



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Deireadh Fómhair / October
2023



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FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

CORPORATE SERVICES

Freedom of Information and Data Protection
2020-2023 - statistics to 26th September 2023

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Freedom of Information				
Freedom of Information Requests	152	176	119	120
Internal Review Applications	6	13	8	3
Appeals to Information Commissioner	1	4	2	4
Data Access Requests				
Subject Access Request	5	6	10	9
Subject Access Request	0	1	1	2
Third Party Requests e.g. Gardai	20	27	27	21



Make Way Day 2023

Make Way Day, the campaign that brings the disability and wider community together to consider the needs of people with disabilities in the public spaces we all share, returned to County Clare this year on Friday, 22nd September. Clare County Council was delighted to work with the Disability Federation of Ireland and local advocates in supporting Make Way Day in County Clare again this year.

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 September included:

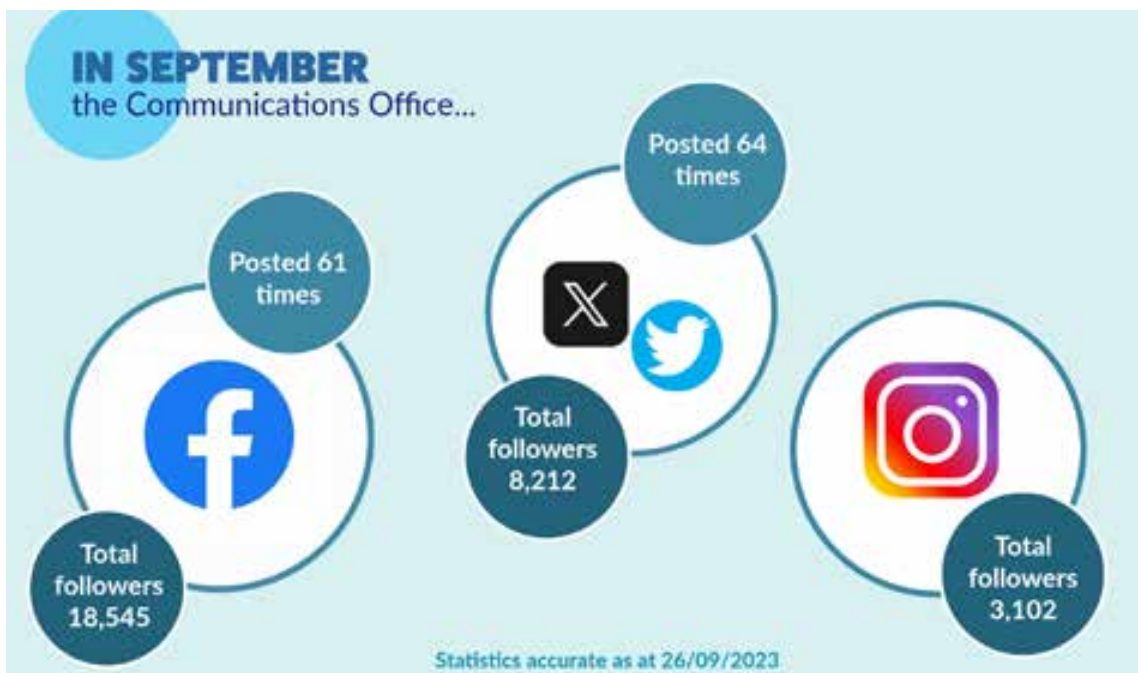
- Works Set To Commence On €11.5m Ennis Public Realm Regeneration Project
- Green Light for Ennis Local Transport Plan
- Everyone encouraged to Check the Register as Clare County Council promotes update campaign
- New research and genealogy resources added to Clare Local Studies Centre.

Check the Register Media Campaign

The Franchise Section in Corporate Services ran a media campaign in September. The campaign highlights the changes to the electoral register and urges the public to check their details on www.checktheregister.ie to confirm or update their details – including by adding Date of Birth, PPSN and Eircode. The campaign has been publicised across a wide range of platforms, including local newspapers, local radio, and social media to ensure as wide an audience as possible is reached.

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.



Clare Pride 2023

The Pride flag was flying at Áras Contae an Chláir for Clare Pride 2023, which took place from 18th-24th September, 2023. Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney, wished the organisers of Clare Pride every success with this year's festival, saying: "The Pride flag will be flying at Áras Contae an Chláir throughout the week as a show of support. Clare County Council is committed to inclusivity and diversity in line with our equality and human rights public sector duty." Cllr Cooney encouraged everyone in Clare to show their support for Clare Pride and check out the programme of events and activities.



Newmarket-on-Fergus 19th Hole Festival

The Chief Executive received the following message of thanks and appreciation on 7th September, 2023, from Margaret Mac Mahon, Secretary, Newmarket-on-Fergus Community Forum.

A Chara

Newmarket on Fergus Community Forum would like to express its gratitude to you as Chief Executive and Clare County Council for the hugely successful and positive community event "The 19 the Hole Festival". We particularly wish to convey our sincere thanks and appreciation, to Anne Griffin SEO, Tom Mellett CEE and the Shannon Municipal District team for the effort they invested in ensuring this event was a such a success.

Feedback from the community has been very positive. People commented that Newmarket on Fergus has seldom looked so well and that the festival itself really enhanced a sense

of community in our town. Active community engagement, attention to detail and a very wellplanned and inclusive programme contributed to a family friendly weekend that was enjoyed by all the community. The commitment of Anne, Tom and the team was evident as they worked throughout the weekend with organisers, residents, and the community. We are deeply appreciative of their contribution to our town.

While we continue to work closely with Clare County Council on the future development of Newmarket on Fergus, we felt that it was very important, on this occasion, to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Clare County Council to our community and our town.

Le gach dea mhein

Margaret Mac Mahon

Secretary

Newmarket-on-Fergus Community Forum

PROCUREMENT

The following Clare County Council tender competitions were published on eTenders in the period from 24th August to 25th September 2023 inclusive:

Tender Name	RFT ID	Response deadline
Repair, Retrofit, Refurbishment and Remodelling of Colaiste Eoghain Ui Chomhraidhe (Carrigaholt Irish College) to accommodate Displaced Persons	2394778	28/09/2023 16:00
Supply and Installation of Timber Post and Rail Fence at Ennis, Co. Clare	2349874	15/09/2023 16:00
Demountable Mini Salt Spreader minimum capacity 1200 liters salt and option of 450 liters Brine	2344797	22/09/2023 16:00
Clare County Council wish to procure the services of a suitably qualified Consultant team to prepare a management plan for the operation and maintenance of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk	2324252	29/09/2023 17:00
Single Supplier Framework 3500KG HVO/Diesel Mini Sweeper with optional weeding and cleaning attachments	2321783	19/09/2023 16:00
Tender for the Renovation Works at 38 St. Patricks Terrace, Kilrush, Co. Clare	2317035	13/09/2023 16:00

HUMAN RESOURCES

Recruitment Competitions September

Competitions Advertised

Open

Canteen Manager
Senior Executive Technician
Assistant Planner
General Operative Panel 2023

Confined

Expression of Interest - Various Salting Routes
(Winter Maintenance)
Expression of Interest - Winter Maintenance
Truck-Drivers (Salting) Relief Panel

Eligibility Exercises & Desktop Shortlisting

Temporary Executive Engineer
Integration Support Coordinator
Integration Support Worker
Library Facilities Attendant

Interviews

Assistant Staff Officer
Executive Planner
Creative Communities Engagement Officer
Temporary Technician Grade I (Civil, Arch & Building)
Assistant Arts Officer
Civil Defence Officer
Age Friendly Development Officer

ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAMMES / WEBINARS / INFORMATION SESSIONS

SEPTEMBER

AIE Training
Climate Action Training
CSCS Locating Underground Services
CSCS Mini Digger
CSCS Site Dumper Assessment
Junior Achievement Online Workshops

Essential Skillz on-line Courses

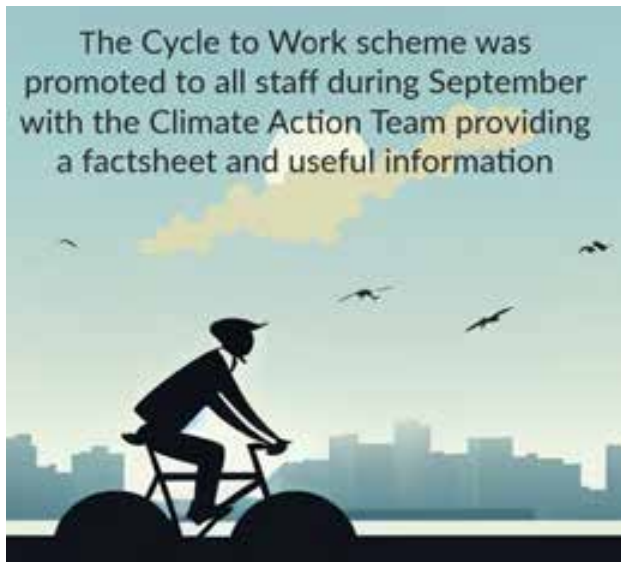
Health & Safety Induction
Slips Trips & Falls

Health & Safety

First Aid Refresher - 2 day course
Serious Incidents Simulated Exercise

Employee Wellbeing

The Cycle to Work scheme was promoted to all staff during September with the Climate Action Team providing a factsheet and useful information



A tender process has concluded for the appointment of professional counselling services to staff which are free and confidential. As an additional support to staff, the Workplace Buddy Programme has also been advised to staff.

Unions

The Human Resources Department engages with Unions on various matters.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

CLÁR Projects

Doonbeg Sensory Garden

Funding of over €40,000 was awarded to Doonbeg Tidy Towns under the CLÁR 2022 Programme to create a Sensory Garden at the Fairgreen in Doonbeg. Match funding in the form of GMA monies was also provided by Cllr Cillian Murphy. The project aimed to transform a central village space into a place that engages people of all ages in a sensory exploration of nature, fostering a deeper connection to the environment and providing a peaceful retreat from daily life.

The management and implementation of the project were handled by Doonbeg Tidy Towns, showcasing their commitment to enhancing the community. The project team worked diligently to ensure that the garden's development aligns with the community's goals and maintains open access for everyone.

The revitalisation of the Fair Green as a Sensory Garden will ensure that the space functions as a gathering place for people of all ages, fostering a sense of community and appreciation for nature.



Doonbeg Sensory Garden.

Crusheen MUGA

Work has been completed on a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) facility in Crusheen. The works have been partially enabled by funding of €50,000 under the CLÁR 2022 Grant Scheme.

Previously, the village relied solely on a local GAA pitch for sports activities, accommodating 25 teams across all age groups. There was a significant lack of all-weather training areas or MUGAs for sports clubs, schoolchildren, and the community.

To address these challenges, a community group formulated a Masterplan for a Community Sports Arena and Community Hub. Part of this plan was the development of a MUGA. The project received a CLÁR funding allocation of €50,000, which facilitated crucial components, including ground works, fencing, lighting, and netting.

The completion of the MUGA will be of enormous benefit to the community, providing a versatile, all-weather sports facility.

It relieves the burden on the existing GAA pitch and promotes physical activity, community engagement, and cohesion in Crusheen. This successful project serves as an excellent example of community-led initiatives supported by CLÁR funding.



Crusheen MUGA.

Kilfenora National School MUGA

Kilfenora National School have completed works on a Multi-Use Games Area in the school yard. The works were funded with a €50,000 grant under CLÁR 2022. The school grounds are one of the few central community spaces in the village. The completed works ensures the safety of school children during playtime and offers a secure environment for their activities. In addition, the facility is not limited to school hours, but it is now accessible to the wider community, including residents and visitors. This fosters a sense of community and encourages physical activity among all age groups.

This initiative exemplifies the positive impact that well-targeted grants can have on enhancing the quality of life in rural areas like Kilfenora.



Kilfenora MUGA.

Scariff Rugby Club Car Park Surfacing

Scariff Rugby Club have carried out works on the parking facilities at the Club's grounds with the aid of a CLÁR Grant of just over €35,000. The condition of the car park had become dangerous, affecting the safety of users, and detracting from the overall facility's appearance. The recent opening of an Indoor Astro

Turf facility had also resulted in increased traffic, exacerbating these issues. The CLÁR Grant has enabled the club to carry out the necessary improvement works including resurfacing with a more durable surface along with drainage works to address the surface water flow issues. The works have enhanced the overall safety, accessibility, and appearance of the Rugby Club's parking facilities and will ensure that it remains a valuable resource for the community.



Scariff Rugby Club.

The official judging for the IPB Pride of Place Awards 2023



The official judging for the IPB Pride of Place Awards took place on 29th and 30th August, 2023. Rural Development Directory nominated three exceptional projects for this year's awards.

The judging process extended over two days, during which the esteemed judges visited the nominated projects. On Tuesday, they explored Tourism East Clare in the morning, followed by a visit to Ennis Men's Shed in the afternoon. The following day, they toured Common Knowledge, the base for the "Rekindle Festival of Lost Skills" initiative.

The judges commended the presenting groups for their outstanding presentations. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive.

The nominated projects represented the heart and soul of Clare, showcasing the commitment of its residents to enhancing their communities and creating sustainable, vibrant places for everyone to enjoy.

The following projects were selected under the IPB Pride of Place awards categories.

Community Tourism Initiative – Tourism East Clare

Located in the picturesque heart of Ireland, East Clare offers a wide array of natural attractions, making it an irresistible destination for tourists. The voluntary group, Tourism East Clare, aimed to promote sustainable tourism development in the region by nurturing collaborations among local providers and offering distinctive tourism products and packages. Through their endeavours, they ensured an authentic and memorable experience for visitors.





Community Wellbeing Category – Ennis Men’s Shed

Ennis Men’s Shed took a proactive stance in addressing mental health concerns by establishing a state-of-the-art community facility. With determination and ingenuity, the group fashioned a space that encouraged social interaction, holistic activities, and skills enhancement in a jovial and inclusive atmosphere. This initiative not only enhanced mental wellbeing but also fortified community bonds.

Community Age Friendly Initiative – Common Knowledge “Rekindle Festival of Lost Skills”

Common Knowledge is dedicated to empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills essential for a gratifying and sustainable

lifestyle. Their "Rekindle Festival of Lost Skills" an intergenerational celebration that breathed new life into traditional skills for a more sustainable future. From traditional craft displays to workshops on weaving and spinning, the festival stood as a tribute to the wisdom of preceding generations.

The IPB Pride of Place Award Ceremony for 2023 is scheduled to take place on Friday, 10th November, at the Armagh City Hotel. This event will be hosted by Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council in collaboration with Co-operation Ireland. Additionally, the ceremony will be livestreamed through the Pride of Place website. We would like to wish all our nominated groups great success and an enjoyable awards evening.

RE: Section 177(AE) Application for Approval from An Bord Pleanála for proposed extension to Drumcliff Burial Ground along with improvement works to Section E

An application has been submitted by Clare County Council to An Bord Pleanála for approval under Section 177(AE) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended). The application seeks approval:

1. To carry out proposed improvement works to St Brigid’s Section E.
2. To extend the existing Burial Ground at Drumcliff.

The proposed development is designed to address the growing need for burial space and aims to enhance the existing Section E of the burial ground while creating a tranquil and reflective environment. Key components of the proposed development include:

- **Burial Ground Extension:** The plan includes an addition of 350 double plots, including provision for ash plots, to meet the increasing demand for burial space.
- **Access Road Improvements:** The project entails improvements to access roads, including the addition of lay-bys, a turning circle, and traffic calming measures to ensure safe and efficient access to the expanded burial ground.
- **Parking, Drainage & Footpaths:** Adequate parking facilities, drainage systems, and footpaths will be constructed to improve the overall accessibility and functionality of the burial ground.
- **Planting and Landscaping:** The design incorporates

thoughtful landscaping and the creation of a Reflectance Garden, enhancing the sense of tranquillity and providing space for reflection. Additionally, a future Columbarium Wall will be located within Section E.

- **Associated Site Works:** Various site works will be undertaken to support the proposed development, ensuring its integration with the existing burial ground.

The need for this development is underscored by the nearing full capacity of Section E within the existing Burial Ground. Addressing this issue is crucial to meet the demand for burial space in the County and ensure that the community’s needs are adequately served.

A copy of the application is available for viewing at the planning offices of Clare County Council and also the office of An Bord Pleanála. In addition, the application can be viewed online at <https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/drumcliffbgextension>.

Submission can be made in writing to An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin, D01 V902 before 8th November 2023 at 5:30pm.

Community, Biodiversity and Climate Knowledge Share Day



Clare County Council's Rural Development Directorate has scheduled a series of walk-in clinics to support Community Groups/Organisations in project development and funding opportunities in a number of key areas: Community, Climate Action, Biodiversity and Heritage.

We would encourage community groups and organisations who require guidance and support around the development of their ideas or projects in their local area to come along to one of these sessions to meet our Rural & Community Development Officers:

- Grainne McCormack (Shannon)
- Niamh Wiley (Ennis & Ennistymon)
- Darren Carroll (Scariff & Tulla)
- Seamus Murríhy (Kilrush)

who will be joined by Kelly Slattery, Community Climate Action Officer, Barry O'Loughlin, Biodiversity Officer, and Dr John Treacy, Heritage Officer, at each venue.

The following funding schemes are set to open for calls for applications from Community Groups/organisations in the coming months:

- Community Climate Action Programme
- Clare Local Area Grants Scheme (CLAGS) 2024
- Heritage Council funding.

If you are unable to attend on the scheduled dates below and have a funding query please email the Rural & Community Development Officers at rcdo@clarecoco.ie

Date	Venue	Time
Monday, 16th October	Shannon: Treacy's Oakwood Arms Hotel	10am - 1pm
	Ennis: Buttermarket Civic Room, Ennis	2pm - 5pm
Wednesday, 18th October	Scariff: Scariff Area Office	10am - 1pm
	Tulla: Cnoc Na Goaithe	2pm - 5pm
Thursday, 19th October	Kilrush: Kilrush Town Hall	10am - 1pm
	Ennistymon: Ennistymon Digital Hub	2pm - 5pm

Healthy Clare



Healthy Clare hosted a 'Health & Wellbeing' stand at this year's **Clare Pride Family Day event in glór** on Saturday, 23rd September, 2023.

Clare's Farmers Weaving Stories Together Project launched in Sixmilebridge on Monday, 18th September, 2023. This is the first of 5 'Creativity for Wellbeing' events with the farming community across the County. The 5 mart areas targeted by this initiative are Sixmilebridge, Ennis, Kilfenora, Kilrush and Scariff. Farmers from each of these locations are working together to create a graphic of their past memories, present experiences and future hopes for farming in their communities. Their words are being visually captured by a graphic harvester and will be presented back to participants and the farming community at an event in glór in November. This is a collaborative project by Clare County Council's Healthy Clare, Age Friendly Clare in partnership with the HSE Connecting for Life programme, Cuimhneamh an Chláir (Clare Memories) and the IFA Clare and is funded by Creative Ireland Clare.

