



COMHAIRLE | CLARE  
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

# TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

## MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Nollaig / December  
2023



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# FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

## CORPORATE SERVICES

### Council supports campaign to end gender-based violence



Clare County Council joined with Ennis & District Soroptimists to highlight a United Nations campaign to end violence against women and girls. The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual campaign that launched on 25th November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ran until 10th December, Human Rights Day. An information table was on display in the foyer of Áras Contae an Chláir for the duration of the UN campaign. Pictured with the Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney, at Áras Contae an Chláir in Ennis, were (l-r): Rosalie Byrne-Muir; Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy, Clare County Council; Gwen Murray Flynn; Brigid Barron; and Audry Kinahan, Ennis & District Soroptimists. Photo: Eamon Ward.

### Freedom of Information & Data Protection

Previous years and 2023 to date - statistics to 29th November 2023.

2020-2023 - statistics to 29th November 2023				
	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Freedom of Information</b>				
Freedom of Information Requests	152	176	119	150
Internal Review Applications	6	13	8	4
Appeals to Information Commissioner	1	4	2	4
<b>Data Access Requests</b>				
Subject Access Request	5	6	10	10
Subject Access Request	0	1	1	2
Third Party Requests e.g. Gardaí	26	27	27	27

### Check the Register

The National awareness campaign which commenced on Monday 6 November highlighted the changes to the electoral registration process and invited the public to engage with the process specifically to either confirm or update their details - including by adding their date of birth, PPSN and Eircode.

This campaign and the campaign led by Clare County Council in October has resulted in a significant increase in the number of individuals, both registering to vote for the first time and those updating their details on [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie)

### Business Innovation

The Innovation team, consisting of representatives across all Grades and Directorates, continue to meet bi-monthly to discuss and progress Innovative projects. Several projects are now completed. These include the availability of Energy Awareness kits for rental via the Library Services and provision Beach QR Code at public beaches to access Beach Bye Laws and maps.



Most recently, the Private Rented Inspection team has now moved from a paper-based system to a digitally based tablet system, whereby information gathered at properties is input directly into handheld devices at the inspection location and uploaded to an online database. This innovative measure has resulted in faster inspection times and an increase in the number of inspections completed. An online applications platform is also being developed to streamline various grants and other application processes.

**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 November included:

- New health and wellbeing calendar from Healthy Clare
- New series of ‘Winter Wildlife Talks’ for Children, Adults and Community Groups
- Status Red wind warning for Clare
- Clare Readers Festival: Celebrating Irish Authors and Writing in Clare Libraries this November.

**Social Media**

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



**ICT**

On 15th November, the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) department conducted a presentation with a focus on how ICT is enabling and supporting workers on the move, as well as the ongoing digitisation efforts to replace existing paper-based inspections. The presentation showcased the successful digitisation of processes, including Housing Inspections, Fire Safety Inspections, Traffic Management, and Tree Surveys.

During the presentation, the Housing Inspection team provided an update on how the digitalisation of their inspection process has significantly improved their operations. The digital solution has led to reduced inspection times, improved data quality, streamlined follow-up processes, and simplified records management and management reporting. This update clearly

demonstrated the tangible benefits of embracing digital solutions within their operations.

A key element of the successful implementation was the collaborative development process, which involved partnering with the system users to ensure that the solutions met their specific needs. The active involvement of the end-users in the development process ensured that the solutions were tailored to address their unique requirements.

The presentation generated immediate interest among other sections, leading to requests for four additional solutions shortly after the presentation. The impactful outcomes of the presentation and the subsequent requests for additional solutions indicate a promising impact ICT is having on service delivery. It is anticipated that there will be many more successful showcases of ICT solutions soon, further demonstrating the department's commitment to enabling operational efficiencies and embracing digital transformation.

The presentation on ICT support for mobile workers and the ongoing digitisation efforts was well received, with tangible examples of success in the form of improved operations and immediate requests for additional solutions. The collaborative approach to solution development and the positive stakeholder response further validates the strategic direction of the ICT department. The upcoming showcases will provide additional opportunities to highlight the department's achievements and contributions to the organization's overall success. This report serves as a testament to the ICT department's commitment to innovation, operational excellence, and partnership with stakeholders to drive digital transformation and support mobile workers.

**PROCUREMENT**

The following Clare County Council tender competitions were published on eTenders in the period from 25th October to 30th November 2023 inclusive:

Tender Name	RFT ID	Response deadline
Tender for the Development of 26 No. Houses at Drumcliff Road, Ennis, Co. Clare	2748750	22/12/2023 16:00
Request for Tender for Provision of Stock Inventory Count Services across Clare Tourism Sites	2665790	22/12/2023 13:00
Supply and Installation of Traveller Welfare Units	2682189	15/12/2023 16:00
Dog Warden Service in County Clare and for the management and operation of the dog shelter at Ennis for Clare County Council	2623191	08/12/2023 17:00
Request for Tenders for Multi Supplier Framework Agreement for the provision of Photography and Videography services to Clare County Council	2592863	29/11/2023 12:00

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Recruitment Competitions November

#### Competitions Advertised

##### Open

Retained Fire-fighters – Scariff  
Tenancy Enforcement Officer  
Retained Fire-Fighter – Ennis  
School Warden Part-time & Sporadic Cover Panels –  
Ennis MD  
Executive Planner

#### Eligibility Exercises & Desktop Shortlisting

Technician Grade I  
Temporary Archivist  
General Operatives  
Assistant Planner  
Print Room Assistant

#### Interviews

Library Facilities Attendant  
Assistant Civil Defence Officer  
General Operatives  
Technician Grade I

## HR NEWS

### Launching eRecruitment

We are pleased to launch eRecruitment for Clare County Council.

All job applications will now be online. Links on how to apply for jobs will be available beside jobs advertised.

If you require further information, please contact [recruitment@clarecoco.ie](mailto:recruitment@clarecoco.ie)



**Note:** All job applications will be online from the end of November 2023.

## ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAMMES / WEBINARS / INFORMATION SESSIONS NOVEMBER

- Abrasive Wheels
- Chainsaw Refresher
- Climate Action Training for Outdoor Staff
- Junior Achievement Recognition Event & Information Session
- Operation & Maintenance of Strimmer & Bushcutter
- Pre-Retirement Course
- ProWorks Tablet Training
- PSDP Training
- Road Opening & Reinstatement Basic
- School Warden Training
- Site Dumper Assessment
- Surface Dressing
- Telephone Skills Workshop

### Essential Skillz Online Training

- Health & Safety Induction
- Slips, Trips & Falls

### Health & Safety

- 3-Day 1st Aid Course
- Manual Handling



## Employee Wellbeing



The Wellbeing Hub was launched with a message from the Chief Executive to all staff. The hub is accessible through the intranet and extranet and is a repository of local and national wellbeing information and events. An updated Staff Census on Disability was undertaken in November. The census is a requirement in accordance with the Disability Act 2005 whereby statistics are compiled and submitted to the Department on an annual basis on the number of staff with disabilities.

Following Gardening Workshops that were rolled out earlier this year, a Gardening Group is being set up for those interested in gardening.

Three one-hour Parenting Workshops were delivered to staff on the 20th and 27th November 2023. The workshops were targeted at parents of toddlers and children up to 9 years old, tweens and teens. The workshops were practical and provided useful tips on how to understand and deal with different situations. They were well attended by staff.



The Human Resources Department issued a staff survey which is part of a suite of staff surveys which will issue over the coming months. The purpose of these surveys is to receive feedback and views on different topics from staff and to ensure that relevant supports are in place. There was a great response to this first survey. Follow up actions will be advised once the survey is analysed. We would like to thank all staff for their engagement.

# RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## Rural & Community Development Engagement

### Parteen community Group

The recently formed Parteen Community group engaged in Committee Skills Training facilitated by the Rural and Community Development Officers. The community recently completed a successful bulb planting day with the support of the Clare Local Area Grant Scheme. The Committee hope to set out a clear Action Plan for the future development of the community in the new year.



### West Clare Women's Shed



West Clare women's group has now met three times since its formation earlier this year.

Seamus Murrhly, Rural and Community Development Officer, has co-ordinated the groups meetings space with the assistance of Kilkee and Kilrush Libraries. Claire Flynn from **Mental Health Ireland** has provided guidance on establishing the group. The

group are hosting a Coffee Morning in Vandeleur Gardens on Dec 2nd with a view to attract further members at this event.

### Community Centre Upgrade Engagement

Darren Carroll and Seamus Murrhly, Rural Community Development Officers, have been visiting Community Centers around Clare and discussing funding opportunities and plans with volunteer committees who hope to upgrade their facilities.



*Darren Carroll with Members of Tuamgraney Community Development Committee who have plans to refurbish a community Building.*

### Community Activities Fund Update

The **Community Activities Fund** is a funding programme by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by the Local Community Development Committees (LDCs) in each Local Authority area designed to support groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas with

- With their non-pay running costs such as utility bills (electricity costs, refuse charges, heating charges) or other non-pay operating costs for e.g., rental/lease costs, insurance bills.
- Groups will also be able to use the funding to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities, purchase equipment for e.g., such as tables and chairs, tools and signage, laptops and printers, lawnmowers, canopies, and training equipment etc.

Our Rural Community Development team members inspected some of the capital projects funded in East Clare. They spoke to committee members who were delighted to be the beneficiaries of the funding and to show how their projects have benefitted their local communities. It was also an opportunity to meet with



the volunteers who are active in the area and discuss what their future needs are and funding streams that may be coming online soon. It was also an opportunity to highlight the work the Rural and Community Development Officers do and how they can assist them in future funding applications.



### A Meals and Wheels Service in North Clare

A Meals and Wheels Service for North Clare when live in September 2023. This is a collaborative effort between Obair and Lisdoonvarna Failte Ltd, who are the distribution hub for the service in North Clare. Rural Development supported the setup of the service. There are currently 25 volunteers from around North Clare assisting with delivery and operations.

The service is currently serving the wider area of Lisdoonvarna and has plans to expand into other areas of North Clare shortly.



Local Kathleen Gibbons receiving her meal, Cllr Joe Garrihy, Niamh Wiley RCDO and Mary Burke, North Clare Volunteer.



Niamh Wiley, RCDO, Fr Robert McNamara, Gemma Dowling, Lisdoonvarna Failte and Meals and Wheels Coordinator, Maryanne Howley and Mary Burke, North Clare Volunteers at the launch of the service in Lisdoonvarna.





### Autism Awareness Workshop



A successful in-person workshop exploring autism awareness, acceptance and understanding from individual to group settings took place at The Temple Gate Hotel in Ennis on Wednesday, November 22nd. The event supported by Clare County Council, was hosted by autism consultant and founder of Get Autism Active Dr Susan Crawford. The event was open to parents, professionals, businesses, and community groups as part of the 'Clare Autism Aware' initiative.



The aim of this free workshop was to ensure people in County Clare receive the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills about autism and especially how to accommodate autistic people to attain their potential. This workshop forms part of ongoing efforts across the county to promote a countywide awareness, understanding and acceptance of autism.

The success and positive engagement of the evening was reflected in that the discussions overran by ninety minutes. Clare County Council's Rural Development Directorate are delighted to support the Clare Autism Aware initiative.

## CLÁR Funded Projects

### Kilfenora National School MUGA

On Friday, 17th November 2023, the new CLAR-funded Multi-Use Games Area was officially opened in Kilfenora National School. The works were funded with a €50,000 grant under CLAR 2022. The facility will be open for bookings for use by the wider community and will serve as a valuable community spaces in the village.



### Cloonanaha National School

CLAR funding of €50,000 has enabled Cloonanaha National School to transform a vacant piece of land adjacent to the local school into a vibrant, educational, and communal space.

The garden serves as an outdoor classroom for school activities and nature-based learning as well as a recreation area for the students and an outdoor meeting space for wider community use.



### Lahinch National School

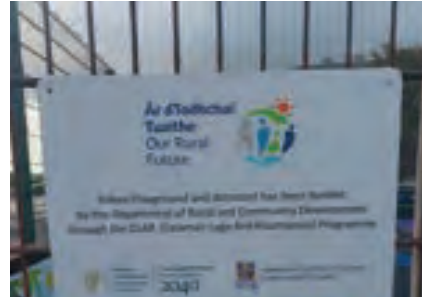
Lahinch National School have completed works aimed at improving car parking arrangements at the school. These works were part-funded by a €50,000 grant under the CLAR 2022 Scheme. The new carparking arrangements provide a safe path for pedestrians, safe parking for staff and a safe passage for students to enter/exit the school.

In addition it is available to visitors to the town outside of school hours thereby helping to alleviate parking shortages within the town at busy time



### Kilkee Playground

Works have been carried out in Kilkee Playground with grant funding of €45,000 from the CLAR Grant Scheme. The works involved the replacement of a senior area play piece to a stainless steel, all inclusive, disability friendly unit. Enhancing the Playground is not only a matter of safety but also a commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming community space.



### Pride of Place 2023

Clare has once again excelled in the IPB Pride of Place competition, celebrating exceptional community development initiatives. At the awards ceremony held in Armagh City Hotel, three Clare-based projects showcased their remarkable efforts, gaining recognition for their contributions to community development.

The Winning Projects were as follows:

**Tourism East Clare** were winners of the Community Tourism

Initiative category. Tourism East Clare is recognised for promoting sustainable tourism development by fostering local relationships and offering unique tourism products and packages. Nominated by Clare County Council, it highlights the region's dedication to sustainable tourism practices.

**Common Knowledge's "Rekindle Festival of Lost Skills"** received a Special Award for empowering individuals with knowledge and skills necessary for joyful and sustainable living. Their project emphasises the importance of preserving and passing down traditional skills for a more sustainable future.



In addition, **Ennis Men's Shed** were Runners-up in the Community Wellbeing Category. The group were acknowledged for their proactive approach in addressing mental health issues by establishing a modern community facility.

Clare's success in the IPB Pride of Place competition reflects the dedication and innovation of its community-driven initiatives. The awarded projects signify the region's commitment to sustainable tourism, traditional skills preservation, and mental

health support, contributing significantly to the region's overall development.

Each of the projects were assessed by judges from IPB Pride of Place during August when group representatives made a formal presentation to adjudicators before hosting tours that highlighted the elements of the community and volunteer efforts of which they are most proud.

## Healthy Clare

### Healthy Clare launches their second health and wellbeing Calendar

The Clare Local Community Development Committee's (LCDC) Healthy Clare team, based in the Rural and Community Development Directorate at Clare County Council, have created their second Healthy Clare 2024 Calendar.



The theme of 'health and wellbeing' flows through each month highlighting:

1. National and International health awareness dates;
2. Ways of 'keeping active', 'switching off and being creative', 'minding your body', 'minding your mood' and 'eating well' in 2024;
3. Health and Wellbeing supports and services.
4. Health enhancing outdoor spaces and activities in County Clare.

To view the Healthy Clare Calendar online please visit Clare County Council's dedicated webpage at [www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/healthy-clare/](http://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/healthy-clare/) or email [healthyclare@clarecoco.ie](mailto:healthyclare@clarecoco.ie) for a hard copy.

The calendar was created in partnership with Clare County Council's Visit Clare, Clare Sports Partnership and Clare Libraries teams.

### Clare Farmers Weaving Stories Together Booklet Lunch & Health & Wellbeing Expo



Members of the rural team supported the launch of the Clare Farmers Weaving Stories Together Booklet and free Health and Wellbeing expo for the local farming community the launch of the Clare Farmers Weaving Stories Together Booklet and as a free Health and Wellbeing expo for the local farming community in which people from all over Clare gathered at glór in Ennis. Traditional farming practices, the importance of the family farm, social isolation, and the advent of online marts are amongst the themes that have emerged in the 'Clare Farmers Weaving Stories Together' initiative. The event was organised and supported by Clare County Council's Healthy Clare, Age Friendly Clare and Creative Clare programmes in partnership with Cuimhneamh an Chláir / Clare Memories, the Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) Clare and the HSE's Mid-West 'Connecting for Life'. Guest speakers on the day included Finola Colgan from Mental Health Ireland's Farming Resilience Project, while more than 20 community, charity and State organisations hosted health and wellbeing information stands at the venue.

## Ukrainian Services

The CSO figures show there are currently 5,124 Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BoTP's) in County Clare. Approximately 3,688 are accommodated in 34 multi-occupancy facilities located throughout the County. The remaining people are accommodated in residential settings in formal hosted arrangements through the Irish Red Cross and Clare County Council's 'Offer-A-Home' scheme. We currently have 186 homes offered under this scheme, with an average of 3 homes being offered each week. To date our Matching & Relationship Manager has facilitated the accommodation of 354 people that were originally living in hotel and multi-occupancy facilities.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) has relaunched the Offer a Home scheme in partnership with the Irish Red Cross appealing to those who have unoccupied properties or rooms to offer them as temporary homes for those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

This new call comes as hundreds of Ukrainian people continue to arrive in Ireland each week, seeking safety. A tax-free recognition payment of €800 per month is available to anybody offering a room or property to house Ukrainian people or families.

Since the conflict began, more than 98,500 people from Ukraine have arrived in Ireland. Irish people have been extremely generous in offering many of them accommodation and other community supports. As winter begins and thousands continue to require temporary homes, this appeal aims to encourage anyone who can make an offer of accommodation to consider it.

Clare County Council take and manage offers of unoccupied houses, apartments or holiday homes. Offers can be made directly at the following website: [www.offerahome.ie](http://www.offerahome.ie) or by contacting our Offer a Home team at telephone number (065) 6846577 or by emailing: [offerahome@clarecoco.ie](mailto:offerahome@clarecoco.ie)

The Irish Red Cross takes and manages offers of accommodation such as rooms and shared properties. Offers can be made at the

following website: <https://registerofpledges.redcross.ie/#/> or by phoning 1800 753343.

Those making offers can be assured that Clare County Council or the Irish Red Cross will follow up within days to discuss suitability, complete the required assessments and match properties to Ukrainian people and families in need.



## SPORTS & RECREATION



### Active Ennis Leisure Complex

#### Return of Sub Aqua & Nippers

In November the swimming pool saw the return of the Sub Aqua on Saturday the 11th at 6pm. On their return they held A Try-A-Dive session to allow people to experience what it's

like to enter the world of scuba diving in a fun way in a familiar environment.

November also saw the Return of the Nippers swim lessons every Sunday morning at 8am, for new swimmers aged 8-12.



## Class Numbers

Class numbers for our body blast and Lunch crunch have steadily rose in November with upwards of 20 participants in some classes. We have also seen an increase in male participation as well as a variation in age groups participating in the classes. This is testament to our trainers who try to be as inclusive as possible to all fitness levels.

Chair aerobics with Trish is also continuing to have steady numbers and promotes inclusivity to class participants tailoring to all abilities.



## Clare Farmers Weaving Stories Together Booklet Launch and Health and Wellbeing Expo

The Active Ennis Sports & Leisure Facilities received an Invitation to host an information stand at the Clare Farmers Health Expo - 13th November 2023 from 12 - 3pm in Glór. This was a very well-run event and gave us an opportunity to promote different services that we offer such as classes, swim lessons, memberships, and pitch hire.



## Football counters

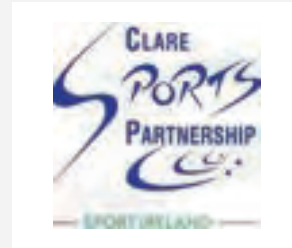
From the 1st of November to date the Active Ennis Leisure Complex has had a total of 22,800 visitors. The average daily number of visitors is 842 people per day.

## Active Ennis Lees Road, TSP, etc

- Revenue is up by 15.7%, with bookings only down by 1%. This indicates more activity by adults during this period. Active hours of 381.5 reflects the same issue, down by 3% on last year of 390 hours.
- New external doors have been installed for facilities in Lees Road, Cloughleigh, Coote Park and the Leisure Complex.

