



# Annual Report 2018 DRAFT



COMHAIRLE | CLARE  
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL  
LOCAL AUTHORITY OF THE YEAR

June 2019





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Cllr. Michael Begley  
**Cathaoirleach**



Mr. Pat Dowling  
**Chief Executive**

## INTRODUCTION BY THE CATHAOIRLEACH AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We are delighted to welcome the 2018 Annual Report which provides an opportunity to showcase the services provided by Clare County Council during the year, as well as some of the new and innovative actions taken across a wide range of activities.

Clare County Council has responsibility for a population of over 118,000 people, with an annual budget of €118m for day-to-day spending plus a further €110m (over 3 years) in capital. The Local Authority employs 854 staff delivering an extraordinarily wide range of services from maintaining local roads to building the local economy and from providing recreation and amenity facilities to being responsible for one of Ireland's main visitor attractions at the Cliffs of Moher, which attracted more than 1.6m visitors from all over the world in 2018.

The Council with its range of responsibilities impacts on the lives of every person in Clare and is continuously endeavouring to improve its services and responsibilities for the benefit of those who live and work in Clare.

During 2018, Clare County Council successfully managed to deliver a number of significant and important projects in the areas of transport, housing, community and enterprise. This was made possible through the hard work and dedication of Elected Members and the Executive and Staff of Clare County Council.

In the area of Economic Development, Clare County Council working in partnership with the University of Limerick progressed a proposal to explore opportunities for a significant 'SDZ/Enterprise hub' development centred on a green field site adjacent to the planned Limerick Northern Distributor Road known as the "University Hinterland" in Clare. In addition, Clare County Council began extensive consultations on the Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy, a long-term plan aimed at informing and driving the economic, social and physical development of Ennis as an investment location and place to live.

Last year was a particularly strong year for the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Clare. In 2018, LEO

Clare paid out approximately €700,000 in grant aid to 44 businesses across the County. LEO Clare also grant aided 33 businesses for Trading Online Vouchers, facilitated businesses throughout the County through a comprehensive Training and Development Programme, and hosted the Student Enterprise Programme, the Clare stage of Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE) and the Clare Women in Business Network.

2018 was marked with the commencement of a number of key capital projects and numerous positive announcements being made regarding Clare County Council's key role in delivering services in the County.

In the area of rural development, the Local Authority delivered three Digital Hubs in Feakle, Miltown Malbay and Kilrush where one gigabit (GB) connectivity is being provided to residents, visitors, e-workers and entrepreneurs. The contract was also signed for the development of a Multi-Service Innovation Centre in Ennistymon. Also, as a part of the Council's plans to advance a County wide digital platform, a variation to the County Development Plan was prepared on the development of Data Centres in the County by identifying, in a plan-led manner, the preferred location for a Data Centre.

Clare was among one of the main beneficiaries under the Government's Urban Regeneration and Rural Regeneration Funds. Some €1.6m was approved for the Ennis Town Centre Public Realm Regeneration Project while another €1m was approved under the Government's Rural Regeneration and Development for the new Multi-Service Innovation Centre in Ennistymon. Meanwhile, the Minister of State at the OPW & Flood Relief, Kevin 'Boxer' Moran, visited Shannon and the adjacent flood defence embankments fronting the Shannon Estuary to announce plans to upgrade those defences and to construct new defences for the town with a proposed spend of €27m.

In the area of housing and social development, Clare County Council purchased a property in Ennis to operate as a homeless hub and work commenced on the delivery of additional office space to facilitate the additional homeless services being managed by the Council at Áras Contae an Chláir. Clare County Council exceeded its housing delivery targets for 2018 and is working diligently to ensure a pipeline of projects for 2019 and 2020 to meet future targets. New housing developments commenced in Feakle (13 units) and Clonlara (9 units) with further housing projects being advanced at other locations, including Shannon and Ennis.

Clare County Council continued working with the Department of Education and Skills to acquire sites for new schools. In December, the Council confirmed its intention to acquire lands in Kilrush for the site for Gaelscoil Uí Choimín, which originally opened 25 years ago. The process of completing the purchase and working with the Department will now commence.

Elsewhere, investment in our Fire Service continued with significant upgrade/refurbishment works being completed at Kilkee Fire Station, while Clare Dog Shelter reopened following completion of refurbishment works. Continuous investment in our seaside towns saw the delivery of a newly refurbished and extended toilet block and an upgrade to the lifeguard station at Spanish Point.

Clare County Council's support for the local tourism sector was evidenced through the appointment of a Tourism Officer and through the organisation's membership of Clare Tourism. The Lough Derg Blueway was launched, Clare County Council successfully retained blue flag designation at 9 separate locations and the Local Authority provided support to the organisers of the 2019 Dubai Duty Free Irish Open in Lahinch.

In the area of sport and recreation, Clare County Council continued to further improve the range and quality of Active Ennis services and facilities in Ennis and Kilrush. The contract for the delivery of a Town Park in Shannon was also signed and the Council, through the Clare Local Sports Partnership (LSP), continued to support the County's many sporting and community organisations.

Clare County Council continued its delivery of a wide spectrum of services in communities throughout Clare. Among the initiatives supported during 2018 was Pride of Place, Clare Comhairle na nÓg and the National Tidy Towns Competition.

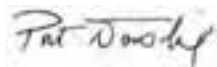
2018 was capped off with Chambers Ireland, in association with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, naming Clare County Council as **'Local Authority of the Year'** at its annual Excellence in Local Government Awards. This award is a tribute to the staff of Clare County Council and their strong track record of service for the people of Clare.

Clare County Council is at the heart of public service delivery in the County and takes a leadership role at national level in areas such as rural development and tourism. The Council, working with its communities, large and small, will continue to be innovative and responsive to the changing needs and expectations of the people of Clare during 2019.

Le meas,



Cllr. Michael Begley  
Cathaoirleach



Mr. Pat Dowling  
Chief Executive

## Clare County Councillors

### Ennis Municipal District

Cllr. James Breen  
Cllr. Johnny Flynn  
Cllr. Pat Daly  
Cllr. Ann Norton  
Cllr. Tom McNamara  
Cllr. Mary Howard  
Cllr. Paul Murphy  
Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy

### Killaloe Municipal District

Cllr. Joe Cooney  
Cllr. Pat Hayes  
Cllr. Michael Begley  
Cllr. Tony O'Brien  
Cllr. Pat Burke  
Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan

### Shannon Municipal District

Cllr. Cathal Crowe  
Cllr. John Crowe  
Cllr. Gerard Flynn  
Cllr. P.J. Ryan  
Cllr. Pat McMahon  
Cllr. Mike McKee

### West Clare Municipal District

Cllr. Christy Curtin  
Cllr. Richard Nagle  
Cllr. Bill Slattery  
Cllr. Ian Lynch  
Cllr. Michael Hillery  
Cllr. P.J. Kelly  
Cllr. Bill Chambers  
Cllr. Gabriel Keating





## FINANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE



**NOELEEN FITZGERALD**  
**Acting Head of Finance,**  
**Corporate and Human Resources**

including financial accounting and reporting, commercial rates billing and collection, payments, the budget process, treasury management and other accounting and compliance activities.

The Human Resources department activities include the provision of learning and development opportunities for staff, operation of the employee welfare programme, recruitment, superannuation, industrial relations management and workplace partnership.

### Finance Department

The Finance and Support Services Directorate primarily delivers internal services to departments to support them in the delivery of services to customers in an efficient manner and implement best practice in corporate governance. The Finance department under the management of the Head of Finance has primary responsibility for a range of functions

The Corporate Services Department incorporates a wide variety of centrally provided services including customer services, communications and public relations, providing support services for the elected members, servicing council meetings, maintaining the register of electors, dealing with freedom of information, data protection, procurement, health and safety, business review, archives and records management and facilities management.

## Commercial rates collection

Commercial rates are payable on a diverse range of commercial properties such as factories, offices, shops, hotels and restaurants. The National Valuation Office based in Dublin ([www.valuations.ie](http://www.valuations.ie)) determines the valuation that is to be applied to a rated property. Following the consideration of the Council budget each year, the Elected Members determine the rate to be levied on this valuation. Rates applied in 2018 were €72.99. Clare County Council billed a total of €42.8m in rates in 2018. Approximately 34% of Clare County Council's revenue expenditure is raised through commercial rates. The collection of rates on commercial properties funds the delivery of a wide variety of essential services. In 2018 the collection of commercial rates improved on the previous year. The Council is aware of the financial difficulties which some ratepayers are experiencing and it remains committed to adopting a practical approach in terms of facilitating rate payers in their payment arrangements. In 2018, the Council continued its commercial rates payment incentive scheme, where commercial rate payers could avail of a grant on their property when all the rates payable on an occupied property have been discharged on time. The long term vacant property scheme is also in place to encourage businesses to occupy vacant properties and avail of a grant over the first three years of business. Further details of both of these schemes are available on the Council website.

## Accounts Payable and Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997 / Late Payments in Commercial Transactions Regulations 2002 and SI no. 580 of 2012

In 2018, Clare County Council spent almost €82m on non payroll costs, covering both operational costs and capital project expenditure. During 2018 the sum of €407 was incurred in prompt payment interest, compared to €5,742 in 2017. This reduction was due to system improvements to allow for speedier processing of invoices. The

sum of €2,560 was incurred in prompt payment compensation payments, payable under the terms of S.I. 580 of 2012, compared to €21,150 in 2017.

## Non Principal Private Residence (NPPR) Charge

The Local Government (Charges) Act 2009, as amended by the Local Government (Household Charge) Act 2011 and the Local Government Reform Act 2014 introduced a €200 annual charge in respect of all residential property not used as the owner's sole or main residence. This charge has been amended and removed by subsequent legislation; however unpaid charges remain a charge on properties. During 2018, outstanding NPPR charges continued to be collected primarily as properties are being sold, with in excess of €1m collected in 2018.

## Internal Audit Department

The internal audit department is part of the Council's corporate governance structure. It is an independent appraisal function charged with reviewing activities across all areas. Internal audit provides an independent assurance opinion to management about whether governance and internal control processes are operating effectively. The public spending code compliance report, published in May 2018 for 2017 was also co-ordinated by internal audit. The internal audit department operates under a charter and to an adopted annual audit plan, agreed with the audit committee, and after consultation, including with the local government auditor. The plan sets out a schedule of audit reviews and checks for the year.

## Motor Taxation Department

In 2018 Clare Motor Tax offices collected €8.3m in motor tax payments. The motor tax payments in person at Clare County Council offices has dropped 50% since 2013; primarily arising from the uptake in the use of the online facility to renew motor tax. None of the motor tax income is retained by Clare County Council



but remitted daily to the Central Exchequer. The usage of the national online motor tax facility [www.motortax.ie](http://www.motortax.ie) continues to grow. Over recent years, Co. Clare's uptake has gone from 47% in 2013 to 68% for 2018. In the one year between December 2017 and 2018, there was a 3% increase in the number of people doing their motor tax online in Co. Clare. The current 68% statistic ranks us 13th in terms of online usage nationally.

	2013	2018
<b>Online Motor Tax</b>	47%	68%

## Human Resources

The pace of change in Local Government is ever increasing. The range of services and activities delivered through Clare County Council continued to expand in 2018 and the influence and risks of changing economies require that we have a workforce that is engaged, dynamic and appropriately trained.

The HR Department has the role of working through various structures to ensure that the objectives of the organisation from a staff capacity perspective are delivered. The team engages with a broad variety of stakeholders on behalf of management and a key challenge is to meet the business needs while maintaining equilibrium in the workplace.

Within our various internal business units, policies and procedures form a key component and they continue to be reviewed and updated. There is ongoing analysis of our data to identify emerging needs and trends which further allows us to respond to change appropriately.

Emerging activity during 2018 included the establishment of a Project Management Office, the appointment of Rural Development Officers and the formulation of a Workforce Plan for our Library Service. Key training programmes in areas such as procurement, A-Z in Local

Government and Project Management were delivered to support our projects and key stake holders.

The HR Department retained the NSAI 'Excellence Through People' award in 2018 and new learning and development initiatives were rolled out such as mentoring and tailored management and leadership training. The HR Department continues to support CPD (Continued Professional Development) while the use of analytics tools has also been adopted to increase our understanding of the dynamics of our human resources for the benefit of our customers.



2018 saw the adoption nationally of the 'National People Strategy' by the CCMA (County and City Managers Association), the principles and focus of which has been integrated into the 2019 Team Plans in Human Resources. A key strategic focus of the People Strategy is the importance of communication which reflects the message presented to us by the NSAI (National Standards Authority of Ireland) earlier in the year. Continued focus on staff engagement through mentoring, leadership, staff updates and engagement through such structures as Partnership, Staff Talks, Union Meetings and the Staff Liaison Network will continue during 2019.

The principles of GDPR were promoted and acted upon in 2018 with a strong focus on data retention, statements and our rationale for collecting information. These principles continue to be embedded in 2019. The use of e-Learning in the areas of Health & Safety and Child Protection is forming a key component of the 2019 Team Plan in Human Resources.

The Human Resources Department operates across a number of key areas of activity:

### Workforce Management

In 2018 the HR Department placed a strong emphasis on the stabilisation of the workforce with a sustained focus on recruitment. In 2017 there were seventy-five recruitment campaigns delivered and this effort was retained into 2018 with new competitions being run to ensure a continued availability of suitable people.

There was a steady increase in permanent staffing levels in line with declared projections with the level of 'acting' arrangements reducing accordingly. Careful monitoring of each grade in line with sanction and available budget will continue into future years.

A diversification of skill-focus to such projects as Rural Development, Atlantic Economic Corridor and Tourism coupled with additional staffing resources in areas of key engagement with the community such as our outdoor staff reflects the responsiveness required in this activity area.

During 2018 the drafting of the Library Workforce Plan began in line with the Workplace Relations Commission recommendations. There was meaningful engagement with FORSA Union in this process and it is anticipated that an agreed plan will be finalised during 2019. The organisation has also placed a renewed focus on the workforce of the future through our recruitment of

Graduates and Co-op students. Engagement is ongoing with the Limerick Clare Educations and Training Board and Senior Management with a view to developing an apprentice programme during 2019.

The HR Department continues to work closely with the Fire Service to meet the continuing demand for retained Fire-fighters across the County.

### Learning and Development

In 2018, the Learning and Development team carried out an extensive audit of the Health & Safety training related requirements. Working closely with management from across the organisation, the needs were identified and a planned programme of training was identified and delivered. This audit is currently underway for the 2019 Annual Programme.

In addition to formal training courses, a number of staff have participated in the community based Junior Achievement Programme. The Training section also co-ordinates the Council's applications for Learning & Development related awards and for the **NSAI 'Excellence Through People' certification** and further to an intensive audit in 2018 Clare County Council received the 'Gold Standard' award.

The Learning and Development team monitors and maintains the Performance Management & Development System (PMDS). This system plays an important role in setting targets for staff, clarifying roles and responsibilities within departments and identifying and evaluating learning and development activities. In 2018 the team participated in the pilot assessment of the Health & Safety and PMDS modules which are currently under development.

A pilot 'Mentoring' programme was delivered in 2018 with twenty six participants volunteering

to participate. As part of a blended approach to our management and leadership development it is anticipated that the programme will be developed further in 2019.

### Employee Welfare

The Employee Welfare Service is a significant asset for staff. The confidential service includes a number of supports available to employees and presents an opportunity for early intervention should issues arise. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 places obligations on the Council as an employer to safeguard employee's welfare and to act proactively by exercising its duty of care.

The Council's Employee Assistance Policy provides details of the free and confidential professional counselling services available to staff at times of need, as well as the opportunity to discuss any difficulties with the Employee Welfare Officer should the need arise.

It is anticipated that during 2019 our Welfare Officer will work in conjunction with Clare County Council Partnership Committee to roll out an extensive 'Health Screening' programme for all staff.



## Industrial Relations

The Council is committed to meaningful consultation with the Unions representing staff in accordance with the various Public Service Stability Agreements.

The Industrial Relations function is dealt with corporately by the Human Resources Department who regularly liaises and consults with the recognised Trade Unions on a wide range of issues and the implementation of change.

Every effort is made to deal with issues in a co-operative and open manner at a local level. The Human Resources department also represents the Council at all third party hearings in accordance with best practices with ongoing support from the Local Government Management Services Board.

In personal matters the HR Department actively encourages staff to engage in confidential mediation processes in an effort to address matters early and informally in the interest of all involved.

## Superannuation

Clare County Council continues to prepare and manage the data entry and storage systems in respect of pay and superannuation but the actual payments process is delivered through 'My Pay', the Sectoral Payroll services centre in Laois.

2018 saw the implementation of a number of national measures in the area of superannuation and the team in HR continue to engage with key stakeholders such as MyPay, DHPLG and our staff - current and retired - to ensure that all measures are implemented effectively having due regard to the personal nature of this activity.

## Workplace Partnership

The Partnership Committee is a positive forum for the discussion between management and staff outside of the industrial relations arena. The local Partnership Committee continued to identify initiatives and promote staff engagement in 2018 with the centre piece being the **Long Service Awards** ceremony being held in June with the service of those staff with twenty five years along with our recently retired colleagues being recognised and celebrated. Some sixty-eight staff were presented with a commemorative certificate at an evening function.

2018 also saw the installation of computers and printers at the area offices for use by the outdoor staff with new logins and e-mail addresses activated for the purpose - this was consequent to a previous initiative to develop a staff extranet for accessing policies, publications, news and job adverts.

In November 2018 the Chief Executive, supported by the chairs of the Partnership Committee and Management Team once again briefed staff at a number of locations across the County.

***The Partnership Committee  
is a positive forum for  
the discussion between  
management and staff outside  
of the industrial relations arena.***

## Corporate Services Department

This department provides a support service to the Elected Members and to Council management and administers a number of functions directly to the public.

## Meetings of Clare County Council

Clare County Council conducts much of its business at meetings of the full Council. Such meetings are regulated by law.

During 2018, Clare County Council held the following types of meetings:

- Annual General Meeting - 1
- Ordinary Meetings - 11
- Adjourned Monthly Meetings - 4
- Budget Meetings – 1
- Special Meeting - 1

Meetings of the full Council are presided over by the Cathaoirleach of the Council. In the event that the Cathaoirleach is absent, the Leas Cathaoirleach chairs the meeting. The public and the media have a statutory right to attend meetings of the Council. Council meetings are held on the second Monday of each month with the exception being August, in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

## Corporate Policy Group (C.P.G.)

The Corporate Policy Group consists of the Cathaoirleach of the day together with the chairs of the Strategic Policy Committee. The Corporate Policy Group has a statutory basis set out in Section 133 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and has specific functions in relation to the preparation of the Annual Budget and the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Policy Group meets on a monthly basis with the Council Executive.

