

**Minutes of the April Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held via MS  
Teams on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 at 3:45 p.m.**

**Present via MS Teams:**

**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, 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, Director of Finance and Support Services.

**Apologies:** Cllr. P.J. Kelly

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Howard presided.

**Votes of sympathy**

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

- The McDonagh family, Liscannor on the death of Anthony.
- The Howley family, Lisdoonvarna on the death of Thomas Howley.

Cllr. P. Hayes extended a vote of sympathy to Cllr. P.J. Kelly on the recent passing of his brother Gerry and proposed that the meeting be adjourned for 15 minutes as a mark of respect. This was seconded by Cllr. J. Cooney and agreed by the members present.

The Chief Executive, P. Dowling, on behalf of the staff of the Council was associated with the expressions of sympathy.

The meeting then adjourned for 15 minutes and resumed at 4:05 p.m.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard informed the meeting that a motion for the purpose of dealing with urgent business had been received and would be dealt with after the motions relating to the statutory functions of the Council.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard welcomed the recent announcement in relation to the future of Moneypoint which will benefit the whole west coast and extended credit to all who brought this to fruition.

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

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

“That the Minutes of the March Meeting of Clare County Council held on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 be adopted and signed.”

**Item 2: Matters Arising.**

Cllr. P. Hayes requested an update on the Water Sector Transformation Policy. P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that discussions continue on the new Water Services Framework and that the CCMA will continue to lobby on behalf of local authority staff. Mr. Dowling informed the meeting that the objective of the local authority sector is to protect employees and this has been made clear to all parties involved in discussions.

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

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

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2021 be noted.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. P. O’Gorman  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Shannon Municipal District Meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2021 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2021 be noted.”

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

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

“That the minutes of the Economic Development S.P.C. meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 be noted”.

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

“That the minutes of the Social Development S.P.C. meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 be noted”.

**Item 5: Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meetings.**

The members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2021 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. C. Murphy requested a commitment on the final deadline for the completion of Kilkee WWTP.

Cllr. M. Nestor thanked Council staff and the ESB for work that has taken place on a derelict site at Knockaderry, Tulla Road, Ennis.

Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy acknowledged the international promotion of County Clare on St. Patrick’s Day. Cllr. Colleran Molloy commended Rural Development on being successful in getting funding grants accorded to local authorities. Cllr. Colleran Molloy referred to special marketing resource entitled “32 reasons to experience County Clare” and requested that the search engine be improved as it is difficult to find.

Cllr. J. Flynn requested an update on progress of the County Library tender stage. Cllr. Flynn welcomed the worthwhile work being undertaken by the Communications Office and commended the Road Design Department on achieving the second highest allocation of funding in the country recently.

Cllr. P. Burke requested an update on the proposed housing development in Scarriff.

Cllr. P. Hayes acknowledged the engineering staff and all staff in Clare County Council for their role in the active travel applications which will benefit many communities.

Cllr. T. O'Brien concurred with Cllr. P. Hayes in relation to the active travel applications and welcomed funding and work carried out on the new bridge crossing in Killaloe and the Killaloe Ballina Bypass. Cllr. O'Brien expressed concern that the completion date for the Killaloe Ballina WWTP has been delayed. Cllr. T. O'Brien also expressed serious concern in relation to the insufficient funding allocated for works proposed for dangerous junction on R463 and R466 in Bridgetown. Cllr. O'Brien requested engagement with the Road Design team when this project is being finalised.

Cllr. J. Cooney recognised the work carried out by community groups, individual volunteers and Tidy Towns groups during the recent "Keep Clare Clean" campaign and acknowledged the support provided by Clare County Council.

Cllr. D. McGettigan requested a timeline in relation to private rented inspections.

Cllr. M. Begley referred to ongoing negotiations with landowners in Springfield, Clonlara and raised concern in relation to the start time being moved from April to May.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and informed the members that Council officials are in continuous engagement with Irish Water in relation to waste water treatment plants. Mr. Dowling thanked the elected members for their comments on the positive PR around County Clare and acknowledged input by all Directorates. Mr. Dowling extended credit to all staff involved in the active travel application process.

A. Haugh, Director of Social Development referred to the tender process for the new County Library and stated that closing date for receipt of submission for the pre-qualification tender was early April. These submissions will be assessed and moved to stage 2 to advertise to the successful applicants who qualified in the second week in May and the successful tenderer will be notified in July.

Ms. Haugh informed the elected members that preparations for the Scariff housing development are at stage 2 for submission to the Department before the end of April.

Referring to private rented inspections, Ms. Haugh stated that this was suspended during level 5 restrictions but the process is being looked at in terms of virtual inspections.

C. Kirby, Director of Physical Development responded to queries raised in relation to waste water treatment plants and stated that officials do advocate to keep these projects on track. Ms. Kirby encouraged the Councillors to attend the Irish Water workshops. Referring to Springfield, Clonlara, Ms. Kirby stated that engagement with landowners is ongoing as the design work is additional to get the project to deliver the required result.

**Item 7: Disposal of lands at Ballycalla, Newmarket on Fergus, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.**

Report dated 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 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 2.312 acres at Ballycalla, Newmarket on Fergus, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P.J. Ryan 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 Ballycalla, Newmarket on Fergus, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.”

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

Report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021 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 0.066 hectares at Cree Village subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021.

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

“Notice having been served pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Clare County Council approves pursuant to the powers vested on it at Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended, of disposal of lands at Cree, Kilrush, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021.”

**Item 9: Disposal of property at Ballard Road, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.**

Report dated 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 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 Ballard Road, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

Ar moladh Cllr. S. Talty  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Killeen 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

Ballard Road, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.”

**Item 10: Fix date for 2021 Annual General Meeting.**

It was agreed by the members that the 2021 Annual General Meeting will take place at 3.30 p.m. on Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2021 having been proposed by Cllr. J. Killeen and seconded by Cllr. P. Daly.

