

**Minutes of the June Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 at 3:45 p.m.**

**Present:**

Councillors M. Howard, M. Nestor, J. Flynn, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Murphy, A. Norton, P. Daly, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, P. Burke, T. O'Brien, C. Crowe, J. Crowe, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, G. Flynn, S. Talty, J. Killeen, J. Garrihy, R. Garvey, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating, C. Murphy, I. Lynch.

- Mr. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive.
- Ms. Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Margaret O'Rourke, Assistant Staff Officer.
- Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development.
- Mr. Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development.
- Mr. Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development.
- Ms. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, A/Head of Finance.
- Mr. Eamon O'Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Transportation.
- Mr. Jason Murphy, Senior Executive Officer, Human Resources.
- Mr. Sean Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Project Management Office.
- Mr. John Corry, Administrative Officer, Transportation.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Cathal Crowe presided.

At the outset, Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe informed the meeting that Cllr. M. McKee was unable to attend the meeting and wished him well on his road to recovery.

**Vote of sympathy.**

Votes of sympathy were expressed to the following:

- The Heduan family, Leixlip, Co. Kildare and the Chambers family, Cooraclare on the death of Mary Heduan, Kildare.
- The O'Sullivan family, Blackrock, Cork on the death of Mary O'Sullivan.
- The Cahill family, Cree on the death of James Cahill.
- The Noonan family, Newmarket on Fergus on the death of Gerard Noonan.
- The Considine family, Ennis on the death of former Councillor Peter Considine.

Cllr. P. Daly on behalf of the Fianna Fáil group, proposed a full adjournment as a mark of respect to the late Peter Considine, former Councillor and Cathaoirleach. He stated that Peter was co-opted to Clare County Council in 1974 following the death of his father Michael and served until the local election was held later in 1974. He was

re-elected in 1991 – 1999; 1999 – 2004; 2004 – 2009. Peter served as Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council from 1995 – 1997.

Peter Considine was also co-opted to Ennis Town Council in 1974. He was re-elected each term up until 2014.

He was Chairman from 1983 – 1984, 1989 – 1990 and 1999 – 2000.

He was Mayor from 2002 – 2003, 2008 – 2009 and 2012 – 2013.

Cllr. P. Daly extended his sympathy to Peter's wife Nora and his daughters Michelle, Auriol and Joanne.

Cllr. P.J. Kelly seconded the adjournment and spoke of Peter's sense of fairness and stated that Peter laid the foundation of the power sharing that currently exists in Clare County Council.

The elected members supported the adjournment and stated that Peter was a very dedicated, honest and knowledgeable Councillor who served with great distinction and that his loss was felt throughout the county. The elected members referred to Peter's connections in business as well as his love for golf, hurling and football.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive spoke on behalf of the staff and shared the expression of sympathy.

It was agreed that the adjourned meeting will take place on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> June at 3:45 p.m. and that a briefing on Climate Adaptation Strategy will take place at 3:00 p.m. on that day.

The meeting then concluded.

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

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

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

**Minutes of the adjourned June Meeting of Clare County Council held in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 at 3:45 p.m.**

**Present:**

Councillors M. Howard, M. Nestor, J. Flynn, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Murphy, P. Daly, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, P. Burke, A. O’Callaghan, T. O’Brien, C. Crowe, J. Crowe, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, G. Flynn, S. Talty, J. Killeen, J. Garrihy, R. Garvey, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating, C. Murphy, I. Lynch.

- Mr. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive.
- Ms. Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Margaret O’Rourke, Assistant Staff Officer.
- Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development.
- Mr. Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development.
- Mr. Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development.
- Ms. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Mr. Noeleen Fitzgerald, A/Head of Finance.
- Mr. Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.
- Mr. Sean Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Project Management Office.
- Mr. John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.
- Ms. Siobhán McNulty, Senior Executive Officer, Social Development.
- Mr. Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner.
- Ms. Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, Physical Development.
- Ms. Siobhán Mulcahy, County Arts Officer.
- Mr. John Corry, Administrative Officer, Physical Development.

