

DRAFT CLARE COUNTY HERITAGE PLAN 2024-2030

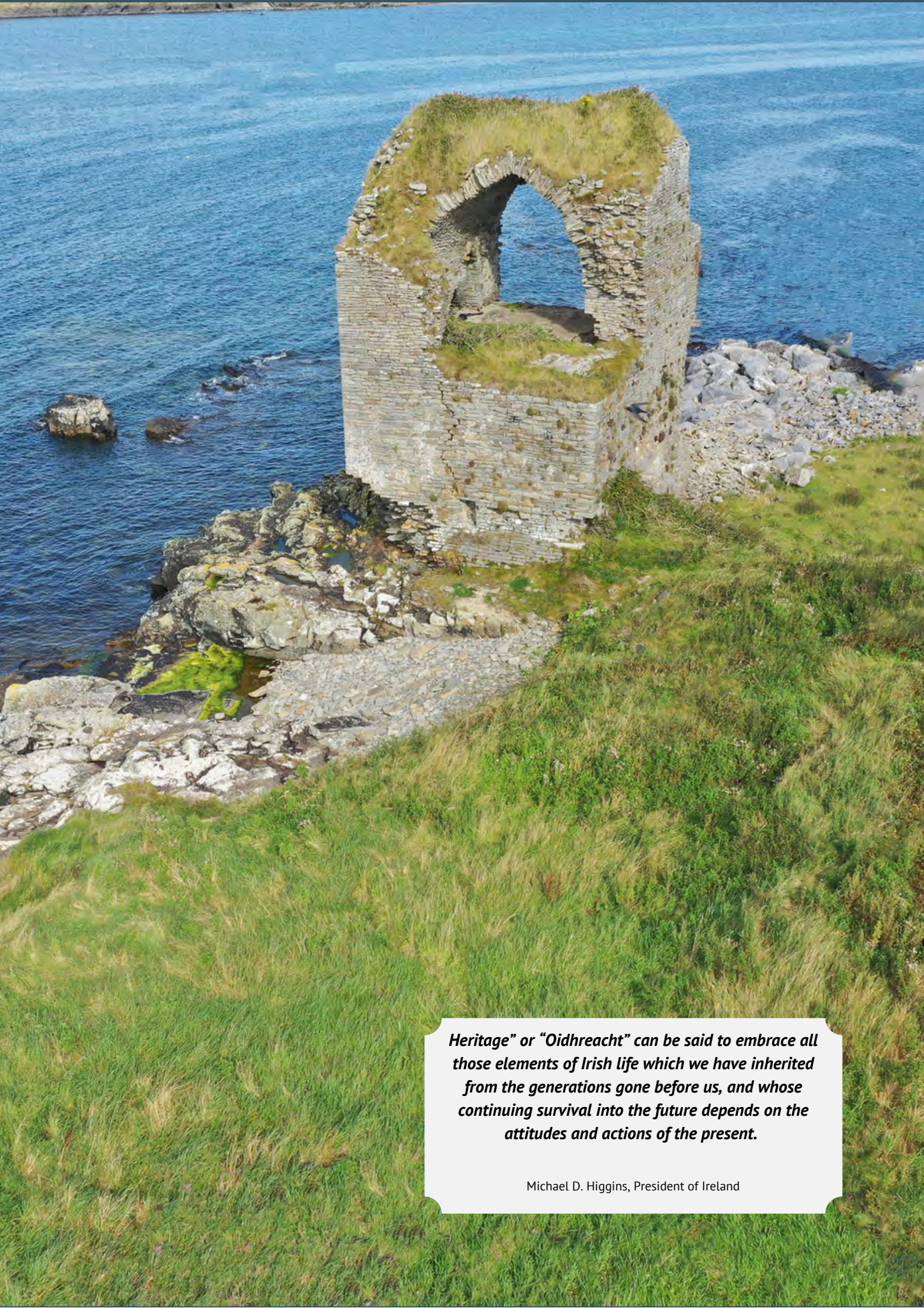


COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL



Funded by
An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council





Heritage” or “Oidhreacht” can be said to embrace all those elements of Irish life which we have inherited from the generations gone before us, and whose continuing survival into the future depends on the attitudes and actions of the present.

Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland

Foreword

As the Chairman of Clare County Council and as Chief Executive, we welcome the preparation of this Clare County Heritage Plan 2024-2030. County Clare is steeped in heritage in all its facets for which it is known around the world. Clare has its own unique identity which is founded on its communities, landscapes, built, cultural and natural heritage, as well as the more intangible elements of folklore, traditions, language and music. This is the 4th County Heritage Plan which reflects the importance placed on heritage by Clare County Council, and the continued commitment to promote, protect and enhance the county's heritage into the future.

This six-year plan provides a clear framework setting out the vision and key focus areas to help guide the Council in continuing its endeavours towards bringing heritage to all sectors of our communities through education, raising awareness, and on-going engagement. The young people of today are the protectors of our heritage for tomorrow and this plan will play a key role in promoting engagement through initiatives which bring heritage at a practical level to our young people, which will not only ignite an interest in heritage but provide 'tasters' to appreciate the many facets of heritage which have the potential to be pursued as future career opportunities.

Collaboration is essential in the delivery of the actions in this plan, where communities, heritage organisations, groups and stakeholders all play a critical role. The challenges experienced over recent times due to Covid-19 have had an impact on the heritage sector, whereby digital technology became an invaluable medium to access heritage content, and there is enormous potential to build on this into the future. The relationship between personal well-being, heritage and environmental protection also became much more apparent. Adapting to adversity creates resilience and this plan sets out a way forward to build on this resilience of the people of County Clare in embracing heritage into our everyday lives.

We invite everyone in the County to participate in the public consultation process on the Draft Clare County Heritage Plan. This is an opportunity for everyone to help guide how we preserve and enhance the County's heritage to carry through our County's future generations.

CLLR JOE COONEY

Cllr Joe Cooney
Cathaoirleach, Clare County Council



Pat Dowling

Mr. Pat Dowling
Chief Executive, Clare County Council





Black Head, Co. Clare

Contents

1.0 Introduction	2
1.1 Heritage – What is it and why it matters.....	2
1.2 What is the Heritage Plan	2
1.3 What underpins the heritage plan.....	2
1.4 Types of Heritage	3
1.5 The Impact of COVID-19	4
1.6 The Impact of Climate Change.....	4
1.7 Clare Heritage and Biodiversity Forum.....	4
1.8 Public Engagement and Consultation	5
2.0 Context for the Heritage Plan	6
2.1 European and National Context.....	6
2.2 Local Context.....	7
2.3 Review Of the Clare County Heritage Plan 2017-2023	9
2.4 Focus of this Heritage Plan	10
3.0 Our Vision and Focus	12
3.1 VISION 2030	12
3.2 Key Focus Areas	13
4.0 Implementation outcomes, Monitoring, and evaluation	21
4.1 Funding opportunities.....	21
4.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment	21
4.3 Appropriate Assessment.....	22
Appendix 1 – Clare Heritage and Biodiversity Forum Membership	24
Appendix 2	25
Appendix 3 - List of pre -draft submissions received.....	26

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Heritage – What is it and why it matters

Our heritage is what we have inherited from the past to value and enjoy in the present and to preserve and pass on to future generations. It comprises of heritage that is tangible (historical sites, buildings, monuments, objects in museums, artefacts and archives), Natural (waterways, landscapes, woodlands, bogs, uplands, native wildlife, insects, plants, trees, birds and animals) and Intangible (customs, sports, music, dance, folklore, crafts, skills, and traditions). Together these facets of heritage, along with the myths, legends, traditions and memories portray the county in a way that connects its people and place with those throughout the world.