## Municipal District Areas

Members meet at area level throughout the year to discuss matters relevant to their particular electoral area. Each municipal district committee has a senior official assigned to it to co-ordinate functions and assist the members in their deliberations. The meetings are attended by the Senior Executive Engineer and a member of the administrative staff in the area. These meetings are generally attended by the press and the minutes of each area meeting are listed on the agenda at a subsequent Council meeting for noting.

## Elected Members

There are 28 members on Clare County Council and they were elected at the May 2014 Local Elections. They represent the following electoral areas:

- Ennis – 8
- Killaloe – 6
- Shannon – 6
- West Clare - 8

The current Council is scheduled to be in existence until May 2019 when the next local elections are due to be held.

The political representation on the Council following the 2014 Local Elections is as follows:

- Fine Gael - 8
- Fianna Fáil – 12
- Sinn Féin - 1
- Non-Party - 7

The Annual General Meeting is held in June each year and Councillor Michael Begley, who represents the Killaloe Municipal District, was elected Cathaoirleach in June 2018 for the ensuing year. Councillor Alan O’Callaghan, who represents the Killaloe Municipal District, was elected Leas Cathaoirleach at that same meeting.



### Office of the Ombudsman

This office was established under the Ombudsman Act, 1980. Its role is to investigate complaints about administrative actions, delays or inactions, adversely affecting persons or bodies in their dealings with state bodies including Local Authorities.

The Office of the Ombudsman dealt with 7 Customer Care complaints in 2018. Reports on each complaint was provided by Clare County Council to the Office of the Ombudsman

### Ombudsman for Children

In 2018, no complaint was made to the Ombudsman for Children.

### Customer Care Co-ordinator

The Council is committed to providing a quality service to all its customers and has a complaints/ comments policy in place. The Council's Customer Care Co-ordinator investigates all complaints/comments received. A person not satisfied with the response provided by the Customer Care Co-ordinator can request to have their case reviewed again by the Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services. In 2018, the Customer Care Co-ordinator responded to 19 complaints received 2 of which were dealt with under appeal, to the Senior Executive Officer.



## Communications and Public relations

- Clare County Council made progress during 2018 in further enhancing the means by which it communicates with staff, Elected Members and customers.
- The Communications Officer issued press releases and photographs promoting the full breadth of services provided by Clare County Council resulting in extensive local, national and international coverage. The Local Authority adopted a proactive position regarding media coverage of matters pertaining to the work of the organisation.
- The Graphic Design & Print Service staff further enhanced the quality of internal and external communications carried out by Clare County Council.
- Clare County Council's social media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) accounts continued fresh focus on media rich postings e.g. video. The Council's corporate social media accounts have a combined following of 16,000 people, up 30% on December 2017.
- Clare County Council's advertising and marketing practices benefited from the input of the Communications section from the perspective of maximising value for money and reaching target audiences in print and broadcast media.

The majority of non-statutory advertising is designed by the Communications section with advice being provided by the Communications Officer to relevant sections regarding the placement of such advertising.

***The Council's corporate social media accounts have a combined following of 16,000 people, up 30% on December 2017***

- Monthly staff newsletters (The Banner Bulletin) and newsletter-based Monthly Management Reports reporting the progress made by Clare County Council Directorates during the preceding month were produced.
- The Communications Officer continued to provide all news items for the main Council website, as well as the Intranet and Extranet.
- The Communications Officer provides organisational support for Civic Receptions and other functions e.g. postcards marking events, videos etc.
- Necessary media training and advice was provided to staff that were engaging with the media on behalf of the organisation.

## Register of Councillors Expenses 2018

The 2018 Register of Councillors Expenses will be available on the Clare County Council's website at the end of March 2019. This register will include details of the following:-

- Attendance at conferences, seminars and training.
- Payments made in respect of travel and subsistence expenses within or outside the State.
- Salaries, monthly allowances, allowances to Strategic Policy Committees, Chair of Municipal District allowances, Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach allowances.
- Payments by other bodies/associations, the members of which were nominated by Clare County Council.
- Attendance at meetings of Local Authorities, Strategic Policy Committees, Municipal District areas, Joint Policing Committee, Audit Committee and Directorate meetings.

## Clare County Council Committees

Clare County Council has formed a number of committees, including Strategic Policy Committees, Joint Policing Committee and the Audit Committee.

### Strategic Policy Committees

Strategic Policy Committees (S.P.C.s) are structured around the main functions of Council. They are made up of elected Councillors and other representatives of the social partners and other sectoral interests. Each S.P.C. is chaired by an elected Councillor

and is supported by a Director of Service. The task of the S.P.C. is to assist and advise the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy. Final policy decisions, however, will ultimately rest with the full Council acting as a body.

The current S.P.C.s are:-

- Social Development
- Physical Development
- Economic Development
- Rural Development

### Audit Committee

The Audit Committee has an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting, processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters, as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the Council.

It supports the work of the Internal Audit Department and advises the Chief Executive in relation to the operation and development of the department.

The committee is non-executive and is independent in the determination of its work programme and in formulating any recommendations, taking account of the functions referred to above.

The committee has five members, three external members and two Elected Members. The chairperson is Tom Kirby, Director of Water Services National Training Group. The committee met 8 times in 2018. The committee completes an annual report to Council each year.



## Civic/Mayoral Receptions

One Civic and two Mayoral Receptions were held in 2018, as follows:-



- A Civic Reception was held in June to honour Clare Senior Hurling Team and Management of 1977/1978 to celebrate their achievements on their 40th anniversary.



- A Mayoral Reception was held in July to celebrate the achievements of Clare participants in the Special Olympics 2018.



- A Mayoral Reception was held in October to celebrate the special achievements of: Jim Warny, Naomi Carroll and Rhys Williams.

## Records management

Our records management unit archived substantial volumes of records, which are required to be retained under the National Retention Policy for Local Authority Records. In addition, records were disposed of in accordance with the above policy.

The photographic digital archive continues and additions to the photographic collection are being carried out on an ongoing basis to ensure their preservation.

All Chief Executive Orders, County Council minute books and registers of electors have been gathered, bound and subsequently archived, thus ensuring vital records are permanently and securely preserved.

## Freedom of information (FOI)

In 2018, there were 136 FOI requests, 8 internal reviews and 4 appeals to the Information Commissioner.

### The outcome of valid requests received in 2018 was as follows:-

Granted	45
Part-granted	50
Refused	40
Transferred	0
Withdrawn/Outside FOI	4

### The categories of the requests are as follows:-

Journalists	32
Business Interest Groups	17
Oireachtas/Public representatives	4
Staff	0
Clients/others	83

### The policy of Clare County Council is:

*“To give members of the public access to information held by this authority, to the greatest extent possible, in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy of the individual”.*

Further information and an application form is available on the Council's website [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie)

The following is a summary of the fee structure in respect of FOI requests:

Search and retrieval costs	€20 per hour
Photocopy per sheet	€0.04
CD Rom	€10

- There is a minimum threshold of €101 below which no search, retrieval and copying fees can be charged. Once the charge reaches €101, full fees apply;
- There is a cap of €500 on the amount of search, retrieval and copying fees that can be charged;
- There is a further upper limit on estimated search, retrieval and copying fees at €700 above which an FOI body can refuse to process a request, unless the requester is prepared to refine the request to bring the search, retrieval and copying fees below the limit.



The Freedom of Information Act sets out appeal mechanisms in the event of a refusal of a request, or in relation to deferral of access, charges, form of access etc. Fees are also payable in certain cases on appeal as follows:-

- The fee for internal review under Section 21 is now €30 (€10 for medical card holders and their dependants).
- The fee for appeals to the Information Commissioner under Section 22 is now €50 (€15 for medical card holders and their dependants).

## Data Protection

Clare County Council processes all personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Acts, 1988 to 2018.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies from 25th May 2018. It has general application to the processing of personal data in the EU, setting out more extensive obligations on data controllers and processors, and providing strengthened protections and rights for data subjects.

There were 8 data subject access requests made under the Data Protection Acts for access to personal data held by Clare County Council in 2018.

## Privacy Statement

At Clare County Council we are committed to protecting and respecting your privacy.

The Privacy Statement lets you know how we look after your personal data. It also informs you as to our obligations and your rights under data protection law. Clare County Councils privacy statement can be found at –

**[www.clarecoco.ie/privacy-statement](http://www.clarecoco.ie/privacy-statement)**

## Health and Safety

In 2018 Clare County Council continued to develop, implement and manage its Occupational Health & Safety Management System across all departments of the Local Authority.

During 2018 Clare County Council maintained its accreditation to the OHSAS 18001 Standard in the Fire Service and were awarded the Mid West Regional Award at the National Irish Safety Organisations (NISO) Safety Awards 2018 for their Health & Safety Management System Performance.

A particular focus in 2018 was on raising awareness around accident causation in Clare County Council and communicating the necessary preventative measures. This was achieved through the delivery of a Safety Awareness Seminar, Safety Alerts and a Safety Poster Campaign which resulted in a reduction in back injuries and dangerous occurrences reported during the year.

In addition a Traffic Management Working Group finalised the Guidelines for Temporary Traffic Management Plans for a variety of routine Roadwork's Scenarios. This guide will be rolled out to all MD areas in early 2019.

Finally a CORE H&S Module feasibility study was conducted in two departments in Clare County Council to determine the usability of the module. The output from this study will be a recommendation on the use of the module in Clare County Council.



## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



**CARMEL KIRBY**  
Director of Physical Development

### Beaches and Amenities

#### Spanish Point public toilets & lifeguard facilities.

The Environment section delivered the total refurbishment of the public toilets and lifeguarding facilities at Spanish Point for the 2018 summer bathing season. The standalone lifeguard hut was also revamped removing the store and increasing the internal space for the lifeguards on duty with a treatment area for incidents/accidents.

### Environment Section

The Environment Section has responsibility for a diverse range of activities including waste enforcement, waste management, environmental awareness, Limerick-Clare energy agency, gardening, scientific services (laboratory, water, and air), veterinary services and blue flag beaches. The 2018 work programme was largely driven by an extensive regulatory framework with some additional non routine projects included.



## Lahinch Public Toilet Facilities

A long term lease with Lahinch Seaworld and Lahinch Golf Club was finalised in 2018 to allow the upgrading of the public toilet facilities to proceed. A contractor was appointed and commenced on site in December 2018. The completion date for this project is April 2019.

## Bathing Water

The international blue flag symbolises high standards in water quality, safety and services as well as environmental management, information and education. The award is made by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), an independent non-profit organisation.

**The twelve bathing areas listed below maintained their nine Blue flags & three Green flags and were monitored for compliance during the 2018 bathing season.**

- Kilkee
- Fanore
- Cappagh Pier (Kilrush)
- Whitestrand (Doonbeg)
- Lahinch
- Whitestrand (Miltown Malbay)
- Seafield, Quilty (Green flag)
- Spanish Point
- Bishops Quarter (Ballyvaughan) (Green flag)
- Ballycuggeran (Lough Derg)
- Mountshannon (Lough Derg)
- Ballyalla Lake (Green flag)



## Water Safety

Irish Water Safety in conjunction with Clare County Council successfully hosted the European Junior lifesaving championship in UL and Kilkee beach in September. County Clare lifeguards also achieved success in both the European event and the World Championship lifesaving events in 2018.





31 lifeguards provided lifeguarding services on Clare's beaches for the summer season with services extended during June, due to the exceptionally hot weather. 2 new beach wheelchairs were introduced in Kilkee and Lahinch, making these Blue Flag beaches more accessible to people with disabilities.

The 2018 summer season also proved a busy one for the Co. Clare lifeguard service as reflected in the statistics outlined below

Rescue	119
First-Aid	766
Lost child	33
Advice given	5277
Accident prevented	1927

## Waste Enforcement

Nearly 1,500 environmental complaints were responded to and closed out by the team throughout the year with illegal dumping and littering accounting for over 50% of all complaints received. Successful prosecutions were also brought against a number of individuals during the year.

As part of the Department for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCA) Anti-Dumping Initiative 2018, over 76 tonnes of waste and 650 mattresses were collected.



*Illegally dumped waste being removed from Dun na Hinse, Ennis under ADI funding. The Clare Waste Management Bye-laws were revised and adopted by the Members and came into force in December 2018.*

# Environmental Monitoring and Enforcement

## Water/Air/Noise Pollution Complaints

2018

197

### Implementation of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP 2018-2021)

Investigations were carried out during the year on a number of water bodies where water quality is at risk of failing to meet Water Framework Directive objectives. Staff from the section also worked with Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) on desk based assessments to assist in identifying pressures responsible for placing water bodies in the County at risk of failing to achieve WFD objectives.

### Rivers and Lakes

45 river sites and 10 lakes are monitored in accordance with the EPA monitoring programmes and the results have been forwarded to the EPA.

### Shellfish Water

Monitoring was also carried out at the 5 designated shellfish waters in County Clare; Aughinish Bay, Poulnaclogh Bay (part of Ballyvaughan Bay), Poulmasharry Bay, Carrigaholt Bay and Rinneveella Bay. The results were all in compliance.

### Bathing Waters

12 bathing areas (nine with blue flags, three with green coast) were monitored from 22nd May to 5th September 2018. A total of 166 samples were taken during the bathing season. All bathing areas monitored achieved “excellent” quality status for the 2018 season.

## Drinking Water

During the year, 19 public water supplies, 19 private supplies and 82 group water schemes were monitored. The compliance rate was over 98% across the various parameters measured.

## Clare County Council Waste Water Treatment Plants

30 licensed or certified municipal plants were monitored during the year. All data is uploaded to the EPA portal ‘EDEN’ and forwarded to Irish Water for approval.

## Section 4 Discharge Licences and Air Pollution Licences

During the year, 131 inspections were carried out at facilities licensed under Section 4 of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act, 1977 & 1990. Two new licences were issued in 2018. Two inspections were carried out at facilities licensed under the Air Pollution Act.

## National Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems

65 individual Domestic Waste Water Treatment System (DWWTS) were inspected in 2018.

## Planning

During 2018, in excess of 300 planning inspections were undertaken as part of the assessment of domestic, commercial, industrial and forestry applications.



## Education and Awareness

A wide-ranging environmental awareness programme focusing on a number of target groups including community groups, businesses and schools was implemented in 2018. A significant number of environmental education events took place including the launch of National Tree Week, **Gum Litter Taskforce (GLT) campaign** and the continuation of the An Taisce Green Schools Programme along with environmental awareness sessions at each of the nine blue flag beaches in Clare. The Green Dog Walkers Initiative, promoting dog responsibility in relation to dog litter also continued during 2018.

A number of campaigns were delivered through the Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Awareness Grant Scheme 2018 including a cinema campaign on dog owner responsibility, Anti-Graffiti Project with Clare Youth Service; Blue Flag Beach Radio and social media campaign and Green Christmas campaign. 49 projects were awarded funding under the Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership fund 2018. Both of these campaigns were co-funded by the Department of Communications Climate Action and the Environment.

During 2018 a Greener Clare Brand was developed to help support and promote a Greener Clare. The Greener Clare initiative makes it easier for and empowers communities to get involved in environmental initiatives including awareness initiatives and encourage behavioural change at the heart of any community. In 2018 the **Greener Clare (@GreenerClare)** social media platform was established and can be followed on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

## Waste Management

Clare County Council (CCC) provides a network of 2 recycling centres and 3 recycling centres & transfer stations (can accept residual waste also) as well as a network of 52 bring bank sites countywide to assist the public in recycling and disposing of domestic waste.

Details of Clare County Council's individual bring bank sites are listed on our website.



## Bring Banks

### New Bring Banks 2018

- Broadford Village
- Sheedy's Shop, Darragh

## Landfill Monitoring

The Central Waste Management Facility (CWMF) Landfill, Doora Landfill and Lisdeen Waste Transfer Station were monitored on an ongoing basis during the year in accordance with their waste licence requirements.

## CWMF Community Fund

In July 2018, final payments were made to 38 applicants, under the CWMF Community Fund Grant Scheme for works with beneficial environmental consequences.

## Energy

Clare County Council has achieved an energy performance of 17.8% towards the required 33% saving required by 2020. Significant progress is required over the coming two years.

## Food Safety

Clare County Council is an official agent of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. By way of a Service Level Agreement, Clare County Council is responsible for supervising and granting approval for all abattoirs and meat plants in the County, including one wild game establishment. Legislation requires that all animals destined for human consumption undergo a full veterinary ante-mortem and post-mortem examination. Last year 4,365 beef animals and 29,014 sheep were slaughtered in County Clare plants. Samples are taken regularly to monitor process hygiene and also to check for prohibited substances. All samples to date have been satisfactory.

## Gardening Section

The Council's Gardening Section continued to maintain very high standards in ensuring the attractiveness of our towns and villages and work closely with and advise community groups on landscaping matters.

## Strategic Policy Committee SPC

The SPC made valuable contributions to the formulation of the County Clare Waste Management Bye-Laws which were adopted by the Members in 2018.

## Dog Control

Clare County Council completed an extensive refurbishment and modernisation of the Clare Dog Shelter in the Gort Road Industrial estate during 2018 which now provides high quality animal welfare facilities. Midland Animal Care Limited executes the Council's statutory functions in this area with the exception of the making of bye-laws and the taking of prosecutions.



## **Roads and Transportation Department**

Roads and Transportation is responsible for the design, maintenance and improvement of the national, regional and local road network throughout the County and also has responsibility for road safety, public lighting, hedge-cutting, parking management, flood relief works, insurances and arterial drainage.

### **Schedule of Municipal District works 2018**

The 2018 Schedule of Municipal Districts Works provided for a Roadworks Programme which had a total fund of €28.5m. This Programme was completed and all approved allocations drawn from the TII and DTTAS respectively.

Listed hereunder are a number of the highlights/works that took place:-

- Strengthening/surface dressing of more than 229km of road network.
- Continuation of enhanced bridge remediation programme.
- Latoon Bridge rehabilitation works
- Road Safety Programme

### **Public lighting**

Clare County Council has responsibility for the management and maintenance of almost 14,000 public lights in the County (with the exception of those pertaining to the motorway network). Public lighting is by far the largest energy consumption component of Local Authority infrastructure and the costs associated with same continue to increase, as a result of both higher maintenance costs associated with ageing stock as well as increased consumption costs as more private estates are taken in charge and increasing energy charges.

The key priorities in relation to public lighting include complete changeover to LED technology, achievement of the 2020 carbon footprint reduction target and replacement of supporting infrastructure where required. It was announced in late 2018 that the Road Management Office (RMO) have been successful in securing €17.5 million in support from the Climate Action Fund for the LA Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project nationally. This will form part of the funding necessary for the delivery of the project. Clare has confirmed its participation and has signed up to be included in region 1 of the Local Authority Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project.

