County Council.

The draft LSMATS document was approved by the NTA board

during the summer and the draft report and the executive summary have been published. The supporting documents have been developed. The LSMATS public consultation, to which all Members were invited, was launched by the NTA on 2nd September and it will be on public display for a six-week period. A presentation on the draft report will take place with the Physical Development SPC on 21st September next.

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 in the coming weeks which is a few weeks later than originally planned. It is still hoped that a contractor will 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
- 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 this monthly project update is relevant only to the current period and the milestone progressions during that period.

Project	Update – July/August 2020
TII HD 15 Sites	<p>For the N85:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions ongoing with TII in relation to Lahinch Rd/Shanaway Rd junction in Ennis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Traffic signal design and cost evaluation has been completed ◦ 28m inscribed circle diameter roundabout design has been completed ◦ Mini-roundabout design and projects costs is progressing. » Agreement with landowners required for all three options. <p>For the N68:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derrycrossaun junction, design and feasibility report is completed. A Notice of Motion in relation to this junction has been received and an alteration design has been prepared for review by the TII.
TII HD 17 Sites	<p>For the N67:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topographical surveys of the identified junctions for phase 1 is now complete, ie. Galway border to Ballyvaughan. Design and Feasibility Report for phase 1 is progressing. » Land acquisition will be required at no. 2 junctions. • Topographical survey of Minster’s Place, Kilkee, has been completed. Design options are progressing and under review with the TII.

Low-cost safety schemes – monthly progress

Project	Update – July/August 2020
R463 junction at Westbury	<p>Proposal to upgrade the existing signalised junction to MOVA system and add additional exit lane from the Westbury estate. The detail design and drawings have been completed. AA screening is completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 38 process complete. Adopted by the Elected Members of Shannon MD on the 24th July, 2020 • Drawings and pricing document completed and circulated to MD • Limerick City and County Council have completed Road Safety Audit.

R352 Hurlers Cross Junction	Topographical road surveys are completed and contact with landowners has initiated. Survey of adjacent lands to be carried out. Horizontal and Vertical Alignment design options is ongoing. Preliminary design for various design options is nearing completion.
L2034/L2032 Moanmore Crossroads on the Kilrush to Doonbeg road	Design completed and issued to the MD.
R474, Mahonburg	Design completed and issued to the MD.
R483 Cree Bridge	Design completed and issued to the MD.

Other projects – monthly update

Project	Update – July/August 2020
Larkins Cross/Gilloge Bridge Specific Improvement works	<p>Traffic signals at Larkins Cross:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The detail design is completed and has been updated with modifications based on feedback from the TII • AA screening is completed • Section 38 process complete. Adopted by the Elected Members of Shannon MD on the 24th July, 2020 • Limerick City and County Council have completed Road Safety Audit • Drawings and pricing document completed.
EuroVelo 1	Funding of €182,000 has been secured from DTTAS for development of the EuroVelo route in County Clare. Drawdown of the grant is by the end of November 2020. Tenders have now been awarded for supply of EuroVelo signs, bike racks, bike repair stations and mapboards.
Roche API site – traffic and transport aspects	Planning report issued.
Liaison with NTA regarding bus stops	<p>Wheelchair accessible bus stop on Bothar Linne, Shannon Town:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design is completed and issued to the Shannon MD • The projects received NTA funding approval for €30,733 • A preliminary safety and health plan is near completion.
Liaison with NTA regarding bus shelters	NTA has assessed proposed locations. Six new bus shelters (Kilkee, Lisdoonvarna, Crusheen, Newmarket, Ennis Rd Limerick and Westbury) and upgrading five existing bus shelters in Shannon. Prior to formal application, NTA requested costings on civil works. Drawings and pricing docs currently being prepared for tender process.

Road Schedule and Queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests from public and Municipal Districts for searches through old road schedule paper mapping to establish if certain roads are/were in public ownership – ongoing basis. • Update the roads schedule ongoing as updates are received.
Circular RW 10/2020 – Active Travel Measures Allocations 2020	Clare County Council received an allocation of €1,264,340 from DTTAS for Active Travel projects submitted for funding consideration in August.
Circular RW 09/2020 – Climate Change Adaptation Allocations 2020	Clare County Council received an allocation of €580,900 from DTTAS for Climate Change Adaptation projects submitted for funding consideration in August.
Circular RST 04/2019 Safe Overtaking Width for Cyclists Signs	Clare County Council has received an allocation of funding from DTTAS of €29,350 for provision of safe overtaking width for cyclists signs. Tenders have been advertised for supply of same with a closing date of 4th September, 2020.

- Bunratty Bridge: Currently preparing tender documents
- Gilloge Bridge: Construction works 80 per cent complete
- Breaghva Bridge: Works complete
- Stonepark Bridge: Design ongoing
- Kilmacduane East Bridge: Works complete
- Carron Bridge: Works complete
- Agouleen Bridge: Contractor appointed, works to commence week commencing 7th September
- Stackpools South Bridge: Works complete
- Carrowduff Bridge: Contractor appointed and works commenced
- Smithstown Bridge: Contractor to be appointed
- Riverstown Bridge: Construction works 30 per cent complete
- Drumanure Bridge: Tenders returned, contractor to be appointed
- Ballyalla Bridge: Contractor to be appointed
- Doonsallagh and Kildema South: Tender returned to be assessed.

2020 Bridge Rehabilitation monthly progress – July/August 2020

- Carrownisha Bridge: Works complete
- Sixmilebridge and Mountievers Bridge: Design complete, tender complete, appointment of contractor progressing. Works to commence early September

Health and Safety

During the past month the Health and Safety Team continued to provide support and guidance in the format of Covid-19 risk assessments to the Crisis Management Team and all Departments of Clare County Council in the delivery of essential services and in accordance with the Government's accelerated phased re-opening plan. In addition, the Health and Safety Team continued to review and assess national, sectoral and operational Covid-19 Guidance Documents in order to revise and update the Council's Covid-19 Response Plan. A Schedule of Covid-19 inspections was completed to check compliance with the Covid-19 Response Plan. The Health and Safety Team continued to progress their Schedule of Workplace Risk Assessment reviews and programme of Health & Safety Inspections.

FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

Recent training courses

The following brigade training courses were held during July and August:

- Breathing Apparatus Wearers Course (Bray)
- Fire Service Swift Water Responders Training in the River Fergus.



Pictured are members of Ennis Fire Brigade carrying out river rescue training recently.

Storm Ellen – Fire Service response

Fire brigades attended 69 storm-related incidents between 19th and 20th August, with some brigades attending incidents throughout the night. The majority of the incidents were based in the east of the county. Overall, the workload was extremely high during this period ensuring main routes across



Clare Fire and Rescue Service attended to call-outs at locations around the county in response to Storms Ellen and Francis in August.



Ennis Fire Station redevelopment works are progressing.



Shannon Fire Brigade has taken delivery of a new Class B fire appliance.

the county were kept open by the actions of the Fire Service.

Ennis Fire Station redevelopment works

Works are progressing and the ground works have been completed with the pouring of the raft foundation. Over the next few weeks, it is hoped that the following works will be completed – backfilling of services, filling of hardcore on site and erection of steel frame on site.

New Class B fire appliance for Shannon Fire Brigade

Shannon Fire Brigade took delivery of a new Class B fire appliance in mid-August at a cost of €450,000 approximately. Appliance-specific training was provided to nine members of staff by Westward Scania, TSi Flowmeters and Sídehán Teo.

Fire & Building Control Section Main Activities	July 2020	August 2020	Year to date
Number of Emergency Calls Attended	54	124	705
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received	11	6	64
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted	7	6	64
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	2	3
Number of Disability Access Certificates Received	5	7	53
Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted	7	4	44
Number of Commencement Notices Received	22	32	237
Number of Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	4	1	19

Clare Civil Defence

Operational duties

Civil Defence provided medical cover for the following events:

- Club cycle race on the outskirts of Ennis.

