



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Feabhra / February
2024



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FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

HUMAN RESOURCES

Recruitment Competitions January

Eligibility Exercises & Desktop Shortlisting

- Executive Planner
- Assistant Planner
- Graduate Planner

Competitions Advertised Open

Beach Lifeguard & Senior Beach Lifeguard 2024 Season
Executive Librarian
Senior Library Assistant
Beach Operative

Interviews

- Retained Firefighter
 - Plant Operator B
- School Warden Part-time & Sporadic Cover Ennis MD

Learning and Development

**ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAMMES / WEBINARS /
INFORMATION SESSIONS**

JANUARY

Courtroom Skills
Grade 4 & Analogous Officer Training
Interview Training
IPA A-Z

Essential Skillz Online Training

Business Communication
Ergowize
Freedom of Information
Health & Safety Induction
Slips, Trips & Falls

Health & Safety

3-Day First Aid New Entrant
3-Day Forklift New Entrant
Fire Warden
Manual Handling

Cyber Security Courses - Metcompliance
Physical Security Breaches.



Newsletter: HR newsletter issued in December online and print version issued to all council bases & libraries.

Partnership Staff Talks

Presentations from Partnerships Committee, Pat Dowling and Director of Services were held around the county for all staff. Seven sessions were attended by approx. 450 staff.



Unions

The Human Resources Department engages with Unions on various matters.

The Partnership High Level Steering Committee Meeting was held in January where the members received comprehensive presentations on the achievements of Partnership over the last three years and Clare County Council’s Occupational Health and Safety Management System. The Chief Executive also addressed the Committee.

PROCUREMENT

The following Clare County Council tender competitions were published on eTenders in the period from 28th December 2023 to 29th January 2024 inclusive:

Tender Name	RFT ID	Response deadline
PMC: Affordable Housing - Clare County Council Is Seeking Expressions Of Interest For The Provision Of Turnkey Housing Developments For Delivery Of Affordable Housing Across County Clare	2978576	29/02/2024 16:00
Footpath Refurbishment Contract 2024 - Shannon Municipal District	2977585	14/02/2024 15:00
Request for Tender for the Operation of Mac Namara and Son Public House	2938507	12/02/2024 13:00
Request for Tender for the Provision of Catering Services	2938073	12/02/2024 13:00
Request for Tender for the Provision of Retail Services	2936081	12/02/2024 13:00
Ballycuggeran Failte Ireland Platforms for Growth Facility	2920647	02/02/2024 12:00
Kilkee Failte Ireland Platforms for Growth Facility	2919184	02/02/2024 12:00

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Launch of Clare Local Enhancement Programme 2024

Clare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is pleased to invite applications for funding for the Local Enhancement Programme 2024 under the Department of Rural and Community Development with a total allocation of €166k available to Clare.



This funding opportunity seeks to support our communities, local groups and clubs, particularly in disadvantaged areas, with necessary repairs and small capital works/improvements to their facilities, and the purchase of equipment for community use. There will also be a support fund for women's groups.

This funding will help communities, community groups and committees, allowing them to continue to provide valuable services to the people in their area, and also aims to support local strategic priorities through linkages with Local Economic Community Plans (LECPs).

Clare County Council's Rural Development Directorate are hosting a series of walk-in clinics to support community groups/organisations in preparing their applications for this scheme and other schemes that are presently open.

Clare Local Area Grant Scheme 2024

Clare County Council has launched this year's Clare Local Area Grant Scheme which includes funding across 11 grant categories with a total allocation of €690k for 2024.

The Council-led scheme will provide grants to community groups and organisations ranging from €300 to €5,000 for projects and initiatives under tourism marketing & promotion, arts, public realm, burial grounds, community playgrounds, Christmas lighting, etc.



Online applications can be made from **9am, Friday, 12th January, 2024.**

The online application system and scheme guidelines can be accessed from the website at: <https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/grants/clarelocalareagrantscheme/>

The closing date for submission of online applications is **5pm, Friday, 2nd February, 2024.**

Enquiries can be made by email: clags@clarecoco.ie.

Kathy Coleman and Niamh Wiley provided listeners with details on the Local Area Grants Scheme on Clare FM on Friday, 19th January, 2024. You can listen to the full interview at the following link: <https://www.clare.fm/featured-2/clare-county-council-launches-local-area-grant-scheme-2024/>



Walk-In Information Clinics and Supports

Clare County Council's Rural Development Directorate is hosting a series of walk-in clinics to support communities in preparing their applications for funding opportunities that are presently open, including the Local Area Grant Scheme 2024 and Local Enhancement Programme 2024. Details of the walk-in clinics are provided hereunder:

Date	Location	Time
Monday 29th January	Teach-Craig Centre, Carrigrohane, W41 W521	10.00AM - 1.00PM
	De La Salle Centre, Enniscorthy, W40 W42	2.00PM - 5.00PM
Tuesday 30th January	Shelving Community Centre, Bessing, W14 4191	10.00AM - 1.00PM
	St. Mary's Catholic Community Centre, 46 Newmarket, W41 W93	2.00PM - 5.00PM
Wednesday 31st January	Clarecom, 100 Road, Kiltoran, W41 W112	10.00AM - 1.00PM
	Clarecom, 100 Road, Kiltoran, W41 W112	2.00PM - 5.00PM
Thursday 1st February	St. Mary's Catholic Community Centre, Shannon, W14 4001	10.00AM - 1.00PM
	The Bridge Complex Community Centre, Southbridge, W41 N104	2.00PM - 5.00PM
	Clare County FCL, New Road, Ennis, W41 D8R2	4.00PM - 7PM

The closing date for receipt of applications is 5pm on Friday 2nd February 2024.

Clare County Council's Rural and Community Development Officers may be contacted at RCDO@clarecoco.ie or 065 6846296.

These walk-in clinics will provide community group and club representatives with an opportunity to discuss their projects with the four Rural and Community Development Officers, namely Grainne McCormack (Shannon), Seamus Murríhy (West Clare & Clarecastle), Niamh Wiley (North Clare & Ennis) and Darren Carroll (Killaloe).



Rural and Community Development Officers (left to right): Seamus Murríhy, Niamh Wiley, Grainne McCormack and Darren Carroll.

Marketing, outreach & social media

A book that had been borrowed in 1955 was recently returned to Clare Libraries via Cork County Library service. The story received lots of attention via social media and County Librarian Helen Walsh gave an interview on Clare FM on Thursday, 18th January. It provided an opportunity to promote that we have abolished late fees and removed all possible barriers to accessing library services.

Media mentions

Clare Champion, Thursday, 11th January: Promotion for event “Starting a Business in Ireland”.

Clare Echo, Wednesday, 17th January: Scariff Library to be named after Edna O'Brien.

Outreach

Library stand at the Parent Wellness Event, Shannon Family Resource Centre, Thursday, 24th January.

	New Followers	Total Followers	Post Reach / Impressions	Post Likes	Engagement
	20	7,362	43,000	443	450
	4	2,159	2,500	21	58
	21	2,043	3,600	160	818

Cultural Services - Library, Arts, Museum & Archives

Clare County Library



New ICT equipment purchased for public use in Clare Libraries

Work is progressing on both the Clare Library capital project and the upgrade to Clare Library website. Clare Libraries was awarded an ICT grant worth €110,115.29. This will allow for an upgrade of all the public IT equipment in branches.

Online resources usage in previous month as follows: keen demand for e-audiobooks & press reader

1615 E-Books	3036 E-Audiobooks	2182 E-Magazines
51 Online courses	2334 Press Reader	44 Transparent Languages

Library Activities in Figures

Total number of in branch events	134
Total audiences at in branch events	1,407
Total number of outreach events	2
Total audiences at outreach events	4
Total number of deliveries	9

Right to Read



Scéalta & rannta sa Leabharlann Inis Díomáin.

Clare Libraries are embarking on a collaborative series of community wellness events for parents in January and February 2024. Ennistymon, Shannon, Ennis, Scariff and Kilrush libraries

will facilitate these gatherings which will host local services and supports providers to showcase what’s available in the local area. There will be mindfulness and life coaching sessions, play therapy demonstrations, library tours and storytimes, and more, for Mums, Dads, Grandparents, Parents and Guardians in an exciting collaboration with Clare Parent Support Champions and the Clare Family Resource Centre as part of the “Right to Read” initiative. Parents will see what the library has to offer for families at this relaxed, informal gathering with a focus on self-care and wellness where they can meet each other and members of their local support network and enjoy a welcome tea or coffee and light refreshments at each event. These events takes place in Scariff library on 23rd January, in Shannon Library on 24th January with the other 3 libraries, Ennis, Kilrush and Ennistymon hosting similar events in February 2024.

Creative Ireland

Eva Birdthistle has taken up the post of Creative Communities Engagement Officer this month. Eva will work exclusively on the Creative Ireland programme in Clare, enhancing the community engagement aspect of the programme, as well as facilitating cross sector partnerships.

The Creative Communities Project Award, formerly The Creative Ireland Project Award, was announced on Monday 22nd January 2024. Clare County Council invites applications for project awards that will develop bodies of creative work in the community with a public interface or engagement. It is envisaged that awards of €500 - €2,000 will be granted. This is an increasingly popular award that supports community projects throughout the county.

Local Studies

The Local Studies Centre has added another resource to the Clare Libraries and Archives collection, sixty-seven 25 inch-to-the-mile sheet maps have been donated by John Holohan. These maps add considerably to the holdings of detailed Ordnance survey maps. The Dunboyne News Cuttings 1824-1878 transcription project has been completed.

The transcription of the 1825 Freeholders is ongoing, and the

transcription of entries from the 1821 census has begun (these entries were recorded in the late 19th century as part of the Crosslé notebooks). These census transcriptions will also have accompanying biographical notes.

Clare Archives

The County Archivist is presently on a career break. A replacement archivist will begin work on the 12th of February. Enquiries will be handled via the Local Studies Centre until that time.

Conservation and listing work on the Barrett Collection is ongoing; re-boxing of the collection and an accession list of the files have been completed.

The digitisation project is ongoing.

Clare Arts Office

The Arts Office grants scheme opened for applications. To support the applicants a Zoom Q & A was held. A webinar was also delivered on making successful grant applications with Visual Artists Ireland. Three “Artist in Schools” residencies began in Rineen, Knockanean and Sixmilebridge NS. PRISM Street Art Works continued in Ennis as did the Creative Places programme in Shannon.

Three exhibitions took place in Ennis, Scariff and Kilkee in January and Cultúrlann Sweeney held one film screening and the staff talks for the Western MDC.

Clare Arts Officer assisted with two television filming requests in O’Brien’s Bridge and Sixmilebridge. The Arts in the Community programme continued in St. Joseph’s Hospital, Ennis and in Raheen Hospital. Clare Youth Theatre continued in glór. Kilkee Youth Theatre continued their work with “Kids Books Ireland” and Laureate na nÓg. Two Arts in Clare slots happened on Clare FM. Four meetings were held with artists as well as an artists networking event in Galway. The Arts Office attended meetings with six organisations planning arts activities for 2024 / 2025. Studios in Tulla and Ennis continue to operate at full capacity, with one new artist joining EASI.

Social media statistics are as follows:

	Post reach	Post engagement	New Page likes	New Page followers	Total followers
Clare Arts Office	3,058	191	2	10	3,112
Cultúrlann Sweeney	1,347	157	5	11	2,010
EASI Studios	43	6	1	1	134
Tulla Stables Artist Studios	11	2	8	9	646
CYT - Clare Youth Theatre	37	0	1	1	571
Riches of Clare	69	0	0	0	2,850
Clare culture night	91	1	0	0	1,278
Embrace Arts Programme	2	0	1	0	567
Arts In Clare Group	-	-	-	26	2,959
Clare Trad Group	-	-	-	24	2,442

Clare Museum

Teresa Carmody O’Shea was appointed as Education Officer to Clare Museum. The strategic plan will be updated to take this new resource into account and the Education Policy will also be reviewed.



Mary Cahill in Clare Museum.

The first Winter Public Talk Series, featuring Mary Cahill on the Mooghaun Gold Hoard, took place this month on 17th January and was a huge success with 62 people in attendance. Other talks have been organised for February through to May. St Bridget’s Day activities are being arranged for primary schools for the end of January. It will include 10 workshops led by Ruth Marshall.

The embroidery collection in Clare Museum will be included in Limerick Institute of Art and Design’s Creative Ireland project. Museum staff met the new CI co-ordinator to discuss a Creative Ireland outreach project from the Museum. There was one new blog entry.

New County Library Construction Project

Construction work continues to make progress on the new Clare County Library and Art Gallery building. Curtain wall glazing installation is complete. Installation of the lifts is complete pending commission. The main feature stairs main structure is complete due to be clad in metal. External doors are installed, a fully weather tight building is imminent. Mechanical and electrical contractors are near completion second fix works for both trades. Wall and ceiling hung radiant panels are hung and installation of floor trench heaters is complete as part of heating system. Other main trades like External Wall Insulation and Render is ongoing at pace, with External Cladding ongoing on the on the second floor. Ceiling and Internal Wall Partitions trades are nearing completion.

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.



CORPORATE SERVICES

Freedom of Information & Data Protection

Previous years and 2024 to date - statistics to 26th January, 2024:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Freedom of Information Requests	152	176	119	156	15
Freedom of Information Internal Review Applications	6	13	8	4	0
Appeals to Information Commissioner	1	4	2	4	0
Data Access Requests - Subject Access Request	5	6	10	10	2
Data Requests - Erasure Request	0	1	1	2	0
Data Access Requests - Third Party Access Requests e.g. Gardaí	20	27	27	29	5

Register of Electors

In advance of the Referendum taking place on 8th March, an awareness campaign, led by the Electoral Commission, is currently underway. This is to advise the public of timelines to apply for inclusion in the Register of Electors in order to be eligible to vote at the referendum. An online application can be submitted at www.checktheregister.ie

Completed applications must be received by Clare County Council by Tuesday, 20th February, 2024.

Completed applications for inclusion on the Postal and Special Voters list must be received by Clare County Council by Monday, 12th February, 2024.

