

**Minutes of the September 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> September, 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, S. Crawford, 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.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Howard presided.

**Congratulations.**

The elected members extended congratulations to Cllr. Donna McGettigan on her recent wedding.

**Vote of Sympathy.**

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

- The O’Connor family, Ennistymon on the death of Heather O’Connor
- The Timlin family, Ennis on the death of David Timlin
- The Collins family, Carrigaholt on the death of Paddy Collins
- The Ryan family, Kilkishen on the death of Thomas Ryan
- The Troy family, Kilkee on the death of Michael Troy
- The Collins family Ballyea on the death of Lorcan Collins
- The Moloney family on the death of Frank Moloney, New York
- The Droney family, Bell Harbour on the death of Chris Droney
- The Hynes family, Ennistymon on the death of Bridget Hynes
- The Mulkere family, Crusheen on the death of Brendan Mulkere
- The Haugh family, Lissycasey on the death of Gerald Haugh
- The Mulhaire family, Galway on the death of Martin Mulhaire

The members agreed to adjourn the meeting for 15 minutes as a mark of respect.

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

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

“That the Minutes of the adjourned June Meeting of Clare County Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 be adopted and signed.”

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

“That the Minutes of the July Meeting of Clare County Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 be adopted and signed.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. D. McGettigan agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the adjourned July Meeting of Clare County Council held on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 be adopted and signed.”

**Item 2: Matters Arising.**

There were no matters arising.

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

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

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> July, 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 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 be noted.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. A. O'Callaghan  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Burke agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Annual General Meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2020 be noted.”

e. Ar moladh Cllr. S. Talty  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Murphy agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Annual General Meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2020 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 be noted.”

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

The members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 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.

Cllr. J. Flynn acknowledged the ongoing work involved in processing the restart grants. He welcomed the contract signing for 40 social houses in Ashline as well as the launch of the draft Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy. Cllr. J. Flynn expressed concern that no update has been provided in relation to dangerous junction at Corrovorrin in the monthly report.

Cllr. G. Flynn welcomed the update on the capital programme in the Social Development Directorate. Cllr. G. Flynn also welcomed the update provided on cultural services and sports and recreation. Cllr. G. Flynn urged caution in relation to the LIS programme funds.

Cllr. J. Garrihy welcomed funding being allocated to County Clare under the rural and heritage grant applications.

Cllr. P. Burke acknowledged the work undertaken by Council crews in the Killaloe Municipal District area together with the local landowners and farmers in clearing roads that were blocked and damaged during the recent storms Ellen and Francis.

Cllr. C. Murphy welcomed progress on Kilkee waste water treatment plant upgrade. He referred to the positive feedback received in relation to the huts in Kilkee. Cllr. C. Murphy congratulated the arts office in providing assistance with filming locations for a German film shooting in Kilkee over the summer months and noted the positive impact this brought to the area.

Cllr. G. Keating welcomed funding granted in respect of applications submitted under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020. Cllr. Keating informed the meeting that work has commenced on the hub in Cross and he welcomed progress in securing a premises for a library in Kildysart.

Cllr. M. Begley welcomed the update provided in relation to the flood relief scheme in Springfield, Clonlara and asked if a Section 50 application is required. S. Lenihan, Senior Engineer responded to this query and stated that this project is under the control of the OPW and is at an advanced stage, currently awaiting a decision from An Bord Pleanála. Cllr. M. Begley raised a query in relation to monitoring discharge from waste water treatment plants serving small developments and P. Dowling, Chief Executive undertook to revert to Cllr. Begley with response to this.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive acknowledged the work undertaken by staff in compiling the management report every month as it is a useful source of information. He invited the elected members to contact Ken Fitzsimons, Communications Officer in relation to items they may wish to include.

#### **Item 6: Co-option to fill vacancy on Clare County Council.**

Report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2020 from Ann Reynolds, A/Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services was circulated with the agenda. The report states that it is proposed to fill the casual vacancy on the Council arising from the nomination of Cllr. Róisín Garvey to Seanad Éireann. The vacancy will be filled in accordance with Section 19 of the Local Government Act 2001, i.e. the person to be nominated by the same registered political party who nominated for election the member who caused the casual vacancy.

The report states that correspondence has been received from the Green Party nominating Susan Crawford, Clonbony, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare for co-option to Clare County Council. Susan provided her written consent to this co-option.

By virtue of her proposed co-option to the Council, Susan Crawford will also fill the vacant Councillor positions on the following:

- West Clare Municipal District Committee
- Physical Development Strategic Policy Committee
- Board of Glór Irish Music Centre
- County Rural Water Monitoring Committee
- Regional Health Forum West
- Western Inter County Railway Committee

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

“That Susan Crawford, Clonbony, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare be co-opted to fill the casual vacancy in

- West Clare Municipal District Committee
- Physical Development Strategic Policy Committee and
- Board of Glór Irish Music Centre
- County Rural Water Monitoring Committee
- Regional Health Forum West
- Western Inter County Railway Committee

The elected members welcomed Cllr. Susan Crawford to Clare County Council.

Cllr. S. Crawford addressed the meeting and stated that it is a great honour and a humbling experience to join Clare County Council as a Green Party member. She undertook to bring strength, vision and support to the Council. Cllr. Crawford acknowledged the support and encouragement she has received from Senator Róisín Garvey. She also acknowledged her son Tomás who is a constant source of inspiration for her. Cllr. Crawford stated that she is a social justice activist who will work for the rights and entitlements for young adults as well as addressing the challenges facing vulnerable people and vowed to drive that vision. She also stated that she will support initiatives getting people out and active.

**Item 7: Disposal of property at Castlecrine, Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.**

Report dated 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 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 Castlecrine, Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2020.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Begley  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. O’Gorman 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 Castlecrine, Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2020.”

**Item 8: Disposal of lands at Gaurus, Ennis, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.**

Report dated 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2020 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 0.036 hectares

at Gaurus, Ennis, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2020.

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton

Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy 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 at Gaurus, Ennis, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2020.”

**Item 9: Report in accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2013 for the proposed enhancement of the public realm of O’Connell Square, High Street, Bank Place, Old Barrack Street and Barrack Square, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

Report 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2020 from Leonore O’Neill, Meetings Administrator, Ennis Municipal District was circulated with the agenda together with report from Gareth Ruane, A/Senior Executive Planner. The report outlines details of proposed enhancement of the public realm of O’Connell Square, High Street, Bank Place, Old Barrack Street and Barrack Square, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“That pursuant to Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2010, Clare County Council proceed with the proposed public realm improvement works at O’Connell Square, High Street, Bank Place, Old Barrack Street and Barrack Square, Ennis, Co. Clare.”