Civil Defence also provided the following operational duties:

- Members provided transport for patients to hospital appointments in University Hospital Limerick and Blackrock Clinic Dublin
- Members delivered meals to elderly and vulnerable persons in the Shannon area. They also delivered medicine and groceries as part of an initiative supported by both the HSE and An Garda Síochána
- Members delivered food parcels to families in need in Ennis and Newmarket On Fergus
- Members assisted Clare County Council with beach patrols in Lahinch and Kilkee
- Members provided assistance for the elderly and vulnerable at lunchtime concerts at Ennis Cathedral organised by the Parish Council, ensuring that participants abided by Covid-19 regulations and also provided medical cover
- Members assisted the Irish Blood Transfusion Board with

their blood donation clinics in Ennis

- At the request of An Garda Síochána, members assisted in the search for a missing person in and around the River Fergus
- Members travelled to Tuam to collect an ambulance donated for use by Clare Civil Defence from the National Ambulance Service.

Training and professional development

Sixty members attended training sessions on “Return to Training During Covid-19” and a base familiarisation of the new Clare Civil Defence Headquarters.

Orlaith Lyons, Clare Civil Defence member, was awarded the inaugural Gold Medal in Health Sciences from NUI Galway for her outstanding record of civic engagement service and achievement. Orlaith has been volunteering with the Civil Defence since 2013 providing emergency first aid to the public for community and national events. Orlaith has qualified in a multitude of skills. The winning of an award like this reflects the professionalism, commitment and sense of community that is inherent in all volunteer members throughout the country.

CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE



Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council, and Willie Madden, RPS, signed the contract for the Shannon Town and Environs Flood Relief Scheme, with Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, and Commissioner John Sydenham, OPW, witnessing. Others in attendance were Cllr Pat McMahon, Chair of the Shannon MD; John O'Leary, Shannon Airport Authority; Carmel Kirby, Director of Service, Physical Development Directorate; and Sean Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Project Management Office.

As there wasn't a Council meeting held in August and therefore no *Monthly Management Report*, the following is an update of works carried out and progress made on the major capital projects throughout July and August.

Access to UL/upgrade to walkway along the Errinagh Canal

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the works proposed for here had to be retendered. A Request for Tender was sent out in early August and tender submissions were due at the beginning of September to coincide with the end of the nesting season. Following assessment of tender submissions, the contract will be awarded and it is proposed to commence the works in mid-September. Work on site has already commenced with the treatment of invasive plants, which is necessary in advance of the main construction works.

Asbestos Remediation Programme

The Phase 2 report which details what permanent remediation measures are required was for review. The options identified in the report included the capping and ongoing monitoring of the subject sites or, alternatively, the excavation and off-site disposal of all asbestos containing material from the subject sites. The report has also been forwarded to interested parties and the next step now is to secure the necessary funding to complete Phase 3, the final remediation of the sites. Pending same, the sites will continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Doolin Visitor Services Building

Despite the Council's best endeavours, it has not been possible

to secure the necessary additional lands needed for this proposal by agreement. Therefore, it is intended to seek approval from An Bord Pleanála to acquire them compulsorily in parallel with the planning application for the scheme. In the coming weeks, the project team will be reconvened to commence the progression of this much-needed development on this basis.

Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme

Works are progressing well on the river defences from the Quin Road Bridge to the N85 Bridge at Clareabbey. Sheet piling works got underway at the start of August and are divided into four different sections. Work is currently progressing in sections 1 and 4 and is ahead of schedule. Piling in poor ground is a technically difficult operation and needs to be carefully managed and also monitored by a specialised geotechnical consultant.

Since our last Monthly Report, the effects of Storm Ellen hit Ennis and its environs in addition to a number of large rainfall events. We are pleased to advise that both of the recently installed culverts at Ballybeg and St Flannan's operated as intended with strong flows observed cascading over both inlet headwalls during this reportable period. Only for the works being completed, significant flooding would have taken place as in the past. The total scheme works are programmed to be completed in August 2021.

Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake's Corner)

The Members will be aware that the compulsory purchase order (CPO) notice to acquire the necessary lands for construction of the proposed new inner relief road at Ennistymon was published on 19th June last. Since then, Clare County Council

has received a number of queries from affected landowners and local residents and these queries are being dealt with by the Project Management Office. Routine inspections and monitoring of site notices and documentation are continuing in line with the statutory requirements. The closing date for submissions is 18th September, after which An Bord Pleanála will decide if an oral hearing is required prior to making its decision.

Killaloe Bridge and Bypass

While RPS come near to finalising the Detailed Design and Tender Preparation stage, the PMO is extremely busy in managing the completion of a number of key requirements of the project in parallel. These include:

- Suitably Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) was published on eTenders in July with submissions due back by the end of August. These are now being reviewed and will allow for the prequalification and shortlisting of suitable contractors to tender for the main works.
- Tenders were sought for the archaeology element of the works required. Following receipt of same, letters of intent and regret issued last week and we would expect to appoint the successful tenderer in the coming two weeks.
- A number of advance works contracts have been identified. Some have already been tendered and commenced. Others are currently in the process of being procured. These include site clearance, bat houses and fencing and will focus on critical seasonal elements to be completed ahead of the main contract award.
- Land acquisitions continue to be finalised, in the main by agreement, with a small number through the arbitration process which is recommencing in mid-September.
- In line with Department requirements for a major capital project of this size and quantum, the technical design is being independently checked by COWI while the draft tender documentation is being checked by Staveleys.

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 continue to meet virtually on a regular basis and we come closer to reaching the significant milestone of publishing the tender for the main work.

Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme

The Steering Group led by Clare County Council and including representatives from the OPW and JBA Consulting continue to meet virtually on a monthly basis. Both the CCTV and the topographical surveys commenced on the ground since the last report. The CCTV element is substantially complete with a small inaccessible section of culvert due to be captured at the end of August. The topographical survey is also progressing with the current focus being placed on channel survey data deliverables which will allow the consultant to start building the hydraulic model. As part of the coastal element of the scheme, RPS Consulting has identified a gap in bathymetric data for Kilkee Bay which is required for its coastal study works. Procurement of the additional survey is underway. Also related to the coastal study, a recent survey of Kilkee Pier by the OPW Hydrometrics

section found that the pier was not suitable to locate the new tidal gauge. Alternate plans are being made to have the gauge installed on the Doonbeg Pier. Due to the Covid restrictions, a traditional public consultation phase was not possible, however, the Steering Group commissioned the production of a public information video which is now available to the public through the project website since Monday, 24th August. Members will have seen or heard, at this stage, the various advertisements on local radio and newspapers. We would ask the Members to input into this exercise and also that they would encourage the public to do likewise. Thank you.

Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR)

In the past month, there have been a number of meetings and discussions between the Project Team comprising Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council and ROD/AECOM and the National Transport Authority to discuss and agree the population, employment and education figures to be used in the traffic modelling scenarios. We continue to engage with the Department of Transport and with the TII with a view to closing out the Phase 2 (Option Selection) Preliminary Business Case for the scheme later in the year.

Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)

Following submission of the Part VIII Planning Application for the road element of this project, a number of third-party submissions were received and considered by the Planning Authority. Following which, their recommendation was to grant permission subject to a number of conditions. Said recommendation is before the September meeting for decision having been tabled at the Ennis MD meeting two weeks ago. In regard to the housing element, work continues with a number of stakeholders on how best to deliver the much needed housing and to this end, a number of options are being examined to determine the appropriate housing mix and density for the site.

N19 Shannon Airport Access Road

The Project Team of Clare County Council, Midwest Regional Road Design Office, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), Shannon Airport Authority, Fehily Timoney and Associates and Clandillon Civil Consulting continue to meet. 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 continues with the TII in respect of the Road Safety Audit Approvals System (RSAAS) as well as with representatives of the Shannon Group (Airport and Commercial Properties) regarding the lands necessary and the identification of services impacted. A tender competition was held for the procurement of a Non-Intrusive Utilities Survey, following which TII granted approval to appoint Apex Surveys to carry the surveys.

