

**Minutes of the October 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> October, 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, 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. Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development.
- Ms. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, A/Head of Finance.
- Mr. Padraic McElwee, Head of Local Enterprise Office.
- Mr. John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.
- Ms. Siobhán McNulty, Senior Executive Officer, Social Development.
- Mr. Seán Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Project Management Office.

**Absent:** Cllrs. P. Burke and M. McKee.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Cathal Crowe presided.

**Make Way Day presentation.**

Following representation from the graduates of the Limerick Institute of Technology Campaign for Human Rights and Equality Course, the elected members of Clare County Council unanimously approved Clare’s participation in Make Way Day at the July Council meeting. It was also agreed that the group be invited to the Council Chamber to outline to the full Council what it is like to be a Clare person with a disability in 2019.

Kayla Reitveld and Gerard McInerney attended and gave a presentation on 'Issues experienced by People with Disabilities'. Susan O’Grady from the H.S.E. provided support to the speakers.

Kayla and Gerard are graduates of the 'Campaigning for Human Rights and Equality' course run in the Limerick Institute of Technology earlier this year. They are part of the group that wrote to Councillors suggesting that Clare County Council participate in the Make Way Day initiative.

**Twinning Delegation.**

Cllr. T. O'Brien introduced Franck Cosnefroy, Sylvie Hary and Jose Godinho from Basse Goulaine Municipal District together with Joan Canty from Killaloe Ballina/Basse Goulaine Twinning Committee to the meeting.

The delegates informed the members that they are part of a group who visited Killaloe Ballina during the weekend and gave an update on Killaloe/Ballina twinning with Basse - Goulaine (near Nantes), France.

Cllr. C. Crowe, Cathaoirleach, formally welcomed the group to Clare.

### **Vote of Sympathy.**

At the outset Cllr. A. O'Callaghan proposed a vote of sympathy to Cllr. Pat Hayes and family on the death of his mother Peggy. The elected members paid tribute to Peggy Hayes and referred to the events she attended in the Council Chamber most notably when her son Pat was elected as Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council in 2011. The members agreed to adjourn the meeting for 15 minutes as a mark of respect.

Cllr. P. Hayes acknowledged the support he has received from his fellow elected members, Council staff and members of the public and thanked the members for the adjournment.

A vote of sympathy was also extended to the following:

- Sexton family, Ennis on the death of Gerry Sexton.
- McCullough family on the death of Siobhan.
- The Brown family, Ennis on the death of Jackie Browne.

The meeting then adjourned for 15 minutes.

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

a. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the September Meeting of Clare County Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 be adopted and signed.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Murphy agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Clare County Council held on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 be adopted and signed.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. S. Talty agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the adjourned September Meeting of Clare County Council held on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 be adopted and signed.”

d. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. O'Callaghan agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Special Meeting (L.P.T.) of Clare County Council held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2019 be adopted and signed.”

e Ar moladh Cllr. J. Garrihy  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Clare County Council held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2019 be adopted and signed.”

**Item 2: Matters Arising.**

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

a. Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Flynn agus glacadh leis

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

b. Ar moladh Cllr. A. O'Callaghan  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 be noted.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

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

d. Ar moladh Cllr. C. Murphy  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Chambers agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2019 be noted.”

e. Ar moladh Cllr. S. Talty  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Keating agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Special Meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 be noted.”

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

The members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2019 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.

**Item 6: Disposal of lands at Skagh Point, Kilrush, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.**

Report dated 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of an area of lands measuring 1.04 hectares at Skagh Point, Kilrush, Co. Clare subject to conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2019.

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

“Notice having been served pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Clare County Council approves pursuant to the powers vested on it at Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended, of disposal of lands measuring 2.57 acres at Skagh Point, Kilrush, Co. Clare subject to conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2019.”

**Item 7: Disposal of lands (0.205 ha) at Ballycar, Newmarket on Fergus, pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.**

Report dated 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of an area of lands measuring 0.205 hectares at Ballycar, Newmarket on Fergus, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2019.

Ar moladh Cllr. A. O’Callaghan  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. McMahon agus glacadh leis

“Notice having been served pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Clare County Council approves pursuant to the powers vested on it at Section

211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended, disposal of land measuring 0.205 hectares at Ballycar, Newmarket on Fergus, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2019.”

**Item 8: Disposal of property at Shannon Banks, Corbally, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.**

Report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2019 from Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of property at Shannon Banks, Corbally, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2019.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Crowe  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Begley agus glacadh leis

“Notice having been served pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Clare County Council approves pursuant to the powers vested on it at Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended, of disposal of property at Shannon Banks, Corbally, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2019.”

**Item 9: Fix date for Budget meeting.**

It was agreed that the Budget meeting would take place on Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2019 at 3:30 p.m. having been proposed by Cllr. J. Cooney and seconded by Cllr. B. Chambers.

