



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Eanáir / January
2024



RURAL DEVELOPMENT p29



TOURISM DEVELOPMENT p21



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT p35



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FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES p2

FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

CORPORATE SERVICES

Civic reception held to mark Clare sporting success



Pictured with Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney, are (l-r): Clare Minor Hurling manager, Brian O’Connell, and Clare Minor Hurling captain, Eoghan Gunning.



Pictured with Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney, are (l-r): Clare Junior Camogie captain, Sinéad O’Keeffe, and Clare Junior Camogie manager, John Carmody.

A civic reception was held on 4th December in the Council Chamber, honouring the Clare Junior Camogie Panel for winning the All-Ireland Premier Junior Camogie Championship, and the Clare Minor Hurlers for winning both the Munster and All-Ireland Minor Hurling Championships. The Cathaoirleach and Councillors acknowledged the great achievements of both teams and the pride they had brought to the county.

A presentation was made to Sinéad O’Keeffe, camogie team captain, and Eoghan Gunning, minor captain, as well as both managers, John Carmody (camogie) and Brian O’Connell (hurling).

The reception ended with the singing of ‘My Lovely Rose of Clare’ by PJ Murrhy.

Freedom of Information & Data Protection

Previous years and 2023 to date - statistics to 15th December 2023.

Freedom of Information and Data Protection				
2020-2023 - statistics to 15th December 2023				
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Freedom of Information				
Freedom of Information Requests	152	176	119	154
Internal Review Applications	6	13	8	4
Appeals to Information Commissioner	1	4	2	4
Data Access Requests				
Subject Access Request	5	6	10	10
Subject Access Request	0	1	1	2
Third Party Requests e.g. Gardai	20	27	27	30

Communications

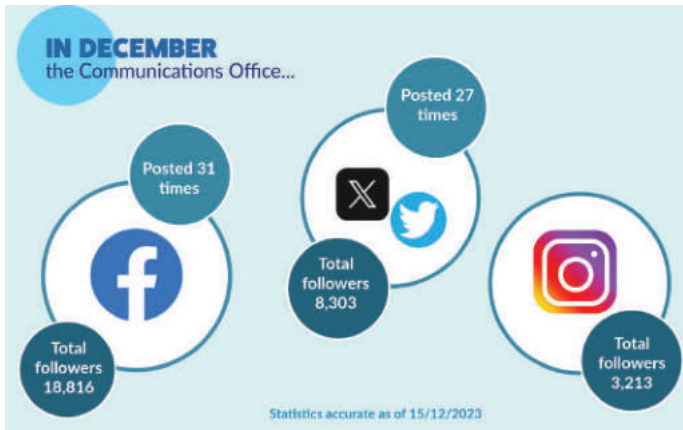
The Communications Office communicates and promotes Council activities and services and raises public awareness of issues of local and national interest.

Media releases issued during December 2023 included:

- Status Orange and Yellow wind warnings for Clare
- Clare schools get with the biodiversity programme
- Council welcomes fund to support community climate action in Clare
- People in Clare are being urged to think ‘circular’ this Christmas
- Civic Reception held to mark Clare Sporting Success
- New passport highlights Clare’s health enhancing natural amenities.

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.



PROCUREMENT

There were no new tender competitions published by Clare County Council on eTenders in the period from 30th November to 19th December 2023 inclusive.

HUMAN RESOURCES

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

- Site Dumper Assessment
- Abrasive Wheels
- Minute Taking for Meetings
- Road Opening & Reinstatement Basic
- Courtroom skills
- Forklift for new entrants
- Climate Action Awareness

Essential Skillz Online Training

- Health & Safety Induction
- Slips, Trips & Falls

- Health & Safety**
- Manual Handling
- Safe Pass

Newsletter: The Human Resources Newsletter issued to all staff in December providing updates from the previous months and notice of upcoming courses for the New Year.

Recruitment Competitions December

Competitions Advertised

Open

Executive Planner (On-line application)
Assistant Planner (On-line application)
Graduate Planner (On-line application)
IS Analyst Developer (On-line application)
Head of IS (Public Jobs)

Confined

Sub-Station Officer (Ennis, Ennistymon, Kilrush,
Killaloe, Kilkee, Shannon & Scariff)
Plant Operator B

Interviews

Assistant Planner
Caretaker Cleaner - Ennistymon & Kilrush
Temporary Archivist
Tenancy Enforcement Officer
Irish Language Development Communications Officer
IS Technical Support Officer



The CIPD HR Awards in Ireland 2024

Finalist

Embracing new ways of working

Clare Council Council has been shortlisted as a finalist for the CIPD HR Awards under the category 'Embracing New Ways of Working'. The winners will be announced in February.

Employee Wellbeing

There was a packed programme of events in December, including:

- Christmas Jumper Day for Cystic Fibrosis: €510 was collected and donated.
- Gardening Workshop: The first meeting of the new gardening group for staff and retirees took place on 13th December 2023. Sixteen people attended with a demonstration from staff of the gardening section.
- Carol singing by staff was held in the foyer on Christmas week.
- Wellbeing Hub: The focus for December was on Financial Wellbeing and lots of valuable advice and guidance was available on the hub.
- The Department issued a circular regarding 'Leave for Medical Care Purposes' under the Work Life Balance & Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023. This unpaid leave provides various entitlements.
- The Department issued a circular regarding 'Domestic Violence Leave' under the Work Life Balance & Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023. This is paid leave.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

2023 was a challenging year for the entire Council and for the Social Directorate as the conflict in Ukraine continued to effect on availability and cost of building supplies and other necessities and these challenges will continue in 2024. However we are confident that the team in the Directorate will continue to deal with all challenges and meet and exceed targets for the coming year.

- Our Capital team has met its Housing Delivery plan targets for 2023 and are already working hard to ensure that 2024 target of 153 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. A second proposal is with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) for evaluation, with further submissions early in the new year. 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 area 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 11 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 number 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.

- Work on the new County Library continues at pace and great progress is now visible on site. This will prove to be a fantastic addition to the town and county and enhance the attractiveness of the town from a visitor perspective.
- The Enhanced Defective Concrete Block [DCB] Grant Scheme went live in mid-July, with the required Department Regulations now in place. The scheme is open and the Council's DCB team are accepting applications online. The Community Facilitator, and other staff, have held a number of workshops in Shannon to assist homeowners with the application process and guide them through the DCB process.

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.

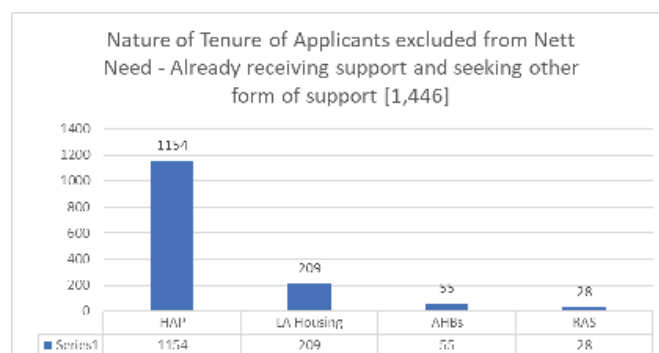
The Clare Homeless Action Team (HAT) office is open by appointment during office hours and can be contacted on 065 684 6291 or by email: hat@clarecoco.ie

Social Housing Demand - Assessment of housing need

Our greatest demand throughout the county remains for 1 and 2-bedroomed properties. There are 2,131 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	2,790	
Transfer Applicants (see below)		1,446
Nett Need	1,344	

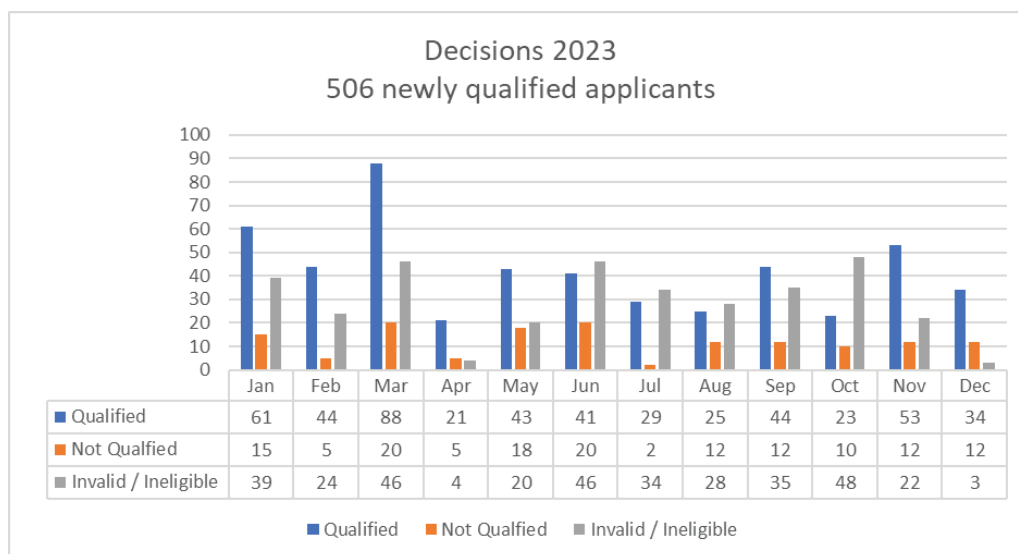


Housing need by Area of choice and number of beds approved:

FIRST AREA OF CHOICE	BEDS_APPROVED			
	1 and 2 beds	3 beds	4 and 5 beds	Total
ENNIS	907	201	80	1188
SHANNON	169	33	16	218
CLARECASTLE	132	27	10	169
INAGH/ENNISTYMON/LAHINCH	124	25	4	153
KILRUSH	95	27	7	129
FEAKLE/SCARIFF/WHITEGATE	99	24	4	127
MEELICK/PARTEEN/WESTBURY	68	30	12	110
MILTOWN MALBAY/MULLAGH/QUILTY	73	10	2	85
KILKEE/CROSS/CARRIGAHOLT	63	11	1	75
COROFIN/RUAN	57	17	1	75
NEWMARKET-ON-FERGUS	50	16	4	70
KILLALOE	54	13	2	69
LISDOONVARNA/BALLYVAUGHAN	47	9	3	59
SIXMILEBRIDGE	39	12	7	58
COORACLARE/DOONBEG	33	9	5	47
TULLA/KILKISHEN/BROADFORD	34	6	3	43
CLONLARA	22	5	1	28
KILDYSART/BALLYNACALLY	20	4	3	27
QUIN	17	6	1	24
KILMIHIL	11	5	2	18
KILMALEY	9	2		11
KILFENORA	6	1		7
	2131	491	168	2790

Newly Qualified Applicants

New income limits became effective on 1st January 2023. 506 new applications were qualified in 2023 which is broadly in line with previous years. Increased income eligibility bands have not had a noticeable effect on our figures.



Housing Allocations

Clare County Council continues to work with the Approved Housing Bodies in relation to the provision of social housing. In this regard 7 no 3 bedroomed and 19 no 4 bedroomed houses located at New Park Grove, Cappahard, Tulla Road Ennis were recently advertised on the CBL website. These properties are being delivered by Co Operative Housing Ireland (CHI). A substantial number of expressions of interest were received. The Assessment process has been completed and 26 households have been nominated to CHI for tenancy of these properties. Once these household are accepted as a tenant(s) by CHI , Clare County Council deems that the accommodation needs of that family has been met.

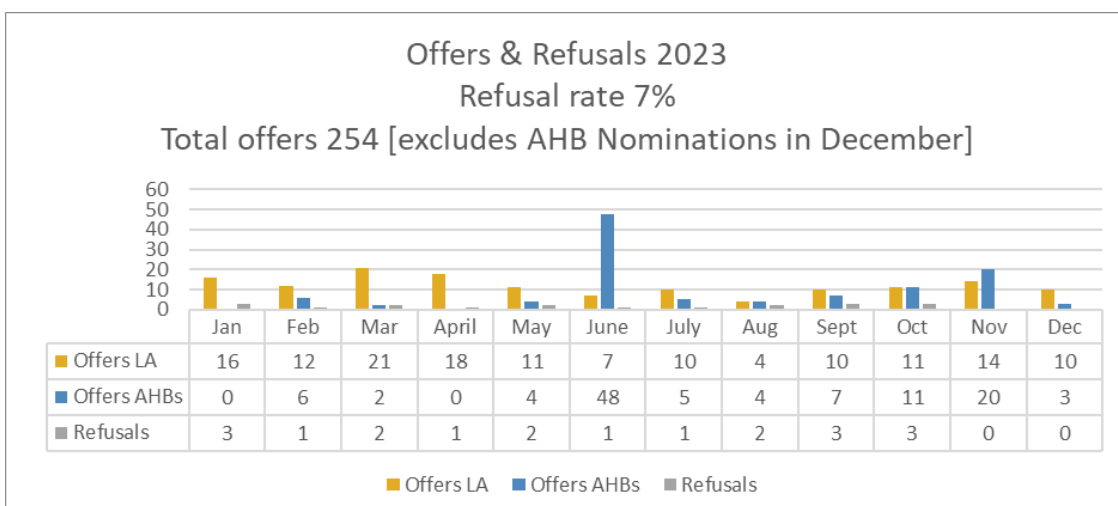


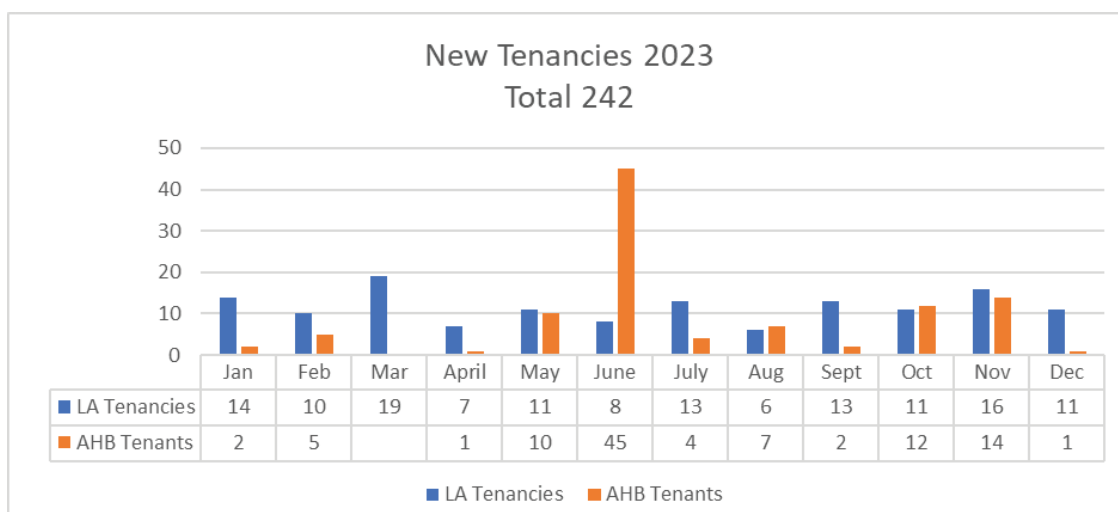
New Park Grove.



