

**Minutes of the December Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held in the  
Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on  
Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 at 3:45 p.m.**

**Present:**

Councillors J. Breen, J. Flynn, P. Daly, A. Norton, M. Howard, P. Murphy, C. Colleran Molloy, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, M. Begley, T. O'Brien, P. Burke, A. O'Callaghan, C. Crowe, J. Crowe, G. Flynn, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, M. McKee, C. Curtin, R. Nagle, B. Slattery, I. Lynch, M. Hillery, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating.

- Mr. Tom Coughlan, Chief Executive.
- Mr. Michael McNamara, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Siobhan Garvey, Staff Officer.
- Mr. Ger Dollard, Director of Service.
- Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Service.
- Mr. Niall Barrett, Head of Finance.
- Mr. Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer.
- Mr. Adrian Kelly, Chief Fire Officer.
- Ms. Helen Walsh, County Librarian.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. James Breen presided.

At the outset the Cathaoirleach and elected members passed a vote of sympathy to Cllr. J. Flynn on the passing of his sister law.

The following proposal was submitted to the meeting and read out by the Meetings Administrator:

“We the undersigned request the suspension of standing order to discuss the flooding in the Springfield, Clonlara area”

Signed by Cllr. M. Begley and Cllr. T. O'Brien.

As there was no objection to this proposal the Cathaoirleach agreed that standing orders would be suspended for a period of 20 minutes in order to discuss the flooding situation.

Cllrs. M. Begley, T. O'Brien and several other members spoke about the affects the recent heavy rain and flooding had in various locations throughout the county in particular in Clonlara and Ennis (St. Flannan's College area), all complimented the Council employees, members of the Clare Fire Service, the Armed Forces and Civil Defence who all worked tirelessly in recent days to assist with those affected by the floods. Sympathy was expressed to the homeowners in South East Clare whose homes could not be saved from flooding despite best efforts.

The Chief Fire Officer provided a presentation of the flooding which included photographs taken in the Springfield, Clonlara area which highlighted the situation that faced residents and the emergency services in the last serious flooding of 2009 and again during the most recent floods.

A report signed by the Chief Executive was distributed to all members at the meeting which provided an overview and timeline of events in relation to the flooding about the county, this overview included actions undertaken by the Council to alleviate the issues.

The Chief Executive then addressed the meeting and reported that it is estimated that the cost of damage as a result of the recent flooding is in the region of €900,000 and that an application for funding will be submitted to the Department and O.P.W. for these costs. He went through the main issues in the report circulated. The Chief Executive paid tribute to the staff of the Council along with all emergency services personnel who had assisted in flood relief works in recent weeks in particular while working long hours over the previous two weekends. He reported that over 300 calls were received by the Emergency Centre which was set up in the Council Headquarters on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> December and that over 30 updates were issued to be public and media that day advising of road conditions and flooding updates etc. The following proposal signed by Cllrs. M. Begley, J. Cooney, T. O'Brien, A. O'Callaghan, P. Hayes and P. Burke was read out by the Meetings Administrator and agreed by all members present.

“That this Council calls on the Clare Oireachtas Members to put in place an Integrated Agency Committee to produce a report and recommendations to solve the flooding problem in Springfield, Clonlara and specifically dealing with this area as we do not want it lumped into any national report and that funding be in place to carry out the necessary works.”

As Item No. 28 on the agenda related to this topic is was agreed that this motion would be moved as part of this discussion.

**Item 28: Arterial Drainage Programme.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Hayes

Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“I am asking that this Council immediately seek funding for an arterial drainage programme to alleviate the constant flooding problems in many areas of this County. The valuable investment in our infrastructure over the years is now being seriously damaged and needs immediate attention.”

**Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer replied as follows:**

“Normally the Council allocates a small proportion of the “Own Resources” component of its roads funding towards arterial drainage. In 2015 the total allocation in this regard is €54,000 – of which €24,000 was ring-fenced for some significant repairs to the barrage on the River Fergus south of Ennis. This leaves only €30,000 to facilitate the various drainage districts throughout the county. This is insignificant and because of the fact that road maintenance funding has become totally inadequate and unsustainable over the past no. of years, a proportion of the designated arterial drainage fund is sometimes necessarily diverted to more general road drainage works. I concur fully with the objective of the notice of motion and would agree that the

O.P.W. should be requested to put a more robust funding structure in place to deal with drainage districts generally.”

The Cathaoirleach advised the meeting that a request had been submitted by the Clare Champion and Clare People to take a photo of the public seated in the public gallery. This request was granted to the photographers with no objection by any members.

**Item 1: Minutes of Council Meetings.**

a. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. R. Nagle agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the November Meeting of Clare County Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 be adopted and signed.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Budget 2016 Meeting of Clare County Council held on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 be adopted and signed.”

At this point in the meeting correspondence from Ennis Chamber of Commerce was distributed to each member at the meeting and Cllr. J. Flynn asked if the contents of this correspondence could be given consideration.

Cllrs. J. Flynn, P.J. Kelly and A. Norton indicated they wished to comment on the Budget Meeting.