[www.activeennis.ie](http://www.activeennis.ie) [www.activekilrush.ie](http://www.activekilrush.ie)

Any defects or operational issues can be reported by email to [info@activeennis.ie](mailto:info@activeennis.ie)



## Schools & Youth

- Our post-primary sportshall athletics programme is completed for this school year.
- Get Going Get Rowing started in St. Patrick's Comprehensive school in Shannon is concluding this week.
- Primary schools are continuing to borrow playground markings and sportshall athletics packs to roll out in their schools in the run-up to Christmas.
- Our 6-week teen boys programme in conjunction with Spartan Fitness in Ennis will finish this Wednesday Nov 29th. 7 teen boys got the opportunity to experience strength training, boxing and Muay Thai as part of this programme.

## Education & Training

- We ran a SG3 course this month. That concludes all our safeguarding courses for this year. We will have next year's courses on the website soon.
- We have Disability Awareness Training workshop online, next Monday December 4th.

## Sports Inclusion

- Inclusive gymnastics with Ennis Gymnastics Club is ongoing on Monday and Tuesday evenings.
- Primary School Inclusive Gymnastics is now in week 6 and caters for 130 children with ASD.
- Our 4th Learn to Cycle course of 2023 in conjunction with ENNIS Voices for Autism and Cycle Right has concluded.
- We have started a new inclusive learn to cycle programme with Derg Athletics Club.
- We have started a brand new integrated physical education programme with TY students and students from the ASD hub in St. Caimins Secondary school in Shannon.

## Older Adults

- Our Banner Balance programme is ongoing. We have two programmes including 16 participants.
- We continue to support out tutors in delivering weekly classes to over 300 older adults in County Clare.

### Active Communities

- Our Healthy DOJO programme in conjunction with the HSE, concluded on November 2nd. We had 24 participants in total sign up to the programme.
- We are into our final week of our Couch to 5k training programmes in Shannon and Kilrush as they attempt their 5k as part of their local parkrun on December 2nd. Almost 90 men, women and children took part.
- Two beginner swimming programmes for female adults in Ennis and Lahinch with 24 taking part has now concluded.
- Two women in sport intermediate swimming programmes has just begun in Ennis and Lahinch for another 24 ladies.
- We supported West Clare Cycling Club to establish a youth section within the club. Over the first three sessions, almost 30 youths have taken part.
- We have had our first session with our new Women in Sport Leadership programme, 22 female sports coaches from 8 different sports are taking part.

### Minority Communities

- The membership bursary is still active. We have redesigned the application system to deal with the increase in applications.
- We had a very successful fitness workshop and information stand at Lisdonvarna Wellness Day on November 4th which targeted adult refugees and Ukrainians.
- We are delivering a Winter Wellness programme including dance fitness and yoga classes in the Pavillon in Lisdoonvarna. This is in conjunction with Lisdoonvarna Fáilte.
- We are planning our 2024 traveller exercise & sport programmes for both Ennistymon and Ennis.



# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Social Directorate continues to face challenges in the remaining months of 2023.

- We are on course, despite the challenges, to meet our Housing delivery targets of 149 units for this year. There are 75 houses completed to date, thereby providing high quality homes to approved applicants on our social housing waiting list. Work on the remainder of these units is at various stages of development.
- We continue to support circa. 80 clients with Notice to Quits in existing private rental agreements. Our staff are actively engaging with these clients to assist them in accessing other housing solutions and to avoid the need for entering homeless services. We are in process of purchasing a number of properties with tenants in situ while AHB purchases are supporting further clients. We continue to provide advice and support to clients who do not qualify for social housing support but may be able to avail of the Cost Rental tenant in Situ program through the Housing Agency.
- Shannon Electoral Area was designated a Rent Pressure Zone from 30th November and this limits rental increases on private rental tenancies to a maximum of 2% per annum. This will hopefully help those currently in private rental agreements with more certainty in relation to future costs. The Ennis Electoral Area was designated a Rent Pressure Zone earlier this year
- Work on the new County Library continues at pace and great progress is now visible on site. This will prove to be a fantastic addition to the town and county and enhance the attractiveness of the town from a visitor perspective.
- The Enhanced Defective Concrete Block [DCB] Grant Scheme went live in mid-July, with the required Department Regulations now in place. The scheme is open and the Councils DCB team are accepting applications online. The Community Facilitator, and other staff, have held a number of workshops in Shannon to assist homeowners with the application process and guide them through the DCB process.
- Expressions of Interest for the delivery of Affordable Housing Schemes by developers at Ennis and Shannon were advertised this month again and is open until end of December. A scheme of priorities for allocating properties should demand for same exceed availability has been approved by the Minister, and was adopted by Elected Members at the September meeting of the Council. A new online portal went live recently at <https://affordable-homes.ie/>. A number of proposals are currently being appraised with one with Dept for approval. It is hoped the first schemes will be announced in early 2024.

## HOUSING

For 2023 the housing public counter remains open to the public, without appointment, from 9am until 1pm and by appointment after 1pm. Customers who require appointments in the afternoon can call 065 6846334 to schedule same.

The Clare Homeless Action Team (HAT) office is open by appointment during office hours and can be contacted on **065 684 6291** or by email: [hat@clarecoco.ie](mailto:hat@clarecoco.ie)

### Social Housing Needs Assessment 2023

The Council has completed the 2023 Social Housing Needs Assessment with over 480 applicants written to seeking updated information to assess their continued qualification for social housing supports. The "count" date was 1st November, with returns submitted to Department and this data will help inform future demand and targets for delivery in the county.

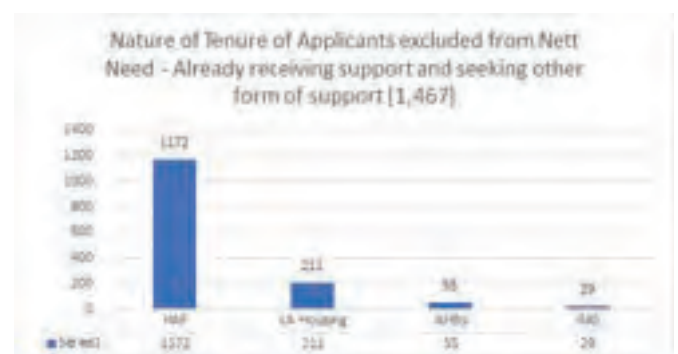
### Social Housing Demand - Assessment of housing need

Our greatest demand throughout the county remains for 1 and 2-bedroomed properties. There are 2,120 applicant households (76%) who have a requirement for this property type.

The Allocations/Assessment Team are currently carrying out a review of the areas where the demand for this property type is greatest.

Current Housing need as of 01/12/2023

Total Households on List	2,774	
Transfer Applicants (see below)		1,467
Nett Need	1,307	

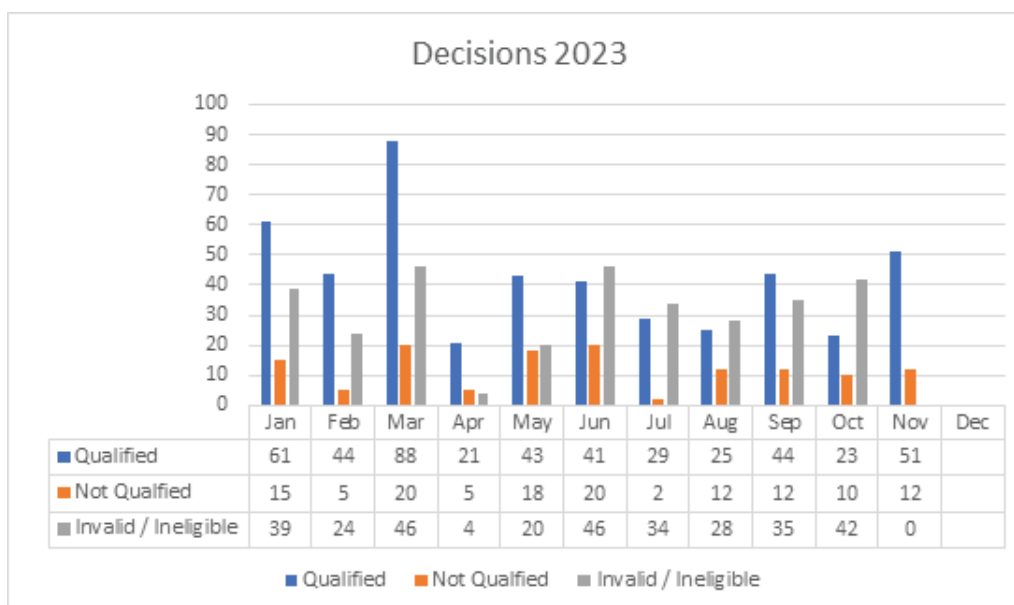


Housing need by Area of choice and number of beds approved:

Count of FIRST AREA OF CHOICE	BEDS_APPROVED2			
	1 and 2 beds	3 beds	4 and 5 beds	Total
ENNIS	903	199	78	1180
SHANNON	169	33	15	217
CLARECASTLE	132	28	11	171
INAGH/ENNISTYMON/LAHINCH	123	24	4	151
KILRUSH	96	28	7	131
FEAKLE/SCARIFF/WHITEGATE	99	24	4	127
MEELICK/PARTEEN/WESTBURY	67	30	12	109
MILTOWN MALBAY/MULLAGH/QUILTY	72	10	2	84
KILKEE/CROSS/CARRIGAHOLT	64	10	1	75
COROFIN/RUAN	55	17	1	73
NEWMARKET-ON-FERGUS	50	16	4	70
KILLALOE	54	13	2	69
LISDOONVARNA/BALLYVAUGHAN	47	9	3	59
SIXMILEBRIDGE	38	11	7	56
COORACLARE/DOONBEG	33	9	4	46
TULLA/KILKISHEN/BROADFORD	34	6	3	43
CLONLARA	21	5	1	27
KILDYSART/BALLYNACALLY	20	4	3	27
QUIN	17	5	1	23
KILMIHIL	11	5	2	18
KILMALEY	9	2		11
KILFENORA	6	1		7
Grand Total	2120	489	165	2774

Newly Qualified Applicants

New income limits became effective on 1st January 2023. To date 470 new applications have been qualified this year which is broadly in line with previous years. Increased income eligibility bands have not had a noticeable effect on our figures.



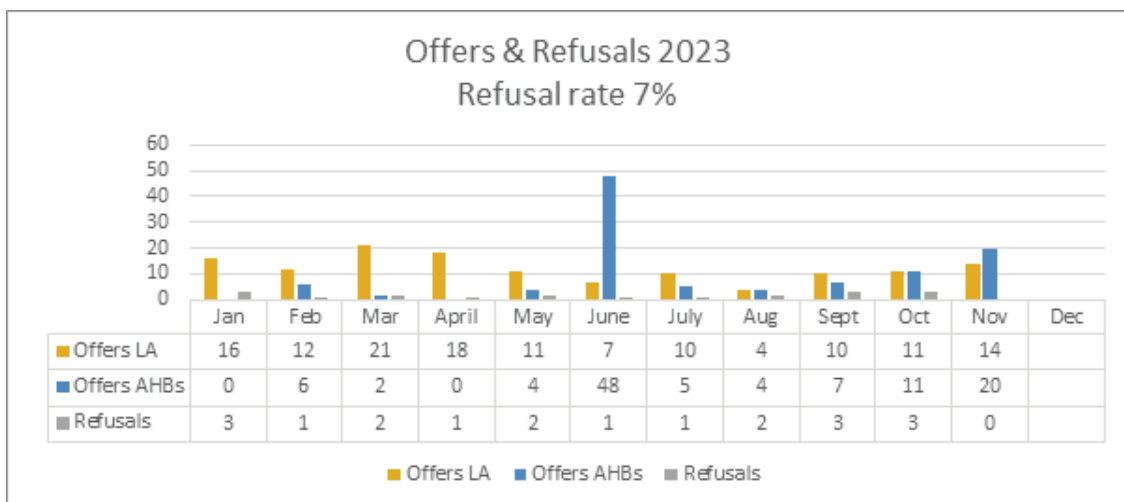


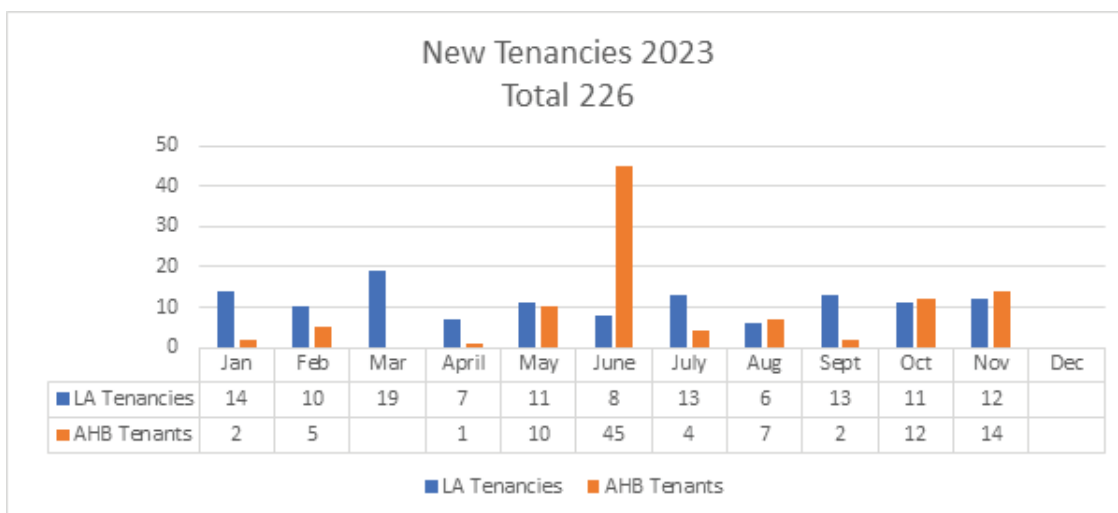
### Housing Allocations

Clare County Council continues to work with the Approved Housing Bodies in relation to the provision of social housing. In this regard 3 and 4 bedroomed houses located at New Park Grove, Cappahard, Tulla Road, Ennis which are being delivered by Co Operative Housing Ireland (CHI) were recently advertised on the Choice Based Letting website. This new social housing development attracted almost 300 expressions of interest. As these properties are being provided by an Approved Housing Body i.e CHI Clare County Council nominate the households from the housing list who have expressed interest in this development via the CBL website to take up the tenancy of these properties. Once these household are accepted as a tenant(s) by CHI , Clare County Council deems that the accommodation needs of that family has been met.



In addition, 2 no 3 bedroomed houses located at Doire More, Tulla Road Ennis were recently advertised on the CBL website. These properties were made available by CHI. A substantial number of expressions of interest were received. These properties were made available for social housing under the Part 5 Scheme which allows a local authority to require developers to set aside a certain proportion of new development for social and affordable housing. The Assessment process has been completed and 2 households have been nominated to CHI for tenancy of these properties.





### Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme

There remains significant interest in the LA Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme with 11 new applications this year to date. We currently have 14 open cases at various stages of the process. However it will 2024 before any of these can be finalised. Sale of 7 properties has completed in 2023 to date.

Having consulted with elected members in relation to maintaining our newer stock we have agreed that properties purchased or built since 1st January 2016 will not be available for sale under this scheme. This can be reviewed at end of current Housing Delivery Plan period in 2026. We have also agreed that 1-bedroom properties will not be available under the scheme.

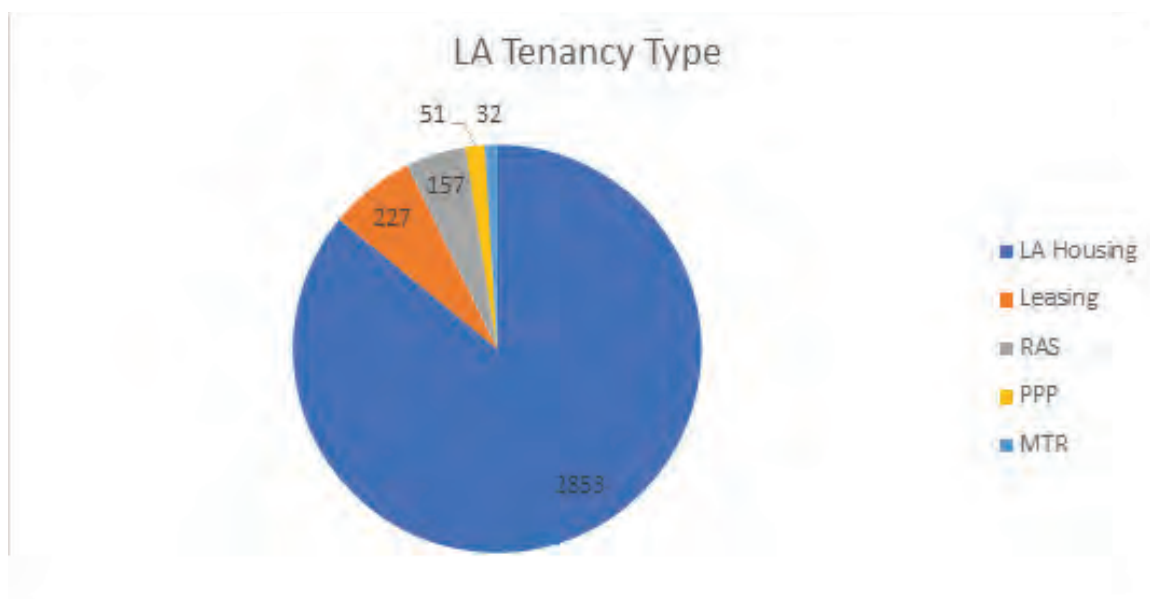


### Housing Tenancies:

\*Breakdown of tenancies by municipal district, (including RAS; long- and short-term leasing; PPP; Traveller accommodation & Mortgage to Rent. Excludes AHBs):

29th Sept 2023			
MD	Allocated	Occupied	Total
Ennis MD	6	1282	<b>1288</b>
Killaloe MD		365	<b>365</b>
Shannon MD	3	728	<b>731</b>
West Clare MD	6	952	<b>958</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3327</b>	<b>3342</b>





Approved Housing bodies are providing approximately 800 tenancies to Social Housing Applicants.

Clare County Council have full nomination rights in respect of the majority of AHB properties and these properties are advertised via our Choice Based Letting System. Nominations are prepared in accordance with a new National Process agreed by LAs and the AHB sector and commenced in July 2022.

**Vacancies:**

Vacant Stock	Ennis MD	West Clare MD	Shannon MD	Killaloe MD	Total
Traveller Accom.	4	7	2	0	13
Derelict Properties	0	0	0	0	0
Projects	4	12	1	2	19
Casual Vacancies	14	14	3	1	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>64</b>

**Estate Management**

The Estate Management Team continue to undertake regular routine and response calls to tenants, dealing with ASB complaints as well as inspecting Local Authority tenancies and providing the necessary supports to tenants.

