



COMHAIRLE | CLARE  
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

# TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

## MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Aibreán / April  
2021



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# FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

## CORPORATE SERVICES

### Freedom of Information and Data Protection

2021 statistics from 01/03/2021 to 26/03/2021:

- 37 Freedom of Information requests
- 1 Freedom of Information Internal Review applications
- 0 Appeals to Information Commissioner
- 1 Data Access Requests – Subject Access Request
- 11 Data Access Requests –Third Party Access Request, e.g. Gardaí
- 6 Data Breaches – internal breach, not forwarded to DPC
- 1 Data Breach – forwarded to DPC
- 2 DPIAs completed.

### Register of Electors

#### Electoral Reform Bill 2020

The General Scheme of the Electoral Reform Bill was published on 8th January, 2021, which provides for a range of significant electoral reforms, including:

- The establishment of a statutory, independent Electoral Commission for Ireland
- The modernisation of our electoral registration process
- The regulation of online political advertising in the run-up to electoral events

- Amendments to electoral law which will assist in the holding of electoral events if Covid-19 restrictions are in place.

Details on the General Scheme of the Reform Bill can be accessed at: General Scheme of the Electoral Reform Bill 2020 (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/34cf6-general-scheme-of-the-electoral-reform-bill-2020/>)

In preparation for the Modernisation of the Electoral Registration Process the Register of Elector Team within Clare County Council will be carrying out a data cleansing process of the current ROE to ensure that the Register is accurate.

### Procurement

Short description	Response deadline
Clare County Library pre qualification stage	07/04/2021
Clare County Library tender stage	07/04/2021
Clare County Council Regional & Local Roads Pavement Overlay Scheme 2021	31/03/2021
Chemical weed control Ennis MD	12/04/2021



## COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Office communicates and promotes Council activities and services and raises public awareness of issues of local and national interest.

Media releases issued during March included: an allocation of almost €6 million to Clare County Council to advance the 2021 Active Travel programme for Clare; the launch of the Age Friendly Clare 'Digital Nursing Home Initiative'; and encouragement to people in Clare to maintain their efforts to stamp out Covid-19 in our communities. Media outlets that featured Council news in March included *The Clare Champion*, *Clare Echo*, Clare FM and RTÉ.

The Communications Office assisted with delivery of the 'Connecting Clare 2021' St Patrick's Day virtual event on social media, which was viewed in countries including the US, the UK, Australia, France and Germany.

Communications activities to promote countywide wellbeing continue on social media and in the mainstream media as part of the Keep Well campaign.

### Social Media

The Communications Office monitors and updates social media channels with creative content to enhance engagement with the public and maintain awareness of the work of the Council. In March, the Communications Office:



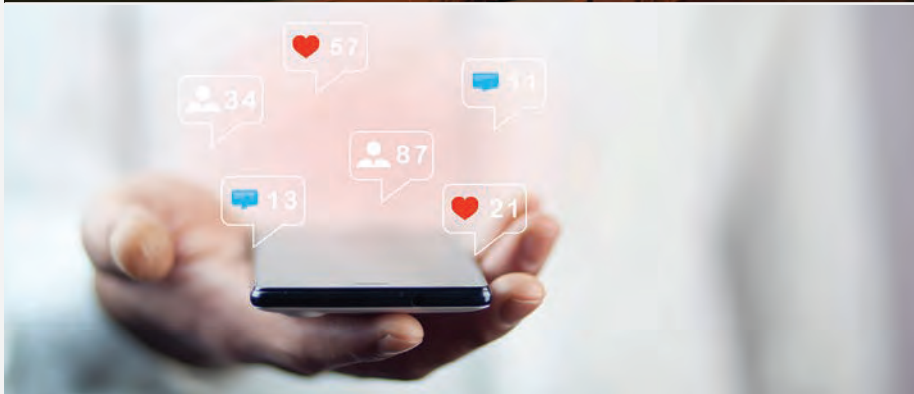
- Posted 41 times on Clare County Council's Facebook page, with followers now 15,549 and 14,285 people have liked the page. Posts achieved 140,000 impressions with 5,800 engagements



- Tweeted 41 times on Twitter, with total followers now 6,925. Tweets earned 120,000 impressions and 2,500 engagements



- Posted 11 times on Instagram, with followers now 1,972.



Clockwise from top left: Clare County Council supported an Irish Kidney Association-led initiative by lighting up Áras Contae an Chláir in green for Organ Donor Awareness Week 2021 (27th March – 3rd April). The 'Connecting Clare' St Patrick's Day virtual event was held online on 17th March, with support from Communications. Clare County Council and partners in the Mid-West region including An Garda Síochána issued a Covid-19 media release in March. Activities continue on Clare County Council social media channels.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

Work Area	Update
<b>Recruitment</b>	<p>The following recruitment competitions were progressed during March 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desktop Shortlisting Staff Officer</li> <li>• Executive Planner (Open)</li> <li>• Retained Fire-Fighter – Kilrush, Shannon and Ennistymon</li> <li>• Assistant Planner (Open).</li> </ul> <p>The following competitions were advertised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retained Fire-Fighter (Part-time) – Ennistymon</li> <li>• Executive Technician (Open)</li> <li>• Technician Grade II (Civil &amp; Architectural Building).</li> </ul>
<b>Learning and Development</b>	<p>Online training programmes/webinars/information sessions held in March include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microsoft Teams</li> <li>• PowerPoint training</li> <li>• Technical report writing</li> <li>• Children First training</li> <li>• HR Symposium 2021</li> <li>• Memory skills and mind mapping training</li> <li>• Speed reading and retention training</li> <li>• Understanding European Public Sector Procurement</li> <li>• Competency interviews</li> <li>• Junior Achievement Ireland – two staff members are working with St Flannan's TY students providing remote interview training.</li> </ul> <p>Essential Skillz online courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manual handling</li> <li>• Cyber security</li> <li>• H&amp;S induction</li> <li>• Wellbeing and remote working</li> <li>• Home working</li> <li>• Ergowize.</li> </ul> <p>The remote delivery by the IPA of its programmes is continuing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate in Local Government Studies</li> <li>• Diploma in Local Government Studies.</li> </ul> <p>Rollout of the Local Authority Climate Action training continued.</p>
<b>Employee Welfare</b>	<p>The opportunity to join a livestream yoga workshop over an eight-week period was offered to staff as a wellbeing initiative. Due to considerable interest two classes are taking place each week. Telephone counselling services continue to be available to staff and members. General employee welfare supports, initiatives, advice and guidance are available from the Employee Welfare Officer.</p>
<b>Covid-19</b>	<p>The Human Resources Department continued to liaise as necessary regarding Covid-19 matters.</p>
<b>Unions</b>	<p>The Human Resources Department continued to engage and consult with unions on various matters.</p>

# RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS): Measure 2 Funding Announcement



Clare County Council has received further funding of €400,000 for two projects under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2020 – Measure 2. The funding announced is in addition to the previous funding announcement under Measure 1 of the ORIS 2020 bringing the total funding granted to date to €488,250 for projects in Clare.

The ORIS scheme provides funding for the development, promotion and maintenance of outdoor amenities such as trails, walkways, cycleways, and blueways.

The funding announced under Measure 2 of the scheme provides funding of €200,000 for each of the two projects in the county, namely:

- (i) River Fergus Walk/Cycleway: This project will see the development of a universally accessible walkway/cycleway connecting the outskirts of Ennis to the outskirts of the adjoining village of Clarecastle
- (ii) Trail Head and Canoe Project: This project entails the development of a series of canoe trails (4) and trail head at O'Briensbridge. The access and egress at O'Briensbridge will be via a floating pontoon jetty.

The Trail Head and Canoe Project will be led by Waterways Ireland in partnership with other statutory agencies and in association with the local host communities. The River Fergus Walk/Cycleway Project, which links Ennis to Clarecastle, will be led by Clare County Council's Project Management Office and builds on the significant research initiated by the local community in Clarecastle and supported by the business community in Ennis.



Over the past year, there has been a greater appreciation for facilities like the above with a marked increase in the number of people using local walking trails, cycleways, parks and other resources to exercise and keep fit, while respecting the guidelines on social distancing during the Covid-19 crisis. Investment in these facilities represents a tremendous long-term asset for communities and visitors alike into the future.

## CLÁR funding programme for 2021 launched



The West Clare Sports & Fitness facility which was funded by the CLÁR Programme in 2019 (photograph taken pre-Covid).

CLÁR provides funding for small scale infrastructural projects in rural areas that have suffered significant levels of population decline.

Funding for the CLÁR programme has been increased by 10 per cent this year, in recognition of the importance of the programme to some of our most remote rural areas. A new innovation measure has been introduced this year to support communities to develop and test new project ideas and encourage outside-the-box thinking. Community Gardens and allotments will also be supported in 2021.

The measures being funded under the 2021 CLÁR programme are:

- Measure 1 (Operated by Clare County Council): Schools/Community Safety measures
- Measure 2 (Operated by Clare County Council): Community Recreation
- Measure 3: Community Wellbeing Measure:
  - a) Community Gardens and Allotments (Operated by Clare County Council):
  - b) Mobility and Cancer Care Transport
- CLÁR Innovation Measure: new for CLÁR 2021.

Clare County Council will be operating Measures 1, 2 and 3(a) of the CLÁR scheme with funding available for Support for Schools/Community Safety Measures, Outdoor Community recreation facilities and Community wellbeing measures including Community Gardens and Allotments. Up to 10 applications in total will be invited from relevant Local Authorities in respect of Measures 1 and 2 combined, and a maximum of three applications invited under Measure 3(a). The maximum level of funding for any individual project is €50,000 and grant-funding is at a rate of 90 per cent of total project costs.

**Under Measure 1:** CLÁR 2021 will consider support for interventions that make the school/community facility environs healthier and safer for the children attending the schools, and for children and adults using the community facilities.

**Under Measure 2:** CLÁR 2021 will consider supports for the enhancement of existing and/or the development of new accessible outdoor community recreation facilities. This Measure is being expanded in 2021 to include playgrounds, MUGAs and amenities for teenagers/young adults through facilities such as skateboard parks. Upgrades to existing playgrounds, MUGAs, skateboard parks are also eligible.

**Measure 3 (a):** This measure supports community gardens, allotments and sensory gardens. These facilities must be publicly accessible.

**Measure 3 (b)** for Meals and Wheels services and Mobility and Cancer Care Treatment will be administered directly by the Department.

**Innovation Measure:** New for 2021, this measure will also be administered directly by the Department for innovative or pilot projects that address specific challenges faced by communities in CLÁR areas.

Application form, guidelines and map of eligible areas of Clare are available at: [www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/grants/clar/](http://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/grants/clar/) or telephone 065-6846222.

The deadline for applications under Measures 1, 2 and 3(a) is April 23rd, 2021.

## Vandeleur Walled Gardens Kilrush gets approval to proceed with construction



Vandeleur Walled Gardens Kilrush.

Clare County Council has received approval to proceed with construction works, including additional funding support of €250,819 at Vandeleur Walled Gardens Kilrush from the Department of Rural and Community Development, bringing the overall Department funding to €1,975,819. The project is funded by the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, Project Ireland 2040 under the Department of Rural and Community Development with match funding by Clare County Council. The news came following Clare County Council's application to proceed with the scope of works tendered and a request for additional funding to address accessibility and other ancillary costs within the existing Centre.

The tendering process was completed in 2020 and Custy Construction Ltd has been appointed to carry out the works. The preparatory enabling works package commenced in January but works ceased temporarily due to Level 5 restrictions on construction. The works include an interpretive museum, multifunction room, shop and new gardener maintenance building along with the development of a new visitor experience design and approach for the complex which includes work to protected structures.

Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Mary Howard, noted: "The approval to proceed with the restoration and renovation of the old stable block and the works at Vandeleur Walled Garden Centre is very much welcomed and I look forward to the new visitor experience which will further enhance this wonderful woodland location in West Clare. The completed project will be a great asset to the

local community and tourism in Clare, addressing the objectives of the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030."

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, said: "Clare County Council welcomes the ongoing support of Minister Heather Humphreys for this project and the Council is committed to ensuring that the investment in Vandeleur, which is part of an overall Visitor Development Strategy, maximises the use of this important heritage asset and ensures that the Vandeleur Walled Garden is best placed to help with recovery following the impact of the pandemic on our tourism sector."

Noel Kilkenny, Chairperson of Kilrush Amenity Trust, said: "On behalf of the Kilrush Amenity Trust Ltd, I would like to acknowledge the ongoing support from the Department of Rural and Community Development, Coillte, the staff and management of the Centre, Clare County Council, the design team and our loyal customers and visitors, without whom the venture would not exist. The Trust are excited to see the Visitor Development Strategy come to fruition and are committed to supporting the Council in the delivery of this project. This is good news for Kilrush and adds to the expanding tourist amenities in West Clare."

The Vandeleur Centre, the Walled Garden and the Woodland Bistro Café will remain open to the public during the construction works subject to Government restrictions. It is anticipated that the works will commence on site following Level 5 restrictions being eased for construction. See [www.vandeleurwalledgarden.ie](http://www.vandeleurwalledgarden.ie) for more information on opening hours.

## Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 consultation

Members of the public, community organisations and tourism stakeholders across Clare are being asked for their input on the formulation of a long-term strategy for the Cliffs of Moher. Clare County Council supported by Fáilte Ireland is working, with a multi-disciplinary consultancy team led by Haley Sharpe Design, to prepare the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040.



Full details of how the public can participate in the consultation process for the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 will be published in the local media and online at [www.cliffsofmoher.ie](http://www.cliffsofmoher.ie)

## St Patrick's Day celebrations

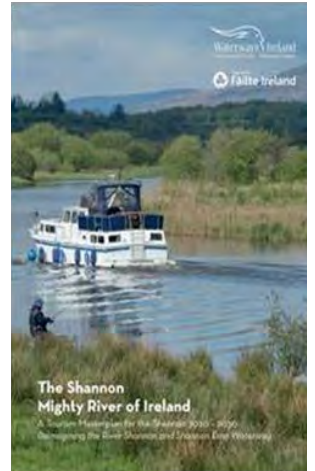


The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience St Patrick's Day promotions received huge international attention with a number of key activities, the Cairde dancers, the national Green Candle event by Tourism Ireland, co-hosting the Tourism Ireland online virtual St Patrick's Day event featuring with Sharon Shannon and Denise Chiala and a mini-socially distanced parade at the Cliffs of Moher with the operation team. There were 1.5m views on the video posted on the Cliffs of Moher page. The Cairde video was viewed over 120m times on various platforms, appearing on Good Morning America (3.36m viewers), Good Morning on the BBC (1.4m viewers) and shared all over social media. In addition to the digital activity the Cliffs of Moher team sent 350 St Patrick's Day cards by post to overseas trade, IDA offices, CEOs of international companies based in Clare and Limerick, and a handful of celebrities compliments of Tourism Ireland.