The Cathaoirleach referred to Standing Orders as they apply to confirmation of the minutes.

A number of people in the public gallery vocally questioned the Cathaoirleach’s comments. At this stage, the Cathaoirleach adjourned the meeting in view of the interruptions from the public gallery.

When the meeting resumed after ten minutes adjournment, the Cathaoirleach pointed out that the people in the gallery are not allowed to contribute to the meeting. He also stated he was accepting the letter from the Ennis Chamber for consideration by the Chief Executive.

c. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Burke  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O’Brien agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Clare County Council held on 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 be adopted and signed.”

Cllr. J. Flynn submitted a proposal to the meeting to amend the minutes of this meeting as follows;

“Cllr. J. Flynn advised the meeting that he would like to be excluded “and to withdraw” from any discussions dealing with volume 3 of the draft plan where it deals with the settlement of Barefield and the Wind Energy Strategy due to personal

interests in those specific areas. There was no discussion on these areas and Cllr. J. Flynn did not have to withdraw.”

It was agreed by all present that these minutes would be amended to include the amendment as outlined above.

**Item 2: Minutes of Municipal District Meetings.**

a. Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Shannon Municipal District Meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 be noted.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Slattery agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 be noted.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Hayes  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O’Brien agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2015 be noted.”

d. Ar moladh Cllr. M. Hillery  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Breen agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 be noted.”

e. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Burke  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 be noted.”

f. Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P.J. Ryan agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Shannon Municipal District Meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 be noted.”

g. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Daly  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 be noted.”

h. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Murphy  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 be noted.”

**Item 3: Minutes of S.P.C. Meetings.**

a. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Hayes  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Chambers agus glacadh leis

“That the minutes of the Cultural Services & Arts S.P.C. meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2015 be noted”.

b. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Hayes  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Chambers agus glacadh leis

“That the minutes of the Cultural Services & Arts S.P.C. meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2015 be noted”.

c. Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Slattery agus glacadh leis

“That the minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise S.P.C. meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 be noted”.

d. Ar moladh Cllr. J. Cooney  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Slattery agus glacadh leis

“That the minutes of the Environment & Transportation S.P.C. meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 be noted”.

e. Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. O’Callaghan agus glacadh leis

“That the minutes of the Economic Development & Enterprise S.P.C. meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 be noted”.

**Item 4: Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meeting.**

The members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2015 as presented.

**Item 5: Monthly Management Report.**

The monthly management report attached to the agenda included key activities in the principal service areas and was noted by the members.

Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer responded to a number of queries raised in connection with progress on Storm Damage works in the county and he advised the meeting that in relation to slippage at Rineen, Lahinch, the consultant's report has now been forwarded to Transport Infrastructure Ireland and it is hoped that any works approved can be undertaken before the tourist season. With regards to proposed strengthening works at Clohanhinchy, the feasibility study is now with the O.P.W. for their approval and the Council has been informed that the O.P.W. are looking at each proposal submitted to them on a case by case and stage by stage basis. Proposed works at Cragg Beach which had been raised by Cllr. B. Slattery has been included under one of the Lahinch and Liscannor schemes. The members will be briefed further as progress is made with regard to this.

**Item 6: Report in accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2013 for the proposed relocating and widening of main entrance at Vandeleur Estate, Kilrush, Co. Clare.**

Report dated 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 from Michael McNamara, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services was circulated with the agenda together with report from Brian McCarthy, A/Senior Planner dated 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2015.

The report states that the proposed development comprises the relocation and widening of the main entrance at the Vandeleur Estate, Kilrush. This will involve the relocating of the existing vehicular and pedestrian gates 6 metres further back from the road. Also the vehicular entrance will be widened from 3.42 metres to 4.5 metres.

Details of the submissions received are outlined in the attached report.

The recommendation of the Planning Department is that the development as proposed would proceed subject to the conditions outlined in the report of the Senior Planner.

Ar moladh Cllr. I. Lynch  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Chambers agus glacadh leis

“That pursuant to Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2010, Clare County Council proceed with the proposed works at Vandeleur Estate, Kilrush, Co. Clare.”

**Item 7: Consider financial contribution to Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann (Ennis) and Marketing Initiatives in conjunction with Shannon International Airport.**

Report dated 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 from Gerard Dollard, Director of Services was circulated with the agenda. The report states that as part of the consideration of budget 2016, the Members approved the sum of €50,000 towards “operational costs incurred by Clare County Council in relation to the Fleadh 2016”. Staging Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Ennis from the 14<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> August 2016 represents a major event for the town and requires significant additional work by the Council on street cleaning, waste management, traffic management and general maintenance of infrastructure. The funding already approved by the Elected Members is towards defraying these costs.

The Council must also give consideration to its financial contribution to Comhaltas (Abbey Branch, Ennis) towards the overall costs in staging the event which are estimated to be in excess of €1m.

The Council has also been engaging with Shannon International Airport in relation to cooperative marketing activities to encourage new services and maximise the potential of existing services to the Airport. €1m is being made available to Tourism Ireland in 2016 for a cooperative marketing initiative with a primary focus of such marketing initiatives being the Wild Atlantic Way. It is expected that Local Authorities and tourism interests in the region will also add to the funding for routes serving Shannon International Airport.

