



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Márta / March
2025



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RURAL DEVELOPMENT

RURAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Community Recognition Fund 2024

Clare County Council was awarded €2,608,408 under the Community Recognition Fund 2024. This fund is specifically targeted at projects that are located in towns and villages that are hosting the Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and/or International Protection Applicants. A total of 20 projects were approved for funding under Window 1 of the scheme, totalling €1,702,000.

The following 4 projects have been successfully completed, enhancing local amenities and community facilities.

St Joseph's National School Miltown Malbay

With a grant of €120,000, St Joseph's National School has completed the construction of:

- An outdoor classroom area, providing students with a dynamic learning space.
- An outdoor exercise area, promoting physical activity and well-being.
- A tarmac walkway, improving accessibility around the school grounds.
- A biodiversity sensory garden, fostering environmental awareness and engagement.
- Picnic benches, creating a social space for students and visitors.

These enhancements have significantly improved the school's outdoor learning and recreational facilities and are open and available for the enjoyment of the wider community.



Twin Wells, Lisdoonvarna

Lisdoonvarna Fáilte utilised €125,000 in funding to complete a landscaping project at the Twin Wells, a site of local cultural and historical importance. The project has improved the site's aesthetics, accessibility, and visitor experience, preserving it as a key community landmark.



St Senan's RFC Shannon

St Senan's Rugby club in Shannon successfully upgraded its floodlighting system with a €50,000 grant. The improved lighting enhances visibility and safety for training sessions and matches, benefiting players of all ages and supporting the club's continued development.



Shannon Leisure Centre

With €50,000 in funding, Shannon Leisure Centre has replaced its Cardio gym equipment, which enhances user experience by ensuring modern, high-quality fitness facilities for the local community.



RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The completed projects have positively impacted their respective communities, improving recreational, educational, and heritage spaces. The Community Recognition Fund 2024 acknowledges and supports the vital role these communities play in welcoming

and integrating new arrivals from the Ukraine and other countries. By enhancing local infrastructure and facilities, the fund directly contributes to improving quality of life and fostering inclusive, vibrant communities.



HEALTHY CLARE

Launch of Healthy Clare Micro Fund 2025

Healthy Clare launched the 2025 Healthy Clare Micro Fund on the 13th February 2025.

The Healthy Clare Micro Fund supports community and voluntary groups wishing to undertake specific 'Health and Wellbeing' projects under the relevant categories of the fund. The purpose of the Local Community Development Committee's Healthy Clare Micro Fund is to encourage and support community and voluntary groups to take an active part in improving and protecting health and wellbeing at all stages of life, reducing health inequalities, and creating an environment where everyone can play their part in a healthier Clare.

The purpose of the fund is to improve population Health and Wellbeing in County Clare, by supporting and encouraging targeted actions in response to the identified 2 priority outcomes needed for a Healthier Clare. The Healthy Clare Micro Fund is supported by the Department of Health's Healthy Ireland Fund, Pobal and Creative Ireland Clare.

The Healthy Clare Micro Fund comprises of 4 different support funds

1. Support Fund for promoting a Healthy Weight (Max Grant €2,000 per application)
2. Support Fund for promoting Positive Mental Health (Max Grant €2,000 per application)
3. Creative Ireland Funding, through Healthy Clare to promote Healthy Weight projects, delivered through creative mediums. (Max Grant €500 per application)
4. Creative Ireland Funding, through Healthy Clare to promote Positive Mental Health projects, delivered through creative mediums. (Max Grant €500 per application)

Closing Date for receipt of Application Forms is: Friday 14th March at 5:00 p.m. via <https://clarecoco.submit.com/show/93>
For more information reach out to Samantha McCarthy, Healthy Clare Coordinator at samccarthy@clarecoco.ie

CORPORATE SERVICES

Freedom of Information & Data Protection:

Previous years and 2025 to date - statistics to 26th February 2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Freedom of Information Requests	152	176	119	156	135	18
Freedom of Information Internal Review Applications	6	13	8	4	5	0
Appeals handled by Information Commissioner	1	4	2	4	4	0
Data Access Requests - Subject Access Request	5	6	10	10	13	3
Data Requests - Erasure Request	0	1	1	2	0	0
Data Access Requests - Third Party Access Requests e.g. Gardaí	20	27	27	29	29	4

Communications

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

16 media releases were issued during February 2025, including:

- Cliffs of Moher wins CIE Tours award after securing 96.5% visitor satisfaction rating
- Clare County Council Launches Healthy Clare Micro Fund 2025
- Clare and Tipperary County Councils Announce Pedestrianisation Trial for Killaloe Bridge

Social Media

The Communications Office monitors and updates social media channels to maintain awareness of the work of the Council.

In the period 1-24 February 2025, the Communications Office:

- Posted 38 times on Facebook, with total followers now 21,941.
- Posted 38 times on X (formerly Twitter), with total followers over 8.8K.
- 34 Posts on Instagram followers are now 4,366.

(Statistics accurate as of 24/2/2025)

Register of Electors

The current register of elector database (IReg) will be migrated to a national system by Quarter 1 2026. In advance of this, preparatory work is currently ongoing by a project team within the Franchise Section. This team are reviewing the accurateness of the existing data, including duplicate records. This work will be ongoing in 2025.

Business Innovation

The Innovation team continue to progress projects/ideas that will improve efficiency in the services provided. A presentation was made at the NOAC/CCMA conference held recently by the project team that developed a Tree Management Software application to manage trees within the Ennis MD area. This project was co-ordinated by the Innovation team.

CULTURAL SERVICES - LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM & ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT

Clare Libraries

Screening of Balor Otherworld film on St. Brigid's Day De Valera Library.

De Valera Library

De Valera Library celebrated St. Brigid with a number of events for all age groups. Children had great fun making St Brigid's crosses and hearing all about the patroness saint and the Club Leabhair loved the themed mindful colouring activity. Staff were delighted to welcome Balor O'Brien who entertained a packed audience with the story and mythology of St. Brigid as well as a screening of his movie 'St. Brigid of Ireland'.




Online Resources usage

Pressreader has garnered the most interest this month. It provides access to thousands of the world's leading newspapers and magazines from more than 100 countries and in 60 languages.



Marketing & Social media

There were two media releases issued this month one for "Ireland Reads Day" and the other announcing the supply of new ICT equipment available in libraries. The library website was updated with articles on the following: news on the Official opening of De Valera & S  il, events for Ireland Reads Day and the events pages were updated for branches. The digi screens were updated for Shannon, Scariff & De Valera libraries with events. Promotional posters were rolled out to 4 branches for Sensory Toy Box & Reading Glasses. New Bookmarks were designed and printed which included branch hours & contact info on it.

	Total Followers	New Followers	Post Reach/ Impressions	Post Likes/ Reactions
	8,334	64	47,900	684
	2,543	74	13,016	481
	2,141	-	2,800	27

Library Activities in Figures

Attendance numbers	169
Total audiences at in branch events	2,448
Total number of outreach events	8
Total audiences at outreach events	12
Total number of deliveries to those housebound	10
Total number of class novels issued	16

Right to Read/ Adult Literacy for Life

Ireland Reads Day on 22nd February is led by Libraries Ireland to encourage people of all ages to pick up a book during February and to embrace the pure joy and power of reading. Events included the launch of the book Gl  r Naomh Brid with a talk on the song repertoire of the late Jamesie McCarthy (1898-1977) in The Carroll Mackenzie Collection in Clare County Library Archives. Copies of the book will be donated to Clare Libraries and Clare primary schools. A sensory Play workshop with Maia Purposeful Play was held in Miltown Malbay Library and a STEAM Paper sculptures and geometric shapes building workshop in De Valera Library. An interview with Ukrainian author Serhii Adamenko, was held in association with Ennis Book Club Festival and the Ireland Against Racism Fund in De Valera Library.



Noelle Tanner (Recovery Education Facilitator for Mid West Aries), Margaret Keane (Education, Training & Development Officer, Mid-West Aries), Catherine Griffin (Executive Librarian)

Healthy Ireland

There were five 5 Healthy Ireland events this month. Trish Cleary, yoga teacher, facilitated 4 online Chair Yoga events, which were attended by people in nursing homes, day care centres and individuals in their own homes. There was a total attendance of 89 people. A total of 20 people attended a journaling for mental health workshop facilitated by Mid-West ARIES, in De Valera Library. Mid-West ARIES offers a range of courses, together with information and educational materials on Recovery and Well-being.

Local Studies



Merriman event

The Local Studies Centre has received papers containing compositions by the musician and composer Ernest De Regge, donated by his daughter Ghislaine. De Regge was the music professor at St. Flannan's College, an organist-choirmaster in Ennis Cathedral, and broadcaster on Radio   ireann and the BBC. The Local Studies Librarian was interviewed on Clare FM about Paddy Hannan, who emigrated from Quin and later discovered the goldfields in Kalgoorlie Australia. A collection of Church of Ireland Glebe maps has been digitised and are available in the library. The Crusheen Active Retirement group visited De Valera Library. The group learned about services and resources available at the library and were delighted to visit the Local Studies section where they perused an edition of The Clare Journal from 1897. Work on the Local Studies Website upgrade is ongoing.

Clare Archives

The latest tranche of Ennistymon Board of Guardians records was uploaded to the Digital Repository of Ireland with files going live week ending 21st February. The archivist is progressing archival

queries (approx. 25 archival requests per month) and general cataloguing. The archivist assisted in the Brian Merriman and Cumann Merriman launch and talk as Gaeilge regarding archives and Local Studies holdings.

Clare Arts Office

Four support meetings were held with artists and Arts office staff also attended meetings and webinars regarding the Creative Places Programme in Shannon. The Arts office adjudicated on the LEO Student Enterprise Awards, the Engine Short Film Scheme and over 80 CLAGS applications.

Staff in the Arts Office assisted with film enquiries regarding an international casting call, an Apple TV documentary and enquiries for local crews and supported a short film shot in Ennistymon.

Three films were shown in Culturlann Sweeney, Kilkee as well as an exhibition event. Two Arts in Clare slots happened on Clare FM.

The Arts in the Community programme continued in St. Joseph's Hospital, Ennis and in Raheen Hospital. Three groups of Clare Youth Theatre continued to meet weekly. The Arts Office completed the first stage of the consultations for the new arts plan via online survey. A total of 113 people engaged initially and follow on consultations are in progress. Three Embrace (Arts & Disability) residencies commenced with the Irish Wheelchair Association, the Brothers of Charity and Ennis Voices for Autism.

Three exhibitions took place in Clare Museum, Scariff Gallery and Culturlann Sweeney. Súil's inaugural exhibition, *The Art of Place*, came to a close and the photographs by John Kelly have been catalogued and added to the county art collection. *Líníocht: A Selection of Works From The National Collection of Contemporary Drawing* which features over 60 works by Irish artists, generously loaned by the Limerick City Gallery of Art runs until March 27th and has welcomed over 400 visitors since its opening on February 7th.

Social Media

Facebook 19/02/25-20/1/25					
	Views	Post reach	Page Likes	New Page followers	Total followers
Clare Arts Office	18,388	5,892	2,920	19	3,464
Cultúrlann Sweeney	35,801	16,272	1,893	9	2,122
EASI Studios	7	0	144	0	153
Tulla Stables Artist Studios	888	377	646	1	665
CYT - Clare Youth Theatre	-	47	543	0	584
Riches of Clare	234	76	2,862	0	2,856
Clare culture night	435	192	1,203	0	1,315
Embrace Arts Programme	33	13	556	1	565
Arts In Clare Group					3,525

Clare trad Group					2,753
Súil	0	0	0	70	148

Instagram 23/12/24-20/1/25			
Account	views	Followers	reach
Clare Arts Office	7,402	959	1925
Culture Night	87	226	67
Súil	4,446	47	719

Clare Museum

Plans are progressing to host a Polish Festival at the Museum. The festival will include an art exhibition, film screenings, Polish crafts workshops and much more. There were 18 people at the monthly lecture series on "Ancient Grains" with Dr Meriel McClatchie of UCD this month.

The Curator and Education Officer visited St. Caimin's secondary school in Shannon, where the curator gave talks to two classes on the Museum. There were approximately 70 students in attendance altogether. The Museum submitted an application for the Heritage Council's Heritage Stewardship funding. The funding is being sought to develop a public access VR exhibition based on the existing John Philip Holland exhibition in the museum. The Museum hosted 8 individual workshops for primary schools, facilitated by local storyteller, Ruth Marshall. Over 225 children, along with their various teachers attended the workshops and learned all about St. Brigid, the Celtic goddess and Christian saint, the many different styles of Brigid's cross, and about the origins, folklore and traditions of the cross (crios), and the cloak. The Curator visited Bridgetown NS in O'Briensbridge to give a talk on the museum and artefacts. The visit was requested by the school as part of their own Museum Week.

The Museum's Education Officer held a competition for TY students from Rice College in their school. This is the first time that County Clare has participated in the nationwide ARTiculation competition, following an invite to do so from the organising museum, Tipperary Museum of Hidden History. As part of the competition students chose a piece of art and/or architecture and gave a 10-minute presentation on their chosen topic. The top two students will go forward to the All-Ireland final in April to represent Co. Clare.

KILLALOE MD

Killaloe - Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Strategy

Pedestrianisation Trial for Killaloe Bridge

Following an engagement with a range of stakeholders in January and February by officials from Clare and Tipperary County Councils, both local authorities have agreed to pedestrianise the existing Killaloe Bridge for a trial period.

The trial, provided for under Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act 1994, aims to pilot a more pedestrian and cyclist-friendly route on the existing bridge between Killaloe and Ballina. The trial will also enable further detail and evidence of traffic flows and pedestrian movements between the towns to be gathered, and for the social, economic and tourism benefits to be measured.

The timeline for the trial will be announced closer to the opening of the new Killaloe Bypass bridge.

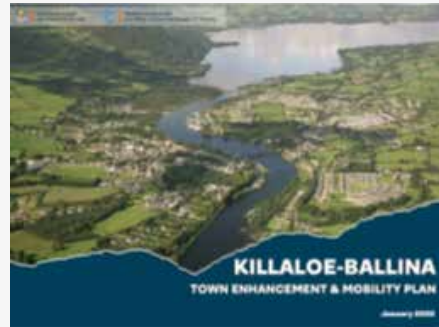


RRDF Application

In the meantime, Clare County Council is leading the preparation of a significant joint Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) application, along with Tipperary County Council, for the commencement of the detailed design and feasibility of a number of projects and improvements to the public realm in Killaloe and Ballina under the Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan.

Work continued in February on the preparation of an RRDF application on behalf of Clare County Council and Tipperary County Council for the enhancement of the public realm and a number of town centre economic development and tourism opportunity developments. The focus in February was undertaking background economic appraisals to assist in the preparation of the funding application. In addition a number of community groups and stakeholders were met.

It is anticipated that an application for RRDF Funding will be made on or before 14th March.



Crusheen

Crusheen Mobility Plan

The focus of work in February was on collating and examining views from the local community on Ideas and Emerging Options for the Crusheen Mobility Plan, following an on-line survey. Presently Killaloe MD are examining options with a view to having a Draft Crusheen Mobility completed in March. It is anticipated that a public consultation event of the Draft Mobility Plan will take place in Crusheen early March.

Reopen Crusheen Railway Station

During February, further engagement with Killaloe MD and Irish Rail took place advocating the reopening of the Crusheen Railway Station. In addition the Senior Planner, Cathaoirleach of the MD and a number of other Elected Members attended an Irish Rail Briefing on regional rail development projects in the Mid-West Region and further highlighted the merits of reopening Crusheen Railway Station on the Western Rail Corridor.

RRDF Application for Crusheen

An RRDF Application for the development of feasibility studies, plans and project development of a transformative town centre project is underway. The proposed RRDF Application will seek to reopen Crusheen Railway Station on the Western Rail Corridor, undertake public realm enhancement in line with the Crusheen Mobility Strategy and develop a Multipurpose Community Enterprise Hub and Crechce. The project - a key objective of the recently launched "Elected Members Killaloe - Workplan and Strategy" - follows significant background studies, assessment and engagement with the community over the last 18 months and in particular engagement by the Elected Members and Senior Planner of the MD with Irish Rail.



Canoe trail, Slalom Course and Whitewater rafting centre on the River Scarriff

In February Killaloe MD, in collaboration with East Clare Paddlers, Canoeing Ireland and a number of other community, sporting and disability organisations sought funding under the Outdoor Recreation Improvement Scheme (ORIS) for a proposed Canoe trail, Slalom Course and Whitewater rafting centre on the River Scarriff.

Funding is sought for detailed Design of a Canoe trail, Slalom Course and Whitewater rafting centre on the River Scarriff. Access for All users to the river will be via a proposed riverside trail on Local Authority owned lands adjoining the river and linking Scarriff town to an existing riverside walking trail.

This ORIS Project Development Measure (PDM) seeks to give effect to the number of local, County and Regional Planning and Tourism Strategies to develop a canoe/kayak facility at this location on the R.Scarriff and to enhance 'Access for All' and use-ability of the waters in the Lough Derg catchment.



Photo of section overall site/Project Development Area showing R. Scarriff in the foreground , adjoining amenity lands to the (left) and pathway ending at boundary. Proposal is to extend the footpath via new footbridge over the stream into the adjacent Local Authority owned lands. Continue footpath to access new amenity /canoe centre/ access to river from here

Outdoor Works

Works continue in Kilkishen Village, with 215m of new footpaths under construction from Hillcrest grove to the L-3016 Junction with the R-462, works expected to be completed on site over the next 2 to 3 weeks.

The works will also involve a new 225mm surface water pipeline, improvement have also been made to the street lighting with with two additional streetlights installed as part of the scheme

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

HOUSING

The housing public counter will remain open to the public, without appointment, from 9am until 1pm and by appointment after 1pm. Customers who require appointments in the afternoon can call 065 6846334 to schedule same. The Clare Homeless Action Team (HAT) office is open by appointment during office hours and can be contacted on 065 684 6291 or by email: hat@clarecoco.ie. Our Ukrainian support team can be contacted on 065 6846577 or by email: offerahome@clarecoco.ie. Our Local Authority Integration Team can be reached at integration@clarecoco.ie

Clare County Council Housing Grants online application

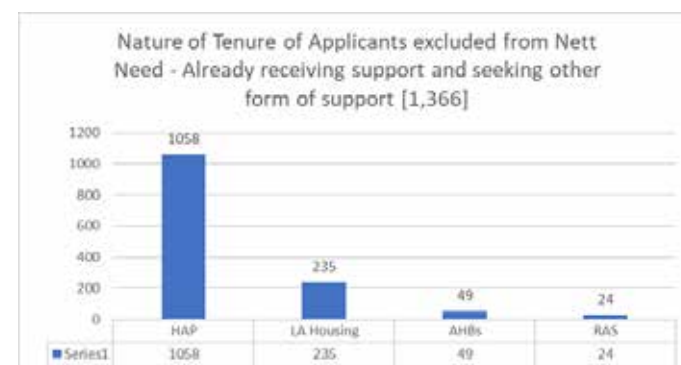
The Council has launched a new online portal for our Housing Adaptation Grant for Older People and Disabled People. The availability of the grant application online portal will greatly reduce paperwork, improve the speed of grant processing and allow applicants to see the progress of their grant throughout our approval process.