**Apologies:** Cllrs. A. Norton and M. McKee.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Cathal Crowe presided. At the outset, Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe requested that the members adhere to Standing Orders to ensure the meetings function efficiently.

**Appointment of 14 members to the Joint Policing Committee.**

Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator read out the updated list of elected members being appointed to the Joint Policing Committee as follows: Cllrs. I. Lynch, A. Norton, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, B. Chambers, P. Daly, P. McMahon, A. O’Callaghan, J. Killeen for two years, S. Talty for three years, M. Howard, P. Murphy, P. Burke, J. Crowe, G. Keating. This was agreed having been proposed by Cllr. G. Flynn and seconded by Cllr. A. O’Callaghan.

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

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

“That the Minutes of the May Meeting of Clare County Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 be adopted and signed.”

**Item 2: Matters Arising.**

**Item 3: Minutes of Municipal District Meetings.**

a. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Keating agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 be noted.”

b. 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 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 be noted.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Murphy agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 be noted.”

**Item 4: 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.

Cllr. G. Flynn enquired about the appointment of Consultants for flood protection scheme in Shannon.

Cllr. I. Lynch queried if works on the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Kilrush could be carried out in conjunction with the proposed greenway between Kilrush and Kilkee. He also queried sewerage treatment plant works in Francis Street, Kilrush.

Cllr. P.J. Ryan asked if a footpath could be included in the design at Bunratty Castle Junction.

S. Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Project Management Office responded to the queries raised. In relation to flood protection works in Shannon, Mr. Lenihan stated that the Council are working on two major schemes in Shannon and Kilkee in tandem and on the advice from the O.P.W. the appointment of Consultants will be staggered proceeding with Kilkee at the end of June and that Shannon will be advertised in September. S. Lenihan assured the meeting that the members will be updated nearer the time.

In relation to the greenway between Kilrush and Kilkee, Mr. Lenihan stated that in order to avoid duplication of work this will be investigated.

C. Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Development stated that no works are planned with regard to laying sewers in Francis Street, Kilrush but there are works planned to the new rising main which will follow the road network from the existing pumping station on the Cappagh road via Shanakyle graveyard to the new proposed treatment plant at Skagh point.”

Cllr. J. Flynn sought an update in relation to road design projects to deal with speeding issues at Ballyalla and the taking in charge at Cappahard Lane.

J. Leahy, Senior Engineer stated that a number of options are at preliminary design stage in relation to Bunratty Castle Junction. J. Leahy undertook to communication with Cllr. J. Flynn in relation to the road design projects referred to.

#### **Item 5: Litter Management Plan 2019-2021.**

Report dated 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from Marie O’Neill, Senior Staff Officer, Environment Section was circulated with Clare County Council Litter Management Plan 2019-2021 which was prepared as a statutory requirement under Section 10(1) of the Litter Pollution Act 1997, as amended. The report outlined the process involved in preparing the Draft Litter Management Plan.

The aim of the Litter Management Plan 2019-2021 is to set out clearly objectives and strategies to improve the situation concerning litter and aims to reduce and ultimately eradicate the problem.

Ar moladh Cllr. I. Lynch  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“Pursuant to Section 10(2) of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997, Clare County Council hereby adopts the Litter Management Plan 2019-2021.”

#### **Item 6: Clare County Council – Arts Development Plan 2019 – 2023.**

A copy of Flourish – Clare County Council – Arts Development Plan 2019-2023 was circulated with the agenda. Under the 2003 Arts Act each local authority is obliged to produce an Arts Plan for the development, support and stimulation of the arts. Flourish - The Clare Arts Development Plan 2019 - 2023 has been developed following a period of consultation with internal and external stakeholders including artists, communities, young people and national partner organisations.