It is proposed therefore to allocate funding as follows:-

- €75,000 towards Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann (Ennis) as a contribution to Comhaltas towards the overall costs of staging the event.
- €75,000 to be provided to fund cooperative marketing activity in conjunction with Shannon International Airport.

The report stated that the above does not represent a new financial allocation but rather utilisation of portions of existing budgets to provide the necessary funding.

The members unanimously approved these proposals on the proposal of Cllr. P. Hayes and seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

**Item 8: Draft Litter Management Plan 2015-2018.**

Report dated 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 from Anne Haugh, Director of Services was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the Litter Management Plan sets out objectives for the prevention and eradication of litter throughout County Clare and outlined the process undertaken in the preparation of the Plan.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Hillery agus glacadh leis

“Pursuant to Section 10(2) of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997, Clare County Council hereby adopts the Litter Management Plan 2015-2018.”

It was agreed that Item 10 would be taken together with this item.

**Item 10: Regional Waste Management Plan.**

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard

Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“I request that domestic rubbish compactors be provided in each of the large urban centres of the County - Ennis, Shannon, Kilrush, Ennistymon and Killaloe, and that Clare County Council request that "The Regional Waste Management Plan" be amended to provide for this.”

**Anne Haugh, Director of Services replied as follows:**

“Civic Amenity Sites currently exist at Ennis & Shannon, both of which are operated under a Certification of Registration license issued from the E.P.A. An application to the E.P.A. to revise the existing license is currently being prepared by the Environmental Section to include for a Pay To Use (P.T.U.) type system that will accept domestic waste at the Ennis Civic Amenity Site. The intention is for this to operate on a trial basis for 2016. However the outcome of the application is not a foregone conclusion due to the following items;

- The new application will be assessed under the new Waste Management (Facility Permit and Registration) Regulations 2008 as amended. Compliance conditions associated with the 2008 Regulations as amended tend to be far more onerous than the older 1998 Regulations, which the site is currently licensed under. It is accepted that the inclusion of this unit at Ennis C.A.S. will attract significant extra costs and require additional resourcing.
- Additional compliance will now be required under the European Union (Household Food Waste and Bio-waste) Regulations 2013. For instance a food waste recycling service must also be provided if domestic waste is to be accepted. This may attract issues such as vermin control and odour issues, both of which will have to be managed closely if the P.T.U. unit is to be a success.
- Finally the recently introduced Amendments to the Waste Management (Facility Permit and Registration) Regulations 2015 will mean that any facility accepting domestic waste must operate on a pay-by-weight basis. A minimum charge per kilo will be set by the Department, proof of which must be provided to demonstrate a householder is managing their waste by using this service. This will also require a customer charter to be put in place. This will require weighing systems to be incorporated as part of the P.T.U. system, details of which are not finalized

The application for a P.T.U. system for Ennis is therefore very much a trial operation with an unknown outcome. Give the amount of uncertainties involved, it would not seem prudent to make a similar application for the Shannon Civic Amenity Site at this time.

It should be noted that Clare County Council currently provides domestic waste facilities at the Central Waste Management Facility, Scarriff and Lisdeen. It is also a



stated policy of the Regional Waste Management Plan that the preferred method for household waste management is via a source segregated kerbside collection by an authorised waste collector.

Consideration for the provision of compactors to receive domestic waste at Kilrush, Ennistymon and Killaloe is a much larger step compared to the Ennis & Shannon sites which are contained within manned and controlled facilities. Were such a consideration given to the Kilrush, Ennistymon and Killaloe sites, new applications to the E.P.A. in respect of Certificates of Registration would need to be applied for. In addition concerns in relation to availability of power supply (Compactors require 3 phase current to operate), security issues and CCTV measures are also required. These will attract significant additional costs in terms of licensing application costs, operational and maintenance costs.

Any new facilities will also require the provision of food waste and recyclables and a method of recording usage as part of a customer charter in accordance with the new Waste Management (Facility Permit and Registration) Regulations 2015

On the basis of the points raised above, we have serious concerns in relation to the provision of domestic waste compactors at the Kilrush, Ennistymon and Killaloe. However the application for a P.T.U. type unit to receive domestic waste at Ennis is currently ongoing and we would be confident we can secure the relevant licensing necessary to operate such a unit.”

**Item 9: Presentation by John Maloney, Cycle Association of Clare at 3:00 p.m. as agreed at the adjourned September meeting.**

Following a proposal submitted by Cllr. Paul Murphy at the adjourned September meeting John Maloney, Noel Cusack and Conor Chandler from the Cycle Association of Clare provided a presentation to the meeting on safety and awareness of road users and cyclists on Clare roads. As part of their presentation they highlighted the need for a safer environment for both cyclists and motorists and welcomed reduced speed limits on rural roads in the county and further maintenance of cycle routes in particular the cycle route from Shannon to Ennis. The Cathaoirleach and members commended the group on their presentation and for their efforts in making the roads safer for all users and increasing the profile of the county as a destination for visitors to come to cycle.