**Item 11: Annual Service Delivery Plan 2021.**

The Annual Service Delivery Plan was circulated with the agenda and was noted by the members having been proposed by Cllr. J. Flynn and seconded by Cllr. A. Norton.

Cllr. J. Flynn welcomed the very detailed Annual Service Delivery Plan and requested that the Ennis Town Centre Public Realm Regeneration Project that received URDF funding be included as an action in 2021 under the heading “Delivery of Capital Projects” on page 63. Cllr. J. Flynn also felt that updated EarthRoute should be noted. Cllr. J. Flynn welcomed maintenance works proposed for Fergus Drainage as well as engagement in relation to Ennis town bus service.

Cllr. A. Norton welcomed the detailed plan and requested that people are mindful that the plan involves the use of wheelchairs and motorised chairs to facilitate users access to amenities.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive thanked the elected members for supporting the Annual Service Delivery Plan and stated that a lot of the work carried out by Clare County Council is subject to revenue. Mr. Dowling stated that there are still uncertainties in 2021 and that continued government support will be required.

**Item 12: Schedule of Municipal District Works (SMDW) for 2021.**

The Schedule of Municipal District Works as previously circulated was noted having been proposed by Cllr. J. Cooney and seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn.

**Item 13: Report from Standing Orders Sub-Committee.**

Report dated 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 from Ann Reynolds, A/Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services was circulated with the agenda. Cllr. G. Flynn, Chair of Standing Orders Sub-Committee provided an outline of the report. The report states that the Standing Orders Sub-Committee met on Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021 and considered the following matters:

i. Notice of motion submitted for December 2020 meeting by the following: Cllrs. G. Keating, J. Killeen, P. O’Gorman, P. McMahon, P. Burke, M. Begley, J. Garrihy, C Murphy, P.J. Kelly, P.J. Ryan, G. Flynn, J. Crowe, P. Daly, P. Murphy, M. Nestor, J. Cooney, T. O’Brien, B. Chambers agus C. Collieran Molloy.

“To request Standing Orders Committee to review time schedule for meetings taking all circumstances into consideration with a view to having morning meetings.”

**Recommendation:**

Having considered the views submitted in writing and consultations with councillor colleagues the members recommended that the current meeting time should remain in place, as it provides a level of flexibility to staff and members to manage attendance at Council meetings with other roles and responsibilities.

ii. Notice of motion submitted for December 2020 meeting by Cllr. J Flynn:

“Members of the public have with interest read recent press & media pieces about the use of technology resulting in remote accessibility & participation being made available to elected members to Monthly Statutory Clare council meetings.

In the interest of democratic engagement by the public in Local Government I ask that Clare County Council give consideration to allow remote public accessibility to view/listen to public Monthly Statutory Clare County Council meetings by secure technology such as a web link.”

**Recommendation:**

The committee reviewed three councillor submissions and a Live Streaming Issues paper (copy attached) which was circulated to members. The issues paper outlined research of livestreaming in other local authorities, key issues identified, viewership statistics and estimated costs based on 12 meetings per annum. Considering the cost implications and the recent extensive changes implemented due to Covid-19 the members recommended that discussion on this matter be deferred for at least 12 months.

**iii. Recommendation:**

To improve efficiency of the management of Council meetings the members recommended the installation of an automated visual display timer in the Council Chamber for the management of 2 and 3 minute speaking times of members.

Cllr. G. Flynn proposed the approval of the report. This was seconded by Cllr. J. Flynn subject to the timeframe for review of live streaming Council meetings being reduced to 6 months.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the members that Ann Reynolds has recently been appointed Senior Executive Officer by the Public Appointments Service. The elected members extended congratulations to Ann on her appointment.

**Item 14: Briefing by HSE personnel on Covid 19 and other service matters across UL Hospital Group and the Mid-West region – Professor Brian Lenihan,**

**Chief Clinical Director, UL Hospitals Group, Maria Bridgeman, Chief Officer, HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare and Dr. Mai Mannix, Director of Public Health Mid-West at 2:00 p.m.**

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard introduced Professor Brian Lenihan, Chief Clinical Director, UL Hospitals Group, Maria Bridgeman, Chief Officer, HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare and Dr. Mai Mannix, Director of Public Health Mid West to the meeting via MS Teams.

Professor Brian Lenihan, Chief Clinical Director, UL Hospitals Group Professor addressed the meeting and briefed the members on Covid 19 impact on UL Hospitals Group under the following headings:

- Impact of Covid 19 on unscheduled care
- Impact of Covid 19 on scheduled care
- Impact of Covid 19 on staffing,
- Latest information: National Service Plan 2021
- Latest information: new starters
- Latest information: Covid 19 vaccination
- Covid 19 vaccination centres
- Capital Developments 2021
- Capital Developments – Ennis OPD
- Capital Developments delivered in 2020
- Waiting lists clearance plans

Maria Bridgeman, Chief Officer, HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare provided a presentation on Covid 19 Mid West Community Healthcare response addressing the following issues:

- Psychosocial Support
- Community vaccination roll out
- Vaccination programme
- Vaccination roll out
- Winter Plan/Enhanced Community Care Programme
- Major initiatives
- Challenges

Dr. Mai Mannix, Director of Public Health Mid-West provided an update of Covid 19 in the Mid-West:

- Number of confirmed cases
- Age profile of confirmed cases
- Outbreaks



- Communication
- Useful links

The elected members thanked the HSE personnel for attending and for providing the regular updates during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Queries raised were addressed by Professor Brian Lenihan, Chief Clinical Director, UL Hospitals Group, Maria Bridgeman, Chief Officer, HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare and Dr. Mai Mannix, Director of Public Health Mid West.

### **Item 15. World Ovarian Cancer Day.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. S. Crawford agus J. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council acknowledge World Ovarian Cancer Day on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, by lighting up Áras Contae an Chláir in the colour teal in the interest of promoting awareness of ovarian cancer in the county, similar to the Convention Hall, the Mansion House, the National Concert Hall, Heuston Station, the Titanic Building, Cork City Hall, UCC, NUIG, Kilkenny Castle, Rock of Cashel, while simultaneously acknowledging the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Clare Cancer Support Centre (Sláinte an Chláir) in Kilnamona, County Clare.”