Social Housing Demand

The highest demand throughout the county remains for 1 and 2-bedroomed properties. There are 2,177 applicant households (78%) who have a requirement for this property type.

Current Housing need as of 18/02/2025

Total Households on List	2,801	
Transfer Applicants (see below)		1,366
Net Need	1,435	



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 and 5 beds	Total
ENNIS	974	186	67	1227
SHANNON	173	36	14	223
CLARECASTLE	151	27	8	186
INAGH/ENNISTYMON/LAHINCH	120	24	7	151
KILRUSH	92	26	7	125
FEAKLE/SCARIFF/WHITEGATE	79	23	3	105
MEELICK/PARTEEN/WESTBURY	67	24	11	102
MILTOWN MALBAY/MULLAGH/QUILTY	69	10	1	80
COROFIN/RUAN	64	13	1	78
KILKEE/CROSS/CARRIGAHOLT	59	15	1	75
NEWMARKET-ON-FERGUS	52	14	1	67
KILLALOE	49	15	2	66
LISDOONVARNA/BALLYVAUGHAN	42	13	3	58
SIXMILEBRIDGE	34	14	4	52
COORACLARE/DOONBEG	33	10	5	48
TULLA/KILKISHEN/BROADFORD	30	8	1	39
CLONLARA	26	7	1	34
KILDYSART/BALLYNACALLY	22	4	3	29
QUIN	16	4	2	22
KILMIHIL	9	4	2	15
KILMALEY	11	2		13
KILFENORA	5	1		6
Grand Total	2,177	480	144	2,801

Newly Qualified Applicants



apartments located at Main Street Clarecastle was recently advertised on the Choice Based Letting (CBL) website and in excess of 500 expressions of interest were received. The Allocations Team are currently assessing the expressions of interest received and this process should be completed within the next 2 weeks.



Housing Allocations

Clare County Council continues to work with the Approved Housing Bodies (AHB's) in relation to the delivery of social housing. The Allocation process in relation to phase 3 of the new social housing development located at Acha Bhile, Lahinch Road Ennis is completed, and the nominated households have been forwarded to Cluid Housing. This development is delivered by Cluid Housing and comprises 10 no 3 bedroomed houses. In addition, phase 2 of the social housing development located at Moyard, Shanballa, Ennis comprising 18 units was recently advertised on the CBL website. Almost 400 expressions of interest were received which the Allocations Team are currently assessing. This development is delivered by Tuath Housing. The new social housing development comprising of 7 no



Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme

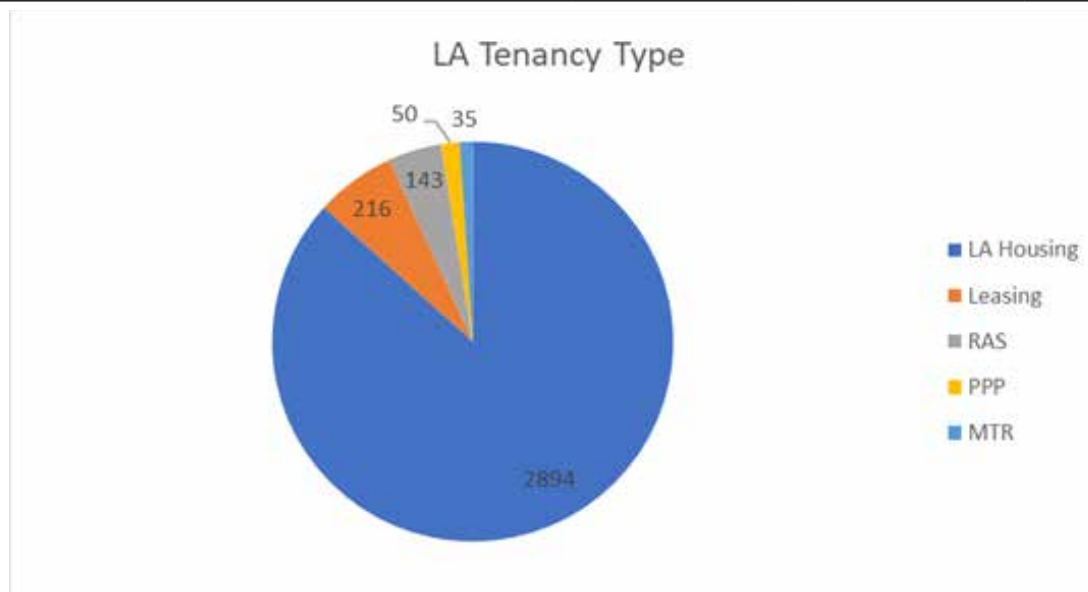
There remains significant interest in the LA Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme. We currently have 26 open cases at various stages of the process. The sale of seven properties under the tenant purchase scheme completed in 2024. Two properties have been sold in February 2025. It is expected that more sales will complete in March 2025.

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.

Housing Tenancies:

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

18th February 2025			
MD	Allocated	Occupied	Total
Ennis MD	0	1,281	1,281
Killaloe MD	1	373	374
Shannon MD	2	745	747
West Clare MD	4	953	957
Grand Total	7	3,352	3,359



There are 143 RAS, 215 leases (120 Long term and 95 short term leases) There are 1058 HAP tenancies. Approved Housing bodies are providing approximately 1,080 tenancies to Social Housing Applicants. Clare County Council have full nomination rights in respect of the majority of AHB properties and these properties are advertised via our Choice Based Letting System. Nominations are prepared in accordance with a new National Process agreed by LAs and the AHB sector and commenced in July 2022.

Vacancies:

Vacant Stock	Ennis MD	West Clare MD	Shannon MD	Killaloe MD	Total
Traveller Accom.	3	6	1	0	10
Derelict Properties	0	0	0	0	0
Projects	6	5	1	2	14
Casual Vacancies	25	20	11	9	65
TOTAL	33	31	14	10	89

Estate Management

The Estate Management Team continue to undertake regular routine and response calls to tenants, dealing with complaints

re breaches of Tenancy and ASB as well as inspecting Local Authority tenancies and providing the necessary supports to tenants. The team were successful in securing 3 Repossession Orders in court in 2024. A number of further Repossession Applications will be going through the Courts in the coming months.

The team continue to be extremely active in carrying out tenancy visits. It should be noted that the follow up on complaints received and the no. of visits carried out **do not correlate** with an increase in instances of anti-social behaviour or tenancy breaches but rather that a more proactive approach is being taken with the team in engaging with tenants.

Any matters that need to be brought to the attention of the Estate Management unit can be done so by emailing asb@clarecoco.ie. Listed hereunder shows details of work being undertaken by the Estate Management team this year to date.

	Total year to date
Complaints rec'd in relation to breaches of Tenancy	100
Referrals to TSS (including Tulsa)	4
Tenancy Notifications/Warnings issued	7
Abandonment Notices issued	7
Keys collected from Casual Vacancies	10
Repossession Orders	0

The team carry out continued patrols of Local Authority housing estates and Traveller accommodation sites and have a very visible presence to manage and mitigate against complaints of antisocial behaviour. The team also engage proactively with tenants to help prevent anti-social behaviour, facilitate the daily patrol of local authority sites, arrange specific meetings with tenants as well as engaging with local communities. The working hours of the team are flexible to meet required need, involving working after hours and weekends as the need dictates. The team can be contacted out of office hours, should the need arise, by contacting the Council Emergency Phone no. **(087) 2599568**

Private Rented inspections:

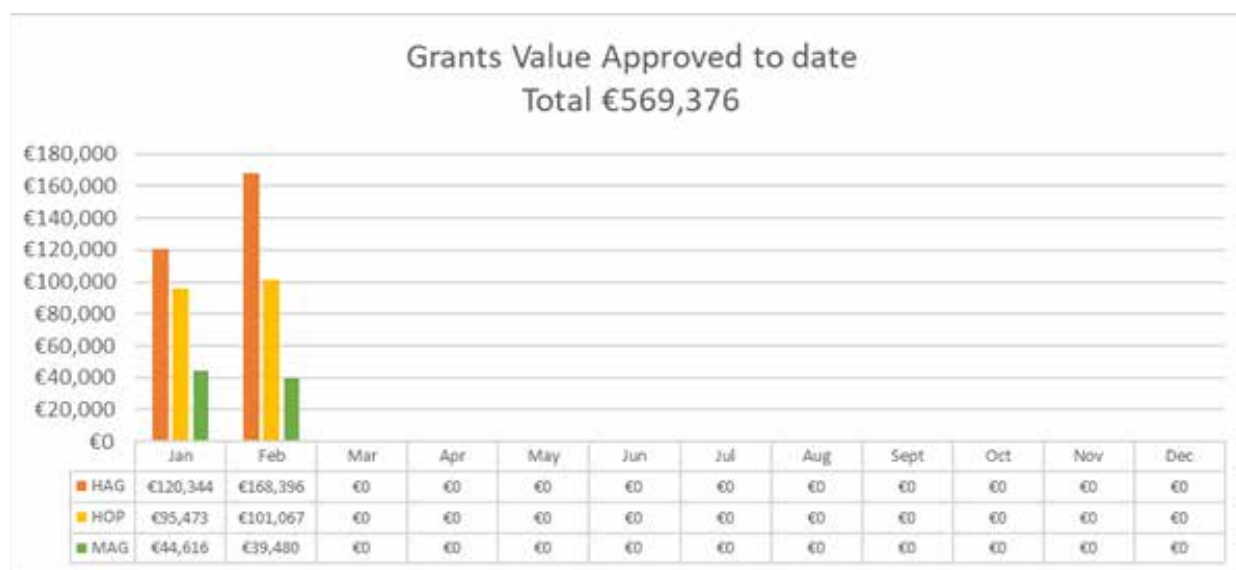
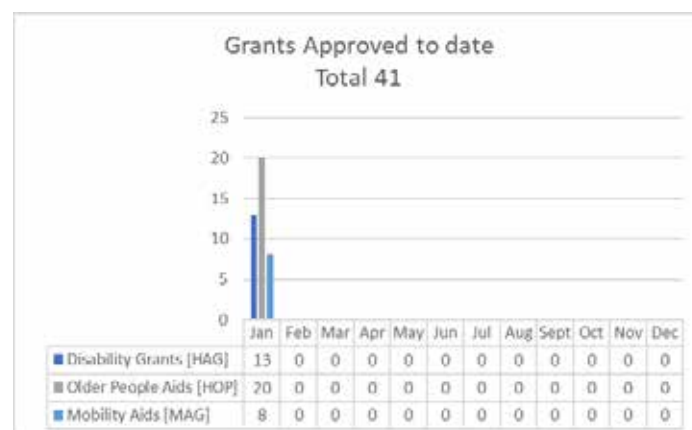
Inspections have commenced for 2025. These inspections are carried out on HAP, Private Rented, RAS and Leased properties, as well as in response to complaints that are received. The team continue to follow up where properties do not meet the minimum rented standards and have inspected 120 properties up to the second week of February.

Housing Grants:

The revised application form for **Housing Adaptation Grant for Older People** and Disabled People is available on Clare County Council's website.

The online facility is also available at the following link: [Housing grants | Housing | Services | Clare County Council](#)

Grants Approved 2025:



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 70 Local Authority Home Loans Approved in Principle. Updated figures are outlined as follows:

4 Application received to date in 2025

40 Applications received in 2024

70 Local Authority Loans Approved

5 Local Authority Loans Drawn Down in 2022, 12 Drawn Down in 2023 and 12 Drawn Down in 2024 & 2 in 2025

Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan

The Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan was introduced on the 22 July 2024. This is a government backed mortgage and loan for the purchase and renovation of derelict and non-habitable homes. The property must be eligible for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, whether derelict, non-habitable or simply vacant.

Full details on the Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan (LAPR) and eligibility criteria including the Loan Calculator can be found on <https://purchaseandrenovationloan.ie/>. 2 LAPR Applications have been received to date.

The Homeless Action Team

The level of complex cases presenting to the Homeless Action Team in Clare has continued to increase. Additional demands are being placed on the Homeless Action Team to provide Emergency Accommodation in a safe and appropriate manner.

The levels of support, advice and advocacy, being requested from households around areas such as Homeless Services, Housing Requirements, Health supports, Outside Support referrals and the need for Emergency Accommodation within this region is increasing.

There has been a notable rise in the number of presentations of individuals and households experiencing difficulties and concerns around Hospital discharges, Prison releases, Family or relationship breakdown, addiction or mental health concerns, dual diagnosis, and a further increase in the number of households presenting from the Travelling Community.

The level of aggression being experienced by the Homeless Action Team staff and supporting agencies staff which increased in 2024 needs to be monitored and addressed in 2025.

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 Homeless services. Other individuals and families were supported in accessing Emergency Accommodation either within our services or through private establishments.

The Homeless Action Team continues to pursue additional emergency accommodation options at a time when accommodation is in high demand generally.

Homeless Services [Homeless Action Team HAT]

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

Emergency Accommodation Status as of 7th February, 2025

	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	13	0	1
Laurel Lodge	0	4	0	1
LL Winter Initiative	0	5	0	1
Cusack Lodge	5	6	15	1
Westbrook	0	17	0	1
WB Winter Initiative	0	3	0	1
Ashford Court	12	16	13	1
Clann Nua	0	12	0	1
EA Families	16	23	27	8
EA Individuals	33	27	0	9
TOTAL	33	126	55	25

Exits from Homeless Services:

Clare Homeless Action Team continues to focus on exits from homeless services.

During the period 10/01/2025 to 07/02/2025 the following exited from homelessness:

Moved to A.H.B Housing	3
Moved to Temp. Accommodation	8
Admitted to hospital	0
Excluded	0
Residential Treatment	0
Tenancy LA	1
Returned to family/friends	1
Other	1

In addition to the above numbers many other households engage with our homeless services on a daily basis.

Affordable Housing Schemes for County Clare

CCC continue to run Expression of Interest (EOI) Campaigns seeking proposals on options to deliver affordable homes in County Clare. CCC are also engaged with developers with potential for Part V affordable delivery.

To date, CCC have received approvals for access to the Affordable Housing Fund for the following developments:

- Tulla Rd Ennis - 10 units.
- Lahinch Rd Ennis - 11 units
- Shannon - 10 units (3 units allocated)

The online applications portal for the homes in Shannon closed on Friday 21st February 2025, and seven successful applicants have been selected using the Council's Affordable Housing Scheme of Priorities. These clients are now engaged with the developer and their agents to finalise sales. The portal for the homes on the Lahinch Rd Ennis opened on Monday 24th February 2025, and an open evening will be held in Ennis in early March. CCC are currently engaged with 2 other developers, that have expressed interest in affordable housing, for potential inclusion on the scheme.

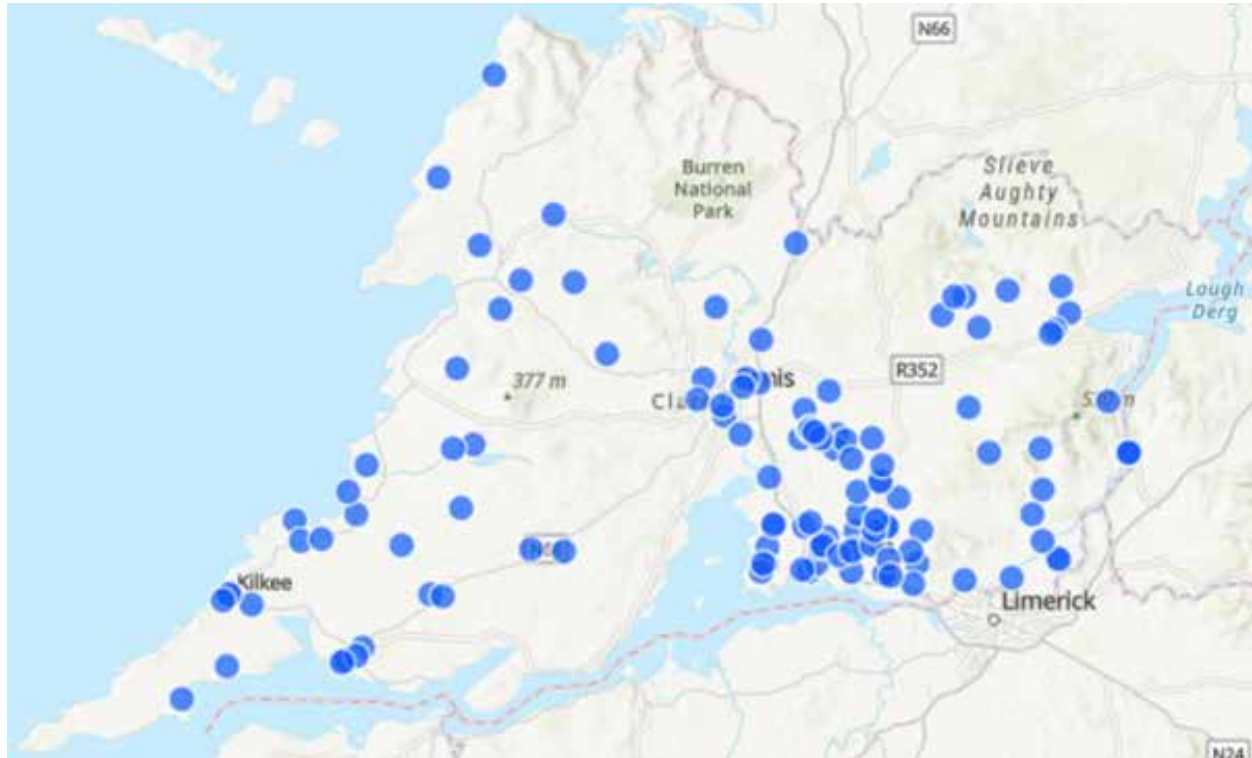
There is an online information portal at <https://affordablehomes.ie/> providing general information to the public with regards to affordable housing.

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.

On the 7th of November 2024, The Minister approved an increase in the grant cap from €420,000 to €462,000.

