



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Feabhra / February
2021



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FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

CORPORATE SERVICES

Freedom of Information and Data Protection

2021 Statistics from 1st January, 2021, to 26th January, 2021:

- 9 Freedom of Information requests
- 0 Freedom of Information Internal Review applications
- 0 Appeals to Information Commissioner
- 1 Data Access Requests – Subject Access Request
- 3 Data Access Requests – Third Party Access Request, e.g. Gardaí
- 1 Data Breach – internal breach, not forwarded to DPC.

Procurement

The following tender competitions were published on eTenders during January 2021:

| Step name | Procedure template | RFT state | Response deadline |
|--|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Landscape Maintenance and Repair works at the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience on behalf of Clare County Council | 1. Open Procedure (NON OJEU) | Published | 01/02/2021 |
| Shannon Town and Environs Flood Relief Scheme – Geophysical Survey Contract | 1. Open Procedure (NON OJEU) | Published | 29/01/2021 |
| 20-044 – Proposed "PUFFIN" pedestrian crossing at Aughanteeroe Bridge/Gort Road, Ennis, County Clare | 1. Open Procedure (NON OJEU) | Published | 05/02/2021 |
| 20-037 – Zebra pedestrian crossing at Kilnamona, County Clare | 1. Open Procedure (NON OJEU) | Published | 05/02/2021 |
| Grassland Management for Shannon Municipal District 2021 | 1. Open Procedure (NON OJEU) | Published | 17/02/2021 |
| Resettlement Programme | 1. Open Procedure (NON OJEU) | Published | 22/02/2021 |
| Hybrid Cloud Infrastructure Solution, Associated Equipment and Services | 2. Open Procedure (OJEU) | Published | 05/03/2021 |

Register of Electors

The Register of Electors 2021/2022 is currently being prepared and will be effective for one year from 14th February, 2021. This is the Register that will be used on polling day in the event of any elections or referenda being held during this timeframe. Due to the United Kingdom leaving the European Union on 1st January, 2021, British citizens will not be entitled to vote in European election and these changes will be reflected in the new register.

Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation

The Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation submitted its final report to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on 30th October, 2020. The report was published on 12th January, 2021, by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

An Taoiseach Micheál Martin issued a formal apology on behalf of the State to former residents of the Mother and Baby Home institutions.

The County Clare Nursery in Kilrush was owned and financed by Clare County Council and was run by the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy between 1922 and 1928 and by directly employed lay staff from 1928 to 1932. It closed in March 1932.

The Chief Executive is in the process of establishing a working group following the Commission Report, to develop an action plan, in line with the Government's response and particularly in relation to memorialisation and access to archives and records.

FINANCE

In order to continue the supports available for ratepayers and in recognition of the impact of the ongoing trajectory of Covid-19, a further waiver of commercial rates has been announced by Government. A three-month waiver will apply to eligible businesses and will take the form of a credit in lieu of rates. The value of the waiver is the equivalent value of 25 per cent of the annual rate bill for 2021. The waiver will apply to businesses closed, or badly impacted, by Level 5 restrictions.

Clare County Council's rates department will apply the waiver to customers' rates accounts in line with the strict eligibility criteria. Any customers excluded from the waiver will be notified of this and given right to appeal.



COMMUNICATIONS

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

In January, Clare County Council and An Garda Síochána issued a joint media release appealing to everyone in Clare to hold firm and keep up their efforts to reduce the spread of Covid-19. The Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, Chief Executive of the Council Pat Dowling and Chief Superintendent of Clare Garda Division Sean Colleran appealed to people in the county to make another extra effort to drive down the levels of infection in our communities.

County Clare was the subject of a news feature in *The Irish Times* on 23rd January ("Remote-working 'revolution' changing life") with input from Liam Conneally, Director of Service, Economic Development and Planning. The article highlighted the role of the DigiClare.ie hubs in facilitating remote working in rural areas. A similar article ("Remote working presents opportunities for rural areas") was published on rte.ie on the same date.

Other media releases issued during January included: details of social housing residential units completed in County Clare; a strong performance from Ennis in the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) nationwide litter survey, which found that Ennis is among only four towns to be "Cleaner than European Norms"; and a public service update in line with recently announced Government Covid-19 guidelines.

Activities to promote the wellbeing resources available at www.clarecoco.ie/together continued as part of the 'Keep Well' campaign in January.

Council-related news featured in *The Irish Times*, RTÉ, Clare

FM, *The Clare Champion*, *Clare Echo* and *The Clare Herald*.

Irish language

January has seen the finishing touches put to the first online Irish language sessions aimed at helping Council staff practise and refresh their Gaeilge.

The Council's Scéim Teanga is under review and in-house translations are ongoing, with boards completed for the much-anticipated EuroVelo biking trail, extending across County Clare.

Possibilities and prospects for Seachtain na Gaeilge (March), normally the busiest time of the year, are under consideration in consultation with Clare county language groups and Council language officers elsewhere.

Social Media

The Communications Office continues to monitor and update social media channels with creative content to enhance engagement with the public and maintain awareness of the work of the Council.

In January, the Communications Office:

- Posted 65 times on Clare County Council's Facebook page, with followers now 15,161 and 14,008 people have liked the page. Posts reached 46,331 users with 14,187 engagements.
- Tweeted 75 times on Twitter, with total followers now 6,832. Tweets earned 142k impressions, 247 mentions and 3,620 profile visits.
- Posted 37 times on Instagram with followers now 1,880.

HUMAN RESOURCES

| Work Area | Update |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Recruitment | <p>The following recruitment competitions were progressed during January 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retained Firefighter (Killaloe, Kilrush) • Wastewater Inspector. <p>The following competitions were advertised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beach Lifeguards Panel • Traffic/Litter Warden Panel • Retained Firefighter Panel (Shannon, Kilrush, Kilkee) • Environmental Technician Grade I • Staff Officer. |
| Learning and Development | <p>Training programmes/webinars/information sessions held in January include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding CWMF: Conditions of Engagement and Public Works Contracts with Greenville Procurement • Children First Training • Self-Care – Managing Stress Webinar • Traveller Mediation Services Information Session • PSA Licence Training • Covid-19 Induction Refresher • Training Needs Analysis. <p>Essential Skillz on-line Courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber Security • H&S induction • Home Working • Miscellaneous courses including manual handling, stress awareness, time management, etc. <p>The remote delivery by the IPA of their programmes is continuing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Local Government Studies • Diploma in Local Government Studies. |
| Employee Welfare | <p>Telephone counselling services continue to be available to staff and members. General employee welfare supports, advice and guidance are available from the Employee Welfare Officer.</p> |
| Covid-19 | <p>The Human Resources Department continued to liaise as necessary regarding Covid-19 matters.</p> |
| Unions | <p>The HR Department continued to engage and consult with unions on various matters.</p> |

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Council receives presentation from Yunnan Province in recognition of five years of partnership



The Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, and Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council, are pictured at Áras Contae an Chláir in Ennis with a piece of marble screen presented to Clare County Council by the People's Government of Yunnan Province, the local authority's twinning partner in China.

Clare County Council has been presented with a piece of marble screen by the People's Government of Yunnan Province, the local authority's twinning partner in China. The presentation follows the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the partnership between Yunnan Province and County Clare.

The depiction on the marble screen, which was made in Yunnan, evokes the spectacular karst landscape in the region. Like the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark, Shilin (Stone Forest) Geopark in Yunnan is renowned for its karst landscape and it is also a UNESCO recognised Geopark. Whereas the Burren landscape features examples of horizontal limestone pavement, the karst landscape in Yunnan Province is vertical, with tall, pillar-like limestone, and is at a high altitude.

A number of exchange visits between the two twinning partners have taken place since Local Government and Government officials from County Clare and the Chinese Province of Yunnan signed an agreement in May 2015 aimed at developing closer ties between the regions. Clare County Council is interested in further expanding this partnership to strengthen tourism from China to Clare and to explore

opportunities for exports of produce from Clare to China.

The partnership provides Clare businesses with a gateway to learn about the Chinese market and explore potential new market opportunities. A number of local food producers export to this market and, while Covid-19 has restricted opportunities in the short term, China offers significant potential, particularly for food-related businesses and service providers. On a previous exchange in 2016, food producers from Clare visited Yunnan Province with the then Mayor of Clare, where they attended a food produce exhibition.

The Tourism Department of Clare County Council, in line with objectives in the recently published County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030, is working towards positioning Clare to be recognised internationally for its commitment to responsible tourism and sustainability, and is also exploring ways to promote Clare as a destination to future growth markets, including Asia and China. The marble screen presented to the Council will be placed on permanent display in Áras Contae an Chláir in Ennis.

The Tourism Department with responsibility for twinning in Clare County Council is arranging to reciprocate this gesture and will forward a gift to the People's Government of

Yunnan Province of a painting of the Burren. Local artist, Manus Walsh, has painted a piece depicting the unique landscape of the Burren. The Burren’s constantly changing light and shade with its terraced hills, sloping down to the Atlantic Ocean, and its ancient prehistoric monuments, is the inspiration for his work.

The Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, said: “On behalf of Clare County Council and the people of Clare, I wish to convey my thanks to our friends and colleagues in Yunnan Province for the presentation of this marvellous piece of artwork. It is symbolic of our friendship with the people of Yunnan Province, a relationship that we value deeply.”

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council, said: “The agreement between Clare County Council and the Yunnan provincial government forms the basis for ways to expand and deepen friendly exchange and cooperation in various fields between County Clare and Yunnan Province. Cultural, diplomatic and economic relations between our two countries have grown and strengthened significantly over the years. We look forward to continuing to build on our strong relationship with Yunnan Province.”

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development, Clare County Council, said: “County Clare and Yunnan Province have recognised common links, such as the karst geology in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher and Shilin UNESCO Global Geoparks. Both areas are renowned internationally in the fields of geoscience and tourism. Our aim is to continue to explore and develop closer industrial, tourism, farming, educational and cultural ties between our two regions.”



Town and Village funding for County Clare

Funding of €779,242 for six projects in County Clare has been announced recently by Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The six successful projects in Clare are:

1. Newmarket-on-Fergus (€200k) – Completion of phase 2 of the regeneration of a derelict building to include commercial enterprise hubs, a commercial cookery school, a hot desk holistic office space for remote working and a youth cafe
2. Kilfenora (€200k) – To re-establish the Burren Centre through the upgrading of the entire facility, including

interior fit-out, upgrading of signage, graphics, lighting and audio-visual hardware content

3. Lisdoonvarna (€90,242) – The development of a universally accessible walking route through the town park and town centre
4. Parteen (€100k) – The installation of a footpath/cycle path to complete the connection between Parteen village and Larkin’s Cross
5. Clooney (€99k) – The provision of a footpath/cycleway in the village to include public realm infrastructure to safeguard users of the facility
6. Barefield Village (€90k) – Construction of a cycle/footpath to link both ends of Barefield Village, including traffic calming, uncontrolled pedestrian crossings, drainage and landscaping.

