

**Minutes of the May/June Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held in
Glór, Ennis, Co. Clare on Monday, 8th June, 2020 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, A. O’Callaghan, T. O’Brien, J. Crowe, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, G. Flynn, D. McGettigan, P. O’Gorman, 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.
- Mr. Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development.
- Mr. Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development.
- Ms. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance.
- Ms. Siobhán McNulty, A/Director of Social Development.
- Mr. Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Directorate.
- Mr. Seán Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Physical Directorate.
- Mr. John Gannon, Senior Executive Engineer, Physical Directorate.
- Ms. Caroline O’Connor, Management Accountant.
- Ms. Trina Rynne, Financial Accountant.
- Mr. Morgan Lahiffe, A/Senior Executive Officer, Killaloe Municipal District.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy presided.

Bob Breathnach, Chairman of the Board of Glór addressed the meeting and welcomed the elected members and Council officials to Glór. Mr. Breathnach thanked Pat Dowling, Chief Executive and Orla Flanagan, Director of Glór for the leadership demonstrated during the Covid 19 pandemic and stated that together we will drive forward in recovery and in rising the spirit of the county.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy welcomed her colleague members, members of the media and the public to the meeting. She stated that it is heartening to see some light glimmer through for us all as the proportionate lifting of restrictions for our society coincides with the resumption of Council meetings.

Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy thanked the Chief Executive, the officials and staff of Clare County Council for their management and response during this time of crisis.

She acknowledged the great efforts expended by Pat Dowling, as Chief Executive to keep the members informed and involved throughout with the bi-weekly teleconference meetings with each Municipal District.

She continued that after a two month hiatus from plenary Council meetings, it is very positive that Clare County Council possess the Glór venue to accommodate safe social distancing for these meetings going forward until such time as public health guidance changes.

Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy then requested that the following resolution be passed.

“In accordance with Standing Order No 67 I propose to suspend Standing Orders to allow this meeting of Clare County Council be held in alternate venue, i.e. Glór.

This decision is being made, having regard to the current exceptional circumstances and advice from the H.S.E. on the spread of coronavirus, in relation to the gathering of people and in the interests of maximising physical distancing.”

This resolution was proposed by Cllr. A. O’Callaghan, seconded by Cllr. B. Chambers and agreed by the members present.

Cllr. Colleran Molloy thanked Orla Flanagan, Director, Nick Bromfield, Technical Manager and Bob Breathnach, Chair of the Board of Glór for facilitating this meeting.

She informed the members that as the standing orders may be suspended only once at any meeting of the Council no further suspension could occur at this meeting, therefore she sought the members co-operation in dealing with items 1 to 14 within 1 hour and then move to notice of motions to conclude the meeting by 6:30 p.m.

The members agreed to photographs being taken by media photographers present.

Vote of Sympathy.

At the outset a vote of sympathy was extended to the following:

- The O’Mahony family on the death of Colm O’Mahony, R.I.P.
- The Stack family, Ennis on the death of Tom Stack, R.I.P.
- The Flanagan family on the death of Paddy Flanagan, R.I.P.
- The Fitzpatrick family Tulassa, Ennis on the death of P.J. Fitzpatrick.

Item 1: Minutes of Council Meetings.

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

“That the Minutes of the April Meeting of Clare County Council held on 6th April, 2020 be adopted and signed.”

Item 2: Matters Arising.

Cllr. J. Flynn referred to matters arising at the April Council meeting and clarified that he proposed the adoption of the Beach Bye Laws 2020 subject to the exclusion of powered water craft use at Ballyalla.

Item 3: Minutes of Municipal District Meetings.

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

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 11th February, 2020 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Meeting held on the 15th January, 2020 be noted.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Hayes
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Meeting held on the 25th March, 2020 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the Shannon Municipal District Meeting held on the 21st January, 2020 be noted.”

e. Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Shannon Municipal District Meeting held on the 22nd January, 2020 be noted.”

f. Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Begley agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Shannon Municipal District Meeting held on the 5th February, 2020 be noted.”

g. Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan
Cuidithe ag Cllr. D. McGettigan agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Shannon Municipal District Meeting held on the 10th March, 2020 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 14th January, 2020 be noted.”

Item 4: Minutes of S.P.C. Meetings.

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

“That the minutes of the Economic Development S.P.C. meeting held on 16th December, 2019 be noted”.

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

“That the minutes of the Social Development S.P.C. meeting held on 3rd April, 2019 be noted”.

c. Ar moladh Cllr. M. Nestor
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Garrihy agus glacadh leis

“That the minutes of the Social Development S.P.C. meeting held on 11th December, 2019 be noted”.

Item 5: Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meetings.

The members noted the minutes of the meetings held on 2nd March, 2020, 1st May, 2020 and 15th May, 2020 as presented.

Item 6: 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. J. Flynn referred to Ennis Town Centre Mobility Plan and thanked the taskforce for devising a plan to make the streets of Ennis safe for staff, visitors, shoppers and residents.

Cllr. C. Murphy referred to previous request in relation to monitoring licence discharge results from treatment plants. He also requested an update on the Kilkee WWTP.

In response, C. Feeney, Senior Engineer stated that the Council submit results to Irish Water. He stated that the 2018 results are on the website and the 2019 results are not available on the website yet.

In relation to capital projects Mr. Feeney stated that this is under the remit of Irish Water. He informed the members that Irish Water hold Councillor Clinics on a regular basis and stated that this is a forum for elected members to engage with Irish Water directly.

Cllr. M. Begley noted that planning for the Springfield, Clonlara project is being referred to An Bord Pleanála and not a Part VIII process and expressed concern that this could potentially delay the final decision.

S. Lenihan, Senior Engineer stated that the Council will submit the planning application later this month and would expect a decision in 4-6 months.

Item 7: Fix date for 2020 Annual General Meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Hayes, seconded by Cllr. G. Flynn and agreed by all present that the Annual General Meeting will take place at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, 29th June, 2020 in Glór.