## **Other Roads Activities**

### **Community Hedge cutting Grant**

Clare County Council provided an allocation of €10,000 to continue the Community Hedgecutting Grant Scheme in 2018. 25 grants were approved in 2018. This initiative is facilitating greater awareness among landowners of their responsibilities in relation to management of roadside hedges on their properties.

### **Community Involvement Scheme**

An allocation of €600,000, under the Community Involvement Scheme in 2018 facilitated work being carried out to 22 public roads throughout the County.

### **Local Improvement Scheme**

Clare County Council was allocated total grant funding of €1,038,844 for Local Improvement Schemes from the Department of Rural and Community Development in 2018. Due to the fact that the previously existing list of applications in respect of Local Improvement Schemes was several years in existence and was found, in many cases, not to reflect current realities, it was

decided in early 2018 by Clare County Council to re-advertise the scheme and to develop an up-to-date list of expressions of interest. A total of 280 applications were subsequently received. The grant funding facilitated the approval and completion of LIS works to 30 non public roads in 2018.

### **Clare Co Council Road Traffic Speed Limit Bye Laws 2017**

Following an extensive review, (over a period of two years), of Speed Limits throughout County Clare, on national, regional & local roads, Clare County Council produced Road Traffic Speed Limit Bye Laws which were adopted by Clare County Council at its October meeting. The Bye Laws become law on 1st June 2019.

### **Doolin Harbour Bye Laws 2017**

Clare Co Council revised the Harbour Charges included in the Doolin Harbour Bye Laws 2017 to reflect the larger passenger vessels using the Pier.

### **Clare Noise Action Plan 2018**

The Noise Action Plan 2018 was prepared in accordance with the requirements of EU Directive 2002/49/EC, transposed into Irish Law by the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006, SI No. 140 of 2006. The aim of the Directive and Regulations is to avoid, prevent or reduce on a prioritized basis the harmful effects due to exposure to environmental noise. In County Clare the only noise source identified is road traffic noise as train movements and flight movements to and from Shannon Airport was below the thresholds for inclusion in the noise mapping process. Noise maps were prepared for National and Regional roads with more than 3 million vehicles p.a. The Plan was adopted by Clare County Council at the July Meeting.

### **Traffic Management**

The Council has responsibility for the management and enforcement of traffic throughout the County. Parking bye-laws and pay and display facilities are in operation in Ennis, Kilrush, Kilkee, Lahinch and Doolin. The Council continues to invest in staff and resources to improve the service delivery in this area.

### **Road Safety**

Clare County Council continued to work in partnership with various other stakeholders including the TII, the Road Safety Authority, the HSE and the Gardai to promote road safety. The Council continued with various initiatives that included Junior School Warden Scheme, cycle training in schools, Road Safety Week, the Street-Smart resource, distribution of High-Viz vests, promotion of road safety through the media and other initiatives to promote road safety.

### **Road Design Office Projects**

Bridge Rehabilitation - Latoon Creek Bridge construction commenced on site in November 2017 and was completed on 25th May 2018. Total cost was 1.9 million euro including design, investigations, service diversions and construction/supervision.

In 2018, €0.8 million was received and Contractors procured for bridge rehabilitation projects at O' Briensbridge (Liscannor), Cloghaun Lough, Killaderry, St Brendan's, Bank Place, Inagh, Inghid, Cloontymweenagh - the latter three projects were designed by the Road Design Office. All these bridges were completed in 2018 except for Inagh Bridge which will be completed in January 2019.

## General Design Office

The Cliffs of Moher Coach Park and Toilet Block construction on site was completed and handed over to the client on 1st June, 2018.

Project	Status	Date
Kilrush Town Hall Refurbishment and Digital Hub	Open to the public and staff	March 2018
Mill House (County Enterprise) Office	Refurbishment works complete and ready to rent	August 2018
Ennistymon Area Office Works Refurbishment	Construction works completed	December 2018
Ennis Northern Inner Relief Road Phase 1	Road opened, with snags to be carried out. Defects Liability Period concluded on November 2018	June 2018
Feakle Broadband Hub	Opened to the public	April 2018
Miltown Broadband Hub	Opened to the public	March 2018

## Speed Limit Review Adopted

- A speed limits review was carried out during the years 2017 and 2018
- The speed limits were adopted by Clare County Council by Resolution on the 8th of October 2018.
- The signage scheduling has been completed.
- The installation and infrastructure will be implemented in early 2019.
- The commencement date for the new speed limits is the 1st June 2019.

Construction of the Junction Building Cloughleigh was completed in June 2018.

Phase 1 - Design, Survey and Construction of the Ennis dog shelter improvement works was completed.

## Roads Performance Indicators

While the indicators for 2018 are not yet compiled, the indicators for 2017 are listed hereunder for Roads

R1 % of roads that received a PSCI condition rating	
Description	%
% of Regional rd km that recd a PSCI rating in 24 months prior to 31/12/2017	86%
% of Local Primary rd km that recd a PSCI rating in 24 months prior to 31/12/2017	84%
% of Local Secondary rd km that recd a PSCI rating in 24 months prior to 31/12/2017	53%
% of Local Tertiary rd km that recd a PSCI rating in 24 months prior to 31/12/2017	82%



**R1 B % of roads represented by PSCI condition rating**

Description	%
% of Regional rd km that recd a PSCI rating in 24 months prior to 31/12/2017	86%
% of Local Primary rd km that recd a PSCI rating in 24 months prior to 31/12/2017	84%
% of Local Secondary rd km that recd a PSCI rating in 24 months prior to 31/12/2017	53%
% of Local Tertiary rd km that recd a PSCI rating in 24 months prior to 31/12/2017	82%

**R1 B % of roads represented by PSCI condition rating**

Road Type	1-4 Rating	5-6 Rating	7-8 Rating	9-10 Rating
Regional	1%	10%	66%	20%
Local Primary	2%	17%	59%	12%
Local Secondary	6%	26%	43%	17%
Local Tertiary	28%	22%	22%	9%

**R2 Regional Road Works**

Km of Regional road strengthened during 2017	10.9km
Amount expended on Regional road strengthening during 2017	€ 1,786,357
Km of Regional road resealed during 2017	19km
Amount expended on Regional road resealing during 2017	€ 483,254

**R2 Local Road Works**

Km of Local road strengthened during 2017	55.4km
Amount expended on Local road strengthening during 2017	€ 3,251,571
Km of Local road resealed during 2017	109.5km
Amount expended on Local road resealing during 2017	€ 1,687,139

## Physical Development SPC

The Strategic Policy Committee for Environment and Transportation held four meetings in 2018. This Committee has a membership of 12, comprising of 7 Elected Members and a representative from each of the following sectors:-

Agriculture/Farming

Environment/Conservation

Development/Construction

Community/Voluntary

Social Inclusion

## Chairperson - Councillor Joe Cooney

Issues discussed by the SPC in 2018 included the following:

- Guidelines for SPCs re Transparency Code associated with Lobbying
- Draft Noise Action Plan 2018
- Review of Winter Maintenance Salting Routes
- Update on River Basin Management Plan
- Update on CFRAMS
- Draft Litter Management Plan 2019-2021
- Draft Waste Management Bye-Laws, 2018
- Bio-degradable packaging
- Update on the Food Safety Authority (FSAI)
- Fire Service Update
- Update on projects by the Project Management Office
- Update on CIS & LIS schemes

## Clare Civil Defence

Currently there are over 100 active volunteer members trained in a variety of disciplines including:

- Emergency Medicine
- Search & Rescue
- Severe Weather Response
- Swift Water Rescue
- Boating and Search Procedures
- Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (drones)

10 new volunteers joined the unit in 2018. Members were qualified in various disciplines throughout the year including: Emergency Medicine, Swiftwater Rescue, Missing Persons/Search Techniques, Map Reading and Severe Weather and Off-road Driving Procedures. Two members of the unit were honoured with University Presidential Gold Awards for their volunteerism with Clare Civil Defence; from the University of Limerick and the National University of Ireland Galway. Four members were successful with their applications to join the National Ambulance Service as Intern Paramedics and two members were accepted into the ranks of An Garda Síochána. In July two members were presented with their 50 Year Long Service Medals, four members received their 30 Year Long Service Medals and all members received their 2016 Commemorative Medals.

There was an increase of 28% in the activities of the unit in 2018 from 2017. This represents the busiest year for the unit on record. Activities included community events, the Munster Fleadh, Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival, teenage discos, music concerts, etc. At the beginning of March the unit set up a control room to respond to calls received in relation to the “Beast from the East”. Members were on standby in the Civil Defence headquarters for 4 days in order to be able to respond to calls for assistance without delay.

***There was an increase of  
28% in the activities  
of the unit in 2018 from 2017.***

96 calls for assistance were responded to which included: transportation of Doctors, Nurses, Care Workers & Paramedics to and from their places of work; transporting district nurses to isolated patients throughout the County; transporting dialysis patients to and from their clinics; assisting members of the National Ambulance Service in reaching isolated patients; transporting family members to hospital to visit a gravely ill family member; clearing footpaths and walkways around the town of Ennis.



The unit was very heavily involved with the extremely successful **“Relay for Life”** Ennis; providing tents, lighting, catering facilities and medical cover for the event. In August, members of the unit travelled to Dublin to assist with the Papal Visit to Ireland. Assistance with providing cover for a Cold Weather Shelter was also provided to our Dublin Civil Defence colleagues in January and February of 2018.



The unit was involved in 6 missing person searches and assisted in the recovery of four bodies for An Garda Síochána. Members also assisted the University of Limerick on its Undergraduate and Post Graduate Paramedic Degree Courses as well as providing assistance to 3rd and 4th year medical students for end of year exams.

A crew-cab 4x4 Jeep was purchased in 2018 to improve the capabilities of the unit to assist the Principle Response Agencies.

## Urban Regeneration and Development Funding

Clare County Council was allocated €1,600,000 towards the Ennis Town Centre Public Realm Regeneration Project which will cater for the delivery of two projects, namely Parnell Street and the Lanes and Bow-ways (€1,411,000), as well as Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street, O’Connell Street and High Street (€189,000). The two projects have a shared purpose of regenerating the public realm and in their totality will enhance the Town Centre environment, making it a more accessible and attractive place to spend time.

Parnell Street has a significant level of vacant property and an increasing lack of retail activity. The proposal will address the urgent need to reinvigorate this principal shopping street. The Lanes and Bow-Ways represent the medieval stage of the town’s history. The revitalisation will allow them to contribute positively to the Town Centre public realm, reinforcing their heritage character, and enhancing the permeability between key streets through increased pedestrian activity. The project is in currently going through the Part 8 planning process, with a contractor expected to be appointed in 2019.

A feasibility study has been completed for public realm improvements to O’Connell Square and High Street, and Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street. The grant of €189,000 will enable Clare County Council to develop the design further and bring it to Part 8 planning stage with full public consultation. The objective is to transform Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street into a ‘café quarter’ that would act as a destination within the heart of the town. In O’Connell Square and High Street, works will seek to enhance this most important civic space in Ennis Town Centre.



## Festivals & Events:

The Ennis MD supports Ennis Events by facilitating road closures, provision of barriers and cones, and by meeting and coordinating with event organisers to ensure smooth operation of the event with as little disruption to the public as possible. Some of the events facilitated in 2018 include Ennis Itri Triathlon event, Ennis Street Arts Festival Events, Fleadh Nua, Irish Guide Dogs Flag day, Clare Run and Eamon Moloney 10k, Events at the Market building and many more.

### St. Patrick's Day Parade

Thousands of people lined the streets for the 2018 Ennis St. Patrick's Day Parade. The theme for the Parade was 'Ennis – Ireland's Friendliest Place' and provided participating groups, organisations, bands, schools and individuals a broad scope within which to reflect on the various cultures in their float or group activity. John Burke was the Parade Grand Marshall for 2018 who, together with the Mayor of the Municipal District of Ennis Councillor Paul Murphy, led the parade in a horse drawn carriage.



### Christmas in Ennis 2018

This year, the Municipal District of Ennis staff facilitated the installation of light fittings throughout the town from early November. The public lighting contract was extended this year to provide additional festive lighting at Francis St. (Park Row Section), Upper O'Connell St. (Additional Features) & Newbridge Road/Lifford Area (funding was supplemented by the business owners in the area). Three Christmas trees were provided in the town this year, including a new 40ft tree, beautifully illuminated and decorated, which became a focal point in O'Connell Square over the Christmas period



The Municipal District of Ennis launched a very successful "Christmas in Ennis" programme of events on 23rd November 2018 with the official switching-on of the Christmas Lights. This year the event was relocated from the Market Building to O'Connell Square where up to 2,000 people turned out to enjoy the street entertainment, festivities and the lighting spectacle. The switching-on of the lights also launched the annual remembrance tree initiative, in conjunction with the Lions Club, in support of Cahercalla Hospice. Music was provided by the Cloughleigh Samba Band & Cloughleigh School Choir who entertained the crowds with a unique blend of Christmas

carols and percussion while the Clare Youth Musical Society performed hits from their Musical Elf Junior show.



The Christmas programme continued throughout December with Christmas Street Radio from 14th December which added to the ambiance throughout the town for shoppers and visitors. The highlight of the programme was the “Christmas Express Train” which operated through the town over four days from 19th to 22nd December. The train was a charity initiative with four local charities yielding €3,848 over the four day initiative. A two-day Christmas Market in the Market Building on 21st and 22nd offered up to ten stalls selling local food, crafts, decorations and gift ideas with performances from the Ennis Brass Band and Carol Singers adding to the shopping experience for customers.

***The train was a charity initiative  
with four local charities  
yielding €3,848 over the four day  
initiative***

## Munster Fleadh

Ennis welcomed Fleadh Cheoil na Mumhan from 15th to 22nd July 2018; the largest provincial Fleadh in Ireland where circa 50,000 people enjoyed competitions and musical entertainment from thousands of musicians, singers, dancers, storytellers and visitors from the six counties of Munster joined for this annual celebration of our Irish cultural traditions. The town of Ennis is steeped in tradition having recently hosted Fleadh na hÉireann in 2016 and 2017 and Ennis Municipal District Staff worked in collaboration with the organising committee to ensure the town showcased all it had to offer by facilitating the event through funding and sponsorship of the “Gig Rig” which was located in Abbey Street. Logistical arrangements including Fleadh TV in Lower Market Street and the overall collaborative management and supervision of the event with Comhaltas







## Works undertaken in 2018:

- The schedule of Municipal District Works in Ennis in 2018 included 42,000 m<sup>2</sup> of road strengthening works and 82,000 m<sup>2</sup> of surface dressing throughout the district. In addition, there were substantial resurfacing works carried out on the Tulla Road (6,500m<sup>2</sup>), the N85 at Fountain (13,000 m<sup>2</sup>), the Kilrush Road (5000 m<sup>2</sup>) Harmony Row (1500m<sup>2</sup>) and Abbey Street (350m<sup>2</sup>).



- In Clarecastle there were 350m of new paved footpath constructed in conjunction with ducting to facilitate the undergrounding of 100's of meters of overhead electricity cables. Along with the installation of decorative new lighting columns, this has greatly enhanced the appearance of the village.
- Kilmaley benefited from the construction of a new junction layout adjacent to the Post Office, making the road safer to all. The Church car park and adjacent junction were also upgraded.
- Significant drainage improvements were made during the year with a substantial investment being made in the drainage districts that fall under the Councils remit – the Fergus, Quin and Manus districts. This was in addition to addressing several drainage issues that existed around the roads of the town.

- 200m of concrete footpath was replaced on Dr. Daly Road, significantly improving the footpaths in this area.
- The footpaths on Drumbiggle road have been improved with works at the junctions allowing full accessibility along the route.
- A major river clean-up in the River Fergus between Aughanteeroe and the Tulla Road Bridge, inclusive of large tree, branch and vegetation removal as well as litter. This clean-up significantly increased the river capacity, especially at the bridges to convey water through the town in times of heavy rainfall
- Continuous monitoring and adjustment of the fish pass at the Mill Road Bridge and adjustment of water levels by raising/lowering sluice gates to enable salmon to come upstream for breeding each year. This work is in collaboration with the Inland Fisheries.
- Maintenance of the flood pumping stations in the town was carried out in 2018 including removal and repair of large storm water pumps from the Parnell Street car park pumping station.



- In 2018 Municipal District technical staff participated in "Walkability Audits" of the Town in conjunction with the Older Peoples Council, Irish Wheelchair Association and other disability groups. A report will follow this initial survey identifying and prioritising areas around the town that are difficult for vulnerable pedestrians to use.



- The MD provides a School Warden Service at Primary Schools throughout Ennis and Clarecastle ensuring safe crossing opportunities for the school children on a daily basis.
- A Low Cost Safety Scheme commenced at St. Flannans including provision of extended bus bay, tighter radii at junctions and installation of cycle lanes, completion is expected in mid-2019.
- The Small Works Crews in the Town Centre respond on a daily basis to issues raised by the Public, including footpath repairs, tree and hedge cutting, signage adjustments, wall and fencing repairs amongst other work items.
- The Municipal District collected and disposed of nearly 600 tonnes of rubbish from the town street bins, road sweeper waste and illegal dumping.
- The street cleaners, road-sweeper crew and bin collection crews were out on the streets 364 days in 2018 ensuring the town is kept in pristine condition for visitors and locals alike. This amounts to 32,760 bins being emptied throughout the year as well as the more unsavory tasks of tackling illegal dumping and illegal encampments.
- Public Realm Initiatives: Ennis Tidy Towns were supported as required to achieve their public realm enhancement aims, including –
  - o Picnic Seats at Ballyallia
  - o Tree Planting Pots near Eire Óg
  - o Tree Planter in Lower Market Street Car Park (currently being progressed)
  - o Clon Road gravelled area
- The Promotion of biodiversity was accommodated through;
  - o Project with Tidy Towns and Banner Bees which involved the provision of a training apiary at the County Council site at Doora.
  - o Community Orchards provided by Ennis Tidy Towns and the Garden of Eden project. These were accommodated on public lands at various locations including Lees Road, Ballyallia, and Claureen.
- Other works undertaken include grass cutting, which is timed to accommodate wildlife; the gardening section provides and waters flower beds, hanging baskets, multi-tier planters, pots and containers; painting street furniture; cleaning of signs, bridges, river clean-ups, removal of graffiti as requested; the conversion of the public lighting to modern energy efficient lighting systems continues.



## Long Service Awards

7 Clare Fire Service personnel received 20 Year Long Service Awards from Eoghan Murphy T.D., Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government.



## Capital/Procurement

Procurement of 166 sets of next generation Personal Protective Equipment PPE (Fire-Kit) for all personnel at a cost of €243,000.