Shannon Town and Environs Flood Relief Scheme

The first meeting of the Steering Group, made up of representatives from Clare County Council, the OPW, Shannon Airport Authority and RPS Consulting Engineers, was held in mid-July. The contracts were also signed during the meeting by CCC Chief

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Executive Pat Dowling and RPS Director Willie Madden in the presence of Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, Cathaoirleach of Shannon Municipal District, Cllr Pat McMahon, and the Commissioner of the OPW, Mr John Sydenham. Following the start-up meeting, RPS are continuing with data collection and review of existing data. Site visits were carried out in early and late August and will include members of RPS's hydraulic team from Belfast and other members of its geotechnical team. Given the delay in commencing this project due to Covid-19 restrictions, we have asked that there would be a fortnightly review meeting in addition to the monthly Steering Group meetings in an attempt to expedite the data collection process and make up some of the lost time due to the delay in commencing. These meetings are ongoing and the development of a project specific website is also due to commence in the coming weeks.

Springfield, Clonlara

The Members will be aware that, as part of Clare County Council and the OPW's continued commitment to deliver a flood relief scheme at Springfield, we published the Planning Notice in the *Irish Independent* on Monday, 20th July, 2020, and submitted the application to An Bord Pleanála thereafter. The scheme involves the construction of a flood protection embankment, land raising, penstock/sluice, pump station and associated works at the townlands of Springfield, Cappavilla North, Cottage and Illaunygagan, Clonlara, Co. Clare.

A Natura Impact Statement, together with plans and particulars relating to the application, was submitted to An Bord Pleanála on that date also, as well as being made available for inspection at the offices of Clare County Council from Monday, 20th July, 2020, to Tuesday, 1st September, 2020. The Board will now consider any submissions received before deciding on the next steps in terms of reaching their decision. A timely decision would be welcome given that, following discussion with the OPW, it has been agreed that the OPW Regional Direct Labour

staff would construct the works, thereby negating the need for a drawn-out procurement competition which will allow earlier construction on site, which is very good news indeed. In the meantime, Clare County Council and its consultant engineers continue to progress the detailed design stage. The next step involves ground investigation and structural design. We continue to liaise with local residents and landowners in the area.

Minor Works Flood Relief Schemes

Work has begun on a flood relief scheme at Ballycorick, Ballynacally. The scheme involves replacement of a locally important sluice on the embankments along the Shannon estuary.

West Clare Railway Greenway

The Council was successful in its application to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) under the Carbon Tax Fund and secured €255,000 for the West Clare Railway Greenway Project. Following which, we met with DTTAS and the National Transport Authority (NTA) in mid-August to present our plans for the scheme, which were very well received. The funding will now allow us to progress the project through concept and feasibility stage and allow Clare County Council to start actively engaging with landowners along the proposed route selection in preparation for the statutory consent phase of development, namely preliminary design, and preparation of the planning permission documentation. Stakeholder and landowner consultation and negotiation is key to the success of a project such as this and we would welcome engagement and correspondence from interested or affected parties. Clare County Council in consultation with Aecom has now finalised the Scope, Pre-Appraisal and Concept and Feasibility Reports. The next steps are to prepare a tender package to engage technical consultants for the statutory consent phase of development for a 20km priority section of the Greenway.

ENVIRONMENT

Covid-19

In Mid-March, the coronavirus 'Covid-19' 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. As we enter Phase 4 of the easing of the restrictions we are returning to pre-Covid-19 work activities that had been suspended.

Environmental Awareness

An Taisce Green Schools Programme

Up to the end of August, additional schools were awarded the An Taisce Green Schools flag for 2020. This now brings a total of

37 schools from across Co. Clare being awarded a Green Flag. Four schools received a first flag (Litter and Waste Flag) and 33 schools received a renewal flag for either Energy, Biodiversity, Travel, Water or a Global Citizenship theme.

An Taisce National Spring Clean and Clean Coast 2020

Registrations for National Spring Clean 2020 are now closed. So far, 39 free passes to one of Clare County Council's five Waste Transfer Facilities has been issued to community groups from across the county.

An Taisce Clan Coast 2020 groups also continue to be supported with the provision of free passes to one of Clare County Council's five Waste Transfer Facilities. Five Clean Coast passes have been issued to date.

Blue Flag and Green Coast

This month a social media campaign promoting responsible beach use commenced. Beach Bylaws, Love Your Coast competition, Think Before you Flush, Clean Coast were all promoted

using Clare County Council and Greener Clare social media channels. This was promoted further on *The Clare Echo* Green Page with a Love Your Coast photography competition advert as well as Think Before You Flush advert. This was further supported by a *Clare Echo* Green Page article on Clare County Council Blue Flag and Green Coast beaches, where Clare McGrath, Water Safety Officer, and Cathal Brodie, Executive Scientist, were interviewed.

Illegal dumping and littering

A targeted facebook social media campaign was carried out to raise awareness around illegal dumping of green waste. In addition, a graphic was developed regarding proper disposal of facemasks, wipes and gloves and promoted initially on Greener Clare social media channels on. An advert on illegal dumping of food waste in public areas was promoted on *The Clare Echo* Green Page and Greener Clare social media channels.

2020 EPA Local Authority Prevention Network

Our Greener Clare programme has been supporting science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM) education, Clare Education Centre and Clare Arts Office in the development, facilitation and piloting of an innovative Climate Action Programme (CAP) that uses a STEAM approach to increase awareness of the local causes and effects of climate change, giving hands-on opportunities to learn the skills needed to adapt and mitigate against it. An integral part of the CAP, developed through STEAM education, is climate change experiments and activities with a focus on waste prevention and resource efficiency.

Clare Education Centre successfully won Public innovation Funding (PIF) of €40,000 to initiate the development and pilot of the programme in primary schools.

Unfortunately, a grant application for funding under the 2020 EPA Local Authority Prevention Network to further support this programme and involve the wider community was unsuccessful.

Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI)

In total, there are 5,557 inspections planned for the year. We have had a focused effort on maintaining our inspection programme during Covid-19. A review of the inspection plan took place in August and we are on target to complete the projected inspections.

Laboratory & Technical Support

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. After the suspension of sampling in April due to Covid-19, the river sampling programme resumed in May and has continued as normal since.

IW SLA

Clare County Council is required to sample and analyse all public water supplies. The level of monitoring required is agreed with Irish Water and is based on the population served. The full range of compliance monitoring is now back to normal taking account of social distancing and safety as per Government guidelines.

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. Monitoring is spread throughout the year. Sampling of private commercial supplies recommenced in June after being suspended since mid-March due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Any shortfall due to Covid-19 restrictions in monitoring will be made up over the coming months.

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.

Section 4 Discharge Licences

As hotels and seasonal commercial operations are back operating after the easing of restrictions, a number of premises were inspected and samples taken to assess compliance with discharge licence requirements. Further inspections will take place during this year's shortened tourist season.

Bathing waters

Bathing water sampling continued throughout August. There were a number of notices placed on some of Clare's Blue Flag beaches' bathing waters. The notices ranged from Prior Warning, Advisory to Prohibition notices. The notices were placed on the bathing waters as a result of unseasonal intense rainfall. The rainfall falls on the entire catchment area and finds its natural path to rivers and streams and onto the sea. This is not as a result of wastewater discharge but instead due to the rainfall and topography of the catchment area.

The purpose of the notices is to protect public health and are placed on bathing waters only.

The restrictions were put in place in consultation with the HSE so as to protect public health. The increased bacterial levels are as a direct result of run-off from the catchment into the streams and rivers which discharge into our bathing areas. It is a natural event resultant from intensive and heavy rainfall. With climate change it is believed that these intensive rainfall events will become more frequent.

On 24th August, a number of staff in the Environment Section took part in a video call with the HSE, EPA and a large number of resident and community groups based along the west coast of Clare. In this video call, Maura McNulty, Executive Scientist, presented the rationale for the various notices and highlighted the important work carried out by our Bathing Water Monitoring Team.