Item 8: Annual Report 2019.

The Draft Annual Report 2019 was circulated with the agenda and was noted and approved by the members present subject to the following:

Cllr. G. Flynn referred to page 10 and requested that under the heading Social Development be amended to read Sports and Recreation.

It was also highlighted that Active Kilrush forms part of Active Ennis Sports and Leisure Committee.

Cllr. J. Flynn stated that under statute the Chairperson of Ennis Municipal District is the Mayor of Ennis Municipal District. Cllr. Flynn also referred to updated version of the map of Clare on page 25.

It was confirmed that a new draft of the Annual Report 2019 had been circulated to the members that contained the updated version of the map of Clare and the correct title for the Mayor of Ennis Municipal District.

Item 9: Clare PPN representation on Social Development S.P.C.

Report dated 4th March, 2020 from Sarah Clancy, Clare PPN Co-ordinator was circulated with the agenda. The report states that Clare PPN would like to nominate Mary Leahy as their community and voluntary representative on the Social Development S.P.C., replacing Trudy Leyden.

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

“That Mary Leahy be appointed to the Social Development Strategic Policy Committee.”

Item 10: Clare PPN representation on the Local Community Development Committee.

Report dated 11th March, 2020 from Sarah Ferrigan, Clare PPN Office and Communications Manager was circulated with the agenda. The report states that Clare PPN would like to nominate Hilary Tonge as one of two community and voluntary representatives on the Local Community Development Committee, replacing Kasia Kowalska.

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

“That Hilary Tonge be appointed to the Local Community Development Committee.”

Item 11: Annual Financial Statement 2019.

The Annual Financial Statement for 2019 together with a report was circulated in advance of the agenda and was noted by the members.

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

“In accordance with Section 104 of the Local Government Act 2001, the approval of Council is sought for additional expenditure by Division as set out below:

	Exp
	Euro
Housing and Building	418,000
Road Transportation and Safety	2,093,000
Development Incentives and Controls	1,987,000
Environmental Protection	301,000

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Garrihy
Cuidithe ag Cllr. S. Talty agus glacadh leis

“That Transfers to reserves as set out below is hereby approved:

		Total
		Euro
A	Housing & Building	1,014,000
B	Transportation and Infrastructure	1,406,000
C	Water Supply & Sewerage	261,000
D	Development Incentives & Controls	6,279,000
E	Environmental Protection	979,000
F	Recreation & Amenity	575,000
G	Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	0
H	Miscellaneous Services	(198,000)
J	Support Services	1,911,000
		12,227,000

The elected members acknowledged the work done by Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance and the finance team in preparing the Annual Financial Statement. Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance responded to the queries raised by the members.

Item 12: Covid-19 Presentation.

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and thanked Bob Breathnach, Chair of the Board of Glór and Orla Flanagan, Director of Glór and all the staff involved in preparing Glór as a new venue for holding Council meetings on a temporary basis. Mr. Dowling outlined the scale and depth of the societal impact caused by the Covid 19 pandemic. He acknowledged the messages of support received from local communities and elected members. He thanked the staff of Clare County Council who have been and continue to be exemplary in adapting to recent circumstances. Mr. Dowling outlined the challenges that County Clare must tackle going forward and stated that the Economic Taskforce for the county will be key leaders in identifying priority economic actions for the county to assist economic sectors in the months and years ahead. Mr. Dowling referred to the financial well being and stability of Clare County Council itself and the difficult choices that will have to be made going forward. He stated that the Council must remain united as a sector and continue the partnership that currently exists. Mr. Dowling stated that the Council will be reporting on updates frequently. He stated that Clare County Council is robust as an organisation and is up to the task of recovery. Mr. Dowling noted that rebuilding will require the Council to focus on important strategic matters going forward.

Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance outlined a detailed presentation under the following headings:

- Continued Council services
- Roadmap to the opening of business and society

- Community response
- Future working arrangements
- Priorities in each Directorate.

The elected members thanked Pat Dowling, Chief Executive and Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance for the presentation and raised queries in relation to compensation for local government, rates waiver for businesses, deficit in budget.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive responded to queries raised.

Item 13: Overdraft Sanction Members Approval 2020/2021.

Report dated 26th May, 2020 from Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the members approved an overdraft facility for 2020 up to a maximum of €15 million on the 14th October, 2019. It is now proposed to seek approval for a further increase of the overdraft limit to €30 million during this unprecedented time. The report continues that this additional overdraft facility is part of our Business Continuity Plan, ensuring that the Council can operate and continue to deliver essential services in these uncertain times.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Chambers 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 €30 million by way of overdraft facility from the Council’s Treasurer for the year ending 30th June, 2021.”

Item 14: Evaluation Approval for Fáilte Ireland Festivals and Events Applications 2020.

Report dated 29th May, 2020 from Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the Council’s Working Group for the Action Plan for Rural Ireland met in May and recommended projects to the June meeting of Clare County Council to be submitted for Fáilte Ireland funding. A list of projects was circulated with the report. The report was noted by the members present having been proposed by Cllr. C. Murphy and seconded by Cllr. T. O’Brien.

Item 15. L.I.S. Scheme.

Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers
Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O’Brien agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council calls on the incoming Government to provide funds to clear the backlog of applications for the LIS scheme.”

Item 16. Commercial rates.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. A. O'Callaghan, P. Murphy, P.J. Kelly, P. Burke, T. O'Brien agus M. Nestor agus glacadh leis

“We are in uncharted waters, there is huge concern and pressure within our business community, in one week alone our unemployment rates have doubled with 140,000 people being laid off work because of measures to tackle the Coronavirus- the numbers were made up of 70,000 restaurant workers, 50,000 pub staff and over 20,000 creche and childcare workers.

In the UK the Government announced a number of measures to help including, that leisure businesses including pubs and restaurants with a rateable value of less than £51,000, would pay no rates for the next 12 months and a rate discount be offered for those in the higher category.