1.2 What is the Heritage Plan

The Clare County Heritage Plan 2024- 2030 is a statement of what Clare County Council's objectives and actions are in relation to the heritage of County Clare. It sets out the framework for heritage activity and management for the next six years and represents an agreed way forward with partners and the community as well as the ongoing commitment to heritage by Clare County Council's Executive and Elected Members.

This plan is the 4th Clare County Heritage Plan and has been developed against a backdrop of ever-increasing challenges including the deepening climate crisis and global biodiversity collapse. The plan builds on the work of previous County Heritage Plans for 2003 - 2007, 2011-2017 and 2017-2023. It establishes a framework for coordinated heritage management and programming for the next 6 years:

- **A Vision** – To inspire, motivate and give direction in what we want to achieve for heritage in the county in 2030
- **Key Focus Areas** - What we will focus on
- **Actions** - What we will do
- **Outcomes** - What we will have as a result





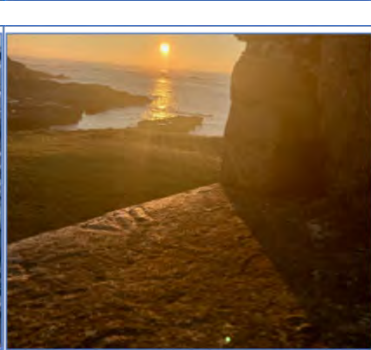

1.3 What underpins the Heritage Plan

This plan has been prepared within a very changed context to that of previous heritage plans, the impact of which has seen a significant shift in our interaction and engagement with the world around us, no more so than with the heritage resource which is within both our physical and now virtual reach, thanks to the many innovative ways of communicating and accessing resources that emerged during the COVID- 19 pandemic, and which continue to evolve today. The ever-changing EU and National legislation, policies and priorities, in particular those relating to climate action and biodiversity, are key priority areas that underpin the vision,

objectives and actions of the Heritage Plan, as well as the collaborative input from the Clare Heritage and Biodiversity Forum, local communities, stakeholders and members of the public.

1.4 Types of Heritage

There are many types of heritage as set out in the the Heritage Act, 1995, which identifies monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, archaeology, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, intrinsic cultural heritage, heritage parks and inland waterways as forming part of the national heritage. Clare is rich in all these types of heritage, here are some examples:

		
<p>Cultural Heritage</p> <p>Includes tangible heritage like buildings and monuments of cultural value as well as intangible heritage including customs, traditions, beliefs, folklore, music, language and crafts. Cultural Heritage in Clare includes its traditional music and farming practices.</p>	<p>Architectural Heritage</p> <p>Includes man-made structures and buildings of architectural, cultural, historic, scientific, social or technical interest. These include buildings, bridges, and monuments that offer a tangible connection to the past. Important examples of Built Heritage in County Clare include Bunratty Castle and Craggaunowen.</p>	<p>Natural Heritage</p> <p>Includes woodlands, uplands, bogs, waterways, landscapes, native wildlife, insects, plants, trees, birds and animals that have ecological or aesthetic value. The Cliffs of Moher and the Burren are iconic examples of Natural Heritage.</p>
		
<p>Industrial Heritage</p> <p>Includes sites, structures, and equipment related to industrial processes. These might include old mills, factories or railways. Examples in County Clare would include old mills along rivers including at Sixmilebridge and Bunratty.</p>	<p>Maritime Heritage</p> <p>Maritime heritage deals with aspects connected to navigation, seafaring, and maritime activities. This can include old ports, shipwrecks, and maritime customs. maritime heritage in County Clare could include ancient fishing methods, old harbours, historic shipwrecks and maritime trails.</p>	<p>Sporting Heritage</p> <p>Includes traditions, locations, and memorabilia related to sporting activities that are part of a community's identity. Hurling, gaelic football and other Gaelic games are deep-rooted in Clare. Places like Cusack Park in Ennis define our Sporting Heritage.</p>

		
<p>Archaeological Heritage</p> <p>Includes material remains (whether in the form of sites and monuments or moveable artefacts) and environmental evidence. Examples in County Clare would include megalithic tombs such as Poul nabrone Portal Tomb.</p>	<p>Oral Heritage</p> <p>Includes cultural and historical traditions passed down by word of mouth from one generation to another including from older family members to younger family members. An example is storytelling, which has long been a notable aspect of Irish culture as well as folklore and songs.</p>	<p>Intangible Heritage</p> <p>Includes knowledge, skills, practices and representations that communities, groups and individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. Examples in County Clare include our GAA traditions and festivals such as the Willie Clancy Summer School.</p>

1.5 The Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the heritage sector in County Clare. While restrictions during the pandemic brought the closure of some heritage sites, others experienced increased footfall from visitors and a renewed appreciation of local heritage and local heritage sites. Many heritage organisations, groups and individuals moved online leading to an increase in online heritage content and the better use of digital technology for engagement, education and training. Our shared experiences during the pandemic have created a new strand of local heritage within the communities of County Clare and has reaffirmed the relationship between personal wellbeing, heritage, environmental protection and tourism.

1.6 The Impact of Climate Change

Climate change is not something that is happening in the future but is a phenomenon that is evident today. Our changing climate, together with biodiversity loss, poses a significant threat not only to the people of County Clare but also to our heritage due to the physical impacts of climate change like flooding from rising sea levels, coastal erosion and increased weathering of our built heritage. Climate adaptation is a key theme of international and national heritage policy and there is an increased focus on working together to adapt and meet the challenges posed by climate change.