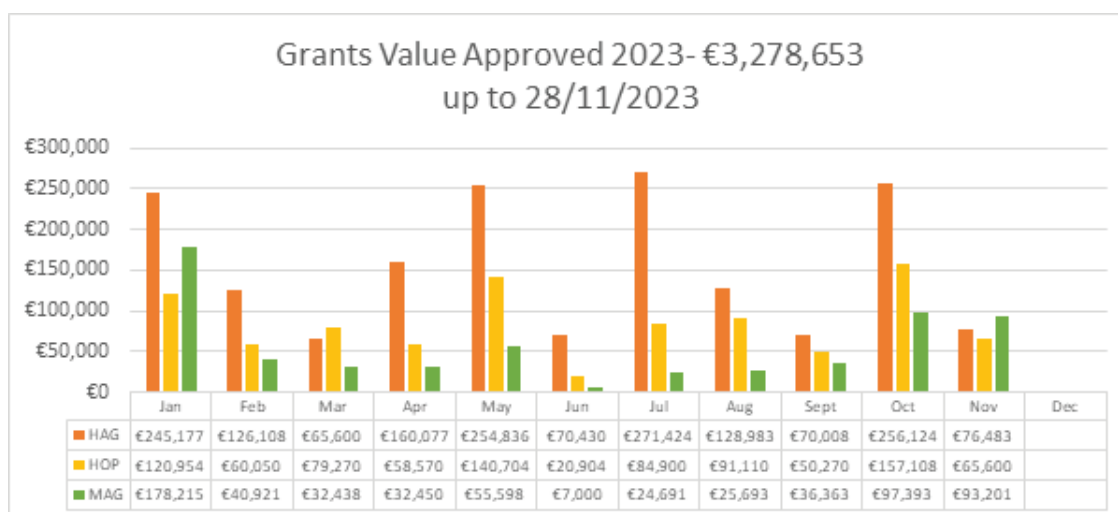
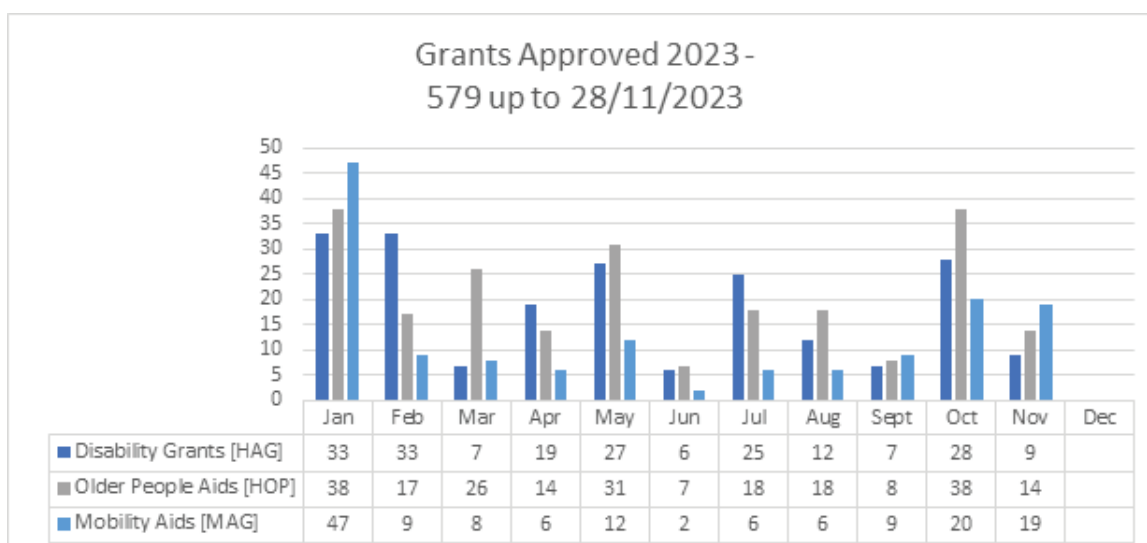
Any matters that need to be brought to the attention of the Estate Management unit can be done so by [emailing asb@clarecoco.ie](mailto:emailing_asb@clarecoco.ie). Listed hereunder shows details of work being undertaken by the Estate Management team this year to date.

	20th of Oct to 20th Nov	Total year to date
ASB Complaints recd	40	793
Housing Inspections	68	657
Referrals to TSS	1	26
Tenancy Notifications/Warnings issued	17	141
Abandonment Notices issued	3	13
Keys collected from Casual Vacancies	4	55
Repossession Orders	0	1

The Tenancy Enforcement team carry out continued patrols of Local Authority housing estates and Traveller sites and have a very visible presence to manage and mitigate against complaints of antisocial behaviour. The team engage proactively with tenants to help prevent anti-social behaviour and between daily patrols of local authority sites, specific meetings with tenants as well as engaging with local communities representatives they have amassed over 9,000 engagements this year to date. You will note 141 notifications/warnings issued this year and in cases where further breaches occur we will proceed to next steps in legal process. While one Repossession Order has been granted to date we also have a number of other cases within court proceedings at present. The working hours of the TEO team are flexible to meet required need, involving working after hours and weekends as the need dictates. The TEO team can be contacted out of office hours, should the need arise, by contacting the Council Emergency Phone no. **(087) 2599568**

## Housing Grants:

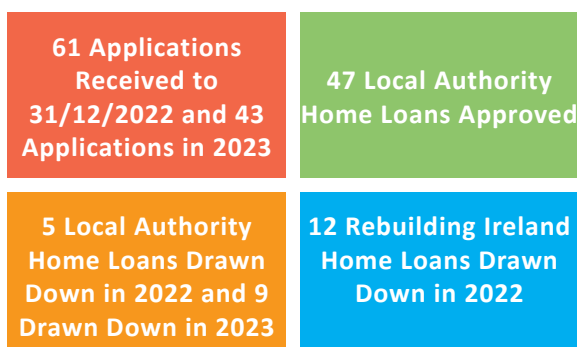
Grants Approved for to date this year:



## Local Authority Home Loan

Full details on the Local Authority Home Loan (LAHL) and eligibility criteria including the Loan Calculator and Information Booklet can be found on [www.localauthorityhomeloan.ie](http://www.localauthorityhomeloan.ie)

Loans data for 2023 up to 22/11/2023: There are currently 47 Local Authority Home Loans Approved in Principle. Updated figures are outlined as follows:



## Traveller Accommodation

The Department introduced a nationwide Pilot Caravan Loan Scheme in 2022 under Section 25 of the Traveller Accommodation Act 1998. The Department have recently issued a circular confirming that this scheme has now been extended to March 2024. Clare families have availed of the scheme in 2022 with more families set to benefit from current 2023 allocation.

Clare County Council continue to progress our Traveller Accommodation Program [TAP] and are currently working with the Traveller Community Development Program in preparing a detailed needs analysis around traveller needs in preparation for the next TAP for which consultation is expected to commence in Mid 2024

## Homeless Services [Homeless Action Team HAT]

The demand on the Homeless Action Team within Clare County Council continues to rise. This is evident given the increased levels of support being requested from households around areas such as Homeless Services, Advice and Support and the need for Emergency Accommodation within this region. The impact



of the cessation of the moratorium on eviction/Winter Eviction Ban (Residential Tenancies (Deferment of Termination dates of certain tenancies) Act 2022), is still being experienced by the Homeless Action Team, which includes an increase in the number of presentations, queries and matters arising around Notice to Quits. This continues to have an impact on both Family and Single Households, while also on Family/Single Households that exceed the Social Housing Income Limits.

The demands on the Homeless Action Team surrounding assessments and the requirements for assessments to be carried out, with the appropriate actions or referrals put in place following this remains considerably high. The workload of each staff carrying out assessments has increased significantly with an increased level of complex cases presenting.

In conjunction with this there has been a significant rise in the number of presentations of individuals and households experiencing difficulties and concerns around addiction or mental health concerns, dual diagnosis, physical disabilities, and a further increase in the number of households presenting from the Travelling Community.

**Presentations to Clare Homeless Action Team [HAT] November:**

During this period there was 480 points of contact to the Homeless Action team. This was made up of 52 new presentations and 428 repeat. A further 3 presentations surrounding general queries. This figure included 284 points of contact regarding single presentations, 172 for family households and 10 regarding couples.

During this period within the 42 new presentations this can be broken down to 10 regarding families, 31 new single presentations and 1 regarding a couple. Of the 323 repeat presentations this can be broken down to 124 regarding families, 194 regarding single presentations and 5 regarding couples.

The need of immediate Emergency Accommodation

- Members of the Travelling Community Seeking Emergency Accommodation
- Discharge from Hospital or Medical Care Settings
- Discharge from After Care/Foster Care (Tusla)
- Family or Relationship Breakdown
- Discharge from Women Refuge Services
- Discharge from Rehabilitation Services
- Prison Releases
- Seeking Homeless HAP Assistance

Prevention and support remains a key factor in the workings of the Homeless Action Team. A number of single and household presentations worked with staff around prevention options and supports which in turn prevented the need for Emergency Accommodation and avoiding entering a homeless situation. Advice regarding legislation on NTQ's, support from the HAP Place-finder, allocations in advance of homelessness situations, and other supports offered by the team ensured a number of these clients avoided the requirement of being placed within emergency accommodation. This demonstrates both the hard work of staff along with the positive effect the prevention work employed by the HAT Team, which is an equally imperative part of this team's work.

Other individuals and families were supported in accessing Emergency Accommodation either within our services or through private establishments. However, as Emergency Services and Accommodation remains at capacity with continuous demand for additional capacity, a number of individuals remain overstaying with friends or family until a vacancy presents within Emergency Accommodation.

The Homeless Action Team works with every individual that presents to this service. Unfortunately, during this period there was an increased level of animosity and aggression experienced by the team. This form of behaviour was also experienced by our partner services in Emergency Accommodation where staff safety and welfare has been put at risk. Staff safety within the Homeless Action Team and it's partner services remains paramount.

The Homeless Action Team continues to pursue additional emergency accommodation options. However, this is proving challenging due to competing demands for accommodation in the County. A significant number of providers within the Hospitality Sector have been contacted by the HAT team in an effort to secure alternative private emergency accommodation, however, this was not successful. Reasons for this would include, tourist season, unable to accommodate large family compositions and not willing to engage with Clare County Council.

An advertisement was placed in the Clare Champion in September 2023 looking for expressions of interest from local establishments to provide emergency accommodation. There was no response to this to date. The Homeless Action Team are currently engaging with our Communications Department to re-advertise this expression of interest via social media. This is in progress.

Clare Homeless Action team continues to engage with all necessary stakeholders, service providers and local supports in order to adopt a collaborative approach to the tackling of Homelessness.

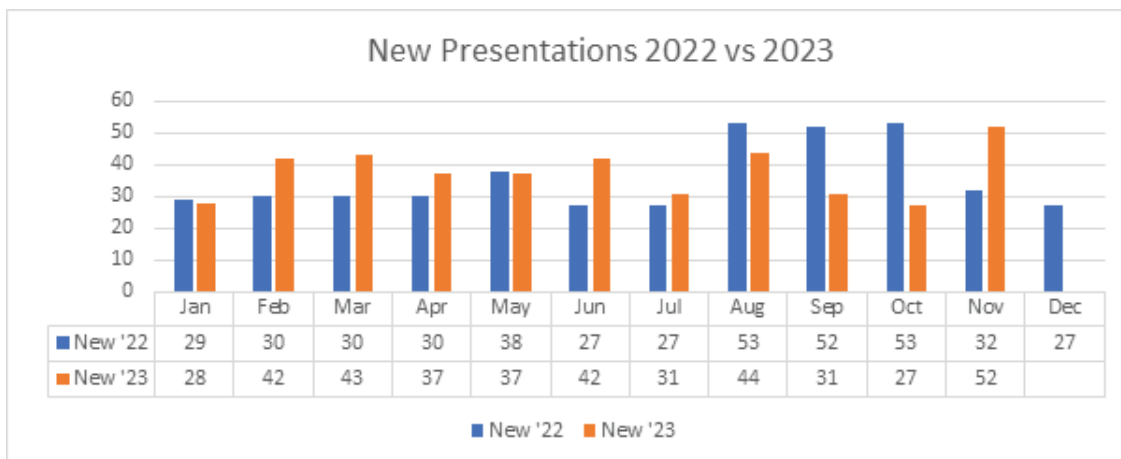
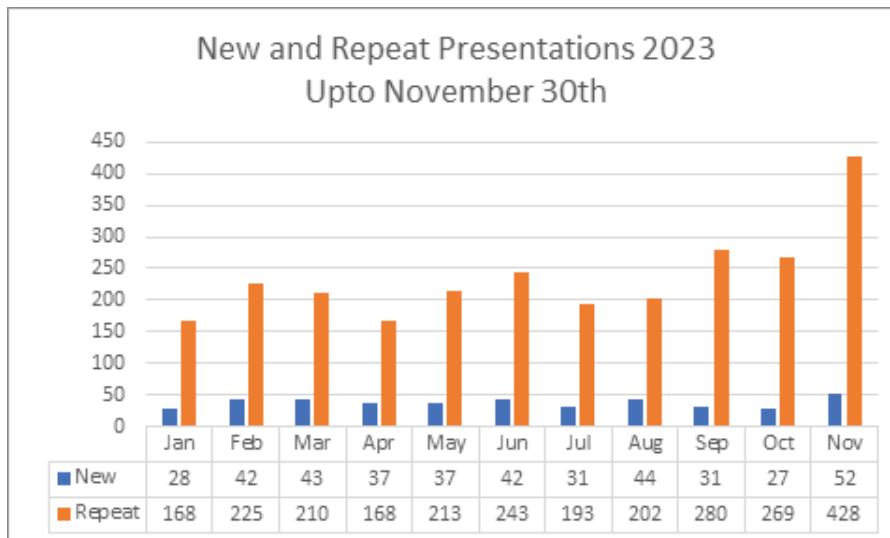
**Emergency Accommodation Status as of 16/11/23:**

	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	12	0	1
Laurel Lodge Weather Initiative	0	0	0	0
Cusack Lodge	5	7	10	1
Westbrook	0	16	0	1
Westbrook Weather Initiative	0	1	0	0
Ashford Court	11	18	18	1
EA Families	4	5	11	0
EA Individuals	0	9	0	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>10</b>

It is important to note that the above figures are not a true representation of the significant number of single and family households that have contacted the Homeless Action Team and continue to await placement within services.

**13 Exits/Discharges from EA from 20/10/23 to 16/11/2023**

- 2 exits to AHB
- 1 exit to private rented-Homeless HAP
- 1 exit to OFD- Clann Nua
- 2 discharges for non use of bed
- 2 self discharge
- 1 discharged for code of conduct
- 4 discharges due to abusive towards staff/arrest into custody/theft/assault on staff



There has been a very visible increase in presentations to HAT during the month of November.

**Affordable Housing Schemes for County Clare**

CCC have received approval in principle on foot of a detailed application to DHLGH by CCC, to prove there is potential for affordable housing schemes in both Ennis & Shannon. In this regard, DHLGH have requested CCC to submit detailed applications for specific developments so that CCC can gain access to the Affordable Housing Fund (AHF), through the Housing for All programme. In this regard, CCC launched an Expression of Interest (EOI) Campaign running until the end of December seeking proposals from developers to deliver affordable homes in Ennis & Shannon. This EOI is advertised on various social media channels, local newspapers and also local radio. Also,

CCC has prepared a Scheme of Priorities (SOP) in accordance with the Affordable Housing Act 2021, which has received Ministerial approval recently, and was adopted by the elected members at the September Council meeting. This SOP will be referenced regarding the future allocation of affordable homes. CCC have received submissions from developers through this EOI campaign, which are currently being assessed and will continue to engage with these interested parties in the coming weeks. CCC submitted their first affordable housing submission to the DHLGH in early November, and plan to make further submissions before year end for evaluation by the DHLGH.

### Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme

Clare County Council have the relevant staff and systems in place for the administration of the Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks Scheme. The Defective Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks Scheme went live in mid-July for private dwellings, with the finalised Act, regulations, updated YQA's (Your Questions Answered) & Ministerial Guidelines published. Applications to the scheme can be submitted on-line through CCC's website with supporting information to further assist homeowners regarding the application process on CCC's website.

In addition, CCC's Defective Concrete Blocks Team are willing to assist with any queries homeowners may have. This Team can be contacted by email at [dcb@clarecoco.ie](mailto:dcb@clarecoco.ie) or alternatively by phone at 065-6846385, 065-6846468 & 065-6846309.

CCC have received a number of applications since the commencement of the scheme, through the online portal and continue to validate applications prior to sending them to the Housing Agency for their review and assessment.

A DCB Community Facilitator commenced employment on the 11th September 2023, to further assist the homeowner's with the DCB application process. CCC DCB Team have also included a video on CCC's website recently on "how to make an application" to further assist homeowners in the application process.

CCC DCB team provided an information meeting on the 21st November last in Shannon Library, to further assist Homeowners on how to make an application to the Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks (DCB) Grant Scheme using Clare County Council's (CCC) online portal. This information meeting was targeted for people with limited digital resources and/or capabilities, to assist them further in making an application. A second information evening is planned for the 28th of November in the Shannon Library, with further locations to be planned thereafter.

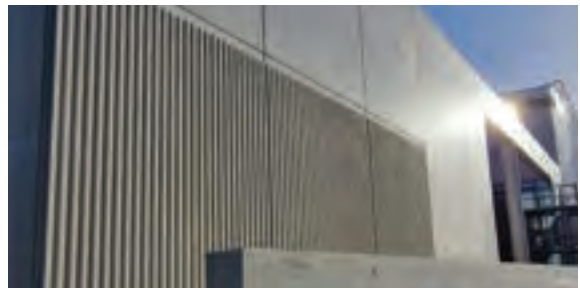
CCC continue to engage with the DHLGH to ensure social houses affected by DCB also are included in a similar scheme. CCC had a meeting in early October with the DHLGH to get information on the upcoming proposed Social Housing DCB Pilot scheme. DHLGH personnel are visiting Clare in Mid-December to view Social Houses affected and to give an update on the proposed scheme.

CCC continue to engage with the DHLGH to ensure social houses affected by DCB also are included in a similar scheme. CCC had a meeting in early October with the DHLGH to get information on the upcoming proposed Social Housing DCB scheme.

### New County Library Construction Project

Construction work continues to make progress on the new Clare County Library and Art Gallery building. The external composite cladding panel installation, Level 03 primary structure steel frame and all other reinforced concrete works are now complete. Internal blockwork is also complete, with partitions to be completed on second floor office area shortly. Curtain wall and glazing frames installation is nearing completion. Precast Stairs throughout the building have also been installed. Roofing Contractor is on site with main Library roofing membrane complete, with entrance lobby nearing completion. M&E contractors are making good progress with first- fix and second fix

works for both trades. Plastering is complete on the main external walls and will return when internal partitions are installed. Raised Access flooring on all three floors commenced in early October and is now complete. Other main trades like External Wall Insulation and External Render is now ongoing, with External Cladding to follow thereafter on the external façade and on the 2nd Floor. Ceiling and Internal Wall Partitions trades have also commenced on site and are making good progress. The state-of-the-art new build will provide a key resource for research, study, recreation, and art in a centralised location of Ennis town adjacent to the well-established Glór theatre.





### Update on capital programme

Works are continuing to progress well on the housing capital programme, with schemes in Scarriff, Clarecastle and Sixmilebridge under construction currently. Design work is ongoing on a number of other social housing projects, which are at various stages of development.



Works progressing on Clarecastle project



Works ongoing on Sixmilebridge project



Progress on Scarriff housing development

### Approved Housing Bodies

The Approved Housing Body (AHB) sector is providing a major contribution to our housing delivery figures under 'Housing for All' as outlined in the Table below. The Housing Department continue to work closely with all of these Bodies and in addition to regular meetings on specific projects, we also hold frequent AHB Forum meetings to discuss any general issues arising.