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

“The Council has the facility to light up the Áras building in various colours and has been responding to requests for lighting events, for national awareness campaigns and from charitable organisations. Requests have become more frequent in recent months and are co-ordinated by the Communications and Facilities teams. The Council can accommodate such requests provided the light colour requested is available and it does not co-incide with another previously confirmed lighting event. A lighting event has been scheduled at the Áras for World Ovarian Cancer Day on 8<sup>th</sup> May per the request in this Notice of Motion and will be accompanied by media promotion of the Councils support.”

The elected members welcomed the positive agreement to light up Áras Contae an Chláir to acknowledge World Ovarian Cancer Day in order to raise awareness and provide information on the importance of womens health.

### **Item 16. Local authority tenancy.**

Ar moladh Cllr. I. Lynch

Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“To protect the most vulnerable in domestic abuse situations I am asking Clare County Council to seek legal advice on the removal of a tenant’s name from a local authority tenancy where domestic violence has been proven or there is a fear for the victims’ health and wellbeing.

In the event that legal opinion cannot identify a mechanism to remove the perpetrators name from a local authority tenancy I further request that the Taoiseach, Micheál

Martin, bring forward emergency legislation empowering local authorities to remove a tenant's name from a local authority tenancy to protect the victim of domestic violence."

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

"Cases of domestic violence as distinct from anti-social behaviour (as defined in the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997) fall to be dealt with under the Domestic Violence Act 1996 and would be outside the remit of the Housing section to police. Accordingly, therefore a tenant's name cannot be removed from a local authority joint tenancy on foot of domestic violence alone without involving anti-social behaviour, rent arrears or a breach of the local authority tenancy agreement.

Having sought legal advice on the matter, the termination of local authority tenancies are dealt with under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014 where tenancy warnings and proceedings for re-possession of the property can issue in the cases of rent arrears, anti-social behaviour and breaches of the tenancy agreement. In the case of a joint tenant, who is no longer residing at the tenanted property, but who is refusing to surrender their tenancy, the legal advice received recommends terminating the entire tenancy by serving separate notices to quit on the joint tenants in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement and thereafter granting a new single tenancy to the tenant continuing to reside at the property."

The elected members were in agreement that emergency legislation should be enacted to provide a mechanism to remove the perpetrators of domestic violence from tenancy agreements in order to protect the victims of domestic abuse.

**Item 17. Moneypoint site.**

It was agreed that this item be deferred to the next Council Meeting.

"That a feasibility study be done on the potential of the Moneypoint site being developed as an international shipping port with emphasis on trans-shipment."

**Item 18. County Development Plan.**

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

"That this council put in place a robust communication system to inform people whose property status changes in the new county development plan and also communicate with communities where alternative energy zoning is under consideration."

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

"The Planning Authority is committed to fully engaging with stakeholders and communities as part of the Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 plan preparation process. The next stage of stakeholder/public engagement will take place in August 2021 when the Draft Plan will be placed on public display for a period of not less than 10 weeks. Notice of this consultation stage will be in the local radio and print media as well as online through the Council's social media accounts. Also during this consultation period it is intended to host public consultation events across

the County Clare (subject to COVID restrictions) where local communities and individuals can discuss the emerging plan with planning department staff members. Videos and Webinars are being developed to assist in engaging the public/stakeholders in the plan-making process and these will be available for viewing online.

A new online consultation portal has been developed which will for the first time allow the public and stakeholders make submissions online if they so wish and this is in addition to the traditional method of receiving submissions via e-mail and post. Also a dedicated webpage has been set up where all interested parties can find all the information about the Plan-making process in one centralised location <https://clarecdp2022-2028.clarecoco.ie/>

In the event that COVID restrictions do not permit town hall type consultation events I have asked that Planning Department staff examine various ways to host community/stakeholder consultations. By Q3 and Q4, 2021 I hope and anticipate that there will be an opportunity for more traditional engagement by all concerned.”

The elected members felt that landowners and households are often not aware of changes to land zoning in the County Development Plans as the traditional method of communication is no longer effective. It was agreed that there should be more consultation in the media and press providing information when areas are zoned for different uses.

L. Conneally, Director of Economic Development stated that work on a County Development Plan is a two year period of plan making which involves a statutory process with steps outlined in legislation. Mr. Conneally informed the meeting that the Economic Development team will use social media and webinar space in the compilation of the current County Development Plan so as to improve community engagement.

#### **Item 19. Community Wealth Building model.**

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

“That this Council should examine the Community Wealth Building model with a view to incorporating it into their local Economic Community Plans.

Community Wealth Building has emerged as a powerful approach to local economic development and has been particularly successful in Preston, England, North Ayrshire Scotland and Cleveland, United States.

The model will allow Counties to leverage existing resources, such as procurement to meet local needs while creating quality employment promoting equity and sustainability.

The council initiate dialogue with local public bodies and semi-state companies in the locality regarding their potential role in the strategy.

Local businesses, enterprises and community activists need to be brought into the discussion around developing the project.

The council could also engage with Councils in Preston, North Ayrshire and elsewhere which have successfully developed this model.”

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

“The Clare LCDC (Local Community Development Committee) is currently preparing to review the LECF (Local Economic Community Plan). This model will be referred to the LCDC as part of this review.”

The elected members agreed that the Community Wealth Building model is in line with the approach articulated in the National Rural Regeneration Strategy which is a revitalized way of rebuilding communities in order to keep maximum benefit in our communities.

Cllr. P. Burke, Leas Cathaoirleach took the role of Cathaoirleach at this point.

**Item 20. Online portal for planning applications.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Murphy  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. D. McGettigan agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council would implement a system to support the submission of all planning applications through an online portal.”