1.7 Clare Heritage and Biodiversity Forum

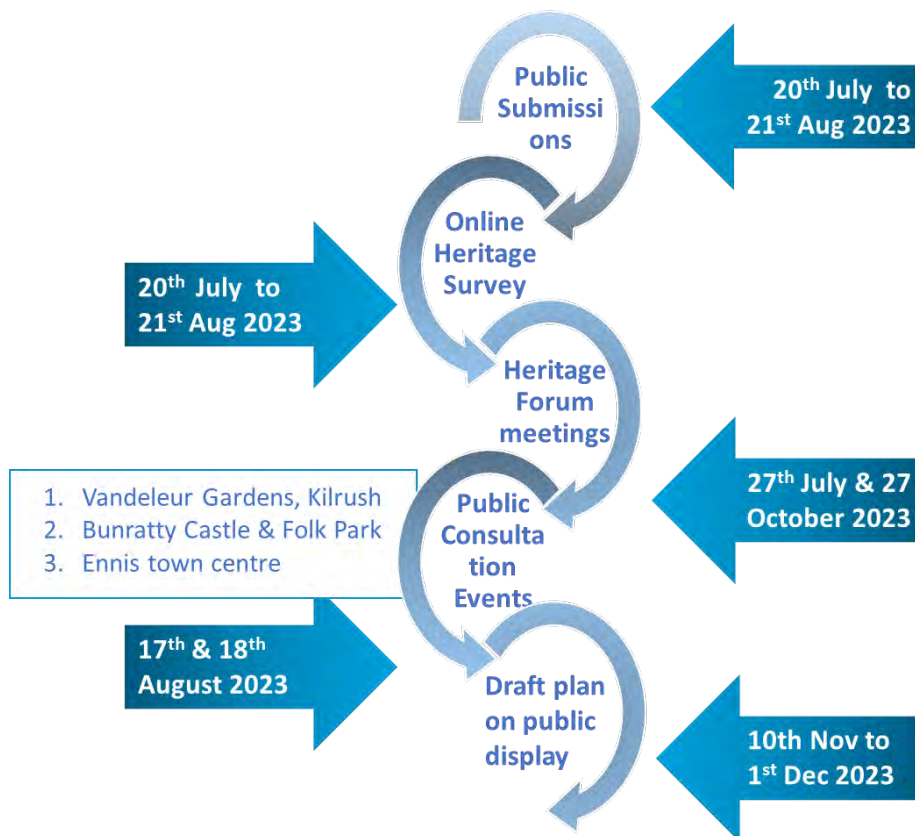
A Clare Heritage and Biodiversity Forum has been established and is representative of a broad range of interest groups, experts and volunteer groups involved with heritage and biodiversity in the county. The Forum has informed the preparation of this plan including identifying potential challenges and priorities for heritage in the county. The Forum will guide the

implementation of the plan and monitor its progress over its lifetime.

1.8 Public Engagement and Consultation

Public participation in the plan-making process is an essential element to ensure that the new Heritage Plan reflects and responds to the public’s views and aspirations for heritage in the county for the next six years. Members of the public, local communities and other stakeholders participated through an online survey, a series of public events held during Heritage Week, and through written submissions.

Public Engagement and Consultation



2.0 Context for the Heritage Plan

Since the inception of County Clare's first Heritage Plan in 2003, there has been a significant evolution in heritage policy. Heritage holds an ever increasing prominence, not only within the local authority, but also among the broader community. Clare County Council is committed to promoting best practices and ensuring the preservation and enhancement of our rich heritage.

2.1 European and National Context

The European and National policy context sets the foundation for the Heritage Plan. The Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (the Faro Convention 2005) and the Heritage Acts of 1995 and 2018 define the many different types of heritage. Heritage Ireland 2030 is a new cross government strategic policy for heritage that sets out a framework for the protection, conservation, promotion and management of Ireland's heritage for the next decade and beyond. The Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2023 will replace the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 and once enacted will provide protection of newly discovered archaeological heritage as well as greater protection for existing heritage on land and sea.

The National Context for the Clare County Heritage Plan 2024-203 is set out in a number of documents:



Current and emerging Government policy on heritage focuses on addressing the impacts of climate change and the biodiversity emergency, promoting leadership and a whole of society approach to key challenges, promoting research and education, awareness and engagement, and supporting partnerships and working together to ensure the protection and preservation of our unique heritage into the future.

2.2 Local Context

Clare County Council's **Corporate Plan 2019-2024** sets out the strategic framework within which Clare County Council will operate. It contains a number of priority actions for the protection, conservation and enhancement of County Clare's natural, built and cultural heritage.

The **Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029** sets out the framework for the development of the county for the period 2023-2029. The County Development Plan contains policies and objectives for archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage including Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas, industrial heritage, archaeology, underwater archaeology, linguistic heritage, folklore and oral culture, amongst others. The Plan also contains policies and objectives for biodiversity, natural heritage and green infrastructure including the protection of Natura 2000 sites, non-designated sites, urban ecology, river corridors and riparian zones, peatlands and wetlands.

Clare County Council's **Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029** supports County Clare's transition to becoming a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050. The Plan contains principles, objectives and actions relating to climate action and the protection, conservation and enhancement of County Clare's biodiversity and heritage.

Clare County Council's **Climate Change Adaption Strategy 2019-2024** is primarily focused on adaptation to climate change and aims to identify Clare County Council's vulnerabilities and the major risks facing the county. The strategy contains objectives and actions to protect heritage from the impacts of climate change and to expand the cultural infrastructure in the county including green networks, green amenities and natural areas for the growth of wildlife and biodiversity.

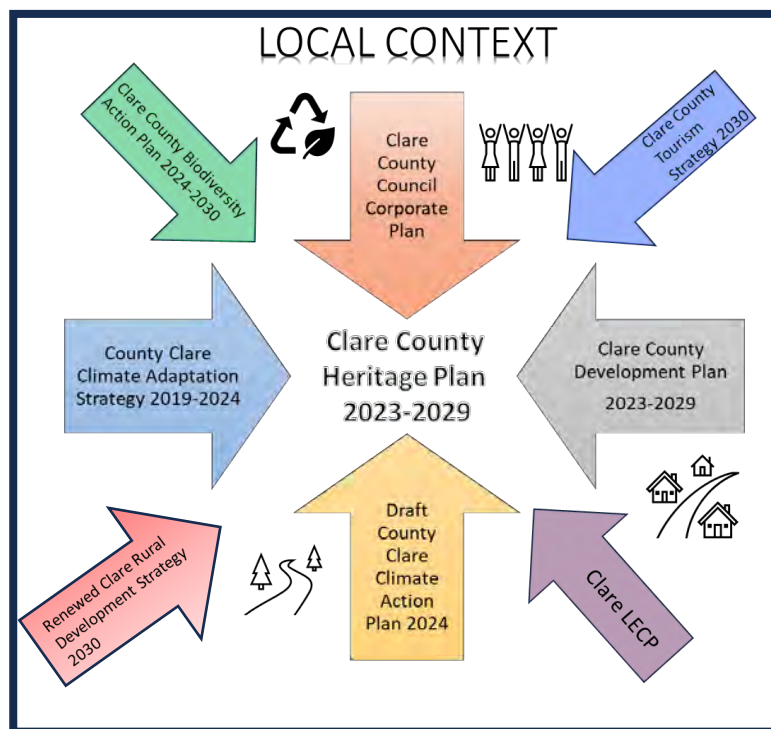
The **Renewed Clare Rural Development Strategy 2030** outlines a comprehensive vision and plan to enhance the socio-economic growth and well-being of Clare's rural areas. It emphasises sustainable practices, community involvement, and collaborative partnerships to ensure prosperity, resilience, and a vibrant rural community by 2030.