## Shannon Tourism Masterplan

The Shannon Tourism Masterplan was launched on 2nd March, 2021, by Minister O'Brien TD and Minister Martin TD. In case you missed it or would like to view the Masterplan itself, we have included a link to both here for your ease of access: <https://online.flipping-book.com/view/569022/>



The Shannon Tourism Masterplan 2020-2030 sets out a bold and integrated framework for sustainable tourism development along the Shannon and Shannon Erne Waterway repositioning the region as a key tourism destination within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, with world-class visitor experiences based on the region's natural and cultural assets.

## Beautiful image from a painting by our Geopark geologist, Dr Eamon Doyle

A St Patrick's Day greeting from all at the Burren Cliffs of Moher Global Geopark, the image is from a painting by our Geopark geologist, Dr Eamon Doyle, from a few years ago as he captured the unique magic of the Burren.





## Introducing the Age Friendly Clare Digital Nursing Home Initiative



Karen Fennessy, the Age Friendly Clare Coordinator, presenting one of the digital nursing home packs, funded by the HSE and Age Friendly Ireland, to Carrigoran House nursing home staff: Quality and Resource Officer, Veronica Callinan, and CEO, Marie O'Malley.

The Age Friendly Clare 'Digital Nursing Home Initiative' has been launched with the aim of keeping residents in our 16 nursing homes connected, using technology to bring the outside in. Each nursing home will receive an Amazon Echo Dot and an accompanying tablet. These devices empower residents to stay connected, which is vitally important, especially during these unprecedented times. They are a vehicle to ensure residents can video-call their loved ones, participate in online activities and quizzes, listen to local radio and music, and access the range of eBooks available from our own Clare Library.

Cllr Mary Howard, Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, said: "I am delighted to see our nursing-home residents receiving this support. They are wonderful people who have missed their loved ones terribly throughout this pandemic. I hope these devices bring some joy back into their lives."



Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council, and Chair of the Clare Age Friendly Alliance, said: "First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the wonderful staff caring for our nursing-home residents. You have been on the front line protecting our most vulnerable and, for this, I thank you.

"Clare County Council is delighted to have the opportunity to provide some digital supports to all of our 16 nursing homes in Clare. It is initiatives like this that create new ways

of participating in activities and events, that match our residents' needs, abilities and interests."

Karen Fennessy, Age Friendly Clare Development Officer, said: "I would like to acknowledge the HSE and Age Friendly Ireland, who provided us with the funding support to buy these devices for all of our Clare nursing homes. We hope it will provide all kinds of opportunities for residents to connect with loved ones, as well as provide endless possibilities for information and entertainment through the 'Alexa' devices. It has been our goal during this pandemic to get as many older people as possible digitally connected to combat social isolation, so I see this as a big step towards that."

Veronica Callinan, Quality and Resource Officer for Carrigoran House nursing home, said: "On behalf of the residents, staff and management of Carrigoran House nursing home we would sincerely like to thank the Clare Age Friendly programme for their donation of a new tablet and Amazon Echo Dot device. Their donation has opened up yet another world of exploration, music, fun and excitement for our residents and we cannot wait to get started."

Clare County Council is committed to the Age Friendly Strategy and ensuring that as many of our older people as possible, in Clare, have access to the digital communication tools they need. For anyone who would like to find out more about the Clare Age Friendly Strategy please visit: <https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/age-friendly/> or email [agefriendlyclare@clarecoco.ie](mailto:agefriendlyclare@clarecoco.ie)

The Age Friendly Clare Digital Nursing Home Initiative is supported by Age Friendly Ireland and the HSE.

## The new Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark logo

The Burren & Cliffs of Moher Global Geopark has been revalidated twice now, and the designation is strongly supported as part of the identity of the region. So, on the 10th anniversary of the Global Geopark, the logo was updated and relaunched to honour the distinction of being part of the UNESCO family. The various icons represent all the various aspects of our work programme that are required for maintaining that designation, which is evaluated every four years by UNESCO.



## Free access to County Clare’s new ‘Share Clare’ Tourism Marketing Resource Bank

### Introducing the new County Clare Tourism Marketing Resource Bank

**Free to Use Marketing Resources to Highlight and Promote County Clare, Ireland**

The Clare Tourism Marketing Resource Bank has been created by the Tourism Department of Clare County Council as a marketing resource, in a challenging time for travel and tourism businesses, to support all those who have an interest in promoting the County and its holiday experiences.

Here's what in the County Clare Resource Bank:

- ✔ Over 1,700 'Free to Use' Photos of County Clare.
- ✔ Stunning Aerial Images.
- ✔ Sharable Clare Flipbook Brochures and Videos.
- ✔ 'Share Clare' Social Media and other Digital Supports.

**Sample Aerial Images**

**Sample Experience Photos**

**Sample Flipbook**

**To Access the Free-to-use Tourism Marketing Resource Bank**  
Go to [www.Clare.ie/share](http://www.Clare.ie/share) for your login details. There is also a user's guide there, and a user's feedback form. If you use the resources and tell how you have used it, you will win our great appreciation, and you could win a prize of your choice.

## 32 Reasons to Experience County Clare

The Share Clare Marketing Resource includes links to our County Clare Digital Flipbooks. Our latest one is “32 Reasons to Visit and Experience County Clare – the Home of Great Times”. County Clare is an amazing place of great beauty, tranquillity, and visual contrast. We have all the ingredients for a magical holiday, and with this in mind, we selected 32 of the many reasons why visitors should plan to holiday in Clare this year, beginning with the warmth of our welcome!



## DIARY DATE

## KEEP WELL GOVERNMENT RESILIENCE CAMPAIGN



### Campaign rationale

Launched in October 2020, the Government Plan for Living with Covid-19: Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021 highlights the important role that individual and community resilience will play in contributing to our ongoing response to Covid-19, which is aimed at showing people of all ages how we can mind our own physical and mental health and wellbeing by adding healthy and helpful habits to our daily and weekly routines. It provides guidelines, information, and tips on how we can make a plan to do things that are good for us everyday.

The Clare “Keep Well” campaign is being led by Rural and Community Development and hosted on Clare County Council’s webpage <https://www.clarecoco.ie/together> connecting the public to information about local resources and initiatives that are available under the following Keep Well Themes:

**1. KEEPING ACTIVE** - and being outdoors even during the winter is a really good way to improve your mood and is important for your physical wellbeing too.

**2. KEEPING IN CONTACT** - staying connected with people and addressing isolation, as person-to-person connection is important to our wellbeing.

**3. SWITCHING OFF AND BEING CREATIVE** - or learning something new, getting back to nature and finding ways to relax can help our general wellbeing.

**4. EATING WELL** - by nourishing your body and mind we can positively impact our physical and mental wellbeing.

**5. MANAGING YOUR MOOD** - equipping people with information on where to go if they need support.

### Collaborative effort

Rural & Community Development are co-ordinating an inter-agency working group to oversee the funding and discuss appropriate initiatives. Cross-collaborative synergies are being achieved with different council departments & external agencies all working together. Membership of the working group is as follows:-

**Bernie Haugh (Chair)** – Rural Development  
**Karen Fennesy** (Rural Development) &  
**Kennas Fitzsimons** (Corporate) – Joint Co-ordinators  
**Dena McGrath** (Secretariat) – Rural Development  
**Helen Walsh** – Clare Library  
**Cora Gunter** – Clare Library  
**Siobhan Mulcahy** – Clare Arts Office  
**Congella McGuire** - Heritage  
**Tim Forde** – Sports & Recreation  
**John Sweeney** – Clare Sports Partnership  
**Triona Lynch** – Limerick Clare Education Training Board  
**David Finnerty** – Gardaí

### Community Resilience Fund

Clare has received a total fund of €67,225 broken down under the following themes:

- Your County – Campaign funding €22,170
- Switching Off & Being Creative initiatives €28,023
- Staying Connected (Community Call & Befriending Services) €17,032

## INITIATIVES

### The 'Here Comes the Sun' project

The 'Here Comes the Sun' project has fostered creativity across the generations connecting communities across County Clare. This Age Friendly intergenerational project brings together primary schools, secondary schools, nursing homes, virtual day centres, and families. The Here Comes the Sun Project is a Keep Well Initiative broken into two parts: [Part 1](#) was released on 19th March, 2021, and paints a bleak picture of the realities faced by people during lockdown. [Part 2](#), released on 26th March 2021, celebrates communities across County Clare, filling us with hope and instilling pride in our county.

The project has been a resounding success with people from Killaloe to Kilfenora contributing video clips, poetry and short stories and our very own President Michael D. Higgins too is involved. Music plays a central role in this project which features musical performances from the Farrell family in New Quay and Craig Pete from Shannon. The Here Comes the Sun Committee worked in conjunction with the Clare Education Centre, Clare Sports Partnership, Clare Age Friendly Programme and Clare County Council.



### Clare Libraries – Keep Well activities in 2021

Clare libraries participated in the Ireland Reads/Clare Reads promotion in February. Clare County Council's Keep Well campaign funded the following:

- 500 print copies of Niall Williams' *This Is Happiness* have been delivered to nursing homes, direct provision centres and other community groups.
- 50 audio copies of the book were distributed to nursing homes and direct provision groups.
- 500 This is happiness bookmarks were sent with the books.

A number of online events were programmed in March as part of the Clare Reads initiative.

- Excerpts from the book were read on Clare FM for 10 evenings at the beginning of March.
- Excerpts of the book were read aloud to residents on St Joseph's radio channel.
- 24 attended a talk on happiness with Rev Bob Vernon on Tuesday, 9th March.
- 25 attended a talk on rural electrification with Dr Sorcha O'Brien on Thursday, 11th March.
- 103 viewed a tribute concert to Junior Crehan on Tuesday, 23rd March, followed by a Q&A with his daughter, Angela Crotty.
- Over 200 attended the interview with Niall Williams on Tuesday, 30th March, in partnership with Ennis Book Club Festival.



Feedback from Clare Reads and the events has been positively received:

**From Niall Williams, author of This is Happiness**

Just a note to say thanks to you both for that wonderful evening of music and reminiscence. It was quite something to be listening to Junior's music and hearing from his relations in the same room where I had sat conjuring him onto the pages a couple of years earlier. A strange sense of completing the circle and honouring in the best way possible. Congratulations to both of you, a really fitting tribute to that, by virtue of the pandemic, it ended with the hellos and goodbyes in people's sitting rooms and kitchens, which is where the music had its first home.

Just to say thank you very much for organising this enjoyable event. Job well done.

Kind Regards  
Helen Whelan

Thanks for last night – a lovely, sensitively-run programme. Thanks too to the family who were marvelous and generous with their memories.

Áine Heslin

Buíochas as san, a Cora. It was very interesting. Please keep me on your mailing list. Le dea-ghuí,  
Máire Ní Laoire

What a wonderful event – thank you for facilitating the discussion and for organising the event. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Geraldine

Thank you for facilitating Celebrating Junior Crehan Concert. I really enjoyed the music and chat afterwards with the Crehan Family. Kind regards. Lorraine

Thanks so much for organising a great tribute. It was a lovely way to spend an hour. I was just wondering is there a recording of the Zoom chat. A couple of family members didn't get a chance to log in and asked me to check. Thanks again, Mary

Could I ask you please to pass on a vote of appreciation to whoever it was in Clare Co Co who sourced the 500 copies of Niall Williams' book. This has been responsible for an outbreak of joy, pleasure and nostalgia for which, happily, there is no vaccine!

Brian

Job well done, a very enjoyable concert. Made my day when Mick mentioned my father as one of Junior's favourite sean-nós singers, Seán 'ac Dhonncha. Go raibh míle maith agaibh. Is mise le meas. Sinéad

## CÚRAM ARTS PROJECTS – KEEP WELL ACTIVITIES IN 2021

### The Little Book of Hope

The concept of 'The Little Book of Hope' is about older people reconnecting with their inner child, to revisit memories and pass them on as something precious and magical. It is also for the children that have not been able to be in touch with their grandparents and would be gifted this amazing book of stories that will bring memories of the loved ones and to enjoy the pleasure of reading, switching off digital content and opening their imagination through written word and accompanying visuals.

### Move with Ease into Creativity with Clare Women's Network

Workshops began with breathe work, creative visualisation and guided meditations with the aim of enabling participants to let go of worries, reconnect with themselves and to lay a foundation to engage creatively with others through Dancing the Rainbow (DTR) exercises in the second part of the workshop.

### Lean ar Aghaidh

Traditional Singer, Researcher and Educator Rachel Uí Fhaoláin is delivering an important 'Fan Ceangailte' (Stay Connected) online programme which will engage and connect the elder members in the community/Clare active retirement groups with children/families in the community remotely through the Zoom platform.

### Shining Path

A light installation initiative took place at the 12 O'Clock Hills, County Clare, on the Spring Equinox weekend of 19th, 20th and 21st March, 2021. This project lit up a section of the 12 O'Clock Hill path with LED lights of multiple colours

(Red, White, Blue, Green,) undulating along the hiking trail between the 12 O'Clock Hills, Lower and Main summits, in East Clare. This project was recorded with photos and drone footage to be shown online.

### Rock Art

Artist Roisin Kelly has delivered suitable rocks for the residents of Liscannor Nursing Home to create their own rock art. In this way, they can be reflective, creative, expressive and channel their thoughts into art. When they are all completed she will take them all to the sea wall in Clahane so their voices are heard along with rocks placed by other members of the community, sharing their own messages of hope during lockdown.

### Heritage Keep Well Activities 2021

The iCAN Project for 2021 is Daoine agus Áit: Connecting Our Communities. This proposal is to develop a shared project that will draw on a shared history and heritage to connect people with their place. These connections will be made through the creation of a Heritage Postcard Collection and the dissemination of printed cards by each community. This proposal is part funded by the Clare Keep Well Campaign.

### County Clare's Befriending service

County Clare's Befriending service is being offered by our four family resource centres and CLARECARE. The service is available to anyone with limited social contacts or who is feeling particularly isolated and lonely. Befriending Services provide companionship by calling their service users at least once a week. Visit the KeepWell page for more information on your local befriending service.

### Befriending Services in County Clare

This service is for anyone with limited social contacts or who is feeling particularly isolated and lonely. The purpose of the Befriending Services is to provide companionship by calling you at least once a week.

Name	Location	Contact Details
<a href="#">North West Clare Family Resource Centre</a> 9am – 4pm (Mon-Fri)	Parliament Street, Ennistymon, Co Clare, V95 NX86	065-7071144 info@northwestclarefrc.ie
<a href="#">Shannon Family Resource Centre</a> 9:30am – 4:30pm (Mon-Thurs) 9:30am – 1pm (Fri)	Rineanna View Estate, Shannon, Co. Clare, V14 XV97	061 707 600 shannonfrc@gmail.com
<a href="#">West Clare Family Resource Centre</a> 9am – 5pm (Mon-Fri)	Community Centre, O'Gorman Street, Kilrush	065 905 2173 info@westclarefrc.ie
<a href="#">Killaloe/Ballina Family Resource Centre</a> 10am -1pm (Mon – Fri)	The Green, Killaloe, Co. Clare	061 374 741 info@kbfrc.ie
<a href="#">CLARECARE</a> 9:30am – 5pm (Mon-Fri)	Harmony Row Ennis, Co Clare V95 F8CN	065 682 8178 info@clarecare.ie

# WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

## KILRUSH LEA

### Bollards for Annagh National School

West Clare MD was contacted by the principal of Annagh NS seeking assistance in placing a row of bollards at the road edge. The row of bollards will separate vehicular traffic from pupils, and will provide the pupils with a safe means of accessing the bus park and car park adjacent to the school. The bollards were put in place prior to March 1st and the return to school of the infants, first and second classes.