Water and Scientific Services

Water pollution complaints

A total of 78 complaints (Section 4 licensed sites, wastewater and agriculture) have been received to date in 2020. Enforcement notices/letters were issued where required under the Water Pollution Acts and the Good Agriculture Practice Regulations 2017 as amended. Further inspections will be carried to ensure that actions recommended in the notices are carried out.



The Gardening Team played an important role in preparation of the “parklet” to be installed in Ennis town centre.



Seasonal tasks such as watering and weeding continued throughout August.

National Inspection Programme of Domestic Waste-water Treatment Systems (DWWTS-Septic Tanks)

A total of 39 inspections are required in 2020. Up to the end of August, 16 inspections have been carried out in West, East and North Clare catchment areas. The remaining inspections will be carried out between now and the end of the year. The EPA will be notified of the inspections and any potential shortfall due to Covid-19 will be considered including how to deal with any shortfall.

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 this year, 87 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. In addition, eight forestry applications have been processed.

Lake Sampling Programme 2020

TMS Environmental are continuing the Water Framework Directive (WFD) lake monitoring programme up to the end of August. All samples are transported to the EPA laboratory in Castlebar for analysis.

Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan

Monitoring and planning for the Areas for Actions continued in August with the EPA Catchment unit and workshops due to be scheduled shortly. Clare County Council plays a vital role in ensuring the relevant areas are included in the plan.

BallyduffBeg Waste Landfill Licence Monitoring Requirements

The EPA have approved a request to reduce frequency of monitoring of dust, noise and suspended solids at different locations on the site, this will reduce monitoring costs as data collected over a 12-year period show that that most data collected is well

below licence limits for the facility.

A weekly update on green waste processing at the Central Waste management Facility (CWMF) was submitted to Cré (Composting Association of Ireland). This feeds back to the Government on how Covid-19 is affecting processing.

Gardening

In conjunction with planned and routine garden works throughout the county during August, the Gardening Team played an important role in preparation of the “parklet” to be installed in Ennis town centre. The Gardening team created a vibrant display of colour to enhance and attract users to the parklet area.

Seasonal tasks such as watering and weeding continued throughout August to ensure floral displays are maintained to a high standard and shall continue to provide colour and enhancement in key public areas.

Planning and preparation for the Remembrance Garden to be located at Áras Contae an Chláir was progressed during August, with commencement of the project expected shortly.

Waste Management

Bring banks and textile banks

The month of August saw a 30 per cent increase in usage at bottle banks and recycling centres. Clare County Council staff worked closely with Clean Ireland to monitor, clean and provide additional collections to keep the service running smoothly.

Doora Landfill

Upgrade works were carried out to the leachate pumping system on site. The footpath upgrade tender is complete and submissions will be assessed shortly.

Ennis Men’s Shed group have continued with their works and progressed well. Mastercabin units are on site, site clearance, fencing, connections to water and wastewater have been done, electricians currently on site with ESB connection to be completed shortly.



Pictured at a launch event for the Rotary Ireland School Bikes Africa project on 19th August, 2020, at the Central Waste Management Facility at Ballyduff Beg, Inagh, were (l-r): Annie Walsh, Ennis branch, Rotary Ireland; Michael Sheppard, Clare branch, Rotary Ireland; Pat Meaney, Community Warden, Environment Section, Clare County Council; Connie Ovesen, President, Rotary Ireland; Cllr Mary Howard, Mayor of Clare; and Maria Carey, Executive Engineer, Environment Section, Clare County Council.

Waste Enforcement

Anti-Dumping Initiative: Bikes to Africa

Anti-Dumping Initiative Funding received from the DCCAE was used to support the Rotary Ireland School Bikes to Africa project. This project was launched on 19th August, 2020, at the Central Waste Management Facility (CWMF), Ballyduffbeg, Inagh, by Cllr Mary Howard, Mayor of Clare.

Under this project members of the public can bring their bikes free of charge to the CWMF, Ballyduffbeg. From there, Rotary Ireland will deliver the bicycles to the open prisons at Loughan House, County Cavan, and Shelton Abbey, County Wicklow, where they will be refurbished by prisoners.

The bikes will then be shipped to Africa and distributed to school children, who would otherwise have to travel 10km or more to get to school and back on foot, in extreme heat. The prisoners are also getting a chance of an education as the School Bikes Africa project allows them to study for a bike mechanic training course, which can help with their rehabilitation back into society and increase their job prospects.

Members of Rotary Ireland were present at the launch. Jason Dempsey, Rotary Ireland District International Services Team Lead, summed up this project as being a “win, win, win: a win for climate action, given the benefits of repair and re-use, as well as promoting sustainable transport; a win for inmates providing training and rehabilitation; and a win for children providing a better chance for education”.

Anti-Dumping Initiative: Other ADI projects are also underway at the moment including site clean-ups, and construction

worked aimed at improving site security at various problem locations. As of August we are on target to spend the ADI grant aid funding received for 2020.

Beach bye laws

During August, the Community Wardens continued patrolling the beaches at weekends, enforcing the beach bye laws. Beaches were extremely busy with large numbers of “staycationers”.

Environmental monitoring (illegal dumping/litter)

The Waste Enforcement Team continued to respond to waste and litter-related complaints in August with a total of 180 complaints relating to litter and waste received in August. Of these complaints, 124 have been closed already.

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. Two litter fines were issued in August. The fines are still within the allotted timeframe for payment and we will continue to monitor this to ensure compliance.

Waste management bye laws

During August, the Waste Enforcement Team continued to carry out surveys of homes and businesses to ensure compliance with the waste management bye laws. In total, 118 households and two businesses were written to in August.

WATER SERVICES

Annual Service Plan

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to be a challenging time for the delivery of essential front-line water services across the county.

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. We are currently on budget under our Annual Service Plan with Irish Water.

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 19th June, 2020, up to and including 27th August, 2020. The figures do not, however, reflect the time invested by the teams which is required to resolve each complaint/issue.

- 52 customer complaints were dealt with
- Emergency Work Orders during the timeframe
- 684 Reactive Maintenance Work Orders were dealt with and closed out
- 2 Customer Asset Flooding Work Orders were received
- 296 Service Requests (SRs) were raised for Field Requests and Follow On Work Orders for Reactive Maintenance work
- 95 Outage Notices were placed on the Irish Water portal during the period.

Water operations

During July and August there were 83 outages placed on the Irish Water reporting portal, which generates a notice to consumers of both planned and unplanned interruptions to their water supply.

There were 77 unplanned outages primarily consisting of 63 emergency water main burst repairs at the following locations:

- East Clare Area – 23 outages – bursts at various locations in Shannon and Kilkishen and 2 significant repairs at Corbally
- Mid-Clare Area – 9 outages – bursts at various locations in Ennis and surrounds including Mill Road, Doora, and a significant repair at Beechpark Roundabout resulting in leakage reduction
- West Clare Area – 31 outages – bursts primarily at proposed mains rehabilitation location – Doonbeg (9), Liscannor (4) and Mullagh-Milltown Malbay (3). Various additional locations such as Kilkee, Kilrush, Doolin and Carrigaholt resulting in leakage reduction.

The remaining unplanned outages were as follows:

- Watermain flushing maintenance – West Clare Area – 4
- Water treatment plant maintenance and process adjustments – 6
- Reactive Leak Detection works – Newmarket, Shannon,

Ardnacrusha – 3

- Back-up generator repairs at New Doolough WTP – 1
- ESB power interruption at Cratloe and Sixmilebridge – 1
- There were 6 planned water supply outages
- Leak detection works within DMAs – Tullabrack/Cooraclare and Castlequarter/Ballinfonta
- Bulk meter installations by Irish Water’s regional contractor Shareridge at Danganelle, Creegh and Knockerra
- Water pump station upgrade at Carnaun, Doolin.

Operation maintenance was undertaken at Castlelake Water Treatment Plant in July. Works included removal of the old sand filter media, pressure washing each filter bed, replacement of bed nozzles and placement of new sand filter media.

At Corrofin WTP, the Dissolved Air Filtration (DAF) unit underwent a full filtration nozzle replacement and silica sand replenishment in filter beds to ensure operating to specifications.