The **County Clare Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)** is a strategic framework that lays out the developmental and economic goals for the region. It is crafted with a dual focus: to boost economic vitality and to foster a cohesive community environment. The plan amalgamates insights from local stakeholders, businesses, and communities to prioritise actions that cater to Clare's unique strengths and challenges. By highlighting areas of potential

growth and addressing critical community needs, the LECP aims to position Clare as a flourishing region that balances economic progression with community well-being.

The **Clare County Tourism Strategy 2030** envisions Clare as a leading tourist destination, emphasising sustainable tourism practices that respect the county's unique natural and cultural heritage. This strategy seeks to harness the potential of Clare's diverse attractions, from its rugged coastline to its historical landmarks, ensuring that tourism development benefits local communities, the economy, and visitors. Through collaborative efforts with stakeholders, the strategy focuses on enhancing visitor experiences, boosting local participation in the tourism sector, and ensuring that tourism growth aligns with environmental and cultural preservation objectives.

The **Clare County Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2030** will be a comprehensive roadmap aimed at conserving, enhancing, and celebrating the rich biodiversity of County Clare. It will include targeted actions to protect endangered species and habitats, promote sustainable land-use practices, and enhance natural ecosystems. The plan will incorporate strong community engagement components, ensuring that local residents, businesses, and organisations are both informed about and actively participating in biodiversity conservation initiatives. Additionally, the strategy will emphasise education and awareness campaigns, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of biodiversity among residents and visitors alike. Collaborative efforts with national conservation bodies, research institutions, and local stakeholders will be essential to ensure the effective implementation and success of the action plan.



The forthcoming Clare Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2030 will be the fourth biodiversity action plan prepared for the county since the first plan published by the local authority in 2004. The Clare Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2030 will set out a range of measurable actions to be achieved within the lifetime of the plan which aim to promote, conserve and protect the biodiversity assets of County Clare. The plan will be underpinned by Ireland's fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2027 (currently in draft) and will run in parallel with the natural heritage actions outlined in the Clare County Heritage Plan 2024-2030. The intrinsic link between the heritage and biodiversity of the county will be strengthened by the heritage and biodiversity plans working in tandem over the next 6 years.

2.3 Review Of the Clare County Heritage Plan 2017-2023

The County Clare Heritage Plan 2017-2023 focused on six themes to guide Clare's heritage priorities including Community, Training and Education, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Built Heritage and Cultural Heritage.

Successful heritage initiatives completed under the Clare County Heritage Plan 2017-2023 include the Ennis Laneways and Bow Ways Project which received over €1.4million under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and the Terret Lodge genealogy and exhibition space at Vandeleur, Kilrush, which received €190,000 in Historic Town funding in 2019. Several significant projects in the county have been supported by Clare Creative Ireland funding in 2022 including the Lisdoonvarna Heritage Audit and Heritage Plan and the Clare Community Archaeology Scheme which saw local communities supported by a local archaeologist who provided advice on conservation, best practices, and funding for archaeological sites.

Training was also provided through several training courses including the Reading Your Local Landscape course launched in 2018 and an innovative LEADER-funded biodiversity training programme in 2019.

Work continued on the iCAN network which was awarded the prestigious "Best Network of Archives Award" at the UK and Ireland Community Archive and Heritage Group (CAHG) 2020 Annual Awards. The Clare iCAN group, consisting of heritage groups in Shannon, Clarecastle, Kilkee, and Scattery Island, has continued to develop their websites and actively participated in online training courses, joint projects, and lectures. In addition, an Online Heritage Portal was launched in 2020 as part of the Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN). Highlight actions of the Clare County Heritage Plan 2017-2023 are in Appendix 2.

2.4 Focus of this Heritage Plan

In particular, the outcomes from the public consultation have contributed to the formulation of the key focus areas and actions of this plan. The feedback we received, presented below, showcases the diverse range of heritage themes that emerged during the pre-draft consultation phase. What became apparent overall is the strong recognition that heritage is our future.

Heritage is our Future



An overview of the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities for the county's heritage identified through the public consultation process are included in the figure below.



3.0 Our Vision and Focus Areas

3.1 Vision 2030

The Clare County Heritage Plan emulates the Clare County Council Corporate vision for the County where heritage and culture are at the heart of life in the County, where stakeholders work in partnership with all to understand, experience and enjoy all aspects of our heritage under the leadership of a professional, responsive, and progressive local government.

The vision of the Heritage Plan builds on this foundation and is based on four main strands.

Collaborations and Connections – bringing heritage into everyday life through collaborative efforts and a robust network and by embracing the digital age, using technology to protect our heritage, with initiatives like the 'Living Archive' which captures the essence of Clare's oral traditions, music, soundscapes, and biodiverse landscapes.

Sustaining and Integrating - is the integration of sustainable tourism initiatives, merging our rich cultural tapestry with economic opportunities.

Capturing and Sharing - where communities are inclusive, celebrating and embracing their shared heritage, contributing to an improved quality of life and well-being.

Educating and Inspiring - equipping communities with the tools and knowledge they need to build capacity within their local heritage, fostering resilience against climate change impacts on local heritage sites, and igniting an interest in our youth to keep heritage and tradition alive.



3.2 Key Focus Areas

The Heritage Plan is underpinned by eight distinct yet interrelated areas of focus which have been identified through an in-depth analysis of, and public consultation on, what the heritage priorities should be for the next six years in County Clare. These key focus areas are set out below and reflect the heritage priorities for the county for the coming six years, emphasising the integration of conservation, awareness and community involvement in a comprehensive plan to ensure that the county’s rich heritage continues to be an integral part of an evolving narrative.

1. It’s How You Tell Them
2. Looking Back / Moving Forward
3. Life is for Living
4. Changing Times
5. Sounds Wonderful
6. Keeping Track
7. Light the Spark, See the Light
8. Working Together for Sustainable Heritage

1. It’s How You Tell Them

Stories of County Clare

Stories and narratives form the bedrock of a community's cultural identity. Conveying these tales can be as crucial as the stories themselves which are an evolving story of both the people and place of County Clare.

Objective 1: Support collaborative heritage projects that will identify the untold and lesser-known stories of County Clare and help to find ways to better preserve, tell and share these stories.

Actions

- 1.1 Facilitate a collaborative approach to further enhance the experience of lesser-known heritage in the County by developing a pilot project on stories around specific theme(s), for example the royal sites of Clare and the bicentennial of Catholic Emancipation, with the aim of promoting a county-wide network of new heritage experiences.
- 1.2 Develop a toolkit to help communities to connect with their local heritage including untapped heritage assets and provide them with the know-how to find out more and to explore the local stories that contribute to that heritage and their local community

and place.