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

“Similar to most other local authorities, presently it is not possible for members of the public, developers or agents to make planning applications online. Currently, applications must be submitted in hard copy. In preparation for ePlanning applications, submissions etc. an online **ePlanning Project** is being developed for national use by the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA). This online planning system will allow ePlanning applications to be made and applicants will be electronically updated on the progress of their application.

The project aims to improve efficiency, reduce the potential for invalid applications, and deliver on the government strategy to move more public services online.

The ePlanning project is currently in its final stages of development and testing following which the LGMA will be tasked with the national rollout. Clare County Council has been consulted during its development thus ensuring that the electronic system will meet our operational requirements and integrate to the largest extent possible with existing systems.

I am hoping that the system will be live in Clare County Council by the middle of 2022.”

The elected members welcomed the development of an online **ePlanning Project** which will be used for ePlanning applications and submissions which is being developed for national use by the Local Government Management Agency as it will reduce the amount of paper being used currently and will be more time efficient.

L. Conneally, Director of Economic Development stated that there will be a dual system initially until agents and people are comfortable using the new system.

**Item 21. Section 254 Licence application form.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Murphy

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. I. Lynch, M. Howard, G. Flynn agus P. O’Gorman agus glacadh leis

“a) that Clare County Council create a specific “section 254” license application form for telecommunications infrastructures,

b) the application form would include the requirement for the applicant company seeking such a license to notify the public of their intention to do so, by

i) Publishing a notice, in a publicly accessible location, at the site for which they seek the license

ii) Publishing a notice of their intention to seek such a license at that location from Clare County Council in a Clare based media outlet

and

c) the Planning section of Clare County Council would notify the elected members when such a license application for telecoms infrastructure is made under section 254.”

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

“There are 3 different Section 254 License application forms currently available online from the Planning Authority. These forms cover advertising and directional signage, street furniture and other forms of apparatus and structures requiring a Section 254 Licence. The form relevant to applications for telecommunication infrastructure is available at the following link location or from the Planning Section. <https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/planning/forms/p09-licence-application-form-under-section-254-scaffolding-hoarding-domes-marquees-etc-11806.pdf>

This existing form is considered to be sufficient and there are no plans to amend same.

There is no requirement under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) for applicants to notify the public of Section 254 Licence applications. For that reason the Planning Authority cannot include this as a requirement on the application forms.

Currently elected members are not notified of applications received, however in future and following receipt of telecommunication infrastructure Section 254 Licence applications I have requested that elected members from the relevant Municipal District be informed of all such applications.”

The elected members felt that the application form currently being used for Section 254 licence applications is not sufficient and agreed that communities want more transparency in relation to licence applications for the erection of telecommunication infrastructure. The elected members requested that they be notified when Section 254 licence applications are received for their Municipal District. It was agreed that while legislation may not require applicants to advertise proposals to erect telecommunication infrastructure, the Council should include a condition requesting them to do so.

L. Conneally, Director of Economic Development addressed the meeting and acknowledged the comments made by the elected members in respect of licence of apparatus on public land. Mr. Conneally informed the members that the Economic Development Directorate can advise the applicants to put proposals on social media

and the print media but there is nothing in legislation if applicants refuse to do so. Mr. Conneally stated that this is a countrywide issue that has been raised with the Department. Mr. Conneally noted that the Section 254 process is in place to facilitate infrastructure rollout and there is a right of appeal to An Bord Pleanála.

**Item 22. Housing build and adaptation policy for towns and villages.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Killeen

Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Garrihy agus glacadh leis

“We call on Clare County Council to make ready our county with a comprehensive housing build and adaptation policy for towns and villages in rural areas in anticipation of relocating urban dwellers which will bring about an increase in the housing stock required. There will be an increase in the number of planning applications that will be made for one off houses, all on foot of the Government's new Rural Strategy set to boost rural Ireland's population by 500,000 by 2040.”

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

“As part of the preparation of the draft Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 a Housing Need Demand Assessment and a Housing Strategy will be developed. Both of these workpieces will look in an evidence-based way at housing demand and trends across the County and in turn when setting new housing objectives to be included in the draft Development Plan will have to have regard to national (N.P.F.) and regional (R.S.E.S.) planning policies. The Planning Department is committed to including objectives in the emerging Plan that will support the Government's town centre first policy, its remote working policy and the development of our towns and villages including the reuse of derelict and vacant sites across our rural towns and villages.

It is the requirement of the national, regional and local planning policy that future housing demand will be met in part by utilising existing housing stock/brownfield development opportunities in towns and villages. Both the Housing Need Demand Assessment and the Housing Strategy will form part of the draft plan to be put on public display in August 2021 which will allow for stakeholders and communities to review and make comments on same.

Where the Council owns lands in rural towns and villages the provision by the local authority of serviced sites is a development option being explored. One-off rural housing policy will also be guided by new national and regional policy direction.”

The elected members agreed that Clare County Council needs to be in a state of readiness for the anticipated movement of people from urban to rural Ireland. It was agreed that financial support needs to be provided for a targeted campaign to promote remote working to encourage residential occupancy in rural towns. The members agreed that infrastructure improvements are required as well as readily available housing, schools and bus timetables in order to attract urban professionals and keep our youth living permanently in strong supportive communities in rural Clare. The elected members agreed that the Clare Oireachtas Members should raise the difficulties being experienced in relation to lack of infrastructure at Government level.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and stated that Clare County Council set out on a journey almost five years ago to prioritise balance in population and infrastructure investment in Co. Clare. Mr. Dowling noted that Government

policy is development in urban centres but events during the last fourteen months has changed that focus. Mr. Dowling informed the meeting that development in rural Clare is a priority in order to attract families to live in and conduct business in rural areas. Mr. Dowling stated that some functions are outside the control of Clare County Council and that the council needs to leverage the Plans provided to ensure incremental improvements for rural Clare and this is a corporate wide challenge which should not disadvantage the rural economy.