Communications

The Communications Office communicates and promotes Council activities and services and raises public awareness of issues of local and national interest. Media releases in January included:

- Civic Reception held to honour Newmarket Celtic's unprecedented success in 2023
- Funding Programme Opens for Clare Communities
- Cathaoirleach welcomes CLÁR funding boost for Clare community projects
- Clare County Council launches Clare Local Area Grant Scheme 2024.

Social Media

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

- Posted 40 times on Facebook, with total followers now 18,997
- Posted 43 times on Twitter, with total followers now 8,354
- Instagram followers are now 3,293.

(Statistics accurate as of 31/01/2024)

Civic Reception held to honour Newmarket Celtic's unprecedented success in 2023

Clare County Council held a Civic Reception on Thursday, 11th January, to mark the outstanding achievements in 2023 by Newmarket Celtic FC team.

The Civic Reception, which was proposed by Cllr Pat McMahon, honoured Newmarket Celtic's first team for their unprecedented success in 2023, becoming the first ever County Clare side to bring the FAI Junior Cup back to the Banner last April. The team then went on to add the Clare District Soccer League Premier Division, the Tom Hand Memorial Cup, and the President's Junior Cup to their ever-growing trophy cabinet.



Newmarket Celtic captain, Eoin Hayes, and manager, Paddy Purcell, accepted a glass presentation piece and Civic Reception Presentation Scroll on behalf of their teammates, management teams, and the club, from the Cathaoirleach, Cllr Joe Cooney.

KILLALOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The focus for Killaloe MD in January was the preparation of an application for RRDF Category 1 Funding for the Enhancement of Scarriff Town Centre. The c.€8 million project will comprise of the

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

The application for Category 1 Funding follows the successful completion of Category 2 funding in 2022 for feasibility for the project and the acquisition of the required properties and the receipt of planning consent in 2023. The application was submitted by Killaloe MD with the support of Scarriff Town Team, Scarriff Community Council and a range of local stakeholders.



January 2024 works/projects Killaloe MD

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

Footpath Replacement at Crossroads, Killaloe

This work was funded by 2023 GMA budget allocation.



Maintenance Works in Kilkishen Village

Killaloe MD road works crew carrying out maintenance works in Kilkishen village, all gullies in the village were cleaned out.



PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Town Centre First

Joan Tarmey has been appointed as Town Regeneration Officer and will lead the development and implementation of the Town Centre First Policy in County Clare. Clare County Council is awaiting a funding call in Q1 2024 for potential new Town Centre First plans and measures.

Implementing the Sixmilebridge Town Centre First Plan

Launched on 2nd August 2023, the Sixmilebridge Town Centre First (TCF) Plan is the first of its kind to be completed in the county having received funding under the national Town Centre First initiative.

The plan sets a vision for the future development of Sixmilebridge, addressing key emerging issues including tackling dereliction and vacant properties, improving community facilities and public space and building on the town's assets and positive attributes including the river and heritage.

The plan focuses on job creation, place-making and an improved quality of life is key for the sustainable development of the town.

The Town Team has widespread representation ranging from elected members, community members such as Heritage and Tidy Towns, businesses, youth, age-friendly and sports



The full Town Team meet to drive on the Sixmilebridge Town Centre First Plan.

representatives amongst others. All are playing an active role in supporting and implementing the action plan.

The Town Team met on 17th January 2023 and are eagerly working to ensure all available funding streams are explored to deliver the objectives of the Sixmilebridge Town Centre First Plan, with particular focus on delivery of a few key projects. This meeting was attended by the Senior Executive Engineer (Shannon MD), Rural & Community Development Officer and the Town Regeneration Officer providing support and advice to the Town Team to assist them in realising projects listed in the action plan.

FORWARD PLANNING

Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2024-2030

Preparation of the Draft LAP by the Forward Planning Team is continuing during January. Specialist consultants are assisting with various aspects of the Plan, namely Strategic Environmental Assessment (Fehily Timoney & Co.), Appropriate Assessment (RPS), Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (JBA) and Transport Accessibility Assessment (AECOM). The Forward Planning Team has undertaken workshops and progress meetings with each of the consultants, assisted by colleagues from the Shannon MD Office. The combined input will inform the optimal Land Use Zoning and Development Objectives for Shannon Town and Environs, for inclusion in the draft LAP.

Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

The first annual review of the RZLT Map has commenced with an Annual Draft Map due to be published on 1st February 2025. Submissions on the Annual Draft Map can be made until 1st April 2024.

Public realm works at Cappa, Kilrush

The design team are continuing to progress the Town and Village funded public realm works at Cappa. A CCTV survey of the existing drainage within the site has been completed, which is now being analysed by the engineers. An on-site meeting took place with members of the local community on 31st January 2024. It is intended that a Part 8 planning consent application will be progressed in the coming weeks.

Public realm works at Parliament Street, Ennistymon

The design team continue to carry out site investigation works in Ennistymon, on foot of the Town and Village funding allocation. During January a ground radar survey was conducted which will assist in the advancement of the detailed design.

One Shannon Hub

During January work continued on the One Shannon Hub transformational project Shannon Town Centre. Various meeting took place with the design team and with the project delivery team within the County Council. Further targeted consultation meetings are planned to take place in early February with key stakeholders, where it is hoped leanings can be gleamed which will inform the ongoing concept design process.

The All-Ireland Community & Council Awards

The Ennistymon Enhancement Plan has been shortlisted under the Best Town or Village Regeneration category of the All Ireland Community & Council Awards. This award recognises interventions or initiatives which seek to regenerate or reactivate existing town or villages, and the needs of the people who live in them. Clare County Council partnered with Ennistymon Town Team in the delivery of the Ennistymon Enhancement plan. The award ceremony is due to be held in Dublin on February 17th.



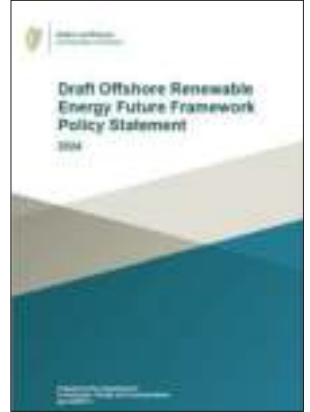
Kilrush Maritime Training Centre

Work is progressing on the preparation of an application for funding under the Smart Regions Enterprise Innovation Scheme with a 1st Call closing date of 31st March, 2024. It is hoped that the new scheme administered through Enterprise Ireland can provide for the remaining funding gap on the project. Enterprise

Ireland have appointed Artemis Consulting Ltd to assist with the preparation of the financial analysis which is required as part of the funding application. In addition, a Socio-Economic Report is also being prepared together with advancing the property solutions associated with the delivery of the project.

Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Future Framework Policy Statement

The draft Future Framework Policy Statement was launched by Minister Ryan on 23rd January which outlines how Ireland will meet the target of 37GW of offshore wind by 2050. It is a long-term model and vision for offshore renewable energy in Ireland and sets out the pathway Ireland will take to deliver 20GW of offshore wind by 2040 and at least 37GW in total by 2050. It establishes 21 key actions setting out future directions and intergovernmental dependencies that will be addressed through subsequent policies to develop and initiate the long-term, plan-led approach to Ireland's ORE future.



This is a critical Policy document in the context of the Saoirse Wave Project off the West Clare coastline which was awarded almost €40 million in 2023 under the EU Innovation Fund. Saoirse is a pre-commercial project that will demonstrate wave energy and will stay in the water off the Co. Clare coast for up to 15 years. Clearly, wave energy is front and centre to the government's offshore energy co-location policy.

The Economic Directorate will be coordinating a response to the consultation process which is now open to submissions (<https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/747c7-consultation-on-the-offshore-renewable-energy-ore-future-framework-policy-statement/>) with an online platform available for those whom wish to make a submission until 19th February, 2024.

CONSERVATION AND BUILT HERITAGE

Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Historic Structures Fund (HSF)

Conservation grant applications for these schemes have now been received and are being assessed. Successful applicants will be notified in late February/early March and these conservation works are scheduled to commence in Q1 2024.

Community Monuments Fund (CMF)

The Community Monuments Funding call is now closed. Applications were received ahead of the closing date of 31st January 2024 and are now being considered. Successful applicants will be notified over the coming weeks.

Section 57 Applications

Section 57 Declarations are issued to owners of buildings or structures that wish to conduct works to their structures. A Section 57 Declaration determines whether works would be considered exempt from planning. A Section 57 Declaration can also be used to clarify the curtilage of a protected structure, or what elements are to be protected. There is no fee for a Section 57 Declaration.

Section 57 Declarations	January 2024	Total (Valid) Year to date 2024
No. of Section 57 Declaration Requests received	2	2

HERITAGE

Clare County Heritage Plan 2024-2030

The Draft County Clare Heritage Plan 2024-2030 was placed on public display on 10th November 2023 until 1st December 2023 and submissions are being considered and are informing the finalisation of the plan. Public engagement has been very valuable and informative, as has the input from the Elected Members and the Heritage and Biodiversity Forum, in the plan preparation process. The finalisation and publication of the Clare County Heritage Plan will be concluded within the coming weeks.

Funding Applications

The Heritage Office is actively engaged in the application drafting stage for several significant funding opportunities. These include applications for the County Heritage Plan Fund, Historic Towns Initiative, and the Public Service Innovation Fund, among others. Success in these schemes will be instrumental in continuing investment in the heritage sector of County Clare throughout 2024.

Audit and Survey of Cillíní in County Clare

The Audit and Survey of Cillíní in County Clare, led by Mr. Michael Houlihan, is approaching completion with only ten survey sites remaining. This initiative has enabled the digital mapping of all these sites for the first time, providing a valuable digital resource for heritage management. The project's success is greatly supported by Creative Ireland, showcasing a significant collaboration in preserving and understanding local heritage.



Dereendooagh Cillini.

BIODIVERSITY

Clare Heritage and Biodiversity Forum Outing

In January, The Clare Heritage and Biodiversity Forum went on a field outing to West Clare. Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer organised a talk with Hometree Charity's Ray O'Foglu and local landowner Noel McMahon to discuss the Illaun-Farm Forest Alliance EIP project. In 2021, Home-tree Charity project led the European Innovation Partnership Project (EIP), Illaun Farm-Forest Alliance EIP (locally led EIP Scheme). The project involved planting 30,000 native trees across participating farms in the local community in County Clare. Trees and shrubs were planted in shelterbelts, copses, and hedgerows. This will improve connectivity between woodland parcels and their resilience into the future. The talk highlighted novel changes that native tree planting can bring to support ecological corridors on farms to combat biodiversity loss. The group then visited Kilfarboy Graveyard where the Heritage Officer gave a talk around the significant heritage and genealogical value of graveyards medieval churches and holy wells county-wide and the issues affecting their conservation. The final visit embarked on a journey to Spanish Point where the Biodiversity Officer highlighted the ecosystem services of sand dunes and

the importance of the habitats for biodiversity and stabilisation work to address impacts and pressures on the SAC. The Heritage Officer led an onsite demonstration of a QR code guided heritage walk commissioned by the Spanish Point Community Group in 2022. There was great engagement and discussions all round. The Clare Heritage and Biodiversity Forum members have diverse backgrounds and will be invaluable in guiding the development of the next Clare Biodiversity Action Plan and Clare Heritage Plan.



Heritage Forum outing.



Heritage Forum outing.

‘Return to Nature’ Laudato Sí Working Group Presentation

In January 2024, Clare County Council’s Biodiversity Officer Barry O’Loughlin along with Kate Chandler, Communities & Engagement Pollinator Officer with the National Biodiversity Data Centre gave an online presentation to the Laudato Sí Working Group as part of the ‘Return to Nature’ biodiversity initiative. Barry is piloting a project in Clare to carry out biodiversity actions on church grounds and spoke about enhancement actions that can be carried out in the Diocese of Killaloe, in addition to declines in habitats and species due to historical practices associated with land use management and potential measures to reverse these declines at a local scale. Kate spoke about the pollinator friendly actions communities can undertake under the ‘All Ireland Pollinator Plan’. There was significant interest from online participants and overwhelming enthusiasm to carry out actions for nature under the next Clare Biodiversity Action Plan.



Above: Kilmaley Church. Below: Inagh Church.



Funding Opportunities

Applications are now closed for the Community Heritage & Biodiversity Grant Scheme 2024. The deadline for receipt of completed applications was January 31st, 2024. The aim of this scheme is to support projects that complement or fulfil the delivery of Waterways Ireland Heritage Plan.

Publication of Ireland’s 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan

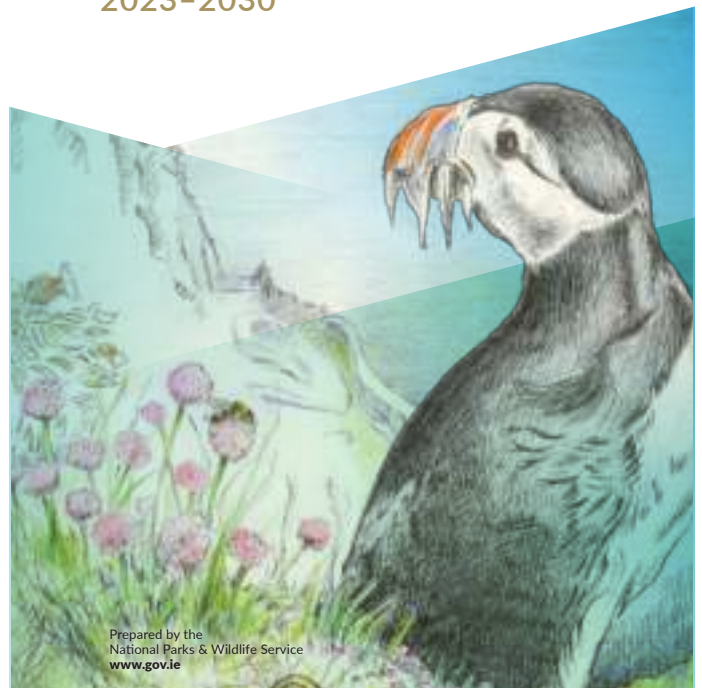
Ireland’s 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) has been published (25th January 2024). The plan sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the trans-formative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature. The 4th NBAP strives for a “whole of government, whole of society” approach to the governance and conservation of biodiversity. The aim is to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and of the implications of its loss.