- 1.3 Continue to develop the Clare Community Archive Network including digital text/image/audio resource pool to capture the unique heritage of County Clare, for example, our untold stories.

2. Looking Back / Moving Forward

Valuing the past, navigating the present and managing change

European, national, and local heritage policy recognises the conflict between heritage value and the needs of society today. It also recognises the need to balance conservation, sustainability, and development so that our heritage can be protected through appropriate activities, which also contribute to the social and economic wellbeing and the quality of life of our communities. Heritage in all its facets is integral to tourism in the county and supporting the many initiatives underway, including those of Clare County Council throughout the county which can often bring a new dimension to a project. Managing the change between the then and now presents new opportunities to explore the past and to inform the future.

Objective 2: To embrace opportunities to maximise the heritage potential in community, ecological, social and tourism related initiatives, including support for existing and new plans and projects in the county.

Actions

- 2.1 Celebrate food culture in County Clare in collaboration with traditional food growers and artisan food producers to promote food heritage in County Clare, by identifying traditional foods, cooking and growing methods, and how these have evolved and influence modern day cuisine.
- 2.2 Maximise opportunities to deliver on heritage funding programmes including the Community Monuments Fund, Built Heritage Investment Scheme and Structures at Risk Fund to promote heritage- led regeneration and public realm enhancement initiatives.
- 2.3 Engage a Community Archaeologist to provide archaeological expertise and advice, and to promote archaeology in the community through targeted initiatives which promote practical engagement in archaeological excavation such as a programme for schools to provide opportunities for young people to participate.
- 2.4 Establish an interdepartmental group within Clare County Council to share information to identify and maximise funding opportunities for heritage related projects.
- 2.5 Develop a Heritage Identification Toolkit to enable local communities to identify, map and record all facets of heritage in their local area.

2.6 Resource and build capacity to guide communities to managing and showcasing their heritage sites. Facilitate cooperation between existing heritage sites in council ownerships and community heritage projects to preserve Clare's rich heritage. This will ensure that new heritage sites and projects fit smoothly into the county's heritage interpretation for all to experience.

2.7 To seek an approach to progress the Burren as a World Heritage site in partnership with all interested parties and relevant organisations.

3. Life is for Living

Engaging with heritage every day

Heritage should be more than a focus on the past or a vehicle to bring us back to another time. At its greatest, it enriches the experience of our time and should be valued as part of our everyday lives. Heritage is not only about preserving the past but also about celebrating the here and now.

Objective 3: To support initiatives that foster community engagement with and appreciation of the county's heritage assets for the well-being and enrichment of the residents of County Clare and visitors alike.

Actions

3.1 To work with communities to review and record local heritage assets within settlements and other areas in the county.

3.2 Develop an accessibility audit template as a resource for communities to identify accessibility issues around local heritage assets and explore potential solutions. For example, the need for a conservation management plan to identify possible ways to overcome accessibility issues.

3.3 To support the implementation of county wide studies including natural heritage sites e.g. pNHAs to inform an ecological network map of the County.

3.4 To develop a system for providing digital QR codes at sites of heritage significance with a view to promoting responsible tourism activities within sensitive landscapes and to highlight biodiversity protection within these areas. This will take the form of installing QR codes at key discreet locations along the Atlantic coastline and Burren landscape e.g 'How you can help our Environment' and Leave No Trace.

3.5 Support cultural and natural heritage education, awareness and outreach programmes with regard to ancient woodlands in the county. This can be achieved fostering strong partnerships with key stakeholder conservation groups around native woodland conservation and protection.

3.6 Continue to develop an integrated Heritage Network in the county through the use of branding, technology, interpretation and communications.

3.7 Prepare an E-Magazine on ‘Heritage Matters’ which celebrates Clare heritage initiatives, promotes engagement and participation and provides a resource to find out more about what is happening in the world of heritage.

3.8 Collaborate within the local authority to enhance awareness of heritage and biodiversity through partnerships with community groups, historical societies, and Tidy Towns committees. A cooperative approach promotes sharing of knowledge and resources, strengthening the preservation and enhancement of our heritage.

4. Changing Times

Navigating the Present to Protect Our Future

Heritage is fragile and needs constant protection and development in an environment where change is constant. Whether it is adapting to climate change, our biodiversity emergency or new technological innovations, the ability to be resilient and adapt is essential. There is a need to focus on the role of heritage in building more sustainable and resilient communities as well as protecting our rich and diverse heritage in the context of environmental changes.

Objective 4: To protect the county’s rich heritage resource by promoting resilience to environmental changes and the conservation of heritage assets.

Actions

4.1 Promote the use of new technology and digital innovation in all heritage related activities, initiatives, projects and programmes.

4.2 Protect and enhance the heritage of the county by creating community awareness through active engagement, education, training, information sharing, publications, signage and events and through working with stakeholders.

4.3 To explore opportunities for developing initiatives that promote sustainable access to local heritage sites through the use of digital technology and the development of a digital interpretation network of local heritage sites.

4.4 Research sites of high cultural and natural conservation value along the Clare coast to fully understand the implications of climate change and sea level rise and the potential approaches to mitigation, adaptation and building resilience, with an initial focus on the area of the Loop Head Peninsula which has been identified as a Decarbonisation Zone (DZ).

4.5 Prioritise vulnerable heritage sites that are identified as being most at risk and determine key actions for their protection through the preparation of Conservation Management Plans.

4.6 Raise awareness of the impacts of climate change on heritage and the role natural heritage, such as wetlands, bogs, trees, can play in helping to address these impacts.

5. Sounds Wonderful

Embracing our language, music and oral traditions

Clare's musical and oral heritage is unparalleled. It is a gateway to the past which focuses on individual experiences and reflects historical, political and social changes as well as the evolution of County Clare's unique identity and sense of place.

Objective 5: To support initiatives that develop and celebrate the intangible elements of the county's heritage.

Actions

- 5.1 To promote the opportunities to celebrate local culture in all its forms through local-heritage initiatives e.g. live performances at heritage sites, social and cultural events at CCC managed heritage sites including Bunratty Castle and Folk Park, Vandeleur Gardens and the Cliffs of Moher.
- 5.2 Explore the potential of developing a 'Sounds of County Clare' initiative to capture iconic sights and sounds of the county including music, sounds of nature and folklore, in collaboration with organisations e.g. Cuimhneamh an Chláir and the Oral History Centre MIRR (MIC).
- 5.3 Promote the integration of the Irish language into heritage initiatives, for example by using local words, sayings and placenames.
- 5.4 Support communities in the collection and preservation of their unique intangible cultural heritage including oral history, folklore and placenames, and in raising awareness of this unique heritage asset and to support collaboration in opportunities with relevant expertise to facilitate community capacity building and to promote participation in iCAN.

6. Keeping Track

Recording to Remember

Linking the past to the present, and inevitably to the future, is priceless. Our heritage carries memories and testimonies, knowledge and ideas in ways that are vivid, moving and real, and lay the foundations for conversations and better understanding between and within the generations.