The plan is in line with other local and national arts and culture strategies and sets out the ambitions of Clare County Council in three strategic areas

- Providing Open and Accessible Opportunities for All
- Offering Strategic Supports to Artists
- Fostering continued appreciation and development of the arts

Cllr. B. Chambers proposed the adoption of this Draft Plan and this was seconded by Cllr. P. Daly.

**Item 7: Proposed Amendment No.1 to Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 which seeks to change the zoning of part of the lands at Illaunmanagh, Shannon, Co. Clare which are currently zoned as OS5 ‘Open Space’ to a revised land use zoning objective of ‘Community C18’ in order to facilitate an extension to the existing burial ground at this location.**

**Consideration of the proposed Amendment No.1 to the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 and the “*Chief Executive’s Report on submissions to the proposed Amendment No.1 to the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018.*”**

**Making of Amendment No.1 to the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018.**

Report dated 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2019 from Pat Dowling, Chief Executive was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the proposed Amendment No. 1 to the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 to change the zoning of part of the lands at Illaunmanagh, Shannon to a revised land use zoning objective of ‘Community’ in order to facilitate an extension to the existing graveyard, was placed on public display from 5<sup>th</sup> April until 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2019.

A total of 3 submissions were received within the statutory period. The Chief Executive has considered each submission received and formulated his response and recommendation on each of the submissions, taking account of the EU Habitats Directive and SEA Regulations, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of the local authority in the area and any relevant Government guidelines, policies or objectives.

The members were informed that the next stage is for them to consider the proposed amendment to the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 and the Chief Executives report.

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

“Following consideration by the Elected Members of:

- (a) The proposed Amendment No.1 to the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 dated April 2019;
- (b) The associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (Environmental Report), the Appropriate Assessment- Natura Impact Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment dated April 2019;

- (c) The “*Chief Executive’s Report to Elected Members on Submissions received to the Proposed Amendment No.1 to the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018*” dated 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019;
- (d) The Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region;
- (e) The policies and objectives of the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (as varied);
- (f) The policies and objectives of the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018;
- (g) The policies and objectives of the Minister contained in the Guidelines prepared under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended);
- (h) Any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or Minister for Government;
- (i) The statutory obligations of any local authority in the area;
- (j) The proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the plan relates; and
- (k) Our determination, in accordance with Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), that the proposed Amendment, is not likely to have any significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site within, or adjacent to, the plan area.

Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) this Council hereby resolves to make the Amendment No.1 to the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018.”

**Item 8. Biodiversity and climate change emergency.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy  
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. C. Crowe agus C. Murphy agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council declare a biodiversity and climate change emergency and as an immediate step cease using Roundup pesticide within the county.”

The following amendment was submitted by Cllrs. C. Colleran Molloy, C. Crowe and C. Murphy:

“That Clare County Council declare a national bio-diversity and climate change emergency and as an immediate step cease glyphosates in areas under the control of the Council.”

**Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development and Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:**

“Changes in Ireland’s climate are in-line with and similar to relevant global trends. Successful implementation of the State’s policies and objectives requires a whole of government response incorporating input and collaboration of numerous agencies of State.

Ireland’s national strategy for climate adaptation is laid out in the National Adaptation Framework (N.A.F.) in line with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. The N.A.F. requires that each local authority should make and adopt local climate change adaptation strategies, supported by Climate Adaptation Regional

Offices which are funded by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

Clare County Council is currently preparing its draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy which will be put out for public consultation during the summer, 2019 with a view to completing the strategy by 30 September 2019. The strategy will address: Mitigation Measures in Clare County Council; Regional and Local Context; Assessing Current Baseline; Climate Risk Identification; Adaptation Goals, Objectives, and Actions; and Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation. A cross directorate team from across the local authority is currently developing the Objectives/Actions for the strategy under the following 6 headings: Governance and Business Operations; Infrastructure and Built Environment; Land use and Development; Drainage and Flood Management; Natural Resources and Cultural Infrastructure; and Community Health and Wellbeing.