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
No. 5 Watery Road, Ennis	1	Complete	-	-
No. 3 Ballymacraven, Ennistymon	1	Complete	-	-
No's 2,3 & 4 Watery Road, Ennis	3	Complete	-	-
No. 1 St. Anthony's Grove	1	Complete	-	-
Poulawilliam	1	Complete	-	-
52 Church Drive	1	Complete	-	-
No. 1 Ballymacraven, Ennistymon	1	Complete	-	-
O' Connel Street, Ennis	7	Turnkey - Complete	-	-
Newtown Corofin	1	Under construction.	Q3 2023	Q4 2023

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Clarecastle	5	Under Construction.	Q1 2023	Q4 2023
Scarriff	18	Under Construction	Q1 2023	Q3 2024
Sixmilebridge	15	Under Construction.	Q1 2023	Q3 2024
Dún na hInse	1	Under Construction	Q4 2023	Q2 2024
Sycamore Drive, Kilrush	2	Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
St. Senan's Terrace, Kilrush	5	Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q2 2024
Clarehill Clarecastle	13	Turnkey - Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2024
Drumcliff Rd. Ennis	26	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Part VIII Withdrawn. Determination issued by an Bord Pleanála. S179A process has commenced, and scheme has gone on public display on 26th October 2023. Tender for construction contract advertised currently.	Q1 2024	Q2 2025
Ennistymon	30	Stage 2 approved. Stage 3 application currently being prepared.	Q4 2024	Q3 2026
Gort Rd. Ennis	20	Stage 2 approved. Planning application submitted to An Bord Pleanála on 16th June 2023.	Q2 2024	Q3 2025
Doonbeg Road, Kilkee	25	Stage 1 approval. Design Team has been appointed and design is progressing.	Q2 2024	Q4 2025
Back Road, Kilrush	12	Stage 1 approval. Design Team has been appointed and design is progressing.	Q2 2024	Q4 2025
Moore Street, Kilrush	21	Stage 1 approval. Design Team appointed.	Q2 2024	Q4 2025
Doonbeg Lands	8	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Application submitted to An Bord Pleanála on 18th August 2023.	Q4 2024	Q4 2025
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>218</b>			
<b>Approved Housing Body Projects</b>	<b>No. approved</b>	<b>Current stage</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Kincora Park, Ennis (Saint Vincent de Paul) CAS Construction	1	Completed	Q4 2022	Q1 2023
Limerick Road, Ennis (Cluid Housing Assoc) CALF Turnkey	15	Completed	Q3 2022	Q2 2023
Church Road, Tulla (Cluid) CALF Turnkey (Part V)	2	Completed	Q1 2022	Q2 2023
Roslevan (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	25	Completed	Q2 2022	Q2 2023
Lahinch (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey (Part V)	3	Completed	Q2 2022	Q3 2023
Limerick Road, Ennis (Inis Housing) CALF Turnkey	18	Completed	Q1 2022	Q3 2023
Sixmilebridge (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey (Part V)	3	Completed	Q3 2022	Q3 2023

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Derg View Scarriff (Inis Hsg.) CAS Turnkey	4	Under construction	Q2 2023	Q4 2023
Ballyminogue, Scarriff (Focus) CALF Turnkey	4	Under construction	Q1 2023	Q4 2023
Doire More, Tulla Road, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turkey	2	Under construction	Q1 2023	Q4 2023
Cappahard, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	26	Under construction	Q1 2023	Q4 2023
Quin, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey)	36	Under construction: 10 units in Phase 1 26 units in Phase 1	Q1 2023 Q3 2023	Q4 2023 Q3 2024
Cluain na Laoi, Kilkishen (Circle Housing Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	16	Under construction: 8 units in Phase 1 8 units in Phase 2	Q1 2023 Q1 2023	Q1 2024 Q3 2024
Acha Bhile, Lahinch Rd., Ennis (Cluid Hsg. Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	33	Under construction 12 units in Phase 1 21 units in Phase 2	Q4 2022 Q1 2024	Q4 2023 Q4 2024
Market Street, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	14	Under construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2024
63 Shannon Heights, Kilrush (Sophia Hsg. Assoc.) CAS Renewal Construction	1	At procurement stage	Q1 2024	Q4 2024
Loughville, Ennis (Tuath Housing) CALF Turnkey	48	Construction to commence	Q4 2023	Q1 2025
Bruachlan, Westbury (Cooperative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Construction	22	Planning application submitted - at further information stage	Q2 2024	Q2 2025
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>273</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>491</b>			

## CULTURAL SERVICES - LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

### Clare County Library

Work is progressing on the Clare Library Capital project. Workshops on fitout, IT provision and My Open Library all took place this month between library staff and design team. The upgrade of the Clare Library website is also progressing. Staff have received training sessions on creating content for the website.

The draft Clare Library Development Plan has been completed and is ready for final design.

**Online Resources usage in previous month as follows: high usage of e-audiobooks continues.**



### Marketing, outreach & social media




Staff from Clare Libraries provided library information and resources at the following events:

- Wellness Day at The Pavilion in Lisdoonvarna on the 4th of November



- Clare Farmers Weaving Stories Together book launch in glór, Monday 13th November. There was 150 people in attendance.
- LCETB Wellness week presentation and stand at the Clonroad campus on Wednesday 29th November with 30 people in attendance.

Press release for the Clare Readers Festival was published in the Clare Champion and Clare Herald and the County Council website. Opening hours postcards for Ennis, Tulla and Corofin were printed this month.

	New Followers	Total Followers	Post Reach /Impressions	Post Likes	Engagement
	35	7,316	264,900	752	7,800
	9	2,151	2,300	17	53
	30	1,795	6,405	280	1,300

### Library Activities in Figures

Total number of in branch events	311
Total audiences at in branch events	4,414
Total number of outreach events	5
Total audiences at outreach events	308
Total number of home deliveries	7



Tony Maude in Ennistymon Library

### Right to Read

To celebrate the historic and literary event of WB Yeats receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923, Clare Libraries ran a small series of poetry performance workshops to introduce children to the poetry of Yeats. Guest poet and musician, Tony Maude visited Ennistymon and Kilrush libraries this month. Tony has set many of Yeats' poems to music and he created a lively, interactive show. Libraries arranged book displays of Yeats' work for children and adults and made customised colouring pages,

masks and maps available, courtesy of the Yeats Society, Sligo

Families with children aged 0-4 years are currently invited to visit their local library to collect a bedtime story they can take home and keep. During the visit, children can join the library, receive their own membership card and wallet to store it and parents can pick up a "Bedtime Reading Tips" sheet. This initiative is available through all public libraries in Ireland in collaboration with the Local Government Management Agency.

### Healthy Ireland

Yoga teacher Trish Cleary delivered the final class of a five part series of Chair Yoga classes to 14 adults in Tulla Library. These classes, accompanied with music, have been a great success in terms of attendance and enjoyment at Tulla Library and participants are looking forward to more classes in the New Year.

Darragh Howley, Performance Psychologist & Fitness Specialist, shared his expertise with 7 adults in Scariff Library, on the practical ways of supporting brain health & wellbeing through exercise and nutrition.



Donal Ryan in Shannon Library

### Creative Ireland

The final drawdown for the Creative Ireland fund was submitted and came to €182,544. A total of 110 projects were supported in Clare during 2023 with this funding.

Clare Libraries Readers Day events took place in Shannon and De Valera Libraries with support from Creative Ireland.



Poster for Mick O'Dea Exhibition

### Decade of Centenaries

The final event in the Clare “Decade of Centenaries” programme is an art exhibition by Ennis native Mick O’Dea entitled **Divided Loyalties** showcasing his art depicting the revolutionary years. The exhibition opened in glór on Friday 17th November and will run until 13th January. The launch will take place on Friday 8th December at 6pm.

### Local Studies

The Local Studies Centre has added another resource to its collection. **Justice in Ireland (1838)** is a collection of correspondences between the Irish Government and David John Wilson, the improving landlord who founded Belvoir school, and who resigned as Commission of the Peace over the treatment of tenants. This is a very rare example of a book printed in Ennis in the 19th century, by Marcus Talbot of Church Street and includes inscriptions by the author.

Conservation and listing work on the Barrett Collection is ongoing, the Dunboyne News Cuttings 1824-1878 transcription project is continuing, and the transcription of the 1825 Freeholders list has begun.

### Clare Archives

The Archivist is presently on a career break and interviews for the position of temporary Archivist will take place in December. Enquiries will be handled via the Local Studies Centre until the position is filled.

### Clare Arts Office

Over 30 applications were received for the “Artist in Schools” Scheme and the “Embrace Arts and Disability” Programme call outs. Partnership meetings took place on the Levelling Access Disability Report, Helium Arts and Visual Artists Support meetings. Support for a Climate Change Arts Project was secured

from the Arts Council and a meeting with a French artist on climate change themes also took place. Three exhibitions took place in Ennis, Scariff and Kilkee and one film was shown in Cultúrlann Sweeney. Clare Arts Office supported the Libraries Decade of Centenaries exhibition by Mick O’Dea in glór. A visit was made to Ennis Men’s Shed and a support meeting was held with one artist. Two Arts in Clare slots happened on Clare FM.

The Arts Officer attended the local authority arts officer’s conference which comprised of presentations from the Arts Council, research on digital media and festivals, Bealtaine and a workshop on Creative Places. The Arts Officer also attended an Arts and Health day by Creative Ireland and Pobal Community Empowerment training. The Arts in the Community programme continued in St. Joseph’s Hospital, Ennis and in Raheen Hospital. Clare Youth Theatre continued in glór and Creative Places in Shannon. PRISM Street Art Works continued in Ennis.

Filming took place at Tulla Stables Studios for RTE’s Home Rescue programme.

### Clare Museum

The new Winter Lecture series began this month with a talk on the painter William Mulready by Dr Maire Bourke. Talks have been organized from January to April of next year.

The curator gave a presentation at the Limerick School of Art and Design on the “Clare Embroidery” collection. The collection, which is in storage, was taken to the venue and put on display. The patterns and designs were used to inspire participants in the workshop. The LSAD is keen to continue working with Clare Museum and using the collection in the new year. Some cataloguing of the Georgina Frost collection was carried out during the month. Promotion of Clare Museum through the use of information about objects on the website continued during the month.

## KILLALOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

### November 2023 works/projects Killaloe MD

During the month of November Killaloe MD staff were involved in the following Projects

#### Low Cost Safety Improvement Scheme at Clonamirran





**Footpath repair works at Nilands Service Station, Tuamgraney**



**Road line marking works and road studs installed at R462 Tulla to Gort Road**



**Progress on Scarriff Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)**

Progress continues this Category 2 project, with the phase of this element of the overall project near completion. At the November meeting of Killaloe Municipal District, the Elected Members adopted a proposed design for the Enhancement of Market Square and Town Centre of Scarriff under Section 38. This was a significant milestone in the investment in Scarriff of over €500,000 by Clare County Council and Department of Rural and Community Development.

In 2022 RRDF Funding was awarded to undertake feasibility work, obtain planning consent for the overall integrated town centre project in Scarriff comprising of the

1. Purchase and renovation of an existing derelict premises in Scarriff Town centre and its conversion to a community Hub and work facility
2. Purchase of a greenfield site to the rear, change of use to a car-park associated with the Hub and for car-parking use as part of wider enhancements to Scarriff Town Centre
3. Enhancement of public realm of Market Square (town centre) of Scarriff.

The approval of the design for Market Square in November now ensures planning consent for the entire project has been obtained. The agreed Market Square Plan reflects the outcome of a number of months of community engagement with Scarriff Town Team, Scarriff Community Council and members of the public, who have shaped and influenced the project throughout. The design of the public realm was largely based on work and designs and public realm improvements to Market Square, that the had undertaken by Scarriff Town Team and Scarriff Community Council as part of their Scarriff Market Square Plan in July 2022.

Planning consent for these elements are a significant requirement to enable an application for Capital funding under the recently announced Category 1 RRDF call for funding application. The focus now is now on the next stage of the project and that is obtaining further funding to undertake this ambitious project, with an application deadline of February 2024.



**Additional Car Parking provision in Scarriff Town Centre**

In November and in advance of the busy Christmas season, Killaloe MD secured the provision of additional free 24-hour daily public car-parking in Scarriff town centre, accessed directly from the R352 Mountshannon Road with pedestrian access to Market Square. Killaloe Municipal District has proactively entered into an agreement with a local property owner to repurpose an existing underutilised town centre site to provide free public carparking for 16 cars each day until end of 2025. Business owners, retailers and employees in Scarriff town centre are encouraged to utilise this free car-park for staff car parking.

This proposal is part of a wider Killaloe MD initiative for enhancements to Scarriff Town Centre. This proposal is in addition to the proposed 45 space car-park located nearby in the town centre, and for which planning consent was obtained earlier this year. Development of that 45 space car-park, and a Bus Coach Parking area, is subject to an impending Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) application, and subject to funding, is anticipated will commence construction in late 2024 early 2025.



**Crusheen Community Meeting**

In November, in conjunction with colleagues from Rural Development Directorate, Killaloe Municipal District staff hosted a Community Meeting in Crusheen. This meeting provided an opportunity for the community of Crusheen to consider and discuss the needs of the village, and to identify potential future developments and projects, and how the community can collaboratively work towards achieving these ambitions. Arising from the meeting, staff from Killaloe MD have since commenced project development and a number of initiatives to respond to the issues raised.

**Mountain Bike Trail Centre - ORIS Feasibility Funding**

In November, funding under the Outdoor Recreation Improvement Scheme was awarded to Killaloe Municipal District, following an application earlier in the year. Feasibility Funding of €50,000 was awarded to examine the potential for a Mountain Bike Trail centre in the Slieve Bearnaghs.

The receipt of the funding follows a successful hosting earlier in April of this year of a National Enduro Series Event in Ballycuggeran and also assists with the delivery of an objective in Killaloe Elected Members Strategic Workplan which seeks to maximise opportunities for recreation in the Ballycuggeran /Two Mile Gate area for mountain biking.



**Rural Transport in Killaloe MD**

Following the meeting with Irish Rail in May of this year in relation to advocating for the reopening of Crusheen Railway Station, in November TFI Local Link presented an update on the new bus routes in East Clare to the Elected Members and Killaloe MD. Outlining the improved access and availability of routes into and throughout Killaloe MD, TFI welcomed the engagement to date with the Killaloe MD and the proposals and suggestions from the MD to enhancing the bus services to provide socio-economic opportunities for all residents, communities and social services across the MD and to enhance access to the variety of tourism assets and amenity sites in East Clare from around the Country. The meeting concludes a focus by the MD in 2023 on enhancement of accessibility into and around the Municipal District with progress on Killaloe Bypass and Bridge Crossing, advocating for the reopening of Crusheen Railway Station, and enhancement of TFI bus and other public transport services into and around the MD.

# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

## TRANSPORTATION

### Roadworks Programme and Operations

The 2023 Schedule of Municipal District Works (Annual Roadworks Programme) is progressing well.

### Strategic Transportation

#### Transportation Progress Update

##### Active Travel

The following is a brief overview of the activities within the Active Travel office:

Tulla Road Cycle scheme:

- Detailed design is underway on this project, this is being undertaken by AECOM Consulting Engineers.

Limerick Road (incl. St. Flannans Drive) Cycle scheme:

- Contract signing took place on the 7th November with Tobins as the Consulting Engineers. Concept design and route option selection is progressing. Traffic Count Surveys are being undertaken at a number of key junctions along the proposed route. This data will help inform the correct design parameters to be followed for the scheme.

Bothar Sioda, Shannon Rapid Implementation Active Travel Scheme

- A topographic survey has been procured and final survey has been received.
- Initial Design Scoping has been completed following site walkover.
- A supplementary Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey is currently being undertaken to identify risks prior to detailed design.

Connecting & Co-creating Ennis:

- Junction tightening works are continuing along Clon Rd with Meadow Court recently completed.

'Safe Routes To School' programme:

- The draft Outline Delivery Plan for St Mochullas, Tulla has been received and an internal review currently in progress.
- The NTA visited the Holy Family National School to go through the preliminary design proposals for the scheme. Discussions are ongoing, it is hoped to progress to the next phase in the coming weeks.
- Construction works will begin at Clonmoney National School Scheme as soon as the contractor can mobilise on site.
- The week-long "School Street" trial for An Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Cíosóg took place in late October and was deemed a great success with the school planning to carry out additional weeks in 2024. This trial will involve students walking, cycling or park and striding to school. A topographical survey in Glenina Residential estate and the green areas around An Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Cíosóg has been carried out. The Safe Routes To School design concepts are now being developed.

Ennis Town Local Transport Plan:

- Work on the Local Transport Plan is ongoing. The design of proposed future bus stops is underway.
- An online public portal is currently open until 7th December for submissions for the enhancement of Transport facilities for the Ennis Municipal District. Feedback thus far is in excess of 370 submissions. The Public Portal is available at the following link: [Placechangers](#)

<b>Public Lighting</b>	<p>The PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project) has commenced in Clare with surveying works in the Shannon &amp; Ennis MD's continuing.</p> <p>For the benefit of Councillors, public lighting faults can be reported online at <a href="https://enerveo.com/report-a-fault/republic-of-ireland">https://enerveo.com/report-a-fault/republic-of-ireland</a>, by Phone (0818-372772) or via Local Authority Identification (<a href="https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/roads-and-transport/road-maintenance-issues/report-a-broken-streetlight">https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/roads-and-transport/road-maintenance-issues/report-a-broken-streetlight</a>).</p> <p>The public lighting section continues to work with its maintenance contractor Enerveo and ESB networks to progress repairs in a timely manner. Given much of the existing public lighting network is ageing there is a necessity to upgrade in order to complete repairs and ensure compliance with ESB public lighting network requirements. This has led to increased repair times, which the public lighting section is actively working with Enerveo and ESB networks to minimise.</p>
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## Road Design Office


### TII Road Safety Projects

Project	Progress Update
<b>HD17</b>	<p><b>N85 Lahinch Road/Shanaway Road</b> There has been ongoing engagement with the TII Safety Engineer in relation to this project. An interim design solution which includes for a raised pedestrian crossing has been prepared to address concerns at the junction of Lahinch Road and Shanaway Road in Ennis. A Road Safety Audit was carried out for the proposal and a Pedestrian Crossing Assessment has been finalised. The feasibility report is due to be submitted by the 30th November.</p> <p><b>N67 Doonbeg</b> A Pedestrian Crossing Assessment will be prepared to identify the possibility of introducing a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of the Church in Doonbeg. Traffic/pedestrian surveys are being organised for this location to inform the design.</p> <p><b>N67 Mount Charles Terrace, Kilkee</b> A Preliminary Design Report for road safety improvements is currently being prepared.</p> <p><b>N67 St Patrick's Church, New Quay</b> A Preliminary Design Report for road safety improvements in the vicinity of the church is currently being prepared.</p> <p><b>N68 Cranny Cross Junction</b> A Feasibility &amp; Options Report has been submitted to the TII for the introduction of an interim safety measure.</p>
<b>Noise Action Plans</b>	Strategic Noise Mapping & Noise Action Plans Agglomerations Technical Working Group Meetings and Workshops are ongoing. Draft Noise Action Plan mapping now received from NCL and analysis being undertaken by Road Design to identify priority areas for inclusion in Action Plan.
<b>Fence Retrofitting Programme</b>	An inventory of boundary fencing within the Clear Zone of national roads where a speed limit of 100km/h applies is currently being prepared to comply with the TII standard of replacing post & rail fencing with a tensioned wire mesh restraining system. A Fence Retrofit Assessment Report for 2024 is ongoing.
<b>Periodic Speed Limits</b>	<p>Periodic speed limit assessments have been submitted to the TII for approval for the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N67 New Quay National School</li> <li>• N67 Rinneen National School</li> <li>• N68 Caherea National School</li> </ul> <p>A response from TII is awaited</p>



## Other Projects 2023

Project	Progress Update
<b>Bridge Rehabilitation Programme</b>	<p>Ballycloghessy Bridge Emergency Works A contractor was appointed &amp; works are underway on site, precast units will be insitu at the end of November.</p> <p>The 23 bridges below will have repairs &amp; works carried out in 2023 under the Bridge Rehabilitation Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breavagh West Bridge</li> <li>• Cloghera Bridge</li> <li>• Crean Bridge</li> <li>• Drimeen Bridge</li> <li>• Gortnaglough Bridge</li> <li>• Gortnagonella Bridge</li> <li>• Inchiquin Bridge</li> <li>• Alagha Bridge</li> <li>• Ballybran Bridge</li> <li>• Dromore Bridge</li> <li>• Gortalassa Bridge</li> <li>• Wyndham Bridge</li> <li>• Knockanena Bridge</li> <li>• Erinaghmore Bridge</li> <li>• Rathmeehan Bridge</li> <li>• Mahonburg Bridge</li> <li>• Poulmagun Bridge</li> <li>• Ballykeel North Bridge</li> <li>• Boolyduff Bridge</li> <li>• Drumellihy Bridge</li> <li>• Magherabaun Bridge</li> <li>• Clonboy Bridge</li> <li>• Cahercon Bridge</li> </ul> <p>N85 Culvert Replacement</p> <p>Consultant appointed for the design of a replacement culvert on the N85 at Fountain, Ennis. Vegetation cleared upstream and downstream to allow for survey.</p>
<b>Liaison with NTA regarding bus shelters</b>	<p>The NTA has approved 15 bus shelters for the 2023 programme. Works are completed at 14 locations. Work at the bus stop at Clarisford, Killaloe is underway.</p>
<b>Low-Cost Safety Schemes 2023</b>	<p>Safety Improvement Works are completed/underway at the following locations under Low Cost Safety Schemes 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cloonamirran R352</li> <li>• Killaloe L3084</li> <li>• Ardnacrusha L3056/R463/R465</li> <li>• Sixmilebridge Shannon Road</li> <li>• Ballkeel South Kilfenora</li> <li>• Kilnaboy R476</li> <li>• Tiermaclane</li> <li>• R462 Tulla Junction</li> <li>• Carmody Street/Parnell Street</li> <li>• Summerhill L4550</li> <li>• Inch Bridge</li> <li>• Cooraclare</li> </ul>

Project	Progress Update
<b>Malbay Track &amp; Trail</b>	<p>Signage snagging has been completed along the track &amp; trail on and it is now open to the public.</p> 
<b>EuroVelo</b>	<p>Engagement with local community groups has now progressed to assist in the maintenance of bike repair stations installed in the County as part of EuroVelo.</p>

### Health And Safety

The Health and Safety Team are continuing with their schedule of Annual Safety Statement and Risk Assessment Reviews and schedule of Safety Inspections in order to inspect, monitor and advise on the implementation of the Clare County Council Occupational Health and Safety Management System.