L. Conneally, Director of Economic Development stated that this is a multi-faceted issue and noted the unprecedented focus on rural development by Clare County Council. Mr. Conneally informed the members that Clare County Council is constantly working with job creation agencies to ensure jobs are created in the county so that people will come to live here. Mr. Conneally referred to Government focus on rural towns and villages and in revitalising town centres in order to facilitate population growth. Mr. Conneally noted the need to have sufficient zoned land, sufficient public space realm and the need to optimise digital connectivity. Mr. Conneally stated that embracing framework facilitating growth in particular areas in the review of the County Development Plan is based on evidence and predictions for housing needs demand as well as an analysis of projected cohort of population. Mr. Conneally assured the elected members that there is a very competent team working on this.

At this stage, Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P. Burke requested the members views on extending the meeting to deal with the remaining items. Cllr. P.J. Ryan proposed that the meeting end at 6:30 p.m. and that the remaining items be discussed at the adjourned meeting. This was seconded by Cllr. P. McMahon and agreed by the members present.

### **Item 23. Temporary facilities on walking trails.**

Cllrs. P. McMahon, P.J. Ryan and P. Daly requested that this item be deferred to the adjourned meeting.

“In view of the increased demand for outdoor exercising as covid restrictions ease, that this Council engage with Coillte, Government Departments and others providing walking trails with a view to having temporary toilet facilities and additional parking in place before the 2021 summer season.”

### **Motion for the purpose of dealing with urgent business.**

Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P. Burke informed the meeting that a motion for the purpose of dealing with urgent business had been received and that motion may be proposed in accordance with Standing Order No. 44. This was agreed by the members present.

Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator read out the following resolution signed by Cllrs. Susan Crawford, Donna McGettigan, Shane Talty, Joe Killeen, Joe Garrihy, P.J. Kelly, Ian Lynch, Clare Colleran Molloy, Gabriel Keating, Alan O’Callaghan, Pat Hayes, Ann Norton, Tony O’Brien, Cillian Murphy, Bill Chambers, Joe Cooney, Pat Burke and Michael Begley (17)

“That Clare County Council ask the Government to establish an independent inquiry to investigate and provide answers to questions that have arisen in relation to the

recently aired RTE Investigates programme, reporting the building and maintaining of dossiers on autistic children and their families who were involved in legal actions against the State.”

Cllr. S. Crawford provided the background to this as follows:

“On Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March RTE Investigates reported that the Department of Health had been secretly using information from private doctor consultations to build and maintain dossiers on autistic children who were involved in legal actions against the State. These dossiers, which included the sensitive medical and educational information of children involved in long-dormant court cases, were built and maintained over a number of years by the Department of Health, without the knowledge or consent of parents. The work was done with the co-operation of the Health Service Executive and the Department of Education and involved detailed information sourced directly from confidential consultations that the children and their families had with doctors and other professionals. The reports included details of specialist service provision and documented the well-being and mindset of parents as they coped with the needs of their child/children. Families were unaware that what they disclosed to medical staff in order to get treatment and support for their child/children was being passed on to the department. In one instance, evidence suggests that a detailed report was sent to the department following a psychiatric consultation with a child. Another case involved the sharing of a video of a child in a distressed state. There were also updates from local care, community mental health and support services. These updates recorded issues related to children named in the court proceedings, as well as their parents and siblings. They also recorded details such as marital breakdowns among parents and addictions in the home. The information was shared and gathered with the goal of aiding the Department of Health with a background legal strategy, such as in determining when it would be a good time to approach parents to settle or withdraw their case.

The following questions have arisen and require answers.

- How do families establish if there is a dossier on them and their children?
- Will the Departments involved contact the affected families directly?
- How do families access the dossiers. Can a step by step approach be provided?
- Will a Helpdesk/Helpline be set up for parents to work through the actuality of dossiers, findings, the impact of those findings and the “where to next” for those affected?
- What are the timelines of dossier compilation?
- Who requested/signed off on this practice?
- What are proposed actions in relation to the practice of dossier compilation going forward?
- What are the legal issues that arise in terms of requesting and accessing medical information without patient consent?
- What are the legal issues that arise in terms of GDPR?

We request an independent inquiry (one that does not involve Government Departments investigating themselves)?

Going forward can we ensure this culture which lacks both accountability and transparency is addressed with a top-down, bottom-up approach to both the inquiry



and service provision. Can we have a commitment from the relevant Departments that the greater picture of lack of appropriate service provision for autistic children and adults and their families across the lifespan be addressed meaningfully, thereby preventing this happening again?"

The elected members were unanimous in supporting this motion and commended Cllr. S. Crawford for raising this for discussion. The members expressed concerns regarding the legal issues raised in relation to GDPR and agreed that the questions raised should be answered.

Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P. Burke informed the members that the adjourned meeting will take place on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> April at 3:45 p.m. The meeting then concluded.

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

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

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

**Minutes of the adjourned April Meeting of Clare County Council held on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 at 3:45 p.m. via MS Teams.**

**Present:**

Councillors J. Flynn, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Murphy, A. Norton, P. Daly, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, P. Burke, A. O’Callaghan, T. O’Brien, 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, Director of Finance and Support Services.

**Apologies:** Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard, Cllr. J. Crowe and Cllr. M. Nestor.

Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Pat Burke presided.

**Votes of sympathy**

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

- The Cronin family, Ennis on the death of Maureen Cronin
- The Andreucetti family, Dublin on the death of Aldo Andreucetti
- The Cotter family, Ennistymon on the death of Michael Cotter
- The McGrath family, Kilkee on the death of Charlie McGrath

**Item 17. Moneypoint site.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Kelly

Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Garrihy agus glacadh leis

“That a feasibility study be done on the potential of the Moneypoint site being developed as an international shipping port with emphasis on trans-shipment.”