Cllr. J. Flynn stated that he is fully supportive of this initiative and expressed concern in relation to the possible deficit in car parking spaces.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that this strategic project will rejuvenate Ennis as Clare’s capital town.

**Item 10: Report in accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2013 for the proposed development at Claureen, Ennis, Co. Clare under the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF).**

Report dated 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 from Seán Lenihan, A/Director of Physical Development was circulated with the agenda together with report from Gareth Ruane, A/Senior Executive Planner. The report outlines details of proposed development of a link road between the existing N85 roundabout at Claureen and the junctions of Lees Road (L4180)/Drumcliffe Road (L4599) and (L4182)/Drehidnagower Road (L4587) at Claureen, Ennis, Co. Clare under the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF).

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

“That pursuant to Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2010, Clare County Council proceed with the proposed development of a link road between the existing N85 roundabout at Claireen and the junctions of Lees Road (L4180)/Drumcliffe Road (L4599) and (L4182)/Drehidnagower Road (L4587) under the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF).”

Cllr. J. Flynn referred to advice received from the County Solicitor outlining that he could find no basis on which the members of the County Council would have a personal responsibility for a decision made in the context of an application pursuant to Part VIII of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended and stated that the elected members decision is made following consideration of the report of the Executive.

**Item 11: Report in accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2013 for the proposed rejuvenation and enhancement of the streetscape at Main Street, Ennistymon, Co. Clare.**

Report dated 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2020 from John O’Malley, A/Senior Executive Office, West Clare Municipal District was circulated with the agenda together with report from Gareth Ruane, A/Senior Executive Planner. The report outlines details of proposed rejuvenation and enhancement of the streetscape at Main Street, Ennistymon, Co. Clare.

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

“That pursuant to Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2010, Clare County Council proceed with the proposed rejuvenation and enhancement of the streetscape at Main Street, Ennistymon, Co. Clare.”

Cllr. S. Talty and Cllr. J. Garrihy complimented the staff in the West Clare Municipal District on the manner which they carried out the public consultation process in relation to this project and the manner in which they dealt with submissions received.

**Item 12: Report in accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2013 for the proposed construction of 8 No. residential units at Tulla Road, Roslevan, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

Report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2020 from Siobhán McNulty, A/Director of Social Development was circulated with the agenda together with report from Gareth Ruane, A/Senior Executive Planner. The report outlines details of proposed construction of 8 No. residential units at Tulla Road, Roslevan, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Cllr. P. Murphy read out the following proposal signed by Cllrs. P. Murphy, M. Nestor, C. Collieran Molloy, P. Daly, A. Norton, M. Howard and J. Flynn.

“Seeking deferral for one month Part VIII for the proposed 8 houses at Tulla Road, Ennis to enable housing section to address the matters of genuine concern of adjoining residents which include:

- (1) Prevention of overlooking
- (2) Retention of existing trees, hedgegrow and stone wall
- (3) Treatment of 1.8 m proposed boundary wall.”

The elected members supported this proposal and stated that consultation with residents should continue when works begin.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that it is important that there is general consensus across the chamber in relation to this and stated that Council staff will try to achieve compromise. Mr. Dowling informed the members that there are legal targets to develop houses for people who are waiting for homes and that there is great need for social housing in the Ennis area.

**Item 13: Interim Financial Report to 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2020.**

Financial Report for half year to 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 was circulated with the agenda. The report set out a financial review of the Council’s income and expenditure account for the first six months of 2020, together with an overview of the activity on capital projects in the same period. The members noted the report as presented.

**Item 14: Schedule date for Local Property Tax meeting.**

It was agreed by the members present that the Local Property Tax Meeting will take place at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2020 in Glór.

**Item 15: Draft Clare Tourism Strategy.**

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the meeting that this document has been before the members at the July meeting and stated that Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development and Deirdre O’Shea, A/Head of Tourism would provide a brief overview.

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development thanked the elected members for their participation in working on the County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 and stated that it provides a vision for tourism over the next decade outlining clear objectives to take tourism forward for the county. Mr. Cleary referred to the significant changes to the global tourism experience, consequent on the Covid-19 pandemic and requested the support of the elected members in implementing the strategy going forward.

Deirdre O’Shea, A/Tourism Officer addressed the meeting and gave a presentation on County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 under the following headings:

- Clare Tourism Strategy – preface
- The Policy Perspective



- Our Destination Experiences
- Clare Tourism Department Marketing Update – Autumn/Winter campaign 2020

Cllr. C. Murphy, proposed the adoption of the County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 and commended the Rural Development Directorate on the work undertaken in producing the document. He stated that all questions and concerns were dealt with admirably. This was seconded by Cllr. G. Keating and agreed by the members present.

The elected members complimented the Tourism Team for putting this living document in place and for dealing with the present climate and challenges facing the tourism sector.

**Item 16: LCDC membership.**

Report dated 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 from Bernadette Haugh, A/Senior Executive Officer, Rural Development was circulated with the agenda. The report states that Clare Public Participation Network (PPN) has five seats on the Local Community Development Committee: Community & Voluntary (2), Social Inclusion (2) and Environment (2). Two of those seats are due to be filled and the Clare PPN has undertaken an election process for this process.

The nominations for the forthcoming term of office are:

- Mr. Dermot Hayes, Social Inclusion College
- Ms. Cornelia Wahli, Environmental College.

The Age Friendly Alliance Board has nominated Mr. Maurice Harvey to fill the vacancy of membership on the LCDC.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection has nominated Ms. Mary Moloney to fill the vacancy of membership on the LCDC.

The members approved the nominations having been proposed by Cllr. S. Talty, seconded by Cllr. B. Chambers and agreed by the members present.

**Item 17: Lahinch and Environs Regeneration Partnership (‘LERP’) project report.**

Report from Noeleen Fitzgerald, Chair of Lahinch Seaworld Project Technical Team was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the Lahinch and Environs Regeneration Partnership is a collaboration between key state agencies and community groups to deliver an innovative, high quality and sustainable hub offering integrated/linked facilities, services and infrastructure in the strategically located town of Lahinch, Co. Clare. The report continues to list six individual component projects being undertaken by Lahinch and Environs Regeneration Partnership. Details of the regeneration and retrofit of Lahinch Seaworld Building and Services project were outlined in the report.

The report states that under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001 promotion of interests of local community, member’s approval is requested to support these keys

to success in Project Technical Support, Project Bridge Finance, match funding to this project and if private loan finance is pursued to provide a loan guarantee to Lahinch Seaworld.