DCB Application Map



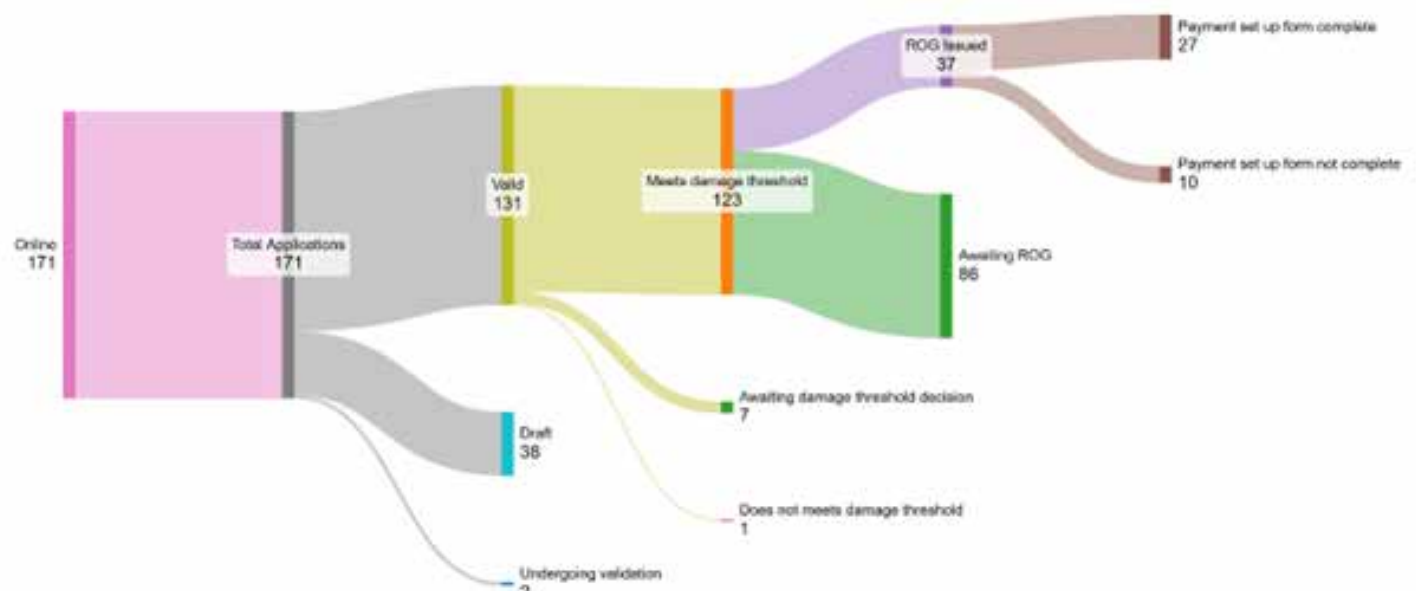
DCB Application Map

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

Clare County Council continue to administer and validate applications since the commencement of the scheme via the online portal. Clare County Council are engaging with the Housing Agency and the DHLGH and continue to carry out all associated duties.

To date, Clare County Council have issued 37 Remedial Option Grants, with the total value of €11.45m awarded by the housing agency and are awaiting input from the Housing Agency to further process 86 applications with grant amounts to follow.

DCB Application Flow Chart



CCC intend to hold further information evenings in 2025 to target people with limited digital resources and/or capabilities, to assist them further in making an application and other elements of the DCB application process.

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

Update on capital programme:

The Doonbeg and Gort Road projects are under construction and these projects continue to progress well. Other housing capital schemes are progressing well and are at varying stages of design and construction across the County Clare. The construction contract was signed for the Shallee Drive/ Cloughleigh Road housing development and this will commence prior to end of Q1 2025.



Progress on Gort Road housing development



Progress on Doonbeg housing development



Approved Housing Bodies

The Approved Housing Bodies continue to work towards the delivery of an ambitious programme in 2025. This sector is vital to successful delivery of our targets under Housing for All and we continue to engage with them on housing output and lend support in relation to operational and financial matters. Our Forum meetings are held quarterly which facilitates engagement with all AHBs.

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Main Street Clarecastle	1	Under Construction	Q1 2024	Q2 2025
Clarehill Clarecastle	13	Turnkey - Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q1 2025 (10) Q2 2025 (3)
Garrán Cathaigh, Leadmore Kilrush	14	Turnkey - Under Construction	Q2 2024	Q2 2025
Main Street Clarecastle	7	Turnkey - Complete	Q2 2024	Q1 2025
Béal an Inbhir, Kilrush	28	Turnkey - Under Construction	Q2 2024	Q2 2025
38 St Patrick's Terrace, Kilrush	1	Under Review	Q2 2025	Q4 2025
Gort Rd. Ennis	20	Under Construction	Q3 2024	Q4 2025
Doonbeg Lands	8	Under Construction	Q4 2024	Q4 2025
Shallee Drive / Cloughleigh Rd	5	Construction Contract signed and construction work to commence Q1 2025	Q1 2025	Q1 2026
Back Road, Kilrush	12	Await Stage 4 approval by DHLGH.	Q1 2025	Q2 2026
Moore Street, Kilrush	16	Stage 3 approval sought. Gone to tender	Q2 2025	Q4 2026
Drumcliff Rd, Ennis	26	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. S179A under judicial review	-	-
Subtotal	151			

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Approved Housing Body Projects	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Acha Bhile, Lahinch Rd., Ennis (Cluid Hsg. Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	10 (Phase 3)	Under construction	Q1 2024	Q1 2025
Millbank, Roslevan, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	10 (Phase 2)	Under construction	Q2 2024	Q2 2025
Loughville, Ennis (Tuath Housing) CALF Turnkey	34	Under construction: Phase 1 - 18 units Phase 2 12	Q2 2024 Q3 2024	Q2 2025 Q3 2025
Market Street, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	14	Under construction	Q3 2023	Q2 2025
63 Shannon Heights, Kilrush (Sophia Hsg. Assoc.) CAS Renewal Const.)	1	At procurement stage	Q2 2025	Q1 2026
71 Shannon Heights, Kilrush (Sophia Hsg. Assoc.) CAS Renewal Const.)	1	At procurement stage	Q2 2025	Q1 2026
Cappahard, Ennis (Co-Operative Housing Ireland) CALF Turnkey	13	Under construction	Q1 2024	Q1 2025
Bruachlan, Westbury (Cooperative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Construction	22	Planning granted	Q1 2025	Q1 2026
Subtotal	105			
Total	256			

UKRAINIAN SERVICES TEAM

The CSO figures show there were 692 Temporary Protections granted nationally in the past month with an average of 25 granted per day, the number of new arrivals into the Country has increased by 80 people compared to the weekly figures outlined in the previous Monthly Management Report. There are currently 5,080 Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTP's) living in County Clare, representing a decrease of 37 people in the County compared to figures released previously. There are 1,350 people accommodated in 25 multi-occupancy facilities located throughout the County - this reflects a decrease of 95 people compared to previous figures. 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. There is still huge interest in the scheme since it's launch in November 2022, we currently have 259 homes offered resulting in

an increase of 2 properties compared to figures released previously. We currently have 3 new properties offered that will be available during the month of March. To date our Matching & Relationship Manager has facilitated the accommodation of 518 people that were originally living in hotel and multi-occupancy facilities.

The Government has confirmed the Temporary Protection status for Ukrainian people fleeing the war which was due to expire on 4th March 2025 has now been extended for another year. Applications to renew the temporary protection status up to March 2026 must be submitted to the Irish Immigrations Office.

The Government will have a decision on the future of the Accommodation Recognition Payment Scheme (ARP) in the coming weeks, the current ARP arrangement will expire at the end of March 2025.

LOCAL AUTHORITY INTEGRATION TEAM

The Local Authority Integration Teams (LAITs) have been set up in all local authorities. Their purpose is to help coordinate the different kinds of support available for people who are applying for international protection, refugees, and others in similar situations.

The goal of LAITs is to help IP applicants and refugees become independent, settle into their new communities, and participate in Irish life. They do this by connecting people to important

services that can help them integrate into the community.

Who do LAITs support?

LAITs provide support for:

- Applicants for International Protection (IP)
- People who have been granted refugee status or other forms of protection, such as subsidiary protection or permission to remain

- Refugees who have been resettled in Ireland through a government programme
- Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOT^Ps)

How is the support provided?

LAITs operate under the principle of 'Integration from Day One'. This means that LAITs provide integration support to people who need it as soon as they arrive in Ireland.

What services do LAITs provide?

The work of LAITs isn't meant to replace existing services. Instead, LAITs help connect people with the existing services that are most suitable for their needs. This includes things like:

- Being a direct contact for new arrivals, helping them with any problems they might have when dealing with public services
- Connecting new arrivals with services like legal help, childcare and healthcare
- Connecting new arrivals with services that improve their ability to live independently, like job training, English classes, education, and apprenticeships
- Guiding new arrivals through the process of applying for financial support, medical help, child benefits, and other services they might need
- Holding meetings in local areas and using community development principles to help those who attend
- Supporting people if they face racism or other unfair treatment, helping them report it to the right authorities
- Helping vulnerable new arrivals get in touch with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other services if they need extra help

How do I contact my Local Authority Integration Team?

You can contact LAIT's by email on integration@clarecoco.ie

Shannon Chamber issued a press release following the success of the recent seminar which the LAIT were invited to speak at - "An invaluable recruitment resource for employers – learn why"



Photo: Helen Downes, CEO, Shannon Chamber (centre) pictured at the seminar in Shannon with (from left): Maureen Williams, Department of Social Protection (DSP); Victoria Haigney, Lufthansa Technik Turbine Shannon; Cathy Moran, DSP/Eures; Pdraig McMahon, LAIT; Austin Hallinan, Entry Point North Ireland; Brendan Boyce and Fiona Cahill, LAIT; and Kevin Frost, Pemcas. Photograph by Eamon Ward

Commenting on the takeaways from the event, Shannon Chamber CEO Helen Downes said: "As a member of the Clare Community Integration Forum, it gave us the opportunity to make our members aware of a talent resource they might not otherwise factor into their recruitment drives. It was also our way of helping new arrivals to Clare to source employment." One member, Austin Hallinan, managing director of Entry Point North Ireland, said that the event gave him a greater awareness of the services and benefits offered by Clare County Council's integration forum and Intreo and that he will be exploring the benefits that might accrue from furthering the collaboration. As a follow-on to this seminar, Shannon Chamber, in collaboration with the Department of Social Protection and the Local Authority Implementation Team (LAIT), will host a Jobs Fair in Shannon on Wednesday, 26 March 2025 from 10am until 1pm as part of the Department's annual Work and Skills Campaign. While the venue has yet to be announced, employers with open vacancies in their companies are invited to send a list of such positions to Shannon Chamber and have a representative(s) at the Jobs Fair to engage with prospective candidates.

Brendan Boyce & Fiona Cahill (LAIT Team) attended the 'Local Integration – Building the Welcome', organised by the Immigrant Council of Ireland as part of a two-day programme designed specifically for Integration Support Coordinators (ISCs) and Integration Support Workers (ISWs) as members of the Local Authority Integration Teams (LAITs).

Brendan Boyce & Fiona Cahill (LAIT Team) attended the National Network Event for Integration Support Coordinators (ISC) and Integration Support Workers (ISW's) as members of the LAIT which was hosted in the Ashling Hotel. This event included LGMA department update and LAIT case studies which and guest speakers from the International Protection & Integration Division, Department of Rural and Community Development & Irish Local Development Network.



Fiona Cahill, LAIT team joined by officers from the Department of Integration, the LGMA and Colin O'Reilly Chief Executive of Carlow County Council.

SPORTS & RECREATION



Active Ennis Leisure Complex

Gym & Pool Report

Swim Galas and Community Games

During the weekend of Sunday, February 2nd, the Future Challenger Gala was held at our pool. This event was designed for swimmers aged 10 to 14. Six clubs were represented, with a total of 150 participants.

From February 21st to 23rd, the pool hosted two swim galas. The Ennis Invite Gala took place on Friday and Saturday, featuring swimmers from eight different clubs around Munster. On Friday, 147 swimmers participated, and on Saturday, 245 swimmers took part. Additionally, 40 master-level swimmers competed in the event.

On Sunday, the Pony Club event took place, involving six clubs from around Ireland and a total of 170 children. Participants ranged in age from 8 to 18. This event was one of five in the Pentathlon series organized by the Pony Club.

The Parish Community Games were also held at the pool from February 23rd to 25th, where young swimmers competed for the opportunity to represent Clare.



Healthy Clare Blog

For the February edition of the Healthy Clare Newsletter, we contributed two blog posts entitled "Benefits of Cardiovascular Training" and "Micronutrients Spotlight."

Eat Well with Jamie



Micro Nutrients Spotlight



Getting enough micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) in your diet is essential for good health. Here are some practical tips to help you meet your micronutrient needs.

1. Eat a Variety of Foods.
2. Prioritize Whole Foods.
3. Incorporate Leafy Greens.
4. Choose Whole Grains.
5. Snack on Nuts and Seeds.
6. Consume Dairy or Fortified Alternatives.
7. Include Lean Proteins.
8. Don't Skip Fruits.
9. Cook Strategically.
10. Embrace Fermented Foods.

Brought to you by Jamie Fitzgibbon. (Active Ennis) Msc. Sports Nut)

Get Fit with Active Ennis this February
Benefits of Cardiovascular (Cardio) Training

1. **Improves Heart Health:** Strengthens the heart muscle, improving its efficiency in pumping blood. Reduces the risk of heart disease, hypertension, and stroke.
2. **Enhances Lung Capacity:** Increases oxygen intake and improves the efficiency of the respiratory system. Strengthens the diaphragm and other respiratory muscles.
3. **Supports Weight Management:** Burns calories and helps in reducing or maintaining body weight. Boosts metabolism, aiding in fat loss.
4. **Boosts Endurance and Stamina:** Increases energy levels and reduces fatigue during physical activity. Improves overall athletic performance.
5. **Regulates Blood Sugar Levels:** Enhances insulin sensitivity and helps in managing or preventing type 2 diabetes.
6. **Reduces Stress and Anxiety:** Triggers the release of endorphins, which improve mood and reduce stress. Helps clear the mind and alleviate symptoms of depression.
7. **Improves Sleep Quality:** Promotes deeper and more restorative sleep by reducing stress and physical tension.
8. **Enhances Cognitive Function:** Improves memory, focus, and decision-making by increasing blood flow to the brain.
9. **Strengthens the Immune System:** Stimulates circulation, enabling immune cells to detect and fight infections more efficiently.
10. **Supports Longevity:** Regular cardio is linked to a longer lifespan and reduced risk of chronic diseases.

Brought to you by Jamie Fitzgibbon. (Active Ennis) Msc. Sports Nut)

Classes

Class attendance has shown a significant increase throughout the first two months of the year. Aqua Aerobics remains highly popular, with the Tuesday and Friday morning classes at 10 a.m. attracting over 40 participants. Similarly, Body Blast and Lunch Crunch classes have also seen a rise in participation compared to December, with the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Body Blast sessions regularly reaching their maximum capacity of 22 participants.

While this uptick in attendance was anticipated with the New Year fitness surge, it is a testament to our instructors that these high numbers have been sustained through February. Each instructor brings a unique style to their classes, striving to make them engaging and accessible to all participants.



LUNCH CRUNCH
COST: €5 STANDARD, €3 MEMBERS

- All levels welcome
- For further info or to book your place, call in or phone 0656821604.
- This class combines Strength, HIIT and Cardio Exercises into fun activities for a Full Body Workout

MON, WED, & FRI
1.15PM - 1.45PM

www.activeennis.com



BODY BLAST
COST: €7 STANDARD, €3 MEMBER, €5 SENIOR

- All levels welcome
- For further info or to book your place, call in or phone 0656821604.
- This class combines Strength, HIIT and Cardio Exercises into fun activities for a Full Body Workout

MON, WED, & FRI
10 AM - 11AM
SATURDAY
9AM - 10AM

www.activeennis.com

Footfall Report for Active Ennis Leisure Complex - January 2025

Total Footfall: 20,201 (17% decrease from January 2024: 24,261)

Average Daily Footfall: 673 (17% decrease from January 2024: 809)

Highest Footfall:

- 1,119 (Saturday, January 25th)
- Corresponds with the sign-up for the new block of swim lessons starting in March.

Lowest Footfall:

- 3 people (Friday, January 24th)
- Corresponds with the red weather warning issued by Met Éireann.

Possible Explanations for Decreased Footfall:

- Complex closure for a day due to a red weather alert on January 24th.
- Change in the swim lessons booking system, making it easier for parents to rebook their children over the phone.

Lee's Road Report - January & February 2025

Vehicle Entries:

- January 2025: 17,635 vehicle entries (Average: 560 per day)
- January 2024: 20,106 vehicle entries (Average: 649 per day)

Decrease Explanation:

- The 13% decrease in vehicle entries may be attributed to poor weather conditions, specifically from January 24th to January 29th, during which the park was either completely or partially closed due to damage from Storm Eowyn, particularly fallen trees.

February Highlights:

- The staff at Lee's Road undertook essential resurfacing work on the woodland trails in February.
- A total of 170 linear meters of trails were resurfaced, enhancing the experience for the public who use these trails for walking and running.



www.activeennis.ie www.activekilrush.ie

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



ESF+ Sport4Empowerment Programme

General update on your operational plan:

• Swim Ireland Pilot:

- The initial lessons for 7 male members of the travelling community have been completed, showcasing mixed abilities within the group.
- An additional 4 lessons are required to bring 2 participants up to an equal standard.
- Suitable pool time for the group is still being arranged.

• Lisdoonvarna Pilot Project:

- This project, targeting Ukrainian refugees in collaboration with Weightlifting Ireland, is set to expand.
- Currently, the project includes a group of cancer survivors who formed a Dragon Boat club with assistance from the Clare Sports Partnership.
- The new phase will commence on 12th February.

• Couch to 1Km:

- Launched on 21st January for the Housing First Group.

• Fabio's Work Experience:

- Fabio has started his work experience with Clare Sports Partnership.
- The goal is to empower him to co-design a programme specifically for the Roma community.
- After conducting focus groups with Roma youth, two programs have been designed: "Namaste Yoga Ennis" for teen girls and "Strength and Fitness" for boys (in collaboration with Spartan Fitness).
- These programs are set to commence in late January, following the Roma community's return from Slovakia/Czech Republic after the Christmas period.

• GAA Adult Introduction for International Protection Applicants:

- Further liaising with GAA Games to develop an introduction to GAA aimed at International Protection Applicants.
- The ultimate aim is to create a football team comprised of 'New Communities,' with an exhibition game in Cusack Park.
- Coordination with CLDC and CISC on outreach efforts to gauge interest and find a suitable location to host.

• Cúl Camp for IPA Children:

- GAA has approached us to run a Cúl Camp over Easter for IPA children, sponsored by Kelloggs.
- Coordination of 3 other camps via ESF officers in other counties for the same cohort.
- Meetings with Hartnell Wilson – Social Impact

Communications for GAA/Kelloggs are ongoing to finalise details.

- One camp will take place in Lisdoonvarna during Easter.
- **Research Funding:**
- Collaboration with Clare Haven on the 'Participatory levels of Children from Domestic Violent Households in Team Sports' project.
- The project is being proposed to their board, with ethical concerns under consideration.

• Walkability Audits:

- Liaising with Clare Traveller CSP to conduct 'walkability audits' from Traveller-specific accommodation using National Roads Authority templates.
- Four audits have been completed.

• Formal Referral System:

- A formal referral system to the ESF+ role from SICAP, Local Area Employment Service, Employability, Traveller CPD, Focus Ireland, and Probation Service has been initiated.
- This system is for individuals seeking training, interested in training, or needing support to get active in sports again.
- Twelve clients have been referred and met so far.
- The referral system will expand to include the Links Worker client base and internal referrals.

Active Communities Update - Walking/Running/Cycling/Swimming

1. Bike Week 2025 Event Application:

- Submitted to National Transport on January 14th, 2025
- Notification received on January 28th, 2025, allocating a total of €16,040

2. Swimming Initiatives:

- **Banner Mile for January:** Commenced in Shannon, Lahinch, and Ennis during the second week of January.
- **Shannon Swimming & Leisure Centre:** Started on January 7th, 2025, for 11 weeks at 7:45 PM with 18 participants.
- **Lahinch Leisure Centre:** Started on January 8th, 2025, for 10 weeks at 8:00 PM with 12 participants.
- **Active Ennis:** Started on January 9th, 2025, for 10 weeks at 8:00 PM with 12 participants.
- **Step Into Clare:** Winter Walking Programme concluded on Saturday, January 18th.