We request that Clare County Council impose a complete freeze on the collection and charging of commercial rates on those businesses, large and small along with sole traders that have had to close or have been affected negatively by COVID19. This rate holiday would last for the duration of this pandemic and for a time after at the very least.”

Noleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance, Corporate and Human Resources replied as follows:

“Clare County Council is responding to dealing with the impacts posed by COVID-19 to ensure that the impacts on communities, businesses and other stakeholders in our county are minimised. Our Crisis Management Team are working to our business continuity plans and the roadmap for reopening businesses and society. We are also supporting the H.S.E. Public Health in the region while maintaining our essential services and supporting our staff through these unprecedented times.

We are acutely aware of the potential issues faced by our commercial rate customers. In particular, in the first instance, businesses, such as those in the hospitality sector, small and medium retailers, leisure and childcare areas. We have met and discussed this with Ennis Chamber of Commerce in the early days of the pandemic. The council did implement the National Policy of deferring rates payments due from the most immediately impacted businesses, primarily in the retail, hospitality, leisure and childcare sectors, until the end-May 2020 and we stood down court proceedings for the collection of rates for the sectors most impacted.

Further to this, in early May, the Government announced two additional support packages for commercial rate customers both to be funded by the Exchequer:-

1. €260m - 3 month waiver of rates for certain businesses.
2. €250m Restart Fund.

The details of the latter scheme have been clarified and we are administering the scheme on behalf of the Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation. In the first week over 800 applications were completed or in progress. We are awaiting the receipt of funding from the DBEI to complete the approval process and we expect to be in a position to commence payment of the grant in the week commencing June 8th.

Further clarifications in relation to the three month rate waiver for certain businesses is awaited before we can commence applying credits on customers' accounts. Initial indications was that this scheme was only applicable for businesses that were forced

to close due to public health requirements. The department have also stated that the position post-27 June 2020 will be considered as part of a wider review of options to support enterprises and employment, and associated local authority funding implications, once the unwinding of public health restrictions has advanced. From our own analysis, we have calculated a €19.7m annual impact on businesses who were closed or impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions, this detail has been shared with our parent department and has been included in an overall assessment of the impact on commercial rates income for all local authorities.

Commercial Rates income for 2020 is budgeted at €44.7m which accounts for 36% of the council's estimated income in 2020. This is a critical source of income to fund the provision of all council services. The setting of this income is a reserved function, completed as part of the 2020 bud get process last November. Any proposal by members to reduce or waive any element of this income will require a supplementary budget process for the members to decide on the commercial rates support and the corresponding expenditure reduction and/or income generation from another source in the absence of Exchequer funding. At this time we are awaiting the outcome of a wider national review of local authority funding implications."

The following amendment as an addition to the motion, was proposed by Cllr. M. Howard, seconded by Cllr. A. O'Callaghan and agreed by the members present.

"We appeal to our Government to have a mandatory fund to pay back local authorities."

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Collieran Molloy informed the members that Cllr. D. McGettigan had issued a request to discuss Item No. 33 at this stage. This was agreed by the members present.

Item 33. Shannon Heritage.

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

"Shannon Heritage Sites famous throughout the globe have immense historical cultural and economic value for us.

These sites contribute an estimated €20 million annually in spin -off revenue, employ up to 350 people and benefit a range of local businesses in both rural and urban settings across many sectors.

The tourism sector will face many difficulties on it's road to recovery.

This Council calls on the Shannon Heritage Group to meet with Clare County Council, Limerick County Council and unions to discuss a wider tourism strategy in the midwest to help retain jobs."

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:

"Clare County Council recently welcomed the establishment of the Tourism Recovery Taskforce announced by Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Shane Ross, and Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, Brendan Griffin. The taskforce is critical to ensuring that the tourism sector survives and emerges from this crisis ready for

business. Tourism in Clare will be a key instrument to aid the economic recovery of our county.

The scale of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Clare and on all of Ireland is going to require a concerted 'Ireland' response. Clare County Council is working to help inform the support responses, and will play an active role in their delivery in whatever way possible. Clare County Council and Clare Tourism will continue to work with lead tourism agencies, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, as well as Clare's tourism industry to bring about the recovery of tourism in the county.

The Clare Tourism Strategy 2030, which is being led by Clare County Council in conjunction with Shannon Heritage, has been reviewed in light of the Covid-19 impact to the tourism industry. It is now at an advanced stage of development and will be finalised and released before year end. The Council has engaged with Shannon Group and its subsidiary Shannon Heritage with whom we work closely. In this regard, Shannon Group have confirmed that they would be delighted to meet with both Clare County Council and Limerick City & County Council to understand what supports could be put in place to support tourism operators in the current crisis. Obviously, the Council wishes to support Shannon Airport in its future as part of such."

The elected members were unanimous in their support of this notice of motion. It was noted that Shannon Heritage have announced that Bunratty Castle & Folk Park, King John's Castle, Craggaunowen Castle and Knappogue Castle will be open to the public for a limited season in 2020, by opening on 20th July and closing on 31st August. It was felt that the decision was premature as these facilities are vital in attracting visitors to County Clare. The Councillors stated that the loss of seasonal activities at Bunratty Castle during Halloween and Christmas would have a very negative impact on the area. The impact this decision will have on the employees was noted and it was emphasised that unions and staff need to be represented at any future meetings. The elected members called on Shannon Group to rescind this decision.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive agreed that these attractions are vital for the future welfare of our county. He stated that Shannon Heritage is a component of Shannon Group and undertook to meet with Shannon Group representatives as soon as possible. Mr. Dowling noted that domestic tourism products can resume on 29th June.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Collieran Molloy requested that Item No. 29 be dealt with at this time.

Item 29. Shannon Airport.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Collieran Molloy
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P.J. Ryan agus glacadh leis

"That Shannon Airport management clarify its rationale for its decision to close Shannon Airport from 10pm to 6am during the Covid19 restrictions, in light of the willingness of the majority of its Airport Police & Fire officers to work 40 hours and receive payment for 32 hours, which it is understood would have averted this decision to close."