The Trial of the ProWorks Traffic Management Software has been completed with 32 Tablets rolled out to Transportation Staff in each of the Municipal Districts in order to select and record Traffic Management Plans and Safe System of Work Plans at each roadworks site using the ProWorks App. All registered users attended a half days training on the 15th November in the use of ProWorks and the project is now moving onto a monitoring and inspection phase.

The Internal H&S Audit Plan 2023 approved by the Safety Management Committee in order to conduct an Internal H&S Audit of each Directorates Compliance with the Clare County Council Occupational Health & Safety Management System commenced in November and is due for completion by end of December.


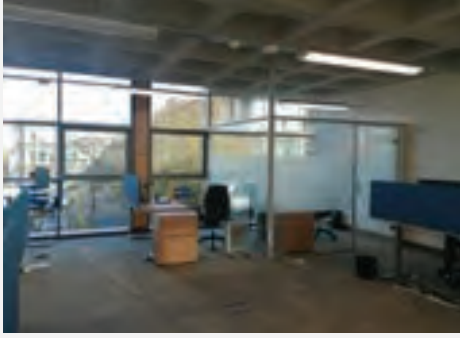



The Driving for Work Handbook was revised and re-issued during October and was updated following the publication of National Guidance from the Local Government Management Agency principally around the following areas;

- Driver Qualification and Authorisation
- Smoking
- Trailer Inspections including Mobile Welfare Units
- Electric Vehicle Safety

### General Design Office

Project	Progress Update
<b>Loophead Lighthouse Boundary Wall Survey</b>	<p>The General Design Office have completed a condition survey of the Loophead Lighthouse boundary walls. A report with cost estimate has been prepared outlining the immediate remedial works required on those boundary walls adjacent to the newly proposed Cafe /Visitors Centre.</p> 

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Project	Progress Update
<p><b>Shannon Heritage Office Remedial Works</b></p>	<p>Remedial works have been completed on the Shannon Heritage office located in the Clare Technology Park, Gort Road, Ennis. Works included soundproofing of the party walls, installation of new canteen and installation of glazed Office Pods.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
<p><b>Town and Village Renewal Schemes</b></p>	<p>Clonlara - Works continuing to progress.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p>Drumgeely - Works on stone wall raised flower bed and paving progressing.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
<p><b>Vandeleur Walled Gardens, Kilrush</b></p>	<p>Courtyard paving, guarding and handrail to pedestrian crossing. Works due to be completed on site by end of November.</p>



## CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Progress throughout November on the Major Capital Projects being managed by the PMO is as follows:

<b>Doolin Pier Visitor Services Building</b>	<p>A submission is being developed for the Department requesting the allocation of additional funding to progress this project to Statutory Consent stage. This follows completion of environmental evaluation surrounding land use options, and re-engagement with appointed design team and local landowner.</p>
<b>Ennis Public Realm Regeneration (Project B)</b>	<p>The first phase of the works involving the installation of a new foul sewer at Upper O’Connell Street has been completed on schedule and the section has now been re-opened to facilitate normal Christmas trading activity.</p> <p>The completion of this phase also represents the first step in the Uisce Eireann (Irish Water) investment in the infrastructure of Ennis involving significant upgrade and replacement works to a large section of the foul sewer running through the Town Centre. We are delighted that these additional works, paid for by Uisce Eireann, are being carried out as they will resolve longstanding legacy issues with the sewer as well as future proofing capacity in the town for many years to come.</p> <p>Shareridge also completed site investigations at O’Connell Square in recent weeks whereby the information gathered will be used to inform the construction methods to be employed when completing this phase in 2024. Road Closures Notices have recently been issued for works to commence in January 2024, thereby enabling public consultation to commence. Upon approval, these road closures will enable works to proceed at O’Connell Street, and at High Street. Further road closures will be advertised during 2024 to facilitate the works programme and to complete certain foul sewer replacement works in advance of the streetscape works.</p> <p>The works requirement within the contract obliges Shareridge to have a Public Liaison Officer (PLO) as part of their Team who is based in their Project Office in Ennis Town Centre. The PLO is engaging extensively with affected parties as the works progress and, in advance of commencement of every work phase. The public and traders are encouraged to take every opportunity to meet with the project team to ensure that their needs are communicated, and disruption is minimised wherever possible. The contractor and design team are also convening fortnightly drop-in meetings, as well as issuing weekly progress update bulletins. Affected/interested parties are invited to email <a href="mailto:ennispublicrealm@shareridge.ie">ennispublicrealm@shareridge.ie</a> if they wish to be added to mailing list.</p> <p>As one would expect, there will be some disruption/inconvenience during the works phase experienced but this is unavoidable in major civil and infrastructural works of this nature. It is expected that the longer-term benefits in terms of user amenity and accessibility will far outweigh the shorter-term inconvenience and cooperation and understanding in this regard is greatly appreciated.</p>
<b>Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake’s Corner)</b>	<p>The third-party challenge to An Bord Pleanála’s decision to confirm the CPO is still before the Courts with the next date for mention being December 11th. On conclusion of same, Clare County Council will determine the next course of action. If the Boards decision is upheld, we will move at pace to progress this much needed infrastructure. Pending same, we are exploring the options available to us in terms of completing the final design and other works not affected by the Court proceedings.</p>
<b>Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass</b>	<p>Work is progressing well across the Project despite the adverse weather and recent extreme weather events experienced by Storm Debi. There is significant body of construction activity currently underway across all areas of the site with a busy schedule of works planned for the remainder of the year.</p> <p><b>Killaloe Bypass Section</b> Surface water drainage, gullies and duct installation progressing on Main Cut.</p> 

**Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass**

The section between Hill and Creeveroe Roads being prepared for kerbs.



The section from Creeveroe Road to Shantraud Roundabout being prepared for road pavement.



**Shannon Bridge Crossing Section**

The section between Shantraud Roundabout and Clarisford being prepared for road pavement.



**Shannon Bridge**

Enabling works for crane and structural steel delivery is currently underway on the Eastern Embankment.

Steel fixing, formwork erection and concreting operations continue across all bridge piers.



**R494 Upgrade**

Various sections of the R494 are now receiving pavement courses to binder level. Traffic management lane switchovers are being progressed accordingly, allowing construction activities to focus on the other lane.



Landowner accommodation works and verge completion works are progressing.



Services installations, including utilities, drainage and attenuation tanks installation is progressing.



**Kilmastulla Bridge**

Prepping for the installation of precast parapets is underway. Earthwork deposition for embankment construction is progressing.





**Rail Bridge**

Prepping for the installation of precast bridge beams is underway. Earthwork deposition continues.



Additional project specific information including monthly drone footage is available on <https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/capital-projects/roads-and-bridges/killaloe-bypass-shannon-bridge-crossing/>



<p><b>Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme</b></p>	<p>Progress continues to be made on the relevant documents required for next year’s planning application to An Bord Pleanála. The Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was recently issued by our Technical Advisors and is currently with the Council for review. The Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is still on course for completion by year end. The pre-planning application consultation request has been completed and will issue shortly. Clare County Council continue to lead the Project Team in finalising landowner drawings which will enable us to engage further with affected landowners regarding the necessary land acquisition required for the scheme.</p>
<p><b>Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)</b></p>	<p>The additional information on the mechanisms that are currently in place to assist in the delivery of housing for the site has been submitted to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH). This, along with updated total scheme cost estimates are in parallel being considered by the LIHAF Section of the Department.</p> <p>Discussions with the relevant landowners is ongoing regarding the acquisition of the necessary lands for the scheme. It is hoped that all lands necessary can be acquired by agreement however, we may have to consider the CPO process for acquisition of any remaining lands required but this would be our last option. To that end, our Consultants RPS are preparing the relevant maps &amp; schedules for a CPO should the need arise.</p>
<p><b>Lough Donnell Culvert Repair works</b></p>	<p>Construction works are now complete and the situation on the ground is being routinely monitored.</p>
<p><b>N19 Shannon Airport Access Road</b></p>	<p>The project is currently at Phase 3 (Design and Environmental Evaluation) and a Draft Preliminary Design has been prepared for the Preferred Option identified during Phase 2 of the Project. The issues identified during the Design Peer Review Process along with recent updates to the Cycle Design Manual are currently being considered by the project consultants FTC, with the view of updating the design drawings to ensure that the Scheme is updated to the latest Design Standards in advance of finalisation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and any potential An Bord Pleanála Oral Hearing that may arise.</p> <p>Over the month of November, works continued regarding the EIAR chapter compilation. It is expected that EIAR, along with the Development Consent Application, will be made to An Bord Pleanála in Q2 2024.</p> <p>Discussions continue surrounding the necessary Land Transfer Agreements between The Minister for Transport, the Shannon Group and Clare County Council.</p> <p>As always further information and associated literature on the project can be accessed via the scheme website <a href="http://www.shannonaccess.ie">www.shannonaccess.ie</a></p>
<p><b>Quin Flood Relief Scheme</b></p>	<p>All 40 piles were successfully installed in early November. Testing of same has also been completed and functioning as intended and per design. This has allowed the FRC (Formwork, Reinforced Concrete) contractor to return to site and commence construction of the outstanding sections of wall. Accommodation works including drainage has been completed to the back of two of the affected properties.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>

<p><b>Remediation of sites containing ACM</b></p>	<p>Tenders in respect of disposal of bulk soil material were published in the summer of 2023 and submissions are now in place, defining the receiving locations and transport requirements for the bulk materials to be removed. These details will be incorporated into tender documents for a separate works contract in respect of the excavation and remediation of the sites scheduled for issue in the new year. In parallel, a review is currently ongoing regarding the statutory approval aspects associated with the Remediation works.</p> <p>The sites continue to be routinely monitored and maintained as required by Council staff in accordance with our agreed approach following discussion and consultation with the EPA.</p>
<p><b>Shannon Town &amp; Environs Flood Relief Scheme</b></p>	<p>Information and comments received from the circa. 30 attendees at the Public Consultation Day have been compiled and will be included in the PCD Report. The report will be issued following receipt of feedback from all consulted stakeholders which is expected in mid-December. A third meeting with NPWS was also held on Wednesday 22nd November.</p> <p>The finalised Hydrology and Hydraulics Reports have now been issued by the scheme consultant.</p> <p>The remaining mammal surveys, including otter, badger, and pine martin will also be completed by year end.</p>
<p><b>Springfield, Clonlara FRS</b></p>	<p>The works are now complete, and the situation is being routinely monitored on the ground.</p>
<p><b>West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 1: Kilrush to Kilkee)</b></p>	<p>Revisions are being finalised on the 'Option Selection Report'. A peer review is scheduled in the coming weeks. The Project Team are preparing for Public Consultation (PC3) which is planned for Q1, 2023.</p>
<p><b>West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 2: Ennis to Ennistymon)</b></p>	<p>The successful completion of a peer review of the Option Selection Report for Section 1 will inform the preparation of the equivalent report for Section 2. The Project Team are preparing for Public Consultation (PC3) which will take place early in the new year.</p>
<p><b>West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 3 &amp; 4: Ennistymon to Miltown Malbay and Miltown Malbay to Moyasta)</b></p>	<p>The Contract signing was recently held at the Station House in Miltown Malbay. Roughan O'Donovan Consulting Engineers are now appointed to progress all 4 sections of the West Clare Railway Greenway project which will deliver enhance value for money given the many issues of a similar nature. The Contract Signing was followed by an extremely interesting presentation on the history of the narrow-gauge railway and the heritage features along the route which will benefit the Greenway project in the future.</p> <p>Preparations continue for initial Public Consultation on these sections, which will launch in the coming weeks. Public Consultation (PC1) will be live for 3 weeks and study area drawings/information will be available to view at local Libraries and online. Affected landowners and members of the public will be given the opportunity to view information and submit feedback, queries and comments that they may have.</p>
<p><b>Other Greenway Proposals</b></p>	<p>Clare County Council is a key part of the Steering Group of the UL to Scarriff Greenway/Blueway proposal as much of it runs through Clare and a significant part of same will utilise the Cycling and Pedestrian elements of the Killaloe Bridge and Bypass Project.</p> <p>The project is being led by Waterways Ireland, but Clare County Council is involved in the drawing down of the funds from the Approving Authority, TII.</p> <p>Works are also continuing the Councils Greenway proposals at Shannon, Bunratty and Sixmilebridge.</p>

## FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

### Kilrush Fire Station Contract

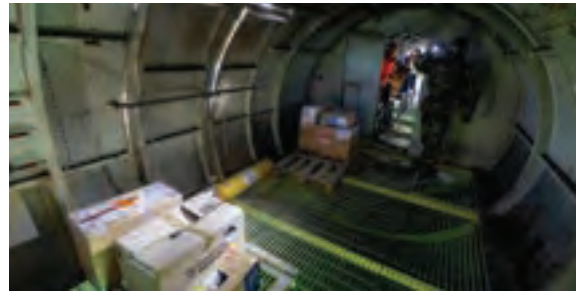
Custy Construction Ltd. has commenced works on the construction of a new 2 Bay Appliance Facility at Kilrush Fire Station as well as general upgrade works to revamp the existing station, which is now 25 years old. The works are being funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with total grant aid of €425,757.00 inclusive of VAT.

### New Class B Fire Appliance Funding

An order has been placed for a new Class B Fire Appliance with High Precision Motor Products Ltd. The appliance is being funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with total grant aid of €549,041.00 inclusive of VAT.

### Major Emergency Exercise at Shannon Airport

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service participated in a Inter Agency Exercise at Shannon Airport on Tuesday 7th November 2023. Shannon and Ennis Fire Brigades took part in the exercise together with their colleagues from Shannon Airport Fire Service, An Garda Síochána, National Ambulance Service and the Defence Forces Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team. The exercise simulated a cargo plane crash landing after a chemical leak on-board. An Inter-Agency Communications Team participated as part of the exercise including Kennas Fitzimons.



### Recruitment of Fire Service Personnel

An additional Sub-Station Officer post has been advertised in each Fire Station as part of the implementation of the Workplace Relations Commission Agreement. Additional Firefighter posts are currently advertised for all stations and it is intended to fill these additional positions in the coming weeks and months.

### Training Courses

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service personnel underwent a number of training courses during November, including a Chainsaw Operator Refresher Training Course, Pole Saw Training, Breathing Apparatus Refresher Training Course and Emergency Services Driving Standard (ESDS) Training. One new recruit firefighter from Kilrush Fire Station successfully completed a 3 week QQI accredited Firefighting Skills Course at Letterkenny Fire Station and has now joined the crew in Kilrush Fire Brigade.



## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Fire & Building Control Section Main Activities	Oct 2023	Nov 2023 (Up to 24.11.23)	Year to Date
Emergency Calls Attended	92	74	884
Fire Safety Certificates Received	10	6	94
Fire Safety Certificates Granted	8	8	80
Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	0	4
Disability Access Certificates Received	3	1	47
Disability Access Certificates Granted	5	6	46
Commencement Notices Received	42	31	401
Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	1	1	7

*(Note: In the Nov Monthly Report, the Oct figures related to 1st- 20th October due to timing of report)*

## CLARE CIVIL DEFENCE

### Clare Civil Defence

#### Operational Duties

- Civil Defence provided medical cover at a large number of events in November including All Ireland Handball Championships (Tuamgraney); Community Games (Lees Road); Charity Cycle from Quin to Athenry; Turning of Christmas Lights in Ennis.
- Clare Civil Defence was tasked by An Garda Síochána to assist in a search for a missing person at the Cliffs of Moher. Volunteers conducted searches in Liscannor and Galway Bay over a 2 day period.

#### Members Training & Professional Development

- Members participated in weekly training set out by Civil Defence instructors - this training included boat training, vehicle training, search training and use of drones.
- Portable pump and hose drill training.
- 12 volunteers passed their exams in Emergency First Responder (EFR).
- Toolbox Talk on "Ambulance Tail-lift Use".
- Manual Handling for 14 new recruits.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Environmental Awareness

#### Awareness raising with youth

Our Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) attended and spoke with students at Ennis CBS in support of their Biodiversity Action Day as part of their Green Schools programme.

Our EAO also delivered a workshop with secondary school students attending after school at the North West Clare Family Resource Centre in Ennistymon.

#### Sustainable Development Goal Champions (SDG) programme





Our EAO attended the second meeting of the SDG Champion programmes at the Rediscovery Centre. The second quarterly report on Clare County Council progress in supporting the goals was also prepared and issued during November.

In conjunction with the Healthy Clare programme weekly posts on showing how Clare County Council projects are aligning to the SDGs have commenced. During November these posts were:

1. Kilkee Green Business Hub - SDG 8; SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 14, SDG 16; SDG 17
2. Clare Local Authority Period Free Period Products - SDG 1; SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 16, SDG 10; SDG 13, SDG 17
3. Invasive Alien Species Toolkit - SDG 11; SDG 13, SDG 14, SDG 15, SDG 17
4. Not around Us - Towards a Tobacco and Vape Free Clare - SDG 1; SDG 3, SDG 10, SDG 12, SDG 14, SDG 17

An email was issued to all Directors of Service asking for examples of projects that support SDGs. This will highlight Clare County Council ongoing commitment towards the programme.

The SDG “Accelerator Tool” has proved very successful and is being used to assist in SDG alignment for:

1. Draft Climate Action Plan
2. Sustainable Tourism Green Team
3. Kilkee Green Business Hub
4. Draft Clare LECP
5. Draft Clare Age Friendly Strategy

#### Clare Farmers Weaving Stories Launch

Our EAO hosted an information stand with the Climate Action Team as part Clare Farmers Weaving Stories Together Booklet Launch and Health and Wellbeing Expo. Greener living, catchment management and SDGs were amongst those promoted at the stand.

#### Oil Tank - Safe Check campaign

Oil Tank - Safe Check campaign social media campaign continued over November to raise awareness about the prevention of oil leaks from home heating oil tanks. Our Environmental Awareness Officer participated in a Clare FM Morning Focus interview. In addition the campaign got coverage as a news item on Clare FM as well as The Clare Champion and Clare Echo print and social media outlets.

#### Clean Air Campaign

A print and social media campaign was carried out during November to promote the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) Clean Air Campaign. The public are advised to keep our air clean by using low smoke coal, cleaning chimneys, and reflecting on alternative heat sources.

#### Gardening

While we are yet to experience the first significant cold snap of winter, the Gardening Team has been fully engaged in their winter maintenance works programme comprising of hedge cutting, pruning, and shaping of trees, together with the other seasonal duties such as weeding and removal of dead vegetation within the numerous pollinator friendly planting spaces.



This important work ensures strong and sustained future growth of perennial plants and to provide pollen and protection for various pollinating insects.

