

Minutes of the April Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare and via MS Teams on Monday, 11th April, 2022 at 3:45 p.m.

Present:

Councillors M. Howard, M. Nestor, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Murphy, P. Daly, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, A. O’Callaghan, J. Crowe, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, G. Flynn, D. McGettigan, P. O’Gorman, J. Killeen, 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. Noeleen Fitzgerald, Director of Finance and Support Services.
- Ms. Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, Physical Development.

Present via MS Teams:

Cllrs. J. Flynn, A. Norton, P. Burke, T. O’Brien, S. Talty, J. Garrihy, L. Grant, P.J. Kelly.

Apologies:

- Dr. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P.J. Ryan presided.

Votes of sympathy.

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

- The Hill family, Lissycasey on the death of Tomo Hill, RIP
- The Moroney family, Ennis on the death of Mary Moroney RIP
- The Houlihan family, Ennistymon on the death of Gus Houlihan, RIP
- The Hillery family, Spanish Point on the death of Moira Hillery, RIP
- The Hynes family, Whitegate on the death of Michael Hynes, RIP
- The O’Sullivan family, Lahinch on the death of Tomsie O’Sullivan, RIP
- The McNulty family Newmarket on Fergus on the death of Thomas McNulty RIP
- The Doyle family Clarecastle on the death of Tony Doyle, RIP
- The Fahey family Clarecastle on the death of Michael Fahey, RIP

- The Howley family, Lisdoonvarna on the death of Gerry Howley, RIP

Ukrainian Crisis.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P.J. Ryan informed the members that an emergency motion had been submitted by Councillor Mary Howard and co-signed by 18 other Councillors and that it is proposed to take this item after the statutory business and before the notice of motions.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and undertook to keep the members up to date on the situation surrounding the displacement of people from Ukraine. Mr. Dowling stated that Minister Roderic O’Gorman, T.D., Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth will be in County Clare in the coming days. Mr. Dowling noted that the role of local authorities is important and that there are significant challenges ahead as the current predictions are that the number of displaced people seeking care and accommodation could reach 75,000 by the end of May. As of Monday the 4th April 1,916 people have been accommodated in 16 different venues across 7 locations in County Clare. Mr. Dowling stated that the local authority sector have now been given a clear mandate in the context of identifying and activating accommodation options in order to provide safe shelter for those fleeing the war in Ukraine. Mr. Dowling informed the meeting that the Clare Civil Defence Unit have prepared a venue in Ennis for emergency accommodation in which 18 adults have been accommodated. Mr. Dowling outlined details of his recent visit to Lisdoonvarna. Mr. Dowling noted that there are numerous organizations with questions on this ongoing issue and stated that local authorities will respond to the best of their ability. Mr. Dowling noted that the Community Response Forum will meet on Thursday.

Item 1: Minutes of Council Meetings.

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

“That the Minutes of the March Meeting of Clare County Council held on 7th March, 2022 be adopted and signed.”

Item 2: Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

Item 3: Minutes of Municipal District Meetings.

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

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 1st March, 2022 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Meeting held on the 26th January, 2022 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the Shannon Municipal District Meeting held on the 18th January, 2022 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 18th January, 2022 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District adjourned Meeting held on the 27th January, 2022 be noted.”

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

a. Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Daly agus glacadh leis

“That the minutes of the Economic Development S.P.C. meeting held on 6th December, 2022 be noted”.

b. Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Nestor agus glacadh leis

“That the minutes of the Social Development S.P.C. meeting held on 8th December, 2022 be noted”.

Item 5: Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meetings.

The members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 28th February, 2022 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. T. O’Brien requested an update on the current status of the Killaloe Bridge Bypass project.

Cllr. J. Flynn referred to the private rented inspections and expressed disappointment that scheduled inspections are being cancelled at short notice due to the unavailability of tenants. Cllr. J. Flynn felt that these inspections should be prioritized as this work is being done on behalf of tenants in order to improve housing standards.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive undertook to provide an update in relation to the Killaloe Bridge Bypass project.