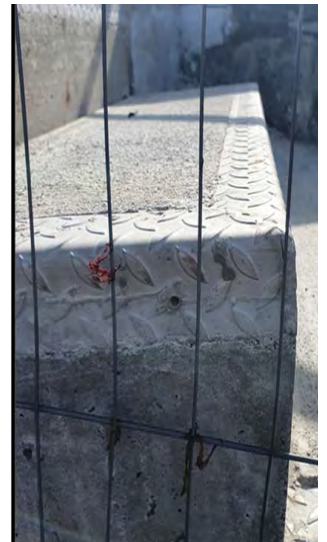
*Annagh National School.  
Recently installed traffic bollards.*

### Safe pedestrian access steps to and from Quilty Beach

Clare County Council received funding for Quilty village from the Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVR). The funding was granted to allow Clare County Council enhance pedestrian access to the beach via the slip located in the village itself. The West Clare MD recently commenced construction of the pedestrian access steps. We hope to complete the installation of stainless steel hand railing shortly.



*Pedestrian access steps. Viewed from slipway.*



*Pedestrian access. Metal edge detail on steps.*



*Annagh National School.  
Recently installed traffic bollards.*



*Pedestrian access steps. Viewed from roadside footpath.*

# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## HOUSING



In spite of Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions the clocks have moved forward and so too do our capital projects. On 26th March the design team were appointed for the development of 25 much-needed social housing units on Drumcliff Road in Ennis. As previously advised, many of our capital projects are delayed as a result of Level 5 restrictions and we are eagerly anticipating the Government announcement on the easing of restrictions. Staff continue to work remotely and remain fully committed to the provision of services, albeit that the manner of service delivery has changed.

The housing public interface is available by appointment only in line with Level 5 restrictions. Appointments are facilitated only where the business of the appointment is deemed necessary by the appropriate line manager for the responsible service area.

### Housing in numbers

Breakdown of tenancies by Municipal District (including RAS and leasing):		
	Social housing*	HAP
Ennis	1,148	647
Shannon	605	155
West Clare	929	392
Killaloe	377	165
Inter Authority HAP		55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,059</b>	<b>1,414</b>

2,563 LA tenancies	1,414 HAP tenancies	214 RAS tenancies
291 leased properties	2,660 LA properties	3,123 Rent accounts

### Summary of activity

Covid-19 restrictions continue to impact on service areas with essential services as determined continuing. The impact of these challenges is reflected in the numbers hereunder.

Housing allocations	
Offers issued (from (23.02.2021 to 24.03.2021)	19
Offers refused	4
AHB nominations	23
Tenancies signed up	17
Tenancies terminated	21

Voids work programme (at end March)	
Voids/casual vacancies	52
Acquired properties (works on-going)	22
Average vacancy period	128 days
Number voids returned to stock	7
Average spend	€24,414

Housing maintenance calls	
March	376

### Private rented inspections

\*Inspections suspended for March under Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions.

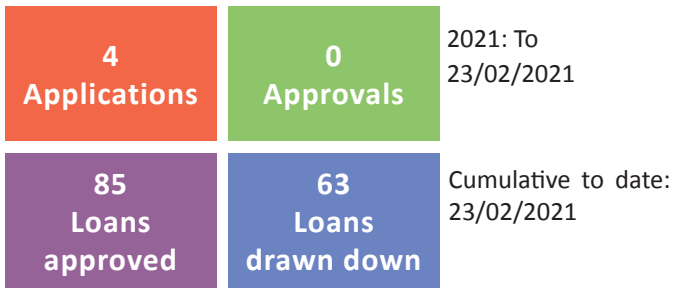
Private rented inspections	
March	0

### Housing grants

Grants approved for March 2021		
Grant type	Number of approvals	Value of works (€)
Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability	4	72,985
Housing Aid for Older People	5	20,400
Mobility Aids Grant	5	19,440
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>112,825</b>



## Rebuilding Ireland home loan



one discharged/self-discharged and left homeless services, two returned to family/friends, two went to rehab/hospital.

Homeless presentations to 21st March, 2021	
New presentations	31
Repeat presentations	106

Status as of 21st March, 2021				
	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	12	0	1
Cusack Lodge	4	5	8	1
Westbrook	0	14	0	1
Ashford Court	5	11	8	1
<b>Winter Initiative</b>	0	5	0	1
EA Families	3	3	5	1
EA Individuals	0	10	0	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>

## Homeless

Homeless services are an essential service and remain available to anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Clare Homeless Action Team (HAT) office is open by appointment during office hours and can be contacted on 065 684 6291.

Clare HAT continue our focus on exits from homeless services and, during the period 21st February, 2021, to 21st March, 2021: eight households exited from homeless services; of these eight households, three housed in own door properties through HAP, leasing, AHB and local authority allocations,

## SPORTS & RECREATION



As a result of Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions there are limited facilities open. That said, Active Ennis/Kilrush are engaged in a number of ancillary projects.

### Operations

#### Active Ennis Leisure Complex

Active Ennis Leisure Complex remains closed. The site is open to accommodate access to the Bring Banks between 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

#### Active Ennis John O’Sullivan Park, Lees Road

The park is open to the public for individual exercise only. No bookings or organised training/matches/gatherings or events

permitted. All users are advised to observe the Government/HSE guidelines.

#### Active Ennis Tim Smythe Park

This park is also open to the public for individual exercise only. No bookings or organised training/matches/gatherings or events are permitted. Playgrounds are accessible with appropriate parental supervision.

It is noted how vital our public parks are in the current climate, we are experiencing a significant increase in usage and request the public's continued compliance with public health advice.

### Clare Sports Partnership

Clare Sports Partnership continues to work with clubs and the community in the active participation in sport in the county. For further details on activities please check out [www.claresports.ie](http://www.claresports.ie)



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## Update on capital programme

SHIP capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start date	Completion date
Shannon PPP	51	Under construction – essential designation 23 units – due to complete Q2 2021 28 units – due to complete Q3 2021	Q4 2019	Q3 2021
Ashline, Ennis	40	Construction stage – stalled due to Covid-19 Forecast completion Q1 2022	Q3 2020	Q1 2022
Milltown Malbay	27	Construction stage – stalled due to Covid-19 Forecast completion Q1 2022	Q4 2020	Q1 2022
Tulla	25	Construction stage – stalled due to Covid-19 Forecast completion Q1 2022	Q4 2020	Q1 2022
Newmarket on Fergus	18	Construction stage – stalled due to Covid-19	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Doonbeg Sites	2	Under construction – essential designation	Q4 2020	Q2 2021
Scarriff	18	Stage 2 app. refused by DHPLG Rev. stage 2 app. being prepared	Q3 2021	Q3 2022
Roslevan, Tulla Road	8	Stage 3 application with DHPLG	Q2 2021	Q2 2022
Doonbeg Lands	8	Stage 2 application with DHPLG	Q3 2021	Q3 2022
Clarecastle	2	Single stage approved by DHPLG Contract ready to be awarded	Q2 2021	Q4 2021
Drumcliff Road, Ennis	26	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG Design Team appointed	Q4 2021	Q4 2022
Sixmilebridge	16	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG Design Team appointed	Q4 2021	Q4 2022
Ennistymon	30	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG Procuring Design Team	Q4 2021	Q4 2022
Ballaghboy, Quin Road, Ennis (TA)	5	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG Procuring Design Team	Q3 2021	Q3 2022
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>276</b>			
Bruachlan, Westbury (CoOperative Housing Ireland)	22	CALF – Property transfer complete, reapply for planning permission	Q4 2021	Q4 2022
Gleann Cora, Newmarket on Fergus (CoOperative Housing Ireland)	2	CALF acquisition approved Under construction – to close in 2021	Q1 2020	Q2 2021
Edenvale (Newgrove Housing Association)	4	CAS – Stage 2 with Dept. for approval	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Ballymacaula, Ennis (Cluid)	2	Part V	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>30</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>306</b>			

# CULTURAL SERVICES – LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM, ARCHIVES

## Clare County Library

Delivery service

3,165 deliveries

Stock deliveries continue to people's homes.

## Online resources

3,288 E-Books	4,108 E-Audiobooks	2,333 E-Magazines
2,479 Online Courses	14,291 Press Reader	182 Transparent Languages

E-Audiobooks surpass e-books in popularity with e-magazines still popular as well.

## TTRS (Touch type, read and spell)

Staff have engaged with 95 primary schools, two secondary schools and with the LCETB on the rollout of these licences which are a multi-sensory approach to improving literacy and spelling skills. Sixty-two teachers have attended training sessions, 511 licences have been requested with 306 licences in use. Further engagement will be made with Direct Provision centres in relation to TTRS.

Staff are also providing one to one digital literacy support over the phone for targeted groups.

### Marketing



146 posts,  
1,235 likes,  
330 shares,  
115 comments



102 posts,  
1,370 likes,  
54 comments



111 posts,  
427 likes,  
152 retweets,  
14 comments



Concertina player Liam O'Brien plays at the Junior Crehan Tribute Concert as part of Clare Reads.

## Library Programming

Clare County Library held a number of online events as part of the Clare Reads initiative. Other initiatives included:

- 24 attended a talk on happiness with Rev Bob Vernon on Tuesday, 9th March
- 25 attended a talk on rural electrification with Dr Sorcha O'Brien on Thursday, 11th March
- There was a tribute concert to Junior Crehan on Tuesday, 23rd March, followed by a Q&A with his daughter, Angela Crotty
- Over 200 attended the interview with Niall Williams on Tuesday, 30th March, in partnership with EBCF.

Clare County Library participated in Seachtain na Gaeilge events with a number of online story time sessions and cartoon drawing workshops with Aidan Courtney. Clare County library hosted four online events for Teen Week in March and engaged with secondary schools in Ennis and Ennistymon.

## Creative Ireland

The Creative Ireland Clare Project Award grants were awarded to the following groups/individuals: Philip Murphy for his podcast with Eddie Lenihan, Kildysart Drama Society for their '21 Year Lookback' documentary, the 'Turf Shed' Band, Féile Brian Ború, Louise O'Connor for her podcast series, Marie Connole for online drawing classes, Kilnamona Development Association, Creevagh Art and Archaeology Collective, Oliver O'Connell for his Burren poetry work, Pamela Finn for a videocast documentary series on Clare craftspeople, Enda Gallery for an innovative music project, Christy McNamara for his Spencilhill Fair project, Ennis Players, Maeve Stone for the 'Rising Tide' project, Banner Theatre Company, Micheál Mac Gearailt with Shannon Archaeological and Historical Society for a placenames project, Ennis Book Club Festival, Sparks Youth Film Festival, Ruairí McKiernan for his 'Creative Souls of Clare' podcast series and the Musicale Festival with Music Generation. All projects will be completed by November 2021.

Sheila Quinn has been appointed as Curator for the Clare Cruinniú na nÓg festival which will take place on 12th June. Eddie Lenihan entertained the residents of Cahercalla Community Hospital with a selection of folk tales and stories. Another storytelling session for all Clare nursing homes will be organised in April.

### Decade of Centenaries

Clare County Library funded a Hedge School discussion with History Ireland on 'Clare in the Revolutionary Decade'. The panel consisted of Tomás Mac Conmara, Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc, Joe Power and Cécile Gordon of the Military Archives and was chaired by Tommy Graham, editor of History Ireland. A podcast of the discussion can be found on [https://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/library/doc\\_info.htm](https://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/library/doc_info.htm) and on the History Ireland website.

### Healthy Ireland

Five Healthy Ireland events were delivered this month.

- Two chair yoga classes were successfully delivered which were well attended and excellent feedback was received from participants. Among the participants were residents from a number of nursing homes throughout the county, Brothers of Charity service users, members of active retirement groups and other individuals.
- Two Tai Chi workshops are planned to take place later in the month, and a large number of bookings have been received for both workshops.
- A nutrition workshop entitled 'Food to boost your mood' was delivered by consultant dietitian Gillian McConnell and was very well attended by both Council staff and members of the community. A follow-up workshop on 'food to boost your immune system' is planned for April.

### Work Matters

- Jennifer Smith from Jayarel Consulting delivered a presentation on the skills and techniques needed to master the online interview in Scariff Library.

### Clare Arts Office

- Following an audit of the needs of the Festivals and Events sector in the county a training programme commenced as part of a Capacity Building initiative with Festivals.
- Five Clare film makers were selected for the second round of the Engine Shorts scheme – a scheme to support and develop emerging film makers in Clare, run in conjunction with Film in Limerick and Limerick and Tipperary Arts Offices, and supported by LCETB.
- Nuala Kennedy and Tara Breen were announced as the recipients of the Duala Scheme in association with the Irish Traditional Music Archive, as was Diarmuid de Faoite.
- Tim Collins (composer), Marie Connole (Artist) and Dermott Petty (Theatre) received commissions under the Decade of Centenaries programme.
- Maeve Stone (film maker) was announced as the recipient of the Platform 31 bursary.
- The Book of Hope by Ana Colomer was published through

the Keep Well programme. A light installation on the 12 O'Clock Hills by Tim Humphries illuminated the East Clare skyline for the Spring Equinox. Jenny Bassett began a Creativity Course with Clare Women's Network through the Keep Well Initiative.

- The Arts Officer adjudicated at the LEO Student Enterprise Awards.
- A presentation by the WRAP fund was made to the SPC and two film productions were assisted in March.
- The Arts Officer attended the RIOT Sligo virtual conference to explore culture as a catalyst for economic recovery and place making.

### Clare Museum

- Two-hundred photos of the museum collection were taken and will go online.
- A batch of photographs from 2014 are awaiting upload to the library website.
- A third video for the Keep Well campaign about processing fleece into a ball of wool has been completed.
- A press release on the Scott family collection, received before Christmas is pending submission. This was featured on the museum Facebook page and received over 1,500 views.
- Research for the Strategic Plan is ongoing and the Hillery Collection is being photographed as part of the process.
- Spot checks on the collection has been conducted during the month, along with other requirements for MSPi accreditation.

### Clare Local Studies and Archives

The Local Studies Centre received old school roll books and attendance registers for Ballycar National School, Newmarket-on-Fergus, from 1891 to 2013. Once calendared, these will be deposited in the county archives in Beechpark. President Michael D. Higgins is a past pupil of this school.