For more information on this initiative please visit:

<https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/farmers-weaving-stories-together>



Earlier this year Clare County Council was awarded Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Champions status. As part of **SDG Week 2023**, Greener Clare, Healthy Clare and Clare Libraries hosted an informational stand in the Áras. Other SDG events are happening throughout the week in Clare Libraries funded by Creative Ireland Clare.

For more information on this initiative please visit: <https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/clare-sdgs>

CLARE'S FARMERS WEAVING STORIES TOGETHER



Clare's Farmers 'Weaving Stories Together' project is targeting 5 Mart areas across County Clare (Ennis, Kilfenora, Kilrush, Scariff and Sixmilebridge), and working with the farmers in those areas to graphically capture Past, Present and Future farming from our Farmers perspective.

THE PROJECT INVOLVES

- Cuimhneamh an Chláir (Clare Memories) facilitated sessions with the local farming community who will be discussing their experiences and views of past, present, and future farming in their area. This information will be creatively captured by a graphic harvester and collated into a co-created Clare's Farmers 'Weaving Stories Together' booklet (in October). This booklet will be launched in Glór on Monday, 13th November
- Refreshments included at each event

Target Mart Area	Date	Time
Sixmilebridge - Parish Hall	Monday, 18th September	6 - 8pm
Ennis - Watermarket, Drumdúgla	Monday, 25th September	6 - 8pm
Kilfenora - Community Hall	Tuesday, 10th October	6 - 8pm
Kilrush - Community Centre	Thursday, 12th October	6 - 8pm
Scariff - GAA Hall	Monday, 19th October	6 - 8pm
glór (Bunkie Leamh)	Monday, 13th November	11-8pm

If you're a farmer near any of these events and would like to participate, please contact Dawn on 065 884 4276 or authentic@clarecoco.ie

For more information and to register online please visit <https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/farmers-weaving-stories-together>



Sponsored by Clare County Council's Healthy Clare, Age Friendly Clare and Creative Ireland Clare programmes





Healthy Clare and the Shannon Rural & Community Development Officer visited **Shannon Allotments** in early August with Clare Garden Festival as part of their upcoming Urban Farming video production where they are promoting existing urban growing opportunities across the county. This video will be launched later this year.

For more information on this initiative please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/claregardenfestival>



Clare County Council's Healthy Clare team was awarded additional funding from the Department of Health to continue to support their successful **Local Authority Free Period Products Initiative**. This funding will support the expansion of the initiative to include Free Vending period product dispensers for interested participating sites.

For more information on this initiative please visit: https://your-say.clarecoco.ie/free-period-products?tool=survey_tool

Joint Policing Committee



Pictured (left to right): Garda Aileen Kennedy, Cllr John Crowe and Jason Murphy.

The Chairperson of the Clare Joint Policing Committee, Cllr John Crowe, attended a Southern Regional Networking Event in Clonmel. Guests were welcomed by Helen Hall, Chief Executive of the Policing Authority and speakers from Clare, Kerry and Waterford presented examples of local safety initiatives on the day. Jason Murphy, A/Director of Services, presented on some of the initiatives and approaches taken in Clare with the 'Ask for Angela', 'Emergency Contact Card' and 'Bogus Traders Awareness' initiatives outlined.

Ukrainian Services

The CSO figures show there are currently 4,892 Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BoTPs) in County Clare. Approximately 3,995 are accommodated in 34 multi-occupancy facilities. 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 164 homes offered under this scheme and have accommodated approximately 297 people that were originally living in hotel and multi-occupancy facilities.

The number of International Protection applicants being accommodated in the County is increasing with a current estimate of 850 in Ennis, Tulla, Meelick, Inch, Lisdoonvarna and Scariff. The International Protection Accommodation Service (IAPS) have begun to engage with us on their activities.

While Clare County Council does not have a role to play in the allocation of accommodation for Ukrainian BoTPs or International Protection applicants beyond the hosting schemes, we do coordinate the local Community Response Forum as part of the response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

Clare County Council established the Community Response

Forum to coordinate the community-led response in the provision of assistance and support to Ukrainian nationals as they are accommodated in County Clare. The Forum, chaired by the A/ Director Rural Development Jason Murphy, brings together private, community and voluntary organisations acting at local level in response to this emergency. An Internal Response Team has also been set up by the Council to respond to the crisis locally.

Refurbishment

On 12th September the Community Group in Carrigaholt arranged a public meeting in relation to the potential to refurbish the Irish College. The meeting, led by Cllr Cillian Murphy and Jason Murphy, A/Director of Services was well attended with 80+ local people listening to the project as it unfolds and providing their inputs and asking questions. The project has been published on eTenders so that the market cost of delivery can be fully understood. Further decisions will be made in the coming month.

SPORTS & RECREATION



Active Ennis Leisure Complex

Clare Echo advertisement

The *Clare Echo* reached out to us as part of their health and fitness week. We used the opportunity to advertise the following aspects of the Active Ennis Leisure Complex.

- Only 25m pool in Ennis with an accessible lifts on deck and in a changing room.
- State of the art gym
- 2 x sets of sauna and steam rooms
- Large, accessible car park
- Variety of fitness classes and swim programmes.

We also used this as an opportunity to advertise our website, Instagram page and membership options.

Instagram

The Active Ennis complex has set up an Instagram page. This is intended as a communication tool with our members and the wider public and will be used to give news, advertise classes, and display the pool and gym timetables.



Installation of Footfall Counters

We recently installed footfall counters to measure the foot-fall within the Leisure Complex. The counters were installed by Mercury Analytics Ltd and collect data through an online analytics platform that is very accurate and user friendly. With this data we hope to establish peak visitor times, and gain a better understanding of how sales correspond with traffic.

Classes and hall booking

Since the return of Schools, class numbers for 'Body Blast' and 'Lunch Crunch' have steadily increased. We also have numerous practitioners renting our fitness studio for classes such as Yoga, Pilates and Chair Exercise. It is an aim for us to make more fitness professionals aware of our facilities and the opportunity to rent space for classes through our online hall booking platform. This can be accessed through our website.



ACTIVE ENNIS LEISURE COMPLEX

LUNCH CRUNCH

COST: €5 STANDARD, €3 MEMBERS

- All levels welcome
- For further info or to book your place, call in or phone 0656821604.
- This class combines Strength, HIIT and Cardio Exercises into fun activities for a Full Body Workout

MON, WED, & FRI
1.15PM - 1.45PM

www.activeennis.com  



ACTIVE ENNIS LEISURE COMPLEX

BODY BLAST

COST: €7 STANDARD, €3 MEMBER, €5 SENIOR

- All levels welcome
- For further info or to book your place, call in or phone 0656821604.
- This class combines Strength, HIIT and Cardio Exercises into fun activities for a Full Body Workout

MON, WED, & FRI
10 AM - 11AM
SATURDAY
9AM - 10AM

www.activeennis.com  

Active Ennis Lees Road, Tim Smythe Park

The Green Flag Award® scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom, Ireland and around the world.

Purpose & aims

- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live.
- To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve.
- To establish standards of good management.
- To promote and share good practice amongst the green space sector.
- To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers.

The Green Flag Award originated in the UK in 1997 and has since spread to the Netherlands, Ireland, Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Spain, Turkey, UAE, Australia and New Zealand. An Taisce have been awarding the Green Flag in Ireland since 2015.

We are proud to announce that both Active Ennis Tim Smythe Park and Active Ennis John O'Sullivan Park, Lees Road are again recipients of the Flag for 2023.



General Updates

- The team are busy planning for the year ahead as our Operational Plan 2024 is due to Sport Ireland next Monday.

Schools

- Post-primary SportsHall athletics began in St Joseph's Secondary School, Spanish Point, on 14th September.
- This week is European Week of Sport (23rd–30th Sept) – Sports Development Officer, Lizzy will be calling to primary schools this week to deliver activity sessions.
- Get Going Get Rowing is starting in St Patrick's Comprehensive school in Shannon on 10th October.
- Primary schools have been borrowing playground markings and SportsHall athletics packs to roll out in their schools.

Education & Training

- We have run 3 Safeguarding 1 courses over the month of September, with more scheduled for October. Safeguarding 2 and Safeguarding 3 courses are also

upcoming in October and November.

- Season of Respect Level 1 Club Award workshops began last week with two more workshops scheduled for October.

Sports Inclusion

- Inclusive gymnastics with Ennis Gymnastics Club is ongoing on Monday and Tuesday evenings.
- We have Disability Awareness Workshops coming up in October and December.

Active Communities

- HER Outdoors week (14th–20th Aug) was a huge success with almost 150 women taking part in over 10 different activities throughout of the week.
- Our Healthy DOJO programme in conjunction with the HSE began on 12th September and will continue until 2nd November. We have 24 participants in total.
- A new Men on Move programme kicked off in Kilrush on 5th September.
- Our Level 6 Sports Administration Certificate course in conjunction with TUS, Tipperary Sports Partnership and Limerick Sports Partnership, is now full with 12 participants from Clare taking part.
- We ran two sports first aid courses in both Shannon and Killaloe during the month of September.

Club Development

- Club grants have been processed and paid out. Clubs are now submitting their grant spend report.

Minority Communities

- On 10th August, we had 39 Ukrainians, from our 3 newly established volleyball clubs in Clare, attend a volleyball tournament in partnership with Volleyball in John O'Sullivan Park, Lees Road.
- The membership bursary continues to be open with 6 applications in September so far.

Clare Sports Partnership continue to work with clubs and the community in the active participation in sport in the county. For further details on activities please check out

www.claresports.ie

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Town Centre First

Sixmilebridge Town Centre First Plan

On foot of the launch of the Sixmilebridge Town Centre First Plan engagement took place on 19th September with the Town Team to identify a list of projects for delivery. Consideration of possible funding streams is now being examined as a means to secure delivery of these enhancement projects.

Shannon Town Centre Masterplan

Significant progress has been made in the next stage of the delivery of a new transformational cultural, community and civic building in Shannon Town Centre that is identified as a priority proposal in the implementation strategy of the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan. A steering group has been established for the project delivery and meetings were held with this group and the appointed Integrated Design Team BDP, QS & Project Manager Tom McNamara & Partners in September. The development of a Concept Design is now underway, which it is hoped will be completed in Q1 of 2024. The next steps will include public consultation, which will be facilitated over the coming months.

The One Shannon Hub will combine civic offices, 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.

FORWARD PLANNING

Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

On 3rd August, 2023, the Minister of State in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage issued a final Direction to Clare County Council regarding the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029. This followed the Minister's consideration of the Chief Executives' Report on the submissions received by the Planning Authority on the Draft Direction (which had been issued to the Council on 18th April) and the recommendation of the Office of the Planning Regulator.

The Minister's Direction requires the Planning Authority to reinstate the zoning objectives and associated text to that of the Draft Clare County Development Plan as they relate to specific zoning objectives for lands identified in Kilrush, Killaloe, Mullagh, Liscannor, Broadford, Cooraclare, Ballynacally and Ennis, as well as to remove the provision for 'Existing Accesses onto National Secondary Roads' under 'Exceptional Circumstances' of section 11.2.9.3 of the Plan. The Direction is deemed to have immediate effect from the date of issue on 3rd August, 2023, and the requirements set out in the Direction are incorporated into the relevant volumes of the Development Plan. A Special Council Meeting was held on Monday 18th September to which Oireachtas Members were invited to attend, where the issues relating to the Ministerial Direction and the policies as they relate to the County Development Plan were discussed.

The Direction is available for viewing on the Council website

<https://clarecdp2023-2029.clarecoco.ie/stage3-amendments/adoption/ministerial-direction-on-clare-county-development-plan-2023-2029-52489.pdf>

Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2024-2030

On 7th July, 2023, pre-draft consultation commenced for the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2024-2030, successful public consultation event at the Shannon Town Centre on 20th July which attracted a steady stream of attendees during the evening. The submissions and consultation feedback will help to inform the preparation of the Draft LAP. Pre-draft consultation with both the secondary and primary schools within the plan area through projects which have been devised by the Forward Planning section is also underway. The Draft LAP will include Land Use Zoning Objectives for Shannon Town and Environs and will also contain analysis and policy objectives relating to, for example, local transport, flood risk, public realm, habitats and environment.

In 2022, Shannon Town's population exceeded 10,000 for the first time, with a total of 10,256 residents recorded in the 2022 National Census. The Core Strategy of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 assigns ambitious population and housing unit growth to Shannon over the next 6 years, in line with its designation as a Metropolitan Town in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

Clare County Heritage Plan 2023-2029

Clare County Council is preparing the fourth Clare County Heritage Plan for the years 2023-2029. The Plan will address natural, architectural, archaeological, oral and cultural heritage and is the Council's statement of intent in relation to the heritage of County Clare over the period of the plan.

Following the recent Pre-draft Public Consultation process, work is ongoing on the preparation of a Draft Clare County Heritage Plan. Pre-draft public consultation was carried out from 21st July 2023 to 21st August 2023, an online questionnaire was provided and three public consultation events held during National Heritage Week 12th to 20th August. All of these consultation events were widely promoted through social media, print media, radio etc. The public consultation events included an Information stand and public consultation workshops at Vandeleur Walled Gardens, Kilrush and at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park, and a pop-up information stand at O'Connell Square in Ennis. The survey responses and submissions received as well as the input from the various events has been compiled and will help inform the preparation of the Draft Heritage Plan.

A second round of public consultation will commence in October with the publication of the Draft Heritage Plan and an invitation to members of the public to comment on the Draft Plan by making submissions.

Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

The RZLT is a new tax aimed at activating existing planning permissions, increasing housing supply and regeneration of vacant and idle lands in urban locations.

The first phase of the RZLT process, which began with the publication of a Draft Map on 1st November 2022, has concluded following receipt of An Bord Pleanála's decision in relation to 15 appeals. The Board has confirmed the Planning Authority's determination in all cases except one.

The second phase of the RZLT process, which involved the publication of a Supplemental Map on 1st May 2023 has also concluded. Four submissions were received during the public consultation stage. All submissions were assessed, and landowners were notified of the Planning Authority's decision by 1st August 2023. No appeals were made to An Bord Pleanála.

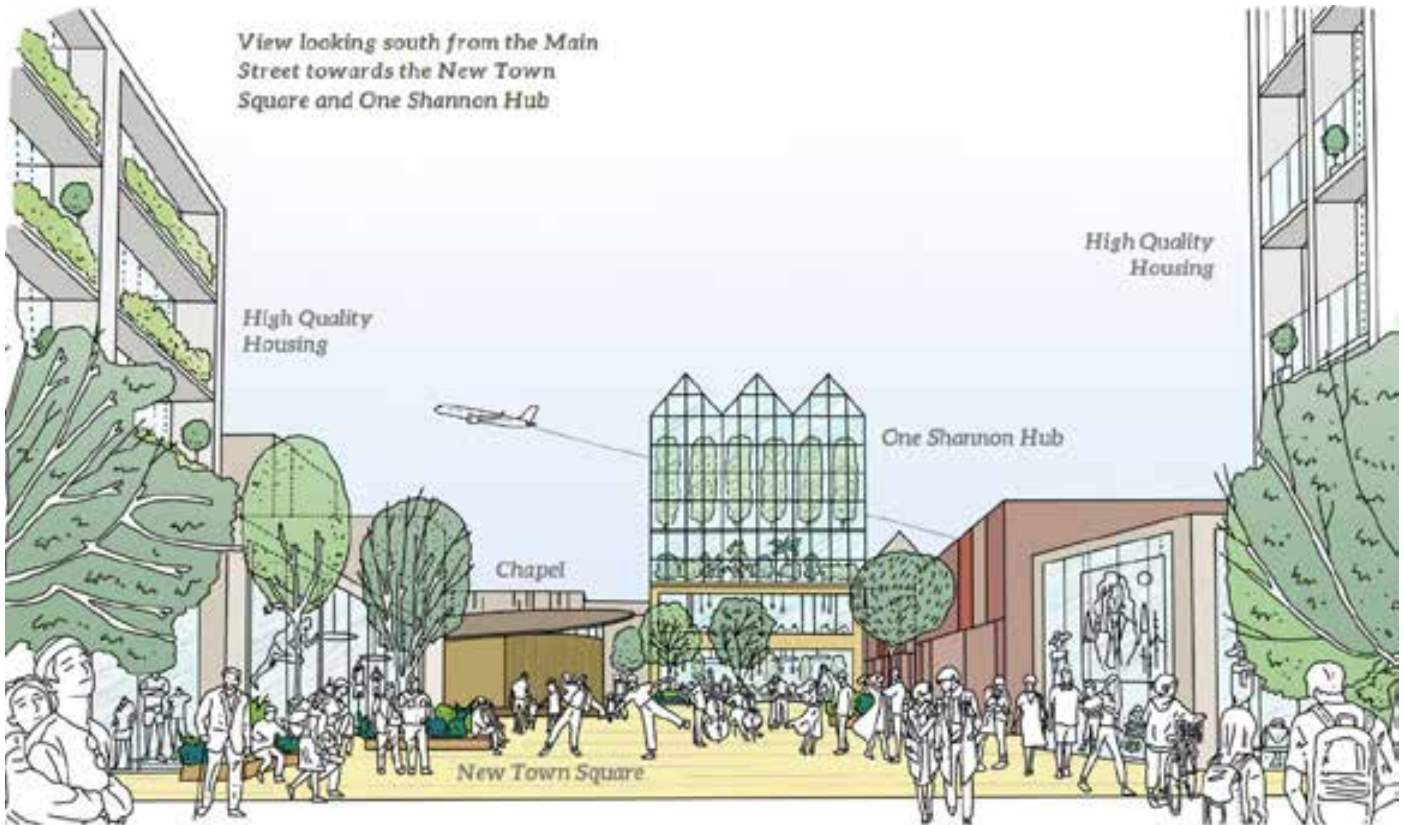
The next step is to prepare the Final Map which is due to be published on 1st December 2023 and this work is currently underway. The Tax will come into effect on 1st February 2024.

Public Realm Enhancements at Cappa Village, Kilrush

The Forward Planning team was 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. Universal design and inclusivity underpin the proposal, which will open up a valuable recreational amenity to all who wish to use it. The proposed amphitheatre seeks to create a social space in the village which can accommodate day to day, as well as special outdoor events. The tender process for specialist consultancy services was concluded in September, and a design team led by Helena McElmeel Architects has been appointed. The project will initiate in early October.

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. The tender process for specialist consultancy services was concluded in September, and a design team led by Helena McElmeel Architects has been appointed. The project will commence in late October.



CONSERVATION AND BUILT HERITAGE

Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS)

The 2023 Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) works are ongoing by property owners. The inspections are scheduled to be carried out in October/November and the final reports issued to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. It is anticipated that the advertisement for the 2024 Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) will be announced in November 2023.

Historic Structures Fund

The 2023 Historic Structures Fund (HSF) works are ongoing by property owners. The inspections are scheduled to be carried out in October/November and the final reports issued to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. It is anticipated that the advertisement for the 2024 Historic Structures Fund (HSF) will be announced in November 2023.

Community Monuments Fund

The 2023 Community Monuments Fund (CMF) projects are ongoing. It is anticipated that the 2024 Community Monuments Fund (CMF) will be announced in November 2023.

