



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Bealtaine / May
2024



TOURISM DEVELOPMENT p17



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT p46



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT p33



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT p5



FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES p2



RURAL DEVELOPMENT p23

FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

HUMAN RESOURCES

Recruitment Competitions April

Eligibility Exercises & Desktop Shortlisting

Technician Grade I Environmental

Competitions Advertised

Receptionist – Active Ennis
Library Staff Officer
Graduate Planner
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Theatre Attendant Culturlann Sweeney
Box Office Attendant Culturlann Sweeney Librarian
Traffic/Litter Warden Countywide Panel
Senior Facilities Attendant
Library Facilities Attendant – Full-time & Part-time Panels
Facilities Management Attendant – Full-time & Sporadic Cover Panel
Chief Technician
Canteen Attendant Sporadic Cover Panel
Plant Operator A
Craftsman (Carpenter)
Burial Grounds Community Playgrounds Co-Ordinator
Community Warden

Interviews

Caretaker/Cleaner – Kilrush
Retained Fire-fighters – Kilkee, Kilrush & Shannon
Foreman
Technician Grade I Environmental

Learning and Development

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

IAT Seminar
Introduction to Public Works Contracts
IPA Election Workshop Training
Local Authority Machinery Yard Seminar
Transport Research Arena Conference

Essential Skillz Online Training

Health & Safety Induction
Slips, Trips & Falls

Health & Safety

1- 2-Day First Aid Refresher Training
DSE Assessor Training
Forklift Refresher
Front Loading Shovel Training
Manual Handling
New Entrant Chainsaw
Prevention Management of Aggression & Violence
Safe Loading & Cargo Securing Training

Beach Lifeguard Induction Training Day was held on Saturday, 20th April.

New firefighter recruits completed three weeks of training at Ennis Fire Station.

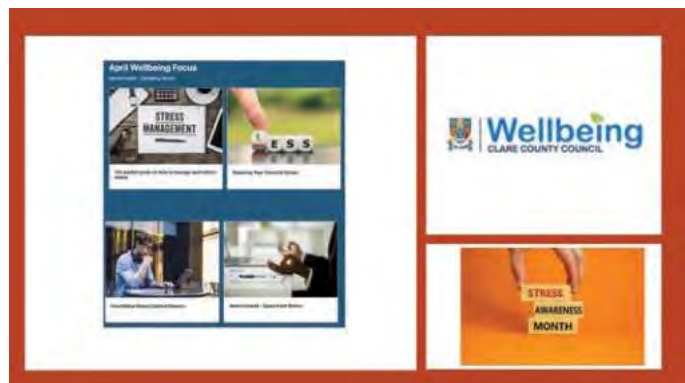


Employee Wellbeing



April Highlights

The Wellbeing Hub featured Mental Health and Managing Stress for the month of April.



The VHI newsletter and upcoming webinars was circulated during April.

The CBS community Reading Event took place on April 17th with members of staff taking part in reading to the primary classes.

The gardening group comprising past and present employees met at the polytunnels on the Gort Road on April 25th.



National
**Workplace
Wellbeing
Day**



April 26th was Workplace Wellbeing Day. Staff received a wellbeing newsletter and breakfast treats to mark the day. Active Ennis hosted free swim and gym sessions and there was a lunchtime walk hosted in the Fairgreen. Healthy Clare packs were distributed to walking and cycling commuters.

FINANCE

Clare County Council is currently rolling out the Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) grant, a Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment initiative introduced as part of the 2024 Budget. This one-time grant, amounting to €257 million nationally will be disbursed to small and medium-sized businesses.

This grant is intended as a one-time financial aid to help businesses with increased costs associated with running a business. It's important to note that this is not a waiver for commercial rates, and businesses are expected to continue paying their commercial rates as usual.

Procurement

The following Clare County Council tender competitions were published on eTenders in the period from 26th March to 29th April inclusive:

Tender Name	RFT ID	Response deadline	Procedure
Pitch Maintenance 24 to 26	3405852	10/05/2024	Open
Public Realm and Mobility Plan for Mountshannon	3387189	30/04/2024	Open
Request for Tender for the Provision of Retail Services	2936081	15/05/2024	Competitive with negotiation
Refurbishment Works at No. 3 Beech Park, Ennis, Co. Clare	3367096	26/04/2024	Open
Regional and Local Road Pavement Overlay Scheme 2024	3313968	25/04/2024	Open

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



L-R Cllr Joe Garrihy, Shelley McNamara (Hometown Architect), Kevin Loftus (Act Studios – architects), Anne Cassin (Nationwide), Joan Tarmey, Marie Lynch, Grainne McCormack (all Town Centre First Department) and Fionn Kidney (Common Knowledge).

Town Centre First

The Town Centre First Policy is to create Town Centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit.

On 16th April, close to 50 people attended a meeting in Lisdoonvarna Pavilion to conclude a Hometown Architect initiative that is part of the Irish Architecture Foundation's Reimagine placemaking programme and to consider next steps. Funded under by the Department of Rural & Community Development and the Arts Council, local architect, Shelley McNamara, oversaw the production of a vision document for Lisdoonvarna – "Tapping the Well". Staff from Clare County Council's Town Centre First Department were in attendance providing useful information on the formation of Town Teams, the process involved and building links with the local community. A wide range of residents, businesspeople, community representatives and stakeholders present are very supportive of forming an over-arching group such as a Town Team. The RTE programme, Nationwide, captured footage of the town and a wide range of people involved in the Reimagine Hometown Architect Lisdoonvarna initiative including the Town Regeneration Officer. The programme is due to air in late May/early June.

Kilrush Town Masterplan

Under the Suite of Town Centre First Supports for 2024 funded by the Department of Rural & Community Development, Clare County Council has welcomed the inclusion of Kilrush in the Town Centre First programme, which focuses on the social and economic revival of towns across the country. Kilrush Town will benefit from funding to produce a Town Centre First Masterplan. Preparatory works are underway with cross-directorate

consultation and plans to engage closely with Kilrush Town Team.

In addition, three towns in County Clare will benefit from Town Team Supports with up to a maximum of €10,000 per Town Team as well as two Project Development Measures worth €50,000 each and decisions are awaited from the Minister of Rural & Community Development confirming beneficiaries.

St Joseph's Spanish Point Win First Prize at Prestigious Renewable Energy Competition

Members of the Town Centre First Department, Grainne McCormack and Marie Lynch, represented Clare County Council at the awards gala for The Shannon Foynes Port Authority Transition Year competition - "Shooting the Breeze". The competition, which saw five schools shortlisted for the grand final, tasked TY students with setting out their vision, via the media of film, for a future entirely powered from floating wind energy off the west coast. Four finalists from Limerick battled it out with the sole Clare finalist, St Joseph's Secondary School Spanish Point.

The standard of entries and the vision of young people is to be commended. St Joseph's Spanish Point had an excellent entry and walked away with the top prize and a €2,000 cheque for the school and Ipads for each of the winning team members. Helen Downes of Shannon Chamber of Commerce was one of the judges who was blown away by the confidence of the students and the standard of the competition. The status of the competition was reflected by the attendance of two cabinet Ministers, Minister for Education Norma Foley and Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Patrick O'Donovan.

FORWARD PLANNING

NTA National Transport Model Forecasting

The Forward Planning Team has engaged with the National Transport Authority (NTA) and their consultants KPMG Future Analytics in the update of the NTA's national and regional transport models. These models inform the development of the NTA's national strategies and plans and assist in meeting the policy commitments set out in the Climate Action Plan 2023. The need to update the models arises from the publication of Census 2022 data and the drafting of the new National Planning Framework expected to be published in June 2024.

Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

The Residential Zoned Land Tax Annual Draft Maps were published on 1st February 2024. A public notice was issued in both national and local papers advising submissions on the Annual Draft Map can be made up until the 1st April 2024 for the inclusion/exclusion of specific sites, and 31st May 2024 for rezoning requests on lands identified on the annual draft map.

The consultation period for making submissions on the inclusion/exclusion of specific sites for the RZLT closed on the 1st April 2024. 15 submissions were received and these have been published on the Council's website.

The next step is to consider the submissions received. This is ongoing and the Forward Planning Team are currently in the process of assessing and making a determination on all submissions. The Council is required to notify those who made submissions requesting their lands to be removed from the scope of the RZLT, of its decision, by 1st July 2024. Following this, if they wish to do so, submitters can appeal the decision to An Bord Pleanála. The closing date for appeals is 1st August 2024.

One Shannon Hub

During April, the project delivery team continued their work on The One Shannon Hub project. The project has now moved into the final stages for the preparation of a concept design and business planning which will be used to inform a future URDF funding application, which is expected to be announced in the coming months.

Cappa Public Realm Improvement works - Part VIII.

The Part VIII proposal for Phase one of the Enhancement works at Cappa was submitted on 4th April.

Submissions or observations with respect to the proposed development, dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, may be made in writing to the Senior Planner, Planning & Enterprise Development, Clare County Council, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare, up to and including 20th May 2024 and should be clearly marked "Cappa Public Realm Improvement Works".



Kilrush Maritime Training Centre

Work is continuing on the preparation of a funding application under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund – Smart Innovation Scheme for Kilrush Maritime Training Centre. The application is being made under Stream one of the Scheme where €145 million is being made available to infrastructure projects which provide innovative capabilities to the region in line with the strategic and regional objectives of both the Mid-West Enterprise Plan 2024 and Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy.

Kilrush – Plouzané Twinning Meeting

Following the successful visit by the French Ambassador to Ireland H.E. Vincent Guérend, on 10th October, and building on the introductions made by the Honorary Consul Dr Loic Guyon to the Mayor of Plouzané and the Twinning committee in France, Clare County Council joined a Teams meeting at the request of the Olivia Lahens, Head of Campus Mondial de la mer (World Sea Campus) to further the discussions between Kilrush and Plouzané Twinning Teams.

The focus of this meeting was to further discussions around Sea Tech week which will take place in Brest from the 14th to 17th October 2024. Ireland will be the guest of honour, which is the first time a European country has been chosen. The focus of this year's Sea Tech week will be on maritime safety and security, which is also a major component of the World Sea Campus community in terms of research, training, and innovation. The conference will address issues such as the risks associated with navigation at sea, government action at sea, cybersecurity, migration, regulations, environmental protection etc all of which are very relevant to the establishment of the maritime training centre in Kilrush. The Clare MEZ project team will continue to liaise with Campus Mondial de la mer with respect to the various workshops, one to one meetings and conference events in October.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme Funding Announcement

The Planning Department were successful in securing €495,000 funding for enhancement works at The Square in Ennistymon under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. This key project was identified in the Ennistymon Enhancement Plan completed in conjunction with Ennistymon Town Team and CLDC and subject to extensive public consultation. This builds on the 2023 funding allocation for enhancement works at Parliament Street, the subject of the current Part VIII process. The newly funded project looks to re-establish The Square as the focal point for the town through the creation of an inclusive, attractive and vibrant outdoor public square. The proposed project uses the natural slope in the ground to create a stepped terrace to provide a space for outdoor seating, creating resting points and providing trees and planting to promote biodiversity in the town centre.

transitions. The HybridLabs project seeks to maximise opportunities and leverage the respective strengths of all Dutch and Irish parties in this competitive, international initiative. Clare County Council are one of 16 Cooperation partners on this new and exciting project with Kilrush Maritime Training Centre providing a link to the Offshore Renewable Energy supply chain. A key focus from the Irish perspective will be in supporting economic development using the Shannon Estuary ORE Supply Chain as a Living Lab.



CONSERVATION AND BUILT HERITAGE

Community Monuments Fund (CMF)

The 2024 round of the Community Monuments Fund were announced on April 15th 2024.

- CMF Stream one funding 2024: €100,000 euros was awarded to Killow Church

- CMF Stream two funding 2024: €30,000 euros was awarded to Moynoe Church

Section 57 Applications

Section 57 Declarations are issued to owners of buildings or structures that wish to conduct works to their structures. A

Section 57 Declaration determines whether works would be considered exempt from planning. A Section 57 Declaration can also be used to clarify the curtilage of a protected structure, or what elements are to be protected. There is no fee for a Section 57 Declaration.

Section 57 Declarations	April 2024 up to & including 26/04/2024	Total (Valid) Year to date 2024
No. of Section 57 Declaration Requests received	1	13

BIODIVERSITY

Clare Local Biodiversity Action Funded (LBAF) Projects

To date, Clare County Council has been awarded 10 projects under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The applications were submitted by the Planning Department. The Local Biodiversity Action Fund offers funding to assist local authorities in the implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan, enabling them to identify and develop projects that address biodiversity loss in their localities. The following projects have been approved to date:

- Return to Nature Clare Church Biodiversity Project
- Clare Wetland Story Map
- Recording Irish Mayfly – establishing conservation status
- Barn Owl Conservation Clare 2024
- Invasive Alien Species Treatment Killaloe
- Invasive Alien Species Survey West Clare
- Ennis Bat Circuitscape Study
- The Hare's Corner Project – Communications Work Package
- Burren Protected Species Survey
- Clare Wetlands Survey 2024,

Community Wetlands Forum: Clare Wetlands Presentation

On 18th April, Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer gave a presentation at the launch of the Community Wetlands Forum Strategic Plan held in Ballydangan, Co. Roscommon. Barry O'Loughlin gave a presentation of the Clare Wetlands Survey and how he has been working with local community groups to integrate wetlands into their Community Biodiversity Action Plans. He also highlighted peatland restoration projects that have been carried out in Clare and the impact such projects



Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer at the launch of the Community Wetlands Forum Strategic Plan.

have for ecosystem services and connecting communities to wetlands.

Tidy Towns and Clare PPN Biodiversity Talks

On 4th April Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer gave a presentation to Tidy Towns groups consisting of Ennis, Quin, Clarecastle and Barefield in addition to other interested members on a range of topics including potential biodiversity enhancement actions communities can undertake. The Biodiversity Officer gave an overview of the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2030 and how communities can get involved and make their observations. On 26th of March the Biodiversity Officer gave a presentation to Clare Public Participation Network (PPN) in relation to the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan 2024-2030 and the challenges facing biodiversity loss in County Clare. He also gave an outline of the Council's Biodiversity Work Programme funded through the Local Biodiversity Action Fund (LBAF).



Caption: Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer Barry O'Loughlin presenting to the Clare Public Participation Network.

Swift Talk and Nest Habitat Enhancement Opportunities

In late March and early April Birdwatch Ireland's Urban Birds Project Officer Tara Adcock gave an online talk organised by Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer to 14 communities groups and discussed the ecology of swifts, their population trends, nesting opportunities through the installation of artificial nest boxes and the role local communities could play. Tara visited eight churches as part of the 'Return to Nature Clare Church Biodiversity Project' to assess the suitability of churches to support swift nest boxes in conjunction with the Biodiversity

Officer and local parish priests. The swift is a red-listed bird species of conservation concern due to ongoing declines in the breeding population.



Online Swift Talk delivered by BirdWatch Ireland's Urban Birds Project Officer

'Wildlife and Planning' Council Training Event

On 19th April, a training event for Council staff took place aimed at highlighting best practice when dealing with structures (e.g. buildings and trees) potentially supporting bats and bird habitat. The first session was covered by bat consultant Dr Tina

Aughney and the second session was covered by John Lusby, who spoke about wildlife in buildings and the checks and signs that planners and area office engineers could do to help inform their work. The training event ties into Clare County Council's Biodiversity Manual: Biodiversity Best Practice Guidelines.



Members of Clare County Council's Planning Team and Area Office Staff attending the 'Wildlife and Planning' Training Event.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The table below shows the number of planning applications processed during the month of April (to 29/04/2024), together with the year to date figures. Fifty four percent of planning applications received in April were received by electronic means.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS	April (to 29/04/24)	Year to date 2024
No. of planning applications received	74	321
No. of Planning Decisions made	75	300
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	4	22
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	16	77
No. of Section 5 applications	9	42
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications (in respect of Part V of the Planning & Dev Act 2000)	1	13
Submissions received regarding Compliance	19	85

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

April 2024 Stats are as follows:

New complaints received	11
New files opened	12
Files closed	7
Warning Letters issued	4
Enforcement Notice issued	1
Legal	1

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

• **Mentoring:** LEO Clare continue through 2024 with a strong requirement for all of our mentoring options including mentoring in Starting a Business, Finance, Digital Marketing & Export Development. In April 14 mentoring applications have been assigned to date.

• **Training:** LEO Clare training programmes were in high demand throughout April with a total of 207 clients signing up to courses. These courses included training in Exporting, social media, start

your own business & GDPR.

April Evaluation Committee Meeting

The Local Enterprise Office Evaluation and Approvals Committee (EVAC) held their second evaluation meeting of 2024 in April. Three Business Expansion, three Priming and one feasibility project was approved for funding.

Local Enterprise Office Productivity Supports

Throughout April Business advisors in LEO Clare have visited several local businesses to promote the current Productivity Supports which are available. These include Green for Business, Lean for Business and Digital for Business. All supports can help businesses reduce costs and make them more energy efficient and sustainable. So far in 2024 LEO Clare have approved 8 applications.

Local Enterprise Office Export Programme

LEO Clare have engaged a company to build a pro-forma export readiness diagnostic tool for 10 businesses in the county. The company will compile a report for each business which will provide an in-depth analysis on the readiness of the business to exploit new business opportunities out-side Ireland.