Welcoming the funding announcement, the Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, said it “will bring a welcome stimulus to towns and villages in receipt of funding and will help them get back on their feet and adapt to the ongoing challenges posed by Covid-19”.

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council, noted that the significant investment in the projects in Clare will make these towns and villages more attractive places to visit and enjoy. “Our rural towns and villages are a vital part of the fabric of our lives. The past year has shown us, more than ever, how much we rely on our local communities, and has rekindled our sense of pride in where we live.” Mr Dowling acknowledged the Covid-19 focus of the funding announcement and said: “The pandemic has made us all appreciate the importance of getting outdoors for a little exercise and fresh air, while adhering to Government guidelines. I am delighted that a number of Clare projects in receipt of funding will support the development of recreational amenities such as walkways and cycleways.”

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development, Clare County Council, acknowledged the “commitment, interest and innovation of communities in putting forward projects for consideration under this funding measure”.

Leading role of women in Burren and Cliffs of Moher UGGP

An article in the *European Geoparks Network* magazine, highlighting the leading role of women in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark. This magazine is distributed to 74 Geoparks in 24 countries across Europe.



Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2020 Measure 1 Funding Announcement



Funding of just over €88,000 has been awarded under Measure 1 of the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) 2020 for projects in County Clare.

Funding of just over €88,000 has been awarded under Measure 1 of the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) 2020 for five projects in County Clare. These projects are among 173 projects in the country to benefit from €3.2 million in funding announced by the Minister on January 18th under the ORIS scheme.

The scheme, which provides funding for the development, promotion and maintenance of outdoor amenities such as trails, walkways, cycleways and blueways, plays a key role in helping to develop and maintain key assets throughout the county that are utilised by locals and visitors alike. In particular, over the past year, the value of these assets has become more apparent with the notable increase in the number of people using the county's walking trails, cycleways, parks and other resources to exercise and keep fit, while respecting the guidelines on social distancing during the Covid-19 crisis.

The five projects in receipt of funding are as follows:

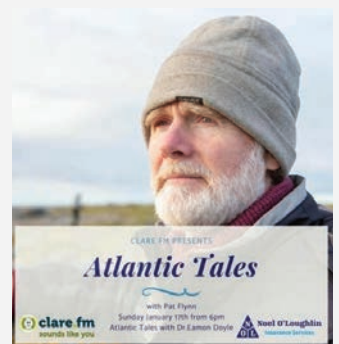
1. 12 O'Clock Hills (€18,189) for upgrade, enhancement and promotion works
2. Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk Upgrade – South (€19,438) for upgrade of coastal walk
3. Cliff of Moher Coastal Walk Upgrade – North (€19,933) for upgrade of coastal walk
4. Shannon Loop Yellow Route – Estuary (€14,400) for bicycle racks, benches, information and interpretation boards within the Estuary Walkway.
5. Dysert O'Dea Archaeology Trail Upgrade (€16,290) – for upgrade works and development of brochure and website.

Further announcements in respect of medium and large-scale projects under the ORIS, with funding of up to €200,000 and €500,000 respectively for each project, is expected in the coming weeks.

Clare FM 'Atlantic Tales' on geology and the UNESCO Global Geopark

Dr Eamon Doyle was interviewed on Clare FM's *Atlantic Tales* on geology and the UNESCO Global Geopark.

This interview by Pat Flynn for the *Atlantic Tales* series covers how Eamon initially got involved with geology, his particular interest in fossils and the importance of the UNESCO Global Geopark designation. The interview, which was originally broadcast on Sunday, 17th



January, is available at the following link:

<https://soundcloud.com/clarefm/atlantic-tales-dr-eamon-doyle-17th-january-2022>



River Shannon Masterplan 2030

Clare County Council’s Tourism Department has been working closely with Waterways Ireland on the River Shannon Masterplan 2030. The plan is entitled *The Shannon Mighty River of Ireland, A Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020-2030, Reimagining the River Shannon and Shannon Erne Waterway*.

Waterways Ireland, in association with Fáilte Ireland and the 10 local authorities along the Shannon and Shannon Erne waterways, commissioned a tourism-focused masterplan for the area. At the centre of this exciting project is the ambition to achieve and deliver a better regional spread of tourism and visitor activity in the area while at the same time supporting and strengthening the Shannon and Shannon Erne as key pillars of the Hidden Heartlands Brand.

The masterplan is the first time a strategic and holistic tourism plan has been formulated for the region, and the expected outcomes and benefits that will be derived from implementing the masterplan can be summarised as follows:

- Growth in the visitor economy of the region
- Enhanced seasonality
- A better regional spread of tourism
- An increase in the vitality and vibrancy of local communities
- A great awareness of the special environmental qualities of the region
- A more co-ordinated approach to the development and deliver
- The strengthening of the waterways as a compelling national and international tourism destination.

Consultation with playground committees on new insurance model

In mid-September, the Rural Directorate was requested to consider and develop a model for community playgrounds in County Clare to address insurance issues, including:

- Escalating insurance costs and impact of Covid-19 on the local fundraising capacity of community playground committees
- Difficulty/inability of playground committees in obtaining insurance cover for these facilities through the open insurance market.

Irish Public Bodies confirmed they were open to supporting this new model and could confirm cover under the Council’s insurance schedule subject to certain conditions.

Rural and Community Development are coordinating the

rollout of this initiative at present in conjunction with the Community Support Scheme 2021. Rural staff facilitated a virtual information evening on the insurance model on Thursday, 22nd January, having invited representatives of the 26 community playground committees in the county. This allowed for a Q&A and feedback from playground committees on the initiative, the majority of which has been positive, subject to the requirement for further clarifications from IPB on a couple of queries.

The closing date for receipt of expressions of interest was Monday, 25th January, 2021, after which Rural staff will engage with the SEOs in each Municipal District in relation to applications received. Following an inspection of the playground facility by an independent provider (coordinated through Rural) a recommendation will be prepared for Management Team to consider the inclusion of these facilities under the Council’s public liability insurance from the date of expiration of their current insurance policy.

Clare Tourism Recovery Taskforce



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

The Clare Tourism Recovery Taskforce held its first meeting of the new year on Wednesday, 13th January, 2021. It is re-convening its work against the backdrop reported that the tourism industry here took an 85 per cent hit in revenue last year with the loss of 160,000 jobs due to Covid-19 (the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation). Businesses in this sector will continue to remain closed until at least March of this year. It is unanimously agreed by the Taskforce that Government support is critically needed to ensure the essential fabric of the tourism industry is preserved; that the Covid Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS) is extended and increased; and that the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme,

which has proven a key measure for tourism businesses since the start of the pandemic, be extended at current levels for the sector for the rest of the year.

It is predicted that a recovery will start in the second half of 2021, but only if certain policies are implemented to support the country's largest indigenous industry and biggest regional employer.

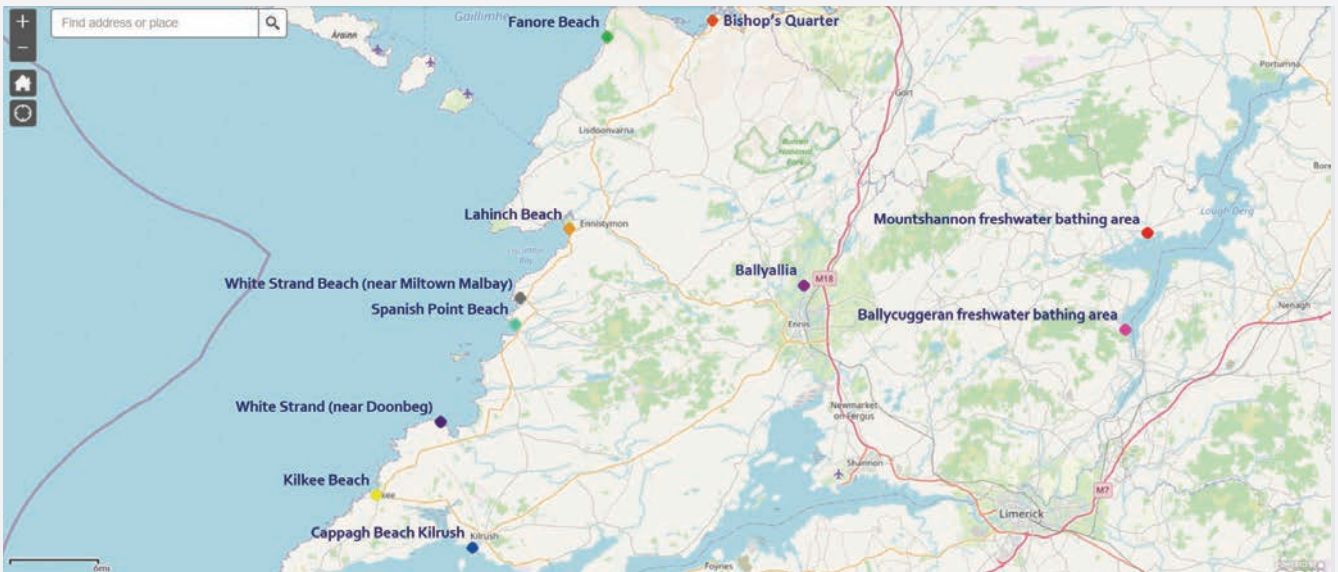
Clare County Council and Fáilte Ireland will continue to co-chair the Taskforce meetings during this time of recovery, until it is time to move to the implementation phase of the *Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 – Guiding our Journey to a Vibrant New Future in Tourism*.

New series of geology articles in The Clare Champion

The first in a monthly series of articles for *The Clare Champion* by geologist Dr Eamon Doyle was published on 21st January. In this article, Dr Doyle explores how stress release has been so important to the formation of the iconic limestone surfaces of the Burren.



WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

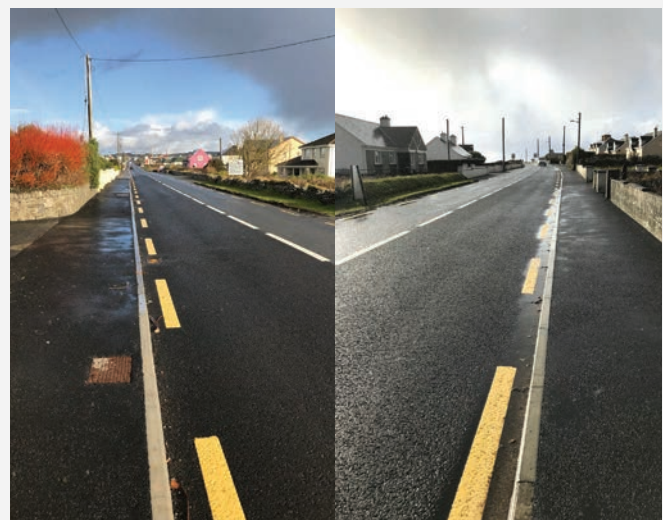


Beach facilities in County Clare.