**Item 12: Rates.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Kelly  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Hillery agus glacadh leis

“That the Section 48 levy scheme be amended to allow for zero rate on commercial developments within villages which are suffering a population decline.”

**Gerard Dollard, Director of Services replied as follows:**

“Clare County Council, in common with other local authorities throughout the state, is required to source considerable amounts of money annually to fund a variety of public infrastructure projects. The Development Contribution Scheme enables the Council to provide funding for infrastructure and amenities such as libraries, open spaces and playgrounds.

The existing Clare County Council Development Contribution Scheme - amended in 2013 to reflect the changes in economic circumstances and encourage economic development - remains in force until 2017. It is anticipated that during 2016 a new scheme will be prepared with a view to it being adopted in early 2017. Whilst the Planning Authority supports and concurs with the overall objective as expressed in the Notice of Motion of maximising the opportunities and creating conditions to encourage economic development in our villages, it is respectfully considered that rather than commence a process, at this stage, of amending the existing scheme, it may be preferable to wait until a new scheme is adopted in early 2017.

The timing of the new scheme would also be relevant as it may be able to take on board emerging data from the April 2016 census, required to assess population trends in our settlements. Moreover the new scheme would also be framed in the context of the new Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023, which seeks to promote and enhance economic development opportunities in our towns and villages.

Notwithstanding the above, the existing scheme provides for a rate of only € per m<sup>2</sup> for new-build commercial development in our villages - substantially more competitive than adjoining authorities and one of the lowest in Ireland. Moreover, there are a number of reductions and indeed exemptions which are relevant to encouraging commercial developments in our villages. These include (but are not limited to), a 33% reduction for commercial developments in village and town centres; developments involving the restoration of derelict properties; and new business developments which are grant-aided or supported by I.D.A./Enterprise Ireland with job creation potential.”

In response to a number of queries raised, Ger Dollard, Director of Service advised the meeting that it is proposed that the Development Contribution Scheme will be reviewed in 2016 and members will be involved in this process.

**Item 13: Rates.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Curtin

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. P.J. Kelly agus I. Lynch agus glacadh leis

“That the Chief Executive inform the Council of the commercial rate and non-domestic water rate receipts for each of the Municipal Districts in 2014 and 2015 (to date) and the ensuing adjustment for expenditure in each district during the same period to cover the particular Service Delivery Plans to adequately address the specific needs of each district.”

**Niall Barrett, Head of Finance replied as follows:**

“The council’s rates database is not based on a municipal district basis. In particular some valuations are provided by the Valuation Office on a county wide basis and are not amenable to subdivision and also there are customers with multiple properties in different parts of the county. However, an estimate of the amounts invoiced by municipal district for the periods requested has been made and this has been set out below:

<b>Municipal District</b>	<b>2,014</b>	<b>2,015</b>
	<b>€'000</b>	<b>€'000</b>
Ennis	6,588	6,627
Global	3,382	3,382
Killaloe	1,480	1,480
Shannon	15,994	15,859
West Clare	15,036	15,004

Since January 2014 the council is not the beneficial recipient of non domestic water charges. These receipts belong to Irish Water. The councils work in this area is solely as the agent of Irish Water and so the council does not have receipts for non domestic water charges in the period indicated.

The Schedule of Municipal District Works sets out the proposed works of maintenance and repair to be carried out in each municipal district for the financial year in line with the annual budget for the overall council. The annual budget of the council reflects the overall income levels projected for the council, including rates, which are available to fund the expenditure approved by the overall council.”

**Item 14: Gateway Workers.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Cooney  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O’Brien agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council use the gateway workers in emergency cases to open outlet and clean local and minor roads in the interest of road safety.”

**Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer replied as follows:**

“Gateway workers have already been contributing in support of the Council’s emergency response since the current flooding events commenced on December 4<sup>th</sup> last – most notably in the preparation of sandbags for distribution to vulnerable householders, businesses etc. For gateway workers to be in a position to carry out works of the type suggested in the notice of motion, training is required and a risk assessment in relation to the situation would preclude use of gateway workers in this way. By and large training of the type required to facilitate this work has not been provided to gateway workers arising from an agreement with outdoor staff unions which precludes crossover into core work areas. In any case, works such as opening of outlets would not be regarded as emergency work. Where roads become flooded as a result of flooding events such as those which have been the Council’s focus since early December, such situations for the most part arise as a result of water table elevations or the surcharging of rivers and streams – in such circumstances there is little that can be done to alleviate the problem other than close or curtail the use of the road in question and wait until flood levels have subsided.”

In response to a number of queries raised, the Chief Executive reminded members that additional staff are welcome but if approved by the Department it is the responsibility of the Council to find the funding to pay them and this funding at present can only be found by increasing income for example via rates or the local property tax.

## **Item 16: Housing Maintenance.**

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Ryan agus glacadh leis

“In view of the very long delays being experienced by tenants of Local Authority housing, concerning essential maintenance, that Clare County Council do a full review of their policy and put in place a more tenant focused approach with an improved monitoring and response time to maintenance requirements.”

