



COMHAIRLE | CLARE  
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

# TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

## MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Eanáir / January  
2021



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# FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

## CORPORATE SERVICES

### Freedom of Information and Data Protection

2020 statistics to 18/12/2020:

- 159 Freedom of Information Requests
- 6 Freedom of Information Internal Review applications
- 1 Appeals to Information Commissioner
- 5 Access Requests (Data Protection) – Data Subjects
- 20 Access Requests (Data Protection) – Third Party Access.

### Procurement

The following tender competitions were published on eTenders during December 2020:

Short description	Response deadline
Multi-Disciplinary Services for West Clare Railway Greenway – Section 1 Kilrush to Kilkee	22/02/2021
PIN – Turnkey Housing Developments/ Housing Schemes and/or Land for the Provision of Social/Affordable Housing	22/02/2021

### Register of Electors

All claims submitted for the Register of Electors 2021/2022 were allowed by the County Registrar and claimants have been notified by letter.

The new Register will be published on 1st February, 2021, be effective from 15th February, 2021, and will be in operation for a period of one year.

### Supporting women and diversity in local government

Clare County Council has been successful in obtaining funding of €6,367 under the recently announced initiative for

supporting women and diversity in local government. An application was lodged with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for the upgrade of exchange plan licences which allows more collaboration and facilitates online meetings (MS Teams). The roll-out of this facility allows Councillors to conduct Council business from their chosen location while saving time and effort travelling, which will allow more flexibility, and it is hoped the initiative will act as a facilitator and a means of attracting people who already have busy lives to participate in local government.

### Records Management

The Records Management Team continues to facilitate daily requests from all departments for file storage and retrieval from the record centre. Records management is currently working with different departments in the destruction of files in line with the National Retention policy for local authorities. Implementation of the ADLIB Archives and Records Management database system is ongoing with testing taking place at present.

## FINANCE

The Finance section has closed out the administration of the Restart Grant. In total, over €15m has been paid to 1,500 businesses across the county in various sectors. The minimum grant paid out was €7,200 with over €30,000 paid to a number of businesses.

The nine-month waiver of commercial rates has also been processed to over 3,300 customer accounts to a value of €13.5m.

In total, €28.5m has been given as direct support to our commercial rates customers.







Pictured at Áras Contae an Chláir in Ennis in support of Samaritans on winter solstice (21st December) were: Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council; Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard; Margaret MacMahon, Director, Ennis and Clare Samaritans; and Ann Gillan, Volunteer, Ennis and Clare Samaritans.

## COMMUNICATIONS

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

Media releases issued during December included: the official launch of the Cusack Hub and Broadband Connection Point at the Michael Cusack Centre in Carron; the opening of online applications for the Community Supports Scheme 2021; and the awarding of the Bronze Xcessible Award to Clare Sports Partnership by national pan-disability sport organisation, Cara.

The Communications Office co-ordinated Council input as part of the 'To Be Irish At Christmas' initiative, which saw virtual and online events from across the four Municipal Districts and around the world shared on the [tobeirish.ie](http://tobeirish.ie) website.

Activities to promote the wellbeing resources available at [www.clarecoco.ie/together](http://www.clarecoco.ie/together) continued as part of the 'Keep Well' campaign in December.

### Print and Graphic Design

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

### 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 December, the Communications Office:

- Posted 110 times on Clare County Council's Facebook page, with followers now 15,041 and 13,934 people have liked the page. Posts reached 65,146 users with 9,806 engagements
- Tweeted 133 times on Twitter, with total followers now 6,771. Tweets earned 181k impressions, 275 mentions and 3,007 profile visits.
- Posted 70 times on Instagram with followers now 1,844.



## HUMAN RESOURCES

Work Area	Update
<b>Recruitment</b>	<p>The following recruitment competitions were progressed during December 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LIT Co-op Students</li> <li>• Tenancy Enforcement Officer (Confined).</li> </ul> <p>The following competitions were advertised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste Enforcement Officer</li> <li>• Wastewater Inspector</li> <li>• Customer Services Officer (Security)</li> <li>• Canteen Supervisor</li> <li>• Retained Firefighter Part-time Panels (Kilrush and Shannon)</li> <li>• Ganger</li> <li>• Assistant Civil Defence Officer.</li> </ul> <p>The Local Authority Graduate Recruitment Programme was promoted with a deadline for applications to the LGMA of 17th December, 2020. The programme provides opportunities for graduates to gain valuable experience of working in a local authority over a three-year period.</p>
<b>Learning and Development</b>	<p>Training programmes held in December include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banksman Training – Fire (28 participants)</li> <li>• Fire Warden Training (5 participants)</li> <li>• Covid-19 Induction (1 participant)</li> <li>• Manual Handling (3 participants)</li> <li>• Children’s First Training (1 participant)</li> <li>• Registration Confirmation for PRA (3 participants).</li> </ul> <p>The remote delivery by the IPA of its programmes is continuing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Government A-Z (22 participants)</li> <li>• Certificate in Local Government Studies (11 participants)</li> <li>• Diploma in Local Government Studies (3 participants).</li> </ul> <p>Over 31 courses were completed on the Essential Skillz training portal by new and existing staff.</p>
<b>Covid-19</b>	<p>The Human Resources Department continued to liaise as necessary regarding Covid-19 matters.</p>
<b>Unions</b>	<p>The HR Department continued to engage and consult with unions on various matters.</p>

# RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## New Digital Hub at Michael Cusack Centre brings high-speed connectivity to Carron



Flan Garvey, Chairperson, Michael Cusack Centre Ltd (front centre), cuts the ribbon at the official opening of the new DigiClare.ie Cusack Hub in Carron, County Clare, on Wednesday, 9th December, 2020. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council (front left), and Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard (front right), were among the speakers, with guests and representatives joining virtually.

Clare County Council, in partnership with the Michael Cusack Visitor Centre and the Government of Ireland, has officially opened the Cusack Hub and Broadband Connection Point at the Michael Cusack Centre in Carron, County Clare. The new digital hub facility, which is part of the Local Authority's DigiClare.ie initiative, will support rural social enterprises and the wider community by providing flexible, affordable hot desks, video conferencing and printing facilities, all supported by high-speed broadband. The facilities at the hub will be made available to all members of the community who have a requirement to access these services, such as those working remotely and students who require access to third-level course material being delivered online. Groups and organisations in the area will also be able to utilise the facilities for community purposes, such as meetings and presentations.

The Cusack Hub is serviced by high-speed broadband connectivity, which is being delivered through the Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) initiative. The BCP initiative is a collaborative effort involving the Department of Rural and Community Development, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, Local Authorities and the owners and managers of the BCP sites.

The initiative was established to ensure remote areas, particularly those that are likely to wait longest for connections, are provided with some access to high-speed broadband while waiting for the National Broadband Plan roll-out to reach them.

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, said: "It is striking today that we are talking about broadband and digital in the heart of the Burren at the homestead of Michael Cusack, GAA founder. The opening of the Cusack Hub brings a welcome new resource to the local community and will support rural social enterprises in the area. The addition of another facility to the network of digital hubs in County Clare underscores our commitment to supporting rural, community and economic development. Utilising broadband and digital technology is a key enabler of rural development. Covid-19 has changed how we work, study and interact, and the value of the DigiClare.ie network has been evident this year as a critical piece of our technology infrastructure."

Flan Garvey, Chairperson, Michael Cusack Centre Ltd, said: "The opening of the Cusack Hub at the Michael Cusack Centre in Carron, home of the founder of the GAA, is a very proud day for the Centre and is a great tribute to Michael Cusack and his





Pictured (l-r) are: Thomas McMahon, Leonard Cleary, the Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, Urban McMahon, and Pat Dowling.

vision. The Cusack Hub is an excellent example of a local tourism community group working in partnership with Clare County Council to help people during these challenging times to access state-of-the-art digital facilities and to help students with their studies and enable people to consider working remotely, or to start or grow their business from the hub.

Urban McMahon, Head of IS – Digital Transformation and Broadband, Clare County Council, said: “Jobs and employment are a key focus of the 10-year Clare Rural Development Strategy. Modern broadband connectivity is being made available to

support those considering enterprise or interested in enhancing their skills or returning to work, training, education or learning. These opportunities will benefit residents and add to the attractiveness of rural Clare for those who wish to work or re-settle here.”

The new Cusack Hub is one of six digital hubs that are being provided under Clare County Council’s DigiClare.ie initiative, with the others located in Ennistymon, Kilrush, Kilkee, Miltown Malbay and Feakle. For more information on Clare’s digital hubs, visit [www.digiclare.ie](http://www.digiclare.ie)

## Enabling works commence at Vandeleur Walled Garden, Kilrush

Clare County Council officials and project stakeholders recently attended a socially distanced site visit to Vandeleur Walled Garden in advance of the enabling works getting underway for the restoration and renovation of the old stable block.

The tendering process is complete and Custy Construction Ltd, a Clare-based construction firm, has been appointed to this project. The project is funded by the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, Project Ireland 2040, under the Department of Rural and Community Development with additional match funding by Clare County Council.

The main works, due to commence in early 2021, will include an interpretative museum and new gardeners’ building along with the development of a new visitor experience design and approach for the complex. The design for the scheme, brought to planning stage by Clare County Council Architectural Services, is being developed for construction led by P. Coleman and Associates along with Moloney Fox, consulting engineers, and Rogerson Reddan, quantity surveyors. John Ruddle Consulting completed a comprehensive visitor experience strategy for the site earlier this year and specialist interpretative designers will be appointed to develop wayfinding and the content of the museum interpretative centre.

The Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, said: “I very much welcome these enabling works for the restoration and renovation of the old stable block. This addition of an interpretative



On the engagement of Custy Construction to carry out works at Vandeleur Walled Garden, Kilrush, the Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, and Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council, look towards the site of the old Vandeleur House with the backdrop of the soon-to-be-renovated stable block. Also pictured are: Dermot Custy, Custy Construction Ltd; Richard Robinson, P. Coleman and Associates; Deirdre O’Shea, Acting Head of Tourism, Clare County Council; Noel Kilkenny, Chairperson, Kilrush Amenity Trust; Leonard Cleary, Director of Services, Rural Development, Clare County Council; and Ruth Hurley, Project Manager and Senior Executive Architect, Clare County Council.

museum, along with the new visitor experience, will enhance this wonderful location. The completed project will be a great asset to the local community and tourism in the area.”