Conserving Built Heritage

The first Inaugural National INStone Symposium 2023 took place on 6th September in Boston, County Clare. The symposium featured nine individual presentations and talks, with various subject matter such as the current research being conducted to aid and assist conservation work throughout Ireland and the UK, current initiatives promoting the development of traditional skills etc. The primary purpose of the day was to showcase the fantastic work being conducted in the area of conservation, allowing open discussions among all involved in the area of conserving our built heritage.

HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

Clare Schools Biodiversity Initiative



Eleven schools across County Clare availed of two Biodiversity Educational Specialists for a one-day workshop to raise awareness of biodiversity through creative learning in mid to late September. The initiative 'Clare Schools Biodiversity' is coordinated by Biodiversity Officer Barry O'Loughlin and is funded by the Heritage in Schools Scheme (Heritage Council) and Creative Ireland (through Clare Libraries). The workshops are targeted at primary and secondary schools whose students are currently undertaking the theme of 'biodiversity' as part of An Taisce's Green Schools Programme and consider steps which can be taken in schools to increase awareness of the importance of our natural heritage to students including native plants, animals and habitats, and to increase species-richness on the school grounds. Students engaged in a range of activities including working with nature and art, habitat identification and mapping of school grounds, installing a bird table and bird nest boxes, creating log piles for insects, identifying garden birds, learning about pollinators and nectar sources, raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity and ways students can play a part in protecting and enhancing the environment for wildlife. The Biodiversity Educational Specialists will also set up a monitoring scheme so that students can identify and record bird and plant life on the school grounds throughout the year. The initiative also assists to address Ireland's biodiversity crisis by improving students understanding and knowledge of their natural environment. Ireland has seen a drastic decline in biodiversity in recent years with 85% of habitats and 30% of species (listed on the annexes of the EU Habitats Directive) listed as 'unfavourable status'. The fourth review of the conservation status of birds across the island of Ireland published in 2021 identified a quarter of Irish birds on the 'red-list' due to declines in breeding and wintering populations.

It is planned to roll out further workshops on a consistent basis and get more uptake in schools to undertake the theme of biodiversity in order to achieve their Green Flag. Outreach programmes such as the 'Clare Schools Biodiversity' initiative go a long way in achieving this objective and at the same time promotes learning and development around biodiversity and supports the Council's work programme.

Community Foundation Ireland Biodiversity Fund

The Biodiversity Officer visited a range of communities and organisations across the county in September to assist and advise communities in their applications to fund a community Biodiversity Action Plan. The Community Foundation Ireland is inviting community groups to apply for a grant to engage an ecologist and develop a Community Biodiversity Action Plan (CBAP). Strand 1 (Grants of up to €5,500) involves community groups to work with an ecologist to classify their local habitats, assess their condition and extent, map them, and define a suite of actions to enhance biodiversity. Strand 2 (Grants of up to €8,000) and Strand 3 (Grants of up to €11,000) allow community groups to implement actions under Strand 1 in collaboration with one or two land managers/owners (strand 2); or in collaboration with three to five land managers/owners (strand 3) particularly farmers to classify habitats at landscape scale with a focus on field boundaries (hedgerows, treelines and stone walls), assess their condition and extent, map them and define a suite of actions to enhance biodiversity. This grant round closes on Friday, 13th October, at 4pm.

Ennis Wetland Survey

Ennis Wetland Surveys are currently underway with most field surveys now complete. Clare County Council with support from the Local Biodiversity Action Fund of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under Clare County Heritage Plan 2017-2022, received funding to undertake field surveys of selected wetlands in the Ennis Municipal District. The survey builds on previous desktop studies commissioned by the Council including the 'County Clare Wetlands Study (CLWS) 2022' and the 'The County Clare Wetlands Survey 2008 - Desk Survey & GIS Preparation'.

Previous desktop assessments aimed to prepare a database of all freshwater and coastal wetland sites in the county. In order to overcome information deficit on the distribution of wetlands within the county, the CLWS 2022 prepared a Geographic Information System (GIS) dataset and associated site database of all wetland areas in the county. The wetland habitats were mapped and included an inventory of different wetland habitat types. The 2023 survey aims to supplement the GIS database by identifying wetland habitats in the field.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The table below shows the number of planning applications processed during the month of September 2023, together with the year to date figures. The percentage of e-planning applications continues to grow with 65% of the planning applications received in September being submitted by electronic means. Planning applications received to date in 2023 are slightly ahead of 2022, with 874 received on the same date in 2022 versus 911 received to 28/9/2023.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS	September (to Sept 28th)	Year to date 2023
No. of planning applications received	96	911
No. of Planning Decisions made	88	732
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	3	23
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	16	164
No. of Section 5 applications	7	76
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications (in respect of Part V of the Planning & Dev Act 2000)	5	34
Submissions received regarding Compliance	18	232

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

The table below provides a summary of Enforcement activity for the months of August and September.

	August	September
New complaints received	7	16
New files opened	7	06
Files closed	2	1
Warning Letters issued	9	5
Enforcement Notice issued	1	4
Legal	0	0

- Training: LEO Clare restarted their training support offerings after the summer during a busy September. LEO Clare ran thirteen training programmes throughout the month with over 230 participants registered. Training included, Start Your Own Business Programme, Financial training, Digital Marketing Programme, a Leadership Management Development Programme, and a Women in Business workshop.

KPMG Women’s Irish Open



L-R Helen Pilkington, LEO Clare, The Clare Jam Company, Quin Art Gallery, Joe Cooney Cathaoirleach Clare County Council, JJ Corry Irish Whiskey, Moher Cottage, and Wix and Wax.

Five Local Enterprise Office Clare Business clients showcased at the Clare County Council tent (Explore Clare) throughout the KPMG Women’s Irish Open in Dromoland Castle. The businesses included, The Clare Jam Company, JJ Corry Irish Whiskey, Wix and Wax, Moher Cottage, and Quin Art Gallery. The businesses were delighted to promote their products to a wide audience on a national and global scale.

The tent also included team members from the Local Enterprise Office Clare and the tourism department.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

- The Trading Online Voucher Scheme, which provides grant support to small businesses to develop an ecommerce website. In September, five further applications were approved bring the year total to thirty.
- Mentoring: LEO Clare has continued with a strong requirement for all our Mentoring Options including mentoring in Starting a Business, Finance, Digital Marketing, Export Development. In September 17 mentoring applications have been assigned.

September Evaluation Committee Meeting

The Local Enterprise Office Evaluation and Approvals Committee (EVAC) held their fifth evaluation meeting of 2023 on September 26th. Three applications were approved including a Feasibility, a Priming and a Business Expansion grant totalling €64,500.

National Ploughing Championships

One of Clare's best small businesses exhibited their business to almost 300,000 people at the National Ploughing Championships in September as part of the Local Enterprise Village. Moher Cottage, located beside the Cliffs of Moher on the Wild Atlantic Way, is supported by Local Enterprise Office Clare and is a destination gift store, manufacturing and selling their own fudge, prints and gifts under their 'Moher Cottage' brand. Founded by Caitriona and Kevin Considine, with decades of hospitality and business experience between them, spotted the need for a new visitor experience for those visiting and living in Co. Clare.

Minister of State Visit

Local Enterprise Office Clare and the Clare County Council welcomed Minister Neale Richmond TD, Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with special responsibility for Business, Employment and Retail on 14th September. Five Clare Businesses, Wowwee.ie, Wix and Wax, JJ Corry Irish Whiskey, AIP Thermoform, and Wild Irish Seaweeds all showcased their products to the Minister. The minister was also provided with a briefing by the Head of Economic Directorate Carmel Kirby who presented on the ambitious plans for Ennis



L-R: Wild Irish Seaweeds, Wowwee.ie, Joe Cooney Cathaoirleach Clare County Council, Minister Neale Richmond TD, Minister of State at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with special responsibility for Business, Employment and Retail, Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise, Wix and Wax, AIP Thermoform, and JJ Corry Irish Whiskey.

Student Enterprise Induction Days

LEO Clare launched Ireland's largest student enterprise programme with a total of three induction days around the county in September. To meet demand with have had to schedule a further two induction days in early October. In total seventeen secondary schools have attended including over 1,100 students.

The students will compete across three categories, Junior, Intermediate and Senior. Each student enterprise is challenged with creating, setting up and running their own business, which must show sales of their service or product.

Showcasing Events

This month Clare County Council were represented by the Local Enterprise Office at the following events:

- 20th September: Clare County Council sponsored a lunch for all attendees at the Motion by Electronomous hosted by Future Mobility Campus Ireland aimed at highlighting the many innovations shaping the future of mobility. Leas-Cathaoirleach of Shannon MD, Councillor John Crowe was in attendance. LEO Clare also participated in a panel discussion around supports available to early stage enterprises exploring innovations around future mobility.



Padraic McElwee, Head of Local Enterprise Office, Jane Magill, Shannon Aviation Museum, and Leas Cathaoirleach of Shannon MD, Councillor John Crowe.

- 22nd September: LEO Clare participated in a Sustainability Conference hosted by Shannon Chamber which was the culmination of a week long series of workshops and webinars aimed at highlighting the challenges, potential solutions and best practices, as businesses adapt to the implementing appropriate sustainability strategies.
- 28th September: LEO Clare along with many educational providers participated in the Mid-West Regional Skills Event hosted by Modular Automation. This event is aimed at highlighting the many upskilling options available for employees.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

The table below shows the number of property transactions completed by Property Management Unit in September (up to 21st September), 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. In addition to the table below, significant property transactions are underway which will add to the economic development of the County and these are related to individual projects.

Transaction type	September 2023	Year to date 2023	Full year 2022
Lease / Sub Lease of Property / Building	3	5	4
Licence to use property / building	2	6	13
Grazing Agreement for Lands	0	17	22
Deed of Transfer signed	4	13	19
Contract for Sale / acquisition signed	0	1	2
Deed of Right of Way / Wayleave signed	1	1	6
Deed of Rectification / Variation signed	2	3	10
Allotment Agreements signed	0	39	39

Lease of pitches at Ballycasey, Shannon to Clare Cricket Board

Following the completion of the lease process for the Clare Cricket Board for the former dis-used pitches at Ballycasey (formerly Newtown FC), they have worked diligently to prepare the grounds for the holding of cricket matches and a new pitch has been installed. The photos show Cllr Donna McGettigan, Chairperson of the Shannon MD and Carmel Greene of the Property Management Unit learning some cricket skills, ahead of the open day that the Club are hosting on 30th September. It is historic to have the first cricket pitch in the County and this will be a great asset to those who play and follow the sport.



Casual Trading

As we come to the close of the Summer and Festivals season, the licences to be issued between now and year end will be for Kilrush Horse Fair and some Christmas related events.

DERELICT SITES

The Derelict sites team are currently dealing with 239 properties that are considered derelict. 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 42 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. Due to the Vacant Property refurbishment Grant (see details below), there is a noticeable increase in the number of derelict and vacant properties on the market at the current time.

We are also seeing the outcome of sales agreed in recent months, with planning applications for refurbishment increasing and some works commencing on individual properties. We are advising owners of properties of the grant for refurbishing vacant and derelict properties to residential use and the amalgamation of the Vacant Homes Team and the Derelict Sites Team 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.



Bogbere Street, Ennistymon.



leverstown House, sixmilebridge.



Ennistymon before.



Ennistymon after.



Moore Street, Kilrush.



Spanish Point before.



Spanish Point after.

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

Derelict Sites	September 2023	Year to date 2023	Full Year 2022
No. of new files opened	8	42	69
No. of Section 8(2) Notices issued - Intention to enter site on Derelict Sites Register	6	30	33
No. of Section 8(7) Notices issued – Entry of site onto Derelict Sites Register	2	17	22
No. of Section 11 Notices issued – Measures required to render the site non-derelict	0	0	0
No. of files closed / property removed from Derelict Sites Register	2	10	21
No. of Notices served to Compulsorily Purchase derelict sites (CPO) (see note below)	2	11	6
No of Vesting Orders signed	3	8	4

Compulsory acquisition of derelict sites (CPO)

2022	Of the six CPOs were initiated in 2022, three have been vested in Clare County Council and one is outstanding in the Property Registration Authority. The CPO process on two more properties has been ceased as works have commenced on them following engagement with the owners / reputed owners. We are working with the Housing Department to return the first three properties to living accommodation, following refurbishment or re-development.
2023	Of the ten CPOs initiated in 2023 to date eight are at the Vesting stage, two have recently been advertised and submissions are awaited. two of them and one has recently been advertised.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has launched a CPO activation programme for local authorities and has set targets for CPOs for each local authority.

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.

VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANT - FOR DERELICT AND VACANT PROPERTIES

Since May 2023, when the Government extended the Croí Cónaithe Vacant and Derelict Property Refurbishment Grant to those who wish to renovate a vacant or derelict property to include properties for rental, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of enquiries and the number of applications. The detail on the number of applications (as at 21st September) is shown in the table below.

This measure will boost the supply of rental properties and options for permanent homes and will deliver on a key plank 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	14%
Year 2023	197	86%
Total no. of Grant Applications	230	100%
Proposed use of Grant aided property		
Private Residence	172	75%
Rental Property	58	25%
Decisions Made		
Approved	82	36%
Rejected	9	4%
Withdrawn	13	6%
Total	104	45%
Applications in progress		
In Progress	33	
Further Information Requested	59	
Awaiting Technical Inspection	34	
Total	126	55%

Key items to note include:

- There has been a significant increase in applications during the Summer months.
- To date 25% of all applications are for properties to be

made available for rental.

- 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 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. Some more claims for payment are on hands, following completion of works.
- With additional staffing on the Team at end of July, much progress has been made on advancing the application assessment process and the carrying out of technical inspections.
- The applications in rural areas account for 60% of all applications and those in towns and villages account for 40%. 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 vacanthomes@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 €4.5 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



ENNIS WINS GOLD IN 2023 COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM

Ennis achieved international success in the 2023 Communities in Bloom (CiB) awards ceremony held at Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada, on 29th September.

The Clare County capital town, which was Ireland's nominated entry to the prestigious annual competition, picked up '5 Blooms' and the title of overall winner (Gold) in the 'International Challenge Medium' category, as well as a special mention in the 'Pollinator Friendly Gardens' category of the competition.

The awards success follows a visit to Ennis this summer by CiB adjudicators who evaluated the town under the criteria of community appearance, environmental action, heritage conservation, tree management, landscape, and plant and floral displays. Other countries that nominated entrants to this year's competition included Canada, USA, Japan, Italy, Belgium, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia.

Mayor of Ennis Municipal District, Cllr Pat Daly, congratulated the staff of Ennis Municipal District (MD), Ennis Tidy Towns, and local community groups and volunteers in achieving international success in CiB.



ENNIS CELEBRATES LANDMARK TWINNING ANNIVERSARIES WITH LANGENFELD AND PHOENIX

A Reception was held at Áras Contae an Chláir on Monday, 11th September, to celebrate key landmark anniversaries of twinning relationships between Ennis and Langenfeld in Germany (10 years) and the US city of Phoenix (35 years).

Mayor of Ennis Municipal District, Cllr Pat Daly, said the longstanding partnerships have helped to bridge geographical and cultural divides and they have created lasting friendships between the people of the sister locations.

A return visit to Langenfeld by a delegation from Ennis will take place in early October following an invitation issued by the chairman of the executive council (Bürgermeister) of Langenfeld, Frank Schneider.

MD CURRENT WORKS

Re Ballybeg Footpaths

Ennis MD continue to work on Phase 2 of the Ballybeg Footpath project. This new scheme has been very well received by the locals and provides a vital pedestrian route between the Kilrush Road and various estates in the Ballybeg area. The scheme also includes new public lighting and drainage works.



Re Overlay on Clonroadmore

Ennis MD recently commenced resurfacing of the Clonroadmore from the R458 (Clare Road) to the Quin Road roundabout. This road is a vital vehicular artery within the town of Ennis. The works follow the recent installation of a new watermain in the area by Uisce Éireann.



Re Shannon Park

Ennis MD recently replaced a section of wall within Shannon Park which had collapsed. The wall surrounds an elevated green area within an older estate with many elderly residents. The residents were delighted with the outcome and the quick and efficient response of Ennis MD outdoor crews.



Re Ashfield park

Ennis MD crews have recently completed the upgrade of footpaths in Ashfield Park, an older estate on the outskirts of Ennis. These footpaths replaced existing tarmacadam footpaths which had deteriorated significantly over time. The works have removed all trip hazards and has improved the safety of all pedestrians using the estate.



Castlelawn Stormwater Pumps Upgrade Works

Electrical & mechanical repair and upgrade works have been carried out at Castlelawn pumpstation in Ennis. These works will ensure the Ennis Flood Relief Scheme can continue to function in tackling adverse weather and flooding conditions in and around the Ennis area.

Pothole Repair Works

Recent adverse weather brought about localised road defects in areas of Ennis. Road and pothole repairs, along with temporary traffic management design and implementation, was carried out by Ennis MD crews over the last number of weeks. Areas include Simms Lane, College Road, Cahercalla, Steeles Terrace and Clon Road.



Linemarking Works



Ennis MD in coordination with line marking contractors have upgraded road markings in critical areas in and around the Ennis area. Some of these works include carparking and disability car parking spaces, junction upgrades (Gort Rd) and traffic related road markings (yellow boxes, loading bays) in areas including Woodquay, Old Gaol Rd and the Market area in Ennis.

Accessibility Measures

Accessibility upgrade works have been continuing in Ennis in the last number of weeks including footpath upgrade works in Lower Market St Ennis. This works will ensure safe access for vulnerable road users accessing areas through Lower and Upper Market St in Ennis.

Road Signage

Ennis MD outdoor crews are in the process of upgrading and replacing existing road signage in the town centre area. New signage will improve transparency for road users in line with guidance set out in the Department of Transport Traffic Signs Manual.



Ennis 2040 Economic & Spatial Strategy - Implementation Ennis Public Realm Update

Following the approval of €8.6M in funding under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) in July for the Ennis Public Realm Regeneration Project, Shareridge Ltd have been appointed as the contractor for the scheme. Public Information sessions were held in September 2023.

The overall works are expected to take up to 2 years to complete but crucially, they will be carried out on a phased basis to minimise the impact on businesses, residents, and visitors to the Town Centre. Importantly, pedestrian and service access will be maintained/facilitated at all times. Subject to grant of road closure licence, the works are expected to commence on site in late October, 2023.

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). The work is being funded by the National Transport Authority Active Travel Funding. The Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) process seeks to devise the most appropriate strategy for the development of Ennis, taking into account land use and environmental considerations, identifying a viable and appropriate solution to Ennis's anticipated transport impacts and requirements.

Systra Ltd are currently carrying out a Baseline Assessment of the Plan and Surrounding Area, examining various policies, the area characteristics, existing travel patterns, existing transport infrastructure, baseline consultation, schools' consultation and environmental conditions. This should give a clear understanding of the existing spatial characteristics, land uses, transport conditions and constraints relating to Ennis.

There will be several occasions during the process where consultation will be carried out to get inputs, concerns, opinions of the Ennis Municipal District Councillors and the public.

