

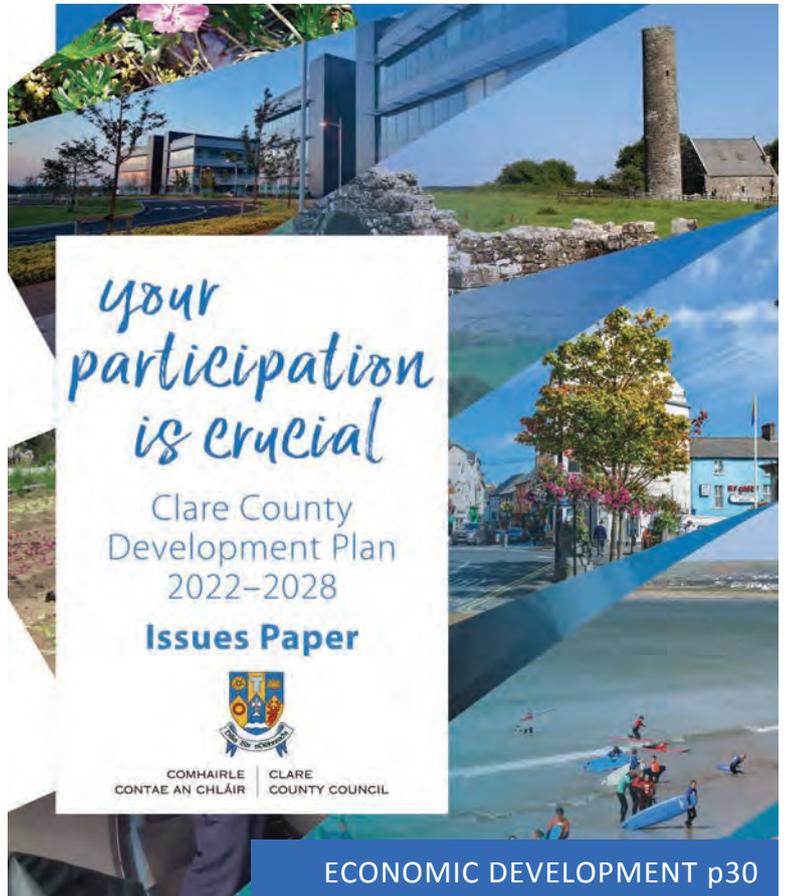


COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Deireadh Fómhair / October
2020



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FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

CORPORATE SERVICES

Oireachtas Members' briefing



Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance, provided a briefing on the Council's current financial situation and sought the support and assistance of the members in addressing the challenges ahead.

The Chief Executive and the Mayor of Clare welcomed our Oireachtas Members to the Council Chamber on Monday, 28th September, for a briefing with Management Team. The briefing was attended by Deputy Cathal Crowe, Deputy Michael McNamara, Deputy Violet-Anne Wynne, Deputy Joe Carey, Senator Róisín Garvey, Senator Timmy Dooley and Senator Martin Conway.

Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance, provided a briefing on the Council's current financial situation and sought the support and assistance of the members in addressing the challenges ahead. Liam Conneally, Anne Haugh, Carmel Kirby and Leonard Cleary updated the members on priority projects and challenges facing Economic, Social, Physical, and Rural Development within the County.

Clare County Council Innovation Competition 2020

Clare County Council signed the Public Service Innovation Declaration, declaring the organisation's commitment to promoting, developing and embedding a culture of innovation. In order to advance this process, Business Review co-ordinated an innovation competition. All staff were invited to submit an innovative idea which would result in a smarter way of working and greater efficiencies. As stated from the outset, the aim was to encourage staff to look at our processes, how we deliver our services and consider how we could improve while also adding value. An evaluation committee was set up to review and score applications. Competition winners (who received €200 Ennis Gold vouchers) were as follows:

1st prize: Nicola Killeen and Deirdre Power (Rural) – Develop an online web-based application process, pilot for the Community Support Scheme, backed up by a robust content management system.

2nd prize: Eoghan Kelly (Physical) – Dynamic on-site recording of works uploaded to the CRM using a handheld data recorder.

3rd prize: Sheila Downes (Economic) – Enhancement of biodiversity on Council property.



Innovation competition winners (l-r) Nicola Killeen, Deirdre Power and Sheila Downes with Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council.

Alliance of Mayors meeting



Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, hosted an Alliance of Mayors meeting in Áras Contae an Chláir, Ennis, on 30th September, 2020.

Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, hosted an Alliance of Mayors meeting to discuss Shannon Airport. The participants were Cllr Mike Cubbard, Galway City Council; Cllr James Charity, Galway County Council; Cllr Michael Collins, Limerick City and County Council; Cllr Michael Smith, Tipperary County Council; and Cllr Patrick O'Connor-Scarreen, Kerry County Council. The meeting was also attended by Mary

Considine, CEO, Shannon Group, and Nandi O'Sullivan, Head of Communications, Shannon Group.

The main topic discussed was the future of Shannon Airport and the urgent need to address aviation policy. Mary Considine provided a briefing on the effects of Covid-19 on the aviation industry and the knock-on effects on tourism and economic development in the Western region.

Remote working

Business Review, along with senior management, researched and reported on the current and potential remote working opportunities in Clare County Council. Staff feedback was sought to identify the barriers and facilitators to remote working across our county. The primary objective of this exercise was to ensure we are well positioned to deliver and advance the way we deliver our services despite factors in our external environment.

Freedom of information and data protection

2020 statistics to 30th September, 2020:

- 130 Freedom of Information requests
- 4 Freedom of Information Internal Review applications
- 2 Appeals to Information Commissioner
- 5 Access Requests (Data Protection) – Data Subjects
- 18 Access Requests (Data Protection) – Third Party Access.

Record management

The Records Management team continues to facilitate daily requests from all departments for file storage and retrieval from the record centre and the management of files in

accordance with the National Retention Policy for Local Authority Records. Works are progressing in the fit out and layout of Quin Road records storage facility. A tender is currently being prepared for the purchase of storage shelving. Implementation of the ADLIB Archives and Records Management database system is ongoing, with testing taking place.

FINANCE

The Restart Grant scheme allows for monies to be invested in helping certain businesses to meet the costs associated with reopening and re-employing workers due to the significant challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Clare County Council has paid out on 1,037 applications on the first phase of the Restart Grant scheme. For Phase 2, Restart Grant Plus, 991 applications have been approved.

In total, €9m will be paid out to businesses across various sectors of the local economy.

The new closing date for Restart Grant Plus is October 31st, 2020.

Procurement

The following tender competitions were published on eTenders during September 2020:

Short description	Response deadline
Audio Visual Exhibition Maintenance Service Level Agreement	30/09/2020
Pedestrian / cycle crossing at Ashline, Kilrush Road (R475), Ennis, Co. Clare	02/10/2020
Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement Scheme – Advanced Works Contract	02/10/2020
Provision of Interpretive Design and Installation at Vandeleur Walled Gardens, Kilrush	15/10/2020
Restoration, Alterations and Extension to Existing Stable Block and Associated Works to Vandeleur Gardens, Kilrush, Co. Clare	15/10/2020
Mini Competition for Consultancy Design Services for housing units and public car parking at Ballyliddan West, Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare, for Clare County Council under Design Consultancy Services FW	23/10/2020

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Office continues to communicate and promote Council activities and services and to raise public awareness of issues of local and national interest.

In September, the Council issued media releases on topics including the commencement of preparation of the new County Development Plan; cultural events such as the reimagined Culture Night 2020, Positive Ageing Week and the Children’s Book Festival; and the award of funding for various initiatives in Clare.

On 25th September, the Communications Office supported colleagues in Rural Development to livestream and promote a virtual ‘Make Way Day 2020’ event, in which the Council facilitated local stakeholders to highlight issues relating to access and mobility in the public realm. For those who were unable to tune in on the day, a video of the event is now available on the Clare County Council YouTube channel.

With Covid-19 cases rising locally and nationally at the end of September, Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, and Sean Colleran, Chief Superintendent, Clare Garda Division, came together to issue a joint media statement asking members of the public to stay vigilant. Mr Dowling reminded people to continue to adhere to Government guidelines and said we must all rise to the challenge and take the actions necessary to come through this challenging period.

The Communications Office continues to engage with members of the public via Council social media channels.

Print and Graphic Design

The print and graphic design service continues to provide services including layout and production of posters and signage, forms, certificates and booklets.

Irish Language Department

September was a month of plaques, commemorations, housing estates, plants and flowers, along with preparations for the beginning of online teaching sessions available to all Clare County Council staff.

The Irish Language Officer prepared the wording for an Irish



Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council (front), and Sean Colleran, Chief Superintendent, Clare Garda Division. Clare County Council and An Garda Síochána called on individuals, businesses and communities in County Clare to remain vigilant and continue to adhere to Government restrictions in relation to Covid-19.

language plaque for Turret Lodge, along with a housing estate in Shannon, new pedestrianisation signage in Ennis and inquiries about road signs in the county.

The Irish Seed Savers Association, an organisation that has assumed critical importance in recent years, is turning 30 next year and, for the first time, it will have the Irish language version of the seeds, flowers and plants available in its annual catalogue.

The Irish Language Officer has begun recording a series of videos which will be made available to Council staff, to replace the weekly sessions offered to staff over the past year.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Work Area	Update
Recruitment	<p>The following recruitment competitions were progressed during September:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burial Ground Caretaker/Registrar Panel, Cree, Doonbeg, Kilkee Burial Grounds (Confined) • Foreman Panel (Confined) • GO Driver 1 (Confined) • School Warden Part-time Ennis MD (Confined) <p>The following competitions were advertised with a view to forming panels in order to fill approved vacancies as they arise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Librarian Panel (Open & Confined) • Retained Part-time Fire-fighter Kilkee Fire Station (Open) • Burial Ground Caretaker Burrane (Killimer) Burial Ground (Confined).
Learning and Development	<p>A number of training programmes were held in September including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Pass (8 Participants) • Manual Handling – outdoor staff (22 participants) • Retirement Planning (8 participants) • Project Supervisor Design Process (8 participants) • Ride on Roller (4 participants) • Site Dumper – New entrant (4 participants) • Site Dumper Assessments (8 participants) • Managing People (8 participants) • Minute taking (8 participants). <p>Online training modules were also provided to staff and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual Handling (12 Participants) • Working in a Covid Era (Employees & Manager course [17 Participants]) • GDPR (12 participants) • Health & Safety Induction (7 Participants) • Local Government A-Z (22 Participants) • Certificate in Local Government Studies (11 participants) • Diploma in Local Government Studies (4 participants)
Employee Welfare	<p>Ongoing supports and assistance were made available to staff as and when required. An advisory regarding the flu vaccination issued to all staff. The vaccine will be made available during October.</p>
Covid-19	<p>Covid-19 related documentation from the Department and the Local Government Management Agency was circulated and the Human Resources Department continued to liaise as necessary. Of note is the 'Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021' Plan for Living with Covid-19, Guidelines for Working from Home, etc.</p>
Unions	<p>The HR Department continued to engage and consult with unions on various matters.</p>

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Make Way Day 2020



Pictured at glór at the Make Way Day 2020 event were: (back, l-r) Clíona Corry, Access Officer, Clare County Council; Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard; Karen Fennessy, Age Friendly Officer, Clare County Council; Bernadette Haugh, SEO, Rural Development Department, Clare County Council; (front, l-r) Padraic Hayes, Clare Leader Forum; Deirdre Power, Rural Development Department, Clare County Council; Orla Platten; Kennas Fitzsimons, Communications Officer, Clare County Council; and Mairead Hegarty, sign language interpreter.

The Rural and Community Development Department hosted representatives and guest speakers from a number of disability organisations such as Clare Leader Forum, Shine, and the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) in a livestreamed event on Friday, 25th September, at 11:00am.

This year's event ensured that the voices of people with disabilities were heard as they raised public awareness around access issues in public spaces from their lived experience of disability. Clare was one of 29 local authorities to host virtual meetings and events on the day, in solidarity with local disability groups and their members. The Disability Federation of Ireland expects Make Way Day 2020 to be a powerful driver for change all over Ireland.

A planning meeting was held with disability networks in Clare in advance of the event to set the agenda, in which members highlighted the topics they wished to raise awareness about.

The event was chaired by the Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, and included live presentations and videos by guest speakers John Fulham of the IWA, Anne Marie Flanagan of

Shine, Padraic Hayes of Clare Leader Forum, Karen Fennessy, Age Friendly Officer, Clare County Council, and Clíona Corry, Access Officer, Clare County Council.

The event, which was streamed from the studio at glór, also included videos depicting the access experiences of Padraic Hayes and Orla Platten in Shannon and Ennis, respectively. The live stream was also made accessible by the presentation of a sign language interpreter on the day.

Twenty-three people registered in advance of the event including staff from Clare County Council, i.e. planners, engineers, library services, architects, elected members, etc. Other agencies included Oireachtas members, Shannon Chamber of Commerce, IWA, Clare Youth Services, Clare Public Participation Network, and Clare Local Development Company. Approximately 35 people viewed the stream live and it has received almost 200 views since the event.

The event can be viewed on the Council's YouTube channel, enabling the wider promotion and communication of the key messages by the stakeholder groups and Clare County Council.

Town and Village funding for projects in County Clare

Clare County Council has received funding of €227,163 for projects around the county under a new standalone 'Accelerated Measure' which was introduced under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020.