Community Sports Hubs Update

1. Shannon Sports Hub:

- **Mother-Daughter Introduction to Boxing Programme:** Planned to commence on January 13th, 2025, in partnership with Shannon Boxing Club, but was cancelled due to low enrolment.

2. Kilrush Sports Hub:

- **Taekwondo for Women 18+:** Commenced on January 14th, 2025, for 6 weeks in partnership with West Clare Taekwondo. 8 participants enrolled.

- **Couch to 5K:** Commenced on January 20th, 2025, for 10 weeks at Kilrush Sports Complex. 65 participants enrolled, with structured weekly training sessions led by experienced coach Barry Coleman. Participants aim to complete their 5K goal at the Vandeleur Parkrun in Kilrush.
- **Strength and Conditioning Programme for Parents at St. Senan's:** Commenced on January 23rd, 2025, with 12 participants. The programme includes resistance exercises, weightlifting, and conditioning activities like cardio, agility drills, and flexibility exercises.

Ethnic Minorities Update

1. Karate Classes for Ukrainians:

- **Ukrainian Integration Support Fund:** A funding application has been developed to support physical activity programmes and provide exercise equipment for ethnic minority groups, particularly Ukrainians.
- Funding available: Up to €150 per applicant
- Expansion of outreach to more ethnic minorities and further integration-focused programmes.
- Organising an exercise programme for Ukrainian teen girls in Lisdoonvarna with remaining funding.

Sports Inclusion Update

- **Inclusive Gymnastics:** Continuing with Ennis Gymnastics Club on Monday/Tuesday evenings, with 80 children attending.
- **GAA All-Stars Inclusive Clubs:** Eire Og/Corofin GAA and Wolfe Tones GAA are running outdoor sessions for over 40 children with disabilities.
- **St. Joseph's Doora Barefield:** Started their All-Stars inclusive club journey with CSP, with further development planned.
- **Clare Comets Basketball All-Stars:** Continuing indoor sessions on Saturdays at Ennis National School.
- **Derg AC & Tulla AC:** Running sessions for over 40 children with disabilities on Saturday mornings and Thursday evenings, respectively.
- **Whole-School Physical Activity Programme:** Continuing with Clare Co Co and Movement Experts Ireland.
- **Sports ability Day:** Hosting on Thursday, February 20th, in Ennis CBS Primary School with different sporting NGBs for Disability Adult Services in Co. Clare.

Older Adults Update

- **Weekly Exercise Classes:** Ongoing, supporting tutors in delivering to over 300 older adults in County Clare.
- **Banner Balance:** Falls prevention programme continues to run weekly with 12 participants in conjunction with the HSE.
- **Active Retirement Groups Engagement:** Ongoing efforts to engage with active retirement groups across the county.
- **Physical Activity Leader Course (PALS):** Starting on

February 10th for individuals working with older adults.

Outdoor Recreation Update

- **January CORC Meeting:** Held on January 30th, 2025. Feedback facilitated on the draft plan with consensus reached within the committee. Public feedback draft preparation is underway.
- **MTB Trail Centre Feasibility Study:** Small working group consultation led by Brian McCarty, Killaloe MD.

Schools Update

- **Borrowing of Playground Markings and Sports Hall Athletics Packs:** Slower than usual due to staggered start of primary schools in January.
- **Active Homework Challenge:** Completed with 21 primary schools (over 3500 children) participating. Activities included physical activity challenges, hip-hop dance moves, gymnastics routines, and workout sessions.
- **Primary School Cricket Programme:** Launched on January 14th in St. Tola's National School in Shannon and St. Senan's National School in Shannon on January 17th. Positive feedback received from students and teachers.
- **Her Moves Teen Girls Wellness Event:** Held on January 18th at the West County Hotel with 30 girls attending. Positive feedback received.
- **Get Going Get Rowing Programme:** Launched in St. Joseph's Secondary School in Spanish Point on January 23rd in conjunction with Rowing Ireland.

Community Youth Update

- **Teen Boys and Teen Girls Programme:** Scheduled to resume in the coming months.

Website/Social Media Update

- **Website:** Kept up to date with upcoming events and initiatives.
- **Social Media:** Posts scheduled and shared as requested.
- **Communications Meet-Up:** Attended the first meet-up of 2025 on January 30th.

Men on the Move Update

- **Whitegate Programme:** Began in January and will run for 8 weeks at Whitegate GAA Club. 15 participants enrolled.

Women in Sport Update

- **Leadership Programme:** Two workshops held in January. Nollaig O Sullivan hosted a positive mental health in sport workshop, and Andy Burke from Blue Vista hosted a personal leadership and development workshop.
- **Kilkee Community College:** Took part in the first part of their Her Moves programme with pottery painting at Charm Bee Studio in Labasheeda. The second activity at the Irish Aerial Creation Centre in Clonlara is scheduled for February.

- **Her Moves Teen Girls Wellness Event:** Took place on January 18th with over 30 participants. The event included mindfulness, sport nutrition, recovery techniques, and strength-building workshops. Goody bags and prizes were given away.

Club Development Update

- **Safeguarding Courses:** Full attendance in January.
- **Club Grant Applications:** Discussed, with some clubs requested for further information and unsuccessful applications informed.
- **Monthly Newsletter:** Sent to clubs with details of February events. Ennis Hockey Club featured as the

active club of the month.

West Clare Links Project Update

- **Yoga Programme:** Concluded in Kilrush with positive feedback.
- **Community Couch to 5K Programme:** Began with over 65 participants for a 10-week programme running into March.
- **Active Referred Participants:** Two participants currently receiving one-to-one physical activity programmes each week. Plans to integrate them into community programmes in the coming weeks.

NORTH CLARE LEA

1. Road maintenance in Ballysallagh, Doolin to address slippage caused by Storm Eowyn.



2. Speed ramps installed on School Road, Lahinch, which enhance safety.



3. Preparatory are works underway at Doolin Pier in anticipation of the 2025 summer Ferry season including:
 - a. Repairs to the car park.



- b. Installation of temporary toilet blocks and staff facilities.



North Clare Integrated Transport & Traffic Plan

- The North Clare LEA has been highly proactive in advancing its objectives to enhance transport and traffic solutions in the region.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Green Team – EarthCheck Audit



Achieving the vision as set out in the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 which is that 'Clare is a globally renowned sustainable and vibrant destination' requires all tourism interests in Clare, supported by government and national agencies to work together to deliver an outcome that enriches all communities across our County.

Many steps have been taken to achieve this objective and the key milestone took place on the week the 19th February 2025, when EarthCheck conducted a week long audit on the Tourism infrastructure of Clare. This audit sets Clare to become an internationally recognised and certified destination to GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council) standard.

The auditor met with the Interim CE and Director of Service for Tourism Development and subsequently met with the established Green Team. The auditor reviewed the work conducted by the Green Team to date, which continues to enable Clare to measure and monitor the impact of Tourism.

The areas of audit also included the work practices across all relevant directorates in the Council (Environment, Recycling plants, Climate Action, Roads) and Uisce Eireann (Water and Wastewater) as well as the Cliffs of Moher Experience, Vandeleur Walled Gardens and Visitor Centre in addition to Shannon Airport Group and ESB Moneypoint.

The formal outcome of this EarthCheck audit will be announced in due course.



Launch of the Cliffs Coast Destination Experience Development Plan (DEDP)

Fáilte Ireland launched a new five-year plan to help drive and sustain tourism in North Kerry and West Clare (Cliff Coast).

The Cliff Coast Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP), launched at Ballygarry Estate Hotel and Spa, Tralee, aims to create a sustainable tourism destination by extending the tourism season and spreading business across all parts of the region over the next five years.

Key stakeholders in the area were consulted and contributed to the plan including Clare County Council, Kerry County Council, Irish Hotels Federation, LEADER, local tourism groups and local tourism operators and networks.

The Clare Collection

Bunratty celebrate ancient Pagan Festival of Imbolc



Bunratty celebrated ancient Pagan Festival of Imbolc

Bunratty Castle and Folk Park celebrated an ancient pagan festival over the February bank holiday weekend. On Sunday, February 2nd, Bunratty Castle and Folk Park celebrated Imbolc, the ancient pagan festival marking the beginning of spring. For the occasion, the attraction showcased the vibrant crafts, traditions, animals, and customs that characterise the season, while the 'Imbolc Celebration' also marked St. Brigid's Day. During the event, visitors were able to learn how to make the Saint Brigid's Cross, an iconic symbol that has graced Irish homes for centuries. Basket maker Michael Foudy demonstrated the time-honored tradition of making traditional-style baskets using locally sourced materials such as hazel and willow. The Bean an Tí's were also on hand throughout the day to demonstrate the art of traditional butter making at the Golden Vale Farmhouse. Members of the Clare Vintage and Engine Tractor club were onsite with an array of vintage agricultural machinery at work, while puppet shows, magic shows, train rides, and more entertained younger visitors.

St. Brigid's Day at the Cliffs of Moher Experience

We embraced the spirit of St. Brigid's Day with celebrations at the Cliffs of Moher Experience from Saturday, 1st of February to Monday, 3rd of February. Visitors had the chance to witness the age-old tradition of making St. Brigid's Crosses, thanks to our incredible team who brought this craft to life with live demonstrations.



St. Brigid's day Celebrations at the Cliffs of Moher Experience.

St. Brigid's Day Celebration at Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre



St. Brigid's Day Celebration at Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre

Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre celebrated St. Brigid's Day and the coming of Spring on Saturday, February 1st with two traditional cross-making workshops led by Phil Crowley. Visitors were also treated to some local talent with a lunchtime Trad Sessiún featuring music and dancing from Comhaltas in the Brambles Woodland Café. Garden staff were also delighted to welcome Connor and Laura Campbell, visitors from the USA, who took part in the workshop while on their honeymoon.

Love is in the air at the Cliffs of Moher Experience

February brought a romantic atmosphere to the Cliffs of Moher Experience, with Valentine's Day celebrations adding a special charm to the breathtaking landscape. Couples from around the world visited to mark the occasion, with many choosing the Cliffs as the perfect backdrop for heartfelt proposals. Visitors embraced the season by capturing romantic moments, further showcasing the Cliffs of Moher Experience as a top destination for love and adventure.



Christine and Evan celebrating their engagement at the Cliffs of Moher Experience on Valentine's Day.

Celebrating 18 years of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre

The Cliffs of Moher Experience Visitor Centre celebrated 18 years on February 08th, 2025. In June 2005, after years of planning, construction on the new Visitor Centre at the Cliffs of Moher Experience began. After 20 months of construction, on the 08th of February 2007, the Cliffs of Moher Experience Visitor Centre officially opened. Now, 18 years later, the Cliffs of Moher Experience Visitor Centre features the Puffins Nest Café, the Cliffs of Moher Craft & Gift Store, an interactive exhibition, 'The Ledge' 4D Experience, the Cliffs View Café and much more.



Staff at the Cliffs of Moher Experience celebrating 18 years of the Cliffs of Moher Experience Visitor Centre.

Cheque presentation to our chosen charities for the funds raised in 2024.

On Wednesday, 12th of February, staff from the Cliffs of Moher Experience handed over cheques to two of our three outgoing chosen charities; Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind Clare Branch and the Brothers of Charity Service Clare. A special mention to the staff and all their efforts in helping with the Charity Day and other fundraising initiatives throughout 2024.



Cliffs of Moher Experience Staff presenting the fundraising cheque to Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind Clare Branch.

Cliffs of Moher Experience wins CIE Tours Award

The Cliffs of Moher Experience picked up an 'Award of Excellence' in the 2025 CIE Tours International Awards of Excellence having received a customer satisfaction rating of 96.5% for 2024, up from 95.8% in 2023. Now in its 33rd year, the annual awards scheme recognises the best hotels and tourist attractions across Ireland following an assessment of feedback from over 15,000 customers throughout the year.



Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan, Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council and Melanie Lennon, Sales and Marketing Manager for the Cliffs of Moher Experience and Clare Tourism Northwest pictured with Stephen Cotter, Managing Director at CIE Tours International at the annual CIE International Awards of Excellence.

Fáilte Ireland Host Global CEO's Tourism Conference

Fáilte Ireland hosted a global tourism CEOs conference, mainly attended by North American leaders, in partnership with Destinations International. The event ran from 11th to 13th of February 2025 at the Radisson Blu, Golden Lane, Dublin. As host, Fáilte Ireland lead discussions, showcased best practices, and fostered industry debate. A post-event learning journey from the 13th to 15th of February was held with the group shown the top tourism initiatives across Ireland including a visit to the world-famous Cliffs of Moher Experience.

Welcoming The Outing Festival to the Cliffs of Moher Experience

The Cliffs of Moher Experience welcomed Eddie McGuinness, director of The Outing Festival, Ireland's unique LGBTQ+ matchmaking and music festival. Known as an inclusive and modern twist on the age-old tradition of Lisdoonvarna matchmaking, The Outing Festival celebrates love, diversity, and connection through a vibrant mix of live music, comedy, and social events. Eddie's visit highlighted the Cliffs as a must-see destination for festivalgoers exploring the beauty of County Clare. His experience at the Cliffs, shared across social media, reinforced the site's appeal as a welcoming and iconic landmark for all visitors.



Eddie McGuinness at the Cliffs of Moher Experience.

The Clare Collection marks a new era in Clare tourism



A significant milestone in the tourism landscape of County Clare has been reached with the unveiling of the Clare Collection brand for some of Ireland's best known visitor attractions. The Clare Collection, owned and operated by Clare County Council, represents a portfolio of attractions that includes Bunratty Castle and Folk Park, the Cliffs of Moher Experience, Loop Head Lighthouse, the Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) Visitor Experience, Craggaunowen, Knappogue Castle and Vandeleur Walled Garden and Visitor Centre. The new brand will feature in all future domestic and international marketing of the attractions.

The Clare Collection Team showcase to key trade partners



This month, The Clare Collection's Reservations, Sales, and Marketing teams travelled to Dublin for a series of productive meetings with key trade partners. These meetings focused on sharing updates about our new brand identity, planned visitor experience enhancements, and potential collaborations across our portfolio. We visited several partners, including Abbey Group, CIE International, and Wild Rover Tours. Beyond updates on our established attractions, we were also excited to introduce

the Groups, Luxury, and FIT divisions of these companies to some of our lesser-known gems and newer additions, such as Craggaunowen, Loop Head Lighthouse, Knappogue Castle and Gardens, Vandeleur Walled Gardens, and Inis Cealtra and discuss the potential for growth and increased footfall to these sites.

The Clare Collection Highlights Attractions to the French Market



The Clare Collection joined ten other tourism businesses from across the island of Ireland to participate in Tourism Ireland's successful Lunch & Learn series in France. Held in the vibrant cities of Bordeaux and Toulouse, these events offered The Clare Collection a valuable platform to showcase its unique portfolio of visitor experiences. The presentations targeted key French travel agents and tour operators, crucial partners in attracting tourists to Ireland. Beyond the presentations, the events fostered invaluable networking opportunities, allowing representatives from The Clare Collection to connect directly with French travel professionals and begin discussions for potential business contracts in 2025 and beyond.

Bunratty Castle & Folk Park Exciting Midterm Family Fun Event



Bunratty Castle & Folk Park hosted a Midterm Family Fun event on Saturday, February 22 and Sunday, February 23 from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. This two-day event provided a delightful array of activities and entertainment for families and children of all ages. Visitors experienced an enchanting weekend filled with magic shows, circus acts, train rides on the Bunratty Express,

traditional crafts and Irish music. The event will also featured a spectacular mix of mime, incredible circus skills, and interactive fun with 'The Wobbly Circus', alongside an array of more traditional forms of entertainment. From storytelling sessions with Mickey Joe, the resident Seanchaí, that brought Irish folklore to life, to craft workshops where you could churn your own butter with the Bean an Tí's in the Golden Vale Farmhouse, there was something for everyone to enjoy.

Other highlights families enjoyed included the whimsical world of Konor the Clown, presenting puppet shows and magic tricks in the charming Corn Barn. For a glimpse into the past, a visit Bunratty Forge to witness the skill of the resident blacksmith, who will bring the life and work of a 19th-century Irish blacksmith to life.

Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark

Introduction to the Geology of the Burren - Evening Course 2025 under way



Dr. Eamon Doyle explaining some of the finer points of geology to participants of the 2025 evening course.

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark with support from LCETB are continuing their hugely popular 'Introduction to the Geology of the Burren' evening course at the Burren Outdoor Education and Training Centre. The course will run until 11th of March and includes a field trip and special guest lecture.

Geology Training for NPWS guides



Dr. Eamon Doyle providing geology field training for NPWS staff in the Burren National Park

The Geopark geologist Dr. Eamon Doyle was pleased to provide geology training for NPWS guides from the Burren National Park and Coole Park. This geology training is an important part of the guides overall knowledge of the Burren National Park.

Broadband & Digital

Economic, Social and Community Impact Assessment for Ennistymon Digital Hub



In order to determine the overall impact of the Ennistymon Digital Hub and Multi Service centre on the town of Ennistymon and its environs, the Digital & Broadband Department commissioned an Economic, Social and Community Impact Assessment for Ennistymon Digital Hub.

The Ennistymon Digital Hub, part of Clare County Council's "Digiclare" initiative, aims at supporting rural communities by offering flexible, affordable office spaces. The Hub, opened in December 2019, serves as a community and enterprise hub, providing hot desks, office space, and meeting rooms. Due to

increasing demand, it expanded in 2022, adding more office pods and desks.

These are the main findings:

Key Impacts

1. Social & Community Benefits

- Supports remote work for both local residents and visitors.
- Enhances work-life balance by reducing commuting times.
- Encourages tourism and economic activity in North Clare (notably benefiting businesses in Lahinch).
- Contributes to town rejuvenation, especially on Parliament Street.

2. Economic Impact

- 76 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs created (direct & indirect).
- Annual economic impact of €3.8 million.
- Generates €586K in tax revenue.
- 67% of relocated workers identified the Hub as a key factor in their move.
- Encourages local spending—89% of users shop locally more frequently.

3. Tourism & Remote Work ("Workcation")

- 60% of summer bookings (Aug 2024 sample) came from tourists & holiday-makers.
- Strengthens Ennistymon's appeal as a remote working destination.