Under 106 Local Government Act 2001 Borrowing and Lending of money, member's approval is sought to borrow up to €1.5m Section 11 HFA funding for this community initiative and under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001 loan funding to Lahinch Seaworld. There will be no cost to the Council above that budgeted as energy savings and budget subvention will fund the repayments.

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

“As per report to members at the statutory meeting September 2020, under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001 promotion of interests of local community, member's approval is requested to support these keys to success in Project Technical Support, Project Bridge Finance, match funding to this project and if private loan finance is pursued to provide a loan guarantee to Lahinch Seaworld.

Under 106 Local Government Act 2001 Borrowing and Lending of money, member's approval is sought to borrow up to €1.5m Section 11 HFA funding for this community initiative and under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001 loan funding to Lahinch Seaworld. There will be no cost to the Council above that budgeted as energy savings and budget subvention will fund the repayments.”

**Item 18: Additional funding for Accelerated Measures and Standard Town & Village Scheme 2020.**

Report dated 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 from Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the full Council has already approved the recommended priority projects for submission to the Department for 2020 Town and Village grants. Subsequently, the Department has expanded the scheme and invited more eligible applications.

Clare County Council will be permitted to submit 6 applications in respect of towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000 people in Round 3 and, in addition, submit 1 application in respect of the town of Ennis.

The number of applications permitted under the Standard Town and Village Renewal Scheme is now being increased from 6 applications per local authority to 10 applications per local authority.

A list of proposed projects was circulated with the agenda.

The report as circulated was noted by the members present.

**Item 19: Review of the existing Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 and Preparation of a new Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028.**

Report dated 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 from Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development was circulated with the agenda. The report advised that statutory notices indicating intention to review the existing Clare County Development Plan

2017-2023 and to prepare a new Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 will be advertised in the Clare Champion dated 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020.

The report continues that in order to assist in this first stage of public consultation an issues booklet has been prepared identifying suggested planning issues that the new Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 could address. Before this first stage public consultation the issues booklet will be forwarded to the elected members. During the public consultation the issues booklet will be posted on the Council's website [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie) and will be available at Council offices and libraries.

This item was noted by the members present.

## **Item 20. Visual impact in West Clare.**

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

“That a report be made available to the members comprehensively detailing all the considerations, calculations and reasoned rationale which led to the present areas listed as those of visual impact in West Clare resulting in the refusal of planning permissions.”

### **Helen Quinn, A/Senior Planner replied as follows:**

“The Clare County Development Plan, 2017 – 2023, as varied, sets out the landscape character areas of the county. There are no areas specifically listed as ‘visual impact’ in West Clare however the Landscape Character Assessment as set out in the plan identifies the landscape types as set out below:

#### **a. Settled Landscapes**

These comprise the network of farmland, villages and towns that make up the majority of the County, and are landscapes where the majority of the population live and work. Such landscapes provide opportunities for agriculture, forestry, tourism, enterprise and leisure.

#### **b. Working Landscapes**

These landscapes contain the highest concentrations of population and employment and the strongest transport links and connectivity and include lands within 10km on either side of the N18/M18, except as excluded by Heritage Landscapes.

#### **c. Shannon Estuary Working Landscape**

This includes all shores and waters between Moneypoint to Ballynacragga Point, excluding Clonderlaw Bay.

#### **d. Heritage Landscapes**

These landscapes are areas of the county where sensitive environmental resources – scenic, ecological and historic – are located, and include both national and internationally recognised areas such as the Clare coastline, the Burren and Lough Derg. The role of these landscapes is to sustain natural and cultural heritage, and to allow these landscapes to evolve and to renew.

In addition to the above the County Development Plan, identifies a number of scenic routes within the County, which traverse the various landscape types and can include for some coastal areas which are also popular tourist routes. The designation of these

routes is not intended to prohibit development but rather that any development on these routes does not hinder or obstruct scenic views.

The above landscape types are supported in the Development Plan by various policies and objectives. These objectives seek to permit development within the various landscapes whilst at the same time recognise the particular characteristics of each area. Furthermore each policy includes a common provision that developments demonstrate:

- That sites have been selected to avoid visually prominent locations
- That site layouts avail of existing topography and vegetation to reduce visibility from scenic routes, walking trails, public amenities and roads,
- That design for buildings and structures reduce visual impact through careful choice of form, finish and colours and that any site works seek to reduce visual impact of the development.

The ‘visual impact’ of a proposed development will vary from site to site and is dependent on a number of factors as set out below. The planning report for each application sets out all the relevant issues pertaining to the application, including those regarding visual impact. As each site and application has specific characteristics and issues, each application is assessed on its individual merits on a case-by-case basis.

Considerations in terms of site selection include:

- sites offering shelter, privacy and good orientation for passive solar gain.
- sites with roadside hedgerows, trees, and natural boundaries which can be retained and incorporated into the layout.
- Sites that provide shelter from prevailing winds and landscaping and which have a natural backdrop.
- Sites that allow for safe access without significant removal of roadside boundaries.

It is important to recognise that prominent or sensitive sites require careful consideration in terms of their siting and design and when done so can contribute to the character of the landscape and set a high design standard which respects the context of the site.

To assist rural house applicants the Planning Authority has prepared guidance in the form of the Clare Rural House Design Guide which is available on the Council’s Website. This sets out in detail, the criteria to be used in selecting the most appropriate site location while also providing information on appropriate house types for rural areas.

The Planning Authority also provides pre-planning advice for potential rural housing applicants when any potential siting and design issues can be addressed at an early stage.

As outlined above, and in previous notice of motions, the considerations applied in the assessment of planning applications vary as each site and application has specific characteristics and issues. In addition the Planning Authority is guided by the policies and objectives of the Development Plan and Ministerial Guidelines which inform the visual and other considerations of various development proposals. The planning application process is one of the most open, transparent and inclusive processes in government.”

Cllr. P.J. Kelly stated that he believes there is lack of consistency in the planning process and that planning applications in West Clare are refused on a regular basis due to visual obtrusion. Cllr. Kelly informed the meeting that he will be requesting this information in a different format.

**Item 21. Rights of people with disabilities.**

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

“In March 2018 Ireland formally ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities which under Article 19 states that disabled people have a right to live in the community and have access to a range of in-home and other supports including PAS to support this.

We call on Clare County Council to consult closely and actively involve persons with disabilities, (including children with disabilities), individually and through their representative organisations, specifically in relation to services provided by this Local Authority which impact on disabled people’s lives, such as Planning, Housing, Transport, Social Inclusion, Enterprise and other areas which impact on the lives of people with disabilities.”

**Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:**

“Clare County Council is committed to continuing and improving service delivery to all citizens of Co. Clare including those persons with disabilities.

The Planning Department will actively engage with persons with disabilities and groups representing those with disabilities as part of the upcoming County Development Plan Review.