Ennis Cycle Lanes Update

Tulla Rd: approx. 2.2km in Length. Currently undertaking detailed design. Aeocom are the appointed consultants for this phase. Recent discussions with the NTA and Aeocom have indicated that detail design should be ready end of Q1 or early Q2 2024. It is anticipated that construction should start in Q3 2024.

Limerick Rd Cycle Scheme (including Flannans Drive): Approx 3.5km in Length. Clare County Council have recently appointed Tobins Consulting Engineers for Phases 1-4 of this project. This incorporates scope, route selections and feasibility options, preliminary and detailed designs phases. It will most likely be late Q1 or early Q2 of 2025 before construction may commence.

Lahinch Rd Cycle Scheme: Approx 2km in length. This project is at inception phase. It is envisaged that this will follow on from the Limerick Rd scheme, i.e – when Limerick Rd is at Construction, the Preliminary and Detailed Design phase

will be progressing. It is estimated it will be Q3 2026 before Construction could begin.

Gort Rd Cycle Scheme: Approx 3.5km length in total. This project is at Inception stage.

Public Ennis Town 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. Route selection is complete and work is now focussed on finalising the bus stop locations and to agree the naming of the bus stop locations.

Post Office Field Masterplan

This is a key amenity and bio diverse area located in the centre of Ennis town. It acts as a flood plain at times of high water levels in the River Fergus. Currently a masterplan to flesh out the remediation and access options for a suitable amenity / recreational development of this area is underway. It is expected that this work will be completed by November 2023 at which point further stakeholder engagement will take place.

Francis St

Departmental approval for the construction of Affordable Housing for Ennis was secured by Clare County Council Housing Department during Q1 2023 which presented an opportunity to explore the potential of the Francis St site for an affordable scheme. A design team has been appointed to commence the preparation of concept designs for development of the site in conjunction with the housing dept.

Abbey St

A Concept Design for this location (which is zoned mixed use) was finalised during 2022. Following a public procurement process early in 2023 MOLA Architects were appointed to lead on the preparation of a detailed design and planning application for future development of this site. It is expected that the output of this work will be available during September 2023 ahead of a planned public consultation to take place during Q4 2023. In addition, site investigation works commenced on 18th September 2023

Harvey's Quay

A Concept Design for this location (which is also zoned mixed use) was finalised during 2022. Following a public procurement process early in 2023 Henry J Lyons Architects were appointed to lead on the preparation of a detailed design and planning application for future development of this site. It is expected that the output of this work will be available during September 2023 ahead of a planned public consultation to take place during Q1, 2024. Site investigations will also take place during October 2023.

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 area 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.
- The National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 - Implementation Plan was launched nationally earlier this year and staff from the Housing Agency were welcomed to Clare County Council on September 25th where they gave presentations on the plan to members of the Housing & Disability Steering Group, The HDSG are reviewing our own Local Implementation Strategy to ensure alignment with the National Plan and this should be completed before year end.
- Ennis Electoral Area was designated a Rent Pressure Zone from 31st August 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.
- 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 to accepting applications online and staff and IT systems are in place to support an online portal so that affected homeowners can continue to submit their applications. A Community Facilitator commenced in mid September to also 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 October. 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/>
- The Housing team are planning a number of workshops at various locations countywide over coming months highlighting housing options available to households. This has been requested on a few occasions by elected members.

We are confident that the team in the Directorate, supported by the Elected Members, will continue to deal with all challenges and meet targets for the remainder of the year.

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

Social Housing Needs Assessment 2023

The Council is finalising the 2023 Social Housing Needs Assessment with over 480 applicants written to seeking updated information to assess their continued qualification for

social housing supports. All Local Authorities are required by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to complete this assessment for all persons who have applied for social housing support. The purpose of the Assessment is to capture the total number of households qualified for social housing support across the county whose social housing need is not being met, in order to understand the level of need for such support. The "count" date is 1st November, with returns to Department to be completed by November 29th. This Council is contacting certain applicants who qualified for social housing support prior to 11th August 2022 confirm that they still require social housing support. Each

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

applicant has been requested to confirm their requirements to the Council by completing the assessment form which issued in August together with a covering letter explaining the process. As part of this process they will need to submit details of income for previous 52 weeks in accordance with national social housing guidelines. Applicants who have qualified for social housing after 10th August 2022 were not contacted as their file would have recently been assessed so there is no need for them to be reassessed or to contact the Council unless there is a change in circumstances. Transfer applicants, HAP and RAS tenants are not included in this assessment. Any applicants who were reviewed in last 12 months have not been contacted either as their files were reviewed recently. If an applicant no longer requires social housing support or is no longer eligible their file will be closed. It is assumed that applicants who do not return their Social Housing Assessment Forms are no longer interested /in need of social housing support and their file will be closed. However Clare Co Council will make every effort to contact the applicant before doing this including issuing reminder letters, advertising on social media, making reminder calls where appropriate.

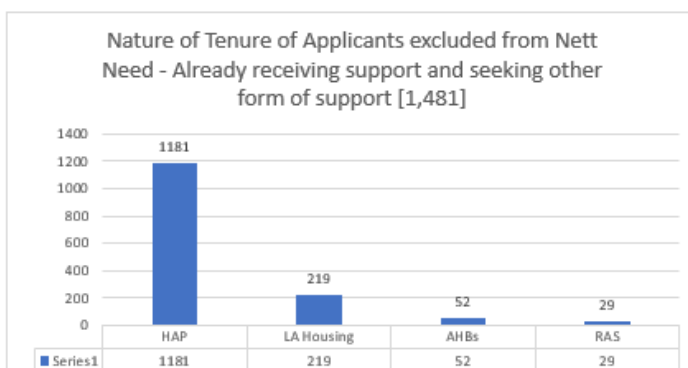
Social Housing Demand - Assessment of housing need

Our greatest demand throughout the county is for 1 and 2-bed-roomed properties. There are 2,157 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. The allocations are currently reviewing files as part of the Annual Assessment of Needs and results will be know by early November.

Current Housing need as of 29/09/23

Total Households on Waiting List	2,831	
Transfer Applicants (see below)		1,481
Nett Need	1,350	

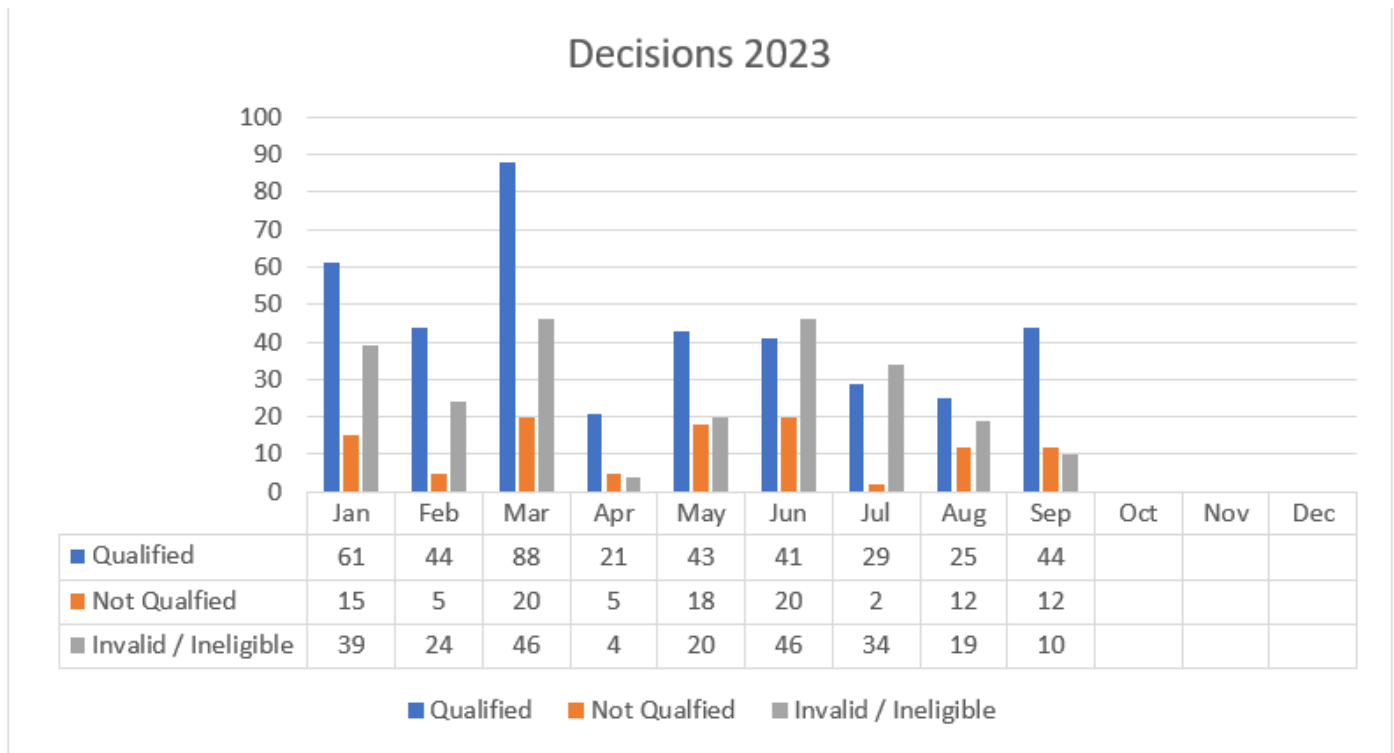


Housing need by Area of choice and number of beds approved:

HOUSING AUTHORITY BEDS APPROVED				
FIRST AREA OF CHOICE	1 and 2 beds	3 beds	4 and 5 beds	Grand Total
ENNIS	908	209	82	1199
SHANNON	173	29	15	217
CLARECASTLE	131	31	10	172
INAGH/ENNISTYMON/LAHINCH	132	24	4	160
KILRUSH	99	32	7	138
FEAKLE/SCARIFF/WHITEGATE	100	22	4	126
MEELICK/PARTEEN/WESTBURY	68	37	11	116
MILTOWN MALBAY/MULLAGH/QUILTY	75	10	2	87
KILKEE/CROSS/CARRIGAHOLT	54	17	5	76
NEWMARKET-ON-FERGUS	58	17	1	76
COROFIN/RUAN	64	10	1	75
KILLALOE	54	13	2	69
LISDOONVARNA/BALLYVAUGHAN	47	8	3	58
SIXMILEBRIDGE	39	10	6	55
COORACLARE/DOONBEG	36	7	4	47
TULLA/KILKISHEN/BROADFORD	35	6	3	44
CLONLARA	22	8	1	31
KILDYSART/BALLYNACALLY	20	4	3	27
QUIN	18	5	1	24
KILMIHIL	10	5	2	17
KILMALEY	8	2		10
KILFENORA	6	1		7
Grand Total	2157	507	167	2831

Newly Qualified Applicants

New income limits became effective on 1st January 2023. To date 396 new applications have been qualified this year which is broadly in line with previous years.



Housing Allocations

Clare County Council continues to work with the Approved Housing Bodies in relation to the provision of social housing. In this regard the 3 bedroomed houses located at Ard Ratha Sixmilebridge which are being delivered by Co Operative Housing Ireland (CHI) were advertised on the CBL website in August. The Allocations Team have completed the assessment process and the nominated households have been forwarded to CHI. 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.



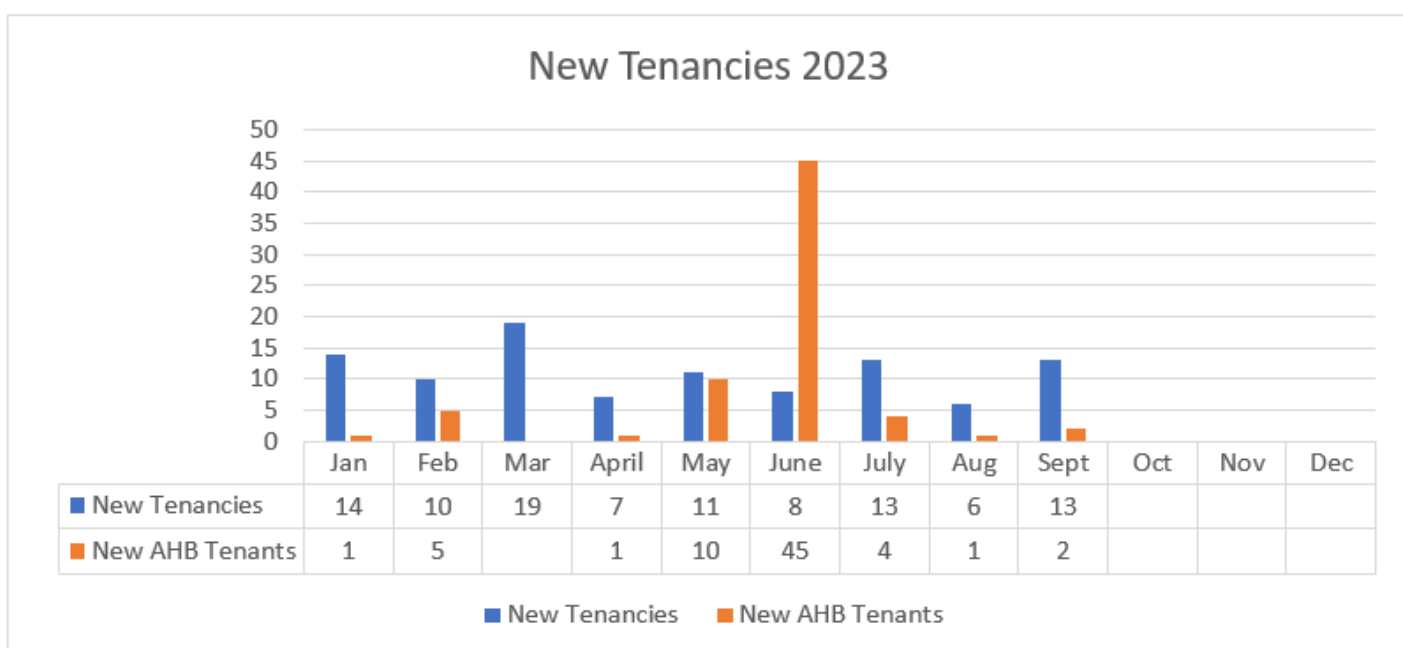
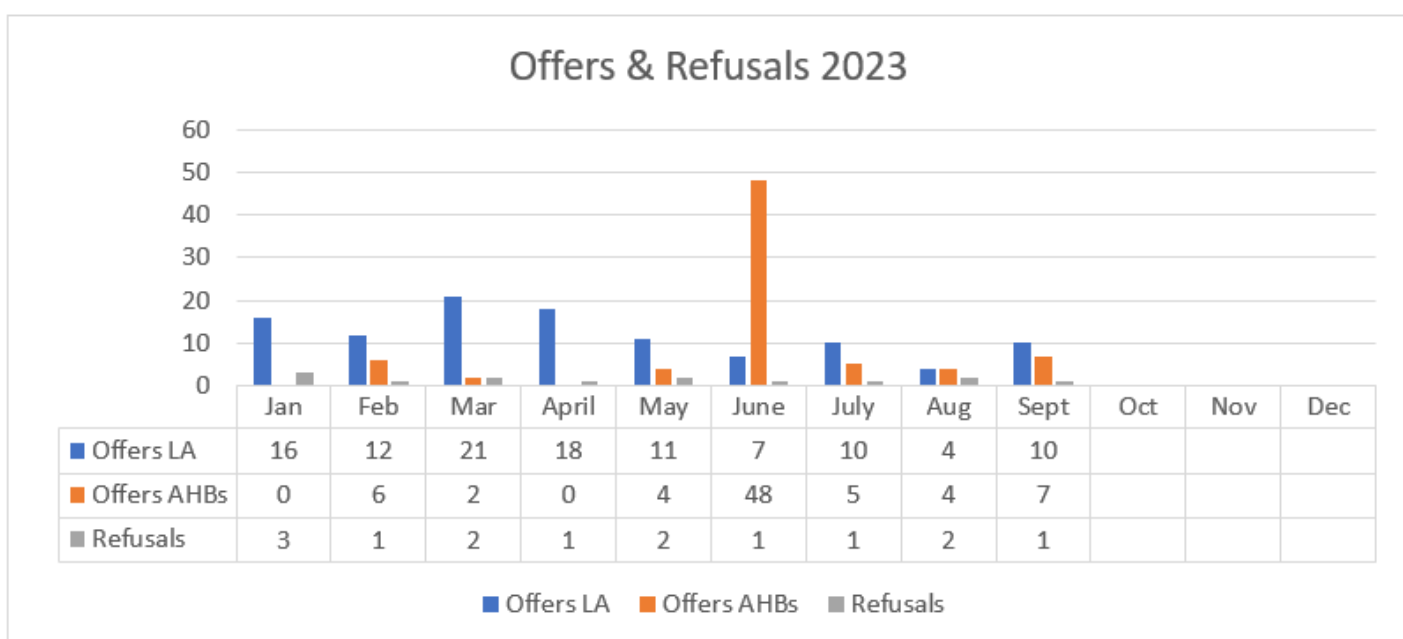
In addition, the 26 units comprising three and four bedroomed properties located at An Cosan Gheall, Limerick Road, Ennis were advertised on the CBL website in June. Inis Housing who are delivering these houses are in the process of carrying out Assessment meetings for these properties.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A total of 170 tenancies have been created to date, details of the basis of need is set out hereunder. Our vacant stock, casual vacancies and new developments including those being made available by the Approved Housing Bodies are now advertised on the Choice Based Letting (CBL) website. Properties which are designated as “bid dwellings” are advertised each Tuesday night at midnight, qualified applicants have until midnight the following Tuesday night to express interest/bid on advertised properties. Once the advertising cycle closes the expressions of interest/bids received are assessed by the Allocations Team. The accommodation which has been advertised is offered to the household who has the highest priority under the allocation scheme and matches the lettings criteria for that dwelling.

Homeless including households that were at risk of homelessness	30%
Medical Needs	28%
Financial	23%
Overcrowding, compassionate, involuntary sharing , unfit and succession	19%



Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme

There remains significant interest in the LA Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme with 9 new applications this year to date. We currently have 13 open cases at various stages of the legal process of which upto 7 are expected to complete in 2023. 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.

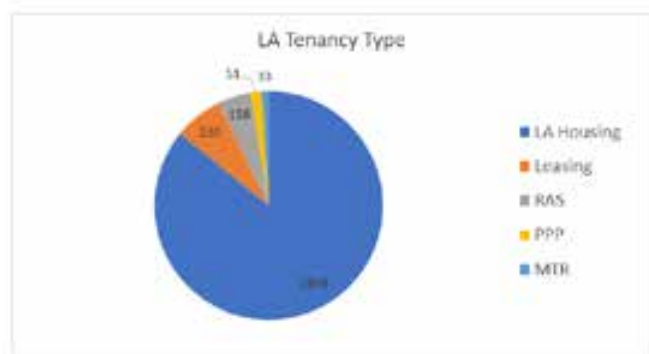


Housing Tenancies

*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	7	1287	1294
Killaloe MD	1	365	366
Shannon MD	2	736	728
West Clare MD	0	953	953
Grand Total	10	3331	3341

In addition, we have 1,181 active HAP Tenancies.