Water Conservation

In July and August, the Find Crews continued water conservation activity throughout the county reacting to various increases in demand primarily in Ennis (Kilmaley Road/Beechpark, Clon Road) and Shannon areas (Ballycasey, Shannon Town) including Crusheen and Newmarket district metering areas.

The Find and Fix Crews concentrated activities in East and West Clare with leaks found and repaired in Killaloe, Ardnacrusha and Bunratty district metering areas. Leak detection works are continuing in Ardnacrusha and Tullabrack/Cooraclare DMAs.

Waste water operations

The annual de-sludging programme for waste water treatment plants (WWTPs) and pumping stations is continuing.

The inlet screens at Clareabbey WWTP have also been repaired. The recent storms and heavy rain caused minor issues in some plants but in the main the service was unaffected.

Irish Water capital programme

Shannon Waste Water Treatment Plant interim upgrade

Ward and Burke commenced on 1st January, 2020. Construction work is continuing on the WWTP with works to four pump stations also scheduled to commence late September 2020. The full project including testing and commissioning is scheduled for completion in March 2021.

Kilrush Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrade

A new waste water treatment plant, rising main and upgrade of the existing Frances St pumping station are proposed in Kilrush. EPS were awarded the contract under the Irish Water Early Contractor Involvement framework to design and build the works. A site investigation contract (to determine ground conditions and locate utilities) is substantially complete. Construction is expected to commence mid-2021 with completion late 2022.

Clarecastle Agglomeration upgrade

Under Irish Water’s UTAS the waste water collected at Quay Rd

pumping station will be diverted via a new waste water pipeline to Clareabbey WWTP.

The design is being finalised and Irish Water expects to issue a tender for the full project before the end of 2020. Irish Water plans to commence construction of the advance section of the rising main early in 2021 with the remaining works following on during 2021.

Liscannor Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrade

A new waste water treatment plant, pumping station, rising main and gravity sewer are proposed for Liscannor. The design/build contract was awarded to EPS in January 2020 under the IW Early Contractor Involvement framework.

A Site Investigation Contract has been completed at the WWTP site, the pump station site and on public roads. The project is expected to go to construction in mid-2021 with completion late 2022.

Ballyvaughan Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrade

A new waste water treatment plant, pumping station including pipework extensions are proposed in Ballyvaughan. The Land owner/Way leave/CPO and the detailed design process is ongoing by EPS. No date for an oral hearing has been set as yet. The expectation is to go to construction late 2021 with completion mid-2023. Site investigation and on-site surveys at the WWTP site, pump station site and rising main route are due to commence in early September.

Kilkee Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrade

A Design Summary Report has been prepared by the consultants in June 2020 in relation to construction of a WWTP. The next stage is the drafting of a project brief to be issued to EPS, the design/build contractor. The site selection process is to be finalised. A planning application is expected to be lodged in late 2021. The project is expected to go to construction in late 2022 with completion late 2024.

Ennistymon and Lahinch Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrade

The Feasibility Study Report was produced by Mott McDonald Consulting Engineers for various options including combining Ennistymon and Lahinch treatment and the report was reviewed by Irish Water. Ennistymon and Lahinch Site Selection Report is underway and constraints mapping has been produced.

Newmarket on Fergus Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrade

It is proposed to construct a new pumped rising main which would outfall to the Rine River thereby ceasing discharge of primary effluent from the existing WWTP to Lough Gash. A Design Inception Report and outfall route selection have been prepared. In the next phase of the project, site investigation, ecological studies, licences, wayleaves and planning application documents will have to be undertaken/prepared. It is anticipated that construction could commence in mid-2022 with completion by mid-2023.

Kilfenora WWTP upgrade

It is proposed to upgrade the existing Kilfenora WWTP, reuse the existing treated effluent rising main to the current discharge point and construct a new percolation area at this site. Planning

permission has been granted. Land owner negotiations are ongoing. The CPO was published in *The Clare Champion* dated 14th August, 2020, and can be viewed at the Ennistymon Area Office. Site investigation works are planned during September. Construction is planned to commence June 2021.

Asset transfer

375 water and waste water assets, in Co. Clare, have been identified for potential transfer to Irish Water to date. Of these, 50 are non-operational assets (prior to January 2014) and as such will not be transferring to Irish Water, leaving 325 for transfer. Of these 325 assets, 183 have now been transferred to Irish Water.

The remaining 142 assets are broken down as follows:

- Pending – 18 assets are being prepared for transfer to Irish Water in the coming months. Some of these assets will have to be subdivided by map/plan. Once a consensus has been reached on the remaining assets with both IW and Clare County Council, a CE order will issue thereafter.
- National Special Projects Office (NSPO) – This is a department within Irish Water dealing with special projects which includes facilitating the asset transfers from Local Authorities – 4 assets are with the NSPO for investigation to ascertain if they are to be considered as underground assets. Underground assets are transferred by S.I. 13 of 2015. When they are approved IW will issue a letter to Clare County Council confirming their approval. Note that underground assets, i.e. all water mains and sewers (other than storm water sewers) and any related accessories, and all pipes, waterworks and waste water works that are located under land, along with any related accessories, were vested in IW by S.I. No. 13 of 2015.
- Property Registration Authority Ireland (PRAI) – No assets have gone to the PRAI to be subdivided.
- Third party/unregistered assets – Of the 142 assets, 120 have been identified as third party registered lands (103) and unregistered lands (17).

Surveys have been completed on third party assets in the Ennis and Shannon Municipal Districts and are underway on third party assets in West Clare MD.

Following recommendations from Irish Water's legal team on a pilot report submitted on an unregistered asset, this asset is now ready to be lodged for first registration with the PRAI. Reports are currently being prepared on all other assets located on unregistered lands.

Rural Water Programme

Under the 2019-2021 Multi Annual Rural Water Programme works have been completed on the replacement of 37 no. fittings on the Glendine and Dunsallagh GWS's in Miltown Malbay to assist in the restoration of supply to the scheme following outages on the public mains. The installation of fittings will significantly reduce the length of time in restoring supply to the extremities of both schemes. The schemes are currently being encouraged to submit taking in charge applications to allow for substantial funding under the next Rural Water Programme.

The installation of a set of booster pumps on the Castlequarter Ballinphonta GWS is nearing completion and this will increase pressure to a small number of dwellings on the scheme that



New vehicle fleet, clockwise from top left: (i) jetting unit; (ii) jetting van; (iii) with new vans (l-r) Kevin Healy, Ger Falsey, Michael McGrath and John Culligan; and (iv) jetting crew (l-r) Ollie Gallagher and John Ryan.

have been adversely affected. Works are due to commence on the Dough GWS with the installation of booster pumps to negate issues with pressure experienced by members of the scheme. Feenagh GWS are due to commence the replacement of their full network of 4.6km of mains in early September. The works on the Feenagh, Castlequarter Ballinphonta and Dough GWS's are to be completed under Measure 5 of the programme with a view to progressing the schemes for transfer to the public water network.

No schemes have been taken in charge by Irish Water in August. Clare County Council has now submitted 12 schemes which await transfer to the public network. The suspension of taking in charge of group schemes imposed by Irish Water has led to great frustration among group water schemes and the Rural Water Programme alike who have both invested significantly in the process and ensuring the schemes meet the

standards as set out by Irish Water.

Following on from new grant conditions for the 'Grant for the Improvements to a Private Water Supply to a House' there has been a marked increase in the number of applications being submitted. To date in 2020 there have been 58 applications which are assessed under the Rural Water Programme.

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

New vehicle fleet

Clare County Council is transitioning its water services fleet to vehicles supplied by Irish Water under the Service Level Agreement. The new fleet vehicles are specially fitted out to cater for the demands of the water services personnel and will enhance the delivery of water services.

ENNIS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Temporary Covid-19 Town Centre Mobility Plan update



Ennis Municipal District (MD) has been working closely with the Intelligence Unit (IU) run by the School of Architecture at the University of Limerick for the past six weeks in order to identify positive attributes, unique features and specific challenges for the town of Ennis, and to introduce

new ideas drawing on the expertise of architects and other disciplines such as engineering. The theme of the project is “Connecting and Co-Creating Ennis”.