### **Gerard Dollard, Director of Services replied as follows:**

“Clare County Council carries out ongoing maintenance to its stock of 2,320 social housing units located throughout the county. Maintenance includes planned works to do with refurbishment of vacant houses, energy efficiency upgrades, upgrading of windows and doors, improvements to heating systems, among other things. The Council also responds to complaints from tenants and investigates those complaints and carries out any necessary repairs. The Council has spent €20,000 of its own resources on housing maintenance in 2015, which in itself is a significant sum. In addition, significant funding, of the order of €2.25 million, has been received in 2015 from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG) for the refurbishment of vacant houses, energy efficiency upgrades and alterations to houses for older persons and for persons who have disabilities.

### **Summary of Expenditure on Housing Maintenance in 2015**

#### **Maintenance Financed from the Council’s Own Resources**

- Annual budget of €20,000, which is being spent on reactive and planned maintenance in 2015.

#### **Works to accommodate the Needs of Disabled Persons Residing in Local Authority Housing**

- €12,000 funding provided in 2015 (90% DoECLG grant funding and 10% Council own resources).
- 65 houses upgraded and works include stairlifts, bathroom modifications, installation of level access showers, central heating, grab rails and ramps.

#### **Energy Efficiency Programme**

- €445,000 provided in 2015 to upgrade Council stock under this Programme. (Fully funded by the DoECLG)
- Works include attic and wall insulation, draft proofing, etc.
- 302 properties have been upgraded under this heading in 2015.

#### **Refurbishment of Vacant Stock**

- The Council received a total of €1,499,000 in two tranches to refurbish/upgrade the Council's vacant social housing stock.
- The Council has upgraded 89 houses with this allocation.

The Council is responsive to the needs of its tenants and any tenant who wishes to raise a maintenance issue is invited to contact the Council’s Housing Maintenance section. The Council endeavours to respond to maintenance requests in as short a timeframe as possible.”

In responding to a number of queries raised, Ger Dollard, Director of Service advised members that a review of the maintenance policy would be undertaken in 2016 and this would be progressed in partnership with the members of the Housing S.P.C.

**Item 17: Library statistics.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Curtin

Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That the Director of Service inform the Council of (i) the following “statistics” for the libraries in Clare:-

- No. of registered readers per branch in 2014 and 2015
- No. of book issues and the internet usage per branch in 2014 and 2015

and (ii) the Programme of Infrastructure Improvement and Calendar of Events for 2016 at each branch to co-incide with Clare’s Year of Culture Celebration.”

**Helen Walsh, County Librarian replied as follows:**

**Number of registered readers per branch library.**

**The following table outlines the number of registered readers per branch library in 2014 and 2015**

	<b>Members</b>		
	<b>2014 total</b>	<b>2014 to end Oct</b>	<b>2015 to end Oct</b>
DeValera	5,642	4,931	4,714
Corofin	188	166	163
Tulla	530	416	499
Kilrush	1,323	1,148	1,147
Kilmihil	341	297	148
Kildysart	332	282	238
Kilkee	1,563	1,469	1,502
Ennistymon	1,285	1,102	924

Miltown	698	582	626
Lisdoonvarna	146	131	130
Killaloe	1,191	1,010	952
Scariff	1,370	1,057	1,052
Shannon	2,089	1,775	1,748
Sixmilebridge	1,248	1,151	1,087
Newmarket	409	361	326
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,355</b>	<b>15,878</b>	<b>15,256</b>

**No of book issues and internet usage per branch in 2014 and 2015**

**The following table outlines the number of book issues and internet usage per branch library in 2014 and 2015.**

	<b>Book Issues</b>				<b>Internet</b>		
	<b>2014 total</b>	<b>2014 to end Oct</b>	<b>2015 to end Oct</b>		<b>2014 total</b>	<b>2014 to end Oct</b>	<b>2015 to end Oct</b>
DeValera	153,809	131,671	123,718		15,489	12,887	16,509
Corofin	8,259	7,107	6,378		470	412	159
Tulla	22,132	18,454	20,676		965	866	508
Kilrush	42,679	35,994	38,635		4,851	4,108	4,297
Kilmihil	5,977	5,002	4,857		144	128	146
Kildysart	9,859	8,175	9,080		653	582	391
Kilkee	30,196	26,948	26,888		4,419	4,020	3,808
Ennistymon	48,162	40,538	39,409		5,508	4,649	5,381
Miltown	24,014	20,453	18,889		2,702	2,363	1,894

Lisdoonvarna	4,363	3,779	3,143		157	138	81
Killaloe	33,503	28,114	27,151		2,973	2,569	2,243
Scariff	47,242	40,093	39,753		4,760	3,842	4,064
Shannon	56,689	48,115	44,896		7,571	6,371	7,402
Sixmilebridge	31,836	26,809	26,703		1,393	1,226	1,259
Newmarket	14,056	11,524	11,350		391	362	308
Local studies					89	80	102
HQ Store	3,016	2,458	2,958				
E-Books	493	365	303				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>536,285</b>	<b>455,234</b>	<b>444,484</b>		<b>52,535</b>	<b>44,603</b>	<b>48,562</b>

Internet totals for De Valera and Shannon include figures for Wifi

**(ii) the Programme of Infrastructure Improvement and Calendar of Events for 2016 at each branch to coincide with Clare’s year of Culture celebration.**

Programme of infrastructural improvement:

Since 2013 the Library Service has carried out renovations at a number of branches – namely, De Valera library, Ennis (2013), Shannon library (2014) and presently Ennistymon library (2015/6).