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council, said: “This investment in Vandeleur is part of an overall visitor development strategy and could not have come at a more pertinent time given



Vandeleur Walled Garden, Kilrush.

the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our tourism sector. The investment will not only contribute to recovery in the tourism sector and assist with rural regeneration in the town of Kilrush, but it is also anticipated that it will create opportunities for economic growth and employment in the region.”

Leonard Cleary, Director of Services, Rural Development, Clare County Council, said: “During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Vandeleur Walled Garden and the Woodland Bistro has proven its popularity and adaptability, providing an important amenity for the town and supporting local employment. This adaptability highlights the importance of local amenity and recreation to the people of Kilrush and only serves to reinforce further the merit and relevance of ongoing investment in Vandeleur Walled Garden.”

A number of improvements have been taking place in recent months in the Coillte-owned Vandeleur Estate in conjunction with the West Clare Municipal District, and these works all align with the overall strategy to improve use of the woods and the Vandeleur Centre as part of the ongoing development of the visitor attraction.

Deirdre O’Shea, Head of Tourism (Acting), Clare County Council, added that Vandeleur Walled Garden is a strong product for tourism in Clare and, in line with both the recently adopted Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 as well as the West Clare/North Kerry Visitor Experience Development Plan being led by Fáilte Ireland, this development will further strengthen this product and provide a very tangible saleable experience for West Clare.

Ruth Hurley, Senior Executive Architect and Project Manager, Clare County Council, said: “The enabling works signal the start of significant investment in the visitor attraction and we would not be here without the input and commitment of all the stakeholders and the design team who have supported this project development from a concept idea to securing investment. In particular, I would like acknowledge the ongoing support from Coillte, the Kilrush Amenity Trust, the Department of Rural and Community Development and the staff and management of the Vandeleur Centre.”

The Vandeleur Centre, the walled garden and the Woodland Bistro Café will remain open to the public during the enabling works. Visit [www.vandeleurwalledgarden.ie](http://www.vandeleurwalledgarden.ie) for information.

## Clare County Council announces Community Supports Scheme 2021

Online applications are now being invited for the Community Supports Scheme 2021, which will see just over €500k being awarded under 11 separate grant support categories.

The Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, acknowledged the Elected Members’ support for this scheme, which, she said, “will facilitate a large range of community groups, event organisers and local organisations in progressing their work and initiatives during 2021. The range of supports available under the scheme is really impressive and will assist successful groups to realise much-needed projects in their respective areas in 2021.”

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council, said: “Clare County Council is committed to encouraging communities, voluntary groups and residents to take an active part in the development of their communities and to improve the quality of life in their areas.”

The schemes include Public Area and Amenity Enhancement, Community Development and Social Inclusion Measures and Measures to Increase Participation in Sport or Physical Activities, Community Playgrounds, Burial Ground Maintenance and Provision, Community Wi-Fi, Best Kept Local Authority Estate, Arts and Arts Festivals, Irish Language, Christmas Lighting, Tourism Marketing and Promotion and Sustainable Tourism.

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development, Clare County Council, said: “This scheme is very popular and supports the implementation of targeted actions of the Clare Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) and it also aligns with the Clare Rural Development Strategy’s objective of rejuvenating rural communities across Clare over the next decade.

“The funding allocated under the scheme, which is based on Clare County Council’s Annual Budget 2021 as adopted by the Elected Members, comprises 11 different support types.”

The closing date for submission of online applications is Friday, 29th January, 2021, at 5:00pm. Paper applications will not be accepted.

The online application system and scheme guidelines can be accessed at: <https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/grants/community-supports-scheme/>

Email enquiries may be made to [css@clarecoco.ie](mailto:css@clarecoco.ie)



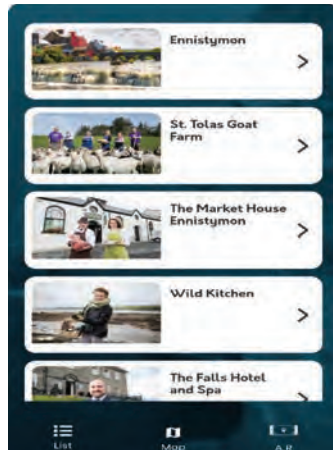
The Working Group for the Action Plan for Rural Ireland who prepared the scheme met recently.



## Atlantic Geoparks App launch

The Atlantic Geoparks project (co-funded by EU Interreg and Clare County Council) has produced a new geotourism app called 'Geotours', and the first version is now available to download for iOS and Android.

The app highlights and promotes local businesses as a means to explore key geoheritage sites in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark and surrounding area as well as partner destinations in Spain, Portugal, UK and France. The project also developed the transnational European Atlantic Geotourism Route ([www.geotourismroute.eu](http://www.geotourismroute.eu)) which aims to become a Cultural Route of Europe and will rely on the UNESCO Global Geopark status to promote the Burren as a sustainable destination to a growing number of geotourism visitors.



## Loophead Looped Trail



As part of the long-term plans for the holistic Loophead Visitor Experience, Deirdre O'Shea, Head of Tourism (Acting), and John O'Malley, A/SEO, West Clare MD, walked the proposed 'Loophead Looped Trail' with Luke Aston of Loophead Tourism.



## Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk



Inspecting the recent Coastal Walk repairs at Cliffs of Moher were Pat Dowling, Chief Executive and Geraldine Enright, Director, Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience. The repairs were jointly led by the Council's teams in the General Design Office and Cliffs of Moher in partnership with local landowners. The financial resources invested were self-generated by visitors to the Cliffs of Moher.

## Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk Repairs – 2km

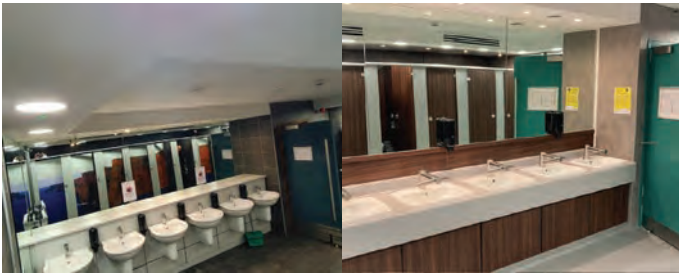


Repair works on the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk 2 kilometre zone, 1km north and 1km south of the Visitor Centre, are almost complete. Works completed by Guerin and Considine include resurfacing the entire length, reinstatement of a dry stone wall 500m in length, repairs to stiles, and raising of flagstones in areas of uncontrolled access. Access to the cliff edge area was achieved in collaboration with the landowners, design was completed in-house by the Design Office and a Section 5 declaration was obtained from the Planning Department for part of the works. The project is due to be completed before Christmas, Pat Dowling commended the works on a recent visit.



## Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience: public toilet upgrade

Construction and fit-out of the toilet facilities upgrade in the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre started on 1st June and was completed at the end of July. The upgrade included reverting unisex to separate male and female toilets, disabled toilet facilities and baby changing facilities. The quality and the finish of the works by Jada Construction is excellent and has had an immediate impact on reducing complaints and increasing customer satisfaction rates. This was the first full upgrade since the opening in 2007, the total cost of the upgrades was €220,000.



Before (left) and after (right) photos of the toilet facilities at the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

## Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2020: Accelerated Measures

(1) Tulla Scouts 12th Clare received €13,050 under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme – Accelerated Measure 2020. The purpose of this measure has been to support rural businesses and communities to enable them to respond to the challenges posed by Covid-19. The Tulla project sought to develop an area for socially distanced meetings/community engagement on the hill of Tulla, near the old boys' school. This involved the erection of an outdoor structure which will be used by the Scouts and other community groups for outdoor meetings and events. Outdoor furniture and landscaping works were also carried out to facilitate socially distanced community engagement.

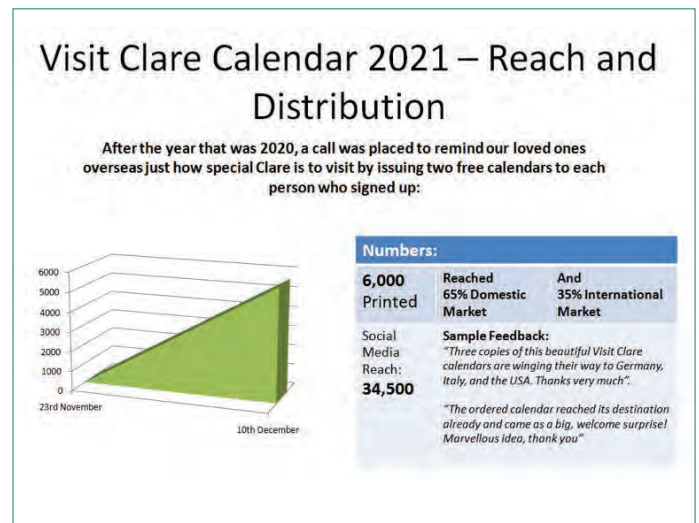
(2) Tuamgraney Development Association has completed work in the Memorial Park in Tuamgraney with the assistance of a grant of €25,000 under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme – Accelerated Measure. The grant has been used to create additional seating areas within the park and improve accessibility for all visitors with new concrete paths and paving area. A covered outdoor structure has also been installed as part of the works.

(3) Kilkee Playground Committee was granted funding of €22,295 under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020 – Accelerated Measure (Round 1). The funding was granted for a project that sought to redeploy the existing playground equipment within the confined space to ensure the maximum number of children and parents can avail of the facility in a safe manner. The movement of equipment to new locations within the site necessitated the re-laying of safety flooring to accommodate the new layout. The works also provided an opportunity to have the existing equipment thoroughly inspected and upgraded as

necessary, with the replacement of some items that were no longer fit for purpose.

## Visit Clare Calendars: 2021 distribution and reach

During late November and early December, Nicola Killeen, Philomena O’Connell and Sile Cahill from the Tourism department were extremely busy processing an overwhelming volume of requests for the Visit Clare 2021 calendars in response to the Visit Clare social media and local media call-out to promote Clare.



## Education and Research – UNESCO Global Geopark

UNESCO Geopark geologist Dr Eamon Doyle is supporting two Young Scientist projects from Lisdoonvarna Secondary School which are being managed by teacher and Young Scientist competition specialist, Mr John Sims. The students (Oisín Jackson and Anna Mae O’Driscoll) are studying the influence of prevailing winds on surface karst processes at Doolin (Oisín) and the impact of visitors on lichen coverage on karst limestone around Poul nabrone Dolmen. As these are two of our most prominent geosites it is important to have young students doing real research and presenting their work to a national audience. We wish them the best of luck in the virtual competition in January.