The IU has been meeting with stakeholders throughout the process to pinpoint areas of strength within Ennis as well as weaknesses that need to be addressed. The group has been in constant consultation with Ennis MD office to co-ordinate plans to improve the experience of people visiting Ennis now and in the future.

An unveiling of works was held in the County Museum on Thursday, 6th August, 2020.

Signage/car park/retractable bollards

As part of feedback received from businesses and members of public on the Mobility Plan, directional signage is being installed on the inner relief road, with work expected to be fully completed in the coming days. This work is being undertaken to improve way-finding, particularly for visitors to the town. Concerns were also been raised regarding the loss of some car parking in the town centre, and as an emergency measure Ennis MD secured the use of the GAA/Cloister Car Park, which will be operational in the coming weeks once the relevant equipment has been installed and the site is prepared. This will provide approximately 100 car parking spaces. Ennis MD was also asked to make the town as attractive as possible and to improve the barriers that prevent cars from entering the town. In that regard, in addition to the planting provided by the Council’s gardening section, retractable bollards are currently being installed to replace the barriers.

O’Connell Monument, Ennis – Conservation Works, Historic Structures Fund 2020

The project is currently out for tender with a closing date in mid-September. Subject to a review of the tenders, it is anticipated that the commencement of the project is likely to be some time in October. The works are expected to be for a six-week duration, meaning a completion date of end November/early December.



Funding

Ennis MD has secured funding under the Climate Change Adaptation Allocations and Active Travel Measures allocation for the following projects:

Climate Change Adaptation Allocations – total received €242,000

- Remedial works on 1km of local road in Clonfeagh (L-8308-11). Badly cracked and out of shape following severe hot weather spell
- Rededial works on 1km of local road in Ballyeashea (L-4222-17). Badly cracked and out of shape following severe hot weather spell
- Reshaping and surfacing of 400m of road edge (L-8168-0) adjacent to a turlough which has failed following repeated filling/emptying of turlough and road fracturing was exacerbated during extreme hot weather events.

Active Travel Measures Allocations – total received €245,000

- Pedestrian crossing at Kilrush Road and additional public lighting on existing pedestrian/cycling lane
- Engagement of a behavioural change person to introduce a pilot scheme (assistance of the Green School Programme, An Taisce, or similar organisation) with one primary school (Ennis National), one secondary school (St Flannan’s College) and possibly one public service office and one private company office in developing active travel forms rather than use of cars, or partial substitution of car use
- Dishing of footpaths at junctions and reducing road width at crossing points
- Reducing the speed limit and/or introducing a “Slow Zone”
- Extension of Ennis Active Travel cycle way from Ballymaley to Barefield. This would include the design of a combined cycleway –pathway from R458 to Ballyallia
- Design process traffic calming in Abbeyville-Abbeycourt
- Design process for the provision of pedestrian cycleway by widening of the footpath and adjustment of existing margins on the Kilrush Road between Ashline and Kilrush Rd Cross at Carmody Street
- Design process for a crossing point to cater for the Educate Together School and Gaelscoil on R458 Gort Road adjacent to Aughanteeroe (this would include some additional Cycleway provision. It would also cater for possible future crossing point on cycleway from Gort to Tulla Rd through Corrovorrin).

Essential maintenance works

Essential maintenance work on the Woodquay pumping station is being carried out by EPS with NCH Crane and Ennis Municipal District providing traffic management. Three large pumps have been removed for refurbishment at the EPS workshop and will be reinstalled at a later date when some further maintenance will take place.

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Clare Economic Taskforce

On 25th September, the Clare Economic Taskforce will hold its next meeting at Áras Contae an Chláir. The Chief Executive has convened the Taskforce, comprising public and private sector leaders, to inform and guide him in the deployment of appropriate economic measures that will stimulate job creation in County Clare. The impact of the Government's July stimulus package on County Clare is being assessed and inputs to the 2021 budget process will be informed by the successful economic stimulus measures.

Updates on the work of the Taskforce will be presented at regular briefings to full Council.

Future Mobility Campus Ireland

The Council is a partner in the Future Mobility Campus Ireland (FMCI) initiative. This project is Ireland's first future mobility campus which will act as a testbed facility for autonomous vehicles across a 4km road network in the Shannon Free Zone and Limerick City. The testbed will be equipped with multiple

sensors along with high-accuracy location systems, a data management and control centre and two sensor-equipped test vehicles. The project is funded by Enterprise Ireland, industry and both local authorities and this investment has been identified by industry as pivotal to raising national competitiveness in the area of transport and mobility.

Atlantic Economic Corridor funding for hubs

The Western Development Commission has recently administered a grant scheme for digital/enterprise hubs along the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) to help them implement measures to reopen in compliance with public health guidelines as the economy recovers from the impact of Covid-19. This is being done in partnership with the Department of Rural and Community Development as part of the AEC Hub Network project. Clare County Council has been allocated the sum of €30,793 for seven hubs in Clare and this will be administered by the AEC Officer.

STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PROJECTS

Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan

This joint project between Clare County Council and Tipperary County Council is for the preparation of a Town Enhancement, Tourism and Mobility Plan for Killaloe-Ballina. The Plan will facilitate a coordinated approach to public realm enhancements within Killaloe and Ballina, providing a clear vision for the towns as linked settlements. Specific measures, designs and schemes will promote the towns' complementarity, and create an overall focus on their joint strengths and opportunities to increase the perception of them being as one town, in terms of their functionality and aesthetics. Work on the preparation of the plan is underway and it is expected to take approximately six months to prepare.



Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Plan

The draft Ennis 2040 strategy was presented to the project steering group on 7th July and, following inputs at the meeting, the final revisions are being made to the draft strategy. It is envisaged that the strategy will be launched in September/October 2020.

Works on setting up an Ennis 2040 strategy implementation structure have commenced.

University of Limerick/South Clare – Strategic Development Zone

Documentation to commence the establishment of a Designated Activity Company (DAC) has been completed. The preparation of the application to seek the designation of the UL/South Clare SDZ by the new Government is at an advanced stage of preparation and communications with the various stakeholders are planned.

Spatial and Economic Masterplan for Shannon Town Centre

This Masterplan, which is funded under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) and Clare County Council, will drive the economic future and spatial pattern for the centre of Shannon Town. On completion later this year, the

Masterplan will unlock the town’s development potential and guide, market 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 develop the potential of key sites at the entrance points to the town. Crucially, the Masterplan will be based on an Economic Viability Assessment.

In June, the Shannon Municipal District Elected Members were briefed on Masterplan and inputs from the Elected Members have been taken into consideration as part of the plan process.

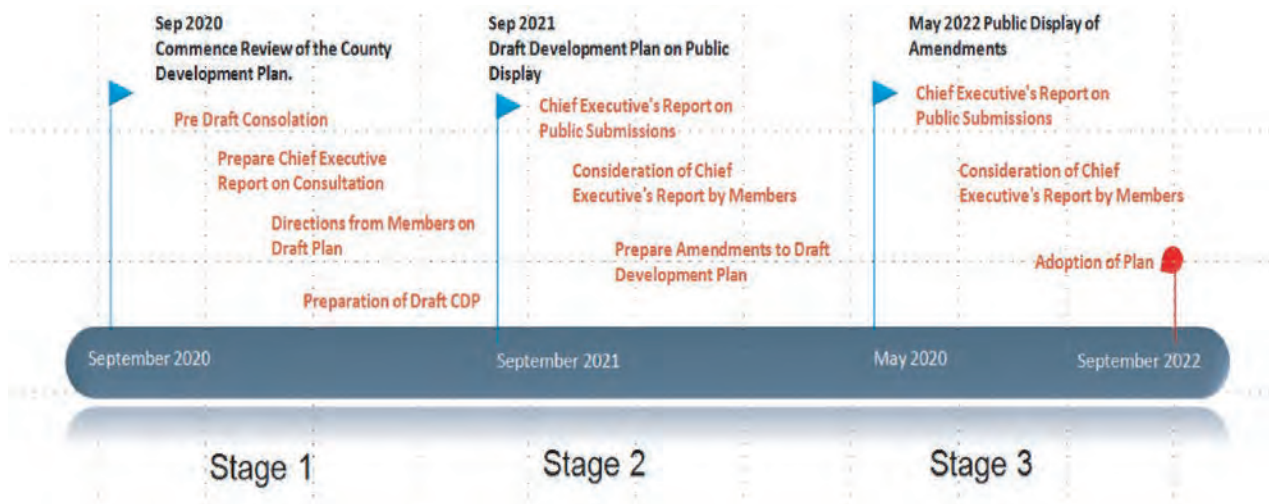
Roche (Clarecastle) Masterplan

The Council is currently working with Roche management on a masterplan for the future use of the Clarecastle site.