The Climate Change Adaption Strategy and future statutory Development Plans will build upon the measures currently incorporated in the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2023.

Should the Council decide to declare a biodiversity and climate change emergency, the decision will mean that the Council would employ protective and restorative actions to protect biodiversity across the County.

In the meantime Clare County Council is continuing to invest in areas such as coastal protection and we have signed up to the national Local Authority Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project to change over to LED technology to achieve the reduction in carbon footprint targets.

We have an opportunity in County Clare, as well as approaching the issue of climate change from a regulatory position, to pursue an economic development strategic approach to climate change and become a market leader in the production of sustainable agriculture, food, drink, and tourism sectors.

### **Use of Roundup**

Clare County Council implements an annual plant protection programme to facilitate the maintenance of public open spaces, road verges and green areas surrounding municipal buildings. At all times we only use EU approved licenced Plant Protection Products (PPPs), most of which contain the active ingredient glyphosate. Our operatives are trained in the correct application procedures and are equipped with the appropriate personal protective equipment when applying the products. In December 2017, the EU Commission renewed the approval of glyphosate for 5 more years until 2022 .Therefore, glyphosate can be used as an active substance in Plant Protection Products (PPPs), until 15 December 2022, subject to each PPP being authorised by national authorities following an evaluation of their safety. We are not aware of any restriction in Ireland in the use of the PPP brand name Roundup at this time. However we are always looking at alternatives and more environmentally friendly products in the area of protecting plants and the environment in general.”

Following discussion, the elected members called for a more definitive decision in relation to the use of glyphosate and the timeframe involved and urged the Council to be careful in order to protect against mitigation. The elected members commented that alternative products are more labour intensive, are not as effective as roundup,



and suggested the encouragement of biodiversity and the growth of wild flowers where appropriate.

C. Kirby, Director of Physical Development stated that the Councils Environmental Awareness Officer is compiling data across departments in relation to this and that the Council will commence eliminating glyphosate in so far as we can, provided there are alternatives. In relation to a query on the timeframe involved, Ms. Kirby advised that this will be reviewed by the end of the summer.

Cllr. G. Flynn advised that the amendment to this notice of motion was proposed before the motion was debated and urged caution as the reply was based on the original motion. In response, Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe stated that three Councillors had signed the original motion and the amendment.

### **Item 9. Climate change emergency for Clare.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn

“Declaration of Climate Change Emergency.

In support of the call from the youth in Clare and in light of the existing threat of climate change to our environment, its species, and humans, I call on Clare County Council to declare a Climate Change Emergency for Clare - which is one of Ireland’s most vulnerable counties to the devastating impacts of climate change.”

Cllr. J. Flynn requested that this motion be deferred to the September Council meeting in light of the fact that the Council are currently working on the Preliminary Draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024. This was agreed by the members present.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the meeting that Clare County Council has a programme of works to deal with the ongoing challenges in relation to climate change and this will dominate a lot of the works for the period of this Council.

### **Item 10. National climate emergency.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Murphy

"That Clare County Council acknowledge that we have a national climate emergency and I am proposing that Feidlim Harty of FH Wetland Systems environmental consultancy give a presentation to the July meeting of this council on measures that we can adopt to tackle the current emergency".

Similar to Item No. 9, Cllr. P. Murphy requested that this motion be deferred to the September Council meeting as the Council are currently working on the Preliminary Draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024 and the Climate Action Plan being launched by the Government. This was agreed by the members present.

**Item 11. Environmental emergency.**

Ar moladh Cllr. I. Lynch

Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy agus glacadh leis

“In light of the recently declared environmental emergency

- a) Clare County Council would request the E.S.B. to reconnect all electric charging points that have been removed
- b) Clare County Council commence a programme of purchasing electric vehicles to replace the existing outdoor maintenance crew diesel vehicles.
- c) a special provision is made in the 2020 and annual budgets going forward for environmental initiatives.”

**Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development replied as follows:**

“A) Clare County Council can engage with the E.S.B. to see if they can reconnect all electric charging points that have been removed.

B) Clare County Council’s Machinery Yard have carried out a review on electric vehicles and currently the technology has not advanced to a stage where we can change from diesel engines to electric for the outdoor maintenance crew vehicles.

However, we are looking into the option of electric vehicles for other plant that will require replacement in the future where the technology has advanced sufficiently e.g. the diesel vans being used by the Traffic Wardens, Environmental Patrol vans etc.

Presently the Ennistymon Municipal District Office is currently looking at procuring an electric gator to collect the rubbish from the street litter bins along the narrow streets and promenade in Lahinch.

Clare County Council is committed to commencing a programme of upgrading its fleet to electric vehicles where possible.

C) We are currently awaiting the publication of the All of Government Climate Action Plan which will better inform our decision making with regard to prioritising environmental initiatives and projects across the whole organisation.

In addition we will be going to public consultation on our own Climate Adaptation Strategy in July 2019. This too will assist in making the required financial provisions at budget time in the latter part of the year. However we currently avail of Grant aided initiatives under the (1) E.P.A. Local authority prevention network grant for greening the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open in Lahinch this year (2) Local Agenda 21

Environmental Partnership fund and (3) Anti-Litter & Anti-Graffiti Awareness Grant Scheme 2019.

We are also availing of the Climate Action Fund to progress our conversion of the existing street lighting stock to LED lamps.”

## **Item 12. Insurance costs.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon

“I will ask the Chief Executive to report on Clare County Council insurance related costs over the last five years and his plans to reduce the Council’s liability and costs for the next five years.”

### **Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development replied as follows:**

“Listed hereunder are the total costs to Clare County Council of insurance premia for the years 2014 to 2018 inclusive:

2014	€1,705,191
2015	€1,788,720
2016	€2,188,929
2017	€2,514,622
2018	€2,364,107

The Council has a number of strategies in place which are orientated towards risk reduction and, by implication, keeping insurance costs controlled insofar as it is feasible to do so. These strategies include:

- The retention and updating (every 6 months) of a comprehensive Risk Register – to raise awareness of the risks associated with implementation of programmes and objectives and the development of ancillary mitigation measures.
- The development, updating, monitoring and implementation of the Council’s very comprehensive Safety Management System which is designed to reduce/eliminate risk from the point of view of both staff and the general public across all of the services in which the Council is engaged.
- There is a requirement to comply with standards in relation to the implementation of works programmes – particularly standards which have public health, safety and welfare implications.
- The GeoAPP, introduced by Transport Infrastructure Ireland, facilitates Local Authorities to, on an ongoing basis, prioritise footpaths which have defects so that funding can be prioritised for the remediation of same.
- Clare County Council are conscious of the need to try and reduce the no of insurance claims being submitted. Accordingly €1.6m was included in the Schedule of Municipal District Works for 2018 to facilitate the remediation of an extensive schedule of defective footpaths throughout the county. The criteria used to determine the content of the programme focused on locations where footpath conditions posed a risk to users or where there was a history of occurrence of mishaps or accidents or the submission of public liability claims. This funding was financed by a Dividend from IPB.

As indicated above, by far the most significant driver of fluctuation in insurance costs is the public liability claims component. IPB have introduced a fraud team to its staff in recent years to rigorously pursue fraudulent claims to help reduce the financial burden of such claims on Local Authorities. The aforementioned measures together with continued engagement with IPB are intended to facilitate minimisation of the

Council's exposure to liability in this regard as well as in respect of many of the other components of our cover."

Cllr. P. McMahon stated that retribution should be imposed on people who make false claims, but this is a matter for Government to legislate on.