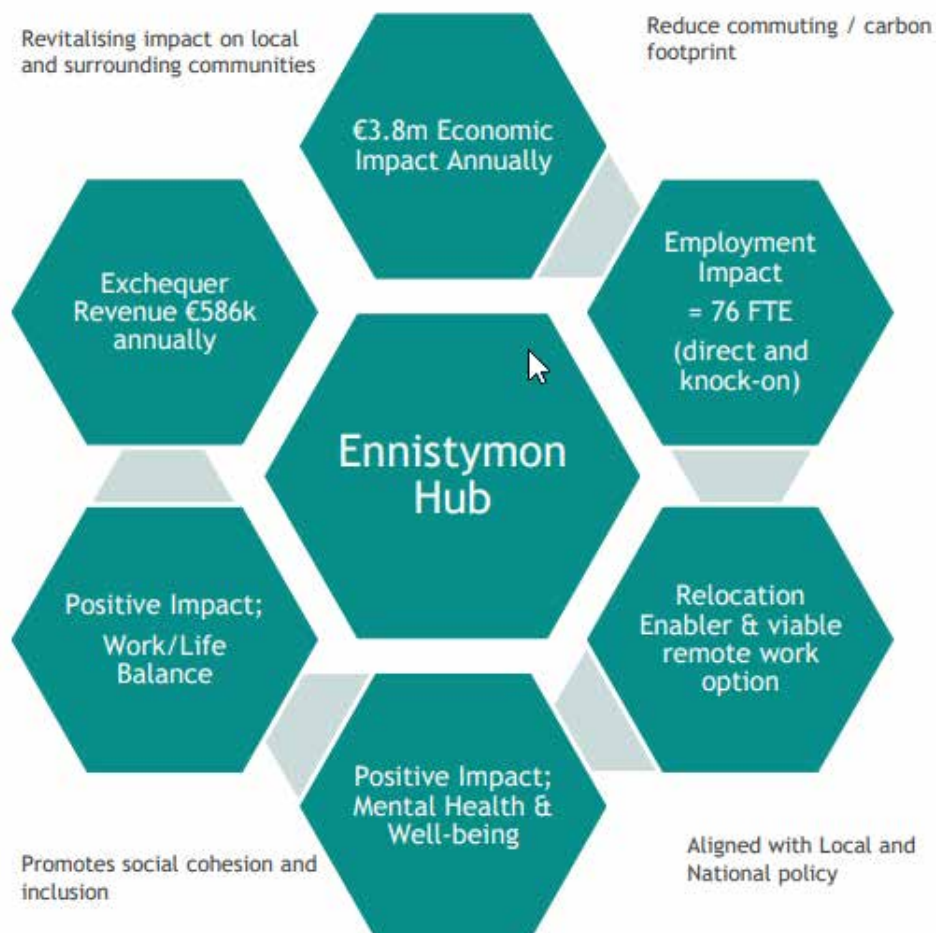
4. Sustainability & Policy Alignment

- Reduces carbon footprint by cutting commuting.
- Supports several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including good health, economic growth, and climate action.

- Aligns with local and national policies promoting digital hubs and sustainable work solutions.

Conclusion

The Ennistymon Hub has had significant social, economic, and environmental benefits, supporting rural employment, local businesses, and sustainable development while promoting a better work-life balance for professionals.



KILRUSH LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA, WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Storm Éowyn:

While Storm Éowyn many have hit in January the fallout and clean up of this extremely powerful extratropical cyclone continued well into February following the record breaking windspeeds which were recorded in some parts of Ireland during Storm Éowyn.

Large scale disruption was caused to electricity supply, water supply and telecommunications systems in West Clare. The West Clare MD crews were to the forefront in clean-up operations after Éowyn.



Works are ongoing to repair the sea wall in Cappa following the storm.



Schedule of Municipal District Works 2025:

In the last month the West Clare MD has continued to carry out drainage works and road surface preparation works prior to the commencement of the 2025 Schedule of MD works.



Housing Development Road Surfacing:

A section of the deficient road surface in Mountshannon Estate, Labasheeda was removed by planing and a new DBM surface laid. The road surface in the Clare County Council developed housing estate had reached the end of its useful life. The overlay was funded from Planning Development contributions.



Hedgerow Contractors Training:

Staff from the MD, external hedgerow contractors and elected members attended a training workshop in Bunratty provided by Clare County Council and Limerick County Council's Biodiversity Officers.

Appropriate Hedgerow Maintenance and Invasive Species management are ongoing issues for Council's across the country and this is becoming a more important issue with the introduction of a new Protection of Hedgerows Bill and the EU Nature Restoration Law.

This training event informed on best practice around hedgerow cutting for future hedgerow maintenance.



FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

ICT



Patrick Tiernan, Ennis MD, Clare County Council, Bhavesh Patadiya, ICT, Clare County Council, Brenda Hegarty, Head of Enterprise, Donegal County Council, Miriam McDonald, NOAC Board Member, Emer O' Brien, County Librarian, Cork County Council. Alfie Jones ICT, Clare County Council, Ailish Shaw, Communications Manager Meath County Council who all presented at the NOAC Good Practice in Local Government conference

Clare County Council presented their Tree Survey solution at the Good Practice in Local Government conference held in Kilkenny castle on the 13th February, organised by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) in collaboration with the County and City Management Association (CCMA) and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA).

The Tree survey project enhances tree management in urban areas, promoting a greener and safer environment for all. The digital Tree survey solution, funded by the Heritage Council in 2023, was developed inhouse and offers numerous benefits:

- Detailed maintenance records for specific trees and locations
- Assistance in preparing tenders
- Reduced risk of damage from trees during storms
- Justification for tree removal

- Consistency of maintenance records
- Mitigation against claims
- A digital dashboard for better decision-making and efficiency

This project is part of Clare County Council's broader innovation strategy, which includes various initiatives such as PRTB housing inspections, lifeguard reporting services, and traffic management for road worker safety. These efforts led to Clare County Council winning the CIPD awards for "*Embracing New Ways of Working*" and "*Rising IT Star*" in public sector digital transformation in 2024.

The Tree solution generated significant interest from other authorities eager to adopt it. The digital strategy team at the LGMA will assist other authorities adopt the solution through the Build to Share initiative.

PROCUREMENT

The following Clare County Council tender competitions were published on eTenders in the period from 27th January to 26th February inclusive:

Tender Name	RFT ID	Response deadline	Procedure
Single Supplier Framework - Dog Fouling related Supplies	5171738	24/03/2025 12:00	Open
Tender for the Development of 16 No. Housing Units at Moore Street, Kilrush, Co. Clare	5146650	19/03/2025 16:00	Open
RFT for a visitor attraction management system for Clare Tourism.	5086412	21/03/2025 13:00	Competitive with negotiation
Request for Tender for the Operation of Mac Namara and Son Public House	2938507	10/03/2025 13:00	Competitive with negotiation
The Establishment of a Multiparty Framework for Works Contractors for Minor Housing Construction Works for Clare County Council	5064845	07/03/2025 16:00	Open
Cliffs of Moher Experience - Audio Visual Exhibition Maintenance Service Provider	5021666	04/03/2025 13:00	Open

HUMAN RESOURCES

Recruitment Competitions February

Eligibility Exercises & Desktop Shortlisting

- Executive Conservation Officer
- Senior Enterprise Development Officer
- Executive Engineer

Interviews

- Assistant Engineer
- Senior Staff Officer
- Environmental Control Warden
- Technician Grade I (Civil, Arch & Building)
- Traffic Warden - Cliffs of Moher
- Staff Officer
- Beach Operatives 2025
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer

The following competitions were advertised:

- Executive Engineer
- Executive Architect
- Clerk of Works
- Canteen Chef/Manager
- Canteen Attendant - Sporadic Cover
- Assistant Facilities Manager - Library

TRAINING PROGRAMMES / WEBINARS / CONFERENCES/ INFORMATION SESSIONS FEBRUARY

- Basic IT Skills
- Climate Change - Raising Awareness
- Dignity at Work IPA Training
- Grade 4 & Analogous Officer Training
- Grade 6 & Analogous Officer Training
- Pre- Retirement Seminar
- Prevention Management of Aggression & Violence Training
- Safety Health & Environment for Construction Site Managers Training

Essential Skillz on-line Courses:

- Health & Safety Induction
- Slips, Trips & Falls

Health & Safety:

- 2-Day First Aid Refresher
- 3-Day First Aid New Starter Training
- Asbestos Awareness
- Banksman
- CPC Driver Training
- Fire Warden Training
- Location of Underground Services
- Manual Handling
- Ride on Roller
- Safe Pass

Employee Wellbeing

The February Wellbeing Focus for February was 'Healthy Eating'.

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Town Centre First

Supporting and empowering Town Teams

The Town Centre First Department arranged further training sessions to assist Town Teams in building capacity in both Tulla and Lisdoonvarna. This training will provide vital support, advice and templates all geared at empowering Town Teams going forward.



Wider Tulla Town Team



Wider Lisdoonvarna Town Team

THRIVE Ennis - Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme



A Part VIII Planning application was lodged by Clare County Council in December which will bring forward designs to regenerate/adapt The Cloister, a significant heritage building and national monument in Ennis, which will be brought back into use while addressing community needs.



The Council expects to apply for Thrive Stream 2 funding in April 2025 to bring this project to fruition. THRIVE is funded by the government under the ERDF Regional Programmes through the Southern Regional Assembly.

A draft Integrated Urban Strategy focussed on heritage is in preparation and stakeholder engagement sessions are due to be held on 11th March 2025 in the Foyer of Áras Contae an Chláir. The Strategy will be a good opportunity to highlight potential heritage buildings that should feature in the Strategy and could benefit from future Thrive funding streams.

FORWARD PLANNING

Kilrush Maritime Training Centre

Work is continuing on the Kilrush Maritime Training Centre Project to identify a suitable funding stream to cover the remaining funding gap within the project. The Project Team are liaising with the Department of Rural Regeneration and Community Development with respect to due diligence on the projects funding allocation. In addition, Enterprise Ireland are concluding their analysis of the Smart Regions funding scheme to establish if the Kilrush Maritime Training Centre project can apply to this scheme to cover the remaining funding gap.



Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary

Following a successful Request for Quotation process Clare County Council acting as Lead Authority on the SIFP Steering Group and Environmental Sub-Group have appointed Quiet Oceans to prepare and deliver the first ever anthropogenic background noise map for the Shannon Estuary. The appointment was approved by the SIFP

at the recent Steering Group meeting held on the 20th of February in Clare County Council. The Planning Department will act as the key point of contact for the project on behalf of the members and will provide access to data where available to facilitate the commencement of the study.

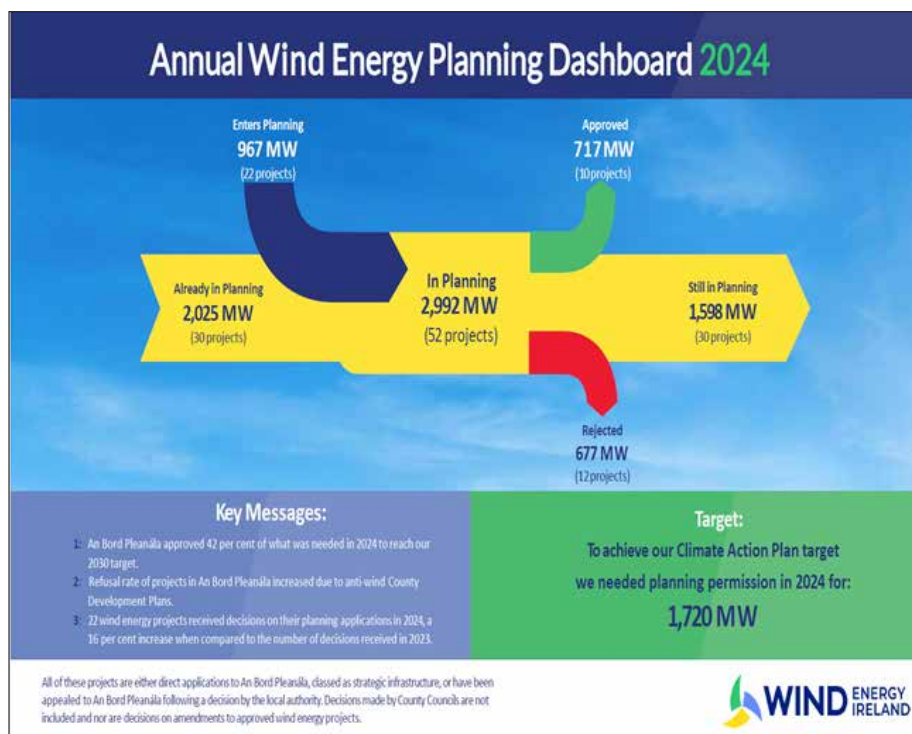
Marine Planning

The inaugural Energising Clare conference took place at the Temple Gate Hotel in Ennis on Friday the 14th of February. The event was organised by Ennis Chamber in conjunction with Wind Energy Ireland. It was revealed that Clare produced the 7th highest amount of wind energy in the country last year, accounting for 4% of Ireland's total. Wind Energy Ireland CEO, Noel Cunliffe, and Minister with Special Responsibility for Fisheries and Marine Protection, Timmy Dooley spoke of the challenges facing wind energy production in County Clare both in terms of onshore and the future potential challenges of offshore floating wind production. Interim CEO Carmel Kirby highlighted the urgency in terms of the preparation of a West Coast DMAP and the importance this sector plays to the region. The Government Plan Led approach is needed to inform the future development locations of these potential floating offshore wind farms.



Interim CEO of Clare County Council Dr Carmel Kirby speaking at the Energising Clare Conference.

Wind Energy Ireland CEO Noel Cunliffe highlighted delays in decision making within An Bord Pleanála as a concern in reaching our climate action targets. His planning dashboard provided an oversight of the targets achieved in 2024.



Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) final map for 2025 and the annual draft map for 2026 are now on public display. **Submissions regarding both maps can be made until 1 April 2025.** For the Final Map 2025, landowners may request the local authority to change the zoning status of their land, included on the map. For the Annual Draft Map 2026, both landowners and members of the public may make submissions regarding the inclusion or exclusion of lands. Details on how to make a submission and links to both maps are available on the Council's website via the planning section. Hard copies of both maps are also available to view at the Council offices

and libraries around the county.

The Residential Zoned Land Tax came into effect on 1 February. The purpose of the RZLT is to activate land that is zoned and serviced for residential or mixed use land to increase housing supply and to ensure the regeneration of vacant and idle lands in urban locations. Local authorities are responsible for the preparation of mapping and identifying lands considered 'in scope' and the Revenue Commissioners are responsible for the collection of the tax. RZLT is an annual tax charged at 3% of the market value of 'in scope' lands. The Final RZLT Map for 2025, published on 31 January 2025 shows 'in scope' lands subject to the tax. Payment of the RZLT to

the Revenue Commissioners is due on 23 May 2025.

For further information or queries please contact: email rzlt@clarecoco.ie, phone 065-6846407/6846451 or visit www.clarecoco.ie/services/planning/residentialrzlt/



CONSERVATION AND BUILT HERITAGE

Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) 2025

On the 14th February 2025 the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage announced the list of projects approved funding under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) 2025. Clare County Council has been awarded €165,720 under the scheme. The scheme supports property owners to conserve and enhance historic buildings and streetscapes. Under the scheme 11 projects in Clare have been approved for grant funding in 2025. This grant funding will be used by the owners of the properties to repair, restore, conserve and protect these historic structures in Clare. The following 11 projects were approved for funding:

Name and Address of Project	Description Of Works	Funding Allocated
Clare County Council		Total: €165,720.73
1 Lower McDonnell Terrace, Kilkee	Windows, Doors and Associated Elements	€6,000.00
Kilnasoolagh Church, Newmarket-on-Fergus	Interiors	€15,000.00
St Columba's Church, Ennis	Rainwater Disposal	€10,945.00
Christ Church, Spanish Point	Windows, Doors and Associated Elements	€10,000.00
St Augustine's Church, Kilshanny	Windows, Doors and Associated Elements /Roofs	€30,000.00

Crotty's, Kilrush	Roofs/ Rainwater Disposal	€40,000.00
Glencairn House, Ennis	External Walls	€8,500.00
St Brigid's Church, Corofin	Windows, Doors and Associated Elements	€10,000.00
Land Steward's Cottage Clooney	Windows, Doors and Associated Elements / External Walls	€13,000.00
Freagh Boathouse, Freagh Castle, Whitestrand, Miltown Malbay, County Clare	External Walls	€10,000.00
Fintra More Cottage, Miltown Malbay, County Clare	Thatch	€12,275.73

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	February 2025 up to & including 26/02/2025	Total (Valid) Year to date 2025
No. of Section 57 Declaration Requests received	3	6

HERITAGE

Clare Heritage Plan application to the Heritage Council.

The Heritage Officer has applied to the Heritage Council for co-funding for the following projects:

- To continue with the Clare Community Archaeological Scheme
- Projects to be undertaken in 2025 subject to funding are as follows:
 - The deconstruction and reconstruction of a partial mud house in Tullaroe, in partnership with the West Clare Municipal District and the Querrin local community. This work is needed to widen the road at the site of this house ruin.
 - Analysis and community consultation of the remote sensing carried out in Loop Head in 2024
 - Making additional Heritage information accessible and available to the public by providing a Partner Website on the Clare County Council main website via Clare iCAN website.
 - Continue with the TY Tasters Traditional Skills training with secondary school students and the formation of a

Traditional Skills directory or register for the county.

- e) Support and participate in the Killaloe-Ballina History Society and Burrenbeo Trust Archaeological conferences. And the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement who will hold their annual conference in Killaloe in May of this year.



Partial mud house in Tullaroe. Photo of North wall c. 2008, Sonia Schormann Collection, Clare County Library.



Remote sensing - Thermal imagery capture at Holy Well in Loop Head.

Clare Creative Ireland funding for Heritage

Clare Creative Ireland funding has been secured from two heritage projects as follows:

- (a) Undertaking a *Reading Your Local Landscape* course in West Clare in association with the Limerick Clare Education & Training Board in September. The course will be advertised shortly.
- (b) Finalise the Clare Cillíní Survey and upload the survey information onto the Clare Heritage iCAN website. The Cillíní survey will be launched for public awareness, engagement and to promote access to the site survey information. Cillíní events will be held with interested communities to inform, engage and to commemorate the more than 144 Cillíní sites around the county and their significance.

The Clare Creative Ireland team held a meeting to discuss and input into the Evaluation Framework for the Creative Ireland Programme 2023-2027 developed by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and the Media (DTCAGSM). This evaluation frame work includes a review of the outputs and outcomes of Clare Creative Communities. The outcomes of this evaluation may impact on decisions around future investment for the Creative Ireland programme.

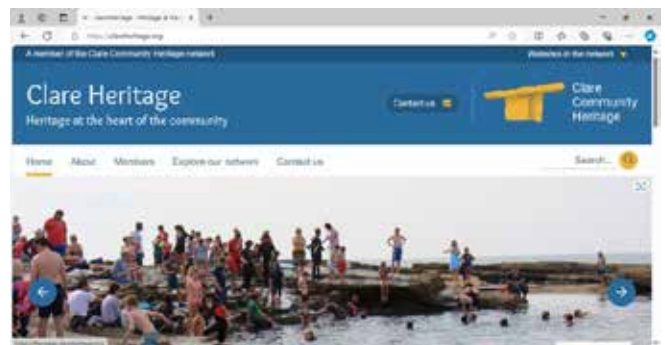
Clare Heritage Website, iCAN

Clare County Council have agreed a partnership agreement with the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) regarding the delivery of the Clare iCAN programme 2023 -2028.

Clare County Council has worked with the National Museum of Ireland NMI on the iCAN programme since 2019. There are presently 6 Clare Communities up and running on the iCAN network, each with a professionally designed website within the portal. There is interest from other Clare communities in joining the Clare iCAN network.

In 2025, the Clare iCAN groups will be offered training, will undertake projects and receive funding under this agreement. Several network meetings are planned throughout the year, where the Clare groups come together on a local and national basis to learn from each other, undertake joint awareness, local history and archival projects.