## A vibrant Clare welcome for visitors at Shannon Airport



The Tourism Department and Shannon Group assist with the installation of wall and floor signs at Shannon Airport. Pictured (l-r) are: Aisling O’Brien (Head of Group Brand & Marketing, Shannon Group), Deirdre O’Shea (A/Head of Tourism), John Sullivan (Signs Plus), and Joan Tarmey (A/Tourism Officer).

During 2020, the Tourism Department has been collaborating with Shannon Airport to design and install highly attractive signs that adorn the floors and hallways of the airport. It is hoped that 2021 will be the year international travel will start up again. This project is an effort to remind visitors that they have landed in a spectacular county and, as such, to interrupt the travel, specifically of the fully independent traveller, in order to increase dwell time within the county.

## Installation of watermain at Loophead Lighthouse

In December, the extension and provision of the watermain installation was completed at Loophead Lighthouse as part of the RRDF funded project. Pictured below are John O’Malley and Deirdre O’Shea at the entrance to the Lighthouse working on a cross-directorate basis progressing all aspects of this project.



## Top musicians filmed at locations in County Clare for ‘Ireland in Music’

Ireland in Music is a new film that captures and showcases some of the country’s top musicians performing at Ireland’s most spectacular locations, including the Cliffs of Moher and the Burren in County Clare.

TradFest, which is run by the Temple Bar Company, has re-imagined its festival for these new and strange Covid-19 times. As part of their festival project, ‘Ireland in Music’ was conceived. Knowing that visitors couldn’t visit and Irish artists couldn’t tour, the organisers wanted to find a way to open new avenues and opportunities for musicians.

The film, shot at iconic locations throughout Ireland, features a star-studded line-up including Clannad, Mundy, Lisa Hannigan, Sharon Shannon, Denise Chaila, Kila, The Hothouse Flowers, The Stunning, Wallis Bird, Saint Sister, Ailbhe Reddy, Rosie Carney, Mark Redmond, Jealous of the Birds, Tolu Makay and Delush.

In Clare, the hugely talented hip-hop and spoken word artist Denise Chaila and her band were captured at the Cliffs of Moher duetting with Clare’s legendary Sharon Shannon. Saint Sister, the fabulous Irish traditional duo, were filmed performing with the Poul nabrone Dolmen and the Burren as their backdrop.

The Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, has welcomed this re-imagined festival and highlighted that all possible efforts will be made to enable the tourism and music industry to recover, which is crucial as Ireland begins to look ahead to its recovery phase from the Covid-19 crisis.

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, emphasised Clare’s deep-rooted traditions in music and highlighted the vital role that the tourism industry plays in providing employment opportunities in Clare. Mr Dowling added that showcasing music at such iconic Clare locations encourages national and international audiences to visit the county, and serves to remind people of the county’s proud traditions and unique and varied landscapes.

‘Ireland in Music’ was premiered by RTÉ One at 8:00pm on Tuesday, 29th December, before commencing a world tour during St Patrick’s Week 2021.



Denise Chaila and her band, with Sharon Shannon, at the Cliffs of Moher.



## WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



Pictured clockwise from top left:

- Recent photos of the Spanish Point footpath upgrades which are near completion, making this route safer for pedestrians and linking the various hotel, restaurants, and golf clubs in Spanish Point.
- Lissycasey footpath upgrade works continued in December, 2020, funded by the Discretionary Maintenance Grant.
- Ballynacally Road resurfacing works completed on the R473 with funding from the Restoration Improvement Grant.
- Ballynacally footpaths completed out of the Discretionary Maintenance Grant.
- Works recently completed in Vandeleur Walled Gardens looped walk from Turret Lane through to N67 Killimer Road as part of the 2020 Active Travel Funding Scheme, carried out with the agreement of Coillte, the owners of the Wood Trail.



# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## HOUSING

December sees the end of 2020, and what a year it has been. All staff in the directorate have worked tirelessly all year to ensure continued service delivery. During the month we continued to draw down funding on projects and gave the final push to meet 2020 delivery targets. Level 5 restrictions eased during December, however at the end of the month we move back into restrictions as the number of Covid-19 cases rise. Remote working remains a priority to protect the welfare of staff; significant advances were made in equipping staff to work remotely. Business processes have changed in response to the pandemic, however staff remain available and are committed to service delivery.

### Housing

The housing public counter remained open daily to the public from 9:00am to 1:00pm and by appointment from 1:00pm until 5:00pm (Monday-Friday). Several properties were allocated in December with families moving into their new homes in time for Christmas.

Schemes completed during December are in Quilty, Kilmihil and Sixmilebridge as well as the AHB developments at Newmarket on Fergus and Ennis. These properties were allocated with many households taking up occupation in time for Christmas. Construction activity is continuing, with 179 social housing units under construction in the county at this time through LA direct build, AHB and the PPP scheme at Shannon.

### Housing in numbers

Breakdown of tenancies by Municipal District (including RAS and leasing):		
	Social housing*	HAP
Ennis	1,150	654
Shannon	642	156
West Clare	923	388
Killaloe	338	167
Inter Authority HAP		56
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,053</b>	<b>1,421</b>

### Summary of activity

2,611 LA tenancies	1,421 HAP tenancies	216 RAS tenancies
284 leased properties	2,663 LA properties	3,141 Rent accounts

While Level 5 restrictions eased during December the legacy of the restrictions continued to impact service delivery, particularly services in occupied properties. Although private rented inspections recommenced tenants were nervous to allow people into their homes. The impact of these unprecedented times is reflected in the numbers hereunder.

Housing allocations	
Offers issued (from 01.12.2020 to 18.12.2020)	20
Offers refused	3
AHB nominations	45
Tenancies signed up	20
Tenancies terminated	6

Voids work programme	
Voids/casual vacancies	35
Acquired properties (works on-going)	18
Average vacancy period	138 days
Number voids returned to stock	11
Average spend	€28,091

Position at the end of December, 2020.

Housing maintenance calls	
December	355

### Private rented inspections

\*Inspections re-commenced 2nd December, 2020, following easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

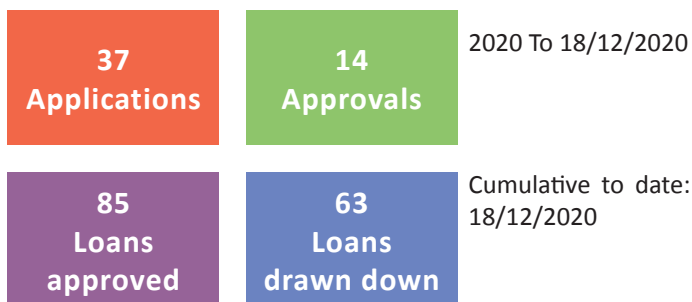
Private rented inspections	
December	9

### Housing grants

Grants approved for December		
Grant type	Number of approvals	Value of works (€)
Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability	16	266,586
Housing Aid for Older People	10	53,680
Mobility Aids Grant	13	58,595
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>378,861</b>



## Rebuilding Ireland home loan



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

Homeless presentations to 17th December, 2020	
New presentations	16
Repeat presentations	78

## 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. 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 seven households from entering homeless services by supporting them to source alternative accommodation.

Status as of 17th December, 2020				
	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	11	0	1
Cusack Lodge	5	6	9	1
Westbrook	0	14	0	1
Ashford Court	5	12	6	1
EA Families	4	5	6	2
EA Individuals	0	12	0	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>

## Edible Garden

Funded through Healthy Ireland, an Edible Garden project was implemented in the Family Hub in Ennis. The initial plan was to begin in early spring, but this was delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions. While not fully completed, the work to date has created a sustainable space for families to learn, utilise and enjoy while they reside in the Hub.



## Update on capital programme

SHIP capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start date	Completion date
Quilty	18	Substantially Complete	Q2 2019	Q4 2020
Sixmilebridge	2	Substantially Complete	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
Kilmihil	2	Substantially Complete	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
Shannon PPP	51	Under construction.	Q4 2019	Q3 2021
Ashline, Ennis	40	Under construction.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Milltown Malbay	27	Under construction.	Q4 2020	Q1 2022
Tulla	25	Under construction.	Q4 2020	Q4 2021
Newmarket on Fergus	18	Under construction.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Doonbeg Sites	2	Under construction.	Q4 2020	Q4 2021
Cloughleigh – Turnkey Dev.	4	Under construction	-	Q4 2021
Scarriff	18	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Design Team Appointed.	Q2 2021	Q2 2022
Roslevan, Tulla Rd.	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 Rd. 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
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>272</b>			
CAS - Cahercalla Phase 2 (Cuan an Chlair)	15	CAS Construction. Substantially complete	Sept 2019	Q4 2020
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)	29	CALF Acquisition approved. Substantially complete	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
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
Sycamore Drive, Ennis (Cluid)	2	Part V – Allocated	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
Ballymacaula, Ennis (Cluid)	2	Part V - Allocated	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
	2	Part V	Q3 2020	Q3 2021
Crusheen (Cluid)	2	Part V	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>79</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>351</b>			



## CULTURAL SERVICES – LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM, ARCHIVES

### Clare County Library wins Best Library Service in the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2020

Clare County Library was awarded with 'Best Library Service' in the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2020 for the project, 'Connections: Stories by Syrian Families in County Clare.'

The project began with an invitation to Syrian families to use their local library and to offer them a special project where they could come together to share their stories and work as a group.

The workshops were facilitated at Ennistymon Library by visiting author, Debbie Thomas. Illustration workshops were led by illustrator, Tatyana Feeney. Parents and older siblings joined the children from Ennistymon National School, Scoil Mhainchín, for a series of weekly workshops. The end result was the publication of 'Connections', a booklet in which 16 Syrian residents in Ennistymon told their unique stories.



Children participating in 'Connections: Stories by Syrian Families in County Clare.'

### Clare County Library

Twelve libraries reopened for browsing services on 1st December. Local Studies has also re-opened for service by appointment. Libraries are continuing to provide a delivery service and click and collect service to the public. This, of course, remains under review in line with public health advice.

#### Delivery service

A total of 2,143 deliveries were completed comprising of 25,586 items (from 27th April to date). Nearly 1,300 deliveries were made during the recent level 5 restrictions.

Online resources remain popular, with strong demand for e-books and e-audio.

#### Clare County Library app

Clare County Library has developed an app to enhance visits to the library. The public can check in and check out books in Wi-Fi-enabled libraries using the app. They will also be able to search the catalogue and reserve books and e-resources. The Clare County Library app is free and available on the App Store and the Google Store. This initiative was funded by Healthy Ireland.