In supporting this motion the elected members noted that Shannon Airport prided itself on its 24 hour operations and emphasised the benefit emergency landings are to

Shannon Airport. Concern was expressed that this decision could have implications for the National Emergency Plan. The members felt that Clare County Council should be represented on the Board of Shannon Group and the Clare Oireachtas Members were commended for highlighting the ongoing concerns in relation to Shannon Airport.

Item 18. Planning permission.

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

“That, when a planning permission is being refused totally or partly on the grounds of visual impact, complete details of all considerations in the assessment of particular visual impact be clearly listed with all referenced relevant authoritative documentary material.”

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:

“The range, nature, scale and complexity of development application proposals received by Clare County Council are significant, and include for example agricultural, renewable energy, urban and rural housing, industrial, aviation related and commercial developments.

As outlined in previous responses to Notice of Motions, the considerations relevant to each planning file are outlined on the planning report associated with the file – including a full assessment of visual impact. In the absence of details of a particular type or nature of development, any attempt to outline “complete details of all considerations” involved in the refusal of a planning application for every possible type and scale of planning application is impossible.

Where any decision has been made to refuse permission, the precise reasons for refusal are indicated. The reasons for refusal are elaborated in the supporting planning report which is available to view on the file. As you are aware any planning application that is refused may be appealed to An Bord Pleanala and indeed all applications determined by An Bord Pleanala also include a similar technical report addressing the relevant planning assessment issues.”

Cllr. P.J. Kelly stated that people have a legal right to be given reasons for being denied planning permission due to visual impact and that it is important that considerations be listed.

Cllr. C. Murphy in seconding the motion stated that it is very important that subjectivity be removed from planning and stated that visual impact is not precise enough to refuse planning permission. Cllr. Murphy stated that there is a responsibility on the Council to outline clearly grounds for refusing planning permission.

Cllr. J. Killeen stated that clarity, accountability and consistency is required within the planning system.

Cllr. P.J. Kelly thanked his fellow Councillors for their support and stated that applicants have a right to appeal based on clear defined reasons for denial.

The elected members agreed to take Items No. 19, 20 and 21 together as they relate to illegal dumping.

Item 19.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. O’Callaghan agus glacadh leis

“Since the lockdown began in March we have noticed a considerable escalation of dumping and fly tipping throughout the county.

Some of our most scenic locations have been hit by indiscriminate and illegal dumping.

Great credit is due to our wardens who are faced daily with this filthy activity.

I am requesting Clare County Council to up the ante on a number of fronts.

- Work with An Garda Siochana on more checkpoints.
- As most of these dumping events take place in the evenings and at weekends, I believe we should consider our outdoor enforcement staff operate outside of their usual 9am -5pm, Monday to Friday hours. By working evenings and weekends and the Council vans being visible in or near these dumping black spots.
- CCTV and / or trail cameras need to be used in these areas.

With more resources and the help of our vigilant communities we can make a difference.”

Item 20.

Ar moladh Cllr. A. O’Callaghan
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“In light of the influx of illegal dumping especially in east and south east of the county, Oatfield, Truagh, Ballycar, Meelick, Parteen, 12 O’Clock Hills. I am asking this Council to make contact with Limerick City Council to come up with a plan to catch these bogus refuse collectors that are causing this mess.”

Item 21.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Cooney
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. J. Crowe agus M. Begley agus glacadh leis

“In light of the recent increase of illegal dumping around the county and the considerable increase from the first half of 2020 when compared to the first half 2019, I am calling on Clare County Council to give a comprehensive update on the matter, identifying areas such as:

- Which parts of the County are worst affected?
- What sort of rubbish dumping is most common?
- What action Clare County Council intend to take to tackle the matter?
- How Clare County Council propose to raise awareness on the subject and the adverse effects if participating in illegal dumping.”

Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development replied as follows:

“Clare County Council’s Environment Enforcement Section recently carried out a series of checkpoints with An Garda Síochána in the South East of the county in order to target the illegal transport and disposal of waste materials. The checkpoints are conducted outside of normal business hours and across a number of locations along the Limerick border. This co-operation with An Garda Síochána is part of an ongoing effort to curb this illegal activity not just in south east Clare but also in other parts of the county. Our community wardens are flexible in their response and work outside of normal business hours when required. We also work closely with Limerick City and County Council Environment Section to help identify illegal waste operators.

Our Enforcement team have an active presence throughout the county and our community wardens routinely carry out patrols to monitor and deter any illegal activity. Our wardens also investigate all illegally dumped waste and we prosecute offenders where we obtain sufficient evidence. The illegal disposal of waste under The Waste Management Act is a serious offence. The Act imposes a general duty of care on holders of waste, under which a person may not hold, transport, recover or dispose of waste in a manner that causes, or is likely to cause, environmental pollution. Penalties for serious dumping offences provided for under the Waste Management Acts are substantial. Persons who are found to be responsible for, or involved in, the unauthorised disposal of waste are liable to a maximum fine of €5,000 on summary conviction and/or imprisonment for up to 12 months, and to a maximum fine of €15 million on conviction on indictment and/or imprisonment for up to 10 years.

The use of CCTV for monitoring and investigating illegal dumping is one that requires careful consideration as it impacts on the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The Council is putting in place the relevant policies and safeguards to ensure such technology is deployed while ensuring adherence to the Regulations. The Council continue to invest significant resources in the Environment Enforcement section and work with communities and the Municipal Districts throughout the county to eliminate this illegal activity. We are also implementing the Waste Management Bye Laws to identify households which do not have a waste collection service and thereby ensure that their waste is disposed of correctly.

There is no area of the county which has not been affected by illegal dumping. We have had instances of dumping at various locations across all the Municipal Districts. In general the types of illegal dumping that we are encountering are mainly domestic waste with a smaller proportion of what we term fly tipping i.e. un-bagged household renovation waste and other materials tipped in bulk in remote locations.