A set of European postcards from the mid-1920s were donated to the Local Studies Centre, the gift of the O'Brien family of Ballyalla, Ennis. The postcards were sent

by Aubrey O'Brien from the Balkans and the Adriatic, Italy, Greece and Turkey, a handful of years after the end of the Great War, and give a vivid portrait of that part of Europe after the tumult of war.

Work continues on digitising the Electoral Registers.



Postcards from 1920s Italy.

## KILLALOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

### Schedule of Municipal District Works

The Killaloe Schedule of Municipal District Works (SMDW) was on the agenda at the March Meeting of the Killaloe MD. Works ranging from road restoration and maintenance to drainage works and safety works were discussed. The SMDW was adopted by all members.

### Works in design

#### **Tubbernurra Banes Field**

Killaloe MD is working with General Design in HQ in putting together a 'construction ready' design for the park in Killaloe in advance of any funding being sourced.

#### **Clooney TVR**

The Clooney TVR project is moving into the Part VIII planning phase this week. Post submissions, the scheme will go before the members of the MD in the coming months. The scheme will involve new footway infrastructure being built in the village along with traffic calming.

#### **Broadford Village**

Designs at Broadford Village in relation to funds secured via CLAR grants and Low Cost Safety grant are ongoing with a Section 38 re traffic calming going before the members at the March MD meeting.

### Submissions

#### **Active Travel**

The MD awaits responses from the Department in relation to an Active Travel submission for funding made earlier in the year.

#### **Climate adaptation and Resilience Fund**

The MD is currently preparing a submission aimed at dealing with areas in the MD where assets are at risk of flooding.

#### **Iniscealtra and Killaloe Ballina Plan**

The MD continues to provide assistance to the Tourism Department and Forward Planning sections in relation to these projects.

#### **Level 5 restrictions**

The outdoor staff team continue to provide essential repair and maintenance to the Areas roads during Level 5 restrictions. Works are concentrated on drainage on regional roads at this time.

### Amenities

#### **Ballycuggeran**

The lease of the shop unit has been awarded after competitive tender. It is expected that a service including food will be available at the amenity from Easter subject to restrictions allowing.

# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

## TRANSPORTATION

### Roadworks Programme and Operations

Clare County Council has received its road grant allocations for 2021. The overall allocation for Roads in the 2021 Roadworks Programme is €34.5m which comprises TII and DoT grant allocations along with IPBMI and own resource allocations.

The Roadworks Programme for 2021 has been prepared as part of the SMDW for 2021 and has been adopted by all four Municipal District meetings in March.

Applications have been invited for works under the Community Involvement Scheme (CIS). The scheme encourages a joint approach between Clare County Council and groups of local residents and landowners for the restoration of public roads which are mainly local or cul de sac roads and is based on a community contribution of 15 per cent towards the cost of the works.

### Strategic Transportation

#### Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy

The Draft Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) document was approved by the National Transport Authority (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, 2020, and was on public display for an eight-week period up to 30th October. There were over 112 submissions during the process which the NTA are now considering. A second round of consultation has commenced recently and a presentation has been made by the NTA to the Physical Development SPC in February. The NTA intend to finalise the strategy by September/October 2021.

#### Connecting Ireland

This project commenced in 2021 and is being led by the National Transport Authority. The aim of the project is to improve the public transport service provision in Clare by improving scheduling, dealing with gaps in the service and by introducing new public transport routes. Liaison and information sharing has commenced between the NTA and Clare County Council Municipal Districts and Road Design Section to support the NTA in a comprehensive rollout of the project.

#### Active Travel Programme 2021

Further to the announcement of the Active Travel Programme 2021, Clare County Council has engaged with the NTA, the funding authority for this programme, in formulating a portfolio of projects across all MDs in Clare. The Active Travel Fund is part of the overall Sustainable Transport Measures Grant (STMG)

Programme. The programme is: Multi-Annual, managed by NTA Project Gateways, flexible, urban-focused, a potential source of ERDF/URDF co-funding and broad in scope and scale. Funding for the Active Travel 2021 programme was announced by the NTA for County Clare on March 29th, 2021, and the total allocation for projects across all MDs in the county is €5,986,000.

Provision of high-quality footpaths and cycleways enhances the activity and liveliness of urban areas by enabling people to connect with their town or village. It is important that residents and visitors of all ages can shop, access schools, workplaces, and recreation amenities safely and smoothly along well-built footpaths and cycling infrastructure.

The Active Travel Programme is year 1 of a multi-annual active travel programme and the projects funded by the current announcement are those that can be delivered or advanced in 2021. For projects that could not be delivered in 2021, the NTA has given approval for some projects to either proceed to the next stage of design or await the outcome of strategies currently being prepared, including the mobility plans that are funded under this programme. This will lead to a further programmed of projects.

Active Travel: 2021 Allocations Clare County Council		
CE/21/0001	Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge Package - Quinn, Creagh, Doonbeg, Cooraclare, Carrigaholt, Inagh	€230,000
CE/21/0002	Cycle Schemes - Ennis	€150,000
CE/21/0003	Footpath Package A - Ennis	€360,000
CE/21/0004	Footpath Package B - Doonbeg, Kilmihil, Cross, Labasheeda, Connolly, Quilty, Carrigaholt, Kilrush, Meelick, Kilbaha, Kilmurry Village, Sixmilebridge, Kildysart, Kilmaley, Kilkee	€444,000
CE/21/0005	Miltown Malbay Footpaths	€120,000
CE/21/0006	Ennistymon/Lahinch Footpath Improvements and Public Lighting	€120,000
CE/21/0007	Doolin Footpaths and Pedestrian Crossing	€170,000
CE/21/0008	Spanish Point Connectivity	€160,000
CE/21/0009	Ballycasey Close Green Area - Shannon Footpaths	€375,000
CE/21/0010	Shannon Banks River Walk	€105,000
CE/21/0011	Killaloe Footpaths	€200,000

CE/21/0012	Pedestrian Crossings - Lisdoonvarna	€70,000
CE/21/0013	Public Lighting - Ennis	€140,000
CE/21/0014	Drumindoora Walking/Cycling Infrastructure	€200,000
CE/21/0015	Kilrush Walking/Cycling Infrastructure 1	€200,000
CE/21/0016	Lahinch Cycle Lane	€175,000
CE/21/0017	Bus Infrastructure - Cusheen	€47,000
CE/21/0018	Transport Studies / Mobility Plans / ABTA (Package)	€450,000
CE/21/0019	Quinn Village Footpaths	€120,000
CE/21/0020	Kilrush Walking / Cycling Infrastructure 2	€200,000
CE/21/0021	Tulla Footpaths	€250,000
CE/21/0022	Lissycassey Footpaths	€250,000
CE/21/0023	Village Enhancement, Co-Creating	€950,000
CE/21/0024	Safe to Schools Programme - Support Infrastructure	€100,000
CE/21/0025	Low Cost Junction Tightening/ Pedestrian Crossing Schemes	€100,000
CE/21/0026	Light Segregation Cycle Schemes	€100,000
CE/21/0027	Urban Mobility Plans/Active Travel Network Plans	€100,000
CE/21/0028	Low-Cost Permeability Measures	€100,000
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>€5,986,000</b>

Source: NTA.

## Public lighting

Cork County Council published the tender for the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project in County Clare and four other counties on 1st October, 2020. The tenders for the contract and the consultants are currently in review stage.

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

- Internet: Direct reporting on our website – [www.airtricitysolutions.com](http://www.airtricitysolutions.com)
- 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, March 2021

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

## TII road safety projects – monthly progress

A progress meeting with the TII was held on 27th January, 2021.

Project	Progress update
TII HD15 sites	<p>For the N85:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The revised concept design for Clareabbey roundabout has been approved by the TII. Modelling of the proposed changes and their effects on the traffic flow is necessary.</li> <li>• The TII are of the view that any proposed design for the Lahinch Rd/Shanaway Rd junction should incorporate Active Travel Strategy and Plan for the wider area.</li> </ul> <p>For the N68:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Derrycrossaun junction design and feasibility report is completed and has been submitted to the TII for approval. Principal project approval received from the TII in January 2021. Design feedback has been received from the TII and these amendments have been incorporated in the detail design. The detail drawings have been resubmitted to the TII for final approval.</li> </ul>
TII HD17 sites	<p>For the N68:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further to onsite inspections at Cranny, Crag and Parknamoney junctions the TII have requested the RDO to progress with detailed site surveys, conceptual designs and Feasibility and Option Reports.</li> </ul> <p>For the N67:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topographical surveys of the identified junctions for phase 1 is now complete, i.e. Galway Border to Ballyvaughan. Revised design required for a number of these junctions, i.e. New Church and N67/ L50221</li> <li>• A revised design for Minster Place, Kilkee has been approved by the TII. The Feasibility and Options Report has been submitted to the TII, CCC awaiting formal approval to progress to next stage.</li> </ul>

## Low-cost safety schemes: monthly progress, March 2021

Road number	Location of LCS	Description of proposed LCS	Progress update
R352	R352/ Corrovorrin junction, Tulla Road, Ennis	LCS to improve the traffic movements of the junction from Kevin Barry Ave onto the R352.	Survey substantially completed. Design phase has commenced.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Junction of R462 & R471	Pedestrian crossing in the Square, Sixmilebridge	Provide a controlled pedestrian crossing point across on the R462 in Sixmilebridge.	Survey Completed. Design phase has commenced.	L4058-2 & L4062	L4058/L4062 Junction in Feakle	Provide a controlled pedestrian crossing point serving the National School and two housing estates.	Survey Completed
R478 / L10381	Doonagore	Improve sightlines approaching R478 from southern side L10381.	Survey Completed	R460/ L1010	Lough Bunny	Improve sightlines onto the L1010 from both sides of junction. Improving signage and lining at the junction, removing vegetation.	Survey Completed. Design phase has commenced.
L4190-7/ L8272-0	Lismulbreeda	Warning signs and to slow down traffic on the approaches to the bend.	Survey Completed	L4611-0	L4611-0 Newpark Ennis	Provide a controlled crossing point. Where footpaths are discontinuous.	Survey to be Completed
R463/ R466	O'Briens Bridge/ Bridgetown Junction	LCS with new signage and lining. Improve sightlines by removing existing vegetation.	Survey substantially completed. Design phase has commenced.				
R352	R352 Spancill Hill to Tooreen	Renew existing road lining, cut back vegetation, SLOW markings on road, 80kph repeater signs, centre and edge lining.	Survey to be Completed				
L-3050-0	Clonlara primary school on the L3050-0	Provide a controlled pedestrian crossing point at the primary school in Clonlara.	Survey to be Completed				
R476/ L5260	Kilnaboy	Improve sightline exiting the L5260 on to the R476. Improving signage and lining at the junction, removing vegetation.	Survey Completed. Design phase has commenced.				
R465-82	Broadford National School on the R465	Provide a controlled pedestrian crossing point serving the National School the GAA sports grounds and a housing estate	Survey Completed				
L2050	Cahill's Hill on Local road from Killmer Ferry to Cooraclare	Improved signage and a pull in area for motorists.	Survey Completed				

### Other projects: monthly update, March 2021

Project	Progress update
EuroVelo 1	Funding of €182,000 was secured from the Department of Transport (DoT) for the implementation of the EuroVelo route signage in County Clare. Procurement is completed and the signage installation is near completion. Consultation with community groups has commenced to identify optimal locations for map boards and cycle stands. Marketing and promotion of the route is being progressed.
Liaison with NTA regarding bus stops	<p>Wheelchair accessible bus stop on Bothar Linne, Shannon Town:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design is completed and issued to the Shannon MD</li> <li>The project received €30,733 in NTA funding</li> <li>A Preliminary Safety and Health Plan have been issued to the Shannon MD. Works commenced in late November. Works well underway with the remainder to be completed in 2021</li> <li>Works will recommence once Covid 19 restrictions permit.</li> </ul>



Liaison with NTA regarding bus shelters	NTA have assessed proposed locations. Six new bus shelters (Kilkee, Lisdoonvarna, Crusheen, Newmarket, Limerick Rd Ennis and Westbury) and upgrading five existing bus shelters in Shannon. Prior to a formal application the NTA have requested costs relating to the civil works. Contract documents have been completed and uploaded on eTenders. Tenders have been assessed and a subsequent funding application has been sent to the NTA for approval.
Road Schedule & Queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Search requests from the public and Municipal Districts regarding the road schedule are being carried out on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>Updates to the roads schedule is carried out as updates are being received.</li> </ul>
Circular RW 10/2020 – Active Travel Measures Allocations 2020	22020 element completed. Active Travel Carry Over List – Surveying and designs have initiated in conjunction with MDs.
Circular RW 09/2020 – Climate Change Adaptation Allocations 2020	2020 element completed. The 2021 remaining element is near completion.
Circular RST 04/2019 Safe Overtaking Width for Cyclists Signs	Clare County Council received an allocation of €29,350 from the Department of Transport for the provision of safe overtaking width signs for cyclists. Installation process is ongoing
Cycle counts	Ongoing monitoring of cycle counts at four locations in Ennis and one in Lahinch.
Planning Reports	Planning reports are being provided for the Planning Department on a continuous basis
Cycle Infrastructure County Clare	Surveying and mapping of the existing cycle infrastructure for the entire county has commenced and will continue as an ongoing project for 2021. Collaboration with IT and GIS has also commenced to find an optimal solution to develop an information map available for public view/download as an app.

NTA Active Travel Circular (2021)	An active travel Projects Proposition List was submitted to the NTA for a wide range of active travel projects across all MDs on 1st February, 2021.
R352 Henchy's Cross Junction	A Specific Improvement Grant Application for R352 (Henchy's Cross) upgrade was submitted to the Department of Transport on 18th November, 2020, in order to progress the project to the next phase. The Department of Transport has allocated €100,000 in February 2021 for specific improvement works.
Circular RW 06/2021 Climate Adaptation and Resilience Works 2021	A funding application is being prepared for submission to the Department of Transport.

## Bridge Rehabilitation – Monthly Update March 2021

2021 Bridge Rehabilitation grant is €687,000 for 30 no. bridges.

- AA Screening: Consultant appointed
- Bunratty Bridge: Meeting on site to be arranged with Waiting National Monuments when Covid restrictions are lifted.
- Stonepark Bridge: Fisheries Derogation applied for, road closure will be required
- Smithstown Bridge: Delayed with water levels and Covid restrictions. Works recommenced 15th March to be complete week ending 9th April
- Ballyalla Bridge: Delayed with water levels and Covid restrictions. Works recommenced 15th March to be complete week ending 9th April
- Sragh Bridge: Structural investigations to be complete when Covid restrictions are lifted. Initial investigation carried out 16th March
- Corlea Bridge: Tenders returned to be assessed
- Pollagoona Bridge: Tenders returned to be assessed
- Derrynacaw Bridge: Tenders returned to be assessed
- Latoon Masonry Bridge: Design ongoing- tender drawings issued for review. Stage 2 Screening required
- Derrycon Bridge: Preparing Tender Documents
- Birchpark Bridge: Preparing Tender Documents.

### Other Bridge Works

- Moanagh Bridge: Emergency repair works completed, other work to be completed when water levels reduce
- Killestry Bridge: Malachy Walsh & Partners appointed as designers, design commenced, Trial hole to locate services to be carried out 23rd March
- Wooden Bridge Springfield: Survey to be carried out, meeting to be arranged with Waterways Ireland when Covid restrictions are lifted
- Check condition of bridges notified by MDs.

## 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 National Framework for Living with Covid-19.

The Health and Safety Team continued to progress their Schedule of Workplace Risk Assessment and Safety Statement reviews. An Annual Safety Report was compiled for 2020 for Management Review with a set of Top Level H&S Objectives agreed for implementation during 2021 in order to continuously improve the Health & Safety Performance of the Organisation. An Internal H&S Audit of Clare County Fire & Rescue Services Occupational Health & Safety Management System was conducted in advance of a National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) ISO 45001 Certification Audit.

## General Design

### Cross Community Digital Hub



Cross Community Digital Hub.

A new Digital Hub community facility which will provide for remote working is nearing completion and is situated within the former National School in Cross, Kilrush. Clare County Council in partnership with the Kilballyowen Development Company Ltd provided this facility.

### Ennis Digital Hub

It is hoped that DigiClare's Ennis Digital Hub and Innovation Centre, located at our Quin Road Campus Building, will resume construction when Covid-19 restrictions are lifted in the coming weeks. Second fixing, electrical and mechanical had just commenced prior to the shutdown.

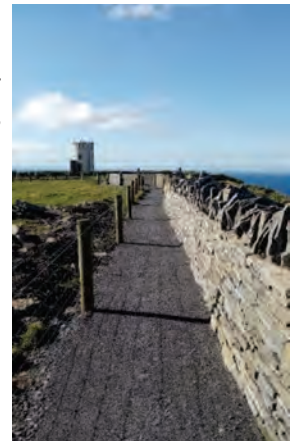
The Hub will consist of a 12-person hot desk open plan office area that also contains two glazed offices and privacy booths along with a meeting/video conferencing space, coffee dock and toilet facilities. There are also three incubation offices for start-up businesses located separately in the space.

### Town and Village Renewal Scheme for Sixmilebridge

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme for Sixmilebridge is currently underway. This project is in the very early stages but has progressed from the initial design brief to preliminary design proposal drawings.

### Cliffs of Moher footpath upgrade

Works on the Cliffs of Moher Footpath is ongoing with works approximately 80 per cent complete.



Cliffs of Moher footpath upgrade.

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## CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

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Despite the enduring restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, the PMO Team made good progress on the varied list of projects being managed and delivered across the County. Some of the main developments during March are as follows.

### Cloughaninchy Coastal Protection Works

Virtual meetings and correspondence is ongoing with landowners to inform them of the detailed design for the project. Once all landowners have agreed to give consent to proceed, the tender process for the appointment of a contractor to carry out the works can commence.

### Doolin Pier Visitors Services Building

Negotiations are at an advanced stage regarding the acquisition of third party lands that would be of benefit to the project. The design is now being developed based on the revised footprint, and a baseline Ecological assessment of the site is proceeding in parallel. A cross-directorate team consisting of the PMO, the

Rural Development Directorate and West Clare MD staff met with the Project Consultants Bucholz McEvoy in recent weeks for a design workshop, which allowed agreement and clarity of key building requirements based on operational needs. Concept design to be agreed in April 2021, following which design can be further refined in preparation for consultation process during summer 2021. It is expected that we will be in a position to submit the Planning Application to An Bord Pleanála by the end of September 2021

### Ennis Lower Flood Relief Scheme

Work is now almost complete on the section of flood protection wall from the Club Bridge to Bank Place and is the final section of the Town Flood Defences along the River Fergus. The limestone wall that fronts onto the river is now complete and the contractor is installing the heritage railing that will provide the necessary protection to the public. Work on the landscaping is continuing. The scheme will be completed by the end of April 2021.

### Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme

Work has now commenced on the final section of the scheme which involves the construction of a pump station. The contractor has begun piling this section and the works will take approximately two months to complete. Work is continuing on the landscaping of the embankment along the flood protection wall. This area has been planted with various species of native hedgerow following consultation with experts in landscaping and biodiversity. Landscaping and fencing are well under way. Riverside works to do with the removal of the original sluices and the connection of the new sluices to the river via constructed channels will take place in May when the environmental window allows. The overall project is on programme to be completed in August 2021. Related to this project, we were advised in early March that we were successful in our application for ORIS funding to provide a Walk/Cycleway alongside the Flood Defence between the Quin Road in Ennis and the N85 Bridge at Clareabbey, Clarecastle. Survey and detailed design is ongoing at present with the works expected to be tendered in the coming weeks.

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

The project team consisting of the Project Management Office, Clare County Council in conjunction with the Mid West Regional Road Design Office and Roughan & O'Donovan Consulting Engineers are continuing with the data gathering and information that will be required as part of An Bord Pleanála's decision making process. An Bord Pleanála have advised that they will update us on the process before 30th April, 2021. Clare County Council continue to welcome any queries from affected landowners regarding the scheme.

### Errinagh Canal bank walkway

In anticipation of work being allowed to resume post the Covid Level 5 restrictions, Clare County Council is currently reviewing construction aspects with key stakeholders including the NPWS. Our invasive species contractor was onsite during March 2021 and removed Giant Hogweed vegetation in line with Invasive Species Management Plan for the site. It is envisaged that works will be completed during the summer months.

### Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass

The Project Team continue to progress the delivery of this important piece of infrastructure and are due to meet again virtually in early April. The full set of tender documents have now been issued for Ministerial Approval ahead of going to Tender for the Main Works Contract. Concurrently, final third-party observations on the detailed design and remaining land agreements are now being incorporated in the final suite of tender documents ahead of going to Tender in Spring 2021. The advance works contract is progressing well on site and remains on programme with a completion date of the end of May. Site clearance works are substantially complete with the traffic management proposed on the R494 from the Roolagh junction towards Ballina scheduled to commence from 12th April for a two-week period. Works are currently progressing simultaneously on accommodation works,

boundary treatments and access road construction.

The Archaeological Works are also nearing completion with the remaining works now being confined to one specific area. Archaeology investigations are also scheduled to be completed on the canal island in the coming weeks, following the site clearance. Completion of these works is expected in early May 2021. Land Acquisition continues to be progressed with a significant number of cases completed while others are nearing finalisation. A small number of others are being dealt with through the Arbitration process which were suspended due to the Covid-19 restrictions but expected to resume in late May.

### Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme

The Project Steering Group led by Clare County Council and including the OPW continues to meet with our Consultants Jeremy Benn Associates (JBA) and JB Barry (JBB) online each month. Seventy-five per cent of the drone survey element has now been completed. The contractor continues to monitor weather conditions for a suitable window to complete this and all associated elements required for the bathymetric survey of Moore's Bay. The consultant has submitted a proposal to complete a preliminary modelling exercise which would assist in progressing the coastal modelling aspect of the project. The proposal is currently under review. Outstanding snags related to both the Topographical and CCTV surveys are nearing completion.

A third-party contractor continues to log information from the rainwater gauges and water level monitors. Draft Ground Investigation tender documents have been submitted by the consultant and are currently under review. Procurement of a contractor for these works will commence in April.

Information on the project can be accessed through our online information video and associated information literature available on the scheme website [www.kilkeefrs.ie](http://www.kilkeefrs.ie)

### Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR)

Following the submission of the Project Appraisal Suite of documents to the Dept of Transport in early November, we await their consideration and formal response to same. We had a clarification meeting with them in late February and now await their final deliberations regarding same. If favourable, we will be able to progress to the next stage of development.

### Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)

Members will be aware of a third-party application to seek a Judicial review of the Part VIII permission approved by the Members at the September meeting. The case was scheduled for mention in early March, following which it was adjourned until the 20th of April 2021. Upon a favourable outcome, we will be able to carry out the necessary Geotechnical Investigations to inform the detailed design and engage further with the relevant Landowners regarding acquisition of the necessary lands.

### Miltown Malbay Flood Relief Scheme

Clare County Council have commenced negotiation with affected landowners and detailed design is continuing. Site

investigation works are due to be carried out in the coming weeks which will conclude the detailed design stage. Following this, we will prepare the necessary tender documentation for the appointment of a contractor to carry out the works which we expect to commence later in the year.

### **N19 Shannon Airport Access Road**

Phase Two (Options Selection) is currently ongoing and following the recent public consultation phase, observations received are now being assessed by the project team and will feed into the final option selection. The non-intrusive utility survey works have been completed on site by Apex Surveys. The results of the survey will provide background utility mapping of the study area necessary to identify any constraints associated with the various options being considered. The ground investigation tenders were received on 12th March, 2021, and are currently being assessed by the project consultants, Fehily Timoney & Co. Following receipt of the Tender Report and CCC review, a letter of Intent will be issued before the end of April. The results of these investigatory works will help inform the emerging route selection process currently ongoing. A co-ordination meeting with the Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Project Team is scheduled for April to ensure constraints from either project are managed as they are progressed independently of each other.

### **N85 Upgrade at Kilnamona**

Funding of €100k has been provided by TII in their 2021 allocations to commence work on this much needed proposal. Following negotiations, approval from TII for the appointment of Consultants to commence the design process is expected in the coming days.

### **Piers and Harbours**

The 2021 annual application for funding under the Fishery Harbour and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme was submitted to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine last month. A total of 10 minor capital projects were identified and submitted. The Department have notified Clare County Council that all projects were successfully shortlisted.

Clare County Council now need to submit more detailed applications for each project and the successful projects will be announced at the end of April. Works on the successful projects will commence in May and need to be completed before the end of the year.

### **Remediation of sites containing ACM (Asbestos Containing Material)**

Clare County Council has engaged with expert Technical advisors RPS Consulting Engineers to appraise engineering and contracting needs for the project. On foot of this, RPS have issued a revised proposal based on provision of Engineering services for detailed design, procurement, and construction phases, involving managed removal and processing of waste deposits from the various sites. This proposal is currently under review with the objective of appointing the Technical expertise to allow main contract tender process and construction to proceed. In

the interim, the sites are rendered safe following the carrying out of temporary works. They are being routinely monitored and we will continue to liaise with the EPA and take direction in this regard.

### **Shannon Town and Environs Flood Relief Scheme**

The Project Steering Group led by Clare County Council and including the Office of Public Works and Shannon Airport Authority continues to meet with our Consultants RPS Consulting Engineers, online each month.

The current status of the third-party surveys for the scheme is as follows. The 'Letter of Intent' for the Geophysical Survey contract has been issued. Following receipt of the requested documents, a 'Letter of Acceptance' will be issued and a date for the pre-start meeting agreed. The consultant has assessed the submissions for the CCTV Flow Monitoring contract and issued the tender report for CCC review. A letter of Intent will be issued in early April. Tenders were received for the Topographical Survey contract which was tendered as a mini competition from the OPW Framework for Lot 1 Survey Services. Following review of the consultant's tender report, CCC have requested OPW approval to appoint the successful tenderer. On 16th February, five tender submissions were received for the Ground Investigation contract. The consultant is currently assessing these and will revert with a recommendation shortly.

The consultant has submitted a draft Hydrology method statement which is currently under review.

A decision on the planning application for permission to carry out the Ground Investigation works is due in April.

### **Spanish Point Coastal Protection Scheme**

Design, planning and environmental analysis reports have been completed for the project. Tenders were sought for the procurement of a supplier and contractor to complete the works and these are currently being assessed. It is expected to award the contract and commence the works in the coming weeks with a completion date prior to the summer bathing season commencing. Project status and timelines will be communicated to relevant stakeholders.

### **Springfield, Clonlara FRS**

A consultant hydro geologist is currently on site to carry out works related to karst features and connectivity. Also, a team of surveyors are on site to set out the land take and extent of the works. The section 50 application has been submitted to the OPW for their assessment and some further clarification is being prepared. The PMO continue to liaise with local residents on progress and negotiations with landowners to acquire the lands necessary to construct the embankments are ongoing. Construction work on site is expected to commence in late May of 2021 and work is expected to take 6 months to complete.

### **West Clare Railway Greenway**

Clare County Council have completed the tender assessment for Technical Advisors for Phases 2-4 of the West Clare Railway Greenway (Kilrush to Kilkee). A successful tenderer has been

identified as submitting the Most Economically Advantageous Tender. Communication is ongoing with the Dept of Transport regarding the necessary funding to award the Contract to the successful tenderer at the earliest juncture.

### White Strand Miltown Malbay, Coastal Protection Minor Works

Byrne Looby Consultants have prepared a Preliminary Design

Report in advance of submission of a Part VIII application for the project. The report is currently being reviewed by Clare County Council and options are being considered. The options have been communicated to stakeholders and landowners. Once a preferred option is decided on, detailed design and site investigation will be carried out. It is expected that we will be in a position to submit the Part VIII application later in the summer.

## FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

### Recent training courses

The following brigade training courses were held during March:

- All Brigades in Clare recommenced on station training on 8th March following a suspension of same since January due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- A new recruit firefighter for Kilrush successfully completed a three-week Recruit Induction Course.

### Safety Management System Audit

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service took part in a two day NSAI audit of compliance to the ISO 45001 Standard (Health & Safety). The auditor stated that he was extremely impressed with Clare County Fire & Rescue service, particularly in relation to our Covid-19 response. He noted that he had no negative findings from the audit, he further noted that throughout his two-day audit that he could find nothing amiss. The auditor recommended certification to the standard for the Brigade for a three-year period based on an Annual Surveillance Audit.

### Fire & Building Control Activities

Fire and Building Control Section Main Activities	February 2021	March 2021 (up to 29.03.21)	Year to date
Number of Emergency Calls Attended	66	48	185
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received	3	2	8
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted	4	1	7
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	0	0
Number of Disability Access Certificates Received	1	1	6
Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted	7	3	13
Number of Commencement Notices Received	23	39	83
Number of Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	1	1	5

(Note: In the March Monthly Report, the February figures related to 1st to 22nd February due to timing of report.)

### Clare Civil Defence

#### Operational Duties

Civil Defence provided the following operational duties:

- Members assisted the Irish Blood Transfusion Board with their blood donation clinics in Ennis and Ennistymon
- Members provided transport for patients to hospital appointments in Limerick and Cork
- Members provided transport for patients from their homes to vaccination appointments in Miltown Malbay, Ennis and Ballybrit
- Members provided 4x4 transport for a district nurse to housecalls in West Clare due to severe weather.

#### Members' Training and Professional Development

- The Civil Defence Officer attended a regional meeting of the Voluntary Emergency Services (VES) and the HSE to discuss the potential for members to assist with the roll out of the national vaccination programme.
- Members participated in and successfully completed a Swiftwater and Flood First Responder (SFFR) course held in Ennis. This brings the number of Clare Civil Defence trained Swiftwater and Flood First Responders to 72.
- Members completed a Cardiac First Responder Course.
- Members completed a Manual Handling Refresher Course.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect operations in the Environment section but the effects are mitigated by our adaptable business continuity planning. To date all services in the environment section have continued uninterrupted. The current Level 5 restrictions will affect our output in terms of inspections, interaction with the public, businesses, contractors and other agencies.

### Environmental Awareness

#### An Taisce Green Schools Programme

In acknowledgement of current Covid -19 restrictions, An Taisce Green Schools have announced that primary and secondary schools can now apply for their green flag up to 25th June, 2021. Our Greener Clare programme continues to support Green School Co-ordinators and we carry out Green School assessments as required.

#### Keep Clare Clean campaign

In March, we focused on raising awareness around littering and illegal dumping through:

1. Social media campaigns using #NotInOurNature videos, developed through the Anti-Dumping Initiative. Videos emphasised messaging around Bogus Waste collectors, Littering and Fly Tipping
2. The *Clare Echo* newspaper adverts this month included: Bogus Waste Collector Advert, Your County Your Waste, Love This Place, Leave No Trace.

#### National Tree Week

To celebrate National Tree Week (Sunday, 21st–Saturday, 27th March, 2021), Clare County Council together with the Tree Council of Ireland and Coillte arranged for 500 saplings to be distributed between 28 community voluntary groups across County Clare. Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, the Environment Wardens delivered these trees to designated community drop off points throughout Tree Week.

#### Shannon Town Pollinator Sites

The Environment Section is supporting the introduction of five new pollinator sites, as part of a pilot grassland management initiative in Shannon Town. Support is being provided through the Greener Clare programme as well as by the Waste Management Team. The Waste Management Team are accepting the grass cuttings from each of the pollinator sites for composting at the Central Waste Management Facility in Inagh at the required reduced mowing intervals. This is a vital support for the project, as grass needs to be removed to reduce soil enrichment and allow the native wildflowers to bloom.

### Water and Scientific Services

#### Water Pollution Complaints

A total of 32 complaints (Section 4 licensed sites, wastewater

#### An Taisce National Spring Clean



Registrations are now open for the An Taisce National Spring Clean 2021. An Taisce are advising groups that clean-ups taking part before the end of the Level 5 Covid restrictions (currently set at April 5th) should only be within households/support bubbles and within 5km from home.

We are supporting groups registered with National Spring Clean 2021, with litter pickers (limited supply) and any additional needs for gloves, bags, Hi Vis vests, as well as a free pass to one of our Waste Transfer Facilities.

We currently have 115 groups from Clare registered for the An Taisce National Spring Clean 2021. To date we have issued 19 free passes to voluntary community groups to our Waste Transfer Facilities. Additional Clean-ups are organised and will be carried out during the school mid-term break.

and agriculture) have been received and investigated to date in March 2021. Enforcement notices/letters were issued where required under the Water Pollution Acts and the Good Agriculture Practice Regulations 2017 as amended.

All data relating to wastewater/air/noise inspection activities were collated for the RMCEI report and National and Local objectives were identified for 2021.

#### Planning referrals from Planning Department

To date, 110 reports including 10 forestry reports were prepared and submitted to the Planning Section. Assessments and recommendations are made in order to minimise potential water pollution and protect public health.

#### Lake Sampling Programme 2021

TMS Environmental have carried out monitoring at 10 lakes to date in 2021. All samples are transported to the EPA laboratory in Castlebar for analysis.

#### BallyduffBeg Waste Landfill Licence Monitoring Requirements

Our Environmental Contractor continues to carry out monitoring on site to comply with EPA licence conditions. Clare County

## GARDENING



Above left: preparation and planting of spring flower beds now completed. Above right: Remembrance Garden at Áras Contae an Chláir.

**W**ith the onset of spring the Gardening Team was busy during March, with preparation and planting of spring flower beds now completed. Hanging baskets have also been installed.

With the seasonal improvement in weather, this allowed the Gardening team to complete final planting at the Remembrance Garden at Áras Contae an Chláir.

Works at the gardening depot continued, with the delivery of summer flowers and continued care for young plants and flowers that will be planted as the growing season progresses.

In line with the Council's Pollinator Action Plan, the gardening team sowed a wild flower meadow at the public park adjacent to Waterpark House.

Council staff carry out weekly sampling of surface water ponds. No issues have been reported to date. All water quality monitoring data was collated for the Annual Environmental Report, which is sent to the EPA.

### Laboratory and Technical Support

#### Historic Landfills

The process of applying for a Certificate of Authorisation for Whitegate Historic Landfill has commenced and approval of funding has issued from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications to complete the necessary risk assessments and application. The consultant was met on site and a walk over of the old landfill took place. The first round of surface water and groundwater samples in the vicinity of the closed landfill were taken towards the end of the month. More samples will be collected in April. The results of this analysis will form part of the application process.

#### Bathing Water

Preparations have been ongoing for the 2021 bathing water

season. A number of bathing water profiles have been updated and amended at the request of the EPA. Furthermore the bathing water calendar has been agreed and submitted to the EPA. Laboratory staff will sample all designated bathing areas at least ten times between the last week of May and the middle of September during the bathing season.

### Waste Management

#### Civic Amenity Sites

All sites have been busy throughout March with increased volumes of timber and garden waste recorded.

#### Monitoring and Sampling

Monitoring and Sampling continues on a monthly basis at the three EPA licenced facilities of Inagh Landfill, Doora Landfill and Lisdeen Civic Amenity Site.

These results feed into the Annual Environmental Reports required to be submitted to the EPA by the end of March. All reports have been submitted on time.

**BallyduffBeg Closed Landfill Site  
(Closure Restoration Aftercare Management Plan)**

Detailed design work has begun on this project with site investigation and a topographical survey completed. The works on the site will comprise of capping works to the existing exposed liner and the creation of a wetland area to encourage biodiversity on the site.



Detailed design work has begun on BallyduffBeg Closed Landfill Site (Closure Restoration Aftercare Management Plan).

**Waste Enforcement**

**Bikes to Africa**

A further shipment of 82 bikes was transported to Shelton Abbey Prison for repair in March. The army was not able to provide this service due to Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions so Clare County Council machinery yard staff undertook the transportation of the bikes.



A shipment of bikes was transported to Shelton Abbey Prison for repair in March.

**RMCEI Inspections**

The Waste Enforcement Team continued to carry out targeted inspections in March in line with the National Waste Enforcement Priorities and with Clare County Council's 2021 RMCEI plan. The targeted area this month was the enforcement of the plastic bag levy (under S.I. No. 605/2001 - Waste Management (Environmental Levy) (Plastic Bag) Regulations, 2001). Over 30 inspections of retail premises were carried out.

**Environmental Monitoring (Illegal Dumping/Litter)**

The Waste Enforcement Team continued to respond to increasing waste and litter related complaints in March. A total of 189 complaints relating to litter and waste have been received in March and are currently being investigated.

A total of 23 litter fines were issued in March, as a result of evidence found by the Environment section in illegally dumped waste. Payments of 2 litter fines have been made in March to date. The remainder are within time frame for payment. We have issued 3 Section 9 Notices (Notice requiring the removal of litter).

**Waste Management Bye Laws**

Under the Waste Management Bye Laws, 55 letters have been issued to householders asking them to demonstrate how they are managing their waste.

**Beaches**

**Beach Bye laws 2021**

The draft documents are currently under review and all submissions are being considered. A report will issue to the members of the Council shortly.



Kilkee Beach.



## 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, especially with the current Level 5 restrictions.

The Water Services Department of Clare County Council continues to deliver the water services function as per the Service Level Agreement and the 2021 Annual Service Plan with Irish Water.

### Water and Wastewater Operations

The following statistics provide an indication of the level of activity/work being carried out by the water and wastewater teams throughout the county from 19th February, 2021, up to and including 19th March, 2021. The figures do not, however, reflect the time invested by the teams which is required to resolve each complaint /issue.

- 28 Customer Complaints were dealt with and closed out
- 5 Emergency Work Orders were received during the timeframe
- 313 Reactive Maintenance Work Orders were dealt with and closed out
- 0 Customer Asset Flooding Work Orders were received
- 162 Service Requests (SRs) were raised for Field Requests and Follow On Work Orders for Reactive Maintenance work
- 37 Outage Notices were placed on the IW portal during the period. 28 accounted for unplanned works for water outages, burst water mains and valve repairs, 2 were for planned works while the remainder 7 notices were for step testing and leak detection.

### Water Operations

A number of outages occurred in the Corrofin Area, Clarecastle, Quin Village, Cusack and Kilrush Road Ennis in the Mid-Clare area.

A significant outage occurred in the Miltown Malbay area on the week 22nd-26th February as a result of mains replacement carried by contractors on behalf of Irish Water and another due to bursts in Rineen and Coore on March 8th/9th. There were also outages in Lisdoonvarna, Cooraclare, Kilrush, Tullabrack and Doonbeg in the West/North Clare Area

In the South East Clare area a number of outages occurred in the Ardnacrusha and Clonlara areas; O'Connor's Cross and Barry's Cross, which resulted in poor or no supply for a number of customers for a period. In Shannon, there were outages in Meelick P.S. and the Shannon Industrial Estate line.

### Water Conservation

The 2021 leakage reduction target for Clare County Council is to achieve a 1.2MLD average leakage saving. This 1.2 MLD reduction is the equivalent demand of supplying circa 3,200 housing units.

In March, the Leakage Find Crews continued water conservation activity throughout the county reacting to various increases in demand primarily in Quin DMA and Shannon (Aidan Park and Shannon Town) DMAs.

The Find & Fix Crews concentrated activities in East-Clare with leaks repaired in Clonlara and Ardnacrusha DMA. Leak detection works are currently taking place in Corofin and Kilkee DMAs with ongoing leak detection works in Ardnacrusha DMA.

### Waste Water Operations

#### Water Industry UK and Ireland Awards 2021

The Ennis North Wastewater Treatment Plant has been nominated as one of seven finalists in the Asset Optimisation Initiative of the Year 2021 and it is the only Irish project in the category. A complete plant optimisation was carried out over the last 18 months with works that included new airblowers, a new double sludge press, instrumentation controls on chemical

dosing and sludge returns, rehabilitation of a clarifier and an aeration tank. Significant energy savings have been made at the plant with a 52 per cent drop in energy usage and an increase of 30 per cent flow capabilities.

## Irish Water Capital programme

### Shannon Wastewater Treatment Plant Interim upgrade

Ward and Burke commenced work on site on 1st January, 2020. Both the industrial and the domestic treatment streams are in operation now. All Emission Limit Values (ELVs) in the final effluent have been compliant based on the latest data available. The "Testing on Completion 30 day test" start date was 23rd March and this will be completed on 22nd April. The Commissioning Cert is anticipated to be issued in early May. Upgrade works at the four pumping stations is due for completion during April.

### Kilrush Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

A new wastewater treatment plant, rising main and upgrade of the existing Frances St pumping station are proposed in Kilrush. EPS were awarded the contract under the IW Early Contractor Involvement framework to design and build the works. The Site Investigation Contract is complete. Detailed design is ongoing. A new planning application was lodged by Irish Water on 8th March to deal with necessary alterations to the design of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Construction is programmed to commence late 2021 with completion early 2023.

### Clarecastle Agglomeration Upgrade

This scheme consists of a new pumping facility at Quay Road and new rising main from Quay Road to Clareabbey Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The advance contract for the construction of 311m of rising main from Quay Road to a point just north of the Church is complete. This is the first step in a project, which will ultimately lead to the cessation of the discharge of raw sewage to the River Fergus at the Quay in Clarecastle. The detailed design of the new pumping facility at Quay Road and the new rising main to Clareabbey WWTP is being finalised and it is anticipated that the contract will go to tender during Q2 of 2021. The works are programmed by Irish Water to start late 2021 with completion during 2022. It is anticipated that the upgrade works at Clareabbey WWTP will run concurrently with the rising main works such that flows can be pumped from Clarecastle to Clareabbey for treatment.

### Liscannor Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

A new wastewater 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. Detailed design is ongoing. Planning compliance documentation is being finalised at present. Irish Water was notified that An Bord Pleanála will determine the Compulsory Purchase Order without holding an Oral Hearing. The An Bord Pleanála decision on the CPO has not

been made available as yet. The project is expected to go to construction in mid 2021 with completion late 2022.

### Ballyvaughan Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

A new waste water treatment plant, pumping station including pipework extensions are proposed in Ballyvaughan. Site Investigation, on site surveys at the WWTP site, pump station site, and rising main route have been completed. Irish Water notified An Bord Pleanála that it has withdrawn the Compulsory Purchase Order for lands for a proposed waste water treatment plant, pumping station and rising main. Irish Water is considering options in relation to the location of a proposed WWTP and the implications for continued use of the existing outfall. The AA screening and NIS have been updated.

### Kilkee Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

A new waste water treatment plant, pumping station and rising main is planned for Kilkee. A Design Summary Report was prepared by the IW Consultants in June 2020 in relation to construction of a WWTP. The Project Brief has been issued by IW to EPS, the Design/Build Contractor. The Site Selection process has to be finalised by IW, EPS and their Consultants before the project can progress, taking into account the work completed by the previous Consultants. The draft delivery plan has been received and Irish Water is to hold Workshop 1 on 31st March 2021 after which the programme will be agreed. A Planning application for the scheme is anticipated to be lodged by Q2 2022. The project is expected to go to construction in late 2023 with completion in late 2025.

### Ennistymon and Lahinch Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

Upgrades of wastewater treatment facilities for Ennistymon and Lahinch are required as the existing plants do not meet the Emission Limit Values required by their wastewater discharge Licences. This project is in the current IW Capital Investment Programme. Mott McDonald Consulting Engineers produced a draft Feasibility Study Report for various options including combining Ennistymon and Lahinch treatment at one new plant.

### 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. A Foreshore licence and Discharge Licence review will be required. The contract for the site investigation along the road from the Plant through Kilnasoolagh Park and on the R458 towards Latoon has been awarded and work commenced on 22nd March. The site investigation will take approx. three months and there will be temporary traffic management in place on an intermittent basis on public roads along the route. Ecology surveys and river flow

surveys have commenced and are continuing. It is anticipated that the Planning application for the upgrade scheme will be lodged mid 2021. Construction is anticipated to commence in early 2023 and be completed by early 2024.

### 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. The CPO Oral Hearing was held on-line by An Bord Pleanála on 23rd February, 2021. The time-frame for a decision is not known. Site investigation is complete and detailed design is ongoing. Construction is planned to commence in September 2021.

### Quin Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

The project aims to provide additional capacity and treatment capability by constructing a new wastewater treatment plant on the existing site while maintaining the operation of the existing plant during the construction period.

The main phase of civil works at the plant have been substantially completed on site. Mechanical and electrical testing and proving of the new plant equipment is now complete with the commissioning phase of the project currently underway. The new plant is expected to be fully operational at the start of May.