Objective 6: To emphasise the important role of heritage in bridging the knowledge gap between past present and future. Tapping into the wealth of the more intangible elements of heritage to ensure our shared heritage is carried on to future generations.

Actions

- 6.1** To broaden the reach of the Clare Community Heritage Network with heritage groups and local communities to build the county audio, photographs, research, data collection, surveys, and inventories. Information collected will be used to inform and guide future heritage initiatives.
- 6.2** Create a map-based database that identifies traditional skills and crafts people in the county to promote.
- 6.3** Support ongoing research and development of traditional skills in relation to built, maritime and natural heritage.
- 6.4** The programme will be designed to foster and promote the continued research and development of traditional skills relevant to Clare's built structures, maritime traditions, and natural landscapes. It emphasises the preservation and enhancement of techniques that have historically been integral to the county's heritage.
- 6.5** Programme structure would consist of multiple components, including grants for research projects, workshops led by experts in the respective fields, and collaborations with educational institutions. There will also be initiatives to document and archive these skills to ensure they remain accessible to future generations.
- 6.6** The Annual Clare Heritage Networking Events Programme will be a structured initiative aimed at promoting and celebrating Clare's rich heritage. This programme is developed through a consultative process involving key stakeholders, including local heritage enthusiasts, experts, and the broader Clare community. The programme structure would comprise a series of events throughout the year, including workshops, lectures, interactive sessions, and exhibitions. The events focus on various elements of Clare's heritage, from its historical landmarks to its traditional arts and crafts.

7. Light the Spark, see the Light

Staying Curious

Education and awareness form the bedrock of heritage conservation, helping to bring people together to contribute to something bigger and better than any individual person or organisation can do on their own.

Objective 7: To develop and promote the link between heritage, education and career opportunities through heritage engagement programmes and initiatives that have multi-generational appeal and promote lifelong learning.

Actions

- 7.1** To support partnerships with 3rd level institutions such as Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS), NUIG, University of Limerick and GMIT relating

to the protection of heritage in the county including links to post-graduate research programmes.

Creating partnerships with learning institutions towards leveraging advancements in digital mapping and interpretation of heritage mapping. This integration of technology ensures the preservation and enhancement of heritage but enriches the public's understanding and interaction with them.

7.2 In collaboration with local experts, assess and develop educational programs focused on the enhancement of traditional skills within the county. This encompasses workshops in primary and post- primary schools, tertiary level courses, and apprenticeships. Additionally, liaise with educational institutions to further the awareness of heritage and its potential career pathways.

7.3 Promote participation in heritage initiatives such as Heritage Week, Heritage in Schools, Adopt a Monument and the Community Wetlands Forum as well as competitions such as the Young European Heritage Makers.

7.4 Develop a fun, interactive, heritage learning resource for young people.

7.5 Implement heritage engagement programmes designed for inter- generational appeal to ensure inclusivity and continuity of heritage appreciation. Opportunities for this to be achieved include:

- To collaborate with representatives from various age groups to identify interests and preferred engagement methods.
- To develop workshops, events, and digital platforms that cater to different age demographics while promoting shared experiences.
- To integrate storytelling sessions where older generations share heritage tales with younger participants, fostering mutual respect and understanding.

7.6 Develop an 'Inspiring through Education' initiative to engage primary and second level schools with heritage including the concept of 'tasters', having a go, trying something new and a Transition Year Youth Heritage project.

7.7 Work with education and training providers such as Clare Education Centre, Clare Museum and Clare Education and Training Board to provide heritage training and courses for the community such as the Heritage in Schools Scheme and Reading the Landscape training.

7.8 Develop educational programs relating to natural and built heritage in Green schools as well as a template to aid the development of new biodiversity areas.

8. Working Together for Sustainable Heritage

Ongoing actions and collaborations

Objective 8: To continue to support the on-going collaboration with key stakeholders and the implementation of plans, strategies, programmes, and initiatives in the delivery of heritage related projects.

Actions

8.1 To continue to support the implementation of key plans, strategies, programmes and initiatives in the county including the following:

- Clare County Development Plan 2023 -2029
- Ireland’s 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) - Actions relating to County Clare
- County Clare Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2030
- All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025
- Clare Climate Change Adaption Strategy 2019-2024
- Clare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029
- Creative Ireland Programme 2023-2027
- Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)
- Renewed Clare Rural Development Strategy 2030
- Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary
- Inis Cealtra Visitor Management Plan
- Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040
- Local Authorities Waters Programme (LAWPRO)
- Clare Tourism Strategy 2030
- Town Centre Health Checks
- Annual programme of events and activities of Clare Archaeological and Historical Societies, Cuimhneamh an Chláir, Clare Roots, the County Clare Heritage & Genealogy Centre, among others.
- Annual Heritage Week Events
- Biodiversity Week Events

4.0 Implementation outcomes, Monitoring, and Evaluation

The County Clare Heritage Plan 2024-2030 will be implemented through the delivery of the key actions identified above. The outcomes of these actions will be monitored throughout the life of the plan.

The implementation of the plan will be managed through a systematic and coordinated approach, optimising funding opportunities as and when they arise. Through a combination of public, private, and community engagement, the plan aims to bring to fruition its outlined vision, ensuring Clare's heritage development is both sustainable and inclusive. Outcomes will be consistently measured against predefined benchmarks and milestones, ensuring that all interventions result in the anticipated positive impact when compared against the vision.

To ensure transparency and continuous improvement, a robust monitoring system will be in place, making use of both qualitative and quantitative metrics. This ongoing monitoring will provide real-time data, allowing for timely adjustments and course corrections. Finally, an evaluation will be conducted at strategic intervals throughout the plan's lifecycle, assessing its effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance. This evaluation will not only measure the plan's success but also inform the design of subsequent strategies and initiatives, ensuring the county stays on a trajectory of growth, sustainability, and heritage preservation.

4.1 Funding opportunities

A key function of the Heritage Officer is to provide support for community initiatives by working with community groups, Tidy Towns, Cuimhneamh an Chláir and others by providing advice and guidance on funding opportunities available to progress local heritage initiatives.

Clare County Council is committed to identifying and accessing heritage funding opportunities during the lifetime of the plan.

4.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to finalise the plan or programme. In addition to SEA, a Appropriate Assessment is required, which comprises the assessment, based on scientific knowledge, of the potential impacts of the plan on the conservation objectives of any European site and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects.

The impacts assessed, must include the indirect and cumulative impacts of the plan, considered in conjunction with any other plans or policies which may impact in this case on the County of Clare. Transboundary impacts must also be considered given County Clare shares many heritage features with Counties Galway, Limerick, and Tipperary. It informs plans (such as the Heritage Plan) of the potential environmental impacts of implementing the

identified actions, policies and/or objectives of the Plan and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations into plan making.