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

Clare County Council has 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 Accommodation	2	8	2	0	12
Derelict Properties	0	0	0	0	0
Projects	4	10	1	0	15
Casual Vacancies	9	12	6	2	29
TOTAL	15	30	9	2	56

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.

	25th Aug to 22nd Sept	Total year to date
ASB Complaints recd	161	665
Housing Inspections	61	555
Referrals to TSS	1	25
Tenancy Notifications/Warnings issued	4	105
Abandonment Notices issued	0	7
Keys collected from Casual Vacancies	4	48
Repossession Orders	0	1

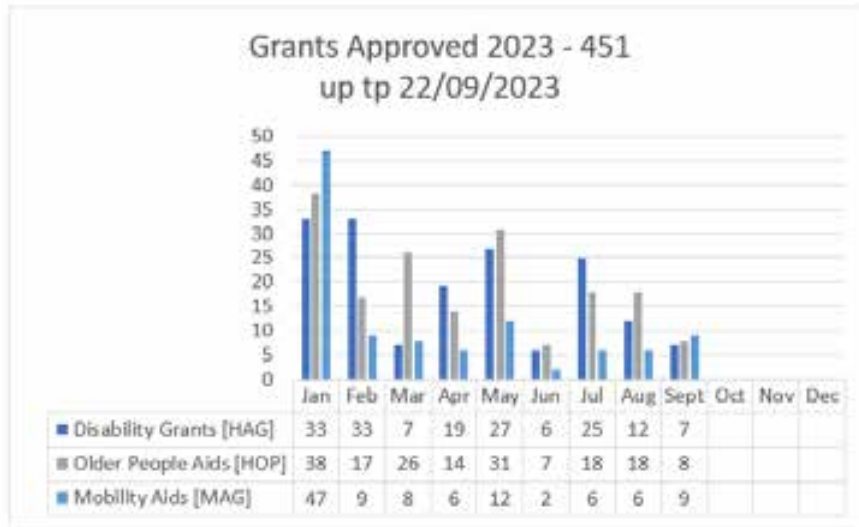
The Tenancy Enforcement team carry out continued patrols of Local Authority housing estates and Traveller sites and have a very visible presence to manage and mitigate against complaints of antisocial behaviour with over 7,700 observations of tenancies as part of these patrols in the year to date. The 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) 4169496

Private Rented inspections:

Th802 inspections carried out up to September 2023. These inspections were carried out on HAP, RTB, RAS and Leased properties, as well as in response to complaints that were received. The team continue to follow up where properties do not meet the minimum rented standards

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

Loans data for 2023 up to 17/09/2023: There are currently 42 Local Authority Home Loans Approved in Principle. This includes 2 new approvals on the 14th September 2023.

61 Applications Received to 31/12/2022 and 36 Applications in 2023

42 Local Authority Home Loans Approved

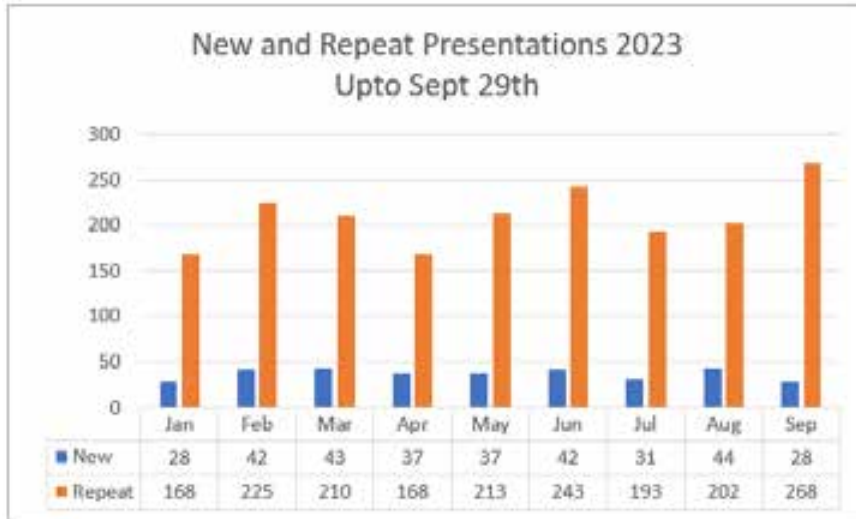
5 Local Authority Home Loans Drawn Down in 2022 and 6 Drawn Down in 2023

12 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans Drawn Down in 2022

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.

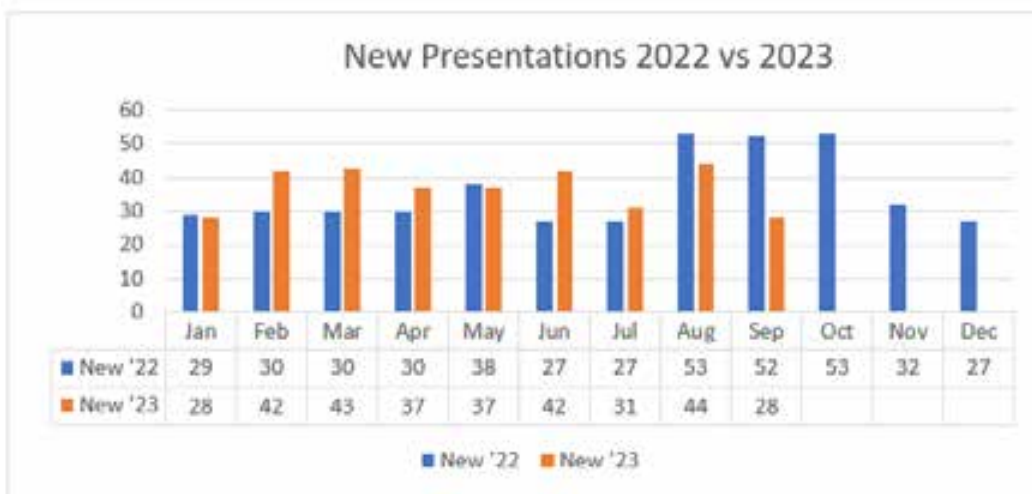
Clare County Council continue to progress our Traveller Accommodation Program [TAP] and are currently working with the Traveller Community Development Programme in preparing a detailed needs analysis around traveller needs in preparation for the next TAP for which consultation is expected to commence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



28 new clients presented to HAT during September 2023, with a further 268 repeat engagements. This figure of repeat engagements has increased significantly over this current timeframe. The needs and requirements of these presentations varied and included:

The need of immediate Emergency Accommodation

- Notice to Quits from Accommodations
- Seeking Homeless HAP Assistance
- 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
- Prison Releases



A number of presentations availed of advice and prevention works and supports from the Social Care Team in HAT. As a result, they avoided entering a homeless situation due to the early intervention work and support employed by the team. 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 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. Further to this, a recent initiative by the Homeless Action Team was to place an advertisement in the local newspaper seeking expressions of interest in providing homeless emergency accommodation.

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 14/09/2023:

	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	13	0	1
Laurel Lodge Weather Initiative	0	4	0	
Cusack Lodge	4	5	10	1
Westbrook	0	15	0	1

Westbrook Weather Initiative	0	1	0	0
Ashford Court	11	17	15	1
EA Families	2	2	4	2
EA Individuals	0	6	0	3
TOTAL	17	63	29	9

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.

Exits from Homeless Services

Clare Homeless Action Team continues to focus on exits from homeless services.

During the period 18/08/2023 to 14/09/2023 the following exited from homelessness:

- 3 Discharged to an Approved Housing Body Tenancy
- 1 Discharged to Residential Treatment
- 1 Self discharged
- 8 Discharged from Services

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 October, 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.

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 or alternatively by phone at 065-6846385 or 065-6846468.

CCC have received and 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 continue to engage with the DHLGH to ensure social houses affected by DCB also are included in a similar scheme. CCC have a meeting organised in early October with the DHLGH to get information on the upcoming proposed Social Housing DCB Pilot 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 works for both trades. Plastering continues to make progress over the last few weeks. Floor screeds were poured in mid September in the Art Gallery. Raised Access flooring is planned to commence shortly on the Second Floor with other main trades like External Wall Cladding to follow thereafter on the external façade.



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 continue to progress on our ambitious 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 Table below. They work in collaboration with our Housing Capital Team to deliver high-quality housing throughout the county. 15 no. units were delivered at Hogan’s Place, Limerick Road, Ennis by Cluid during the month of June and construction is underway on a number of other schemes



Completed bungalow at Hogan’s Place, Limerick Road, Ennis.

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Newtown Corofin	1	Under construction.	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Clarecastle	5	Under Construction.	Q1 2023	Q4 2023
Scarriff	18	Under Construction	Q1 2023	Q3 2024
St. Senan’s Terrace, Kilrush	5	Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q1 2024
Clarehill Clarecastle	13	Turnkey - Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2024
Doonbeg Lands	8	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Application submitted to An Bord Pleanála on 18th August 2023.	Q4 2024	Q4 2025
Drumcliff Rd. Ennis	26	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Part VIII Withdrawn. Determination issued by an Bord Pleanála. Stage 3 application currently being prepared.	Q1 2024	Q2 2025
Sixmilebridge	15	Under Construction.	Q1 2023	Q2 2024
Ennistymon	30	Stage 2 approved. Stage 3 application currently being prepared.	Q4 2023	Q4 2024
Gort Rd. Ennis	20	Stage 2 approved. Planning application submitted to An Bord Pleanala on 16th June 2023.	Q2 2024	Q3 2025
Moore Street, Kilrush	21	Stage 1 approval. Design Team appointed.	Q1 2023	Q2 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. Tender ongoing for appointment of design team.	Q2 2024	Q4 2025
Subtotal	187			
Limerick Road, Ennis (Cluid Housing Assoc)	15	CALF Acquisition – completed on 26th May, 2023	Q3 2022	Completed
Church Road, Tulla (Cluid)	2	CALF Turnkey (Part V) – Completed	Q1 2022	Completed
Kincora Park, Ennis (Saint Vincent de Paul)	1	CAS Construction – completed	Q4 2022	Completed
Roslevan (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland)	25	CALF Turnkey - completed	Q2 2022	Completed
Lahinch (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland)	3	CALF Turnkey (Part V) – completed on 20/7/2023	Q2 2022	Completed
Bruachlan, Westbury (Cooperative Housing Ireland)	22	CALF - Property transfer complete. Planning application submitted	Q2 2022	Q2 2025
Limerick Road, Ennis (Inis Housing)	18	CALF Turnkey – construction in progress	Q1 2022	Q3 2023

Market Street, Ennis (Peter McVerry Trust)	14	CAS Turnkey – contracts currently being signed and construction to commence.	Q2 2023	Q4 2024
Cluain na Laoi, Kilkishen (Circle Housing Assoc.)	16	CALF Turnkey – const. commenced. 6 units to be delivered in Q1 2024 10 units to be delivered in Q2 2024	Q1 2023 Q1 2023	Q1 2024 Q2 2024
Ballyminogue, Scarriff (Focus)	4	CALF Turnkey – under construction	Q1 2023	Q1 2024
Ashfield Close (Sophia Housing)	6	CAS Construction – Dept approved	Q2 2023	Q3 2024
Sixmilebridge (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland)	3	CALF Turnkey (Part V) under construction - sale due to close	Q3 2022	Q3 2023
Derg View, Scarriff ((Inis Housing)	4	CAS Turnkey – under construction	Q2 2023	Q4 2023
Subtotal	133			
Total	320			

CULTURAL SERVICES - LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

Clare County Library

Work is progressing on the new Library for Ennis with workshops on fitout, IT provision and “My Open Library” facilitated by the design team with input from library staff. The upgrade of the Clare Library website, www.clarelibrary.ie is also progressing. Staff have received training sessions on creating content for the website. The next five year strategy for Clare libraries is presently being drafted.




Online Resources usage as follows: E-audiobooks and Press Reader continue to top the most used digital resources.

1752 E-Books	3254 E-Audiobooks	883 E-Magazines
157 Online courses	2327 Press Reader	41 Transparent Languages

Marketing & social media

A press release was issued announcing two new Local Studies resources; FindMyPast.ie and Irish Newspaper Archives. A press release was also issued for Children's Book Festival due to start in October. A joint press release was issued with Healthy Clare and Greener Clare for activities during “Sustainable Development Goals Week”. Clare Libraries are holding nine events from the 18th September to 8th October. The events were also advertised in the Clare Echo.

Outreach: Clare Libraries held an information stand at the Clare Pride Festival Family Day in glór on Saturday 23rd September.

	New Followers	Total Followers	No of Posts & stories (Insta only)	Likes	Shares/ Retweets/ Reach	Comments
	42	7210	251900	472	7400	34
	9	2137	6660	31	210	0
	25	1974	5100	330	861	34

Library Activities in Figures over the summer months

Total number of in branch events	286
Total audiences at live events	131
Total number of outreach events	1123
Total audiences at outreach events	7
Total number of home deliveries	8



Right to Read

The Art of Storytelling with Young Children: Tales from County Clare is a collaborative project by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Local Creative Youth Partnership, Clare County Childcare Committee and Clare County Library. An audio stories launch and workshop take place on the 30th of September at Shannon Library. Creative practitioners, Jane Hayes and Sara Keating will deliver storytelling workshops that will enthral young and old. Audio recorded stories from parents will be heard for the first time and early years artist Jane Hayes will deliver a workshop facilitating parents and educators to explore the use of visual and other sensory aids to help tell their stories to young audiences. Writer and storyteller, Sara Keating delivers her very successful A Book Club for babies, for toddlers and their caregivers incorporating an interactive storytime, with sensory activities and songs.



Staff member Ciara Carew telling stories at De Valera Library, Ennis.

Plans for the annual Children's Book Festival (CBF) are currently being finalized. Fifty events will take place across all fifteen library branches to include reading promotion events for Junior Infants to 6th class pupils in primary schools throughout the county.

CBF 2023 events include visits from Children's Laureate na nÓg Patricia Forde and award winners Ellen Ryan and Alex Dunne. Éanna Ní Lamhna will show children how to explore nature's hidden secrets. There will be history and archaeology workshops, LEGO robotics, music and illustration workshops. The Cool Food School will deliver practical workshops to promote fun and easy food preparation while demonstrating the importance of healthy eating. The Children's Books Ireland Book Doctor will visit Shannon Library on Saturday the 21st October to provide special reading prescriptions and treatment plans for all sorts of reading issues. This promises to be an excellent family event where children accompanied by their parents get special attention and advice on how to choose the best books to suit their reading ability and interests.



Healthy Ireland

Clare libraries has received nearly €4,000 in funding for developing Healthy Ireland at your library zones. The first in a series of chair yoga classes took place in Tulla Library on 14th September with Trish Cleary. Further classes will take place in Tulla Library until November. The Marie Keating Foundation Mobile Unit visited Scariff Library on Friday 29th September. A specialist nurse was on hand to provide evidenced based up-to-date information on the most common types of cancer and provided information to people on how to recognise signs and symptoms of the various types of cancer. People also learned about the supportive services on offer within the community.

Creative Ireland

Interviews were held for the position of Creative Communities Engagement Officer. The successful candidate will work exclusively on the Creative Ireland Clare programme. Creative Ireland Clare supported Sustainable Development Goals week with nine events in libraries around Clare. Events included a clothes swap morning, sewing and mending workshops, home energy savings talk and demonstration of the (Codema) Home Energy Savings Kit, and Sustainable Gardening talks with Clare Garden Festival. Creative Ireland Clare supported Clare Pride with an author event in Banner Books, Kilrush. Activist Orla Egan spoke about her book "Diary of an Activist."

Decade of Centenaries

Preparations are underway for a commemoration by the Mid Clare Commemoration Group at Rineen on 24th September. Michéal Martin will be in attendance. Funding has been provided through the Decade of Centenaries programme for the booklet for this event. A lecture by historian Tomás Mac Conmara took place on Thursday 14th September as part of Marie Connole's 'Vial' art exhibition in Scariff Library – this exhibition covers Marie's work over three years on the revolutionary period in Clare. The programme for Clare Libraries History Week is currently being finalised, this will take place from 16th-20th October.

Local Studies

The Local Studies Centre has added new resources to its collection.

- A collection of papers relating to the O'Looney family of Monreal have been donated.
 - o Brian Ó Luanagh (O'Looney) was a Celticist and Irish-language scholar who transcribed translated medieval manuscripts for William Smith O'Brien in the 1850's and worked with Eugene O'Curry on

various translations. The collection contains an 18th century leather-bound book which contains hand-written notes by Brian O’Looney and his three brothers, John, William, and Martin, dating to the 1840’s.

- o The second part of the donation relates to Brian O’Looney’s nephew Liam Ó Luanaigh (William Martin O’Looney). He did research on the Clare poets at the British Museum during the 1920-1950 period. Staff in the library have commenced conservation and preservation work on the collection.
- The Local Studies Dunboyne News Cuttings 1824-1878 transcription project is continuing.

Clare Archives

The Barrett collection continues to be catalogued and processed. Queries relating to Board of Health Records and Our Lady’s Hospital Records have been dealt with this month through research by the Archivist. Queries relating to various collections within the archives have been dealt with by the archivist in conjunction with the Local Studies Centre. The scanning project is continuing. Material from the Kilrush Urban District Council (1899-2001) is in the process of digitisation. The Clare Grand Jury Collection is now available to view at Clare Grand Jury - Digital Repository of Ireland (dri.ie). The Board of Guardian Records’ metadata is the current project as the next collection to be available through the DRI.

Clare Arts Office

The Arts in the Community programme continued with St. Joseph’s Hospital, Ennis radio resuming and arts activities in Raheen Hospital. Clare Youth Theatre resumed in glór with over 30 members and a Ukrainian youth theatre performance took place in Kilkee. A Culture Night Arts in Clare slot was broadcast on Clare FM. Over 40 events took place in twenty-one towns and villages countywide and all events were free to the public on the night. PRISM Street Art Works were completed in Ennis, Tulla and Killaloe and the Creative Places programme in Shannon began with community group meetings.

Residencies with North Clare Mental Health in Ennistymon and Brothers of Charity in Scariff were completed as part of the Arts and Disability Programme. The research publication, Levelling Access in the area of Arts and Disability, a major national research project was launched. This was undertaken with Arts Offices in Clare, Mayo and Galway City. A new panel of artists was formed for socially engaged projects in the areas of arts and education, arts and disability, youth theatre and creative places. Three exhibitions took place in Ennis, Scariff and Kilkee and the Burren Annual Exhibition took place in Ballyvaughan. The Keystone, “Artist in Schools” Project, was launched in the Courthouse Gallery in Ennistymon by the Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney.

Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee, had a busy September with a music concert, literary weekend, heritage talk, theatre performance and film screening all taking place. The Arts office Facebook groups membership grew by almost 4% in August to over 5,000 and the Facebook pages are now followed by nearly 10,500 people.

Clare Museum



John Joe ‘Goggles’ Doyle’s goggles currently on short term loan to the National Museum of Ireland.