The focus of this measure is to provide accelerated support for towns and villages to adapt to public health requirements such as social distancing in the short term, and to encourage increased footfall in towns and villages as they re-open for business.

The nine projects in receipt of funding are as follows:

1. Tulla: Social distancing community meeting space
2. Tuamgraney: Improvements to East Clare Memorial Park including footpaths, seating and boundary wall
3. Kilkee: Reconfiguration of playground layout to allow for social distancing
4. Carrigaholt: Provision of outdoor tables and seating with temporary awnings
5. Killaloe: Provision of measures to promote social distancing in main pedestrian areas
6. Cross: Repurposing of an old school to create a remote working hub and community social space
7. Ballynacally: Completion of two self-catering cottages to be let for tourist accommodation to increase footfall and generate income for the community group
8. Bunratty: Biodiversity and nature trail walk on public lands, new information signage boards, improved access to a conservation area, resurfacing graveyard access and new seating
9. Kildysart: Fit-out of toilet and shower facilities to attract both locals and tourists to the area.

The funded projects were identified by local community groups and businesses, in conjunction with Municipal Districts and the Rural Development Directorate.

Further approvals under Round 3 of the Accelerated Measures under Town and Village Renewal are expected to be announced by Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, in the weeks ahead.



East Clare Memorial Park, Tuamgraney.

Annual SICAP meeting hosted by Clare LCDC in September

The Clare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) hosted its annual Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) engagement meeting in September.

The engagement event was attended by Pobal and Clare Local Development Company (CLDC).

The programme, which provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion, is managed at local level by the Clare LCDC and is delivered by Clare Local Development Company by helping people, for example: to find work or to upskill; providing CV training or a personal development course; helping them onto a work placement programme such as the Community Employment (CE) programme or Tús. It is administered by Pobal and funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development, and receives funding by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020.

At this year's meeting there was a large focus on the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, which greatly affects the programme, especially for work with schools, homework clubs and individual interventions.

The presentation provided by Pobal highlighted the national outlook for 2020 and gives the LCDC a comparison for benchmarking. In general, County Clare is performing above the national average in relation to targets and outputs.

The full analysis report for 2020 can be viewed at www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/sicap.



Clare LCDC hosted its annual SICAP engagement meeting in September.

Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience recognised for safety and service excellence



Pictured at the Cliffs of Moher following the awarding of the Fáilte Ireland Service Excellence Business Award and the Fáilte Ireland Covid-19 Safety Charter to the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience (COMVE) are (l-r): Eoin Flanagan, HR Manager, COMVE; Kevin Quinn, Enterprise Development Advisor, Fáilte Ireland; Mark O'Shaughnessy, Head of Operations, COMVE; Siobhain King, Projects Officer – Wild Atlantic Way, Fáilte Ireland; Geraldine Enright, Director, COMVE; Noel Lyons, Operations Manager, COMVE; and Noreen Doherty, Bookings Administrator, COMVE.

The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience has been awarded the Fáilte Ireland Service Excellence Business Award and the Fáilte Ireland Covid-19 Safety Charter.

The Accredited Service Excellence programme is aimed at helping businesses within the tourism sector reach and maintain the highest standards in customer service excellence, while the Covid-19 Safety Charter aims to reassure all visitors that the businesses they visit have committed to adhere to the highest safety measures and hygiene protocols.

Welcoming the awards, Geraldine Enright, Director of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience, said: “The staff at the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience are renowned for their very high standards of customer care. The awards further demonstrate our commitment in striving to maintain our position as Ireland’s most-visited natural attraction and top visitor attraction as voted for by the visitors themselves. We are delighted to work closely with Fáilte Ireland in partaking in their programmes and I was extremely pleased to see all our departments participating to complete the customer service excellence and safety charter training. Combined with our strategy for the future and continued investment in transforming the visitor experience, this recognition demonstrates our continued focus on the visitor journey, their wellbeing and safety from the moment they arrive right through their experience here, making it as easy and stress-free as possible while at the same time being educated by our kind and attentive staff.”

Speaking about the awards, Martina Kerr Bromley, Head of Enterprise and Hospitality Development at Fáilte Ireland, said: “The way in which businesses are operating now is significantly different. Our Accredited Service Excellence programme has been modified to help businesses to continue to deliver the world-class service our industry is famous for in this new and challenging environment. Never has it been more important to look at service to ensure the visitor experience is the best it can be. From our consumer research, we also know that safety is a key concern for those planning trips across the country and the Covid-19 Safety Charter aims to give comfort and reassurance to visitors that tourism businesses are operating safely.

“We are delighted to present the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience with both our Service Excellence Business Award and our Covid-19 Safety Charter, which show that the attraction is putting the visitor at the centre of everything they do, both in terms of service and safety.”

To achieve Fáilte Ireland’s Service Excellence Business Award, 75 per cent of visitor-facing staff and management in a business must complete Fáilte Ireland’s customer service excellence training.

To achieve Fáilte Ireland’s Covid-19 Safety Charter, a business must agree to adhere to Fáilte Ireland’s Guidelines for Re-opening and all employees must undertake requisite Covid-19 safety and hygiene control training.

Positive Ageing Week 2020 in Clare



Positive Ageing Week ran from 28th September to 2nd October, 2020.

The Clare Age Friendly Programme and Clare Older People’s Council were delighted to support Positive Ageing Week, a festival that celebrates the positive aspects of ageing and the contribution older people have made and continue to make to their families and communities.

The central aim of the week is to celebrate the fact that we are living longer and to transform attitudes towards ageing and older people. Organised by Age Action for the 11th time, Positive Ageing Week ran from 28th September to 2nd October this year and also marked the UN International Day of Older Persons on 1st October.

A number of events took place in County Clare.

Clare County Council offered a free online workshop called ‘AgeWise’ run by Age & Opportunity. AgeWise aimed to challenge negative stereotypes about ageing and older people. The workshop took place on Wednesday, 30th September, and Thursday, 1st October, between 2:00pm and 4:00pm via Zoom.

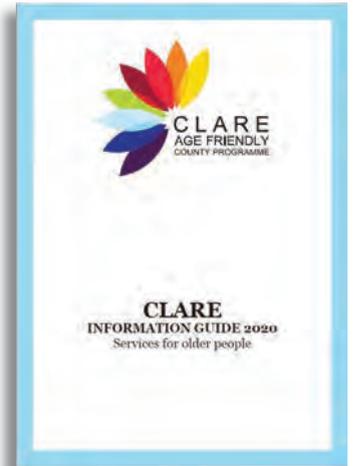
Clare County Library has offered a series of smartphone classes for older people in a number of libraries, which started

at the end of September. The daytime classes take place in the libraries in Ennis, Shannon, Scariff, Kilkee and Ennistymon, commencing on Tuesday, 29th September.

Clare Sports Partnership is offering online fitness classes to older adults. For more information, visit: www.claresports.ie/get-active/get-active-older-adults

The Clare Age Friendly Programme has developed an *Information Guide 2020: Services for older people*.

Copies are available by emailing agefriendlyclare@clarecoco.ie or phoning 065-6846240.



The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark

Working with Evolve Technologies (Ennistymon), the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark is developing a monitoring system for our geosites around the Burren.

The flexible, mobile or tablet GPS-based monitoring system will allow recording of any number of management issues (litter, invasive species, signage condition, etc.) at all the geosites (and any other locations) and has an integrated task-assignment function to direct any issues to the relevant partner agency when required.

Monitoring of geosites is a requirement of UNESCO Global Geopark status and this system will be vital for our future revalidation in 2023. This app may also have applications for other sections of Clare County Council where ongoing site management is required.

The Geopark team are also applying to Geological Survey Ireland for funding to develop an integrated version for all geoparks and aspiring geoparks on the island of Ireland.



Dr Eamon Doyle, geologist, testing the monitoring system in Doolin.

Clare Tourism Strategy 2030

During 2019, the work began of shaping a 10-year strategy to chart the future of tourism in County Clare. In partnership with Shannon Heritage, Shannon Group and Fáilte Ireland, the Tourism Department led on this strategy with the appointed consultants, Team Tourism. The purpose was to ensure the continued growth of tourism in the county by adding to its appeal to both overseas and domestic visitors, and to do so in a sustainable way – managing and dispersing growth so that communities in all parts of Clare benefitted.

As the strategy was close to sign-off, the Covid-19 pandemic unleashed a massive economic shock on the world. It brought a sudden stop to international travel and tourism and it also deeply impacted domestic tourism within Ireland.

Having had an extended period of consultation, the County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 is intended to guide our journey to a vibrant new future in tourism. Our 2030 vision is for Clare to be a globally-renowned sustainable and vibrant destination, easily reached and traversed, and recognised for its rich



cultural assets, its stunning and open-space landscapes, its compelling array of remarkable experiences, and for its welcome and exceptional hospitality.

The Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 was adopted at the September Council meeting and will be formally launched in October.

Contract signed for survey and design works for Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) Visitor Experience



Clare County Council and consultants have signed a contract for the design of the Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) Visitor Experience.

Clare County Council and consultants signed a contract on 21st September, 2020, for the design of the Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) Visitor Experience. The contract was signed in the Council Chamber at Áras Contae an Chláir, Ennis, where the Chief Executive of Clare County Council, Pat Dowling, met the appointed consultants (both in person and virtually).

Mr Dowling said: “The Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) Visitor Experience is a very exciting project for Clare County Council and will be a model for sustainable tourism. It is wonderful to see the calibre of consultants that have been appointed and the breadth of creativity and cutting-edge design and interpretation that the consultants will bring to this project.”

The consultants appointed are McCullough Mulvin Architects, Tandem Partners Ltd and Tobin Consulting Engineers.

Clare County Council is leading the project, along with a wide range of partners. The Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard, said: “This project will be a significant component in implementing the newly adopted Tourism Strategy for County Clare. I wish the consultants well in progressing this to planning stage.”

The Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) Visitor Experience project is being led by the Tourism Department of Clare County Council under the Rural Development Directorate. Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development, Clare County Council, said: “This project is one of collaboration with partners including the Office of Public Works, National Monuments Service, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Waterways Ireland, and Fáilte Ireland. There has been close engagement with Mountshannon Community Council and it is important that this project enhances and complements the village of Mountshannon and its surrounding area.

“The project seeks to conserve Inis Cealtra as well as provide a high-quality visitor attraction in Mountshannon that will raise the profile of the tourism offering in County Clare and complement existing tourism brands both in Clare and in neighbouring counties including Galway and Tipperary.”

The long-term objective of the project is: (a) to conserve Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) as a significant historical, ecclesiastical, archaeological and cultural site; and (b) to expand its attractiveness as a sustainable tourism destination and, in so doing, address population decline and rural deprivation by providing social and economic benefits derived from tourism.

Cllr Pat Hayes, Chairperson of Killaloe Municipal District (MD), said: “This is an exciting milestone after more than two years of detailed preparatory work by the Tourism Department. The project has been brought to this stage by working in collaboration with staff in the Killaloe MD, all partners and the local community council. I look forward to seeing this project come to fruition for the benefit of the people of Mountshannon, East Clare and beyond. The Department of Rural Development is to be complimented on making this project possible through its generous investment and funding under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund, with co-funding from Clare County Council. It is great to see the profile of East Clare being lifted with this proposed iconic tourism attraction.”

WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT ENNISTYMON AND KILRUSH

Welcome to Dr Susan Crawford as the new Green Party Councillor for the West Clare Municipal District (MD) following her co-option to Clare County Council at the September meeting. This seat was vacated following Roisín Garvey's (GP) appointment to the Seanad in June.

Blue Flag amenities

The summer season is at an end at our Blue Flag and Green Flag beaches and Blue Flag marina. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the requirement to staycation, Clare County Council's blue flag beaches experienced very high visitor numbers. All our beaches were especially busy from the early stages of the Covid-19 crisis in March with the fine weather until late September. Additional 'portaloo's were hired to accommodate visitor numbers at the Diamond Rocks (West End) car park in Kilkee. In addition, newly refurbished public toilets were opened on Kilkee promenade. While the Blue Flag marina in Kilrush is privately owned, the operator of the 'Aqua Park' in the marina states that he had a very satisfactory season.

Doolin pier has confirmed that daily visitor numbers were up on previous years and additional resources were deployed from the MD.

Large numbers of people visited our lovely corner of West Clare, and most seem to have enjoyed their stay, which is a testament to all of our staff with responsibilities to provide and maintain our tourist-related services.

Due to coastal erosion, some sections of the pathway leading to the Bridges of Ross near Kilbaha are now quite close to the rock edge. To ensure safety and to enhance the overall visitor experience, the West Clare MD recently carried out resurfacing works on the existing walkway, and provided sections of new pathway to allow visitors divert away from the sections bordering the verge. In addition, new seating and additional directional signage was put in place.



Aerial photograph of the Bridges of Ross.

Road improvements and widening for additional parking have been carried out in Clonredden, Cooraclare to support the West Clare Sports and Fitness facility, which will be holding County and Munster championship events this year.



Roadworks programme 2020

Our roads works crews have been concentrating on completing the Schedule of Municipal District Works (or roadworks programme) recently. Due to Covid-19, the time available to our teams to complete the 2020 schedule has been abbreviated, but they have been working valiantly to make up the lost time. Our surface dressing, pavement improvement and pavement overlay programmes are broadly on schedule and the target is that all works listed in the Schedule of Municipal District Works will be completed on time.