The next Clare Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2030 will be underpinned by this document and will set out biodiversity actions in the county for the next six years. There is vast potential for cross collaboration with our project partners and to support community biodiversity actions.



Ireland’s 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan

2023–2030



Prepared by the
National Parks & Wildlife Service
www.gov.ie

Ireland’s 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The table below shows the number of planning applications processed during the month of January (to 29/01/2024), together with the year to date figures. Fifty seven per cent of planning applications received in January were received by electronic means.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS	January (to 29/01/24)	Year to date 2024
No. of planning applications received	47	47
No. of Planning Decisions made	75	75
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	2	45
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	15	15
No. of Section 5 applications	9	9
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications (in respect of Part V of the Planning & Dev Act 2000)	4	4
Submissions received regarding Compliance	21	21

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

January 2024 Stats are as follows (up to the 29th of January 2024):

New Complaints received	6
New Files opened	1
Files Closed	3
Warning Letters issued	2
Enforcement Notice issued	0
Legal	0

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

- **Training:** LEO Clare continued to see strong demand for online training support offering during January as our new programme for 2024 began. The main topics of interest to Clare enterprises were Start Your Own Business Programmes, Bookkeeping Vat and Income Tax, Food Starter programmes and our first Women in Business Network meeting. In total we had over 230 people sign up to training and events in January.
- **Mentoring:** LEO Clare began 2024 with a continued strong requirement for all of our Mentoring Options including mentoring in Starting a Business, Finance, Digital Marketing, Export Development and Brexit. In January 24 mentoring applications have been assigned.

Local Enterprise Office Clare 2023 Job Numbers

On 16th January Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, announced the annual results of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) for 2023 which showed that Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Clare supported companies created 188 jobs in 2023.

- 188 new jobs created in 2023
- Net employment gain of 62 in 2023
- 229 total small businesses employing 1,393 people supported by LEO Clare.

The net jobs created by Local Enterprise Office Clare supported clients in 2023 was 62, which considers companies that amalgamated, ceased trading and those that transferred on to Enterprise Ireland.

The new figures show that the LEO Clare financially supported 229 small businesses in their portfolio across the county these companies in turn employ 1,393 people.

Other Key Metrics in relation to 2023 for LEO Clare:

- €661k grant aid approved to 35 applicants
- €451k paid out (pipeline commitments €550k)
- 1,269 participated in training programmes
- 289 participants received mentoring
- 1 business transferred to Enterprise Ireland.

Showcase Ireland 2024

Businesses from Clare had the opportunity to meet buyers from all over the world this week as part of the Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase 2024 at the RDS in Dublin. There were over 100 Local Enterprise Office supported businesses from across the country present at the event with three in attendance from Clare.

Palm Free Irish Soap, Siar Photography and Creative Clay were all exhibiting at the Local Enterprise Showcase, part of Showcase 2024, that saw over 4,000 buyers from retailers across the globe attend the three-day event in Dublin looking to secure new sales and partners for the year ahead.



Showcase (l-r: Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment; Tony Hoynes, Palm Free Irish Soap; and Tom Rooney, Head of Enterprise, LEO South Dublin).

This year saw the introduction of the Business of Craft Awards by the Local Enterprise Offices for all the craft and design companies taking part in Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase 2024.

In the Sustainability Champion category, the winner was Palm Free Irish Soap, who are supported by Local Enterprise Office Clare. The luxury range of Irish made soaps, deodorant, and shampoo bars, which are free of palm oil, won the award for having sustainability running right through the business.

Local Enterprise Week 2024

Local Enterprise Week is organised every year by the 31 Local Enterprise Offices across the country and all events are taking place from Monday 4th to Friday 8th March. Local Enterprise Office Clare will organise a number of events throughout the week and will be promoted via social media and our website.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Property Transactions and Conveyancing

The table below shows the number of property transactions completed by Property Management Unit up to 29th January and also shows the final figures for 2023.

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

Transaction type	January 2024	Year to date 2024	Full year 2023
Lease / Sub Lease of Property / Building	0	0	7
Licence to use property / building	2	2	7
Grazing Agreement for Lands	8	8	17
Deed of Transfer signed	1	1	15
Contract for Sale / acquisition signed	0	0	1
Deed of Right of Way / Wayleave signed	4	4	2
Deed of Rectification / Variation signed	0	0	4
Allotment Agreements signed	37	37	39

Shannon Allotments

The renewal of the agreements for the Shannon Allotments is almost completed and we are pleased to be able to allocate an allotment to four new people this year.

Grazing of Land

The Tender for the grazing of lands were advertised and will be

opened and allocated by the end of January 2024. Some of the agreements for smaller land parcels have been renewed.

Leases and Licences

- The lease between Clare County Council and the Shannon Handball Club is being signed, having been approved by the Elected Members. This lease formalizes the formal lease agreement with Shannon Development. Works have commenced on the refurbishment of the site.
- The licence agreement with Shannon Tidy Towns is now in place and works have commenced on this site, following the grant of planning permission.



- The lease between Clare County Council and Dúchas na Sionna will be signed shortly in relation to Hasting’s Farmhouse. Fencing works are underway to define the site area and provide boundary protection to the curtilage of the protected structure. Funding by the Heritage Council has allowed the Council to improve the access to the property with new vehicular and pedestrian gates installed and a more defined pedestrian pathway.



Casual Trading

The renewal of the annual Casual Trading licences is ongoing with eight licences having been issued in January for locations in Ennis, Fanore, Kilkee and Doolin.

DERELICT SITES

The Derelict Sites team are currently dealing with 256 properties that are considered derelict. The activity in recent years has substantially increased with 127 derelict properties identified in the years 2022 and 2023. To date in 2024, we have opened files on 3 new properties. Initial engagement with owners or their representatives is key to resolution of the issues of dereliction and to gain an understanding of the various reasons why the properties are in a derelict state. Where derelict properties are sold, we commence engagement with the new owners of those properties to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990.

We are also seeing the number of planning applications for refurbishment works and extensions increasing and works commencing on individual properties. We are advising property owners of the vacant property refurbishment grant, where the property is suitable for residential use. With time and effort, working with owners, financial institutions and other departments, there are definite options for positive re-development and revitalisation of many such derelict sites.

The table provides a snapshot of the activity in January (up to 29th January and the last few days of December 2023) and the comparative figures for the full year 2023.

Derelict Sites	January 2024	Year to date 2024	Full Year 2023
No. of new files opened	3	3	58
No. of Section 8(2) Notices issued - Intention to enter site on Derelict Sites Register	8	8	41
No. of Section 8(7) Notices issued - Entry of site onto Derelict Sites Register	0	0	24
No. of Section 11 Notices issued - Measures required to render the site non-derelict	0	0	0
Notice of Valuation of Property for Derelict Sites Levy - Section 22	1	1	7
No. of files closed / property removed from Derelict Sites Register	0	0	15
No. of Notices served to Compulsorily Purchase derelict sites (CPO) (see note below)	2	2	10
No of Vesting Orders signed	0	0	9

Compulsory Acquisition of Derelict Sites (CPO)

The Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government has launched a CPO activation programme for local authorities and has set targets for CPOs for each local authority. We commenced this programme in 2022 and the table below sets out the status of those CPOs commenced in 2022, 2023 and to date in 2024.

Year	No of CPOs commenced	Current Status
2022	6	3 - Completed and transferred to Housing for refurbishment / re-development
		1 - Completed recently and is for sale since mid-January 2024
		1 - Works have commenced and CPO parked for now
2023	12	8 - At Vesting Stage and lodged in PRA
		2 – Early Stage of CPO process
		1 - Objection received and has been referred to An Bord Pleanála
		1 - Works have commenced and CPO parked for now
2024	2	2 – Notice of commencement of CPO process issued

In addition, the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund will provide funding for CPOs 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. One such CPO is with the PRA for registration and works will be done to safeguard the property in the interim.

Derelict Site Levy

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

Survey of Vacant and Derelict Properties

The Team is currently carrying out surveys of vacant and derelict properties in towns and villages around the county. Based on the Geo-directory data on vacancy and dereliction, the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government has asked the Council to validate the data that they hold. To date, we have passed the figure of 1,500 surveys completed (29th January 2024), with the data being uploaded digitally. There are a number of towns and villages yet to be done and it is intended that it will be completed in January / February 2024. The data collected will be the basis for future policy direction by the Department and will guide the work programme of the Derelict Sites Team and the Vacant Homes Team. The snapshot of activity on surveys was on 23rd January 2024.



VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANT - FOR DERELICT AND VACANT PROPERTIES

We continue to have high levels of enquiries and applications for the Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant. As of 29th January, we have 279 applications for the grant and this is the seventh highest number of applications of all local authorities. Our response time for new applications is generally less than three weeks. To date we have processed four payments of the grant and claims for payment will be increasing in the coming months as work is being completed on the grants approved in 2022 / 2023.

The table below sets out the status on applications. To date 57% of applications are for rural areas of the county and 43% for properties in towns and villages.

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

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

No. of Applications Submitted		Overall %
Year 2022	33	11%
Year 2023	261	85%
Year 2024	12	4%
Total no. of Grant Applications	296	100%
Proposed use of Grant aided property		
Private Residence	214	72%
Rental Property	82	28%
Decisions Made		
Approved	146	49%
Rejected	14	5%
Withdrawn	26	9%
Grant Funding Paid Out	4	1%
Grant Funding Withdrawn	2	1%
Total	192	65%
Applications in progress		
In Progress	23	8%
Further Information Requested	63	21%
Awaiting Technical Inspection	18	6%
Total	104	35%

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 up to €7 million by Government in the refurbishment of vacant and derelict properties in County Clare to be returned to economic use as permanent homes.



ENNIS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The main updates to the key projects and works programme carried out during January are as follows:

Public Bus Service Update

Ennis MD staff continue to liaise with the National Transport Authority to deliver this important infrastructural project which is projected to commence in Q1 2025. A briefing to the Ennis MD Councillors on the naming and location of the proposed bus stops was held in mid-January and we expect that the outline layout for the proposed Ennis Town bus stop at Friars Walk/ Museum will be submitted for review in the coming weeks.

Tulla Road Cycle scheme

Detailed design is currently underway on this project. Fortnightly on-line progress meetings are continuing with an on-site meeting held recently. The next steps include the procurement by the Council of a CCTV drainage survey and an Arborist Report.

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

Our Technical Advisors, Tobins Consulting Engineers, are progressing with the Concept Design and Route Option Development phase of the scheme. To inform same, Traffic Counts and Junction Turning Movements have recently been completed at a number of the key junction locations within the scheme.

Additional Carparking at Waterpark House Campus

In late January, the Council submitted a Part 8 Application to the Planning Authority for an additional 85 no public carparking spaces in Drumbiggle. The proposal includes another 52 no existing staff spaces, which will be publicly available out of

business hours and at weekends, along with an additional 8 universally accessible spaces and a further cluster of 6 dedicated EV spaces. In total, this will bring a total of 136 spaces within minutes of the Town Centre which is a very welcome proposal indeed. The public notice was in last week's media and is currently open to the public was observation/submission. We await the Planners report which will ultimately come before Ennis MD Members for information and the full Council Membership for decision.

Ennis Transport Plan Update

Our Technical Advisors, SYSTRA Ltd, have submitted the first draft of the Ennis Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) & Local Transport Plan (LTP) Baseline Assessment Report for initial evaluation by the Council. This will involve a cross directorate review carried out by staff from Ennis MD, the Planning Section and the Transportation Section. Included in the Baseline Report are the Policy Context, Local Area Characteristics, Existing Travel Patterns, Accessibility, Existing Transport Infrastructure & Services finishing with Conclusion and Recommendations.

Interestingly, Ennis MD and Clare County Council's Physical and Economic Development Sections recently held a workshop with representatives from the University College London (UCL) Centre for Transport Studies. This arose from UCL asking the Department of Transport to identify a suitable large Town to undertake a "Knowledge Exchange Partnership" with UCL on "Developing a Streetscape Allocation Framework for Sustainable Mobility". Ennis was nominated and ultimately selected for the study and we are excited as the Knowledge Exchange Partnership will give us the opportunity to avail of the expertise of Professor Peter Jones and his team from

UCL who have extensive experience in transport studies. This will assist Ennis MD greatly in developing and applying streetscape allocation principles to optimise the use of available streetscape on individual streets across the urban area: by rebalancing current street space allocation to reflect future rather than historical public and political priorities. This will have many benefits particularly in terms of promoting sustainable travel, place making and liveability.

Winter Maintenance & Other Operational Works

In early January salting was carried out in various areas of the town including at local schools and public areas. Salt was applied using a truck mountable mini-gritter. More recently crews responded to various issues associated with storm Isha & Jocelyn. This included localised flooding issues, removal of fallen trees and pothole repairs. The town-based crew assisted in the removal of Christmas decorations and lights throughout the town, returning same to storage.

Ennis MD crews also carried out drainage works in various areas throughout the district with new pipework, drainage, manholes and road gullies installed. The clearing and opening of drainage outlets were also carried out on some of the major roads in the MR including the N85, R476 & R474.



Connecting and Co-Creating

Works continued on Connecting and Co-creating projects at various junctions along the Clon Road. Four junctions reached full completion in January with civil works, ramps and line marking installed. The completed works will increase the safety for pedestrians in this area of Ennis. The connecting and co-creating project is a key element in the strategy to make Ennis Ireland’s first ‘10-minute town’.



Riverside Walk to Clareabbey

Ennis MD crews carried out some minor upgrade works to the Riverside Walk between the Quin Road and Clareabbey. These works included the installation of additional anti-litter signage and also the installation of some children’s play equipment at the exit of the walkway to the Quin Road.



Other Key Strategic Works

In addition to the aforementioned, Ennis MD staff continue to work alongside our colleagues in the PMO who are managing the Ennis Public Realm project as well as our colleagues in Ennis 2040 in progressing the ambitious plans outlined in the *Ennis 2040 Economic & Spatial Strategy*. The 4 main proposals currently being progressed under the Strategy are as follows:

Francis Street

Section 179A Notice advertised. Proposal for access to Affordable Housing Fund to be submitted to Department in coming weeks.