The museum curator has finalised four public talks which will take place in October, funded by the Night Time Economy fund. The museum is also in the process of organizing Halloween workshops to promote to primary schools during the last week in October. The curator gave guided tours of the museum to the groups from Langenfeld and Phoenix during the month.

A total of 300 items from the Georgina Frost collection have been catalogued to the Axiele database this year. Many of these items have been photographed and will be uploaded onto the Museum website. The curator attended the Irish Museums Association annual conference in Derry during the month. A digital podium called ‘The Rainbow Revolution’, an oral history of the LGBTQ+ community in Ireland over the last 40 years, presented by the National Museum of Ireland, has been successfully installed in the museum. There were 12 social media posts and another entry on the museum blog in September.

KILLALOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Ballycuggeran - Disability Hoist and new Pontoon to provide public access for all to water In September

On Friday, 22nd September, 2023, in conjunction with Make Way Day 2023, a new floating pontoon and gangway to serve access for persons with disabilities to watercraft, together with a disability hoist and swing-lift, was officially opened at Ballycuggeran/ Twomilegate water amenity. The facility was installed following a number of months of consultation on its design by Killaloe Municipal District with a wide range of disability stakeholders. The facility is one of the first year-round public accessible hoists and canoe-accessible areas for persons with mobility issues and disabilities, and was part funded by Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme funding. Following significant consultation with a number of disability groups, specifically on the design requirements for the hoist and access to water, Killaloe MD looked a variety of design options and are delighted with the installation. Arising from engagement with disability stakeholders and the popularity of water sports in the area, the design was amended to not only provide disability access to the water for bathing, but allowing for disability access to canoes, through the use of a specialist watercraft boarding area. This is an important first step in proposals by Killaloe MD to enhance the wider amenity area of Ballycuggeran.



September 2023 works/projects Killaloe MD

During the month of September Killaloe MD staff were involved in the following Projects/ Meetings/Correspondence:

Works underway by Cotter Plant Hire on New Street, Killaloe as part of Low Cost Safety Scheme project.



New Cathaoirleach Chain and Pendant

Following consultation with the Elected Members of Killaloe MD over the last year, the first Cathaoirleach Chain, pendant and logo for Killaloe MD was unveiled in September and will be used for official functions. The design of the pendant reflects the Cultural Heritage, History, Landscape and Environment of Killaloe MD and East Clare. A description of the design is attached.





The Fiddle acts as a frame to the overall graphic element, with the fingerboard of the Fiddle also represented by the central vertical device which plays three roles.



The second role of the central vertical device is as a sword representing Brian Boru, High King of Ireland from Killaloe with additional references to key archaeological heritage of the region including in Killaloe, Tuamgraney and Inish Cealtra.



The third role of the central vertical device is as the Round Tower of Inish Cealtra, along side the church, representing East Clare's ecclesiastical history which would also include St. Cronan's Church, Quin Abbey, St. Flannan's Cathedral, and St. Lua's Oratory.



Leaves from the Sessile Oak Tree, the national tree of Ireland, reflective of both the estimated 1,000 year old 'Brian Boru Oak Tree' in Killaloe, and the ancient Great Slieve Aughty forest that covered much of the East Clare area.



The bridge and water representing the two crossings of the River Shannon from East Clare at O'Brien's Bridge and Killaloe; both 19th century bridges; and with Killaloe, the water also referencing Lough Derg.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Dromoland Castle Hotel & Country Club KPMG Women's Irish Open



Events like the KPMG Women's Irish Open take preparation and dedication, with many strategic partners collaborating to ensure it is a great success. The Tourism Department was delighted and honoured to play our part again for a second year.

The following was organised to showcase the Visit Clare Brand:

- **Players:** Welcome to Clare Signature Golf Gift Set, presented during the formal evening.
- **Caddies:** Umbrellas.
- **Hospitality & Media:** Visit Clare bag.
- **Visit Clare Stand & Signage:** with Visit Clare totes for the spectators.
- Experienced staff, across the tourism industry, rostered for the weekend, at the Explore Clare tent.
- Media:
 - o Clare FM – Outdoor Broadcast.
 - o Classic Hits – Outdoor Broadcast.
 - o Clare Champion – Full page advertisement 24th August.
 - o Clare Echo – Social media platforms.
 - o Ennis prize sponsored to their social media.
 - o 30 second vignettes on Clare provided.
 - o Visit Clare social media across all platforms.

Clare County Council, through Shannon Municipal District, hosted the '19th Hole Community and Family Fun Festival' in Newmarket on Fergus on 2nd and 3rd September 2023.







10th Geopark Conference in Marrakech



Carol and Seán recently participated in the 10th International Global Geopark Conference held in Marrakech, Morocco. Seán's presentation on "Education and Simplifying Scientific Knowledge for the General Public" resonated well with the conference attendees. Regrettably, Carol was unable to deliver her prepared presentation because the conference was abruptly halted due to a powerful 6.8 magnitude earthquake that struck Marrakech.

Fortunately, both Carol and Seán emerged from the earthquake unharmed, and they were safely guided to secure locations by the geologists from the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark, highlighting the importance of geologists' expertise during such unexpected natural events.

Revalidation – UNESCO Global Geopark

The Geopark received wonderful news as their revalidation for UNESCO Global Geopark status was granted. They extend their sincere gratitude to all those who contributed their time and support during the evaluation visit in June of this year. This approval of their UNESCO Global Geopark status serves as a testament to the diligent efforts of the team and the affiliated organisations. They are dedicated to furthering sustainability, conservation, education, and the promotion of cultural and heritage values within the region.



Twinning – Phoenix, Arizona, and Langenfeld Germany



Ennis celebrates landmark twinning anniversaries with Langenfeld, Germany and Phoenix, Arizona. An Official Welcome reception was held at Áras Contae an Chláir Clare County Council, Monday, 11th September, to celebrate key landmark anniversaries of twinning relationships between Ennis and Langenfeld and the US city of Phoenix.

Hosted by Mayor of Ennis Municipal District, Cllr Pat Daly, and Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney, the event was attended by local government and community representatives from Langenfeld, Germany and Phoenix, Arizona who have travelled to Ireland to mark the 10th and 35th anniversaries respectively for their links with the Clare County town.

To mark these anniversaries 3 days of trips around the county were scheduled to explore our wonderful county, embrace our twinning links, promote, and foster tourism and develop new friendships to flourish into the future.



Day 1: with Phoenix Sister Cities and Stadt Langenfeld, 11th September. Nurturing twinning relationships promotes and fosters tourism, economic development and Cultural appreciation:

Tour:

- View Eamon de Valera's 1947 Dodge Limousine at Clare Museum.
- A journey through time with Dr Jane O'Brien on her Guided Walking Tour of medi-eval Ennis.
- Lunch in the award winning Legend's Restaurant Temple Gate Hotel.
- Step back to an Ireland of old at Bunratty Castle & Folk Park.
- Official Welcome, and evening reception in The Old Ground Hotel.



Day 2 with Phoenix Sister Cities and Stadt Langenfeld, 12th September.

Grow the strong bonds that have been created. Encourage our young people to explore different cultures. Develop new partnerships.

A Business Breakfast for delegates from Phoenix, Arizona, and Lagenfeld, Germany – both twinned with Ennis - took place at Hotel Woodstock, hosted by Ennis Chamber. Eric Johnson, Assistant Director of Economic Development for Phoenix, wowed the gathering with an impressive presentation on business growth and development in Phoenix, all the while maintaining the city's standing as a very attractive place to live.

Two members of Ennis Chamber gave presentations on opportunities for County Clare to become a driver in offshore renewable energy. Marie Gleeson, of Simply Blue Group, highlighted the 'Saoirse' wave energy project that Simply Blue are leading on. Located off County Clare's west coast, this project recently attracted €40 million in EU development funding. Meanwhile, Ronan O'Flynn of ESB gave an overview of the transition of Moneypoint power station to become a green energy hub, which is currently well underway.

Tour:

- Visit the new developments at Vandeleur Walled Garden, Kilrush.
- Cruise The River Shannon and Lough Derg with Killaloe River Cruises.
- Evening receptions Old Ground Hotel.

Day 3 with Phoenix Sister Cities, 13th September.

With temperatures reaching 40°C in Phoenix, our visitors are happy to enjoy our climate and wide-open spaces.

Tour:

- Take in The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark.
- Visit the home of Michael Cusack, founder of the GAA, and the history of the GAA Michael Cusack Centre.
- Witness the talent, agility and skills of the border collies (and shepherds) at Ca-herconnell Stone Fort.
- Experience award winning food at Vaughan's Anchor Inn.
- Breathe in one of Ireland's highest sea cliffs and favourite visitor experiences Cliffs of Moher Experience.
- Explore the enchanting gardens at Dromoland Castle Hotel & Country Club.

Inaugural National INStone Symposium

On September 6th, Dr Eamon Doyle from the Geopark attended in the inaugural National INStone Symposium, which centred around the theme of "Preserving our Built Heritage and Traditional Skills Development." This event was hosted by Irish Natural Stone – INStone and offered a packed schedule featuring a wide range of topics such as architecture, stone craftsmanship, heritage, history, ethics, and conservation. It proved to be a captivating and insightful gathering dedicated to the preservation and conservation of stonework.

Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre - Green Flag Award

Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre have been awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award for the 7th successive year.

The award benchmarks excellence in the management of green spaces. This recognition is a testament to the wonderful work and dedication of the staff who maintain the beauty and sustainability of the garden.



First Irish Harp Celebration in Bunratty

A unique celebration of the harp and its special place in Irish folklore and culture took place at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park in County Clare on September 2nd and 3rd last.

The inaugural two-day celebration featured harpists and harp music experts from across Ireland with a series of exhibition, talks and performances marking the instrument's unique position in the medieval banquet offering at Bunratty Castle. 'A Celebration of the Irish Harp' coincided with the 60th anniversary of the Bunratty Castle Medieval Banquet and the launch of a new exhibition chartering the history, evolution, and popularity of one of Ireland's oldest running evening entertainment shows. The celebration was hosted in collaboration with Deirdre O'Brien Vaughan, Director of the Irish Traditional Music Institute. The internationally renowned harpist, musician and music teacher has nurtured thousands of musicians over the last 30 years, toured and taught across the world, and has performed with Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann, The Chieftains and Liam O'Flynn. According to Ms O'Brien Vaughan, "The celebration will bring the story of the Irish harp to life through an array of talks,

performances and activities based around this most symbolic of musical instruments."

"Ireland's heraldic emblem is the harp, and we are the only nation to have a musical instrument as our national emblem. Its use as the arms of Ireland goes back to medieval times when the instrument was played in banquet halls across the country and, most notably, at Bunratty Castle where its melodic sounds have had a presence over the centuries," she added.

Marie Brennan, Events Manager at Bunratty Castle & Folk Park, said, "More than 3 million people have attended the banquets in Bunratty since the dramatic idea of a medieval meal in a 15th century Irish castle captured the imagination of travel agents, dignitaries, and celebrities worldwide in the 1960s. The Irish harp is the one musical instrument that people associate with this long-running event and, therefore, we are delighted to be able to celebrate its status as a symbol of Irish culture at the visitor attraction next week."



Preliminary Draft Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 – Now Available



The Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy focuses on the setting out of a long-term vision for the sustainable development of the worldclass visitor attraction over the next 20 years. The proposals have been informed by detailed analysis of the natural, heritage, architectural, tourism and economic context of the Cliffs of Moher site and wider region. A preliminary draft and executive summary is now available on www.cliffsofmoher.ie A public information evening took place on 20th September

in the Falls Hotel with 80 attendees, presentations on strategic proposals were made from Clare County Council, Fáilte Ireland, HSD Consultants, University of Limerick and ATU Sligo. Feedback received will be considered and incorporated into the draft. Physical copies of the draft are available in the hinterland Clare Libraries to the Cliffs of Moher Experience- Ennistymon, Corofin, Lisdoonvarna and Miltown Malbay.

Michael Cusack Day celebrations in County Clare



Tim Madden (Michael Cusack Centre), Deirdre Murphy (Clare GAA), Brian Nevin (Fáilte Ireland), Cllr Joe Cooney (Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council), Senator Roisin Garvey, Cllr Tom O'Callaghan, Dónal Ó hAiniféin (Michael Cusack Centre) and Siobhan King (Fáilte Ireland) at the Michael Cusack Day and Website Launch in Carron. Photograph by Eamon Ward.

The final event of 'Cusack 175', a yearlong programme of events marking the 175th anniversary of the birth of Michael Cusack, was held at birthplace of the founder of the GAA in Carron, County Clare, on Sunday, 17th September. The Michael Cusack Centre hosted the fourth annual Michael Cusack Day at which a new website, for the North Clare visitor attraction also was launched. www.michaelcusack.ie, which has been developed with the support of Fáilte Ireland's 'Digital That Delivers' programme, celebrates the Clare man's love for education, Irish culture and sport that led to the foundation of the world's largest amateur sporting organisation.

Michael Cusack Day featured free entry to the Centre, the Púca Sculpture and Fairy Trail, and included hurley making demonstrations by Aidan Cuddihy of Inagh-based Macoda Hurleys, facepainting, and live music from singer songwriter Pete Molloy and the children of Carron National School where Cusack attended and later became a teacher.



Aidan Cuddihy of Inagh based Macoda Hurleys and Cllr Joe Cooney chatting at the Michael Cusack Day in Carron on Sunday.

WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT- KILRUSH LEA

The weather is rather mixed and we are coming towards the end of our Roadworks Programme, so in September – much as in recent months – our roadmaking crews have been concentrating on completing the roads listed on the 2023 Schedule of Municipal District Works (Roadworks Programme). Additionally works have been carried out on the Local Improvement Scheme for private roads and Community Involvement Scheme for public roads. Drainage, road strengthening & resurfacing works have been carried out.

We also carried out other works to pedestrian areas at The East End in Kilkee and works at the memorial plaque at the Kilkee Cliffs carpark as well as to drainage & footpaths in Lissycasey.

Works with funding from Active Travel completed at Spanish Point. Refurbishment works at Ennistymon Public Toilets commenced.

ROAD WORKS PROGRAMME



Surface Dressing at Ballyea



LIS Scheme at Cragg, Lissycasey



Footpaths & drainage works in Lissycasey



Memorial Plaque works at Kilkee Cliffs



Surface Dressing at Knock & Kilmurry McMahon



Active Travel Spanish Point



Pedestrian area works. East End, Kilkee



Refurbishment Works Ennistymon Public Toilets



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

Roadworks Programme and Operations

The 2023 Schedule of Municipal District Works (Annual Roadworks Programme) is progressing well despite the inclement weather conditions over the summer months.

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:

- An on-site meeting and walk through with the Design Team was held on Wednesday 23rd August.
- A letter of Intent has been issued for the appointment of a Quantity Surveying Consultant for the delivery of the following phases:
 - o Detailed Design & Procurement.
 - o Construction & Implementation.
 - o Close-out & Review

Connecting & Co-creating Ennis:

- Junction tightening works are progressing throughout the town, with construction works recently completed at Árd na Gréine. Works will shortly commence at a number of locations along Clon Rd including French Park, Meadows Court, Greendale, French Court and Riverdale.

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

- Tender Evaluation has been completed and Tobin Consulting Engineers have been selected as the most Economically Advantageous Tender. Contract signing will take place in the coming weeks. This contract will be for the Options Selection, Preliminary Design and Statutory Processes phases.

'Safe Routes To School' programme:

- Tender Evaluation has just been completed following a competitive tender process for the Clonmoney National School Scheme. The successful tenderer will be awarded the contract shortly with works expected to commence in the coming weeks.
- Preliminary Design Drawings have been completed for the Holy Family National School scheme. Approval is now required from the NTA before the Detailed Design Phase can progress and go through the required Section 38 Statutory Process.

Ennis Town Local Transport Plan:

- Systra Consulting Engineers have been formally appointed to prepare the Ennis Town Local Transport Plan.

Ennis Town Cycle Counters:

- Installation of Cycle Counters at a number of locations around Ennis town are nearing completion. These will provide valuable information on existing cyclist numbers at these locations.

Public Lighting

The PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project) has commenced in Clare with surveying works completed in the Shannon MD & ongoing in the Ennis MD.

For the benefit of Councillors, public lighting faults can be reported online at <https://enerveo.com/report-a-fault/republic-of-ireland>, by Phone (0818-372772) or via Local Authority Identification (<https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/roads-and-transport/road-maintenance-issues/report-a-broken-streetlight>).

Road Design Office

TII Road Safety Projects

Project	Progress Update
HD17	<p>N85 Lahinch Road/Shanaway Road 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 is currently being prepared.</p> <p>N67 Doonbeg A Pedestrian Crossing Assessment will be prepared to identify the possibility of introducing a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of the Church in Doonbeg.</p>
Noise Action Plans	Strategic Noise Mapping & Noise Action Plans Agglomerations Technical Working Group Meetings and Workshops are ongoing.
Fence Retrofitting Programme	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.

Other Projects 2023

Project	Progress Update
Bridge Rehabilitation Programme	<p>Ballycloghessy Bridge - Section 50 application submitted to OPW. Contractor appointment on going.</p> <p>Construction works 90% completed, bar snagging on the following bridges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloghera Bridge • Crean Bridge • Drimeen Bridge • Gortnaglough Bridge • Gortnagonella Bridge • Inchiquin Bridge <p>Construction works commenced on the following bridges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alagha Bridge • Ballybran Bridge • Dromore Bridge • Gortalassa Bridge • Wyndham Bridge • Knockanena Bridge <p>Contractor appointed ongoing for the following bridges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erinaghmore Bridge • Rathmeehan Bridge • Mahonburg Bridge <p>Tender evaluation and Contractor appointment ongoing for the following bridges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poulmagun Bridge • Ballykeel North Bridge • Boolyduff Bridge • Drumellihy Bridge <p>N85 Culvert Replacement - Consultant appointed for the design of a replacement culvert on the N85 at Fountain, Ennis.</p>

<p>Liaison with NTA regarding bus stops</p>	<p>The NTA has approved 15 bus shelters for the 2023 programme. Works are completed at 14 locations.</p> <p>The following is an update of progress with respect to the final bus shelter at Clarisford:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Road Safety Audit has been forwarded to the NTA for approval.
<p>Low-Cost Safety Schemes 2023</p>	<p>Design works are complete for all 17 low-cost safety schemes.</p> <p>Section 38 process completed on the following schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Mill Road, Ennis • Summerhill • Ardnacrusha

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 and Tablets are currently being 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.

An Internal H&S Audit Plan has been drafted for approval 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 by the end of 2023.

Serious Incident Simulated Exercise Workshops continue to be delivered in each Municipal District and across a range of Departments in Clare County Council during 2023.

ESB Public Safety Manager will be delivering Safety Talks in each Municipal District and at the Safety Monitoring Committee Meeting during October on working near overhead power lines and underground services.

General Design Office

Project	Progress Update
<p>Ennistymon Hub/ Monastery Lane derelict storeroom redevelopment</p>	<p>Tenders were received by the General Design Office and a Contractor appointed to carry out refurbishment works to the existing Ennistymon Library Public Toilets. The project provides for the installation of an external platform lift with the complete internal refurbishment of the Male and Female toilets, each to be Part M compliant and contain baby changing facilities. The Library Plaza is to be repaved with the addition of landscaping works. Works are due to commence on site by the end of August and completed by the end of October 2023.</p> <p>The General Design Office are currently working on a scheme to redevelop the existing derelict storerooms located at the rear of the Ennistymon Hub to provide new office accommodation. These works will complete the development of the former Parliament Street/Monastery Lane SuperValu site and will enhance the area adjacent to the existing Hardware Store on Monastery Lane.</p>



Project	Progress Update
Vandeleur Walled Gardens, Kilrush, Courtyard Pergola	Preliminary design ongoing, material samples requested, site surveys completed.
Vandeleur Walled Gardens, Kilrush - Upper Carpark.	Works completed on site, minor snagging items to be closed out.
Vandeleur Walled Gardens, Kilrush - Courtyard Paving	Courtyard paving and guarding and handrail to pedestrian crossing. Pricing drawings completed, quotations received from contractor and forwarded to Administrative Officer for approval.
Town and Village Renewal Schemes	Clonlara - Works started on site 18th September 2023. Parteen – Redesign currently ongoing. Corofin - Topographical survey finalised and on file. Preliminary design investigations ongoing. Drumgeely – Tenders received, Contractor to be appointed early October 2023.

CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

As the last Monthly Report was tabled at the July Meeting, the following update covers progress during July and August on the Major Capital Projects being managed by the PMO.

Doolin Pier Visitor Services Building	Arising from hyperinflation in the industry generally, we have requested the Department to allocate increased funding to this project to enable it to progress to Statutory Consent stage. This follows completion of environmental evaluation surrounding land use options, and re-engagement with appointed design team and third party landowner.
Ennis Public Realm Regeneration (Project B)	<p>As a consequence of the increased funding allocation of €8.6m, the Council was in a position to advance this project to the next stage of development. Letters of intent and regret issued and following the expiration of the standstill period, the Letter of Acceptance issued to the successful Tenderer, Shareridge Ltd marking an important milestone. Information update sessions were held with the Elected Members along with a well-attended Public Information Session held in the Civic Room in Drumbiggle in September. This was attended by representatives of Shareridge, the Design team and Council staff who were on hand to outline the project works and answer any questions. Public Consultation is ongoing regarding the Statutory Road Closure process which if granted, will allow works to commence on Phase 1 of the project in Upper O’Connell Street in October 2023.</p> <p>The works requirement within the contract obliges Shareridge to have a Public Liaison Officer (PLO) as part of their Team who will be based in their Project office in Ennis Town Centre. The PLO will engage extensively with affected parties before and during the works and will also be convening routine meetings with the public throughout the construction programme. The public and traders are encouraged to take every opportunity to meet with the project team to ensure that needs are communicated, and disruption is minimised wherever possible. As part of the works programme, we will be facilitating Uisce Eireann (Irish Water) with 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 in full by Uisce Eireann, can be accommodated 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>Some disruption/inconvenience during the works phase will be experienced but 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 the Publics, Residents and Traders cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated.</p>
Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake’s Corner)	The next Hearing date in regard to the Judicial Review proceedings is scheduled for week commencing October 9th Pending the outcome of these, Design work has paused on the project. If the decision of ABP is upheld, then we will scale up quickly to complete the detailed design and tender documents with a view to appointing a Contractor at the earliest juncture.

Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass

Despite the mixed weather experienced in September, work continues at pace on this exciting project. Rock breaking and Earth Works mass haul and deposition operations continue for the Killaloe Bypass section with material being placed at the Kincora Roundabout section.

Drainage installations and utility diversions continue in particular at the Creeveroe Road & Hill Road staggered junction which was closed to through traffic on Monday the 25th of September.

Road make-up, kerb installation and drainage are progressing elsewhere.

Marine Works are progressing well for the Shannon Bridge Crossing element, with the installation of the Precast Pile Caps along with the Land based Bridge Pier and Abutment works.

On the R494 Upgrade section, the piling works for the new railway bridge have been completed with RC abutment works now progressing.

This work has necessitated a road closure to through traffic for a period of 9 months whilst the new bridge is constructed. However, local access is maintained to all affected properties, businesses and Signage and Diversionary routes are in place.

Landowner Accommodation Works and Road Construction elements are progressing along various sections of the R494.

A further Road Closure at the proposed staggered junction on the Creeveroe Road is required to facilitate the installation of utilities there. This closure will follow on from the completion and reopening of works currently underway on Hill Road. Further details can be found on the Council's project webpage on <https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/capital-projects/roads-and-bridges/killaloe-bypass-shannon-bridge-crossing/#tma>

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

Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass





<p>Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme</p>	<p>Scheme consultant JBA-JB Barry continue to progress the various documents required in preparation for next year’s planning permission application. All baseline surveys for the EIAR (Environmental Impact Assessment Report) have been completed.</p> <p>The Options Report is currently being updated with the findings of the CCAP (Climate Change Adaptation Plan). The revised Buildability Report has been reviewed and assessed onsite.</p>
<p>Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)</p>	<p>A progress review meeting was held in early September with the LIHAF Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) where delivery of the Road Infrastructure and Housing elements were discussed in detail. The scheme estimate has been updated to reflect completion of the detailed design of the road and current market costs. The associated increase in grant allocation is currently being considered by the Department. In terms of the Residential element of the project, we continue to liaise with our colleagues in Housing regarding the optimum design and composition of the scheme, following which we will be able to revert to the Department. The detailed design and preparation of the tender documents associated with the road element of the scheme have been finalised by our consultants RPS. Discussions with the relevant landowners is ongoing regarding the acquisition of the necessary lands for the scheme.</p>
<p>Lough Donnell Culvert Repair works</p>	<p>At this stage, the Contractor (Donnelly Brothers) is nearing substantial completion of the works with all remaining work expected to be finished in the coming weeks. Following representations by Elected Members and adjoining Landowners, we had hoped to carry out some improvement works to the access road at the Clohauninchy end which has essentially been eroded away in recent years. Unfortunately, the costs required to construct an access road to an acceptable standard were prohibitive and are currently not available. The area does however, benefit from an access to the shoreline from the southern end at Carrowmore.</p>

<p>N19 Shannon Airport Access Road</p>	<p>The Phase 3 (Design and Environmental Evaluation) stage is currently ongoing with Phase 4 (Statutory Consent) stage to progress thereafter. This will involve a Development Consent Application & EIAR to An Bord Pleanála which is currently expected to be submitted in Q2 2024. Over the month of September works continue with regard to the EIAR chapter compilation and the issuing of various reports such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preliminary Design Report, - Cost Benefit Analysis Report, - Updated Scheme Cost Estimate <p>The Phase 3 Design Peer Review was held on the 25th of September at the Mid-West Regional Road Design Office in Limerick whereby the team of TII’s peer reviewers challenged the preliminary design of the scheme in advance of proceeding to the next project phase. The Preferred Option includes a combination of active travel measures, improvements to public transport, along with new and improved road infrastructure between Drumgeely Roundabout and Knockbeagh Point roundabout on approach to Shannon International Airport.</p> <p>As always further information and associated literature on the project can be accessed via the scheme website www.shannonaccess.ie</p>
<p>Quin Flood Relief Scheme</p>	<p>Construction of the Reinforced Concrete (RC) wall to the rear of the three dwellings is progressing well onsite. A number of foundation sections have been poured to date, with wall pours due to commence shortly. The earthen embankment has also advanced to full height over the agricultural land area. The tie-in section will re-commence on completion of the RC wall.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
<p>Remediation of sites containing ACM</p>	<p>Tenders in respect of disposal of bulk soil material were published this summer 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 tender in respect of the excavation and remediation of the sites. In the interim, 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>Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme</p>	<p>The steering group have continued to work closely with scheme consultant RPS in the development of the fluvial options for the scheme. As a result, RPS have now issued the Draft Options Development Report for our review. Initial comments and observations from Clare County Council and the OPW have been returned to RPS. A contractor for the underwater Archaeology Impact Assessment (AIA) has been appointed and will commence the survey in the coming weeks following issue of the required license.</p>
<p>Springfield, Clonlara FRS</p>	<p>Work on the scheme has now reached substantial completion. The Pumpstation including the security fencing, storage shed, surfaces and lighting is complete. Fencing of the boundary including access gates is 90% complete. The land raising area has been re contoured, topsoiled, and reseeded. Landscaping of the lands damaged by the works is continuing. Remaining works on the scheme are minor in nature and include construction of access steps and railings, landscaping, works to the entrance and accommodation works. It is expected that the contractor will be off site within the next week or so, weather dependant.</p>
<p>West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 1: Kilrush to Kilkee)</p>	<p>Work continues on the ‘Option Selection Report’ in line with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) requirements. The Emerging Preferred Route Corridor Public Consultation (PC3) is scheduled to commence before Christmas. Individual landowner meetings are ongoing and Clare County Council is available to meet landowners to discuss any concerns or issues that they may have throughout this process.</p>
<p>West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 2: Ennis to Ennistymon)</p>	<p>Studies of environmental sensitivities, including protected sites and flood prone areas are underway. Information on other planned complimentary works at Corofin (e.g. Burren Visitor Centre) has been collated and is being assessed by the consultants in the finalisation of the Option Selection Process.</p>

West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 3 & 4: Ennistymon to Miltown Malbay and Miltown Malbay to Moyasta)	A Study Area has been defined and mapping of constraints has commenced. It is intended to undertake initial Public Consultation on the Study Area later this year.
Other Greenway Proposals	<p>Works are continuing on our other Greenway proposals at Shannon, Bunratty and Sixmilebridge. Clare County Council remain committed to working with all affected stakeholders to ensure an optimum outcome.</p> <p>Clare County Council continue to collaborate with TII and Waterways Ireland on developing the proposal between Limerick/UL and Scarriff.</p> <p>Following representations made by Elected Members at recent Municipal District and SPC Meetings to extend our Greenway proposals to include the Burren area north of Ennistymon, and Mountshannon and Derrybrien in East Clare, we have undertaken to raise these matters with our colleagues in TII, who are the Approving Authority nationally, for Greenway Developments.</p>

FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

Emergency Tender Appliance

Capital Grant Aid Approval of €349,935.00 (including VAT) was granted by the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management to re-chassis and carry out significant upgrade works to an Emergency Tender Appliance based at Ennis Fire Station.

Training Courses

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service ran a Managing Fire Service Incidents Course (Module 1) at Shannon Fire Station. The Course is accredited by the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management. 12 personnel attended from Clare Fire Service.

Fire & Building Control Section Main Activities	Aug2023	Sept 2023 (Up to 25.09.23)	Year to Date
Emergency Calls Attended	72	51	688
Fire Safety Certificates Received	7	8	76
Fire Safety Certificates Granted	15	3	61
Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	0	4
Disability Access Certificates Received	7	4	41
Disability Access Certificates Granted	10	3	33
Commencement Notices Received	51	26	319
Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	0	0	5

(Note: In the Sept Monthly Report, the Aug figures related to 1st- 25th August due to timing of report)

CLARE CIVIL DEFENCE

Operational Duties

- Civil Defence provided medical cover at a large number of events in September including Senior Club Football and Hurling Quarter Finals (Cusack Park); West Clare Cycle (Kilrush); Women's Irish Open (Dromoland); 19th Hole Festival (Newmarket On Fergus); Cycle against Suicide - Killimer to Lahinch and Lahinch to Salthill; Motorcycle Ride Out (Liscannor).
- As part of Health Heart Month, Clare Civil Defence Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) will present workshops to Clare County Council employees covering topics such as cardiac arrest, signs of stroke / heart attacks, etc.



Members Training & Professional Development

- Manual Handling Training.
- Emergency First Responder Course.
- Cardiac First Responder Training.
- Members of the Boat Team attended National Power Boat Training.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Awareness

Sustainable Development Goal Champions (SDG) programme

The Department of Environment Climate and Communications hosted Ireland’s second Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week from 23rd September – 1st October 2023, in conjunction with European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW). As SDG Champions we actively participate to promote SDG’s. In association with Clare Libraries, Healthy Clare and the Climate Team a number of events and workshops took place including an awareness stand in the foyer of Clare County Council on the 25th September 2023.



The week’s events and the SDGs were promoted with a press release and a comprehensive social media campaign. Our SDG “Your Say” web platform was updated detailing all events being undertaken as part of SDG Week <https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/clare-sdgs>

Shannon Chamber Sustainability Week

Our Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) attended the inaugural Shannon Chamber Sustainability Week Street Event on 22nd September 2023 with Clare County Councils Climate Action Co-ordinator. Our EAO focused on promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the My Waste Ireland Commercial Waste campaign to businesses attending at this event.

September Awareness Campaigns

The following were promoted on social and print media during September:

- 1) Invasive Alien Species Your Say web resource



- 2) What goes in the kerbside recycling bin utilising My Waste campaign material
- 3) Community Foundation Biodiversity fund
- 4) An Taisce Green Schools Teacher training
- 5) Clare Schools Biodiversity Programme
- 6) Tyres and Waste Tyres Regulations

Gardening

With a shift in the season's, work within the Gardening Team has transitioned towards a focus on winter maintenance and preparations for the 2024 growing season.

Planting for juvenile flowers has already commenced at the nursery to ensure a healthy stock of vibrant flowers are available to provide earlier season colour to our public spaces in springtime.

During September the Gardening Team collaborated with several of the Municipal Districts, including Shannon and Ennis, to enhance various public spaces and provide a colourful backdrop to events such as the 2023 KPMG Women's Irish Open.

In keeping with the increased focus on providing habitat and food for pollinating insects, many of the areas that have been planted with suitable plants and flowers will be allowed to remain in their natural state during September and into the early winter. This process is in keeping with the aims of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan by ensuring the distribution of seeds within flower beds for future regrowth, and to also provide cover and refuge for insects during colder months.

Water Enforcement and Laboratory Scientific Services

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

Water Enforcement Scientific Team	September 2023	Jan - September 2023
Audits/Inspection of Section 4 licenced premises	8	18
Bathing Water Monitoring	51	236
Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Inspections (NIP Plan)	0	63
Monitoring Inspections of Section 4 licenced premises	0	33
Planning applications (Agriculture)	3	26
Planning applications (Domestic)	34	326
Planning applications (Large Developments)	1	13
Planning applications (Forestry)	15	76
Pollution complaints received	9	72
Private Commercial Drinking Water Supplies	0	26
Private/Public Group Water Scheme supplies	15	102
Rivers	50	210
Warning & advisory letters issued	1	6

Bathing Water Monitoring

The bathing season ended on the 15th of September 2023.

There were two bathing water prohibitions introduced for inland bathing areas at Ballycuggeran and Mountshannon in September 2023. These prohibitions were introduced on advice of the Health Service Executive



(HSE) after the identification of a Blue/Green Algal Bloom on Lough Derg which impacted on these bathing areas. Blue/Green algae can produce harmful toxins. Such toxins have been known to be harmful to animals that drink the water and skin rashes have occurred in humans following contact. Monitoring continued throughout the month and the HSE notified our Bathing Water Team that the prohibition notices could be lifted on the 26th September. However, they also requested that an advisory notice should be maintained, and appropriate signage erected until further notice. This is in line with HSE Protocol and WHO guidance, and we will continue to monitor both locations to ensure there are no weather or environmental conditions which could cause a recurrence of the bloom.

Waste Enforcement

Kilkee Green Hub update

Work on this initiative is ongoing. Call back visits have commenced. Businesses are advised on waste segregation practices and discussion is ongoing regarding improved waste management practices. The Water Refill Station recently installed in Kilkee is in use. Funding for a second Water Refill Station has been received under this initiative.

Bins designed specifically to take pizza boxes have been ordered for Kilkee. It is hoped these will help combat the problem of pizza box litter.

Links to the businesses who have signed up are now live on the "Have Your Say" page on the Clare County Council website.

Anti-Dumping Initiative 2023

An inter-agency clean-up is planned for the Vandeleur Gardens, Kilrush on Thursday 28th September. This will involve Clare County Council, Coillte and private contractors. Waste will be removed from the site and disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Mattress Amnesty days will be held in Kilfenora and Kilrush marts on September 30th and in Scarriff mart on October 7th.

A Household Hazardous Amnesty Event will be held at the Central Waste Management Facility in Inagh on October 14th. Local radio, newspaper and social media are being used to advertise these events, which are funded under the Anti-Dumping Initiative.

Solid Fuel Regulations 2022

Several meetings were held in September between Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council and Offaly County Council on foot of a joint grant application funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) to investigate compliance with Air Pollution Act 1987 (Solid Fuels) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 529 of 2022).

Response to Dumping and Littering

The Waste Enforcement team continue to respond to illegal dumping complaints. In total, 50 complaints of litter and dumping were received in September, 27 of which are now closed. The remainder are under investigation and relevant enforcement actions are underway i.e. Warning Letters and Notices under the Waste Management Act, 1996 as amended, have been issued and compliance is being monitored. We issued 6 Litter Fines under the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 as amended, 2 of which have been paid.

Waste management

Further to the recent Office of Government Procurement (OGP) Tender for various waste streams at our 5 Civic Amenity Sites and 3 Waste Transfer Stations, the successful tenderer has begun site mobilisation and new compactors are being installed that will enable better site management and collection of certain waste streams.

Following the revision of opening hours at the Scariff Civic Amenity Site to better align with opening hours requested by the public we have seen an increased usage at those preferred times. Feedback at the site is that the current opening hours suit the drop off of waste at times that are more suitable to our customers than previous opening hours.

Our Waste Management team continues to investigate suitable locations for additional bring banks. Suitable locations require appropriate access for the public and for collection by truck, lighting, it is also preferable to have full access outside of normal business hours.

Monitoring continues at our Doora, Lisdeen, and Inagh closed landfills on a monthly / quarterly basis as required by or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) licences. We have been fully compliant with our Licence conditions for September.

CLIMATE ACTION

Climate Action Plan Development

Development of the Climate Action Plan is ongoing. Actions are being developed under a number of thematic areas as informed by the Pre-Draft Public Consultation. Actions rooted in thematic areas are as per graphic below.



Stage 2 of the process is expected to be mid-October when the Draft Plan goes to public consultation. This public consultation will be for a 6-week period. A number of public consultation events will be organised by the Climate Section to encourage and facilitate submissions on the Draft Plan.

Phases of Developing Climate Action Plan



Shannon Sustainability Week

Clare County Council partook in the inaugural Shannon Chamber Sustainability Week. It was an opportunity to showcase the types of projects companies are undertaking to reduce their carbon footprint. The 'Street Event' included displays from several companies focusing on specific projects, their objectives, methodologies, and outcomes. Clare County Council focused their submission around the work being carried out in the area of Public Lighting with regard to the energy reductions associated with same. There was cross section collaboration at the event to promote Clare County Council as a SDG champion.



Community Climate Action

Through the Climate Section, we are continuing to build links with communities in relation to Climate Action and promote the upcoming Community Climate Action Programme. Community engagement is a key component of the Community Climate Action Programme. A community engagement plan has been initiated to advise and support local community groups throughout County Clare to prepare and submit an expression of interest for funding once the programme has been launched. Elected members will be accommodated with a briefing on the detail of the Community Climate Action Programme once the Department have finalised all details. The Community Climate Action Officer has begun the task of creating networks in the Community arena towards ensuring active participation in the programme. In recent weeks, the Community Climate Action Officer has worked with Shannon Tidy Towns, Clarecastle Tidy Towns, Mna Gaire, Ennis Mens Shed amongst others.

Energy Awareness

Promotion of Energy awareness in the community is identified by the Climate team as a key priority over the coming years. Climate Officer, Chris gave an Energy Saving workshop to Shannon Tidy Towns during the Summer. Helpful hints and tips were provided in relation to how to reduce energy consumption in the home.



WATER

Water Services Briefing Note

Since January 2014 Clare County Council has worked under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Irish Water to provide the Water Services function in county Clare. During this time Clare County Council directly managed the service and staff while adhering to key performance indicators and budgets set by Irish Water.

However, following extensive negotiations over the last 3 years between the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage, the Workplace Relation Commission, the LGMA representing the local authority sector, the various trade unions and Irish Water a “Framework for the delivery of water services” was developed in June 2022 and a new contract agreement has been ratified between the parties. The new Agreement known as the Master Co-Operation Agreement (MCA) supersedes the SLA and was signed by Clare County Council in May 2023.

The main features of the MCA and the Framework are as follows:

- Irish Water, now to be known as Uisce Eireann, will take direct management control of the water services function across the local authority sector. The effective date for this transition for direct management control in Clare County Council was the 20th September 2023. On this date Uisce Eireann assumed responsibility for the management of health and safety of water services staff where previously that came under the local authority’s remit.
- Staff currently employed in water services will have the following options. (a) They can remain with their local authority where their terms and conditions will be maintained and a suitable post commensurate with their current role will be provided. Re-training of staff for new roles will also be provided where required. (b) Staff can also transfer to Uisce Eireann on their current terms and conditions and continue to work in the water services sector but no longer be a local authority employee. Staff will have until December 2026 to choose which option they prefer.
- On December 31st 2026 the Master Co-Operation Agreement will conclude and the local authority sector will cease to have any further involvement in the provision of water services.
- There will be some financial adjustments as central management charges previously paid by Uisce Eireann are unwound in the next 3 years. The Dept have “committed” to meeting any stranded costs in this area incurred by the local authority sector until 2026.

What changes?

- Clare County Council will no longer be reporting on water services functions/activities in the monthly management report as since the effective date we are not authorised to do so. The exception being the Rural Water programmes as this function remains with the local authority sector.
- While CCC staff will remain in posts in water services they are working under the control and direction of Uisce Eireann and as such their work programmes and reporting is under the direction of UE.
- CCC’s ability to deal with water services related issues/ Councillor queries will be severely curtailed as CCC staff are not authorised to report on functions outside of our remit. Uisce Eireann’s dedicated Councillor contact platforms are to be utilised for these issues. Uisce Eireann are hosting a Councillor clinic on the 25th October 2023 from 2.30-4.30pm to update Councillors on changes since the effective date.
- Over the next 3 years CCC’s involvement and influence in the capital and operational elements of water services will gradually diminish.

Future Delivery Of Water Services

The Master Co-Operation Agreement (MCA) and the Data Sharing Agreement between Uisce Eireann and Clare County Council was signed by the Chief Executive on the 5th May 2023. The MCA replaced the existing Service Level Agreement on the effective date which for Clare County Council was the 20th September 2023. Under the new MCA Uisce Eireann has now assumed direct management control of the water services staff and are also responsible for health and safety. The Council held briefings with Water Services staff on the 22nd of June to update staff on the future of water services in Clare. The briefings were well attended and afforded staff the opportunity to engage with Council management. There are further briefings planned in the coming months.

Water Services Operations

The detail hereunder is up to the 20th September as after that date the Council is not authorised to report on Uisce Eireann data. This issue is confusing for all but the best analogy is that the Council do not report on the activities of ESB and while our staff continue to work in water services they are working under the control and direction of Uisce Eireann.

Water Operations

Hereunder is a synopsis of activity of water services staff in response to water outages:




Area	Date	Location	Issue
East Clare Area	01.09.23	Whitegate	Burst Mains
	08.09.23	Clonlara Village	Burst mains
	13.09.23	Newtown, Killaloe	Burst mains
Ennis Area	28.08.23	Corofin, Ruan	Low Pressure due to upgrade works
	09.09.23	Abbeyville, Ennis	Burst Mains
	15.09.23	Knockanean, Doora	Burst mains
	23.09.23	Elm Park, Gort Rd.	Burst mains
West Clare Area	29.08.23	Lisdeen, Lisgreen - Kilkee	Burst mains
	04.09.23	Cross, Kilbaha, Killballyowen, Rehy – Loop Head	Burst mains
	05.09.23	Cappagh Dr., Kilrush	Burst mains
	07.09.23	Baltard, Killard, Glascloune, Doonmore - Doonbeg	Burst mains
	11.09.23	Shragh, Killard, Doonmore, Glascloune - Doonbeg	Burst mains
	12.09.23	Shragh, Doonmore, Glascloune, Killard - Doonbeg	Burst mains
	16.09.23	Mountrivers, Doonmore, Killard, Glascloune - Doonbeg	Burst mains
	17.09.23	Doonbeg	Burst mains
	18.09.23	Coore, Milltown, Spanish Point, Mullagh	Burst mains
	20.09.23	Doonmore, Glascloune, Killard, Baltard - Donbeg	Burst mains
	21.09.23	Querrin, Doonaha, Lismuse - Kilkee	Burst Mains
North Clare Area	22.09.23	Doonmore, Glascloune, Killard, Doonmore - Doonbeg	Burst mains
	08.09.23	The Falls Rd., Ennistymon	Burst Mains
Shannon Area	08.09.23	Kilshanny	Burst Mains
	28.08.23	Kilkishen	Burst Mains
	05.09.23	Aidan Park, Shannon	Faulty PRV
	05.09.23	Tullyvarra Crescent	Burst mains

Water operations team in conjunction with the Environment staff are co-operating with the HSE, Uisce Eireann and the EPA in respect of addressing recent Boil Water Notices applied to supplies in O'Briensbridge and Killaloe. Uisce Eireann are currently undertaking capital mains works at Clonroadmore, Ennis and Clonlara.

Water Conservation	
Leak Detection Works	Mid Clare – Tulla Rd, Ennis North Clare – Kilfenora, Ballheehan, Liscannor Shannon/East Clare – Killaloe, Ardnacrusha, Shannon (various) including Shannon Ind. Est.
Leak Detection Fix Operation	Various locations including Kilkee, Kilmihil, Ennis

Wastewater Operations

A sample of works carried out during the period are noted below:

Wastewater Operations	
Wastewater Pumping station -refurbishment	<p>Water services completed the external painting of the Quay Road Pumping Station building in Clarecastle. Consultation took place with the residents living on Quay Road through Cllr. Paul Murphy regarding the choice of colour scheme.</p> 
Wastewater Pumping station – stone wall boundary repair	<p>The repair of a stone boundary wall in Inagh, Co. Clare was completed in September. Inagh wastewater pumping station is located in Inagh Church carpark adjacent to the bottle banks. The north boundary stone wall which bounds the R460 road was damaged during a vehicle accident some years ago. Following the works “Inagh Tidy Village” reached out to thank water services staff and to acknowledge the work that was undertaken commenting that the wall looks fantastic.</p>  

Uisce Éireann Capital Programme	
Ballycannon and Elton Court Sewerage Pumping Station Upgrade	A project to upgrade the pumping facilities at Elton Court and to provide the required replacement infrastructure to allow the decommissioning of the existing Ballycannon wastewater treatment facility is underway. The construction of a new storm water holding tank and new wastewater pumping chamber on the existing pumping station site at Elton Court is ongoing, with final mechanical and electrical work expected to be completed in September. This will improve the capacity for pumping wastewater to the Limerick main drainage network. A new rising main from the existing Ballycannon plant to the Elton Court site and new pumping facilities at the Ballycannon treatment plant will then be constructed. When completed this will allow for the decommissioning and demolition of the Ballycannon WWTP. Planning permission for the works at the Ballycannon site has been granted. The contractor is now finalising the detail of equipment to be provided and proposals to provide for planning conditions.
Ballymacraven Water Treatment Plant	This plant provides water to the North Clare Region, including Ennistymon, Lahinch, Lisdoonvarna, Doolin and Ballyvaughan. Phase 1 of this will modernise the water treatment processes at the plant with Phase 2 delivering the sludge handling line to follow. Phase 1 Work has commenced with the construction of a new third water clarifier now complete. Work to rehabilitate the old clarifiers now underway. The phase 1 upgrade is programmed to be complete by end of 2023, with the phase 2 works expected complete by Q4 of 2024.
Ballyvaughan WWTP	A new wastewater treatment plant, pumping station including pipework extensions are proposed west of Ballyvaughan village. Planning permission has been granted to Uisce Éireann. It is anticipated that construction work will commence in mid-2024 and is likely to take 18 months.
Clonroadmore & Clareabey WTPs	A project has commenced to examine the two wastewater treatment plants serving Ennis to ensure adequate capacity is available to cater for the future growth and development. The output of this stage of the project is a feasibility study report which will inform the decision on the most appropriate option to develop capacity in the plants. The consultant is preparing options reports for each plant and assessing the assimilative capacity available in the River Fergus.
Doonbeg WWTP Upgrade	This scheme is in the 'Early Contractor Involvement' programme. The working draft of the Environmental Scoping Report is Phase 1 of the marine modelling study and is under review at present.
Ennis Drainage Area Plan	This project involves the gathering of all available data on the wastewater network in Ennis and surveying and monitoring of flows in the network. This information will be used to build a hydraulic model of the network. The hydraulic model can be used to model future growth in the town and accurately identify where upsizing of pipework or improved pumping infrastructure might be required. It will also be used to identify where groundwater is infiltrating into the network. It will allow Uisce Eireann to have confidence in obtaining the best value for money on network improvement. The consultant has completed an unverified preliminary model build and will now proceed to check and verify this using survey and flow data to be gathered by a contractor. The procurement of the flow and data collection survey work is in process with appointment expected before year end.
Ennistymon And Lahinch WWTP Upgrade	Work on selection of an exact site, pipeline route, detailed design, land acquisition and a planning application will commence in the coming months. The marine model mentioned above is required to inform the design of a new effluent outfall.
Inagh Wastewater Treatment plant Upgrade	Uisce Eireann is progressing the design for an upgrade including additional headroom at the Inagh Wastewater treatment plant under the IWSS programme. A designer/contractor has been appointed and is undertaking options development for the upgrade.
Kilfenora WWTP Upgrade	Mechanical and civil works snagging continued on site. Process proving commenced at the treatment plant. Repairs to the administration building were carried out.

Kilkee WWTP	A new wastewater treatment plant, pumping station and rising main are planned for Kilkee. It is planned to continue the use of the existing sea outfall at Intrinsic Bay. Design of the treatment plant and pump station is ongoing. It is anticipated that a planning application will be lodged in the coming weeks.
Kilmihil WTP upgrade	A project under the National Certificate of Authorisation Programme (NCAP), to modernise the existing wastewater treatment plant for Kilmihil, is at design stage. The project includes new inlet works, primary and secondary treatment with nutrient removal and a storm water holding facility. It will provide sludge dewatering and storage capacity. The stage 4 design workshop was held in May and design continues to be developed.
Kilrush WWTP	The scheme now comprises of a new wastewater treatment plant near Skagh Point, a new rising main and additional storm storage. Upgrade of the existing Francis St pumping station will also be completed. At the WWTP at Skagh Point snagging work continued. Following on from an investigation of a section of the existing rising main on Cappagh Road a report was prepared by the Contractor and is under review at present.
Liscannor WWTP	The scheme now consists of a new wastewater treatment plant at Corcomroe, a pumping station adjacent to John P Holland Park, rising main, gravity sewer and connection to the existing outfall. The scheme will be operated by EPS until April 2024 and will then be handed over fully to Uisce Éireann.
Miltown Malbay WWTP Upgrade	The upgrade project is now at the investment planning stage. The marine model mentioned above is required to inform the design of a new effluent outfall. Uisce Éireann has indicated that the proposed WWTP and new outfall will be able to cater for inclusion of Spanish Point effluent in the future.
Newmarket on Fergus WWTP upgrade, rising main and outfall	It is proposed to construct additional treatment facilities at the treatment plant and a new 400mm diameter rising main which would outfall to the Rine River thereby ceasing discharge of treated effluent from the existing wastewater treatment plant to the Lough Gash turlough. A decision on the planning application is awaited. Subject to a grant of planning permission, construction is anticipated to commence in mid-2024 and is likely to take 18 months.
Old Doolough Water Treatment Plant	Úisce Eireann is progressing the design for a package plant to be installed to supplement the water supply at Doolough and facilitate the decommissioning of the Old Doolough water treatment plant. The project team carried out an initial site assessment in June and options development continues for this project.
Uisce Éireann Investment Plan Preparation 2025 to 2029	On the 5th of May Water Services, Clare County Council made a submission to Uisce Éireann on the Consultation Paper in Advance of their Investment Plan Preparation 2025 to 2029. It outlined UÉ wastewater infrastructure in County Clare which currently needs investment due to deficiencies in capacity or treatment quality and also outlined County Clare settlements which currently have no wastewater treatment.

Note: WWTP indicates wastewater treatment plant, WTP indicates water treatment plant

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** (14 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)** (57 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** (21 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 much 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" 54 applications have been received to date in 2023.

SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Model Aircraft display at Shannon Airport

Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan Shannon MD together with Cathaoirleach Joe Cooney Clare County Council attended the launch of the second installation of model aircraft in Shannon Airport during the Summer. The new exhibition showcases over 900 additional model aircraft and is available to view by the general public in the aviation gallery. Models on display include a collection of concordes, fleet of VC 10's, a sunderland aircraft model which was owned by Al Capone, iconic Antonov 225 and many, many more interesting and historic diecast planes. The strong history of aviation in Shannon is something to be celebrated and remembered and Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan was pleased to attend this event which will be a point of interest to many travellers including families using the airport into the future.

Shannon MD Meeting held at the Limerick Clare Education and Training Board Campus



Shannon Municipal District held its September meeting at the Limerick Clare Education and Training Board Campus in Shannon and took part in a very informative site visit of the facility after the meeting. James Power of the LCETB gave a briefing to Members and on the various Apprenticeship courses available including plumbing, electrical, aircraft maintenance, spray painting, welding (incl. orbital pipe welding), metal fabrication, refrigeration and air-conditioning etc.

The main function of the Shannon campus is the delivery of Phase 2 Apprenticeships with 2500 apprentices awaiting this phase.



Pictured at the launch of the new diecast model aircraft in Shannon were Cathaoirleach Donna Mc Gettigan, Shannon Municipal District and Cathaoirleach Joe Cooney, Clare County Council together with Mary Considine CEO Shannon Airport Group.



The Councillors saw firsthand the apprentices at work in the workshops and were impressed by the practical, on the job training where the apprentices were developing specialised skills and knowledge relevant to their chosen field. These programs offer flexibility, as graduates can work in various sectors such as construction, aviation or manufacturing and can earn very competitive salaries. The LCETB works closely with the secondary TY schools in Clare and provides opportunities for small classes of students to participate in a practical program over a 2 week period. LCETB Campus in Shannon is playing a crucial role in enabling many people to secure long-term employment through their specialised training programmes.



Newmarket on Fergus Community and Family 2-day Festival a huge success

It takes a whole community to make a Festival and this was the case in Newmarket on Fergus when the '19th Hole Festival' was held in the town in early September in conjunction with the Women's Irish Open. The festival ran over 2 days with the much-appreciated input, assistance and participation from the local community groups and residents. Their commitment and co-operation in ensuring everything ran smoothly was welcomed by Shannon Municipal District.

Community support and dedication was a key success factor in the organisation of the Festival. The town presented itself in its very best light with all the hard work paying off. The welcoming environment was evident with bunting, festival lighting, freshly painted buildings, floral displays and signage. Huge crowds attended the programme of events and it was wonderful to see so many people across the County and beyond coming together and having fun and enjoying the diverse range of music and numerous family activities. Events were held in O'Regan Park, Mooghaun and at 'The Green' in the town centre. The sun shone down and made it even more enjoyable with sunglasses and ice-cream at the ready. The boost for the local economy was also welcomed. The 2 day event in Newmarket on Fergus offered a shared experience that resonated with people of all ages and created memories for families for years to come.





Excellence in Local Government Awards

The Shannon Embankment Scenic Trail has been shortlisted for the prestigious Excellence in Local Government Awards 2023 under the Municipal District Initiative category. The Shannon Embankment Scenic Trail is a 3 km of 7.5km looped accessible route that runs along the southern side of the Shannon estuary in Shannon Town. The views are truly breath taking and the starting point is at Illaunamanagh in Shannon. It incorporates a forest area as well as the stunning Estuary views which is a special area of conservation. This is a true gem in that its location is one of the most important sites in Ireland for over-wintering wildfowl and waders.



The trail facilitates a weekly parkrun event which is attended by hundreds of locals and visitors and has proved a huge success. The enhanced Council carpark provides secure, safe parking for all participants. Shannon is a cycle, walk and wheelchair-friendly metropolitan town and this Embankment Scenic Route contributes to a higher quality and standard of life for all. Works for this project were funded through ORIS, GMA and own resources. An emphasis on highlighting the presence of local wildlife has been incorporated on signage along the walk and is reinforced with QR codes on each sign allowing access to the information for walkers with additional needs. The results of the competition will be announced in November 2023.



Future Mobility Campus

Leas-Cathaoirleach John Crowe attended Electronomous event on 20th September 2023 at the Future Mobility Campus in Shannon. This event brought together global players within the mobility, automotive and aviation ecosystem. A panel of speakers discussed matters such as transportation and mobility research, integrated public transport and shared autonomous mobility for equitable transit coverage, electrifying fleets, west of Ireland as a global technology hub etc. Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr John Crowe hosted a lunch event with Padraic McElwee, Head of Local Enterprise Office, Clare County Council.

Summary Of Other Works

Newmarket on Fergus ORIS	The Mural is nearing completion as part of this overall project outdoor recreational project.
Sixmilebridge Railway Station	Works including the provision of Bollards and Overhead barrier are currently being completed with a view to re-opening the Station to vehicles in the near future.
Tullyvarraga Hall	Disabled parking and Age-friendly parking provided at the Community Centre at Tullyvarraga Hall.
Town Village Renewal Schemes	Works have commenced in respect of (Clonlara); Land ownership matter being addressed (Bunratty) Letter of Intent has issued & site meeting between Contractor, Design Team and MD staff will be held in coming days (Drumgeely)
Ballycasey, Shannon.	Works to connecting pathway currently underway
Hedgecutting	Hedgecutting is ongoing throughout the MD at Parteen, Clonlara, Ardnacrusha and various other locations.