#### Creative Ireland

The Creative Ireland programme continues to support Creativity in the Community. Recent events included Christmas shows in care settings with Fionn and Jonathan Angus of Fionnathan. Nine shows took place, including two via Zoom. Funding was also provided to Siobhán O'Sullivan for a CD of old-time songs, to filmmaker Noel McNerney for a short film filmed in the Spanish Point/Quilty area, and for a series of online poetry classes with schools in conjunction with Poetry Ireland. Creative Ireland also supported the Mid-West Short Film Scheme, the Eco Showboat project and

the Artist-to-Artist Mentoring Project in glór. The Cultural Companions series of virtual concerts from Ennis Cathedral was also funded through CI Clare and received 4,500 views. A series of Music in Healthcare concerts was held in four nursing homes around the county – St Joseph's in Ennis, Ennistymon Community Hospital, Regina House in Kilrush and Raheen Community Hospital. The feedback received include this from one of the Activities Coordinators:

"They were wonderful, lifted all our spirits. Great to see the residents' mood lifted and facial expressions change, good for the soul, tears in a few eyes. It made our day/week. Such a boost for the staff and residents. Amazing musicians and amazing voices. Thank you."

#### Decade of Centenaries

2021 will mark the centenary of the end of the War of Independence and the signing of the Treaty. It is anticipated that applications for a Project Awards scheme will be advertised in late January once funding has been finalised.

#### Family Time at Your Library

The final "Right to Read" 2020 programme, Family Time at Your Library, was rolled out to families and schools during December. All events took place online and included a packed schedule of activities including storytime videos and related arts and craft ideas presented by popular Irish authors and library staff. Other choices for families delivered via Clare County Library's YouTube channel and on social media included a children's book clinic, illustration videos and library staff shared their favourite childhood reads. The range of family events included were specifically intended to engage parents and children in the enjoyment of reading and sharing stories.



Author Mary Murphy read stories online as part of Family Time at Your Library.



New showcase displaying some items from the Clare Embroidery Collection.

### Clare Arts Office

The Ennistymon Streetscape Project Artwork commission was awarded to Aidan Harte. It is proposed to have the artwork in place this summer. The Tar Isteach project, working with asylum seekers in Clare, Galway and Roscommon, culminated in a Zoom round table discussion on 4th December with the participating artists, Arts Officers and Bealtaine, the project commissioners.

A capacity building initiative with festivals commenced with the appointment of Smart Marketing who will design and deliver a training and support scheme for arts festivals in the county following an audit of needs. The Vision Symphony was a runner-up in the European Innovation in Politics Awards.

Three artists were shortlisted for consideration for the Platform 31 programme, a joint initiative between the Arts Council and local authority Arts Officers, which will see one artist per county funded to engage in project and professional development. Fionnathan's Festive Follies was performed live in seven disability centres throughout the county, in lieu of our annual Arts and Disability Concert.

Applications opened 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.

### Clare Museum

Clare Museum reopened to the public on 1st December. The Museum received a special-order showcase purchased with a Heritage Council grant. A sample of some the smaller items from the Clare Embroidery Collection have been placed on display and will be the subject of a press release before Christmas.

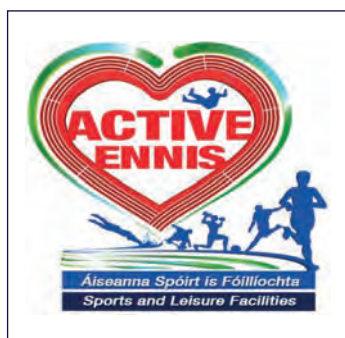
A new donations box that meets internal audit requirements was made by our facilities attendant. It should be ready for use before Christmas, it is currently awaiting some stickers that will indicate its purpose and thanking the donor. There were no items catalogued during December, but a number of new items were donated to the museum, including photographs relating to experiences of the pandemic and a collection from Canada relating to Cahercon House in Kildysart.

Staff are currently learning how to use the newly acquired camera equipment to make videos of objects for posting to social media.

### Clare Archives

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

## SPORTS & RECREATION



### Active Ennis Leisure Complex

At the time of writing the complex is open by prebooking a session in the facility. This is, of course, subject to change on public health advice.

Clare County Council secured funding under the Sports Ireland Funding Award for Swimming Pools. This funding is to support the facility in meeting the costs associated with Covid-19 restrictions and reduced capacity. The award was for €14,777.

Active Ennis John O'Sullivan Park, Lees Road, is open to the public for outdoor recreation.



## Active Ennis Tim Smythe Park

We are unable to host the Irish International Christmas Tree Throwing Championship at this time, however a competition was running online with a 12-month family membership as a prize for the best photo of the event.

## 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](http://www.claresports.ie) has been updated to make it more user-friendly for those with additional needs.



### €5.8 million in Covid-19 supplementary funding for sport

Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin TD, and Minister of State for Sport and the Gaeltacht, Jack Chambers TD, recently announced the allocation of €5,804,828 in funding for the Covid-19 Supplementary Grant Scheme.

In November, an unprecedented €85 million funding package was announced for the Irish sport sector, which has been

significantly impacted by the various Covid-19 restrictions imposed since March 2020. €5.8 million of that funding was ring-fenced to address any additional and immediate needs that may arise in the sector because of the recent Level 5 restrictions.

Scheme	Amount
NGB Resilience Fund	1,400,500.00
Sports Club Resilience Fund	2,297,328.00
NGB Restart and Renewal Fund	188,000.00
Disability Sport Support Fund	494,000.00
LSP Community Support Fund	725,000.00
Swimming Pool Support Fund	700,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,804,828.00</b>

### Local Sports Partnership allocations

Each local sports partnership, including Clare Local Sports Partnership, was allocated €25,000 from an overall funding envelope of €725,000.

This funding is to support the partnership to respond to the demands of Covid-19.

## KILLALOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

### Killaloe Ballina Mobility Plan

The Killaloe Ballina Mobility Plan – dedicated to forward planning for the towns of Killaloe and Ballina – is being managed in conjunction with Tipperary County Council. Consultants are working through the process at present. The output of this project will be a new transport strategy, place making and public realm strategy, along with analysis of how the tourism product can be increased in the area. There will be further consultation with both elected members and the public in the coming months.

### Planning 2021

Having successfully completed the 2020 Schedule of Municipal District Works, planning has started for works in 2021. MD engineers will be consulting with elected members prior to the drafting of the Electoral Area Projects schedule for 2021. Formulation of plans with elected members in relation to the

General Municipal Allocation for 2021 will begin also in early 2021.

Killaloe MD was successful in 2020 in acquiring funding streams from different sources including CLÁR, TVR, Active Travel and Climate Change (See Whitegate upgrade in photos below) and will continue in 2021 to compete strongly for more funding.



Whitegate climate change upgrade.

# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

## TRANSPORTATION

### Roadworks Programme and Operations

Clare County Council's Roadworks Programme for 2020 has been completed and all road grants recouped from the TII, the Department of Transport and the Department of Rural and Community Development.

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 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 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 over 100 submissions during the process which the NTA are now considering.

### Public lighting

Cork County Council has 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 18th December, 2020. It is anticipated that a contractor will be appointed to the project 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](http://www.airtricitysolutions.com)
- Phone: Airtricity Utility Solutions dedicated call centre – 1850 372 772
- Local Authority Identification – via Local Authority's website or contact number.

### Road Design Office

#### Current projects – monthly update

It should be noted that 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 – December 2020
HD15 and HD17 site inspections, with TII Regional Road Safety Officers, were conducted on 29th September.	

TII HD15 sites	<p>For the N85:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An additional revised design for Clareabbey roundabout has been submitted to the TII for consideration, focusing on reducing speed and pedestrian crossing points.</li> <li>• The TII are reviewing additional design proposals for the Lahinch Rd/Shanaway Rd.</li> </ul> <p>For the N68:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Derrycrossaun junction design and feasibility report is completed and has been submitted to the TII for approval. Further to a Notice of Motion from the West Clare MD an alternative design was submitted to the TII for consideration, this alternative design has been rejected.</li> </ul>
TII HD17 sites	<p>For the N68:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further to on-site inspections at Cranny, Crag and Parknamoney junctions, the TII have requested the RDO to progress detailed site surveys, conceptual designs and an option feasibility report, all to be progressed in the new year.</li> </ul> <p>For the N67:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topographical surveys of the identified junctions for phase 1 is now complete, i.e. Galway border to Ballyvaughan. Design and Feasibility Report for phase 1 is progressing, with land acquisition required at two junctions.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

#### Low-cost safety schemes – monthly progress

Project	Update – December 2020
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.

Road Schedule & Queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Search requests from the public and Municipal Districts regarding the road schedule are being carried out on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>Updates to the roads schedule are carried out as updates are being received.</li> </ul>
Circular RW 10/2020 – Active Travel Measures Allocations 2020	2020 element completed.
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 well advanced.
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.

### Other projects – monthly update

Project	Update – December 2020
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 well advanced.
Liaison with NTA regarding bus stops	<p>Wheelchair-accessible bus stop on Bothar Linne, Shannon Town:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design is completed and issued to the Shannon MD.</li> <li>The project received €30,733 in NTA funding.</li> <li>A Preliminary Safety and Health Plan have been issued to the Shannon MD. Works commenced in late November. Works well underway with the remainder to be completed in 2021.</li> </ul>
Liaison with NTA regarding bus shelters	NTA has assessed proposed locations. Six new bus shelters (Kilkee, Lisdoonvarna, Crusheen, Newmarket, Limerick Road [Ennis] and Westbury) and upgrading five existing bus shelters in Shannon. Prior to a formal application the NTA have requested costs relating to the civil works. Contract documents have been completed and uploaded on eTenders with a tender return period of 15th January, 2021.

## 2020 Bridge Rehabilitation monthly update – December 2020

- Carrownisha Bridge: Works completed.
- Sixmilebridge: Works completed.
- Mountievers Bridge: Works completed.
- Bunratty Bridge: Awaiting National Monuments formal response shortly.
- Gilloge Bridge: Works completed.
- Breaghva Bridge: Works completed.
- Stonepark Bridge: Works to start January 2021.
- Kilmacduane East Bridge: Works completed.
- Carron Bridge: Works completed.
- Agouleen Bridge: Works completed.
- Carrowduff Bridge: Works completed.
- Smithstown Bridge: Delayed with water levels.
- Riverstown Bridge: Works completed.
- Drumanure Bridge: Works completed.
- Ballyalla Bridge: Delayed with water levels. Contractor on site.
- Doonsallagh and Kildema South: Contractor on site, works 80 per cent complete.
- Annagh Bridge: Works completed.
- Latoon Service Diversion Removal: Works completed.
- Latoon Masonry Bridge: Designer appointed, design works commenced. Survey completed.
- Sragh Bridge: Designer appointed, structural investigations underway.