Surface dressing recently completed on Shellshock Road, Kilrush.



As part of the Clare Active Travel Measures Allocation 2020, the West Clare MD resurfaced the access road to Inchinquin Lake to ensure walkers and cyclists are provided with a safe route to access amenities. The local community group also have plans for new viewing/seating area at this location.



Pavement improvement works recently completed on the R-483.



Pavement overlay works recently completed on Griffin Street, Kilrush.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

HOUSING



Contracts have been signed for (clockwise from top left): construction of social housing developments in Newmarket-on-Fergus, Tulla and Miltown Malbay; and for appointment of design consultants for a social housing development in Doonbeg.

We continue to adjust to the ever-changing realities of Covid-19. All services have returned, however the delivery mechanisms for services are under continuous review. The directorate is gearing up to support staff to work remotely where it is feasible.

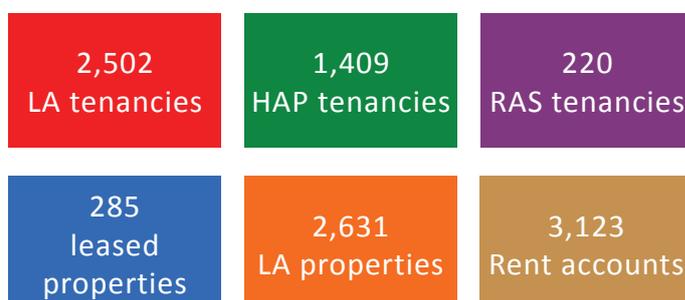
The housing public counter is opened daily to the public from 9:00am to 1:00pm and by appointment from 1:00pm until 5:00pm (Monday to Friday).

There is limited stock available to advertise on Choice Based Letting at this time, albeit the system remains very popular. As schemes near completion additional properties will be advertised on the system. The new development in Quilty will be advertised in October for allocation in early November. In addition, we are working with Co-Operative Housing Ireland with a view to advertising its properties at Gleann Cora in late October/November.

Four contracts were signed during September: three construction contracts and one contract for consultants. These contracts support local economies by generating local employment in Newmarket-on-Fergus, Tulla and Miltown Malbay. These developments will see an additional 70 social housing units under construction in the County.

Housing in numbers

Breakdown of tenancies by Municipal District (including RAS and leasing):		
	Social housing*	HAP
Ennis	1,142	645
Shannon	625	155
West Clare	905	391
Killaloe	339	171
Inter Authority HAP		47
TOTAL	3,011	1,409



Summary of activity

COVID-19 restrictions continue to impact service delivery, particularly services in occupied properties, in this regard there has been limited activity in inspections for private house grants and private rented inspections. Other business areas have returned to a new normal level of service and this is reflected in the numbers hereunder.

Housing allocations	
Offers issued (from 20/08/2020 to 25/09/2020)	6
Offers refused	2
AHB nominations	0
Tenancies signed up	15
Tenancies terminated	9

Voids work programme		Position at the end of September.
Voids/casual vacancies	43	
Acquired properties (works on-going)	19	
Average vacancy period	142 days	
Number voids returned to stock	10	
Average spend	€33,598	

Housing maintenance calls	
September	475

Private rented inspections

There were 53 scheduled inspections, however a number were cancelled by tenants and the remaining 11 inspections will be undertaken before month end.

Private rented inspections *To 25/09/2020	
September	32

Housing grants

On 14th September, 2020, Clare County Council received an allocation of €239,605 for adaptation works to local authority stock; this, with a contribution of €26,623 from the Council's own resources, equates to available funding of €266,228. The 2019 allocation was €350,000 and at this juncture this Council has committed expenditure of ~€390,000 for adaptation works to Council stock. We have sought additional funding to recover the shortfall between the allocation and the committed expenditure.

Grants approved for September		
Grant type	Number of approvals	Value of works (€)
Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability	4	47,300
Housing Aid for Older People	15	71,850
Mobility Aids Grant	5	14,635
Total	24	133,785

Rebuilding Ireland home loan



Homeless

The Clare Homeless Action Team (HAT) provides services to anyone who is homeless or at risk of losing their home. The HAT office is open by appointment during office hours and can be contacted on 065-6846291.

Homeless presentations to 25th September, 2020	
New presentations	38
Repeat presentations	213

Status as at 25th September, 2020				
	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	13	0	1
Cusack Lodge	5	6	9	1
Westbrooke	0	15	0	1
Ashford Court	5	8	5	1
EA families	7	9	9	3
EA individuals	0	16	0	7
TOTAL	17	67	23	14

Update on capital programme

SHIP capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start date	Completion date
Quilty	18	Under construction.	Q2 2019	Q4 2020
Sixmilebridge	2	Under construction.	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
Kilmihil	2	Under construction.	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
Shannon PPP	51	Under construction.	Q4 2019	Q3 2021
Ashline, Ennis	40	Construction commenced.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Milltown Malbay	27	Contract awarded.	Q3 2020	Q1 2022
Tulla	25	Contract awarded.	Q3 2020	Q1 2022
Newmarket on Fergus	18	Contract awarded. Construction due to commence.	Q3 2020	Q4 2021
Scarriff	18	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Design team appointed.	Q1 2021	Q1 2022
Roslevan, Tulla Rd.	8	Stage 2 approved. Part VIII lodged.	Q4 2020	Q1 2022
Doonbeg Lands	8	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Design team appointed.	Q1 2021	Q1 2022
Clarecastle	2	Single Stage approved by DHPLG. Contract ready to be awarded.	Q4 2020	Q4 2021
Drumcliff Rd, Ennis	26	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Procuring design team.	Q2 2021	Q2 2022
Sixmilebridge	16	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Procuring design team.	Q2 2021	Q2 2022
Ballaghboy, Quin Road, Ennis (TA)	5	Stage 1 approved by DHPLG. Procuring design team.	Q3 2021	Q3 2022
Subtotal	266			
CAS – Cahercalla Phase 2 (Cuan an Chlair)	15	CAS Construction. Under construction.	Sept 2019	Q4 2020
Bruachlan, Westbury (CoOperative Housing Ireland)	22	CALF – Property transfer complete, planning permission to be re-applied for.	Q4 2021	Q4 2022
Gleann Cora, Newmarket on Fergus (CoOperative Housing Ireland)	31	CALF Acquisition approved. Under construction.	Q1 2020	Q4 2020
Edenvale (Newgrove Housing Association)	3	CAS – Stage 2 with Dept for approval	Q3 2020	Q3 2021
Sycamore Drive, Ennis (Cluid)	2	Part V	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
Ballymacaula, Ennis (Cluid)	2	Part V	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
	2	Part V	Q3 2020	Q3 2021
Crusheen (Cluid)	2	Part V	Q4 2019	Q4 2020
Total	345			

CULTURAL SERVICES – LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM, ARCHIVES

Clare County Library



Staff in De Valera Library marked Culture Night with a book display this September.

Library Covid-19 services	
Book deliveries	718 (27th April–18th September)
Contact and collect library stock service	1,305 (8th June–18th September)

Online resources usage statistics

	E-books	E-audio-books	E-magazines	Online courses
January	595	1,010	542	399
February	662	903	710	750
March	1,145	1,202	934	577
April	1,891	1,776	1,059	1,925
May	2,013	1,881	1,204	2,861
June	1,927	1,600	1,290	1,350
July	1,546	1,709	1,134	560
August	1,470	1,684	898	372
	11,249	11,765	7,771	8,794

Marketing

Please see below Clare Library social media activity for August.

August 2020	Posts	Likes	Shares/retweets	Comments
Facebook	76	289	77	3
Twitter	66	143	103	6
Instagram	62	263	5	6

Clare County Library is planning a series of programmes with funding from Dormant Accounts. These include smart-phone classes in five libraries; a play therapy programme with Cloughleigh NS in De Valera Library; a mindfulness programme with the DEIS school in Kilrush; and a sensory programme in Scariff Library. Clare Library will also distribute Touch, Type, Read, Spell (TTRS) licences, a literacy software programme to schools over the next few months through Dormant Accounts Funding.

Creative Ireland

An additional €50,000 in funding was allocated to Creative Ireland Clare as part of the July stimulus package. This funding has been allocated through the Creative Ireland Culture Team with grants to “Fionnathan Productions” for a musical tour in disability settings, John Lillis for three radio shows amplifying the voices of Clare’s primary school children, “Your Man’s Puppets” for an online series of puppet shows for children and ceramic artist Ann McBride for her “Gift” project which will produce a series of ceramic art works that will be gifted to individuals, community groups and organisations for their work during the current global pandemic. Funding was also allocated to Noel McInerney for the shooting of a short film in West Clare, to Siobhan O’Sullivan for a CD of songs telling the stories of the history of Ireland and to Clare Traditional Youth Orchestra for a virtual concert. Support will also be offered to “Street Art” projects in Ennis and to a professional development programme for young artists.

Healthy Ireland

A proportion of upcoming Healthy Ireland (HI) events will be online. The HI co-ordinator will be liaising with a number of partners and organisations, including schools, and workshops will be tailored to meet the current needs of participants. The Pobal funding for the current year, which covers the period July 2020-June 2021, will fund the delivery of local events and book stock. Promotion of Healthy Ireland at your library will continue at a national level together with the development of webinars.



Roald Dahl Day was celebrated in a number of Clare libraries in September, like this book display in Shannon Library.

Clare Arts Office



Helen Carroll, RTÉ's *Ear to the Ground*, Siobhán Mulcahy, County Arts Officer, and Cllr Mary Howard, Mayor of Clare, at the "Gaining Ground Rural Arts" symposium in glór on September 4th, 2020. Photo: Fergus Tighe.

Clare Arts Office held a national symposium on rural arts in glór on 4th September, 2020. Fifty people were in attendance and it was chaired by Helen Carroll from *Ear to the Ground*.

Clare Arts Office nominated two artists to participate in Age and Opportunity's Azure training programme (training to work with people with dementia) which took place in September. Two new artists took up residency in the Tulla Stables Studios and the EASI Studios. Magpie Media Animation Company moved into the EASI studios. Exhibitions re-commenced in Cultúrlan Sweeney, Kilkee, and the Clare Museum. Filming for *Clueless in Ireland* wrapped in Kilkee, but *Smother* – filming in Lahinch – resumed. Twenty events took place for Culture Night – 16 online – with an estimated audience on the night of 1,500.

Duala, a commission in partnership with the Irish Traditional Music Archive, launched in glór and on Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA) digital platforms. A training webinar for local festivals took place, as did child protection training for artists – all in conjunction with Visual Artists Ireland and Limerick and Tipperary Arts Offices. In total, 296 applications were received for four residencies on offer through the River Residency Programme with Arts Office in Cavan, Clare, Limerick and Tipperary.

Clare Museum

The curator submitted a funding application for the Heritage Community Grant Scheme 2020, for camera equipment and a new showcase. This will allow the museum to digitise the

collection, record/livestream museum activities and provide an exhibition space for some of the Clare Embroidery Collection, which is an under-utilised museum resource. Both will help to increase access to the collections and to museum activities online.

Another funding application was submitted to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Stream D – Cultural Capital Scheme. The application was for the funding of 31 half-hour weekly socially distanced talks on the intangible culture of Clare (traditions, folklore, arts and crafts) targeted at mid-week breakers in Ennis. It will support the local economy. The events will also be recorded/livestreamed.

The museum is in discussion with the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) on the use of the Clare Embroidery Collection in support of one of its adult learning courses. It is proposed to host 10 pods of 5/6 students over a 10-week period. In total, 332 items have been catalogued and accessioned into the collection so far this year, bringing the total to 3,094. This figure includes photographs capturing the experiences of Clare people during the pandemic, which is being promoted to the Clare public on the museum's social media.

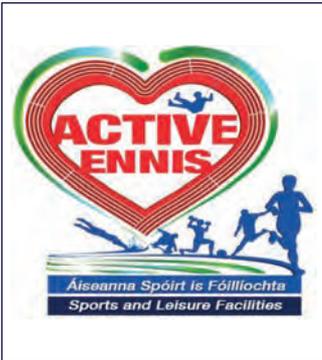
Clare Archives

The Local Studies Centre took delivery of the archives of John Holohan, c1870-1940, Chairman of the Scariff Rural District Council. The archive contains maps and surveys, auctioneers' posters, material relating to compulsory purchase orders for the hydro-electrical scheme at Ardnacrusha, creameries in East Clare, the Scariff District Hospital and a vaccination register. The materials were donated to the county collection in Ennis by John Holohan, Donnybrook, Dublin, grandson of John Holohan of Baurroe, Feakle.

Small Scale Capital Works Programme

Clare County Library Service was successful in an application for Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) "Small Scale Capital Works" programme funding and has been approved €100,000 with matched funding of €10,000 coming from the Local Authority. Libraries at Ennistymon and Shannon will see space in each branch refurbished to create much-needed multi-purpose rooms allowing the programming of activities in a dedicated space – prior to this all activity occurred within the body of the library often intruding with activities such as study and browsing. In addition to this, the multi-purpose room in Shannon will also contain digital equipment for public use and the multi-purpose room in Ennistymon will be supplied with sensory equipment.