A. Haugh, Director of Social Development addressed the meeting and stated that the Council relies on the co-operation of landlords in order to get access to property and that the relevant resources have been applied in the current year. Referring to virtual inspections, Ms. Haugh stated that while landlords can be invited, the Council is reliant on them being available as co-operation is needed so that inspections can proceed as planned.

Item 7: Disposal of lands 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 14th March, 2022 from Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of an area of lands measuring 0.0086 hectares at Ballard Road, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 14th March, 2022.

Ar moladh Cllr. S. Talty
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 Ballard Road, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 14th March, 2022.”

Item 8: Disposal of lands at Bunnabinnia South (Woodcock Hill), Meelick, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.

Report dated 29th March, 2022 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of an area of lands measuring 0.28 hectares at Bunnabinnia South (Woodcock Hill), Meelick, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 29th March, 2022.

Cllr. G. Flynn stated that he opposed the sale of this land at Municipal District level and requested that a condition be included that the sale be subject to planning permission being obtained for alterations or any new installations at this location. This was supported by Cllrs. J. Flynn and D. McGettigan.

L. Conneally, Director of Economic Development confirmed that the proposed disposal can proceed, subject to planning permission being required for any new structures or installations that are not exempted development.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn
Cuidithe ag Cllr. D. McGettigan 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 Bunnabinnia South (Woodcock Hill), Meelick, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 29th March, 2022 and subject to planning permission being required for any new structures or installations that are not exempted development.”

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 development at Block 2 Ballymaley Business Park, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Report dated 6th April, 2022 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development was circulated with the agenda together with the Chief Executive’s report dated 6th April, 2022 (including Clare County Council’s screening for appropriate assessment and determination), which had been prepared by Helen

Quinn, A/Senior Planner, under Delegation Order HR151 dated 9th April 2021. The reports outline details of a proposed development at Block 2, Ballymaley Business Park, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare and the members were asked if there were any issues that they wished to raise in respect of the report circulated.

As the Chief Executive's report had been duly considered by the members, in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, as amended, and as there was no proposal to vary or modify the development, and as there was no proposal to refuse the development, accordingly, the development can proceed as outlined.

Item 10: Clare County Council Draft Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026.

Report dated 4th April, 2022 from John Corry, Administrative Officer, Social Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the Strategic Plan has been prepared by the Clare Housing and Disability Steering Group (HDSG), based on a template received from the Housing Agency, and aims to facilitate strategic planning in providing Clare County Council, other housing and service providers with information that will help to inform and guide housing provision and necessary support services for people with a disability over the next 5 years. This Strategy has had input from individuals with lived experiences as well as all groups, agencies and representatives involved with people with disabilities.

The core goal of the Strategy is to meet the identified housing needs of people with disabilities locally whether they are currently living in the community and or in congregated setting. The Strategy is intended to form an integral part of the Housing Services Plans and will promote and support the delivery of accommodation for people with disabilities using all appropriate housing supply mechanisms.

The four categories of disability targeted in the Strategy are:

- (a) sensory disability
- (b) mental health disability
- (c) physical disability and
- (d) intellectual disability/autism.

The Draft Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026 was approved by the members present having been proposed by Cllr. M. Howard and seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy.

Item 11: Community Support Scheme 2022.

Report dated 11th April, 2022 from Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development was circulated with the agenda. The report states that a total of 467 applications were received under the Council's Community Supports Scheme 2022. The total fund for 2022 is €97,500.

Due to particular challenges, assessment of the applications was delayed and as a result, members are being asked to consider the recommendations in 2 tranches.

At their meeting on Wednesday, 30th March 2022, the members of the Working Group for the Action Plan for Rural Ireland considered the grant recommendations under Tranche 1 which included the following support schemes:

- (1) Support Scheme for Burial Grounds
- (2) Support Scheme for Christmas Lighting
- (3) Support Scheme for Community Wi-Fi
- (4) Pre-Allocated

The total fund for Tranche 1 is **€18,000**

The approval of the members is now sought.