### Emergency bridge works

- Moanagh Bridge: Site visit and contractor procurement ongoing, works to commence early January.
- Killestry Bridge: Survey carried out Malachy Walsh and Partners to prepare preliminary report on best method of repair.
- Wooden Bridge Springfield: Survey to be carried out, meeting to be arranged with Waterways Ireland.

## 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, Corofin, Cross, Flagmount, Kilkee, Kilmihil, Kilrush, Killaloe, Sixmilebridge, Ennis.

### Economic development and property

- County Museum refurbishment – tender analysis commenced.
- 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.

### Rural Development and Tourism

- Ennistymon Hub basement unit.
- Cliffs of Moher Walking Paths – 60 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, maintenance works.

### Project Management Office, Municipal Districts, Planning – mapping services

- Capital projects – Ennis Flood Relief, Killaloe Bypass.
- Taking in charge – mapping.

### Roads and transportation

- Traffic management plans.
- Funding applications for footpath works.



## FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

### Recent training courses

The following brigade training courses were held during December:

- Emergency Services Driving Standard (ESDS) Training
- Emergency Services Driving Standard (ESDS) Test
- Banksman Training.

### Fire & Building Control Activities

Fire and Building Control Section Main Activities	November 2020	December 2020 (Up to 16/12/2020)	Year to Date
Number of Emergency Calls Attended	69	42	950
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received	3	2	79
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted	9	2	91
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	0	3
Number of Disability Access Certificates Received	2	1	65
Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted	6	2	67
Number of Commencement Notices Received	39	10	370
Number of Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	1	0	21

(Note: In the December Monthly Report, the November figures related to 1st to 29th November due to timing of report.)

### Clare Civil Defence

#### Operational Duties

Civil Defence provided the following operational duties:

- Members assisted the Irish Blood Transfusion Board (IBTS) with their blood donation clinics.

Clare Civil Defence have been supporting the IBTS with the running of their blood donation clinics in Clare throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

The IBTS has recognised this support with a presentation to Clare Civil Defence of a piece of artwork – see photo (right), with Steven Hayes, Assistant Civil Defence Officer, accepting on behalf of the Clare Civil Defence Unit.

The presentation is made up of the handprints of children who received blood transfusions during 2020.

#### Members' Training & Professional Development

- Members attended a Department of Defence (DOD) demonstration of new MX mapping system.
- Members of the boat crew conducted a training exercise on the River Fergus.



## CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

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On 8th December, Minister Patrick O'Donovan with responsibility for the Office of Public Works, visited a number of sites throughout the county. He was accompanied by a number of Oireachtas Members, Councillors and representatives of the Office of Public Works. The visit included the proposed coastal protection works site in Spanish Point, proposed culvert works in Miltown Malbay, recently completed works in Lahinch, exposed coastline at Clahane, the near completed Flood Relief Scheme in Ennis along with the proposed scheme in Springfield Clonlara. In each location, he met with local residents affected by the elements where Council staff briefed him on the particular issues at each location and our various proposals to address them and mitigate the risks pertaining.

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### Access to UL/Upgrade to walkway along the Errinagh Canal

The Contractor has mobilised on site and is completing some necessary preparatory works. The contract period is estimated to take 10 weeks.

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### Doolin Pier Visitors Services Building

The next Project Team Meeting is scheduled to take place in early January with a view to finalising the programme and scope of work to progress this much needed infrastructure. This will result in the Council being in a position to submit a Planning Application at the earliest juncture possible in order to advance the delivery of the scheme.

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### Ennis Lower Flood Relief Scheme (Club Bridge to Bank Place Section)

Work is continuing on the final section of the Town Flood Defences along the River Fergus bank from the Club Bridge to Bank Place. The sheet piled wall is now complete save a small 2m section of reinforced concrete tie in wall. The location is now protected from flooding from the Fergus. Work will begin in the New Year on the limestone wall and coping and the safety railings that face on to the river. The work is programmed to be completed in April 2021 and is currently on course to meet this date. The site is now closed until 4th January 2021.

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### Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme

Work is now complete on the sheet piled wall along the entire 1.5km length of the embankment. This now secures the area from flooding by overtopping of the existing embankment or a breach. All new sluices are now in place and working as per design. Some work remains on the removal of the existing sluices from the old embankment and the connection to the river. 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. The site closed on Friday, 18th December, for the holiday period and will reopen on 4th January, 2021.

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

A decision in this regard is expected from An Bord Pleanála early in the New Year.

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### Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass

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

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 early Spring 2021. The following elements have been progressed since the last report:

- The shortlisting of the pre-qualified contractors to tender for the works has been completed and the requested declarations have been submitted by each.
- The Letter of Acceptant has been issued to COIR Infrastructure Ltd appointing them as the Main Contractor for the Enabling Works Contract. This work includes site clearance, fencing, demolition, sewer diversions and access road construction which will progress over the winter months and into the Spring/Summer 2021.
- A number of other Advance Works contracts are also being progressed and managed by the PMO office. These consist of:
  - A new bathymetric station has been installation in the Kilmastulla River, Coole, Co. Tipperary.
  - Works continues to progress at pace with the archaeological investigations on site. Completion of these works is expected in April 2021.

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### Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme

The unsuitable weather and sea conditions continued into December and the bathymetric survey of Moore's Bay still has not been carried out. The specialist survey contractor continues to monitor weather forecasts and upcoming tidal cycles to avail of a suitable window to carry out the works. Most of the rain gauges, flow meters and water level monitors have now been installed and results are being monitored. The CCTV survey has been complete, but elements of the topographical survey are outstanding. Work has begun on construction and testing of the hydraulic model with the survey information available to date. A workshop has been arranged for January involving all the sec-



tions of Clare County Council that have an input into the project. This will involve Planning, Environment, Municipal District and Water Services. Information on the project can be accessed through our online information video and associated information literature available on the scheme website, [www.kilkeefrs.ie](http://www.kilkeefrs.ie)

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### 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. Following their review of same, we await their approval to progress to the next stage.

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### Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)

While we await final determination on the Planning Permission for the road infrastructure, we continue to explore the various options in terms of the optimum development of the zoned lands. These lands once serviced by the proposed road and associated infrastructure, will facilitate the delivery of much needed housing for Ennis and its environs.

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### Miltown Malbay Flood Relief Scheme

Mr Patrick O'Donovan, Minister of State with responsibility for Office of Public Works, in mid-December, along with Clare Elected Members and officials, visited the site and met some of the affected landowners who will benefit greatly from this scheme when it is complete. In addition, the first meeting between the Scheme Consultants JBA and Clare County Council took place on 17th December, 2020. Work will now commence on the detailed design of the project. Clare County Council will now be engaging with local property owners and stakeholders affected by the development. Part VIII permission and Section 50 approval have already been obtained for the project. Work on site expected to commence in early summer 2021.

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### 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 the associated public consultation for this phase closed on 2nd of December. Observations received are now being assessed by the project team and will feed into the final option selection. The non-intrusive utility survey works have been completed on site by Apex Surveys. The results of the survey will provide background utility mapping of the study area necessary to identify any constraints associated with the various options being considered and to inform the brief for the required intrusive ground investigations (slit trenching, boreholes, etc.) contract in 2021.

### N85 Upgrade at Kilnamona

Following a scope change on the original proposal, we need to appoint Technical Advisors to advance this project. We await approval from TII in this regard but in anticipation of a favourable response, we sought a significant allocation of funding in their 2021 Budget for this project. TII included an allocation of €100k for this scheme in their Funding announcement of late December 2020.

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### Remediation of ACM Sites

As confirmed by the EPA, the sites are deemed to be in a safe condition. While we consider the final remediation plan and associated costs, the sites are being monitored routinely and any necessary maintenance work is being and will be carried out as required.

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### Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme

Work is continuing on the Scheme. Data review and collection and gap analysis are all now complete. Scoping and Tender Documents have been prepared for third party surveys including CCTV, Topographical, Geophysical and level and flow monitoring. A Natura Impact Statement is being prepared for submission in January. The NIS is required to allow the ground investigations to be carried out. At the same time the tender documents are being prepared for the ground investigation contract. The hydrological assessment and constraints study are ongoing.

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### Spanish Point Coastal Protection Scheme

During his tour of the county in mid-December, Minister Patrick O'Donovan, Minister of State with responsibility for Office of Public Works along with Clare Elected Members and officials, visited Spanish Point to witness the site where the proposed Spanish Point Coastal Protection Scheme will be completed in Summer 2021. During this site visit, the Minister and his officials met with a number of the local community who very much welcomed progress on the scheme.

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### Springfield, Clonlara

A number of meetings have taken place between consultants Byrne Looby, the Office of Public Works and Clare County Council both on site and virtually to progress this scheme to the next stage. Work is continuing on the detailed design of the embankment and the pump station. Land acquisition maps have been prepared. A contractor has been appointed to carry out the ground investigation works and this will happen shortly. Archaeological trial trenching will happen in tandem and an archaeologist has been appointed to carry out the assessment and prepare a report. A more detailed topographical survey is in also being carried out. The PMO continue to liaise with local residents and affected landowners to deliver the project. Construction work on site is expected to commence in late Spring

(April) of 2021 and work is expected to take 6 months to complete.

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### Thomond Villas Flood Relief Scheme

Following an application from Clare County Council the Office of Public Works announced the allocation of funding to take this scheme to detailed design and planning stage. Clare County Council has been working on this project for some time and is currently preparing Flood Risk Assessment Report and a Natura Impact Statement for the construction of a number of embankments and flood walls to provide protection to the area. It is

programmed to submit an application in the second quarter of 2021.

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### West Clare Railway Greenway

The Tender Package for the Engagement of Technical Advisors for the Planning Phase of development between Kilrush and Kilkee was published in early December. The closing date for receipt of tenders has been extended to the end of January 2021 to incorporate the Christmas holiday period. Stakeholder and landowner consultation is continuing, and we would welcome engagement and correspondence from all interested or affected parties.

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## ENVIRONMENT

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### 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 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.

### Environmental Awareness

#### An Taisce Green Schools Seminar Green Christmas Campaign

The Green Christmas campaign was rolled out over December with the promotion of sustainable shopping in support of the Green Friday campaign. Social media and a Clare Echo article with Community Reuse Network Ireland assisted with the promotion of this initiative.