**Item 10: Overdraft facility for the twelve month period to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020.**

Report dated 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2019 from Noeleen Fitzgerald, A/Head of Finance was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the Council requires a new facility to be in place for the period of twelve months to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020. It is proposed to maintain the overdraft facility of €15 million.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“That pursuant to the provisions of Section 106 of the Local Government Act, 2001 the Council hereby approves of borrowing up to a maximum of €15 million by way of overdraft facility from the Council’s Treasurer for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020.”

**Item 11: Report to Council on the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024.**

Report dated 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2019 from Siobhán McNulty, Senior Executive Officer,

Social Development was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the draft Traveller Accommodation Programme was put on public display from the 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 until the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019. The 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019 was the closing date for receipt of submissions. Six submissions were received within the closing date and one submission was received on the 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2019.

Clare County Council has considered the submissions and the response to the submissions is set out in the report.

The progress and stages for adoption of Clare County Councils Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 -2024 are also set out in the report.

The report states that the Minister has directed, under section 17(1) of the 1998 Act, that a review of the programme should be carried out no later than the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021.

Cllr. M. Howard outlined details of representations received from residents in Watery Road, Ennis and requested that the plan be amended to remove sentence referring to 1-6 Watery Road, Ennis under Section 5.1.1 Traveller Group Housing. Cllrs. J. Flynn and C. Collieran Molloy also outlined the concerns raised by the residents in Watery Road.

Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development informed the meeting that this is the final draft of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024. She stated that the development at Watery Road is part of the traveller specific accommodation programme going forward and that a number of houses will be refurbished in this area in order to fulfill the need for traveller accommodation in the town. She acknowledged there are issues around the site and that this will be dealt with by the Estate Management Department. Anne Haugh outlined the legislative background that requires housing authorities to prepare and adopt a 5 year Traveller Accommodation Programme and stated that it has been through the public consultation process. Ms. Haugh informed the members that the Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme can be adopted or not adopted by the members, but if it is not adopted it will go forward for the Chief Executive to adopt and that amendments cannot be made at this stage.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe called for a vote on the adoption of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024 which resulted as follows:

**In favour:** Cllrs. A. Norton, J. Cooney, A. O’Callaghan, C. Crowe, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, G. Flynn, S. Talty, J. Killeen, J. Garrihy, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers. **(12)**

**Against:** Cllrs. M. Howard, J. Flynn, C. Collieran Molloy, P. McMahon, R. Garvey, C. Murphy. **(6)**

**Abstentions:** Cllrs. P. Murphy, G. Keating. **(2)**

**Absent:** Cllrs. M. Nestor, P. Daly, P. Hayes, P. Burke, T. O’Brien, J. Crowe, M. McKee, I. Lynch. **(8)**

The Cathaoirleach declared the vote carried.

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

“That the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024 be adopted pursuant to Section 7 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998.”

At this point Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe requested that the members adhere to standing orders and time allocated to each speaker. He also welcomed Lauren Brody, Student based in Clare County Council’s Communications Department and thanked Lauren for her work providing updates during storm Lorenzo.

It was agreed that Item No. 26 be taken at this time as Cllr. M. Howard had to attend another appointment.

**Item 26. Diabetes services.**

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

“That Clare County Council call on the Minister for Health, Simon Harris, to address the staffing shortages in University of Limerick Hospital diabetes services urgently and to confirm that the H.S.E. has included Diabetes Dietetic posts in the 2020 estimates and will be funded.”

Cllr. R. Garvey stated that she will raise this issue at the next Regional Health Forum West meeting.

**Item 12. Flexible work policy for employees.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Murphy  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Collieran Molloy agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council undertake the relevant research into the delivery of a remote or flexible work policy for its employees, including what current legal, ideological and technical blockages there may be and what would be required to surmount them.”

**Jason Murphy, Senior Executive Officer, Human Resources Department replied as follows:**

“Clare County Council is a significant regional employer with in excess of 970 employees in 150 roles delivering over 500 services to the people of Clare and beyond. We are a distributed and diverse organisation with staff working from over 50 locations across the county including area offices, libraries, fire services and depots.

The staffing structures, recruitment, assignments and training are managed through the Human Resources Department as part of the executive function with the primary objective of supporting the delivery of the strategic and operational objectives of the four strategic pillars: Rural Development, Physical, Economic and Social.

The Council operates a number of family friendly practices and flexible working arrangements including: flexi-time, shorter-working year, parental leave, paternity/maternity leave, carers leave, compassionate leave, work-sharing, career breaks and toil.

Within the workplace there is a strong tradition of Partnership and staff training and development gives our employees opportunities to develop in their roles and compete for promotional opportunity in a multitude of areas. This variety of opportunity, coupled with family friendly/flexible working practices and a vibrant workforce makes Clare County Council an employer of choice both locally, regionally and nationally.