The grant recommendations were approved having been proposed by Cllr. J. Cooney and seconded by Cllr. C. Murphy. It was noted that some areas were listed in the incorrect Municipal Districts. L. Cleary, Director of Rural Development undertook to correct this.

Item 12: Schedule of Municipal District Works (SMDW) for 2022.

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

Item 13: Clare County Council Audit Committee Annual Report 2021.

The 2021 Audit Committee Annual Report was circulated with the agenda. The report states that under the provision of the Audit Charter for Clare County Council and Section 60 of the Local Government Act 2014 requires that the Audit Committee report to the Council at least annually.

The report outlines details of the Audit Committee under the following headings:

- Functions of the Audit Committee
- Membership of the Committee
- Role and Responsibility of Internal Audit
- Meetings with Directors of Services
- Internal Audit
- Local Government Audit Report 2019
- Risk Register
- External Assessment of Internal Audit Function by IPA
- Work Programme for 2022

The members noted this item as presented having been proposed by Cllr. P. Hayes and seconded by Cllr. P. McMahon.

Item 14: Statutory Audit Report to the members of Clare County Council for the year ended 31st December, 2020.

The Statutory Audit Report to the Members of Clare County Council on the Accounts of Clare County Council for year ended 31st December, 2020 was circulated with the agenda.

The report included the Chief Executive's responses to all comments raised by the Auditor. The report as presented was noted by the members present having been proposed by Cllr. P. Hayes and seconded by Cllr. B. Chambers.

The elected members raised queries in relation to collection of housing rents and loans, local authority companies overview and the County Library project.

Noeleen Fitzgerald, Director of Finance and Support services responded to queries raised by the members.

Item 15: Report from Audit Committee on Statutory Audit Report for year ended 31st December, 2020.

Report from Austin Slattery, Chairman on behalf of the Clare Audit Committee was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the Audit Committee held its meeting on 17th January, 2022 to review the Statutory Audit Report for year ending 31st December, 2020.

The members noted the report as presented having been proposed by Cllr. M. Howard and seconded by Cllr. P. Burke.

The elected members wished recently retired Local Government Auditor, Mr. Tommy O'Callaghan well in his retirement and extended thanks to him for his service to the local government sector for many years.

Cllr. P. Hayes as a member of the Audit Committee acknowledged the co-operation received from Management and staff and noted the in-depth investigations that take place into the workings of the Council together with the ongoing challenges being experienced.

Item 16: Clare County Council Draft Annual Financial Statement 2021.

The Annual Financial Statement for 2021 together with a report was circulated in advance of the agenda and was noted by the members present, having been proposed by Cllr. P. Hayes and seconded by Cllr. McMahon

Responding to queries raised, Noeleen Fitzgerald, Director of Finance and Support Service outlined the process of preparing the Annual Financial Statement as set out in the Local Government Act 2001.

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

“In accordance with Section 104 of the Local Government Act 2001, the approval of Council is sought for additional expenditure by Division as set out below. The approval of the Council is also sought for approval under Section 66 of the Local Government Act for additional contributions for Leisure Centres, Glór and Kiltrush Amenity Trust in support arising from Covid impact.

Division	€
Road Transportation and Safety	(2,140,456)
Development Incentives and Controls	(268,215)
Environmental Protection	(712,963)
Recreation and Amenity	(1,050,067)

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Begley agus glacadh leis

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

		Total Euro
A	Housing and Building Total	1,343,000
B	Road Transport & Safety Total	963,000
C	Water Services Total	256,000
D	Development Management Total	3,477,000
E	Environmental Services Total	1,862,000
F	Recreation and Amenity Total	1,670,000
G	Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare Total	-
H	Miscellaneous Services Total	521,000
J	Central Management Charges Total	1,861,000
		11,953,000

Item 17: Nomination to Regional Health Forum West.