An Upcycling Competition in conjunction with the Keep Well Campaign initiative was also launched on the *Clare Echo* by Anthony Daly during the month and promoted through Clare County Council, Greener Clare and Healthy Clare social media. There was an advert and article in the *Clare Echo* on 10th December, 2020.

Social media campaign posts were scheduled throughout December for the following:

- Waste Prevention: 1) Upcycling Challenge 2020; 2) MyWaste.ie tips
- Recycling Centre Christmas opening hours
- Illegal signage
- Battery recycling
- Bring banks
- Smoky coal
- Dog owner responsibility (including advert in the *Clare Echo*)
- Love Your Place Leave No Trace
- #StopIllegalDumping campaign – video.

### Water and Scientific Services

#### Water Pollution Complaints

A total of 146 complaints (Section 4 licensed sites, wastewater and agriculture) have been received and investigated to date in 2020. A total of 90 of the investigations are closed and the remainder are open until re-inspections are carried out or requested information is received. A total of six 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)

A total of 39 inspections are required in 2020. Up to the start of December, 35 inspections have been carried out in West, East and North Clare catchment areas. Clare has exceeded the revised EPA compliance rate as we have already achieved a 90 per cent inspection rate. A total of five re-inspections were carried out to check for compliance.

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#### Planning referrals from Planning Department

To date this year 290 reports have been prepared and submitted by environmental staff to the planning section. Assessment and recommendations were made in order to minimise potential water pollution. In addition, 55 forestry applications have been processed.

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#### Lake Sampling Programme 2020

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



### Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan (RBMP)

The EPA draft RBMP plan is due to be complete in December 2020. This will be followed by a public consultation process until June 2021.

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### 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

In 2020, over 1,700 samples were collected and analysed in the main council laboratory. A further 1,400 were analysed in the four area laboratories in Sixmilebridge, Kilmurry, Ennistymon and Doo Lough. The samples collected included bathing water, rivers, lakes, drinking water, effluent samples and process samples. All these analysis samples were upload to the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) and approved for subsequent transmission to the EPA or Irish Water through their systems.

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### River Monitoring Programme 2020

Clare County Council is required to collect 295 river water samples in 2020. The calendar for sampling was agreed with the EPA in December last with the sampling spread evenly over the 12 months. The full quota of river water sampling was completed in the second week of December. There were no shortfalls due to Covid- 19 as additional samples were taken as required. The calendar for 2021 was agreed with the EPA in early December.

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### IW SLA

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. All monitoring points were sampled as required and in compliance with the Irish Water SLA requirements.

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

The sampling and monitoring of group water schemes and small private supplies was completed in December despite the Covid-19 restrictions. Sampling procedures were adapted to address Covid- 19 restrictions and guidelines and all were complied with. All analysis results will be approved for submission to the EPA.

### Wastewater Treatment Plants

Laboratory Staff in conjunction with Area based technicians monitor all Licensed and Certified discharges for compliance with their discharge limits. In Clare monitoring varies from monthly to twice yearly, based on population served. Monitoring is spread throughout the year. Additional samples were requested by Irish Water in December for a number of plants. This request was facilitated by the laboratory staff.

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### Section 4 Discharge Licences

Section 4 licence monitoring continued this month. However, with Covid- 19 restrictions, a number of tourism related facilities were either closed or not operating to capacity. In these cases, an inspection was undertaken but no sample obtained.

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### Bathing Waters

An end of season review meeting was held with the HSE in early December. The meeting was used to address issues which arose during the bathing season and to review action protocols which are in place. There was a particular emphasis placed on providing information to the public and ensuring a speedy response to incidents. A further pre-season meeting will take place prior to next seasons bathing season.

### Gardening

The construction of the Remembrance Garden at the Áras has now been completed. The Gardening Team played a central role in this project, with assistance from Roads and Water Services.

While this work was a priority within the team during December, other scheduled and seasonal works have been maintained during the month to date.

### Waste Management

#### Ballyduff Beg Closed Landfill Site

The Tender assessment for the Closure Restoration and Aftercare Management Plan (CRAMP) invitation to Consultants has been completed. The tender will be ready to award to the successful consultant at the start of January.

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### Landfill Monitoring

Surface water, groundwater and leachate monitoring has continued throughout December in compliance with the site licences for Doora and Inagh. Leachate will continue to be removed from the sites as required over the Christmas period.

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### Bring Banks

Bottle Banks will be monitored for increased usage over the Christmas Period and additional collections will be provided if required.

### Civic Amenity Sites

Civic Amenity Sites around the county will continue to provide a service to the public over the Christmas period. Updated opening hours have been provided on [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie) for the holiday period.

### Waste Enforcement

#### Advertising Signage

An informative Social Media post was published, advising that the placement of advertising signs in a public place is an offence under the Litter Pollution Act, and informing the public of how to apply for permission for such signage, either through the Planning or Environment Sections, depending on individual circumstances.

In addition, business owners were contacted by staff advising them of same. A targeted approach to the placement of Advertising Signage will be continued in 2021.

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

The Waste Enforcement Team continued to respond to waste and litter related complaints in December. A total of 76 complaints relating to litter and waste have been received in December to date, of these complaints 72 per cent have been closed already.

A total of three litter fines were issued in December to date, as a result of evidence found in waste. One fine was issued for Dog Fouling.

One Section 14 Notice has been issued in December to date.

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#### RMCEI PLAN

During December the Waste Enforcement Team continued to carry out planned inspections, in line with the RMCEI plan. They continued to focus on Solid Fuel Retailers, carrying out inspections on retail outlets as well as delivery vehicles within the Low Smoke Zones of Ennis, Clarecastle and South East Clare. Inspected premises have been found to be 100 per cent compliant to date.

Inspections of retail premises were carried out by the Environment and Community Wardens to check compliance with the Waste Management (Environmental Levy) (Plastic Bag) Regulations 2001-2007. All businesses inspected to date were found to be compliant.

Following on from the letters issued to 17 Dental Practices in Clare during November, under The Mercury Regulations 2018 (Regulation of the Disposal of Dental Amalgam) requesting evidence of compliance, responses have been received from 65 per cent of practices to date. These are currently being assessed for compliance.

Several retail premises were inspected for compliance with Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations and Batteries and Accumulations Regulations 2008 this month also. 100 per cent compliance achieved to date.

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#### National Environmental Enforcement Priorities 2021

The National Environmental Enforcement Priorities for 2021 have been circulated by the EPA. These include:

- Tackling significant illegal waste activity by focusing on unauthorised waste collectors, including collectors not authorised for specific wastes
- Utilising the Anti Dumping toolkit material hosted on [mywaste.ie](http://mywaste.ie) to raise awareness and combat illegal activity
- Working with the Southern WERLA to co-ordinate a multi-agency response to sites where illegal waste activity is occurring
- Focusing on Construction and Demolition activity to ensure appropriate management and controls are in place at source to manage disposal of C&D waste
- A targeted inspection programme of the End-of-Life vehicle and Waste Metal sector including the leakage of WEEE to metal recycling facilities. A co-ordinated response against unauthorised ELV sites will be implemented
- Raising awareness to drive improved compliance in segregation of household and commercial waste, focusing on food retailers, restaurants and hotels
- Ensuring compliance with Waste Collection Permits, including continued roll-out of brown bins in designated areas and monitoring compliance in skip hire sector.

### Beaches

#### Beach Bye laws

The process of reviewing the beach bye laws commenced in December and draft documents will be ready for review and public consultation early in 2021.



## WATER SERVICES



### Annual Service Plan

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to be a challenging time for the delivery of essential front-line water services across the county, especially with the current level of restrictions.

The Water Services Department of Clare County Council continues to deliver the water services function as per the Service Level Agreement with Irish Water. The Annual Service Plan for 2021 is currently under review 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 25th November, 2020, up to and including 20th December, 2020. The figures do not, however, reflect the time invested by the teams which is required to resolve each complaint/issue.

- 12 Customer Complaints were dealt with and closed out
- 0 Emergency Work Orders were received during the timeframe
- 346 Reactive Maintenance Work Orders were dealt with and closed out
- 0 Customer Asset Flooding Work Orders were received
- 127 Service Requests (SRs) were raised for Field Requests and Follow On Work Orders for Reactive Maintenance work
- 41 Outage Notices were placed on the IW portal during the period.

### Water and waste water operations

There were no major works on the networks since the last report with the exception of a burst on the wastewater rising main from Pump house No. 1 to the plant in Shannon on

7th December. Service was maintained while the repair was undertaken.

### 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

Under the National Leakage Reduction Programme Irish Water set Clare County Council a leakage reduction target of 850m<sup>3</sup> per day in 2020. To date, Clare County Council have achieved a saving of 2,840m<sup>3</sup> per day, greatly exceeding this target. The savings achieved in 2020 reflects the excellent work undertaken by all water services staff in Clare County Council (both Operations and Capital) in collaboration with Irish Water.

Work Programme: In December, the Leak Detection Find Crews continued water conservation activity throughout the county reacting to various increases in demand primarily in Ennis.

The Find and Fix Crew concentrated their activities in North Clare.

### Waste Water Operations

The current sludge landfill site at Tradaree in Shannon has now reached capacity and Irish Water will be making alternative arrangements to dispose of sludge from the waste water treatment plant.

## 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. It is anticipated that the pump station works will be completed in Q1 2021. All flow has now been diverted to the new industrial stream. Works are continuing on the domestic stream and flows are likely to be turned into this process stream in early January. 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 as the land-fill is now full.

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### 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. 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. Construction is expected to commence late 2021 with completion early 2023.

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### Clarecastle Agglomeration Upgrade

Under Irish Water's UTAS the waste water collected at Quay Rd pumping station will be diverted via a new waste water pipeline to Clareabbey WWTP.

The 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 the Church was awarded to Ward and Burke Construction Ltd and works will commence on site 4th January, 2021, with a duration of approximately one month. Temporary Traffic Management will be in place on Quay Road and on the R458 for the duration of the works and details will be available on the Irish Water website and on social media. Information on the schemes is being circulated by the Contractor to locals including the School, Church, Day Care Centre and Tidy Towns Committee. Works at Clareabbey WWTP are required before flows can be diverted from Clarecastle.

### 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 is anticipated in mid-January 2021. 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. The project is expected to go to construction in mid-2021 with completion late 2022.

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### 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 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 is anticipated in mid-January 2021. It is proposed to lodge a Planning application for the scheme by mid-2021. The expectation is to go to construction early 2022 with completion mid-2023.