A cross-directorate working group has been set up to review the county's main beaches and outdoor water-based visitor facilities. The purpose of the review is to ensure that Council services at these beaches and amenity areas are properly coordinated resourced and to provide a quality product that the county can be proud of. The changed environment we are now living in has highlighted areas where improvements are required. The increased usage of beach and water-based facilities by the public is evident all year round. The target is to continue to improve the beach and water-based areas involved and to ensure that proper resources are in place to maintain them.



Church Hill, Ennistymon footpath completed and part funded by 2020 GMA allocation. Completed end of December prior to Level 5 restrictions.



N67 Miltown pavement overlay and resurfacing of footpath, completed end of December 2020.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

HOUSING

The year 2021 began as 2020 ended with Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions as a result of significant Covid-19 community transfer. The demand for housing services remains significant and staff are fully committed to the provision of services, albeit that the manner of service delivery has changed. We continue to enable staff to work remotely and staff remain available and committed to service delivery.

Housing

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.

The majority of our construction projects are suspended again for compliance with Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions and in the interest of public health. Only projects that can be completed before the 28th February are authorised to continue. In addition, the return of vacant stock and necessary maintenance works can proceed at this time.

Demands in other service areas, particularly our engagement with vulnerable groups, have increased exponentially and staff are working diligently to respond.

Housing in numbers

| Breakdown of tenancies by Municipal District (including RAS and leasing): | | |
|---|-----------------|--------------|
| | Social housing* | HAP |
| Ennis | 1,155 | 647 |
| Shannon | 605 | 155 |
| West Clare | 928 | 387 |
| Killaloe | 381 | 165 |
| Inter Authority HAP | | 58 |
| TOTAL | 3,069 | 1,412 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 2,832 LA tenancies | 1,412 HAP tenancies | 214 RAS tenancies |
| 284 leased properties | 2,664 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 (22.12.2020 to 22.01.2021) | 6 |
| Offers refused | 0 |
| AHB nominations | 0 |
| Tenancies signed up | 5 |
| Tenancies terminated | 4 |

| Voids work programme | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Voids/casual vacancies | 40 |
| Acquired properties (works on-going) | 23 |
| Average vacancy period | 149 days |
| Number voids returned to stock | 1 |
| Average spend | €5,959 |

Position at the end of January, 2021.

| Housing maintenance calls | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| January | 345 |

Private rented inspections

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

| Private rented inspections | |
|----------------------------|---|
| January | 0 |

Housing grants

| Grants approved for January 2021 | | |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| Grant type | Number of approvals | Value of works (€) |
| Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability | 3 | 38,000 |
| Housing Aid for Older People | 5 | 32,520 |
| Mobility Aids Grant | 6 | 31,000 |
| Total | 14 | 101,520 |

Rebuilding Ireland home loan

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 Applications | 0 Approvals | 2021 To 26/01/2021 |
| 85 Loans approved | 63 Loans drawn down | Cumulative to date: 26/01/2021 |

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. Please be advised that due to the demand for the service all calls cannot be immediately answered, please leave a detailed message which will be responded to.

The interagency Homeless Action Team continues to support clients in the transition from homeless services to accommodation while also endeavouring to prevent clients from becoming homeless. Consequently, the team, with the assistance of CCC HAP place finder, prevented two households from entering homeless services by supporting them to source alternative accommodation.

In addition, we continue our focus on exits from homeless services and, during the period 17th December, 2020 to 21st January, 2021, six households exited from homeless services; of these six households, two were housed in own door properties through HAP, leasing, AHB and local authority allocations, four discharged/self-discharged and left homeless services.

| Homeless presentations to 21st January, 2021 | |
|--|----|
| New presentations | 9 |
| Repeat presentations | 55 |

| Status as of 21st January, 2021 | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| | Families | Adults | Dependents | Providers |
| Laurel Lodge | 0 | 13 | 0 | 1 |
| Cusack Lodge | 5 | 7 | 9 | 1 |
| Westbrook | 0 | 14 | 0 | 1 |
| Ashford Court | 5 | 11 | 5 | 1 |
| Winter Initiative | 1 | 13 | 0 | 1 |
| EA Families | 4 | 5 | 6 | 2 |
| EA Individuals | 0 | 13 | 0 | 10 |
| TOTAL | 15 | 76 | 20 | 17 |

KILLALOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Killaloe Town and Village Renewal Accelerated Measures

Killaloe Municipal District (MD) introduced a number of initiatives in the public realm of Killaloe in recent months. The works are aimed at increasing space available to pedestrians as they walk to busier areas of town. Bollarding has been introduced on routes from the schools to the retail area to achieve this.

The provision of bicycle repair stations in the town has also occurred in the recent past. This initiative is aimed at supporting outdoor activity and supports the Keep Well campaign currently running by Government.



Bicycle Repair Station at Killaloe.

Clooney Town and Village Renewal

The Killaloe MD submission for funding to provide much needed infrastructure at Clooney village was approved by the Department of Rural and Community Affairs. Funding of €99,000 was awarded with match funding requirement of €11,000 by the Local Authority. This submission was in conjunction with Clooney Spancillhill Development Group.

Works in relation to designing the scheme, consultation with the community and procurement will commence shortly with a projected timeline to completion of one year.

Level 5 restrictions

The outdoor staff team continue to provide essential repair and maintenance to the areas roads during Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions. Works are concentrated on drainage to the sides of regional roads at this time.

The MD continues to contribute in spreading the public health message throughout the area via signage and stensilling.

The 2021 Schedule of Municipal District works is also being worked on currently with a view to having in place for March 2021.

Update on capital programme

| SHIP capital | No. approved | Current stage | Start date | Completion date |
|--|--------------|--|------------|-----------------|
| Sixmilebridge | 2 | Substantially complete | Q1 2020 | Q4 2020 |
| Kilmihil | 2 | Substantially complete | Q1 2020 | Q4 2020 |
| Shannon PPP | 51 | Construction paused due to Covid | Q4 2019 | Q3 2021 |
| Ashline, Ennis | 40 | Construction paused due to Covid | Q3 2020 | Q4 2021 |
| Milltown Malbay | 27 | Construction paused due to Covid | Q4 2020 | Q1 2022 |
| Tulla | 25 | Construction paused due to Covid | Q4 2020 | Q4 2021 |
| Newmarket on Fergus | 18 | Construction paused due to Covid | Q3 2020 | Q4 2021 |
| Doonbeg Sites | 2 | Construction paused due to Covid | Q4 2020 | Q4 2021 |
| Cloughleigh – Turnkey Dev. | 4 | Substantially complete | - | Q4 2021 |
| Scarriff | 18 | Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Design team appointed. | Q2 2021 | Q2 2022 |
| Roslevan, Tulla Road | 8 | Stage 2 approved. Part VIII approved. | Q1 2021 | Q1 2022 |
| Doonbeg Lands | 8 | Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Design Team appointed. | Q3 2021 | Q3 2022 |
| Clarecastle | 2 | Single Stage approved by DHPLG. Contract ready to be awarded. | Q1 2021 | Q4 2021 |
| Drumcliff Road, Ennis | 26 | Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Procuring design team. | Q3 2021 | Q4 2022 |
| Sixmilebridge | 16 | Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Design team appointed. | Q3 2021 | Q4 2022 |
| Ballaghboy, Quin Road, Ennis (TA) | 5 | Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Procuring design team. | Q3 2021 | Q3 2022 |
| Subtotal | 254 | | | |
| 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) | 3 | CAS – Stage 2 with Dept. for approval | Q3 2020 | Q4 2021 |
| Ballymacaula, Ennis (Cluid) | 2 | Part V | Q3 2020 | Q3 2021 |
| Subtotal | 29 | | | |
| Total | 283 | | | |

CULTURAL SERVICES – LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM, ARCHIVES

Clare County Library

Delivery service

In total, 411 deliveries were made from 4th to 15th January inclusive. There is an increased demand for library resources from members of the public in Clare. Feedback on the home delivery service is that it is greatly appreciated from those availing of the service.

Online resources

Coming into January 2021, online e-resources continue to see high demand with close to 58,000 items accessed in total at year end last year. The highest usage is in e-audiobooks. A similar trend is emerging in January.

Marketing

Clare Library service is active on all media platforms – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – and this continues in 2021. The platform with the highest activity is Facebook, followed by Twitter and then Instagram.

Right to Read programme

The children's librarian is currently planning programmes for Seachtain na Gaeilge, Teen Week and World Book Day events.

Staff in branches have uploaded four story readings online for young children, and staff in Miltown Malbay library have created a Chinese New Year craft session video for children.

Creative Ireland

The Creative Ireland (CI) Project Award grant scheme was advertised on 28th January with a closing date of 12th February. The theme is 'Creativity in the Community' and CI Clare invited applications for any form of creative work with a public interface/engagement. Awards of €500 to €2,000 will be granted with two awards of €5,000. Creative Ireland is a five-year initiative, 2017-2022, which places creativity at the centre of public policy. CI Clare will also support a number of Culture Team projects in 2021 – the Culture Team is comprised of representatives from the Library, Museum, Arts, glór, LEO, Heritage and Rural Development. Helen Walsh, County Librarian, co-ordinates the programme under Director of Service, Anne Haugh.

Decade of Centenaries

The Decade of Centenaries project award grant scheme was advertised on 21st January with a closing date of 5th February. Applications were encouraged from community groups and historical and commemorative groups who wish to commemorate events that happened in Clare during 1921. Awards of €500 to €2,000 will be granted. The Decade of Centenaries plan for 2021 will include an online lecture schedule, a series of booklets on individual personalities in Clare during this period and a hedge school with historians discussing a topic of relevance to Clare during the revolutionary period.

There was an article on Clare Local Studies on *Irish Genealogy*

News in relation to staff continuing to upload genealogical resources onto the website. They also mentioned the online history events added to the Clare Library website.

Healthy Ireland

Two Tai Chi workshops were successfully delivered by Kevin Copeland and many people from around the county participated. Among the participants were residents from a few nursing homes and daycare centres, together with members of active retirement groups and other individuals.

Irish sign language teacher, Adrian Rynne, together with interpreter, Ide Barrett, gave a workshop on sign language. Due to the demand, another taster workshop was organised for Tuesday, 26th January.

Clare Library partnered with the HSE and West Clare Mental Health Association to deliver a concert, via Zoom, to all nursing homes, daycare centres and Brothers of Charity services. People logged in from 21 different venues to view the concert, which was delivered by the well-known local singer Patrick Roche. Feedback on song requests was obtained from activities co-ordinators in various venues and the requested songs featured as part of this most enjoyable event.

Sonia Millar, mindfulness teacher, will deliver a mindfulness workshop to a group of children aged 7-10 years in the North Clare Direct Provision Centre on Monday, 25th January.