Kilkee Fire Station upgrade/refurbishment works were completed during 2018 with the project costing €661,207. This project involved the construction of an extension to the rear of the existing building to include a new Drying Room & BA Servicing / Compressor Room and the provision of a lecture room and kitchenette on the new first floor, together with the provision of female shower and toilet facilities with disabled access, two roller shutter doors and various other upgrades to services. Clare County Fire and Rescue Service took delivery of a new equipment transfer vehicle at a cost of over €51,000 in late 2018.

The Fire Service communications network was upgraded with the rollout of Tetra Digital Radios throughout the County

## Recruitment/Retention

Recruitment and retention of Retained Personnel continues to be a challenge throughout the country. In Clare in 2018, 16 personnel were taken on, and completed their initial training courses. Unfortunately 14 left the service in the same period.

Successful Open Days in Shannon in October realised a significant increase in the number of applicants for Shannon Fire Station.

Fire Service Performance Indicators	2018	2017
Average time taken, in minutes to mobilise Fire Brigades in Part-Time Stations in respect of Fires	5.62 min	5.53 min
% of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	32.2%	40.4%
% of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	44.4%	36%
% of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	23.4%	23.6%
Average time taken, in minutes to mobilise Fire Brigades in Part-Time Stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents	5.42 min	5.83 min
% of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	34.6%	32.8%
% of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	48.3%	46.7%
% of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	17.1%	20.5%

## Health & Safety

In February 2018, Clare County Fire & Rescue Service maintained the OHSAS 18001 Health & Safety Management System Standard for the implementation of their Safety Management System throughout the Service following a surveillance visit by the National Standards Authority Ireland.

## Fire Prevention

The Risk Based Inspection Programme continued across Nursing Homes, Apartment Buildings & Hostels. 97 Fire Safety Certificate Applications were received in 2018, a slight increase on the 2017 figures. 82 licence applications dealt with during 2018 covering pubs, hotels, community centres and events throughout the County.

National Fire Safety Week took place from 1st – 8th October. Activities carried out during the week included media interviews, use of social media for fire safety messages, fire safety talks to interested groups, fire safety promotion at Ennis Mart, where fire safety material and smoke detectors were distributed.

## Building Control

Rate of inspections of new building works remained within our target and 21% of notified buildings were inspected in 2017.

We continue to carry out a technical desk study of every Commencement Notice and where issues are identified, a follow-up inspection is carried out.

69 Disability Access Certificate Applications were dealt with by the Building Control Section in 2018, a similar figure to 2017.

## Major Emergency Management

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service continues to provide secretariat to the Council's Major Emergency Management Committee and participate in The Mid West Regional Working Group and associated sub-committees and Shannon Airport Major Emergency Management Site Specific Group.

Ongoing training was provided to personnel who may be involved in delivery of key roles in the response to a Major Emergency to ensure Clare County Council remains prepared for responding to a Major Emergency.

Training with other agencies took place at Shannon Airport and Limerick Tunnel.

## Dangerous Structures

The number of Dangerous Structures cases reported to the Local Authority has increased in 2018 to 23 from 15 cases in 2017.

## Project Management Office

In May 2018, the Council established a dedicated Project Management Office from within existing resources in order to manage and deliver a number of key projects throughout the County. Aligned to this will be the introduction of new systems and processes which will assist in building the necessary expertise and consistency of approach. Fundamental to its success will be to ensure compliance with the various statutory and best practice codes and guidelines pertaining.

An update on some of the main projects being worked on throughout 2018 is outlined below. Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass – Work continued throughout the year in relation to the necessary land acquisitions required. RPS Consultants were appointed in May 2018 to produce the detailed design and contract documents. €8m has been allocated for the project. It is proposed to go to tender in late 2019 with construction expected to be completed by late 2022.

**Limerick Northern Distributor Road (Phase 2)** – The Project Appraisal Plan was completed during the year and forwarded to the Dept of Transport, Tourism and Sport. The next stage is the submission of the detailed appraisal and following approval of same, we will be in a position to advance the preliminary design, Environmental Impact Assessment Report and CPO.



**Ennistymon Inner Relief Road & Bridge Crossing (Blakes Corner)** – Following approval of the Part VIII in April of 2018, work on this project is continuing by the steering group led by Clare County Council and including the TII and the Mid West Regional Design Office (MWRDO). ROD Consultants were commissioned in August 2018 to complete the detailed design, CPO and Tender Stage. This work is continuing with the draft CPO expected to be submitted to TII in late spring 2019 with approval to publish expected in early Summer.



**N85 Kilnamona Realignment Scheme** – Survey work and further assessment in terms of any flood risk arising continued in 2018. Ground Investigation work is ongoing and will inform the detailed design with a view to submitting for Planning Permission in Summer 2019.

**N19 Shannon Airport Access Road** – Following a strong case being made for this project to progress, the Council were informed in late 2018 that the Project Appraisal Plan was approved by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). This allowed us to apply to move to the next stage, the appointment of Consultants, approval for which is currently awaited.

**Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme** – Due to some contractual issues outside of the Councils control, it was necessary for us to retender this project in the summer of 2018. We fast tracked the process which allowed us to seek OPW approval in early December. Approval was issued in January and construction is due to commence on site in March 2019.

**Shannon Embankments** – During the year, Clare County Council headed up a Steering Group involving the OPW and Shannon Airport Authority with the purpose of assessing the condition and structural integrity of the Estuary embankments protecting Shannon Town and Airport. The Consultants report identified some remedial measures that are necessary and in late December 2018, Minister Kevin (Boxer) Moran visited Shannon and announced that the necessary funding would be allocated as required.



**Lahinch Coastal Protection Works** – On receiving the necessary Foreshore Licence in the Autumn of 2018, we were able to tender the works later in the year. Following evaluation of same, we were able to appoint the successful contractor early in 2019 with work commencing on site in February 2019 expected completion before the start of the Summer bathing season in early June.



**Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs)** under the CFRAMs process that has been ongoing over the past 6 years were launched by the Minister in May of 2018. Funding of €257 million was announced for the first tranche of 50 schemes nationwide which included €5.54 million for 5 Clare Flood Relief Schemes to proceed to detailed design and construction. These are Kilkee (€3.2m), Springfield (€1.1m), Bunratty (€760k), Killaloe (€310k) and Kilrush (€170k). Subsequently the €6m Shannon Town scheme was also given the green light to proceed. The funding enables very significant flood relief works to be progressed, initially to detailed design stage and then to the construction phase of the relevant schemes

**Flood Relief Schemes** – Throughout 2018, the Council has been pursuing feasible solutions in a number of areas with a view to minimisation of flood risk. Among the locations under consideration are Springfield, Miltown Malbay, Ballyvaughan, Murtyclough (near New Quay), Kilkee and Clarecastle.

**Doolin Pier Visitor Centre** – In late August, the Council made a submission under the Rural Regeneration & Development Scheme for funding to advance the design and development of an accommodation building, enhanced parking and traffic management at Doolin Pier. We were successful in same which allows us now to complete the detailed design required with a view to submit formal planning proposals later in the year.



*Latoon Bridge*



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



**ANNE HAUGH**  
**Director of Social Development**

**The overarching vision for the Social Directorate is:**

To enhance the quality of life for the people of County Clare through the delivery of a vibrant social housing sector and the recognition of the County as a regional centre for arts, culture and sport.

The Social Directorate of Clare County Council comprises of three areas of responsibility as per the schematic hereunder.

### **Housing**

Provider of housing solutions for people who are in need of housing and who are deemed eligible for social housing support.

### **Sports and Recreation**

Provision of facilities for participation in active recreation, sport and physical activity.

### **Cultural Services**

Provision of Library, Arts and Cultural services in County Clare.

The Council exceeded Rebuilding Ireland targets set by the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government as per the table hereunder:

### 2018 Performance v target:

	Target 2018	Output 2018
Build	29	56
Acquisition	35	97
Leasing	100	79
Sub-total	164	232
HAP	414	388
RAS	17	16
Sub-total	431	404
TOTAL	595	636

The delivery of social housing remains a priority of Clare County Council as emphasized by national Government. The objective of social house delivery is to provide suitable accommodation for those who are unable to provide their own.

The Social Directorate, under its Housing function, centrally delivers the management and maintenance of social housing services in the County.

Activity and progress in this area is reported monthly in the Management Report. To deliver on our objectives we work closely with the Elected Members and Sectoral interests on our Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) which met on six occasions in 2018 to discuss and agree a range of policies and initiatives which are or have been implemented.

Hereunder is a synopsis of some of the services and initiatives the Housing team were involved with in 2018:

### Estate Management

The Council has an Estate Management Unit, available to meet with tenants and tenant associations on a regular basis to deal with issues that may occur. Pre-tenancy training meetings are held in conjunction with all new housing allocations. This has proven to be very worthwhile as they provide information in relation to the tenancy, advice on rent payment methods, environmental awareness and crime and fire prevention. Residents are encouraged to participate in the management of their estate, to take ownership, and to be proud of where they live. This Unit is committed to the encouragement and formation of residents groups within their housing estates. Estate Management staff liaise with and assist residents groups with crime prevention and anti-social behaviour within their estate and encourage the continuing enhancement of the estate.

### Tenant Purchase Scheme

A Tenant Purchase Scheme based on incremental purchase principles was introduced during 2016. Under the terms of the scheme tenants with a reckonable gross income of €15,000 per annum or above may apply to purchase the property they are renting. A minimum of 50% must be in the form of employment income. Discounts available are based on household income and range from 40% to 60% of the market value. The discounts are subject to an incremental purchase charge. There has been significant interest in the scheme and 12 properties were sold under the scheme in 2018.



## Housing Assessments and Allocations

During 2018 a total of 990 applications for social housing support were assessed by the Housing Department. There are now approximately 2,700 approved applicants for social housing support on the housing waiting list. Based on experience to date it is likely that a significant proportion of these applicants are interested in housing support via the housing assistance payment (HAP) and do not wish to be considered for standard Local Authority housing.

The Housing Department allocated 166 new tenancies in the Council's standard housing stock during the year.

## Resettlement Programme

Ennistymon welcomed 9 Syrian refugee families into their community in early 2017 under the UNHCR led Resettlement Programme. A total of 18 families have now relocated to Clare under the programme. They continue to be supported by an inter agency group coordinated by Clare County Council and including all relevant agencies including TUSLA, HSE, LCETB, CLDC, the Department of Social Protection, Clare County Childcare Committee, Clare Immigrant Support Centre and An Garda Síochána.

## Housing Loans

In February 2018 the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan Scheme, which is a new Government backed mortgage for first time buyers, was launched. The Loan can be used to purchase a new or second-hand property or for self-build. The Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan provides up to 90% of the market value of the property. A total of 62 applications under the scheme were received during the year as well as 3 Annuity Loan applications. 16 new loans were drawn down in 2018, 14 under the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan Scheme and 2 Annuity Loans.

Work on the restructuring option for Shared Ownership borrowers is ongoing. 2 loans were restructured in 2018, while 6 Shared Ownership Loans are currently being processed and engagement with other Shared Ownership Loan Customers is continuing. Repayment arrangements are to be structured on the basis of affordability and will involve restructuring all outstanding debt into a single loan. The term of the loan will be determined by the amount of the monthly repayment deemed to be affordable and sustainable for each Shared Ownership borrower.

The Council is continuing to implement the guidance on mortgage arrears under the revised Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARF). There were 5 customers in the MARF process at the end of 2018. We are also implementing the Mortgage to Rent Scheme and Voluntary Surrender for unsustainable loans and 3 borrowers made agreements under these Schemes during the year.



The level of arrears on housing loans reduced in 2018. A 3% improvement in collection levels was recorded at year end with a corresponding reduction of €87,000 in net arrears. This was due to a combination of re-payment agreements being adhered to including those under MARF arrangements, re-structuring of shared ownership loans and the taking back into stock of dwellings where unsustainable loans were in place. It is expected this improvement will continue in the coming year.

## House Acquisitions

The Council performed strongly in this category in 2018 with an additional 97 units purchased by a combination of this Council, Approved Housing Bodies and the Housing Agency. As the Council's construction programme is now underway and will be significantly ramped up in 2019 it is likely that the focus will transition from acquisition to build.

16 of the purchases were under the 'Buy and Renew Scheme' which has a dual objective to renew streetscape and return vacant stock to productive use.

## Planned Maintenance Project

During 2018, the Social Development Directorate completed condition surveys on a planned maintenance programme for most of the Council's Social Housing Stock, with the remainder to be completed in early 2019. The three elements to the programme are:

- Completion of a condition survey of the Council's stock of owned social housing.
- Generation of schedules of works and cost plans from the condition surveys.
- Preparation of a capital expenditure proposal for a multi-annual Planned Maintenance Programme, initially over a 5-year timeframe, but also projecting forward to examine maintenance needs over the next 30 years.

The Council has constructed or acquired a substantial housing stock of 2,600 units including traveller accommodation units, ranging in age of construction from 1930 up to the present time. This represents a significant investment and the Council wants to ensure that this housing stock is managed and maintained into the future to protect the investment already made.

## Vacant Homes Strategy

Under the Vacant Homes Action Plan surveys were carried out in Ennis and Shannon during the year with a view to identifying the vacancy rate in these areas. A number of properties were eliminated for various reasons such as unsuitable, since sold or re-let, occupied, temporarily vacant or under development. The results show that the true vacancy rate in Clare is less than reported at fewer than 10% and does not take account of the significant number of holiday homes in Clare or the fact that the vacancy that exists is generally detached rural properties in areas of low housing demand. The Council has to carry out in depth investigations in some cases to identify and locate the owners of vacant properties. The surveys will be extended to cover other areas of the County in 2019.

## Housing Capital

The delivery of social housing remains a key priority for the Directorate in 2018. In this regard the table hereunder indicates the current stage of the projects on hand with the Council:

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Commencement Date	Completion Date
Clonlara	9	Under construction by Pat Keogh Construction Ltd.	20th November 2018	Q4 2019
Feakle	13	Under construction by Custy Construction Ltd.	5th November 2018	Q4 2019
Quilty	18	Stage 4 submitted for approval	March 2019	Q3 2020
Roslevan, Ennis	8	Tender completed, Stage 4 to be submitted for approval	March 2019	Q1 2020
Ashline, Ennis	40	Stage 2 to be submitted to DHPLG	Q4 2019	Q2 2021
Ballard Road, Miltown Malbay	27	Stage 1 approved	Q1 2020	Q1 2021
Tullyglass, Shannon	21	Procurement of design team, Stage 1 application	Q2 2020	Q4 2021
Ballaghboy TAU	5	Single stage Application to be submitted	Q3 2019	Q4 2019
Shannon NDFA project	51	NDFA bundle being prepared for tender.	Q3 2019	Q3 2021
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>192</b>			
CAS - Cahercalla Phase 2 (Cuan an Chlair)	15	CAS Construction Stage 3 submitted to DHPLG for approval 14.11.2018	March 2019	Q2 2020
Roslevan (CoOperative Housing Ireland)	2	CALF Turnkey. 3 units were delivered with the 2 remaining units to be delivered in 2019	Q1 2018	2 = Q2 2019
Bruachlan, Westbury (CoOperative Housing Ireland)	22	CALF - Property transfer complete, CHI to commence procurement of design team.	Q4 2019	Q3 2021
Tullyvarraga, Shannon (CoOperative Housing Ireland)	47	CALF Acquisition application works almost complete	Q2 2018	Q2 2019
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>AHB delivery</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>278</b>			

The delivery of good quality accommodation is a national priority which presents both challenges and opportunity for local service delivery. Significant funding is available for the delivery of housing solutions to meet the need. In addition the Council is progressing proposals for development on existing landbanks in Kilmaley, Kilmihil, Doonbeg, Sixmilebridge, Clarecastle, Scarriff, Newmarket on Fergus, Ennis and Ennistymon.

### **LIHAF**

Under the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF), the Council has reached agreement with the Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government (DHPLG) and has successfully secured funding for strategic road infrastructure on residential lands at Claureen, Ennis. This provides for investment in infrastructure sufficient to enable early activation of suitably located and scaled housing sites that are currently zoned, along with a commitment from those housing providers/developers to produce housing quickly, at scale and at affordable prices. The LIHAF grant valued at €3.66m (75% Department funded, 25% CCC funded) is conditional on the supply of the road infrastructure and 200 units by 2021 together with other conditions relating to affordability.

In 2018 an urban design strategy was developed for these lands. This scheme is now being progressed by the Physical Directorate, through the Project Management Office.

### **Social Housing PPP Programme - Shannon**

The Social Housing Public Private Partnership (PPP) Programme is a collaboration between the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government (DHPLG); the Council and a specially formed Project Company. In 2018 the Council, in partnership with the National Development Finance Agency, worked to bring this scheme to tender stage with Clare County

Council members agreeing the Part VIII for the development to proceed. This scheme will deliver 51 housing units for which the Council will have full nomination rights. The development will be managed by the private company for the duration of the agreement.

### **Social Leasing Scheme**

Clare County Council leases private housing to meet the housing needs of social housing applicants. At the end of 2018 there were 118 active 'short term' leases and 157 active 'long term' leases in place. There are 174 units leased with approved voluntary housing bodies at the end of 2018.

### **Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)**

The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme continues to provide a viable alternative for social housing in Clare. To be eligible for a Housing Assistance Payment, the person (or both persons for a joint application) applying must be currently on Clare County Council's housing list. The scheme provides assistance for those eligible to pay their rent in private rented accommodation. It is up to the applicant to source the private rented accommodation. The tenancy agreement remains a private agreement between the tenant and their landlord. Where a person(s) is deemed eligible for HAP, a payment is made directly to their landlord by the Local Authority monthly. A person who is approved for a Housing Assistance Payment is also required to pay a differential rent (it is based on income) to the Local Authority, which is based on income. By the end of 2018 there were 1,335 households receiving assistance under the HAP scheme in Clare.





## **Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)**

There were 368 households on R.A.S. at the end of 2018, 21 additional units were provided during the year with 39 units withdrawn from the scheme. The number of tenancies under this scheme is falling with transition from this scheme into other social housing i.e. standard Council housing, private rented housing supported by HAP, long and short term leasing arrangements or a positive change regarding their housing need.

## **Inspection of Private Rented Properties**

Privately rented properties are inspected by the Council in accordance with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2017. A total of 554 private rented properties, which includes HAP, RAS, Approved Housing Bodies and leased properties, were inspected in 2018.

## **Voluntary housing**

Clare County Council has worked closely with Approved Housing Bodies during the year to meet our housing delivery targets. Cluid delivered 30 new units at Lahinch Road, Ennis and Co-Operative Housing Ireland delivered 3 units at Roslevan, Ennis. Tenants were appointed to these properties from the Council's social housing waiting list. A further 47 units in Shannon are currently under construction and will be ready for occupation in 2019. The Approved Housing Bodies continue to make an invaluable contribution to housing provision in the County for people on our waiting list.