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### 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. Drafting of a Project Brief has commenced and will be issued to EPS, the Design/Build Contractor in due course once approved. The Site Selection process is not yet finalised. 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. A Planning application is expected to be lodged in late 2021. IW/CCC have agreed that pumping of flow from the Victoria Stream to the outfall will be considered by the contractor as part of the design briefing process. 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 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 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 are being evaluated and a draft of the Site Selection Report was to be issued to Irish Water in mid-December 2020.

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### 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 late January/early 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 commence in early January. 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.

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### 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 correspondence from An Bord Pleanála is awaited by Irish Water in relation to an Oral Hearing. Some site investigation is yet to be completed and detailed design is ongoing. 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. Construction is planned to commence in September 2021.

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### Quin Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

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 fitout 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.

### 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 – 4 assets are with the NSPO for investigation to ascertain if they are to be considered as underground assets. Underground assets are transferred by S.I. 13 of 2015. When they are approved IW will issue a letter to Clare County Council confirming their approval. Note that underground assets i.e. all water mains and sewers (other than storm water sewers) and any related accessories, and all pipes, waterworks and waste water works that are located under land, along with any related accessories, were vested in IW by S.I. No. 13 of 2015.
- Property Registration Authority Ireland – 0 assets have gone to the PRAI to be subdivided.
- Third Party/Unregistered assets – Of the 134 assets 114 have been identified as 3rd Party Registered lands (97) and Unregistered Lands (17).

Reports for Ennis MD area are currently being prepared on two assets located on developer owned lands for Irish Water's Legal Team. The remaining two assets in Ennis MD consist of a water pumping station in a housing estate which will be reviewed with Irish Water when the estate had been taken in charge and an Rural Housing Organisation owned waste water treatment plant. Further direction is awaited in relation to the transfer of RHO assets.

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 are now substantially complete on the Caherkine GWS with the replacement of existing fittings on the scheme. Works are also now complete on Dough (Lahinch), Noughaval Kiltan (Kilfenora) and Castlequarter Ballinphonta GWS with

booster pumps installed on the schemes now operational. The replacement of 4.6km of Feenagh GWS watermains continues with works set for completion in early 2021. Minor Works have also been approved under the programme for water quality works on Ballyportry GWS (Corofin), Ballyeighter GWS (Tubber) and Drumsallagh GWS (Crusheen).

Tendering for the replacement in full of the Tullaher GWS is now complete and the appointment of a contractor shall be completed prior to years end with works set to commence in mid to late January 2021. This is another significant project with the replacement of 4.6km of mains.

Significant Leak Detection Works were undertaken on the Deepark GWS (Sixmilebridge) in early December with significant savings achieved on water losses on the network.

The above works on the Dough, Noughaval Kiltan, Castlequarter Ballinphonta, Feenagh and Tullaher GWS's are being carried out under Measure 5 of the Programme (Transition of Existing Group Water Schemes to Public Network) which entails the works being funded at 100 per cent and the

Clare Rural Water Programme shall be submitting taking in charge applications on behalf of the schemes on completion of the aforementioned works.

No schemes were taken in charge by Irish Water in December, however there has been a total of 10 No. schemes taken in charge in Clare in 2020. A further 5 No. schemes have been submitted by Clare County Council to Irish Water and these await confirmation of taking in charge. A number of further schemes shall be submitted for taking in charge in 2021.

Following on from new grant conditions for the 'Grant for the Improvements to a Private Water Supply to a House' published in June, there has been a significant increase in applications on previous years. To date in 2020 there have been 91 applications which are assessed under the Rural Water Programme which is up from 49 applications in 2019 and 28 in 2018.

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



### Christmas Season in Ennis

For the Christmas 2020 season, Ennis Municipal District endeavoured to make the town centre an attractive and safe place for all its residents and visitors. To stimulate Christmas and New Year shopping in Clare's County Town, free parking was available in all public car parks in Ennis Town every Monday to Saturday from 2:00pm to 6:00pm. This commenced Thursday, 3rd December, and ran until Saturday, 9th January, inclusive. Parking remains free of charge from 8:00am to 6.30pm, Monday to Saturday, at the Cloister/GAA car park. Similar to previous years, during the Christmas period, streets were pedestrianised on Sundays between 1:00pm and 6:00pm (6th, 13th, 20th, 27th December and 3rd January). Ennis Street Radio was on air from 11th-24th December, playing Christmas hits. All of these steps have contributed to the 'Ennis experience'.

### Ennis Public Realm Works – Parnell Street

Civil engineering works are complete on Parnell Street from Carmody Street as far as the junction with River Lane and Fahy's Lane. Civil work is also completed on four of the laneways off Parnell Street, namely, River Lane, O'Halloran's Lane, Curtin's Lane and Barrett's Lane.

The paving has been laid on the new shared surface in Parnell Street from Carmody Street as far as Wood Quay Junction. Paving works to both River Lane and O'Halloran's Lane are also substantially complete with just the tie ins to Parnell Street to be finished in the new year.



Completed paving to River Lane.

### Memorial Stone

The Clare Branch of the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) unveiled a memorial stone dedicated to organ donors and their families. The Clare branch of the IKA commissioned Dennis Goggin (Galway) to create the piece and Ennis Municipal District facilitated in planning process and the design of the area, utilising several existing unsightly boulders in the landscaping scheme.



Memorial stone.

### Roadworks programme – progress update

The following works were undertaken by Ennis MD staff during December:

- Footpath access works in An Seán Dun following section 38 process earlier in 2020.
- The removal of an old wall, hedge and gate in addition to the installation of new footpath, fence and gate was recently completed at Cahercalla Road. This work was funded by Ennis MD General Municipal Allocation.

# PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Clare Economic Task Force

The Clare Economic Task Force met on December 18th, 2020. Work is ongoing in relation to making representations to Government in support of the aviation sector and for Shannon Airport. The Shannon Town Centre Master Plan preparation work is nearing completion and wider stakeholder engagement and discussions with the new Skycourt owners are taking place and led by the Shannon MD. The Council continues to assist the work of Shannon Group in relation to the airport and the substantial regeneration of the Shannon Free Zone. The Chief Executive and Director of Economic Development recently 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) initiative. This Enterprise Ireland and private industry funded project is Ireland's first future mobility campus which will act as a test bed facility for autonomous vehicles. The Director of Service represents the FMCI project on an interdepartmental CAV working group. Updates on the FMCI project will be presented to the Economic Development SPC.

## STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PROJECTS



First meeting of the new Ennis 2040 DAC.

### Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Strategy

The first meeting of the new Ennis 2040 DAC took place in December.

The Board of the newly established Ennis 2040 (Strategic Development) Designated Activity Company held its inaugural meeting on 17th December.

The Board members bring a wealth of experience and expertise, and a diverse knowledge of financial management, commercial development, property development, business expertise and governance.

The Ennis 2040 DAC Board members are:

- Gerry Cahill, Manager Roche Ireland – Chairperson
- Kieran Considine, AIB Manager Clare, Limerick and Kerry

- Brian Crowley, Director, Broadlake
- Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development, Clare County Council
- Noeleen Fitzgerald, Director of Finance and Support Services, Clare County Council
- Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy, Ennis Municipal District
- Cllr Mark Nestor, Ennis Municipal District

Director of Economic Development, Liam Conneally, and the Chairman, Gerry Cahill, Managing Director, Roche Ireland, opened the meeting and outlined the key priorities for the Board, including:

- Promoting the economic development, social integration and environmental improvement of the town of Ennis and its environs through the implementation of the Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy due to be launched next month
- Supporting the prioritisation of projects and actions, providing ongoing guidance and stewardship in the implementation of the transformational sites identified in the short, medium and long term
- Ensuring a co-ordinated approach across all stakeholders and work programmes in the development and promotion of the town of Ennis
- Supporting and influencing funding and investment requirements in the delivery of key projects and the establishment of public/private partnerships as appropriate.

The Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy is due to be officially launched by An Taoiseach Micheál Martin at the end of January.

Commenting on the Ennis 2040 DAC, Liam Conneally said:





### Spatial and Economic Masterplan for Shannon Town Centre

In November 2020, further stakeholder engagement on the Shannon town centre economic and spatial masterplan was completed. 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.

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 through the master planning exercise.

### University of Limerick/South Clare Strategic Development Zone

During the month of December, the Council’s Chief Executive, Director of Economic Development and Law Agent met with the University of Limerick (UL) Interim President and her team. Work will continue by the both teams on the Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) DAC legal arrangements. The DAC will be the SDZ applicant.

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.

Pictured above is Gerry Cahill (Chairperson, Ennis 2040 DAC) and Liam Conneally (Director, Ennis 2040 DAC).

“The first meeting of the DAC Board marks a key milestone in delivering on our vision as set out in the Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy. This Strategy is ambitious and will guide the future development of the town of Ennis supporting compact growth, realising economic opportunities and responding to the call for climate adaptation. I would like to thank the Board members for their support and contribution to date, and look forward to working with them in delivering on the actions outlined in the plan.”

## FORWARD PLANNING

### Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028

Work is underway on the preparation of the Chief Executive’s Report on the 194 written submissions received during the pre-draft public consultation time period. The report will present the Chief Executive’s opinion and recommendation for each submission received and, upon completion, will be issued to the Elected Members for their consideration. The issues raised in the submissions help to inform the key strategic planning policy issues that the County Development Plan 2022-2028 must address. 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 the end of March 2021.

As part of the preparation of the Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 a Retail Strategy is being prepared for the county, 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 compiled to be posted on the Council’s social media and Map Alerter over the Christmas and New Year period. The information compiled from this survey will provide valuable information to be used to help formulate a retail strategy for the county. It

is planned to undertake a telephone shopper survey early in the New Year which will further supplement the information gathering in this regard.





### Ennistymon Masterplan

Clare County Council, together with its partners, Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) and Ennistymon Town Team, has prepared a brief for a masterplan to be completed for the town of Ennistymon. Following a tender process, Helena McElmeel Architects has been appointed to complete the masterplan. The inception meeting took place on December 16th between

the Planning Department, Ennistymon Town Team and Helena McElmeel Architects. This masterplan will build on the existing Clare County Council proposals in place associated with the planned new bridge crossing and the upgrading works planned to take place along the Main Street. It is planned to meet again in January 2021, where CLDC and West Clare Municipal District staff will participate.