Acha Bhile.

In addition, 12 no 3 bedroomed houses located at Acha Bhile, Lahinch Road Ennis were recently advertised on the CBL website. These properties are being made delivered by Cluid Housing. 186 expressions of interest were received for these properties. The Allocations Team are currently assessing the applications received. As these properties are being provided by an Approved Housing Body i.e Cluid Housing, Clare County Council nominate the households from the housing list who have expressed interest in this development via the CBL website to take up the tenancy of these properties.





Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme

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

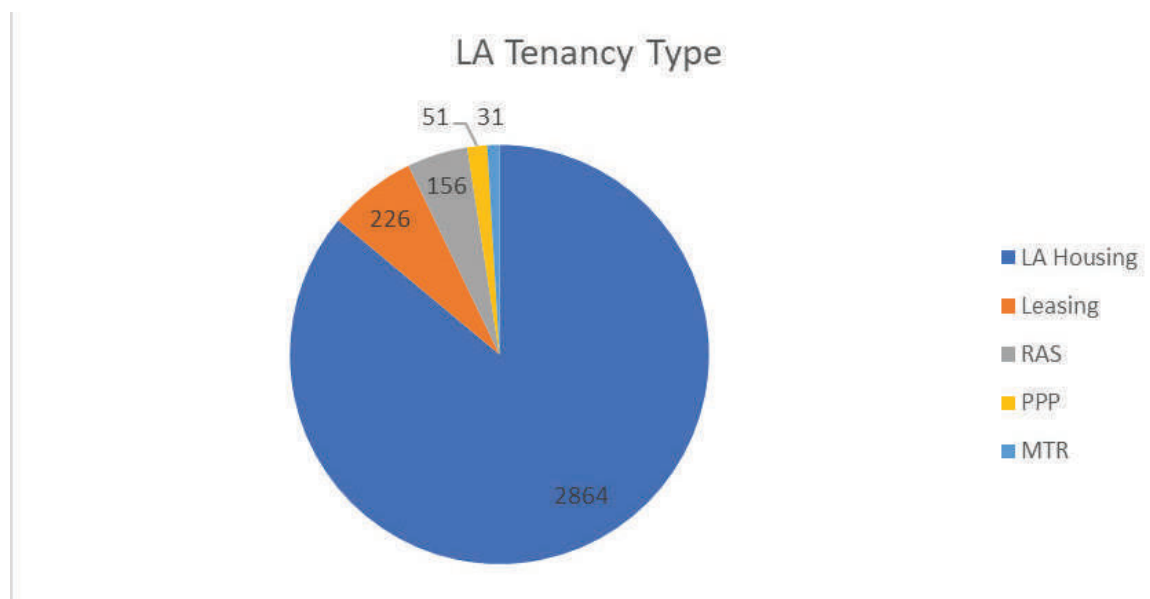
The Department issued a Circular in December 2023 advising of small changes to the scheme including a reduction in minimum income eligibility and adding further income sources as eligible, including certain state pensions and disability payments.



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	6	1283	1289
Killaloe MD		364	364
Shannon MD	3	729	732
West Clare MD	6	953	959
Grand Total	15	3327	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.	4	5	2	0	11
Derelict Properties	0	0	0	0	0
Projects	4	12	1	2	19
Casual Vacancies	11	13	3	3	30
TOTAL	19	30	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 was continued and blatant breach of a Tenancy Agreement and we will continue to seek possessions through the courts in such situations.

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.

	21st Nov to 15th Dec	Total year to date
ASB Complaints recd	41	834
Housing Inspections	12	669
Referrals to TSS	2	28
Tenancy Notifications/Warnings issued	5	146
Abandonment Notices issued	0	13
Keys collected from Casual Vacancies	3	58
Repossession Orders	1	2

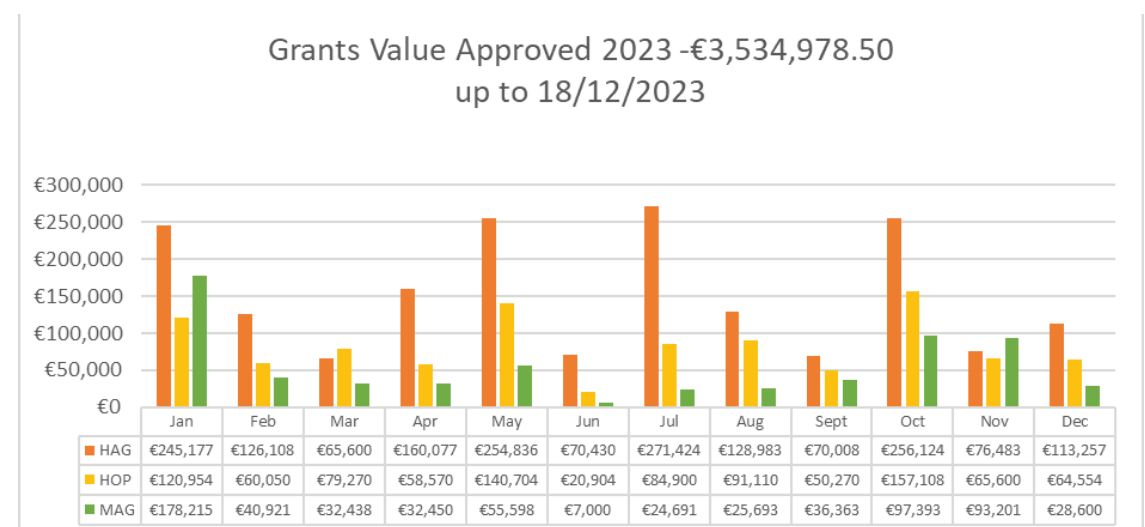
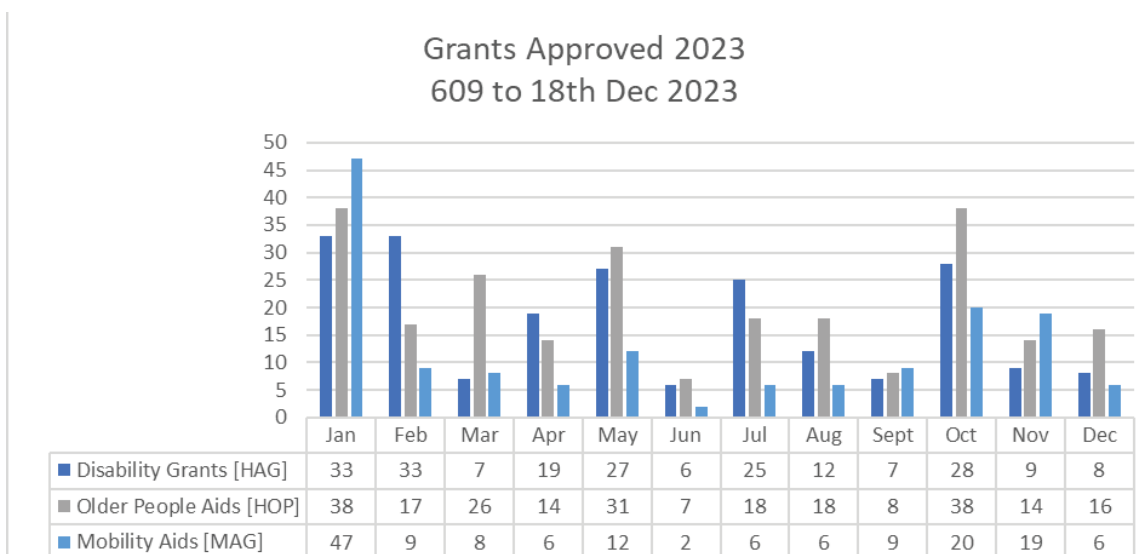
The Tenancy Enforcement team carry out continued patrols of Local Authority housing estates and Traveller sites and have a very visible presence to manage and mitigate against complaints of antisocial behaviour. The team engage proactively with tenants to help prevent anti-social behaviour and between daily patrols of local authority sites, specific meetings with tenants as well as engaging with local communities representatives they have amassed over 9,600 call outs this year to date. The working hours of the TEO team are flexible to meet required need, involving working after hours and weekends as the need dictates. The TEO team can be contacted out of office hours, should the need arise, by contacting the Council Emergency Phone no. (087) 2599568

Private Rented inspections

1002 1st time dwelling inspections were carried including 106 re-inspections brings overall total to 1108 achieving target of 25% of all rental tenancies up to December 2023. These inspections were carried out on HAP, RTB, RAS and Leased properties, as well as in response to complaints that were received. The team continue to follow up where properties do not meet the minimum rented standards.

Housing Grants

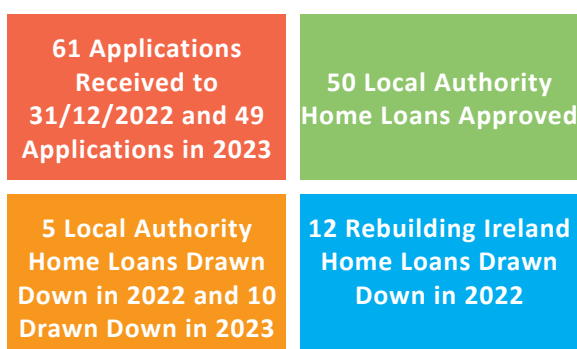
Grants Approved for to date this year:



Local Authority Home Loan

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

Loans data for 2023 up to 18/12/23: There are currently 50 Local Authority Home Loans Approved in Principle. Updated figures are outlined as follows:



Traveller Accommodation

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

A Department Circular issued in December advising housing authorities to commence preparation of the next 5-year Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAPs) for adoption by 31 December 2024. The existing TAPs will therefore continue to operate to end 2024 while local authorities prepare for the adoption by end 2024 of the Sixth Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAPs) 2025-2029. The Minister’s objective is to ensure that the incoming elected members will have full ownership of the new TAPs including implementation, which is also in line with the advice of the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (NTACC).

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 rise. This is evident given the increased levels of support being requested from households around areas such as Homeless Services, Advice and Support and the need for Emergency Accommodation within this region. The impact of the cessation of the moratorium on eviction/Winter Eviction Ban (Residential Tenancies (Deferment of Termination dates of certain tenancies) Act 2022), is still being experienced by the Homeless Action Team, which includes an increase in the number of presentations, queries and matters arising around Notice to Quits. This continues to have an impact on both Family and Single Households, while also on Family/Single Households that exceed the Social Housing Income Limits.

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

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

Presentations to Clare Homeless Action Team [HAT]

During this period there was 192 points of contact to the Homeless Action team. This was made up of 24 new presentations and 168 repeat. A further 5 presentations surrounding general queries. This figure can be broken down to 100 points of contact regarding single presentations, 92 for family households..

During this period within the 24 new presentations this can be broken down to 11 regarding families and 13 new single presentations.. Of the 168 repeat presentations this can be broken down to 80 regarding families, 84 regarding single presentations and 4 regarding couples.

The need of immediate Emergency Accommodation

- Members of the Travelling Community Seeking Emergency Accommodation
- Discharge from Hospital or Medical Care Settings
- Discharge from Prison Services

- 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. This demonstrates both the hard work of staff along with the positive effect the prevention work employed by the HAT Team, which is an equally imperative part of this team's work.

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

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

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

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

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

Emergency Accommodation Status as of 14/12/23:

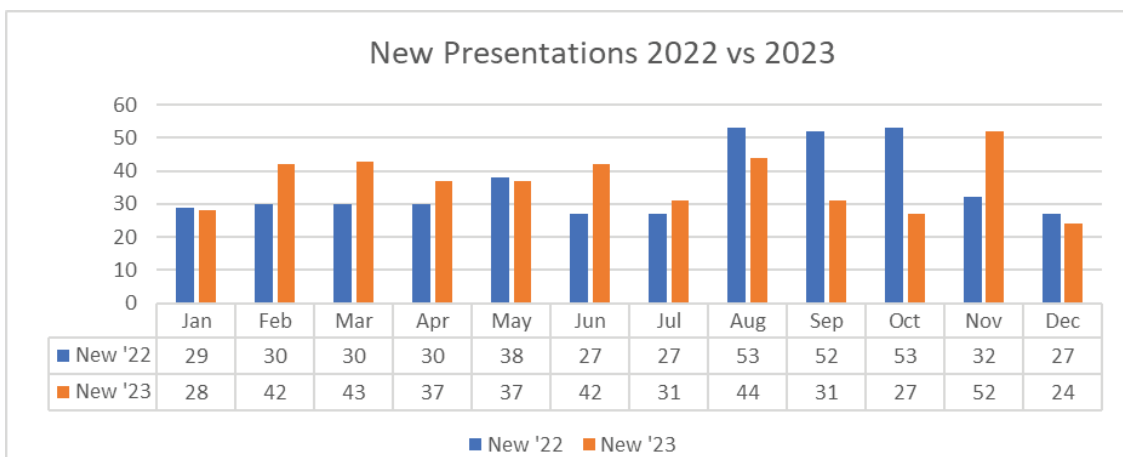
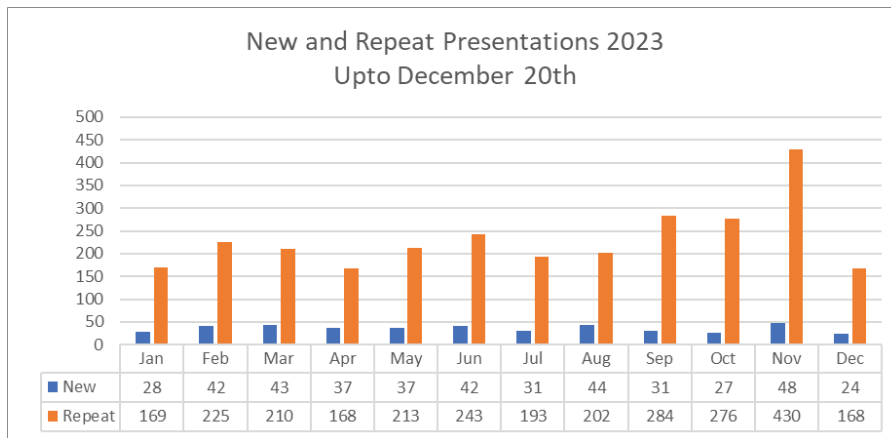
	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	13	0	1
Laurel Lodge Weather Initiative	0	4	0	0
Cusack Lodge	5	7	10	1
Westbrook	0	15	0	1
Westbrook Weather Initiative	0	2	0	0
Ashford Court	11	17	16	1
EA Families	4	5	11	2
EA Individuals	0	12	0	4
TOTAL	20	75	37	10

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.

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.