On 24th June, 2020, Roche Ireland Ltd lodged a planning application for its site at Clarehill, Clarecastle (Ref No. P20-420) for the phased demolition of buildings and structures on the site and the phased remediation of areas of the site.

The application and the request for additional information which issued in August can be viewed on the Council’s website or at the customer services desk of the Planning Department.

FORWARD PLANNING



Clare County Development Plan review timeline.

Review of the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023

Workshops were held throughout July with the Elected Members of each Municipal District in relation to the forthcoming review of the *Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023*. These provided the opportunity for the Forward Planning team to outline the two-year process in terms of the key stages and issues which the new development plan will need to address and for the Elected Members to present the key issues that need to be considered in the Municipal Districts. This was a very informative process and the start of an ongoing conversation with Elected Members which will continue throughout the process.

In preparation for the official commencement of the statutory two-year plan-making process, preparatory work for the first consultation period is underway and it is due to commence on 18th September. A Strategic Issues Paper and online media material has been produced and will be made available on the Clare County Council website. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the format for public consultation will be tailored to ensure accessibility to information and the opportunity to make submissions/ observations online. It is currently proposed to hold a public consultation event in the Council atrium on 1st October, 2020, which will be by appointment only and subject to Government guidance.

A public notice will be placed in the local media which will signify the start of the pre-draft public consultation period on 18th September, 2020, which will run until 16th November, 2020.

Cappa Enhancement Strategy

The Planning Section and Helena McElmeel Architects have prepared an Enhancement Strategy for Cappa, Kilrush, focusing on its connection to the sea, the pier and the beach. It is anticipated that the strategy will be finalised in the coming weeks.

Ministerial visit

The Director of Economic Development, Liam Conneally, attended a briefing with the Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Minister Malcolm Noonan, in Ennis on 12th August, 2020, where the key strategic issues which the county faces were presented to the Minister in the context of the forthcoming review of the County Development Plan. These included the future of rural towns and villages, the challenges faced due to Covid-19, the changing face of town centres, the critical importance of Shannon Airport to the county’s – and region’s – economy and the importance of the Shannon Estuary, particularly in relation to its enormous potential for off-shore renewable energy opportunities. The Minister then participated in a brief walkaround in Ennis town where he was shown some of the key town centre transformational sites including the Post Office Field and riverside sites at Wood Quay and Abbey Street, set within the context of the Ennis 2040 spatial and economic plan.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

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

Development management	July 2020	August 2020	Year to date 2020
Planning applications			
No. of planning applications received	93	73	683
No. of planning decisions made	179	84	733
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	3	2	30
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	25	19	193
No. of Section 5 applications	6	2	39
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications	5	4	32
Submissions received regarding compliance	30	23	307
Planning enforcement			
No. of new complaints received	25	14	120
No of files opened	14	6	76
No. of warning letters issued	9	7	84
No. of enforcement notices served	0	0	8
No. of enforcement files closed	24	7	67

TAKING IN CHARGE

The Taking in Charge team is continuing to progress remedial work contracts on a number of housing estates, many of them have now been completed and others with minor works to be carried out, as outlined in the table below. It is planned that all these contracts will be completed before year end.

Estate	Update regarding remedial works
Inchicronan, Crusheen	Remedial works have now been completed
Mount Clare, Claremount, Clarecastle	Remedial works 90% complete
Craglands/Crag Ard, Ballynacally	Remedial works 90% complete
Manor Grove, Ardnacrusha	Remedial works have now been completed
Boheraroan, Newmarket on Fergus	Remedial works 90% complete
Gort na mBláth/Rathban/Lios Ard, Tulla Rd, Ennis	One minor issue to be completed
Woodmount, Ennistymon	Remedial works have now been completed
Dun Aras/Cluain Alainn/Dun Aras Ave/Ballycasey Ave, Shannon	Remedial works are ongoing
Gort Leamhan, Ennis	Remedial works 90% complete
Tir an Fhia, Kilkishen	Remedial works 90% complete
Clochán na Mara and Blackthorn Drive, Liscannor	Remedial works contractor was appointed at the end of July 2020, works to commence first week in September
Woodstock View and Woodstock Hill, Shanaway Road	Remedial works contract was put out to tender, closing date for receipt of Tenders was 31st August, 2020

The statutory process in relation to the Taking in Charge of five estates commenced with an advertisement in *The Clare Champion* issue dated 31st July, 2020, four of which are in the West Clare Municipal District and one in the Killaloe Municipal District.

HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2020

The Heritage Council's Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2020 has been announced for supporting capital projects that improve access and inclusion to heritage sites and supports the purchase of essential equipment. This scheme is open to voluntary and community groups and not-for-profit heritage organisations. The closing date for applications is 5:00pm on Tuesday, 15th September, 2020. For more information, please visit: www.heritagecouncil.ie/funding/funding-schemes.

Reading your Local Landscape courses

The Reading your Local Landscape courses in both the Burren and Kilkishen areas that were 'paused' due to Covid-19 will now resume. This is a joint initiative between Clare County Council and the Limerick Clare Education Board. Arrangements are being put in place to restart the training with a Covid-19 risk assessment and response plan in place.

Clare Holy Wells audit

County Clare has a very high density of Holy Wells per capita and relative to its area. There are 241 Holy Wells in the Record of Monuments and Places for County Clare. Holy Wells are sacred spaces in the landscape and are held in high regard by the people of the county. The traditions, oral heritage and customs surrounding Holy Wells are a very important aspect of our intangible heritage. Some Holy Wells are not afforded protection and are at risk from land clearance and development pressures. Many of the people who know the customs and traditions relating to Holy Wells are from an older generation, therefore, it is vital to collect and collate this information before it is lost, in addition to providing information and an audit of each site.

Michael Houlihan and Tony Kirby continue to populate the Holy Well Survey for County Clare with over 135 Holy Wells surveyed to date. The resulting comprehensive database of information includes a focus on the less well known or unrecorded Holy Wells or those not in present use. The audit is raising awareness and knowledge of the rich heritage associated with Holy Wells and their settings.

Demonstration Sites for Biodiversity Management

All 10 Demonstration Sites for Biodiversity Management have been surveyed, species list compiled and the relevant people who manage these sites have been consulted with, working in partnership with the Municipal Districts and the local community. Draft Biodiversity Plans for the sites have been prepared for consultation with the site managers and with feedback the Site Biodiversity Reports will be finalised shortly.

This project aims to showcase best practice in biodiversity management, creating awareness and a message for change. Among the issues considered are vegetation and habitat management, value of retaining existing vegetation and/or enhancement of same, roadside and pathway verge management, suitable grass-cutting regime, grass, tree and hedgerow management, maintaining existing and attracting wildlife, proposals for habitat creation, solutions to habitat fragmentation, suitable plant varieties with an emphasis on pollinator friendly and native species, planting regime and establishment



Frances Giaquinto, project ecologist, and Deborah Bent, Scarriff Community Council, talking on Scarriff Bay Radio about the demonstration sites for biodiversity management at the Riverside Park in Scarriff.

of flower, bulb, shrub and trees etc. planting methods, ongoing future maintenance, invasive species management plan and management of aggressive native species.