The Housing Department leads on a Housing and Disability Steering Group which comprises of representatives from the H.S.E. (public, mental health and disability services) and other bodies representing persons with disabilities in the County. This forum provides a platform for inter-agency engagement to consider the housing needs and supports those with disability require to live independently.

**Clare PPN** include groups representing people with disability and has representatives on a number of committees across the organisation and set out hereunder

- Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) – 2 Social Inclusion Reps
- Joint Policing Committee – 1 Social Inclusion Representative
- Physical Development S.P.C. – 1 Social Inclusion Representative
- Rural Development S.P.C. – 1 Social Inclusion Representative
- Economic Development S.P.C. – 1 Social Inclusion Representative
- Social Development S.P.C. – 1 Social Inclusion Representative
- Rural Development Forum – 1 Social Inclusion Representative

The Sports Inclusive Disability Officer’s works with all relevant stakeholders to increase and sustain participation and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities within the County Clare.

Clare County Councils Leisure Complex holds 7 years of ‘Gold Awards’ from Ireland Active’s Excellence in Disability Awareness. The Councils newly revamped Gym was designed for access for people with disabilities in addition to providing outdoor wheelchair ‘Mountain Trikes’ in Lees Road and Kilrush and swimming classes for people with disabilities.

All of the Local Enterprise Office Clare funding, training and mentoring programmes are accessible to persons with disabilities and are adapted according to the requirements; LEO have previously appointed a sign language interpreter to facilitate participants, and have run a number of primary food safety courses for the Irish Wheelchair Association.

The Clare Arts Office Embrace Arts & Disability Programme creates integrated opportunities for individuals with disabilities and without disabilities to engage in creative activities together in the community. The Embrace programme steering group is made up of people with disabilities, representatives of disability organizations and artists. The Arts Office works with over thirty Disability and Mental Health Organisations in Clare to provide artists residencies and art projects across a wide range of art forms for participants with disabilities.

The Council recently commissioned artist Shona McGillivray to facilitate a long term art project with St Anne’s Special School in Ennis.

Clare County Council is fully committed to continuing to consult and involve persons with disabilities across all of its functions.”

Cllr. J. Killeen welcomed the response and noted the considerable effort being made by Clare County Council in consulting and actively involving persons with disabilities in delivering its services. Cllr. Killeen proposed upskilling for Councillors and Committees on disability awareness.

In supporting this notice of motion, the elected members noted that Clare County Council is very pro-active when areas requiring improvement are highlighted. The mobility grants and disability grants for altering homes to improve accessibility were commended. The elected members called for the Council to arrange an awareness campaign on social media urging members of the public not to park on footpaths. It was felt that higher penalties should be incurred for people who park cars at bus stops as the impact this can have on people with disabilities is immense as it obstructs their only way of getting out.

It was noted that “Make Way Day” will take place on 25<sup>th</sup> September next.

## **Item 22. Communications Boards.**

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

“Can Clare County Council put up communications boards in some if not all of their amenities sites such as John O Sullivan Park, Lees Road and Vandeleur Garden’s to help with accessibility for people with disabilities and elderly people.

You can read more about the development of the communication board and how it helps accessibility <https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/community/public-parks-and-playgrounds/min-ryan-park-communication-boards>” (M)

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

“The installation of communication boards would be a welcome addition to Clare County Councils amenity sites and in this regard we will seek a funding stream to pilot a site and trial this initiative. That said the premise of these boards is that they are interactive and given current COVID-19 restrictions we would not be in a position to commence a pilot at this time. We can however look at a pilot whereby the communication board could be in the form of a downloadable QR Code which individual users can use on their own smart phone/tablet.

Again we will endeavour to seek a funding stream and work in partnership with other service agencies to trial this service.”

Cllr. A. Norton advised that communication boards help people with language and communication issues as they display photos and symbols and would be a positive addition to our amenities.

**Item 23. Funding for housing department.**

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“Due to increased pressure on limited funds I am calling on the Chief Executive to provide increased funding to the Housing Department for additional resources to deal with Estate Management throughout the county.”

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

“The Council has a committed estate management team who work tirelessly to address tenancy compliance. The volume of complaints of anti-social behaviour has increased significantly as a result of COVID with 220 complaints already received during 2020 to date. This compares with 139 complaints to year end in 2019.

A review of the estate management function is currently underway to seek to respond to this escalation in complaints and a revised model of estate management to incorporate an enhanced tenancy enforcement approach will be developed over the coming weeks. A review of our estate management practices is particularly relevant and timely at this juncture as the housing stock is increasing significantly and as a means of ensuring the establishment and growth of sustainable communities in our newly developed estates.

It is recognised that supports provided to vulnerable clients are central to successful outcomes. To this end this Council is leading a Housing High Level Steering Group to deliver an integrated, multi-agency approach to housing provision, sustainability and to consider the impact on socio economic development of communities in the County. This multi-agency approach in the development and management of housing will hopefully lead to more sustainable outcomes and positive impacts for residents in the County.”

Cllr. G. Flynn referred to the increased work load in housing section and stated that this requires increased funding as the Council no longer have sufficient resources to manage tenancies. Cllr. Flynn also stated that the management of housing estates needs to be on a seven day basis.

In supporting this notice of motion the elected members felt that estate management services need extra resources so that residents are comfortable and safe. It was noted that the Council has a growing stock of housing and that a cautious approach should be taken when allocating houses. Instances of anti social behaviour were outlined and it was felt that all complaints should be investigated as anti social behaviour should not be tolerated.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and stated that this is a very intuitive motion. He stated that it is no way a reflection on staff in housing as they are not trained in mediation or as peacemakers. Mr. Dowling stated that the Council are looking at establishing a dedicated unit to manage estates where there are tensions by providing ongoing engagement with residents and strengthening our day to day working with individuals and families. Mr. Dowling noted that covid did exasperate these problems and it now needs a targeted response. Mr. Dowling stated that this will require people with a certain skillset to manage conflictual relationships with our tenants who have a contract with the Council and anti social behaviour is not part of that contract. Mr. Dowling informed the members that this initiative will require partnership with An Garda Síochána.

#### **Item 24. Homeless situation in Clare.**

Ar moladh Cllr. D. McGettigan

“To ask what are the true figures for the homeless situation in Clare by area. Are those living on families/friends couches, hubs/hostels/hotels/ B&B or where you don't have your own front door considered on the homeless list?

What is Clare County Councils plan to end homelessness and what is the time frame for it?”

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

“The homeless figures are as reported in the monthly management report, these figures relate to those in emergency accommodation. It is not possible to breakdown the homeless list by area as requested.