In addition a number of branch libraries are now facilitated with Wi Fi – De Valera library and Shannon library - with plans to provide Wi Fi in Kilrush in 2016. In addition, De Valera library has been chosen to operate as an “Open Library” – this entails the use of technology to drive library processes such as access to the internet, automated self service for return and issue of books, automated entry and exit of library. The objective is to offer a 24/7 service with the public gaining access to the library outside of traditional opening hours. When this service becomes operable in 2016 the aim will be to allow access to the library from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. each day – seven days per week.

The calendar of events for 2016 within the Library, Arts, Museum and Archives services and connected with the county of culture will have a focus on the commemoration of 1916 as the contribution to this celebration.

The programme for 1916-2016 was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2015 and lists 65 events countywide. During December 2015, talks on 1916 are scheduled to take place in the following libraries – De Valera Ennis, Kilrush, Scariff, Shannon and Ennistymon libraries. The detailed 1916-2016 programme has been circulated to all councillors previously and the programme lists all 65 events and the relevant location for the event in each case. The library has programmed 14 of the 65 events listed in the programme ranging from exhibitions to talks, Irish language events, competitions

and children and teen activities. The events have a countywide focus. These events are in addition to the ongoing library, museum and arts events scheduled throughout the year as outlined recently in the budget report.”

Helen Walsh, County Librarian responded to a number of queries raised.

**Item 18: Community burial ground extensions.**

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating

Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. J. Kelly agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council would consider establishing a designated fund to assist local voluntary communities planning burial ground extensions as the costs involved in such developments are becoming financially prohibitive.”

**Gerard Dollard, Director of Services replied as follows:**

“Clare County Council operates a fund to assist local community groups with the expense associated with the provision of new burial grounds or extensions to existing burial grounds.

Applications for funding are considered once the following are in place –

- Approval has been received from National Monuments Service (if required)
- Full planning permission has been granted
- Ownership/purchase of the site for development has been processed and registered
- Committee has in place plans/actions for funding of the project

Works must be substantially complete prior to payment of the approved grant funding.

The total fund available is €8,000 per annum.”

Ger Dollard, Director of Service responded and stated that the issues raised by the members will have to be considered in the context of Budget 2017.

**Item 25: Community Employment Schemes.**

In the absence of Cllr. T. McNamara, Cllr. P. Hayes moved this motion and this was seconded by Cllr. A. O’Callaghan.

“That Clare County Council calls on the minister for Social Protection Joan Burton to immediately increase the materials grant for community Employment Schemes from its current level of €13.46 per participant to its original level of €20 prior to the 2012 reduction to meet the spiralling cost of insurance which has seen a 284% increase in premiums in the past 12 months.”

As the time approached 6:30 p.m. and a number of Civic Recognition Ceremonies were taking place immediately following the monthly meeting, it was agreed by all present that the adjourned December meeting would take place on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2015 at 3:45 p.m.



**Item 29. Comhfhreagras.**

**Conferences.**

**Reports on Seminars/Conferences attended.**

With regard to seminars/conferences attended, reports completed in accordance with Section 142 of the Local Government Act 2001 were made available at the meeting.

**A.I.L.G. “In Service” Training taking place in the Hodson Hotel, Roscommon on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2015.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €303.12 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllr. P. Hayes attend this Conference.

**A.I.L.G. Autumn Seminar taking place in Inchydoney, Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2015.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €459.87 including conference fee of €125.

It was agreed that Cllrs. P. Hayes, B. Chambers and P.J. Kelly attend this Conference.

**A.I.L.G. Training Seminar taking place in Silver Springs Hotel, Co. Cork on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €26.39 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllrs. P. Hayes, P.J. Kelly and B. Chambers attend this Conference.

**L.A.M.A. Autumn Training Seminar entitled “The Lobbying Act – Implications for Councillors” taking place in Hotel Kilkenny, College Road, Kilkenny on 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €74.95 including conference fee of €180.

It was agreed that Cllrs. P. Hayes, P.J. Kelly and C. Crowe attend this Conference.

**A.I.L.G. Training Seminar for elected members taking place in Red Cow Hotel, Dublin on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €438.62 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllrs. J. Crowe, A. O'Callaghan and P.J. Ryan attend this Conference.

**A.I.L.G. Training Seminar for elected members taking place in Ennis on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €9.60 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllr. P.J. Kelly attend this Conference.