The key to deciding if SEA will apply is whether the new Heritage Plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. The draft Plan was screened having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations (S.I. 435 of 2004) (as amended).

It is the opinion of Clare County Council that the actions contained within the draft Plan are unlikely to give rise to significant impacts on the environment. A key factor in this decision is that the Heritage Plan is not intended to be a detailed programme of works but aims to create awareness and understanding, leading to a greater appreciation, enjoyment, and ownership of our natural, cultural, built and community heritage and will optimise the unique character of County Clare's heritage. It will complement existing frameworks and statutory plans and policies of which the Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029 is of most relevance. The Heritage Plan does not set a framework for projects rather it supports the strategic objectives of the Clare County Development Plan 2023- 2029 and provides for greater engagement through community participation which is achieved through public consultation at a local level. The Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029 and its objectives there in have been rigorously assessed at the strategic level through the application of Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment. Following the application of the Schedule 2A Screening Assessment it has been concluded therefore that full SEA and the preparation of an Environmental Report is not required for the Heritage Plan.

4.3 Appropriate Assessment

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) as transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) requires that all plans and projects must be screened for potential significant effects on European sites.

Clare County Council is committed to the implementation of the requirements of the Habitats Directive and therefore Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the Heritage Plan was undertaken prior to its consideration by Clare County Council.

All forty-three actions arising from the Clare County Heritage Plan were assessed for their likely significant effects based on direct, indirect, and secondary impacts both alone and in combination with other plans and projects. The assessment focused on the key criteria as contained in the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government (2010) Guidance on Appropriate Assessment for Planning Authorities. This includes consideration of the size and scale, land take, distance from the European site or key features of the site, resource requirements, emissions, excavation requirements, transportation requirements and duration of construction, operation, and decommissioning stages.

It was concluded that the proposed Clare County Heritage Plan 2024-2030 is not directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of any European site. Screening established that in view of the best scientific knowledge and based on objective

information, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, the Clare County Heritage Plan 2024- 2030 is not likely to have significant effects on the Conservation Objectives of any European site within the 15km zone of influence. Therefore, in accordance with Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010), significant impacts can be ruled out and no further assessment is required.

Appendix 1 – Clare Heritage and Biodiversity Forum Membership

Forum Member	Organisation	Role
Cllr Cillian Murphy (Chair)	Clare County Council	Public Representative
Cllr Gabriel Keating	Clare County Council	Public Representative
Cllr Liam Grant	Clare County Council	Public Representative
Barry O’Loughlin	Clare County Council	Biodiversity Officer
John Treacy	Clare County Council	Heritage Officer
Anne Marie Cusack	Clare County Council	Conservation Officer
Helen Quinn	Clare County Council	A/Senior Planner
Candace Ingram	Clare County Council	A/Senior Executive Planner
Karen Foley	Clare County Council	Environmental Awareness Officer
Chris Dixon O’Mara	Clare County Council	Climate Action Officer
Helen Walsh	Clare County Council	County Librarian
David Lyons	National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)	District Conservation Officer
Tom Lane	Irish Farmers Association	Chair of Clare IFA branch
John Lusby	BirdWatch Ireland	Raptor Officer/ Project Manager
Declan Garvey	Coillte	Estates Manager
Cormac McCarthy	Ennis Tidy Towns	Committee member
Jonathan Coates Farrell	Inland Fisheries Ireland	IFI Inspector for Clare
Brendan Dunford	Burrenbeo Trust	
Declan Murphy	Teagasc	Environment & Technology Advisor
Sarah Hegarty	Green Schools (An Taisce)	Green Schools Travel Officer (Clare)
Andrew St Ledger (RIP) CELT	Clare Public Participation Network (PPN)	Representing Clare PPN &
Simon Berrow	Irish Whale and Dolphin Group	Chief Science Officer
Karen Kelleher	Clare Scouts Club	County programming co-ordinator
Domhnall Ó Loingsigh	An Clár as Gaeilge	Rúnaí
Linda Lynch	National Monuments Service	Archaeologist

Appendix 2 - Highlights of the Clare County Heritage Plan 2017 – 2023 under key themes

Community	Sustainable Tourism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ennis Laneways and Bow Ways Project • The Terret Lodge genealogy centre project • Lisdoonvarna Heritage Audit and Heritage Plan • Clare Community Archaeology Scheme • 2021 Clare Holy Wells Project • Adopt a Monument programme • Clare Keep Well Campaign • Know Your 5k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to and information on tourism sites • West Clare Railway Greenway Project • Shannon Estuary Walk Project • Mountshannon White Tailed Eagles viewing and information point • Reading Your Local Landscape training
Training and Education	Biodiversity, Climate Change and Green Infrastructure Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Daoine agus Áit: Connecting Communities’ postcard & schools project 2021 • Heritage Films on “Stories from the Landscape” • Traveller Heritage Project • Primary schools Raptor Workbooks & Video • Swift Survey, Communities’ Swifts Boxes • All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 25 communities and 20 farmers • The Hare’s Corner pilot - Burrenbeo Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-year County Clare Wetland Survey • Shanakyle Bog Restoration and Habitat Enhancement Project • Public talks and workshops focusing on best practice in the control of Giant Hogweed • Conservation report - record and mitigate visitor impacts at Fanore dunes • Rare plants, flora and fauna of the Burren and Aran Islands data collection to be used as an educational resource
Built Heritage	Cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility Study of Cahiracon House • Fishery Harbour and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme • Priming grants for historic graveyards • Preservation and access to Clare Holy Wells and archaeology • Community Monuments Fund - Five built heritage projects received funding • The Clare Cillíní survey • Vandeleur Estate at Kilrush 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folklore and Storytelling nights Heritage Week • Award winners in the European Year of Cultural heritage competition; ‘An Exhibition of Kilrush Ceramics’; Killaloe-Ballina Local History Society ‘Sharing Memories’; Burren Beo Trust ‘Burren Wild Child’ initiative • Oral recordings of stories and histories of people living along the Shannon Estuary Way and in the Loop Head area

Appendix 3 - List of pre -draft submissions received

1. Mary Angela Keane
2. Cuimhneamh an Chláir
3. Colm Liddy
4. Michael Gleeson
5. Killaloe-Ballina Historical Society
6. Kilkee and West Clare Heritage and Historical Society

Appendix 4 – Monitoring and Implementation

Action	Our Vision				Indicator
	Collaboration & Connections	Capturing & Sharing	Educating & Inspiring	Sustaining & Integrating	
Focus Area 1 It's How You Tell Them					
3.1.1	√	√	√		Pilot project delivered
3.1.2	√	√	√	√	Heritage Toolkit is developed
3.1.3	√	√		√	No. of audits undertaken No. of community workshops held
Focus Area 2 Looking Back / Moving Forward					
3.2.1	√	√	√		Compilation of recipes on the Clare Community Heritage Network. Collaborate on Artisan food trail. Workshops on sustainable cooking with schools/ how to grow your own produce.