Other events in January include Zoom book clubs, a talk on feeding wild birds and a series of four online weekly workshops on parent and vaby sign language.

Staff are also currently planning a "Clare Reads" initiative as part of the Keep well & Ireland Reads campaigns for February and March. Niall William's, the author of "This is happiness" has been chosen to promote reading in the community.

Clare Arts Office

January saw much preparation for the year ahead with applications for a variety of schemes received, advice given to artists regarding relevant funding strands and schemes and supporting initiatives undertaken to assist artists. Activities that took place included:

- An audit of the needs of the festivals and events sector in the county began as part of our capacity building initiative with festivals.
- Applications closed for Engine Shorts, 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.
- Applications closed for the Duala 'Creator in Residence Scheme' with the Irish Traditional Music Archive.
- Applications closed for the arts grants under the Community Supports Scheme.
- Applications opened for arts proposals to commemorate the Decade of Centenaries.
- Six arts projects commenced under the Cúram/Keep Well

Arts Initiative:

1. A Little Book of Hope – an intergenerational publication edited and illustrated by Ana Colomer.
2. Creel – an environmental art project creating artworks from rubbish collected on beaches in north Clare with poet Grace Wells.
3. Stone Mad – an art project with residents of Liscannor Nursing Home.
4. Shining Light – an art installation on the 12 O’Clock Hills for the spring solstice in March.
5. Keeping Connected – an intergenerational traditional singing project with singer Rachel Uí Fhaoláin.
6. Dancing the Rainbow – a creative expression project with Clare Women’s Network and Jenny Bassett.



Museum donations box.

Clare Museum

Clare Museum has been closed to the public this month. Twenty-two items have been photographed and have been captioned. The photographs will be uploaded onto the museum website before the end of January. Items from 2015 are in the process of being photographed at present. Two objects have been featured on the museum’s facebook page this year.

Ten items acquired by the museum late last year have been catalogued to the museum collection.

Two more reports associated with the Creative Ireland excavation at Derryboy were received during the month and have been placed on the museum website. They have also been promoted on the museum’s social media platforms and have received 1,000 views. A paper on the excavation has been completed by the excavating archaeologist for publication in the next edition of *The Other Clare*.

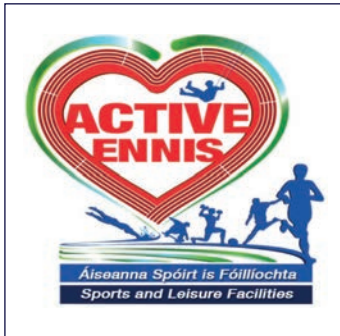
The curator is currently working on the Strategic Management Plan for Clare Museum, required for MSPI maintenance accreditation. A draft of the museum’s education policy is being updated with a view to submitting to the directorate Strategic Policy Committee in the spring.

The new donations box has been installed in keeping with internal audit requirements.

Clare Archives

The Archive Digitisation Project is continuing with scanning of the older District Electoral Registers.

SPORTS & RECREATION



January is a month of new beginnings and new year's resolutions and generally a busy period for Active Ennis. January 2021, however, sees us begin the new year with all facilities closed with the exception of access to the parks for individual use.

Active Ennis Leisure Complex

Active Ennis Leisure Complex is closed. The site is open to accommodate access to the bring banks between 9am and 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 are 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.

Clare Sports Partnership

Clare Sports Partnership has been very active in the promotion of sport in Clare. To that end, our website www.claresports.ie has been updated to make it



more user friendly for those with additional needs. Check it out!

Happy new year and here's hoping that the year ahead will be kind to you. As we go into another period of restrictions, it is now just as important as before that we keep active in order to support and maintain our physical and mental health.

Banner Buddies

Banner Buddies started on Monday, 11th January, and runs until Sunday, 7th March. People were asked to team up with a buddy of their choice so that they can keep each other motivated and accountable for the duration of the programme.

The aim of the challenge is for both buddies to reach the 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity weekly (with lots of help from the team at CSP). This is a minimum standard as set out by the World Health Organization.

They will provide you with weekly podcasts on motivation, psychology, injury prevention, how to get the best from their fitness tracker, etc.

They will also provide you with two weekly workouts of 30 mins duration from some of the best fitness experts in the county. You will be asked to complete three 30-minute weekly sessions of an activity of your choosing, e.g. walk/run/jog/push.

A playlist is provided for you to enjoy while working out. You will be added to a closed Facebook group and a private Strava group to track your progress.

CSP has two Garmin fitness watches, among other spot prizes, that participants will be in with a chance of winning during the programme.

Feedback to date is that the take-up is high and the programme is a huge success.



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

Roadworks Programme and Operations

The Roadworks Programme for 2021 will be prepared as part of the SMDW for 2021 in the coming weeks as soon as we receive our full road grant allocations.

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 and was on public display for an eight-week period up to 30th October. There were 112 submissions during the process, which the NTA are now considering. A second round of consultation will commence in February 2021 with a view to finalising the strategy by September/October 2021.

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, with a return of tenders to be submitted by December, 2020. It is anticipated that a contractor will be appointed and on site in 2021.

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

- Internet: Direct reporting on the website – www.airtricitysolutions.com
- Phone: Airtricity Utility Solutions dedicated call centre – 1850 372 772
- Local Authority Identification – via Local Authority’s website or contact number.

Road Design Office

Current projects – monthly update

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

TII road safety projects – monthly progress

| Project | Update – January 2021 |
|--|-----------------------|
| HD15 and HD 17 sites site inspections, with TII Regional Road Safety Officers, were conducted on 29th September. A progress meeting with the TII was held on 27th January, 2021. | |

| | |
|----------------|--|
| TII HD15 sites | <p>For the N85:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TII are reviewing additional design proposals for the Lahinch Rd/Shanaway Rd. • An additional revised design for Clareabbey roundabout has been submitted to the TII for consideration, focusing on reducing speed and pedestrian crossing points. <p>For the N68:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. |
| TII HD17 sites | <p>For the N68:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further to on-site inspections at Cranny, Crag and Parknamoney junctions the TII has requested the RDO to progress detailed site surveys, conceptual designs and an option feasibility report, all to be progressed in 2021. <p>For the N67:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topographical surveys of the identified junctions for phase 1 are now complete, i.e. Galway border to Ballyvaughan. Design and feasibility report for phase 1 is progressing, with land acquisition required at two junctions. • A revised design for Minster Place, Kilkee, has been approved by the TII. A detailed design, feasibility report and preliminary design report are being prepared for submission to the TII in early 2021. |

Low-cost safety schemes – monthly progress

| Project | Update – January 2021 |
|-----------------------------|--|
| R463 junction at Westbury | Completed. |
| R352 Hurlers Cross Junction | A Specific Improvement Grant Application for R352 (Henchy’s Cross) upgrade has been submitted to the Department of Transport on 18th November, 2020, in order to progress the project to the next phase. |

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| R474, Mahonburg | Substantially completed. |
| R483 Cree Bridge | Completed. |
| Low Cost Safety 2021 | A list of projects, across all MDs, was submitted to the Department of Transport for approval on 9th October, 2020. |

Other projects – monthly update

| Project | Update – January 2021 |
|--|---|
| Larkins Cross/Gillogue Bridge Specific Improvement works | Completed. |
| EuroVelo 1 | €182,000 in funding was secured from DTTAS for the implementation of the EuroVelo route signage in County Clare. Procurement is completed and the installation is near completion. |
| Liaison with NTA regarding bus stops | <p>Wheelchair accessible bus stop on Bothar Linne, Shannon Town:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The design is completed and issued to the Shannon MD. The project received €30,733 in NTA funding. A Preliminary Safety and Health Plan has been issued to the Shannon MD. Works commenced in late November. Works well underway with the remainder to be completed in 2021. Works will recommence once Covid-19 restrictions permit. |
| Liaison with NTA regarding bus shelters | NTA has 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 has requested costs relating to the civil works. Contract documents have been completed and uploaded on eTenders. Tender return date has been extended to 29th January, 2021, due to Covid-19 restrictions. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Road Schedule & Queries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search requests from the public and Municipal Districts regarding the road schedule are being carried out on an ongoing basis. Updates to the roads schedule are carried out as updates are being received. |
| Circular RW 10/2020 – Active Travel Measures Allocations 2020 | 2020 element completed. Active Travel Carry Over List – Designs have initiated in conjunction with MDs. |
| Circular RW 09/2020 – Climate Change Adaptation Allocations 2020 | 2020 element completed. |
| Circular RST 04/2019 Safe Overtaking Width for Cyclists Signs | Clare County Council received an allocation of €29,350 from DTTAS in 2020 for the provision of safe overtaking width signs for cyclists. Procurement is completed and the installation is near completion. |
| 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. Collaboration with IT and GIS will be required to find an optimal solution to develop an information map available for public view/download as an app. |
| NTA Active Travel Circular (2021) | Initial contact has initiated with the NTA. A Clare County Council briefing session with the NTA has been coordinated for the 26/01/2021. |

2020 Bridge Rehabilitation monthly update – January 2021

- AA Screening: Tender being prepared for screening of bridges funded under 2021 Bridge Rehabilitation grant.
- Bunratty Bridge: Meeting on site to be arranged with Waiting National Monuments when Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.
- Stonepark Bridge: Fisheries derogation applied for, road closure will be required.
- Smithstown Bridge: Delayed with water levels and Covid-19 restrictions.
- Ballyalla Bridge: Delayed with water levels and Covid-19 restrictions.
- Latoon Masonry Bridge: Design ongoing.
- Sragh Bridge: Structural investigations to be complete when Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Other bridge works

- Moanagh Bridge: Contractor appointed, works to commence when Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.
- Killestry Bridge: Malachy Walsh & Partners preparing a preliminary report on best method of repair.
- Wooden Bridge Springfield: Survey to be carried out, meeting to be arranged with Waterways Ireland when Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

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. In addition, the Health and Safety Team continued to review and assess national, sectoral and operational Covid-19 guidance documents in order to revise and update the Council's Covid-19 Response Plan. A Schedule of Covid-19 Inspections were completed to check compliance with the Covid-19 Response Plan. The Health and Safety Team continued to progress their Schedule of Workplace Risk Assessment reviews and programme of Health and Safety Inspections.

General Design

The General Design Office are delivering the following projects across the organisation.

DigiClare hubs – site selection, design, tender, contract management

- Carron at Michael Cusack Centre (completed and open for business), Corofin, Cross (90 per cent complete),

Flagmount, Kilkee (completed and open for business), Kilmihil, Kilrush, Sixmilebridge and Ennis (80 per cent complete).