**Item 13. Traffic management.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Killeen

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. S. Talty, R. Garvey agus J. Garrihy agus glacadh leis

"We propose that Clare County Council find ways to explore further opportunities to improve traffic management in the North Clare region and throughout the county."

**Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development and Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:**

"Clare County Council recognises the significant increase in tourist numbers in recent years and in particular to the North Clare area, to key tourist attractions such as the Cliffs of Moher, Doolin and the Burren. Such increases in tourists place additional pressure on the roads infrastructure and accordingly the Council have taken measures to improve traffic management both directly and working closely with state agencies and communities namely:

- The Council engage on a continued basis with the National Transport Agency (N.T.A.) regarding licences to operators who operate public bus passenger services that include stopping locations at tourist sites. The N.T.A. seek the consent of the Local Authority for bus stops at such sites. Clare County Council have recently alerted the N.T.A. regarding public bus passenger services using unsuitable roads and requested that they amend their routes accordingly.
- Fáilte Ireland are currently undertaking a traffic congestion survey at pinch points along the Wild Atlantic Way. Consultants RPS have been appointed to research a solution.
- The Council invested in improving road infrastructure servicing tourist sites such as the R478 on the approach to the Cliffs of Moher.
- Increasing the presence of Wardens at key tourist locations such as the Cliffs of Moher and Doolin to enforce illegal parking.
- The Council and Shannon Heritage are currently leading the preparation of a Clare Tourism Strategy. Consultants, Team Tourism held a number of consultation workshops recently, at which this traffic issue was raised.
- The Cliffs of Moher is currently preparing a strategy for the future and this will address traffic flows.
- A meeting was held recently with bus and tour operators to discuss the issue. This was attended by ITOA and CTTC.
- On a pilot basis, the Cliffs of Moher is operating a courtesy shuttle bus service for visitors who are afforded the opportunity to park in local towns and villages.
- Clare County Council and NPWS (National Parks and Wildlife Service) have been meeting over the last year to discuss a vision for a sustainable tourism model in the Burren.

The Transportation Department has planned to commence a review in September 2019 which will explore opportunities to improve transportation across the county."

The elected members welcomed the response issued to this notice of motion and outlined the difficulties being experienced due to the increased use of roads by buses and cars heading to the Cliffs of Moher. They stated that while the Cliffs of Moher and the Burren are wonderful products, an overall plan is required as an optimum solution that will benefit the entire county.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that this issue has been around a long time and there are ongoing pressures from a roads and a tourism perspective. He stressed that there is ongoing engagement with local landowners. He informed the members that the Council will communicate with Bus Éireann. Mr. Dowling stated that there is merit in trying to come up with an integrated plan, the Council will work on it and will revert to the elected members after communication with colleagues.

C. Kirby, Director of Physical Development stated that an overall plan has to incorporate traffic management and public transport and that these issues are being raised by the Councils Engineers, staff within the Council and other stakeholders.

L. Cleary, Director of Rural Development stated that tourists are very welcome in Co. Clare and that as a starting point a briefing can be arranged for the West Clare members to outline plans within the directorate. He stated that there is ongoing engagement with stakeholders, farmers and the local communities. He informed the meeting that as a pilot initiative a shuttle bus is currently running to the Cliffs of Moher and this should increase visitor spend in local villages. He stated that there is ongoing engagement with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in relation to the future plans for visitor parking in the Burren. Mr. Cleary also stated that the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 is being developed by Clare County Council to enhance the visitor experience and the attraction.

J. Leahy, Senior Engineer, Physical Development stated that the Council will keep improving the roads around the Cliffs of Moher and the Department of Transport has been lobbied for funding.

#### **Item 14. Road Design Unit.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Crowe

“To ask the Road Design Unit of Clare County Council:

- i) How many staff are currently working in the unit?
- ii) Are additional staff required to manage the unit's vast workload?
- iii) Are design projects ever out-sourced?
- iv) Have any funding opportunities, such as Low Cost Safety Schemes, been lost in the past 12 months due to design delays?
- v) How many projects are currently in a backlog?”

**Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development replied as follows:**

- (i) Presently, there are 7 staff members assigned to the Road Design Section.
- (ii) A review of technicians is currently being undertaken by Clare County Council and the requirements of Road Design is part of this review.

- (iii) Specialised design work is outsourced as required e.g. Latoon Creek Bridge rehabilitation.
- (iv) No Road funding, including Low Cost Safety Schemes have been lost in the past 12 months due to design delays.
- (v) 8 projects have not yet commenced but are scheduled by the Road Design Office in the 2019 programme of work.”

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe thanked C. Kirby for the reply and stated that the work of the Road Design Unit is hugely valued by the elected members.

**Item 15. 5G.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Hayes agus glacadh leis

“In light of a recent appeal to the EU from 180 scientists and doctors from 36 countries warning about the danger of 5G, which will lead to a massive increase in involuntary exposure to electromagnetic radiation, that Clare County Council in exercising its responsibility to protect the environment and the public from harm:-  
1)opposes the roll-out of 5G in the County; and  
2)calls on CommReg to deny licensing for its roll-out; and  
3) calls on the Minister for Communication, Climate Change and the Environment, to establish a working group to establish the facts about the radiation impact of 5G on the environment & human health due to the current questionable scientific knowledge.”

Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy provided an update on how other countries have reacted to the proposed rollout of 5G and stated that this issue requires public awareness due to the health implications associated with it. Cllr. P. Hayes asked for clarification in relation to the Councils role in granting licences to telecommunication companies.

L. Conneally, Director of Economic Development stated that apart from the planning process in relation to antenna above a certain diameter, the Council has no licencing role in terms of the regulatory process.

It was agreed that this notice of motion would be circulated to all other local authorities.

**Item 16. Roll out of free folic acid.**

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“Clare County Council request Minister for Health Mr Simon Harris to provide for the rollout of free folic acid for all women of childbearing age and to run an educational programme in tandem, not unlike the hugely successful HPV Vaccination Campaign championed by our own late Laura Brennan.”

It was agreed that this notice of motion would be circulated to all other local authorities.

**Item 17. Procurement system.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan

Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That this Council would request the Minister for Local Government, John Paul Phelan to give an update on the performance to date of the current procurement system, for the awarding of public contractors specifically in relation to value for money, good practice, satisfactory outcome, among other criteria.”

The elected members expressed concern in relation to the quality of work being done by some contractors, particularly in relation to grass cutting. It was stated that the Council are withdrawing from the provision of services by appointing contractors to do the work and that this needs to be addressed at budgetary level. Concern was also expressed at the lack of support for local rate payers when contracts are not being awarded locally and that there should be a metric for appointing contractors other than the costing.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and stated that the Council work with the public procurement laws that exist, all of which are above board and transparent. He stated that hundreds of Clare contractors based in the county are being awarded contracts. He also stated that it is the Councils responsibility to monitor the quality of work and that the Council is duty bound to act on that matter. He informed the meeting that the Council has to comply with the law and that it is a fair, democratic process that allows anybody to compete.

**Item 18. Rural houses renovation grant scheme.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Kelly

Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council calls on the Government to introduce a renovation grant scheme to adapt vacant rural houses for rental by tourists who wish to holiday in a rural environment.”

**Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:**

“From a tourism perspective there is a current shortage of tourism accommodation in Clare at peak season. There is merit in researching a renovation grant scheme to adapt vacant rural houses for rental by tourists who wish to holiday in a rural environment. The Clare Rural Development Strategy seeks to create jobs and sustainable communities. Such a scheme could support both objectives.

The ‘*Vacant Dwellings in County Clare*’ publication produced by the Planning Department in 2016 is a report which provides analysis of vacant dwellings throughout the county. In Clare 10,926 vacant dwelling units are recorded of which 4,792 were vacant holiday homes.”

Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator read the following amendment which was proposed by Cllr. P.J. Kelly and seconded by Cllr. C. Crowe.

Insert the words “for local use and” following “rural houses” and before “for rental”.

The amended notice of motion reads as follows:

“That Clare County Council calls on the Government to introduce a renovation grant scheme to adapt vacant rural houses for local use and for rental by tourists who wish to holiday in a rural environment.”

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe referred to Standing Order No. 22 and stated that this amendment is acceptable.

The elected members felt that investment by Government in repairing abandoned houses would help alleviate the current housing problems and bring vibrancy back into local communities.

L. Cleary, Director of Rural Development stated that anything that brings population back into rural communities would be welcome. He informed the meeting that cross-directorate work is ongoing whereby the Council is looking at buying houses to rent, but there are challenges with the level of funding available to refurbish houses and that the Council has to work with the schemes and the resources available.

A. Haugh, Director of Social Development agreed with Mr. Cleary and referred to the buy and renew scheme available. She stated that the houses need to be in the right place, specific for social housing.

#### **Item 19. Medical card assessment.**

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn

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

“That Clare County Council request the Minister for Health to review the policy on Medical Card Assessment. Calculations are currently based on gross income and what I am requesting is that the policy be based on a net income as the current policy is creating hardship for a lot of people who need support for medical needs.”

The elected members stated that some people are earning too much to qualify for a medical card but are not earning enough money to look after their health and people are suffering because of this. The elected members felt that the government need to review the criteria for qualifying for a medical card and that Social Welfare Officers should have discretion in relation to this.

#### **Item 20. Comhfhreagras.**

- Cllr. P. Hayes expressed disappointment at the lack of response to correspondence issued to Eir, despite two reminders issuing. P. Dowling, Chief Executive undertook to make contact with Eir.
- Cllr. P.J. Ryan expressed dismay that the Mayor of Clare, Mayor of Shannon and Chief Executive were not invited to represent the county when the President of the USA visited Shannon and County Clare recently.
- Cllr. S. Talty complimented the Chief Executive, Directors of Service and their teams on the work being carried out in Lahinch ahead of the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open 2019 taking place from 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> July.
- Cllr. P. Daly expressed disappointment that Clare County Council is not represented on the Board of Shannon Group and requested that



correspondence issue to the Minister for Transport and An Taoiseach requesting that the Chief Executive be appointed to the Board.

- Cllr. P. Hayes stated that he intends to request suspension of standing orders during the July Council meeting to discuss Shannon Airport due to the fact that €5m has been invested into Waterford and Knock Airports at a time when airlines are leaving Shannon Airport.
- Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe paid tribute to the people of Doonbeg on the outstanding welcome they extended to Americas first citizen, President Donald Trump when he was a guest of our county recently and stayed in the West Clare village. He stated that the locals pulled out all the stops and this was reflected on the fabulous coverage in both local and national media.

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

1. Correspondence dated 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 from Garda National Protective Services Bureau in relation to proposal from Haven Horizons, blue print model.
2. Correspondence dated 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 from the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation in relation to access to and the cost of finance.
3. Correspondence dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2019 from the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment concerning R.T.E. and a potential TV licence fee increase.
4. Correspondence dated 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2019 from O.P.W. in relation to floodlighting at Clare Abbey.
5. Correspondence dated 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 from the Department of Health concerning the Standing4Women campaign.
6. Correspondence dated 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 from An Garda Síochána in relation to armed response unit.
7. Correspondence dated 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 from the Office of the Minister for Education and Skills in relation to the lack of secondary school places in Ennis.
8. Conference entitled “Creating Economic & Business Opportunities from Climate Change” taking place in the Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2019.

**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.

**Conference entitled “The Finance Act 2018” taking place in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth on 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2019.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €18.43 including conference fee of €100.

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

The meeting then concluded.

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

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

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