We continue to modernise our Human Resources operations, practices and systems having regard to practices in the sector, expectation, culture, national policy, resourcing, agreements and technology. Having regard to these and other factors, as opportunities arise to further develop our work practices we will respond appropriately.”

Cllr. C. Murphy outlined the advantages of providing remote working options to staff in order to attract the best employees and provide a good work life balance.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that Clare County Council promotes remote working in the form of area offices, branch libraries and depots and that the Council hopes to grow on this going forward in order to satisfy the need to deliver services. He stated that Rural Development will proceed to prepare a remote working policy on this.

Mr. Dowling stated that there are much larger employers in the private sector and that Clare County Council, Enterprise Ireland and the IDA are working together to create jobs in rural Clare.

### **Item 13. Apprenticeship Schemes.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“Due to new apprentices that have been created by the different Departments that a spokesperson address this Council on their availability and how does one apply.”

### **Jason Murphy, Senior Executive Officer, Human Resources Department replied as follows:**

“In meeting our business needs Clare County Council offers a range of employment opportunities to the communities in Clare and beyond. Our organisation is diverse and the culture continues to develop.

Competitions to recruit staff are the primary avenue used to ensure that we meet our business needs. Job opportunities, as they arise, are advertised appropriately through our internal channels such as the Banner Bulletin and the intranet/extranet or into the public domain through the local press, [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie) , twitter and [www.localgovernmentjobs.ie](http://www.localgovernmentjobs.ie).

Clare County Council also has a strong tradition of offering ‘Co-op’ student placements which are organised by Human Resources and through the placement offices within the local third level institutions:

Each year the Human Resources Department contacts the senior team members and seeks expressions of interest in a ‘co-op’ student. Consideration is given to the required study area. Upon receipt of these submissions the Human Resources



Department contacts the placement officers of local third-level institutions to identify suitable candidates –

Candidates are invited for interview and if successful they are offered a suitable placement with Clare County Council in the relevant department. In 2019 we have 10 student Co-op placements.

In recent years the Human Resources Department has also been engaged with Employability Clare, whose focus is to ‘support people with illness, injury or disability to secure and maintain employment’. In the last year four staff have joined our workforce on placement to fulfil suitable roles and gain valuable experience.

Both the Co-op and Employability Clare placements deepen the diversity within our workforce. Such programmes also raise awareness of our business, build relationships with other organisations, contribute greatly to our culture and assist us in our business while offering a significant step and experience for the participants.

In our efforts to broaden our scope, this year Clare County Council engaged with Solas through the Educational Training Board (L.C.E.T.B.) to begin an apprenticeship. An opportunity to create a 4-year apprenticeship position for ‘Apprentice Heavy Vehicle Mechanic’ was identified in the Machinery Yard.

The post was advertised on our website, [www.localgovernmentjobs.ie](http://www.localgovernmentjobs.ie) and in the Clare Champion on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2019 with a closing date of 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2019. The competition was recently completed and a panel was formed. The successful candidate will shortly be offered an apprenticeship where they will gain experience within the Machinery Yard and fulfil their studies through the L.C.E.T.B. training centres.

The Human Resources Department continues to engage with senior managers to identify other suitable opportunities across the organisation. Just like the current placement in the Machinery Yard, if a new opportunity arises the scheme will be co-ordinated through the Human Resources Department and advertised through the standard channels and ultimately be filled following an interview/competition process.

Many organisations offer apprenticeships directly and they are advertised in various ways. The Limerick Clare Educational Training Board in conjunction with Solas (<http://www.solas.ie>) offer a range of opportunities which can be accessed through their website. These include Auctioneering, Finance, Engineering, Electrical, Hospitality and Food, Motor, Sales, Hair and Biopharmachem.”

Cllr. P. McMahon recommended that Joe Leddin, Forum Manager, Mid West Regional Skills be invited to address the elected members on opportunities for apprenticeships in the area.

P. McElwee, Head of Enterprise informed the members that the Mid West Apprenticeship and Traineeship Careers Showcase 2019 will take place in the South Court Hotel, Limerick on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> October. He stated that this is an interactive event with multiple apprenticeship and traineeship stands demonstrating the diversity and range of industry career options and job roles in a variety of sectors. Clare schools will participate in this event.

#### **Item 14. Reduction in paper use.**

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. R. Garvey agus glacadh leis

“In the current climate and the need to reduce our carbon footprint, I request that Clare County Council endeavour to significantly reduce the amount of paper it uses.

While it may not be feasible to go completely paper free, I do believe that a significant measurable reduction can be achieved.

With this in mind I request that Clare County Council estimate the volume of paper it uses currently and to aim for a 50% reduction within 12 months.”