Abbey Street

The concept design is complete and Computer-Generated Images (CGIs) have been finalised for public consultation as follows:

Tues 30th January	15:00 – 19:00	Templegate Hotel
Weds 31st January	18:00 – 20:00	Community Centre, Barefield
Thurs 1st February	19:00 – 21:00	Clarecastle

At the time of writing, the Public Consultation event in the Temple Gate Hotel on January 30th was very well attended with all views now to be carefully considered.

Harvey’s Quay

A concept design for this location is being finalised with public consultation to follow in the coming months. Discussions are ongoing with the DHLGH regarding the proposed development and its suitability under the terms of certain housing support schemes recently published. Options regarding the type of development and associated actions will be reviewed during Q1, 2024.

Post Office Field Masterplan

This is a key amenity and biodiversity rich area located in the centre of Ennis Town. Draft Master Plan recently completed to be brought forward for stakeholder consultation over the coming months.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

Roadworks Programme and Operations

The 2024 Schedule of Municipal District Works (Annual Roadworks Programme) will be developed as soon as the TII, DoT and NTA grant allocations are received.

Strategic Transportation

Active Travel

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

Tulla Road Cycle scheme:

- Detailed design for this project is ongoing, this is being undertaken by AECOM Consulting Engineers. Fortnightly on-line progress meeting continuing. The services of an arborist have been procured by Clare County Council with Arborist Report expected by end of January 2024. CCTV drainage surveyors are expected to be appointed by mid-January with survey completed by end of January 2024. The NTA has agreed to include an additional section of footpath on New Park Road, in the detailed design for this project.

Ennis LTP:

- Traffic Survey data has been gathered and is currently being assessed and modelled.

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

- The Concept Design and Route Option Development phase of the scheme continues to progress well with draft options expected from the consultants Tobins in February.

Connecting & Co-creating Ennis:

- Raised crossings were installed at a number of completed junction tightening schemes along Clon Road in January.

'Safe Routes To School' programme:

- Clonmoney National School: Construction works for this scheme began on the 22nd January. The works will involve footpath improvements, kerb buildout, raised junction crossing, line marking, installation of pencil bollards, driver feedback signs and public lighting. The programme for the works is expected to last 8 weeks.
- The second week-long "School Street" trial for An Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Cíosóg was held from 18th to 22nd December. This was another great success with the school eager to have this as a permanent practice when their SRTS works are implemented. The Safe Routes to School design concepts are being progressed.

Clare Bridges - Pedestrian & Cycling Connectivity

- The feasibility and option selection reports have been submitted by Barry Transportation who are the consultants for this project. The preliminary design stage is now underway.

Public Lighting

No further survey works have been completed under the PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project). Survey works are currently at 70% completion with further survey works to be completed in February.

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>).

The public lighting section continues to work with our public lighting maintenance contractor Enerveo and ESB networks in an efforts to reduce outage numbers and timelines. Significant infrastructure works are required in some locations to upgrade the network as a result of the ageing network and the requirement to meet ESB Networks Minimum requirements for Public Lighting. This is leading to increased repair times currently but shall ultimately result to reduced outages in the future and swifter repair times.

The public lighting section is committed to continue to engage with both Enerveo and ESBN to secure additional resources with a view to reducing outage numbers and timelines.

Road Design Office

TII Road Safety Projects

Project	Progress Update
HD17	<p>N85 Lahinch Road/Shanaway Road A feasibility & design options report for an interim safety measure at the Shanaway junction has been sent by the Road Design Office to TII on 13th December for their design & funding approvals. TII have since reverted with additional comments and amendments are being made for resubmission</p> <p>A junction improvement layout incorporating the aforementioned pedestrian crossing is being developed by the Road Design Office. There have been detailed discussions with TII in recent weeks regarding these junction improvements at Shanaway Road junction and a feasibility report is being prepared for their approval.</p> <p>N67 Doonbeg Pedestrian Crossing A feasibility & design options report was submitted to TII for their consideration in December 2023.</p> <p>N68 Cranny Cross Junction A feasibility & options report for vehicle activated signage at this location has been approved at TII Gateway 1 and a design report is being prepared.</p> <p>N85 Clareabbey Roundabout Pedestrian & Cycling Facilities A feasibility and design options report was submitted to TII for their consideration in December 2023.</p>
Noise Action Plans	<p>Strategic Noise Mapping & Noise Action Plans Agglomerations Technical Working Group Meetings and Workshops are ongoing.</p> <p>The draft Limerick Clare Agglomeration noise plan has been prepared.</p>
Fence Retrofitting Programme	<p>A Fence Retrofit Assessment Report for 2024 is ongoing. 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.</p> <p>Projects on the N68 have been submitted to TII for their approval.</p>

Other Projects 2024

Project	Progress Update
Liaison with NTA regarding bus shelters	Work at the bus stop at Clarisford, Killaloe is ongoing. JCDecaux have installed the bus shelter. The concrete slab and connecting tarmac footpath will be completed in the coming weeks.

Health and Safety

The Health & Safety Team's programme of work as detailed in the Annual Safety Report for 2022 was successfully completed by December 2023.

The Health & Safety Team are currently compiling all the data for the Annual Safety Report 2023, where it will set out the programme of work for the upcoming year and set Top Level H&S Objectives in order to ensure continuous improvement in the Occupational Health & Safety Management System for the Local Authority.

The annual review by the Safety Management Committee is scheduled for February where subject to approval of the programme of work, Top Level H&S Objectives and updates to the Occupational Health & Safety management System will be issued to all staff for implementation.

The implementation of the programme of work will be monitored throughout the year by the H&S Teams ongoing reviews of Safety Statements, Risk Assessments and H&S Audit and Inspection plans

CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

<p>Doolin Pier Visitor Services Building</p>	<p>An application has been prepared for submission to the department in respect of additional funding required to progress this project to Statutory Consent stage. This follows environmental evaluation of land use options, and re-engagement with appointed design team.</p>
<p>Ennis Public Realm Re-generation (Project B)</p>	<p>Having paused the works for December 2023 to facilitate the Christmas trading period, the appointed contractor remobilised to O’Connell Street and High Street on January 8th, in line with agreed programme and phasing plan. This represents a significant advance in project activity, following-on from the completion of the first phase of foul sewer replacement works at Upper O’Connell Street in November 2023.</p> <p>Road Closures are now in place for O’Connell Street, and High Street, and further road closures will be advertised during 2024 to facilitate the works programme and to complete certain foul sewer replacement works in advance of the streetscape works.</p> <p>Works are now set to proceed at 4 locations in the town centre in January, with crews progressing Public Realm works completing in parallel with foul sewer refurbishment at High Street and at O’Connell Street. The foul sewer works represent a significant investment in the infrastructure of Ennis involving significant upgrade and replacement works to a large section of the foul sewer running through the Town Centre. We are delighted that these additional works, paid for by Uisce Eireann, are being carried out as they will resolve longstanding legacy issues with the sewer as well as future proofing capacity in the town for many years to come.</p> <p>The works requirement within the contract obliges Shareridge to have a Public Liaison Officer (PLO) as part of their Team who is based in their Project Office in Ennis Town Centre. The PLO is engaging extensively with affected parties as the works progress and, in advance of commencement of every work phase. The public and traders are encouraged to take every opportunity to meet with the project team to ensure that their needs are communicated, and disruption is minimised wherever possible. The contractor and design team are also convening fortnightly drop-in meetings, as well as issuing weekly progress update bulletins. Affected/interested parties are invited to email ennispublicrealm@share-ridge.ie if they wish to be added to mailing list.</p> <p>As one would expect, there will be some disruption/inconvenience during the works phase experienced but this is unavoidable in major civil and infrastructural works of this nature. It is expected that the longer-term benefits in terms of user amenity and accessibility will far outweigh the shorter-term inconvenience and cooperation and understanding in this regard is greatly appreciated.</p>
<p>Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake’s Corner)</p>	<p>The Judicial Review process is ongoing.</p>

Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass

Progress during the first week of the New Year was modest due to Sisk subcontractors and suppliers being closed or on annual leave. Despite the adverse weather good progress is being maintained on activities that are not temperature dependant such as pavement laying and concreting. Upcoming milestone events include delivery and installation of Span 2 (East Pier 1 – East Pier 2) edge girders W/C 29th Jan.

Killaloe Bypass Section

Kincora: Earthworks complete to sub-formation level. New watermain and gas mains activities in progress. Drainage in progress.

Main Cut: Surface water drainage, gullies and duct installation progressing. Kerb preps in progress.



Hill Road to Creeveroe Road: Road surfacing in progress. Prepping to cycle path and ped. path.

Creeveroe Road to Shantraud: Final preps to cycle path and ped path.



Creeveroe Road to Shantraud: Final preps to cycle path and ped path.

Shantraud Roundabout: Prepping for remainder of kerbing and pavement laying.



Shannon Bridge Crossing Section

Shantraud to Clarisford Junction: Prepping for remainder of kerbing and pavement laying.

Clarisford to West Embankment: Reinforced earth embankment 90% complete.



Shannon Bridge

Edge Girders to Span 5 (East Pier 2 - East Pier 1) installed. Cross girders delivered and installation in progress.

Edge Girders to Span 6 (East Pier 1 - East Abutment) installed. Cross girders delivered and installation in progress.



West Pier 2: Concrete works complete. Curing.

Central Pier: Reinforcement and shuttering to Upper Half Piers in progress.



Piling enabling works for 600t Crane in progress.

R494 Upgrade

Road Construction Activities are progressing on Northbound Lanes of Sections 2 & 6.



Landowner accommodation works and verge completion works are progressing on Sections 2 & 6.



Kilmastulla Bridge

Installation of precast and vehicle restraint systems has commenced.



Rail Bridge

Deck poured. Steel fixing and formwork to Kentledge slabs in progress. Steel fixing, formwork and conc. pours to wing walls in progress.



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

Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme

Clare County Council are currently completing their final review of the latest NIS (Natura Impact Statement) and Options Report. The first four chapters of the EIAR (Environmental Impact Assessment Report) have also been issued for our review. CCC have returned comments on the full suite of planning level drawings which will be included along with the above-mentioned documents as part of the planning application submission to An Bord Pleanála in March/April of this year.

Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)

Discussions are ongoing with the Department of Housing and to that regard a meeting with the LIHAF Section regarding programme delivery and additional funding for the project has been organised for February. A favourable response is awaited which will enable us to move forward with project development.

In parallel, discussions with the relevant landowners are ongoing regarding the acquisition of the necessary lands for the scheme. It is hoped that all lands necessary can be acquired by agreement but we are exploring our options should a CPO be required as a last resort.

N19 Shannon Airport Access Road

Phase 3 (Design and Environmental Evaluation) stage is currently ongoing with Phase 4 (Statutory Consent) stage progressing thereafter. The Project Team continue to work across a range of areas which will result in submitting this project for Statutory Consent in mid-2024. These include engagement with An Bord Pleanála regarding the submission as well as closing out on the various Chapters of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). Phase 5 (Enabling and Procurement) & Phase 6 (Construction) will progress thereafter which are subject to timely consents, no legal challenge, funding, etc. The construction contract is estimated to be in the region of 18 months in duration. Discussions continue regarding the necessary Land Transfer Agreements between The Minister for Transport, the Shannon Group and Clare County Council and as always, further information and associated literature on the project can be accessed via the scheme website www.shannonaccess.ie

Quin Flood Relief Scheme

Works have progressed well during the January period. Construction of the access stairs over the wall is planned for the next two weeks. This will see the completion of all concrete works on the scheme. The final trim of the earthen embankment, including the installation of headwalls, has commenced. Accommodation works are complete in two of the three affected properties with the final one well underway. Reinstatement of agricultural lands will take place over the coming weeks.



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Remediation of sites containing ACM	<p>The tender documents for a works contract in respect of the excavation and remediation of the sites are scheduled for issue in coming months, further to conclusion of an ongoing review of statutory approval aspects. Proposals for the disposal of bulk soil material were received in the summer of 2023, thereby defining the receiving locations and transport requirements for the bulk materials to be removed.</p> <p>The sites continue to be routinely monitored and maintained as required by Council staff in accordance with our agreed approach following discussion and consultation with the EPA.</p>
Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme	<p>Further engagement with Shannon Airport Group, National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Shannon Golf Club is planned for the coming weeks with particular focus on the western embankments and the lagoon area.</p> <p>As a result of inclement weather during the December period, otter surveys were postponed and rescheduled for completion in January. The wintering bird survey is ongoing.</p> <p>Our Scheme Consultants, RPS, have recently issued a pre-application notice to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) for a Maritime Area Consent (MAC), which will be required for the scheme.</p>
Springfield, Clonlara FRS	<p>High water levels on the Shannon River caused by a prolonged period of heavy rain over December and the New Year required the ESB to increase the discharge at Parteen Weir from 10cumecs to 210cumecs. This resulted in flooding in the Shannon flood plain. The Springfield Flood Relief Scheme was put into operation and pumping commenced on 2nd Jan 2024 and ceased on 7th Jan 2024. The scheme operated as designed.</p>
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 1: Kilrush to Kilkee)	<p>The 'Option Selection Report' is complete. A peer review is scheduled for February 2024. The Project Team are preparing for the final formal Public Consultation event (PC3) which is planned for Q1, 2024.</p>
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 2: Ennis to Ennistymon)	<p>Work continues on the 'Option Selection Report' and it is due to be completed in Q1, 2024. Following which, the Project Team are preparing for Public Consultation (PC3) which will take place following a peer review.</p>
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 3 & 4: Ennistymon to Miltown Malbay and Miltown Malbay to Moyasta)	<p>Public Consultation 1 commenced in mid-January and will run for three weeks. Information and drawings are available to view in Doonbeg Community Hall, Miltown Malbay Public Library and online at www.westclarerailwaygreenway.ie. We encourage any interested member of the public, including landowners to submit feedback.</p>
Other Greenway Proposals	<p>No update this month.</p>



Western Inter-County Railway Committee

A meeting of the Western Inter-County Railway Committee in Sligo in January was attended by Cllr Alan O'Callaghan, Cllr John Crowe, Cllr Gabriel Keating and Cllr Pat Hayes.

FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

Training Courses

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service personnel underwent a number of training courses during January, including a Chainsaw Operator Refresher Training Course, Pole Saw Training, Emergency Services Driving Standard (ESDS) Refresher Training, Breathing Apparatus Refresher Training and Interview Skills Training.

Recruitment of Fire Service Personnel

Interviews took place from the 15th to 17th January for firefighter posts. It is hoped that this will result in new recruits for 6 Fire Stations in Clare.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Storm Isha

Storm Isha hit Co. Clare on Sunday 21st January 2024. Met Éireann issued an Orange Level warning from 17:00 on Sunday 21st to 05:00 on Monday 22nd January for County Clare. An orange warning is the second highest level of warning with windspeeds between 65 and 80kn/hr expected. Clare Council Severe Weather Assessment Team attended National co-ordination meetings hosted by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) over the weekend. All seven Brigades of Clare County Fire and Rescue Service responded to a total of 58 emergency calls related to the storm. These calls related to removing trees which were blocking roads or where ESB or telephone wires had fallen and in dangerous locations. There were no injuries or significant structural damage caused by the storm.



Fire & Building Control Section Main Activities	Dec 2023	Year to Date 2023	Jan 2024 (Up to 23.01.24)
Number of Emergency Calls Attended	104	1019	99
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received	6	100	5
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted	10	94	5
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	4	1
Number of Disability Access Certificates Received	7	55	2
Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted	2	49	5
Number of Commencement Notices Received	16	420	32
Number of Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	0	7	1

(Note: In the Jan Monthly Report, the Dec figures related to 1st- 14th Dec due to timing of report)

CLARE CIVIL DEFENCE

Operational Duties

- Civil Defence provided medical cover at a number of events in January including Run the Banner (Lees Road); Sea Swin and Run Clare (Spanish Point).
- Clare Civil Defence was tasked by An Garda Síochána to assist Limerick Civil Defence in a search for a missing person in Athea, Co. Limerick.

Members Training & Professional Development

- Members participated in weekly training set out by Civil Defence instructors - this training included boat training, vehicle training, search training and use of drones.
- 14 members received Auxillary Fire Service (AFS) training.
- New recruits received Radio Communications training.



AFS Training Night.



Swiftwater & Flood Awareness Training.

Assistant Civil Defence Officer

Aileen McMahon was appointed to the role of Assistant Civil Defence Officer and commenced employment on the 15th January 2024. Clare Civil Defence members welcome Aileen to the team and wish her every success in her new role.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Awareness

AIE Requests

Our Environmental Awareness Officer is the designated Information Office (AIE Officer) under the Access to Information on the Environment Regulations for Clare County Council. During 2023 20 AIE requests were received by Clare County Council and processed. There were no appeals to the Commissioner of Environmental Information, to date, from the requests received during 2023 which is testament to the responses by AIE decision makers across Clare County Council. There has been 2 AIE requests received to date in 2024.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Champion Programme

As SDG Champions we are asked to actively participate promote how Clare County Council are supporting the global goals. During January posts showing on Love This Place Leave No Trace campaign and our Mattress Amnesty Day supports the goals.

Clare County Councils Rural and Development Department have purchased use of the SDG Accelerator tool to carry our SDG assessments. Staff training will be provided for use of this tool as part of the SDG Champion programme. This will have cross directorate benefits.



January Awareness Campaigns

The following were promoted on social media (@GreenerClare / @ClareCoCo) and print media during January.

- Christmas Tree Recycling
- Get a Brown Bin Here there and everywhere (MyWaste.ie)



- Bin It - Butts belong in Bins
- Dog owner responsibility (Roaming dogs leaving poo in public spaces)

Clare FM Ours to Protect

The Clare FM Ours to Protect project is a collaboration of local and regional broadcasters who have come together to raise awareness on how to challenge and tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. Since June a weekly programme has aired on Clare FM every Friday at 11:05am and will continue up to the end of May 2024. Our Environmental Awareness Officer spoke on how on the importance of how we dispose of waste left after Christmas (5th January).

Gardening

With the festive season now behind us, the Gardening Team were busy throughout January engaged in the take back and

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

recycling of over 1,000 Christmas trees received from households across the County.



The resulting wood mulch will be used by the team as a sustainable weed suppressant in future gardening projects, in conjunction with providing material to Ennis Men's Shed for gardening and landscaping purposes.

Another important task completed by the team in January was scheduled maintenance works at Ballyallia Lake, including the pruning and shaping of over 500 metres of hedging, together with pruning of various mature trees in the area.



Water Enforcement and Laboratory Scientific Services

The table below summarises the work of the scientific teams to date in 2024:

Water Enforcement Scientific Team	January 2024	Year To Date
Bathing Water Monitoring	0	0
Domestic Wastewater		
Treatment Plant Inspections (NIP Plan)	10 inspections planned but not possible as no water supply at the sites due to storm.	0
Public queries processed with regard to DWWTS grants	8	8
Monitoring Inspections of Section 4 licenced premises	1	1
Planning applications (Agriculture)	2	2
Planning applications (Domestic)	20	20
Planning applications (Large Developments)	1	1
Planning applications (Forestry)	23	23
Pollution complaints received	27	27
Private Commercial Drinking Water Supplies	0	0
Private/Public Group Water Scheme supplies	18	18
Rivers	1	1
Warning & advisory letters issued	1	1

Historic Landfills

A notification in accordance with Regulation 7(5) of the Waste Management (Certification of Historic Unlicensed Waste Disposal and Recovery Activity) Regulations 2008, of a draft Certificate of Authorisation in respect of Whitegate Historic Landfill, was received by Clare County Council. The Council has reviewed the draft document and has made representation to the Agency within the 30 day period as provided for in Regulation 7(5).

Waste Enforcement

Environmental Monitoring (Illegal Dumping/Litter)

The Waste Enforcement Team continued to respond to complaints relating to waste and litter. In January to date, 15 litter complaints and 66 complaints relating to waste and dumping were received and dealt with by the Waste Enforcement team.

Waste Facility Permit / Certificate of Registration Applications

A new Waste Facility Permit (WFP) Application was received in January. This is currently being assessed and a decision will be made whether to grant or refuse.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Inspections of Waste Permitted Sites

In addition to the above, a total of 6 inspections of authorised waste sites and 2 unauthorised waste sites were carried out by the Waste Enforcement Officer in January.

Fines and Directions issued under the Waste Management Act 1996, As Amended and Litter Pollution Act 1997, As Amended

A total of 1 Notice was issued under Section 14 of the Waste Management Act 1996 in January. We also issued 4 litter fines in January, and 2 Notices under Section 9 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997.

Shannon Estuary Anti-Pollution Team (SEA-PT)

The Environment Section meet with the Shannon Foynes Port Authority to finalise the site selection for the 2024 Annual Training Exercise that will be delivered at Ballyallia lake. The purpose of this exercise is to practice the response capabilities of SEA-PT members as per requirement of the Oil, Hazardous and Noxious Substances Spill Response Plan.

Dog Control

Capital funding in the amount of €59,739 has been provided by the Department of Community and Rural Development. The Dog Control Support Initiative funding will be used to upgrade existing infrastructure and equipment.

CLIMATE ACTION

Community Climate Action Programme

The Community Climate Action Programme is now open for applications and remains open until the 28th of February 2024. The Community Climate Action Officer has been supporting community groups and organisations across County Clare in the development of potential projects and initiatives. Several online and in person information sessions were held in January to assist community groups with the application process.

- Food and Waste
- Shopping and Recycling
- Local Climate and Environmental Action

Please contact the Community Climate Action Officer Kelly Slattery on kslattery@clarecoco.ie / communityclimate@clarecoco.ie or Tel: 087 4777658 for further information.

Please see the table below detailing the Programme timelines:

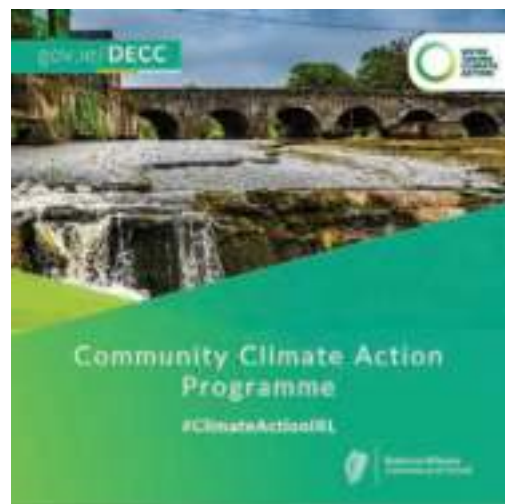
Project Milestones	Date
Online portal open for expression of interest (applications)	06/12/2023
Online portal closed for expression of interest (applications)	28/02/2024
Confirmation of Ministerial approved projects	17/07/2024

The programme supports small and large, rural, and urban communities to take climate action at a local level. The Department of Environment, Climate and Communications has allocated €572,000 to Clare County Council, under phase 1 of the programme, to fund small (up to €20,000), medium (between €20,000 and €50,000), and large-scale (between €51,000 and €100,000) community climate action projects.

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

Up to 100% project funding may be provided from the Community Climate Action Programme. Other funding may be leveraged for projects (e.g., with LEADER, Tidy Towns, Town and Village Enhancement funding, etc.) although that is not a requirement of this programme. Pre-funding is available if required and a clear need has been demonstrated. The community-based projects/initiatives will take action across at least one, preferably several, of the following five themes:

- Community and Energy
- Travel



Climate Action Plan Development

The Climate Action Plan has reached its final development stages and will be proposed for adoption at the February 12th full council meeting. Ahead of the adoption meeting, a briefing to all members will be given on Thursday February 1st. Clare County Councils Climate section proceeded through the various stages of development in collaboration with all stakeholders including elected members, SPCs, the council executive, partners and communities. The Plan charts a course



towards the 51% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 within Clare County Council, an increase in Energy efficiency to 50% by 2030 and supporting Climate Action across County Clare's various sectors.

The public consultation process has concluded with the development of a comprehensive Chief Executives report detailing any alterations to the Draft Plan. The total number of submissions on the Draft Plan received by November 24th was 148 which indicates a significant level of interest by the communities and partners across the county.

Energy Awareness

The accessing of technical and financial supports available from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to progress major energy / building decarbonisation projects in the region to assist in achieving national energy efficiency and carbon emission reduction targets is a key priority. Clare County Council is working with other Local Authorities on methodologies to best ensure that significant funding is made available to Clare County Council to progress decarbonisation projects.

Preparations are underway for our annual energy audit scheduled to be carried out in the coming weeks to demonstrate our ongoing commitment as an organisation to energy management and to continue our recognition as having an Energy Management System in compliance with the requirements of the internationally recognised ISO 50001 Standard and accredited by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI).

Reduce Your Use

The Reduce Your Use campaign for Winter 2023/24 continues with email, online and social media engagement, led by the Energy Management Team, providing guidance on how to reduce energy consumption in the home and the workplace. Reduce Your Use supports public bodies to encourage staff to cut energy waste over the winter months and implement operational actions that reduce energy consumption. Staff of Clare County Council are receiving biweekly reduce your use emails, with December's campaign 'Holiday Power Down' covering energy saving opportunities during the holiday period. Further information on the Reduce Your Use campaign and guidance can be viewed on the Reduce Your Use Your Say Engagement Page: <https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/reduce-your-use-campaign-2023-2024>

WATER

Asset Transfer

Following an assessment of the water and wastewater networks in County Clare, 383 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 312 assets, 221 have now been fully transferred to Úisce Eireann. The 91 assets remaining to be transferred are divided into the following four categories:

- **Internal Query (13 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) (53 assets)** - Assets are proposed to this department within Úisce Eireann to obtain their agreement for the Asset Transfers from Local Authorities. Most assets now being dealt with in this category are folios under third party ownership but where water assets are present and operational, often for decades. Department Circular L1 2022 proposes that property in long term operational possession but not in the Council name be obtained by the adverse possession process and provides for grant support to Councils for this process. These folios will then be transferred on to Úisce Eireann.
- **With County Solicitor (25 Assets)** These assets are now with the County Solicitor to progress by ordinary transfer or by adverse possession processes.

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 long-awaited Multi-annual Rural Water Programme 2024-2026 framework document was formally published on the 23rd of January 2024 and invitations will now be issued for Group Water Schemes to submit applications for funding. The Department will meet with local authorities in the coming weeks and will organise workshops to support local authorities in the preparation of submissions. The Rural Water Team will

continue to assist Group Water Schemes with their applications and in the selection of the most suitable funding measure within the 2024 – 2026 programme. Group Water Scheme Taking in Charge applications are actively being progressed by the Clare Rural Water Team.

A significant number of applications under the 'Grant for Improvement Works to a Private Water Supply' under the Rural Water Programme continues with a total number of applications received in 2023 now standing at 84. There is a continued demand for this grant in 2024.

SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Warm welcome extended to Alan Farrell, Director of Services

Alan Farrell was recently appointed Director of Services over Physical Development with includes responsibility for the Shannon Municipal District function. Alan has been out and about meeting the Councillors and viewing various projects throughout the MD. He had a preliminary tour in Shannon, Bunratty, Sixmilebridge, Shannon and Cratloe and intends to visit other locations in the coming weeks. Alan is looking forward to working in partnership with the Shannon MD Councillors in supporting the towns, villages and communities within the MD functional area. At its January MD Meeting, a warm welcome was extended to the Director of Services by the Cathaoirleach and members of the MD.



Alan and Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan and Tom Mellett.

Shannon Airport Group briefing with Shannon MD members

Mary Considine CEO of Shannon Airport Group met with Shannon MD members on Tuesday 23rd January 2024. Matters that were discussed included the impressive 29% increase in passenger numbers to 1.96 million, the provision of new routes to destinations such as Chicago, Charles de Gaulle, expansion and upgrade of its property portfolio and the findings of the recently conducted Economic Impact Assessment Report by Oxford Economics. The Shannon Group Airport delivers a major contribution of almost €4billion to Ireland's GDP, supports over 20,300 jobs across the Irish workforce and contributes €643m

in tax revenue. The temporary admission into the Airports Programme was discussed and it was noted that the outcome of the interim review is still awaited.

The collaborative working relationship between the Municipal District and the Airport Group was acknowledged. The upgrade of the N19 Airport access road and flood protection measures are key infrastructural projects in this regard.

Mary Considine informed the Members that Shannon Airport was voted best Irish airport brand in 2023 by Red C. The Members commended the Airport Group and re-affirmed that the long, established strategic collaborative approach will continue and grow into the future.



Meetings held between community groups and MD personnel

Sixmilebridge

Personnel from Shannon MD offices and Clare County Council attended the Town Centre First meeting in Sixmilebridge on 17/1/24. The Town Team was in attendance along with the Town Regeneration Officer Ms Joan Tarmey and the Rural and Community Development Officer, Ms Grainne McCormack. Various Projects were considered for prioritization under upcoming funding streams.

The importance of the provision of a footbridge was highlighted. The MD is committed to providing a solution to this ongoing issue and interim options are now being explored to alleviate the problem. A meeting was held on site at the bridge on 30/1/2024 between Road Design, Shannon MD and the Director of Service and potential solutions e.g. the erection of traffic lights etc, are now being further scoped and considered.



Town Team meeting.

Pedestrian crossing and footpath upgrade at Barrys Cross, Ardnacrusha



Preparation of 4no. Flower beds for tidy towns in Shannon



Sixmilebridge 'bridge'.

Road maintenance repair of potholes throughout the MD following adverse weather conditions.



Completion of raised pedestrian crossing and junction tightening in Sixmilebridge

Shannon Athletics Group

Personnel from the MD together with the Rural & Community Development Officer met with representatives from the Chairperson and Secretary of Shannon Athletics Club on 23/1/2024. The appointment of a consultant to conduct the Feasibility Study will be made shortly; - quotations are currently being evaluated. The Club is very committed to re-invigorating the facilities in Shannon and has a collective and collaborative approach to achieving this. Advice and guidance were given by Council staff on various other matters including hardstand works, lease, insurance, etc. Council personnel will continue to work closely with the Club to enable the provision of facilities that will ensure participation in athletics by the people in Shannon and beyond.

Other Works

Eire Landscapes appointed for the Shannon MD landscape maintenance contract for 2024.

The 2024 footpath refurbishment contract is currently on E-Tenders which consists of 2,100 m2 of footpath, kerbing and tactile paving.



Town & Village Renewal Schemes and further works

Clonlara

Significant works have been carried out in Clonlara and the area is being transformed with the enhancement works. The Senior Executive Engineer has worked closely with the Contractor and other relevant parties. The completed works will be a real focal point for the locals for many years to come.



Sli na Slainte route underway

The launch of this Sli na Slainte route will take place shortly. All directional signage has been erected and the route will link in with existing walkways within the heart of Shannon town.

Drumgeely

The Town and village renewal scheme in Drumgeely is nearing completion and has been carried out to a very high standard. The feedback from the locality is hugely positive. The works include public realm upgrades, paving, stonework etc which will greatly enhance the area for the residents.



Bunratty

Completion works are being carried out.

Outdoor Fitness Equipment

Site Works ongoing.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Big start for the Geopark in 2024



The Irish Times, Clare FM, RTE, Limerick Live 95 FM and other media channels. The 315-million-year-old discovery was a monumental find and is the first of its kind in Ireland.

The Geopark had a big start to 2024 with two big moments in the media. The first saw Dr Eamon Doyle's recent fossil finding gaining wide national media exposure. Eamon featured on Virgin Media News, the *Irish Independent*, the front page of

In addition to this, the Geopark received great media coverage for the Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism which over 70 business members of the Burren Ecotourism Network are committed to. The story featured on the *Irish Independent* and Carol spoke on Clare FM about the code and its significance to the region. Businesses of the Burren Ecotourism Network are now gearing up for the upcoming Code of Practice submission deadline which is just around the corner at the end of February.

Bunratty Celebrates Ancient Pagan Festival Of Imbolc



Imbolc, the ancient pagan festival marking the beginning of spring, will be celebrated at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park on February 4th. Showcasing the vibrant crafts, traditions, animals, and customs that characterise the season, while the 'Imbolc Celebration' will also mark St Brigid's Day. Visitors will be able to learn how to make Saint Brigid's Cross,

an iconic symbol that has graced Irish homes for centuries. Bunratty's experienced Bean an Tí's will guide the public through the traditional craft, demonstrating the meticulous process of weaving straw or rushes into the distinctive cross shape. A variety of native Irish animals from Droimeann cattle to Irish Wolfhounds and from Irish Red Deer to Tamworth pigs will be on display as part of the visitor attraction's ongoing work

to increase awareness of native Irish breeds and how they have formed part of Ireland's social and cultural history down through the centuries. Members of the Wolfhound Society of Ireland will be onsite on the day with opportunities for the public to engage with them and discover more about one of Ireland's most celebrated indigenous Irish canine breeds.

Basket maker Michael Foudy will demonstrate the time-honoured tradition of making traditional style baskets using locally sourced materials such as hazel and willow. The Bean an Tí also will be on hand throughout the day to demonstrate the art of traditional butter making at the Golden Vale Farmhouse. See www.bunrattycastle.ie for more on the Imbolc Celebration at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park, County Clare on February 4th from 11:00am to 5.00pm.

Travel and Trade Shows



Tourism Ireland Marketing Plans 2024



Shannon Heritage were delighted to attend the official launch of Tourism Ireland's 2024 Marketing Plans which took in Dublin on 26th January 2024.

Some excellent campaigns and initiatives planned for the year ahead to inspire visitors from our key overseas markets to travel to Ireland in 2024 with particular emphasis on supporting economies and communities, sustainability and strengthening partnerships across the industry.

Tourism Ireland's Celtic Connections Workshop & ETOA Britain & Ireland Marketplace B2B Event



Shannon Heritage / Clare Tourism DAC were delighted to join Tourism Ireland's Celtic Connections Workshop for the 2024 season in Glasgow, where we were among almost 30 other trade partners from the island of Ireland, and there was great representation from County Clare with Doolin Ferry Co. and Caherconnell Stone Fort & Field School also in attendance. Additionally, we had the opportunity to attend the ETOA Britain & Ireland Marketplace B2B event at the InterContinental

Clare Hotels: Lucky Breaks



"Lucky Breaks" campaign by the Visit Clare Team, Clare Tourism Department, is designed to promote County Clare as a wonderful destination and to spotlight the participating 'Lucky Breaks' hotels in our marketing efforts.

This initiative offers visitors holidaying in Clare the chance to win a return stay at the hotel they stayed at. There is no cost for hotels to participate. The commitment required from hotels is to agree to provide one return break as a prize to a winning guest who stays with them between March 1 and October 31, 2024, and, importantly, agree to issue the competition entry leaflets supplied by Visit Clare to guests.

Promoting Lucky Breaks and Participating Hotels:

- We will actively promote 'Lucky Breaks' to potential visitors to County Clare through advertising, social media, PR, and within features promoting the County.
- Participating hotels will be highlighted as a 'Lucky Breaks' Hotel and will be prominently listed on VisitClare.ie, significantly elevating their profile to prospective guests.

Funday Sunday: Activities & Attractions



Following the positive feedback received from the providers coupled with the popular local engagement for last year’s “Be a Tourist in your own County Clare”, we have created the “Funday Sundays” initiative. This initiative aims to support participating visitor attractions and activity providers in Clare by helping to boost business on Sundays starting after the Be a Tourist weekend, of Saturday and Sunday, 20th, and 21st April 2024.

This initiative will highlight the range of experiences available in Clare throughout the week and year-round. We are currently inviting tourism providers to express their interest in participating in this initiative.

Spotlight on the Website across the Visit Clare platforms



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



These posts are being increased in 2024 to include highlights on our towns and spotlights to the range and variety of tourism businesses within the County, featuring Accommodation, Attractions, Activities, Festivals & Events, and dining.

Networking Event - Clare Tourism Together in Clare (Save the Date)

Visit Clare in conjunction with the Clare Tourism Advisory Forum is inviting the Clare tourism providers to Save the Date, to this year’s Clare ‘Tourism Together’ networking event, Wednesday, 6th March. This event will enable collaboration and facilitate ways to stimulate meaningful business.

Twinning - A Birmingham Connection

The Cathaoirleach and Cllr Tony O’Brien (Chair of the Council Twinning Committee) sent an invitation, late last year, to Birmingham Council which the Lord Mayor of Birmingham and delegation has accepted and agreed to travel to Clare from Friday 16th to Sunday 18th of February.

A 2-day comprehensive tour of the county is being arranged to initiate economic discussions and cultural connections between Shannon and Birmingham.

London - The O2. It was an excellent chance to share details of the planned developments across our portfolio with both existing and potential new trade partners.



2023 Results at The Cliffs of Moher Experience

The year 2023 proved to be very successful for The Cliffs of Moher Experience being the most visited natural attraction in Ireland and a major emphasis on sustainable tourism. The Cliffs of Moher staff welcomed 1,343,904 visitors in 2023. This is a 23% increase on the visitor numbers in comparison to 2022.

The overall customer experience and satisfaction levels at The Cliffs of Moher is highly rated. This is linked to the onsite offering, excellent customer service, visitor assistance, quality food, upgraded interpretation, quality crafts & gifts, and quality information throughout the visitor journey. Our three designated charities were showcased with a charity open day in May. In December, we held a free entry to Clare residents' promotion which brought a total of 808 guests.

The breakdown of the visitor type was:

- 57% of visitors were fully in-dependent travellers.
- 43% of visitors were group tour activities.
- Route license activity account-ed for 13% of the overall numbers.

- In Q4 of 2023, there was a return of Chinese group tour business. The key international markets in addition to the domestic market are: the US, Ireland, France, Germany, Rest of Europe, and Australia/Asia.
- Independent research conducted onsite in 2023 showed that:
 - 42% of fully independent visitors stayed in County Clare the night of their visit.
 - 26% of fully independent visitors stayed in Galway the night of their visit.
 - 4% of fully independent visitors stayed in Dublin the night of their visit.
 - 29% of FIT visitors are accommodating in Clare for 2-3 nights.
 - 19% of FIT are accommodating in Galway for 2 - 3 nights.
 - 17% of FIT are accommodating in Kerry for 2-3 nights.
 - 7% of FIT are accommodating in Dublin for 2-3 nights.
 - 44% of group tours were going to Galway that night.
 - 22% of group tours were going to Dublin that night.

2023 Results at The Cliffs of Moher Experience



The Irish Independent Reader Travel Awards as voted by the public featured several Clare Tourism businesses.

1. The Cliffs of Moher Experience was voted in Ireland's top 10 visitor attractions.
2. The Cliffs of Moher coastal walk was voted in Ireland's top 10 walks & trails.
3. The Burren featured in Ireland's top 10 walks & trails.
4. County Clare was voted as the 3rd best holiday county in Ireland.
5. Dromoland Castle was voted as Ireland's number one best hotel.
6. The Woodstock hotel featured in the top 10 hotels in Ireland.
7. Wild Meadow Huts in Doolin featured in the top 10 best small stays in Ireland.
8. Moher Cottage was voted in the top 10 best pet friendly cafés in Ireland.
9. Shannon Airport was voted no.2 in the Airports Category.

WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT- KILRUSH LEA

Safety Works at Kilrush Depot

A new paved access road from the gate of the depot (yard) to the depot building was laid in December. The road was recently lined, including a pedestrian & cycle lane and a yellow box at the depot.



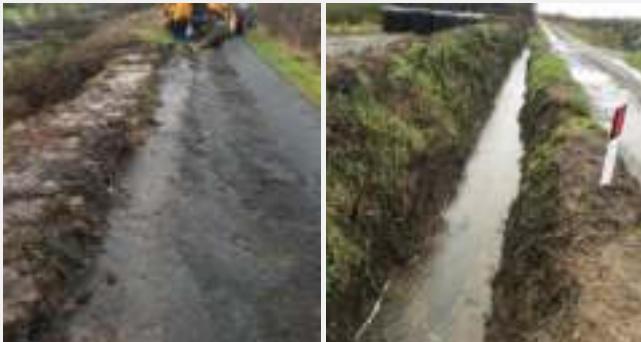
Collapse of Sea Wall at Knock

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



Preparation Works for 2024 Schedule of MD Works (roadworks programme)

We carried our hedge cutting, drainage works edge preparation etc. in preparation for 2024 RWP.



Low Cost Safety Schemes

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



Bridge repairs

Completed repairs to Ballycloghessy road bridge (*near Caherea*).



Footpath improvements

Footpath improvement works continued, and we commence footpath improvements at Lissycasey.



Sea Wall at Erribul

Work commenced raising the sea wall at Erribul, along the R473. These works will prevent the Shannon Estuary overtopping onto to the Regional Road.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

On 1st January there were directorate changes across the organisation. The Social Directorate now comprises Housing, Ukraine & Integration, Sport & Recreation and the West Clare Municipal District (North). Library Services have now been merged within the Rural Development Directorate. Jason Murphy has been assigned responsibility of the Social Development Directorate with Anne Haugh now leading the Rural Development Directorate.

- Our Capital team Housing Delivery targets for 2024 is 153 units and the team is already working hard to ensure this is achieved and indeed exceeded.
- We have been successful in securing approval for the first Affordable Housing Scheme in County Clare under the new Affordable Funding Scheme. Approval has been received for 10 properties in Oakwood View in Shannon. Two further proposals are with DHLGH for evaluation, with a further submission about to be submitted to the DHLGH. 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://affordablehomes.ie/>
- We continue to support circa. 50 clients with Notice to Quits in existing private rental agreements. Our staff are actively engaging with these clients to assist them in accessing other housing solutions and to avoid the need for entering

homeless services. 22 households have sourced alternative HAP accommodation or have been allocated properties through the Council. We have purchased/agreed sale on 17 properties through the tenant in situ process with more acquisitions in the pipeline. AHBs have purchased 2 properties with further properties also in process. In addition a small number of clients are being supported through the transboundary scheme where they are renting in border areas outside of Clare boundary, and a further three households have been referred to the Housing Agency as they may be able to avail of the Cost Rental Tenant in Situ program through the Agency.

- The Enhanced Defective Concrete Block [DCB] Grant Scheme went live in mid-July, with the required Department Regulations now in place. The scheme is open and the Councils DCB team are accepting applications online. The Defective Concrete Block Team have held workshops in Shannon and will be holding Walk in Clinics in each of the MDs, no appointment necessary, to assist members of the public in completing their applications for the grant and to provide general information on the scheme.
- Clare County Council, Sport & Recreation team has been successful in our application to participate in a national pilot program to develop a County Sports Plan. Clare has been included with Carlow, Laois and Cavan in this Sport Ireland led initiative. Details of the project will unfold in the coming weeks.

HOUSING

For 2024 the housing public counter will remain 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

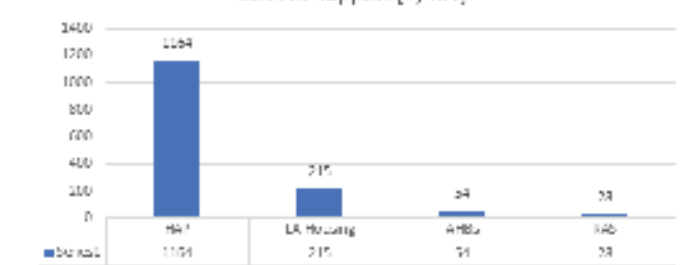
Social Housing Demand

The highest demand throughout the county remains for 1 and 2-bedroomed 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.

Current Housing need as of 21/12/2023

Total Households on List	2,825	
Transfer Applicants (see below)		1,461
Nett Need	1,364	

Nature of tenure of Applicants excluded from Nett Need - Already receiving support and seeking other form of support [1,461]



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Count of FIRST AREA OF CHOICE	BEDS_APPROVED			
	1 and 2 beds	3 beds	4 and 5 beds	Total
ENNIS	925	203	81	1209
SHANNON	169	35	16	220
CLARECASTLE	135	26	10	171
INAGH/ENNISTYMON/LAHINCH	124	26	4	154
KILRUSH	95	27	7	129
FEAKLE/SCARIFF/WHITEGATE	100	24	4	128
MEELICK/PARTEEN/WESTBURY	67	31	12	110
MILTOWN MALBAY/MULLAGH/QUILTY	73	10	2	85
COROFIN/RUAN	58	17	1	76
KILKEE/CROSS/CARRIGAHOLT	64	11	1	76
NEWMARKET-ON-FERGUS	53	16	4	73
KILLALOE	53	13	2	68
LISDOONVARNA/BALLYVAUGHAN	48	10	3	61
SIXMILEBRIDGE	39	12	7	58
COORACLARE/DOONBEG	33	9	5	47
TULLA/KILKISHEN/BROADFORD	35	6	3	44
CLONLARA	23	5	1	29
KILDYSART/BALLYNACALLY	20	4	3	27
QUIN	17	6	1	24
KILMIHIL	11	5	2	18
KILMALEY	9	2		11
KILFENORA	6	1		7
Grand Total	2157	499	169	2825

Newly Qualified Applicants



Housing Allocations

For the period Q 4 2023, a total of 74 households were allocated social housing. Of these 74 new tenancies created, 29 of these applicant households were either availing of homelessness emergency accommodation, homeless or at risk of homelessness. Of these 29 households, 12 of them were allocated properties that were delivered by Approved Housing Bodies.

39% of the social housing allocations for Q3 2023 was allocated to applicant households who were either residing in homelessness emergency accommodation or were assessed as being at risk of homelessness as defined by Section 2 of the Housing Act 1988 and therefore the allocation of social housing by this Authority either prevented these households from entering emergency accommodation or facilitated households to exit emergency accommodation.

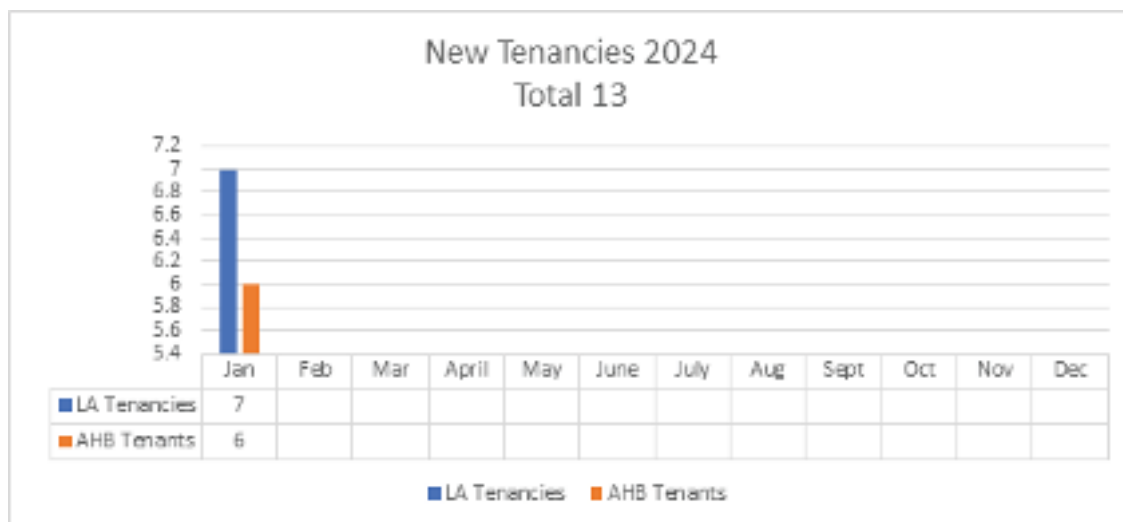


All of our properties which are available for letting are advertised on our Choice Based Letting (CBL) website. Recently advertised on this website were 10 apartments located at O'Connell Street, Ennis. This developed attracted in excess of 200 expressions of interest, which the Allocations Team are currently assessing, and successful applicants will be notified in early February and should be in their new homes shortly after being notified. This new social housing development, has basic services such as education, employment , shops within walking distance which in turn means more support for local businesses. From an environmental perspective, the new tenants of these properties can walk or use buses to access local services, reducing their reliance on cars. In addition, repurposing this vacant building into social housing rather than building new, will help reduce carbon emissions . Furthermore, it will make the town more attractive to visitors, which in turn means more benefits to our local economy.

In December 2023, 12 no 3 bedroomed houses located at Acha Bhile, Lahinch Road Ennis were advertised on the CBL website. These properties are being delivered by Cluid Housing. 186 expressions of interest were received for these properties. The Assessment process has been completed and 12 households have been nominated to Cluid Housing for tenancy of these properties. Once these household are accepted as tenants by Cluid Housing, Clare County Council deems that the accommodation needs of these households has been met.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme

There remains significant interest in the LA Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme. We currently have 14 open cases at various stages of the process. Sale of 7 properties were completed in 2023.

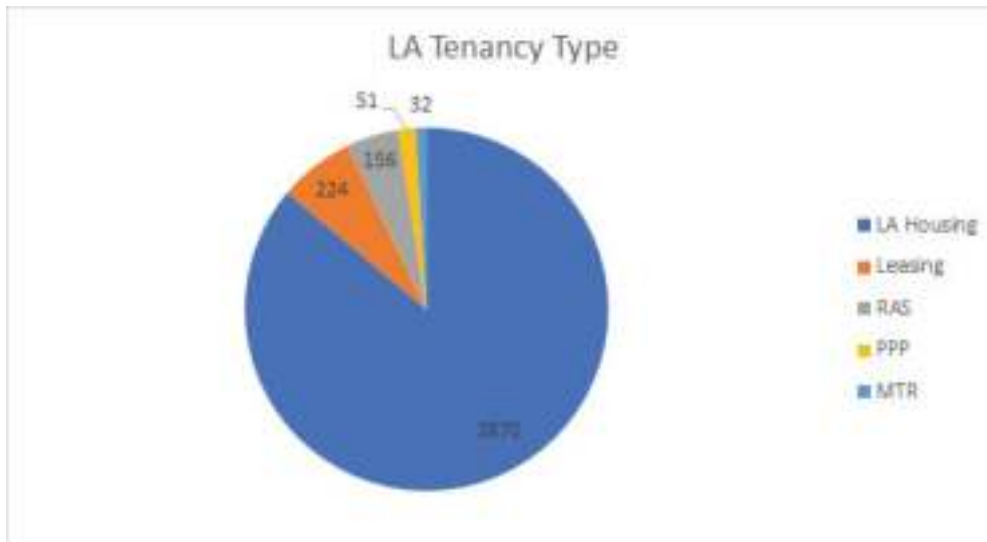
Having consulted with elected members in relation to maintaining our newer stock we have agreed that properties purchased or built since 1st January 2016 will not be available for sale under this scheme. This can be reviewed at end of current Housing Delivery Plan period in 2026. We have also agreed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

The Department issued a Circular in December 2023 advising of small changes to the scheme including a reduction in minimum income eligibility and adding further income sources as eligible, including certain state pensions and disability payments.

Housing Tenancies:

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

21st Dec 2023			
MD	Allocated	Occupied	Total
Ennis MD	2	1283	1288
Killaloe MD		364	364
Shannon MD	1	731	732
West Clare MD	1	955	959
Grand Total	4	3333	3342



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

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

Vacancies:

Vacant Stock	Ennis MD	West Clare MD	Shannon MD	Killaloe MD	Total
Traveller Accom.	3	7	2	0	12
Derelict Properties	0	0	0	0	0
Projects	4	12	1	2	19
Casual Vacancies	11	12	3	3	29
TOTAL	18	31	6	5	60

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.

The team were successful in securing a repossession in court earlier this month in a case where there were continued breaches of a Tenancy Agreement and we will continue to seek repossessions through the courts in such situations.

The Estate Management Team have started extensive inspections of council stock this year with almost 200 properties in Shannon inspected during January. It is planned to carry out inspections on 2,000 properties this year in relation to general upkeep of the properties, refuse collection etc. Follow up calls are scheduled in relation to approximately 10% of the properties inspected to date to ensure compliance with issues of concern are addressed.

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

	Total year to date	1st - 24th January 2024
ASB Complaints recd	41	41
Housing Inspections	92	92
Referrals to TSS	5	5
Tenancy Notifications/Warnings issued	4	4
Abandonment Notices issued	4	4
Keys collected from Casual Vacancies	3	3
Repossession Orders	1	1
Daily Patrols [TEOs]	529	529

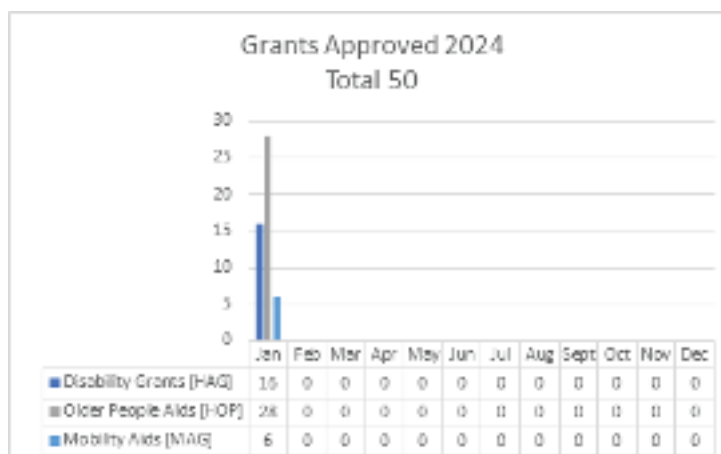
The Tenancy Enforcement team carry out continued patrols of Local Authority housing estates and Traveller sites and have a very visible presence to manage and mitigate against complaints of antisocial behaviour. The team engage proactively with tenants to help prevent anti-social behaviour and between daily patrols of local authority sites, specific meetings with tenants as well as engaging with local communities and their representatives. The working hours of the TEO team are flexible to meet required need, involving working after hours and weekends as the need dictates. The TEO team can be contacted out of office hours, should the need arise, by contacting the Council Emergency Phone no. (087) 2599568

Private Rented inspections

110 inspections were carried out up to January 2024. 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:



The Housing Department paid out close to 500 private house grants to the value of €3,128,567 in 2023. 80% of this sum is claimed from the Department with the balance coming from our own resources. In addition, disability works were completed in many of Clare County Council own properties which provided an improved quality of life for our tenants thus enabling them to enjoy a greater level of comfort in their homes. This work will continue throughout the coming 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

There are currently 52 Local Authority Home Loans Approved in Principle. Updated figures are outlined as follows:



Traveller Accommodation

Clare County Council continue to progress our Traveller Accommodation Program [TAP] 2019 – 2024.

We have also commenced preparation of the next 5-year Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAPs) for adoption by 31 December 2024. Preparation of the new plan will require housing authorities to consult with adjoining housing authorities, the HSE, approved housing bodies, the Local Traveller Consultative Committee, other local Traveller representative groups, community and interest groups and the public in general. Housing authorities, following consultation, must make an estimate of the current and projected accommodation needs of Traveller families arising over the five-year programme. We are currently working with the Traveller Community Development Program in preparing a detailed traveller led needs analysis in preparation of same.

It is expected that draft plan will be available for public consultation in Q3 2024.

Homeless Services [Homeless Action Team HAT]

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

Over the last quarter there has been an increase in the number of presentations, queries and all matters arising around Notice to Quits. This continues to have an impact on both Family and Single Households, while also on Family/Single Households that exceed the Social Housing Income Limits.

The demands on the Homeless Action Team surrounding assessments and the requirements for assessments to be carried out, with the appropriate actions or referrals put in place following this remains notably high. The number of assessments has increased again within this period with an increased level of complex cases presenting. Within this period there has also been an increase in presentations and households who have been assessed as Non HRC Compliant. While such households are not eligible for services in the area, the amount of work and interactions each staff has had with such households has increased and placed considerable pressure on all members.

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

The need of immediate Emergency Accommodation

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

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

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. As more complex circumstances and situations arise in this space there is an ever increasing need to ensure the awareness of our Health & Safety systems and procedures among our teams.