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

“With the implementation of Brexit and its associated impacts on trade and also the recent spotlight on the global supply chain of goods via sea freight, the sentiments expressed in this Notice of Motion are timely. The Shannon Estuary is a key national strategic transport corridor and a natural deepwater resource with Moneypoint routinely hosting the largest vessels entering Irish or indeed European waters. The

Estuary and Moneypoint have facilities that serve the national and regional economy, as well as providing the necessary maritime and ancillary resources to facilitate value-added activities serving national, European and global markets.

Recent research has found that the natural deepwater resource, availability of hinterland, and prime maritime location of the sheltered estuary is creating an attractive investment potential for transporting containers and bulk cargo, particularly on large transshipment vessels. This trend is emerging with the aspiration of avoiding the busy shipping lanes in the English Channel and Atlantic routes and increasing trading and transportation efficiencies throughout Europe and other international markets.

The Programme for Government (June 2020) states that Government “*will consider the potential of the Shannon Estuary in terms of regional economic development across transport and logistics, manufacturing, renewable energy and tourism, and develop a strategy to achieve this potential, with support from the Exchequer*”. The Programme for Government follows the Governments Climate Action Plan (2019) which committed to ending the burning of coal in ESB’s Moneypoint generation plant by 2025, and to the replacement of coal-fired generation with low-carbon and renewable technologies.

From a Local Authority policy perspective, Moneypoint is a strategic development location, identified in the *Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary* as comprising 280 hectares, 227 hectares of which is occupied by the Moneypoint power generating station with 53 hectares of land available and zoned for further development. The objectives of the *Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023*, the *Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary* and the recently adopted *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region* all seek to capitalise on the natural deep water potential of Moneypoint and existing Port and maritime infrastructure, by facilitating and proactively encouraging the sustainable development of maritime related industries.

Whilst the focus of this Notice of Motion is on transshipment which undoubtedly has significant potential, there are also very real opportunities for Moneypoint, the County and Ireland for the establishment of a hub for off-shore wind energy, potentially utilising the Shannon Estuary and Moneypoint, for manufacturing, assembly, servicing and associated supply chain requirements of the large-scale turbines and - critically - to provide on-shore access to the national grid.

Building on the vision as set out in the *2017-2023 Clare County Development Plan* for the Moneypoint site and off-shore renewable energy, ESB and Equinor are exploring the feasibility of developing Offshore Wind Farms off the West Coast of Ireland. If developed, the first phase of the project, Moneypoint Offshore One, will be located 16km off the Clare /Kerry Coast. The expected capacity from the first phase is estimated to be 400MW whilst a further phase would bring the overall capacity to 1,300MW. These off-shore wind farms are likely to connect into Moneypoint substation and utilise the spare capacity available following the coal plant closure. The evolution and transition of Moneypoint from coal to renewables would see the continued supply of electricity generation and transmission from this site but from a cleaner energy source.

It is clear that there is not only potential for the Moneypoint site for transshipment but also for a Hub for off-shore renewable energy. The spin-off benefits for County Clare

and the Mid-West region are significant in terms of economic, social development and sustainable energy generation. The sentiments expressed to undertake a feasibility study for the potential of the Moneypoint Site being developed is timely and in that regard, Clare County Council will continue to work, assist and collaborate with the ESB, the Shannon Foynes Port Company and all stakeholders to explore the potential for the site in order to maximise all opportunities for the benefit of this nationally significant asset and County Clare.”

Cllr. P.J. Kelly informed the meeting that this notice of motion had been submitted prior to the recent announcement in relation to Moneypoint and provided reasons why Moneypoint has potential to be developed as an international shipping port particularly in relation to trans-shipment. Cllr. Kelly stated that this would create employment and encouraged Clare County Council, Government and the ESB to establish a team to ensure Moneypoint is development to its maximum potential.

The elected members agreed that Moneypoint has been identified as an excellent resource and has the capacity to deliver and work with Maritime World Trade. It was noted that development at Moneypoint has potential to attract other industry to the region, can act as a refueling stop as well as being a hub for distribution to the rest of Europe.

The West Clare Municipal District members thanked the Chief Executive for organising the earlier presentation from the ESB and welcomed the announcement for the Clare coastline.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and stated that Sean Hegarty, Station Manager, Moneypoint and Paul Lennon, Manager, Offshore Wind and Alternative Fuels, ESB had given a briefing to the West Clare Municipal District Councillors in relation to the proposed development at Moneypoint. Mr. Dowling stated that this will commence a series of engagement with local Councillors and that his intention is that a full briefing will be given to the full Council once a year to provide an update on the strategy.

### **Item 23. Temporary facilities on walking trails.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon

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

“In view of the increased demand for outdoor exercising as covid restrictions ease, that this Council engage with Coillte, Government Departments and others providing walking trails with a view to having temporary toilet facilities and additional parking in place before the 2021 summer season.”

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

“The Rural and Community Development Officers will engage on a cross-directorate basis with the Municipal District offices and the relevant departments to research funding streams for the provision of these facilities based on local need, and guidance from Area Engineers/Senior Executive Officers in the Municipal Districts.”

During discussion the elected members welcomed the noticeable increase in people walking and cycling and noted the lack of toilet facilities available at walking trails. It was agreed that traditionally people would have used local cafes, bars and restaurants but these are now closed due to covid 19 restrictions. The elected

members felt that facilities need to be in place prior to the summer season as it is anticipated that County Clare will be a popular staycation area during the upcoming tourist season. It was suggested that engagement take place with local community groups requesting the use of existing community facilities in areas where there are no public facilities available. It was recommended that when building or upgrading toilet facilities that they must be able to cater for people with disabilities. It was also noted that parking is causing problems at many amenity areas also.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that this issue has been raised nationally and noted the ongoing progress in relation to the new toilets built in Lahinch, Spanish Point and Kilkee. Mr. Dowling agreed that there is a need to make sure maximum facilities are open for the summer season but engagement will have to take place with a view to using other public buildings as Clare County Council does not have the resources or budget to install facilities at every amenity area. Mr. Dowling undertook to look at sourcing facilities in conjunction with community groups and committed to continue to build facilities going forward.