### RAL Upgrades

Ward and Burke Construction Ltd have been appointed by Irish Water to undertake the Clare Remedial Action List (RAL) Upgrade contract. As required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), milestones for the completion of the projects at the individual sites have been set as follows:

- Corofin WTP – 30th November, 2021
- New Doolough WTP - 30th February, 2022
- Ballymacravan WTP – 30th January, 2023.

Designs for New Doolough and Corofin plants are currently being progressed with Ballymacravan to follow. The Contractor is expected to start on site with Corofin and site investigation are scheduled to take place in April.

### Mullagh/Milltown Malbay Pipeline

These works involve the replacement of 4.7 kilometres of existing substandard water supply pipework which was identified to Irish Water as requiring replacement.

The contractor is continuing works onsite with 1.7km of the total 4.7km left to construct. This work will be carried out under road closures starting at the end of February. Works are expected to be fully complete by June 2021.

### Asset Transfer

376 water and wastewater assets, in County Clare, have been identified for potential transfer to IW to date. Of these 51 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 191 have now been transferred to IW.

The remaining 134 assets are broken down as follows:

- Pending – 17 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 ie. 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 – 0 assets have gone to the PRAI to be subdivided.
- Third Party/Unregistered assets – Of the 134 assets 114 have been identified as Third Party Registered lands (97) and Unregistered Lands (17).

### Rural Water Programme

Under the 2019-2021 Multi Annual Rural Water Programme (MARWP), upgrade works on the Feenagh GWS and the Tullaher GWS continue with completion dates in mid-April for both schemes. The works involves the complete replacement of mains of both schemes. Ballinruane GWS, Mountshannon shall be publishing tenders for the completion of upgrade works on their network replacing the remainder of their network totalling 1.88km. Danganelly East GWS in Cooraclare have commenced upgrade works with the replacement of service fittings throughout the scheme. The aforementioned works are being completed under Measure 5 of the Programme which is the Transfer of Existing Schemes into the public Network and funding under this measure is granted at 100 per cent of the value of the works.

Ballard GWS (Miltown Malbay) and Dough GWS (Lahinch) have recently been submitted for Taking in Charge in March and this now brings the number of GWS's submitted by the Clare Rural Water Programme awaiting Taking in Charge to 9. Irish Water has imposed a temporary suspension on the taking in charge of GWS's since Nov'20 and we await the progression of the submitted scheme to the public network.

The assessment and processing of grants under the 'Grant for Improvement Works to a Private Water Supply' is continuing under the Rural Water Programme. A total no. of 22 applications have been received to date in 2021.

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.

## ENNIS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Ennis Town Centre Public Realm Project attracts €4,042,793 in funding under URDF



URDF funding for Ennis Town Centre.

The Public Realm Enhancement Project O’Connell Square, High Street, Bank Place, O’Connell Street, Barrack Street and Old Barrack Square has an overall cost of €5,390,391 with 75 per cent of the cost being awarded under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF), and the remaining 25 per cent being financed by Clare County Council.

The Barrack Square area is to be developed as a ‘café quarter’ with a high-quality civic space, while the works to O’Connell Square, High Street and O’Connell Street will deliver a well developed expanded plaza, with seating and planting in addition to greater accessibility for pedestrians. Valuable and visible enhancements to these areas will include shared surface treatment, widened footpaths, high-quality surface materials with improved street furniture, lighting and signage, street trees, canopy structures, and an interactive pavement fountain. While locals and tourists will benefit from the tangible benefits of this windfall, it has been found that public realm improvements also result in economic benefits for a town in terms of footfall, investment and trading. The award of this funding for Ennis is a recognition of the ambition Clare County Council, Ennis Municipal District and its stakeholders have for Ennis. It is also testament to the in-house capability to sell a vision and formulate high-quality plans to deliver another element of that vision.

This project continues the regeneration work of Parnell Street and the extensive network of Lanes and Bow-ways in the town, works previously supported under the URDF ‘Call 1’.

St Patrick’s Day Virtual Event 2021



Tommy Meskill, Virtual Grand Marshall, with Mayor of Ennis, Cllr Paul Murphy.

The St Patrick’s Day Virtual Event, ‘Connecting Clare’, hosted on Clare County Council’s Facebook page and YouTube channel, attracted audience members from Australia, France, Germany, the UK and the US. Tommy Meskill proved to be an excellent choice as the Virtual Grand Marshall. The event showcased Clare talent from various locations across the county in addition to performances from Australia, Germany and across the US. All age groups got involved to produce a feast of artistic talent. Our twinning town ‘Lagenfeld’ in Germany also teamed up for the ‘Connecting Clare’ online experience. Furthermore, the event provided a platform for Tourism and LEO to convey their messages that Clare provides opportunities for those that want to visit or work here. The hosting of this online event with submissions from members of the ‘Clare Community’ was the first of its kind in the Council. The background work and solution provided for this event has paved the way for any future Clare County Council online events.



**Ennis MD gets green light to advance ‘active travel’ plans**

The NTA recently announced the projects that have been approved under the ‘Active Travel’ scheme and Ennis Municipal District is delighted with decisions made and the allocations received. The focus of allocations in this investment programme concentrated on projects which can be delivered in 2021. In addition to those projects, Ennis MD has also been awarded money for the design of other projects indicating underlying commitment from the NTA and signals potential funding opportunities in future years. This financial commitment is the result of continuous engagement with the NTA, communicating our sustainable travel objectives and plans for Ennis and environs, namely connecting communities, advancing cycling and walking infrastructure and ensuring it is accessible and safe for all. The table below lists the projects which the NTA approved for Ennis Municipal District.

Name	Description
Drehinagower Rd, Ennis	Drehinagower Rd Pedestrian/ Cyclist Link & optioneering for crossing of River Fergus
Club Bridge Ennis	Club Bridge Ennis. Design of Cantilever Footpath Extension on Town Side
R458 Gort Rd to Ballyallia, Ennis	Progress the design of new pedestrian and cycle access from R458 Gort Rd to Ballyallia (Clare CoCo to progress design)
R458 Gort Rd to Ballyallia, Ennis	Progress the design of new cycle-way on Gort Road to Ballymaley (Clare CoCo to progress design)
R458, R352, N85, Ennis	Detailed Design for the provision of protected Cycle Lanes on R458, R352, N85. R458 Gort Rd 1730m, Tulla Road 2000m, Quin Road 1000m, R458 Clare Rd 1800m, (R475 Kilrush Rd Design by DOT ATT Project) N85 and R Lahinch and Cusack Rds 1400m
Orchard Lane to Carmody Street, Ennis	Provide Pedestrian Link from Orchard Lane to Carmody Street

Junction of Francis Street & Abbey Street, Ennis	Junction of Francis Street, Abbey Street. Pedestrian level access required.
Roslevan Area including Cappahard Lane, Ennis	Roslevan Area completion of pedestrian links including Cappahard Lane
Ballybeg Water Tower to Kildyasrt Road, Ennis	Provide footpath at Ballybeg from water Tower to Kildyasrt Road Phase1 (excluding lighting)
Peoples Park, Ennis	Provision of street lighting in Peoples Park (Clarecastle access to school). This would give all year pedestrian access to school off road in park that connects large residential area to school and Sports Grounds
Ballybeg from N68 to Water Tower, Ennis	Provide Public Lighting on Footpath Ballybeg from N68 to Water Tower
Ennis Town	Mobility Plan for Ennis Town. Required under RSES and Goal 6 of County Dev Plan Ennis MD
Ennis Town	Connecting and Co Creating Ennis, increasing permeability – Commence implementation of LEVEL 1 remedial/upgrading work which are deliverable in 2021. Level 2 and Level 3 works require statutory processes, design works and in some cases land acquisition and will be put forward for advancement following the mobility plan.

**Illegal dumping**

There has been a significant increase in the number of incidents of illegal dumping throughout the Ennis environs. Ennis Municipal District has continued to provide assistance to the Environment Section with the removal of same.

# PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Clare Economic Task Force

Clare County Council officially launched the Abodoo Skills mapping platform in February with coverage on Clare FM and Scarrif Bay radio encouraging people to sign up to the website – [www.abodoo.com/clare](http://www.abodoo.com/clare). To date, over 140 people have registered. A digital marketing campaign is due to go live in early April targeting people across key industries and sectors both inside and outside the county to register their skills and qualifications to provide robust data to competitively position Clare to attract inward investment, reverse migration, create employment and underpin our investment in co-working spaces.

A meeting of the Clare Economic Task Force took place in March and the key issues discussed included the impact of the Covid restrictions across a range of sectors in the local and

regional economy and economic growth opportunities for Clare post-Covid.

### Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy

As part of ongoing site mapping analysis and prioritisation of projects, the Ennis 2040 Designated Activity Company (DAC) has started to engage with landowners, sectoral experts and potential funding sources to progress plans. A subcommittee from the Ennis 2040 DAC has been established to review market trends in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit, consult with sectoral experts and agree on priority sites to be delivered in the short to medium term. Recruitment of staff for the Ennis 2040 DAC is progressing, with the Chief Operating Officer role soon to be advertised. The Ennis 2040 Strategy will officially be launched once Level 5 restrictions have been lifted.

## STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PROJECTS

### Spatial and Economic Masterplan for Shannon Town Centre

This masterplan, which is funded under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and Clare County Council, will drive the economic future and spatial pattern for the centre of Shannon Town, and is now three-quarters through the master-planning exercise.

The team is currently preparing the draft masterplan and environmental appraisals, with a view to presenting options to the Shannon Municipal District Elected Members in mid-April and obtaining their feedback.

### University of Limerick (UL)/South Clare – Strategic Development Zone

Following the meeting of the Chief Executive, Director of Economic Development and Law Agent with the UL Interim President and her team, work has continued by both teams on the SDZ DAC legal arrangements. In the coming months, further engagement between the partnership will take place to prepare for the making of an application to Government to seek the designation of the UL South Clare SDZ.

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

Clare County Council, in conjunction with Tipperary County

Council, has commenced 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 Killaloe and Ballina as linked settlements.

Ongoing work has continued in conjunction with colleagues in Tipperary County Council on the finalisation of an emerging draft document. It is anticipated that a draft plan will be available in May for discussion and consideration with the Elected Members of the Killaloe Municipal District and the wider Council.

### Roche Masterplan

Following the grant in early February of this year of a 10-year planning permission for the phased demolition and remediation of the Roche Facility in Clarecastle, work has now commenced on the preparation of background studies and the consideration of the scope of a future Roche Masterplan.

The preparation of the masterplan is a medium-term objective which will be informed significantly by the preparation and outcome of the draft Clare County Development Plan and the commencement of the development and remediation on site.

## FORWARD PLANNING

### Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028

Following the consideration of the Elected Members of the Chief Executive’s Report on the pre-draft submissions on the preparation of the Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028, directions have now been made to the Chief Executive to officially commence the preparation of the draft County Development Plan. The draft Development Plan will be issued to the Elected Members in June for their consideration and input prior to the Draft Development Plan being adopted and placed on public display in August 2021.

As part of the Clare County Development Plan process, work is ongoing in the preparation of a Retail Strategy, Housing Strategy and Renewable Energy Strategy for the County. These strategies will form part of the County Development Plan as individual volumes and will inform the objectives within the main policy document of the Plan.

### Corofin Enhancement Strategy

Clare County Council and National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) have worked together to develop a brief for the preparation of an enhancement strategy for the village of Corofin. The Corofin Enhancement Strategy seeks to maximise the potential of the village and its proximity to the Burren through thoughtful and sensitive interventions.

The strategy seeks to identify a suitable location and develop a design for a Burren National Park Visitor Centre and Administration Facility for NPWS, provide public realm improvements through a streetscape enhancement plan and improve the tourist experience through the development of a new signage strategy.

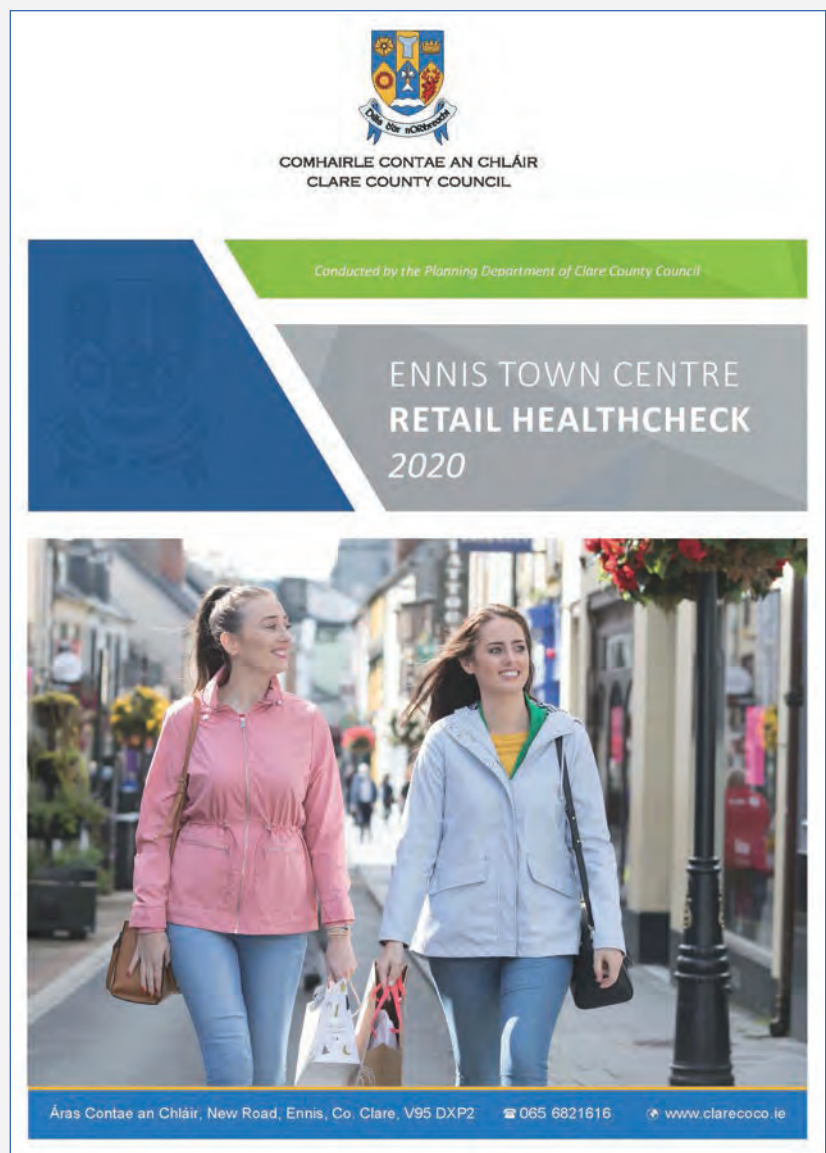
Tenders for an architect/urban designer-led Design Team are due to be returned at the end of March. Tender assessment will be concluded in April.