Clare County Council working with the other local authorities in the region have a co-ordinated approach to tackling this problem and have utilised a variety of measure to raise awareness on the issue. We actively promote the Green School programme in partnership with An Taisce which imparts valuable information to children regarding recycling and the correct disposal of waste materials. The lessons learned at this early age help children to not only educate their parents but also instils values in children which they bring to adulthood.

The Mywaste.ie was a national campaign which was funded through the Department of Communications Climate Action and Environment and was actively supported by Clare County Council. As part of this campaign we utilised Clare County Council and Greener Clare social media channels and local radio to actively promote that Household waste collection services and Civic Amenity Sites are operating normally throughout the COVID 19 period. Through our social media campaigns we continually remind the public of their duties to correctly dispose of their waste. We are also promoting and supporting voluntary groups during the National Spring Clean activities which include litter picks and beach clean ups. Spring Clean was due to take place during April but has now just commenced on the 8th June to comply with COVID 19 restrictions.

It is important to also acknowledge the general public who continue to recycle and dispose of their waste correctly either through a collection service, bring banks or amenity sites. We have seen a significant increase in certain types of recyclable material and a general increase in activity at our amenity sites. In fact many items that are illegally dumped could be recycled for a small nominal fee and certain items such as electric goods and textiles are actually free to recycle at our sites.”

The elected members outlined problems being caused by bogus waste collectors and the disgraceful and embarrassing behavior of people who carry out illegal dumping. The Councillors agreed that people who carry out this activity should be named and shamed and queries were raised in relation to the use of CCTV cameras. The members called for action to protect our county. It was noted that the law can be harsh as landowners are not always responsible for illegal dumping on their lands. Compliments were paid to the staff in Environment Section on the amount of effort, work, time and resources being put into resolving this issue.

It was noted that recycling centres are much busier than normal as people are spring cleaning during the recent travel restrictions and compliments were paid to the staff in the recycling centres.

C. Kirby, Director of Physical Development addressed the meeting and stated that there has been a 21% increase in household waste during the Covid 19 and that staff have been reassigned to the recycling centres. She stated that procedures are being put in place regarding the use of CCTV going forward and that behavioral change is needed. Ms. Kirby urged people to hire licenced waste operators and undertook to publish a list of licenced operators. She stated that the possibility of upgrading recycling centres will be examined.

It was agreed that Item No. 28 be moved without discussion.

Item 28. National Small Business Recovery Plan.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Collieran Molloy
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. J. Flynn agus A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“Further to my remote attendance as Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council to the webinar launch of “The National Small Business Recovery Plan“ (ref the “Plan”) on Tuesday, 5th May 2020, and in further support of that expressed by the Mayor of Ennis Municipal District (MD) and all Ennis Municipal District Councillors of the

Plan, that Clare County Council communicate its unanimous support for a call for the Irish Government to urgently adopt the “Plan” and its actions.”

The following amendment to this motion was proposed by Cllr. J. Flynn, seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy and agreed by the members present.

Amend last sentence “that Clare County Council communicate its unanimous support for a call for the Irish Government to urgently adopt and implement the “plan” and its actions.”

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy informed the meeting that she had received information that Shannon Heritage will be opening its facilities at Bunratty Castle & Folk Park and King John’s Castle when restrictions are eased on 29th June and noted that there was no update in relation to Craggaunowen Castle and Knappogue Castle.

Cllr. Colleran Molloy informed the members that the meeting cannot go past 6:30 p.m. and requested that outstanding items be deferred to the July Council Meeting. Cllr. G. Flynn proposed that an adjourned meeting take place at 2:00 p.m. on the 29th June, 2020, prior to the Annual General Meeting. This was seconded by Cllr. A. O’Callaghan and agreed by the members present.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that the Council has to manage its gatherings and future meetings in accordance with public health guidelines and that Glór will be a suitable location on a temporary basis. The members agreed that the Glór venue is a suitable location, and should continue as the meeting location on a temporary basis.

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:

- Correspondence dated 5th June, 2020 from Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance and Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development in relation to DBEI business supports.
- Gerard Hartnett, Senior Executive Health & Safety Officer provided induction training for the elected members on the Covid 19 response prior to the Council meeting.

The meeting concluded at 6:30 p.m.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____

**Minutes of the adjourned June Meeting of Clare County Council held in Glór, Ennis,
Co. Clare on Monday, 29th June, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.**

Present:

Councillors M. Howard, M. Nestor, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Murphy, A. Norton, P. Daly, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, P. Burke, A. O’Callaghan, T. O’Brien, J. Crowe, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, G. Flynn, D. McGettigan, P. O’Gorman, S. Talty, J. Killeen, J. Garrihy, 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, Head of Finance.
- Mr. Seán Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Physical Directorate.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy presided.

Cllr. P.J. Kelly proposed that the meeting be adjourned for 15 minutes as a mark of respect to the late Jack Daly, former Councillor. He stated that Jack was a member of Clare County Council from 1974 – 1979. He was also a member of Ennis Urban District Council. Cllr. Kelly stated that the late Jack Daly was a visionary and an achiever who had a major role in the development of Shannon Airport and UL. Mr. Daly also served as Chairman of Clare GAA. It was noted that he presented the Jack Daly Cup to Clare GAA and this is awarded to the Clare Senior Football champions each year.

The elected members supported the adjournment and tributes were paid to the late Jack Daly. Sympathy was extended to his wife and family.

The meeting then adjourned for 15 minutes.

When the meeting resumed Pat Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the members. He stated that he met with Senior Management in Shannon Group together with the Chief Executives from Tipperary County Council and Limerick County and City Council. At the meeting it was felt that a regional approach is best with the singular objective to secure the future security of Shannon Development products. Mr. Dowling informed the members that he would hope to report further at the July meeting.

The elected members present extended congratulations to Róisín Garvey and Timmy Dooley on their appointment to Seanad Éireann during the weekend.