Cllr. A. O’Callaghan requested that Item No. 27 be taken at this time. This was agreed by the members present.

**Item 27. Meat regulator.**

Ar moladh Cllr. A. O’Callaghan  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. S. Talty agus glacadh leis

“Call on Clare County Council to contact the Minister for Agriculture to allow the appointment of an independent Meat Regulator with statutory powers.”

The elected members agreed that the beef industry needs regulation as beef producers deserve a fair price for their produce so that their business is sustainable. Concerns were expressed that small farmers will phase out and be non-existent as they are finding it difficult to survive due to the uncertainty in the cattle trade.

**Item 24. Water abstraction from Lough Derg.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn

“Proposal for potential financial levy if and when proposed abstraction scheme proceeds of Lough Derg water for Dublin region water supplies to benefit development and growth of rural Clare\* and rural Tipperary.

That Clare County Council request the Government put in place a funding mechanism in association with Irish Water that would levy a charge on an ongoing basis, e.g. a proportional % cent per litre of abstracted water to result in circa €10million annual fund, on any future water abstracted from Lough Derg for the lifetime of such water scheme to provide water to Midlands & Dublin Region. Such levies to be used equally for rural development in both Clare and Tipperary. Immediate Clare projects would be a strategy to provide waste water treatment of Clares 55 unsewered towns and villages. Further Clare projects would include rural tourism, rural enterprises,

rural housing, etc. \* Rural Clare means areas outside of Limerick Metropolitan Area as per Southern RSES.”

Cllr. J. Flynn outlined his reasons for submitting this notice of motion in the event that this project proceeds as he felt that County Clare should benefit if resources are being taken to the east of the country and that the money could be used to benefit Irish Water projects in this county. Cllr. J. Flynn requested that An Bord Pleanála be requested to put a condition in the planning decision that an annual sum of money be paid to Clare County Council and requested support from his colleagues prior to the adoption of the National Water Plan.

Cllr. G. Flynn in seconding the notice of motion stated that he did have reservations initially in relation to this proposal but after hearing proposals put forward by Cllr. J. Flynn agreed to second it.

Cllrs. P. Hayes, T. O’Brien, J. Cooney and P. Burke stated their objection to this proposal as they felt it was premature and requested Cllr. J. Flynn to withdraw this notice of motion. The Killaloe Municipal District members felt that further discussions need to take place with Irish Water before any agreement can be reached. It was agreed that Irish Water need to provide infrastructure in County Clare but have not provided any information on plans or projections for the region. It was felt that allowing the extraction of water from Lough Derg could interfere with the natural flow of the River Shannon and would have a negative impact on the tourism industry and amenities built around it. It was agreed that there is merit in getting finance in future but Irish Water have a lot to deliver in east Clare before agreement can be considered on this issue.

Cllr. J. Flynn stated that he has been viewing ongoing progress on this project and felt it is not premature as Irish Water have been declaring intent and working on the planning application for this project in relation to the National Water Resources Plan as once this Plan is adopted it will include this project. Cllr. J. Flynn stated that his proposal could ensure that Clare County Council would receive finance to invest in infrastructure projects which would benefit the county. Cllr. J. Flynn informed the meeting that he felt that this is a lost opportunity but in the spirit of co-operation he agreed to withdraw this notice of motion.

The Killaloe Municipal District members stated that our Government representatives need to protect this asset and obtain the best possible outcome for east Clare going forward. It was agreed that no real negotiations have taken place with Irish Water in relation to the extraction of water from Lough Derg and the members felt that it is imperative that a meeting is facilitated to discuss future plans. The members agreed that there was merit in Cllr. J. Flynn’s proposal but felt it was premature at this stage.

## **Item 25. Carers allowance.**

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

“I am asking Clare County Council to write to the Taoiseach, Minister for Finance and the Minister for Social Protection, to prioritise that the carers allowance is no longer means tested after the 2021 budget. Given that the majority of carers are

female and the fact that carer's allowance is means tested a huge amount of women don't receive any money due to their partners earnings.

This means that women carers are reliant on their husband or partner for financial support with no support from the state. This is a throw back to the 1800's when women were not recognised by society for their contributions or value to the state. Carers are saving the state millions for this service with no recognition. The carers allowance should be provided to the carer regardless of their partners income, as that is their only means of income.

Why is it that the carers allowance is means tested but the children's allowance is universal? Is one not as important as the other? I would like the Ministers and the Taoiseach to answer these questions.

I would also like that this motion is circulated to all councils across Ireland to show solidarity and support for all carers."

The elected members extended support and respect for carers and agreed that it is time that this issue is addressed as being a carer involves working 24 hours daily without respite. It was noted that most carers are women and many do not receive carers allowance as it is means tested. The elected members agreed that it is time carers were supported and respected by the state as they are facilitating the wishes of people by allowing them stay in their own homes. It was agreed that this notice of motion would be circulated to all other local authorities.

## **Item 26. Community Psychiatric Car Service.**

Ar moladh Cllr. S. Crawford  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. D. McGettigan agus glacadh leis

"That Clare County Council ask the HSE and the "Connecting for Life" initiative to pilot a Community Psychiatric Car service in the County. This has been successfully piloted by the NHS in London. The Mental Health Joint Response Car (MHJRC) involves having a Community Psychiatric Nurse and Emergency Medical Technician on call 24/7. The rationale is that people in mental health crises in the community do not often require admission to hospital, rather to address their issues with trained personnel in their own homes. Equally the qualified personnel can also make the call if actual hospital admission is warranted. To date, evaluation of the pilot has proven successful in the UK and a further 7 cars are now in operation.

Currently, Goal four of Connecting for Life, Ireland's national strategy to reduce suicide 2015-2020, aims to enhance accessibility, consistency and care pathways of services for people vulnerable to suicidal behaviour. This motion seeks to enact this in real time in our communities. I also ask for the motion to be circulated to every local authority."