### Ennis Town Centre Health Check 2020: Report 2021

The Planning Department conducted an Ennis Town Centre Health Check in September 2020 and this report has now been prepared and is based on the findings of a survey of the ground floor use of units in Ennis Town Centre.

To allow for comparisons to be drawn and patterns to be identified the results were compared with the results from previous years. The findings from the health check illustrate that retail and retail services account for 35 per cent of the total ground floor use of buildings within the town centre, this is a 3 per cent increase from the first survey conducted in 2013. Leisure services such as restaurants, public houses and gyms encompass 11.5 per cent of the ground floor usage in Ennis; these findings indicate that Ennis is thriving as a social and cultural hub of the county. Financial and business services are also well established in the town accounting for 7.2 per cent of the ground floor usage of buildings.

Critically, occupancy rates within the town centre have been improving, with a decrease of 3 per cent in the vacancy rate since the town centre health check in 2016.



## Ennistymon Masterplan



Clare County Council has appointed a multi-disciplinary team to complete a masterplan for Ennistymon.

Clare County Council, together with its partners, Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) and Ennistymon Town Team, has appointed a multi-disciplinary team led by Helena McElmeel Architects to complete a masterplan for Ennistymon. The masterplan seeks to build upon existing Clare County Council proposals in place associated with the planned new bridge crossing and the upgrading works to take place along the Main Street. The study will explore the potential of the existing townscape and its built environment in order to guide its development in a positive way. It will also comprise a new signage strategy and streetscape enhancement plan, which seeks to improve both the visitor and resident experience. The gathering of baseline information continued through March and site visits are planned for April. The steering group will meet with CLDC and West Clare Municipal representatives for a review of the work undertaken to date.

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

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

Development management	March 2021	Year to date 2021
<b>Planning applications</b>		
No. of planning applications received	115	294
No. of planning decisions made	91	267
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	3	4
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	43	83
No. of Section 5 applications	8	17
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications	8	12
Submissions received regarding compliance	35	83

Development management	March 2021	Year to date 2021
<b>Planning enforcement</b>		
No. of new complaints received	72	154
No of files opened	16	35
No. of warning letters issued	4	18
No. of enforcement notices served	12	12
No. of legal cases initiated	0	0
No. of enforcement files closed	3	19



## HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

### Clare Heritage Plan funding

The Heritage Council granted funding to Clare County Council under the Clare Heritage Plan 2017-2023 for the projects:

1. Conservation Plan for Hastings Farmhouse in Shannon
2. Heritage from the water in association with the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
3. Clare Heritage Map Viewer
4. Heritage Information Provision.

### National Biodiversity Action Plan funding

Five biodiversity funding applications were made to the National Biodiversity Action Plan funding from Clare County Council for 2021. The project proposals are as follows:

1. Clare Wetland Project in association with Farming for Nature and Burrenbeo
2. Establishment of a monitoring programme to record and mitigate visitor impacts at Fanore Dunes in association with the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Geopark
3. Giant hogweed eradication from a pilot test area from the upper catchment of River Blackwater in association with the Shannon Municipal District Office
4. Invasive Alien Species (IAS) online web resource in association with the Environment Awareness Officer
5. The elimination of Knotweed species, as three separate project proposals in association with Ennis Municipal District and the Clare Local Development Company.

### Cumhacht an Nádúir: The Power of Nature

Clare County Council biodiversity demonstration sites featured in the two-part documentary on TG4 on 31st March 2021, 9.30pm. This documentary looks at the solace nature has offered during this pandemic and how it may fuel the debate

for a broader range of wildlife habitat and land management.

### Biodiversity Strategy

The Heritage Officer gave an update and progress report on the Clare County Council Biodiversity Strategy to the Physical and the Economic Strategic Policy Committees.

### iCAN Network

The Clare iCAN groups participated in the National iCAN Network meeting in March, with group presentations, networking proposals and presentation on townland research, the National Archives of Ireland and a demonstration on how to embed Google maps on websites.

The iCAN project for 2021, Daoine agus Áit: Connecting Our Communities, was discussed. This proposal is to develop a shared project that will draw on a shared history and heritage to connect people with their place. These connections will be made through the creation of a heritage postcard collection and the dissemination of printed cards by each community. This proposal is part funded by the Clare Keep Well Campaign.

### Current Heritage Council Grant Schemes 2021

1. The Community Grant Scheme 2021 has seen much interest and a good number of applications for funding were made by Clare community groups under this scheme.
2. The GLAS Traditional Farm Buildings grant scheme 2021 is now open for online applications by 5pm on Monday, 5th April, 2021.

All details to be found at the following link:

<https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/traditional-farm-buildings-grant-scheme>

## CONSERVATION AND BUILT HERITAGE

Seven Section 57 declarations were issued during the month of March to permit works to protected structures.

### Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2021

The deadline for applications to be returned to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) was 12th March and nine projects were recommended for funding by the Council, valued at €72,000. It is anticipated that, in the coming weeks, the successful applications will be announced.

### Historic Structures Fund 2021

Six applications were forwarded to the Department under the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) conservation grant. It is anticipated that, in the coming weeks, an announcement will be made on successful applications.

### Community Monuments Fund 2021

The Community Monuments Fund 2021 was announced by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on 4th March, 2021. The closing date for applications to Clare County Council is 12th April, 2021.

The Fund will invest in our valuable archaeological heritage and help owners and custodians of archaeological monuments to safeguard them into the future for the benefit of communities and the public. It will:

- enable conservation works to be carried out on monuments that are deemed to be significant and in need of urgent support
- encourage access to monuments and improve their presentation
- build resilience in our monuments to enable them to withstand the effects of climate change.

The Community Monuments Fund has three funding streams and more information on this can be provided by contacting the Planning Department.

## LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

### Covid-19 supports

Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Clare continued to support our local businesses through the month of March. A very high uptake of these supports is in evidence:

- The Enhanced Trading Online Voucher Scheme, which provides grant support to small businesses to develop an ecommerce website, has seen strong interest. In the month of March a further eight vouchers were approved, bringing the number already approved in 2021 to 66. The focus is ensuring the funding approved in 2020 is released to successful applicants and a further 42 vouchers (€93,210) were paid out during the month.
- Online Webinars and Training: Over 91 clients registered in the month of March to partake in our range of online webinars and training courses which were provided separate to Local Enterprise Week. Events included Managing Your Online Business and Cashflow Management and a Start Your Own Business programme.
- Mentoring: There were 34 applicants in March 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.

### Local Enterprise Week 2021



Pdraic McElwee, LEO Clare, and Cllr Mary Howard, Cathaoirleach, Clare County Council.

LEO Clare was delighted to deliver Local Enterprise Week 2021 (1st-5th March). Over 455 budding entrepreneurs and business owners in Clare took part in online events this week, marking Local Enterprise Week hailed as a “success” by LEO Clare.

An annual initiative from the 31 Local Enterprise Offices around the country, including LEO Clare, conducted more than 270 events which took place online under the theme

of ‘Making It Happen’, attracting over 10,700 bookings nationally.

Supported by Clare County Council and Enterprise Ireland, LEO Clare hosted eight events for local businesses this week, in addition to 10 ‘Spotlight’ events which were open to businesses across the country.

Highlights from the week included Managing Your Online Business Regional Event, S.M.A.R. Tech for Start Ups Spotlight Event, Student Enterprise Programme Finals and Digi Eco for the Green Economy information event.

### Student Enterprise Awards 2021

LEO Clare has announced that winning teenager entrepreneurs from St Joseph’s Secondary School, Spanish Point and Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon, have won the County Final of the Student Enterprise Programme which took place virtually on 3rd March. This final was one of the many events taking place for Enterprise Week.

A total of eight secondary schools in Clare took part in this year’s programme. The enterprise education initiative, delivered by the 31 LEOs in local authorities throughout the country, saw over 25,000 students from over 500 secondary schools across the country take part last year.

In Clare in the Junior Category, the students representing County Clare at the National Finals are Sadie O’Brien and Niamh Lavender-Duncan of ‘The Art Company’ at Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon.

In the Intermediate Category, Mae Kivlehan of ‘Tried n Tested’ from Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon, will be representing the county.

In the Senior Category of the competition, County Clare will be represented on 14th May by Aoibhnaid O’Dea and Roisin Montgomery from ‘Portable Pouches’ at St Joseph’s Secondary School, Spanish Point.

### Tech Disrupt 4.0

The LEOs of Clare and Limerick announced that six companies will receive up to €25,000 funding vouchers to help them develop next generation solutions based on Industry 4.0 and Smart Technology principles.

Managed by the LEOs of Clare and Limerick, the Tech Disrupt 4.0 Pilot Project was devised to enable and encourage the development of Industry 4.0 solutions in Ireland’s Mid-West region. Solutions aligned to Industry 4.0 include, but are not limited to: Big Data, 3D Printing, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, IoT, MedTech, FinTech, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Robotics and Automation.

The winning solutions from businesses based in Clare and Limerick were wide and varied, ranging from Industrial IoT Applications, Autonomous Robotics, FinTech, Smart Manufacturing, Sports Performance Analysis and Smart Recruitment.

## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



Áras Contae an Chláir in Ennis was lit in green in support of Organ Donor Awareness Week, 27th March to 3rd April, 2021. Pictured is Cllr Mary Howard, Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council.

### Facilities management

Clare County Council was delighted to support an Irish Kidney Association led initiative by demonstrating solidarity in support of organ donation. The Irish Kidney Association's main awareness campaign is Organ Donor Awareness Week (Saturday, 27th March, to Saturday, 3rd April, 2021) and the building was lit again for that period, to include World Kidney Day on 11th March.

Work is underway by our own staff on improving the area to the rear of Áras Contae an Chláir, which will improve access for fire service vehicles and for pedestrians and those accessing the reflective garden.

Quotations are being sought for tree surgery on the perimeter of the site as many of the trees are too large for the site. Consultation will be held with adjoining property owners

### Property improvements

While construction works in general were postponed due to Covid-19, essential repair works to the windows and the roof of Tullyvarraga Community Hall in Shannon were completed under contract. This property is leased by the Council to the local community group and the works were planned and supervised by the General Design office and funded through a community grant scheme. Projects such as this which greatly benefit the community show that the co-operation between departments is working well.

### Property transactions

The Table below shows the number of property transactions

completed by Property Management Unit in March, together with the totals for 2021 to date.

Transaction	March 2021	Year to date 2021
Lease of Property/Building	1	2
Licence to use property/building	1	4
Grazing Agreement for Lands	0	15
Deed of Transfer signed	1	2
Contract for Sale signed	0	3
Deed of Right of Way signed	0	1
Deed of Rectification signed	0	0
Allotment Agreements signed	0	39

### Casual Trading

Due to the Level 5 Government restrictions in relation to Covid-19, only those licensees who trade in food are currently trading. An additional five Casual Trading licences were issued during the month of March for the Killaloe Farmer's Market.

In preparation for the review of the Casual Trading Bye-Laws, workshops have been held with the elected members of the Killaloe Municipal District and Ennis Municipal District. Workshops with the Shannon Municipal District and West Clare Municipal District are being arranged for the coming weeks.

Draft Bye-Laws will then be prepared for public consultation with a time period specified for submissions.

## Derelict sites

While non-essential site inspections are postponed for the duration of the Level 5 restrictions, work has continued on review of files on the Derelict Sites Register. There continues to be a positive response to engagement with owners of derelict sites. The table below provides a snapshot of the activity in March 2021,

when there was a significant increase in new files being opened for sites to be investigated. In particular, work has taken place on a site owned by the ESB on the Tulla Road in Ennis, which had been widely reported on as a derelict site. The efforts made on the site are a result of constant communication and constructive work between the Council and the ESB over the past eight months.

Derelict Sites	March 2021	Year to date 2021
No. of new complaints / new files opened	6	13
No. of Section 8(2) Notices issued – Intention to enter site on Derelict Sites Register	0	0
No. of Section 8(7) Notices issued – Entry onto Derelict Sites Register	0	0
No. of Section 11 Notices issued – Measures required to render the site non-derelict	0	0
No. of files closed / property removed from Register	3	12
No. of Compulsory Purchase Orders	0	0

## SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

In accordance with Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions, Shannon Town Hall remains closed in the afternoons, with meetings by appointment being facilitated. Our crews continue to carry out emergency work across the Municipal District (MD) including the repair of traffic lights and pedestrian crossings with footpath repairs being carried out on a case-by-case basis.

The Grass Cutting tender was completed in January/February and the contract to maintain the 130 hectares of open public space across the Shannon MD was awarded to Eire Landscapes. The contractors commenced with the first cut in the last week of March.

At this time of the year, drainage across the MD is challenging with localised ponding/flooding and the crew has responded to these emergency works. In Springfield, Clonlara, the ticker-taping works, installed during February to ensure a state of preparedness, have been removed bringing the community back to normal. Sandbags have been retained on a site nearby in the event of discharge levels rising again. The MD continues to monitor the data from ESB.

Shannon MD adopted the Schedule of Municipal District Works for 2021 at the March meeting of the Shannon MD. As of yet we have not carried out any preparation works, in line with Covid-19 restrictions, other than the emergency works.

During the month the MD Councillors participated in an online workshop to review the draft County Development Plan and to submit a joint direction on same.

The MD has applied for 'Green Flag' status for the Shannon Town Park (<https://www.greenflagaward.org>) with Dromoland Castle Hotel providing assistance in the judging aspects of the application. Other partners included in our application are An Garda Síochána, Shannon Tidy Towns, Shannon Leisure Centre and Social Economy Machinery Ltd, who all have roles to play in the ongoing maintenance of this 'state-of-the-art' community facility.

Shannon MD applied for funding under the National Transport Authority's 'Active Travel Fund' for 2021. The following summarises the status of projects under that application:

- A significant project to connect/upgrade Ardnacrusha Power Station to Athlunkard bridge with cycle/walkways (via the residential areas in Ardnacrusha, Barry's Cross, Griffin's Cross [aka Clancy's Cross], Larkin's Cross and Westbury/Shannon Banks) will be given further consideration following the adoption of the LSMATS later this year.
- The development of multi-use shared surfaces and junction upgrades in Shannon Town Centre and Aidan Park (€1.1m) was given funding to progress to Design stage in 2021 – providing a basis for the second stage funding application into 2022.
- Following on from works completed in 2020, the remainder of the footpath in Meelick North will be funded in 2021 for delivery by the Shannon MD. Further works in the public realm beyond that are also being planned.
- Funding was approved for the upgrade of the Ballycasey Green area in Shannon Town to improve access and mobility to the town centre.
- Funding was approved for upgrade of the Shannon Banks footpath between Hampstead Park and Athlunkard Bridge.
- Finally, funding was approved to develop a mobility plan for Shannon Town and we will work with the Road Design Office on this project. This mobility plan will be prepared in conjunction with the NTA and a programme of future projects will be identified from this plan.

The projects being supported above add to our pipeline of MD projects and are of significant strategic importance to Shannon MD. Some of them will be delivered in phases, particularly having regard to LSMATS and the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan. The above list represents a significant investment commitment into the coming years.



Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice



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