Item 22. Attract people to live in County Clare.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Murphy
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Garrihy agus glacadh leis

“Given the possibilities and opportunities remote work presents us in Clare to diversify our local economies and address rural depopulation, that Clare County Council set aside similar resources, including staffing, planning, implementation and marketing, in attracting people to come and live here permanently as they do to attracting tourists.”

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:

“Clare County Council has recently established a Digital and Broadband Unit within the Rural Development Directorate which has been allocated its own resources both staffing and financial. This unit will work on a cross directorate basis with relevant internal Council Departments and District Offices. It will also work with external agencies and community organisations and explore opportunities to access various funding streams.

The unit is responsible for developing a number of new programmes and projects and exploit opportunities which will help deliver on the goals and objectives of Clare Rural Development Strategy and Clare Digital Strategy. It will also be responsible for further developing the Councils “Digiclare” Digital Hub programme which are already established and successful in a number of locations, thus allowing us to expand the opportunities and possibilities of remote working in County Clare for all sectors of our community and visitors to Clare.”

Cllr. Murphy welcomed the setting up of digital hubs and also welcomed the positive change in relation to remote working. Cllr. C. Murphy requested that the Councils tourism team expand resources to attract people to County Clare who can work remotely in order to regenerate our rural and coastal communities.

Cllr. G. Flynn expressed concern in relation to the inept broadband connectivity and stated that without proper continuity of broadband connectivity there will be problems for people remote working.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the members that a suite of six hubs will be completed before the end of the year. He stated that a number of Clare County Council staff will remain remote working into the future. He agreed that this is a huge opportunity to internationalise Clare as a venue for remote working and that Clare County Council need to lead the way in relation to this.

Item 23. Election posters.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Burke
Cuidithe ag Cllr. I. Lynch agus glacadh leis

“I am calling for a ban on election posters in Co Clare in all elections going forward.”

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

“Members can agree to a ban on election posters in County Clare in all elections going forward. However this is not enforceable as the Council cannot over ride national legislation, and in this regard any deviation from a ban on election posters agreed by this Council would not be enforceable under the legislation.

The statutory instruments governing the use of election posters is section 19 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997 and the Electoral (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2009. This legislation sets out

the time period before and after Election Day that Election Posters may be erected. This time period is **either** (a) 30 days before the poll date or (b) from the date the polling day order for the election has been made, whichever provides the shorter period of time. There is a requirement for candidates to remove all posters including any cable ties within 7 days of the poll. Failure to comply with these conditions constitutes an offence under the Act and is enforceable under the litter Pollution Act.”

The elected members suggested that a policy be agreed by the members of Clare County Council in relation to election posters which could identify a designated location in towns and villages to display election posters or billboards.

Cllr. D. McGettigan stated that she was not fully in support of this notice of motion as new candidates would be at a disadvantage as the electorate need to see what the candidates look like.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that the Council can devise a proposal and bring back before council on this item without reducing opportunities for new candidates if it is the wish of the members.

Item 24. Housing applications.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Nestor
Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O’Brien agus glacadh leis

“This motion requests Clare County Council to assess the possibility of creating an online portal on the Council website that would allow for housing application forms to be submitted online.”

Siobhán McNulty, A/Director of Social Development replied as follows:

“The content of the housing application form is a standardised form used by all local authorities in the Country, the form is localised to include Clare County Council crest, local contact details and can only be amended for areas of choice.

The sector is moving towards online housing applications and in this regard the Local Government Management Agency has tasked the ICT subcommittee with the development of an online platform for submission of housing applications as a key priority of the committee.

There has been engagement and some preliminary discussion with the Department of Heritage, Planning and Local Government as to how to progress the online application form and this will be progressed through the ICT Strategic Housing Programme Board who recently prepared a project initiation document for decision.

Clare County Council will work with the LGMA and appointed subgroup to support the transition to online platforms for housing applications.”

Item 25. PPE for nursing homes.

Due to the nomination of Róisín Garvey to Seanad Éireann this item was not dealt with.

Item 26. Social welfare payments.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Daly

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. S. Talty agus J. Killeen agus glacadh leis

“We ask Clare County Council to request the Department of Social Protection to consider changing the present system, that when an employee goes sick and applies for benefit, he/she has to wait six days before a decision is made, even though Department officials can view the applicants PRSI contributions and medical reports within a short period of time.”

The elected members stated that the current system is outdated and expressed concern that the delay in processing sick benefit is causing hardship for people. It was felt that a more co-ordinated approach is needed to speed up the process for paying sick benefit.

Item 27. Irish tourism industry.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon

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

“That Clare County Council call on the Government to introduce imaginative measures to support the hospitality industry to restore public confidence in the Irish Tourism industry.”

The elected members in supporting this notice of motion agreed that the tourism industry needs to be rejuvenated and stated that it is important to open tourist sites in order to attract domestic tourists to the region. Disappointment was expressed at the closure of Craggaunowen Castle and Knappogue Castle and it was felt that this is an indictment on our local heritage.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy advised the members that it was time to commence the Annual General Meeting and that the remaining items would have to be dealt with at another time. Cllr. P. Daly proposed that an adjourned meeting take place at 2:00 p.m. on Monday, 13th July, prior to the July Council meeting. This was seconded by Cllr. T. O’Brien and agreed by the members present.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed:

Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed:

Cathaoirleach

Date:

**Minutes of the adjourned June Meeting of Clare County Council held in Glór,
Ennis, Co. Clare on Monday, 13th July, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.**

Present:

Councillors M. Howard, M. Nestor, J. Flynn, C. Colleran Molloy, A. Norton, P. Daly, J. Cooney, P. Burke, A. O’Callaghan, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, G. Flynn, D. McGettigan, P. O’Gorman, J. Killeen, J. Garrihy, 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.
- Ms. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance.
- Ms. Helen Quinn, A/Director of Economic Development.
- Ms. Bernadette Haugh, A/Senior Executive Officer, Rural Development.
- Ms. Deirdre O’Shea, A/Tourism Officer, Rural Development.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Howard presided.