Report dated 5th April, 2022 from Ann Reynolds, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the current Clare County Council elected representatives on the Regional Health Forum West are Cllrs.

C. Murphy, B. Chambers, P. Burke and L. Grant. It is now proposed that Cllr. M. Howard will replace Cllr. P. Burke on the Regional Health Forum West.

This was agreed having been proposed by Cllr. J. Cooney and seconded by Cllr. G. Keating.

The members thanked Cllr. P. Burke for his service and commitment while he was a member of the Regional Health Forum West and wished Cllr. M. Howard well in the role.

Motion for the purpose of dealing with urgent business.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P.J. Ryan 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. M. Howard, J. Garrihy, J. Killeen, D. McGettigan, L. Grant, C. Colleran Molloy, A. O'Callaghan, J. Crowe, J. Cooney, S. Talty, M. Begley, P. Daly, J. Flynn, P. O'Gorman, G. Keating, P. McMahon, C. Murphy, M. Nestor and I. Lynch.

That Clare County Council via the Community Response Forum identify suitable locations that can be used as Hubs for various support groups to assist Ukrainian people during this crisis. The Hubs could also be used as a central point for donations of items required. The various agencies would come together with Clare County Council and plan how to manage the facility"

The elected members were unanimous in supporting this motion and paid tribute to the volunteers and communities who have responded to this ongoing crisis. The members felt that this is not a short time issue and that a central location should be established where information and experiences can be shared and where services can be provided by the agencies involved. The members agreed that it is unrealistic to expect community volunteers to provide the required services long term. The members believed that communities and volunteers need guidance and requested that the option of providing full time resources be explored in order to deliver clarity and role definition. The importance of maintaining social cohesion and solidarity was outlined in order to help people being displaced feel welcome and safe. The members felt that it is important that people are aware and kept up to date in relation to the supports available.

Item 18. Spancilhill Fair.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy

Cuidithe ag Cllr. P.J. Kelly, P. Hayes, P. Burke agus J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council take all necessary steps to assist and to ensure the success of the 400 year old internationally renowned Spancilhill Fair due to the situation where its voluntary committee are unable to obtain insurance, particularly in light of the foreseeability that people will attend this national heritage event in large numbers and will have no place to park their vehicles and conduct their activities except on the public roads.”

The elected members explained that communication had been received from the Spencil Hill Fair Committee expressing concern in relation to insurance cover to assist in the safe operation of the fair for this year. Tributes were paid to the Spencilhill Fair Committee who have kept this historical and traditional event active. The members felt that community groups need assistance in finding solutions to insurance issues.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and confirmed that the fair in Spencilhill will go ahead in June.

The elected members thanked the Chief Executive for supporting the Spencilhill Fair Committee and for his positive response.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P.J. Ryan requested that Item No. 27 be taken at this time as he had to leave the meeting to attend another appointment. This was agreed by the members present.

Item 27. Market Shannon Airport.

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan

Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That this Council request the Shannon Group, with Clare Tourism, Fáilte Ireland, and other tourism related bodies would market Shannon Airport as the gateway to the Wild Atlantic Way.”

Deirdre O’Shea, A/Head of Tourism replied as follows:

“The success of Fáilte Ireland’s *Wild Atlantic Way* brand presents a unique opportunity for the marketing of Shannon Airport.

The Clare Tourism Advisory Forum, as an industry stakeholder-led forum comprises of representatives from Clare Tourism Department, Tourism businesses and State Agencies, to include Fáilte Ireland and Shannon Group, meets on a bi-monthly basis. The marketing of Shannon Airport is a recurring agenda item. This facilitates all partners on the Forum working collaboratively to ensure that Shannon Airport and air connectivity to the West of Ireland receives continued priority through collaborative marketing nationally and internationally.

Fáilte Ireland recognise that Shannon Airport as an International Airport is integral to the West of Ireland and will market this and other airports on the Wild Atlantic Way as gateways, but in particular Shannon as the international airport.

Shannon Group positions Shannon Airport as the closest airport and most convenient airport to explore the Wild Atlantic Way. The Shannon Airport website features a section on the Wild Atlantic Way and shows photography of iconic sites of the County. Shannon Group work closely with Tourism Ireland and participates in the Fáilte Ireland Wild Atlantic Way steering Group to ensure Shannon is heavily promoted as the international gateway to the Wild Atlantic Way.”

Role of Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. J. Killeen, Leas Cathaoirleach took the role of Cathaoirleach at this point.

Item 19. Potential takeover of Shannon Heritage.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Murphy

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. S. Talty, J. Garrihy, J. Flynn, P. O’Gorman, T. O’Brien, G. Flynn agus J. Killeen agus glacadh leis

“To request a full briefing for the elected members with regards to the current status of the due diligence process underway for the potential takeover of Shannon Heritage”

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:

“Clare County Council has been engaged in a Due Diligence process on the proposed transfer of Clare based Shannon Heritage sites to Clare County Council. The Council has also engaged at a national level with Government Departments seeking a funding package for the transfer of Shannon Heritage and associated costs involved in rejuvenating these tourism sites. A decision is awaited from Government Departments on the requested funding. The transfer cannot proceed without this funding package. A briefing session will be arranged with the elected members shortly.”

The elected members welcomed the reply and felt that an information session would be beneficial so that they could have an input into the process and gain a better understanding of the process.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the members that a briefing is scheduled to take place in the next week and stressed that any debate or discussion will take place in committee. Mr. Dowling stated that this is a transfer of the legal entity of Shannon Heritage to Clare County Council in accordance with a Government request and that it is not a takeover.

Item 20. General Municipal Allocation.

Cllr. G. Flynn requested that this be deferred to the May Council meeting.

“I am calling on the Chief Executive to put in place some technical support for elected members to deal specifically with the GMA (General Municipal Allocation). The current system of the SEE having the responsibility to meet with the elected member and organise the proposed program of spend can be problematic as the Senior Executive Engineer operates on a very limited time availability. The 2014 Local Government Reform Act was very positive in its approach to giving mandated councillors some control over spend and improvements in their respective areas and also acknowledge the important work carried out for their constituents that needs to be supported by the Executive in the local authority.”

Item 21. Zoning map for Kilmihil.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Murphy
Cuidithe ag Cllr. I. Lynch agus glacadh leis

“In light of the announcement of the Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade for Kilmihil that the zoning map, and population and housing allocation, for the village be revised in the County Development Plan core strategy to reflect the capacity for Kilmihil to grow.”

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:

“As a result of the recent announcement of the upgrade for the wastewater treatment plant for Kilmihil the implications of the upgrade for the future planning of Kilmihil will be addressed within the statutory plan making process currently underway for the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029.”

The elected members complimented the work being done by the people in Kilmihil in relation to the provision of the People’s Park and the Astro pitch and requested that they be included in discussion going forward in relation to the development of the area.

Item 22. Placenames Committee.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Begley agus glacadh leis

“Considering the increase in building development within the county, I request the Chief Executive and the Director of Social Development to reinstate the "Placenames Committee".

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:

“Clare County Council was very fortunate to have a Clare Placenames Committee established in 2002 and which operated over a number of years. The Committee gave advice on placenames countywide and acted as an advisor/monitor for estate names which were given to new developments. The establishment of the committee was an action under the then Clare Heritage Plan.

In the coming months I am committed to reinstating a Clare Placenames Committee and I will seek to have the representation on that Committee finalised and a clear structure and terms of reference in place as to how that Committee would operate.”

The elected members welcomed the re-instatement of the Placenames Committee and suggested that placenames be bi-lingual. The members asked if the Council monitor the erection of placenames chosen for developments by developers when the developments are complete. L. Conneally, Director of Economic Development stated that this is a planning enforcement issue and requested that it be brought to the attention of the planning department if signs are not erected.