SPORTS & RECREATION



Active Ennis Leisure Complex

ACTIVE ENNIS LEISURE COMPLEX						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
10 - 11AM	10 - 11AM*	9 - 9AM	9 - 9AM	9 - 9AM	10 - 11AM	10 - 11AM
11:30 - 12:30PM	Active Age Hour (Over 60's only)	9:30 - 10:30AM	9:30 - 10:30AM	9:30 - 10:30AM	11:30 - 12:30PM	11:30 - 12:30PM
1 - 2PM	11:30 - 12:30PM	11 - 12PM	11 - 12PM	11 - 12PM	1 - 2PM	1 - 2PM
2:30 - 3:30PM	1 - 2PM	12:30 - 1:30PM	12:30 - 1:30PM	12:30 - 1:30PM	2:30 - 3:30PM	2:30 - 3:30PM
4 - 5PM	2:30 - 3:30PM	2 - 3PM	2 - 3PM	2 - 3PM	4 - 5PM	4 - 5PM
	4 - 5PM	3:30 - 4:30PM	3:30 - 4:30PM	3:30 - 4:30PM		
		5 - 6PM	5 - 6PM	5 - 6PM		
		6:30 - 7:30PM	6:30 - 7:30PM	6:30 - 7:30PM		
		8 - 9PM	8 - 9PM	8 - 9PM		

Terms and conditions

- Hourly bookings with pre-payment required
- Members must pre-book also
- Arrive five minutes prior to your booking to allow for check in and observe social distancing
- All customers will be restricted to four sessions per week in the interest of equity

Active Ennis Leisure Complex timetable.

The facility is open as per the timetable above. The capacity of the pool and gym are reduced to ensure compliance with Covid-19 guidance. All sessions must be pre-booked and pre-paid in order to ensure the comfort and safety of customers. Each session is an hour in duration with 30 minutes between sessions for cleaning and sanitising of equipment and all areas. The Complex has separate entrances/exits for both gym and pool areas. The gym side is train only and pool side is swim with short shower. The gym is operating with increased floor space, as we have transferred a selection of our equipment into the aerobics studio.

We are continually reviewing operations in line with guidelines towards the return of activity for clubs, organisations, groups, or a return to programmed activities, classes, birthday parties/camps.

Full details on www.activeennis.ie



Active Ennis Leisure Complex.

Tim Smythe Park

As the autumnal evenings close in it was necessary to reset the lighting around the running track at Tim Smythe Park to ensure those using the facility can do so safely.



Tim Smythe Park.

John O'Sullivan Park, Lees Road

The Pitch Maintenance Programme of 2020 is now complete. In addition to the usual sanding, aeration and fertilising, we have this year installed artificial turf in a number of goalmouths. This will have a great effect on pitch performance and minimise costs.

Clare Sports Partnership

Clare Sports Partnership (CSP) continued to support active engagement in sport during September. To this end, sport and physical activity in Clare has received a welcome boost, with €125,650 being allocated to Clare through the Dormant Accounts Fund.



Included in the allocation to Clare is €31,500 for new Community Sports Hub in Shannon, €40,000 for the continued development of Kilrush Community Sports Hub, €13,000 for the development of an app that will allow people with disabilities have more inclusive opportunities in accessing outdoor trails, €6,000 for Youth Leadership and €35,100 for the development of an Urban Adventure Hub in Ennis.

Bike Week, 19th-27th September

Bike Week is funded through the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport via Clare County Council. Full details of organised activities are available on www.claresports.ie Examples of activities are:

Companies Cycle to Work – companies were asked to encourage staff to cycle to work as least one day during Bike Week.

Schools Sprocket Rocket – Videos of daily cycling skills will be

sent to every primary school in County Clare.

Cycle to School – Primary schools throughout County Clare were asked to encourage their students to cycle to school during Bike Week, post to CSP social media and be in with a chance of winning a four-week Sprocket Rocket cycling course for the school free of charge in 2020/2021.

Cycle Bus Hi-Vis Competition – Primary school children design their own hi-vis vests for their school's cycling bus, with the chance of winning 30 hi-vis vests with their own design.

Leisure Cycle – Tradaree Wheelers, Newmarket, hosted a come and try 10km loop cycle on quiet country roads on Saturday, 26th September.

Axa Community Bike Ride – County Clare's first Axa community leisure cycle took place on Saturday, 19th September, in Miltown Malbay.

Cycle Helmet Scheme – We teamed up with Planet Tri, Killaloe, Tierney Cycles, Ennis, and Landscape & Leisure, Kilrush, to help to subsidise the cost of a new helmet.

Ennis Voices For Autism (EVA) – EVA is running a six-week Learning to Cycle programme for children with autism in Clare. For more information please contact: Laura (086-3848795).

Down Syndrome Clare – Down Syndrome Clare Sports Group is running a six-week Learning to Cycle programme for children with Down syndrome in Clare. For more information please contact: Catherine (087-8438610).

Inclusive Cycling Tutor Training – CSP in conjunction with Cycling Ireland is running inclusive cycling tutor training. For more information please contact: James (087-9627696).

Hand-Cycling/Hand-Mountain Trike Programme – CSP in conjunction with Active Ennis is running a hand-cycling/hand-trike programme for wheelchair users. For more information please contact: James (087-9627696).

The Banner Challenge

We called on all Clare people to take part in 'The Banner Challenge' in September. The total circumference of county Clare is 440km and we wanted to collectively see how many times we could get around the county during the week.

KILLALOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Works are on programme in relation to Schedule of Municipal District Works 2020. Notable projects completed in recent months are detailed below.

Estates upgrade

The upgrading of Riverview Estate footpaths in Scarriff and the Millbrook Estate footpaths in O'Briens Bridge. The roads in each estate will now be resurfaced as the final phase of the upgrades.

Pedestrian crossings

Killaloe MD now has two new operational pedestrian crossings funding via General Municipal Allocation (GMA) along with Department grants. These are located on Convent Hill, Killaloe and Kilkishen.



Grants

Active Travel funding

Killaloe MD has been successful in acquiring funding of €220,000 from the Active Travel initiative as part of the July Stimulus. Works will be aimed at the completion of the Bluetrail from Beakelly to Killaloe. It is anticipated that works will be substantially complete for December 2020.

Climate change

Killaloe MD's submission was successful for funding to the amount of €162,000. Works are aimed at the alleviation of flooding to assets. Locations to benefit are Crusheen, Tulla, Whitegate and Killaloe.

Timelines for delivery set by Government are extremely challenging, with the MD staff working to achieve these timelines.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

Roadworks Programme and Operations

Work is ongoing on the Roadworks Programme for 2020 with significant progress being achieved in each area under the Restoration Improvement, Restoration Maintenance, Drainage and Discretionary Maintenance grant categories. Work is also progressing on the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) approved for 2020.

Following a submission made to the Department of Transport, additional grant funding has recently been allocated in respect of Active Travel (€1.264m) and Climate Change Adaptation (€0.581m). These welcome grant allocations will facilitate significant additional works being carried out in each Municipal District before the end of the year.

Strategic Transportation

Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy

The Draft Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy Document was approved by the National Transport Authority (NTA) board during the summer and the draft Report and the Executive Summary have been published. The supporting documents have been developed. The LSMATS public consultation, to which all Members were invited, was launched by the NTA on 2nd September and it will be on public display for an eight-week period up to 30th October. A presentation on the draft Report took place with the Physical Development Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) on 28th September.

Public lighting

At the April meeting of Clare County Council the Members approved a Section 85 (of the Local Government Act 2001) agreement between Clare County Council and Cork County Council for the Public Energy Efficiency project. This will entail Cork County Council managing the relevant statutory procedures, procuring the necessary design, and managing the carrying-out of the construction works for the project within County Clare.

Also at the April meeting of Clare County Council the Members approved the Raising of a Loan Facility to fund the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project in County Clare.

Regarding the contract itself, the RMO is close to having the contract documents for Region 1 completed and it is presently proposed to publish the tender in the coming weeks. It is anticipated that a contractor will be appointed and on site before the end of the year.

For the benefit of Councillors, the following are the options available to facilitate reporting of public lighting faults:

- Internet – direct reporting on our website – www.airtricitysolutions.com
- Phone – Airtricity Utility Solutions dedicated call centre – 1850 372 772
- Local Authority Identification – via Local Authority’s website or contact number.

Road Design Office

Current projects – monthly update

It should be noted that this monthly project update is relevant only to the current period and the milestone progressions during that period.

TII road safety projects – monthly progress

Project	Update – September/August 2020
HD 15 and HD 17 sites site inspections, with TII Regional Road Safety Officers, were conducted on 29th September.	
TII HD 15 Sites	For the N85: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traffic and speed counts, including a traffic trial, for an alternative design has been requested by the TII for Clareabby Roundabout.• TII reviewing design proposals for the Lahinch Rd/Shanaway Rd. For the N68: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Derrycrossaun junction design and feasibility report is completed and has been submitted to the TII for approval. Further to a Notice of Motion an alternative design has been also submitted for review.
TII HD 17 Sites	For the N68: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further to on-site inspections at Cranny, Crag and Parknamoney junctions, the TII has requested the RDO to progress detailed site surveys, conceptual designs and an option feasibility report. For the N67: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topographical surveys of the identified junctions for phase 1 is now complete, i.e. Galway border to Ballyvaughan. Design and Feasibility Report for phase 1 is progressing. Land acquisition will be required at these two junctions.• A detailed meeting was held with the TII reviewing design options for Minster Place, Kilkee. TII observations have been noted and will require minor changes to the design to be carried out.

Low-cost safety schemes – monthly progress

Project	Update – September 2020
R463 junction at Westbury	Proposal to upgrade the existing signalised junction to MOVA system and add additional exit lane from the Westbury estate. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section 38 process complete. Adopted by the Elected Members of Shannon MD on 24th July, 2020.• Drawings and pricing document completed and circulated to MD.• Limerick City and County Council has completed a road safety audit.• Construction works are due to commence on 5th October, 2020.

R352 Hurlers Cross Junction	Topographical road surveys are completed. Survey of adjacent lands has also been carried out. Horizontal and vertical alignment design is completed. A preliminary design for various design options has been completed and the feasibility options report has commenced. Land owner contact has initiated and the valuer has been instructed.
L2034/L2032 Moanmore Crossroads on the Kilrush to Doonbeg road	Design confirmed and agreed with MD. Issued to NRMO for approval.
R474, Mahonburg	Design completed and issued to the MD.
R483 Cree Bridge	Design completed and issued to the MD.
Low Cost Safety 2021	List currently being compiled for submission to the Department by early October and will include proposed project in Corrovorrin for consideration.

Other projects – monthly update

Project	Update – September 2020
Larkins Cross/Gillogue Bridge Specific Improvement works	<p>Traffic signals at Larkins Cross:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The detail design is completed and has been updated with modifications based on feedback from the TII. AA screening is completed. Section 38 process complete. Adopted by the Elected Members of Shannon MD on 24th July, 2020. Limerick City and County Council has completed a road safety audit. Drawings & pricing document completed. Construction works commenced on 14th September, 2020.
EuroVelo 1	<p>Funding of €182,000 has been secured from DTTAS for development of the EuroVelo route in County Clare. Drawdown of the grant is by the end of November, 2020. Tenders have now been awarded for supply of EuroVelo signs, bike racks, bike repair stations and mapboards. EuroVelo signs are due for delivery week commencing 5th October. Location points for the signs are being marked out on the ground in North and West Clare areas. Self-service bike repair stands and bike racks received. A specification is being prepared for the map design for outdoor mapboard displays.</p>
Liaison with NTA regarding bus stops	<p>Wheelchair accessible bus stop on Bothar Linne, Shannon Town:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The design is completed and issued to the Shannon MD. The projects received NTA funding approval for €30,733. A Preliminary Safety and Health Plan has been issued to the Shannon MD, works programmed for December.

Liaison with NTA regarding bus shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NTA have assessed proposed locations. Six new bus shelters (Kilkee, Lisdoonvarna, Crusheen, Newmarket, Limerick Rd Ennis and Westbury) and upgrading five existing bus shelters in Shannon. Prior to formal application NTA requested costings on civil works. Drawings and pricing documents are completed. Tender documents being prepared for issue.
Road Schedule & Queries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requests from public and Municipal Districts for searches through old road schedule paper mapping to establish if certain roads are/were in public ownership – ongoing basis. Update the roads schedule ongoing as updates are received.
Circular RW 10/2020 – Active Travel Measures Allocations 2020	Clare County Council received an allocation of €1,264,340 from DTTAS for Active Travel projects submitted for funding consideration in August. A significant number of these projects have commenced. The Department has now indicated that some allowance for the transfer of allocations into 2021, to allow for the completion of works, may be considered.
Circular RW 09/2020 – Climate Change Adaptation Allocations 2020	Clare County Council received an allocation of €580,900 from DTTAS for Climate Change Adaption projects submitted for funding consideration in August. A significant number of these projects have commenced. The Department has now indicated that some allowance for the transfer of allocations into 2021, to allow for the completion of works, may be considered.
Circular RST 04/2019 Safe Overtaking Width for Cyclists Signs	Clare County Council has received an allocation of funding from DTTAS of €29,350 for the provision of safe overtaking width signs for cyclists. Tender awarded for supply of signage.
Cycle counts	Ongoing monitoring of cycle counts at four locations in Ennis and one in Lahinch.