Economic development and property

- County Museum refurbishment – Contractor appointed and ready to start.
- Quin Road Campus Development – Phase 4 commenced.
- HQ and Libraries (space remodelling).
- Council Property Management - Claireen property clean-up; masterplans input; property assessments.
- Feasibility Study for Enterprise Centre.
- Tullyvarraga Hall – access and building repairs; designed and tendered.
- Canteen modifications at HQ.
- Bunratty Village perimeter walkway proposal.

Rural Development and Tourism

- Ennistymon Hub basement unit.
- Cliffs of Moher Walking Paths – 90 per cent complete.
- Burren Discovery Trail and Burren Signage Plan.
- George's Head, Kilkee.
- Lough Derg Amenity Trail.
- Loophead Lighthouse Visitor Centre.
- Burial grounds: countywide – parking, access and maintenance works.
- Works completed at Drumcliff Burial Ground.
- Site investigations and site surveys for lands at Ballaghafadda.
- Lemenagh Burial Ground; Newmarket-on-Fergus: Stone work entrance – specifications sent to contractor, awaiting quotation.
- Ballycannon – tree surgery and improvement of pathway works in hand. Site visit carried out with contractor – awaiting quotation for clearance of spoil under trees in main burial ground.
- Loophead Looped Trail.

Project Management Office, Municipal Districts, Planning – mapping services

- Capital Projects – Ennis Flood Relief, Killaloe Bypass.
- Taking in Charge – Mapping.
- Ennis Leisure Centre - New Entrance Porch.
- Sixmilebridge Town and Village Renewal.

Roads and transportation

- Traffic Management Plans.
- Funding applications for Footpath works.
- Connecting Ennis Project – Recreational Trails in Ennis and Environs.

CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Good progress on a number of fronts took place throughout January while PMO staff took part in a well-attended Active Travel Webinar hosted by Senator Roisin Garvey and attended by Minister Eamon Ryan at the end of the month. Some of the main developments during the month are as outlined below.

Access to UL/Upgrade to walkway along the Errinagh Canal

These works, while important, were deemed non-essential nor classed as critical infrastructure and, as such, cannot continue during the Level 5 Covid-19 related restrictions. The contractor has temporarily demobilised from site but detailed design work continues and it is hoped to quickly return to site when the restrictions are lifted and it is safe to do so.

Doolin Pier Visitors Services Building

Negotiations are ongoing regarding the acquisition of third party lands that would be of benefit to the project. Following the conclusion of same, we expect to advance the project at pace with a view to submitting for planning permission to An Bord Pleanála at the earliest juncture possible.

Ennis Lower Flood Relief Scheme

Work on this scheme, which extends from the Club Bridge to Bank Place, continues and is the final section of the Town Flood Defences along the River Fergus. Works have been progressing well on a number of fronts with the limestone wall and coping works underway along the riverside face of the flood defence pile wall. The relevant drainage works along the land side of the defence wall has also commenced and is nearing completion, with the installation of the new outfall headwall and flap valve the final elements remaining to be carried out. Work on the two tie-in sections is also underway and is due to be fully closed out over the coming weeks. The scheme is programmed to be completed in April 2021 and is currently on course to meet this date.

Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme

Work is now complete on the installation of the sheet piled wall along the entire 1.5km length of the embankment. This secures the area from flooding by overtopping of the existing embankment or a breach. Minor works are currently underway regarding the installation of the various pile caps, landscaping and drainage works for the scheme. All new sluices are now in place and working as per design. The construction of the pump station and the landscaping will begin when the environmental window opens in April 2021 and the overall project is on programme to be completed in August 2021. Related to same,

we are awaiting the outcome of a funding application to the Department of Rural Affairs under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructural Scheme (ORIS) which, if successful, will allow us to create a wonderful riverside walkway alongside the flood defence connecting the Quin Road to the N85 at Clare Abbey.

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

We are awaiting the decision from An Bord Pleanála regarding whether an oral hearing will be held or not in its determination of the CPO application submitted by the Council last summer. In expectation of same, the Project Team are working on the various engineers' and planners' reports that will be required as part of the board's decision making process.

Killaloe Bridge and Bypass

COIR Infrastructure has now commenced on site with the Advance Works contract. Site clearance works are currently being progressed on the Clare side of the scheme. Significant tree felling is taking place in Ballyvally, Clarisford and Shantraud. The contractor has applied for a two-week road closure of the R494 from the Roolagh junction at Ballina to the Birdhill Roundabout to facilitate safe roadside site clearance works planned from 15th February until 1st March. Further notifications will be provided in the coming week in this regard.

The Project Team continue to progress the delivery of this important piece of infrastructure and are due to meet again virtually in early February.

The independent checking and technical compliance of the final detailed design of the project Works Requirements/Scope of Works is nearing completion. Observations from these third party disciplines are now being incorporated in the final suite of tender documents ahead of going to tender in spring 2021.

The archaeological works are now being confined to specific areas on the site deemed suitable for further investigation. Backfilling works has also commenced to previously excavated and examined areas. Completion of these works is expected in April 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 is temporarily suspended due to the Covid-19 restrictions and the recent retirement of the property arbitrator.

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. Since the last period, a short weather window has allowed the specialist survey contractor to carry out the inshore survey of Moore's Bay. A second day of surveying further out in the bay is still required and will be carried out when conditions allow. The associated drone survey of the rocky outcrop is also planned subject to suitable flying conditions. An additional day of topographical surveying was required during January and this has now been carried out and will be included as part of the final report to be issued in the coming week.

Using the preliminary topographical and CCTV survey information received to date, the consultant has assembled the model of the Atlantic stream and run a number of the specified flooding scenarios. Adjustments will be made where necessary on receipt of the final survey reports. Unfortunately, the planned January workshop involving the various departments of Clare County Council had to be postponed due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions but will be re-scheduled when safe to do so. Information on the project can be accessed through our online information video and associated information literature available on the scheme website www.kilkeefrs.ie

Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR)

The Project Appraisal suite of documents, namely the Project Brief, the Traffic Modelling Report, the Cost Benefit Analysis Report and the Project Business Case are currently with the Department of Transport for consideration. We are awaiting their approval of same, following which we will be in a position to progress to the next stage.

Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)

Following the grant of Part VIII permission at the September meeting, leave to seek a Judicial Review of the decision was sought through the courts by a third party. The preliminary hearing re same was scheduled for January 18th and the matter is included for mention in early March. We await the final decision in this regard, following which, if successful, we will be in a position 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

Work has commenced on the detailed design of the project and meetings are ongoing between the Scheme Consultants, JBA and the PMO. Clare County Council will now be engaging with local property owners and stakeholders affected by the proposed works. Part VIII permission and Section 50 approval have already been obtained for the project. Work on site is expected to commence in early summer 2021.

N19 Shannon Airport Access Road

The Project Team led by Clare County Council and consisting of

Midwest Regional Road Design Office, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Shannon Airport Authority along with our consultants Fehily Timoney & Associates and Clandillon Civil Consulting continue to meet each month. 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 project steering group held a virtual risk workshop in late January where previous identified risks for the project were evaluated based on the information gathered through stakeholder liaison and utility surveys. The work is necessary in mitigating risk associated with the final preferred route option to emerge at a later stage.

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 and to inform the brief for the required intrusive ground investigations (slit trenching, boreholes, etc.) contract in 2021. The ground investigation tender documents are currently being finalised and it is envisaged that this element will be issued for tender in the coming month.

N85 Upgrade at Kilnamona

The Council has requested approval from TII regarding the appointment of Technical Advisors to advance this work and their decision is awaited.

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.

Work is continuing in the scoping and preparation of tender documentation for the various third-party surveys. The Geophysical Survey tender has been advertised on eTenders and tenders are due for return in the coming days. Draft Ground Investigation tender documents have been submitted by the consultant and are currently under review. Following a number of site visits and consultations with specialists, the bespoke CCTV Survey and Flow Monitoring specification and tender documents are nearing completion and will be published on eTenders in early February. Observations and recommendations of the steering group have also been returned to the consultant relating to the Topographical Survey specification. This package of works will also be advertised on eTenders in early February.

Spanish Point Coastal Protection Scheme

Work has commenced on planning and design requirements. Once this is finalised, Clare County Council will procure a contractor with the view of completing works before the summer season of 2021.

Springfield, Clonlara

Following many years of effort, the proposed project at Springfield is moving at considerable pace. Several meetings have taken place recently involving Clare County Council, OPW, consultants Byrne Looby and subcontractors, stakeholders and landowners. A ground investigation survey has commenced and a contractor is on site to carry out the boreholes and trial holes. A resident engineer is supervising the works. The soil samples will be tested in a laboratory and the results will inform the final detailed design. In conjunction with this, trial trenching is taking place to examine the area for archaeology. A qualified archaeologist is onsite to assess the trenches and provide a report. A team of surveyors are also on site to carry out a more detailed topographical survey of certain critical areas around the proposed works. All this information will be used in the final design. 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 spring (April) of 2021 and work is expected to take six months to complete.

West Clare Railway Greenway

Clare County Council advertised for Technical Advisors for Phases 2-4 of the West Clare Railway Greenway, which includes a detailed constraints study, appropriate assessment and route selection and will conclude with the submission of a Planning Permission Application for the 25km priority section between Kilrush and Kilkee. The Request for Tender also included an option to appoint Technical Advisors for Detailed Design (Phase 5) which will proceed if the necessary statutory consents (Planning and Environmental) are granted. The closing date for receipt of tenders was Friday, 29th January, 2021. The Tender Assessment and review will be completed by mid-February following which, it is hoped to appoint Technical Advisors by the end of February subject to the availability of the funding required.

FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

Recent training courses

All training has been suspended for the month of January 2021 due to the ongoing high number of Covid-19 incidents.

Fire & Building Control Activities

| Fire and Building Control Section Main Activities | December 2020 | Year to Date 2020 | January 2021 (up to 25.01.21) |
|---|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Number of Emergency Calls Attended | 104 | 1,014 | 52 |
| Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received | 8 | 85 | 3 |
| Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted | 4 | 93 | 2 |
| Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Number of Disability Access Certificates Received | 5 | 70 | 4 |
| Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted | 3 | 68 | 1 |
| Number of Commencement Notices Received | 15 | 375 | 15 |
| Number of Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints | 0 | 21 | 3 |

(Note: In the January Monthly Report, the December figures related to 1st to 16th December 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
- Members provided transport for patients to hospital appointments in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Limerick
- Members participated in a search of Galway Bay for three missing persons
- Members provided 4x4 transport for a palliative care nurse to housecalls due to severe weather
- Members are currently assisting the Clare Community Forum Helpline by taking calls from 5.00pm to 8.00pm each evening, seven days per week.

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. As previously seen in earlier restriction periods, the level of activity tends to increase in the civic amenity sites.

An Taisce, IBAL Anti-Litter Survey

The An Taisce Report – IBAL Anti-Litter League, Round 2, 2020, was published on 25th January. A strong performance by Ennis has placed it among only four towns to be deemed “Cleaner than European Norms”.