In 2025, Clarecastle will receive funding for QR-coded plaques for the local Heritage Trail, Dúchas na Sionna are supported to produce a promotional brochure and video, Ruan/Dysart will receive funding to purchase equipment, and the Scatterly Island group are funded for their postcard project.



Clare iCAN Website Homepage. <https://heritage.clareheritage.org/>

Lisdoonvarna Historic Town Initiative HTI

As part of the Historic Town Initiative for Lisdoonvarna Spa Wells, a Conservation Management Plan (including Gazette of the Existing Rooms, an outline of Essential Works and a 10-year Management Plan), Heritage Led-Regeneration Plan (including Architectural Drawings, Ecological Appraisal and high-level preliminary Budget Estimates), a detailed Business Case and a Topographical Survey was produced.

The Business Case examined the Heritage Led-Regeneration Plan in the context of wellness tourism and made a proposal for regenerating the Spa Wells experience. A Tourism Impact Assessment and business case rationale was undertaken. The outcomes of this work was presented to the West Clare Councillors by the consultants involved, Myco Studio and Rubucon.



Lisdoonvarna Spa Wells

Community Monument Fund (CMF)

There was a lot of interest from community groups and church organisations in the Community Monument Fund (CMF). Site visits were made to a wide variety of monument types and advice given on the CMF application process. Nine applications were forwarded by Clare County Council to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in February for their assessment. Two applications were made by Clare County Councils on their own properties. The Heritage Officer in partnership with the Special Projects Team has sought funding for the provision of a small car park at Beal Ború fort in Killaloe under the scheme.

Heritage of West Clare and the Green Team

The Heritage Officer made a presentation on some Heritage projects in West Clare to communities and businesses in Loop Head, as part of the County Clare Destination Green Team on the journey toward securing Ireland's first certified sustainable destination.



Heritage of West Clare

Lesser Horseshoe Bats at Dromore Stables

The Heritage Officer provided advice on the Heritage Council works taking place at Dromore Stables to safeguard one of the most important colonies of the rare and endangered Lesser Horseshoe Bat in Ireland.

Current Heritage Funding and Project Opportunities

a) Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2025

The Heritage Council's Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2025 is open for community and voluntary groups, and NGOs and stays open until 14th of March.

The Scheme is open to:

- Voluntary and community groups, for example, parish councils, tidy towns groups, local action groups etc.
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including not for profit trusts.
- See link to the information
- <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/news/news-features/community-heritage-grant-scheme-is-now-open-for-applications>

The Scheme funds a wide range of heritage projects. In 2024, ten projects in County Clare were supported, received funding from €800 to €25,000, on average the funding available is €10,000 to €15,000. The scheme funded the Cuimhneamh an Chláir / Clare Memories group to archive their oral histories with the Digital

Repository of Ireland, the Old Ennistymon Heritage Company were funded to undertake repair works to the Ennistymon Courthouse building using traditional lime mortar techniques, while the X-PO Kilnaboy were funded to make a lovely film on the traditional method of cutting reed for thatching on the wetlands of the Shannon Estuary which has been shown at the X-OP in Kilnaboy and the County Library.

Traditional Farm Buildings Grant Scheme

Traditional Farm Buildings Grant Scheme with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is now OPEN for applications. The closing date for receipt of completed applications is **5pm Monday 10th March 2025**.

Full details here: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/traditional-farm-buildings-grant-scheme>

In 2025, the Heritage Council particularly encourage applications for the repair of traditional farming structures other than buildings. To support this effort, it is intended that €500,000 be specifically allocated this year for the repair of these other related farm structures such as walls, gate pillars and gates, walled orchards, cobbled yards and masonry dung steds.

Adopt a Monument Scheme

"The Adopt a Monument Scheme" aims to ensure that our monuments remain an integral part of the community. The scheme provides expertise and resources on the maintenance and care of the chosen Monument. The aim is that the monument will serve as a focal point for heritage-related, educational and recreational activities and will encourage greater appreciation and understanding of local heritage. With funding from the Heritage Council "The Adopt a Monument Scheme", the Labasheeda Projects Group commissioned ecological and architectural surveys and developed a walking trail to the site.

The Heritage Council is now calling for interested groups to apply for the scheme. The closing date for applications 21st March 2025. Further information about the scheme and the application process can be found here: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/aam>

National Heritage Week 2025

Save the date for the National Heritage Week 2025 which will take place from August 16th-25th. All are invited to get involved under this year's theme: **"Exploring Our Foundations."**

BIODIVERSITY

Hedgerow Training Workshop at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park

On the 13th of February, Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer and Limerick City and County Council's Biodiversity Officer teamed up at Bunratty, Co. Clare to organise a workshop for external hedgerow contractors and council staff (Clare and Limerick) on the sustainable management of hedgerows for biodiversity and best

practices in relation to invasive species. The workshop promoted to adopt the 'A-shape' profile of hedgerows and light trimming to benefit bats, birds and mammals. The workshop involved an outdoor site demonstration on the sustainable management of hedgerows to transition away from the traditional 'box cut' hedgerow and to adopt an 'A-shape' (triangular shape) by cutting the hedgerow at an angle at the highest point to allow the hedgerow to grow upwards and give the hedgerow height to function as an ecological corridor for wildlife. Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer Barry O'Loughlin gave a presentation which covered best practices in relation to hedgerow cutting and management, legislation and ecological corridors. The Limerick Biodiversity Officer Sinead McDonnell covered the benefits of grass verges and hedgerows for biodiversity. Will Earle of INVAS Biosecurity covered best practices and biosecurity in relation to invasive species while Catherine Keena of Teagasc spoke about tree management of hedgerows and best practices in relation to hedgerow rejuvenation. This workshop was timed in advance of the bird nesting season to highlight ecological sensitivities. A special thank you to all speakers, MD Staff, Elected Members of the Council and hedgerow contractors that made the event. Thank you also to the staff at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park for all their help and assistance. This training event was funded by the Local Biodiversity Action Fund (NPWS), Clare County Council and Limerick County Council. The Biodiversity Officer Programme is funded by the Heritage Council in partnership with the relevant local authorities.



Training Day Event on the Sustainable Management of Hedgerows at Bunratty Folk Park for external Hedgerow Contractors and Council Staff

Tourism SPC Meeting: Biodiversity Work Programme and Visitor Destination Sites

On the 19th of February, Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer gave a presentation to the Tourism SPC Meeting on the Biodiversity Work Programme and biodiversity initiatives undertaken at visitor destination sites within the Council's landbank. The Biodiversity Officer has worked closely with operations and gardening staff in Vandeleur Gardens in Kilrush and Loop Head Lighthouse to adopt pollinator friendly mowing regimes on the grounds. This involves delaying the mowing regime to allow wildflowers to grow to provide a nectar and pollen source. The Biodiversity Officer has also met with staff at the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre to advise on mowing regimes to link in with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. The pollinator actions were reported in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Council Annual Report. The Biodiversity Officer has funded through the biodiversity budget a Biodiversity Conservation Management Plan for Craggaunowen near Kilmurphy, Co. Clare in addition to profiling some visitor destination sites to promote the conservation of wetlands through the Clare Wetland Story Map.

World Wetlands Day Event: Launch of Clare Wetland Initiatives

Clare County Council's Biodiversity Office launched the Clare Wetland Story Map and the new wetland guidelines aimed at community groups and landowners '*Community Action: A Beginner's Guide to Wetlands*' on the 4th of February at the Civic Room, Buttermarket Building, Ennis. Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer Barry O'Loughlin discussed how communities can integrate local wetlands into their Community Biodiversity Action Plans and promote wetlands through talks and walks. Poppy Overy of Wetland Surveys Ireland provided an overview of the Clare Wetland Field Survey 2024 and the benefits of mapping wetlands in Clare. Patrick Crushell of Wetland Surveys Ireland gave a demonstration of the new online digital interactive Clare Wetland Story Map and how communities and schools can use this as an educational resource and the simple measures communities can do to protect wetlands. Laurence Fullam of the Community Wetlands Forum spoke about successful peatland restoration initiatives including Shanakyle Bog in Co. Clare and discussed how the new '*Community Action: A Beginner's Guide to Wetlands*' booklet can be used by community groups to embark on a new wetland project. Landowner Feargal Marren spoke about the Marsh Fritillary Conservation Project he is embarking with the local community in Clonlara. This project is funded by Clare County Council's Biodiversity Office and NPWS. The projects are funded by Clare County Council, NPWS and Creative Communities Funding (through Clare Libraries). The event was well attended by Tidy Towns groups, communities and landowners. The Clare Wetland Story Map is available to view at the link: bit.ly/ClareWetlands



Launch of the new Clare Wetland Story Map and the booklet '*Community Action: A Beginner's Guide to Wetlands*' at World Wetlands Day Event on the 4th of February

All-Ireland Community and Council Awards

On the 22nd of February, Elected Members of the Council, Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer, the Director of Services for Economic Development and the Director of Services for Tourism attended the LAMA awards hosted in Cork. The 'Return to Nature Clare Church Biodiversity Project' was shortlisted for an award under the category 'Best Environmental/ Ecological Project'. The project is led through the role of Clare County Councils Biodiversity Officer working in partnership with twelve community groups (ten parishes) and the Diocese of Killaloe to carry out biodiversity actions on church grounds in County Clare.



LAMA Awards Ceremony in Cork

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The table below shows the number of planning applications processed during the month of February, up to and including February 25th. Sixty four percent of planning applications received in January were received by electronic means.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS	February (to 27/2/25)	2025
No. of planning applications received	66	133
No. of Planning Decisions made	58	122
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	1	8
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	26	45
No. of Section 5 applications	6	16
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications (in respect of Part V of the Planning & Dev Act 2000)	1	3
Submissions received regarding Compliance	27	50

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

February Statistics (29th of January to 21st February 2025 incl)	February (to 21/02/25)	2025
New Complaints Received	22	29
New Files Opened	12	17
Files Closed	6	9
Warning Letters Issued	16	24
Enforcement Notices Issued	18	18
Legal Proceedings	0	0

NSAI Quality Service Award

Following extensive Auditing and Assessment NSAI has issued an IQNET recognised certificate that the Planning Dept, Clare County Council has implemented and maintains a Quality Management System for the following scope: To provide for the proper planning and sustainable development, the promotion and management of economic development and the protection and enhancement of the natural and built heritage and amenity in County Clare. Clare County Council, Planning Dept are the only Local Authority to have achieved such an award for Quality Service.



LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

- **Mentoring:** LEO Clare commenced the year with a substantial demand for one-to-one mentoring support. 60 clients were assigned expert mentors to assist them in enhancing their businesses.
- **Training:** In January, LEO Clare provided an extensive array of training courses & programmes covering areas such as Starting Your Own Business, Bookkeeping, Social Media, Digital Marketing & Ideation. Approximately 240 individuals availed of these training supports since the start of the year.
- **Productivity Supports:** With rising prices affecting all businesses, LEO Clare has various productivity supports to assist businesses offset higher input costs. In January, LEO Clare have processed applications for 10 Digital for Business, 4 Green for Business, 2 Energy Efficiency Grants, 2 Lean for Business & 2 Grow Digital Vouchers.

'Lunch & Learn' events

LEO Clare completed their 'Lunch & Learn' roadshow in February with 2 more events in Ennistymon & Kilrush. These sessions provided businesses with the opportunity to enjoy lunch while gaining valuable insights into LEO services, including the new Energy Efficiency Grant & the Grow Digital Voucher. The events were well-attended with over 60 entrepreneurs participating overall. Participants subsequently signed up for several support services with LEO Clare.

Student Enterprise Awards 2024/25 Clare Final

Local Enterprise Office Clare has announced that teenage entrepreneurs, Amy Killeen, Aoife Keane & Roisin Hogan from Colaiste Mhuire in Ennis will represent Co. Clare at this year's Student Enterprise Programme National Final in Mullingar on Thursday 8th May. Their business, ARA, was the Senior Category winner of this years competition.

The students all took part in the Clare County Final on 26th February, which was held at the Treacy's West County Hotel. An estimated 1,000 students from 13 participating schools took part in the annual programme locally.

In the Junior Category, the winning business representing Clare at the National Final is Brilliant Creative from St. Josephs School, Spanish Point. In the Intermediate Category, Cross Crafts from St Annes Community College, Killaloe will be representing Clare at the National Final.



SEA Co Final Senior Winners (L-R Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise, ARA - Senior Winners from Colaiste Mhuire, Cathaoirleach an Chlair, Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan)

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Property Transactions and Conveyancing

The Table below shows the number of property transactions completed by Property Management Unit up to 19th February 2025 and the corresponding figures for 2024.

The property market in the County continues to be quite active, albeit that there is a shortage of supply, particularly in the residential sector. The Property Management unit continues to assist many solicitors acting for their clients on issues associated with title, boundaries, old leasehold folios etc. We are also processing a number of applications for first registration of Council property and assessing the various properties we own for correct title.

Transaction type	February 2025	Year to date 2025	Full year 2024
Lease / Sub Lease of Property / Building	0	0	6
Licence to use property / building	0	2	14
Grazing Agreement for Lands	15	15	22
Deed of Transfer signed	2	2	9
Contract for Sale / acquisition signed		0	0
Deed of Right of Way / Wayleave signed	0	0	6
Deed of Rectification / Variation signed	0	0	4
Allotment Agreements signed	35	0	40

Property Valuation Services Framework

Following a Tender process, a new Framework Contract has been put in place for Auctioneering and Valuation services. This is effective from mid February 2025.

Shannon Allotments

Due to the recent storm Darragh and storm Éowyn, repairs to fencing and fence posts are needed at the Shannon Allotments. Works will be carried out as soon as possible and consultation with the Allotment Association will be held in advance of same. The Agreements with the Allotment holders for 2025 are nearly all completed.

Grazing of Lands

The advertisement for the annual grazing of Council owned lands was published in January with a closing date of 27th January, 2025. During the month of February, the grazing agreements have been signed up for an eleven month period.

DERELICT SITES

The Derelict sites team are currently dealing with 278 properties that are considered derelict. We continue to have high levels of activity and engagement with owners and their representatives. 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 a consistent number of planning applications for property refurbishment/extension and it is clear from driving around the county the level of work ongoing 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 below provides a snapshot of the activity in February 2025 and year 2025 to date and the comparative figures for the full year 2024.

Derelict Sites	February 2025	Year to date 2025	Full Year 2024
No. of new files opened	6	6	35
No. of Section 8(2) Notices issued - Intention to enter site on Derelict Sites Register	1	1	36

No. of Section 8(7) Notices issued - Entry of site onto Derelict Sites Register	2	2	43
No. of Section 11 Notices issued - Measures required to render the site non-derelict	1	1	2
No. of files closed / property removed from Derelict Sites Register	0	0	26
No. of Notices served to Compulsorily Purchase derelict sites (CPO) (see note below)	2	2	7
No of Vesting Orders signed	0	0	5

Compulsory Acquisition of Derelict Sites (CPO)

The Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government launched a CPO activation programme in 2023 for local authorities, which set targets for CPOs for each local authority. The Table below sets out the status of CPOs commenced by the Derelict Sites Team in Clare County Council since 2022 to the current year. It is important to note that the CPO process can be lengthy and complex.

Year	No of CPOs commenced	Current Status
2022	6	3 - CPOs completed and property transferred to Housing for refurbishment works. Two of these are now completed and Part VIII permission has been got for the other property.
		1 - CPO completed and sale closed in August 2024- New owner has commenced works
		2 - works have commenced and CPO parked for now
2023	10	7 - At Vesting Stage and lodged in Taillte Éireann
		1 - CPO completed and property was sold in December 2024
		1 - Title received in December 2024. Property has been cleared out and this property will be on the open market in Spring 2025, with a condition for permanent residence.
		1 - Objection received and is under appeal.
		1 - Works are being commenced
2024	7	5 - At Vesting Stage and lodged in PRA
		1 - CPO commenced and has been appealed to An Bord Pleanála
		1 - Objection received and An Bord Pleanála has not confirmed the CPO order. The CPO process will be re-commenced in January 2025.

2025	1	1 - CPO process commenced in January 2025.
	1	1 - Objection received

In addition, the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund will provide funding for CPOs 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. Two such CPOs are with the PRA for registration. Actions taken on properties in the town of Ennis has resulted in a number of properties coming to market or making plans for site development.

Derelict Site Levy

Determination of valuations on sites which are on the Derelict Sites Register commenced in 2023 and notices of valuation have issued to 26 properties to date. Three owners appealed the valuation to the Valuation Tribunal and while decisions are awaited on two appeals, one appeal by an owner was rejected. 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. Assessment of valuations and billing of the levy will be further progressed during 2025 and it is intended that all properties on the Derelict Sites Register will be valued for the purposes of billing the levy. This levy will go towards the cost of billing and collection of the levy and resourcing of derelict sites function, up to and including CPO of properties.

The Table below shows the levels of activity on the Derelict sites levy as of 19th February 2025. Further properties on the Derelict sites register are being valued for the purposes of the Derelict sites levy on a regular basis.

Derelict Sites Levy	February 2025	Full Year 2025	Full Year 2024
No. of properties on which the levy has been billed	2	12	9
Amount billed in respect of Derelict sites Levy	€14,000	€187,950	€124,110
Number of properties on which valuations have been requested	0	0	26
Number of properties on which notices of Valuation have been issued to owners	4	8	18
Number of properties where the notice of valuation was appealed by the owner	0	0	3

VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANT - FOR DERELICT AND VACANT PROPERTIES

The Council welcomes the inclusion in the draft programme for Government of the intention to extend the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant to 2030. A meeting has been arranged with officials in the Department for April to establish if there are changes proposed to the scheme and to update them on the work ongoing in County Clare.

To date the value of grants approved under the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant by Clare County Council has exceeded €20 million as at 19th February 2025 (338 grant applications approved or 65% of all applications), with further approvals due to issue. This is a very significant investment in housing in County Clare and the work ongoing around the county on 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 Grant is making a real difference in boosting 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.

A number of walk-in advice clinics will be held in 2025 where property owners can come in to meet the Vacant Homes Team for advice regarding making their applications. Any applicant can meet with the Vacant Homes Team in Áras Contae an Chláir by appointment or can discuss their application over the phone with any team member.

The breakdown of Grant approvals by Municipal District is shown in the Table below.

Amount approved by Local Electoral Area (including those with grant funding paid out)			
Local Electoral Area	No of applications approved (€)	Total amount approved (€)	% of total number of Grants Approved
Kilrush LEA	119	€7.31 million	36%
Ennistymon LEA	67	€4.14 million	20%
Ennis LEA	53	€3.0 million	15%
Killaloe LEA	61	€3.66 million	18%
Shannon LEA	38	€2.19 million	11%
Grand Total	330	€20.3 million	100%

We continue to have high levels of enquiries and applications for the Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant and the total applications since the scheme was introduced in July 2022 is

now 517. We are in the top eight local authorities in the Country in relation to application numbers. Our response time for initial assessment of new applications is generally four to five weeks.

At mid February, we have paid out €4.7 million to 83 property owners in County Clare who have completed works and many others are in the process of submitting their claims for payment. The final site inspections are organised and the administration of the financial and legal elements of the grant are completed. The level of claims for payment is increasing every day and the Team work closely with owners on this process.

Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan.

A new loan has been launched by Government called the Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan. It is a government-backed mortgage and loan that helps people to buy and renovate a derelict or uninhabitable home. The loan is for first-time buyers, and 'fresh start applicants', who have been unable to get funding from commercial lenders. It is an extension of the [Local Authority Home Loan](#). The applicant must qualify for the [Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant](#) to get this loan. The Housing Department will administer this loan and work closely with the Vacant Homes Team.

Other Points of Information

- Changes to the grant were announced in late 2024 to be in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EU/2024/1275). In order to meet the timeline in Article 17(15), the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant will no longer fund the installation of stand-alone boilers powered by fossil fuels, for new applications from 1st December 2024. This is being notified to all new applicants
- The breakdown of applications 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.
- To date, 71% of applications are for properties to be used as principal private residence (333 properties) and the balance of 29% are for rent. This has remained consistent in recent months.
- A number of property owners have applied to have the period to complete the works extended. Such requests are considered on a case by case basis, depending on the level of work carried out to date and the timeframe needed to complete the works.

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.

ENNIS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

February was another busy month for the MD Staff with a number of significant works being progressed as well as the ongoing operation and maintenance of key infrastructure in our charge.

Some of the key works progressed throughout the MD area in the past month include the following:

Clarecastle Works

In February Ennis MD installed new footpaths and junction improvements in Clarecastle Village between the community centre and the centra shop. This project has come to fruition through strong representation from the public and elected members. The works were carried out under Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act.

The scheme involved the installation of the following:

- new footpaths,
- raised concrete hammerhead junction,
- an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing,
- new parking layouts and signage installation.

The works were carried out by Cotter Plant Hire for the Ennis Municipal District office and the works were completed over an accelerated programme of three weeks in order to minimize disruption to the adjacent shop. The project also ensures users and visitors of the Clarecastle Daycare Centre have safe pedestrian access to the village.



Road Maintenance

Ennis MD crews have been busy during February carrying out the annual winter road maintenance work throughout the Ennis area.

This work involved:

- cleaning gullies
- trimming road edges
- litter picking
- sign cleaning
- filling potholes



Storm Éowyn

The clean up after the destruction of Storm Éowyn continued for the first three weeks of February. Crews were busy collecting and mulching branches, removing trees that were uprooted or displaced, reinstating sections of roads that were damaged by the roots of fallen trees and cleaning up works and forestry walks of any fallen trees and overhanging branches.



Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day graphics was projected at O'Connell Square with the O'Connell Monument light in red from our programmable LED lighting installation.



Ennis URBACT eConnecting Project.

Town Engineer Donnagh Murphy and our colleague John Treacy from the Rural Development Directorate travelled to Tori, Estonia in February as part of the Ennis URBACT eConnecting project that we are the Irish partner in. Network partners that attended the event included representatives from Italy, Slovenia, Hungary, Greece, Portugal, Estonia and Montenegro.

One of the main focuses of the project over the coming months will be to develop an integration action plan for Ennis, which will address and identify strategic objectives associated with urban-rural mobility, environmental sustainability, regional development and community led solutions. The plan is due to be completed in Q3 in 2025, an added outcome of which will be that it will assist greatly in applying for future funding streams.



Other Key Strategic works

In addition to the aforementioned, Ennis MD staff continue to work on a number of other key projects such as the Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA), the Town Bus Project and also, on a cross-directorate basis with our colleagues and the various Government Departments in advancing a number of other works throughout the Town and Environs. These include the Ennis Public Realm Project, the LIHAF Access Road project, the THRIVE project at the Cloister and the Tulla Road and Clare Road Active Travel Projects.

We also work closely with our DAC colleagues in developing the ambitious plans outlined in the Ennis 2040 Economic & Spatial Strategy. Another key development in the Town soon to commence works will be the Carpark project on GAA lands between the Garda Station and Cusack Park. Once completed, this will provide approximately 200 car spaces in the town centre location which will be very welcome news indeed.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

Roadworks Programme and Operations

The 2025 Schedule of Municipal District Works (Annual Roadworks Programme) is currently being drafted and will be brought to each Municipal District for consideration in March.

Strategic Transportation

Active Travel	<p>The following is a brief overview of the activities within the Active Travel office:</p> <p>Tulla Road Active Travel Scheme: The detailed design is now complete with the inclusion of Bus Stops, the scheme is gone out for public consultation.</p> <p>Limerick Road (incl. St. Flannans Drive) Cycle Scheme: Following a presentation given to the NTA on the proposed preliminary design for the scheme, the Active Travel Office now await approval to proceed to the public consultation and statutory approval phase.</p> <p>Ardnacrusha to Athlunkard Bridge: Traffic Counts will be conducted in mid-March following the appointment of the successful tenderer. This information is important in determining flows and volumes of both vehicles and pedestrians along the route. This will help the consultant in progressing the Route Option Selection phase of the scheme.</p> <p>Ennis Town Enhancement, Co-Creating: Design work progressing on junction tightening around Ennis.</p> <p>Safe Routes To School program:</p> <p>Holy Family National School Phase 2: The detailed design for this scheme is with the NTA for comment and final approval prior to issuing for tender.</p> <p>Ennis National School: Construction of this scheme is substantially complete.</p>
Public Lighting	<p>Maintenance on faults on our public lighting network through our maintenance contractor Electric Skyline. Due to the impact of Storm Eowyn, ESB Networks imposed a stand down on the availability of all staff for public lighting works and also for maintenance contractors to undertake works on public lighting on any ESB Network Poles. This stand down was concluded in Clare on the 11th February which permitted faults to be tended to on network poles again.</p> <p>For the benefit of Councillors, public lighting faults can be reported via Local Authority Identification (https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/roads-and-transport/road-maintenance-issues/report-a-broken-streetlight).</p> <p>The PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project) continues with the retrofitting of existing luminaires to LED in the Ennis, Shannon and Killaloe MD's. 1228 Luminaires have been retrofitted to date to the 18th February representing 39% of the overall no of units to be retrofitted in Clare as part of the PLEEP Project. Survey Works in West Clare are set to conclude in West Clare in advance of retrofitting works area.</p> <p>Clare County Council are working with the PLEEP Team and Electric Skyline to maximise output of both work crews.</p>

Road Design Office

Project	Progress Update
Bridge Rehabilitation Programme	<p>The 2025 Bridge Rehabilitation grant application has been approved, the funding for this year Totals: €689,500.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AA Screening: Invitation to tender has been sent out to the relevant consultants.
Safety Improvement Works on Regional and Local Roads	<p>Low Cost Safety Schemes in 2025:</p> <p>The 2025 Safety Improvement Works on Regional and Local Roads grant application has been approved, the funding for this year Totals: €640,000. The projects are</p> <p>L2016/L6044 Johnny Mac's Cross L-3300, L-3301& L-3306 Cronan Junction Shannon R352 Bodyke Tuamgraney L-4174 & L4172 Claremount, Clarecastle - Lissane Junction L5192 Ardnaculla Ennistymon L-3110 Phayers Rd, Meelick L-4158 Barefield Village L-1041 East of Bealaclugga R485 North of M18 Junction 9 @ Cullen R-463-125 Ardcloney Bridge, Killaloe, R473 Kiladysart National School</p> <p>Design work has commenced. The section 38 process has begun on the traffic calming on the L 5192 Ardnaculla Ennistymon.</p>
Default Speed Limits	<p>Default Speed Limit Update:</p> <p>The MDs are completing the installation of new 60kph speed limit signs on the local rural road network.</p> <p>More detailed advice regarding the introduction of the 30kph urban default speed limits is awaited from the DoT.</p>

TII Safety Improvement

HD17	<p>N85 Clareabbey Roundabout Engineering consultants have been appointed to develop a preliminary design and bring the scheme through the relevant statutory process for pedestrian and cyclist facilities at this location.</p> <p>N67/L2094 Mullagh Junction A traffic turning count survey has been carried out at this junction.</p> <p>Periodic Special Speed Limits Provisional install date for Periodic special speed limit signs on the N67 at New Quay National School is by the start of March at the latest.</p> <p>Miltown Malbay Road Lahinch - Pedestrian Crossing A Traffic & Pedestrian Count Survey is due to be completed by early March.</p> <p>The Square, Miltown Malbay - Junction Improvement Scheme A Traffic & Pedestrian Count Survey is due to be completed by early March.</p>
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Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Team have completed their Annual Schedule of Safety Inspections, Safety Statement and Risk Assessment Reviews for 2024.

The following top-level H&S objectives approved by the Safety Management Committee in March 2024 have been completed;

- ISO 45001 Accreditation received in the Physical Directorate and Housing Department
- Development of a Work Programme to complete DSE Assessments for staff that are outstanding

- Continued Focus on digitalisation of elements of the Occupational Health & Safety Management System in order to improve efficiency, effectiveness and minimise paperwork through utilisation of the following;
 - ProWorks
 - ArcGis
 - Meta Compliance
 - Online E-learning Modules

The Health & Safety Team will now commence preparation of the Annual Safety Report 2024 in order to develop Top Level H&S Objectives for 2025.

CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Doolin Pier	<p>Having consulted stakeholders and Local Elected members, a Cross-Directorate review was held in 2024 at which current needs were defined and key priorities identified.</p> <p>The focus has now moved to pedestrian routing to the pier area. The MD are progressing construction of footpaths between Fisher Street and Doolin Pier, the programme of works which is due for completion in coming months. This will ensure that pedestrian connectivity is in place along this well-trafficked route in time for the 2025 tourist season. Staff are available to meet and brief the local Elected Member as required.</p>
Ennis Public Realm Regeneration (Project B)	<p>The appointed contractor Shareridge Ltd. is progressing works at number of locations. Civils and construction crews are now deployed throughout the town centre, in accordance with Phasing plan. An extensive area has been opened up at the Cathedral, and already paving is being finished out, in combination with preparations for street trees and planters. A section has been prioritised for paving so as to restore pedestrian routing from Station Road to O'Connell Street ahead of phase completion. This has greatly improved access in the area and eliminated the need for diversions through the Cathedral grounds.</p> <p>The intensive works programme continues along sections of upper O'Connell Street and the contractor has recently mobilised to O'Connell Square. Completion crews have also been dedicated to works on High Street, and for snagging on uncompleted sections of O'Connell Street.</p> <p>In coming weeks, the contractor will be deploying dedicated works crew to the O'Connell Street/Market Street junction, for which works will be largely scheduled on evenings in order to minimise impact on traders. In such areas of narrow street width, activity will be completed Out of Hours to facilitate pedestrian movement through these street sections.</p> <p>Consultation with impacted traders and stakeholders is ongoing, and the contractor has appointed a Public Liaison Officer in this regard, in line with Works Requirements. A focused Stakeholder Consultation event was held on 9th December 2024 to review the updated phasing plan and inform stakeholders as to upcoming works phases. The contractor is also issuing weekly newsletters to inform of upcoming works. (Subscribe to ennispublicrealm@shareridge.ie). The contractor, project team, and Clare County Council Resident Engineering staff are available to help traders and the public with any concerns and to mitigate impacts from the works wherever possible.</p> <p>It continues to be necessary to close streets to allow these works to be completed safely, and the project team and contractor, together with Ennis MD are working hard to coordinate activities to keep traffic impacts to a minimum and ensure that Ennis is kept open for business throughout the remaining months of this project.</p>
Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake's Corner)	<p>The Judicial Review process is ongoing.</p>

Killaloe Bridge, Bypass & R494 Upgrade

The most recent Project Deliverable was the opening of the section of new road between Shantraud Roundabout and Clarisford Junction.



Upcoming Project Milestones include the completion of road pavement wearing course to the R494 (scheduled for W/E 21st Feb.)

Progress has been maintained despite the recent adverse weather events.

Eir progressing the removal of temporary diversions and installing permanent infrastructure.

Killaloe Bypass Section

Kincora: Roundabout and Bypass substantially complete. Accom. Wks. to CPO 101 (Ballyvalley House) off-line but progressing well.



Main Cut to Hill Road: Complete.

Hill Road to Creeveroe Road: Complete.

Creeveroe Road to Shantraud: Complete.

Shantraud Roundabout: Complete.

Shannon Bridge Crossing Link

Shantraud to Clarisford Junction: Complete and open to pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Off-line finishing works in progress.



Clarisford to West Embankment: Finishing Works in progress.

Shannon Bridge

Bridge structure complete.



Finishing works to embankments in progress.



R494 Upgrade

Off-Line Works include: progressing Eir permanent connections to all properties, preparation of shared facility for tarmac paving, tarmac paving to domestic entrances and driveways and landscaping works to verges.

Section 7 (South of Rail Bridge): Practically complete.

Section 7 (North of Rail Bridge): Road Construction practically complete. Off-line finishing works in progress.



Section 6: Road Construction practically complete. Off-line finishing works in progress.

Section 5 (Chainage 1350-1750): Road Construction practically complete. Off-line finishing works in progress.



Section 4 (Chainage 950-1350): Road Construction practically complete. Off-line finishing works in progress.



Section 3 (Chainage 650-950): Road Construction practically complete. Off-line finishing works in progress.



Sections 2: Road Pavement wearing course scheduled to be complete W/E 21st Feb. Off-line finishing works in progress.



Section 1 Roolagh Roundabout: Road Pavement wearing course scheduled to be complete W/E 21st Feb. Off-line finishing works in progress. Pumping Station testing and commissioning on-going.



Kilmastulla Bridge
Practically complete.

Rail Bridge
Practically complete.

RW03

Practically 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/>

Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme	<p>The tender for the Geophysical Survey has been issued to CCC for review.</p> <p>The issue and review of temporary and permanent land acquisition drawings is ongoing.</p> <p>The Planning application for the scheme is currently with An Bord Pleanála.</p>
Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)	<p>A revised Grant Agreement between the Council and Department of Housing / LIHAF Management Committee is being developed which will enable us to move forward with the Infrastructure & Housing delivery in 2025.</p> <p>Contractor responses on specific tender queries are currently being considered and subject to satisfactory clarification, a recommendation to proceed with the appointment will be made to the Department of Housing / LIHAF Management Committee over the coming weeks.</p> <p>Currently over 90% of the land parcels required for the road have been acquired/agreed terms including the parcel of lands where the first approx. 225 housing units will be delivered. There is positive engagement with the remaining landowner, and to that regard we are hopeful of reaching terms by agreement very shortly.</p>
N19 Shannon Airport Access Road	<p>As part of Phase 3 - Design & Environmental Evaluation, recent updates to project drawings are available to view on the project website www.shannonaccess.ie</p> <p>The design team continue to work towards the finalisation of the Statutory Documentation required as part of the proposed planning application for submission to An Bord Pleanála in 2025. To that regard the completed EIAR has now been issued for legal review and observation.</p> <p>Positive 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.</p>
Remediation of sites containing ACM	<p>Work is underway on the preparation of a Planning Application in respect of the remediation of the subject sites.</p> <p>The sites continue to be routinely monitored and maintained as required by Council staff in accordance with approach as agreed with the EPA.</p>
Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme	<p>A walkway user survey was carried out at various locations on the existing Shannon Loop coastal walkways over the weekend of February 7th.</p>
Flood Relief Scheme	<p>The additional topographical survey has been completed. This required Airside access under supervision as well as access to multiple industrial premises in the Shannon Free Zone and Smithstown Industrial estates.</p> <p>CCC are currently reviewing the proposed scope for the 2025 detailed ecological surveys.</p> <p>The over-wintering bird survey for the 2024/25 is ongoing.</p> <p>A number of meetings were held with the N19 Project Team to continue the ongoing sharing of information and resolution of design issues in overlapping scheme areas.</p> <p>A scheme briefing for the elected members is planned for the March meeting of the Shannon Municipal District on 21.03.25.</p>
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 1: Kilrush to Kilkee)	<p>Consultations between the Project Agronomist, Project Liaison Officers and affected landowners are now underway, with plans to meet all impacted parties over the next month. Based on these discussions and the feedback received, the alignment drawings for the Greenway will be further refined.</p> <p>The final 'Options Selection Report' and 'Options Appraisal Report' have been submitted to TII for approval..</p>
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 2: Ennis to Ennistymon)	<p>Work continues on the development of 'Public Consultation 3: Emerging Preferred Route Corridor', subject to peer review and TII approval process. Preparation of the Options Selection Report continues.</p>
West Clare Railway Greenway (Sections 3 & 4: Ennistymon to Miltown Malbay to Moyasta)	<p>The Constraints Study Report is under review in advance of submission to Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). Preparations for 'Public Consultation 2: Route Options is underway.</p>
Other Greenway Proposals	<p>No update this month.</p>

General Design Office

Refurbishment of the Former County Library HQ, Bellevue House

The General Design Office are providing design & project managing services for the refurbishment of the former County Library HQ, Bellevue House, Harmony Row, Ennis. The works will include a complete internal redecoration with the provision of new mechanical & electrical services including the installation of solar panels and new electric heating system. The building is a protected structure and as such a Section 57 application will be submitted to the planning department.

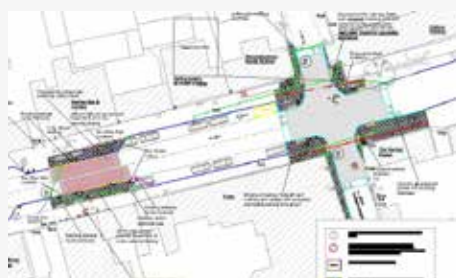


Wood River Walk, Kilrush

Preliminary design investigations ongoing, procurements ongoing.

Mountshannon Mobility Plan

Works to commence in late February include improvements to traffic calming with controlled / uncontrolled crossing points / table-tops, upgrade to sections of paving and designated bus stopping areas. Contractor - MI & S Boland Civil Engineering Ltd.



FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

Training Courses

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service personnel underwent a number of training courses during February, including Bronto Aerial Appliance Operator Initial & Refresher training held in Ennis Fire Station and Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT) held in Hackettstown, Carlow.

Storm Éowyn - Fire Service Response

Storm Éowyn was an exceptionally powerful and record-breaking extratropical cyclone that struck Ireland in the early hours of Friday, January 24, 2025. Named by the UK Met Office on January 21, the storm prompted widespread red weather warnings across the country as it rapidly intensified. It was the strongest and most severe storm to hit Ireland since Hurricane Debbie in 1961, breaking an 80-year-old national wind record. The highest recorded wind gust in Ireland reached 183 km/h (114 mph) at Mace Head, with devastating effects, while a maximum wave height of 10.4 meters (34 feet) was measured near Doolin, County Clare.

By 09:00 on January 24, approximately 815,000 homes, farms, and businesses across Ireland were without power, including around 44,400 customers in County Clare amounting to 74% of

the county's ESB customers leading to widespread water outages and loss of telecommunications. As conditions improved, Clare County Fire & Rescue Crews initially responded to 127 emergency incidents and later when conditions allowed were joined by Clare County Council crews clearing transportation routes of fallen trees and other obstructions. Their huge efforts to restore access, assess storm damage and support recovery would continue for several days and into the following week.

Throughout the following week into early February, the council's Crisis Management Team and the Interagency Local Co Ordination Group for County Clare continued to meet and to co-ordinate the response to the restoration of power, facilities, transportation routes, etc. across the county.