The meeting then concluded.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Riarthóir Cruinnithe**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cathaoirleach**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Minutes of the adjourned December Meeting of Clare County Council held in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2015 at 3:45 p.m.**

**Present:**

Councillors J. Breen, J. Flynn, P. Daly, A. Norton, M. Howard, P. Murphy, C. Colleran Molloy, J. Cooney, M. Begley, T. O'Brien, P. Burke, A. O'Callaghan, C. Crowe, J. Crowe, G. Flynn, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, M. McKee, C. Curtin, R. Nagle, B. Slattery, I. Lynch, M. Hillery, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating.

- Mr. Tom Coughlan, Chief Executive.
- Mr. Michael McNamara, Meetings Administrator.
- Mr. Kieran O'Donnell, Administrative Officer.
- Mr. Ger Dollard, Director of Service.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. James Breen presided.

At the outset the Cathaoirleach conveyed congratulations to Cllr. J. Cooney on his achievement in being elected as Cathaoirleach of Clare G.A.A. All the members present expressed their congratulations to Cllr. J. Cooney and wished him and the Clare teams well in the future. On behalf of the staff, Tom Coughlan, Chief Executive also congratulated him on his election.

**Standing Orders.**

Cllr. G. Flynn as Chairperson of the Standing Orders Committee wished to provide clarification on the use of Standing Orders by the Cathaoirleach at the December monthly meeting as this had received a lot of publicity in the media. He advised the members that Cllr. J. Breen had implemented the relevant Standing Orders correctly at the monthly meeting and he called on the Ennis Chamber of Commerce to issue an apology to the Cathaoirleach and elected members of Clare County Council arising from their attendance at that meeting.

**Vote of Sympathy.**

- A vote of sympathy was extended to the family of the late Joe Haugh, Kilkee.
- A vote of sympathy was also extended to the family and members of Kildare County Council on the death of Cllr. Willie Crowley who died tragically.

**Item 11: Municipal District Offices.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Crowe  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O'Brien agus glacadh leis

"To ask the Clare County Council C.E.O. his intentions for maintaining services to the citizenry of Clare in each Municipal Office and each Area Office?"

**Michael McNamara, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services replied as follows:**

“There are no plans to change the present arrangements as they apply at the individual Municipal District Offices at Ennis, Kilrush, Ennistymon, Scariff and Shannon. This spread of offices ensures that each of the four Municipal Districts is served by an office where many local issues can be dealt with. All of the above offices are owned by Clare County Council.

In the case of the office at Westbury, this has been leased since 2006 and the present Lease is due to expire in March 2016. Lease, rent and service charges amount to c.€43,000 per annum.

It is proposed to review the necessity for seeking to extend this Lease beyond March 2016 in the coming weeks and in this regard activity levels at the office over recent years will be examined.”

T. Coughlan, Chief Executive advised that a cost benefit analysis is currently being completed in relation to the services being availed of in Westbury. Cllr. C. Crowe suggested that alternative services should be considered for this location e.g. a library. T. Coughlan advised that it was currently very difficult to get capital funding for new libraries and he referred to the difficulties being experienced in sourcing funding for the new Ennis library.

**Item 15: Housing list.**

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Hillery  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Curtin agus glacadh leis

"With over 3,000 on Clare County Council housing list what progress was made in 2015 in providing housing to reduce this list in the following categories;

1. Number of houses refurbished and allocated?
2. Number of houses purchased and allocated?
3. Number of houses erected and allocated?
4. What plans are in place for 2016?"

**Gerard Dollard, Director of Services replied as follows:**

“1. The number of houses refurbished and allocated in 2015 is 89 no. houses.

2. The number of houses purchased is 59 to date with refurbishment works ongoing since summer. 10 no. houses will have been allocated by year end in 2015 with others being allocated in 2016 depending on the level of works required.

3. The number of houses erected and allocated is nil at present as this is part of a construction process, which is currently at planning stage. It is expected that 31 no housing units will commence in 2016.

4. The plans in place for 2016 aim to complete the refurbishments of houses acquired in 2015. Also to purchase some new houses based on available budget funding from the Department of Environment and Local Government.”

**Item 19: European City of Culture 2020.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council support and wish to collaborate with both of the applications for European City of Culture 2020 being submitted by our near neighbours Limerick and Galway. May the best application win. Ennis as the capital of the Clare County of Culture could position itself by working with both applications if one of them was successful, to become a 'fringe' (supporting events in Ennis to the main events in the winning City) European County Town of Culture 2020.”

**Gerard Dollard, Director of Services replied as follows:**

“The Council has positioned itself well in portraying a high level of cultural activity within the county for next year and beyond which could attract either applicant to view the county as a valuable ally in its application process. The 1916-2016 programme lists 65 cultural events taking place in the county next year. The hosting of the Fleadh and its huge potential to attract national and international interest is another strong factor in addition to a number of other activities tied into county of culture. The festival events guide lists over 400 activities.

The Council has received contact from both Limerick and Galway. Now that the shortlisting process has been completed it is expected that the discussions on any possible Clare involvement will progress further.

The Council would be very supportive of both locations achieving the designation.”

T. Coughlan, Chief Executive advised that the Council have written to Limerick City and County Council and sought a joint economic proposal. Similar correspondence will issue to Galway County Council in the near future.

**Item 20: Clare Age Friendly Board.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Breen

Cuidithe ag Cllr. R. Nagle agus glacadh leis

“That the Council invite the Clare Age Friendly Board to address the Council at its next monthly meeting.”

**Item 21: Dr. Brendan O'Regan.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Crowe

Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“I request Clare County Council to honour the late Dr. Brendan O'Regan for his great contribution to the developments of Shannon International Airport by erecting a statue of him in the airport in 2017 to mark his 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday.”

Cllr. M. Howard advised that the “Friends of Shannon Airport” have plans in place to commemorate Dr. O'Regan and she proposed that the Council would liaise with FOSA. This was agreed by the members.

**Item 22: Commercial Rates System.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy

"That this Council calls on the government to fundamentally reform the commercial rates system and as a temporary measure to alleviate the unexpected pressure of the Global Valuation of Utility Companies establish a Commercial Rates assistance fund similar to the government's decision last year to fund Irish Water's commercial rates bill."

Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy requested that this motion be dealt with at the January meeting.

**Item 23: Mammogram Breast Check.**

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

"That Clare County Council write to the Minister for Health requesting that the mammogram breast check age be reduced from its current value to 35 years of age to help reduce the incidences of breast cancer in young women."

**Item 24: Water mains.**

Ar moladh Cllr. I. Lynch  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Curtin agus glacadh leis

"Irish Water provide this council with a break down for each municipal district of the location and length of asbestos water main which still forms part of the water infrastructure network throughout the county and provide details of their program of works for removing the use of asbestos as part of the water delivery service infrastructure."

**Anne Haugh, Director of Services replied as follows:**

"Details of this notice of motion will be referred to Irish Water for a response."

Cllr. I. Lynch indicated he was not happy with the reply received.

**Item 26: G.P. Services.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P.J. Ryan agus glacadh leis

"That this Council support the campaign to ensure the widest possible availability of G.P. services in traditional centres."

Many members spoke in support of this motion and they raised their concerns about the decrease in G.P. services in rural Ireland and the implications of same for those living in these areas.

**Item 27: Compliance with Road Traffic Laws.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. P.J. Ryan agus P. Daly agus glacadh leis

“That the Council request details from the Gardai as to the level of enforcement undertaken to ensure compliance with Road Traffic Laws in particular speed limits and parking in disabled spaces.”

**Item 29. Comhfhreagras.**

- The Cathaoirleach and the Chief Executive wished all the members and staff a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

**Correspondence.**

**The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:**

1. Correspondence dated 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 from Seán Lenihan, Senior Executive Engineer, Water Services Section in relation to proposed Water Supply Project – Eastern & Midlands Region.
2. Correspondence dated 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 from the Department of Health in relation to the Fire Service providing additional cover in medical emergencies.
3. Correspondence from Limerick City & County Council regarding the Wild Atlantic Way.
4. Correspondence from the Office of the Information Commissioner concerning the Legal Services Regulation Bill.
5. Correspondence dated 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade in relation to the release of Ibrahim Halawa.
6. Correspondence dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2015 from An Garda Síochána acknowledging receipt of the Book of Condolences from Clare County Council following the death of Garda Anthony Golden.
7. Correspondence from Emmet Stagg T.D., Labour Chief Whip in relation to the Legal Services Regulation Bill.
8. Correspondence from Paul Kehoe, T.D., Government Chief Whip in relation to the Legal Services Regulation Bill.
9. Correspondence dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2015 from the Department of Justice and Equality regarding the Legal Services Regulation Bill.
10. Correspondence dated 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 from Shannon Airport in relation to the Lynx Cargo Project.
11. Correspondence dated 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 from the Department of Health in relation to public consultation on end of life issues.
12. Correspondence dated 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 from the Department of Justice and Equality in relation to the installation of burglar alarms in homes.
13. Correspondence dated 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 from the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources in relation to fracking.

14. Resolution agreed by the members of South Dublin County Council in relation to the release of Ibrahim Halawa.
15. Resolution agreed by the members of Sligo County Council in relation to Social Housing.
16. Resolution agreed by the members of Donegal County Council in relation to global re-valuation.
17. Conference entitled “The Finance Act 2015” taking place in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth on 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2016.
18. Conference entitled “Housing Grants & Schemes” taking place in the Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2016.
19. Preliminary Notice of 27<sup>th</sup> Colmcille Winter School entitled “Democratic Government and its survival” taking place in Gartan, Churchill, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal on 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2016.

### **Conferences.**

#### **Reports on Seminars/Conferences attended.**

With regard to seminars/conferences attended, reports completed in accordance with Section 142 of the Local Government Act 2001 were made available at the meeting.

#### **A.I.L.G. Training Seminar for elected members taking place in Red Cow Hotel, Dublin on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €438.62 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllrs. P. Daly and M. Begley attend this Conference.

#### **Training seminar entitled “Housing Public Policy & Local Government” taking place in Park House Hotel, Main Street, Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford on 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2015.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €362.70 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllr. P.J. Kelly attend this Conference.

The meeting then concluded.



**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Riarthóir Cruinnithe**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cathaoirleach**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_