## **Homelessness services**

During 2018 the Council were proactive in dealing with the increasing homeless presentations in Clare; 412 people were assisted through the homelessness clinics during 2018, a decrease from 494 in 2017. It must be noted that the profile of clients is becoming increasingly more complex, whereby significant engagement is necessary to support individuals and families while within the service. To support clients of this profile, a pilot project known as the Shannon Supported Housing Project was opened in 2018. This project is supported by Clare County Council, Inis Housing and Novas Initiatives. The project provides a long term targeted support tenancy (3 Houses/6 Clients) in shared accommodation, to individuals with mild to low moderate Intellectual/Mental Health needs. Clients referred to the project also have a history of not being able to sustain independent accommodation.

Novas Initiatives were appointed as the support agency to run the Cusack Lodge Family Hub which will open in 2019. The hub will provide a safe supported environment for appropriate homeless families. Clare County Council will assume full responsibility for homeless services on the 1st of February 2019. Currently the Department of Social Protection monitor and provide financial support to homeless individuals and families who require emergency accommodation in Clare. Consequently, work commenced on the Homeless Action Team (HAT) office in Áras Contae an Chláir. This office will provide a work space that will support the Council and relevant agencies to provide an integrated case management approach which will be overseen by a newly formed HAT for Clare. To enhance this approach in 2019 the Council will convene a high level interagency advisory group to support the implementation of a new Homeless Strategy for Clare.

## Traveller accommodation

Traveller Accommodation continues to present challenges, particularly in the context of the rapid growth in young Traveller households. This Council must adopt a new Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2019 – 2023 by September 2019. The consultative process for the delivery of the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2019-2023 is ongoing. It is intended to continue work to achieve the target in the current TAP in the context of rising demand and increasing capital funding availability. The Council continues to work with relevant agencies and groups on initiatives to develop a framework to deliver integrated support services to the traveller community.

## Housing Grants

In 2018 a total of 418 grants were approved and paid to disabled and elderly persons in private accommodation to facilitate the continued occupation of their houses at a cost of €2,966,803. This is broken down by grant in the table hereunder:

Grant type	No. Approved and paid in 2018	Value of works
Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability	106	1,583,041
Housing Aid for Older People	182	880,222
Mobility Aids Grant	130	503,540
Total applications paid to 31/12/2018	418	2,966,803

A substantial backlog still exists and the Council is seeking an additional allocation in 2019 to deal with applications on hand as well as Priority 1 applications to be submitted. Matching funding has been provided by the Council to enable these grants to be processed. An increased allocation was received in 2018 of €933,014 to facilitate adaptations for specific needs of tenants of Local Authority houses. A total of 136 renovations and extensions were carried out with this funding.

## Refurbishment of casual vacancies

Funding is made available by the DHPLG for the refurbishment of housing stock that becomes vacant, i.e. through the Voids Programme subject to limits. In 2018, the Council refurbished 78 vacant properties and returned these to productive use.

## Energy Efficiency Programme

Significant investment and planned maintenance works have been carried out on the Council's housing stock in recent years under the Energy Efficiency Programme. These schemes are largely funded by the DHPLG with a requirement for contributions from the Council's own resources. All the indications are that these schemes will proceed in 2019, but the exact scope or level of funding that will be available is not known at this stage.

The Energy Efficiency Scheme has been very successful in increasing the level of comfort of tenants of the Council while adding value to the assets. This programme improves the insulation standards of the Council's houses and significantly improves energy performance of the property.

The Council has completed all Phase 1 works on the housing stock and in addition has completed Phase 2 works on 60 properties in 2017/2018. It is our intention to apply under the SEAI BEC scheme for Phase 2 works for the final 30 type 2 houses in 2019.

## Sports and Recreation

In line with our primary objective to increase participation in sport we are continually improving our facilities towards our ultimate goal being to make County Clare the Sports and Recreation 'Hub' of the Mid West Region so that everyone living in or visiting our County will have an equal opportunity to enrich their lives through participation.

To this end, the following has been achieved:

## European Funding

### Atlantic Youth



The launch of the 2nd year of this 3 year Erasmus Plus, European funded project began on 11th October with a presentation given in the Chamber by Project Leader, Tim Forde. This event was attended by Pat Dowling, CE, Anne Haugh, DOS, the project team, teachers and students of the schools involved.

With two schools, Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon and Scariff Community College working together, County Clare brings uniqueness to this educational program. This year we have 80 students involved, with 25 of these preparing to attend the next transnational event in Moulin Mer, France in May 2019.



The Project's objective is to encourage and develop the maritime culture of young Europeans, through the practice of water sports and maritime education at school. With partners in Spain, Portugal, France, UK and Ireland, the '**Atlantic Youth**' will also contribute to the implementation of the Atlantic **Maritime Strategy**, through the development of a maritime culture among young people which in turn will encourage the upcoming generation to consider Maritime Sport/Recreation & Industry as a career path.

Ireland hosted the first of three transnational events from **28 May - 2 June 2018**, which saw secondary school students from Spain, Portugal, France, UK and Ireland travel to Co Clare and experience our recreation and maritime industries.

On the back of the success of the Atlantic Youth Project, we are in discussions with our European Partners sourcing further opportunities for European Funding/Projects.

## National Funding

5 projects have been applied for under the **2018 Sports Capital Grant Programme**.

These are:

- Upgrading of Floodlighting at Active Kilrush Sports Complex;
- Redevelopment of Basketball/ Tennis Courts at Active Kilrush Sports Complex;
- Refurbishment of Changing Rooms at Active Ennis Leisure Complex and Active Ennis John O Sullivan Park, Lees Road;
- Purchase of 2 lawnmowers for our Active Ennis/Kilrush Facilities Pitches;
- Refurbishment of All Weather Pitch at Cloughleigh.

While we received funding in the **2017 SCG Programme** for the redevelopment of changing rooms at Active Ennis Tim Smythe Park and Active Kilrush Sports Complex, the amount granted was only 50% of the necessary funding and therefore not sufficient to complete the projects. The Department have since given the option for these types of projects to reapply under the 2018 Programme, which should enable us to 'top up' the funds and be in a position to deliver these important strategic projects.

We are also working on the preparation of projects in anticipation of the roll out of the newly announced Large Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund.

## National Policy

We continue our work on the **Healthy Clare** initiative through the LCDC, which comes under the **Healthy Ireland Strategy**, both from Sports and Recreation perspective and as representatives of the Clare Sports Partnership. With the CSP we are also working on actions in relation to the National Sports Policy 2018 - 2027. Alongside this, we will be continuing to work on delivering actions under the **Age Friendly Strategy 2018 - 2022**.

## Services & Facilities

We continue to successfully provide diverse services and usage opportunities in all our owned and managed sports and recreation facilities of Active Ennis/Kilrush.

We consult, advice and support communities, clubs, and volunteer groups in their efforts to provide sports & recreation facilities and services throughout the County.

We will be building on the success of our **Green Flag award**, which was received in 2017 for Active Ennis Tim Smythe Park, by nominating Active Ennis, John O'Sullivan Park, Lees Road

as a potential site for recognition in the 2018 Scheme.

This scheme, awarded by An Taisce, is the benchmark standard for parks and green spaces. It aims to recognise and reward the best green spaces and encourage high environment standards.

## Library Service

Library membership reached 19,702 in 2018 – a 5.6% increase on 2017 and 405,736 items were borrowed from Clare County Library in 2018, a slight increase also. Adoption of new technologies for reading for leisure and work continues but not in any true sense of a challenge to traditional reading methods through the published book format. E resources, e books, e- audiobooks, e newspapers and magazines, e language learning and other e learning courses - accounted for 5% of total loans, up from 2% of all loans in 2017. These e resources are available for free to all library members through the new national library service "Libraries Ireland". This service also provides access for Clare County library members to the book stock of all 333 library branches throughout the country – a total stock of 15 million items. Books, music CDs and DVDs can be requested from anywhere in the country and delivered for free to the library member's nearest branch, with the member receiving a message when the item is available for collection. Library members in Clare borrowed 26,807 items from other counties in 2018 while 29,806 items from Clare's stock were provided to readers in other counties. Adult, children's and teenage book stock was maintained to a high standard in 2018 with 30,203 items added to stock allowing for constant refreshing of latest publications and back stocking of areas in need of special attention.

Library members availed of 37,000 internet sessions in 2018, down 14% on 2017 whilst



the number of Wi-Fi sessions increased by 16% to 10,500. Wi-Fi is currently available in the libraries in Ennis, Shannon, Ennistymon, Scariff, Kilrush, Sixmilebridge and Milltown Malbay. Classes are held on a weekly basis in many of the larger branches to assist members of the public in the use of new technologies. In addition, the Surfbox self-service (Print-Scan-Copy) service already available in Ennis, Shannon, Scariff, Ennistymon and Kilrush Libraries was extended to Kilkee library in 2018. This service whereby users can print from a library computer or print remotely from their laptop, home PC, tablet or Smartphone and scan documents has proved very popular with library users.

The Library Service is currently running a number of programmes under the remit of “Our Public Libraries 2022” which is the national strategy for libraries adopted by each Library Service nation-wide – specific programme areas cover initiatives around literacy for children “Right to Read”, health of the citizen “Healthy Ireland” and Age Friendly Libraries, support to enterprise and employment “Work Matters” and both the Creative Ireland and the Decade of Centenaries Programmes.



Children’s and teenage events were programmed in keeping with the national “**Right to Read**” framework for literacy support and reading development. “**Spring into Storytime**” in April saw each of the 15 library branches provide at least one special

story time for young children with several branches offering regular story sessions on a weekly or monthly basis throughout the year. 1,765 children participated in Summer Stars, the Summer Reading Programme delivered through all branches of Clare County Library. Clare County Library actively participated in Clare’s Children’s and Young People’s Services Committee (CYPSC) event “Explore Play Learn”, an interactive play based, showcase for parents and their children in September. The event was designed to promote parent participation in their children’s learning and development and is guided by Aistear, the National Curriculum Framework in Ireland for children aged 0-6 years old. The annual and highly successful Children’s Book Festival in October was attended by 2,300 children with 60 events scheduled across the Clare library branch network.

A new Right to Read initiative, “**Family Time at Your Library**” was launched in December. Family focused events took place in all Clare library branches and ranged in variety, including Library “Welcome and Information” sessions and library tours, “My Baby and Me” classes for new mothers, Christmas Art and Craft workshops and Library Online Resources demonstrations. Other collaborative initiatives in Clare delivered through the “Right to Read” local network included a “Share a Story Project” with the parents, grandparents and children of the DEIS school Scoil Chriost Ri in Ennis, and continuing collaboration with Clare Youth Service and the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB). A core Services to Schools Programme was offered to both primary and secondary schools in the County with regular class visits to branches taking place during the school year. A new literacy support collection continued to be rolled out to library branches to support the primary schools’ Literacy Lift-Off intervention which gives children the opportunity to read

books at their own level of competency. Other events were programmed for World Book Day, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Teen Week and Science Week with audiences from both primary and post-primary schools attending.

Clare County Library Service carried the programming of Bliain na Gaeilge 2018 on behalf of the Local Authority – this was a celebration of 125 years of Revival of the language/Athbheochan 1893-2018. A series of bi-lingual stands were purchased and displayed in the foyer of Áras an Chontae and throughout the library branch network. Killaloe library hosted conversational Irish group chats and Michael McCaughan, author of “Coming home – one man’s return to the Irish language” held instant Irish workshops in both Kilrush and DeValera Library, Ennis. “Fíochán Filí-Filí Comhaimseartha na Gaeilge ar Chamchuaire” saw contemporary Irish language poets such as Conor Crimmins, Aifric Mac Aodha, Áine Moynihan and Louis de Paor go on tour to branch libraries. Léigh an t-údar Sadbh Devlin, scéalta do páistí óga sa leabharlann bunaithe ar a leabhar nua “Beag

Bídeach” foilsithe ag Futa Fata. Book displays of Irish language stock accompanied the year-long celebration of the language.

A very successful “Cruinniú na nÓg” was held over the weekend of 23rd June. Cruinniú aims to celebrate and encourage children and young people’s participation in culture and creativity and is within the remit of the national Creative Ireland Strategy (2017-2022). A variety of child centred events were programmed, all free of charge. Fifteen events were held in ten separate venues around the County – some of the most successful ones were St. John’s Eve celebration in the Burren College of Art at which in excess of 200 people were in attendance. The storyteller, Niall de Burca, entertained over 250 children at his library shows in Shannon and Ennis. A further 100 children participated in interactive “Irish History Live” workshops in Scariff and Killaloe Libraries. The “Decade of Centenaries” national initiative was marked with a series of lectures and performances – six lectures took place throughout the County with themes of World War 1 and Women in 1918. Dr Joe



*Proposed new public Library*

Power, Ger Browne and Joe Ó Muircheartaigh spoke on World War 1 and Lucille Ellis and Mary Clancy gave talks on “Women in 1918”. The lectures were held in library branches in Ennis, Shannon, Killaloe, Kilrush, Ennistymon and Sixmilebridge. Mike Hanrahan performed his show ‘Clare - Songs of Independence: Declaration’ - a new show researched, written and performed by him. Mike premiered his show in DeValera Library, Ennis on Tuesday, 27th November with a performance in Shannon Library on Wednesday, 28th November. This is the first in a planned series of shows - the future narrative will look at the War of Independence and beyond. All events are part of Clare County Library’s Decade of Centenaries programme.

The calendar of events for the year (which number in excess of 1,000 programmed events for visitors to the library branch network) also included the Bealtaine celebrations in May, support to the “PolskaÉire Festival of Friendship and Culture, the National Heritage week in September, Positive Ageing week in October and the first “Reader’s Day” celebrating crime writing – three invited crime writers read and discussed their work with a rapt audience in DeValera library in November. Science week was celebrated nationwide from 11th-18th November with Scariff Library hosting two shows for children in neighbouring schools, “Scientific Sue” explored some of the amazing scientific and engineering feats endeavoured by Irish scientists over a 150 year period. The award winning “Science Magic” show visited from Belfast looking at the science behind a series of magic-like tricks, this event was highly praised by teachers and students alike who attended the show in Shannon and Ennis. Sixmilebridge and Ennistymon Libraries hosted Debbie Thomas who held intimate family reading sessions for Syrian parents and their children who have only recently come to live in County Clare.

The “Work Matters” initiative progressed with staff information sessions in a number of branch libraries and a talk on “Brendan O’Regan” and “Interview Confidence” in DeValera Library, Ennis and Shannon Library. “Creative Ireland 2017-2022” the national strategy for creativity offered a grant scheme of €25,000 to the public and a number of actions were programmed through the cross-disciplinary Clare County Council Cultural team which represents Library, Arts, Glór, Museum, Archives, Enterprise, Rural Development, Tourism and Heritage.

Activities programmed through the Library Service included memoir writing workshops, Reader’s Day, the Beyond Borders series of talks, poetry and chess workshops as well as support to literacy events in libraries. A unique initiative saw the “BUMBLEance” – the children’s national ambulance service visit the County with popular children’s authors Derek Mulveen and Christine Hamill on board creating a unique reading experience and exposure to this service which plays an outstanding role in supporting sick children nationwide.

Kilrush library re-opened in March, 2018 after a three month closure, during this time the branch underwent extensive refurbishment work to bring it to a high standard of energy efficiency and accessibility. The cost of the refurbishment works was €230,000 offset by an SEAI grant and Council funding. At the latter part of the year, an ICT grant became available on a matched funding basis; the library service purchased a suite of ICT equipment for public use in the branch library network including laptops and tablets. The total grant was €97,000.

## Arts Service

New Initiatives in 2018 saw the development of a Creator in Residence award in conjunction with The Irish Traditional Music Archive. The impressive art work “Bláth na hínse” was unveiled in Ennis, awarded to Clare for Ennis winning the IBAL Anti Litter League Programme. This is a sculptural installation of an Iris which is situated in the Abbey Street carpark.

The Arts Office is in a successful partnership with the Irish Memory Orchestra which received Arts Council funding for the creation of a major music project enabling blind musicians to perform with the Orchestra. In addition, the LCETB led one of three projects nationally to receive pilot Creative Youth Arts Partnership funding, in which Clare Arts Office and Limerick City and County Arts Office are joint partners. The Riches of Clare concert series held 19 concerts, 3 in conjunction with Fleadh Cheoil na Mumhan. The Arts Office organised artworks for the roundabouts for Fleadh Cheoil na Mumhan and worked closely with LCET Bon the Music Generation Clare project and also supported 14 schools through the Artist in Schools Scheme. Clare Youth Theatre continued to meet weekly and performed during Ennis Book Club Festival. They also performed in ‘Dancehall Days’ in glór, an intergenerational theatre project with the residents of St. Joseph’s Hospital, Ennis. This project arose from an ongoing artists’ residency in the hospital which also saw an exhibition of residents portraits launched in November, 2018. The “arts in health programme” also continued in Raheen Day Care Centre, Tuamgraney.

In the area of visual arts the Arts Office organised 29 exhibitions in Kilkee, Scariff and Ennis and worked with Glór on the First Friday series of talks for artists. A total of 7 artists were based in Tulla Stables Studios and a new artists studio opened in Ennis in May at Tobairtascán catering for 4 artists initially. Almost 17 arts projects took place with disability organisations culminating in a Christmas Concert in Cois na hAbhna and an exhibition and performance in Glór in May. Over 40 events were organised in 33 venues County-wide as part of Culture Night in September with over 2,700 people attending. Over 100 individuals, events and festivals were supported by the annual grants and bursary schemes. Support was also given to the development of the Creative Ireland Programme and to Cruinniú na nÓg.

### ***Audience figures increased by 33% in Cultúrlann Sweeney***

Art commissions were awarded through the Per Cent for Art Scheme for projects in Kilnaboy (art), West Clare (music) and Shannon (dance). Audience figures increased by 33% in Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee with 3,300 attendees at 66 events throughout the year.





## County Museum

There were just over 30,000 visits to Clare Museum during 2018. Educational workshops were a popular feature with 1,286 pupils from 20 primary and secondary schools visiting the museum during the year. In addition, the museum provided support to several LCETB Adult Education courses in Ennis and Scariff. The highlight of 2018 for the museum was receiving full Accreditation status in July for the MSPi programme of the Heritage Council, completing a long-term goal for the museum which now joins a handful of other Local Authority Museums who have achieved this status under the Museums Standards Programme.

A total of 1,344 items were accessioned to the museum collection during the year, doubling the total to over 2,683 items. This represents about half of the total collection backlog. A reduction in staffing resources reduced museum activities after the summer months, but a number of new volunteers were recruited to expand research into the collection and to revive the curriculum focussed education workshops. A final highlight for the museum was the nomination in the “Best Tourism Experience” category in the Clare Business Excellence Awards in November.