**Ann Reynolds, A/Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services replied as follows:**

“Corporate Services Department with the support of Karen Foley, Environmental Awareness Officer is currently working towards complying with the Green Government initiative (January 2019) to phase out single use plastic, separate more waste and becoming more resource efficient. Paper reduction is an integral part of this initiative. Steps to phase out single use plastics across Clare County Council are currently being taken and roll out will take place in the coming months. As part of this initiative recycling station signage across Clare County Council offices will be updated and following this staff recycling workshops will be held. Preventing waste in the first instance will form part of these workshops and staff will be invited to discuss and action paper reduction steps for their individual departments. All waste paper is currently confidentially shredded and managed in a sustainable manner.

A number of organisational changes particularly around IT and record management would be required to reduce paper usage. There are ongoing efforts to optimise use of the council Staff Intranet and Councillor Extranet for circulation of reports, meeting agendas etc. in an effort to reduce paper and increase efficiency. Some Councillors have opted to use electronic version of the Council meeting agenda and reports on the Extranet. The ongoing business review seeks to increase efficiency, review business processes and look to automate processes and adopt new technology where appropriate.”

The elected members welcomed initiatives being introduced by Clare County Council that will help to reduce the amount of paper being used and commended the Business Review Department on bringing in the new app to assist Councillors track representations they receive.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive committed to commence the process of reducing the use of paper and stated that it will have to be balanced in order to accommodate peoples wishes.

### **Vote of congratulations.**

- Cllr. J. Cooney extended congratulations to the Social Development Directorate who won the award for Planned Maintenance Project in the Housing Management Models category. The award ceremony took place at the Irish Council for Social Housing Biennial National Social Housing Conference.
- Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy expressed congratulations to the Health and Safety Department on winning the National Irish Safety Organisation Annual Occupation Award 2019 Higher Distinction.

### **Item 15. Grass cutting policies in Housing Estates.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Cooney

“That Clare County Council outline their grass cutting policies in Housing Estates under the control of the Council throughout the County.”

#### **John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Transportation Department replied as follows:**

“Most of the public open spaces in the county are maintained by entities such as Community Groups, Tidy Towns Committees, Social Employment Schemes etc. Nearly all of the grass cutting that is carried out by Clare County Council is being maintained for historical reasons. Policy changes in this regard began to evolve in the 1990s which resulted in public open spaces in new housing estates being maintained by the communities which benefit from them. This change in approach has been found to be a positive development for a number of reasons as follows:

- Where maintenance of public open space requires the attention of communities, it can become a focus for the community and be instrumental in developing local community spirit.
- Where communities take on the role, they tend to be much more attentive to the issue than the local authority can be – in many cases the result surpasses normal expectation in that flower beds and various other innovations emerge which are all for the benefit and well-being of the community.
- Cost savings from the local authority perspective.

At present most of the grass cutting and green area maintenance work carried out under the control of Clare County Council is carried out by contract – mostly in the Shannon and Ennis Municipal Districts, (large urban areas).

Given that the current approach is working well and given the benefits of such an approach, I would recommend that we continue with the current arrangement especially when roads own resource funding is still limited and has not recovered to 2008 funding levels.”

Cllr. J. Cooney complimented the Tidy Towns groups, community groups and Community Employment Schemes for their ongoing work and stated that they need continued support from local authorities.

### **Item 16. Illegal encampments.**

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

"I am proposing that a multi agency response taskforce comprising of Clare County Council, the Chief Superintendent of the Clare Division of an Garda Síochána (or equivalent), the Public Health Office of the H.S.E., Tusla and the Department of Education is formed as a matter of urgency. This is required to deal with the ongoing problems that arise as a result of illegal encampments across County Clare but particularly in the environs of Ennis, the M18 Motorway, Western Relief Road and it's service roads. Also, that Bye-Laws are introduced prohibiting overnight parking at these locations in order to address the issue of trespass at these locations and that these roads are signed over to local landowners with a wayleave for required access."

**Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development and Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development replied as follows:**

"This Council work closely with the agencies referenced in this notice of motion and is open to a more formal engagement of these agencies to address the issue of illegal encampments in the County.

Further this Council enact the available legislation to address illegal encampments and have resolved a number of such matters in the recent past. There are a number of encampments remaining, one of which is the subject of high court action. In relation to the other encampments this Council are working to find a housing solution for the families, however engagement of the social housing applicant is proving difficult.

Current parking bye-laws, to prohibit overnight parking of caravans and motorhomes, only apply to designated parking spaces i.e. car parks and on-street car parking spaces. The locations identified do not fall within these criteria.

Transfer of public roads to private landowners would require the abandonment of a public road; this function is a reserved function under Section 12 of the Roads Act 1993. Additionally, where motorway infrastructure is in situ, consent from Transport Infrastructure Ireland is required."

The elected members outlined issues caused by illegal travelling encampments in relation to health and safety concerns, impact on local landowners and the costs incurred in subsequent tidy up operations.