Within the Gardening Nursery during November, works also continued with the planting and establishment of juvenile plants, to ensure that the team can continue to provide colourful planting schemes throughout public spaces in Spring and Summer 2024.



### Water Enforcement and Laboratory Scientific Services

The table below summarises the work of the scientific teams to date in 2023:

Water Enforcement Scientific Team	November 2023	Jan - November 2023
Audits/Inspection of Section 4 licensed premises	5	23
Bathing Water Monitoring	0	236
Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Inspections (NIP Plan)	5 re-inspections	130
Monitoring Inspections of Section 4 licenced premises	14	52
Planning applications (Agriculture)	5	33
Planning applications (Domestic)	37	378
Planning applications (Large Developments)	4	19
Planning applications (Forestry)	15	101
Pollution complaints received	12	96
Private Commercial Drinking Water Supplies	12	52
Private/Public Group Water Scheme supplies	41	180
Rivers	50	273
Warning & advisory letters issued	2	9

## Waste Enforcement

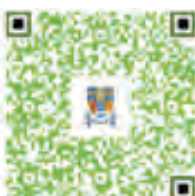
### Solid Fuel Regulations and Sampling Programme

As it has been one year since the introduction of the Solid Fuel Regulations, *Air Pollution Act 1987 (Solid Fuels) Regulations 2022*, The Environment Section combined in multi-Local Authority Solid Fuel Sampling Programme of a random representative sample of Solid Fuels on the market in Clare and neighbouring Counties. Following receipt of results from the accredited laboratory, Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council, Laois County Council, Meath County Council and Offaly County Council will undertake a collaborative approach to the enforcement actions required.

This programme was funded by the Department of Environment Climate and Communications.

Additionally, retailers in Clare have been issued letters reminding them of the new Regulations and obligations with respect to sale of compliant fuels only.

Clare County Council’s Environment Section throughout November is implementing an inspection programme, comprising visits to retailers and distributors to raise awareness of the implications of the new Regulations, and to check that stock that does not meet the new technical standards is no longer being sold. A link to the DECC Clean Air web page with information and FAQs for Retailers, Householders and Haulage companies can be scanned below.



### Anti-Dumping Initiative 2023

A claim for €99,565.91 in Anti-Dumping Initiative funding was approved by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) in November 2023. This has been spent on the following projects:

- Vandeleur Gardens:** Inter-agency clean-up
- Mattress Amnesty Days:** Held in Kilfenora, Kilrush and Scariff marts.
- Household Hazardous Waste Amnesty Day:** Ballyduffbeg Civic Amenity Site
- Shopping Trolleys, Shannon:** A pilot project linking in with Shannon Tidy Towns, Shannon Active Retirement Group and local Councillors.
- Purchase of Solar Compactor Bins and Halloween Cleanups**
- Skips were provided by Clare County Council** at a location prone to stockpiling and burning waste at Halloween. This eliminated air pollution and reduced the number of Fire Brigade callouts at Halloween.

### Environmental Monitoring (Illegal Dumping/Litter)

The Waste Enforcement Team continued to respond to complaints relating to waste and litter. In total, 97 complaints relating to waste and litter were received and dealt with by the Waste Enforcement team in November.

### Notifications of Controlled Burning

In total, 10 notifications of controlled burning were received and processed in November, as per the Waste Management (Prohibition of Waste Disposal by Burning) Regulations 2009. The exemption to the provisions of the Waste Management (Prohibition of Waste disposal by burning) (Amendment)



Regulations 2022 is due to expire on 30th November 2023. Thereafter, no applications will be accepted or processed.

**Historic landfill**

The Laboratory team continued monitoring the Kilrush historic

landfill as per requirements of the Certificate of Authorisation as issued by the Environmental Protection Agency. Monitoring of the Whitegate Historic landfill continued in November to obtain base level data in preparation of receipt of the Certificate of Authorisation.

CLIMATE ACTION

**Community Climate Action Programme**

The Community Climate Action Programme launched on the 6th of December. The application process will be made available through the Clare County Council website from 9:00 am on December 6th and will remain open until 5:00pm on February 28th 2024. The overall objective of the Community Climate Action Programme is to support and empower communities to take direct climate action and the programme provides funding for small, medium and large scale projects. The community-based projects/initiatives will take action across at least one, preferably several, of the following five themes: community and energy, travel, food and waste, shopping and recycling, local climate and environmental action.

Not for profit community groups/organisations who are registered with a PPN or connected with other collectives such as the Wheel, Tidy Towns and /or a community group with Articles of Association or a Constitution, which hold an AGM, and for which approved minutes are available are eligible to apply to this programme.

Of the €572,000 allocated to Clare County Council under phase 1 of the programme, €57,200 is available for to fund small projects up to €20,000, €228,800 is available for medium sized projects valued in the range of €20,000 to €50,000 and €286,000 is available for larger projects in the range of €51,000 to €100,000. In parallel, the Government’s Shared Island Fund is providing €3 million for strand 1a of the programme which enables communities and Local Authorities to propose a cross-border project in partnership with organisations in Northern Ireland. The application process for strand 1a will also be made available through the Clare County Council website from 9:00

am on December 6th and will remain open until 5:00pm on February 28th 2024.

The Community Climate Action Programme provides 100% funding for selected projects with the availability of prefunding if required. The key milestones of the programme are detailed in the graphic below. Elected members were briefed on the programme on November 30th.



**Biobus**

The Climate Action team welcomed the biOrbic team to Co. Clare as part of the national Biobus tour that visited 35 locations around Ireland. The mobile exhibition was a part of a national campaign to raise awareness about the bioeconomy, the part of the economy which uses renewable resources from agriculture, forestry and the marine to produce food,



feed, materials and energy while reducing waste, in support of achieving a sustainable and climate neutral society. Throughout the afternoon, the Biobus was visited by members of the public who had the opportunity to explore the exhibition and discover just how many day to day products have crude oil components and find novel ways of producing the items we need from plants, animals and microbes instead.



Kelly Slattery CCAO with members of Biobus Project.

**Climate Action Plan Development**

The Draft Climate Action Plan went on public display on Tuesday October 10th. The closing date for submissions was 4pm on Thursday November 23rd. The Climate Team held five Public Consultation evenings to support information sharing regarding the Plan. The events took place in:

- West Clare MD - Kilrush November 6th (5pm to 7pm).
- West Clare MD - Ennistymon November 7th (5pm to 7pm).
- Shannon MD - Shannon November 6th (5pm to 7pm)
- Killaloe MD - Scarriff November 7th (5pm to 7pm)
- Ennis MD - Ennis November 8th (5pm to 7pm).

There also was a targeted social media presence to engage with the public with frequent posts on Facebook, Instagram and X.



Chris Dixon O Mara and Cian O Donovan (Climate Section) pictured at Kilrush Event.

The total number of submissions on the Draft Plan received by November 24th was 148. This is substantial feedback in comparison to other counties. The work will now begin towards working through these responses in detail and the preparation of the Chief Executives Report for the Elected Members towards adoption of the Climate Action Plan in February 2024.

**Energy Awareness**

Clare County Council has achieved the ISO50001 Energy Management Accreditation. Staff awareness and engagement forms a vital part of that accreditation and in that regard the Climate Section held a Climate Action and Energy Awareness day for staff in the foyer of the Aras on October 19th. Information was available on the types of renewable energy used by the council in our buildings and well as promotion of the Draft Climate Action Plan. Electric bikes were also showcased which are available for use by the staff.



Morgan Lahiffe and Cian O Donovan pictured with Anne Marie Cusack at Awareness Day.

## WATER

### Asset Transfer

Following an assessment of the water and wastewater networks in County Clare, 384 sites have been identified for potential transfer to Úisce Eireann to date. Following on site surveys, 71 of these assets have been determined to be duplicate, non-operational assets or assets which Úisce Eireann will not accept. Of the remaining 313 assets, 221 have now been fully transferred to Úisce Eireann. The 92 assets remaining to be transferred are divided into the following four categories:

- **Internal Query (10 assets)** - These consist of assets for which need further investigation or information /approval from another council section to proceed, or sites under transfer via a different section of the council.
- **National Special Projects Office (NSPO) (58 assets)** - This is a department within Úisce Eireann dealing with special projects which includes facilitating the Asset Transfers from Local Authorities. Most assets in this category are folios under third party ownership but where long standing use and some evidence of previous land dealing is present. Úisce Eireann are now advocating that property in long term operational possession but not in the Council name be obtained by the adverse possession process. Circular L1 2022 has confirmed department support for this approach.

All assets which have not yet transferred will be examined to see if they can be progressed using this method.

- **Outstanding assets to be reported on (0 assets)** - All identified sites have now had reports completed.
- **With County Solicitor (24 Assets)** These assets are now with the County Solicitor to progress by ordinary transfer or by adverse possession processes.
- **A review of assets** which were originally determined to be disused is underway.

### Rural Water Programme

The Rural Water Team continues to support group water schemes to ensure a robust and sustainable quality and quantity supply of water is available.

The Clare Rural Water Programme awaits the publication of the 2022-2025 Multi Annual Rural Water Programme. This is the leading to frustration amongst the GWS's who have already engaged in the process and have submitted bid details to the Clare Rural Water Programme.

Under the 'Grant for the Improvement of a "Private Water Supply to a House" 75 applications have been received to date in 2023.

## SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

### Attendance at Excellence in Local Government Awards



Front Row: Ann Reynolds, Senior Executive Officer; Chief Executive Pat Dowling; Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney; Siobhan McNulty, A/Director of Services; Cathaoirleach of Shannon MD, Cllr Donna McGettigan; Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise.  
Back Row: Adrian Headd, A/Senior Engineer; Leonard Cleary, Director of Services; Cllr Pat Hayes; and Cllr Ian Lynch.



**Attendance at Excellence in Local Government Awards**

Shannon MD was delighted to have made the shortlist under the Municipal District category for the prestigious annual Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2023 which was held on Thursday, 23rd November in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Dublin. In its 20th year, the Awards featured over 90 Local Authority projects shortlisted over 15 categories, including a new addition, 'Urban Revival', which showcases Local Authorities' innovative efforts to take action in transforming their urban areas. The Shannon MD project was the The Shannon Embankment Scenic Trail in the M.D. category.



*Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan, Sergeant Seamus Mulligan, Anne Griffin, A/SEO and Tom Mellett, Senior Executive Engineer.*

**Launch of Shannon Community Partnership**

The launch of Shannon Community Partnership (replacement group as part of an agreed transition from Love Shannon) was held in the Oakwood Hotel on 29th November 2023. Shannon Community Partnership is a newly established community development and advocacy body which will promote Shannon as a great place to live, work and visit. An interim board is in place chaired by Nick Condon and a broad umbrella network structure will be put in place to promote cooperation and information sharing between groups and organisations in the town. Shannon Municipal District is looking forward to working collaboratively with this new representative organisation. Separate meetings were held with officials of the MD and also with MD Councillors.

**Christmas Lights Switch on in Shannon Town Park**

Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan switched on the lights in Shannon Town Park on 4th December. The festive season kicked off in style in Shannon with a countdown to the turning on of the lights at 6pm. The beautiful tree and lights created a magical ambiance in the Town Park.

There was a fantastic festive atmosphere at the event and it was a celebration of residents coming together transcending cultural barriers, and spreading warmth and cheer. A great evening was had by all with entertainment from the local Gospel Choir in Shannon followed by the arrival of Mr and Mrs Claus in a surprise vehicle. The children were overjoyed to meet Mr & Mrs Claus who had taken time away from the North Pole to visit Shannon. Festive Christmas songs, sweets and treats kept everyone buzzing with contagious enthusiasm. A special thank you to all involved for making it such a successful and wonderful night.



*Board of Shannon Community Partnership at launch event.*



**Working collaboratively with An Garda Siochana**





Cathaoirleach of Shannon MD together with Council officials met with Sergeant Seamus Mulligan to discuss various matters in the Shannon Area.

Regular communication and collaboration help in addressing community needs and concerns and are a key aim of these meetings. The MD is currently working on initiatives like neighbourhood watch and school awareness programmes with the Gardai. This approach allows for the implementation of multifaceted solutions to address problems like anti-social behaviour or crime.



*Shannon MD staff worked diligently to make the night a success, pictured with Santa and Mrs Claus.*

Summary Of Other Works

<b>Newmarket on Fergus</b>	Repair works to roadway at the rear of houses on Ennis Road carried out.
<b>Sli na Slainte route underway</b>	<p>Works have been completed on the Sli na Slainte route off the roundabout near Town Centre/Lidl in Shannon. This route will link in with existing walkways within the heart of Shannon town. Signs will be erected in the near future.</p> 
<b>Westbury</b>	<p>New pedestrian crossing in place.</p> 
<b>Town Village Renewal Schemes</b>	Works are underway and steady progress is being made (Clonlara); Works are proceeding at (Drumgeely)
<b>Outdoor Fitness Equipment</b>	Site Works commenced on 30th November 2023.
<b>Hedgecutting</b>	Hedgecutting is ongoing throughout the MD at various other locations.
<b>Pedestrian Crossings</b>	Works on two pedestrian crossings nearing completion at Sixmilebridge and at Barry's Cross in Ardnacrusha.
<b>Clonlara</b>	<p>New parking spaces (5 No.) in Clonomra, Clonlara.</p> 
<b>Shannon Banks</b>	Road overlay restoration improvement works in Shannon Banks and also in Sixmilebridge.
<b>Tree Maintenance</b>	Tree contractor carrying out tree maintenance throughout the MD
<b>Mini Road Sweeper</b>	Working diligently throughout Shannon- removal of leaves, verges etc.
<b>Corrib Drive, Shannon.</b>	<p>New footpath connection to embankment walk at the side of St. Senan's School, Corrib Drive.</p> 



# TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

## New Initiative to Promote One Of Ireland's Rarest Pony Breeds



The Kerry Bog Pony Cooperative Society has teamed up with Bunratty Castle and Folk Park in County Clare as part of a joint initiative to preserve and promote awareness of one of Ireland's rarest breeds of pony. The popular visitor attraction, which already is home to a range of Irish native breeds, has engaged with the Society to secure a pair of Kerry Bog Ponies for its farm.

The Kerry Bog Pony has experienced a resurgence in recent years having declined in numbers throughout the 20th century to only 26 known mares and 6 stallions in 1990. Today there are around 450 ponies with approximately 50 foals being registered each year. Little is known of the origins of the Kerry Bog Pony. The original ponies identified by John Mulvihill were located in South Kerry. Based on their genetics it has been suggested that the ponies could have been imported by the Vikings who had an encampment at Beginish near Valentia Island from the 10th to the 12th century.

"We are very grateful to The Kerry Bog Pony Cooperative Society for the support they have given us in reaching out on social media to pony breeders and owners across the country with a view to securing a pair of ponies," explained **Niall Moloney, Farm Manager at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park**. "One of our primary missions in Bunratty is to increase awareness of native

Irish breeds and how they have formed part of our social and cultural history in Ireland down through the centuries," he continued. "We are looking to expand on our collection of native Irish animals from Droimeann cattle to Irish Wolfhounds and from Irish Red Deer to Tamworth pigs, and, in doing so, help to preserve and promote our heritage."

**Tomás Rosengrave, Chair of The Kerry Bog Pony Cooperative Society** commented, "We are very excited to have the opportunity to work with Bunratty Castle and Folk Park on this project and in the future on educating all visitors to the Folk Park on our native Kerry Bog Pony while also celebrating its heritage and character. The Kerry Bog Pony is a very versatile breed, makes an excellent child's riding pony but also excels in many equestrian sports such as carriage driving for adults. We are delighted that all visitors to the Bunratty Castle Folk Park Farm will have the opportunity to get know this great Irish breed of pony."

Kerry Bog Pony owners or breeders are asked to contact Niall Moloney on [niall.moloney@shannonheritage.com](mailto:niall.moloney@shannonheritage.com), or visit [www.kerrybogpony.ie](http://www.kerrybogpony.ie) or [www.bunrattycastle.ie](http://www.bunrattycastle.ie).



## 1.0 A taste of the Geopark at the Burren Food Fayre



Carol and Seán were busy this month promoting GEOfood alongside several of the GEOfood producers at the Burren Food Fayre on October 29th. The day was a big hit as large crowds gathered to treat themselves to some local Burren delicacies and to enjoy some local traditions, one of which was the Burren Winterage Walk. Burren Winterage was organized by the Burren Beo Trust and the starting and finishing points this year were at the Burren Food Fayre. After a few brief talks at Michael Cusacks GAA pitch, the crowd of onlookers took to the gravel as they walked behind the cattle and farmer to the uplands of the Burren. This was the second year of the Burren Food Fayre and the Winterage Walk were held together, and after a huge turnout, it is anticipated that it will remain this way going forward.

## 2.0 The Clare Tourism Advisory Forum, November meeting



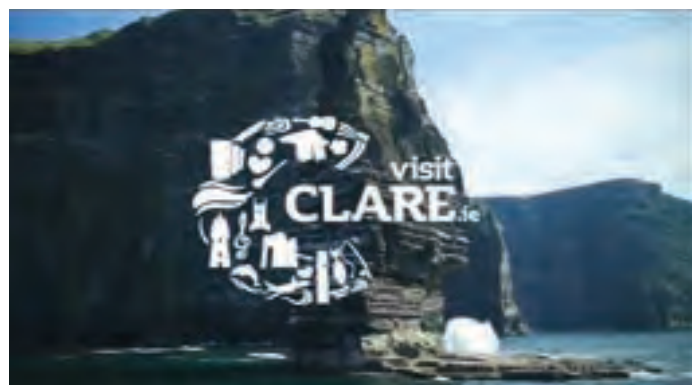
The final meeting of the year for the Clare Tourism Advisory Forum was held on Thursday, 24th November with a very impressive report and presentation by Failte Ireland on the Accommodation Audit for Clare with a number of recommendations for scoping in the New Year.

## 3.0 Colaiste Muire, Ennis victorious in prestigious geography competition organized by GTTP (Global Travel and Tourism Partnership)



The Tourism Department supported the Transition Year TY2 students with their geography teacher Ms. Gemma Hassett from Coláiste Muire, Ennis, for their preparation and trip to Dubai, as a result of being crowned the all-Ireland champions for a geography competition, earning them a once-in-a-lifetime trip, organized by GTTP (Global Travel and Tourism Partnership).

## 4.0 Winter Marketing Campaign: Winter Escapes to Ennis and The Burren



With thanks to funding from Fáilte Ireland, Big Wheel Marketing delivered two marketing videos and a Digital / Social Media Marketing Campaign for the Shoulder Season for Clare with particular focus on Ennis and the Burren.

This targeted digital marketing plan, to engage with digital marketing agencies, the local tourism networks and the providers, has been initiated through to the end of February 2024.

## 5.0 Clare Christmas Cracker Campaign



This year the Tourism Department delivered the creation of a festive Event Listing and Feature for the Christmas and New Year celebrations. Titled "Christmas Crackers in Clare", the event listing will take prominent place on the Visit Clare website and will be highlighted in November on a special one-page Christmas feature in the Clare Echo.

This initiative offers a fantastic opportunity to amplify the visibility of local events to both locals and visitors in Clare, enhancing the festive season spirit.

Local businesses have been invited to showcase their Christmas and New Year events at no cost. To ensure their event reaches the widest audience, it will also be promoted on Visit Clare's social media channels.

- Events must be open to the general public for attendance or booking.
- Submissions should be sent via the provided Smartsheet form link.
- The deadline for submission is Monday, November 27th, though we encourage earlier en-tries to facilitate better planning.

### Typical Events to feature include:

- Santa, Christmas, and New Year Experiences at attractions and other venues.
- Christmas Markets.

- Christmas and New Year Celebrations, Entertainments and Performances.
- Gift and Local Food Offerings (Special Hampers etc).

We look forward to making this holiday season in Clare a memorable and successful one.

## 6.0 Spotlight on the Website across the Visit Clare platforms



There are weekly promotional campaigns scheduled across the Visit Clare platforms (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn), directing traffic to the VisitClare.ie website.

Each Tuesday evening, a post issues on the Visit Clare promotional resources available, while each Thursday evening a post issues spotlighting the range and variety of tourism businesses within the County, featuring Accommodation, Attractions, Activities, Festivals & Events, and dining.

## 7.0 Visit Clare Promotion Opportunities

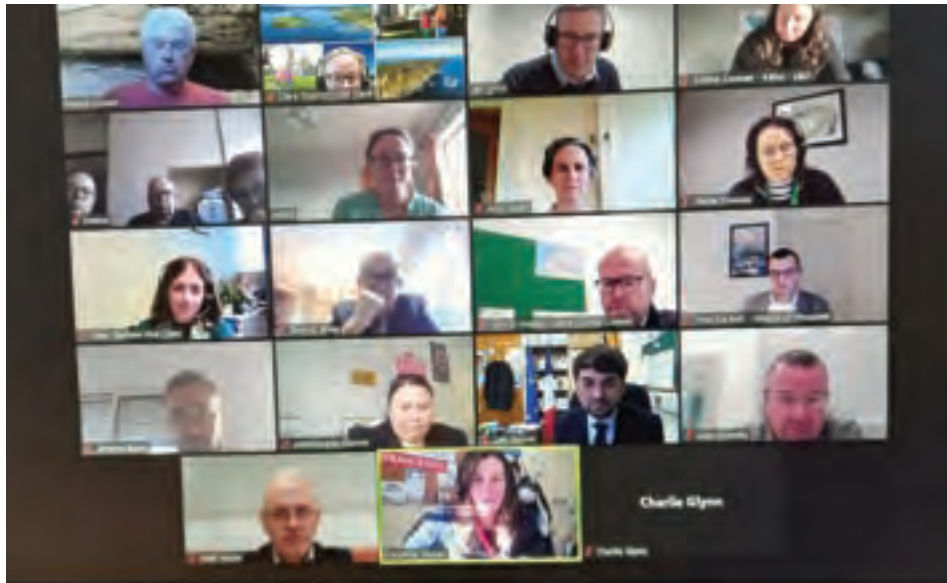


Visit Clare got the opportunity to complete the following business promotion during November:

**A trip to J.J. Corry, in Cooraclare,** to discuss their current tourism experience and offer guidance on their future plans.



## 8.0 Twinning: Reviving the Kilrush / Plouzané Committee



Following on from the successful visit of French Ambassador Guérend and Gaultier to Clare in October, a Cross-Directorate and Cross-Atlantic follow up meeting with Kilrush – Plouzané Twinning Committee was scheduled for 3pm, Tuesday, 7th November.

The key focus of this meeting was to re-ignite the relationship that has existed for many years, and to look for opportunities for co-operation:

- Kilrush Training Centre and possibility of a joint EU funding application with the European Institute for Marine Studies.
- Irish Whale & Dolphin Group (Shannon Dolphin Project) and possibility of a research partnership with the European Institute of Marine Studies.
- Participation in the Sea Tech Week 2024.

## WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT- KILRUSH LEA

### Low Cost Safety Schemes

Work continued on a Low-Cost Safety Scheme (LCSS) at Teermaclane (near the grounds of Fern Celtic FC).



We also commenced works on a Low Cost Safety Scheme at Inch Bridge, Mahonburg.



### Resurfacing Works

We carried our road resurfacing works on the L-41651.



Work commenced on road resurfacing works L-6053 in Kilkee. This road leads to a number of houses (including a small housing development) & 2 caravan parks. Work has been carried out to improve drainage, new footpaths have been installed and the road has been prepared for resurfacing (pavement overlay).





**Winter Drainage Works**

Drainage work continues at various location in the Municipal District.



**Footpath improvements**

Footpath improvement works continued, and we completed footpath improvements at Shannon Heights, Kilrush.



**Collapse of Sea Wall at Knock:**

A section of the sea wall at knock collapsed during Storm Debi. A section of the edge of the R-473 carriageway was compromised by the collapse. Works are underway to replace the sea wall (with an improved RC retaining wall) and repair the road.



**Retirement of Marian Naughton**

Finally - last but not least - the Kilrush LEA team bade farewell to one of our longest serving members - Marian Naughton. Marian retired from Clare County Council, having been our cleaner for more than 2 decades. Her colleagues held a collection for Marian and made a presentation to her to mark the occasion. We wish Marian well in her retirement.



**North Clare**

**Ennis Road DFS** - Installation of a new driver feedback sign to encourage drivers to slow down on the Ennis Road, Milltown Malbay.



**LCSS** - Before and after photos of a Low Cost Safety Scheme on the R-476 at Ballykeel South, Kilfenora.



# PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Town Centre First

The Town Centre First Network meeting took place in November in the Tullamore Court Hotel. We await the funding call in early 2024 for new Town Centre First initiatives.

## FORWARD PLANNING

### Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2024-2030

The Forward Planning team visited the Transition Year group in St. Patrick's Comprehensive School in Shannon on November 7th. The students undertook a practical workshop with the Forward Planning Team. The workshop allowed the students to develop and demonstrate their insights and perspectives in relation to the present and future of Shannon Town and Environs. The students' ideas and opinions on how Shannon should grow in the future were obtained through the workshop and this feedback will inform the preparation of the Draft Local Area Plan. The workshop involved desk-based mapping exercises with the class, as well as a visit to the nearby Shannon Town Wetlands, where the students met representatives of the Shannon Wetland Restoration Project, and discussed the value of this asset to the town.

Engagement has also progressed with the primary schools within Shannon. Each of the primary schools in Shannon has returned completed workbooks from their 5th and 6th Class groups which had been prepared and issued by the Forward Planning team. The workbooks focus on topics relevant to the LAP and will help to inform the preparation of the Draft LAP. A total of 200 workbooks were completed and returned.

Preparation of the Draft LAP by the Forward Planning Team is continuing during November and December. Specialist consultants have been appointed and are assisting with various aspects of the Plan, namely Strategic Environmental Assessment (Fehily Timoney & Co.), Appropriate Assessment (RPS), Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (JBA) and Transport Accessibility Assessment (AECOM). The combined input from those disciplines will inform the optimal Land Use Zoning and Development Objectives for Shannon Town and Environs, for inclusion in the draft LAP.



*Visit to Shannon Town Wetlands with St. Patrick's Comprehensive School students, as part of Shannon LAP workshop.*

### Clare County Heritage Plan 2023-2029

Clare County Council is preparing a new Heritage Plan for County Clare. The Pre-draft public consultation phase has concluded, and a draft heritage plan has been prepared. The Draft County Clare Heritage Plan 2024-2030 was placed on public display on 10th November 2023 and submissions and observations are being accepted up to and including the 1st December 2023.

Following this, all submissions and observations received will be considered in the making of the final Heritage Plan which is due to be completed in Q1 2024.



### Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

The RZLT aims to activate existing planning permissions, increase housing supply and promote the regeneration of vacant and idle lands in urban locations. The public consultation phase of the current process has concluded. The final RZLT Map for 2024 has been finalised and will be published on 1st December 2023. The Tax is due to come into effect on 1st February 2025. The first annual review of the RZLT map will commence on 1st January 2024.

### Public Realm Enhancements at Cappa Village, Kilrush

The Forward Planning team were successful in securing funding to deliver works at Cappa Village under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2022. The project arises from the Cappa Enhancement Strategy which identified key sites to sustainably develop the village while preserving its maritime character and scale. The funding provides for a new connection to be made from an existing recreational amenity to the adjoining coastal walk. This will further usage and increase connectivity with adjoining residential areas while opening up views to the Shannon Estuary. The public consultation process was finalised and targeted consultation meetings took place in November. The design team have initiated the next stage of the design process, which involved integrating the findings of the public consultation process into the project, and this will continue into December.

### Public realm works at Parliament Street, Ennistymon

The Forward Planning team were successful in securing funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2022 to undertake public realm enhancement works at Parliament Street, Ennistymon. This follows on from the Ennistymon Enhancement Plan, where Parliament Street was identified as an area with high potential to contribute positively to the streetscape of Ennistymon town centre. This plan-led project proposes to enhance the public realm offering at Parliament Street to make it a more pedestrian friendly, age-friendly, and accessible street. Helena McElmeel Architects have been appointed to lead a multi-disciplinary design team. The steering group undertook a site visit to Ennistymon with the design team in November. The consultation process will initiate at the end of the month with a consultation event in Ennistymon, and the process will continue into December.

### One Shannon Hub

The One Shannon Hub is the key transformational project to emerge from the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan. The One Shannon Hub is located in Shannon Town Centre, and combines a town hall, an adaptable performance and community space, library, and flexible co-working spaces. The new development will also feature public realm improvements to the town square adjacent to the site. BDP Architects and Tom McNamara & Partners will provide specialist consultancy services on the project. The concept design stage is underway, and meetings

were held with the project team and cross-directorate steering group in November. The public consultation process will initiate in early December with a public consultation event taking place at Shannon Town Centre on the 7th of December from 4pm – 7pm. A preliminary design for the One Shannon Hub will be on display and the project team will be available to meet the public to discuss the proposal and to get feedback. The public consultation process will enhance the vision for this important civic and cultural hub for Shannon.



*The proposed One Shannon Hub, Shannon Town Centre Masterplan.*

### Corofin Enhancement Strategy

Clare County Council and National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) worked in partnership to prepare an Enhancement strategy for the village of Corofin. The enhancement strategy is now finalised and contains public realm proposals in addition to proposing new uses for vacant and derelict buildings. The project reached a significant milestone in November with the submission of a Part 8 planning application for public realm works and the reuse of a vacant and derelict building. A signage plan has also been prepared and this forms part of the submission. In addition to this, representatives from Clare County Council and National Parks & Wildlife Services led Minister Malcolm Noonan on a visit to Corofin in late October. The project team gave Minister Noonan an overview of the Enhancement Plan and undertook a walkabout throughout the village to review the project sites and to give an overview of the visions contained in the plan. This visit was an important endorsement of the Corofin Enhancement Plan.



*Minister Malcolm Noonan accompanied on a visit to Corofin by Clare County Council and NPWS representatives.*





### Kilrush Maritime Training Centre

At a meeting with the Mayor of Halifax during the recent study visit to Canada with respect to the potential establishment of the Kilrush Maritime Training Centre, Cathaoirleach Joe Cooney and Councillor Ian Lynch also raised the absence of a direct flight from Shannon to Halifax as a key priority. Since the meeting, Westjet has announced the return of a seasonal transatlantic service to Halifax with non-stop connectivity to Dublin. A transatlantic flight historically had been in place and its re-establishment, albeit to Dublin at this point, is a welcome development. The return of this service will strengthen the region's critical connections to global hubs, tourism, and business economies. Canada and specifically Nova Scotia is an important market for Ireland, and direct flights play a key role in leveraging these markets. The potential for a direct flight from Halifax to Shannon will remain on our agenda in future discussions with the Mayor of Halifax.



*Joe Cooney, Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council at his recent meeting in Halifax with Mayor Mike Savage.*

### Smart Regions Enterprise Innovation Scheme

A new fund of €145 million was recently announced by Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Simon Coveney and Ministers Dara Calleary and Neale Richmond. The Smart Regions Enterprise Innovation Scheme is aimed at accelerating economic growth and sustainable job creation across all regions of the country.

The Scheme will be administered by Enterprise Ireland and is already open for applications. Co-funded by the Government and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the funding will capitalise on existing regional enterprise partnerships and complement priorities set out in the nine Regional Enterprise Plans. The Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 for the Mid-West outlines a specific Strategic Objective under Action 5.5 to establish a world class Marine, Renewable, Science and Climate Change Centre in Kilrush. The Clare MEZ project team have therefore commenced discussions with Enterprise Ireland to prepare an application in consultation

with its Regional Manager to close the remaining funding gap for Kilrush Maritime Training Centre.

The overall objective of this Scheme is to drive job creation and enterprise development in each region throughout Ireland. In addition, Smart Regions funding will support the micro and SME client base in strategic regional locations by addressing deficits in key infrastructure. Successful projects will be collaborative in nature, innovative, financially viable, sustainable and will support existing regional infrastructure.

The first call for the Smart Regions Enterprise Innovation Scheme is open for applications and closes on 31 March 2024. Clare MEZ will be preparing an application under Stream 1 which relates to Local Infrastructure Projects with varying investment levels, up to €10m covered by this Stream. The Project Team hope to have an application ready for submission in early Q1 of 2024.

### Kilrush - Plouzané Twinning Meeting

Following the successful visit by the French Ambassador to Ireland H.E. Vincent Guérend, on the 10th of October, and building on the introductions made by the Honorary Consul Dr Loic Guyon to the Mayor of Plouzané and the Twinning committee in France, Clare County Council attended what is hoped will be the first of many calls and discussions between the Kilrush and Plouzané Twinning Teams.

A Zoom meeting was facilitated on the 7th of November to engage both teams in the reestablishment of the twinning between Kilrush and Plouzané. The meeting was attended by representatives from the European Institute for Marine Studies, the organisers of Sea Tech Week in Brittany in October 2024, the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Kilrush Town Team, Clare County Council together with members of the Plouzané Twinning Committee. The meeting was a significant step forward in strengthening the twinning relationship between Kilrush and Plouzané. The meeting served to build connections and establish mutual benefits to groups on both sides of the Atlantic and with our nearest EU neighbour. It is anticipated that bi-lateral meetings will be held over the coming months between the various sub-groups involved in the call.

### Marine Spatial Planning Saoirse Wave Energy Project

The proposed Saoirse Wave Energy Project, is being jointly developed by ESB and Simply Blue Group. This will be a pioneering 5MW wave farm array, located approximately 4km off the County Clare coast, Northwest of Doughmore Bay as outlined below. This project is a wave energy demonstration project which aims to prove the viability of wave energy in Irish Seas. The project was pre-selected for €39.5 million funding by the European Commission's Innovation Fund programme in July 2023. The EU Innovation fund is targeted at supporting pilot projects for technology solutions that can reach considerable scale and make a significant contribution to decarbonization. The chosen technology for deployment is Corpower Ocean's Wave Energy Converter (WEC). The Corpower Video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qu20lw4-p8> and

the Corpower website is at [CorPower Ocean - Wave Power. To Power the Planet.](#)

The project commenced initial early-stage development in 2020 and has undertaken considerable engineering and environmental assessments alongside stakeholder engagement through the period to date. The project has the capacity to power 3,500 homes and will displace 10,868 tons of CO2 per year. The awarding of the Innovation Fund is the largest award to Ireland through Innovation funding and is recognized as the biggest award to a wave energy project to date. This project

represents a significant opportunity for Ireland to lead on an international stage in the deployment of wave energy at scale and for County Clare to once again be world class leaders in energy generation. Following a briefing to the Council meeting on the 13th of November the Forward Planning team of the Economic Directorate are meeting with the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government with a view to establishing a mechanism for the timely preparation of a West Coast of Clare DMAP - Designated Marine Area Plan to incorporate the potential for Wave Energy.

## CONSERVATION AND BUILT HERITAGE



### Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS)

The 2024 round of the Built Heritage Investment Scheme was announced on 2nd November 2023. The Scheme is designed to assist with the repair and conservation of structures that are protected under the Planning and Development Acts. In certain cases, the scheme also supports the conservation of structures within Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) where, in the opinion of the local authority, a need for works to enhance the character and appearance of an ACA has been demonstrated. The primary purpose of the scheme is to support privately owned properties in need of repair and conservation. Projects that incorporate a traditional skills training element may also be supported by this fund. Any such projects must be agreed in advance by the Department.

The grants scheme operates on a 50/50, grant/match funding basis. The minimum funding awarded for successful projects will be €2,500 (works value of €5,000) up to a maximum of €15,000 (works value €30,000). Clare County Council will put an assessment process in place to determine which applications are eligible to go forward for funding. Priority will be given to small-scale, labour-intensive projects. Projects should demonstrate a range of conservation skills and will not be concentrated in a particular geographical area or on a particular type of structure.

### Historic Structures Fund

The 2024 round of the Historic Structures Fund Scheme was announced on 2nd November 2023. The primary focus of the Fund will be on conservation and enhancement of historic structures and buildings for the broader benefit of communities and the public.

There are four streams of funding under the HSF:

1. **Stream 1** - will offer grants from €15,000 up to €50,000 and is aimed at essential repairs and smaller capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of heritage structures. The grant can cover up to 80% of eligible cost.
2. **Stream 2 - Historic Shopfronts** sub-stream – For essential repairs and small capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of historic shop facades, windows, signage and other associated details to safeguard them and keep them in use. The grant can cover up to 80% of eligible cost.
3. **Stream 3** - will offer a small number of grants from €50,000 up to €200,000 for larger enhancement, refurbishment or reuse projects involving heritage structures. A grant of over €200,000 may be awarded in exceptional circumstances



*Stain glass window restored under 2023 CMF scheme by Master-stained glass artists and designers.*

where a case is made by the applicant in relation to the significance of the project and the works proposed.

(Record of Monuments and Places). It must be noted that the CMF covers 100% of the cost and requires no match funding.

**4. Stream 4 - Vernacular Structures Stream** - The purpose of the stream is to support conservation repairs and small capital works to vernacular structures that are not listed in local authority Records of Protected Structures or otherwise legally protected.

There are three streams of funding under the CMF:

1. **Stream 1-** Grants up to €100,000 for essential repairs and capital works for the conservation of archaeological monuments.
2. **Stream 2-** Grants of up to €30,000 for the development of Conservation Management Plans/Reports and detailed Specification of Works aimed at identifying measures for conservation of archaeological monuments and improving public access.
3. **Stream 3-** Grants of up to €30,000 for the enhancement of access infrastructure and interpretation (including virtual/online) at archaeological monuments.

Further details are available at <https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/planning/news/2024-historic-structures-fund-and-built-heritage-investment-schemes.html>

Further details are available at <https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/planning/news/community-monuments-fund-2024.html>

The closing date for both the HSF and BHIS for Clare County Council applications has been set as **22/01/2024**.

The closing date for CMF applications is **31/01/2024**.

### Community Monuments Fund (CMF) 2024

The 2024 round of the Community Monuments Fund was announced on 16/11/2022. The Community Monuments Fund (CMF) is investing essential capital in our archaeological heritage to help owners and custodians of archaeological monuments safeguard them into the future for the benefit of communities and the public. The Fund is available for structures on the RMP

## HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

### ‘Winter Wildlife Talks’ series - Biodiversity

Clare County Council’s Biodiversity Officer, in conjunction with Clare Libraries organised ‘Winter Wildlife Talks’ series during November at Kilrush Public Library and De Valera Public Library Ennis. Four separate talks were given to children, adults, and community groups. John Lusby, Raptor Conservation Officer with BirdWatch Ireland, gave two talks in relation to the ecology of barn owls at Kilrush Public Library.

On the 23rd of November, Dr Kate McAney, Ireland Mammal Programme Manager of the Vincent Wildlife Trust, gave two talks at De Valera Public Library in Ennis, and spoke about the ecology of bats and projects the Vincent Wildlife Trust have been involved in particularly conservation efforts for the lesser horseshoe bat.





The talks have generated significant interest and interaction on social media and appeared on local print media (Clare Champion and Clare Echo)

The next talk will be given by Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer Barry O'Loughlin on the 5th of December at Sean le Mass Public Library Shannon. Barry will give a presentation on peatland restoration methods, funding sources and county wetland inventory surveys. He will outline the benefits of ecosystem services associated with rewetted peatlands and wetlands for biodiversity, climate, water management and local communities.

### School Visits – Biodiversity

Along with members of the forward planning team, the Biodiversity Officer visited transition year students at St. Patrick's Comprehensive School Shannon to carry out a workshop on sustainable town planning which incorporated biodiversity as part of student engagement under the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2024-2030. The workshop helped students identify biodiversity within Shannon Town and informed students learning to identify ecological constraints around town planning.



John Lusby of Birdwatch Ireland gives a talk on barn owls at Kilrush Public Library

In late November, Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer and Environmental Awareness Officer visited CBS Primary School Ennis. Teachers at C.B.S. Ennis organised a Green Schools Day of Action as part of their awareness-raising efforts, including a Biodiversity parade, performed their school Green Code, and carried out other biodiversity-related activities. CBS Ennis was one of the schools that recently participated in the 'Clare Schools Biodiversity' Initiative workshops organised and coordinated by Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer.

### Irish Garden Bird Survey

In late November, Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer and Employee Welfare Officer have teamed up to sign up council staff to participate in the Irish Garden Bird Survey. Council office headquarters on New Road and De Valera Library Ennis will be surveyed as part of this initiative.



Dr Kate McAney of the Vincent Wildlife Trust gives a talk on bats at De Valera Public Library Ennis



BirdWatch Ireland's Irish Garden Bird Survey starts in Early December

### National Invasive Species Management Plan – Limerick Stakeholder Workshop

Clare County Council’s Biodiversity Officer Barry O’Loughlin attended the National Invasive Species Management Plan stakeholder workshop in Limerick. The National Parks and Wildlife Service are working to develop a National Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Management Plan. This work is being supported by the National Biodiversity Data Centre, a steering committee of relevant state agencies and other sectors .

Following the two workshops, NPWS and NBDC will integrate feedback into a collaborative draft version of the national plan. Invasive alien species are recognised as one of five key drivers of biodiversity loss globally alongside climate change, habitat loss, overexploitation, and pollution. Recently, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) published a landmark assessment report on invasive alien species. Their findings identified that IAS have been a major factor in 60% of species extinctions and the direct cause of 16% of global animal and plant extinctions. They also found that species introductions have quadrupled every decade since the 1970’s and a further 36% increase is anticipated by 2050 if action is not taken to curb their introduction and spread. In Ireland great efforts are being made to address the threat of invasive alien species by a diverse range of stakeholder groups including practitioners, government departments, state agencies, local authorities, eNGO’s, businesses, volunteer networks, community groups, researchers and experts.



National Invasive Species Management Plan Stakeholder Workshop was held in Limerick.

### Shannon Dolphin Project

The Irish Whale and Dolphin Group have completed a range of communication work packages that was successfully funded by Clare County Council and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) through the Local Biodiversity Action fund (LBAF). The LBAF Shannon Dolphin Project was funded by three local authorities (Clare, Limerick and Kerry) and aims to share the knowledge gained demonstrating the estuaries (Shannon) uniqueness in supporting a unique dolphin population. The

Bottlenose Dolphin is a qualifying interest of the Lower River Shannon SAC. The project involved the publication of a Shannon Dolphin Book by the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group; outreach to schools (along the Shannon Estuary), production of a short film; exhibition of Images by John Coughlan; creation of Shannon Dolphin Story Boards; undertaking a Dolphin Bio Blitz; production of Shannon Dolphin podcasts; and an event held for interested stakeholders in Limerick ‘Shannon Dolphin Seminar’ and the compilation of a seminar report. In late September, Clare County Council’s Biodiversity Officer was in attendance at the book launch to support the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group. The event was launched by the Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan.



Clare County Council’s Biodiversity Officer at the Shannon Dolphin Book Launch (photo credit Irish Whale and Dolphin Group).



Celebrating 30 years of Shannon Dolphins Book Launch (photo credit Irish Whale and Dolphin Group)

### Quagga Mussel - LBAF Project Results (Invasive Species)

Clare County Council along with nine other local authorities funded research into the expansion of the quagga mussel within the Shannon system. The project was also funded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) through the Local Biodiversity Action fund (LBAF).

The project focuses on the quagga mussel (*Dreissena rostriformis bugensis*), a high impact invasive alien species discovered in the Shannon in 2021 and in 2022 was shown to be spreading and increasing rapidly. In 2023, Clare County Council provided



funding to researchers with University College Dublin (Invasive Ecology Laboratory) to carry out surveys along the Shannon system to monitor the expansion of mussel populations. Extremely high densities were recorded in Ballina, which are the highest densities detected in Ireland other than those attached to boats. In many sites along the length of the river, quagga mussel now constitutes more than 80% of the mussel density, suggesting zebra mussel may be entirely outcompeted in this system over the next few years.

Sites in Lough Derg surveyed in 2021 & 2022 were again surveyed in 2023. The results indicate that the quagga mussel is in its exponential growth phase (as it is in many parts of the Shannon) and has increased its distribution and density significantly over this short period of time. The 2023 results also demonstrated that Quagga mussels regularly attach to boats which can move substantial distances and are likely to play a significant role in the spread of the Quagga mussel. Biosecurity is seen as a vital step in preventing and reducing the spread of quagga mussel attaching to boats through checking and cleaning equipment.



Quagga mussel attached to boat propeller (photo credit University College Dublin)



Quagga mussel (photo credit University College Dublin)

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The table below shows the number of planning applications processed during the month of November 2023, together with the year to date figures. Fifty Two percent of planning applications received in November were received by electronic means.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS	November to (28/11)	Year to date 2023
No. of planning applications received	94	1105
No. of Planning Decisions made	73	876
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	12	43
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	34	219
No. of Section 5 applications	7	91
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications (in respect of Part V of the Planning & Dev Act 2000)	4	43
Submissions received regarding Compliance	14	269

## PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

The table below provides a summary of Enforcement activity for November, 2023

New complaints received	9
New files opened	4
Files closed	4
Warning Letters issued	8
Enforcement Notice issued	3
Legal	2

## LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

- **The Trading Online Voucher Scheme**, which provides grant support to small businesses to develop an ecommerce website. In November, three further applications were approved bring the year total to thirty-eight.
- **Mentoring:** LEO Clare has continued with a strong requirement for all our Mentoring Options including mentoring





L to R: Cathaoirleach Cllr Joe Cooney, Chantel Keane, Danielle Kenneally and Aisling Kenneally, Wix and Wax Ireland, and Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council.

in Starting a Business, Finance, Digital Marketing, Export Development. In November 17 mentoring applications have been assigned.

- **Training:** LEO Clare held ten training courses and events over the month of November which saw almost 180 participants register. These included training digital marketing, trading online voucher info webinar and start your own business workshop.

### Clare Business Excellence Awards

Local Enterprise Office Clare sponsored an award for the Best Micro Business at the Clare Business Excellence Awards on November 16th at Inn at Dromoland. The prize, presented by Padraic McElwee, went to LEO Clare Client, Wix and Wax, who

also won Business of the year 2023 which was presented by Cathaoirleach Joe Cooney and Chief Executive of Clare County Council Pat Dowling. Many other LEO Clare clients also came away with winning prizes in other categories.

### Productivity Voucher Information Sessions

Local Enterprise Office Clare held two separate information events during November which provided detailed information to businesses about Green and Digital Supports.

Our Green for Business Event was held in Hotel Doolin while our Digital for Business Event was held online. Both supports can provide help and assistance through an external consultant. In total 25 businesses attended the events.

## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

### Property Transactions and Conveyancing

The Table below shows the number of property transactions completed by Property Management Unit up to 23rd November, together with the totals for 2023 to date and the full year 2022.

As the property market in the County is quite active, we continue to assist many solicitors acting for their clients on issues associated with title, boundaries, old leasehold folios etc.

Transaction type	November 2023	Year to date 2023	Full year 2022
Lease / Sub Lease of Property / Building	1	7	4
Licence to use property / building	0	7	13

Grazing Agreement for Lands	0	17	22
Deed of Transfer signed	1	14	19
Contract for Sale / acquisition signed	0	1	2
Deed of Right of Way / Wayleave signed	1	2	6
Deed of Rectification / Variation signed	1	4	10
Allotment Agreements signed	0	39	39

### Lands At Ballaghafadda, Kildysart Road, Ennis

An advertisement was placed in November seeking expressions of interest for these lands with a focus on sports and recreational uses. The Council's aim in respect of the property is to facilitate development of the following (a) additional sports and

recreational activities and facilities in the Ennis / Clarecastle area and (b) a project which adds value to the recreational and sporting use of the site (or part of the site) while allowing space for amenity projects to be also developed on the site. The closing date for same is 8th December.

### Casual Trading

As we come to the end of the year, the licences to be issued between now and year end will be for Kiltrush Horse Fairs on various dates and some Christmas related events. Two licences were issued in November and one application was refused.

## DERELICT SITES

The Derelict sites team are currently dealing with 255 properties that are considered derelict, an increase of 3 properties since last month. The activity in recent years has substantially increased with 69 derelict properties identified and reported on in 2022 and to date in 2023, we have opened files on 55 new properties. Initial engagement with owners or their representatives is key to resolution of the issues of dereliction and to understand the various reasons why the properties are in a derelict stage. The level of activity in the property market for vacant and derelict properties has increased and of the properties we have identified as derelict, a number of them have been brought to the market and some are at 'sale agreed' stage. We continue the engagement with the new owners of those properties to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990.

We are also seeing the outcome of sales agreed in recent months, with planning applications for refurbishment increasing and works commencing on individual properties. We are advising property owners of the vacant property refurbishment grant, where they are suitable for residential use. The amalgamation of the Vacant Homes Team and the Derelict Sites Team earlier in 2023 is accruing benefits. With time and effort, working with owners, financial institutions and other departments, there are definitely options for positive re-development and revitalisation of many such derelict sites.

The table below provides a snapshot of the activity in November and the year 2023 to date, together with comparative figures for the full year 2022.

Derelict Sites	October 2023	Year to date 2023	Full Year 2022
No. of new files opened	4	55	69
No. of Section 8(2) Notices issued - Intention to enter site on Derelict Sites Register	4	36	33

No. of Section 8(7) Notices issued - Entry of site onto Derelict Sites Register	3	23	22
No. of Section 11 Notices issued - Measures required to render the site non-derelict	0	0	0
Notice of Valuation of Property for Derelict Sites Levy	1	4	0
No. of files closed / property removed from Derelict Sites Register	0	10	21
No. of Notices served to Compulsorily Purchase derelict sites (CPO) (see note below)	0	10	6
No of Vesting Orders signed	0	9	4

### Compulsory Acquisition of Derelict Sites (CPO)

The Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government has launched a CPO activation programme for local authorities and has set targets for CPOs for each local authority. We commenced this programme in 2022 and the Table below sets out the status of those CPO's commenced in 2022 and 2023 to date.

Year	No of CPOs commenced	Current Status
<b>2022</b>	<b>6</b>	3 - completed and transferred to Housing for refurbishment / re-development
		1 - completed recently and is being put up for sale
		1 - works have commenced and CPO parked for now
<b>2023</b>	<b>12</b>	8 - At Vesting Stage and lodged in PRA
		2 – Early Stage of CPO process
		1 - Objection received and will be referred to An Bord Pleanála
		1 - Works have commenced and CPO parked for now



In addition, the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund will provide funding for CPO's on a rolling basis in the town of Ennis with the objective being that these properties would then be sold on the open market. A particular emphasis will be on properties that have potential for residential use.

**Derelict Site Levy**

Determination of valuations on the derelict sites which are on the Derelict Sites Register has commenced and notices have issued to four property owners. One of these has appealed the valuation to the Valuation Tribunal and a decision is awaited. The levy is an annual levy while the property remains on the Derelict Sites Register and amounts to 7% of the value of the property, on an annual basis. This will be further progressed in 2024.

**Survey of Vacant and Derelict Properties**

The Team is currently carrying out surveys of vacant and derelict properties in towns and villages around the County. Based on the Geo-directory data, the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government has asked the Council to validate the data that they hold. To date almost 800 properties have been surveyed, with the data being uploaded digitally and there are a number of towns and villages yet to be done. The data collected will be the basis for future policy direction by the Department and will guide the work programme of the Derelict Sites Team and the Vacant Homes Team.

applications being received for the Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant in recent weeks. The detail on the number of applications (as at 23rd November) is shown in the Table below.

This measure will boost the supply of rental properties and properties for permanent residence and will deliver on a key priority of 'Housing for All' National Policy and the Vacant Homes Action Plan, the key objective of which is to reduce vacancy and dereliction in our cities, towns, villages and rural countryside and provide more housing options in the process.

No. of Applications Submitted	Overall %	
Year 2022	33	12%
Year 2023	235	88%
<b>Total no. of Grant Applications</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Proposed use of Grant aided property</b>		
Private Residence	199	74%
Rental Property	69	26%
<b>Decisions Made</b>		
Approved	128	48%
Rejected	12	4%
Withdrawn	26	10%
Grant Paid Out	1	0%
Grant approval Withdrawn	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>Applications in progress</b>		
In Progress	18	
Further Information Requested	62	
Awaiting Technical Inspection	18	
Awaiting 2nd Technical Inspection	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>37%</b>

VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANT - FOR DERELICT AND VACANT PROPERTIES

We have noted an increase in the number of queries and

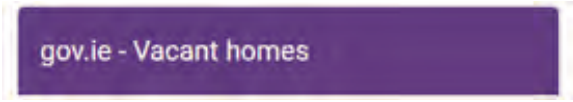


**Key items to note include:**

- The processing time for applications has reduced with additional resourcing to the Team. Technical inspections are being undertaken on a weekly basis.
- The percentage of the total applications to be made available for rental remains reasonably constant at 25% / 26%.
- Since May 2023, the time period for completion of works is 13 months from the date of grant approval and this may be challenging for applicants to achieve.
- The revised maximum grant amounts introduced in May 2023 are being applied to all existing approved applications.
- We have processed our first payment under the Grant, including the signing of the Deed of Charge. Two further payments are being processed at present following completion of works.
- The applications in rural areas account for 57% of all applications and those in towns and villages account for 43%. This has remained fairly consistent since the grant was introduced.

Full details of the scheme and eligibility criteria are published on the Council’s website. The contact email address for further information and guidance on the grants scheme is [vacant-homes@clarecoco.ie](mailto:vacant-homes@clarecoco.ie). We continue to meet individual owners to guide them through the process and to ensure they have all the documentation when submitting their application.

Based on the applications received and the revised grant levels, there is a potential investment of €6 to €7 million by Government in the refurbishment of vacant and derelict properties in County Clare to be returned to economic use as permanent homes.



## ENNIS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

### Christmas Lights switched on in Ennis

The Christmas lights were officially switched on in Ennis on Thursday November 23rd, in Abbey Street carpark. Ennis group ‘Socks in the Frying Pan’ kicked off the annual family friendly event at 5pm, followed by a festive performance from local group Pantaloons. The Mayor, Cllr. Pat Daly and his special guests, Santa and recently crowned all star Clare hurler Shane O’Donnell arrived on an open top vintage bus. Colum McGrath was MC for the event and got all on stage to participate in seasonal friendly banter. The lights were officially switched on in Ennis and the Mayor took the opportunity to encourage all present to ‘Look for local’ this Christmas.



### Tommy Scott retires

Tommy Scott, Senior Executive Technician retired from Ennis MD at the end of October. Tommy was instrumental in progressing projects that enhanced Ennis Town and surrounding area, including the playgrounds and MUGA unit in Tim Smyth Park and John O'Sullivan Amenity Park (in Ennis UDC-TC days). He embraced projects that involved the natural and built heritage including the maintenance of the mature trees around the town, the refurbishment of the O'Connell Monument. He was also responsible for the management of festive lighting around the town each Christmas. All his colleagues in Ennis MD wish him a long and happy retirement.



### Twinning Anniversary

A delegation from Ennis recently travelled to Germany to celebrate 10 years of Twinning between Ennis and Langenfeld. The celebrations also coincided with the 75th anniversary of the founding of the City of Langenfeld. Pictured are the delegation who travelled to the celebrations - Cllr Mary Howard, Paddy Tiernan, Bernard Dilger and Dara GylInn.



### Community Recognition Fund

#### People's Park Clarecastle

Ennis MD recently completed the install of a new Outdoor Gym facility within the People's Park in Clarecastle. Gym equipment has been carefully selected following extensive consultation with many community groups, both young and old, within Clarecastle. This facility has proven to be a great success and is widely welcomed by the local community.



### Ennis Municipal District Works

#### Clon Road Business Park New Footpath

Ennis MD have commenced work on a new footpath to provide safe pedestrian access to Clon Road Business Park. This project was funded by Elected Members using GMA funds. The scheme also involves a new pedestrian crossing at the junction of Clon Road, new public lighting and the relocation of an existing boundary wall.





### Parnell St. Laneways & Bow-ways

Specialist cleaning was carried out on Parnell St. and Laneways & Bow-ways. This was undertaken out of business hours to minimise disruption to local businesses.



### De Valera Park and Monument

A deep clean including landscaping and graffiti removal of the De Valera Park and Monument was undertaken in November. Works included strimming, edging of kerbing, graffiti removal, dead tree and shrub removal and paving/surface deep clean.



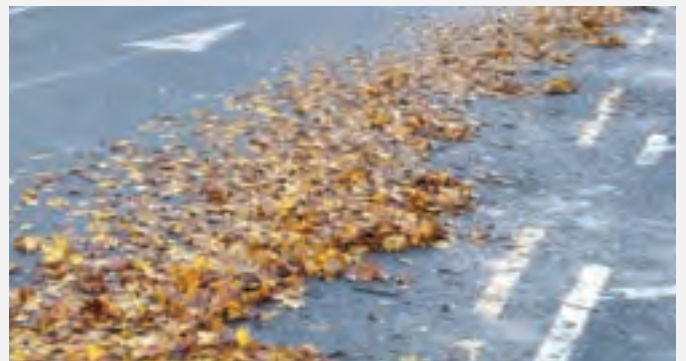
### Drumbiggle Rd Traffic Lights

Reinstatement/repair works were undertaken by Ennis MD crews on traffic lights on Drumbiggle road this month. Following a vehicle traffic collision, the crews made the area safe, repaired and reinstated the traffic lights and associated infrastructure.



### Leaf Management

Leaf management has been an important part of Ennis MD's work output in recent weeks. Works include collection and disposal of leaves on footpaths/roadways, gully cleaning and other areas of surface water management.





## Ennis 2040 Economic & Spatial Strategy Implementation

### Ennis Public Realm Update

The first phase of the works involving the installation of a new foul sewer at Upper O'Connell Street has been completed on schedule and the section has now been re-opened to facilitate normal Christmas trading activity. Works are intended to recommence on site on January 8th 2024.

### Ennis Transport Plan Update

Systra Ltd have been appointed to undertake the Area Based Transport Assessment (which will form part of the upcoming Local Area Plan for Ennis). A Baseline Assessment of the Plan and Surrounding Areas is being undertaken with **the first round of public consultation currently underway**. Ennis Municipal District are seeking feedback on how local residents, students, workers and visitors currently travel to and around Ennis, to identify what would make travel easier for people including journeys made by foot, bike, public transport and by car. This will help us understand the challenges and opportunities facing users of the transport network in Ennis and will inform the development of the Ennis Local Transport Plan. The closing date for submissions is the 7th December 2023.

### Tulla Road Cycle scheme

Detailed design is underway on this project, this is being undertaken by AECOM Consulting Engineers.

### Limerick Road (incl. St. Flannan's Drive) Cycle scheme

Contract signing took place on the 7th November with Tobins as the Consulting Engineers. Concept design and route option selection is progressing. Traffic Count Surveys are being undertaken at a number of key junctions along the proposed route. This data will help inform the correct design parameters to be followed for the scheme.

### Public Bus Service Update

Ennis MD continue to liaise with the National Transport

Authority to deliver this important infrastructural project which is projected to commence in Q1 2025.

### Francis Street

Presentation of proposed scheme to Council Members on 28th November 2023. An application for 39 affordable homes is being prepared in conjunction with the Housing Department for submission to the Department.

### Abbey Street

The concept design is being finalized with public consultation expected during Q1 2024.

### Harvey's Quay

A concept design for this location is being finalized with public consultation to follow.

### Post Office Field Masterplan

This is a key amenity and biodiverse area located in the centre of Ennis Town. Draft Master Plan completed to be brought forward for stakeholder consultation.

### Urbact IV Action Planning Networks 2023-2025

The Lead Partner and Lead Expert from the project 'Econnecting - greener & closer communities', visited Ennis on November 1st. Various sections of the Council presented on current and future plans in terms of mobility projects in Ennis. Representatives from TFI and the NTA public bus service presented also.