Deed of Right of Way / Wayleave signed	1	5	2
Deed of Rectification / Variation signed	1	1	4
Allotment Agreements signed	40	40	39

Shannon Allotments

A very good meeting was held with the Shannon Allotment Association in early April and the Rural and Community Development Officers also attended. This annual meeting covers operational matters and examines if any maintenance works are needed.

Casual Trading

The renewal of the annual Casual Trading Licences is ongoing and licences are being granted for some annual events, including Farmers Markets in Kilrush being held this year. In conjunction with the Municipal Districts, a review of the locations for trading for festivals in Miltown Malbay and Lisdoonvarna is being carried out following request from residents and elected members.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Property Transactions and Conveyancing

The table below shows the number of property transactions completed by Property Management Unit up to 23rd April and the numbers to date in 2024 and the corresponding figures for 2023.

As the property market in the county continues to be quite active, we continue to assist many solicitors acting for their clients on issues associated with title, boundaries, old leasehold folios etc. We are also doing a number of applications for first registration of Council property and assessing the various properties we own for correct title.

Transaction type	April 2024	Year to date 2024	Full year 2023
Lease / Sub Lease of Property / Building	0	1	7
Licence to use property / building	1	7	7
Grazing Agreement for Lands	1	18	17
Deed of Transfer signed	2	4	15
Contract for Sale / acquisition signed	0	0	1

DERELICT SITES

The Derelict sites team are currently dealing with 260 properties that are considered derelict. We continue to increase levels of activity and to date in 2024, we have identified and commenced engagement on 12 additional properties which we consider to be derelict with derelict properties being identified on a weekly basis. Initial engagement with owners or their representatives is key to resolution of the issues of dereliction and to gain an understanding of the various reasons why the properties are in a derelict state. Where derelict properties are sold by the owner, we commence engagement with the new owners of those properties to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990.

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

The table on the next page provides a snapshot of the activity in April (up to 23rd April) and the comparative figures for the full year 2023.

Derelict Sites	April 2024	Year to date 2024	Full Year 2023
No. of new files opened	1	12	58
No. of Section 8(2) Notices issued – Intention to enter site on Derelict Sites Register	5	21	41
No. of Section 8(7) Notices issued – Entry of site onto Derelict Sites Register	2	10	24
No. of Section 11 Notices issued – Measures required to render the site non-derelict	0	0	0
No. of files closed / property removed from Derelict Sites Register	5	10	15
No. of Notices served to Compulsorily Purchase derelict sites (CPO) (see note below)	0	2	10
No of Vesting Orders signed	0	0	9

Compulsory Acquisition of Derelict Sites (CPO)

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

Year	No of CPOs commenced	Current Status
2022	6	3 – CPOs completed and property transferred to Housing for refurbishment works (see photos below where works are currently underway)
		1 – CPO completed, title got and sale has been approved by Council in March 2024
		2 - works have commenced and CPO parked for now
2023	10	7 - At Vesting Stage and lodged in PRA
		1 - completed recently and is intended to be put on open market for sale in coming months
		1 - Objection received and has been referred to An Bord Pleanála
		1 - Works have commenced and CPO parked for now

2024	2	1 – At Vesting Stage and lodged in PRA
		1 - Objection received and has been referred to An Bord Pleanála for decision

In addition, the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund will provide funding for CPO's on a rolling basis in the town of Ennis with the objective being that these properties would then be sold on the open market. A particular emphasis will be on properties that have potential for residential use. One such CPO is with the PRA for registration and works have recently been completed in order to safeguard the property in the interim. A particular focus on properties in the town of Ennis has resulted in a number of properties coming to market and a planning application lodged in April for another key site.



Two storey house in Ennis



Terraced house in Kilrush

Derelict Site Levy

Determination of valuations on the derelict sites which are on the Derelict Sites Register has commenced and notices have been issued to a number of property owners to date. Two of these the owners have appealed the valuation to the Valuation Tribunal and decisions are awaited. The levy is an annual levy while the property remains on the Derelict Sites Register and amounts to 7% of the value of the property, on an annual basis. This will be further progressed in 2024 when all properties on the Derelict sites Register will be valued for the purposes of billing the levy. Clare County Council will be billing the levy as per the budget adopted for 2024. This levy will go towards the cost of billing and collection of the levy and resourcing of derelict sites function.

In April 2024, the derelict sites levy was billed on five property owners in the total sum of €94,000.

Survey of Vacant and Derelict Properties

The Team has recently completed the first round of surveys of vacant and derelict properties in towns and villages around the County. Based on the Geo-directory data on vacancy and dereliction, the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government has asked the Council to validate the data that they hold. A total of 1,900 individual surveys have been completed (with the data being uploaded digitally). The next stages are the assessment of the priority areas for further action, work on getting information on ownership and making contact with owners. The data collected will be the basis for future policy direction and will guide the work programme of the Derelict Sites Team and the Vacant Homes Team. The data collected will also support the work being done by Town Teams under Town Centres First policy.

VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANT - FOR DERELICT AND VACANT PROPERTIES

The level of approvals of the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant by Clare County Council has passed the €10 million mark. This is a very significant investment in housing in County Clare and the work ongoing around the county in renovations and extensions is very visible. The Vacant Homes Team continues to advise applicants on all elements of the scheme and is available

to meet with individuals to take them through the process.

The breakdown of Grant approvals by Municipal District shows the level of potential investment in West Clare Municipal District in particular, which accounts for 60% of all Grants approved to date.



West Clare: before.



West Clare: Works almost complete.

Amount approved by Local Electoral Area (incl those with grant funding paid out)

Local Electoral Area	No of applications approved	Total amount approved (€)	% of total number of Grants Approved
Kilrush LEA	71	4,486,850	40%
Ennistymon LEA	41	2,379,749	21%
Ennis LEA	27	1,499,155	13%
Killaloe LEA	24	1,371,000	12%
Shannon LEA	24	1,420,000	13%
Grand Total	187	11,156,754	100%

We continue to have high levels of enquiries and applications for the Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant. As of 22nd April, we have received 367 applications for the grant and we are in the top 7 local authorities in the Country in relation to application numbers. Our response time for initial assessment of new applications is generally three to four weeks. To date, we have processed seven grant payments, with a further four payments being processed at the end of April. The level of claims is increasing and reflects completion of works on properties for which the grant was approved in 2022 and 2023. The table below sets out the status of applications as at 22nd April 2024.

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Applications (Note analysis is by date application was received)						
Application Status	Current Status	2022	2023	2024	Grand Total	%
Application in Progress	In Progress			15	15	4%
	Further Information Requested	1	54	48	103	28%
	Awaiting Technical Inspection		8	7	15	4%
Application in Progress Total		1	62	70	133	36%
Application Finalised	Approved	12	155	12	179	49%
	Grant Funding Paid Out	4	4		8	2%
	Grant Funding Withdrawn	2			2	1%
	Withdrawn	10	19	2	31	8%
	Refused	1	13		14	4%
Application Finalised Total		29	191	14	234	64%
Grand Total		30	253	84	367	100%

Points of Information

1. In recent months, the breakdown of application between urban and rural areas has remained consistent - 56% of applications are for rural areas of the county and 44% for properties in towns and villages.
2. To date, 72% of applications are for properties to be used as principal private residence (248 properties) and the balance of 28% are for rent. Note – The option to apply for the grant for rental purposes was only introduced in May 2023.
3. In 2024, we have received the further highest number of applicants in the whole country.
4. A review of the Grants Scheme is being undertaken by the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government. We will feed into this review and will bring the concerns and suggestions of the elected members to their attention.
5. We are currently following up on requests for additional information issued during 2022 and 2023 to see if further assistance is needed by applicants or if they wish to continue with their application.

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

Full details of the scheme and eligibility criteria are published on the Council's website. The contact email address for further information and guidance on the grants scheme is vacanthomes@clarecoco.ie. We continue to meet individual owners to guide them through the process and to ensure they have all the documentation when submitting their application. We will consider holding further one-to-one clinics around the county during 2024.

ENNIS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The Ennis MD Team progressed a range of issues and initiatives during the month of April and were in communication with large numbers of the Ennis public via formal meetings, public consultation events and through informal discussions on the streets and school and business visits. As always, regular communication took place with the Elected Members both local and national, and other state agencies, on various issues of mutual concern and importance. As the term of the current Council, comes to a close, the Ennis MD Staff Team would like to wish all of the outgoing Councillors, some retiring and some seeking reelection, and indeed the other new candidates, all the very best in the upcoming Elections and for the future. Many thanks for your service to, and representation of, the Ennis MD constituents over the past 5 years.

Co Creating Programme

In April Ennis MD commenced work on the junction of Summerhill and Lower Market Street. This junction is one of the larger junctions that will be improved under this programme this year. These works will provide a raised table uncontrolled pedestrian crossing from "Specsavers" to "Precious Pets" pet shop, a realigned junction layout to prohibit illegal parking which allows for safer crossing for pedestrians, also included will be hard and soft landscape areas that will enhance the appearance of lower Market Street while also contributing to biodiversity in the area.



Traffic Management

It was great to see the record crowds in Ennis for the Clare vs Limerick Hurling match in April and Ennis MD staff were to the fore in ensuring everything ran smoothly. Our Engineers were involved in the advance planning with the Gardai, Emergency Services and Clare GAA. Ennis MD staff also assisted with temporary traffic management associated with the capacity 20,000 crowd. Works involved bespoke signage, traffic barriers, temporary road closures/diversions and liaison with local residents and businesses to ensure a practical and safe approach to vehicular and pedestrian movements was in place on the day. The following day, our Street cleaning crews were out early to ensure the town centre was looking its best for the week ahead. Well done on a good job to all involved.

Grass and Weed Maintenance

After somewhat of a delay due to a particularly wet Spring, grass cutting has commenced around Ennis and environs. Weed Control is expected to commence the first week in May.

Traffic Lights Repair -Gort Road

Ennis MD were responsible for co-ordinating replacement and upgrade of the Gort Road traffic light infrastructure this month. The works involved included excavation, ducting and installation of a new traffic controller and associated site works.



Working closely with Ennis Tidy Towns

Ennis MD were happy to assist Ennis Tidy Towns and the Ennis Men's Shed group with the temporary installation of a new artwork piece symbolising a distinctive flower feature on the Watery Rd/Drumcliff Road roundabout recently. Works involved excavation, construction of a concrete foundation and subsequent installation.



URBACT Delegation visit to Ennis

Ennis MD is the Irish Representative in a transnational project called Econnecting under the EU Urbact Programme. The other 8 Countries involved are Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Slovenia, Hungary, Estonia and Montenegro. The purpose of the URBACT project is essentially to share learning and experiences with other Large Towns and Cities that have similar opportunities and challenges to Ennis. In particular, the Econnecting Project focuses on sustainable urban-rural mobility solutions within the 30-minute territory. The mission is to advocate inclusive, digital, and ecological strategies, fostering the community engagement in co-designing climate-resilient towns. The network promotes accessible and welcoming cities, good governance for proximity territory, humanised and sustainable mobility, green communities, and a gender-balanced development.

In mid April, we were delighted to host delegates from each of the participating Countries to Ennis for 2 days of presentations and workshops. Topics and speakers for the event were selected to demonstrate how Ennis is working towards these goals. External contributors included John Nott, Senior Transport Planner (NTA), Ann Gaughan, Manager (TFI local link) and Systra who are working on the 'Area Based Transport Assessment'. The Visitors received a warm welcome on the opening morning from the Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney, and the Mayor of Ennis Municipal District, Cllr Pat Daly. They got an overview of the Irish local government context, planning systems and the Ennis2040 strategy. The afternoon included a trip to the Cliffs of Moher with Mark O'Shaughnessy briefing all on the history and future of the Unesco Global Geopark. The E-connecting team stopped off at the Digihub in Ennistymon where Urban McMahon briefed on the Digital Strategy and provided a tour of the hub. Network business was addressed in the training room before returning to Ennis. Miguel Sousa, an EU funding expert provided an overview of various EU funding streams and how to align potential projects with these. Shane O'Grady, PMO presented the phased transformation of streetscapes and civic spaces in Ennis town centre while Senator Roisin Garvey outlined the Irish Government modal policy and objectives. To round off the day participants were given a guided walk through the historic town of Ennis. While reflecting on the visit the partners highlighted the Digihubs for sustaining rural communities as a key takeaway. Thank you to all our Clare County Council Colleagues for making the trip a success.



Manusmore Bus Stops

Ennis MD completed the construction of two new rural bus stops as an addition to the TFI 343 Route on the R458 at Manusmore, Clarecastle. The request for these two new bus stops was initiated by a notice of motion following representations from the residents of the locality. Clare Co. Co. in conjunction with the NTA have now delivered these bus stops to an operational stage which will provide connectivity and accessibility to services in Ennis and surrounding towns and villages for the residents of Manusmore.



Road Safety Measures to Barefield National School

Following on from a very productive and worthwhile consultation with the Principal and Safety Officer of Barefield National School, Ennis MD staff have just completed improved road safety measures in the vicinity of the school. The aim of the works is to increase the visibility to the front of the school area by incorporating measures to keep cars a certain distance away from the main access points for the children and to increase the visibility of the advance warning signage and road markings to forewarn drivers of the need to reduce their speed and drive with extreme caution as they are entering a school zone area.

A summary of the works that were carried out were as follows:

- Installation of new solar powered advance school warning

VMS signs.

- Installation of designated bus set down and visitor parking areas.
- The addition of two new School Ahead triangular warning signs on the carriageway.
- The refreshing of all the line marking in the vicinity of the school and the road centerline through Barefield village
- Installation of bollards around the footpaths and road junction adjacent to the school.



Ballyallia Lake

Following complaints of algae and slippery underfoot conditions on the Ballyallia slipway, Ennis MD staff carefully inspected the area from a H&S perspective. The slipway was deemed a safety issue and following screening, remediation works were carried out to ensure the slipway was safe for use. It is hoped that we will be in a position to carry out further works in the area before the busy summer season is upon us and public use increases.

Footpath Repairs

Ennis MD outdoor crews repaired a number of footpath defects recently in Ennis Town Centre. These works took place in the O'Connell Square area, Bindon Street, Friary Car Park and Francis Street.

Public Bus Service Update

A very useful meeting was held during the month with Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan TD where Ennis MD Mayor and Staff impressed upon the Minister the need for additional Roads Funding as well as the importance and urgency of the new Town Bus Service for Ennis and beyond. Ennis MD staff continue to liaise with the National Transport Authority to deliver this important infrastructural project. The NTA Town Bus Planners, Ennis MD staff and our colleagues in the Road Design Office continue to meet on a monthly basis and are presently working on NTA's Draft layout for the proposed Bus Stop at Friars Walk/Museum.

Other Key Strategic works

In addition to the aforementioned, Ennis MD staff continue to work on a cross directorate basis with our colleagues in Housing, Roads and Planning in regard to illegal encampments; in the Project Management Office in relation to the Ennis Public Realm project where during the month, we were able to permit the Contractor to carry out some late evening/nighttime works with a view to expediting the construction period in certain areas of the town centre. We continue to highlight that the Pubs, Restaurants and Shops are very much open and welcoming of business during the works. We also continue to work with our colleagues in the Road Design Office in relation to the Active Travel Projects and the General Design Office on various concept proposals including looking to enhance parking availability in the Gort Road Industrial Estate. Finally, we continue to work with our colleagues in Ennis 2040 in progressing the ambitious plans outlined in the Ennis 2040 Economic & Spatial Strategy. The 4 main proposals currently being progressed under the Strategy are as follows:

Francis Street S179A Affordable Housing Proposal

Enabling works completed. Judicial review lodged with High Court. Awaiting decision which will inform our next course of action.

Abbey Street (Riverside proposal)

Following the recent 3 nights of Public Consultation event, the report of the findings from same is being prepared.

Harvey's Quay

Concept Design being completed. Discussion continuing with the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage.

Post Office Field Masterplan

Presentations were made to various groups including the Ennis MD Elected Members and other representative stakeholders during the month. In addition, two well attended public consultation evenings in respect of proposed development took place in the Civic Room in late April. Conceptual Drawings of the proposal are currently on Public Display in the Council HQ Foyer with hard copy and online forms available for the public to have their say. Further details are on the Councils website.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Planning Approval for Loop Head Lighthouse Tourism Development



An Bord Pleanála has granted planning approval to Clare County Council for the development of new visitor experience facilities at Loop Head Lighthouse Visitor Experience in County Clare.

The proposed development features new visitor centre facilities, a Looped Walking Trail network, the construction of a new visitors' carpark, the conservation of two Keeper's Cottages, the installation of wayfinding signage, and the upgrade of the existing wastewater system.

Introduction of the Connector Brand for the Council-owned tourism sites

As the licence for the Shannon Heritage Connector Brand in Clare Tourism East has expired, there is a need to introduce a new connector brand for the seven Clare County Council owned tourism sites i.e. Cliffs of Moher Experience, Bunratty Castle and Folk Park, Craggaunowen Bronze Aged Park, Knappogue Castle, Vandeleur Walled Gardens and Visitor Centre, Loop Head Lighthouse and Inis Cealtra (Holy Island).

Called 'the Clare Collection' this is an umbrella logo / front end connector brand for the council owned tourism sites for sales and marketing purposes.



Step back in time with Bunratty Castle's new Jaunting Car Rides!



Launched on April 2nd, the team at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park were delighted to launch a brand new addition to the park, charming horse-drawn carriage rides. Offering a unique way to explore the park's beauty and rich history, visitors are invited to immerse themselves in the folklore and stunning scenery as they travel by jaunting car, a traditional mode of transport reminiscent of a bygone era.

The leisurely ride will take visitors past majestic Irish Wolfhounds, graceful Red Deer, and sturdy Connemara ponies as well as the opportunity to admire the charming thatched farmhouses and traditional streetscape of the early 20th century.

Knappogue Castle Stateroom Accommodation Refurbishment



A comprehensive refurbishment project for the Stateroom accommodation at Knappogue Castle is scheduled to commence on April 29th, 2024. Pattons Interiors has been appointed to oversee and complete the project. They possess a distinguished track record of successful project completion across Ireland, Europe, and internationally. Their clientele includes prestigious names like the K Club, Marriott Hotels, and Hilton. The refurbishment will be meticulously designed to complement the historic setting of the castle. The project will evoke the rich history and idyllic landscape surrounding Knappogue Castle, while simultaneously incorporating all the modern amenities expected from a luxury castle rental experience. The refurbishment of the Knappogue Castle Staterooms is projected for completion in mid-summer 2024.

Craggaunowen's Easter Celebration Draws Record Crowds!



Easter festivities took over Craggaunowen on April 1st, with the Easter Bunny and friends leading an afternoon filled with egg-cellent fun. Visitors of all ages enjoyed Easter games, activities, and entertainment that captured the spirit of the season.

Puppet shows, magic tricks, dancing, and stories of Irish myths and history kept everyone entertained throughout the day. The event was a smash hit, becoming the busiest day in the park's 50-year history!

Date for diary: Charity Community Fun Day, Saturday, 25th May

Shannon Heritage / Clare Tourism East attend Meitheal 2024



Shannon Heritage / Clare Tourism East were delighted to attend Meitheal 2024 – Ireland's largest travel trade show which took place in Killarney on April 11th and 12th.

With over 230 international buyers from 16 countries in attendance, this year's event provided a fantastic platform to showcase the existing and new range of visitor attractions and experiences available across the portfolio to new and long established travel trade partners.



A great community day out at the Cliffs of Moher Experience which will feature live music and dancing, singing, facepainting and spot prizes. The three charities (Sláinte an Chláir, Irish Guide Dogs for the blind Clare Branch and Brothers of Charity Servies Clare) will be in attendance on the day to meet and speak

with members of the Clare public about the vital services they provide. Please book your complimentary tickets on the <https://www.cliffsofmoher.ie/> website using promo code charityday24. See you there.

Climate Action Managers and Officers site visit to Cliffs of Moher Experience



CARO (Climate Action Regional Office) and Climate Action Managers and Officers nationally led by Morgan Lahiffe visited the Cliffs of Moher Experience in April to meet staff and learn about best practice sustainability and carbon reduction measures in place at Ireland's most visited natural attraction.

Site Visit by Giants Causeway and Carrick-a-rede representatives

Giants Causeway and Carrick-a-rede representatives visited the Cliffs of Moher to understand best practice in visitor management and capacity management and learn about the Cliffs of Moher long term plans under the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040.



Pictured at the site visit are:

Mark O'Shaughnessy – Head of Operations Clare Tourism North West, Edward Mason – General Manager, Giant's Causeway & Carrick-a-Rede, Alastair Walker – Property Operations Manager, Giant's Causeway & Carrick-a-Rede, Richard Griffin – Project Manager.

10th anniversary of the Wild Atlantic Way at Meitheal



Fáilte Ireland marked the 10th anniversary of the Wild Atlantic Way at Meitheal in the INEC in Killarney. The international buyers at Meitheal had experience first-hand the depth, breadth, and quality of the Irish Clare tourism product. Featuring Scattery Island, JJ Corry Whiskey, Burren Smokehouse, Cliffs of Moher Experience, Fáilte Ireland, and Aillwee Burren Experience.

Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre and Loop Head Lighthouse Visitor Experience



Both Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre and Loop Head Lighthouse Visitor Experience in co-operation with Visit Clare participated in the "Be a tourist in your own County" due to the success of the 2023 initiative. Hundreds of people visited the attractions over the weekend of 20th and 21st April, to explore these hidden gems, learn about local history, and create unforgettable memories with their loved ones. The sun also played its part by adding to the enjoyment for all!

Local Government Tourism Conference



Members of Management Team and the Tourism Directorate attended the recent Local Government Conference in Kildare, themed 'local authorities supporting tourism locally, regionally and nationally'. Leonard Cleary, Director of Service for Tourism Development, provided a detailed presentation on the implementation of the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030.

Clare Lucky Breaks: Inviting Guests to 'Come Back Soon' with the Launch of 'Lucky Breaks' Initiative



In a heartening collaboration, Visit Clare Tourism and twelve leading hotels across the county are rolling out the welcome not just once, but with the possibility of a return visit for lucky guests. The 'Lucky Breaks' initiative captures the essence of

County Clare's inviting spirit, rewarding travellers who choose to experience its landscapes and hospitality.

Participating hotels are uniting under the 'Lucky Breaks' banner. This partnership symbolises a shared commitment to offer visitors a genuine taste of Clare life—with a second helping for some fortunate guests. For these hotels, the 'Lucky Breaks' initiative is more than a competition—it's a promise of continued exploration. Guests who stay at any of the participating venues may find their next trip to Clare is on the house, inviting them to delve deeper into the county's rich tapestry of history, culture, and nature.

The offer is simple: stay in Clare, and you may well be staying again. Guests can register for the draw during their stay at any participating hotel.

County Clare awaits eager explorers. With a coastline shaped by the Atlantic's might, golden beaches, majestic cliffs, enchanting waterways, top attractions, and dynamic communities, the county offers an open invitation to come and pen your own story. 'Lucky Breaks' broadens this invitation.

Learn how you can create additional memories in Clare and perhaps schedule your return visit sooner than anticipated. For details on the 'Lucky Breaks' initiative and the 12 participating hotels, www.VisitClare.ie/luckybreaks

Be a Tourist: hosts 'Be a Tourist' promotion, 20th and 21st April



Free and half price admission was offered at local visitor attractions and sites across County Clare on Saturday and Sunday, April 20th and 21st, as part of the second annual "Be a Tourist in Your Own County Clare" initiative.

The Tourism Department of Clare County Council, working in partnership with the Clare Tourism Advisory Forum and local tourism attractions, invited the public to become a tourist for the day in County Clare as part of ongoing efforts to tap into the growing domestic market ahead of the peak tourism season.

The wide range of experiences to be enjoyed at discounted prices included going full Willy Wonka at a real chocolate factory, taking a cave tour, stepping back in time at Craggaunowen

and Bunratty, sailing to the Aran Islands, watching sheepdog demonstrations, and exploring a botanical tribute to Ireland's rich natural history in West Clare.

Clare is home to some of Ireland's best known visitor attractions including Bunratty Castle and Folk Park, Cliffs of Moher Experience, Aillwee Burren Experience, Doolin Cave, Craggaunowen, Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre, Shannon Aviation Museum and OPW Ennis Friary, all of which feature in the promotion.

Other participating attractions included Wilde Irish Chocolates, Loop Head Lighthouse, Irish Seed Savers, Doolin Ferry, Killaloe River Cruises, Caherconnell Fort & Sheepdog Demonstrations, Doolin Cave, Moher Hill Open Farm, Lahinch Leisure Centre, Charm Bee Studio and Café, Tulla Guided Walk, and Taste The Atlantic – The Salmon Experience.

Funday Sundays: Visit Clare Launches Funday Sundays: Weekly Sunday Excitement with Exclusive Offers and Great Prizes



We are delighted to introduce this initiative, Funday Sundays, is aimed at enriching the Sunday experience for both locals and tourists. Making Sundays in Clare vibrant days of adventure and discovery, offering special deals on Clare's top attractions and activities, complemented by the thrill of winning attractive prizes each week.

Each Monday, we will unveil, to the website, a select number of curated offers for the following Sunday, providing unique opportunities to explore the county's diverse attractions. These offers will range from discounted admissions and two-for-one deals, to special packages, that include extra perks.

Offers and competitions will feature weekly on <https://visitclare.ie/Sundays/>

TUS spotlight on Tourism



It was our pleasure to promote County Clare & Career Opportunities, during the spotlight on Tourism event for the students of the Travel & Tourism Programme at TUS, the Technological University of the Shannon, Limerick.

Pictured: Siobhan King, Fáilte Ireland, Nicola Killeen, Visit Clare, Ollie Gleeson, Ollie's Tours and Aileen Moloney Bunratty Castle & Folk Park.

Local and National Promotional Campaigns

Classic Hits: Regional & multi-city:

There are 5 adverts currently running across Classic Hits Radio, from April to August, regionally and multi-city included, to promote a Visit to Clare, across our various attractions and campaigns.

KILRUSH ELECTORAL AREA, WEST CLARE MD

Schedule of Municipal District Works 2024

Road recycling equipment is with Kilrush LEA and road recycling has begun. Road recycling involves the removal of the existing deficient road surface and its subsequent regrading and resurfacing.



Preparation of existing road surfaces for upgrading as part of the 2024 RWP is ongoing.

We have commenced preparations for the 2024 Roadworks Programme (RWP).

Drainage works and existing surface prep. works.



Due to staff shortages (a number of our road crew in Kilkee are on long term sick leave) we had to engage a contractor to carry out drainage works in the Killee / Loop Head area.



Road Safety

A section of the deficient road surface in Marian Estate, Kilkee, was removed by planning and a new DBM surface laid in its place. The road surface in the Clare County Council developed housing estate had reached the end of its useful life. The overlay was funded by Planning development contributions.



Overlay in Doonbeg village

TII funded the surface overlay of approx. 1.6km of the N67 through Doonbeg village. As part of the works the Kilrush Road junction in the village was improved to make it safer for all road users. Improvements included new footpath build-outs and the advancement of the "STOP" bar into the junction.



Road lining of recently completed surface overlay at George's Head



The recently completed pavement overlay at George's Head, Kilkee was lined recently. 2 disabled spaces are now facing the sea and 36 additional car parking spaces are now available.

Place de Plouzané:

Surface preparatory works & drainage works continued in the Place de Plouzané car park, Kilrush prior to resurfacing.



Pictured at the last meeting of Cliffs of Moher DAC as a marked farewell to Leonard Cleary on his departure from Clare County Council.

The Tourism Directorate wish Leonard all the very best as he takes up his new role as Chief Executive in Galway City Council.



RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Community Recognition Fund (CRF) 2024: Drop-in Information Clinics

Five drop-in information clinics were held between the 22nd and 24th April in Lisdoonvarna, Kilkee, Scarriff, Shannon and Ennis to provide an opportunity for community groups to engage with the Rural and Community Development Officers (RCDOs) considering projects in relation to the 2024 CRF which was launched 12th April 2024.

The CRF 2024 is specifically targeted at projects ranging from

€50,000 - €500,000, located in cities, towns and villages that are hosting Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and/or International Protection Applicants. 22 host locations are identified in Clare and expressions of interests submitted for funding must demonstrate a community need for that location. Closing date for receipt of expressions of interest is 9th May 2024. All details are available on the Clare County Council website under "Have Your Say".



Community Needs Analysis Survey

A Community Needs Analysis Survey was launched 29.4.2024, is open until 12.5.2025 and available via the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T6FPCBH>

The purpose of this survey is specifically focused on the 22 locations with the highest numbers of new arrivals which are targeted under the CRF 2024 and will inform the assessment process when evaluating applications for funding under the Community Recognition Fund (CRF) 2024.

While the role of Clare Co Council is to support community development based on a "bottom-up approach" it also recognises that whatever supports may be provided must meet the needs of the local community, and this varies from location to location within

the county.

This survey aims to gain some insight into:

- What being part of the local community means to you and your level of participation and support for it.
- What, in your view, would support or help you to become part of or more involved in your local community.
- What is preventing you from becoming involved or more involved in your local community.
- Your views as to what you would consider essential to support community development and participation - both in terms of physical facilities, dedicated community spaces, resources, supports and activities.

Rural and Community Development Officers

Darren Carroll, RCDO for Killaloe MD, met with members of Killaloe/Ogonnelloe Scouts to discuss their aspirations to renovate and extend the Old Boys National School in Killaloe, which is currently derelict and in a state of disrepair. The group wish to transform this building, which is also a Protected Structure, into a new home for the scouts and a local community centre, which can cater for a wide-range of community events and activities. The group will soon appoint an architect, using funding secured through the Clare Local Area Grants Scheme, and move forward with the planning and design stage of the project.

Following on from a successful public consultation event in November 2023, RCDOs Darren Carroll and Niamh Wiley have been working with the local community in Crusheen to support the formation of a new, overarching community group for the area. Meetings held in February and April were designed to help foster a sense of collaboration and cohesion amongst this new and emerging group, while also making steady progress towards getting a formal structure place. A further meeting is to be scheduled for May, at which key roles, including Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, will be allocated.

Shannon MD's Rural and Community Development Officer has been engaging with and supporting the staff of Obair with regard to their needs for the expansion of the creche facility in Newmarket on Fergus in order to accommodate some on their long waiting list, as well as providing for expansion of their outdoor play areas.



"After a fruitful public consultation in February, the RCDOs team led by Niamh Wiley have collaborated with Moy's local community to establish a comprehensive community group. In April, the RCDO's organised the election and establishment of the Moy Community Development Group. They have now begun to work on potential projects identified during the consultation process".

"Following a string of community engagement sessions with Cnoc Na Scoile estate residents, the Clare County Council, led by RCDO Niamh Wiley and Olive Mulconroy from Housing, unveils the formation of a new resident association for the Ennis-based Cnoc Na Scoile estate. This group intends to advocate for the estate's residents, enhance local conditions and amenities, and foster social activities within the community".



Taken in March, where members of the Cnoc Na Scoile Residents committee met with Elected Members from the Ennis Municipal District, facilitated by Rural Development and Housing.



The Cnoc Na Scoile Residents group and members from the estate busy during a litter pick of the estate and the public walkway.

Age Friendly

The Clare Age Friendly Programme supported the Clare Older People's Volunteer of the Year Awards 2024 which were held at the Woodstock Hotel on Wednesday, 10th April. Over 170 people attended the event to celebrate with the fifteen people nominated, in recognition of their invaluable contribution to the local community. Bríd Dilleen was awarded the Clare Older People's Volunteer of the Year Award 2024 by Clare Age Friendly Ambassador, Mike Hanrahan, and Leas-Chathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Gabriel Keating. The award is in recognition of Bríd's work with Ennis Tidy Towns, the Banner GAA Club, Probus, Clare Volunteer Centre, Guide Dogs for the Blind, and the Irish Cancer Society. The guest speaker at the event was Clare Age Friendly Ambassador, Mike Hanrahan, of Stockton's Wing, who spoke passionately about the importance of the work of Age Friendly Ireland in ensuring that Ireland is a place where people can be proud to age in. Entertainment at the event was provided by the Forever Young Choir, Mike Hanrahan, and Shay O'Callaghan who had the attendees dancing and singing the afternoon away.



(L-R) Mike Hanrahan, Clare Age Friendly Ambassador, Bríd Dilleen, Clare Older People's Volunteer of the Year Award 2024, Cllr Gabriel Keating, Leas-Chathaoirleach of Clare County Council.



(L-R) (Back) Bernadette Haugh, Kelly Slattery, Helen Moloney, (front) Cllr Gabriel Keating, Maurice Harvey.

Joint Policing Committee

The Clare Joint Policing Committee meeting was held on Monday 8th of April in the Buttermarket Building, Drumbiggle. Joint Policing Committee members from Clare County Council, An Garda Síochána, Community Groups, Oireachtas, and elected members attended the meeting along with members of the media.

Chief Superintendent Aileen Magner was formally introduced to the committee members and welcomed onto the committee. Chief Superintendent Magner presented a year-on-year comparison on crime statistics and provided an update on community engagement activities, which included an onsite demonstration of the new community policing van.

In addition, a presentation was given to the JPC members from Bernadette Dunne, Task Community Care in relation to innovative technology that supports community safety and enables independent living. Inspector Padraigh Sutton gave a very impactful briefing on The Lifesaver Project, a new road safety education programme delivered by members of An Garda Síochána. The Lifesaver Project is a hard hitting and realistic road safety presentation highlighting the devastating effects that road traffic collisions have on people's lives.



Healthy Clare

The Healthy Ireland reporting for 2023 was completed in April. In brief, a total of 5 programmes were supported under the Healthy Clare Core Fund to include:

- Clare Garden Festival 2023 (Healthy Weight)
- SHEP Course (Mental Health)
- Links Worker West Clare (Mental Health)
- Age Friendly Expo (Healthy Weight and Mental Health)
- Clare Blue Health & Wellbeing Passport (Healthy Weight and Mental Health).

There were further programmes supported through the 2023 Healthy Clare Micro Fund.

- 7 projects under Healthy Weight Pillar
- 10 projects under Mental Health.

7 further projects were supported in collaboration with Creative Ireland to support multicultural cooking events and breast feeding awareness.

3 further projects were supported in collaboration with the Rural Directorate under Clare Autism Awareness.

Launch of Healthy Clare Micro Fund 2024

Clare's Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is preparing to announce the launch of the Healthy Clare Micro Fund for 2024, aimed towards recognising the importance of supporting initiatives around the county that promote health and wellbeing across the lifespan.

The fund will support targeted actions in response to the identified 2 priority outcomes for a Healthier Clare:

1. Healthy Weight
2. Positive Mental Health Promotion.

More details of the fund will be published in local media during early May and will be available on the Clare County Council Social Media. The fund will be open for applications until the end of May.

Clare County Council Free Period Products Campaign

Clare County Council were successful in securing €15,000 in funding to continue rolling out Clare County Council's Free Period Products Campaign in Local Authority spaces, libraries and leisure facilities. This will enable the supply of free period products and free vending machines to any premises that is more than 50% owned by the local authority.

For more information about the campaign, please visit: <https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/free-period-products> Please contact the Healthy Clare Coordinator for more information, samccarthy@clarecoco.ie

For more information, please contact the Healthy Clare Coordinator, Samantha McCarthy on healthyclare@clarecoco.ie and 087 987 8785.



CORPORATE SERVICES

Freedom of Information & Data Protection

Previous years and 2024 to date - statistics to 23rd April, 2024:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Freedom of Information Requests	152	176	119	156	50
Freedom of Information Internal Review Applications	6	13	8	4	0
Appeals with Information Commissioner	1	4	2	4	1
Data Access Requests – Subject Access Request	5	6	10	10	7
Data Requests – Erasure Request	0	1	1	2	0
Data Access Requests – Third Party Access Requests e.g. Gardaí	20	27	27	29	10

Communications

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

Media releases issued during April 2024 included:

- Mayoral Reception held in Áras Contae an Chláir
- Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council addresses 60th Anniversary of Ennis and District Sorooptimist Club
- Celebration of Clare Older People's Volunteer of the Year 2024
- Six-year economic and community strategic plan for County Clare is adopted.

Social Media

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

In the period 1st-23rd April 2024, the Communications Office:

- Posted 38 times on Facebook, with total followers now 19,341.
- Posted 51 times on X (formerly Twitter), with total followers

now at 8,437.

- Instagram followers are now 3,375.

(Statistics accurate as of 23/04/2024)

Register of Electors

The closing date for receipt of voter registration applications and updates is 20th May 2024.

Those not already registered, or whose circumstances have changed, are requested to update their details at www.check-theregister.ie by that date to be eligible to vote in the Local and European elections taking place on 7th June.

Increasing the Participation of Women in Local Government

Funding has been received from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, to support and encourage the increased participation of women and people of diversity in the 2024 local elections. With this assistance, Corporate Services, in conjunction with a Facilitator organised a course over a 6 week period, aimed at assisting Women who are interested in being involved at Local Government level. This included a meeting between participants, Director of Services, Meetings Administrator and some existing female councillors.



Mayoral Awards

Cllr Joe Cooney, Cathaoirleach, hosted a Mayoral reception on Friday 19th April, which recognised a number of individuals and groups in County Clare. Cllr Cooney acknowledged the outstanding contributions and achievements of the award recipients, who represented a cross section of the community in the county. The awards recipients were Clare Juvenile Handball, Rachel Akers, Caimin Jones, Clare 22nd Battalion Association and pupils from St. John's N.S. Cratloe.



Business Innovation

The Innovation lead collaborated recently with the Environmental Team and ICT team to develop a digital system that will automate the reporting process which is part of the daily duties of Lifeguards. The Physical Directorate report gives further details of this project.

Other projects, submitted through the Innovation team, are currently in the development phase.

CULTURAL SERVICES – LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

Clare County Library

Online Resources usage as follows: keen demand for e-audiobooks and Pressreader. Pressreader is an international news stand that allows access to over 7,000 of the world's leading newspapers and magazines from over 100 countries.

1923 E-Books	3555 E-Audiobooks	1871 E-Magazines
643 Online Courses	2931 Pressreader	56 Transparent Languages

Library Activities in Figures

Total number of in branch events	225
Total audiences at in branch events	2782
Total number of outreach events	10
Total audiences at outreach events	285
Total number of deliveries	3
Total number of class novels issued	7

Right to Read

Clare Libraries celebrated Spring into Storytime for the month of April as part of the Right to Read programme. Children from pre-schools and primary schools were invited to visit their nearest library and attend story time and craft sessions delivered by Library staff. Library staff also visited local schools and creches to deliver story time sessions. Sessions included themes of seed planting, sensory play, yoga and earth science. A total of 36 story time sessions were held throughout the month including a special online story time session with Librarian and Illustrator Aidan Courtney, 32 schools registered for this event.



Social media

	New Followers	Total Followers	Post Reach /Impressions	Post Likes	Engagement
	27	7538	123,100	486	745
	-	2159	3628	31	95
	-	2112	3800	288	937

Healthy Ireland

A total of 8 Healthy Ireland events took place in Clare Libraries.

Trish Cleary delivered 2 Chair Yoga classes in Scariff Library. Colette Nagle, yoga teacher, entertained a group of 12 children from Lakyle Primary School, with a storytime yoga adventure. Colette also facilitated a Children's Yoga class in Corofin Library. Deirdre Doyle from the 'Cool Food School' shared her knowledge of making healthy treats with primary school children in 4 Libraries, Miltown Malbay, Kilrush, Newmarket-on-Fergus and Sixmilebridge. Children made a healthy snack from Deirdre's own cookery book entitled 'Chop, Cook, Yum'.



Creative Ireland

Creative Communities funded projects have begun, such as the Climate Action workshops with Evelyn Sorohan, Lahinch Music Festival, Men's Shed upgrade of Horseshoe pitching green and The Common Knowledge Centre's Irish Palestinian Cultural Exchange.



The curation of Cruinniú na nOg is being completed with 30 events and projects taking part in Co Clare on the run up to and on the day of June 15th. All content has been received with an e-programme being created for launch in mid-May.

Local Studies

Clare Local Studies Centre has added another collection to the Clare Libraries and Archives collection. Six diaries, and several files of correspondence photographs and ephemera of the Butler family of Castlecrine dating to the second half of the nineteenth century, have been donated by Grant Miecovich, a relative of the family living in Australia. The diaries provide a detailed record for events in Clare for the period. The transcription of the 1825 Freeholders and the transcription of entries from the 1821 census are ongoing, the various parishes for the census have been transcribed and are now being edited.



Clare Archives

The Archivist arranged an exhibition in the Council Chamber for the 125th anniversary of Clare County Council. Archives from April 1899 and other council minutes were on display. A substantial volume of 180,000 images were identified of scanned archival material and finding aids to accompany the images were added. There was ongoing cataloguing and cleaning of documents of the Barrett Collection. There were also ongoing general archival queries regarding private collections and local authority collections in Clare County Council possession. Work started on obtaining the Clare collection relating to Lord Leconfield's estates based in the National Archives after receiving permission from the family to ask for it back. The collection was donated to the NAI in 1976, predating the Clare Archives. It is deemed that the collection should be returned to Clare.

Clare Arts Office



Three artists started projects on the Artist in Schools scheme in Dromindoora, Ogonnolle and Moy while two projects finished in Ennis and Knockerra. Five artists began residencies on the Embrace Arts and Disability programme in Ennis, Shannon and Kilrush with the completion of one residency in the Brothers of Charity, Ennis. Creative Places Shannon saw the completion of painted EIR boxes in the town and Dance workshops began in the leisure centre. The Musicians on Call Project began in public nursing homes in the county and the 20th anniversary of the Riches of Clare concert series launched at the Kilfenora Trad Festival.

Three exhibitions took place in Ennis, Scariff and Kilkee and a new exhibition hanging system was installed in Scariff. Studios in Tulla and Ennis continue to operate at full capacity. Tulla Stables was featured on Clare FM's Atlantic Tales programme. Two Arts in Clare slots were facilitated on Clare FM. The Arts Office participated in the Western Audio-Visual Forum and supported the visit of an Australian Film Crew to Ennistymon. The Arts in the Community programme continued in St. Joseph's Hospital, Ennis and in Raheen Hospital. Clare Youth Theatre continued in glór.

March 23rd 2024 - April 19th 2024

	Post reach	Post engagement	New Page likes	New Page followers	Total followers
Clare Arts Office	3,920	250	6	15	3222
Cultúrlann Sweeney	2121	349	1	3	2039
EASI Studios	15	44	1	2	144
Tulla Stables Artist Studios	15	0	1	2	654
CYT - Clare Youth Theatre	31	2	1	1	575
Riches of Clare	2252	248	3	4	2855
Clare culture night	74	1	1	1	1279
Embrace Arts Programme	22	3	0	0	562
Arts In Clare Group	-	-	-	13	3116
Clare Trad Group	-	-	-	16	2560

Clare Museum

Clare Museum's staff members visited the Education & Outreach Officer in Clonmel Museum and gained insight, information and ideas about their education programmes. Museum staff are currently working on developing a "Handling Box", as a result of this visit, with more projects planned for the future. Storyteller and Gaelgóir, Ceri Garfield, facilitated 4 separate storytelling sessions in Irish for various classes from Ennis-based school, Gaelscoil Mhichíl Cíosóg. A total of 114 pupils attended in all, along with their teachers and classroom assistants. Students from the Holy Family Senior School visited the Museum with their teacher and classroom assistant. Two quern stones from Kilrush were donated to the collection. There were 15 social media posts on Facebook.

A temporary exhibition on the Liverpool Ceili Band was installed in the Tourist Office. The Liverpool Ceili Band used to come to Clare regularly for the Fleadh Nua in the 1970s and had many Clare born members. The Exhibition will be launched at the Fleadh Nua in May.

New County Library Construction Project

Final stages of construction work continues to progress on the new Clare County Library and Art Gallery building. External Wall Insulation and Render is now complete, with External Cladding complete on the second floor. Cladding of the main entrance portico steel structure is also complete. Mechanical and electrical contractors are near completion of second fix works for both trades. All equipment is installed to the plant room. The comms room is being fitted out in liaison with CCC IT services. Ceiling and Internal Wall Partitions are complete. Skirting and architrave installation is also nearing completion. Sanitary ware is currently being installed. The ductwork for ESB, Eir Networks and the water connection are complete. Ductwork for public lighting is near completion and external ground paving is nearing completion along Causeway Link. Painting works is ongoing currently also and nearing completion. The state-of-the-art new build will provide a key resource for research, study, recreation, and art in a centralised location of Ennis town adjacent to the well-established glór theatre.



KILLALOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Socio-Economic Study on the merits of reopening Crusheen Railway Station

The re-opening of the Crusheen Railway Station is a long standing objective of Clare County Council and is a priority objective of the Elected Members of Killaloe MD – Strategy and Workplan.

Following the engagement in March of consultants to undertake a Socio-Economic Study on the merits of reopening Crusheen Railway Station, the focus of work in April was the commencement of significant public consultation and engagement on the reopening the railway station.

An on-line questionnaire survey was prepared and widely distributed across the communities and the settlements in North and East Clare within the catchment of the railway.

<https://repuconconsulting.welcomesyourfeedback.net/s/CrusheenRailStudy>

The questionnaire, which remains open, has received significant engagement from community members, students, commuters and a range of organisations from the Crusheen and North and East Clare.

The overall proposal also received endorsement with the hosting of a meeting of the Western Inter-County Railway Committee in Crusheen on 11th April. The committee comprises elected representatives from the seven County Councils of Mayo, Galway, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Donegal, Galway City and County Council in addition to the Elected Members from Clare, Cllrs P. Hayes, A. O'Callaghan, J. Crowe and G. Keating.

Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner and Killaloe MD Coordinator gave a presentation on the proposals to advocate for the reopening, in particular that recent census results demonstrate that Crusheen has had a significant increase in population over the past few years. The reopening of the existing Crusheen Railway station would increase passenger numbers and connectivity along the Western Rail Corridor, create socio-economic opportunities and benefits to all residents and commuters, as well as assisting to meet our ambitious climate action objectives. Mr. Mark O'Connell of Repucon Consultants outlined the methodology and approach to the socio-economic report.

Deputy-Chairman Cllr. Richard Finn said the committee remained one hundred per cent behind their Clare Colleagues. Following contributions from Elected Members along the entire western seaboard, particularly the number of shared experiences and learnings from the reopening of stations on the Western Rail Corridor, the meeting passed a unanimous motion of support for the campaign to reopen the station.



Councillors of the Western Inter-County Railway Committee pictured with local West on Track members and officials at Thursday's meeting.

Mobility Plan for Crusheen

Arising from relatively significant number of developments in Crusheen and following agreement with Elected Members of Killaloe MD, Helena McElmeel Architects and Alan Lipscombe Traffic & Transport Consultants are preparing a Mobility Plan for Crusheen in partnership with the Killaloe MD.

The Mobility Plan will plan how we can enhance the footpaths, streets, public lighting in Crusheen and make sure we provide for new infrastructure e.g. pedestrian crossings, cycle paths, bus shelter, pathways to ensure Crusheen is a pleasant and sustainable village for everyone of all ages and abilities to safely walk, cycle and travel from our homes to the school, the shop and other community and recreational facilities.

In particular it is envisaged that the mobility plan will guide the coherent, plan-led, cost effective development and investment by Killaloe MD of public infrastructure in the settlement eg footpaths, traffic calming, and guide future funding applications eg Active Travel Funding.

To initiate the plan process, significant public consultation has commenced. On the afternoon of 16th April, the project team and staff from Killaloe MD met with a number of community groups and undertook a walkover for 3 hours of Crusheen gathering invaluable information and feedback from residents on detailed aspects of footpath condition, parking arrangements, traffic safety, accessibility within the village.

Later that evening a public consultation event took place in the community centre where the project team and Killaloe MD were available to discuss with members of the public and the existing challenges and opportunities in Crusheen.

In addition a detailed online mobility survey on Mobility has commenced with the closing date of 5th May for input: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CRUSHEEN>

Arising from the detailed input, it is envisaged that a Draft Mobility Plan for Crusheen will be prepared and made available in June.

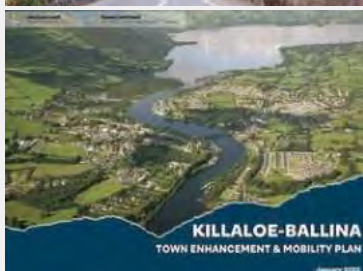
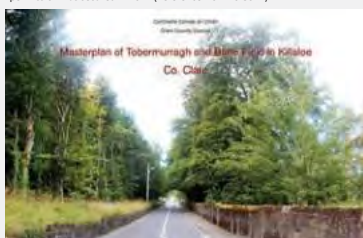
Town and Village Renewal – Tobermurragh, Killaloe

The month of April concluded with the announcement of funding of €225,000 for significant enhancement works to Tobermurragh park. The project will help to realise the full potential of this centrally positioned green space, and result in a revitalised, more attractive and accessible Community Park to serve both the local community and visitors to the town. Key elements of the project include:

- public realm enhancements within the park, including the provision of seating and new paved surfacing at the Holy Well and viewing areas;
- installation of new signage and interpretation boards relating to the area's history and ecology;
- upgraded walkways, including installation of raised timber boardwalk through the park's marshland area;
- new stone wall along its roadside boundary; and
- invasive species removal and vegetation management.

PLANNING CONTEXT FOR PROPOSALS

The works proposed under this TVRS application have a firm planning context, having originally been detailed in the 2016 'Masterplan of Tobermurragh and Bane Field in Killaloe' (top), and then brought forward into the more recent 2022 'Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan' (bottom). Planning permission was secured in 2017 (Reference No. P16-8012).



EXTRACT FROM CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL'S 'MASTERPLAN OF TOBERMURRAGH AND BANE FIELD, 2016'



ILLUSTRATION OF PROPOSED ENHANCEMENT WORKS TO HOLY WELL AND SURROUNDING SETTING



ILLUSTRATION OF PROPOSED ENHANCED PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS



The park is owned by Clare County Council and has been subject to a detailed masterplanning exercise in the 'Masterplan of Tobermurragh and Bane Field' 2016. The project is also identified in the 'Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement & Mobility Plan' 2022, which outlines a strategy to revitalise and reconnect the towns by re-imagining public spaces and connecting key landmarks with considered pedestrian and cyclist routes.

The project has full planning consent and is a key element in the enhancement of Killaloe, providing the town with a centrally located and high quality public green space.

Enhancing the range of services and functions at Killaloe MD

Killaloe MD continues to experience the significant year on year increase in CRM contacts from members of the public regarding the range of functions undertaken by the staff of the MD, with a c.50% increase in contacts already in 2024, compared to same period in 2023. The majority of CRM's relate to Outdoor road work crews with consequent implications for the delivery of services.

	2023	2024	% Monthly increase
January	87	93	7%
February	65	122	88%
March	84	134	63%
April	64	97	66%

April 2024 Works/Projects Killaloe MD

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

Works at Ballysheen Graveyard

This work was funded by Killaloe MD GMA budget allocation.



Road Restoration Improvement Works



Footpath Works at Tulla

This work was funded by Killaloe MD GMA budget allocation.



Footpath Works at Quin Village



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

HOUSING

For 2024 the housing public counter will remain open to the public, without appointment, from 9am until 1pm and by appointment after 1pm. Customers who require appointments in the afternoon can call 065 6846334 to schedule same.

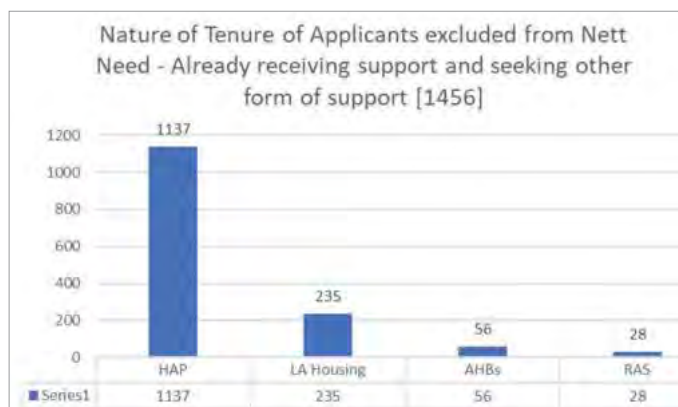
The Clare Homeless Action Team (HAT) office is open by appointment during office hours and can be contacted on 065 6846291 or by email: hat@clarecoco.ie. Our Ukrainian support team can be contacted on 065 6846577 or by email: communityresponseforum@clarecoco.ie. Our Local Authority Integration Team can be reached at integration@clarecoco.ie

Social Housing Demand

The highest demand throughout the county remains for 1 and 2-bedroomed properties. There are 2,164 applicant households (76%) who have a requirement for this property type.

Current Housing need as of 25/04/2024:

Total Households on List	2,866	
Transfer Applicants (see below)		1,456
Nett Need	1,410	



There are 153 RAS, 223 total leased properties (96 short-term, 127 long-term). There are 1,130 HAP properties.

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

Count of FIRST AREA OF CHOICE	BEDS APPROVED			
	1 and 2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	Total
ENNIS	931	208	88	1227
SHANNON	169	36	17	222
CLARECASTLE	140	25	10	175
INAGH/ENNISTYMON/LAHINCH	122	27	6	155
FEAKLE/SCARIFF/WHITEGATE	99	28	4	131
KILRUSH	91	28	8	127
MEELICK/PARTEEN/WESTBURY	66	30	13	109
MILTOWN MALBAY/MULLAGH/QUILTY	75	10	3	88
KILKEE/CROSS/CARRIGAHOLT	66	12	1	79
COROFIN/RUAN	59	17	1	77
NEWMARKET-ON-FERGUS	50	20	4	74
KILLALOE	53	13	2	68
LISDOONVARNA/BALLYVAUGHAN	47	11	3	61
SIXMILEBRIDGE	39	12	7	58
COORACLARE/DOONBEG	34	9	5	48
TULLA/KILKISHEN/BROADFORD	35	8	3	46
CLONLARA	23	6	2	31
KILDYSART/BALLYNACALLY	21	4	3	28
QUIN	17	7	1	25
KILMIHIL	12	5	2	19
KILMALEY	9	2		11
KILFENORA	6	1		7
Grand Total	2,164	519	183	2,866

Newly Qualified Applicants



Housing Allocations

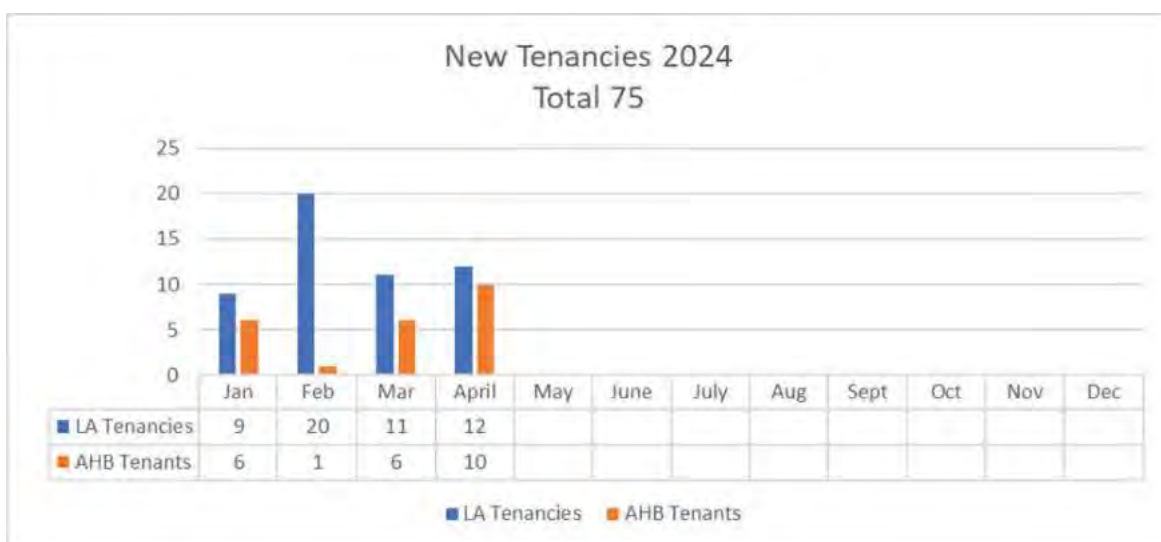
Clare County Council continues to work with the Approved Housing Bodies in relation to the provision of social housing. In this regard 8 new houses located at Cluain na Laoi, Kilkishen, were advertised on the CBL website at the end of February. These properties were delivered by Circle Voluntary Housing Association, and the new tenants signed their tenancies on 25th April last. This is the first social housing development that this AHB have delivered in Clare and Clare County Council looks forward to Phase 2 of this development which is expected to be ready for occupation in late May/early June.



New homes at Cluain na Laoi, Kilkishen, which were delivered by Circle Voluntary Housing Association.

To date in 2024 a total of 75 new tenancies were created. Our Social Housing Allocation Scheme sets out the priorities and procedures for allocating properties to approved applicants on our housing list. Included within the 75 new tenancies were households:

At risk of homelessness/ Homeless	22
Succession Tenancies	17
Medical	8
Involuntary Sharing	7
Unsustainable Mortgage	3
Social housing transfer (Downsizing)	1
Compassionate	1
Overcrowding	1
Financial and other	15
Total	75



Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme

There remains significant interest in the LA Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme. We currently have 19 open cases at various stages of the process of which up to 10 may finalise sales in 2024.

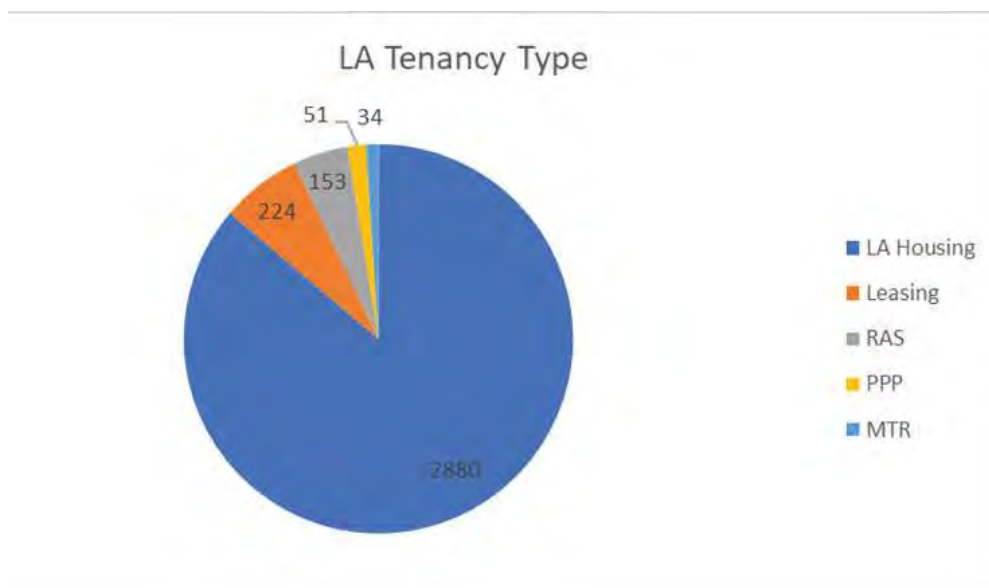
Having consulted with elected members in relation to maintaining our newer stock we have agreed that properties purchased or built since 1st January 2016 will not be available for sale under this scheme. This can be reviewed at end of current Housing Delivery Plan period in 2026. We have also agreed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

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

Housing Tenancies

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

25th April, 2024			
MD	Allocated	Occupied	Total
Ennis MD	2	1,293	1,295
Killaloe MD	0	362	362
Shannon MD	1	740	741
West Clare MD	1	954	955
Grand Total	4	3,349	3,353



Approved Housing Bodies are providing approximately 800 tenancies to Social Housing Applicants. Clare County Council has full nomination rights in respect of the majority of AHB properties and these properties are advertised via our Choice Based Letting System. Nominations are prepared in accordance with a new national process agreed by LAs and the AHB sector and commenced in July 2022.

Vacancies

Vacant Stock	Ennis MD	West Clare MD	Shannon MD	Killaloe MD	Total
Traveller Accommod.	3	7	1	0	11
Derelict Properties	0	0	0	0	0
Projects	4	12	1	2	19
Casual Vacancies	16	12	6	3	37
TOTAL	23	30	9	5	67

Estate Management

The Estate Management Team continue to undertake regular routine and response calls to tenants, dealing with ASB complaints as well as inspecting Local Authority tenancies and providing the necessary supports to tenants.

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

The Estate Management Team have started extensive inspections of council stock this year with 756 properties inspected across each of the MDs year to date. It is planned to carry out inspections on 2,000 properties this year in relation to general upkeep of the properties, refuse collection etc. Follow-up calls are scheduled in relation to approximately 10% of the properties inspected to date to ensure compliance with issues of concern are addressed.

Any matters that need to be brought to the attention of the Estate Management unit can be done so by emailing asb@clarecoco.ie

clarecoco.ie. Listed hereunder are details of work being undertaken by the Estate Management team this year to date.

	Total year to date	21st March to 26th April
ASB Complaints recd	234	64
Housing Inspections	756	255
Referrals to TSS (including Tusla)	29	10
Tenancy Notifications/Warnings issued	27	10
Abandonment Notices issued	10	0
Keys collected from Casual Vacancies	15	4
Repossession Orders	1	0
Daily Patrols	1,898	288

The Tenancy Enforcement team carry out continued patrols of Local Authority housing estates and Traveller sites and have a very visible presence to manage and mitigate against complaints

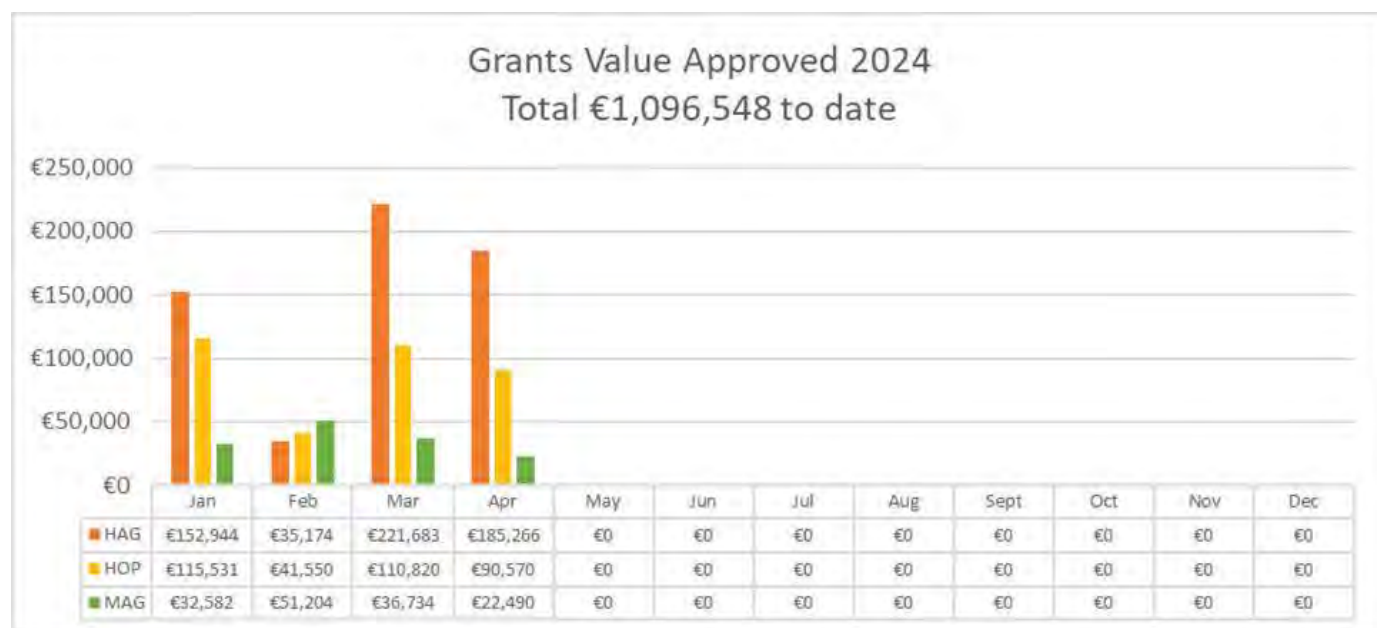
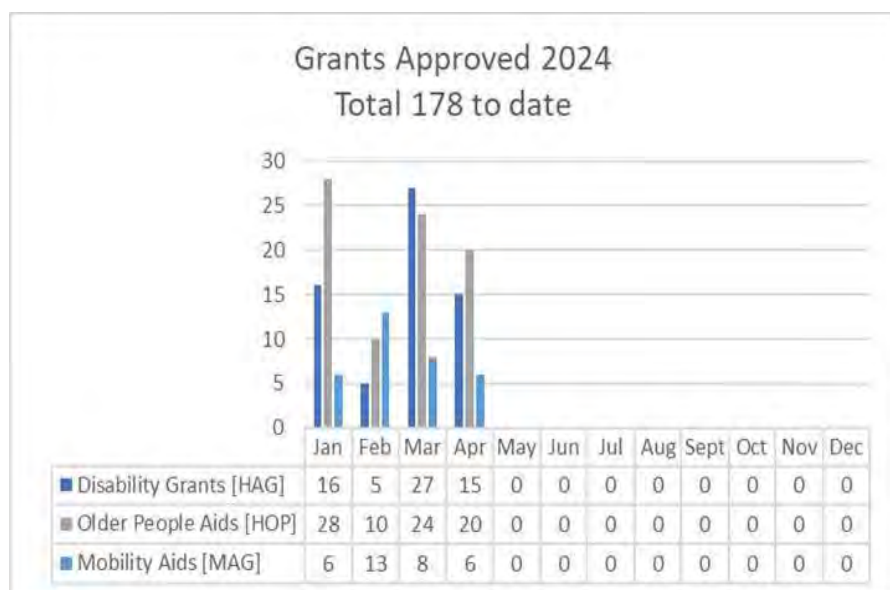
of antisocial behaviour. The team engage proactively with tenants to help prevent anti-social behaviour and between daily patrols of local authority sites, specific meetings with tenants as well as engaging with local communities and their representatives. The working hours of the TEO team are flexible to meet required need, involving working after hours and weekends as the need dictates. The TEO team can be contacted out of office hours, should the need arise, by contacting the Council Emergency Phone no. (087) 2599568

Private Rented inspections

112 inspections were carried out in the period. The inspections were carried out on HAP, RTB, RAS and Leased properties, as well as in response to complaints which were received by the team.

Housing Grants

Grants approved for to date this year:



Local Authority Home Loan

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

There are currently 59 Local Authority Home Loans Approved in Principle. Updated figures are outlined as follows:



Traveller Accommodation

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

We have also commenced preparation of the next 5-year Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAPs) for adoption by 31 December 2024. Preparation of the new plan will require housing authorities to consult with adjoining housing authorities, the HSE, approved housing bodies, the Local Traveller Consultative Committee, other local Traveller representative groups, community and interest groups and the public in general. Housing authorities, following consultation, must make an estimate of the current and projected accommodation needs of Traveller families arising over the five-year programme. We are currently working with the Traveller Community Development Program in preparing a detailed traveller led needs analysis in preparation of same. It is expected that draft plan will be available for public consultation in Q3 2024.

Homeless Services [Homeless Action Team; HAT]

The number of complex case presentations to the Homeless Action Team continues to increase along with the increase of households seeking emergency accommodation.

This is evident through the increased levels of support, advice and advocacy, being requested from households around areas such as Homeless Services, Housing Requirements, Outside Support referrals and the need for Emergency Accommodation within this region. Within this period there has been an increase in presentations of households who have been assessed as Non HRC Compliant. While such households are not eligible for services in the area, the amount of work and interactions each staff has had with such households has increased and placed considerable pressure on all team members.

In conjunction with this there has been a significant rise in the number of presentations of individuals and households

experiencing difficulties and concerns around family/relationship breakdown, Hospital discharges both medical discharges and discharges from the APU, addiction or mental health concerns, dual diagnosis, and a further increase in the number of households presenting from the Travelling Community.

During this period there has been an increase in challenging behaviour being faced by staff in the HAT team.

Prevention and support remain a key factor in the workings of the Homeless Action Team. Several single and household presentations worked with staff around prevention options and supports which in turn prevented the need for Emergency Accommodation and avoiding entering a homeless situation. Other individuals and families were supported in accessing Emergency Accommodation either within our services or through private establishments. However, as Emergency Services and Accommodation remains at capacity with continuous demand for additional capacity, several individuals remain overstaying with friends or family until a vacancy presents within Emergency Accommodation.

The Homeless Action Team continues to pursue additional emergency accommodation options. This continues to prove challenging due to demand for accommodation. The Council has completed the purchase of an additional property for emergency accommodation. This will be available for homeless women and children. A service provider is being procured through tender process to manage the accommodation and provide the necessary supports.

Emergency Accommodation Status as of 21/03/2024

	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	13	0	1
Laurel Lodge Weather Initiative	0	4	0	0
Cusack Lodge	4	6	10	1
Westbrook	0	17	0	1
Westbrook Weather Initiative	0	0	0	0
Ashford Court	12	20	17	1
PEA Families	5	9	11	3
PEA Individuals	0	11	0	3
TOTAL	21	80	38	10

Exits/Discharges from EA 17/03/24 to 18/04/24

- 3 – Discharged to Transitional Accommodation
- 2 – Long Term Tenancies AHB Housing
- 3 – Discharged: Breach of conditions / Non-use of bed space
- 1 – Self Discharge
- 1 – Other

Notices to Quit

We continue to support circa. 60 clients with valid Notices to Quit in existing private rental agreements. Our staff are actively engaging with these clients to assist them in accessing other housing solutions and to avoid the need for entering homeless services. Since the eviction ban was removed, we have supported a further 95 households through various solutions including allocations of LA properties, AHB properties, purchase through tenant in Situ Scheme, new HAP properties, etc. In addition, a small number of clients are being supported through the transboundary scheme where they are renting in border areas outside of Clare boundary, and a number of households have been referred to the Housing Agency as they may be able to avail of the Cost Rental Tenant in Situ programme through the Agency.

Affordable Housing Schemes for County Clare

Clare County Council continues to run Expression of Interest (EOI) Campaigns seeking proposals on options to deliver affordable homes in County Clare.

Clare County Council has been successful in securing approval for the first Affordable Housing Scheme in County Clare under the new Affordable Funding Scheme. Approval has been received for 10 properties in Oakwood View in Shannon and the first of these were advertised in early March with applications being accepted online since 28th March.

Three further submissions are currently under consideration by the DHLGH for inclusion on the scheme, with two other submissions under review with Clare County Council currently, in advance of submission to DHLGH in the coming weeks.

A new online information portal went live recently at <https://affordablehomes.ie/> providing general information to the public.

Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme

The Defective Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks [DCB] Scheme went live in mid-July 2023, for private dwellings, with the finalised Act, regulations, updated YQA's (Your Questions Answered) & Ministerial Guidelines published.

Applications to the scheme can be submitted on-line through our website. The website includes supporting information to further assist homeowners regarding the application process. CCC DCB Team have also included a video on CCC's website recently on "how to make an application" to further assist homeowners in the application process. In addition, our team are available to assist with any queries homeowners may have. This Team can be contacted by email at dcb@clarecoco.ie or alternatively by phone at 065-6846385, 065-6846468 & 065-6846309.

We have received a number of applications since the commencement of the scheme through the online portal and

continue to validate applications prior to sending them to the Housing Agency for their review and assessment. Housing Agency have carried out coring and testing on a number of properties and remediation options for the first batch of applications have commenced. Clare County Council has received the first ROGs (Remediation Option Grants) from the Housing Agency, and have referred these options to the relevant homeowner.

Clare County Council's DCB Team continue to hold workshops in each electoral area to further assist homeowners on how to make an application to the scheme via the online portal. These workshops are targeted for people with limited digital resources and/or capabilities, to assist them further in making an application. So far in 2024, Walk in clinics have been held in Kilrush, Ennistymon, Scarriff, Shannon and Ennis.

Clare County Council continues to engage with the DHLGH to ensure social houses affected by DCB are included in a similar scheme.

Update on capital programme

Our Capital team Housing Delivery target for 2024 is 153 units and the team is working hard to ensure this is achieved and indeed exceeded. Schemes under construction in Scarriff and Sixmilebridge are progressing very well. Design work is underway on a number of other social housing projects, which are at various stages of development.



Progress on Sixmilebridge project.



Progress on Scarriff housing development.

Approved Housing Bodies

The Approved Housing Body Sector delivered 8 units at Cluain na Laoi, Kilkishen this month, which is very welcome from our housing delivery perspective. The remaining 8 units are due for completion during the summer months. Department approval was also received during April for the completion of 5 units through Part V at Shannon which will be delivered by Cluid in Q3 of 2024. In addition to the projects outlined below, there are a number of other projects at the initial stages. The Housing Department continue to provide a co-ordinating role and is holding progress meetings with all these bodies to ensure projects are delivered in line with targets set out in our Housing Delivery Action Plan.

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Scarriff	18	Under Construction	Q1 2023	Q3 2024
Sixmilebridge	15	Under Construction.	Q1 2023	Q3 2024
111 Dún na hInse	1	Under Construction	Q4 2023	Q2 2024
Main Street Clarecastle	1	Under Construction	Q1 2024	Q3 2024
38 St Patrick's Terrace, Kilrush	1	Contractor Appointed	Q2 2024	Q4 2024
St. Senan's Terrace, Kilrush	1	Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q2 2024
Clarehill Clarecastle	13	Turnkey – Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2024
Garrán Cathaigh, Leadmore Kilrush	14	Turnkey – Under Construction	Q2 2024	Q2 2025
Drumcliff Rd. Ennis	26	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Judicial Review Proceedings have been initiated in relation to S179A.	-	-
Ennistymon	30	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Project on hold.	-	-
Gort Rd. Ennis	20	Stage 2 approved. Permission granted by An Bord Pleanála. Tender for construction contract currently being prepared.	Q2 2024	Q3 2025
Doonbeg Road, Kilkee	25	Stage 1 approval. Design Team has been appointed and design is progressing.	Q4 2024	Q2 2026
Back Road, Kilrush	12	Stage 1 approval. Stage 2 application is pending approval from Department of Housing. Design Team is appointed and design is progressing.	Q3 2024	Q2 2026
Moore Street, Kilrush	16	Stage 2 submitted to the department for approval	Q1 2025	Q3 2026
Doonbeg Lands	8	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Application submitted to An Bord Pleanála on 18th August 2023.	Q3 2024	Q3 2025
Shallee Drive / Cloughleigh Rd	5	Stage 1 & 2 approval. Design Team appointed and design is progressing.	Q3 2024	Q3 2025
Subtotal	206			
Approved Housing Body Projects	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Quin, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey)	36	Under construction: 10 units in Phase 1 26 units in Phase 1	Q1 2023 Q3 2023	Q3 2024 Q3 2024
Cluain na Laoi, Kilkishen (Circle Housing Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	16	Completed on 15/04/2024 8 units in Phase 1 Under construction: 8 units in Phase 2	Q1 2023 Q1 2023	Q2 2024 Q3 2024
Acha Bhile, Lahinch Rd., Ennis (Cluid Hsg. Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	21	Under construction 11 units in Phase 2 10 units in Phase 3	Q3 2023 Q1 2024	Q3 2024 Q4 2024

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Market Street, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	14	Under construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2024
63 Shannon Heights, Kilrush (Sophia Hsg. Assoc.) CAS Renewal Construction	1	At procurement stage	Q3 2024	Q3 2025
Loughville, Ennis (Tuath Housing) CALF Turnkey	48	Under construction: 16 units in Phase 1 32 units in Phase 2	Q1 2024 Q1 2024	Q4 2024 Q1 2025
Crusheen (Cluid Housing Association) CALF Turnkey (Part V)	3	Under construction	Q3 2023	Q2 2024
Clonroad, Ennis, St. Vincent de Paul CAS Turnkey	12	Under construction	Q1 2024	Q4 2024
Bruachlan, Westbury (Cooperative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Construction	22	Planning application ongoing - at further information stage.	Q4 2024	Q4 2025
Shannon (Cluid Housing Assoc.)	5	Under construction	Q4 2023	Q4 2024
Subtotal	178			
Total	384			

UKRAINIAN SERVICES

There are currently 5,581 Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTP's) living in County Clare, representing a decrease of 15 people in the county compared to figures released in April. There are 2,992 people accommodated in 39 multi-occupancy facilities located throughout the county. The remaining people are accommodated in residential settings in formal hosted arrangements through the Irish Red Cross and Clare County Council's 'Offer-A-Home' scheme. We currently have 210 homes offered under this scheme, with an average of one home being offered each week. To date our Matching & Relationship Manager has facilitated the accommodation of

435 people that were originally living in hotel and multi-occupancy facilities.

Homeowners providing accommodation through hosting arrangements in their own homes or in unoccupied homes are entitled to claim a monthly Accommodation Recognition Payment (ARP) of €800 tax free through the Department of Social Protection. The ARP was due to expire in March 2024 however the payment has now been extended until March 2025 to reflect the extension of the temporary protection order by the European Commission.

LOCAL AUTHORITY INTEGRATION TEAM

Clare County Council's Integration Team was delighted to be invited to St Joseph's Secondary School in Spanish Point on 18th April to deliver a presentation to third-year CSPE students on International Protection Applicants and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection.

Clare County Council would like to thank our guest speakers, Tayeb Abu Awwad and Oleksandra Leizhieva, and the students and staff of St Joseph's for a very warm welcome.



Clare County Council's integration team, along with local councillors and members of An Garda Síochána, hosted a meet and greet event in Scariff on Tuesday night, 16th April, to welcome the residents from the Clare Lakelands Hotel (International Protection) and the East Clare Golf Village (Ukrainians).

The event was very well received by the community and provided an excellent platform for new members of the community to feel welcome and to join local groups/clubs. This in turn will no doubt help to further build positive relationships.



Integration Team Scariff.



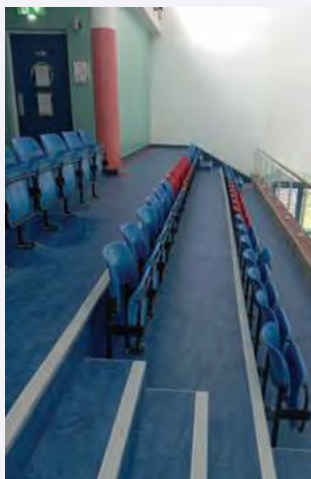
L-R: Brendan Boyce, Cllr Pat Hayes, Fiona Cahill, Padraig McMahon.
Photo: Cealtra Communications

SPORTS & RECREATION



Active Ennis Leisure Complex Gym & Pool Report

We recently refurbished our viewing area, changing the floor and reconditioning the seating. The viewing area is an important aspect of our complex gathering a large footfall, especially from parents watching swimming lessons. Works began in early April when the old flooring and seating were removed. The new flooring was put down and reconditioned seating was re-installed towards the later part of April.



Swimming lessons

The last week of April saw our current block of Swimming Lessons come to a close. A new block of lessons will begin in the first week of May. Swimming Lessons are still in huge demand and quickly booked out. A new block of adult swimming lessons will be commencing in early May and slots are filling out very quickly.

Classes and Teen Gym

Class numbers for our Aqua Aerobics were very popular in April, we run Aqua Fit classes Monday, Wednesday evenings and Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. We continue to promote our classes using social media and encourage all levels to participate. Bookings for our Fitness Studio also remain very busy, instructors/practitioners can rent the hall using our online booking system. We have recently added a new class on Friday evening called 'Dance Fitness'. Teen Gym also remains very popular for young gym users and helps them get used to a gym environment.

Teen Gym Hours 12-15 years

Mon/Wed/Fri 4-5pm €6

Saturday 5-6pm €6

School Holidays Mon-Friday 11am-12pm or 12pm-1pm, €6 per hour

Footfall Report Active Ennis Leisure Complex

Total Footfall for the Active Ennis Leisure Complex in March was 22,161 with an average Footfall of 715 people per day. The Lowest recorded Footfall 161 which was Easter Sunday and the highest recorded Footfall was 2,129, the Community games were held in the pool on this day.

A decrease in Footfall compared to February would have been caused by Swim Lessons not going ahead for 2 weeks within the month and School Swim Lessons not going ahead for 1 week within the month. The highest total recorded footfall was on Friday 15th of March when the finals of the community games were held. The lowest recorded Footfall was on the 31st of March (161) which was Easter Sunday, this was significantly lower (53%) than the lowest recorded footfall in February (339).

Lee's Road

March saw a busy period for Lee's Road. 20,532 vehicles entered the park in March, an average of 662 per day. Revenue increased a total of 2.5% for March.

The pitches in Lee's Road saw a lot of use in March particularly for GAA clubs and an FAI County Primary Schools 5 a-side blitz held over 2 days on the Astro Turf Pitch.

Kilrush

In March bookings for facilities in Kilrush saw an increase of 48% and the number of active hours also saw an increase of 20.2%. Revenue also increased by 59.9% in February.

www.activeennis.ie www.activekilrush.ie

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



General Updates

- Jessica O'Keeffe is now the Outdoor Recreation Officer in Clare Sports Partnership.
- Jessica and John attended the Outdoor Recreation Network (ORN) conference of 2024 held in Glendalough, Wicklow on April 11th, and April 12th.
- We won the award for 'Best practice for accessibility and inclusion' with our partner Eoin Hogan, the rural recreation officer at the inaugural awards night. It was a fantastic event which focused on the use of data insights in the outdoors recreation space.

Schools & Youth

- Borrowing of playground markings and sportshall athletics packs by primary schools continues.
- Our 6-week sportshall athletics programme began in Ennis Community College on Monday April 8th and is due to begin in Ennistymon Community College on Wednesday April 24th.
- Get Going Get Rowing is launching in Colaiste Mhuire Ennis on Wednesday April 17th.

Education & Training

- Safeguarding courses continue to be delivered. The full list of safeguarding courses is available on our website.
- Bridge United AFC have achieved their Season of Respect Level 2 award on April 10th.
- Our next Disability Awareness Training is on April 22nd.

Sports Inclusion

- Inclusive gymnastics with Ennis Gymnastics Club is ongoing on Monday and Tuesday evenings. There are 50 children who attend these sessions.
- School inclusive gymnastics takes place every Monday in Ennis Gymnastics during the school term with 19 different schools and over 100 children participating in this programme.
- We have commenced inclusive gymnastics training for teachers and SNAs from the school's participating in our inclusive gymnastics programme.
- The brand new integrated physical education programme with TY students and students from the ASD hub in St. Caimin's Secondary school in Shannon continues to be delivered.
- Eire Og / Corofin GAA All-stars Inclusive Clubs are back running indoor sessions for over 40 children with a disability.
- A new 6-week All-stars pilot programme has commenced in Wolfstones GAA club in Shannon.
- Clare comets basketball all-stars continue to run their indoor sessions on Saturdays in Ennis National School.
- Both Derg AC (Saturday mornings) and Tulla AC (Thursday evenings) continue to run sessions for over 40 children with a disability.
- Dates confirmed for this year's inclusive summer camps:
 - o Derg Athletics club – week of July 15th
 - o Clare Comets Basketball – week of July 29th
 - o ASD Cúl Camp – August 6th – 8th
 - o FAI Down Syndrome camp – August 20th – 22nd.

Older Adults

- This block of banner balance programme has now concluded with 16 participants.
- We continue to support our tutors in delivering weekly classes to over 300 older adults in County Clare.
- An activator pole walking programme in Killaloe with 12 participants is ongoing.

- Go for Life Games County Finals will commence in early May in preparation for the All-Ireland finals in Dublin in June.
- James attended the Clare Older People's Council Awards on April 10th in Ennis.

Active Communities

- 36 people have now completed their ten-week swimming programme – and 31 completed the mile or full-mile swim event.
- Women on the Move Kilkee has started with 16 ladies taking part in this six-week programme.
- County Clare events for National Bike Week have been sent to the department.
- Sports equipment for another three clubs in Kilrush Sports Hub.
- Our first “Her Moves” teenage girls programme started in Kilrush, with a combination of gym and hair/beauty involved.
- Work has begun on our Kilkee outdoor adventure hub with launch taking place at the end of May.

Minority Communities

- Our Winter Wellness programme has been extended due to popular demand – this will continue until May 17th. This presents an excellent chance for integration, with both Ukrainians and local Irish residents participating. Doolin Yoga have commenced body conditioning classes every Tuesday and Dance with Kasia is on Fridays. An arrangement has been initiated to distribute exercise mats to individuals in need within the group, with distribution scheduled for this week. This will enable participants to do exercise at home and continue after the programme has finished.

ESF+ Sport4Empowerment Programme

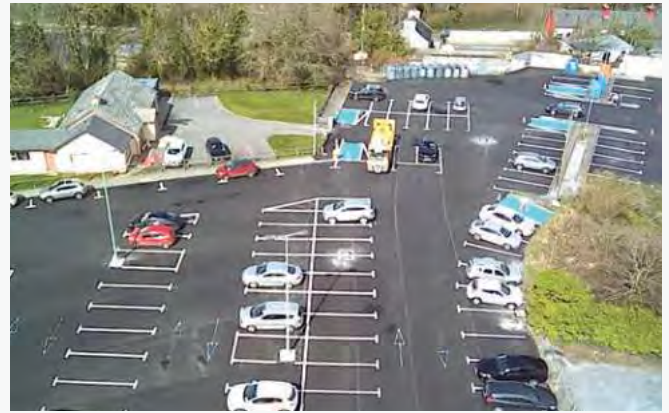
- In conjunction with GAA Handball Development Officer Marguerite Gore we were able to co fund the Clare

Traveller CPD with the purchase of goggles, gloves and balls through the Men on the Move Programme. We are progressing a traveller Handball competition to culminate with ‘Traveller Pride’ Day in May, we will continue to engage with Marguerite to work with the group and intend to run a coaching course for them.

- Continue to work with Swim Ireland on a project to bring a group of traveller men - from not being able to swim through to being certified swim coaches. We are working on surmounting the literacy issues and time commitment from the group. We are also engaged with the Department of Social Protection – INTREO Office to get funding through the ‘Training Support Grant’.
- The development of a ‘Haven Club’ concept for children in residential care for families utilising domestic services, is continuing to progress. TUSLA Foster Care and Early Family Intervention teams are on board and very anxious to support the development. A Steering group of stakeholders will be created to further pursue concept. TUSLA will be part of this and will advise on safeguarding.
- Research funding proposal for 18k submitted to Sport Ireland on the “Participatory levels in Sport and impact on children from Domestic Abuse settings in pursuing activities”. UL Engage are the co collaborators if the proposal is accepted.
- In conjunction with Clare PPN, Clare Volunteer Centre, CLDC and others we are partaking in a voter registration drive leading up to the local elections – the target are underrepresented groups, IPA's, Travellers, Roma, people with disabilities and will be working with representative groups to engage these cohorts. Civic participation is a core tenet of the ESF programme.
- Have held further one to one discussion with International Protection Applicants in Ennis and Miltown Malbay, and Roma community Leaders about potential initiatives.

WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT - NORTH CLARE LEA

Overlay works and line marking carried out at Lisdoonvarna Car Park



Overlay works on the R-479 in Doolin



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

Roadworks Programme and Operations

The 2024 Schedule of Municipal District Works (Annual Roadworks Programme) has been adopted by the municipal districts. The annual roadworks programme has now commenced in all 4 Municipal Districts.

Strategic Transportation

Active Travel

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

Tulla Road Cycle scheme:

- Detailed design for this project is ongoing, this is being undertaken by AECOM Consulting Engineers. Regular progress meetings are continuing. First iteration of the detailed design to be issued for review by CCC and NTA on the 26/04/2024. A Stage 2 Road Safety Audit to follow.

Ennis LTP:

- Systra Consulting Engineers are working with relevant stakeholders and progressing the Local Transport Plan for Ennis.

Limerick Road (incl. St. Flannans Drive) Cycle scheme:

- Consultant is updating Concept Design & Route Options Selection Report following feedback from Active Travel team and NTA.

Connecting & Co-creating Ennis:

- This project will continue through 2024 with a number of junction-tightening and raised crossings planned.

‘Safe Routes To School’ program:

- Clonmoney National School: The project delivering traffic calming and enhanced pedestrian/cycling facilities is substantially completed.



- Holy Family National School: This scheme will be split into two phases with the Preliminary Design with the NTA for approval to progress to the Statutory Approval Phase. Section 38 public consultation for this is scheme due to close on the 29th April .
- Gaelscoil Mhíicil Chíosóg; Two concept options have been developed for this scheme: Option 1. Front of School Treatment consisting of junction tightening, raised crossings, lining, signing, bollards, and realignment of parking and Option 2 – Permeability Improvement by the refurbishment and repurpose of the old railway bridge crossing the River Fergus Minor, linking the Tulla Rd to the Gaelscoil on the Gort Rd. A consultant has been procured to carry out a condition assessment of the existing abutments, results from this assessment will inform the preferred option.

Clare Bridges – Pedestrian & Cycling Connectivity

- Barry Transportation are currently developing the preliminary design for 11 Bridges throughout the county, the Road Safety Audits on the preliminary design are currently being undertaken.

Public Lighting

Survey works being undertaken as part of the PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Programme) are working towards a conclusion in Clare with in excess of 95% of units surveyed to date. Reconciliation Surveys are due to commence next month prior to the commencement of design works.

For the benefit of Councillors, public lighting faults can be reported online at <https://enerveo.com/report-a-fault/republic-of-ireland>, by Phone (0818-372772) or via Local Authority Identification (<https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/roads-and-transport/road-maintenance-issues/report-a-broken-streetlight>).

Clare County Council continues to liaise and engage with its maintenance contractor, Enerveo and ESB Networks in its efforts to reduce outage times on the public lighting network. ESBN's Minimum Requirements for Public Lighting Networks necessitates additional civils and interface works and this has resulted in a more prolonged repair time and work load on some repairs. CCC continues to liaise with and engage with ESBN and Enerveo in seeking additional resources to expedite outage periods.

Road Design Office

TII Road Safety Projects:

Project	Progress Update
HD17	<p>N85 Lahinch Road Ennis Pedestrian Crossing Gateway 1 approval has been granted by TII.</p> <p>N85 Lahinch Road Shanaway Junction A draft preliminary design report has been forwarded to TII for feedback.</p> <p>N68 Cranny Cross Junction The Design report being prepared for Vehicle Activated Signage at this location has been approved by TII. A topographical survey has been completed, and concept designs for proposed junction realignment options will be developed by the RDO for discussion with TII.</p> <p>Lahinch Pedestrian Crossing Pedestrian & Traffic survey has been carried out.</p> <p>Inagh Pedestrian Crossing Pedestrian & Traffic survey has been carried out.</p>

Noise Action Plans	<p>Strategic Noise Mapping & Noise Action Plans Agglomerations Technical Working Group meetings and workshops are ongoing.</p> <p>Please be advised that the Draft Agglomeration of Limerick Noise Action Plan 2024-2028, prepared under S.I. No. 549 of 2018 (as amended), to address environmental noise in the Agglomeration of Limerick (as defined in the above regulations), prepared jointly by Limerick City and County Council and Clare County Council is now on public display. This is a four-year strategic plan with the main purpose to inform and consult the public about the health effects of noise exposure from road, rail and major industry sources and the measures that may be considered to address this issue in the Agglomeration of Limerick.</p> <p>The plan may be accessed online at: Draft Agglomeration of Limerick Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 Clare County Council Community Engagement (clarecoco.ie)</p> <p>Submissions relating to the administrative area of Clare County Council may be made in writing to Clare County Council or via https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie or by email to noiseactionplan@clarecoco.ie</p> <p>The closing date for submissions or observations on the draft plan is 17th May 2024.</p> <p>Please note the draft County Clare Noise Action Plan is also currently being prepared and will be going to public consultation in May 2024. Dates of this public consultation will be advised in due course.</p>
Fence Retrofitting Programme	<p>Projects on the N68 have been granted approval to proceed to tender by TII. An allocation of €50,000 was provided by TII for 2024.</p>

Other Projects 2024:

Project	Progress Update
Bridge Rehabilitation Programme	AA screenings are commencing on bridges in the 2024 Bridge Rehabilitation Programme. Tender packs for rehabilitation works are being prepared.
Safety Improvement Works on Regional and Local Roads	<p>Low Cost Safety Schemes in 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> R471 Bothar Mor, Shannon €90,000, Section 38 public consultation underway in April, closing date for submissions 29th April. L-4118 Gaurus, Ennis, Co. Clare €15,000, Section 38 has been completed. R-481-17/L5180 Ballybreen Kilfenora €35,000, design complete. L-4608 Rosslevan, Ennis €40,000, Section 38 public consultation underway, closing date for submissions 6th May. R484 Kilmihiil Village €40,000. Design complete, Section 38 submissions being considered. L3312 Bealach Buí €45,000, Section 38 public consultation concluded. R474/L8344 Connolly €45,000, survey completed, design complete. <p>Specific Improvement Grant Ogonolloe €100k:</p> <p>A topographical survey has been carried out and design work has commenced for speed reduction measures.</p>
Liaison with NTA re- garding bus shelters	Engagement is ongoing with the NTA regarding new bus shelter locations in County Clare.

Health and Safety

The Health & Safety Team commenced their programme of work for 2024 starting with the updating and communication of the Clare County Council Occupational Health & Safety Management System and ongoing revision of routine Risk Assessments and Safety Statements. The implementation of the programme of work will be monitored throughout the year by the Health & Safety Teams ongoing reviews of Safety Statements, Risk Assessments and H&S Audit and Inspection plans.

The H&S Team have commenced completing Safety Inspections using the Pro Works App across all the Service Areas of Clare County Council. In addition meetings were held in each of the Municipal Districts during March/April in order to provide additional training and support in the roll out and use of the Pro Works App.

During April a Gap Analysis was completed of the Physical Directorate and Housing Departments Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems readiness for accreditation to the ISO 45001 Standard. The outcome from the GAP Analysis was that an application will be made to the NSAI to extend the current ISO 45001 accreditation in Clare County Fire & Rescue Service to include the Physical Directorate and Housing Department during 2024.

DSE Assessors Training was completed by 11 staff over two training sessions so far in 2024 with a third training session planned in order to close the gap in DSE Assessments as identified in the Internal Audit 2023.

CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Doolin Pier Visitor Services Building	The council are at present liaising with the department with a view to securing additional funding necessary to bring this project to Statutory Consent stage.
Ennis Public Realm Re-generation (Project B)	The appointed contractor Shareridge Ltd. is making very satisfactory progress in all areas of the works, in line with the agreed phasing plan. There are 30 personnel onsite, and in excess of 22,000 hours worked to date. In order to expedite works, an additional evening shift commenced on High Street 15th April 2024. This will bring forward the opening up of this street section by a minimum of 3 weeks and has received the popular support of our business community. With the sectional completion of paving of street sections, it has been possible to remove higher heras fencing, in favour of lower pedestrian fencing. This is an important step in re-opening the streets and brings us closer to eventual hand-over of the remodelled streetscapes for the use and enjoyment by our stakeholders and general public.

	<p>With the advance sewer works on O'Connell Street and High Street now at 90% complete and nearing completion, an important milestone in the project will be achieved in coming weeks. This will in turn allow the retirement of existing legacy cabling which must be removed to facilitate construction of the shared surface pavement on the western extent of O'Connell Street.</p> <p>Phase 1 (O'Connell Street to Carmody street junction) Works have recommenced on this section in April. Footpaths to be paved in coming weeks, with completion forecast for June 2024. The works will be coordinated in tandem with upgrade of Traffic signals at Carmody street junction.</p> <p>Phase 2A (High Street) Extensive paving completed along central section of street. Concrete pours in progress on northern pavement. The southern pavement will be broken out on evening shift, followed by service installation, laying of pavement. Advance sewer works complete on this section.</p> <p>Phase 2B (Middle O'Connell Street) Significant progress made on paving and finishing central carriageway. An additional crew are advancing sections outside Old Ground hotel with sections opened to the public in April 2024. Advance sewer works complete on this section.</p> <p>Phase 3 (O'Connell Square) Works to commence on O'Connell Square in coming weeks. The section outside Hidden Hearing on the southern side of the square will be advanced first, followed by phased implementation of separate sections. The programming of these works is currently being reviewed by the council and the appointed contractor.</p> <p>Phase 5 (Upper O'Connell Street) Advanced sewer works are well progressed along this section with overall completion scheduled for mid May. This will allow temporary removal of construction fencing, pending commencement of Public Realm works.</p> <p>Phase 6 Advance sewer works complete on this section in April 2024.</p> <p>Road Closures are now in place for O'Connell Street, and High Street, and there will need for limited further road closures in the town centre in 2024 to facilitate certain aspects of the works.</p> <p>The works requirement within the contract obliges Shareridge to have a Public Liaison Officer (PLO) as part of their Team who is based in their Project Office in Ennis Town Centre. The PLO is engaging extensively with affected parties as the works progress and, in advance of commencement of every work phase. The public and traders are encouraged to take every opportunity to meet with the project team to ensure that their needs are communicated, and disruption is minimised wherever possible. The contractor and design team are also convening fortnightly drop-in meetings, as well as issuing weekly progress update bulletins. Affected/interested parties are invited to email ennispublicrealm@shareridge.ie if they wish to be added to mailing list.</p>
Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake's Corner)	<p>It is unavoidable that there will be disruption with a major civil and infrastructural works of this nature but every effort is being made to keep this to a minimum while allowing the necessary access to allow timely completion. It is expected that the longer-term benefits in terms of user amenity and accessibility will far outweigh the shorter-term inconvenience. The cooperation and understanding of all stakeholders in this regard is greatly appreciated.</p> <p>The Judicial Review process is ongoing.</p>

Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass

Progress has improved with recent spell good/dry weather. Major Milestones achieved include: installation of final edge girders to central pier of New Shannon Bridge using 600t crawler crane.



Upcoming milestones include: the re-opening of R494 to through-traffic scheduled for Friday May 3rd. The plan is to have the road opened for two lanes of traffic for 1.5km, i.e. from Birdhill (Chainage 3300m) to Kilmaglasderry (Chainage 1750). Whilst the R494 will be open to through-traffic after this date there will continue to be Temporary Traffic Management arrangements in place while the remainder of the works both online and offline are completed towards the new Roolagh roundabout.

Killaloe Bypass Section

Kincora: Roundabout Arms tie-ins in progress.

Main Cut to Hill Road: Cycle Track kerbing in progress.

Hill Road to Creeveroe Road: Concrete to footpath in progress.

Creeveroe Road to Shantraud: Concrete to footpath in progress. Shaping attenuation pond.

Shantraud Roundabout: Attenuation Pond shaping in progress. Accommodation Works to CPO 124 boundaries in progress. Kerb preps and kerb installation in progress.



Shannon Bridge Crossing Link

Shantraud to Clarisford Junction: Access Road to CPO 134 in progress. Kerb preps and installation in progress. Pavement activities in progress. Attenuation pond shaping in progress.

Clarisford to West Embankment: Foundations to walls in progress. Blockwork and stonework in progress.



Shannon Bridge

East Abutment: Diaphragm poured.

West Abutment: Steel fixing to diaphragm in progress.

Central Pier: Edge girders to spans either side installed. Transverse beams to central spans being installed.

Spans 1,2,5&6: Formwork and steel fixing in progress.



R494 Upgrade

Section 7 (South of Rail Bridge): Culvert installed. Kerbs installed. Drainage in progress. Paving activities imminent.

Section 7 (North of Rail Bridge): Kerb installation nearing completion. Pavement laying activities well advanced.

Section 6 (Northbound Lane): Pavement laid.

Section 3: Kerbs installed.

Section 2(Northbound Lane): Kerbs installed. Drainage being completed. Accom. Works in progress.

Section 2 (Southbound Lane): Accom. Wks. continue.

Section 1: Works to Pumping Station in progress. Accommodation works in progress.



Kilmastulla Bridge

Services being installed and shared facility preps in progress.

Rail Bridge

Paving activities complete. Services being installed and shared facility preps in progress.

RW03 (Shannonside Embankment): New access road to Business Park paved. Edge protection to retaining structure complete. Paving to embankment complete.



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

	JBA have submitted the Preliminary Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), for CCC's review. The CEMP will be included in the planning permission application, along with all final planning documents and drawings. It is anticipated to make a planning submission to An Bord Pleanála this summer.
Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)	<p>Discussions are ongoing with the Department of Housing and to that regard, CCC await a favourable response from the LIHAF Management Committee of the Department which will enable us to move forward with the Infrastructure & Housing delivery.</p> <p>Discussions regarding the acquisition of the necessary lands for the scheme continue with the relevant landowners affected. It is hoped that all lands can be acquired by agreement and to that end our design consultants RPS are progressing with the completion of the tender documents associated with the infrastructure element. There has been interaction with the Department with regard to the funding and timelines for delivery for the project, and staff in the PMO as well as Ennis MD are working to achieve the desired outcome</p> <p>Liaison is continuing with the relevant utility providers in terms of the necessary provision for the scheme and diversions required.</p>
N19 Shannon Airport Access Road	<p>Phase 3 (Design and Environmental Evaluation) stage is currently ongoing with Phase 4 (Statutory Consent) stage progressing thereafter.</p> <p>The preparation of the various Chapters of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) continues with a final draft expected to be issued for TII review by the end of April.</p> <p>The Project Team & scheme consultants FTC & Co continue to work across a range of other areas including engaging with TII Project Services Departments, The Shannon Airport Group, Shannon Commercial Properties, Future Mobility Campus Ireland, Shannon FRS Team, etc., all in preparation of submitting this project for Statutory Consent in mid-2024.</p> <p>Phase 5 (Enabling and Procurement) & Phase 6 (Construction) will progress thereafter which are subject to timely consents, no legal challenge, funding, etc. The construction contract is estimated to be in the region of 18 months in duration.</p> <p>Discussions continue regarding the necessary Land Transfer Agreements between The Minister for Transport, The Shannon Group and Clare County Council and as always, further information and associated literature on the project can be accessed via the scheme website www.shannonaccess.ie</p>
Quin Remedial Flood Scheme	<p>Suitable dry conditions during April have allowed works to recommence on the scheme. Topsoiling of the embankment is nearing completion and the reinstatement of adjacent agricultural lands is progressing. Hedgerow planting to the front of the RC wall is also complete, with permanent fence installation due to commence in May.</p> <p><i>Quin RFS May 01 Quin RFS May 02</i></p>
Remediation of sites containing ACM	<p>Having completed detailed design in respect of the excavation and remediation of the sites, a tender process was carried out, and receiving locations have been finalised. Following consideration of statutory approval aspects, the council is currently reviewing implementation options with a view remediation of the sites on a phased basis.</p> <p>The sites continue to be routinely monitored and maintained as required by Council staff in accordance with our agreed approach following discussion and consultation with the EPA.</p>
Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme	<p>Scheme consultant RPS are currently addressing a small number of modelling issues that once complete will allow them to finalise the project description and commence drafting the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).</p> <p>A further meeting was held with NPWS to discuss the scheme in terms of the airport lagoon, golf club embankments and public walkways. Clare County Council presented amended proposals to address concerns raised by NPWS about particular aspects of the scheme.</p> <p>Environmental surveys for the summer season are due to commence this month. Water sampling at the lagoon is ongoing.</p>
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 1: Kilrush to Kilkee)	<p>Public Consultation 3 concluded on 12th April 2024. Landowner consultations are ongoing. Feedback from the Public Consultation event is now being reviewed and information will feed into the finalisation of the 'Emerging Preferred Route Corridor'. A peer review has been undertaken by TII on the draft Option Selection Report, and the comments raised are being addressed in conjunction with the review of the feedback from PC3.</p>
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 2: Ennis to Ennistymon)	<p>Work continues on the 'Option Selection Report' and it is due to be completed in Q2, 2024. In particular, studies of groundwater flooding and bird surveys of the most sensitive areas are being progressed.</p>

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

West Clare Railway Greenway (Sections 3 & 4: Ennistymon to Miltown Malbay to Moyasta)	The Project Team are finalising the Consultation Report following Public Consultation 1. A report on the feedback to PC1 has been drafted. Environmental specialists are mapping the constraints in the Study Area to inform the development of possible route options.
Other Greenway Proposals	No update this month.