Item 23. Active Travel Programme.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Murphy

"Recent media coverage reported that just 22% of Clare's allocation under the 2021 Active Travel Programme was drawn down. I am requesting clarification on whether the other 78% of these monies referred to "have been lost" or whether they are still available for expenditure by Clare County Council".

John Gannon, Senior Executive Engineer, Physical Development replied as follows:

"The NTA Active Travel submission that Clare County Council made in 2021, which contained a wide variety of project types, was based on a 5 year programme. The projects that were not completed in 2021 have continued into 2022 with a new funding allocation reflecting the projected budgets required for their completion. Some of these projects will continue beyond 2022."

Item 24. Planning Regulator.

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

"That the Planning Regulator be requested to attend a meeting of the Council with a view to discussing planning policies of mutual interest."

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:

"On behalf of the members I am happy to issue an invitation to Mr. Niall Cussen, the Planning Regulator to attend a meeting of Clare County Council. In order to get the most from the meeting it would be beneficial if the members could identify the specific planning policy areas they wish Mr. Cussen to address."

The elected members agreed that a constructive discussion with the Planning Regulator would be beneficial in order to clarify planning implications that arise on a regular basis. The members felt that good and defined planning policies are crucial for County Clare particularly during the preparation of the County Development Plan.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the meeting that he has had discussion with the Planning Regulator and that he has agreed to attend a meeting and engage with the members of Clare County Council. Mr. Dowling undertook to issue a formal invitation to Mr. Cussen. Mr. Dowling noted that the Council is in the process of preparing the County Development Plan and felt that the role of the Planning Regulator must be respected.

Item 25. Elective only hospital in the Mid West.

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

“In light of the record trolley numbers, lack of bed and clinical capacity at University Hospital Limerick that Clare County Council request the Minister for Health urgently bring to Government a proposal for the development and building of an Elective-only Hospital in the Mid-West, preferably in Ennis.”

The elected members provided an outline of the excessive number of patients on trollies waiting for treatment in hospitals in the Mid-West. Concern was expressed in relation to the high number of consultant posts not filled. The members believed that nurses are experiencing burn-out due to working in stressful facilities. The members agreed that an elective hospital, not impacted by the emergency department in University Hospital Limerick is needed in the mid-west preferably in Ennis.

Item 26. Criminalise the use of the ‘Z’ symbol.

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

“In response to the call from Dmytro KUBELA, Ukrainian Minister for Foreign Affairs, that this Council call on the Minister for Justice to propose legislation forthwith to criminalise the use of the ‘Z’ symbol as a way to publicly support Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. ‘Z’ means Russian war crimes, bombed out cities, thousands of murdered Ukrainians. Public support of this barbarism must be forbidden.”

The members expressed disappointment that the “Z” symbol has appeared locally and noted that this resolution is about criminalizing the context of the letter. The members felt that vandalism that can cause discrimination should not be acceptable in any community. The members noted that having met with displaced people from Ukraine we need to be true ambassadors for caring and giving and extend a warm welcome.

It was agreed that this resolution would be circulated to all other local authorities.

Item 28. National Ambulance Service.

Ar moladh Cllr. I. Lynch
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Murphy agus glacadh leis

“Clare County Council request the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly to initiate an independent review of the grossly under resourcing of the National Ambulance Service,

The suitability, effectiveness, efficiency of the current dynamic deployment system used by the National Ambulance Service for deployment of services in Rural Ireland.”

The elected members felt that the National Ambulance Service is under resourced nationally and the impact of this was outlined. The members agreed that the National Ambulance Service members carry out their duty with dignity and deserve to be better resourced. The members acknowledged the service being provided by community

first responders and the fire service in assisting the National Ambulance Service. The members agreed that the Minister needs to take responsibility and initiative a review in relation to the National Ambulance Service.

The Council's representatives on the Mid West Regional Health Forum acknowledged that the Regional Health Forum is aware that the National Ambulance Service is not working and is fundamentally under resourced and committed to the campaign to provide an extra ambulance allocation in West Clare.