2020 Bridge Rehabilitation monthly update – September 2020

- Carrownisha Bridge: Works complete.
- Sixmilebridge and Mountievers Bridge: Works commenced early September on Sixmilebridge Bridge. The contractor is to mobilise to Mountievers Bridge mid-October thereafter.
- Bunratty Bridge: Tenders returned. The award will be issued shortly subject to a remaining consideration with National Monuments being resolved.
- Gillogue Bridge: Construction works 80 per cent complete.
- Breaghva Bridge: Works complete.
- Stonepark Bridge: Tender to be issued 2nd October, 2020.
- Kilmacduane East Bridge: Works complete.
- Carron Bridge: Works complete.
- Agouleen Bridge: Repair works to be completed 30th

September, 2020.

- Carrowduff Bridge: Repair works to be completed 2nd October, 2020.
- Smithstown Bridge: Contractor appointed with works to commence in mid-October.
- Riverstown Bridge: Contractor on site, works 50 per cent complete.
- Drumanure Bridge: Contractor appointed with works to commence after Sixmilebridge and Mountievers bridges are completed.
- Ballyalla Bridge: Contractor appointed.
- Doonsallagh and Kildema South: Contractor appointed.
- Annagh Bridge: Contractor on site, works to be completed mid-October.

Currently assessing bridges and preparing 2021 Bridge Rehabilitation grant application.

Health and Safety

During the past month the Health and Safety Team continued to provide support and guidance in the format of Covid-19 risk assessments to the Crisis Management Team and all Departments of Clare County Council in the delivery of essential services and in accordance with the Government's accelerated phased re-opening plan.

In addition, the Health and Safety Team continued to review and assess national, sectoral and operational Covid-19 Guidance Documents in order to revise and update the Council's Covid-19 Response Plan. A schedule of Covid-19 inspections were completed to check compliance with the Covid-19 Response Plan.

The Health and Safety Team continued to progress their Schedule of Workplace Risk Assessment reviews and programme of Health and Safety inspections.

FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION



Ennis Fire Station redevelopment works are progressing.

Service's Fleet Preventative Maintenance and Management Systems and associated documentation on 28th September. A vehicle inspection was also carried out. No issues were identified. These audits take place periodically every two to three years. The brigade currently runs 25 heavy goods vehicles (fire engines) and 10 light goods vehicles (four-wheel drive vehicles). All fleet maintenance recording systems are currently being set up on the Flex electronic database. A new workshop is also currently under construction at the brigade headquarters at Ennis Fire Station.

Ennis Fire Station redevelopment works

Subcontractors for Gildoc Limited are currently on site erecting the steel frame for the Fire Service maintenance building.

Major Emergency Management Exercise at ESB Moneypoint

Clare County Council organised a Major Emergency Management Exercise at ESB Moneypoint on Tuesday, 22nd September, 2020. One of the main objectives of the exercise for Clare County Council was to utilise remote connectivity to re-create what the response would be to a large-scale emergency incident at ESB Moneypoint while adhering to current public health guidelines.

Personnel from the following organisations participated in the exercise: Kilrush Fire Brigade; Clare County Council; An Garda Síochána; National Ambulance Service; Health Service Executive; Shannon Foynes Port Company; ESB Moneypoint management team; media representatives for each of the agencies; and control centres of each of the emergency services.

Key decision makers were assembled in the visitor centre and all others joined online using Microsoft Teams. Clare County Council's Crisis Management Team, based in the Conference Room of Áras Contae an Chláir, successfully interacted with the on-site coordination team via Microsoft Teams. As we progress through this pandemic, it is intended to continue to exercise

Recent training courses

The following brigade training courses were held during September:

- Initial Breathing Apparatus Wearers Course (Bray)
- Hazardous Material Exercise held in Moneypoint.

ISO 45001:2018 accreditation

Clare County Fire and Rescue Service received accreditation from NSAI to ISO 45001:2018 for the Occupational Health and Safety Management System. Previously, Clare County Fire and Rescue Service attained accreditation to OHSAS 18001, which has now been superseded by the ISO 45001 standard. Receipt of the accreditation is a reflection of the high emphasis placed on health and safety within Clare County Fire and Rescue Service, the systems that are in place to manage health and safety and on the Clare County Council Safety Management System.

Road Safety Authority (RSA) audit

The AA on behalf of the Road Safety Authority (RSA) carried out an external audit on Clare County Fire and Rescue

and improve/enhance our remote connectivity capabilities that will be used in the event of a real emergency.

Fire & Building Control Section Main Activities	September 2020 (Up to 28/09/2020)	Year to date
Number of Emergency Calls Attended	46	759
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received	6	70
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted	5	69
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	3
Number of Disability Access Certificates Received	4	57
Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted	6	50
Number of Commencement Notices Received	45	282
Number of Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	0	19

Clare Civil Defence

Operational duties

Civil Defence provided the following operational duties:

- Members assisted the Irish Blood Transfusion Board with their blood donation clinics in Shannon and Ennis.
- Members provided transport for patients to hospital appointments in University Hospital Limerick.
- Members provided transport for a patient from Carrigoran Nursing Home to their home in Ennis.

Members' training and professional development

- Members successfully completed a Water and Flood Awareness Course.
- Two members travelled to Roscrea to assist the Civil Defence Branch in assessing Emergency First Responder (EFR) examinations. The examinations were recorded at Civil Defence bases throughout the country and submitted electronically to the Branch for assessment.
- Senior members held interviews for potential recruits for Clare Civil Defence. A total of 15 candidates were interviewed.

CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Work continued throughout September across the range of Capital Projects being managed by the PMO with a number of significant milestones being achieved. The following is the up-to-date position on the key projects.

Access to UL/upgrade to walkway along the Errinagh Canal

Following a retender, the submissions have been received and assessed for the proposed pedestrian access from the Burlington Factory to UL along the Canal Bank. The contract documents are being finalised and the preferred contractor is in the process of being appointed. Construction works are due to commence in mid-October and, in preparation for same, treatment of invasive plants has been carried out.

Doolin Pier Visitor Services Building

Following the easing of the Covid-19 restrictions, the Project Team reconvened in mid-September to develop the detailed design and commence the preparation of the documentation required for the various statutory consents. The Council is aiming to submit a planning application at the earliest juncture possible and, to this end, the Project Team have been tasked with reviewing and revising the various works required with a view to finalising an updated programme for delivery of the scheme.

Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme

Works are progressing well along the riverbank with the sheet

pile flood defence works being carried out on two sections simultaneously during the month of September. The defences are sub-divided into four different sections for piling and design reasons.

- Section 1 is 80 per cent complete with the remaining work to be completed in the coming weeks. Work has commenced on the replacement and upgrade of the sluice at this location.
- Section 2 is 95 per cent complete. Works are still required regarding cutting the piles to their required finish level along with installing the pile cap. These works will be progressed over the coming weeks.
- Section 3 work is programmed to commence in October.
- Section 4 is 80 per cent complete.

In addition to the above, ancillary works to the newly installed culvert from St Flannan's were also progressed during the month. Resurfacing works have now been completed at the St Flannan's roundabout along with the close-out of the majority of snag items for this element of the scheme. The project is on course to be completed in August 2021.

Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake's Corner)

The closing date for receipt of submissions relating to the Compulsory Purchase Order for the Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake's Corner) was September 18th. A number of submissions were received and these are now being considered by An Bord Pleanála.

Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass

The Project Steering Group led by Clare County Council and comprising representatives from Tipperary County Council, RPS Consulting Engineers and the Department of Transport Inspector continue to meet virtually on a regular basis as we come closer to reaching the significant milestone of publishing the tender for the main work.

The detail design phase of the project is now substantially complete and tender documentation is currently being finalised by our scheme consultants, RPS. In line with Department requirements for Major Capital Works, the technical design is being independently checked by COWI while the draft tender documentation is being checked by Staveleys with a view to publishing the tender later in the year. In parallel, PMO staff are extremely busy in managing the completion of a number of key requirements of the project. These include:

- Suitably Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) assessment is currently ongoing where expressions of interest were received in late August 2020 from a number of national and international contractors. A shortlist of suitably experienced contractors will be drawn up and subsequently invited to tender for the Main Works Contract.
- Given the seasonal constraints, in advance of the main works, we are also progressing a number of advance works contracts. These consist of bat roost construction, invasive species treatment, utility diversions and enabling works, including site clearance and fencing. These works will be commencing in early November and will progress over the winter months and into spring 2021.
- In order to facilitate the completion of the advanced works contracts, Clare County Council intends to issue a scheme-wide Notice to Enter in late early October 2020. This notice is issued to all landowners to inform them of the intention by the statutory authority and its agents to enter and take possession of the lands as confirmed by the CPO in advance of the contracts outlined above.
- Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd were appointed on 17th September for the provision of archaeological consultancy services required in advance of the construction of the proposed main works contract. A prestart meeting has been held with the appointed contractor and works are programmed to commence on site on Monday, 12th October.
- Significant progress has been made in completing land acquisition deals, with the majority of agreements anticipated to be in place by the end of 2020. These will be concluded in the main by agreement, with a small number through the arbitration process.

Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme

Recently commissioned topographical and CCTV surveys are now completed and the resultant data will allow our project consultants JBA/JB Barry to start building the hydraulic model for the scheme. Additional coastal studies were identified as being required and the contract for these works will be awarded in the coming days, following which the works will be carried out at the earliest opportunity during suitable weather and tidal conditions. A specialist subcontractor has been engaged for the treatment of Japanese knotweed, which is due to commence in the first week of October. Following the launch of the project information video and the newspaper and radio advertisements,

a small number of comments from the public were received, generally concerned with water quality/Blue Flag status and the current sewerage scheme in Kilkee. The submissions are currently being reviewed and responses will issue shortly.

Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR)

The steering group comprising Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council and ROD/AECOM continue to meet (virtually) fortnightly. We are liaising with the National Transport Authority (NTA) regarding the necessary data to enable the traffic modelling required and close out of the appraisal stage. Meetings are being arranged with the Department of Transport and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) for the end of October.

Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)

The Part VIII planning permission for the road element was confirmed at the September Council meeting subject to a number of conditions. Following the standstill period, we will be in a position to complete the detailed design. In preparation for same, ground investigation works are expected to commence mid-November, which will inform the final design for the proposed link road. Concurrently, negotiations for land acquisition and accommodation works will also commence with the various landowners affected by the new road. It is hoped that these will be concluded by agreement where possible. In regard to the housing element, work continues with a number of stakeholders on how best to deliver the much needed housing and to this end, a number of options are being examined to determine the appropriate housing mix and density for the site.

N19 Shannon Airport Access Road

The Project Team of Clare County Council, Midwest Regional Road Design Office, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), Shannon Airport Authority, Fehily Timoney and Associates/Clandillon Civil Consulting continue to meet (virtually) every month. Following TII approval, Apex Surveys are expected to commence the non-intrusive utility surveys on site in the coming weeks.

Phase Two (Options Selection) is currently ongoing. A constraints study area has been identified for the scheme and a study has been completed to determine the nature and extent of natural and artificial constraints. A number of preliminary route corridors have been developed which take cognisance of the identified constraints. These preliminary route corridors are currently being appraised. An important attribute of Phase Two is the facilitation of stakeholder engagement through public consultation. Obviously, we have to be mindful of Covid-19 restrictions and the absolute need to host a safe means of public engagement, therefore the public engagement is being managed using the project website, in combination with local media advertisements and the distribution of a project brochure throughout the study area. The first public consultation is expected to take place in Q3 2020.

N85 Upgrade at Kilnamona

Following a scope change to this proposed project and the associated costs estimate involved, we need to appoint technical advisors to progress the works. We have written to Transport Infrastructure

Ireland requesting same and await their approval to appoint consultants either from their framework or through open competition.

Shannon Town and Environs Flood Relief Scheme

Progress on this project continues. The first coordination meeting between consultants on the Shannon T&E FRS (RPS Consulting) and the N19 Shannon Airport Access Road (Fehily Timoney) was held remotely on Monday, 28th September. Bi-monthly coordination meetings are planned for the foreseeable future in order to manage interfaces between the projects, assist in sharing of information and coordination of submissions to ABP where necessary. Data collection for the scheme is nearing completion. A meeting was held last week with the geotechnical team relating to the condition of the existing estuary embankments, the outcome of which will inform scheme consultants RPS who are currently preparing the scoping document for the ground investigation contract. Other activities planned to commence in October include the digitisation of the existing storm water drainage network, water level and flow monitoring and also the launch of the project specific website.

Springfield, Clonlara

Following the lodgement of the planning application by Clare County Council to An Bord Pleanála in July of this year, the deadline for submissions has now elapsed. A number of submissions were received by the Board and these are now being considered by ABP, after which we await their decision. Meanwhile, work is continuing on the final design and, to this end, ground investigation works have been commissioned.

Asbestos Remediation Programme

We are in ongoing discussion with the EPA in relation to this project and held another (virtual) meeting with them in recent weeks to discuss our next steps towards the permanent

remediation of the sites. The EPA confirmed that they are satisfied with our actions to date and that the sites do not pose a risk subject to ongoing monitoring and maintenance as required pending the permanent remediation works being carried out. As the costs will be significant, a phased approach for delivery of remediation works is currently being investigated. A meeting with the Southern Region Waste Management Office has been arranged to discuss possible funding streams to carry out the necessary works. In the meantime, the sites will continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Minor Works Flood Relief Schemes

The minor flood relief scheme at Ballycorick, Ballynacally, is now practically complete. The new headwall, sluice and associated pipework have been installed and the flood protection embankment reinstated. Land reinstatement and snagging remain to be done. The scheme will give increased protection to a large area of agricultural lands from the Shannon Estuary and mitigate flooding on the regional road. Work has also been completed on the Gort na n-Úll scheme at Sixmilebridge, which now provides additional protection to a number of dwelling houses at the location.