Eight out of the 10 Ennis locations surveyed received a Grade A. The report found top-ranking locations in Ennis were O’Connell Street, Abbey Street, Tim Smythe Park, Ennis Friary and Ennis Recycling Centre – not only were they very good with regard to litter but also well-presented and maintained.

Ennis Recycling Centre along with other sites named above received a notable mention under the recent IBAL litter survey for 2020 as being well maintained and litter free, which is unusual for a managed civic amenity site according to IBAL.

Environmental Awareness

Social media campaign

Posts for January using Clare County Council and Greener Clare social media channels are as follows:

- Illegal dumping (Your County – Your Waste)
- Responsible use of Clare County Council bring banks
- Dog owner responsibility
- Christmas tree recycling (further promoted by adverts on the *Clare Echo* and *The Clare Champion*).

The Clare Echo Green Page

Low Smoke Coal, Your County – Your Waste (Illegal dumping) advert, Dog Owner Responsibility campaign, Household Burning of Waste were all advertised on the *Clare Echo* during January. Articles included a Year in Review of Clare County Council's Environment Section, Moy Hill Community Farm, Irish Seed Savers as well as an article on how to reduce your carbon footprint.

The Low Smoke Coal online *Clare Echo* advert continued throughout January with over 126,000 impressions and 397 clicks on the infographic.

Water and Scientific Services

Water Pollution Complaints

A total of 10 complaints (Section 4 licensed sites, wastewater and agriculture) have been received and investigated to date in January 2021. Enforcement notices/letters were issued

where required under the Water Pollution Acts and the Good Agriculture Practice Regulations 2017 as amended.

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

No inspections have been carried to date due to Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions.

Planning referrals from Planning Department

To date this year 20 reports have been prepared and submitted by environmental staff to the planning section. Assessment and recommendations were made in order to minimise potential water pollution.

Lake Sampling Programme 2020

TMS Environmental have started the Water Framework Directive (WFD) lake monitoring programme for 2021. All samples are transported to the EPA laboratory in Castlebar for analysis.

Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan (RBMP)

There was a LAWPRO Regional Operational meeting held on 13th January. There is a public consultation process in place until June 2021 for the third cycle of the River Basin Management Plan.

Ballyduff Beg Waste Landfill Licence Monitoring Requirements

Our Environmental Contractor continues to carry out monitoring on site to comply with EPA licence conditions. There are zero non-compliances to report. Clare County Council staff carry out weekly sampling of surface water ponds.

Laboratory and Technical Support

General

During January data and statistics for return to the EPA are compiled and uploaded to the EPA data portal, EDEN. The data includes all the monitoring, which Clare County Council Environmental Laboratory undertakes that is not covered by the Irish Water SLA. Any queries in relation to the data are fielded from the EPA with all data to be completed and queries will be answered by the second week of February.

River Monitoring Programme 2020

Clare County Council is required to collect 295 river water samples in 2020. The calendar for sampling was agreed with the EPA

GARDENING



Pictured are young plants and baskets in polytunnels. Maintenance and upkeep of young plants has continued, with a focus on preparing for the planting season to commence in early March.

During January, the Gardening Team was heavily involved in the running of the Christmas tree recycling initiative, which saw record numbers of trees delivered by members of the public which will be shredded and reused as mulch in future gardening works.

Due to Level 5 restrictions in January, some of the scheduled works for the Gardening Team had to be postponed. Maintenance and upkeep of young plants has continued, with a focus on preparing for the planting season to commence in early March.

in December last with the sampling spread evenly over the 12 months. The first round of sampling was completed in the third week of January.

from monthly to twice-yearly, based on population served. Monitoring is spread throughout the year. January monitoring has already been completed.

Drinking Water Monitoring

Clare County Council is required to sample and analyse all public water supplies including public supplied Group water schemes as part of the Service Level Agreement. The level of monitoring required is agreed with Irish Water and is based on the population served.

The monitoring is spread evenly throughout the year and has commenced with several supplies already monitored in January. The analysis results will be forwarded to IW in the agreed format.

Group Water Schemes (GWS) and Small Private Supplies

Clare County Council is the Competent Authority for regulating private water supplies and undertakes in excess of 270 samples from these supplies each year. The sampling and analysis will be ongoing throughout 2020. A number of schemes have been monitored in January already.

Wastewater Treatment Plants

Laboratory Staff in conjunction with Area based Technicians monitor all Licensed and Certified discharges for compliance with their discharge limits. In Clare monitoring varies

Section 4 Discharge Licences

The programme of sampling and monitoring for Section 4 discharge licence operators will be agreed with the Water and Scientific Services Team in by the end of January. Due to Covid-19 Level 5 restrictions, many of the businesses normally operating are not open or have minimal discharges at the moment. This will be taken into account when scheduling sampling.

Waste Management

Ballyduff Beg Closed Landfill Site (Closure Restoration Aftercare Management Plan)

Clare County Council have notified all tenderers of the outcome of the tender process undertaken. We are currently in a formal “standstill period” and may proceed with awarding the contract if all contractual obligations are satisfied.

Bring Banks

The bring banks at the Ennis Leisure Centre remain open for public use.

Civic Amenity Sites

All Civic Amenity Sites and Waste Transfer Stations in each Municipal District have remained open throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lisdeen

An application has recently gone to the EPA for their consideration, regarding the development of a Community Solar Park on the site of Lisdeen Recycling Centre.

Waste Enforcement

Environmental Monitoring (Illegal Dumping/Litter)

The Waste Enforcement Team continued to respond to waste and litter related complaints in January. A total of 182 complaints relating to litter and waste have been received in January to date, and are currently being worked through and closed out. A total of six litter fines were issued in January to date, as a result of evidence found in waste. Two Section 14 Notices have been issued to date in January.

Dog Fouling

Level 5 Covid restrictions has increased walking activity which has led to a notable increase in Dog Fouling complaints. Our wardens have responded to these complaints by erecting signage and stencils and increasing patrols in the affected areas. There was an advert placed in last week's *Clare Echo*

on this topic to raise awareness and promote good dog owner responsibility.

Dog Warden, Frankie Coote will address this issue and promote responsible dog ownership on his Clare FM slot on January 26th

Solid Fuel Inspections

Residents in the Drumbiggle area will be notified by way of an information letter of the requirement to burn Low Smoke Fuel. This will assist in the improvement of air quality in the local area.

The Clare County Council website was updated to inform the public of their responsibilities under the Air Pollution Act (Marketing, Sale, Distribution and Burning of Specified Fuels) Regulations 2012 (S.I. No. 326 of 2012)

The Waste Enforcement Team also continues to focus on Solid Fuel Retailers, carrying out inspections on retail outlets and delivery vehicles within the Low Smoke Zones of Ennis, Clarecastle and South East Clare. A random sample of Low Smoke Fuel from a local retailer will also be sent for laboratory analysis to determine the sulphur content.

Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental inspections RMCEI 2021

Clare County Council is currently drafting the 2021 RMCEI inspection Plan for Submission to the EPA. This will detail the number of inspections to be carried out by Environment staff and will outline the collaboration with external agencies targeted to achieve Environmental compliance on Air, Water, Waste and Noise. The National Environmental Enforcement Priorities for 2021 has been set by the EPA based on consultation by NIECE Steering Committee; CCMA representatives; Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications; Department of Housing, Planning, Local Government and Heritage; WERLAs and LAWPRO.

Beaches

Beach Bye laws

The 2021 Beach Bye Laws are at public consultation stage this month. Once all comments have been collated, we will provide a summary report on submissions.

WATER SERVICES



The new upgraded Quin Waste Water Treatment Plant which is nearing completion.

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 waste water operations

The following statistics provide an indication of the level of activity/work being carried out by the water and waste water teams throughout the county from 21st December 2020 up to and including 21st January 2021. The figures do not, however, reflect the time invested by the teams which is required to resolve each complaint /issue.

- 19 Customer Complaints were dealt with and closed out
- 0 Emergency Work Orders were received during the timeframe
- 395 Reactive Maintenance Work Orders were dealt with and closed out
- 1 Customer Asset Flooding Work Orders were received
- 181 Service Requests (SRs) were raised for Field Requests and Follow On Work Orders for Reactive Maintenance work
- 48 Outage Notices were placed on the IW portal during the period. 25 accounted for unplanned works for water outages and burst water mains. The remainder 23 notices

were for leak detection works, pump repairs and valve replacement.

Water and Wastewater Operations

A number of outages occurred at Lees Road, College Road, Clarehill and Ashline in the Mid-Clare Area.

There were a number of outages in Lisdeen, Bansha Lisdeen, Bansha, Doonmore, Glascloune, Baltard, Killard, Marion Estate Kilkee, Killadysert, Drumdigus, Kilmurphy McMahon in the West/North Clare Area.

In the Shannon area a power outage at Castlelake treatment plant on Christmas day required attendance by staff.

There were no major repair works on the wastewater network since the last report.

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:

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

Water Conservation

Irish Water is currently in consultation with Clare County Council regarding the National Leakage Reduction Plan for

2021. The proposed leakage reduction targets for Clare in 2021 are 1.2 MLD.

In 2020 Clare achieved a leakage reduction of 4.26 MLD which was significantly ahead of programme.

Work Programme

In January, the Find Crews continued water conservation activity throughout the county reacting to various increases in demand primarily in Ennis (Sandfield DMA) and Shannon (Aidan Park and Shannon Town) district metering areas (DMA).

The Find & Fix Crews concentrated activities in Mid-Clare and West Clare with leaks repaired in Quin with ongoing repairs in Lahinch. Leak detection find works are currently taking place in Ballybeg and Kilmihil DMAs.

Waste Water Operations

A new sludge handling system has been commissioned in the Ennis North Wastewater Treatment plant. This consists of a new dewatering unit, auger and articulated trailers. This upgrade has further optimised the volume of wastewater being treated at the plant by allowing more sludge to be dewatered. Approximately 24t of cake sludge is now being produced over a 24-hour period and the system is semi-autonomous compared to the old belt press which needed constant supervision.

Irish Water Capital programme Shannon Waste Water Treatment Plant interim upgrade

Ward and Burke commenced work on site on 1st January, 2020. Construction work is continuing on the WWTP and on the four pump stations. All flow has now been diverted to the new industrial stream. Works are nearing completion on the domestic stream and flows will be turned into this process stream on 1st February. Works to the pump stations are well advanced. The full project including testing and commissioning is scheduled for completion in March 2021. Sludge is being conveyed to skips and will be removed off site.

Kilrush Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

A new waste water treatment plant, rising main and upgrade of the existing Frances St pumping station are proposed in Kilrush. EPS were awarded the contract under the IW Early Contractor Involvement framework to design and build the works. A Site Investigation Contract (to determine ground conditions and locate utilities) is substantially complete. Detailed design is ongoing. A new planning application is to be lodged by IW to deal with necessary alterations to the design of the WWTP. Ecology surveys have to be undertaken again and a new NIS prepared. The Planning application is anticipated to be lodged in February 2021. Renewable energy sources to provide electricity for the operation of the plant will be investigated by Irish Water. Planting to increase biodiversity will also be included in landscaping plans. Construction is expected to commence late 2021 with completion early 2023.

Clarecastle Agglomeration Upgrade

Under Irish Water's UTAS the waste water collected at Quay Rd pumping station will be diverted via a new waste water pipeline to Clareabbey WWTP thus ending the discharge of untreated wastewater from Clarecastle to the River Fergus.

The detailed design is being finalised and it is anticipated that the main contract will go to tender by Q2 of 2021. The advance contract for the construction of 311m of rising main from Quay Road to a point just north of the Church was awarded to Ward & Burke Construction Ltd. Works commenced on site on 11th January 2021 and will take approximately one month. Temporary Traffic Management will be in place for the duration of the works and details will be available on the Irish Water website and on social media. This rising main will be capped off until the remainder is completed. The contact for the remainder of the rising main and the Quay Road works is programmed 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 Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

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

A Site Investigation Contract has been completed at the WWTP site, the pump station site and on public roads. Detailed design is ongoing. Irish Water has been 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. Renewable energy sources to provide electricity for the operation of the plant will be investigated by Irish Water. Planting to increase biodiversity will also be included in landscaping plans. The project is expected to go to construction in mid-2021 with completion late 2022.

Ballyvaughan Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

A new waste water treatment plant, pumping station including pipework extensions are proposed in Ballyvaughan. Detailed design process is ongoing by EPS. Site Investigation and on site surveys at the WWTP site, pump station site and rising main route have been completed. Following discussions between Irish Water and Clare County Council, investigation of opportunities for the inclusion of renewable energy sources to provide electricity for the operation of the plant will be pursued by Irish Water. Planting to increase biodiversity will also be included in landscaping plans. Irish Water has notified An Bord Pleanála that it has withdrawn the Compulsory Purchase Order. Irish Water will undertake further assessment of the proposed scheme.

Kilkee Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

A Design Summary Report has been prepared by the Consultants

in June 2020 in relation to construction of a WWTP. The Project Brief has been issued to EPS, the Design/Build Contractor. The Site Selection process has to be finalised by EPS before the project can progress taking into account the work completed by the previous Consultants. Renewable energy sources to provide electricity for the operation of the plant will be investigated by Irish Water. Planting to increase biodiversity will also be included in landscaping plans. A planning application is expected to be lodged in late 2021. IW/CCC have agreed that pumping of flow will continue from the Victoria Stream to the outfall. This is done to protect the Blue flag status of the beach during the bathing season – end of May to mid September each year. The project is expected to go to construction in late 2022 with completion in late 2024.

Ennistymon and Lahinch Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

The Feasibility Study Report was produced by Mott McDonald Consulting Engineers for various options including combining Ennistymon and Lahinch treatment and the Report was reviewed by Irish Water. The West Clare Railway and the infrastructure safeguards for both Ennistymon and Lahinch were included on the constraints mapping. Land zonings, SACs, pNHAs, NIAHs, and National Monuments are included in the Mapping along with a 50m buffer zone around buildings. Potential sites were evaluated and a draft of the Site Selection Report was issued to Irish Water in late December 2020. A number of options will go forward from the Site Selection Report to the Feasibility Study Report which will then be finalised.

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 site investigation along the road from the Plant through Kilnasoolagh Park and on the R458 towards Latoon is anticipated to commence in February 2021 and temporary traffic management will be required. Ecology surveys and river flow surveys have commenced. It is anticipated that a survey of the existing network in the town will be carried out in February 2021. Clare County Council has requested that IW review power supply to the existing plant and possibilities for use of renewable energy. It is anticipated that the planning application 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. Landowner negotiations are ongoing. The CPO was published in *The Clare Champion* dated 14th August, 2020, and the Oral Hearing is likely to be held by An Bord Pleanála in February 2021 but a date has not been fixed as yet. Some site investigation is yet to be completed and detailed design is ongoing. Renewable energy sources to provide electricity for the operation of the plant will be investigated by Irish Water. 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 waste water treatment plant on the existing site whilst 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 fitout is well underway with the control panel installation now in progress. Once fit out is complete, the testing and proving of the new plant equipment will take place. Preparations are underway for the commissioning phase of the project which is expected to commence in April 2021. The new plant is expected to be fully operational at the start of May.

Asset Transfer

A total of 375 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 324 for transfer. Of these 324 assets 190 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 – four assets are with the NSPO for investigation to ascertain if they are to be considered as underground assets. Underground assets are transferred by S.I. 13 of 2015. When they are approved IW will issue a letter to Clare County Council confirming their approval. Note that Underground assets, i.e. all water mains and sewers (other than storm water sewers) and any related accessories, and all pipes, waterworks and waste water works that are located under land, along with any related accessories, were vested in IW by S.I. No. 13 of 2015.
- Property Registration Authority Ireland – 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).

A Report on a third party asset for Ennis MD area has been submitted to Irish Water’s Legal Team and another is being prepared. Work has commenced on preparing background information on third party assets in the Shannon MD area.

A first registration application is pending with the Property Registration Authority (PRAI) and the team is awaiting further instructions from Irish Water’s Solicitors in relation to revisions that may be required to the application.

Rural Water Programme

Under the 2019-2021 Multi Annual Rural Water Programme works the replacement of 4.6km of Feenagh GWS water mains continues although progress is currently affected by the Covid pandemic. Tendering for the replacement in full of the Tullaher GWS was completed in late December with a contractor appointed in early January and works are set to commence in February on the replacement of 4.6km of mains. These works are being carried out 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.

The Deerpark GWS undertook significant leak detection works in December. This work was completed in early January and this resulted in a significant saving of 300m³/day. It is hoped to submit a Taking in Charge Application on behalf of the scheme in the coming weeks.

No schemes were taken in charge by Irish Water in January. Clare now currently has seven schemes which are awaiting taking in charge. However, due to the temporary suspension of the taking in charge of group water schemes by Irish Water, these schemes will not transfer at this time. A number of further schemes shall be submitted for taking in charge in 2021.

The assessment and processing of grants under the ‘Grant for Improvement Works to a Private Water Supply’ is continuing under the Rural Water Programme with the significant uptake of grants in 2020 continuing into 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 classed ‘Cleaner than European Norms’

Ennis has maintained the highest classification, ‘Cleaner than European Norms’, in a nationwide litter survey. It ranked third in the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) league, based on independent surveying and monitoring carried out by An Taisce. It joins only three other towns that were deemed ‘Cleaner than European Norms’. Eight out of 10 sites surveyed in the town were awarded Grade A status. This is against a backdrop of findings that litter levels rose in 24 of the 37 towns and cities inspected by An Taisce at the end of 2020. This recognition does have ripple effects for the local economic and tourism sectors. Huge credit to all involved, community groups and Ennis MD outdoor crews in achieving this standard.

Festive lighting

Ennis is one of around 100 towns, villages and cities that are keeping the Christmas lights on for the month of January in a bid to lift people’s spirits during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

While it is essential that we all comply with the current Covid-19 measures, there is light and there is hope, and with the development of vaccines it is hoped that brighter days are ahead.

Update on Covid-19 Temporary Ennis Town Centre Mobility Plan

The taskforce continues to meet on an ongoing basis and membership has expanded to include ‘Retailers of Ennis’ and ‘Better Ennis’. Installation and commissioning of retractable bollards commences on Thursday, 28th January, and should be fully commissioned by end of month.

Roadworks programme – progress update

The following works were undertaken by Ennis MD staff during January.

Kilrush Road cycleway/crossing

As this work was nearing completion works were allowed continue under Level 5 restrictions. Civil works are substantially complete on the Kilrush Road cycleway/crossing. Lighting and line-marking is due to be completed in the coming weeks.

Ballybeg Woods

Works have been carried out by Ennis MD Staff to improve accessibility at the entrance to Ballybeg Woods.

Gritting of footpaths

Key access points within the town and steeper sloped footpaths around the town were salted or gritted during the cold weather to ensure safe access for all.

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Clare Economic Task Force



The Chief Executive and Director of Economic Development attended the sod-turning ceremony for the new DB Schenker building at Smithstown East, Shannon.

As a local authority we are regularly challenged to provide relevant up-to-date data reflecting current trends. This is become increasingly important as the recent Covid-19 pandemic is driving radical change in the manner in which the

future of work evolves to accommodate the changing needs of employees and employers. For this reason, the Council has employed to services of Abodoo to assist us to capture relevant live data on qualifications, data intelligence and technology that provides mapping and matching technology of the skills of people in the county. Such data provides insights into the skills of commuters, skilled under-employed or unemployed in Clare which in turn will facilitate inward investment, reversing migration, creating employment and underpinning our investment in co-working spaces.

In December 2020, the Chief Executive and Director of Economic Development attended the sod-turning ceremony for the new DB Schenker building at Smithstown East, Shannon.

Future Mobility Campus Ireland

The Council is a partner in the Future Mobility Campus Ireland (FMCI) designated activity company. This Enterprise Ireland and private industry funded project is Ireland's first future mobility campus, which will act as a testbed facility for autonomous vehicles. The project will test unmanned road and aerial vehicles and will put Shannon and the Midwest region at the forefront of the research and development of this new technology.

STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PROJECTS

Spatial and Economic Masterplan for Shannon Town Centre

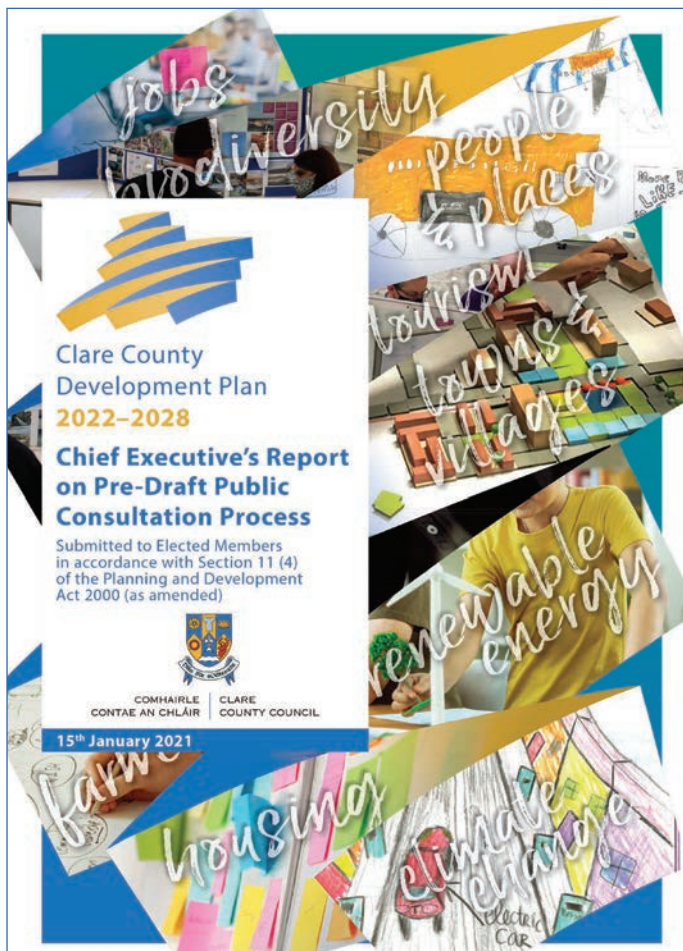
This Masterplan, which is funded under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) and Clare County Council will drive the economic future and spatial pattern for the centre of Shannon Town, and is now three-quarters of the way through the master planning exercise. Following the conclusion in November of the stakeholder engagement on the Shannon town centre economic and spatial masterplan, the team are currently preparing the draft masterplan and environmental appraisals. Subject to the positive outcomes of future URDF funding applications, the Council will assist in pump priming the regeneration of Shannon Town and the Town Centre

masterplan will be used by the Council to bid for future EU, national and regional funding opportunities for Shannon.

University of Limerick/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 the both teams on the SDZ Designated Activity Company (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.

FORWARD PLANNING



The Chief Executive's Report on the 194 written submissions received during the pre-draft public consultation period for the County Development Plan was issued to the elected Members on 15th January, 2021, for their consideration. The issues raised in the submissions help to inform the key strategic planning policy issues that the Development Plan 2022-2028 must address. To assist the Elected Members in their consideration of the Chief Executive's Report, a workshop will be held with the full Council as well as separate workshops with the Municipal Districts during February 2021. The Elected Members must give a direction to the Chief Executive to prepare a draft Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 within 10 weeks of receiving the report, which will be by no later than 25th March, 2021.

As part of the preparation of the Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 a number of strategies must be prepared which include the following.

Retail Strategy

A Retail Strategy is currently being prepared for County Clare, as well as for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, the latter in conjunction with Limerick City and County Council. As part of the data gathering, an online shopper survey has been underway over the past number of weeks to compile information

which will assist in the formulation of the retail strategy for the County.

Housing Strategy and Housing Needs Demand Assessment

In addition to the preparation of a Retail Strategy, a Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDR) must also be prepared for County Clare as part of the preparation of the Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028. The outcome of these will provide essential information which will inform both the preparation of the Core Strategy and the housing policy formulation of the Plan for 2022-2028.

Renewable Energy Strategy

A new County Clare Renewable Energy Strategy is being prepared which will take account of the progress in renewable energy technologies since the current strategy was developed and the strategy outcome will inform the renewable energy policies of the Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028.

Ennistymon Masterplan

Clare County Council, together with its partners Clare Local Development Company and Ennistymon Town Team, has appointed a multi-disciplinary team led by Helena McElmeel Architects to complete a masterplan for the town of 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, and seek to guide its development in a positive way. Following the inception meeting in December 2020, work is underway in gathering baseline information which will form the basis for the report. It is proposed to meet again towards the end of February, where CLDC and West Clare Municipal District representatives will participate in a review of the work undertaken to date.



Ennistymon.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

The table below summarises the activity in relation to planning applications and planning enforcement during the month of January 2021.

| Development management | January 2021 |
|---|--------------|
| Planning applications | |
| No. of planning applications received | 52 |
| No. of planning decisions made | 75 |
| No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála | 1 |
| No. of pre-planning enquiries received | 16 |
| No. of Section 5 applications | 4 |
| Planning enforcement | |
| No. of new complaints received | 19 |
| No of files opened | 14* |
| No. of Warning Letters issued | 2 |
| No. of Enforcement Notices served | 0 |
| No. of Legal Cases initiated | 0 |
| No. of files closed | 9 |

* includes complaints received: 1 x November 2020, 8 x December 2020, and 5 x January 2021.

HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

Projects for 2021

Funding applications are being prepared for the Heritage Council call for projects under the Clare Heritage Plan 2017-2021. In addition, the Heritage Council is seeking funding applications under the Historic Towns Initiative 2021 and has opened applications for the Heritage Sector Support Fund.

Burren World Heritage Tentative List Application

Clare County Council continues to liaise with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on the draft application made to retain the Burren on Ireland's World Heritage Tentative List and continues to communicate with the relevant stakeholders on the process.

Biodiversity Demonstration Sites

Phase 2 of the Biodiversity Demonstration Sites continues with

further action planned in association with the relevant stakeholders at Two Mile Gate, Ballycuggeran, Shannon, O'Sullivan Park and the Tidy Town Network in early 2021.

Conservation and built heritage

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2021 (BHIS) and the Historic Structures Fund (HSF) for 2021 are conservation grant schemes which were announced by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in November 2020. Full details and application forms for applicants and owners of protected structures in County Clare are available on www.clarecoco.ie.

The closing date for receipt of applications to the Planning Department has been extended to 22nd February, 2021.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

Covid-19 Supports

LEO Clare continues to support local businesses through the month of January. 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 January over 35 applications have been approved, and a further 30 applications have been completed and paid out to applicants.
- Online webinars and training: 143 clients registered in the month of January to partake in our range of online webinars and training courses. All of these webinars were provided free of charge to applicants.
- Mentoring: There were 27 applicants in January 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.
- Micro Finance Ireland (MFI) loans: LEO Clare continues to provide this popular loan facility in conjunction with MFI for eligible businesses. Clients can also avail of mentor support to assist with completion of applications

Brexit Support

LEO Clare continues to support clients dealing with the impacts of Brexit with ongoing free mentoring and training. Three customs information sessions were held in January, providing customs awareness training to 24 participants. Further customs awareness courses are scheduled for the coming months.

A new online, radio and press campaign was launched in January, encouraging clients to prepare for the impacts of Brexit. Adverts can be seen in the *Clare Echo* and *The Clare Champion*, through our social media pages and can be heard on Clare FM during the day.

We continue to provide our range of grant supports (including Feasibility, Priming and Business Expansion and our TAME grant for micro-exporters) to eligible businesses. As new supports are announced, these are advised through our social media channels, website and in local media.

Student Enterprise Programme

The ongoing Local Enterprise Office Clare Student Enterprise Programme involves nearly 600 students in 10 secondary schools across the county who are competing in Junior, Intermediate and Senior categories to develop a micro-enterprise. The winner of the county finals, due to take place in March 2021, will go on to represent Clare at the national final in May 2021. In the month of January, students and their teachers learned about how to create the best submissions and how to prepare financial forecasts for their micro-enterprises through a series of online webinars.

Showcase 2021

Showcase Ireland's Creative Expo is a buyers-only trade fair where craft, jewellery, fashion and gift designers can highlight their designs to the market buyers. Showcase 2021 is a virtual event due to the current restrictions. From 25th to 29th January, 120 designers will engage with buyers through virtual showrooms and one-to-one online meetings. Local Enterprise Office Clare is represented by Siar Photography at this year's event, but County Clare is also represented by McConnell Woollen Mills and Creative Clay.

National Enterprise Awards 2021

January saw the official announcement of the National Enterprise Awards Final 2021. Aine Gleeson of Wowwee.ie (pictured below) will represent Clare at this year's final on 11th February. We wish Aine the very best of luck in the competition.



Aine Gleeson, WowWee.ie.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



Reflective garden.

Facilities management

Work has been completed on the reflective garden at the rear of the Council Chamber. This was an initiative of the Chief Executive and is now a beautiful place of peace and calm with a water fountain and new rockery and landscaping. This project has been designed and delivered mostly by our own staff under the stewardship of Cyril Feeney, with a project group made up of staff from Human Resources, Environment and crews from various Departments. It is well worth a visit to take

time out to reflect and remember former staff and Councillors who have gone to their eternal reward.

It is intended to further improve this area in 2021 and provide some parking spaces and a design for same is awaited.

Property transactions

The table below shows the number of property transactions completed by Property Management Unit in December, together with the totals for January 2021.

| Transaction | January 2021 | Year to date 2021 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Lease of property/building | 1 | 1 |
| Licence to use property/building | 0 | 0 |
| Grazing agreement for lands | 0 | 0 |
| Deed of transfer signed | 1 | 1 |
| Deed of rectification/assent signed | 0 | 0 |

Letting of Lands

During January, the annual tendering for the grazing of lands was advertised and the tenders are currently being assessed. Agreements will be entered into from February up to the end of 2021.

Shannon Allotments

The annual renewals for the Shannon Allotments were also done in January, with all existing allotment holders renewing their plot. Since its development in 2019, the allotments have proven to be very successful in their new location.

Casual Trading

During January, 2021, the annual Casual Trading licences were issued, as follows: 9 for Killaloe Farmer's Market, 8 for Ennis Market, 1 for Doolin and 1 for Ennistymon. Due to the Level 5 Government restrictions in relation to Covid 19, only those licensees who trade in food are currently trading.

Derelict sites

While non-essential site inspections were postponed for the duration of the Level 5 restrictions, work continued on review of current and older files on the Derelict Sites Register. In general, there has been a positive response to engagement with owners of derelict sites and a number of files have been closed. Pre-planning meetings have been held in relation to some sites and some works have been completed or are planned by owners to render sites non-derelict. The table below provides a snapshot of the activity in January 2021.

| Derelict Sites | January 2021 | Year to date 2021 |
|---|--------------|-------------------|
| No. of new Complaints | 4 | 4 |
| 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 | 5 | 5 |
| No. of Compulsory Purchase Orders | 0 | 0 |

SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The New Year has commenced with a review of our daily activities in the context of Covid-19. Return to work forms indicated that our team are well and safe and a number of Toolbox refresher talks were carried out with staff to ensure that the welfare and safety of our team remains the top priority. The team in the MD are working closely with our Councillors during January in anticipation of a busy schedule of work ahead in the coming year.

The Shannon Town Hall remains accessible by appointment and our crew are focussed on emergency works for the moment as per the guidelines – much of what we do at this time of the year is of an emergency nature, often driven by poor weather conditions.

The team in the MD engaged with other sections of Clare County Council, councillors, the community and An Garda Síochána this month to clear an illegal encampment at Illuanmanagh, Shannon, adjacent to the burial ground. The site has since been secured and the team are actively pursuing Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) funding to improve the amenity for the wider community.

Shannon Municipal District has welcomed the announcement by Minister Heather Humphreys TD of funding under call 1 of the ORIS for €14,400 for bicycle racks, benches, and information/interpretation boards in the Shannon Loop Yellow Route Estuary Walkway. These works are to commence in the coming months.



Shannon MD has welcomed €14,400 in ORIS funding for bicycle racks, benches, and information/interpretation boards in the Shannon Loop Yellow Route Estuary Walkway.



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