Item 30. Shannon Airport.

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

“In view of the fact that Aer Lingus is already operating flights between Belfast, Cork and Dublin, that Clare County Council calls on the CEO of Aer Lingus to restore flights to Shannon as a matter of urgency.”

The elected members, in supporting this notice of motion, noted that the Shannon to Heathrow flights are a loss to the airport and businesses in the mid west region.

Item 31. Shannon International Airport.

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

“That this Council calls on An Taoiseach and relevant Ministers to urgently review Aviation Policy to ensure Shannon International Airport is in a position to attract a substantial portion of services and passengers to ensure it's viability for the future after the restrictions have been lifted.”

The elected members expressed disappointment at the lack of government support for Shannon Airport. They agreed that Shannon Group need to invest in a marketing plan

for the airport. The members present also felt that bus and rail links to Shannon Airport need to be developed. Concern was expressed at the continuous changeover of management at Shannon Group.

Item 32. Housing assistance payment.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn
Cuidithe ag Cllr. D. McGettigan agus glacadh leis

“I am calling on Clare County Council to support a call to The Taoiseach and Minister responsible for housing to urgently review the housing assistance payment (H.A.P.) and design a better way to provide affordable accommodation and also to consult with local authorities in the process.

I believe this particular model of housing support is not suitable for people who have qualified for social housing. I believe the current policy lacks transparency and places a great degree of stress on vulnerable people who need assistance from the state and especially at this time of uncertainty. I would also request that if this proposal is supported that it be circulated to all other Councils and members of the Oireachtas.”

The elected members agreed that the Housing Assistance Scheme scheme needs to be reassessed as substantive changes have occurred since it was established.

Item 17. Commercial rates.

Ar moladh Cllr. D. McGettigan

“To ask the Chief Executive to confirm (a) the amount of decline of commercial rates income to date since the start of the Covid 19 public health emergency (b) the total expected income shortfall as a result of the Government’s waiving of commercial rates as an aid to business recovery (c) the additional expenditure incurred by the Council to date as a result of the emergency; and if the Chief Executive will detail any contact or discussions with the Department of Housing and Local Government about a compensatory package for the Council to offset the decline in rates income and the added expenditure.”

Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance, Corporate and Human Resources replied as follows:

“Commercial Rates income for 2020 was billed for €44.7m, compared to €43.0m in 2019. The difference explained by additional properties in the utility sector being valued/revalued in 2019.

To date to the end of May 2020, receipts from commercial rates as adjusted for the additional income billed was €2.1m lower than the same period in 2019.

In early May, the Government has decided that commercial rates, for a 3 month period beginning on 27 March 2020, for all businesses that have been forced to close due to public health requirements, will be waived. The exchequer providing €260m to fully fund the cost of this initiative. We are awaiting further clarifications on this scheme from the Department in order to assess the benefit this will have to commercial rate customers. It is our understanding that the cost of this will be fully

recouped to this council. We expect clarification in the coming weeks on the businesses that qualify for this scheme and will update members thereafter. From our own analysis, we have calculated a €19.7m annual impact on businesses who were closed or business severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional expenditure has been incurred to date by the council in responding to this emergency pandemic. This expenditure is in the areas of PPE, signage, ICT equipment, cleaning and facilitating public health recommendations. The estimate to the end of May is €500k. Some of this was procured on our behalf by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) so exact costs are not available at this time.

The Chief Executive and the Head of Finance have through the CCMA Finance Committee on behalf of the Local Authority sector outlined the impact on commercial rates and other goods and services income to this council. These submissions have resulted in the initial rates deferral initiative, the subsequent rates waiver scheme and also the business restart scheme to be announced.

The sector continues to outline to government the commercial rates impact beyond the three month waiver on a number of sectors and the serious need that full compensation is paid to local authorities for the loss of this income. This financial stability is required to deliver local services and to allow local government to contribute effectively to local economic recovery.”

Item 34. Return to Rural Living.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Garrihy

Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“I am calling on the Government to incentivise Return to Rural Living by investment by private investors/companies and individuals in Rural Towns and Villages with focus on bringing existing buildings back in to use as permanent residential occupancy along with development of new low density developments in towns suitable and strategically located to be selected by the local authority.

Proposal: Investment in bringing back in to use or conversion of buildings located in Rural Towns to be credited with TAX allowances based on the full expenditure incurred in the development and fit out of the property including interest payable on loans required for the purpose. This tax deduction to be creditable against all income earned in the Republic of Ireland. Tax allowable to be usable over a 20 year period. Similar to apply to green field low density development for permanent occupancy in appropriate Rural Towns and villages.

- 1: The property is built, renovated and fitted out to highest current standards as per current building regulations and energy efficiency.
- 2: The property is to be used solely for permanent residential occupancy either by the owner occupier or by a long term lease (suggest 20 years)
- 3: The property can be mix of commercial and residential with over the shop living quarters allowable.
- 4: Towns to be selected by the local authority for this Rural Renewal Scheme.

Suggest that in case by case basis infrastructure deficit specific to the town should be addressed by development charges targeted and specifically set at a level

commensurate with this aim. Development charges levied to address infrastructural deficits specific to selected Towns should also be eligible for tax write off.

5: Specific allowances be made for old buildings which cannot be brought to accessibility standards due to age and space available with demolition and rebuild options accommodated by planning.”