4 Exits/Discharges from EA from 17/11/2023 to 14/12/2023

- 1 Household exited to AHB
- 1 discharge for non use of bed
- 1 discharged for code of conduct



Affordable Housing Schemes for County Clare

CCC have received approval in principle on foot of a detailed application to DHLGH by CCC, to prove there is potential for affordable housing schemes in both Ennis & Shannon. In this regard, DHLGH have requested CCC to submit detailed applications for specific developments so that CCC can gain access to the Affordable Housing Fund (AHF), through the Housing for All programme. In this regard, CCC launched an Expression of Interest (EOI) Campaign running until the end of December seeking proposals from developers to deliver affordable homes in Ennis & Shannon. This EOI is advertised on various social media channels, local newspapers and also local radio. Also, CCC has prepared a Scheme of Priorities (SOP) in accordance with the Affordable Housing Act 2021, which has received Ministerial approval recently, and was adopted by the elected members at the September Council meeting. This SOP will be referenced regarding the future allocation of affordable homes. CCC have received submissions from developers through this EOI campaign, which are currently being assessed and will continue to engage with these interested parties in the coming weeks. 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. A second proposal is with the DHLGH for evaluation, with further submissions early in the new year.

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, with further locations to be planned thereafter.

CCC continue to engage with the DHLGH to ensure social houses affected by DCB also are included in a similar scheme. DHLGH personnel visited Clare in Mid-December to view Social Houses affected and gave an update on the proposed scheme which is planned early next year to commence.

New County Library Construction Project

Construction work continues to make progress on the new Clare County Library and Art Gallery building. The external composite cladding panel installation, Level 03 primary structure steel frame and all other reinforced concrete works are now complete. Internal blockwork is also complete, with partitions now completed on second floor office. Curtain wall and glazing frames installation is nearing completion. Precast Stairs throughout the building have also been installed. Roofing Contractor is on site with main Library roofing membrane complete, with entrance lobby now complete. M&E contractors are making good progress with first- fix and second fix works for both trades. Plastering is complete on the main external walls and internal partitions are now being plastered. Raised Access flooring on all three floors commenced in early October and is now complete. Other main trades like External Wall Insulation and External Render is ongoing at pace, with External Cladding to ongoing on the external façade and on the 2nd 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.





Update on capital programme

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



Works progressing on Clarecastle project



Works ongoing on Sixmilebridge project



Progress on Scarriff housing development

Approved Housing Bodies

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

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
No. 5 Watery Road, Ennis	1	Complete	-	-
No. 3 Ballymacraven, Ennistymon	1	Complete	-	-
No's 2,3 & 4 Watery Road, Ennis	3	Complete	-	-
No. 1 St. Anthony's Grove	1	Complete	-	-
Poulawilliam	1	Complete	-	-
52 Church Drive	1	Complete	-	-
No. 1 Ballymacraven, Ennistymon	1	Complete	-	-
Main Street, Sixmilebridge	9	Turnkey - Complete		
O'Connell Street, Ennis	7	Turnkey - Complete	-	-
Newtown Corofin	1	Under construction.	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Clarecastle	5	Under Construction. Completion week commencing 18th December 2023.	Q1 2023	Q4 2023
Scarriff	18	Under Construction	Q1 2023	Q3 2024
Sixmilebridge	15	Under Construction.	Q1 2023	Q3 2024
Dún na hInse	1	Under Construction	Q4 2023	Q2 2024
Sycamore Drive, Kilrush	2	Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
St. Senan's Terrace, Kilrush	5	Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q2 2024
Clarehill Clarecastle	13	Turnkey - Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2024
Drumcliff Rd. Ennis	26	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Part VIII Withdrawn. Determination issued by an Bord Pleanála. S179A process has commenced, and scheme has gone on public display on 26th October 2023. Tender for construction contract advertised currently.	Q1 2024	Q2 2025
Ennistymon	30	Stage 2 approved. Stage 3 application currently being prepared.	Q4 2024	Q3 2026
Gort Rd. Ennis	20	Stage 2 approved. Planning application submitted to An Bord Pleanála on 16th June 2023.	Q2 2024	Q3 2025
Doonbeg Road, Kilkee	25	Stage 1 approval. Design Team has been appointed and design is progressing.	Q2 2024	Q4 2025
Back Road, Kilrush	12	Stage 1 approval. Design Team has been appointed and design is progressing.	Q2 2024	Q4 2025
Moore Street, Kilrush	21	Stage 1 approval. Design Team appointed.	Q2 2024	Q4 2025
Doonbeg Lands	8	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Application submitted to An Bord Pleanála on 18th August 2023.	Q4 2024	Q4 2025
Subtotal	218			

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Approved Housing Body Projects	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Kincora Park, Ennis (Saint Vincent de Paul) CAS Construction	1	Completed	Q4 2022	Q1 2023
Limerick Road, Ennis (Cluid Housing Assoc) CALF Turnkey	15	Completed	Q3 2022	Q2 2023
Church Road, Tulla (Cluid) CALF Turnkey (Part V)	2	Completed	Q1 2022	Q2 2023
Roslevan (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	25	Completed	Q2 2022	Q2 2023
Lahinch (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey (Part V)	3	Completed	Q2 2022	Q3 2023
Limerick Road, Ennis (Inis Housing) CALF Turnkey	18	Completed	Q1 2022	Q3 2023
Sixmilebridge (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey (Part V)	3	Completed	Q3 2022	Q3 2023
Derg View Scarriff (Inis Hsg.) CAS Turnkey	4	Under construction	Q2 2023	Q4 2023
Ballyminogue, Scarriff (Focus) CALF Turnkey	4	Under construction	Q1 2023	Q4 2023
Doire More, Tulla Road, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turkey	2	Under construction	Q1 2023	Q4 2023
Cappahard, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	26	Under construction	Q1 2023	Q4 2023
Quin, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey)	36	Under construction: 10 units in Phase 1 26 units in Phase 1	Q1 2023 Q3 2023	Q4 2023 Q3 2024
Cluain na Laoi, Kilkishen (Circle Housing Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	16	Under construction: 8 units in Phase 1 8 units in Phase 2	Q1 2023 Q1 2023	Q1 2024 Q3 2024
Acha Bhile, Lahinch Rd., Ennis (Cluid Hsg. Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	33	Under construction 12 units in Phase 1 21 units in Phase 2	Q4 2022 Q1 2024	Q4 2023 Q4 2024
Market Street, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	14	Under construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2024
63 Shannon Heights, Kilrush (Sophia Hsg. Assoc.) CAS Renewal Construction	1	At procurement stage	Q1 2024	Q4 2024
Loughville, Ennis (Tuath Housing) CALF Turnkey	48	Construction to commence	Q4 2023	Q1 2025
Bruachlan, Westbury (Cooperative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Construction	22	Planning application submitted - at further information stage	Q2 2024	Q2 2025
Subtotal	273			
Total	491			

CULTURAL SERVICES - LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

Clare County Library

Work is progressing on the Clare Library Capital project and the upgrade of the Clare Library website is near completion. The draft Clare Library development plan was approved by the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) on 6th December and by Management Team on 11th December, it will now advance to adoption at Council meeting in January. A staff training morning took place early in the month which was well attended by Library and branch staff.

Online Resources usage in previous month as follows: high usage of e-audiobooks and Press Reader.



Marketing, outreach & social media

Media releases included 'Divided Loyalties' an exhibition by Mick O'Dea at glór, a Decade of Centenaries event. It was published in the Clare Herald and on the Clare County Council website.

New print items include the following:

- Clare Libraries Winter Newsletter - distributed to branch libraries and also electronically via mailer lite.
- Clare Libraries Novel Gifts booklet –a compilation of book recommendations from library staff and library book clubs.

	New Followers	Total Followers	Post Reach /Impressions	Post Likes	Engagement
	26	7342	51700	333	560
	8	2155	4851	26	74
	19	2031	3900	14	929

Library Activities in Figures

Total number of in branch events	277
Total audiences at in branch events	3,754
Total number of outreach events	15
Total audiences at outreach events	79
Total number of home deliveries	3

Right to Read

A number of Family Time at Your Library events, one of the core programmes under the Right to Read initiative, took place in libraries this month. Family Time at Your Library activities focus on the enjoyment of sharing stories, highlighting the collections of children's books, e-books and e-audio books. Reading support events included Christmas art and crafts, music workshops, storytimes and children's movies based on classic Christmas stories. Book club meetings, chess and LEGO clubs continued and Shannon Library held its annual Family Christmas Carols evening recital with the Non Nobis Domine Choir on the 19th of December.

Healthy Ireland

The Marie Keating Foundation Mobile Unit visited Kilrush Library in December and was parked outside for a number of hours. A total of 30 people visited the unit, which was staffed by a specialist nurse who was there to provide evidenced based up-to-date information on the most common types of cancer and the knowledge to recognise signs and symptoms, which would require further investigation. In addition, people also learned about the supportive services on offer within the community.

Creative Ireland

The Creative Ireland programme is drawing to a close for 2023. In total 110 projects were supported by Creative Ireland Clare in a variety of genres including biodiversity and heritage, climate, visual art, music, community, storytelling, theatre, literature and drama. The projects were aimed at adults and children and reached over 12,000 people in Clare over the course of the year. Clare Creative Ireland supported projects to a total sum of €144,984.



Members of the Shared Island Group.

Shared Island

Creative Ireland Clare initiated a new project in partnership with Galway County Council Library service called Birds of a Feather. The project is funded by Creative Ireland's Shared Island fund

and will see Ennis Women's Shed Mná ag Gaire, Ballinasloe Library Womens' Group and Ballymac Friendship Group from East Belfast work together on an enterprise, arts, drama and theatre project during 2024 and 2025. Representatives from all partners on the project met at the Ballymac East Side Community Centre in Belfast to begin the planning process.

Decade of Centenaries

Divided Loyalties, an exhibition by Mick O'Dea runs in glór until 13th January. The exhibition was officially opened on 8th December by Prof Kevin Whelan followed by a morning of events on the 9th December with an Artist's Tour by Mick O'Dea and two film screenings and a Q and A session facilitated by Clare Arts Officer Siobhán Mulcahy with Mick O'Dea, musician Mike Hanrahan and film director Emile Dineen. A catalogue was produced to accompany the exhibition. The exhibition is the final event of the Clare Decade of Centenaries programme.

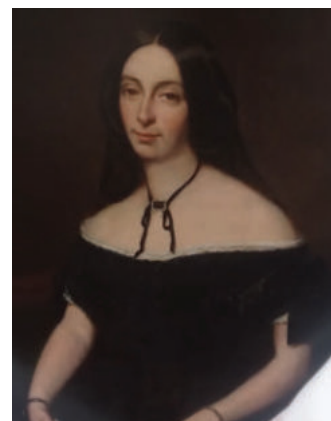
Local Studies



Photograph of James Blackwell & Michael Stackpoole included in RTÉ's Marty's Big Picture Show.

Photographs from the Clare Libraries Photographic Archive by Michael John Glynne were used in recent RTÉ series Marty's Big Picture Show which showcased stories behind the images. The Local Studies Centre has added another resource to the Clare Libraries and Archives collection. Two portraits of Edmund John Armstrong and his wife Jane Longden have been donated by David Richardson Moore, a descendent of the Armstrong family living in the UK. These probably date to the 1840's. Edmund is wearing the uniform of the Clare Militia. The Armstrong family had lands in Clare from the early 18th century, including property in Lismoher and Ennis. The family owned Willowbank house, which is now part of the Franciscan Friary. Edmund John Armstrong was born in 1806. When he reached the age of 21, in 1828, he married Honora McNamara, a daughter of a prominent Clare family. In 1832 she died childless, and in 1840, he was remarried to Jane Longden.

Conservation and listing work on the Barrett Collection is ongoing, the Dunboyne News Cuttings 1824-1878 transcription project is near completion, and the transcription of the 1825 Freeholders is ongoing.



Portrait of Edmund Armstrong & Portrait of Jane Longden.

Clare Archives

The Archivist is presently on a career break. Interviews for the position of temporary Archivist took place in December and an Archivist will be appointed in the new year. Enquiries will be handled via the Local Studies Centre until that time.

Clare Museum

Cataloguing continued with 700 items from the Georgina Frost collection catalogued. A total of 4,200 items have now been catalogued. A new fire alarm system was installed in December. Clare Museum was awarded the best public building award by Ennis Tidy Towns during the month.

Clare Arts Office

The Arts Office recruited an Assistant Arts Officer in December. The Artist in Schools Scheme awarded 17 residencies and a total of 16 disability organisations were awarded residencies through the Embrace Arts and Disability Programmes. A Visual Artists Support meeting was held with partners in Limerick and Tipperary Arts Offices. Studios in Tulla and Ennis continued to operate at full capacity, albeit with changes in resident artists. A Health and Safety audit was undertaken in Tulla Stables. Three exhibitions took place in Ennis, Scariff and Kilkee.

A total of 400 people attended two music, one theatre and one film event in Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee in December. The Arts Office assisted three film makers with location enquiries. The Arts in the Community programme continued in St. Joseph's Hospital, Ennis and in Raheen Hospital. Clare Youth Theatre continued in glór and work continued on a potential European exchange project. Two Arts in Clare slots happened on Clare FM, PRISM Street Art Works continued in Ennis and Ennistymon and the Creative Places programme in Shannon continued.

Two meetings were held with artists, and meetings attended included Music Generation, Creative Engagement Community Practices, Basic Income for the Arts, Arts Council Outcome Measurements and 2023 Arts Insights, the public consultation for One Hub Shannon, Procurement Training and the Streetscape Allocation Framework for Sustainable Mobility.

Social media statistics for the period 16th November - 13th December, 2023, are as follows:

	Post reach	Post engagement	New Page likes	New Page followers	Total followers
Clare Arts Office	1,203	105	1	2	3,101
Cultúrlann Sweeney	1452	446	1	1	1,999
EASI Studios	12	0	1	1	139
Tulla Stables Artist Studios	124	14	22	23	632
CYT - Clare Youth Theatre	36	0	0	0	569
Riches of Clare	125	1	0	0	2,854
Clare culture night	122	0	1	1	1,278
Embrace Arts Programme	7	0	0	0	566
Arts In Clare Group	-	-	-	-	2,933
Clare trad Group	-	-	-	-	2,418

KILLALOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

December 2023 works/projects Killaloe MD
During the month of December Killaloe MD staff were involved in the following projects.

Upgrade works at Killaloe Playground



Line marking Upgrade & Speed Bump at Killaloe



Irish Seed Savers Scarriff

In early December the Senior Planner and Killaloe MD Coordinator and colleagues met with Irish Seed Savers at their centre and Headquarters in Scarriff. The meeting centred on a proactive approach by Killaloe MD to enhance the collaboration between the Killaloe MD, the Local Authority and Irish Seed Savers, in particular regarding enhanced biodiversity initiatives, projects and climate adaption measures across the communities, towns and villages of East Clare and the County. A further meeting is planned for early 2024.



Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner and Killaloe MD Coordinator; Kitty Moroney, Killaloe MD; and Gillian Lattimore, Communications & Development Co-ordinator, Irish Seed Savers.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Jordan lights up Bunratty for Christmas



Bunratty Castle & Folk Park officially kicked off the festive season with a heartwarming ceremony, as brave 15-year-old Jordan Perez from Sixmilebridge was invited to be guest of honour at the attraction's annual Christmas lighting ceremony on 7th December.

Jordan, who has been battling Muscular Dystrophy, fulfilled his lifelong dream of switching on the Christmas lights at the iconic

venue alongside his family and friends.

Bunratty Castle & Folk Park seized this opportunity to raise awareness of SMA Ireland: Spinal Muscular Atrophy Ireland Foundation, a non-profit organization established in 2019 to provide a collective voice for Irish adults and children living with Spinal Muscular Atrophy.

Elected Members at the Cliffs of Moher



Elected Members of Clare County Council recently visited the Cliffs of Moher site to discuss the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 and the contribution of the Cliffs of Moher to the local economy and host community. Professor Jim Deegan and PhD Student



Ernesto Bastida made a presentation to the Elected Members on their research relating to patterns of visitor behaviour at the Cliffs of Moher.

Christmas Magic Returns to Bunratty Castle and Folk Park



During the Christmas season, Bunratty Castle and Folk Park was transformed into a captivating winter wonderland spread across 26 acres. Visitors could enjoy a variety of events, including Breakfast with Santa, the Santa Grotto Experience, the Christmas at the Castle Banquet, and the enchanting Festive Walkabout Experience.

The highlight of the festivities was Santa Claus making an exclusive return to his beloved grotto on Village Street after a three-year hiatus. This promised joy, wonder, and magical moments for our younger visitors.

In addition to these events, visitors also had full access to Bunratty Folk Park Trail of Lights Experience, Puppet and Magic Shows, Traditional Christmas Tales, Festive Themed Shops, and a delightful ride on the Bunratty Polar Express. All in all, Bunratty was a must-visit destination for festive fun during the holiday season.

Staff at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park raise over €1000 for Children’s Ark Unit at University Hospital Limerick



Staff across at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park came together for our annual Christmas Staff Lunch and Christmas Jumper Day, this year in aid of the Children’s Ark Unit in University Hospital Limerick.

A big thank you to all the local businesses who kindly donated spot prizes to this worthy cause including The Cliffs of Moher Experience, Clayton Hotel Limerick, Shannon Springs Hotel, Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa Limerick, Hotel Woodstock, The Inn at Dromoland, South Court Hotel Limerick, Galanta Jewellery, Tipperary Crystal, Shamrock Gifts, Solvar Jewellery, and Corporate Catering Services Limited.

The event raised over €1000 for this worthy cause.

Travel and Trade Shows



Clare Tourism were delighted to be back out on the road over the past number of weeks meeting and updating existing and new trade partners on developments and planned enhancements throughout the business. The team attending various events including the European Tour Operators Association, Global European Marketplace Workshop and World Travel Market, both of which took place in early November in London and Fáilte Ireland’s Leisure and Luxury buyers workshop which took place in Limerick in mid November.

Bunratty Castle and Craggaunowen showcase portfolio of Educational Tours and Experiences



Bunratty Castle and Folk Park and Craggaunowen Bronze Age Park was delighted to exhibit at the Principals and Deputy Principals Association Annual Conference which took place in Galway Bay Hotel in mid November. Management and animators from the business showcased to delegates the portfolio's range of Educational tours and experience offerings available to primarily, secondary and third level students ahead of the 2024 school tour season.

Bunratty Castle Entertainers bring the festive season to life for the residents of local Nursing Homes



In the spirit of the festive season, the renowned Bunratty Castle Entertainers brought a touch of merriment to Athlunkard Nursing Home and Cahercalla Community Hospital by treating the staff and residents to a special Christmas concert this December. Clad in captivating medieval attire, the talented ensemble regaled the audience with a delightful repertoire of beloved Christmas carols and classics, lifting the spirits of both residents and staff.

Visit by Hunt Trust to Craggaunowen

The following recently attended a meeting at Craggaunowen: Donnacha Lynch, Head of Commercial & Shared Services, Clare Tourism, Leonard Cleary, Director of Tourism, John Logan, Chairman of Hunt Trust, Pauline Lenihan, Manager

Craggaunowen and Stephen Hanley, General Manager Clare Tourism East.



Free entry for Clare residents to Cliffs of Moher 'Festive' Experience



'Buy Local' campaign at Ireland's most visited natural attraction. All residents of County Clare are being offered complimentary admission to the Cliffs of Moher Experience as part of the world-famous attraction's Christmas offering. Clare residents wishing to avail of the Clare pass are invited to book online at www.cliffsofmoher.ie and use the promo code CLARE23 to receive their tickets.

The Cliffs of Moher Experience is promoting a festive 'Buy Local' campaign this year by offering visitors a 20% discount at the Craft and Gift Store where products by more than 80 Irish suppliers, of which 60 are local or artisan, are available to purchase. Meanwhile, diners at the Cliff View Café are able to enjoy menus filled with locally sourced produce from Burren Smoked Salmon to St Tolas goat cheese and Burren Gold Cheese.

Before or after taking in the breathtaking scenery of the Cliffs of Moher and the Atlantic seascape, visitors can enter the visitor centre building to choose from a wide range of knitwear, candle, art, porcelain, jewellery, ceramic and beauty products along with a range of other gift ideas from adult and children's books to vintage posters and from handbags to Christmas decorations. A wide selection of wines, jams, chutney, mustards, sea veg, chocolate, fudge, coffee, Christmas Cakes gift hampers and local foods, for which the Burren and County Clare is known the world over, is also on offer.

The Visitor Centre is adorned in twinkling Christmas lights and

decorations and is open every day between 9am and 5pm. It is closed 24th, 25th and 26th of December.

Visitors to the Cliffs of Moher are being invited download the Cliffs of Moher Experience app. With free Wi-Fi available throughout the main visitor centre building and viewing platforms, visitors will be able to access a range of information about the Cliffs via their smartphone.

Staff also will be hosting fundraisers for community-based charities throughout the month, including a Christmas Breakfast at the Cliff View Café.



Generations celebrate Christmas together in Liscannor and Ennistymon



The Cliffs of Moher Experience and two North Clare schools continued their Christmas tradition of sending some love to local care home residents.

Pupils of Liscannor National School and Mol an Óige Steiner National School in Ennistymon visited the residents of St Dominic Savio Nursing Home in Liscannor and Ennistymon Community Hospital to perform Christmas carols and spread some Christmas cheer.

The Craft and Gift store and the Cliffs View Café, operated by Brambles, as in previous years, sponsored gifts and provided treats on both days. The staff at each of the centres were treated to a variety of home-cooked goodies as a thank you for all the hard work and the residents received a small gift from the Craft and Gift store at the Cliffs.

Cliff of Moher Experience gift voucher



Share some Moher magic this Christmas, by gifting loved ones a Cliff of Moher Experience gift voucher.

This €20 gift voucher includes admission to the Cliffs of Moher Experience, secure car parking, wi-fi, and access to all areas including O'Brien's Tower and the interactive Cliffs exhibition. This gift voucher is for admission for a family of 4 (2 adults and 2 children under the age of 12)

Please note that the bookings office is open Monday to Friday and is closed on 24th, 25th and 26th of December. Terms and Conditions apply. Please visit www.cliffsofmoher.ie for more information.

Santa's visit to Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre



There was a busy weekend at the Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre on the 8th, 9th & 10 of December 2023 as over 400 children came to visit Santa.

The new interpretative centre was transformed into a magical

Santa trail for the weekend whereby children with their families got to wander through the winter wonderland with beautifully decorated Christmas trees, Elves, a reindeer stable, a polar bear display, twinkling lights, and festive decor.

Visit Clare: County Promotional Opportunities



Snamhai Sasta with Mid-West Simon Community

Tourism Department sponsored the first swim on 1st December with June Curtin Snamhai Sasta, at Spanish Point, Co. Clare completing the first swim of 63 SWIMS in 21 DAYS with the goal of €200,000, to provide a Social Grocery in Clare for those in need.

Ennis Fashion Show with Celia Holman Lee



Tourism Department complemented The Ennis Fashion Show with a social media campaign across the Visit Clare platforms to highlight Ennis as the Boutique capital of Ireland and home to small independent boutiques and craft outlets, shop along its narrow, historic lanes and bow ways and pickup something unique. <https://visitclare.ie/ennis-and-nearby-highlights>

Clare Christmas Cracker Campaign



Tourism Department invited content from local tourism providers to submit their festive events to feature in this Clare Christmas Cracker Campaign, to highlight local Christmas and New Year celebrations.

The "Christmas Crackers in Clare" captures 8 pages of local Christmas events and takes a prominent place across our Visit Clare website, a special one-page Christmas feature in the Clare Echo and across Visit Clare's social media channels. This initiative offers a fantastic opportunity to amplify the visibility of Clare events to both locals and visitors in Clare, enhancing the festive season spirit.

The Guide includes 3 pages of general Clare gifting ideas to inspire.

<https://visitclare.ie/events>

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.

Promotional campaigns will continue as scheduled during the Christmas and New Year period.

Christmas & New Year Promotional Campaign



Promotional campaigns will continue as scheduled during the Christmas and New Year period.

2024 Festivals & Special Events



There are hundreds of festivals and special events that take place in the County throughout the year. We are currently recruiting the large festivals and special events for 2024: <https://visitclare.ie/events>

Geopark Code of Practice and geological findings

Members of the Burren Ecotourism Network are preparing their data for the Geopark Code of Practice February submission date which is just around the corner. Meanwhile, the Geopark team

are working hard behind the scenes on building a bank of Code of Practice Case Studies, which they are releasing weekly on their social media pages and the Geopark website. Case studies cover all principles of the code, and so far, they have seen a wide range of sustainable initiatives such as sponsoring of local sports teams, renewable energy and a 30-mile menu. There will be a press release for the Code of Practice in early 2024 and they will continue to post these stories throughout the year. Check them out on their social media page @burrengeopark.



An image of the Glas Restaurant 30-mile-menu at Hotel Doolin.



Nuala Mulqueeny of Aillwee Burren Experience presenting a jersey to the club they sponsor, the Burren Gaels Ladies Football Club.

Dr. Eamon Doyle has been out and about finding fossils and items of interest in the Geopark. He communicates his findings on social media and reminds people of the importance of looking after the environment for these creatures. Here is a jaw that he discovered washed up on Wednesday, 13th December.



The Geopark team would also like to wish everybody in the department a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, we hope to see 330 million more of them in the Geopark.

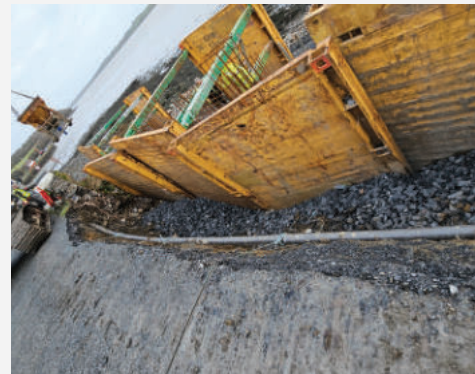
WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT - KILRUSH LEA

Resurfacing Works

We carried our road resurfacing works on the L-2009 (road to George's Head, Kilkee).



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



Low Cost Safety Schemes

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



Footpath improvements

Footpath improvement works continued, and we completed footpath improvements at Cappa Drive, Kilrush.



Bridge repairs

Carried out repairs to Ballycloghessy road bridge (near Caherea).



Collapse of Sea Wall at Knock

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

Road Crossing

Replaced a damaged culvert on the L-2088, near Seafield, Quilty.



Lahinch Promenade - refurbishment and upgrading works to an existing shed at Lahinch Promenade to provide staff canteen/welfare facilities along with electric vehicle storage/charging.

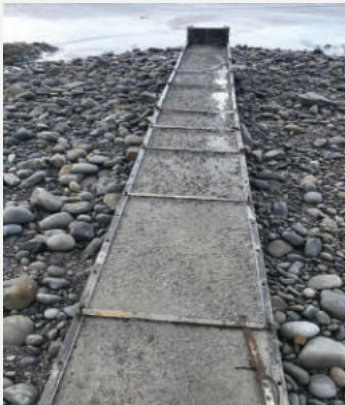


Road Safety - upgrading and safety works to junction at Liscannor GAA grounds.



Drainage Works

Installed a new outfall pipe to a watercourse near Seafield, Quilty.



Drainage - ongoing drainage works to the local road network around St Bridget's Well, Liscannor.



Ennistymon

Ennistymon Public Toilets - ongoing works on the refurbishment of the public toilets next to Ennistymon Library. It is hoped to reopen the toilets in early 2024.



RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural and Community Development Officers

Moy Community



RCDOs Niamh Wiley and Seamus Murrhy in Moy, engaging with volunteers Sue Garrahy, from Moy Hall Committee and Brendan Hayes, from Moy GAA discussing possible future development and projects for the area. A public consultation evening, facilitated by Rural Development will take place on 23rd January. This meeting will provide an opportunity for the community of Moy to discuss the needs of the village, identify potential future developments and projects, and consider how the community can collaboratively work towards achieving these ambitions.



DAF Engagement Project 25th October: Minister O'Brien

Clare pilot project

Clare Local Development Committee were the project lead on a pilot engagement project with marginalised Groups that will inform the development of the Local Economic and Community Plan 2023 -2029. The project was delivered by Clare PPN on behalf of the LCDC and collaborating partners Clare County Council, Clare Local Development Company and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. The project focused on those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and a shared vision to a rights-based approach to a just transition and become a framework for the LECF.

Brendan Boyce, Rural Development, Clare County Council, and Sarah Clancy of Clare PPN presented the findings of the report to Minister O'Brien, Department of Rural and Community Affairs and all local authorities. Also in attendance was A/Director of Services Jason Murphy who took part in a question-and-answer session after the presentation.



Clare Cultural Companions

An Age & Opportunity arts initiative

Clare Cultural Companions had their final outing of the year in Glór where a tea/coffee morning and a film screening of “The Man who invented Christmas” was held. Over 65 members were in attendance for the event.

This year Clare Cultural Companions had 4 outings and members also attended a pottery workshop. Events included a visit to Bunratty Castle & Folk Park and Craggaunowen, a boat trip on Lough Derg followed by a visit to St Flannan’s Church in Killaloe and a trip to Foynes Flying Boat museum, and Christmas meet in Glór.

All events were oversubscribed. At present there are over 300 members in the Cultural Companions programme. We have also received requests to join from neighbouring counties.

Cultural Companions is an Age & Opportunity Arts Initiative comprising a network of older people interested in arts and culture who can attend events together as a group. Its aim is to provide increased opportunities for older people to engage with Ireland’s vibrant arts and cultural scene. Since its inception in 2018 where we began with 25 members, the initiative has grown from strength to strength. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with members enjoying the opportunity to meet up with new and old friends. This is recent feedback received from a member; “Thank you and your team for organising some wonderful events for members of Clare Cultural Companions. I was lucky enough to attend 3 outings so far this year which I thoroughly enjoyed. It was great to share these treats with so many of our CC members; I enjoyed their company and had time to chat and make new friends and also had an opportunity to meet up with some old friends”.