It was agreed that this resolution would be circulated to all other local authorities and Clare Oireachtas Members.

Item 29. Childcare workers pay.

Due to the absence of Cllr. P. McMahon at this time, it was agreed that this item be deferred to the May Council Meeting.

“That Clare County Council calls on the Government to increase investment in the Childcare sector and in particular to urgently address the pay of childcare workers.”

Item 30. Exhume remains from Kilmainham Gaol.

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

“I call on Clare County Council to support the campaign to call on the appropriate department to carry out the necessary excavation works to recover the remains of Joe Brady, Daniel Curley, Michael Fagan, Thomas Caffrey and Tim Kelly in what is commonly known as the invincibles yard at Kilmainham Gaol.

The bodies of the five men lie beneath the paving slabs of the yard where they were executed in 1883.

The families of the five men are represented by the National Graves Association and the wish of the families is for their relatives to be exhumed from Kilmainham Gaol and reinterred in consecrated ground at Glasnevin Cemetery.”

Details of the campaign to have the necessary excavation works carried out and recover the remains of Joe Brady, Daniel Curley, Michael Fagan, Thomas Caffrey and Tim Kelly from Kilmainham Gaol and reinter them in consecrated ground at Glasnevin Cemetery were provided. The members supported the families wishes.

Item 31. Waiting times at Ennis General Hospital.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. D. McGettigan, A. O'Callaghan agus L. Grant agus glacadh leis

“This week we became aware that Ennis General Hospital has the second highest wait time for gynaecology appointments in the country.

Figures released to the Dáil show the average wait time for an outpatient gynaecology appointment at the hospital is close to one year and five months and is second only to Tallaght Hospital nationwide. Waiting times at University Hospital Limerick are around half that number, averaging out at 291 days. 599 women are currently waiting for such appointments in Ennis, along with a further 1,455 at University Hospital Limerick. On foot of this information we request the Minister for Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly to approve and allocate funding for both equipment and the recruitment of appropriate personnel for the Gynaecology Department in Ennis. This needs to be done as a matter of urgency.”

The elected members expressed concern in relation to the ongoing crisis in the provision of services at Ennis General Hospital and provided details of the consequences of delayed appointments, delayed diagnosis and care. The importance of regular gynaecological appointments, screening and early treatment was emphasised by the members. The elected members felt that women feel unheard and dismissed. The support of local media in highlighting this issue was welcomed. It was agreed that this resolution would be circulated to all other local authorities and Clare Oireachtas Members.

Item 32. Correspondence/Comhfhreagras.

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:

1. Correspondence dated 21st March, 2022 from the Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Defence regarding the provision of passport services.
2. Correspondence dated 23rd March, 2022 from the Office of the Revenue Commissioners concerning the importation of gifts from outside of the European Union.
3. Correspondence dated 5th April, 2022 from Irish Water in relation to briefings with the executive and members of Clare County Council.
4. Correspondence dated 10th March, 2022 from the Department of Health regarding the National Ambulance Service.
5. Correspondence dated 15th March, 2022 from Shannondoc regarding the Shannondoc out of hours service.
6. The Suck Valley Way Conference in relation to “Rural Regeneration Post Pandemic: The Challenges and Opportunities to Unlocking our Potential” taking place at the Abbey Hotel in Roscommon on 27th and 28th April, 2022.

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 Elected Members February 2022 Module 1 Training entitled “Elected Members Personal Safety and Risk Assessment” being held in the Clayton Silver Springs Hotel, Co. Cork on 19th February, 2022.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €256.12 including conference fee of €65.

It was agreed that Cllrs. M. Howard, P. Burke, P. McMahon and P. Daly attend this Conference.

AILG Annual Training Conference 2022 taking place in the Inishowen Gateway Hotel, Buncrana, Co. Donegal on 23rd - 24th March, 2022.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €39.28 including conference fee of €15.

It was agreed that Cllrs. G. Keating, C. Colleran Molloy, J. Cooney and P. McMahon attend this Conference.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____