Glór's mission is to be a leading multi-disciplinary arts centre of excellence for its audiences, artists and communities, by presenting quality arts experiences to enhance Clare's rich cultural landscape, with a particular focus on the traditional arts.



In 2018, Glór sold 45,514 tickets to over 249 performances which included 23 traditional arts performances, 17 theatre productions and 7 exhibitions and offered 27 performances across the year appealing to children and families. Glór also presented 57 community performances and events and in April & May alone 1,800 young people performed on the Glór stage. Strong partnerships with the Bealtaine Festival, Ennis Street Arts Festival, Fleadh Nua, Ennis Traditional Festival, Ennis Food Festival and Ennis Garden Festival continued and helped in diversifying audiences and extending the programme. Ennis Musical Society was nominated for best "Front of House" at the Association of Irish Musical Societies (AIMS) as part of their Sister Act production, which 2,830 attended in March.

Flynn and Catherine Ireton which culminated with a concert in October of the Dave Flynn Irish Memory Orchestra with Mairtin O Connor featuring new music created by Flynn during his Glór Artist's Association. Catherine Ireton's work will be presented at Glór during 2019 together with another new Artist Associate, Jacinta Sherrin. The annual highlight Mórglór Award Night in November honoured the outstanding contribution of Clare musician Chris Droney, legendary concertina player. Mórglór is an acknowledgement and celebration by Glór of the wealth of professional and semi-professional artists, alongside the talented individuals, groups and communities within the County, all of whom provide a vital stimulus for the growth and development of Clare's unique culture.

2018 has been a very productive year of development and regeneration which will accelerate event further in 2019, through artist initiatives, significant co-productions and new partnerships.

Glór continued to support Associate artists Dave



## RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



**LEONARD CLEARY**  
Director of Rural Development

### Rural, Community & Tourism Department

#### Rural Development Strategy and Forum

Clare Rural Development Strategy has had a very successful year with many funding sources being secured for the 8 targets identified. The proposed Ennistymon Multi-Service Centre secured funding of €1m under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund in December 2018 and the project is due to be completed in September 2019.

This followed a comprehensive cross-directorate effort to submit a range of applications for RRDF funding.

In July 2018, four Rural and Community Development Officers were appointed and their remit is to work with community groups in order to build their capacity and thereby support them in the development of their local areas.

#### Local Community Development Committee

During 2018 the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) managed the delivery of the first year of the new SICAP 2018 – 2022 programme. A number of funding supports were also managed and approved by the LCDC during the year and these included the 26 projects under the Community Enhancement Programme and 9 projects under the Healthy Ireland Fund. The LCDC also approved the 3 year Healthy Clare Strategy in 2018. This is the first for the County and was developed by a working group of local stakeholders and Fruition Consultancy.



As part of the Clare Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) a Countywide survey of the population's Quality of Life, Health & Well Being was carried out in conjunction with the Limerick and Clare Education & Training Board. The 'Clare Survey' provides data relating to employment, education, health, transport and social inclusion.

### **Public Participation Network**

A Service Level Agreement for 2018 was finalised between the PPN and Clare County Council and an annual work plan was agreed for the year. The Secretariat supported by two part-time Co-ordinators drive the work of the PPN.

The 2018 operational costs of the PPN were met from a Department grant of €50,000 and a contribution from Clare County Council of €30,000.

### **Age-Friendly Strategy**

Clare County Council co-ordinates the delivery of the County's inter-agency Age-Friendly Strategy with eight agencies leading or supporting the delivery of the various actions. The County Council is committed to delivering its services in an "Age-Friendly manner". The Age Friendly Alliance Board is supported by the work of the Older People's Council to inform the priorities for the delivery of the Action Plan. In 2018 the Age Friendly Alliance launched the 2nd Age Friendly Strategy for Clare for the period 2018 - 2022.

In 2018 the World Health Organisation (WHO) included County Clare in its Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. As a member, County Clare will be part of a growing global movement of communities, cities and other sub-national levels of government that have pledged to meet the needs of their older residents.

### **Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2018**

€581,000 was secured in funding to support the enhancement and economic development potential of four towns and villages in the County. These areas include Ballynacally, Killaloe, Shannon and Tulla.

### **CLÁR Initiative 2018**

Ten projects benefited from approved funding of €371,598.43 under the CLAR initiative 2018. Of the ten projects, seven national schools (Coore, Doolin, Dromindoorra, Labasheeda, Rineen, St Enda's Lisdoonvarna and Tubber) were afforded the opportunity to develop additional play facilities and the remaining three projects addressed road safety issues in Kilmaley, Quilty and O'Callaghan's Mills.

### **Lough Derg Blueway**

With the assistance of a grant from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs under the REDZ initiative, the Lough Derg Blueway was launched in March 2018. The funding supported the development of the Blueway status, the production and distribution of marketing collateral and general promotion.

### **Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme**

Four projects were approved funding of €692,000 under this national scheme. The projects included a 5km extension of an amenity trail from Bealkelly to Tuamgraney along with the upgrading of an existing trail from Ballycuggeran to Bealkelly. When complete it will provide for a continuous off-road amenity trail for the 18km route from Killaloe to Scarriff. Funding of €498,000 has been allocated to this project. The remaining €194,000 was allocated to the development and upgrading of a river walk in Ennistymon, construction of a looped trail adjacent to the soccer pitch in Tulla and the upgrade of a walkway and boardwalk at the People's Park in Clarecastle.



## **Tidy Towns**

The Rural Development Directorate organised a briefing session for all Tidy Towns groups during March 2018. Guest speakers included Aileen Campion - Birdhill Tidy Towns, (winners of the 2017 Tidy Town's competition) and Janice Fuller – National Tidy Towns adjudicator with information.

In addition and in preparation for the national competition there were one to one clinics organised around the County during April 2018 with application form guidance provided by a national adjudicator (Lorraine Power) for 24 different towns and villages.

Ennis and Kilrush Tidy Towns received Gold Medal awards and Mountshannon, Quin, Kilmurry and Scariff National School also received awards.

## **Pride of Place**

Pride of Place is an annual all-island competition run by Co-operation Ireland. It aims to recognise and celebrate the vital contributions that communities make to society.

Clare was represented in this year's competition by: Quin Village Tidy Towns (Population Category 3); Shannon Town (Population Category 5); Spanish Point in the Islands & Coastal Communities Category; and the Castle Bog Walk in Kilkishen featuring in the 'Community Wellbeing Initiative' category. Shannon was named overall winner of Category 5 for population centres of over 5,000 people, with both Quin and Spanish Point receiving Runner Up Awards within their categories.

## **Burial Grounds**

Voluntary committees assist in the maintenance of burial grounds throughout the County. The ongoing commitment of these groups is invaluable. To partially defray the costs involved, €25,355 was paid by the Council in priming grants to thirty eight applicants in 2018.

The Council has purchased land at Kildysart Road, Ennis for the development of a new burial ground / amenity area and surveying work on this land will commence in early 2019.

## **Community Support Scheme**

In April 2018 Clare County Council launched the Community Supports Scheme 2018 the purpose of which is to encourage community and voluntary groups to take an active part in the development of their communities and to improve the quality of life experience in their areas. Groups benefited from €345,838 under the Scheme.

## **Clare Comhairle Na nÓg**

Clare Comhairle Na nÓg is part of a national initiative from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Comhairle aims to provide an opportunity for young people in the 12-18 age range to identify the issues that are important to them, discuss some of the changes they would like to see and bring forward ideas and suggestions for bringing about change.

The members participated in a range of activities; they hosted two successful AGM's, (in Ennis and Spanish Point); along with hosting their Icelandic visitors. They held a residential weekend in Petersburg, where they completed transport surveys and agreed their themes for 2018. They presented to the Strategic Policy Committee for Rural Development and provided their input into the development of this Strategy. They helped out with the

Shoebox Appeal as a collaborative action supporting the Mid-West Suicide Prevention Action Plan - Connecting for Life.

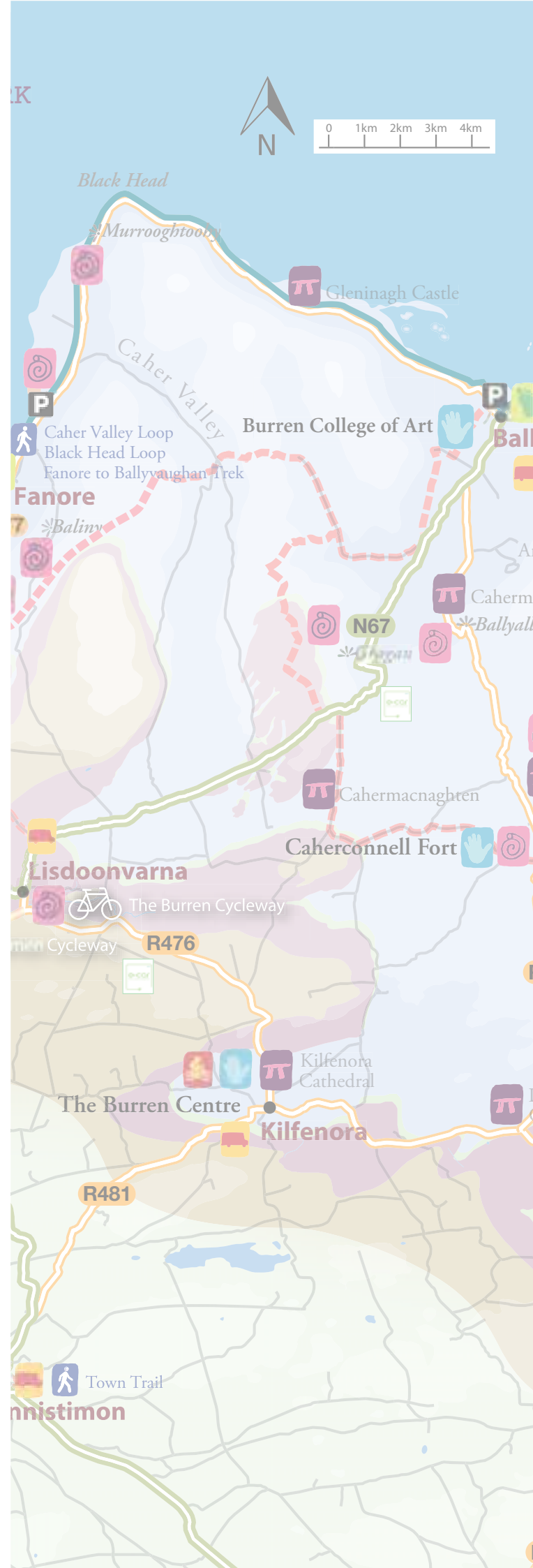
Their main highlight and national success in the year was getting the opportunity to travel to Dublin on invitation from the Taoiseach to the launch of the Action Plan for Online Safety. This invite was extended on foot of their mentoring programme on Cyber safety with McAfee and their presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee.

### Tourism

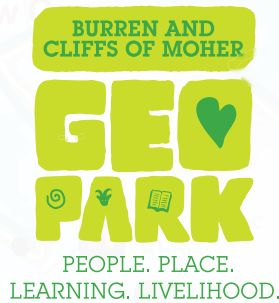
Clare County Council works in partnership with Clare Tourism in its marketing and promotion role of the County. A number of marketing initiatives were undertaken during the year in addition to the publication of a festivals and events guide.

The Geopark status for the Burren will be due for re-validation in 2019 and the preparatory process commenced during 2018.

A request for tender to prepare a Tourism Strategy for County Clare issued in July 2018. Team Tourism Consulting Ltd was appointed and the process will be completed by July 2019. A Steering Group comprising Council staff, Shannon Heritage and Failte Ireland is in place to manage the process.



## The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark



The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark continued to develop the Geopark as a sustainable tourism destination and implemented a work programme which supports locally based tourism enterprises through the Burren Ecotourism Network. The Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism is central to this work in the development of sustainable tourism programmes, in conservation projects with local communities, and in cultural sites and trail management and monitoring.

As a member of the Global Geoparks Network, the Geopark participated in European Geopark meetings and the Irish Geoparks Forum which work closely with the Geological Survey of Ireland to promote geological education and tourism in Ireland and abroad. The Geopark Work Programme is part-funded by the Geological Survey of Ireland. The Geopark is also a partner on a European Interreg Atlantic Area Partnership Programme which will see the development of a tourism route of Geoparks along the Atlantic.

Initiatives undertaken during the year included the geology evening course in February and the Global Ecology course which were run in partnership with the Burren Outdoor Education Centre, Caherconnel Fort and Burren College of Art respectively. The Burren Rocks festival was hosted in May.

Revalidation of the Geopark as a member of the Global Geoparks Network is due for renewal during 2019 and the preparatory process commenced towards the end of 2018.

### Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience

2018 was the busiest year on record at the Cliffs of Moher with 1.58 million visitors representing a 3.1% increase year on year. A new coach reception building opened in June providing a first-class admission for all group tours, additional toilet facilities and a new coach layout. A new dynamic pricing model was implemented for the independent traveller offering off peak pricing to encourage visitors to spend additional time in Co. Clare and have a better overall visitor experience. The organisational structure changes have been successful and key to managing the increased level of business; have improved functions, operations, and commercial management.

Genealogy Centre  
Heritage Centre

Burren National Park  
Visitor Centre

Corrofin

R476

Ruan

61

Dromore Wood  
Nature Reserve

Ruan-Dromore Wood Loop

Moher

Crusheen

Ballinruan

## Joint Policing Committee

The overall aim of the Clare Joint Policing Committee (JPC) is to facilitate consultations, discussions and recommendations in relation to the policing of County Clare, between the Elected Members, Oireachtas Members, Community and Voluntary representatives, Garda Síochána and Local Authority Officials. Four public meetings were held in 2018. At each meeting the Gardaí provided an update on the policing statistics. In February, the JPC welcomed a presentation from the Age Friendly Officer on the new action areas to develop a strong and vibrant Age Friendly County. In April, the Clare Youth services provided an update on the services provided to the Youth of Clare. The Criminal Assets Bureau presented at the October meeting and gave an overview of their activities.

The JPC hosted a child safety online information evening in October which was aimed at those caring for children to provide information and advice of the potential dangers online and how to protect children online. In November, The Vintners Federation of Ireland, the Joint Policing Committee and an Garda Síochána promoted the launch of the 'Ask for Angela' campaign in County Clare. This initiative provides a codeword for patrons to use if they feel unsafe and require help to leave the premises. It has been taken up by a number of hospitality providers who have trained their staff to take action if the codeword is used. Other areas of JPC discussions included domestic violence, use of drones, Garda recruitment, Garda detection, drugs, community health, and elder abuse.

## Broadband, Digital and Information Technology Department

Clare County Council's Broadband, Digital and Information Technology Department is responsible for the provision of Information Communications Technology services to all employees of Clare County Council. The Council's network now covers 15 different locations throughout the County supporting approx 500 users. These sites include the Municipal District offices in Shannon, Kilrush and Ennistymon where access to all Council information and services is available. Access to services such as motor tax, account enquiry and payment and online planning enquiries are facilitated in these locations.

## Clare Digital Strategy

The Clare Digital Strategy was adopted by Clare County Council in 2018. The context of the Strategy is to provide a vision and associated roadmap for supporting the digital economy in the County over the next five years and beyond. This strategy seeks to build on the rollout of Broadband throughout the County and also Clare's Rural Development Strategy.





This Strategy also aims to establish County Clare as a leader both nationally and internationally in leveraging broadband and digital technologies for Rural Regeneration at a County level. A copy of the strategy can be accessed on [www.clarecoco.ie/publications](http://www.clarecoco.ie/publications).

**Clare County Councils Digital Hub Programme**  
One of the issues recurring and being highlighted through Clare County Council's Rural Development Strategy and also in our Digital Strategy is the absence of high speed Broadband throughout Rural Clare. While access to broadband services is critical, the requirement for facilities to compliment this infrastructure was identified as being equally important. Clare County Council's Digital Hub Programme not only provides communities with access to broadband, but it also provides the facilities to enable communities to exploit the potential of same. Three digital hubs have now been established throughout the County – Kilrush, Miltown and Feakle.

Two other facilities are also being planned for Ennistymon and Ennis. The services provided include hot desks, meeting rooms, full audio visual facilities etc all with hi-speed broadband connectivity.

The facilities are available to:-

- Local residents and communities
- Local Enterprises, entrepreneurs and for businesses who need space to work and collaborate
- E-Workers and commuters who want to reduce commuting time by working closer to home – occasionally, regularly or even on a daily basis
- Visitors who need office space and internet connectivity



In providing these services the key ethos is to offer our users flexibility by facilitating arrangements to suit varying requirements – thereby enabling communities to become connected. The aims and objectives of this initiative are that through the establishment of these digital hubs Clare County Council will;

- address the demand gaps by providing fit for purpose facilities with broadband connectivity within our communities located strategically throughout our County.
- enhance the ability of our citizens to live and work in as well as visit our local communities.
- improve the quality of life of members of our communities by our flexible approach and by facilitating arrangements to suit varying requirements.
- through the provision of high specification facilities enable our users to exploit the potential of hi –speed broadband services

Full information on this initiative is available on [www.digicclare.ie](http://www.digicclare.ie)

### **Website upgrade - [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie)**

In 2018 our Clare County Council website [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie) was upgraded. This upgrade was completed in-house by the Broadband, Digital and IT Department.

The main objective of the upgrade was to serve our customers better by making the web site responsive. This means that the display adapts to the device used. We made the web site more modern while improving the site structure and simplifying the navigation systems. An accessible ‘megamenu’ was introduced for better usability. A number of components of the site were updated on the home page, for example the news panel makes it easier to view the latest items by topic. Also the information about the organisational structure, directorates, departments, directors and senior teams was improved. A dedicated ‘Have your say’ area to provide access to all consultations in one area has been added and this will be progressively improved in 2019 as part of continued upgrade.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



**LIAM CONNEALLY**  
Director of Economic Development

### Development Management

The number of planning applications received in 2018 was 1,076, an increase in the number and complexity from previous years. In addition there were 13 Part VIII Local Authority own development applications. Determinations were made in relation to 926 planning applications, of which 882 were granted and 44 were refused. 40 applications were appealed to An Bord Pleanála and of these, 33 decisions were upheld by the board.

### Pre-planning

A total of 288 pre-planning consultations took place during the year to enable applicants to discuss the principles of their proposals free of charge with Council Planners.

### Development contributions

The sum of €2,779,642 was collected during 2018. Such contributions cover a range of services, including water, sewerage, roads, amenity, community, recreation and car parking. The Council is obliged to collect water and sewerage contributions on behalf of Irish Water on planning permissions granted prior to January 1st 2014.