ESB Ardnacrusha Emergency Services Familiarisation Day

On the 21st of February last, representatives from Clare County Fire & Rescue Service had the opportunity to attend an Emergency Services Familiarisation Day held at Ardnacrusha Hydro Electric Station. This was a multi-agency event which focused on giving the emergency services who attend emergencies at Ardnacrusha the chance to meet and familiarise themselves with the Dam and its infrastructure in the event of an emer-

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

agency such as Fire in the Hydro Station, Confined Space Rescue, Water Rescue, Injury on the Embankment, etc.

The groups that were represented on the day were from: Clare County Fire & Rescue Service; Limerick Fire & Rescue Service; An Garda Síochána; HSE; Irish Coast Guard; Irish Army and Clare Civil Defence. Many thanks to Declan Quille, Civil Engineering Manager at ESB Ardnacrusha Generating Station for hosting this very beneficial event.



Fire & Building Control Section			
Main Activities	Jan 2025	Feb 2025 (Up to 20.02.25)	Year to Date 2025
Number of Emergency Calls Attended	233	52	285
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received	6	2	8
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted	12	9	21
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	1	1
Number of Disability Access Certificates Received	6	4	10
Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted	2	14	16
Number of Commencement Notices Received	20	15	35
Number of Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	2	0	2

(Note: In the Feb Monthly Report, the Jan figures related to 1st to 23rd Jan due to timing of report)

CLARE CIVIL DEFENCE

Operational Duties:

- Civil Defence provided medical cover at the following events in February including Run Clare (Barefield); Clare Vs Fermanagh Mens Senior Football (Cusask Park); Clare Vs Leitrim Mens Senior Football (Cusask Park) and Clare Vs Wexford Mens Senior Hurling (Cusask Park).
- Clare Civil Defence Volunteers assisted in the transportation of an elderly patient from Cahercalla Community Hospital to Carrigoran Nursing Home.



Pictured: Volunteers Rebecca Byrnes and Saoirse Passman with the Garda Community Tractor at Cusack Park, Ennis during the Clare Vs Fermanagh Match



Pictured: Volunteers and members of PROBUS at the CD Headquarters

Members Training & Professional Development

- Members participated in weekly training set out by Civil Defence Instructors.
- Recruit Basic Training (RBT) continues each Monday evening.

ning. The class are currently completing a Cardiac First Responder Course.

- Year 2 students are currently participating in Auxiliary Fire Service Training (AFS). Training to be completed by the end of February.
- The Civil Defence Officer and Assistant Civil Defence Officer attend Continuous Personal Development (CPD) training in Tullamore. The training was organised by the Civil Defence Branch of the Department of Justice.

Health & Safety

Clare Civil Defence have established a H&S Team made up of volunteers. The main objectives of the team are to review the current risk assessments and inspection forms and to assist in the continued ISO 45001 accreditation of the Safety Management System. They will carry out inspections during training and operational duties. The team will meet monthly and bring forward any suggestions to the Civil Defence Officer and Assistant Civil Defence Officer.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Awareness

An Taisce Green Schools

Clare County Council supports and encourages active participation in the An Taisce operated Green Schools programme. Our Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) carries out Green School assessments and makes recommendations to An Taisce on the awarding of a Green Flag. To date eight green school assessment visits have been undertaken.

Community Engagement

Our Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) presented at the Tidy Towns Networking Event at the Civic Room in the Buttermarket Building on the 12th February 2025. Our EAO presented on what a circular economy means as well upcoming circularity initiatives being delivered through the Environment Section.

Awareness Campaigns

The following were promoted on social media (@GreenerClare / @ClareCoCo) and/or print media during February 2025.

- Dog owner responsibility
- Sustainable fashion
- Clean Air
- Bin It or Bring it Home

Gardening

Imbolg (St. Brigid's Day) has traditionally been heralded as the start of Spring, and with milder temperatures and an increase in daylight hours, the Gardening Team have been busy preparing early season bedding plants.

Hanging baskets have been prepared in advance of hanging before St. Patrick's Day festivities, while spring flowering bulbs have been planted to bring a colourful burst at locations around Áras Contae an Chláir.



While focus now shifts to a new growing season, in early February the team undertook the shredding of 1,000 Christmas trees which had been dropped off by householders to the Gardening Depot during January. This wood chip will be used by Gardening in the coming months as a natural weed suppressant and soil improver, as the material breaks down and releases nutrients into the soil.



The Gardening Team also continue to engage with and assist community and tidy town groups. During February, the team engaged with Kilrush Tidy Town to advise and assist in the preparation of spring bedding plants, that the tidy town group will plant at various locations around Kilrush Town in April and May.

Water Enforcement and Laboratory Monitoring Scientific Services

The table below summarises the work of the scientific teams to date in 2025:

Water Monitoring & Enforcement Scientific Team	February 2025	Total to date 2025
Bathing Water Monitoring	Monitoring season begins in mid-May	0
Domestic Wastewater		
Treatment Plant Inspections (NIP Plan)	10	10
Public queries processed regarding DWWTS grants	2	4
Monitoring Inspections of Section 4 licenced premises	26	26
Planning applications (Agriculture)	2	5
Planning applications (Domestic)	23	56
Planning applications (Large Developments)	3	5
Planning applications (Forestry)	0	0
Pollution complaints received	4	9
Private Commercial Drinking Water Supplies	20	20
Private/Public Group Water Scheme supplies	40	40
Rivers	10	14
Farm Inspections (NAIP) (Routine Planned & Unplanned)	10	11

Annual Drinking Water Returns - Public and Private GWS and Commercial Private Supplies

In accordance with Section 58 of the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992, Clare County Council are required to submit the 2024 annual drinking water monitoring returns for private drinking water supplies. All 2024 drinking water monitoring data was uploaded and submitted through the Environmental Data Exchange Network Monitoring Data System (EDEN-MDS) by the deadline of 28th February 2025. Drinking water supply details must also be updated in EDEN for the 2024 reporting period by 28th February 2024. We have complied with all statutory obligations in this regard.

Agriculture Inspection Programme:

All farms inspected during 2024 have been listed in required format for submission to the EPA by the annual February deadline.

Local Authorities Waters Programme

Clare County Council hosted the quarterly South Western Regional Water & Environment Management Committee meeting in February. This forum provides an opportunity for member Local Authorities to discuss the requirements of the Water Action Plan and Local Authority Strategic workforce planning requirements. The role of LAWPRO and Local Authorities are set out to promote the improvement mechanisms for the receiving envi-

ronments. The meetings are chaired by Clare County Councils Chief Executive.

Waste Enforcement

Environmental Monitoring (Illegal Dumping/Litter)

The Waste Enforcement Team continued to respond to waste and litter related complaints in February. A total of 87 complaints relating to litter (6) and waste (81) were received in February. All of these are currently being investigated, followed up and appropriate enforcement action will be taken.

Multi-Agency Meeting

The Q1 2025 meeting of the Regional Multi-Agency Forum took place in Cork on February 13th. In attendance were members of An Garda Síochána, Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authority (WERLA), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Revenue and other local authorities. Multi-agency checkpoints are planned for Q1, where the Gardai will lead, and members of the Waste Enforcement team will inspect vehicles for relevant waste authorisations.

Fines issued under the Litter Pollution Act 1997, As Amended

A total of 7 litter fines were issued in February, under the Litter Pollution Act, 1997. Appropriate time will be provided for payment, thereafter reminder letters are issued.

Staff Training

Staff from the Waste Enforcement team attended training on Environmental Inspection Skills on 21st and 22nd of February, to assist staff when carrying out Environmental Inspections.

Enforcement Notices and Warning Letters

Three notices were issued in February under Section 14 of the Waste Management Act 1996, as Amended. These are being monitored for compliance.

Waste Enforcement Complaints Investigation

The tables below summarise the work of the Waste Enforcement team in January 2025, in response to complaints:

Waste Enforcement Complaints	February 2025
Litter	6
Dog Fouling	1
Waste Presentation	2
Dumping	81
Waste complaints (total)	90

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Waste management

Below is a table indicating waste materials collected at all our Civic Amenity Sites for January, which is the most recent dataset available.

Civic Amenity Site Waste Streams (KG)	
Item	January 2025 (latest Data)
Bulky items	43,040
Cardboard	28,960
Dry Recyclable	612
Paper	16,360
Green Waste	21,740
Mattresses	2,700
Municipal Waste	125,490
Plastic Packaging	1,280
Timber	110,880

Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI)

The Environment Section have completed our Annual RMCEI return for 2024 to the Environmental Protection Agency. This provides a summary of all resources, inspections, monitoring and sampling and enforcement actions undertaken by the Council and it is required to be submitted by the end of February each year. We have also submitted our 2025 Plan detailing the ex-

pected number of inspections to be carried out under each of the following thematic areas: Air, Noise, Waste, Water.

Earthcheck Audit

The Environment team hosted the Earthcheck Auditor on the 19th and 20th February, where we presented on the wide range of services provided by the team across all thematic areas. The presentation was given in our Laboratory where we provided insight to the operations undertaken and how they enhance the local environment and provide a sustainable future for residents and visitors alike. We then gave the Auditor a tour of our Central Waste Management Facility in Inagh and showcased our recently developed Integrated Constructed Wetlands, which enhances the local biodiversity.



CLIMATE ACTION

Community

The Climate Team at Clare County Council partnered with Ennis Tidy Towns to host a Tidy Towns Networking event on February 12th in the Civic Room of the Buttermarket Building. Tidy Towns Groups from across the county attended to network and build capacity. Councillor Mary Howard opened the evening with a welcoming message, addressing feedback from the earlier workshop held in December 2024.

An attendance of over 40 volunteers and community representatives heard presentations from Clare County Councils Climate Action Co Ordinator in relation to opportunities around Tree Week, an over 60's Climate Awareness course and also how community groups can align their work with the UN's SDG's to ensure quality in their submissions for funding applications.

Clare County Councils Environmental Awareness officer presented on the circular economy and opportunities available to Tidy Towns committees in this space whilst our Rural and Community Development officer offered information to the gathering on the role and guidance that they can offer to Community Groups.

The evening also offered an opportunity for Tim Humphries from Tulla Tidy Towns to details aspects of Tulla Tidy Towns work in the area.



Tree Week: To celebrate National Tree Week 2025 the Tree Council of Ireland and Coillte, with the support from the Climate section and Environment sections of Clare County Council, are making saplings available, for free, to voluntary community groups across the county. Any interested group must undertake to plant saplings in a suitable public location, in their own community. Details are available as per the QR code.



Energy

In preparation for the upcoming NSAI audit the energy management met on February 13th.

This group is tasked with monitoring energy usage, identifying opportunities to lower emissions and increase energy efficiency across the organisation.

A review of 2024 was presented showing a reduction in overall energy consumption of 38% since the 2009 baseline. This indicates that Clare County Council remains 5% below the glidepath to the target of 50% by 2030.

The annual energy review to the Management Team also took place on 17th February. Existing energy performance was discussed along with potential future opportunities in relation to Solar PV and LED retrofitting. Management Team via the renewed signing of our Energy Policy committed to supporting the delivery of our targets over the next decade.

Climate Action Plan Implementation:

There are a number of reporting mechanisms required to be actioned in relation to reporting on Climate Action within Clare County Council. In February, the Climate Action Team reported to the LGMA on a number of indicators relating to the progress of Year one of the Climate Action Plan. As part of our reporting principles outlined in the Climate Action Plan, the Climate Action Team are preparing an Annual Report on Climate Action for the Elected members. This document will give detail on numerous actions that have been progressed since the adoption of the plan.

On a National level, the Climate team are engaged in work-groups around the Local Government Climate Action Charter and around a review of KPIs for Climate Action.



Community Climate Action Programme Update:

23 Community Groups/Clubs around Co Clare are progressing implementation of Phase 1 of the Community Climate Action Programme with the support of the Community Climate Action Officer.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Group:	Project Details:	Current Progress:
BODYKE TIDY TOWNS	Water Refill Station, Pollinator Friendly Planting.	Planning stage of project
BRIDGE UNITED AFC	Solar PV, Cycle Parking, Recycling Station.	Planning stage of project
CARRIGAHOLT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION LTD	Flood Gate, Native Trees, Bird Nesting Boxes, Wildlife Cameras, Bee & Bug Hotels, Educational Signage, Accessible Walkway Installation, Seating	Floodgate has been ordered, trees have been purchased and planting will commence shortly
CLARECASTLE COMMUNITY GARDEN	Community Garden and Polytunnel.	Planning stage of project
CLOONEY SPANCILHILL CDG	Community Planting, rainwater harvesting, Bike Parking.	Site clearance works are complete. Planting of native trees has commenced.
COLLEGE GREEN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION	Native Planting in Housing Estate.	Community planting day to plant native woodland has taken place.
COROFIN TIDY TOWNS	Water Refill Station, Water Bottles.	Water refill station has been purchased. Awaiting installation. Reusable water bottle have been purchased.
CRATLOE COMMUNITY COUNCIL	Planting, Rainwater Harvesting, Bike Repair Station.	Planning stage of project
DOONBEG TIDY TOWNS	Electric Bike, Solar Outdoor Light, Concrete Base for Bike Shed.	Solar Light installed in Fair green sensory garden. Concrete base and repurposed bike shed has been installed.
ENNIS MENS SHED	Solar PV, Polytunnel, Rainwater Harvesting, Biodiversity Garden, Solar Water Feature.	Solar PV installation is complete on workshop.
ENNIS TIDY TOWNS	E-Cargo Bike, Bike Parking, Bike Locker, Water Refill Station	E-Cargo bike has been purchased and delivered to Ennis Tidy Towns.
INAGH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION	2 Solar PV Projects, Reusable Cups, Rainwater Harvesting, LED Lights, Water Refill Stations, Bike Shelters, Fruit, Nut Trees & Native Hedgerows.	One solar installation complete
INCH TIDY VILLAGE	Rainwater Harvester for Community Garden.	Planning stage of project
LISDOONVARNA FÁILTE CLG	Native Town Park Planting and Works	Planting works have been complete at the twin wells.
MIKE MCTIGUE COMMUNITY CENTRE	New Windows, Attic Insulation.	Replacement of existing windows with triple glazed units complete.
OBAIR	Solar Panels for Meals on Wheels Delivery Vans.	Planning stage of project
RUAN TIDY TOWNS	2 Raised beds, Fruit trees, Vegetables, Pollinator Friendly Area, Water Station. Hedgerow.	Installation of raised bed complete.
SCARIFF RUGBY CLUB	Replacement of LED lights for pitch.	LED Lighting retrofit works have been complete at Scariff Rugby Club.
SHANNON TIDY TOWNS	Pollinator Corridor, Raised beds planting.	Works have commenced. Raised beds have been prepared for planting.
SMITH O'BRIENS GAA & CAMOGIE CLUB	Solar PV, Water refill station, Planting, Bike Parking.	Large solar PV installation complete in Smith O'Brien's GAA Club.
ST. JOSEPHS GAA MILTOWN MALBAY	Solar PV, Rainwater Harvesting, Bike Parking, 3x Composters	Rainwater harvesting system installation has commenced.
WATERWORLD KILKEE	Ground Mounted Solar PV and associated works.	Planning stage of project
WEST COAST SURF CLUB	Water stations (Lahinch & Spanish Point, 100 Water Bottles.	Planning stage of project

WATER

Rural Water Programme

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

The Department has decided to take a phased approach to approval of funding with a focus on water quality issues for the first phase, namely Measures A1, A2, A3, A6 and A7. Funding applications for the Taken in Charge of Public Group Water Schemes under Measure A6 are not part of this first phase of funding. In addition, the Expert Panel is continuing its work in its evaluation of applications received under Measure A4, A5 and A9. We have informed all successful Group Water Schemes.

The Clare Rural Water Programme Office held an update meeting in relation to the Multi-annual Rural Water Programme 2024-2026 with successful schemes. The purpose of this meeting was to update the schemes recommended for funding under Measure A6 Taking-in-charge of group water schemes and assist in the development of a pathway to successful project delivery.

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 works within the last 12 months are ongoing.

The Clare Rural Water Office has submitted all additional information as requested by the Department by the closing date of the 12th of February 2025 in relation to funding bids submitted on behalf of GWS under the MARWP 2024 – 2026. A meeting of the County Rural Water Monitoring Committee took place on the 17th of February as detailed in the Water Services Act 2007 Part 6. The meeting was attended by elected members, the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association, Irish Farmers Association, Clare Federation of GWS, National Federation of GWS and the Clare Rural Water Programme Office Staff.

SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Visit to St Gabriels Respite Centre

St. Gabriel's Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity founded in 1961. They provide a range of essential services and education to children with disabilities and their families in the Mid-West. Two thousand children with varying levels of disability attend their services, which include St. Gabriel's School, Hydro pool, Respite House, Orthotics Department and two Clinical Disability Network Teams.

Treasa McAuliffe, CEO of St Gabriels Respite Centre, welcomed Shannon Municipal District staff to their respite facility. Their facility caters for children with complex medical needs, and it is currently the only facility of its kind outside of Dublin. It currently serves the Mid-Western Health Board's CH03 area which includes North Tipperary, Limerick and Clare.

We look forward to working in partnership with St Gabriels to facilitate an extension of their service across our Municipal District.



Storm Éowyn Response

Shannon Municipal District maintenance crews worked with Shannon Fire Service, ESB Networks, EIR and Uisce Eireann to remove fallen and damaged trees from the public roads in the Municipal District. This work was completed within two days after Storm Eowyn. However, the amount of damaged and fallen trees that required to be felled and cleared in the public area was significant. Additional resources from the private sector were utilised. This work has continued and should be completed by the end of February.



Two satellite community hubs were setup in the Shannon MD for local level response to the needs of people who have been significantly impacted by Storm Éowyn. The hubs provided people with basic needs such as water, phone charging facilities, broadband, showers and information on how to source a hot meal or other requirements across the district.

Works Underway

- Ongoing road maintenance throughout the Municipal District.
- Responding to complaints from the public, community groups and local representatives.
- Drainage works.
- Footpath capital works in Shannon and Meelick.
- Responding to issues resulting from the substantial Storm Eowyn.
- Ongoing maintenance works continued to storm water Pump House 3 in Drumgeely, Shannon.
- Installation of new speed regulatory road signs throughout the Municipal District.
- Installation of speed reduction and pedestrian crossing completed in Shannon and Sixmilebridge.

Footpath Refurbishment- footpath upgrades at the following locations:

- Elton Court Meelick - 220m²
- Westbury - Willow Gove - 60m²
- Westbury - Newark Grove - 130m²

Construction of a new pedestrian crossing and associated works at Inis Orga, Sixmilebridge.



Construction of a new pedestrian crossing and associated works at L3147, Sixmilebridge.



Construction of a new pedestrian crossing and associated works at Hurler Cross, Shannon.



Construction of a new pedestrian crossing and associated works at Ballycasey Avenue, Shannon.



Construction of a new pedestrian crossing and associated works at Sli Lara, Shannon.



Construction of a new pedestrian crossing and associated works at Bealach Bui, Shannon.



Cleaning of storm drains at Shannon Industrial Estate.



Line marking at Aidan Park, Shannon.



New disabled parking bay beside Newmarket on Fergus Church.