West Clare Railway Greenway

Clare County Council in consultation with Aecom are finalising the Preliminary Strategic Assessment Report (SAR), which is a requirement of the newly named Department of Transport (DoT) formerly known as DTTAS. The SAR assesses the information gathered during Phases 0 and 1 of the project, namely the Project Brief, Project Appraisal Plan, Constraints Study and Ecological Desk-top Study. In parallel, we are progressing the preparation of the tender documentation to engage technical consultants for the Statutory Consent Phase of the development (Phases 2-4) for the 20km section between Kilrush and Kilkee. Stakeholder and Landowner consultation is continuing and we would welcome engagement and correspondence from all interested or affected parties.

ENVIRONMENT

Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to be a challenging time for the delivery of essential front-line services in the Environment Section. Early in the outbreak the Environment Section developed a Business Continuity Plan that would enable us to continue to provide the community with essential services such as waste management, pollution incident management, monitoring and sampling, where required, of water and wastewater systems. A list of essential services was identified and appropriate resources allocated to ensure continuity.

Environmental Awareness

An Taisce National Spring Clean 2020 and Clean Coast 2020

Spring Clean 2020 has teamed up with Clean Coast to provide clean-up kits to groups who want to arrange local clean-ups in their own time. An Taisce has advised that there is no time limit for groups to carry out clean-ups. Clare County Council will

further support clean-ups for those groups that registered under National Spring Clean 2020 with the provision of free passes to our waste transfer facilities up until the end of the year.

Promotion and awareness

A targeted Greener Clare Facebook promotion took place in September promoting responsible dog ownership.

The Leave No Trace Ireland “Love This Place, Leave No Trace” campaign also continued with targeted social media promotion on a countywide basis. This was further supported with an advert in *The Clare Echo*. Promotion of correct disposal of face-masks, wipes and gloves continued this month. The public were also encouraged to choose reusable face masks over single use. Graphics were made available through mywaste.ie to support this message. This message was further supported with two newspaper adverts in *The Clare Echo* during September. The Rotary Ireland School Bikes for Africa Anti-Dumping Initiative project was also publicised through social and print media.

River catchments

The Local Authorities Water Programme (LAWPRO) online community information evenings for the Carrigaholt (Moyarta) River Catchment, the Lickeen Lake and Ballymacraven River Catchments were promoted on social media. Both these catchments are Prioritised Areas for Action (PAA) for focused water quality improvements.

Laboratory and Technical Support

River Monitoring Programme 2020

Clare County Council is required to collect 295 river water samples in 2020. The calendar for sampling was agreed with the EPA in December last with the sampling spread evenly over the 12 months. After the suspension of sampling in April due to Covid-19, the river sampling programme resumed in May and has continued as normal since.

IW SLA

Clare County Council is required to sample and analyse all public water supplies. The level of monitoring required is agreed with Irish Water and is based on the population served. The full range of compliance monitoring is now back to normal taking account of social distancing and safety as per Government guidelines. Sampling of domestic houses is still not permitted and new locations have to be sourced in several cases.

Group Water Schemes (GWS) and Small Private Supplies

Clare County Council is the competent authority for regulating private water supplies and undertakes in excess of 270 samples from these supplies each year. Monitoring is spread throughout the year. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, access to domestic houses is not permitted so additional and new locations will be sourced which are to the satisfaction of the EPA.

Wastewater Treatment Plants

Laboratory staff in conjunction with area based technicians monitor all licensed and certified discharges for compliance with their discharge limits. In Clare, monitoring varies from monthly to twice-yearly, based on population served. Monitoring is spread throughout the year.

Section 4 Discharge Licences

As hotels and seasonal commercial operations are back operating after the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, a number of premises were inspected and samples taken to assess compliance with discharge licence requirements. The non-seasonal commercial discharges will be inspected in the coming months to assess compliance with their discharge licences.

Historic Landfill

The Tier 3 Environmental Risk Assessment for the closed landfill site at Kilrush was completed in September. This will now be assessed and recommendations implemented.

Bathing Waters

The bathing season came to an end in the middle of September. The second half of the season was particularly challenging due to several intensive rainfall events. As was well publicised there were a number of bathing restrictions placed on several of Clare's premier bathing spots.

The notices ranged from Prior Warning, Advisory to Prohibition notices and were put in place to protect public health as a result of increased bacterial loads detected in the bathing water. The increased bacteria in the bathing water was as a direct result of intensive rainfall within the catchment of streams and rivers which discharge onto or in close proximity to the bathing areas. The bacteria are washed off the land, are from a number of sources which are funnelled into the streams and ultimately into the bathing water.

Water and Scientific Services

Water Pollution Complaints

A total of 86 complaints (Section 4 licensed sites, wastewater and agriculture) have been received to date in 2020. Enforcement notices/letters were issued where required under the Water Pollution Acts and the Good Agriculture Practice Regulations 2017 as amended. Further inspections will be carried to ensure that actions recommended in the notices are carried out.

National Inspection Programme of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (DWWTS-Septic Tanks)

A total of 39 inspections are required in 2020. Up to the end of September, 19 inspections have been carried out in West, East and North Clare catchment areas. The remaining inspections will be carried out between now and the end of the year. The EPA will be notified of the inspections.

Planning referrals from Planning Department

Compliance is achieved through inter-department referrals of planning reports. To date this year, 250 reports have been prepared and submitted by environmental staff to the planning section. Assessment and recommendations were made in order to minimise potential water pollution. In addition, 45 forestry applications have been processed. Three staff from the team are completing Site Suitability Training course in compliance with the EPA Code of Practice for Single Houses 2009.

Lake Sampling Programme 2020

TMS Environmental are continuing the Water Framework Directive (WFD) lake monitoring programme up to the end of September. All samples are transported to the EPA laboratory Castlebar for analysis.

Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan

Staff from this team liaised with LAWPRO staff in September in finalising the proposed Areas for Actions list for the county, which were submitted to the EPA Catchment unit for assessment. Clare County Council plays a vital role in ensuring the relevant areas are included for the planning of the third cycle of the River Basin Management Plan which will be compiled at an EPA Workshop in October.

LAWPRO hosted two community meetings in the catchment of Lickeen and Carrigaholt (Priority Areas of Action) where they will be carrying out catchment investigations in the coming months.

Ballyduff Beg Waste Landfill Licence Monitoring Requirements

Weekly sampling of surface water ponds carried out, all monitoring data is uploaded to EDEN in order that the EPA can see that that licence monitoring compliances are fulfilled.

A weekly update on green waste processing at the Central Waste management Facility (CWMF) was submitted to Cré (Composting Association of Ireland).

Gardening

With the arrival of autumn and the drop in temperatures, routine winter maintenance has commenced around the county, with hedge cutting, pruning of shrubs and bedding preparation being completed at various locations.

National Tree Week, which had been postponed earlier in the year due to Covid-19, was carried out in Clare during September with a total of 32 groups collecting trees from the Gardening Depot, Gort Road, Ennis. These native trees will be planted by volunteers and community groups at various public and open spaces around the county in the coming weeks.

Site clearance works for the Remembrance Garden at the Áras also commenced during September.

Waste Management

Recycling Centres and Bring Banks

All sites continue to be well used around the county. Recycling centre staff have noticed customers who used the facilities for the first time during lockdown, continuing to return to the various sites on a regular basis. Usage for the bring banks is still up on this time last year with an increase of 15 per cent noted for September.

Doora Landfill

To continue to achieve compliance with the landfill licence conditions new signage has been erected at sampling points in Doora Landfill.

The footpath improvement tender was awarded to Askeaton Paving in early September under the ORIS funding grant.

Natural grass pathways have been widened and extended around the site throughout September. This will further enhance the amenity value of the site and will encourage more users to explore the natural surrounds.

Waste Enforcement

Anti-Dumping Initiative

ADI funding continues to be spent on the following projects:

Bikes to Africa: The Rotary Ireland School Bikes to Africa project is running well, with over 100 suitable bikes already donated since the project was launched. The first 100 bikes are due to be transported to the open prison at Shelton Abbey, County Wicklow, for refurbishment.

Members of the public can continue to donate their used mountain bikes to this worthy scheme over the coming weeks.

Site Security: A clean-up was done and fencing is being erected at the rear of a housing estate in Kilcornan, Ennistymon. This piece of ground had been prone to dumping and stockpiling of rubbish for burning. ADI funding is being used to secure the council-owned site and make it inaccessible for such activity going forward.

Household Hazardous Waste Amnesty Day: A Household Hazardous Waste Amnesty Day is being held at the Central Waste Management Facility at Ballyduffbeg, Inagh, on Saturday,



Household Hazardous Waste Amnesty Day on 10th October.

10th October. Members of the public can dispose free of charge of their paint, pesticides and other household waste chemicals.

Removal of Tyres at 12 O'clock Hills: The 12 O'clock Hills committee have developed an extension of the existing walking trails at Belvoir, Kilkishen, known as the purple loop. One section of this new walk went through an area of ground which had a large amount of waste tyres which had been dumped there over time. Clare County Council and a local contractor organised to remove the tyres and clean up the section of the walk. We also provided bags and litter pickers to the committee to enable them carry out daily litter picks.

Environmental Monitoring (Illegal Dumping/Litter)

The Waste Enforcement Team continued to respond to waste and litter-related complaints in September, with a total of 268 complaints relating to litter and waste received in September, of these complaints 182 have been closed already. Eight litter fines were issued in September. The fines are still within the allotted timeframe for payment and we will continue to monitor this to ensure compliance.

RMCEI Plan

In line with the RMCEI plan, the Waste Enforcement Team continues to carry out planned inspections. Tyre facilities were the focus of planned inspections for September.

Enforcement Notices

We have issued two Notices under Section 9 of the Litter Pollution Act and two Notices were issued under Section 14 of the Waste Management Act during September. We will follow up in due course to ensure corrective action is taken.

Waste Management bye-laws

During September, the Waste Enforcement Team continued to carry out surveys of homes and businesses to ensure compliance with the Waste Management bye-laws. This aims to ensure that there is appropriate disposal of waste to one of Clare's five civic amenity sites, waste transfer stations or by an authorised collector.

WATER SERVICES

Annual Service Plan

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to be a challenging time for the delivery of essential front-line water services across the county.

The Water Services Department of Clare County Council continues to deliver the water services function as per the Service Level Agreement with Irish Water. The monthly key performance indicators (KPIs) continue to be monitored by all of the water services teams to achieve required targets.

Water and waste water operations

The following statistics provide an indication of the level of activity/work being carried out by the water and waste water teams throughout the county from 28th August, 2020, up to and including 29th September, 2020. The figures do not, however, reflect the time invested by the teams which is required to resolve each complaint/issue.

- 24 Customer Complaints were dealt with and closed out
- Five Emergency Work Orders were received during the timeframe
- 360 Reactive Maintenance Work Orders were dealt with and closed out
- 0 Customer Asset Flooding Work Orders were received
- 214 Service Requests (SRs) were raised for Field Requests and Follow On Work Orders for Reactive Maintenance work
- 53 Outage Notices were placed on the IW portal during the period.

Water operations

During September, there were 48 outages placed on the Irish Water reporting portal, which generates a notice to consumers of both planned and unplanned interruptions to their water supply.

There were 42 unplanned outages primarily consisting of emergency water main burst repairs at the following locations:

East Clare Area – 9 outages	Bursts at various locations in Newmarket-on-Fergus, Bunratty/Cratloe (M18) and Kilkishen, with significant repairs required at Ardnacrusha
Mid Clare Area – 5 outages	Bursts at various locations in Clarecastle and Abbey Street, with a number of repairs required at Showgrounds Road and Golf Links Drive
West Clare Area – 28 outages	A significant burst repair was undertaken on the 750mm trunk main from New Doolough WTP to Moneypoint Power Station, at Creegh, affecting the entire Supply Zone. Other significant bursts occurred at Ballyvaghan, Station Rd Lehinch, and Coolmeen Rd Killadysert. At identified mains rehabilitation locations, there were again repeated repairs at Tullabrack, Doonbeg, and Mullagh-Milltown Malbay. Leak repairs at additional locations such as Bog Road, Kilmihil, resulted in reduction to unaccounted-for water.

The remaining unplanned outages were as follows:

- Watermain flushing maintenance – West Clare Area
- ESB Power Interruption at Craggaunowen Pump Station
- Pump Station/Reservoir interruption at Moveen – Loop Head.

There were three planned water supply outages to facilitate the following works:

- Leak Detection works within Doolin DMA
- GWS Bulk Meter Replacement at Clooneen, Kilfenora
- New GWS Water Pump Station installation at Dough, Lehinch.

Water conservation

In September, the Find Crews continued water conservation activity throughout the county reacting to various increases in demand primarily in Ennis (Courthouse and Clon Road) and Shannon areas (Ballycasey, Shannon Freezone) including the Newmarket district metering area.

The Find and Fix Crews concentrated activities in East and North Clare with leaks repaired in Scarriff and the Ardnacrusha district metering areas. Leak detection find works are currently taking place in Doolin and Bellharbour DMAs.

Waste water operations

Preparatory works are underway in Clonroadmore waste water treatment plant to facilitate the installation of new sludge pressing and handling equipment.