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

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

Development management	December 2020	Year to date 2020
<b>Planning applications</b>		
No. of planning applications received	106	1,021
No. of planning decisions made	104	1,069
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	1	39
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	17	274
No. of Section 5 applications	7	57
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications	1	46
Submissions received regarding compliance	32	348
<b>Planning enforcement</b>		
No. of new complaints received	15	199
No of files opened	6	141
No. of Warning Letters issued	14	150
No. of Enforcement Notices served	0	12
No. of Legal Cases initiated	1	1
No. of Enforcement files closed	12	0

## TAKING IN CHARGE

The Sli an Fheargais estate was taken in charge at Ennis Municipal District meeting during December 2020. In total, 16 estates were taken in charge during 2020: seven in West Clare MD, five in Ennis MD, three in Shannon MD, one in Killaloe MD. The Taking in Charge team have completed remedial works on a number of housing estates during the year. Works are ongoing on the estates listed in the table below.

Estate	Update regarding remedial works
Tir an Fhia, Kilkishen	Landscaping to be carried out in Spring 2021.
Clochan na Mara and Blackthorn Drive, Liscannor	Remedial works complete. Further landscaping contract to be carried out in spring, 2021.
Woodstock View and Woodstock Hill, Shanaway Road	Contractor commenced remedial works in December 2020, these are to continue through January and early February 2021.
Cluainin, Shannon	Tenders for remedial works were procured and a contractor is currently being appointed.

## 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.

The Heritage Officer gave an update on the County Council's Biodiversity programme to the Social Development Strategic Policy Committee Meeting.

### 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.

### Community Monument Fund

The Heritage Officer attended the online briefing on the Community Monument Fund held by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The fund is new and is to support the conservation of our archaeological heritage and is to be announced shortly. County Clare has one of the highest densities of monuments of any county in Ireland and is particularly rich in early field monuments and ecclesiastical settlements. There are approximately 7,500 known archaeological sites and many more yet undiscovered in the county. There are over 170 historic graveyards in the county, not including Cillíní

or children's burial grounds. The Planning Department is working to assist communities to avail of this funding opportunity in early 2021.

### 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.

### Clare ICAN group

The Clare Irish Community Archive Network (ICAN) group continue to participate in on line training. For more details please see <https://heritage.clareheritage.org/>

### 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. Full details and application forms for applicants and owners of protected structures in County Clare are available on [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie) with a closing date for receipt of applications to the Planning Department of 29th January, 2021.

Six Section 57 declarations was issued during the months of November/December to permit works to protected structures, bringing the total for the year to 22.



## LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

### Covid-19 supports

LEO Clare continues to support our local businesses through the month of December. A very high uptake of these supports is in evidence:

- **Business Continuity Vouchers:** Of the 347 approved applications for external consultancy support, approximately 290 clients (worth over €610,000) have been completed, with the balance expected to conclude by the end of the month.
- **The Enhanced Trading Online Voucher Scheme,** which provides grant support to small businesses to develop an ecommerce website, has seen strong interest. To date over 400 applications have been approved, of which 130 have been completed and paid out to applicants.
- **Online Webinars and Training:** 197 clients registered in the month of December 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 15 applicants in December 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 supports

LEO Clare continues to support clients in preparing for the impacts of Brexit with ongoing free mentoring and training. Three Customs information sessions were held in December, providing Customs awareness training to 56 participants. A new online, radio and press campaign was launched in December, encouraging clients to prepare for the impacts of Brexit.

Head of Enterprise, Padraic McElwee, also participated in a Mid-West panel discussion, alongside client company ShadeTech, as part of a national Brexit Customs Briefing Series on 8th December.

### December Evaluation Committee Meeting

Our Evaluation Committee (EVAC) met on Wednesday, 9th December, for their sixth and final meeting of the year. The committee continued the process of meeting remotely, aided by the new Submit.com grant processing system. The December EVAC approved over €152,000 in funding for seven projects. The projects included a Feasibility Grant application, three Priming Grants and three Business Expansion Grant applications.

### Look for Local



Pictured (l-r) are: Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise LEO Clare; Aine Gleeson, Owner, Wowwee.ie; and Cllr Mary Howard, Mayor of Clare, at the launch of the 'Look for Local' campaign.

Local Enterprise Offices across Ireland have come together to launch a national 'Look for Local' campaign to promote shopping locally, either in store or online, in the lead-up to Christmas. Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, and Aine Gleeson, owner of Wowwee.ie, supported the launch of the campaign for Clare in early December. The 'Look for Local' campaign runs alongside our 'Click for Clare' initiative, in partnership with the *Clare Echo*. To date, over 200 Clare businesses have engaged in both campaigns.

Research carried out to date on behalf of the Local Enterprise Offices as part of their "Look for Local" campaign has shown that 79 per cent of Clare consumers were now more likely to buy local, either online or in store, this year, compared to 2019, as a result of recent campaigns to highlight local businesses.

LEO Clare, in conjunction with the Ennis Municipal District, is also supporting the Ennis Street Radio to bolster the atmosphere in the town during the run-up to Christmas and hosting a podcast for local businesses to promote their products and services as part of this.



Pictured (l-r) are: Cllr Mary Howard, Mayor of Clare, and Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council, encouraging people to shop local at Christmas as part of the 'Click for Clare' campaign. Photo: Gary Collins/Clare Echo.

**Student Enterprise Programme**

As part of the Local Enterprise Office Clare Student Enterprise Programme, a two-page special was featured in *The Clare Champion* in December to highlight and promote mini-enterprises set up by our young entrepreneurs in the county. Nearly 600 students in 10 secondary schools across the county will compete 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.

**Ongoing supports**

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 will be advised through our social media channels, website and in local media.

**PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

**Facilities management**



Áras Contae an Chláir on Sunday, 20th December, lit up for 'Shine Your Light' on the eve of the winter solstice.

Improvement and monitoring of measures continued during the month to ensure that the workplaces and arrangements for staff and Elected Members meet the requirements of the Council's response plan and the national and HSE guidance on Covid-19.

The lighting-up of the Áras for the Christmas period has been done. In addition, the Facilities team have lit up the building to support a number of organisations and occasions as follows:

Thursday, December 10th – Orange The World: At the request of the Soroptimists Ennis & District to mark the International Day For The Elimination of Violence against Women, ending 16 days of global "Orange The World" action to highlight awareness of the plight of women. It is also designated by the UN as International Human Rights Day worldwide. Orange is the UN colour for recovery.

Sunday, 20th December – Shine Your Light – Solstice: the building was lit from 8:30pm to 9:00pm. In homes and neighbourhoods and on RTÉ One television and radio people come together to light a candle, a torch, a lantern, in a shared moment to mark the winter solstice of 2020 and celebrate the imminent arrival of new light, new beginnings and hope.

Monday, 21st December – At the request of the Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, the building was illuminated green to recognise the work of the Samaritans.

Work is progressing well on the reflective garden under the stewardship of Cyril Feeney and the flowing water installation was completed just before Christmas.



Works progressing on the reflective garden.

## Property transactions

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

Transaction	December 2020	Year to date 2020
Lease of property/building	0	4
Licence to use property/building	1	9
Grazing agreement for lands	0	18
Deed of transfer signed	2	9
Deed of rectification/assent signed	1	3

## County Museum upgrade

Tenders are currently being assessed for the upgrade works to the County Museum. The project involves investment in the museum offering by increasing the proportion of space for the County Museum to incorporate the DeValera 1949 Dodge car, by improving the space for the tourist office to make it more inviting and improvements to the upstairs areas with an upgrade to the meeting room, office space and canteen/break-out space.

## Casual trading

During December 2020, activity levels resumed with the lifting of restrictions. However, overall the level of casual trading activity for the year 2020 was much reduced. Preparations were made during December for the renewal of licences for the year 2021.

## Derelict sites

During December, site inspections continued as part of a review of the sites and properties on the Derelict Sites Register. There has been a positive response to some of the engagement with owners of derelict sites and three 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 December and the year 2020 to date.

Derelict Sites	December 2020	Year to date 2020
No. of new Complaints	0	19
No. of Section 8(2) Notices issued – Intention to enter site on Derelict Sites Register	0	0
No. of Section 8(7) Notices issued – Entry onto Derelict Sites Register	0	0
No. of Section 11 Notices issued – Measures required to render the site non-derelict	0	0
No. of files closed/property removed from Register	3	6
No. of Compulsory Purchase Orders	0	0



## SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

In December, Tom Mellett, Senior Executive Engineer, joined the team in Shannon MD as the Area Engineer. We would like to take the opportunity to welcome Tom and to thank Aidan O'Rourke for his dedication to and time in Shannon and wish him well in his new role in Water Services.

During December, the team in the Shannon MD continued to focus on closing out the work programme of this extraordinary year. During the year the team responded to the Covid-19 crisis, ensuring that there was signage in our parks, playgrounds and public spaces generally, working with agencies and the community alike to respond effectively. Our School Wardens played their role in assisting in getting the schools back up and running and all members of the team ensured that they, their colleagues and our customers were safe while carrying out our duties – This continues to be the case as we enter 2021.

The junction upgrade at Westbury was completed with road markings being the final step in the upgrade process. The new junction will now cater for traffic turning right both in and out of the estate with new dedicated signalling.

The new signalisation at Larkin's Cross will be finished before Christmas and will be a great improvement for traffic travelling from Gillogue and Parteen as well as pedestrian users.

During the month, both Patrick O'Donovan TD and Cathal Crowe TD visited Springfield, Clonlara, to meet with the residents in anticipation of the new Flood Defence Scheme, which was announced recently. The team in the Shannon MD have begun preparations for the winter ahead with 21,000 sandbags delivered and stored in our depots in anticipation of poor weather. The team works closely with a variety of agencies including ESB, Fire Services and Civil Defence along with the public and elected representatives in monitoring and responding to emergencies.

The Schedule of Municipal District works are substantially complete, due in no small part to the efforts of our crews, and we have begun to plan the schedule of works for 2021 with our MD Councillors.

As we approach Christmas, we have installed Christmas lighting in the Shannon Town Park and worked with St Peter and Paul's Church and our colleagues in Transport and Community to install public lighting.

### To Be Irish At Christmas

As part of the international 'To Be Irish At Christmas' event the community in Shannon came together to send a Christmas



Lighting at Shannon Church.



The community in Shannon came together to send a Christmas Message to the Irish diaspora on 21st December as part of the international 'To Be Irish At Christmas' initiative.

message to the Irish diaspora on 21st December. Organised through the Shannon MD Office, the socially distanced family 'pods' worked together to produce a 20-minute greeting from Santa and members of the community and local musical society. The streamed event from the bandstand in the new Town Park, festooned with new Christmas lighting, has been provided to the national 'To Be Irish at Christmas' event and is available to view on Clare County Council's YouTube Channel.







Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice



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