Since the introduction of the Homeless Action Team on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019, 50 households have exited homeless services to own door accommodation. This is broken down as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> Feb 2019 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2019:	26 (33 adults + 36 dependents)
1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2020 to 1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2020:	24 (27 adults + 24 dependents)

This Council provides a robust Homeless prevention service and supports those homeless/facing homelessness to secure alternative accommodation with the support of the HAP placefinder.

It would be disingenuous to say that Clare County Council can eliminate homelessness in the County as there are a range of issues that cause homelessness. The HAT interagency model seeks to manage the consequent effects that homelessness generates across health, economic and social conditions. The homeless service now has the client front and centre in the management of their homelessness; it addresses root causes of homelessness and provides support and guidance for the



client to address issues that arise while in the service and to provide pathways to exit the service. There are many facets to the service to respond to the clients and cases that present. The collaborative client centred model has a positive impact on clients exit from homeless services.”

**Item 25. West Clare Greenway.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. A. Norton, A. O’Callaghan agus P. Daly agus glacadh leis

“With significant increased Government funding announced for greenways can the Council provide an update report of likely completion dates for the sections of the previously commenced portion of the West Clare Greenway from Ennis to Lahinch.”

**Seán Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Physical Development replied as follows:**

“While the Motion mentioned the section from Ennis to Lahinch, the development of a Greenway along the entire route of the old West Clare Railway line “from Ennis as far as Kilkee” has been a long standing objective of Clare County Council. Once constructed, it will provide a world class, sustainable, fully accessible Greenway that will connect communities and other destinations along the proposed route. I wish to point out that the old railway line, while safeguarded, is the tentative route and as mentioned previously, it is acknowledged that much of the route is now in private ownership. We fully understand that we need to reach agreement with Landowners and are willing to consider alternative routes that may be suitable and less impactful or private properties, farming practices, etc. Key to the success of a project such as this will be extensive engagement, consultation and buy in from Local Landowners and Communities and to this end, we would welcome any contributions or comments from interested parties or those that may be affected

In terms of programme, the Members will be aware that we were recently successful in acquiring €255k under the Department of Transport’s Carbon Tax Fund. This will now enable us to move forward with our ambitious plans by advancing the entire 85km project through the initial stages of scope, appraisal, concept and feasibility including options and constraints at a high level. It is intended then to bring a shorter 20km pilot section through to the Route Selection, Detailed Design and preparation for statutory consent stage initially while at the same time, sourcing the additional funding required for the main scheme to progress in parallel. The construction costs will be quite significant, with latest cost estimations based on national figures in the order of €600k per kilometre. There will also be a number of key environmental challenges to be managed and overcome.

Precise programme dates are difficult given our external dependence on availability of funding, land acquisition agreements, timely statutory consents, etc. It would be our expectation, however, that by working in collaboration with private landowners, local communities, elected members and all interested or affected parties, of delivering the pilot phase by 2025 and the entire scheme by 2029. In the meantime, we will explore and consider all options that may deliver, what will be a wonderful piece of infrastructure for the County and the wider Midwest Region, in a shorter timeframe and we will keep the Members informed of developments in this regard.”

The elected members were unanimous in supporting the development of the West Clare Greenway and outlined the opportunities it would provide to local villages as

well as communities, businesses and the environment. The elected members offered support in engaging with landowners to acquire lands on the proposed route.

The meeting concluded at 6:30 p.m. It was agreed that the adjourned meeting would take place on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> September at 3:30 p.m. after the Special Meeting in relation to Local Property Tax.

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

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

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

**Minutes of the adjourned September Meeting of Clare County Council held in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2020 at 3:30 p.m.**

**Present:**

Councillors M. Howard, M. Nestor, J. Flynn, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Murphy, A. Norton, P. Daly, P. Hayes, 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, S. Crawford, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating, C. Murphy.

- 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.
- Mr. John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.
- Mr. Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Howard presided.

**Item 26. River dredging.**

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

“In the context of climate change, that Clare County Council engage with the relevant statutory authorities to dredge the rivers in Co. Clare to prevent ongoing flooding of our lands in the interest of good environmental and farming practice.”

**Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Development replied as follows:**

“It is important to acknowledge that climate change is having and will continue to have a significant effect in County Clare. As outlined in our Climate Change Adaptation Strategy one of the effects for this region is an increase in the frequency of extreme precipitation events which will result in an increased risk of flooding from rivers and rainfall.

However dredging is not always the solution for flooding. Dredging can have unintended consequences and can increase the flow and speed of rivers causing damage to properties, infrastructure and the economy in an area far removed from where the original dredging took place. It can also be detrimental to the river morphology, habitats and ecosystems.

We must also understand what is giving rise to such flooding events outside of climate change. Sometimes flooding can be caused by manmade interventions such as the construction of pinch points i.e. bridges or insufficiently sized culverts/drainage

pipes and other developments. In addition land which historically absorbed heavy rainfall events has been drained and reclaimed for other purposes such as agriculture and coniferous forestry resulting in faster rainfall runoff to adjacent rivers.

There are also environmental considerations which must be taken into account. The Water Framework Directive established a framework for the protection of all waters including rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and their dependent wildlife/habitats under one piece of environmental legislation. In Ireland through the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 we are implementing measure to ensure the objectives of the Water Framework Directive are met.

Therefore a holistic approach must be undertaken prior to dredging any river to ensure we have a full understanding of the causes, consequences and environmental impacts such works may have on the communities of County Clare.

We are committed to working with all statutory bodies to ensure where appropriate dredging can be carried out to alleviate flooding.”

In supporting this notice of motion the elected members felt that a condition should be included in planning permissions specifying the size and type of pipework to be used when constructing driveways.

Cllr. P. Hayes proposed that the Council establish an interagency group to bring different agencies together to address drainage issues in the county. It was noted that the Council are committed to working with all statutory bodies to ensure where appropriate, dredging can be carried out to alleviate flooding.

**Item 27. Promote a pedestrian safety campaign.**

Due to the absence of Cllr. I. Lynch, this notice of motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Howard, seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy and agreed by the members present.

“In light of the recent increase in numbers of walkers on our roads, the need to social distance and the shortening of daylight hours, I request Clare County Council in conjunction with the RSA develop and promote a pedestrian safety campaign 'Walk Right' to encourage and promote increased pedestrian awareness and safety.”

**John Corry, Administrative and Road Safety Officer, Transportation Department replied as follows:**

“The Road Safety Authority (RSA) is currently undertaking an evaluation of the current Government Road Safety Strategy for the period 2013-2020 and developing a new Government Road Safety Strategy for the period 2021-2030. As part of this process, the RSA is seeking the views of stakeholders and interested parties on a range of issues. This Motion is timely in that regard and I will include same as part of the feedback sought from Clare County Council. I have brought this proposal to the attention of the RSA’s Road Safety Promotion Officer for the Clare Area and I will also bring to the attention of Clare’s Road Safety Working Together Group (RSWTG) which is responsible for co-ordinating multi-agency road safety policy and implementation at a local level.”

**Item 28. Register of roads – schedule and map.**

Ar moladh Cllr. S. Talty

Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy agus glacadh leis

“Register of roads - the Roads Act 1993, Section 10(5)(C) states that the schedule and map shall be kept at the offices of the roads authority and shall be available for inspection during office hours. Currently the register is not readily available for inspection.

Clare County Council as the relevant roads authority in Clare should ensure that they are in compliance with this act. If greater resources are required, then they should be sought from the relevant government department.”

**John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Physical Development replied as follows:**

“Clare County Council’s Road Design Office maintain and update a road schedule as well as to make same available for public inspection during office hours in full compliance with the Roads Act 1993. Due to Covid -19 requirements, the time documents are available for inspection is dependent on the revised opening hours, the nature of the request and is subject to latest Government advice at the time of the request. This can be facilitated also by appointment. The staff in the road design office, Clare County Council, are committed to assisting the public in resolving any queries they may have.”

**Item 29. Ban use of inflatable toys on our lakes, rivers and beaches.**

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard

Cuidithe ag Cllr. D. McGettigan agus glacadh leis

“I request that Clare County Council update our "Beach Bye-Laws" to ban the use of inflatable toys, designed for use in swimming pools, on our lakes, rivers and beaches.”

**Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Development replied as follows:**

“In light of the many challenges facing the delivery of services during COVID-19 especially on our blue flag beaches it is an opportune time to review our Beach Bye Laws to ensure our life guarding, maintenance, and welfare facilities services can continue to be delivered in a safe manner.

There are currently restrictions regarding the use of leisure craft in the Beach Bye Laws but following some recent high profile events during the summer months it is perhaps prudent to include the use of swimming pool inflatable toys in the proposed review.”

Cllr. M. Howard stated that inflatable toys had become very popular on beaches this year and were also the source of a number of call outs of emergency and rescue services. The elected members agreed that these are inflatable toys and are not buoyancy aids or lifesaving equipment that are meant for pools and should not be

used at beaches, rivers, lakes or waterways. Concern was expressed that these toys are readily available at very low cost.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that the Council are aware of the tragedies that can happen. Mr. Dowling agreed that the Council need to take a more holistic approach for public safety in this area and there is now an opportunity to extend it further by providing adequate signage and updating bye laws across the county for peoples safety.

### **Item 30. River Fergus.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Murphy

Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

"I am requesting that Clare County Council (Rural Development and Physical Development departments) liaise with the Office of Public Works in exploring all of the options that have been provided by the piling of the Fergus River bank between the Quin Road and Clareabbey. A hardcore roadway has been provided (1.5km in length) and should be retained as this really unlocks the potential that the river has of being used as a walkway/cycleway that can possibly also feed into other routes ie West Clare Greenway"

#### **Seán Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Physical Development replied as follows:**

"The members will be aware of previous engagement with elected members and relevant community representatives in regard to the provision of a walking trail along the river bank from the Quin Road Bridge to the N85 Bridge at Clareabbey following the completion of the Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme, currently under construction.

In order to construct the flood defence, a construction platform in excess of 10m width had to be provided for the Piling Rig. On completion of the works, part of the aforementioned platform will be retained as an access for future maintenance purposes. With relatively modest expenditure, said maintenance track could be upgraded to facilitate a walkway/cycleway as referenced in the motion which would indeed be a very welcome amenity for the town of Ennis and beyond to enjoy.

We have already consulted with the OPW regarding this proposal and subject to their agreement, we will now engage with our colleagues in the Rural Development Directorate with a view to securing the necessary funding required.

We will keep the members advised of developments."

Cllr. P. Murphy welcomed the response and he referred to the River Fergus walking route feasibility study commissioned by Clarecastle Community Development CLG partnering with Ennis Chamber of Commerce and Promote Ennis. The elected members in supporting this notice of motion stated that this project would increase connectivity between Clarecastle and Ennis and would enhance tourism in the area.

The elected members referred to the Cliff walk between Liscannor and Doolin and stated that 1km either side of the Cliffs of Moher visitor centre has recently been upgraded. They requested that Clare County Council engage with the Department with a view to being involved in the management and maintenance of this walkway going forward.

**Item 31. Insurance cover for community operated playgrounds.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Murphy

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. I. Lynch agus J. Garrihy agus glacadh leis

"In light of the inability for new community operated playgrounds, and those whose policies may have lapsed, to get insurance cover, and the increasing burden of individual insurance costs on existing community operated playgrounds we call for Clare County Council to take all those playgrounds in under the councils policy."

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

"Community Playgrounds are provided by communities. Much of their initial capital funding was provided by Clare County Council and in some instances, the Department. Clare County Council currently supports 24 community playgrounds annually through the Community Supports Scheme at an annual cost of €40K. Specific playground related national funding schemes have not been rolled out in recent years however some community playground committees have recently benefited under mainstream Town & Village funding schemes targeting specific Covid-19 related measures.

It is important to note that outside of providing annual financial support towards operation and maintenance costs, Clare County Council are not the owner or leaseholder of these facilities and therefore do not have an insurable interest in them.

The issue of escalating insurance costs for community facilities is a matter for the insurance market to resolve in line with Government policy and potentially a targeted funding approach to this particular area. We will refer this matter on nationally for consideration.

The key need for communities and identified projects to access funding streams depends on an adequate staff team to deliver this service through the Rural Directorate. Without this staff developmental support, grant opportunities for Clare could be missed out on. While insurance grants are practical and needed, if funding emerges during the difficult budget 2021 process, this service continuity will have to be prioritised over new insurance expenditure such as proposed."

Cllr. C. Murphy outlined the challenges facing community groups when sourcing insurance cover for new and existing playgrounds. It was noted that voluntary community groups have incurred enormous expense in providing amenities and facilities and are facing closure due to insurance costs. The elected members agreed that playgrounds are a fundamental element of local communities as in addition to providing activity for children they add to the holistic health and wellbeing for people to meet and engage.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive acknowledged the value of playgrounds in local communities and noted that voluntary groups are struggling. He stated that local authorities can empower communities and provide capital assistance. Mr. Dowling informed the members that this is a sizeable task that will incur significant expenditure for Clare County Council. Mr. Dowling stated that Council officials will discuss this matter with IPB and he undertook to ask the Director of Rural Development to carry out an audit of playgrounds in the county to examine how this model might operate going forward.

Cllr. C. Murphy thanked his fellow Councillors for their support and acknowledged response from the Chief Executive. He re-iterated that this notice of motion is about insurance and stated that a small number of communities have spent money and cannot open playground facilities due to inability to source insurance cover. Cllr. Murphy acknowledged that there is a role and responsibility for both local authorities and the communities and stated that other local authorities are addressing these issues.

### **Item 32. Serviced locations for motor home/campervans.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Murphy  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Keating agus glacadh leis

“In light of the very visible increase in motor home/campervan holidays in 2020, expected further growth in 2021, and in a bid to ensure the sustainable management of this industry sector within our communities I request that Clare County Council undertake the following;

- an assessment by location and quantity of the current availability of privately owned serviced locations to cater to that market segment.
- identify and designate appropriate specific locations for overnight parking by motor homes/camper vans on public lands
- undertake an analysis of the economic benefit, and the social and environmental impacts, to the wider community of the public provision of services to cater to that market segment,
- introduce by-laws, backed up by significant penalties, to prevent wild parking and wild camping in those locations, deemed inappropriate though a community engagement process, including, but not limited to, those with international and/or national environmental protected designations.”

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

“This motion is very timely in light of the recent trends in visitor behavior during the “staycation”. There is merit in initiating a process of research in the form of a feasibility study to establish the potential development of sustainable service provision for the motor home and campervan holiday sector throughout the county.

This could involve an assessment by of the serviced locations for this market segment throughout the county. In addition it would need to identify potential locations for appropriate serviced facilities which would allow for possible further development in time.

The scope of the research would need to provide analysis of the social and environmental impacts to the wider community. There is a need to Fáilte Ireland, other statutory agencies and relevant academic expertise as necessary. With this completed and in a staged process for future development of serviced facilities, the prevention of wild parking could also be reviewed.

Although there is strong merit in this project, the Tourism Department does not have the team capacity to take on this work at present. Thus, it is a matter for consideration during the Budget 2021 process.”

Cllr. C. Murphy informed the meeting of adverts in the UK promoting the west of Ireland as the ultimate tourist route for motor home/campervan holidays. Cllr. Murphy informed the meeting that infrastructure needs to be put in place to cater for



the unprecedented motor home traffic in 2021. Cllr. C. Murphy stated that there is an opportunity to work on this during the winter before the next tourist season commences as the issue has been recognised. He stated that government funding should be allocated for private operators to manage serviced sites. Cllr. C. Murphy called for a cross directorate response to amend bye laws to enable the availability of affordable serviced sites.

The elected members supported Cllr. C. Murphy and agreed that there is a need for appropriate serviced facilities in suitable locations to accommodate this growing market. It was also agreed that a coherent plan is required before next years tourist season. Concern was expressed in relation to potential damage caused by wild camping in areas of conservation.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive agreed that there has been a marked increase in the number of camper vans in the county during the last six months. Mr. Dowling stated that the provision of serviced secure sites would require significant resources. Mr. Dowling informed the members that the Council needs support from the tourist sector and private sector operators as staycations will be here for the foreseeable future.

### **Item 33. Shannon Airport.**

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

“In recognition of the disappointing drop in passenger numbers using Shannon Airport over the past decade and the disastrous impact of Covid, that Clare County Council liaise with other public and private stakeholders with a view to commissioning a far reaching report setting out positive attainable goals for the future of the airport.”

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

“At a macro-economic level, in order to respond to the changing environment there is a need for a National Government intervention policy and investment in Shannon Airport. At a local county level, Clare County Council has a role in supporting these Government actions.

The Clare Tourism Strategy 2030, which is being considered for adoption at today’s meeting, has clearly highlighted the importance of strengthening air access into Shannon Airport. It identifies the need to build strategic connectivity that would enhance Shannon’s role as a ahub and entry point. The negative impact on regional economic growth and tourism can be illustrated and as such, the current Covid 19 situation. This significant challenges is highlighted in the Strategy.

The Clare Tourism Strategy 2030, has a specified Strategic Priority - *Clare County Council will work collaboratively with Shannon Airport to secure and sustain new routes that will improve air connectivity to the west of Ireland and increase air arrivals.*

This priority action will be set out in the immediate term action plan for the implementation of the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030. Both the Tourism Department and the Economic Department actively support and will continue to work

collaboratively with Shannon Group and relevant stakeholders in order to set out positive attainable goals for the future of the airport.

The researching of this project will require additional tourism staff input and capacity. The resourcing of this action and capacity needs to be considered as part of the Budget 2021 process.”

Cllr. P. McMahon outlined a list of personnel with vast experience in aviation within the county and requested that a committee be established to plan for Shannon into the future.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard informed the meeting that a Mayoral Alliance meeting has been arranged to take place on Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> September next. She noted that Mary Considine, Chief Executive, Shannon Group will attend this meeting.

The elected members expressed disappointment at the lack of support from various governments for Shannon Airport. It was agreed that Ireland needs a national aviation policy together with EU regional policy support to make informed decisions for Shannon Airports viability and growth. The elected members stated that this is a key infrastructural asset for the region and expressed concern in relation to the impact its demise would have on the region. It was agreed that government funding is urgently required for Shannon Airport and that Clare County Council should be represented on the Board of Shannon Group. The elected members were unanimous in supporting the upcoming Mayoral Alliance meeting.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and stated that Shannon Airport is a victim of international collapse in aviation. He informed the members that Shannon Group made a submission to the Minister and Government for support. He stated that the Clare Economic Taskforce will meet in the next week and it continues to be a key piece of work. Mr. Dowling stated that the position of the Chair of Shannon Group is vacant and that recruitment is ongoing to fill this position. Mr. Dowling stated that Clare County Council can and will help support recovery that will take place but cannot come up with a panacea to fix this critical piece of infrastructure. He undertook to continue to meet Shannon Group and expressed hope that government funding will be made available.

#### **Item 34. Community owned energy generation.**

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

“Community owned energy generation projects are an exciting and potentially lucrative emerging element in the transition to a low carbon economy and reducing our country's dependency on imported energy/fossil fuel. Following the opening up of the RESS, I propose that Clare County Council take a lead role in working with, mentoring and supporting communities throughout the county to identify, co-ordinate and advance suitable and strategically located sites and lands for the development of 100% community owned energy generation projects in the county, or partnerships between the communities and the Council. The cost of initial access to the national electricity grid is a key impediment for most communities, and the Council should explore means and methods whereby we can assist our communities in this regard.”

**Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:**

“Objective RPO 221 of the Regional and Economic & Spatial Strategy supports local and community renewable energy networks and projects. Furthermore it is an objective of the Clare County Development Plan in CDP 8.40 to encourage and favourably consider proposals for renewable energy development in order to promote a low carbon economy. In addition Chapter 17 of the Councils Renewable Energy Strategy recognises the role of community led renewable projects.

Therefore from a general policy perspective, there is support for community led projects. At present there is a zoned site in Shannon (E3 – Stonehall) which has an objective for the provision of a strategic green energy development in order to deliver low carbon energy. Similar sites may be further looked at as part of the review of the forthcoming development plan with an emphasis on community led developments and the identification of appropriate lands for this purpose.

It is noted that the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) administer grant supports for the development of community projects as well as providing technical advice on same. The Planning Authority will work with communities through the provision of planning advice where necessary in order to bring forth any projects.

Regarding grid connection this is an application to Eirgrid which is a commercial transaction and dependent on the power generation capacity of the project and the grid infrastructure available.”

Cllr. J. Garrihy welcomed the response and outlined the potential benefits community owned energy generation could have for communities on the west coast of Clare. This was supported by the elected members present who agreed that it is pertinent countywide. Concern was expressed in relation to grid connection.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive agreed to further examine the proposal and how this might be progressed.

**Item 35. Grant incentive to develop accommodation.**

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. P.J. Kelly agus J. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council request the Government to explore the feasibility of a grant incentive scheme to develop farmhouse accommodation for visitors to rural Ireland, targeted at land owners availing of the proposed early retirement scheme. The aim of such a scheme is to refurbish “empty nest” farmhouses.”

The elected members agreed that this initiative could provide a major boost to local rural communities.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive agreed that this is an issue well worth exploring. He informed the meeting that he will meet Minister Heather Humphries, Minister for Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands during the week and undertook to discuss this initiative at that meeting.

**Item 36. Timber felling licences.**

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

“That this Council would request the Minister for Agriculture to intervene in the allocation of timber felling licences as there seems to be a very long delay in acquiring same.”

Cllr. P.J. Ryan informed the meeting that this is a nationwide problem and there are currently 700 applications for timber felling licences in the Department, over 400 of these applications are awaiting ecology reports and this is causing an unsustainable delay. Cllr. Ryan outlined the difficulties being experienced in the forestry industry. The elected members present supported this notice of motion and the problems being experienced by timber producers and builders were outlined.

### **Item 37. Shannon Airport.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Crowe

“I request that Clare County Council make contact with the Minister for Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan, T.D., with a view to Shannon Airport returning under the Dublin airport Authority”.

Cllr. J. Crowe outlined the impact caused by the withdrawal of airlines from Shannon Airport. Cllr. J. Crowe proposed that communication issue to the Minister for Transport seeking a percentage of passenger traffic from Dublin Airport.

The elected members present agreed that change is needed in Shannon Airport but felt they could not support the proposal to return to Dublin Airport Authority. It was agreed that Government policy and national aviation policy needs to change and that a proper distribution of air traffic in the country would positively enhance Shannon Airport. The elected members requested that this issue be discussed with the Clare Oireachtas Members at their upcoming meeting.

The following amendment was proposed by Cllr. J. Crowe, seconded by Cllrs. J. Flynn, C. Colleran Molloy and J. Killeen and agreed by the members present.

“I request that Clare County Council make contact with the Minister for Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan, T.D. with a view to have national aviation policy requiring 15% of passenger traffic to be directed to use Shannon Airport.”

### **Vote of Sympathy.**

A vote of sympathy was extended to the following:

- The Moloney family, Clarecastle on the death of Cora Moloney
- The Reidy family, Sixmilebridge on the death of Colm Reidy

### **Item 38. Comhfhreagras/Correspondence.**

Cllr. G. Flynn referred to acknowledgement received from the Office of the Taoiseach in relation to housing assistance payment. Cllr. G. Flynn requested that further

correspondence issue to the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government as a comprehensive reply has not yet been received.

Cllr. P. O’Gorman asked when will Council meetings resume in the Council Chamber in Áras Contae an Chláir. In response, P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that Council meetings cannot be held in the Council Chamber presently due to capacity restrictions. Mr. Dowling undertook seek advice in relation to this.

### **Correspondence.**

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:

1. Correspondence dated 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 from the Office of the Taoiseach in relation to housing assistance payment.
2. Correspondence dated 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 from the Department of Finance in relation to VAT rate for Irish Yoga Studio owners.
3. Correspondence dated 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 from the Department of Health concerning Ennis General Hospital.
4. Correspondence dated 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in connection with support for the hospitality and the Irish Tourism Industry.
5. Correspondence dated 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 from the Office of the Taoiseach in relation to Shannon International Airport.
6. Resolution circulated by Limerick City & County Council supporting the National Small Business Recovery Plan.
7. Resolution circulated by Sligo County Council in relation to registered rights of way.
8. Resolution circulated by Roscommon County Council seeking financial support for all Tidy Towns and voluntary groups to ensure maintenance of all public areas.
9. Resolution circulated by Waterford City & County Council supporting SIPTU and the “Big Start Campaign” which demands adequate investment in the early years services.
10. Resolution circulated by Limerick City & County Council in relation to the National Planning Framework on Rural Housing Policy.
11. Resolution circulated by Kerry County Council in relation to state pension public service fund.
12. Resolution circulated by Derry City & Strabane District Council in relation to care homes.
13. AILG training webinar for local authority elected members entitled “Guidance for Councillors on the initial stages of preparing Development Plans and their Core Strategies” taking place on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
14. Webinar focused on Sustainable Energy Communities hosted by the Eastern & Midlands CARO in conjunction with Sustainable Energy Association of Ireland (SEAI) and ORS Consulting taking place on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2020.

## **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 Cork on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2020.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €266.86.

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

#### **AILG training entitled “Moorhead Report – Briefing for elected members” taking place in Clayton Whites Hotel, Wexford on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2020.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €328.67.

It was agreed that Cllrs. G. Keating and J. Crowe attend this Conference.

#### **AILG training entitled “Moorhead Report – Briefing for elected members” taking place in Carrickdale Hotel, Dundalk, Co. Louth on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2020.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €266.86.

It was agreed that Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy attend this Conference.

#### **AILG training taking place in Thurles on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2020.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €266.86

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

#### **AILG training entitled “Moorhead Report – Briefing for elected members” taking place in Rochestown, Co. Cork on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2020.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €266.86.

It was agreed that Cllrs. P.J. Ryan, C. Murphy, P.J. Kelly, P. McMahon, M. Howard, P. Daly, A. O’Callaghan, P. O’Gorman and P. Burke attend this Conference.

The meeting then concluded.

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

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

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