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:

“The suggested Rural Renewal Scheme has been piloted as a new concept in Ireland and was one of many property-based tax incentives contained in the Taxes Consolidation Act (T.C.A.) 1997 that applied between June 1998 & December 2006. It provided residential tax relief ranging from 5% for 10 years on Construction to 10% for 10 years on refurbishment or conversion. For the most part, these were area-based incentive schemes comprising both commercial and residential aspects. These provided for a scheme of tax reliefs aimed at invigorating certain areas of rural Ireland on similar lines to the renewal schemes previously available in an urban context. Provision was made under the scheme for accelerated capital allowances in respect of capital expenditure incurred on the construction or refurbishment of certain industrial and commercial buildings or structures (including those in use for the provision of sewerage facilities, water supplies and roads for public purposes) in qualifying rural areas. Also, there was provision for relief against rental income in respect of expenditure on the construction, conversion or refurbishment of certain residential accommodation in qualifying rural areas and for relief against total income for expenditure incurred by owner-occupiers on the construction, conversion or refurbishment of residential accommodation. At the time the scheme covered all of the counties of Leitrim and Longford as well as certain areas in counties Cavan, Roscommon and Sligo.

Any such scheme would be outside the remit of Clare County Council and would be a matter for the Revenue Commissioners to introduce nationally. The Council can refer the Motion to the Revenue Commissions for their consideration. The Rural Development Directorate would support the introduction of any such scheme which is aligned with one of the key actions of our Rural Development Strategy i.e. “to put in place local policies and develop programmes that underpin the way of life of the people who live in rural Clare and that stimulate the growth of our towns, villages and their more rural hinterland”. (Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026).

The Economic Development Directorate leads to Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (as varied). It has a number of objectives which support the use of existing derelict and vacant buildings in our towns and villages. Among those objectives are

CDP 4.3 – Development Plan Objective – Living in our Towns and Villages

CDP 16.6 - Development Plan Objective – Town Centre Vacancy

CDP 16.9 – Development Plan Objective – Derelict Sites

A Vacant Homes Action Plan for Co. Clare was prepared by the Social Development Directorate and submitted to the Department in December 2017. The Vacant Homes Website (www.vacanthomes.ie) has recently been re-launched by Mayo County Council encouraging the public to make use of the vacant homes website and register vacant residential properties in their area. To date 35 houses in Clare have been entered on the Website by Members of the public. There are a small number that Clare County Council may be able to acquire in due course, if and when legal issues

are resolved. Others can be ruled out due to insufficient address or where the locations are in a rural area where there is insufficient demand for housing. Assessing the reasons for vacancy can be a difficult and a slow process as some derelict/vacant property owners do not reside in the area and a lack of knowledge on their whereabouts is a barrier to advancing acquisition. Where the owners' details can be obtained from the Land Direct Register,, they are being contacted by Clare County Council and requested to bring their properties back in to use through the following means; Repair and Lease Scheme, Buy and Renew Scheme and Long Term Leasing. To date 25 no. properties have been acquired throughout the county under the Buy and Renew Scheme. Clare County Council has reached its housing targets and is open to exploring new suitable properties in rural areas.”

The elected members agreed that tax incentives would encourage people to invest and live in rural towns and villages.

Item 35. Public procurement process.

Cllr. I. Lynch requested that this notice of motion be withdrawn.

“In light of the current economic difficulties Clare County Council call on the Taoiseach to review public procurement process to allow additional weighting to be applied for local contractors in the qualification/ tendering process in an effort to ensure that government contracts provide the best possible stimulant for the local economy.”

Item 36. Comhfhreagras/Correspondence.

Cllr. J. Flynn informed the meeting that he has been informed that 5 or 6 people are sleeping rough in the town centre without toilet facilities or running water.

Cllr. J. Flynn stated that a significant number of people have established an illegal encampment near a special area of conservation in a housing estate and it is causing a health and safety risk.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive assured Cllr. J. Flynn that issues of this nature are not new and there are many difficult challenges being faced by local authorities.

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:

1. Correspondence dated 25th March, 2020 from the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment regarding penalties for dumping/littering offences.
2. Correspondence dated 24th April, 2020 from the Department of Justice and Equality in relation to penalties for dumping or littering offences.
3. Correspondence dated 24th March, 2020 from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government with regard to amending the restrictions around slurry spreading.
4. Correspondence dated 12th March, 2020 from the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine concerning slurry spreading.

5. Correspondence dated 23rd March, 2020 from University of Limerick in relation to student rent increases for the incoming 20/21 year.
6. Correspondence dated 12th March, 2020 from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in relation to the Housing Assistance Payment scheme.
7. Correspondence dated 30th April, 2020 from the Department of Justice and Equality in relation to legislation to deal with trolls and trolling.
8. Correspondence dated 16th March, 2020 from the O.P.W. in relation to funding for the cleaning and dredging of rivers in Co. Clare.
9. Correspondence dated 16th March, 2020 from Cathal Crowe, T.D., in relation to resolution pertaining to high rents and low levels of house ownership.
10. Correspondence dated 12th March, 2020 from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in connection with targets for house build and renovation.
11. Correspondence dated 12th March, 2020 from the Department of Education and Skills in relation to a programme on the election/electoral process for elections into the secondary school curriculum.
12. Correspondence dated 12th March, 2020 from the Department of Education and Skills in relation to a new initiative for all schools to teach sign language.
13. Correspondence dated 12th March, 2020 from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in relation to sign language.
14. Correspondence dated 12th March, 2020 from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in connection with regulations concerning Airbnb and RPZs.
15. Circular NOAC 01/2020 in relation to the Review of Corporate Plans 2015-2019.
16. Correspondence dated 24th April, 2020 from the Governor of Yunnan Province the People's Republic of China.
17. Resolution circulated by Sligo County Council in relation to rates shortfall.
18. Resolution circulated by Cork County Council in relation to parental alienation.

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.

Irish Planning Institute Conference held in Metropole Hotel, Cork on 5th February, 2020.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €30.13 including conference fee of €100.

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

AILG Training entitled “The Development Plan making process” taking place in Dooley Hotel, Waterford on 15th February, 2020.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €38.88 including conference fee of €5.

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

Conference entitled “Safety Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005” taking place in Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 21st – 23rd February, 2020.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €54.35 including conference fee of €100.

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

AILG Annual Conference taking place in Longford on 4th & 5th March, 2020.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €444.49.

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

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____