General Design Office

Lemenagh Burial Ground, Newmarket-on-Fergus	Piers/gates restoration project recently completed at entrance to Lemenagh Burial Ground. 
Vandeleur Gardens Lower Carpark Refurbishment	Preliminary design investigations, proposals and approvals ongoing.
Town and Village Renewal Scheme	Clonlara - Official unveiling/opening date to be confirmed. Parteen - Contractor appointed. Works due to commence on site in June 2024.
Active Travel Project	Section 38 resolution for Active Travel project passed at Ennis MD meeting - Roslevan Roundabout to Gaurus Cross i.e. Newpark Road.

FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

Training Courses

17 recruit fire-fighters from across the country, including 7 for Clare County Fire & Rescue Service attended a QQI accredited Firefighter Skills course at Ennis Fire Station Training Centre from 8th to 26th April 2024. These fire-fighters will return to their stations after the course and will respond to emergency call-outs. The Clare fire-fighters will be based at Ennis, Shannon, Scarriff & Killaloe Fire Stations.



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Recruitment of Fire Service Personnel

Interviews took place on the 16th April for recruit fire-fighters and 5 additional personnel are currently being processed for posts across the County.

Fire & Building Control Section Main Activities	March 2024	April 2024 (Up to 24.04.24)	Year to Date 2024
Number of Emergency Calls Attended	80	76	400
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received	5	8	32
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted	7	6	27
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	1	2
Number of Disability Access Certificates Received	4	3	18
Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted	3	5	15
Number of Commencement Notices Received	75	98	250
Number of Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	3	0	9

(Note: In the April Monthly Report, the March figures related to 1st- 20th March due to timing of report)

CLARE CIVIL DEFENCE

Operational Duties:

- Civil Defence provided medical cover at a number of events in April including Run the Banner (Ennis); Run Clare (Kilkishen); Munster Senior Hurling Championship Clare vs Limerick (Cusack Park); Odd Socks Cycle 2024; Cliffs of Moher Cycle Challenge 2024 and Shannon Estuary Anti-Pollution Team (SEA-PT) Oil Pollution Response Exercise.
- Clare Civil Defence assisted An Garda Síochána with a missing person search at the Cliffs of Moher. The person was located and monitored over 10 days until the arrival of the Garda water unit to recover the body.
- Clare Civil Defence volunteers were tasked by An Garda Síochána to assist with a high risk missing person search in Ennis. 10 volunteers responded and conducted a search of the area in Ennis.

the River Fergus

- 64 volunteers attended a Health & Safety briefing evening.



Members Training & Professional Development

- Members participated in weekly training set out by Civil Defence instructors - this training included boat training, vehicle training, search training and use of drones.
- Swiftwater Flood First Responder Training took place on

New Recruits 2023/2024

12 new recruits participated in the end of year training exercise in Shannon which included visits to the Fire Station and Coast Guard Base in Shannon.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Awareness

National Spring Clean 2024

This year, to date, 158 groups have registered for the National Spring Clean in Clare. Groups have been advised that they can avail of free passes to our waste transfer facilities. Since

January 2024, 72 free passes have been issued to community groups.

Communication campaigns

The Environment Section used print and social media campaigns in April to promote electronic waste recycling, free electrical waste drop-off day at Kilrush, dog owner responsibil-

ity (dog control and dog fouling).



Gardening

With the arrival of April, we finally experienced a 'grand stretch in the evening' together with a long overdue improvement in weather conditions. This increase in daylight hours in conjunction with the improved soil temperatures has ensured that plant and grass growth has been vigorous in recent weeks. The Gardening Team has been busy with planned seasonal work, including grass cutting and maintenance at corporate buildings.



In late April, the gardening nursery hosted a visit and provided a practical demonstration to the Council's Gardening Club, comprising of both existing and retired staff members. This club is an initiative of the Council's Employee Welfare Officer and aims to promote mindfulness and wellbeing through encouraging staff to become green fingered.

During April, the Gardening Team has assisted Shannon Municipal District in the planting of new trees within Shannon Town, while also assisting Ennis Municipal District in the development of new flower beds and tree planting at the Market Square. This work shall be completed in early May.



Water Enforcement and Laboratory Scientific Services

The Environment Section have been approved for an additional National Agricultural Inspector (Assistant Scientist) to assist in completing the prescribed number of inspections notified by the EPA.

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

Water Enforcement Scientific Team	April 2024	Total YTD 2024
Bathing Water Monitoring	Season starts in June	Season starts in June
Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Inspections (NIP Plan)	6 first inspections: 4 first inspections.	31
Public queries processed with regard to DWWTS grants	6	22
Monitoring Inspections of Section 4 licenced premises	6	36
Planning applications (Agriculture)	0	10
Planning applications (Domestic)	15	80
Planning applications (Large Developments)	0	9
Planning applications (Forestry)	22	39
Pollution complaints received	19	50
Private Commercial Drinking Water Supplies	0	21
Private/Public Group Water Scheme supplies	2	107
Rivers	10	71
Warning & advisory letters issued	4	7
Farm Inspections (NAIP) (Routine Planned)	3	13

Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems

This team in collaboration with the planning section have organised a workshop to be given by Dr Robbie Meehan (one of the authors of the 2021 EPA Code of Practice for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems) on Friday April 26th at Clare County Council HQ to planning agents/site assessors. The power point presentation will be placed on CCC website for future reference for planning agents and site assessors.

Waste Enforcement

Waste Facility Permit / Certificate of Registration Inspections

Inspections of 3 permitted and 3 unauthorised facilities were carried out by the Waste Enforcement team in April. Follow-up enforcement action was taken in the case of the two unpermitted sites. The permitted sites were inspected to monitor compliance with their permit conditions, to achieve positive environmental outcomes for the receiving environments.

The table below summarises the work of the Waste Enforcement team to date in 2024:

Waste Enforcement Complaints	April 2024	Total YTD 2024
Litter	5	41
Dog Fouling	7	25
CRM	141	645
Waste Presentation	4	15
Dumping	44	242

Waste Enforcement Inspections	April 2024	Total YTD 2024
Cert of Registration	3	13
Waste Facility Permits	--	3
Unauthorised Sites	3	10

Kilkee Green Hub

Kilkee was one of several sites nationally which was recently designated as a Green Hub. Businesses signed up to take waste reduction measures and were promoted on our Greener Clare social media account. Follow-up actions are ongoing to build

on this in 2024. An onsite meeting was held in April to implement further measures.

National Oversight Audit Committee (NOAC)

In April, the Environment Section submitted all required data sets to NOAC, which is the national independent oversight body for the local government sector in Ireland. This data was submitted via the Local Government Returns web portal. It summarises the Rural Water, Green Flag, Waste and Litter statistics for 2023.

Shannon Estuary Anti-Pollution Team

The Shannon Estuary Anti-Pollution Team (SEA-PT) comprises of Local Authorities, the Shannon Foynes Port Company, and other organisations who operate in the vicinity of the Estuary. Each year an exercise involving a simulated pollution incident is held to test the response capabilities of SEA-PT members. Clare County Council was the host for 2024. The 2-day event on the 17th and 18th April was attended by 99 people, covering 16 Local Authorities, relevant organisations along the Estuary and appropriate state agencies. The event received very positive feedback and the efforts of the staff in Clare County Council in the organisation of it were applauded by those attending.





Innovation Project - Digitisation of Lifeguard forms

The Environment Section through an Innovation fund secured by our Innovation Team under the Corporate Services Department set up a secure digital system for recording lifeguard statistics that are required for submission to Water Safety Ireland.

Our Information and Communications Technology (ICT) section designed the system in-house. A secure tablet will be provided to each of our 12 lifeguarded stations and will be ready for use at the start of the upcoming summer season.

CLIMATE ACTION

Energy

Clare County Council, like every public sector organisation, is obliged to achieve by 2030:

- 51% reduction in energy-related greenhouse gas emissions
- 51% reduction in thermal (heating and transport) related emissions
- 50% improvement in energy efficiency

To this end, Clare County Council is currently seeking to collaborate with the local authorities of Limerick and Kerry to form a regional energy unit to access capital funding from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to delivery major energy projects to meet or exceed national targets.

Energy Elephant: In order to better understand our energy usage across the organisation, Clare County Council has recently acquired specialist energy management software. This software will allow the organisation to monitor energy usage within buildings and by vehicles with near real-time data being made available for analysis. This will allow the organisation to identify unnecessary energy usage and arrest any energy excursions.



Community Climate Action Programme

The Climate Department completed the assessment of the applications for the Community Climate Action Fund this month. Once the application deadline passed all applications were reviewed to ensure they were complete, and all information required was included.

Where clarity on the information submitted was required, we followed up with groups for evidence of quotes or the inclusion of VAT as part of their submission. An assessment panel met on March 22nd to review the shortlisted applications and to assess their merits and evaluate them based on their, relevance and impact, innovation and scalability, value for money, achievability, partnership approach and governance arrangements. They were also considered in light of Clare County Council's Climate Action Plan. The chosen projects were then presented to a Rural Development directorate working group, *Working Group for the Action Plan for Rural Ireland* for approval on April 19th. The projects were submitted to the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications on April 24th for departmental review. Confirmation of Ministerial approval of the projects is expected on July 17th.

Twenty-three projects under Strand 1: 'Building Low Carbon Communities' were submitted. The value of these projects is €572,000. Three projects were submitted under Strand 1a: 'Shared Island Community Climate Action.' The value of these projects is €300,000. The Strand 1a projects will be evaluated by the Department of the Taoiseach.

Strand 1 Applications Received: Graphic



All Strand 1 Applications Received (Red = Large, Blue = Medium, Green = Small)

Please contact the Community Climate Action Officer Dara Dever on ddever@clarecoco.ie / communityclimate@clarecoco.ie for further information.

CARO Climate Conference Ennis

The inaugural CARO (Climate Action Regional Office) conference was held in Co Clare on April 10th and April 11th. The conference marked a significant milestone for local government in addressing climate change and enhancing the quality of life for residents. Climate Teams representing all 31 local authorities were present for two days to witness ongoing Climate Action and Biodiversity projects across the banner county and to listen to varying and interesting presentations in relation to implementation and Climate ambition.

Day one included a field trip to a number of sites around the county. Attendees stopped at Hometree to learn about their work to establish and conserve permanent native woodland in Ireland. The second stop was to the Fall Hotel in Ennistymon where the Hydro electric scheme developed by the hotel is in operation and its positive effects on lowering emissions and costs. Climate Adaptation was on view at Lahinch, where Climate teams, guided by Steve Lahiffe (Project Management Office) took in the Rock Armour project constructed to provide

resiliency to the local community against future weather events. The Lahinch Leisure Centre Energy retrofit was next of the agenda, where attendees were brought on a tour of the premises, exploring the fossil free technology in place to power and heat the centre.

At the Cliffs of Moher, the group were educated on sustainable tourism and how the Cliffs of Moher centre puts sustainability front and centre. Day one was complete with a presentation on the unique Burren Limestone pavement, its history and the biodiversity and carbon storage aspects of the region.

Day 2 was opened by Alan Farrell, Director of Services who welcomed the delegate to County Clare. The Cathaoirleach, Cllr Joe Cooney welcomed Minister Eamon Ryan to the Old Ground Hotel where he officially launched all 31 Local Authority Climate Action Plans. Ministers Ryan address focused on the significant part Local Authorities can play in advocating and co ordinating Climate Action across the country.



CARO Climate Conference Ennis



WATER

Rural Water

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

The long-awaited Multi-annual Rural Water (MARWP) 2024-2026 framework document was formally published in late January 2024 and all applications for funding are now submitted by this office to the Department. We now await funding approval from the Department. Group Water Scheme Taking in Charge applications continue to be progressed by the Clare Rural Water Team

The Rural Water Team is working with Group Water Schemes in assessing the need to carry out emergency works and applying to the Department for exceptional urgent capital works for once off funding as they arise. Applications for Group Water Scheme annual subsidy which is available to fund operational costs of group water schemes providing water for domestic use continues to be processed by this office.

All applications under the 'Grant for Improvement Works to a Private Water Supply' under the Rural Water Programme continue to be processed by the Rural Water Team. Post works final inspections for 2023 works within the last 12 months and pre inspection for 2024 are ongoing.

SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Shannon Town Park hosts the Down Syndrome Charity Cycle event

There was a huge turnout at Shannon Town Park on April 14th to commence the Odd Socks Cycle charity event which saw over 300 cyclists take part in 50km and 100km routes. The money raised supported Down Syndrome Clare's services and programs, and benefited individuals with Down Syndrome and

their families. Hosted by Club Rothaíochta na Sionainne, it was part of the Munster Leisure Series and continues to go from strength to strength each year. Shannon Municipal District ensured that the Town Park was looking its very best on the day and this was the third time that the event had been held in Shannon Town Park. Cyclists had an enjoyable and rewarding experience as they navigated the rolling hills of east Clare and scenic routes of towns like Sixmilebridge.



Meeting held with Stephen Hanley, General Manager Clare Tourism East in Bunratty

Shannon MD senior staff met with Stephen Hanley to offer assistance and advice in relation to small scale works required in the vicinity of Bunratty Castle. The bandstand is nearing completion which will act as focal point on the approach road to the entrance of the iconic castle. Bunratty Castle and Folk Park will see a medieval quarter which will be open this year from May to September. Jaunting cars have been launched and promotional endeavours are being utilised. Train will be running on the north side of the park and onsite restaurant will be open later this year. The aim is to continue to develop this international attraction that will bring ongoing benefits to the County of Clare. A collaborative approach with the Municipal District is important in this regard.

Ongoing engagement with An Garda Siochana

Cathaoirleach of Shannon MD together with A Griffin, A/SEO met with Sergeant Seamus Mulligan to discuss various matters in the Shannon Area.

Regular communication and collaboration help in addressing community needs and concerns and are a key aim of these meetings. The MD is currently working on initiatives like neighbourhood watch and exploring the use of cctv in Shannon Town Park with the Gardai. This approach allows for the implementation of multifaceted solutions to address problems like anti-social behaviour or crime.



Cathaoirleach of Shannon MD, Cllr Donna McGettigan with Sergeant Seamus Mulligan.

Meeting held with Shannon Community Partnership

Shannon Community Partnership is a recently established community development and advocacy body which promotes Shannon as a great place to live, work and visit. The Board is chaired by Nick Condon and a broad umbrella network structure is in place to promote cooperation and information sharing between groups and organisations in the town. Shannon Municipal District is working collaboratively with this representative organisation and it is proposed that Neighbourhood Watch initiative be enhanced with the assistance of this Group.

Meeting held with landowner in Sixmilebridge

Shannon MD senior officials together with Cllr's PJ Ryan and J Crowe met with a landowner to resolve an ongoing issue with regard to the completion of a length of footpath in Sixmilebridge. The meeting resulted in a Land Dedication Agreement being signed. The accommodation works will be carried

out in the near future and will greatly enhance people's safety on this busy route.

Clonlara Artwork installation

An amazing piece of artwork has recently been installed in Clonlara. It was commissioned by Clonlara Community Council and it is inspired by local folklore. Councillor Michael Begley was on hand to see the sculpture which is a 3D horse piece. It now forms part of the recent town and village renewal works that were completed in the village. It is truly a focal point which will add to the many other focal points in the general area. The sculpture has received hugely positive feedback from the community. In keeping with the horse theme, the designer of the art piece, who is a local Clonlara person, did a painting on the forge previously.



Other Works

- Anti-skid surfacing at Poulawilly Bridge, Cratloe were recently installed. This is the first step of a Traffic Calming Scheme at this location, it will be supplemented with improved signage on the approaches.





- Drainage Works carried out at Ballymorris.



- An Choill Bheag - site visit No 2 complete at St Senan's School, Shannon.
- Drainage works at Meelick.



- Age Friendly Parking installed at Newmarket on Fergus library.