The Homeless Action Team continues to pursue additional emergency accommodation options. This continues to prove challenging due to demand for accommodation. 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 with limited success for various reasons.

An advertisement was placed in the Clare Champion in September 2023 seeking expressions of interest from local establishments to provide emergency accommodation. Due to the poor response the Homeless Action Team are currently engaging with our Communications Department to re-advertise this expression of interest via social media. This is in progress. Clare Homeless Action team continues to engage with all necessary stakeholders, service providers and local supports in order to adopt a collaborative approach to the tackling of Homelessness.

Emergency Accommodation Status as of 17/01/2024

	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	13	0	1
Laurel Lodge Weather Initiative	0	4	0	0
Cusack Lodge	5	7	10	1
Westbrook	0	15	0	1
Westbrook Weather Initiative	0	2	0	0
Ashford Court	11	17	16	1
EA Families	4	5	11	2
EA Individuals	0	12	0	4
TOTAL	20	75	37	10

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.

It is also important to note that at this time Homeless Services are operating a Winter Initiative Plan where the use and numbers of those availing of this fluctuates on a nightly basis. This can rise over 8 on occasions depending on weather.

In particular during this period, two separate but complex cases took up a significant amount of time and resources from both the Homeless Action Team and outside support agencies such as An Garda Siochana and the HSE. The level of complex cases continues to rise within this catchment.

Exits/Discharges from EA during Q4 of 2023

- 4 * exits to AHB/LA housing
- 2 * Self Discharge
- 4 * Discharged : Breach of conditions / Non use of bed space

Affordable Housing Schemes for County Clare

CCC continue to run an Expression of Interest (EOI) Campaign seeking proposals from developers on options to deliver affordable homes in County Clare. 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. CCC have been successful in securing approval for the first Affordable Housing Scheme in County Clare under the new Affordable Funding Scheme. Approval has been received for 10 properties in Oakwood View in Shannon. Two further proposals are with DHLGH for evaluation, with a further submission about to be submitted to the DHLGH

Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme

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

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

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 DCB Team have also included a video on CCC's website recently on "how to make an application" to further assist homeowners in the application process.

CCC DCB team provided an information meeting on the 21st November last in Shannon Library, to further assist Homeowners on how to make an application to the Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks (DCB) Grant Scheme using Clare County Council's (CCC) online portal. This information meeting was targeted for people with limited digital resources and/or capabilities, to assist them further in making an application. A second information evening took place on the 28th of November in the Shannon Library. Walk in clinics, no appointment necessary, are planned for each of the Municipal Districts in February to assist applicants with their applications.

WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL (W)	WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL (N)	KILRUSH DIGITAL HUB	KILALOE MUNICIPAL	SHANNON MUNICIPAL	ENNIS MUNICIPAL
ENNISTYMON DIGITAL HUB	SCARRIFF AREA OFFICE	SHANNON TOWN HALL	CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL H/Q		
20.02.24 TUESDAY	22.02.2024 THURSDAY	27.02.2024 TUESDAY	29.02.2024 THURSDAY	01.03.2024 FRIDAY	
9.30 - 13.00	9.30 - 13.00	9.30 - 13.00	09.30 - 13.00	9.30 - 13.00	

If you are unable to attend on the scheduled dates and have any query regarding the application process, please email the Defective Concrete Blocks Team at dcb@clarecoco.ie

CCC continue to engage with the DHLGH to ensure social houses affected by DCB also are included in a similar scheme.

Update on capital programme:

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



Works ongoing on Sixmilebridge project.



Progress on Scarriff housing development.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Approved Housing Bodies

The Approved Housing Body (AHB) sector delivered a number of properties in Scarriff and Ennis at the close of 2023, providing housing of a very high standard to applicants on our social housing waiting list. Some of these units were supplied through the Part V mechanism. The Housing Department will be holding meetings with all of these bodies early in 2024 to agree delivery targets, monitor progress and provide support to them in relation to any issues arising.

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Scarriff	18	Under Construction	Q1 2023	Q3 2024
Sixmilebridge	15	Under Construction.	Q1 2023	Q3 2024
Dún na hInse	1	Under Construction	Q4 2023	Q2 2024
38 St Patrick's Terrace, Kilrush	1	Contractor Appointed	Q1 2024	Q4 2024
St. Senan's Terrace, Kilrush	5	Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q2 2024
Clarehill Clarecastle	13	Turnkey - Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2024
Drumcliff Rd. Ennis	26	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Judicial Review Proceedings have been initiated in relation to S179A.	-	-
Ennistymon	30	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Project on hold.	-	-
Gort Rd. Ennis	20	Stage 2 approved. Permission granted by An Bord Pleanála on 2nd January 2024. Tender for construction contract currently being prepared.	Q2 2024	Q3 2025
Doonbeg Road, Kilkee	25	Stage 1 approval. Design Team has been appointed and design is progressing.	Q2 2024	Q4 2025
Back Road, Kilrush	12	Stage 1 approval. Design Team has been appointed and design is progressing.	Q3 2024	Q1 2026
Moore Street, Kilrush	21	Stage 1 approval. Design Team appointed.	Q3 2024	Q1 2026
Doonbeg Lands	8	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH.	Q3 2024	Q3 2025
Shallee Drive / Cloughleigh Rd	5	Stage 1 approval. Design Team appointed.	Q3 2024	Q3 2025
Subtotal	200			
Approved Housing Body Projects	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Quin, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey)	36	Under construction: 10 units in Phase 1 26 units in Phase 1	Q1 2023 Q3 2023	Q1 2024 Q3 2024
Cluain na Laoi, Kilkishen (Circle Housing Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	16	Under construction: 8 units in Phase 1 8 units in Phase 2	Q1 2023 Q1 2023	Q1 2024 Q3 2024
Acha Bhile, Lahinch Rd., Ennis (Cluid Hsg. Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	33	Under construction 12 units in Phase 1 - Completed 21 units in Phase 2 – Under Construction	Q4 2022 Q1 2024	Q4 2023 Q4 2024
Market Street, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	14	Under construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2024
63 Shannon Heights, Kilrush (Sophia Hsg. Assoc.) CAS Renewal Construction	1	At procurement stage	Q1 2024	Q4 2024
Loughville, Ennis (Tuath Housing) CALF Turnkey	48	Construction to commence: 16 units in Phase 1 32 units in Phase 2	Q1 2024 Q2 2024	Q4 2024 Q2 2025
Bruachlan, Westbury (Cooperative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Construction	22	Planning application ongoing - at further information stage.	Q3 2024	Q3 2025
Subtotal	170			
Total	370			

UKRAINIAN SERVICES

The CSO figures confirm there are currently 5,508 Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BoTP's) living in County Clare. This represents an increase of 140 people from last month. Approximately 3,802 people are accommodated in 38 multi-occupancy facilities located throughout the County. The remaining people are accommodated in residential settings in formal hosted arrangements through the Irish Red Cross and Clare County Council's 'Offer-A-Home' scheme. The Offer-A-Home scheme remains open and available online at <https://offerahome.ie>. We currently have 200 homes offered under this scheme, with an average of 2 homes being offered each week. To date our Matching & Relationship Manager has facilitated the accommodation of 385 people that were originally living in hotel and multi-occupancy facilities.

The new Local Authority Integration Team has started in Clare County Council over the last number of weeks. The team includes Brendan Boyce (Integration Coordinator), Fiona Cahill (Integration Support Worker), Pdraig McMahon (Integration Support Worker) and Margaret O'Rourke (Assistant Staff Officer). New Integration teams are being established in each of the 31 Local Authorities and are funded by the Department of Children and Integration (DCEDIY). The new team will work with people from migrant communities, agencies and NGOs to build integration supports and networks.

SPORTS & RECREATION



Active Ennis Leisure Complex

Introduction of QR codes

QR codes are now on display around the Complex enabling people to easily access our timetables and social media outlets. We aim to increase our online interactions to help promote our services and provide information to our customers.



Membership

At the start of January, we launched a new year promotion "New Year New You", offering 3-month gym and pool membership for €120 and 12-month gym and pool membership for €380. This offer is proving very popular and is adding to our overall membership, currently in excess of 800.



Class Numbers

Classes for our Body Blast and Lunch Crunch have been very busy in January with upwards of 20 participants in some classes. We continue to promote our classes using social media and encourage all levels to participate.



Footfall Report Active Ennis Leisure Complex

It has been a busy month in the Active Ennis Leisure Complex with a total of 12,334 visitors to date. This is an average of 725 visitors per day, a 14% increase from Decembers average. A total of 18,800 visitors entered the premises over December with an average of 627 visitors a day.

Lee's Road

December was a very busy period for Lee's Road. Bookings for facilities saw an increase of 10.2%. The number of active hours also saw an increase of 18%.

The outsized revenue increase is likely to be influenced by the mild winter we have had this year which leads to a decrease in cancellations due to weather factors. A total of 13,067 vehicles entered the park in December, with an average of 422 per day.

Over the year some data has been attained from traffic counters for vehicles and pedestrians using Lees Road. The total number of vehicles counted was 212,694, with a weekly average of 4,079. The total number of pedestrians counted over the year was 20,371, with a weekly average of 391 pedestrians.

Cloughleigh

Bookings for facilities and active hours saw an increase of 57.9% over December.

Kilrush

In December bookings for facilities in Kilrush saw an increase of 47.4% and the number of active hours also saw an increase of 25%.

Tim Smythe Park

Activity also increased by 20% in December. Tim Smythe Park also hosted a charity soccer match on St Stephen's Day.
www.activeennis.ie www.activekilrush.ie

Any defects or operational issues can be reported by email to

info@activeennis.ie

Swimming lessons

January saw a new block of swimming lessons begin, with lessons available at weekends as well as weekdays. Lessons are available for children and adults. Swimming lessons are in high demand and quickly became booked out. We will advertise and promote more blocks of lessons as they become available



The Banner Mile

The Banner Mile training program commenced in the pool in January. This program, run by Clare Sports Partnership will run for 10 weeks on Thursdays upto mid March. It is helping individuals to train to swimming a half mile or a full mile.



General Updates

- We are currently accepting applications for a Programme Manager position.
- We are working with Bluescope Technologies to develop and improve our website.
- We have a student on placement with us for 600 hours.

Schools & Youth

- Get Going Get Rowing will begin in St. Joseph's Secondary School, Spanish Point over the coming weeks. The program has finished in Shannon Comprehensive School and proved very successful.
- Borrowing of playground markings and sportshall athletics packs by primary schools has begun for 2024.
- Our Active Homework Challenge 2024 for primary school children was held during January
- Active Storytime was delivered to primary school children in Kilrush Library on Jan 24th.

Education & Training

- Safeguarding courses have resumed for 2024. The full list of safeguarding courses is available on our website.
- Season Of Respect Level 1 Club Award workshop is scheduled to take place on Jan 24th.

Sports Inclusion

- Inclusive gymnastics with Ennis Gymnastics Club is ongoing on Monday and Tuesday evenings. There are 50 children who attend these sessions.
- The brand new integrated physical education programme with TY students and students from the ASD hub in St. Caimin's Secondary school in Shannon has re-started for 2024.

Older Adults

- Our Banner Balance programme has re-started for 2024.
- We continue to support our tutors in delivering weekly classes to over 300 older adults in County Clare.

Active Communities

- Three locations are hosting our Banner Mile ten-week swimming programme with 36 people taking part across Shannon, Lahinch and Ennis.
- 103 people took part in our four-week Christmas walking challenge.
- 16 ladies are participating in our West Clare Women on the Move gym programme.
- 17 men are participating in our West Clare Men on the Move gym programme.
- We have now completed 5 workshops in our Women in Sport Leadership programme, with 20 female sports coaches taking part.
- Bike Week funding application submitted for 2024.

Club Development

- Our coach support workshop 'Sports Nutrition for Teens' was held on Thursday 25th of January at Clare Education centre.
- We are reviewing the Level 6 Sports Admin course which we ran last year for volunteers, in conjunction with Limerick and Tipperary LSPs and TUS.
- We are supporting two new clubs in applying for the New Club Grant to help them with set up costs. The clubs are involved in caving and climbing. We are also still supporting Shannon Sharks, the new Underwater Hockey Club.

Minority Communities

- Following on from the success of the pilot, we are relaunching Winter Wellness in the Pavilion with Lisdonvarna Failte. This will be Dance Fitness with Kasia and will run for 10 weeks on a Friday afternoon. This opportunity is accessible to all members of the community and will be widely promoted.
- Working in partnership with Clare Traveller Community Development we have identified a group of 10-15 traveller women who want to get physically active. We will be starting a 6-week programme in Cloughleigh Community Hall every Monday starting at the end of January.
- We have started a 6-week programme in Ennistymon with traveller women. This is taking place in the meeting room of the Northwest Clare Family resource centre.
- We are working with sanctuary runners on helping recruit volunteers and participation numbers with plans for further collaborations this year.
- We supported the Child Family Support Network in Tusla at their event for disadvantaged parents in Scariff Library on 23rd of January. 5

WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT - ENNISTYMON LEA

North Clare Integrated Traffic & Transport Plan

It has been agreed by the West Clare Municipal District to develop a North Clare Integrated Transport and Traffic Plan, to be led by the Physical Directorate and supported by input from the Tourism Directorate as well as by the West Clare Municipal District. This plan will address capacity and infra-structural challenges relating to additional visitor traffic, combined with local transport needs, during the tourism season in North Clare. A Steering Group has been set up to progress and draft Terms of Reference have been issued to the North Clare Communities Group (NCCG) for their feedback.

Winter Maintenance

A new gritter is now based in the yard in Ennistymon which can be rear mounted on a pickup van. During extreme frost conditions it is deployed to treat local roads and footpaths not covered on the county wide Winter Maintenance programme.



Footpath Maintenance

Works have been completed in Miltown Malbay



Storm Response

Short section of footpath closed along the Main Street in Corofin following reports of loose roof slates evident on a derelict building. Building Control section are now contacting the relevant property owner to make safe.



Showers at Lahinch beach

Lahinch Showers incorporating new foot shower