The sites in question include Tim Smythe Park, Ennis, Shannon Wetland, Shannon, public green area on the Cooraclare Road in Kilrush, Two Mile Gate, Ballycuggaran, Killaloe, public park near to the church in Miltown Malbay, triangular area at junction of Liscannor/Ennistymon Road in Lahinch, public road between Ennistymon and Lahinch, picnic area across from Ennistymon Church on the Lahinch Road, Riverside Park, Scarriff and Ballycannon Graveyard, Meelick. A further €7,000 in funding from the National Biodiversity Action Plan Funding has been allocated for this project, which must be completed in 2020.

National Biodiversity Action Plan funding

Three funding applications were made under the National Biodiversity Action Plan as follows:

1. Biodiversity best practice demonstration sites plan training and implementation
2. Feasibility study for the collection, transportation and environmentally friendly disposal of organic matter/grass cuttings resulting from ecological works associated with the Pollinator Plan
3. The provision of biodiversity information and up-to-date material for Clare County Council biodiversity and Clare ICAN websites.

All Ireland Pollinator Plan

The implementation of the Pollinator Plan within Clare County Council includes biodiversity initiatives, Pollinator Plan resource material such as *Gardening for Biodiversity* publication and Managed for Wildlife signs, which are available to the public on request.

The County Clare Swift Survey

In total, 56 swift nest sites were confirmed in 89 localities within County Clare. Low numbers of breeding pairs have been confirmed in Ennis, Kilrush, Quin, North Clare, Whitegate, Scarriff, Killaloe and Tuamgraney. Many of our big towns such as Lahinch and Miltown Malbay did not have Swifts. The final report is being prepared and it will make general and specific local recommendations. The Council will continue to work with local communities and residents to erect Swift nest boxes in suitable locations and new civic buildings where possible. For more information please visit: www.clarecoco.ie/your-council/

[news]/clare-swift-survey-2020-to-take-place-this-summer.html.

Biodiversity Resource Manual for all Local Authority staff

An initial draft of the Biodiversity Resource Manual and associated Environmental Practice Guidance has been prepared and will be circulated to Council engineers for comment, with anticipated roll-out of staff training in the autumn.

One-hundred employees responded to the Biodiversity Questionnaires, which represents the opinion of 10 per cent of staff on 13 questions on biodiversity. The survey results will be available shortly.

Heritage Week

There were 33 Clare Heritage Week projects registered for the county and these can be viewed at: www.heritageweek.ie. The project organisers were very creative in their approach this year. Some of these projects are still accessible on the Heritage Week website and all projects submitted will be considered for a county Heritage Week Award due to be announced in October. The Heritage Council plans to keep the website active for a long period of time to allow people to share the projects.

Promotional material can be found on our social media pages and below are links to some projects that can still be enjoyed even though National Heritage Week has finished:

- www.heritageweek.ie/projects/hastings-farmhouse-restoration
- www.heritageweek.ie/projects/community-memories-as-a-community-cohesion-resource
- www.heritageweek.ie/projects/kilmurry-community-hall
- www.heritageweek.ie/projects/voices-of-our-heritage

CONSERVATION AND BUILT HERITAGE

One Section 57 declaration was issued during the month of August to permit works to protected structures.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

Covid-19 supports

Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Clare continued to support our local businesses through the months of July and August. A very high uptake of these supports is in the following evidence:

- Of the 397 approved Business Continuity Voucher applications, approximately 135 have been completed (the appointed consultants have completed their work and submitted their report), with the balance expected to conclude in the coming months.
- The enhanced Trading Online Voucher Scheme, which provides grant support to small businesses to develop an ecommerce website has seen strong interest. To date, 201 applications have been approved, with clients working to complete a further 140 applications. We continue to assess applications and progress to approval as quickly as we can. The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation has provided additional funding to meet demand.
- A total of 584 clients registered in the months of July and August to partake in our range of online webinars and training courses, including webinars on digital marketing and on steps to start a business. All of these 14 webinars were provided free of charge to applicants.
- Over 60 applications were received in July and August for 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.

- LEO Clare has been informed that the popular Micro Finance Ireland loan facility is to reopen to applications on Monday, 31st of August. The scheme was fully subscribed and closed to applications nationally in early July.

The LEO team continue to provide our range of grant supports (including Feasibility, Priming and Business Expansion and our TAME grant for micro-exporters) to eligible businesses.

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

Littus Directory

Local Enterprise Office Clare initiated a pilot scheme in conjunction with Littus in Philadelphia to promote local Clare businesses and retailers to the American market. The system creates an online directory of local Clare businesses and retailers. American customers can purchase products from businesses listed on the directory, for delivery to recipients within Ireland. This will be especially beneficial to Americans who would normally visit Ireland but cannot travel due to the current restrictions. The new system will allow them to purchase gifts in Clare for delivery to their Ireland-based family and friends. Twelve Clare-based companies have volunteered to take part in this pilot scheme.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Quin Road Campus

Work is nearing completion on this new campus to accommodate the Civil Defence headquarters and a Records Management Centre. The Civil Defence team has moved in to its part of the building and snagging work is being completed on other parts of the building. The last phase of the project is the Records Management Centre and the tender documents for this are being prepared. It is intended to mark the opening of this new campus at a time when the Government restrictions allow for it to be held.

Refurbishment of beach huts at Kilkee

These are now completed and are a great example of the type of restoration work that can be done to property in our ownership that may not have been used to its full potential. They have provided an addition to the services and amenities at Kilkee in recent weeks.

Facilities management

The working arrangements for staff and the provision of services to the public at Áras Contae an Chláir has been the focus of our work programme in July and August. The Planning Department public counter re-opened for appointments on 25th May. Work continues to ensure that the workplaces and arrangements for staff and Elected Members in Áras Contae an Chláir and Waterpark Campus meet the requirements of the Council’s response plan, national and HSE guidance.

Property transactions

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

Transaction	July 2020	August 2020	Year to date 2020
Lease of property / building	0	0	4
Licence to use property / building	1	1	6
Grazing agreement for lands	0	0	18
Deed of transfer signed	1	1	6
Deed of rectification signed	1	1	3

Filming in Áras Contae an Chláir

In late August, we facilitated a film production company to film scenes of a production entitled *Planlos in Ireland/Clueless in Ireland*, which is about a German businesswoman coming to Ireland. This is a joint production between H&V Entertainment GmbH and Treehouse Media Ltd. The film is mainly based in Kilkee since mid-July and all Government guidelines and protocols in relation to Covid-19 are being strictly followed to ensure a safe working environment for the cast and crew and for all of

the locations in which they film.

The main character in the movie, ‘Connie’, is in her mid-50s, an executive secretary in Germany who needs to improve her fluency in written and spoken English. Kilkee was chosen as the main location for this heartwarming and funny movie about a woman finding her inner strength, her adventurous side and her sense of humour on the beautiful coast of Clare.

We are delighted to facilitate the production in Áras Contae an Chláir and look forward to seeing the film following its broadcasting in Germany in springtime and our building and Kilkee will be shown to an eager German audience.



Filming for *Planlos in Ireland/Clueless in Ireland* took place in the Áras.

SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The restrictions to Covid-19 continued to restrict opening hours at the Town Hall office in Shannon over the summer months. Opening times remain 9:30am-1:00pm (Monday-Friday) and by appointment in the afternoon. However, we are delighted to see our School Wardens back as the country moves forward.

Torrential rain and unseasonal storms had significant impact on our roads programme with fallen trees and spot flooding across the area further disrupting scheduled works, but crews are working hard to bring programmes under control with 90 per cent of our surface dressing and drainage works complete with the restoration and improvement works commenced. Our footpath tender is currently under assessment.

Design works for the Sixmilebridge Town and Village Renewal Scheme have started and further grant aid in the areas of Climate Change and Active Travel has been awarded in the past week for programmes in Westbury, Shannon and Meelick.

The extensive resurfacing works to the ‘Tír Na nÓg’ playground in Shannon Town have been completed and we are awaiting the final inspections for safety compliance – it is anticipated that the facility will re-open shortly.



Coronavirus
COVID-19
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