**Item 17. Adopt a family scheme.**

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P.J. Kelly agus glacadh leis

"That arising from a report entitled '*Vacant Houses in County Clare*' based on Census 2011 and produced by Clare County Council on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2014, that Clare County Council in conjunction with the Vacant Houses Unit of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government examine the option for rural villages and appropriate settlements as identified in the County Development Plan for the implementation of 'Adopt a Family Scheme'. The rationale for such a radical approach to housing needs is to revitalise such areas in Rural Ireland with the occupation of these vacant houses up to proper living standards.

Supporting a family who have a housing need would in the first instance, in such circumstances, benefit not alone the family but provide a, human, social and economic boost for communities' schools, shops and sporting organisations, and provide a challenge to the local authority from which I requisition a preliminary report.”

**Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development replied as follows:**

“A Vacant Homes Action Plan for County Clare was prepared by the Social Development Directorate and submitted to the Department in December, 2017. This report considered vacancy rates from the Central Statistics Office, (C.S.O.) and the Geo-Directory database which is administered by An Post. The C.S.O. Census 2016 indicated there were ~10,925 vacant homes in the county, once holiday homes were excluded the figure reduces to 6104. Geo-Directory figures from An Post show 2,700 unoccupied dwellings for the similar period. These figures are being examined nationally to report on the disparity between the two figures and locally the vacancy properties are being confirmed using the Geo-Directory as the start point.

Areas under review include Ennis, Shannon, Kilrush, Tulla, Killaloe. There is very limited success in securing vacant properties for social housing either as an acquisition or under one of the supported rented/leasing schemes. While it is considered there are many vacant properties in rural Clare these properties are invariably located in areas with minimal social housing demand. Further there are many reasons for this vacancy and invariably these properties are not available for social housing tenants as either they are unsuitable or the cost to return them to use is far in excess of the grant aid available under the various schemes.

The premise of the proposal is welcome and we encourage property owners who have vacant properties to make contact with the Vacant Homes Officer to ascertain the viability of such a property for social housing. If there is demand in an area then this Council will work with the property owner to advise on the most appropriate scheme to fund works that may be required.

The Social Directorate is working closely with the Rural Directorate, in particular with the Rural Development Officers in villages namely Tulla, Broadford, Sixmilebridge, and Tuamgreaney to identify vacant properties that can reasonably be returned to productive use. This initiative will be rolled out to other villages based on learning's from this project.

It should also be noted that this Council are imminently due to introduce Choice Based Letting (C.B.L.), an online system where qualified social housing applicants can express their desire to be considered for a property which is due for allocation. This system does not limit the applicants to their initial area of preference and they can in fact express a wish to be considered for housing in any part of County Clare. This C.B.L. system will be rolled out on a phased basis.

It is the case that areas of preference are discussed with social housing applicants who are at homeless or at risk of homelessness in order to provide a housing solution that may not currently be available in their expressed areas of preference.”

The elected members stated that there is merit in examining initiatives that would help revitalise rural villages in decline.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that the Rural Development Directorate can respond to the vacant homes aspect of this initiative and asked the elected members to

engage with the Council executive if they are aware of private properties that can be developed for social housing in their areas.

**Item 18. Tour de France cycle race.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Crowe

Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Murphy agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council liaise (i) other local authorities in the west of Ireland, (ii) the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, (iii) Mr. Loic Guyon; Honorary French Consul for the Mid-West of Ireland and (iv) the French Embassy in Dublin with the view to hosting a stage of the Tour de France cycle race along Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way in the coming years.”

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

“The Tour de France is a prestigious international cycle race. The Wild Atlantic Way offers spectacular scenery along the west coast. Clare County Council will as a starting point discuss this proposal with Fáilte Ireland who have the international tourism promotional remit.”

The elected members outlined the potential tourism benefit hosting this prestigious event could provide to County Clare.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that he will discuss this with his colleagues and Department officials and emphasised that Clare would need to be the lead authority in hosting this event in order to ensure maximum benefit for the county.

**Item 19. Sports and amenity facilities.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Garrihy

Cuidithe ag Cllr. R. Garvey agus glacadh leis

“In the context of the importance of our sports and amenity facilities to our communities social and economic wellbeing, I propose that Clare County Council resource and support the Clare Sports Partnership to carry out an audit of the sports and amenity facilities in Clare with a view to clear identification of our key and hub assets natural and built in the area. I propose that this audit explores the potential of adding value to these assets and developing a county wide standards of practice and management targeted at getting maximum benefit in the context of delivering the objectives of the Healthy Clare and Healthy Ireland Strategies and in rural areas ensuing the volunteers who run these centres and facilities are supported to maximum possible effect.”

**Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development and Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development replied as follows:**

“The role of Clare Sports Partnership is to provide the platform and support to increase participation in sport within the county. This company was one of the first sports partnerships established in the country and as such was established as a company, the later sports partnerships functions were assigned to local authorities. Clare Sports Partnership provided input to the response to this notice of motion.

This motion has a number of elements to it that need to be addressed separately but with some commonality.