Irish Water capital programme

Shannon Waste Water Treatment Plant Interim upgrade

Ward and Burke commenced work on site on 1st January, 2020. Construction work is continuing on the WWTP with works to 4 No pump stations also scheduled to commence in early November 2020. Commissioning works will commence in October with diversion of flow to the new industrial stream. The full project including testing and commissioning is scheduled for completion in March 2021.

Kilrush Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

A new waste water treatment plant, rising main and upgrade of the existing Frances St pumping station are proposed in Kilrush. EPS were awarded the contract under the IW Early Contractor Involvement framework to design and build the works. A Site Investigation Contract (to determine ground conditions and locate utilities) is substantially complete. Detailed design is ongoing. Construction is expected to commence mid 2021 with completion late 2022.

Clarecastle Agglomeration Upgrade

Under Irish Water's UTAS the waste water collected at Quay Rd pumping station will be diverted via a new waste water pipeline to Clareabbey WwTP.

Workshop No 4 was held on 25th September, 2020. Further site investigation is planned on Quay Road, Clarecastle. The design is being finalised and IW expects to issue a tender for the

full project before the end of 2020. IW plans to commence construction of the advance section of the rising main early in 2021 with the remaining works following on during 2021. Works at Clareabbey WWTP are required before flows can be diverted from Clarecastle.

Liscannor Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

A new waste water treatment plant, pumping station, rising main and gravity sewer are proposed for Liscannor. The design/build contract was awarded to EPS in January 2020 under the IW Early Contractor Involvement framework.

A Site Investigation Contract has been completed at the WWTP site, the pump station site and on public roads. Detailed design is on going. The project is expected to go to construction in mid-2021 with completion late 2022.

Ballyvaughan Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

A new waste water treatment plant, pumping station including pipework extensions are proposed in Ballyvaughan. The Landowner/Way leave/CPO and the detailed design process is ongoing by EPS. No date for an Oral Hearing has been set as yet. The expectation is to go to construction late 2021 with completion mid 2023. Site Investigation and on site surveys at the WWTP site, pump station site and rising main route have been completed. Detailed design is ongoing.

Kilkee Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

A Design Summary Report has been prepared by the consultants in June 2020 in relation to construction of a WWTP. Drafting of a Project Brief has commenced and will to be issued to EPS, the design/build contractor. The site selection process is not yet finalised. A planning application is expected to be lodged in late 2021. The project is expected to go to construction in late 2022 with completion late 2024.

Ennistymon and Lahinch Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

The Feasibility Study Report was produced by Mott McDonald Consulting Engineers for various options including combining Ennistymon and Lahinch treatment and the Report was reviewed by Irish Water. Ennistymon and Lahinch Site Selection Report is underway and constraints mapping has been produced. The project constraints were discussed at a meeting in mid-September and the consultants were asked to include the West Clare Railway and the infrastructure safeguards on the constraints mapping for both Ennistymon and Lahinch.

Newmarket-on-Fergus Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

It is proposed to construct a new pumped rising main which would outfall to the Rine River thereby ceasing discharge of primary effluent from the existing WWTP to Lough Gash. A Design Inception Report and outfall route selection have been prepared. In the next phase of the project site investigation, ecological studies, licences, wayleaves and planning application documents will have to be undertaken/ prepared. A Foreshore Licence and Discharge Licence review will be required. A site investigation is required along the rising main route which includes the R458. The Site Investigation contracts will be issued for tender by mid-October. It is anticipated that construction could commence in mid-2022 with completion by mid-2023.

Kilfenora WWTP Upgrade

It is proposed to upgrade the existing Kilfenora WWTP, reuse the existing treated effluent rising main to the current discharge point and construct a new percolation area at this site. Planning permission has been granted. Landowner negotiations are ongoing. The CPO was published in *The Clare Champion* dated 14th August, 2020, and can be viewed at the Ennistymon Area Office. Site investigation and detailed design are underway. Construction is planned to commence in June, 2021.

Asset Transfer

375 water and waste water assets, in County Clare, have been identified for potential transfer to IW to date. Of these, 50 are non-operational assets (prior to January 2014) and as such will not be transferring to Irish Water, leaving 325 for transfer. Of these 325 assets, 187 have now been transferred to IW.

The remaining 138 assets are broken down as follows:

- Pending – 18 assets are being prepared for transfer to Irish Water in the coming months. Some of these assets will have to be subdivided by map/plan. Once a consensus has been reached on the remaining assets with both IW and Clare County Council, a CE order will issue thereafter.
- National Special Projects Office (NSPO) – This is a department within Irish Water dealing with special projects which includes facilitating the Asset Transfers from Local Authorities – four assets are with the NSPO for investigation to ascertain if they are to be considered as underground assets. Underground assets are transferred by S.I. 13 of 2015. When they are approved IW will issue a letter to Clare County Council confirming their approval. Note that underground assets, i.e. all water mains and sewers (other than storm water sewers) and any related accessories, and all pipes, waterworks and waste water works that are located under land, along with any related accessories, were vested in IW by S.I. No. 13 of 2015.
- Property Registration Authority Ireland – No assets have gone to the PRAI to be subdivided.
- Third-party/unregistered assets – Of the 138 assets, 116 have been identified as third-party registered lands (99) and unregistered lands (17).

4 No. third-party assets located in the Ennis Municipal District have transferred to Irish Water and others are under review. Surveys are underway on third-party assets in West Clare MD.

An application for first registration was lodged with the PRAI in September and they have requested additional information in relation to this application. Detailed discussions are taking place between Irish Water's legal team and the Asset Transfer Section to deal with the complex issues arising.

New Vehicle Fleet

Clare County Council are transitioning their water services fleet to vehicles supplied by Irish Water under the Service Level Agreement. The new fleet vehicles are specially fitted out to cater for the demands of the waterservices personnel and will enhance the delivery of water services.

Rural Water Programme

Under the 2019-2021 Multi Annual Rural Water Programme works have been substantially completed on the installation

of booster pumps for the Dough Group Water Scheme in Lahinch. Works have also been substantially completed on the installation of booster pumps on the Castlequarter-Ballinphonta GWS in Cratloe. The above works shall resolve pressure issues being experienced by scheme members and also form works required to facilitate the submission of taking in charge applications for the schemes.

Works have commenced on the Feenagh GWS with the replacement of their full network of 4.6km of mains in early September. Works are due to carry through to mid-November. On completion, a taking in charge application shall be submitted to Irish Water on behalf of the scheme. The Rural Water Programme continues to endeavour in encouraging schemes approved under the programme to undertake works at the earliest opportunity.

7 No. schemes have been taken in charge by Irish Water in September. Ballynote GWS (Kilrush), Ballyvannon GWS (Tuamgraney), Kiltannon GWS (Tulla) and Rhynagonnaught – The Quay GWS (Doonbeg) have been taken in charge under the standard taken in charge process.

Drummeen GWS (Clonlara), Knockatinty GWS (Kilkishen) and Castlefergus No. 2 GWS (Quin) have been taken in charge under the orphan taking in charge process. The orphan taking in charge process permits the taking in charge of schemes where there is no longer a committee present on the scheme and there are less than 15 connections.

An additional 3 No. schemes submitted by Clare County Council have not been progressed by Irish Water at this current time due to funding constraints. It is hoped that they will progress in late 2020/early 2021. Irish Water have confirmed they will not be progressing the taking in charge of any further schemes other than the aforementioned until mid-2021 due to funding issues.

Following on from new grant conditions for the ‘Grant for the Improvements to a Private Water Supply to a House’ there has been a marked increase in the number of applications being submitted. To date in 2020, there have been 68 applications which are assessed under the Rural Water Programme. The Rural Water Team continues to work with group water schemes to ensure their members have a robust and sustainable quality and quantity supply of water available to them.

ENNIS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Temporary Covid-19 Town Centre Mobility Plan Update



The Cloister/GAA car park is now open.

From Thursday, 24th September 2020, the hours of operation of the traffic re-routing measures of the Town Centre Mobility Plan changed from 11:00am to 6:00pm, Monday to Saturday. This decision was following a review of the plan which examined traffic flows, footfall activity, the progression of the Covid-19 pandemic, and took account of all submissions to Clare County Council. This amendment was made to facilitate persons with reduced mobility to access the town using their vehicle. Businesses are also encouraged to facilitate this vulnerable group during these hours.

The Cloister/GAA car park is now open in close proximity to the town. This is to provide additional parking adjacent to the town centre. It will operate from 8:00am to 6:30pm, Monday to Saturday. Business parking permit holders are encouraged to avail of the parking in this area. The car park is also available

for use by the general public. Ennis MD would like to thank Clare GAA and Patrick Keogh for the use of their lands for the provision of temporary car parking.

A parklet using age-friendly seating has been installed on O’Connell Street. This is in response to submissions received on the plan, outlining that persons with reduced mobility were unable to walk for long periods. The parklet is a modular unit, and is made from 100 per cent recycled plastic.



New bicycle stands have been installed at Bank Place and on Bindon Street.

New VMS signage has been installed at Francis Street to warn large vehicles not to proceed to the junction where they will not be able to take the turn during the period of pedestrianisation.

Roadworks Programme

Footpath construction was carried out at the grotto in Marian Avenue following a request to Ennis Municipal District to replace the existing path that had steps, thus making the grotto more accessible to all.

Works are ongoing to improve footpath and drainage at Ballymacahill, Barefield.

Emergency road strengthening works were carried out recently in Kilfilum where the road verge had completely worn away and the road was in danger of collapsing into the adjacent watercourse. Additional fencing was added as a safety measure.

Road overlays were recently completed in Cloughleigh, Turnpike, Ballaghboy and Cusack Road.

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Clare Economic Taskforce

The Clare Economic Taskforce met on 25th September. Chaired by Noel Kilkenny, the meeting topics ranged from the forthcoming Ennis 2040 and Shannon Town Centre Masterplans to matters relating to the green economy, Shannon Airport and the draft Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS). Liam Conneally, Director of Service, presented on a number of the topics discussed and a series of action items resulted. The next meeting is scheduled for December. Updates on the work of the Taskforce will be presented at regular briefings to full Council.

Future Mobility Campus Ireland (FMCI)

The Council is a partner in the Future Mobility Campus Ireland (FMCI) initiative. This Enterprise Ireland-funded project is Ireland's first future mobility campus which will act as a testbed facility for autonomous vehicles across a 4km road network in the Shannon Free Zone and Limerick City. Updates on the FMCI project will be presented to the Economic Development SPC.

STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PROJECTS

Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy

The draft Ennis 2040 Strategy was presented to the Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee on 28th September and was well received by those in attendance. It is envisaged that the Strategy will be presented to the full Council in October, following which a formal launch will be held in October 2020.

Works on setting up an Ennis 2040 Strategy implementation structure continue. This will be critical to the delivery of the projects identified under the Strategy.

discussions took place on the establishment of a SDZ. In the coming month further engagement will take place to prepare for the making of an application to seek the designation of the UL South Clare SDZ by the new Government.

University of Limerick (UL)/ South Clare – Strategic Development Zone

During the month of September, Clare County Council met with Keirsten Mey, interim President of UL, where advanced

Roche (Clarecastle) Masterplan

The Council continues to work with Roche Management on the development of a masterplan for the future use of this strategically important Clarecastle site, which is also one of the sites identified in the Ennis 2040 Strategy.

Spatial and Economic Masterplan for Shannon Town Centre

This Masterplan, which is funded under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) and Clare County Council, will drive the economic future and spatial pattern for the centre of Shannon Town, and is now mid-way through the master planning exercise. The appointed consultants BDP made a presentation to staff on the outputs from the plan to date on 24th September and it is anticipated that the plan will be finalised by year end.

LIVING SHANNON - One Shannon



FORWARD PLANNING

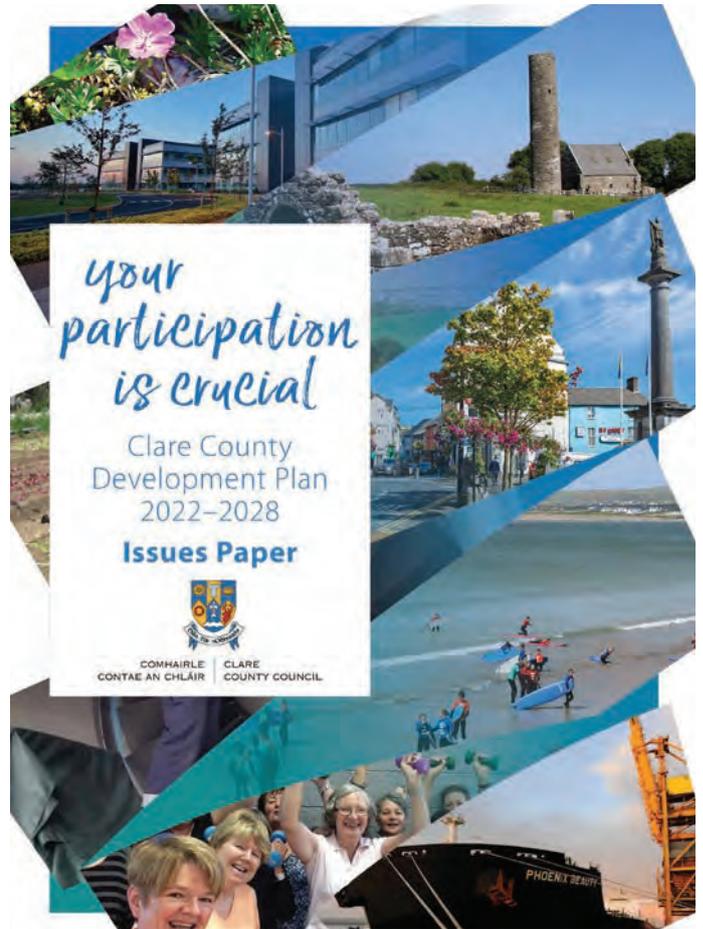
Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028

The preparation of a new Clare County Development Plan for the period 2022-2028 officially commenced with the placing of a public notice in local media on 18th September, 2020. This signifies the start of the first stage of the statutory two-year plan-making process and the commencement of the Pre-Draft public consultation period, which runs for a period of eight weeks from 18th September, 2020, until 16th November, 2020. During this time written submissions and observations can be made to the Planning Department and a range of initiatives are underway to encourage individuals, communities, schools, businesses and stakeholders to become involved at the earliest stage in the process and help plan for the future of the county.