The elected members in supporting this agreed that this is a well structured community based initiative which would have the capacity to deal with suicidal behaviour as Accident & Emergency Departments are not the place for this and many people do not require hospital admission. It was felt that these trained staff could determine if people needed hospital admission and many situations can often be dealt

with in peoples own homes. It was noted that there has been an increase in suicide due to covid 19 and its impact on job losses, isolation and long-covid and the members called for preventative health and well being intervention by the HSE. The members felt that it important that resources and training are available at local centres as distance can prevent people from availing of services. It was agreed that this notice of motion would be circulated to all other local authorities.

**Item 28. Shannon International Airport.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon

Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council alert the Minister for Transport and the Government to the potential downside for Shannon Airport and Aer Lingus staff in this region arising from the developing of the airline Manchester hub and demand strong government action to avert a crisis.”

The elected members noted that workers have been let go at Shannon Airport and expressed concern that any further reduction in services at Shannon International Airport will have huge unemployment consequences for workers in hotels, restaurants, car hire etc. in the region. It was felt that a smart marketing campaign is required to support the marketing of Shannon International Airport. The elected members agreed that the Clare Oireachtas Members need to be more forceful and speak out more to protect Shannon Airport as it is vital that there is a thriving international airport to protect the western seaboard and businesses that set up.

**Item 29. Land Development Agency Bill 2021.**

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Begley agus glacadh leis

“I am calling on Clare County Council to contact the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage to outline our complete opposition to the proposed provisions of The Land Development Agency Bill 2021 (LDA). The proposed removal of Section 183 reserved function of elected members in relation to the disposal of local authority held land to the LDA as provided for in the Bill is unacceptable and an affront to democracy.

The Government should provide adequate funding for local authorities to build affordable homes for rent and for sale and stop wasting public money on unaccountable bodies.

I am calling on my colleagues to support my call to the Minister.”

The elected members supported this notice of motion and voiced their total opposition to the Bill which would remove one very important reserved function from Councillors and will not solve any housing issues. The elected members considered that the function of Councillors is the cornerstone of local democracy which needs to be protected. It was felt that this is an attempt to dilute the powers of local authorities and Councillors and the members agreed that if sufficient funding is provided to local authorities for social housing that these services will be delivered.



The members felt aggrieved by this situation and requested that influence be exerted on Oireachtas Members to ensure this legislation does not proceed to adoption.

Cllr. M. Begley read an extract from correspondence received from AILG expressing their serious concerns in relation to the proposed removal of the Section 183 reserved functions of elected members in relation to the disposal of local authority held land, to the Land Development Agency, as provided for in Part 7 Section 56 of the Bill.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive advised the members that during his time in Local Government there has been continuous Local Government reform and current policy is referring to directly elected Mayor as well as enhancing the role of the Councillor and the role of the Chief Executive. Mr. Dowling noted that this bill has not yet been enacted.

### **Item 30. Free Psychological Support.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Garrihy

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

“That Clare County Council write to the Department of Health and to Minister Stephen Donnelly requesting that Victims of Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence have access to free psychological support and counselling during and after the legal process as required. We request this support be provided bearing in mind that convicted perpetrators have access to these services at least over the duration of sentence. If passed we ask that this motion is shared with all other local authorities for support.”

The elected members noted that support for survivors of domestic, sexual and gender based violence ends after court cases have been heard and decisions handed down to perpetrators and noticed that the perpetrators can continue to avail of supports. The members present called for this practice to be reversed as the victims need ongoing action and support to deal with the situation and the ongoing challenges. It was felt that in society victims are being encouraged to come forward in order to protect others and the importance of protecting and supporting the victims was re-iterated.

The members noted that there are supports available for victims of crime, and acknowledged the role played by voluntary organisations. It was agreed that people should not have to rely on charitable organisations for support as this should be provided by the government and HSE. The members agreed that this notice of motion would be circulated to all local authorities.

### **Item 31. Comhfhreagras/Correspondence.**

#### **Correspondence.**

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

1. Correspondence dated 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media regarding new tourism promotion strategy which will aid the promotion of Shannon Airport and tourism in Ireland.

2. Correspondence dated 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine regarding EU Regulation on Veterinary Medicinal Products.
3. Correspondence dated 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 from the Department of Health in relation to recognition of front line healthcare workers.
4. Correspondence dated 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in relation to mother and baby homes records.
5. Correspondence dated 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications in relation to the proposed ban on burning of turf, peat products or wood for the heating of homes.
6. Correspondence dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021 from the Department of Justice in relation to the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act.
7. Correspondence dated 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in relation to the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act.
8. Correspondence dated 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 from the Office of the Taoiseach in relation to the Fair Deal Scheme.
9. Correspondence dated 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 from the Department of Health.
10. Resolution circulated by Sligo County Council in relation to community and voluntary sector funding.
11. Resolution circulated by Sligo County Council in relation to Post Offices.
12. Resolution circulated by Sligo County Council in relation to independent meat regulator.
13. Resolution circulated by Sligo County Council in relation to the Land Development Agency Bill 2021.
14. Resolution circulated by Leitrim County Council in relation to pesticide cypermethrin.
15. Resolution circulated by Kerry County Council in relation to the Land Development Agency Bill 2021.
16. Resolution circulated by Wicklow County Council in relation to the Land Development Agency Bill 2021.
17. Resolution circulated by Galway County Council in relation to the Land Development Agency Bill 2021.
18. Resolution circulated by Louth County Council in relation to the Land Development Agency Bill 2021.
19. Resolution circulated by Limerick City and County Council in relation to National Union of Journalists employees working in the Limerick Leader newspaper.
20. Resolution circulated by Mayo County Council in relation to the Land Development Agency Bill 2021.

21. Resolution circulated by Monaghan County Council in relation to the equitable global distribution of all vaccines, treatments and therapies developed to combat the coronavirus.

The meeting then concluded.

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

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

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