## Enforcement

2018 was another busy year for the Enforcement Section of the Planning Department and the activity is summarised in the following table:

New Cases Investigated	114
Warning Letters Issued	199
Enforcement Notices Issued	53
Legal Cases Initiated	6
Files Closed	135

## Taking in Charge

Twenty eight housing estates were taken in charge by Clare County Council in 2018. Progress was made on the completion of many other estates through engagement with bondholders, developers, contractors and residents. It is planned to take in charge a minimum of a further twenty five estates in 2019.

The taking in charge team in the Planning Department proactively monitored ten new developments under construction during 2018. This ongoing monitoring of estates, albeit resource intensive should ensure that housing developments in the future are finished to a higher compliance standard and that subsequent taking in charge processes should be more straightforward.

The Planning Department continued to finalise site resolution plans and to arrange for remedial works contracts to be put in place on several estates where we were in receipt of bond monies.

In developments where the bonds, for a variety of reasons, are insufficient to complete the required works, it is hoped that a national incentive scheme, similar to that provided by the Department in 2016 would become available to the Council, which would assist in the completion of such developments.

## Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC)

The AEC is the term applied to a non-administrative or “linear” region along the Western seaboard, stretching from Kerry to Donegal, and includes County Clare. The aim is to build and increase collaboration within the AEC that maximises its assets, attracts investment and creates jobs and prosperity in the region. A key objective of the AEC is to drive significant regional development, complementing and balancing Ireland’s thriving East Coast. The AEC initiative provides an opportunity to create an accelerated, more responsive pathway for regional development in Ireland.

The Department of Rural and Community Development is helping to progress the project and develop a clearly articulated road-map for delivery of the AEC objectives. In this regard, the Department is working closely with the Business Community, Government Departments, Regional Assemblies, Local Authorities, Public Bodies and Community Interests and Chambers of Commerce

Clare County Council appointed an AEC officer in July 2018 and during 2018, work was advanced on an audit of enterprise space in Ennis. The findings from this audit will tie in with the work being done on the Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Plan and will be useful for the Economic Development Unit in attracting new business to the town and will guide which property solutions need to be found.



### Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)

Funding of €1.6 million was approved by the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund for Ennis Town Centre Public Realm Regeneration Project which will include works to O'Connell Street and High Street, Parnell Street, Ennis laneways and bow-ways, Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street. Masterplans for The Redesign of Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street to Enhance the Public Realm and The Regeneration of Lanes and Bow-Ways in the Medieval Core of Ennis were published by the Planning Department in May 2018.

Funding was also approved under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) for a Shannon Town Masterplan. A meeting was held with the Department in February 2019 and it is intended that the Masterplan brief will be developed in the coming weeks.

***Funding of €1.6 million  
was approved by the Urban  
Regeneration and Development  
Fund for Ennis Town Centre Public  
Realm Regeneration Project***

### Third Level Education



LIT are currently based in the County Museum and in order to expand the courses and student offering, the Economic Development Directorate worked closely with LIT to have a greater third level presence in Ennis, with degree courses on the CAO offering in 2019. Significant progress was made during 2018 in finding an alternative property solution for Limerick Institute of Technology in Ennis to serve the growing student population. Two properties were acquired in **Bindon Street, Ennis** and a planning application was made in **early 2019**.



## **Property Management**

In early 2017, a new Property Management unit was established in the Economic Development Directorate. Since its establishment, a number of Local Authority owned properties have been upgraded and these include the Ennistymon District office, which was reroofed and refurbished, Slí na Mara Cottage in Shannon which was re-thatched, and the Mill House in Ennis which was refurbished internally and made accessible. Further projects are at planning stage for completion in 2019.

The Council leases property to many community groups and also has some commercial leases and these are managed by the new Unit as a key support to other Directorates. Such long term leases are subject to the approval of Council. The issue of licences for the short-term use of Council property and letting of Council owned lands is also managed by this team.

A new site is being sourced for the relocation of the Allotments in Shannon from their current site in Illaunamanagh as this area of land will be required for the extension of the Burial Ground, which is planned for 2019.

## **Quin Road Campus Project**

Work is progressing on the detailed design for the new Civil Defence Headquarters which will form part of a major re-development and refurbishment of a vacant building in the Quin Road Industrial Estate in Ennis. Tenders for the construction work will be sought in 2019.

## **Supporting Primary Level education**

Under a national agreement, Clare County Council works with the Department of Education and Skills to acquire sites for new schools. In December 2018, the Council confirmed its intention to acquire lands in Kilrush for the site for Gaelscoil Uí Choimín, which originally opened 25 years ago. The process of completing the purchase and working with the Department will now commence.

The Council agreed to sell lands in Shannon to the Department of Education to provide a new school for Gaelscoil Donnacha Rua. The Department will now advance to planning stage for this school, which will provide the school with permanent buildings and a bright future.

The Council is working with the Department of Education to source a site in Ennis for a new school site for Ennis Educate Together and discussions are ongoing in relation to this.

# Forward Planning

## Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Southern Regional Assembly engaged with Local Authorities in 2018 to draft the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region for the period 2019-2031 which was drafted in December 2018. The draft RSES provides a long-term regional level strategic planning and economic framework, in support of the implementation of the National Planning Framework, for the future physical, economic and social developments for the Southern Region. The draft RSES is a consultation document and the Southern Regional Assembly will consider all submissions made on before adopting the RSES. A submission on behalf of the Clare County Council was made on March 8th 2019.

## Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023

The Chief Executive's Report to the Elected Members on progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 issued to the members on 18th December 2018. This report complies with the requirements of section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requiring such a report to be furnished to the Elected Members not more than 2 years after the making of the Plan.

## Variation No 1 to the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023

The Variation No. 1 to the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 has been prepared and went on public display from 21st December 2018 until 28th January 2019. The reason for the proposed variation is to give effect to the Government Policy Statement on the development of Data Centres in Ireland by identifying, in a plan-led manner, the

preferred location of a Data Centre in County Clare. Environmental consultants completed a Strategic Environmental Assessment, a Natura Impact Report and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the subject lands of the proposed Development Plan variation. Full details of the proposed variation are available to view on [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie) and at Clare County Council offices and public libraries. The Variation was adopted on 11th March 2019.

## South Clare Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ)

In April of 2018 the Elected Members of Clare County Council committed to the preparation of a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) application for UL's/South Clare campus. The SDZ application will transform a 325 acre Greenfield site beside UL's existing 125 acre Campus in Clare into an education/employment/residential University zone. In the process, it is anticipated that at least 3,500 jobs will be created and simultaneously UL will seek the EU designation of Europe's first University Town.

In recent weeks the Council have met with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government officials who have requested that additional work i.e. preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment be undertaken which will accompany the SDZ application to Government. It is anticipated the full SDZ application will be lodged with Government in May 2019.

## Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Plan

Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy is an initiative of Clare County Council to prepare an Economic Development, Spatial and Marketing Strategy for Ennis Town and Environs Area to 2040 and beyond. Clare County Council engaged the consultant team of GVA Grimley Ltd in July 2018 and



held a targeted stakeholders event for the preparation of the Strategy on 4th September followed by a public consultation event on 10th November 2018. On the 27th November a workshop was held between GVA Grimley Ltd. Consultant Team and Council officials to examine the vision, goals, ambitions and requirements of Ennis 2040. In addition there have been regular Steering Group and Working Group meetings between the consultants and Clare County Council in 2018. It is anticipated the Strategy will be completed and delivered in 2019, the contents of which will inform the preparation of the Ennis Towns and Environs Local Area Plan.

### **Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary (SIFP)**

A Steering Group meeting hosted by Clare County Council in June 2018 where the finalisation of the Bird Usage Survey for the Shannon Estuary was presented by McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan, This survey is the most comprehensive waterbird survey of the River Shannon and Fergus Estuaries that has ever been undertaken, with year-round coverage of approximately 85% of the SPA. A total of 70 waterbird species were recorded across the survey. More than 20,000 waterbirds occurred in all the months across the traditional winter counting period (September-March) with the numbers peaking at nearly 44,000 in December. The survey covered 85% of the River Shannon and the River Fergus Estuaries Special Protection Area, including all the tidal habitat within Areas of Opportunity and adjacent to Strategic Development Locations, identified within the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary. During the survey, internationally important numbers of two Special Conservation Interest species, Whooper Swan and Black-tailed Godwit were recorded. However, there are striking apparent declines in numbers of Light-bellied Brent Goose, Shelduck, Pintail, Scaup, Lapwing, Bar-tailed Godwit, Knot, Dunlin.





## Cahercon Marine Centre of Excellence

Clare County Council led the development of the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary. The SIFP identified a number of strategic sites in the Shannon Estuary, including Cahercon, and the site was zoned for Marine Related Development in the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023. The Development Plan and the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy identified a number of sites suitable for off-shore wave energy renewable technologies.

In 2017 the Planning Department with the assistance of Enterprise Ireland undertook a feasibility study on maximising the development potential of the Cahercon Marine Related Site. The feasibility study identified a number of potential developments in Cahercon.



*Photograph at Announcement by EI of Funding for Cahercon Marine Centre of Excellence*

The vision for the Cahercon facility in the document is to create a

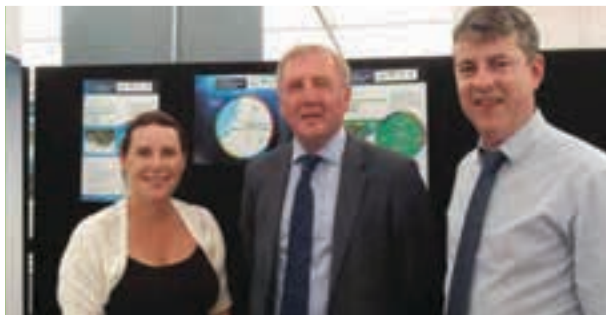
- A specialist commercial training facility providing maritime training courses and value-added training for non-seafaring personnel taking up positions at sea.
- A facility to include field research labs, marine equipment, and marine transport for a large national and international third-level field research marketplace.
- A field testing base for marine renewable device developers for secure R&D and to build on the planned activities of a current developer on site.

Enterprise Ireland in 2018 have awarded the sum of €1.7 million for the purchase of specialist training equipment, personnel and office/lab kit out for a multipurpose facility that will deliver international cruise training, house an international field research centre, and marine renewable testing and training location.

**A Marine Spatial Planning Public Consultation** event took place in July 2018 where representatives from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government presented on the preparation of the roadmap and the initial plans in relation to progressing the Marine Spatial Plan. This allowed all stakeholders within County Clare whom have an interest in the preparation of this plan to have an initial say and to input to the process.

### **Ocean Wealth Summit, SeaFest**

Attendance at the Our Ocean Wealth Summit, part of SeaFest held in Galway on 28th and 29th June 2018 provided the opportunity to further promote the zoned Marine Related Industry sites along the northern shore of the Shannon Estuary in County Clare. Significant interest and footfall at the Marine Trade Show proved beneficial to the process.



*Brian McCarthy and Sheila Downes with Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine Michael Creed at SEAFEST promoting Marine Related Development along County Clare*

### **Shannon Town Park**

The proposal to deliver the €910,000 flagship park for Shannon Town has been developed by the Council with co-funding through the Southern Regional Assembly's Operational Programme 2014-2020. The design proposals are the culmination of extensive consultation with the community and key stakeholders in 2017, including invaluable feedback from local residents, schools, SkyCourt, the Garda

Station, the Shannon Venue Company and the Leisure Centre. The statutory Part 8 approval for the scheme was obtained in April 2017 and was followed by a protracted procurement procedure in 2018. Work on the development of the new Shannon Town Park began in 2019 after the Council signed a contract with M. Fitzgibbon Contractors. The works, which are expected to be completed by mid 2019, include formal footpaths and a cycle track, an adventure play area and a bandstand/performance area, the first cycle pump track to be built in the Mid West Region, formal and informal seating areas, lighting and signage, the creation of a natural water feature and new native woodland planting. The development will also include a new Toucan pedestrian/cycle crossing on Bóthar Linne.

### **Proposed Visitor Signage Plan for Kilrush Town and Cappa Village**

In February 2018 Helena Mc Elmeel Architects were appointed to prepare a Visitor Signage Plan for Cappa and Kilrush. In March 2018 a public consultation event was held in Kilrush and was advertised by way of notices on Clare FMs community diary, and notices on Clare County Council's website and Facebook page. Following on from the public consultation, a survey and assessment of the existing visitor signage at Kilrush and Cappa was undertaken by the consultants and a number of meetings have been held between the consultants and staff of the Planning Department in order to progress this plan. A pre draft report has been submitted to the Planning Department for consideration and a final draft is to be submitted at the end of March 2019.

### **Public Realm Enhancement Plan for Ballyallia**

Barefield Tidy Towns secured LEASER funding and engaged The Paul Hogart Company to complete a public realm enhancement plan for the Ballyallia Lake area of Ennis. The Planning



Department of Clare County Council are acting as an advisor to the local community group and are liaising on their behalf with the appointed consultants. A public consultation event was held in December 2018 and was followed by a period for persons to make submissions on the enhancement plan. The next step will be for the consultants to collate the submissions received and present their findings to the community group and to prepare the Draft Plan. The Planning Department of Clare County Council will act in an advisory capacity to this community group for the remainder of the plan preparation stage.

### **Pilot Project on 6 Village Studies**

The Elected Members were briefed in relation to this project at Municipal District meetings for the West Clare MD area and the Killaloe MD area in January and March 2018. In April and May 2018 initial public consultations were held in relation to the carrying out of Village Studies in the villages of Broadford, Whitegate, Flagmount, Cooraclare, Mullagh and Carrigaholt. Points as made by the local community were taken into consideration and the preparation of the village studies was progressed.

In November and December 2018 staff members of the Planning Department presented the main findings and recommendations of the Village Studies to the local communities at each of the villages. At these events, the summary of the findings of the village pilot studies into exploring opportunities for growth and regeneration, along with recommendations, information and guidance for the local communities were presented. The feedback from the communities has been collated and the village studies are being finalised at present.

### **Ennis Town Centre Health Check**

Survey work has been completed for the 2018 Ennis Town Health Check, the report is currently in draft format and it is anticipated that this will be finalised and made available in the coming weeks.

### **Vacant Sites Register**

A progress report on the Vacant Site Levy implementation by Clare County Council was submitted to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on 31st October 2018. In November and December 2018 the Forward Planning Section carried out an assessment of all sites listed in the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 as lands where the Vacant Site Levy may apply in accordance with the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended 2018).

Notices as per Section 7 (1) and Section 7(3) of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended 2018) were sent to the owners of 6 sites in November and December 2018 in order to advise the land owners of the process and to advise that submissions in respect of the proposed entry could be made in writing to the Planning Authority within a specified time frame and to advise of the appeals process to An Bord Pleanála in relation to the Vacant Sites Register.

Currently a number of appeals have been made to An Bord Pleanála in relation to sites that have been included on Clare County Councils Vacant Site Register and the Planning Authority has made observations on the appeals and awaits the final decision of An Bord Pleanála.

## Architectural Conservation

During 2018 33 number Section 57 declarations were issued relating to works on Protected Structures. Support was given to the Public, Elected Members, Tidy Towns and Community Groups on various conservation issues.

Funding for protected structures and buildings in ACAs was provided in 2018 by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht through the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Structures at Risk Fund (SRF). In total, grants totalling €92,000 were provided to assist works on 13 projects under the BHIS and €27,000 to assist works on 2 projects under the SRF all of which were inspected by the Architectural Conservation Officer.

During Heritage Week 2018, the ACO gave public talks on recent repairs to a Romanesque Window at Templemaley Church, Ennis, Dysert O'Dea monuments and Cratloemoyle Castle.

The ACO facilitated a lime mortar preparation and masonry ruin repair weekend on 17th to 19th August at An Cabhail Mhór, Killinaboy, organised by SPAB (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) and attended by over 60 participants.



*Trainees working on An Cabhail Mhór*

## Heritage and Biodiversity 2018

Funding of €23,000 was granted from the Heritage Council in 2018 to implement the following projects under the Clare County Heritage Plan 2017-2023:

- Shannon Estuary Way - Abarta Heritage were engaged to produce and record Heritage Information and Interpretation on the Shannon Estuary Way, involving community consultation and oral recordings.
- Stories from the Landscape - The European Dimension. As part of European Year of Cultural Heritage a film has been made to showcase the practices of Transhumance as practiced in the Burren in comparison with the traditional practices carried out in Austria. The film may be viewed on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXa1VFwcuKo>



**Biodiversity Week** took place from May 20th-27th with 14 events taking place at various venues throughout the County including Shannon Dolphin Centre, Kilrush, Irish Seed Savers in Scariff, Burren National Park Information Centre, Corofin, Whale Watch at Loop Head, Clarisford Park, Killaloe and Lees Road, Ennis.



The Heritage Officer made submissions to the National Heritage Plan, Heritage Ireland 2030 and also to Heritage at the Heart, Heritage Council Strategy 2018-2022.

Funding of €17,200 was granted from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in 2018 under the National Biodiversity Action Plan Fund towards the implementation of the following projects in the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2023:

- Site specific Invasive Species Management Plan for Tobermurragh and Banes Field in Killaloe, County Clare – prepared by Minogue & Associates
- Nature Based Tourism on the Shannon Estuary Way – prepared by Alan Lauder Consulting

In addition, funding of €4,800 was received from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under their Invasive Alien Species of EU concern fund to implement a Management Strategy for the control of Giant Hogweed on the River Blackwater catchment, an action from the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2023. The Strategy was prepared by Knotweed Ireland Services

Heritage Week took place between the 18th and 26th August. This year's theme was 'Share a Story, Make a Connection' and a record 102 events took place around the County with thousands of people attending these events. Events included lectures, field trips, film screenings, workshops, exhibitions, historical re-enactments, and local history walks and talks. In addition, three Clare events were successful in the Annual Heritage Awards in Kilkenny, showcasing the best of National Heritage Week, as follows:-

- The Great Irish Garden, organised by Irish Seed Savers in Scarriff, won the Hidden Heritage Award.
- The Laneways and Bow-ways of Ennis walk organised by Ennis Tidy Towns was named runner-up in the category.
- Spa Wells Pumps 150 years, organised by Lisdoonvarna Tidy Towns, was named runner up in the Heritage communities' category.

A Reading the Landscape Training Course was held in Scarriff and Miltown Malbay in 2018 with the aim of enabling participants to identify, examine and record the heritage features of their own local area through desk research and fieldwork. This project is funded by the Clare Creative Ireland Strategy and is being undertaken in collaboration with the Limerick Clare Education Board.

Ennis was awarded the Tidy Town Pollinator Award for the mid-west region in October 2018.

## Local Enterprise Office



2018 was another successful year for Local Enterprise Office Clare. We now support 239 enterprises that provide employment to 1,270 people. In 2018, our enterprises created 104 net jobs bringing the total number of jobs created by Clare enterprises since the establishment of the Local Enterprise Office in April 2014 to 752 net jobs.