The Cultural Companions are already looking forward to 2024 with numerous enquiries to know what events are planned for next year and even one or two suggestions thrown in.



Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2024-2028



From Left To Right: Dóirín Graham, CEO, CLDC; Mike Hogan, CHAIR CLDC; Councillor Gerry Flynn, Chair, LCDC; Bernadette Haugh, Chief Officer, LCDC.

Clare Local Community Development Committee, (LCDC) a sub-committee of Clare County Council has signed contracts with Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) to deliver the SICAP Program for 2024 -2028 on behalf of the LCDC following their successful tender submission.

SICAP is a social inclusion programme that assists individuals and groups through a two-pronged approach, supporting communities and individuals. The programme aims to address high and persistent levels of deprivation through targeted and innovative, locally led approaches. It targets and supports those who are disadvantaged in Irish society and less likely to use mainstream services. The SICAP programme aligns and is a key instrument in delivering on the themes of the high-level goals identified in the LCDC’s forthcoming Clare Local Economic and Community Plan 2023 -2029.

Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) will engage with marginalised communities and service providers using a community development approach to address issues relating to social exclusion and inequality. CLDC will now be in a position to continue and build upon the good work that has been achieved under previous SICAP programmes.



Ukrainian Services

Ukrainian Services Department

The CSO figures show there are currently 5,368 Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BoTP's) living in County Clare, this represents an increase of 244 people based on figures released in December. Approximately 3,697 people are accommodated in 34 multi-occupancy facilities located throughout the County. The remaining people are accommodated in residential settings in formal hosted arrangements through the Irish Red Cross and Clare County Council's 'Offer-A-Home' scheme. We currently have 190 homes offered under this scheme, with an average of 3 homes being offered each week. To date our Matching & Relationship Manager has facilitated the accommodation of 364 people that were originally living in hotel and multi-occupancy facilities.

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

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

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

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

The Irish Red Cross takes and manages offers of accommodation such as rooms and shared properties. Offers can be made at the following website: <https://registerofpledges.redcross.ie/#/> or by phoning 1800 753343.

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

Volunteer Recognition Events

In early December the Clare Volunteer Centre, Clare Local Development Company and Clare County Council ran a series of recognition awards across the County. Focussing on our volunteers, the award aimed to recognise the efforts of those who have given of themselves to aid in the integration of our new migrant community—Notable examples of the volunteering effort included our own Clare Civil Defence, the Loughgraney Community Development Association in Flagmount, Lisdoonvarna Faillte, Faillte Isteach, Tidy Towns groups, Mná ag Gáire, local sporting groups and individual community volunteers. The events were



Left To Right Back Row: Darina Green, CLDC; Brendan Boyce, LCDC Support Staff; Peter Williams, Procurement, Clare County Council; Frank Cullinan, LCDC Support Staff.

Further information at: www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/lcdc/

Healthy Clare

A new health and wellbeing passport that encourages people living in Clare to explore the county's local natural amenities has been launched by Healthy Clare.

The Clare Blue Health and Wellbeing Passport focuses on the Blue and Green Flag beaches in County Clare, which are highlighted on an interactive map, along with nearby free or low-cost, health-promoting activities and spaces in each Municipal District. Explorers can rate the blue spaces they've visited by colouring in the number of hearts above the location on the map.

The Clare Blue Health and Wellbeing Passport can be viewed online on Clare County Council's dedicated webpage: <https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/blue-health-and-wellbeing-passport>

For further information and to have a physical copy mailed out to you please contact 065-6846276 or healthyclare@clarecoco.ie

The passport is supported by Healthy Ireland and Creative Ireland funding and is available through Clare Libraries and Clare County Council offices.



run on the week of the 4th December and our local councillors represented Clare County Council with speakers at each event. Events were held in Lisdoonvarna, Ennis, Shannon, Kilrush and Killaloe. Our thanks to Sharon Meaney, Dolores and Marguerita from the Clare Volunteer Centre, Monica McKenna from the Clare Local Development Company and our own team in Rural Development for their support in this initiative.



Local Authority Integration Team

New Integration Team in Clare County Council

The new Local Authority Integration Team has started Clare County Council over the last number of weeks. The team includes Paul Fallon (Integration Coordinator), Fiona Cahill (Integration Support Worker), Padraig 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). At this point approximately 10 teams are in place nationally.

Clare County Council is represented on the International Protection Support Services Working Group (IPSS WG) which is focussing on meeting the Programme for Government which gave a commitment to end the system of Direct Provision and replace it with a new International Protection accommodation model centred on a not-for-profit approach. As part of this process, Minister for Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), Roderic O'Gorman TD, published A White Paper to End Direct Provision and to Establish a New International Protection Support Service in February 2021.

The new team, which is to be based in the Social Directorate from January 2024 will work with people from migrant communities, agencies and NGOs to build integration supports and networks. The team will work across the national network to ensure consistency of approach as this project develops.



SPORTS & RECREATION



Active Ennis Leisure Complex

Christmas Jumper day

On Friday December 8th all staff wore their Christmas jumpers in aid of cystic fibrosis Ireland's appeal. Christmas Jumper Day for cystic fibrosis was great fun. We used it to mark the beginning of Christmas in the leisure center and teach our young users about giving to others. It was a great opportunity to raise awareness and funds for a worthwhile cause.



First Aid training

On Monday 18th of December 8 of our staff undertook revalidation in first aid responder training. This was carried out by tutor Robbie from the SAFE-T group. It was extremely helpful for staff to get a refresher in the course material and a reminder of the importance of first aid response.



Coffee Morning

To celebrate Christmas and the end of a busy year of fitness classes we have arranged for a coffee morning to take place on Friday the 22nd of December. All class goers are invited to attend, and they will be served tea and scones. The leisure complex has many loyal customers that attend our aqua-aerobics and fitness classes, and we will use this as an opportunity to show our appreciation for all their efforts during the year.

Footfall report

It has been a busy month in the active Ennis leisure complex with a total of 13871 visitors to date 18/12/23 this month. Since installing the counters in the last week of September the complex has had over 72000 visitors.

www.activeennis.ie www.activekilrush.ie

Any defects or operational issues can be reported by email to info@activeennis.ie



General Updates

- Clare Sports Partnership are closing Christmas on Friday 22nd at 1pm and will re-open on January 3rd at 9.30am.

Schools & Youth

- Our post-primary sportshall athletics programme is completed for this school year.
- Get Going Get Rowing has finished in Shannon Comprehensive School.
- Borrowing of playground markings and sportshall athletics packs by primary schools has now concluded for 2023.
- Our 6-week teen boys programme in conjunction with Spartan Fitness in Ennis finished on Wednesday Nov 29th.

Education & Training

- Safeguarding courses will resume in the new year, beginning on January 10th.
- Disability Awareness Training took place on Monday December 4th.

Sports Inclusion

- Inclusive gymnastics with Ennis Gymnastics Club is ongoing on Monday and Tuesday evenings. There are 50 children who attended these sessions.
- Primary School Inclusive Gymnastics has now concluded for 2023. Over the last 8-10 weeks, 130 children have taken part in this programme.
- Our inclusive learn to cycle programme with Derg Athletics Club is due to finish this week.
- We have started a brand new integrated physical education programme with TY students and students from the ASD hub in St. Caimins Secondary school in Shannon.

Older Adults

- Our banner balance programme is taking a break for Christmas, with 50% of two programmes completed. It will resume in January.
- We continue to support out tutors in delivering weekly classes to over 300 older adults in County Clare.

Active Communities

- Over 40 participants completed their first couch to 5k in Shannon and Kilrush.

- Our Women in Sport Leadership programme with 19 female sports coaches from 8 different sports is ongoing.
- We delivered a sports first aid course in Shannon for 4 boxing clubs within the county.
- We launched our Walk County Clare Challenge this week. Nearly 100 people have registered for the challenge which began on Monday December 18th and will continue until Sunday January 14th.

Club Development

- Clare Rock Climbing club is being supported for a new club grant application.
- A new Underwater Hockey club has been established in Shannon. They have received €1000.00 as per their new club grant application.

Minority Communities

- The membership bursary is now closed for 2023.
- Our Winter Wellness programme including dance fitness and yoga classes in the Pavillon in Lisdoonvarna, will conclude this Friday. This is in conjunction with Lisdoonvarna Fáilte.

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	<p>The following is a brief overview of the activities within the Active Travel office:</p> <p>Tulla Road Cycle scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Detailed design is underway on this project, this is being undertaken by AECOM Consulting Engineers. Fortnightly on-line progress meeting continuing with an on-site meeting held recently.• CCTV drainage survey and Arborist Report to be procured by CCC. <p>Ennis LTP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design of bus stops is ongoing with draft drawing expected before Christmas. The online public portal is now closed for submissions on the enhancement of Transport facilities for the Ennis Municipal District. Feedback reached approx. 450 no. submissions. Traffic Surveys are currently ongoing at numerous locations around the town in relation to this scheme. <p>Limerick Road (incl. St Flannan's Drive) Cycle scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tobins Consulting Engineers are progressing the Concept Design and Route Option Development phase of the scheme. Traffic Counts and Junction Turning Movements have recently been completed at a number of key junction locations within the scheme. <p>Connecting & Co-creating Ennis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Junction tightening works are continuing along Clon Rd with kerbing at Friar's Close, French Court, Riverdale and Meadow Court now completed. The raised crossings to be installed in early 2024. <p>'Safe Routes To School' program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clonmoney National School: A meeting has taken place between the contractor, the school and Clare Co Co regarding a start date for the project. The appointed Contractor has now confirmed that the project will commence in early January 2024.• A second week-long "School Street" trial for An Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Cíosóg is planned to take place between 18th-22nd Dec. This trial will involve students walking, cycling or park and striding to school. A topographical survey in Glenina Residential estate and the green areas around An Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Cíosóg has been carried out. The Safe Routes To School design concepts are now being developed.
Public Lighting	<p>The PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project) has commenced in Clare with partial survey works completed in Ennis & Shannon MD.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>The public lighting section continues to engage with its public lighting maintenance contractor Enerveo and ESB networks to progress the timely repair of faulty public lighting. Given that significant sections of our lighting network located in residential development and on our public roads is ageing and not fit for purpose, enabling works are required to update the network to minimise outage areas and times going forward which is leading to increased repair times. The public lighting section is committed to expediting lengthy repair times with its maintenance contractor.</p>

Road Design Office

TII Road Safety Projects

Project	Progress Update
<p>HD17</p>	<p>N85 Lahinch Road/Shanaway Road There has been ongoing engagement with the TII Safety Engineer in relation to this project, and this is continuing in relation to full junction intervention. An interim design solution which includes for a raised pedestrian crossing has been prepared to address concerns at the junction of Lahinch Road and Shanaway Road in Ennis. A Road Safety Audit was carried out for the proposal and a Pedestrian Crossing Assessment has been finalised. A lighting design assessment has taken place. A feasibility report for this scheme has been submitted to the TII.</p> <p>N67 Doonbeg A Pedestrian Crossing Assessment will be prepared to identify the possibility of introducing a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of the Church in Doonbeg. Traffic/pedestrian surveys have been carried out for this location to inform the design.</p> <p>N67 Mount Charles Terrace, Kilkee A Preliminary Design Report for road safety improvements is currently being prepared. A lighting design assessment has been carried out with a lighting design to follow.</p> <p>N67 Ministers Place A lighting design assessment has been carried out with a lighting design to follow and the services of a landscape architect have also been engaged.</p> <p>N68 Cranny Cross Junction A Feasibility & Options Report has been submitted to the TII for the introduction of an interim safety measure.</p>
<p>Noise Action Plans</p>	<p>Strategic Noise Mapping & Noise Action Plans Agglomerations Technical Working Group Meetings and Workshops are ongoing.</p>
<p>Fence Retrofitting Programme</p>	<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>

Other Projects 2023

Project	Progress Update
<p>Bridge Rehabilitation Programme</p>	<p>Ballycloghessy Bridge Emergency Works The culverts have been installed, and the works are now substantially completed.</p> <div data-bbox="477 427 1398 633" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>The 23 bridges below have had repairs & works carried out in 2023 under the Bridge Rehabilitation Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breavagh West Bridge • Cloghera Bridge • Crean Bridge • Drimeen Bridge • Gortnaglough Bridge • Gortnagonella Bridge • Inchiquin Bridge • Alagha Bridge • Ballybran Bridge • Dromore Bridge • Gortalassa Bridge • Wyndham Bridge • Knockanena Bridge • Erinaghmore Bridge • Rathmeehan Bridge • Mahonburg Bridge • Poulmagun Bridge • Ballykeel North Bridge • Boolyduff Bridge • Drumellihiy Bridge • Magherabaun Bridge • Clonboy Bridge • Cahercon Bridge <p>Submissions have been made to the Department of Transport for 2024 projects. N85 Culvert Replacement A consultant appointed for the design of a replacement culvert on the N85 at Fountain, Ennis is commencing survey & design work.</p>
<p>Liaison with NTA regarding bus shelters</p>	<p>The NTA has approved 15 bus shelters for the 2023 programme. Works are completed at 14 locations. Work at the bus stop at Clarisford, Killaloe is ongoing. JCDecaux have installed the bus shelter. The concrete slab and connecting tarmac footpath will be completed in the coming weeks.</p>
<p>Low-Cost Safety Schemes 2023</p>	<p>Safety Improvement Works are completed at the following locations under Low Cost Safety Schemes 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloonamirran R352 • Killaloe L3084 • Ardnacrusha L3056/R463/R465 • Sixmilebridge Shannon Road • Ballkeel South Kilfenora • Kilnaboy R476

- Tiermaclane
- R462 Tulla Junction
- Carmody Street/Parnell Street
- Summerhill L4550
- Inch Bridge
- Cooraclare

Submissions have been made to the Department of Transport for 2024 projects.

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Teams annual programme of work as follows was completed by December 2023;

- Annual Review and Update of the Clare County Council Occupational Health & Safety Management System 2023
- Annual Review Updating and Communication of 24 Departments Safety Statements
- Annual Review Updating and Communication of 740 Risk Assessment Documents
- Completion of 138 Workplace safety Inspections
- Internal H&S Audit of 5 Directorates compliance with the Occupational Health & Safety Management System
- Delivery of 8 No Serious Incident Workshops across a range of Departments
- Procurement, administration, training and monitoring of the ProWorks Software application across the Municipal Districts
- Provision of ongoing support, advice and training on all matters of Safety Health & Welfare to Clare County Council staff

General Design Office


Loophead Lighthouse Boundary Wall Survey	The General Design Office have completed a condition survey of the Loophead Lighthouse boundary walls. A report with cost estimate has been prepared outlining the immediate remedial works required on those boundary walls adjacent to the newly proposed Cafe /Visitors Centre.
Shannon Heritage Office Remedial Works	Remedial works have been completed on the Shannon Heritage office located in the Clare Technology Park, Gort Road, Ennis. Works included soundproofing of the party walls, installation of new canteen and installation of glazed Office Pods.
Town and Village Renewal Schemes	Clonlara - Works continuing to progress. Drumgeely - Works on stone wall raised flower bed and paving progressing.

CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Despite December being a relatively short working month, significant progress was made across many of the major Capital Projects being managed by the PMO. Most notably was the significant milestone achieved in the Killaloe Bypass and Bridge Project where the first two long sections of the Bridge Trusses were delivered by road to site from the Manufacturers in Carlow and safely lifted into place by the large Crane Operator in early December.

Following the recently announced restructuring at Senior Staff level, this will be my last Monthly Management Report on behalf of the Project Management Office before I take up my new position in the Ennis Municipal District. I want to sincerely thank my own colleagues/friends in the PMO Team and also to all staff and councillors for their assistance to me during my tenure in Capital Projects over the past 5 and a half years. I want to wish them continued success and look forward to seeing all these wonderful projects being completed in the coming years. Regards, Sean Lenihan, Senior Engineer.

Doolin Pier Visitor Services Building	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.
Ennis Public Realm Regeneration (Project B)	While the works have been paused for the Christmas trading period, the project team and Share-ridge Ltd. have continued to plan for forthcoming phases, due for commencement January 8th, 2024. Following the recent briefing delivered to Ennis MD Elected members, a public information session was held on 18th December to review forthcoming phases. Works will be proceeding at 4 locations in the town centre in January, with crews completing refurbishment of foul sewer and progressing Public Realm works at High Street and O'Connell Street.

	<p>The first phase of the works at Upper O’Connell Street has already been completed on schedule between 23rd November and 1st December last, and this section has been re-opened to traffic. The completion of this phase represents the first step in the Uisce Eireann (Irish Water) investment in the infrastructure of Ennis involving significant upgrade and replacement works to a large section of the foul sewer running through the Town Centre. We are delighted that these additional works, paid for by Uisce Eireann, are being carried out as they will resolve longstanding legacy issues with the sewer as well as future proofing capacity in the town for many years to come.</p> <p>Consultation periods in respect of Road Closures have now concluded, and Notices of Decision have been advertised, thus enabling works to proceed at O’Connell Street, and at High Street in January 2024. Further road closures will be advertised during 2024 to facilitate the works programme and to complete certain foul sewer replacement works in advance of the streetscape works.</p> <p>The works requirement within the contract obliges Shareridge to have a Public Liaison Officer (PLO) as part of their Team who is based in their Project Office in Ennis Town Centre. The PLO is engaging extensively with affected parties as the works progress and, in advance of commencement of every work phase. The public and traders are encouraged to take every opportunity to meet with the project team to ensure that their needs are communicated, and disruption is minimised wherever possible. The contractor and design team are also convening fortnightly drop-in meetings, as well as issuing weekly progress update bulletins. Affected/interested parties are invited to email ennispublicrealmb@shareridge.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>Members will be aware that the An Bord Pleanala confirmation of the CPO was challenged through the Courts. At the most recent Court Hearing on December 11th, the third-party was requested to deliver its affidavit by Dec 21st, the Council then have until January 19th to respond. An Bord Pleanala and the Attorney General on behalf of the State are also defendants in the proceedings and have until Jan 26th to submit their responses with the matter again down for mention on January 29th. On conclusion of same, Clare County Council will determine the next course of action. If the Boards decision is upheld, we will move at pace to progress this much needed infrastructure.</p> <p>While the lack of progress is hugely frustrating, it is due process and we have to await the decision of the Courts or the withdrawal of proceedings. Pending same, we are exploring the options available to us in terms of completing the final design and other works not affected by the Court proceedings.</p>
<p>Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass</p>	<p>Work is progressing well across the Project despite the adverse weather and recent extreme weather events experienced by Storms Elin and Fergus. There is a significant body of construction activity currently underway across all areas of the site and a number of Project Milestones have been achieved in recent weeks.</p> <p><u>Killaloe Bypass Section</u></p> <p>New gas and water main installation in progress at Kincora Roundabout Surface water drainage, gullies and duct installation progressing on Main Cut.</p>  <p>Prepping and installing kerbs on Main Cut.</p>

Road surfacing works in progress on section between Hill and Creeveroe Roads.



Prepping Shared Facilities on section from Creeveroe Road to Shantraud Roundabout and excavation works to Attenuation Pond commenced.



Road surfacing works in progress at Shantraud Roundabout. Accom. Wks. to pond commenced.



Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass

Shannon Bridge Crossing Section

Road surfacing works in progress.
Reinforced embankment works commenced.



Shannon Bridge

Edge Girders to Span 5 (East Pier 2 - East Pier 1) installed.



Edge Girders to Span 6 (East Pier 1 - East Abutment) installed.

Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass

Installation of cross girders to spans 5 & 6 has commenced. West Pier 2 cross-heads being prepped for concrete pour this week.



Central Pier: installation of nodes this week. Pour after Xmas.



Piling enabling works for 600t Crane due on site in mid February to lift the further long sections of Bridge trusses into place has commenced. It may be timely to arrange a site visit for Councillors around that period if Members so wish?

R494 Upgrade

Tarmac installed on Southbound Lanes of Section 2 and Section 6.



Road Construction Activities have commenced on Northbound Lanes of Sections 2 & 6. Accommodation Works continue on Section 2. Attenuation Tank installed on Section 3.



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

Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass

Kilmastulla Bridge

Kentledge slabs to be poured this week.



Precast parapet edge beams to be installed in the new year.

	<p><u>Rail Bridge</u> Deck pour planned for later this week.</p>  <p>Please note that the site will be closed from Thursday 21st Dec. to Jan. 2nd 2024. 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/</p>
<p>Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme</p>	<p>Preparation for next year’s planning application to An Bord Pleanála is ongoing. Scheme Consultants JBA have issued a number of chapters of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) for the Council’s review. The amended Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has also been re-issued for review. An Invitation Letter to discuss and engage with the Project Team will issue to all affected landowners in the new year regarding land acquisition required for the scheme.</p>
<p>Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)</p>	<p>Discussions are ongoing with the Department of Housing as well as the LIHAF Section regarding additional funding and a time extension to the programme and a favourable response is awaited. Receipt of same will enable us to move forward with project development.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Lough Donnell Culvert Repair works</p>	<p>Following completion of the works, the scheme is functioning as intended in terms of maintaining a level of water in the previously drained lagoon which will enable plant and fish life to replenish. The tidal salt waters are mixing with the freshwater via the new culvert and initial reports from the Fisheries are positive.</p> <p>Concern has been expressed by some local landowners that enough water isn’t getting through the culvert inlet causing excessive flooding upstream. This is being monitored on the ground and will continue into the summer period to assess the performance of the new culvert. An update will be given at that stage.</p>
<p>N19 Shannon Airport Access Road</p>	<p>The Project Team continue to work across a range of areas which will result in submitting this project for Statutory Consent in Q2 of 2024.</p> <p>These include engagement with ABP regarding the submission as well as closing out on the various Chapters of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).</p> <p>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</p>
<p>Quin Flood Relief Scheme</p>	<p>The construction of all wall foundations is now complete. Wall pours are ongoing and are scheduled to be complete before the Christmas break.</p> <p>The OPW Direct Labour Staff will resume works in January to complete the final section of embankment and outstanding drainage and accommodation works.</p>
<p>Remediation of sites containing ACM</p>	<p>Tenders in respect of disposal of bulk soil material were published in the summer of 2023 and submissions are now in place, defining the receiving locations and transport requirements for the bulk materials to be removed. These details will be incorporated into tender documents for a separate works contract in respect of the excavation and remediation of the sites scheduled for issue in the new year. In parallel, a review is currently ongoing regarding the statutory approval aspects associated with the Remediation works.</p> <p>The sites continue to be routinely monitored and maintained as required by Council staff in accordance with our agreed approach following discussion and consultation with the EPA.</p>

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme	In recent weeks, the Project Team led by the Council engaged with the Shannon Airport Group, National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Shannon Golf Club as part of the development of the Emerging Preferred Option and associated accommodation works. The remaining mammal surveys, including otter, badger, and pine martin will also be completed by year end. Our Scheme Consultants, RPS, have recently issued the EIAR Screening Report and the Public Consultation report following the 2nd Public Consultation event held in October.
Springfield, Clonlara FRS	Following completion of the works, the scheme is functioning as intended and the situation is being routinely monitored on the ground.
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 1: Kilrush to Kilkee)	The 'Option Selection Report' is almost complete. A peer review is scheduled for January 2024 while the Project Team are preparing for the third formal Public Consultation event (PC3) which is planned for Q1, 2023.
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 2: Ennis to Ennistymon)	Similar to Section 1, the 'Option Selection Report' 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.
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 3 & 4: Ennistymon to Miltown Malbay and Miltown Malbay to Moyasta)	Preparations continue for initial Public Consultation on these sections, which will launch in January. Public Consultation (PC1) will be live for 3 weeks and study area drawings/information will be available to view at local Libraries and online. Affected landowners and members of the public will be given the opportunity to view information and submit feedback, queries and comments that they may have.
Other Greenway Proposals	Clare County Council is a key part of the Steering Group of the UL to Scarriff Greenway/Blueway proposal as much of it runs through Clare and a significant part of same will utilise the Cycling and Pedestrian elements of the Killaloe Bridge and Bypass Project. The project is being led by Waterways Ireland, but Clare County Council is involved in the drawing down of the funds from the Approving Authority, TII. Works are also continuing the Councils Greenway proposals at Shannon, Bunratty and Sixmilebridge.

FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

Training Courses

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service personnel underwent a number of training courses during December, including a Chainsaw Operator Refresher Training Course, Community First Responder and Emergency First Responder Training Courses which included joint training with members of the Coastguard Rescue Helicopter at Shannon Airport.

Fire & Building Control Section Main Activities	Nov 2023	Dec 2023 (Up to 14.12.23)	Year to Date
Emergency Calls Attended	105	30	945
Fire Safety Certificates Received	6	1	95
Fire Safety Certificates Granted	12	5	89
Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	0	4
Disability Access Certificates Received	1	2	49
Disability Access Certificates Granted	7	2	49
Commencement Notices Received	34	6	410
Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	1	0	7

(Note: In the Dec Monthly Report, the Nov figures related to 1st- 24th Nov due to timing of report)

CLARE CIVIL DEFENCE

Clare Civil Defence

Operational Duties:

- Civil Defence provided medical cover at a number of events in December including Community Games (Lees Road); Turning on of Christmas Lights in Shannon.
- Clare Civil Defence assisted the Community Policing Office, Ennis Garda Station with their annual “Young at Heart” Christmas Party on the 11th December in the Woodstock Hotel. Members transported over 70 senior citizens to and from the party.

Members Training & Professional Development

- Members participated in weekly training set out by Civil Defence instructors - this training included boat training, vehicle training, search training and use of drones.
- Portable pump and hose drill training.
- 14 new recruits received Cardiac First Responder (CFR) training.

ENVIRONMENT

Christmas and New Year Recycling Centre opening hours

	Central Waste Management Facility, Inagh	Ennis Civic Amenity Site	Lisdeen Civic Amenity Site	Scariff Civic Amenity Site	Shannon Civic Amenity Site
Monday 18 th December 2023	Closed	Closed	9am-4pm	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 19 th December 2023	8.30am-4.30pm	10am-5pm	Closed	9am to 1pm	10am-5pm
Wednesday 20 th December 2023	8.30am-4.30pm	10am-5pm	9am-4pm	2 pm to 6pm	10am-5pm
Thursday 21 st December 2023	8.30am-4.30pm	10am-5pm	9am-4pm	2 pm to 6pm	10am-5pm
Saturday, 23 rd December 2023	8.30am-1pm	9am-3pm	10am – 2pm	9am – 3pm	9am – 3pm
Sunday, 24 th December 2023	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Monday 25 th December 2023	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 26 th December 2023	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Wednesday 27 th December 2023	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Thursday 28 th December 2023	8.30am-4.30pm	10am-5pm	9am – 4pm	2pm to 6pm	10am-5pm
Friday 29 th December 2023	8.30am-4.30pm	10am-5pm	9am – 4pm	12 noon – 6pm	10am-5pm
Saturday, 30 th December 2023	8.30am-1pm	9am – 3pm	10am – 2pm	10am – 4pm	9am – 3pm
Sunday, 31 st December 2023	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Monday 1 st January 2024	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 2 nd January 2024	8.30am-4.30pm	10am-5pm	9am – 4pm	9am to 1pm	10am-5pm



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Environmental Awareness

Sustainable Christmas Campaign

A comprehensive sustainable Christmas media campaign encompassing print, radio and social media was undertaken during December. People were encouraged to have a sustainable Christmas by preventing waste, reusing the things that we have, and recycling what we or others can no longer use or reuse. Our Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO), Karen Foley, was interviewed for Clare FM news and both local newspapers The Clare Champion and The Clare Echo covered the campaign.

The following were also promoted as part of the campaign:

- Circular living and climate action
- Web resources mywaste.ie and www.stopfoodwaste.ie

- Sustainable Development Goals
- Christmas and New Year opening hours for the Recycling Centres
- Recycling of Waste Electrical and Electronic equipment and Batteries
- Clare County Council bottle banks.

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. For week 25 of this project our Environmental Awareness Officer spoke on how to be sustainable this Christmas. Sustainability was explained in the context of

the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how we can all support the concept of circularity in the context of climate action through practical tips and advice.

Circular Christmas event



Our Environmental Awareness Officer, teamed with Clare Libraries as part of their Family Time at Your Library initiative at Scariff Library in delivering a Sustainable and Circular Christmas presentation and recycling workshop. This event was supported by Scariff Tidy Towns

Anti-Litter Campaigns

Adverts were placed in the Clare Champion and The Clare Echo promoting dog owner responsibility. This was supported by social media promotion.

Leave no Trace was also promoted in print and social media as part of the Green Christmas Campaign as was illegal dumping at bottle banks during the festive season.

Gardening

With planned seasonal works continuing through December, the Gardening Team has also engaged with Ennis MD with a view to expanding the existing network of pollinator friendly flower beds in public spaces. It is planned that a number of new planter locations will be developed in the Market Square area in the New Year to both deliver on the objectives of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, and to enhance the aesthetic of the Market Square area.



This initiative has been developed by Carol Hands, Employee Welfare Officer, and aims to promote wellbeing and mindfulness for staff through encouraging people to nurture an interest in gardening and green spaces. The Gardening Team has assisted throughout 2023 by hosting a number of talks and workshops, and the December meeting aimed to encourage

staff to further develop this scheme through providing a forum for ideas to be shared and encouraging staff to take ownership of the initiative.

Water Enforcement and Laboratory Scientific Services

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

Water Enforcement Scientific Team	December 2023	Jan - Dec 2023
Bathing Water Monitoring	0	236
Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Inspections (NIP Plan)	5	135
Monitoring Inspections of Section 4 licenced premises	1	53
Planning applications (Agriculture)	0	33
Planning applications (Domestic)	60	438
Planning applications (Large Developments)	4	23
Planning applications (Forestry)	2	103
Pollution complaints received	46	142
Private Commercial Drinking Water Supplies	1	53
Private/Public Group Water Scheme supplies	12	193
Rivers	5	278
Warning & advisory letters issued	2	9

Waste Enforcement

Solid Fuel Regulations and Sampling Programme

Following on from the multi-Local Authority Solid Fuel Sampling Programme following the introduction of the Solid Fuel Regulations, Air Pollution Act 1987 (Solid Fuels) Regulations 2022, Clare County Council is running an education and awareness campaign to communicate the new Regulations to retailers. Under Clare County Council’s enforcement strategy, it is our intention to share information and answer queries retailers may have to assist with compliance. Clare County Council is also currently conducting inspections of solid fuel retailers/distributors. 5 inspections of retailers have been carried out to date in December and information letters have issued to retailers of Solid Fuels reminding them of their obligations with the new Regulations.

Shopping Trolleys, Shannon

The Environment Section has teamed up with Shannon Tidy Towns and Shannon Active Retirement Group to help raise awareness around and prevent the removal of shopping trolleys from supermarkets in Shannon town.

There is a history of complaints regarding the removal of shopping trolleys from supermarkets. They are then left in public spaces, where they are unsightly and potential road hazards.

While ongoing enforcement actions have been undertaken by our Waste Enforcement Team, we have now launched this



positive initiative to see if promoting the use of a wheelie shopping bag will further assist in addressing this issue.

This initiative is being launched in conjunction with Shannon Tidy Towns, Shannon Senior Citizens, and Active Retirement Ireland, using funding secured under the Anti-Dumping Initiative.

Environmental Monitoring (Illegal Dumping/Litter)

The Waste Enforcement Team continued to respond to complaints relating to waste and litter. In December to date, 6 litter complaints and 43 complaints relating to waste and dumping were received and dealt with by the Waste Enforcement team.

Water Safety

Clare County Council's Water Safety Development Officer attended the World Conference on Drowning Prevention. The aim of this global conference was to focus world attention on drowning prevention. The event gathered experts in drowning prevention, lifesaving, and water safety with the goal of Shaping Global Strategy and Mobilising for Action.

Oil Pollution Equipment

Clare County Council purchased new Oil pollution clean-up consumables, and these will be securely stored in a newly purchased container at our machinery Yard in Beechpark.

Central Waste Management Facility, Ballyduff Beg

In December, the Environment Section hosted the annual Community Liaison Monitoring Committee meeting as per our requirements in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued Licence. The Environment Section gave a presentation to the members providing an update on the Closure Restoration and Aftercare Management Plan (CRAMP), Air, Noise, Forestry, and the recent EPA audit.

Dog Shelter and Dog Warden Tender

The Environment Section recently advertised for the provision of a Dog Warden Service in County Clare and for the management and operation of the dog shelter at Ennis. The Tender period closed on the 8th December 2023 and valid tenders will now be reviewed by an evaluation team in the Environment Section with a view to contract award early in the new year.

CLIMATE ACTION

Community Climate Action Programme

The Community Climate Action Programme launched on the 6th of December and will remain open for applications until the 28th of February, 2024. This is a new programme to support 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, medium, and large-scale 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 to 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
- Food and Waste
- Shopping and Recycling
- Local Climate and Environmental Action



Climate Action Plan Development

The development of the Climate Action Plan is nearing its conclusion as the Climate Action Team continue to work through the high level of responses received during the Public Consultation which was held from October 10th to November 23rd. Submissions were received from a wide array of stakeholders including national departments and agencies to local communities, businesses and individuals. This process will inform the Chief Executives Report for the Elected Members towards adoption of the Climate Action Plan in February 2024. For more information on the Climate Action Plan and the to follow further updates visit the Climate Action Plan Your Say Engagement Page on: <https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/climate-action-plan>

Reduce Your Use Campaign

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>

The Community Climate Action Officer is available to community groups and organisations to provide advice and support in the development of potential projects and initiatives and to assist with the application process. Please contact the Community Climate Action Officer Kelly Slattery on kslattery@clarecoco.ie / communityclimate@clarecoco.ie or Tel: 087 4777658 for further information.

WATER

Asset Transfer

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

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

see if they can be progresses using this method.

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

Rural Water Programme

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

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

Under the 'Grant for the Improvement of a "Private Water Supply to a House" 83 applications have been received to date in 2023.

SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Shannon Chamber of Commerce - President's lunch event

Leas Cathaoirleach John Crowe attended Shannon Chamber's annual President's lunch event at which Minister for Finance Michael McGrath was guest speaker. In his keynote address the potential of the Shannon Town Masterplan was lauded. Minister McGrath stated that it was a very exciting roadmap for the future of the town which includes the One Shannon Hub multi-purpose facility. The initial funding for the Masterplan was sourced through the Urban Regeneration Development Fund. The Shannon Town and Environs Flood Relief Scheme was also referenced as was the growth of Shannon Airport. It was heartening to hear Minister McGrath confirm that there will be sustained public capital development work in this region.



Public consultation event on One Shannon Hub held on 7th & 8th December

Shannon MD personnel and Councillors were delighted to assist with the 'One Shannon Hub' public consultation event which was held on 7th and 8th December 2023. This is a catalyst project for Shannon and will deliver on real change for the town. It will enhance Shannon by providing a new social heart for the town. Leaflet drops notifying nearby houses and businesses of the event were carried out by the MD.

The information boards on display included material on the masterplan, ongoing works completed and underway in the area, and concept options. There was a large number of attendees over the 2 days and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Some of the feedback comments included..

'Fantastic design ideas! Shannon needs a central focus and this could deliver that.'

'Great Plan.'

'Performance alternative to Glor, currently travel out of Shannon ...'

A URDF Funding application will be submitted once this funding stream is announced in 2024.



Other Works

Pedestrian crossing and footpath upgrade at Barrys Cross, Ardnacrusha



Tree maintenance works to expose public light Aidan Park, Shannon



Traffic calming in Ashton Grove Westbury



New link footpath from Lios Rua Estate, Ballycasey to Bothair na Loiste footpath Shannon



Traffic calming in Riverdale, Westbury



Footpath upgrade works, Kilnasoolagh Park, Newmarket on Fergus



Town & Village Renewal Schemes and further works

Clonlara	Great progress is being made on the TVR in Clonlara - the works are taking shape and the positive transformation of the village is now evident.
Sli na Slainte route underway	Signage has been put in place marking this Sli na Slainte route near the centre of the town. The route will link in with existing walkways within the heart of Shannon town.
Drumgeely	The Town and village renewal scheme in Drumgeely is enhancing this very special locality within Shannon town. The works that being carried out are of high quality and include public realm upgrades, paving, stonework etc which will greatly enhance the area for the residents.
Bunratty	Gateway/Entrance plaques carved from stonework are now in place and define Bunratty's unique character.
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	Site Works ongoing.

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Town Centre First

Clare County Council awaits the funding call in early 2024 for new Town Centre First initiatives.

FORWARD PLANNING

Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2024-2030

The Forward Planning team provided a Progress Report to the Shannon Municipal District Elected Members in early December. The report presented findings regarding the pre-draft public consultation phase of the LAP. The report also briefed the Elected Members on the outcomes of the practical workshop and site visit undertaken with the Transition Year group in St. Patrick's Comprehensive School in Shannon during November.

The Forward Planning team also briefed the Clare County Council Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) in December, regarding the progress of the LAP project and the next steps towards publication of the draft Local Area Plan.

Preparation of the Draft LAP by the Forward Planning Team is continuing during December. 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.

Clare County Heritage Plan 2023-2029

Clare County Council is preparing a new Heritage Plan for County Clare. The Draft County Clare Heritage Plan 2024-2030 was placed on public display on 10th November 2023 until 1st December 2023. The public consultation on the draft heritage plan has now closed. 11 submissions were received on the Draft County Clare Heritage Plan 2024-2030 and will now be considered ahead of the making of the final plan which is expected to be completed in Q1 2024.

Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

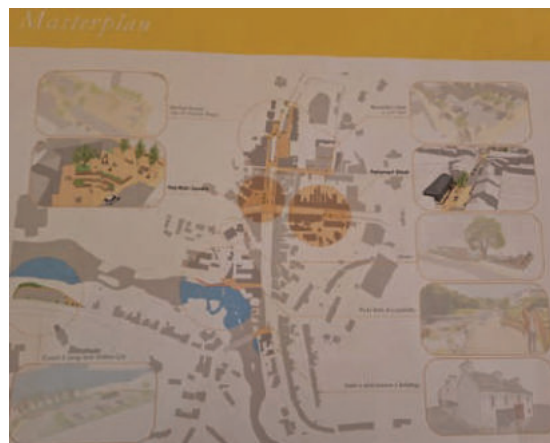
The final Residential Zoned Land Tax Map for 2024 was published on 1st December 2023 and the Tax is due to come into

effect on 1st February 2025.

The first annual review of the RZLT Map has commenced with a Draft Map due to be published on 1st February 2025.

Public realm works at Parliament Street, Ennistymon

A Public Consultation meeting was held in Ennistymon on 7th December 2023 with Helena McElmeel Architects and members of the Ennistymon Community to review the masterplan drawings outlining the proposed public realm works for Parliament Street and the Main Square of Ennistymon. Excellent feedback and useful comments were received and these will be integrated and developed as the scheme prepares for a Part VIII submission in Q1 2024.



One Shannon Hub

The One Shannon Hub is the key transformational project to emerge from the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan. The One Shannon Hub is located in the heart of Shannon Town, and combines civic offices, an adaptable performance and community space, library, and flexible co-working spaces. The new development will also feature public realm improvements to the town square adjacent to the site. The concept design stage is underway, and meetings were held with the project team and cross-directorate steering group in December. The public consultation process initiated with a public consultation event held at Shannon Town Centre on the 7th of December. A series of targeted consultation meetings were also held with

key stakeholders. An online questionnaire has been launched and will run for two weeks. The feedback gained through the consultation process will enhance and enrich the vision for this important civic and cultural hub for Shannon.



The One Shannon Hub Public Consultation event held on the 7th December at Shannon Town Centre.

The All-Ireland Community & Council Awards

Forward Planning submitted two projects to the 2024 All-Ireland Community & Council Awards. These awards recognise and celebrate community and councils working together, and recognise a variety of collaboration, environmental, design and economic initiatives.

The Ennistymon Enhancement Plan was submitted to the Best Town or Village Regeneration category. 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 Corofin Enhancement Plan was submitted to the Best Town or Village Regeneration category. Clare County Council, National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) and Fáilte Ireland formed a strategic partnership to prepare an Enhancement strategy for the village of Corofin, working closely with Corofin Future

Planning Group. This enhancement plan is built upon innovative urban planning principles and looks to realise the potential of a strategically located village. The Corofin Enhancement Plan is composed of a building feasibility study, streetscape enhancement plan and a signage plan.



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 the 31st of March 2024. It is hoped that the new scheme administered through Enterprise Ireland can provide for the remaining funding gap on the project.

Town Centre First

Clare County Council awaits the funding call in early 2024 for new Town Centre First initiatives.

CONSERVATION AND BUILT HERITAGE

European Cultural Heritage Skills Alliance: 11th December, 2023

The Architectural Conservation Officer (ACO) attended the European Cultural Heritage Skills Alliance on the 11th December 2023 in The Printworks at Dublin Castle chaired by the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage. The Charter aims to map the needs and identify skills shortages and mismatches, taking into account transversal competences such as digital / technological, green / blue economy.



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.

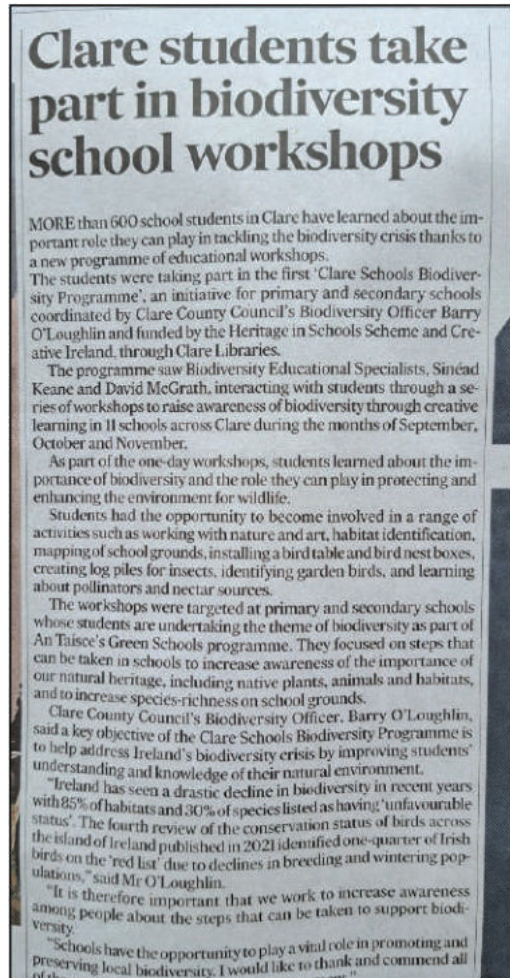
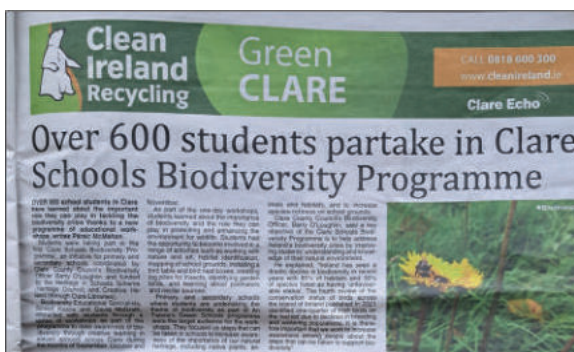
Section 57 Declarations	December 2023 up to & including 18/12/2023	Total (Valid) Year to date 2023
No. of Section 57 Declaration Requests received	2	24

HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

‘Clare School Biodiversity’ Programme Reaches Out to 670 Students

Over 600 school students in 11 schools across County Clare have learned about the important role they can play in tackling the biodiversity crisis. The students were taking part in the first ‘Clare Schools Biodiversity Programme’, an initiative for primary and secondary schools coordinated by Clare County Council’s Biodiversity Officer Barry O’Loughlin and funded by the Heritage in Schools Scheme (Heritage Council) and Creative Ireland (through Clare Libraries).

The workshops were targeted at primary and secondary schools whose students are undertaking the theme of ‘biodiversity’ as part of An Taisce’s Green Schools programme. They focused on steps that can be taken in schools to increase awareness of the importance of our natural heritage, including native plants, animals and habitats, and to increase species-richness on school grounds.





Coverage of the Clare Schools Biodiversity Programme in local media. Extracts from the Clare Echo, Clare Champion and Clare Herald.



Barn Owl Chicks monitored during the breeding season 2023 at Shanakyle Bog, County Clare (Photo taken by Alan McCarthy under NPWS licence).



School children engaging in biodiversity workshops.