3.2.2	√			√	No. of projects under each scheme secured.
3.2.3	√		√	√	A community archaeologist is engaged to provide expertise and advice. Engagement with Young People.
3.2.4	√		√	√	No. of successful heritage applications/projects funded
3.2.5	√	√	√		Engagement with community groups, heritage advocacy groups. and schools
3.2.6	√		√	√	Board Membership. Feedback on future projects. No. of events, activities, workshops, exhibitions etc.
3.2.7	√		√	√	Burren recognized as a World Heritage site
Focus Area 3 Life is for Living					
3.3.1	√	√		√	No. of community initiatives No. of community workshops held

3.3.2	√			√	Accessibility audit template devised. No. of local accessibility audits undertaken
3.3.3	√	√	√		Compilation of a digital ecological network map
3.3.4	√	√	√	√	Guidance material is developed and made available. Increased public awareness of leave no trace at important heritage and ecological sites
3.3.5	√		√	√	No of partnerships built No of conservation and protection projects supported
6.3.6	√	√	√		An integrated Heritage Network is further developed using iCAN platform. No of interpretive/display projects achieved
6.3.7	√	√	√		E-magazine produced.
6.3.8	√		√	√	Delivery of a training module.
Focus Area 4 Changing Times					
6.4.1	√	√	√		No. of projects where the use of new technology and digital innovation have improved the outcome.

6.4.2	√	√	√		No of interactions and engagements / events etc.
6.4.3	√	√		√	No. of initiatives undertaken.
6.4.4	√	√		√	Vulnerable heritage sites are identified by geographical area. Climate resistant strategies are developed and implemented by geographical area.
6.4.5	√	√		√	No. of Conservation Management Plans
6.4.6	√	√	√	√	Develop factsheets /leaflets. No of factsheet/leaflets distributed.
Focus Area 5 Sounds Wonderful					
6.5.1	√	√	√		Live performances and local culture are showcased in heritage sites. Partnership with CCC managed heritage sites during Heritage Week.

6.5.2	√	√	√		<p>'Sounds of Clare' is scoped and if feasible implemented.</p> <p>In collaboration with SMEs build capacity.</p> <p>No. of initiatives</p>
6.5.3	√	√	√		<p>No. of initiatives supported</p> <p>Measure capacity building exercises.</p> <p>Annual growth in Clare community participation in iCAN.</p>
	√	√	√		<p>No. of additional groups utilising iCAN</p>
Focus Area 6 Keeping Track					
6.6.1	√	√	√		<p>No. of additional groups utilising iCAN</p> <p>Additional data stored and user traffic.</p> <p>No. of projects</p>
6.6.2	√	√	√	√	<p>A map-based database is developed.</p> <p>Measure of school TY program participation</p>

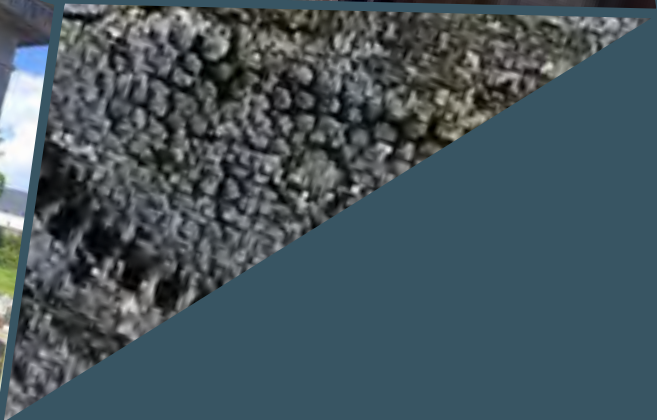
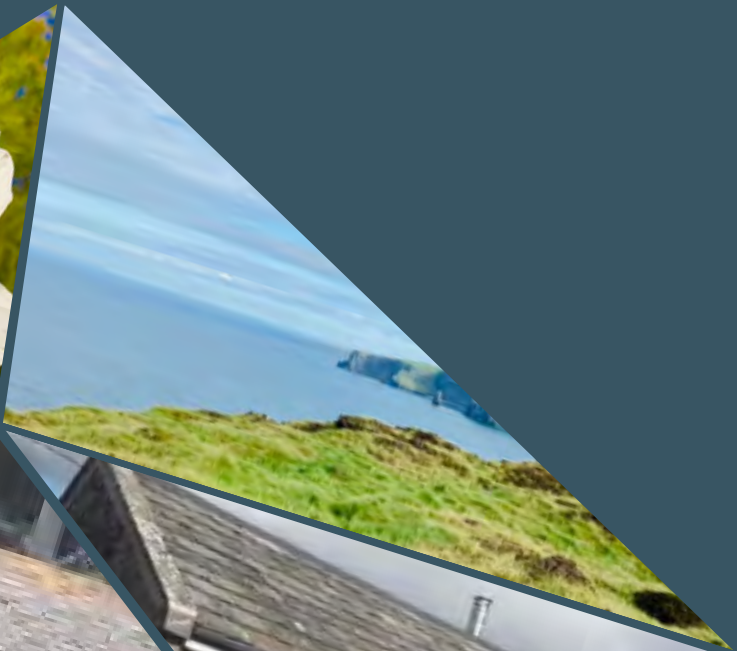
6.6.3	√	√	√		<p>Attendance and feedback from the training sessions and workshops.</p> <p>Engagement metrics from public awareness campaigns, including online engagement, workshop participation, and feedback.</p>
6.6.4	√	√	√	√	<p>Number of events held and attendance figures for each event. Feedback and satisfaction surveys from participants.</p> <p>The number of collaborations or partnerships formed as a result of the networking events.</p> <p>Tracking mentions and engagements on social media and other platforms to assess the broader impact and reach of the programme.</p>
Focus Area 7 Light the Spark, see the Light					

6.7.1	√	√	√	√	Partnerships are developed. Post-graduate research programmes are linked to heritage mapping, documentation and protection.
6.7.2	√	√	√		Education opportunities are implemented. Measure primary and second level schools participation. Schools Heritage Engagement Programme Schools friendly Heritage Plan
6.7.3	√	√	√		Communications Social media Schools, communities actively involved
6.7.4	√	√	√		Heritage resource is developed

6.7.5	√	√	√		<p>A series of intergenerational workshops and events on the annual calendar.</p> <p>Digital content tailored for diverse age groups while promoting shared heritage themes.</p>
6.7.6	√	√	√	√	<p>No. of tasters No. of schools No. of students</p>
6.7.7	√	√	√	√	<p>No. of training courses provided</p>
6.7.8	√	√	√	√	<p>Using school/parish grounds to engage students to enhance education around natural and built heritage.</p>



Clareabbey - Augustinian Monastery



Clare County Heritage Plan

2024 -2030



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

Áras Contae an Chláir
New Road
Ennis
Co. Clare
V95 DXP2
www.clarecoco.ie