#### 1) Facilities Audit

In 2008, Clare LSP in partnership with this Council carried out an audit of facilities at a cost of €16,703.28, at that time, there was no comprehensive database of facilities in the county. This database still sits on Clare County Council website as the ‘most up to date’ directory for the county, however at this juncture this database needs to be updated.

In the context of national policy in 2019 and beyond, there will be a directive for this Council to carry out an audit of facilities under the guise of the National Sports Policy (<https://assets.gov.ie/15979/04e0f52cee5f47ee9c01003cf559e98d.pdf>)

It would be beneficial to undertake this audit sooner rather than later, as at present there is a gap in knowledge regarding facilities, especially upgraded and new facilities in the county. It is also important to note that Sport Ireland have commissioned a feasibility study for Developing a National Database of Sports and Recreation Amenities in Ireland.

Presently Clare Sports Partnership does not have the resources or remit to carry out such an audit. However it is accepted that Clare LSP are best placed to undertake such an audit subject to accessing funding to ensure that a robust audit is carried out.

#### 2) Adding Value

In relation to adding value this proposal is more strategic and is in line with Action 14 of the National Sports Policies.

*Action 14: - We will use our funding streams to foster social participation in sport by encouraging the development of strong community-based sports organisations (e.g. Community Sports Hubs), supporting and developing those who volunteer for sport and promoting social membership of sports clubs (as well as playing membership).*

Through local collaboration via Community Sports Hubs, we can add value to the fabric of the community, to enhance facility usage and facility management. This in turn may lead to reduced sedentary behaviour, reduced cost of medical needs, improved social behaviour etc.

For Clare LSP to really have the successes that have been achieved in communities such as Killaloe (Clarisford Community Sports Hub), Lahinch (Atlantic Community Sports Hub) and more recently in Kilrush (Kilrush Community Sports Hub), there needs to be a dedicated funding stream to ensure that communities such as Shannon, Ennis etc. can also benefit. Facilities outside of the Hub areas would also glean immense benefit from this approach also. They would not be excluded but we would have to be resourceful as to how strategically best to include them, as they are of great importance to their communities

The Rural and Social Development Directorates will work on a cross-directorate basis with Clare Sports Partnership who is best placed to lead the pursuit of this objective. While Clare County Council does not have a budget or staff capacity to carry out this audit, there may be an opportunity for Clare Sports Partnership to access funding from LEADER or other grant agencies.”

The elected members agreed that enhancing the sports and amenity facilities in the county will add to the strategic success and development of our county which will attract people to come and live in county Clare.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive reassured the members that the Council is particularly supportive of the role of the Sports Partnership model within the county and the work they do is important in the context of rural development. Mr. Dowling stated that Clare County Council does not directly support Clare Sports Partnership but an element of support is being proposed as part of the budgetary process.

## **Item 20. All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015 – 2020.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Killeen

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

“In light of the success of the many Clare participants in the Tidy Towns competition, the success of the farming for conservation initiative in the Burren and the display in glór of the biodiversity plans for villages and towns in Clare, we call on Clare County Council to lead by example: fund/lead campaigns and devote greater support and resources to progress the operational guidelines for Councils contained in the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020.”

### **Congella McGuire, Heritage Officer, Economic Development replied as follows:**

“The 39 Tidy Towns groups in Clare did really well this year under various categories in the Tidy Towns competition and do indeed deserve our appreciation for the amazing work they do to make County Clare a clear and green destination.

The Burren Farming for Conservation Programme is recognised as a leader and this programme showcases best practice in farming for conservation practice nationally and throughout Europe.

The successful programme of biodiversity training for communities being rolled out by the Clare Local Development Company (C.L.D.C.) who commissioned Burrenbeo to provide the training programme, led to the development of 15 local biodiversity action plans for communities throughout the county. These 15 local community biodiversity action plans were on display in glór on the 1<sup>st</sup> October last "**Working together for nature - An exhibition of community biodiversity plans**" and illustrates what communities are capable of achieving with a little assistance.

Clare County Council Heritage Officer works with C.L.D.C. on various initiatives for biodiversity, including the development of this and the current C.L.D.C. biodiversity training programme and she represented Clare County Council on the night and will continue along with other Clare County Council staff to support these and other community biodiversity initiatives.

The Clare Local Development Company have commenced further training and are currently providing training for more Tidy Town, environmental groups and individuals on biodiversity topics, local biodiversity audits and biodiversity action plan development.

The enthusiastic adoption for biodiversity training and action by environmental groups and Tidy Towns groups in Clare does indeed need to be commended and



supported. Clare County Council intends to sign up to the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 for Council's shortly.

A preliminary evaluation of the current practices and intended improvements required under the Pollinator Plan for Council's illustrates that Clare County Council are very committed to playing their part, leading by example and providing support for action by communities.