Clare Barn Owl LBAF Project: Survey Findings and Further Actions

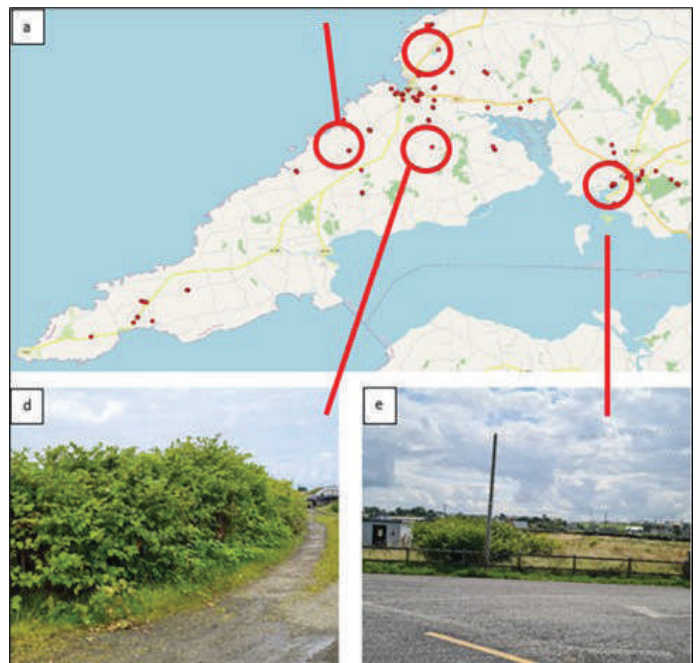
In 2023, funding from the Local Biodiversity Action Fund (administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service) and Clare County Council was used to carry out monitoring of 16 barn owl nest boxes.

Of the 16 nest boxes installed, BirdWatch Ireland were able to determine the occupancy status of 15 of these nest boxes. The occupancy rate of these 15 boxes was 46% (seven boxes occupied), with 27% (4 boxes) used for nesting. This is the highest uptake rate of nest boxes within the first breeding season for any BirdWatch Ireland county nest box scheme to date. A further additional 15 nest boxes will be installed throughout County Clare in the coming months which will bring the total number of nest boxes to 31.

West Clare Invasive Species Survey: LBAF Project

A survey was carried out in 2023 to identify and map invasive species along all Primary, Local Secondary, Local Tertiary and Regional Roads in West Clare concentrated from Kilkee and Kilrush to Loop Head. The survey was funded by Clare County Council and the Local Biodiversity Action Fund, administered by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (National Parks and Wildlife Service). All identified and mapped species were documented in a report, finalised in December 2023.

A key recommendation of the report is to implement a comprehensive long-term Management Plan for the area of West Clare.



Japanese knotweed recorded as part of the West Clare Invasive Species Survey 2023.

‘Winter Wildlife Talks’ series - Biodiversity

The final talk of the ‘Winter Wildlife Talks’ series was delivered by Clare County Council’s Biodiversity Officer Barry O’Loughlin in Shannon library on the 5th of December. Barry gave a talk on peatland restoration, biodiversity enhancement actions and county wetland inventory surveys.



Clare Biodiversity Officer Barry O’Loughlin with members of Shannon Tidy Towns.

Funding Opportunities

Inland Fisheries Ireland’s nationwide €1m Habitats & Conservation Fund 2024 closed for applications on December 15th.

The Heritage Council’s Heritage Organisation Support Fund is now open for applications. The scheme is open to not-for-profit non-governmental heritage-focused organisations with demonstrated national and or regional relevance. Details of the scheme are available at https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/funding/heritage_orgs-fund.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The table below shows the number of planning applications processed during the month of December (to 19/12/2023) November 2023, together with the year to date figures. Forty seven percent of planning applications received in 2023 were received by electronic means.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS	December (19/12/23)	Year to date 2023
No. of planning applications received	84	1205
No. of Planning Decisions made	57	938
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	2	45
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	9	228
No. of Section 5 applications	3	94
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications (in respect of Part V of the Planning & Dev Act 2000)	5	48
Submissions received regarding Compliance	16	290

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

December 2023 Stats are as follows: (up to and including 21st December 2023)

New Complaints received	8
New Files opened	3
Files Closed	2
Warning Letters issued	3
Enforcement Notice issued	0
Legal	0

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

- **The Trading Online Voucher Scheme**, which provides grant support to small businesses to develop an ecommerce website, has continued to see strong interest. Forty applications have been approved in 2023.
- **Mentoring:** LEO Clare continue to experience a demand for mentoring support primarily in the areas of Starting a Business, Finance, Digital Marketing, Export Development and Brexit. In December, 10 further mentors have been assigned.

- **Productivity Supports:** With rising prices affecting all businesses, LEO Clare has various productivity supports to assist businesses offset higher input costs. In 2023 LEO Clare has approved 13 Green for Business applications, 15 LEAN applications and 3 Digital Start Applications.
- **Training:** LEO Clare held a further training course in the month of December. LEO Clare also finalised more training programmes for 2024 including management development programmes.

December Evaluation Committee Meeting

The Local Enterprise Office Evaluation and Approvals Committee (EVAC) held their sixth and final evaluation meeting of 2023 in December. Two Business Expansion and one Feasibility project totalling €102,956 were approved for funding. In total Local Enterprise Office Clare approved 22 projects including 5 Feasibility, 5 Priming, and 12 Business Expansion applications which totalled €634,507 in funding. There were also 12 TAME Grants approved throughout the year.

2023

Priming Grants	5 total,	€118,750
Business Expansion	12 total,	€460,557
Feasibility	5 total,	€55,200
Total	22 Total	€634,507

2024 Training Programme

Throughout December, Local Enterprise Clare have been organising their 2024 Training programme. Currently 51 training courses and workshops have been organised with further programmes to follow. Training courses include our Start Your Own Business, Digital Marketing courses, LEAN and Management Development Programmes.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Property Transactions and Conveyancing

The Table below shows the number of property transactions completed by Property Management Unit up to 20th December, together with the totals for 2023 to date and the full year 2022.

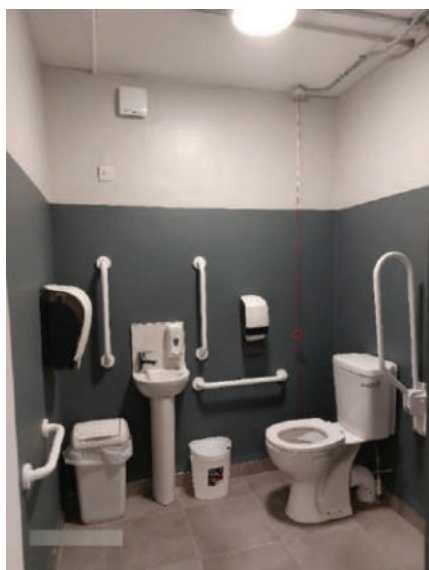
As the property market in the County is quite active, we continue to assist many solicitors acting for their clients on issues associated with title, boundaries, old leasehold folios etc.

Transaction type	December 2023	Year to date 2023	Full year 2022
Lease / Sub Lease of Property / Building	0	7	4
Licence to use property / building	0	7	13
Grazing Agreement for Lands	0	17	22
Deed of Transfer signed	1	15	19
Contract for Sale / acquisition signed	0	1	2
Deed of Right of Way / Wayleave signed	0	2	6
Deed of Rectification / Variation signed	0	4	10
Allotment Agreements signed	0	39	39

Refurbishment of Tullyvarraga Community Hall, Shannon

This Community Hall, which dates from the 1960’s, is owned by Clare County Council and is leased to Tulach na Farraige CLG. It was in need of considerable refurbishment externally and internally. The Council’s Buildings Manager has worked closely with the group and they were awarded funding from Pobal under the Community Centres Investment Fund. With the funding of €25,000, the building has been considerably improved. Internal and External Painting works were undertaken in September 2023. Reconfiguration of the male and female toilets was completed in October and this allowed for the addition of a Disabled Access Toilet. Line-marking of Disabled Car Parking Spaces was also done in conjunction with the Shannon Municipal District Team. The overall work has resulted in a much better space with much improved accessibility for all.





Shannon Allotments

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

Grazing of Land

As we reach year-end, we are preparing for the advertisement of lands for the 11 month letting period. The notice will be published in the Clare Champion in early January.

DERELICT SITES

The Derelict sites team are currently dealing with 253 properties that are considered derelict. The activity in recent years has substantially increased with 69 derelict properties identified and reported on in 2022 and to date in 2023, we have opened files on 58 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 below provides a snapshot of the activity in December (up to 20th December) and the year 2023 to date, together with comparative figures for the full year 2022.

Derelict Sites	November 2023	Year to date 2023	Full Year 2022
No. of new files opened	3	58	69
No. of Section 8(2) Notices issued - Intention to enter site on Derelict Sites Register	5	41	33
No. of Section 8(7) Notices issued - Entry of site onto Derelict Sites Register	1	24	22
No. of Section 11 Notices issued - Measures required to render the site non-derelict	0	0	0
Notice of Valuation of Property for Derelict Sites Levy	3	7	0
No. of files closed / property removed from Derelict Sites Register	5	15	21
No. of Notices served to Compulsorily Purchase derelict sites (CPO) (see note below)	0	10	6
No of Vesting Orders signed	0	9	4

Compulsory Acquisition of Derelict Sites (CPO)

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

Year	No of CPOs commenced	Current Status
2022	6	3 - completed and transferred to Housing for refurbishment / re-development
		1 - completed recently and is being put up for sale early in 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 will be referred to An Bord Pleanála
		1 - Works have commenced and CPO parked for now

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

Derelict Site Levy

Determination of valuations on the derelict sites which are on the Derelict Sites Register has commenced and notices have issued to seven 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 1,000 surveys completed, 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 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.

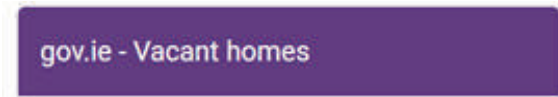


VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANT - FOR DERELICT AND VACANT PROPERTIES



We continue to have high levels of enquiries and applications for the Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant. As of 20th December, we have 279 applications and our response time for new applications is generally less than three weeks. To date we have processed three 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 / early 2023. 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. Full details of the scheme and eligibility criteria are published on the Council's website. The contact email address for further information and guidance on the grants scheme is vacant-homes@clarecoco.ie. We continue to meet individual owners to guide them through the process and to ensure they have all the documentation when submitting their application.

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



ENNIS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Ennis Street Fashion Show

Ennis Municipal District partnered with Ennis Chamber and the Holman Lee Agency to host two street fashion shows on Saturday, December 2nd in the 'Boutique Capital' of Ireland. Once Christmas pedestrianisation took effect, O'Connell Square became a hive of activity with DJ, models and management at the fashion agency setting up. Local retailers congregated in the square to deliver their fashion items. At noon, the models took to the streets to the beat of festive Christmas music and again in the afternoon. Spectators and the Holman Lee Agency were very impressed with the uniqueness and range of fashion in the Ennis stores, with over 30 shops participating. The modelling agency gave the Ennis Street Fashion Show and by default Ennis retailers, extensive coverage on their Instagram in advance and following the event.



Festive music in the Plaza

Perfect weather conditions facilitated locals, visitors and musicians to enjoy festive music at the Templegate Plaza on Thursday evening, 14th December. The area is a busy thoroughfare and workers and shoppers got an opportunity to stop and appreciate musical notes from Jaskane, Ennis Brass Band, Comhaltas and Ennis Gospel Choir. The Templegate hotel accommodated the festive event setting up their outdoor dining, serving festive favourites.



Winter Maintenance Works - Ennis

Ennis MD crews, during adverse weather conditions in early December, carried out winter maintenance measures on public roadways. These works included salting of roads in the Ennis town area and surrounds and also a small number of footpaths in heavily trafficked areas of the town centre.



Ennis 2040 Economic & Spatial Strategy Implementation

Ennis Public Realm Update

As per the Contract, the Works on the ground are currently paused for the Christmas trading period and are due to recommence on 8th January, 2024. In the interim, the Project team, in consultation with the Contractor, are planning for the next phases of the project. As agreed, the public and those affected by the works are updated regularly. A Public Information Session was held in the Templegate Hotel on Monday, 18th December, 2023.

Ennis Transport Plan Update

SYSTRA Ltd has submitted the first draft of the Ennis Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) & Local Transport Plan (LTP) Baseline Assessment report for initial evaluation by Ennis MD, Planning and Transportation. The Baseline Report includes Policy Context, Local Area Characteristics, Existing Travel Patterns, Accessibility, Existing Transport Infrastructure and Services with Conclusion and next Steps in the process.

Ennis MD and Clare County Council's Physical and Economic Development Sections had an initial visit from the University College London, Centre for Transport Studies in December. The UCL Centre for Transport Studies requested 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" and Ennis was selected for the study.

Ennis MD are delighted that the Knowledge Exchange

Partnership will give us the opportunity to avail of Professor Peter Jones and his team from UCL extensive experience in transport studies to assist us in developing and applying streetscape allocation principles to optimise the use of available streetscape on individual streets across the urban area: by rebalancing current streetspace allocation to reflect future rather than historical public and political priorities, in terms of promoting sustainable travel, place making and liveability.

An outline of the knowledge exchange partnership and practical ways in which UCL can assist Ennis MD were discussed with the Ennis MD Councillors and a broader Consultative Group. Ennis MD wish to thank those that participated at a busy time in December.

Tulla Road Cycle scheme

Detailed design is underway on this project. Fortnightly on-line progress meetings continuing with an on-site meeting held recently. CCTV drainage survey and Arborist Report to be procured by Clare County Council.

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

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

Public Bus Service Update

Ennis MD continue to liaise with the National Transport Authority to deliver this important infrastructural project which is projected to commence in Q1 2025. A briefing with the Ennis MD Councillors on the naming of the proposed bus stops will be arranged in January and we expect that outline layout of the proposed Ennis town bus stop at Friars Walk will be forwarded in early January so Ennis MD with Ennis 2040 DAC can draft a brief for a master plan for this area.

Francis Street

The proposed scheme was presented to Ennis MD Councillors at a meeting held on 28th November 2023 and formally notified to Clare County Council members on 20th December 2023 in accordance with the provisions of the Section 179A planning process.

This development will comprise of 39 affordable homes located in the town centre of Ennis.

Approval for this specific scheme under the Affordable Housing fund is being progressed in parallel with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH).

Abbey Street

The concept design is being finalised and Computer-Generated Images (CGIs) are being prepared for public consultation which is scheduled to take place during Q1 2024. Coupled with the design material, a video is being prepared for the public consultation process to demonstrate how this development forms part of a broader plan for the regeneration of Ennis Town Centre in conjunction with other initiatives planned by Clare County Council.

Harvey's Quay

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

Post Office Field Masterplan

This is a key amenity and biodiverse area located in the centre of Ennis Town. Draft Master Plan recently completed to be brought forward for stakeholder consultation over Q1, 2024. Following on from this, agreement will be sought in respect of the funding required to complete this initiative.



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