As part of the Pre-Draft consultation stage of the process, all primary and second-level schools have been contacted seeking their students' participation in the process and materials have been provided to them in the form of workbooks, maps, etc. to facilitate and stimulate their thinking. A number of schools have already responded positively in terms of participating in the project.

To encourage public participation in the plan-making process and to especially encourage young people to get involved and have a say in the plan preparation process, the Planning Department has engaged with 18 post-primary schools and 113 primary schools and developed a class project aimed at transition-year and sixth-class students. The aim of which is to stimulate students' interest in their local area and also in the Local Government system, and will culminate in feedback sheets with students vision for their area/county up to the period 2028. The school project submissions will feed into the development of new polices in the County Development Plan.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the format for public consultation is tailored to try to maximise engagement as much as possible online to ensure accessibility to information as well as awareness on how to make submissions/observations. A dedicated webpage has been developed for the Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 which provides information on the process and how to become involved and participate. A Strategic Issues Paper and online video have been produced



Clare County Development Plan Issues Paper.

by the Forward Planning Team and can be viewed on the Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 webpage (<https://clarecdp2022-2028.clarecoco.ie>). The use of the Council's social media is also playing an essential role in reaching out to encourage participation in this process.

A public consultation event is being held in the atrium of Áras Contae an Chláir on Thursday, 1st October, 2020, between 2:00pm and 8:00pm, which will be by appointment only and subject to government guidance regarding Covid-19.



Development Plan stages.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

The table below summarises the activity in relation to planning applications and planning enforcement during the month of September and also gives the year to date totals..

Development management	September 2020	Year to date 2020
Planning applications		
No. of planning applications received	94	777
No. of planning decisions made	105	838
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	3	33
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	27	220
No. of Section 5 applications	5	44
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications	7	39
Submissions received regarding compliance	27	334
Planning enforcement		
No. of new complaints received	21	149
No of files opened	16	104
No. of Warning Letters issued	12	98
No. of Enforcement Notices served	0	8
No. of Legal Cases initiated	0	0
No. of Enforcement files closed	13	106

TAKING IN CHARGE

The Taking in Charge team continue to progress remedial work contracts on a number of housing estates, several of these have now been completed and there are others with minor works to be carried out, as outlined in the table below. It is planned that all these contracts will be completed before year end.

Estate	Update regarding remedial works
Mount Clare, Claremount, Clarecastle	Remedial works 95% complete.
Craglands/Crag Ard, Ballynacally	Remedial works 90% complete.
Boheraroan, Newmarket-on-Fergus	Remedial works 95% complete.
Gort na mBláth/Rathban/Lios Ard, Tulla Rd, Ennis	One minor issue to be completed.
Dun Aras/Cluain Alainn/Dun Aras Ave/Ballycasey Ave, Shannon	Remedial works are ongoing.
Gort Leamhan, Ennis	Remedial works 90% complete.
Tir an Fhia, Kilkishen	Remedial works 90% complete.
Clochan na Mara and Blackthorn Drive, Liscannor	The contractor commenced remedial works on 2nd September, 2020.
Woodstock View and Woodstock Hill, Shanaway Road	Tenders for the remedial works have been received and appointment of a contractor is currently being assessed.
Cluainin, Shannon	Tenders for remedial works to complete construction of road and footpaths connecting Cluainin to Inbhear na Sionna were issued on 15th September, 2020, and the closing date for receipt of tenders is 5th October, 2020.

A total of eight estates were taken in charge during the month of September, two in West Clare Municipal District, four in Ennis Municipal District and two in Shannon Municipal District.

HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2020

Even though the timelines were tight there was a lot of interest and applications from Clare communities for the Heritage Council's Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2020.

The Monument Fund

The recently announced Monument Fund by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht had very tight timelines and was over-subscribed from interested monument owners in County Clare.

Reading your Local Landscape courses

The Reading your Local Landscape courses in both the Burren and Kilkishen areas that were 'paused' due to Covid-19 will be resumed in early October with all the previous participants expected to continue the course. This is a joint initiative between Clare County Council and the Limerick Clare Education Board. Arrangements are being put in place to restart the training with a Covid-19 risk assessment and response plan in place.

Clare Holy Wells Audit

Michael Houlihan and Tony Kirby continue to populate the Holy Well Survey for County Clare with over 155 of the 241 Holy Wells in the Record of Monuments and Places for County Clare surveyed to date. The resulting comprehensive database of information includes a focus on the less well known or unrecorded Holy Wells or those not in present use. The audit is raising awareness and knowledge of the rich heritage associated with Holy Wells and their settings.

Demonstration Sites for Biodiversity Management

Reports are being finalised for the 10 Demonstration Sites for Biodiversity Management that have been surveyed, species list compiled and the relevant people who manage these sites consulted, working in partnership with the Municipal Districts and the local community. The €7,000 in funding from the National Biodiversity Action Plan Funding will allow for the continuation of this project in 2020 where new sites and communities will be involved. This will allow for further assistance to be provided

to the existing 10 demonstration sites in addition to work on further sites in Shannon and Ennis. It is intended that a series of information webinars will be undertaken before the end of the year.

The County Clare Swift Survey

The final Clare Swift Survey report has been prepared with only 56 breeding pairs found in Ennis, Shannon, Tuamgraney, Killaloe, Kilrush, Quin, Whitegate and Lemanagh. The final report makes general and specific local recommendations for further action. The Council will continue to work with local communities and residents to erect swifts nest boxes in suitable locations and new civic buildings where possible. For more information please visit: [www.clarecoco.ie/your-council/\[news\]/clare-swift-survey-2020-to-take-place-this-summer.html](http://www.clarecoco.ie/your-council/[news]/clare-swift-survey-2020-to-take-place-this-summer.html).

Biodiversity Resource Manual for all Local Authority Staff

Feedback has been sent to the consultants on this project. The initial draft of the manual and associated Environmental Practice Guidance will be finalised in 2020. Staff training on the use of the manual will take place by year end.

One-hundred employees responded to the Biodiversity Questionnaire, which represents the opinion of 10 per cent of staff on 13 questions about biodiversity. The survey results demonstrated a high level of understanding of biodiversity by staff, where a high number of staff felt that biodiversity was very important to them personally and in their work. Most were aware of biodiversity initiatives carried out by the Council and many expressed a need for more hands-on advice and best practice guidance.

Heritage Week Awards

There were several entries for the Heritage Hero Awards from County Clare and nominations for the other Heritage Award categories are due to be announced in October. Some of the Clare Heritage Week projects are still accessible on the Heritage Week website (www.heritageweek.ie) and all projects submitted will be considered for the Heritage Week Awards.



CONSERVATION AND BUILT HERITAGE

Turret Lodge, Kilrush

Clare County Council officially opened the Turret Lodge, Kilrush, on Tuesday, 22nd September, 2020. This project received funding under the Historic Towns Initiative 2019, which is a partnership between the Heritage Council, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht with Clare County Council providing match funding.

The delivery was based on a collaborative approach between Kilrush and District Historical Society, Clare County Council and the Heritage Council. Together the project has been successfully delivered for the community for their historical, social and tourism benefit. A licence agreement has been put in place between the Council and the Historical Society.



Pictured (l-r): Clíona Corry, Executive Architect, Planning Department, Clare County Council; Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council; and Lisa O’Sullivan, Kilrush and District Historical Society.



Pictured (l-r): Paul Gleeson, Kilrush and District Historical Society; Clíona Corry, Executive Architect, Planning Department, Clare County Council; Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council; Cllr Cillian Murphy, West Clare Municipal District; Nancy O’Keeffe, Architectural Conservation Professionals; and Lisa O’Sullivan, Kilrush and District Historical Society.



Pictured (l-r): Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council; Mayor of Clare, Cllr Mary Howard; and Lisa O’Sullivan, Kilrush and District Historical Society.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Quin Road Campus

The next stage of this project will be the fitting-out of the Records Management Centre and the training room in the building. The Civil Defence team are now up and running with this as their permanent base and while some snagging work is to be completed, this will be done while they are in occupation. It is intended to mark the opening of this new campus at a time when the Government restrictions allow for it to be held.

Facilities management

During September, we have been working on the design of some works to maximise the utilisation of space in Áras Contae an Chláir and these works will commence in October. We continue to ensure that the workplaces and arrangements for staff and elected members in Áras Contae an Chláir and

Waterpark Campus meet the requirements of the Council’s response plan and the national and HSE guidance on Covid-19.

The Environment Department is leading a project to incorporate a reflective garden into the space to the rear of the Council Chamber. The intention of the garden is to commemorate deceased Councillors and employees of Clare County Council, as well as providing a calm and peaceful reflective space.

Property transactions

The table on the page opposite shows the number of property transactions completed by the Property Management Unit in September this year, together with the totals for 2020 to date. Other transactions are at various stages.

Transaction	September 2020	Year to date 2020
Lease of property / building	0	4
Licence to use property / building	1	7
Grazing agreement for lands	0	18
Deed of transfer signed	0	6
Deed of rectification signed	0	3

Casual Trading

During September 2020, we continued the Council’s policy of regulating casual trading under the Casual Trading Act 1995 and our bye-laws made thereunder. Compliance with the Covid-19 guidelines is being monitored. In the month of September, we issued five casual trading licences for the Kilrush Horse Fair to be held in October 2020, subject to it going ahead.

Derelict Sites

The Economic Development Directorate has recently taken over the Derelict Sites function from the Rural Directorate. We are doing a full review of all of the existing files and reviewing the data on the Derelict Sites Register as well as updating procedures in this area to ensure that there is a consistent and manageable approach. We have updated the Council’s website and members of the public can now access information on how to submit new complaints. The focus of engagement with owners will be on developing solutions for sites to bring them back into economic use.

To date in 2020, we are dealing with 14 new complaints.

SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The restrictions due to Covid-19 continued to restrict opening hours at the Town Hall office in Shannon during the month of September. Opening times remain 9:30am-1:00pm (Mon-Fri) and by appointment only in the afternoon. However, we are delighted to see our School Wardens back as the country moves forward.

Torrential rain and unseasonal storms had significant impact on our roads programme with fallen trees and spot flooding across the area which further disrupting scheduled works. However, our crews are working hard to bring programmes under control with 90 per cent of our surface dressing and drainage works complete and restoration and improvement works also commenced. Our footpath tender is currently under assessment.

Design works for the Sixmilebridge Town and Village Renewal Scheme have started and further grant aid in the areas of Climate Change and Active Travel has been awarded in the last week for programmes in Westbury, Shannon and Meelick.

The extensive resurfacing works to the ‘Tír Na nÓg’ playground in Shannon Town have been completed and we are awaiting the final inspections for safety compliance. It is anticipated that the facility will re-open shortly.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

Covid-19 supports

LEO Clare continued to support local businesses through the month of September. A very high uptake of these supports is in evidence:

- Of the 397 approved Business Continuity Voucher applications, approximately 202 (worth over €420,000 in support) have been completed (the appointed consultants have completed their work and submitted their report), with the balance expected to conclude in the coming months.
- The enhanced Trading Online Voucher Scheme which provides grant support to small businesses to develop an ecommerce website has seen strong interest. To date, 233 applications have been approved, with clients working to complete a further 140 applications. We continue to assess applications and progress to approval as quickly as we can. The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation have provided additional funding to meet demand.
- In total, 192 clients registered in the month of September to partake in our range of online webinars and training courses, including webinars on digital marketing and on steps to start a business. All of these webinars were provided free of charge to applicants.

- There were 41 applicants in September for a free three-hour mentoring session, where a member of the LEO Clare mentoring panel is assigned to an applicant to mentor them in areas ranging from financial review to starting a food business to digital marketing, among others.
- The Local Enterprise Office Clare continues to provide the popular Micro Finance Ireland loan facility. Clients can also avail of mentor support to assist with completion of applications.

We continue to provide our range of grant supports (including Feasibility, Priming and Business Expansion and our TAME grant for micro-exporters) to eligible businesses.

As new supports are announced, these will be advised through our social media channels, website and in local media.

September Evaluation Committee Meeting: Our Evaluation Committee (EVAC) met on Wednesday, 23rd September, for their fourth meeting of the year. The committee continued the process of meeting remotely, aided by the new submit.com grant processing system. The September EVAC approved €162,200 in funding for six projects. The projects included two Priming Grant applications and four Business Expansion Grant applications.



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice



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