Clare County Council are at present trialing HEAT WEED a steam machine to eliminate weed as an alternative to chemicals. In all municipal districts the use of chemical has decreased and in Ennis this is up to a 90% reduction. Chemical are applied according to the manufacturers guidelines and as per the Sustainable Use Directive with targeted plant treatment. Grass cutting regimes have been reduced at a saving to the Council and for the benefit of biodiversity, roadside margins are now more managed for pollinators, more Council owned amenity and recreational areas are being managed for biodiversity, more native flower, plant and tree species are being planted, there are 5 community orchards in Ennis in public areas and the Banner Bee Keepers have established a training apiary in the Council amenity area in Doora for example, all of which benefits biodiversity generally.

Clare County Council Heritage Officer has an annual programme for biodiversity under the Clare Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2017-2023. The Clare County Heritage Officer is currently working closely with Clare Education Centre to promote Wild Teaching and Heritage in Schools Scheme schools throughout the county. A bespoke Biodiversity Resource Manual will be produced for all Clare County Council staff in 2020. As part of the background work for this manual, research will take place into how Clare County Council's own work practices affect biodiversity, staff consultation and a gap analysis of staff knowledge of biodiversity will take before the end of 2019, with the roll out of a comprehensive programme of biodiversity training available for all staff in 2020, including training on the Pollinator Plan.

In January/February 2020 Clare County Council will announce funding to communities under the Local Community Fund including the Public Area Enhancement Scheme, Town and Village Amenity Grants and the Graveyard Grants, while the focus of these grants is not biodiversity, this funding can support communities in actions for biodiversity. Local Agenda 21 funding can also provide some funding for biodiversity projects in Clare and will be available again in 2020. Unfortunately it is unlikely that the Heritage Council Community Fund will be in place in 2020. Capital funding for biodiversity action and projects is still available from the Clare Local Development Company.

Should Clare County Council sign up to the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, there will be resource implications to document the current practices within Clare County Council for biodiversity and report back to the National Biodiversity Data Centre, in addition to up scaling and expanding our current practices and actions for pollinators and for Biodiversity generally and within Council owned amenity and recreational areas, in graveyards, roadside and green spaces generally etc."

The elected members agreed that education is the key to enhancing biodiversity and that Tidy Towns groups need to be encouraged and supported in continuing their efforts.

**Item 21. Flemish Decree.**

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

“That Clare County Council calls on the Government to immediately comply with the terms of the Flemish Decree.”

During discussion the elected members agreed that planning is about structure, location and suitability and not about the person who proposes to live in a particular location.

The members expressed dis-satisfaction that a previous commitment from the Minister to deal with this matter has not materialised.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive undertook to communicate with the Department and await reply. Mr. Dowling also stated that there is an ongoing and positive working relationship with the new Head of Planning Regulation.

**Item 22. Fridays for future Clare.**

Due to the absence of Cllr. J. Flynn at this time, this motion was proposed by Cllr. J. Crowe and seconded by Cllr. C. Crowe.

“That Clare County Council invite a deputation from the second level students organising “Fridays for future Clare“ to attend the November County Council meeting regarding the issue of Climate Change.”

Cllr. R. Garvey objected to this decision as she felt it was too soon to invite this deputation.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe asked for a show of hands which resulted in 9 Councillors in favour and 4 Councillors not in favour, therefore the motion was carried.

**Item 23. Shannon Airport.**

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

“That Clare County Council call on Ms. Rose Hynes, Chairperson, and the Board of the Shannon Group, to set out a clear pathway to restore Shannon airport to a consistent pattern of passenger growth for a five year period and to forward this plan to Shane Ross, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport for immediate implementation and that Oireachtas Members and councils in the catchment area be appraised of the plans content.”

The elected members expressed frustration at the lack of future planning in relation to Shannon Airport and stated that there is great public concern in this regard. Concern was expressed at the fact that no European connections have been sourced and no marketing campaign has been initiated. The elected members expressed the fear that passenger numbers in Knock airport will overtake Shannon Airport. The lack of political will in support of Shannon airport was also discussed.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe outlined details of meeting he attended with the Honorary Consul of France Dr Loic Guyon in July together with Cllr. T. O'Brien and Ann Reynolds, A/Senior Executive Officer. This meeting was convened to discuss ways of working towards having a seminar of aviation companies in the Shannon Airport. Cllr. C. Crowe informed the members that as a result of this meeting 13 aviation companies met in Shannon Airport that morning and stated that this intervention is reflective of what the Council can bring to assist Shannon Group in promoting Shannon Airport.

Cllr. C. Crowe informed the members that Limerick City and County Council had passed a similar motion as Clare County Council requesting that a delegation meet with Minister Ross in relation to the future of the airport. Cllr. C. Crowe suggested that a delegation from Clare County Council join the delegation from Limerick City and County Council at this meeting. It was agreed that this delegation will consist of the Cathaoirleach, Chief Executive, Director of Economic Development and the Chairperson from the four Municipal Districts.

It was proposed by Cllr. G. Keating, seconded by Cllr. J. Crowe and agreed by the members present that time be extended to 7:00 p.m. in order to complete the business of the meeting.

**Item 24. Patient referral to A & E.**

Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. A. Norton agus C. Murphy agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council calls on the Minister for Health to empower G.P.’s in Co. Clare to refer patients to A & E in the private sector in the event of overcrowding resulting in people being left waiting on trolleys at the University Hospital, Limerick and any expenditure incurred be covered by the H.S.E.”

**Item 25. Development of social and affordable housing.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. P. Daly, J. Killeen agus S. Talty agus glacadh leis

“We call on the Council to make strong representations to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government with a view to providing finance to purchase land for the development of social and affordable housing in County Clare.”

**Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development replied as follows:**

“This Council has approved a loan of €6,000,000 to fund the purchase of land for house construction projects to meet the targets under Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness. This loan is not yet drawn down however this has not hindered the Council in the purchase of land for social housing.

During 2019 sales closed on land in Tulla; Newmarket on Fergus; Scarriff; Tulla Road, Ennis; Doonbeg (two sites). Developments at the above locations are at various stages of design and planning. As these projects progress and are approved by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government the land costs associated with them will be recouped. Further this Council has a number of offers on sites at other locations in the County to meet housing demand.

The development of an affordable housing scheme in the County is dependent on first of all receiving approval under the Serviced Sites Fund to fund enabling infrastructure on Council owned lands which will facilitate delivery of housing at affordable cost. This will invariably mean that any such scheme will be required to have minimum or zero associated land costs in order to meet the affordability test. Clare County Council currently have a submission with the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government under the Serviced Sites Fund Scheme which has been deemed a “project of interest”.

## **Item 27. Comhfhreagras. Correspondence.**

### **Correspondence.**

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

1. Correspondence dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2019 from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in relation to designating Clare as a Rent Pressure Zone.
2. Correspondence dated 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 from the Office of the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation in relation to redundancy payments to workers at Avara Pharmaceutical.
3. Correspondence dated 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection in relation to the workers at Avara Pharmaceutical.
4. Correspondence dated 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 from Kirker & Co. Chartered Accountants and Insolvency Practitioners in relation to Avara Shannon Pharmaceutical Services Limited (in liquidation).
5. Correspondence dated 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 from Deputy Joe Carey in relation to the Irish Beef Sector Agreement.
6. Correspondence dated 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 from the Office of the Minister for Trade, Employment, Business, European Union Digital Single Market and Data Protection in relation to the crisis in the agriculture industry.
7. Correspondence dated 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 from UL Hospitals in relation to costs relating to accommodation and taxi/transport in Co. Clare for hospital services.
8. Correspondence dated 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in relation to procurement systems.
9. Correspondence dated 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 from the Office of the Taoiseach in relation to medals for gallantry and distinguished service.
10. Correspondence dated 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 from the Department of Justice and Equality in relation to the Atypical Working Scheme Permits.
11. Resolution circulated by Limerick City and County Council in relation to Shannon Airport.
12. Resolution circulated by Leitrim County Council in relation to the Beef Plan Campaign.

13. Resolution circulated by Leitrim County Council in relation to Wind Farms.
14. Resolution circulated by Leitrim County Council in relation to Local Area Hackney Licences.
15. Resolution circulated by Monaghan County Council in relation to the National Ambulance Services Representative Association.
16. AILG training dates for October and November 2019.
17. Conference entitled “Emerging Threats and Persistent Conservation Challenges for Freshwater Biodiversity” taking place in O’Donovan’s Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2019.
18. Conference entitled “Entitlement to Health Services” taking place in O’Donovan’s Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2019.
19. Conference entitled “Regional Development and EU Cohesion Policy beyond 2020” taking place in The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth on 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> November, 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.

#### **AILG training taking place in Thurles, Co. Tipperary on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2019.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €300.36 including conference fee of €55.

It was agreed that Cllr. M. Howard attend this Conference.

#### **Parnell Summer School taking place in Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2019.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €332 including conference fee of €70.

It was agreed that Cllr. G. Keating attend this Conference.

#### **AILG autumn training seminar 2019 being held in Hillgrove Hotel, Old Armagh Road, Monaghan on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2019.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €608.26 including conference fee of €140.

It was agreed that Cllrs. P. McMahon, M. Howard, M. Begley, A. Norton and G. Keating attend this Conference.

#### **AILG autumn training seminar entitled “The Planning Process, the Elected Member and the Office of the Planning Regulation” being held in the Crown Plaza Hotel, Dundalk, Co. Louth on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2019.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €55.62 including conference fee of €108.35.

It was agreed that Cllrs. P. Murphy, P.J. Ryan, A. O'Callaghan, A. Norton, P. McMahon, P. Daly, J. Crowe, J. Cooney, C. Colleran Molloy and P.J. Kelly attend this Conference.

The meeting then concluded.

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

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

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