During 2018 we approved grant funding of €741,000 to 31 enterprises supporting the potential creation of 127 net jobs over the next 3 years. In 2018 we placed an increased focus on up-skilling our local entrepreneurs through training programmes, workshops, seminars and events at which 1,260 people attended the 66 programmes run.

Mentoring support is proving the most effective means of assisting enterprises and 111 different enterprises availed of this support during the year.

Aside from our normal supports we also assist enterprises with small grants interested in exporting and trading online. In 2018, 12 enterprises availed of our Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters and 33 availed of our Trading Online Voucher.

This year we transferred two companies to Enterprise Ireland bringing the number of enterprises we have transferred to Enterprise Ireland over the last 5 years to 15. At the time of transfer these companies employed 475 people.

***During 2018 we approved grant funding of €741,000 to 31 enterprises supporting the potential creation of 127 net jobs over the next 3 years.***

Brexit has been very much at the forefront of our activities. We have introduced a range of supports from an online assessment tool of Brexit risks to “one to one” free mentoring support. This will be a key focus of activity in 2019.

The winner of our County National Enterprise Awards, Get The Shifts Ltd went on to be recognised nationally as the Best Start Up at the national awards gala event in May 2018. A number of Clare enterprises were also recognised during the year at various award ceremonies which demonstrates the success our enterprises are achieving nationally. Our student enterprise programme aimed at promoting enterprise to 2nd level students continues to grow in popularity with over 900 students participating in the programme which commenced in September 2018.

Our Rhode Island project delivered its first tangible success in 2018 with a Rhode Island company, Avtech Inc, establishing a presence in Shannon as part of a joint venture with Titan Solutions Ltd. This connection with Rhode Island continues to develop and will hopefully lead to further success in 2019.

## Casual Trading

Clare County Council continued its policy of controlling casual trading under the Casual Trading Act 1995. At present the holder of a licence can trade within the designated trading areas of the County, where they hold a valid casual trading licence.

The current active designated casual trading areas and the number of licences issued during 2018 are shown in the following table:

	Annual Licences	Special Event Licences
Ennis	11	4
Kilkee	5	
Ennistymon	1	
Doolin Pier	1	
Killaloe	1	1
Total in 2018	19	5

In addition, Clare County Council is responsible for casual trading at many events which take place annually throughout the County, such as the Fleadhanna, Willie Clancy Festival, Lisdoonvara Matchmaking Festival, Kilrush Horse fairs or any other special events. In total, 25 casual trading licences were issued for such events.

The management of the Casual Trading function is under the remit of the Economic Development Department since February 2019.



## MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS



There are four municipal districts in the County, which provide a range of local services at local service centres in Ennis, Scariff, Kilrush and Shannon.

### Killaloe Municipal District

The members of Killaloe Municipal District met regularly during 2018 to consider the provision of services and the further development of facilities and amenities in their district. The members met with representatives from local community groups throughout the year to discuss issues relevant to their areas.

Funding was provided towards a number of important projects under the General Municipal Allocation. Councillor Pat Burke was elected Cathaoirleach at the Annual General Meeting in June, taking over the role from Councillor Alan O'Callaghan and Councillor Pat Hayes was appointed as Leas Cathaoirleach, retaining the role for another year. Killaloe Municipal District adopted the budgetary plan and agreed the General Municipal Allocation of €182,800 at their budget meeting on 31st October 2018.



*Holy Island*



## Ennis Municipal District Award Achievements

- The Excellence in Local Government Awards saw Ennis Municipal District win awards in 2018 for Ennis Peace Park under the “Commemorations and Centenaries” category. Ennis Peace Park, located at Friars Walk opposite Glór, is home to memorials dedicated to World War One, the FCA, Vietnam Veterans and the 1917 Hunger Strike Memorial.
- Friars Walk Coach Park – Coach Friendly Destination won under “Outstanding initiative through the Municipal Districts” category. The Coach Park provides 14 coach parking spaces, passenger drop off/pick up facility with bus shelter, water supply for coach washing & waste water disposal facilities all within close proximity of Ennis town centre. The Coach Tourism and Transport Council of Ireland (CTTC) declared Ennis, once again, a ‘Coach Friendly Town’ for Ireland’s coach touring companies and private bus operators.
- Ennis was also named Ireland’s Cleanest Town in the 2018 survey by business group Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL), resulting in a sculpture being unveiled in Abbey Street car park.
- 2018 also saw the renewal of the Purple Flag for Ennis town, a prestigious international accreditation in respect of the town’s excellence in managing the evening and night-time economy

## West Clare Municipal District

The members of the West Clare Municipal District met regularly during 2018 to consider the provision of services and the improvement of facilities and amenities in their district. The members met with numerous representatives from local community groups throughout the year to discuss issues relevant to their areas. As well as the statutory meetings, two special meetings took place during the year. The West Clare Municipal District adopted the Budgetary Plan and a General Municipal Allocation of €276,700 for 2018 at a Special Meeting held on 24th October 2017. Funding was provided towards a number of important projects under the General Municipal Allocation.

Councillor Ian Lynch was elected Cathaoirleach at the Annual General Meeting in June 2018 and Councillor Gabriel Keating was appointed as Leas Cathaoirleach. Some of the issues discussed and agreed at West Clare Municipal District Meetings during the year included:

- Revision of the Doolin Harbour Bye Laws 2017
- Taking in Charge of Roads in a number of estates in accordance with S11 of the Roads Act 1993
- Taking in charge of private roads in accordance with S11 of the Roads Act 1993
- S183 Disposals of Council owned properties at various locations within the Municipal District
- Holding a Civic Reception to honour Rita Malone Kierce in September 2018
- Inviting Ms. Caroline Kelleher from Shannon Group to the December 2018 Meeting
- Holding a Special Meeting to discuss the proposed Closure of Rural Post Offices in August 2018.

## Shannon Municipal District

At the annual general meeting of the Municipal District of Shannon in 2018, Councillor Gerard Flynn was elected as Cathaoirleach, and Councillor Pat McMahon as Leas-Cathaoirleach.

During 2018, 50 sporting, cultural, historical and community groups received grant funding under the inaugural community grants scheme of the Shannon Municipal District

The Shannon Municipal District adopted the budgetary plan and a general municipal allocation of €189,100 at the Draft Budgetary Plan meeting in October 2018.

In 2018, a report was commissioned in relation to the Shannon Flood Defence infrastructure and it is intended that this report will inform future works required to ensure the integrity of the embankments into the future.

The rehabilitation and enhancement of the Shannon Estuary Walks was completed in early 2018 rejuvenating the existing scenic walking areas in Shannon. The Shannon Town Park Project was progressed through the tendering process and is expected to be completed in 2019.

The Municipal District Road works programme, comprising 38 projects across road remediation, road improvement, road safety enhancement, footpath restoration and drainage enhancement was substantially completed and hundreds of maintenance issues across the district addressed.



**Abridged Financial Statement: Year ended 31st December 2017** **Abridged Financial Statement: Year ended 31st December 2017**

<b>Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
	€'000	€'000
Income		
State grants	32.2	28.0
Local Property Tax	6.4	3.2
Goods and services	34.1	32.9
Commercial rates	42.5	41.9
Income from other local authorities	0.1	0.1
Pension levy	-	1.3
Total income	115.3	107.3
Total expenditure	103.5	96.6
Surplus/(deficit) for year before transfers	11.8	10.7
Transfers to/from reserves	(11.0)	(10.0)
Overall surplus / (deficit) for year	0.74	0.75
General revenue reserve/(deficit) – opening	0.5	(0.3)
General revenue reserve/(deficit) – closing	1.2	0.5
<b>Balance sheet</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
	€m	€m
Fixed assets	2,742.8	2,734.2
Work in progress and preliminary expenses	20.7	15.5
Long term debtors	18.8	20.8
Current assets	56.6	57.7
Current liabilities	(35.3)	(38.1)
Net current assets/(liabilities)	21.3	19.6
Creditors (amounts falling due after more than one year)	(82.5)	(88.3)
Net assets	2,721	2,702
<b>Financed by</b>		
Capitalisation account	2,742.8	2,734.2
Income work in progress	20.1	15.2
Specific revenue reserve	-	-
General revenue reserve	1.2	0.5
Other balances	(43.1)	(48.1)
Total reserves	2,721	2,702

## Representation of Elected Members on committees

### **Regional Assembly**

Cllrs. P. McMahon, B. Slattery.

Cllrs. M. Hillery, G. Keating, A. Norton, C. Crowe, M. Howard

### **Appointment of Chair Designate for each of the four Strategic Policy Committees**

Cllrs. R. Nagle, G. Flynn, P. Hayes, J. Cooney

### **Local Authority Members Association**

Councillor B. Chambers

### **Association of Irish Local Government**

Cllrs. P. Daly, C. Curtin, J. Crowe, J. Cooney.  
(Cllrs. P. Daly, C. Curtin and J. Crowe permanent delegates)

### **Lisdoonvarna Fáilte**

Councillor R. Nagle

### **Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd.**

Councillor C. Colleran Molloy

### **Board of Management of Cahercalla Hospital**

Cathaoirleach of the day

### **Board of Management of Kilkee Waterworld**

Councillor G. Keating

### **Board of Management of Lahinch Seaworld**

Councillor B. Slattery

### **Rural Resettlement Ireland**

Cathaoirleach of the Day

### **Hunt Museum Trust**

Councillor P. Murphy

### **Board of Glór Irish Music Centre**

Cllrs. M. Howard, G. Flynn

### **Clare Sports Partnership**

Cllrs. G. Keating, T. McNamara

### **Local Traveller Accommodation Advisory Committee**

Cllrs. T. O'Brien, C. Curtin, G. Keating, R. Nagle, M. McKee, A. Norton

### **Twinning Committee**

Cllrs. M. Howard, M. Begley, T. O'Brien, G. Keating, P. McMahon, P.J. Ryan, M. McKee, P. Hayes, J. Crowe, Cathaoirleach of the day

### **County Clare Road Safety Working Group**

Cllrs. T. O'Brien, J. Cooney, P.J. Ryan

### **County Rural Water Monitoring Committee**

Cllrs. P. Burke, M. Hillery, C. Curtin

### **Active Ennis/Kilrush Sports and Leisure Committee**

Cllrs. C. Colleran Molloy, M. Howard, J. Breen

### **Audit Committee**

Cllrs. P. Hayes, G. Keating

### **Board of Clare Local Development Company**

Cllrs. G. Keating, T. McNamara

### **Local Community Development Committee**

Cllrs. J. Flynn, B. Chambers, M. McKee

### **Regional Health Forum West**

Cllrs. T. McNamara, P.J. Ryan, A. Norton, P. Burke

### **Joint Policing Committee**

Cllrs. I. Lynch, M. Hillery, A. O'Callaghan, P. McMahon, P. Burke, J. Crowe, B. Slattery, A. Norton, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, G. Flynn, P. Daly, M. Howard, P. Murphy



## **Governing Body of the National University of Ireland**

Councillor P.J. Kelly

## **Western Inter County Railway Committee**

Cllrs. J. Breen, P. Hayes, P.J. Kelly, J. Crowe, P. Murphy

## **Standing Orders Sub-Committee**

Cllrs. G. Flynn, B. Chambers, C. Curtin, J. Cooney, P. Murphy, C. Colleran Molloy

## **Rural Development Forum**

Cllrs. B. Chambers, G. Keating, J. Crowe/P.J. Ryan, P. Hayes, T. McNamara, C. Curtin, J. Flynn (on behalf of LCDC) and P. Murphy (on behalf of Clare GAA)

## **Board of Cliffs of Moher**

Councillor R. Nagle, B Slattery

## **Seminars and Conferences attended by Clare County Councillors in 2018**

- The Finance Act 2017, Carlingford, Co. Louth, 5th – 7th January 2018 (5 Members attended).
- EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020, Carlingford, Co. Louth, 2nd – 4th February 2018 (2 Members attended).
- Rural Development Conference, Cork, 15th February 2018 (1 Member attended).
- Association of Irish Local Government Training – Module 1, Councillors and Journalists – How best to convey your message as a Member of your Council through the media, Carlow, 17th February 2018, (22 Members attended).
- New Affordable Housing Schemes, Carlingford, Co. Louth, 9th – 11th March 2018 (3 Members attended).
- Local Authority Members Association Spring Seminar 2018, Donegal, 5th –

7th April 2018 (24 Members attended).

- Association of Irish Local Government Spring Seminar, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, 12th – 13th April 2018 (22 Members attended).
- Regional Audit Forum Meeting, Cork, 3rd May 2018 (2 Members attended)
- Association of Irish Local Government Training – Module 2, Councillors & Community Safety – a briefing on Joint Policing Committees and Presentation on “Use your brain not your fists” project, Westport, 19th May 2018 (14 Members attended).
- Association of Irish Local Government Training – Module 3, Irish Water and a Single Public Water Utility – a briefing for Elected Members, Killarney, Co. Kerry, 19th June 2018 (14 Members attended).
- Association of Irish Local Government - Module 3, Irish Water and a Single Public Water Utility – a briefing for Elected Members, Dundalk, Co. Louth, 23rd June 2018, (6 Members attended).
- Association of Irish Local Government - Module 3, Irish Water and a Single Public Water Utility – a briefing for Elected Members, Bundoran, Co. Donegal, 28th June 2018, (1 Member attended).
- Scoil Samhraidh an Phiarsaigh, Inveran, Co. Galway, 26th – 27th July 2018 (2 Member attended).
- Parnell Summer School, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, 12th to 16th August 2018 (1 Member attended).
- Roger Casement Summer School, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, 30th – 31st August 2018 (1 Member attended).
- Water Charges and Local Property Tax Conference, Galway, 13th September 2018 (2 Members attended).

- Association of Irish Local Government - Module 4, The new ePlanning (online planning applications) and the National Building Management Project – A briefing for Elected Members, Cork, 15th September, (16 Members attended).
- Association of Irish Local Government - Module 4, The new ePlanning (online planning applications) and the National Building Management Project – A briefing for Elected Members, Birr, Co. Offaly, 21st September, (2 Members attended).
- Local Authority Members Association Autumn Seminar 2018, Castleisland, Co. Kerry, 28th – 29th September 2018 (6 Members attended).
- EU Cohesion Policy 2014 – 2020, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, 5th – 7th October 2018 (1 Member attended).
- Association of Irish Local Government - Module 5, Local Authority Finance and Budgeting, Budget Preparation and key decisions for the Elected Members in the Budget Process and a Briefing on the Elected Members Gratuity Scheme, Sligo, 13th October 2018, (15 Members attended).
- Smart Towns and Villages Conference, Mohill, Co. Leitrim, 22nd October 2018 (1 Member attended).
- Association of Irish Local Government Autumn Seminar, Monaghan, 25th to 26th October 2018, (21 Members attended).
- Association of Irish Local Government - Module 6, General Data Protection Regulation and the Elected Member, Kilkenny, 15th November 2018, (8 Members attended).
- Association of Irish Local Government - Module 6, General Data Protection Regulation and the Elected Member, Leixlip, Co. Kildare, 17th November

2018, (2 Members attended).

- EU Cohesion Policy 2014 – 2020, Carlingford, Co. Louth, 14th to 16th December 2018 (1 Member attended).

## Contact information/telephone numbers

- **Clare County Council, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare**  
Telephone: (065) 6821616,  
Fax: (065) 6828233,  
email: customerservices@clarecoco.ie,  
website, www.clarecoco.ie

Hours of business: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday

Note: Planning Department, Housing Department and Cash Office 9:00 a.m to 4:00 p.m. Emergency contact number: (087) 4169496 (outside office hours only)

- **Motor Tax, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis**  
Hours of business: 9:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, telephone: (065) 6844661
- **Clare County Museum**  
Tel: (065) 6823382,  
email: ClareMuseum@clarecoco.ie
- **Active Ennis Sports and Leisure Facilities**  
Tel: (065) 6821604,  
Fax: (065) 6823655
- **Glór Music Centre**  
Tel: (065) 6845370

## Direct dial in facility

To facilitate our callers all sections have a direct dial in facility. Individual sections can be contacted by dialling the following numbers:

- Archives and Records Management, (065) 6846414
- Arts Office, (065) 6846684
- Broadband, Digital and IT Department, (065) 6846377
- Central Cash Office, (065) 6846208
- Civil Defence, (065) 6822199
- Corporate Services Department, (065) 6846209
- Environment Department, (065) 6846331, fax (065) 6846444
- Environment anti-litter freephone, 1800 606706
- Finance Department, (general queries), (065) 6846329
- Fire and Emergency Services Department, (065) 6846410
- Freedom of Information, (065) 6846405
- Group Schemes, (065) 6866119
- Higher Education Grants, (065) 6846320
- Housing Department, (065) 6846334
- Human Resources Department, (065) 6846415
- Local Enterprise Office Clare, (065) 6846230
- Partnership Facilitator, (065) 6846435
- Planning Department, (065) 6846232
- Register of Electors, (065) 6846363
- Revenue Department, (065) 6846530
- Transportation Department, (065) 6846312
- Road Design, (065) 6846479
- Rural and Community Department, (065) 6846222
- Tourism Department, (065) 6846511
- Veterinary Services Department, (065) 6846358
- Water Safety, (065) 6846270
- Water Services Department, (065) 6866116

## Municipal district offices

- Ennis, (065) 6866133
- Killaloe, (061) 640815
- Shannon, (061) 362319
- West Clare, (065) 7072283/9054310

## Library branches

- Corofin, (065) 6837219
- De Valera Branch Library, (065) 6846353
- Ennis Library Headquarters, (065) 6846350, website [www.clarelibrary.ie](http://www.clarelibrary.ie)
- Ennistymon, (065) 7071245
- Kildysart, (065) 6832113
- Kilkee Sweeney Memorial Library, (065) 9056034
- Kilmihil, (065) 9050528
- Killaloe, (061) 376062, Fax (065) 376062
- Kilrush, (065) 9051504
- Lisdoonvarna, (065) 7074029
- Local Studies Centre, Ennis, (065) 6846271
- Miltown Malbay, (065) 7084822
- Newmarket-on-Fergus, (061) 368411
- Scariff, (061) 922893
- Shannon, (061) 364266
- Sixmilebridge, (061) 369678
- Tulla, (065) 6835919

## Other useful numbers

- **Central Waste Management Facility,** Ballyduffbeg, Inagh, (065) 6836960
- **Scariff Recycling Centre and Transfer Station,** (061) 921735
- **Shannon Recycling Centre,** (061) 364483
- **Lisdeen Recycling Centre and Transfer Station,** (065) 9060175
- **Ennis Recycling Centre** (065) 6893705



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR  
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL