

Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on Tuesday 1st September at 4pm in Council Chamber, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare

Leas -Cathaoirleach sa Cathair:

Cllr. Cillian Murphy

I Láthair:

Cllr. Shane Talty, Cllr. Gabriel Keating, Cllr. Joe Killeen, Cllr. Ian Lynch, Cllr. PJ Kelly, Cllr. Bill Chambers, Cllr. Joe Garrihy

Officials present:

Mr. Leonard Cleary, Area Co-Coordinator & Director of Service

Mr. John O'Malley, A/Senior Executive Officer & Meetings Administrator, West Clare Municipal District

Mr. Alan Kennelly, SEE, West Clare Municipal District

Mr. Enda MacNamara, SEE, West Clare Municipal District

Mr. Sean Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Capital projects

Mr. Steve Lahiffe, Senior Staff Officer, West Clare Municipal District

Leas-Cathaoirleach Cillian Murphy convened the meeting.

1. Minutes of AGM held on 28th July 2020.
The Minutes were proposed by Cllr. Talty & seconded by Cllr. Chambers & agreed.
2. Adoption of Plan of Strategic Projects for West Clare Municipal District.
The plan's adoption was proposed by Cllr. Keating & seconded by Cllr. Chambers.
3. Disposal of lands at Victoria Park, Kilkee.
The disposal was proposed by Cllr. Chambers & seconded by Cllr. Murphy.
4. Declaration of public roads Suan na Mara, Carrigaholt.
The declaration was proposed by Cllr. Keating & seconded by Cllr. Chambers.
5. Declaration of public roads Woodmount, Ennistymon.
The declaration was proposed by Cllr. Talty & seconded by Cllr. Killeen.
6. Update on West Clare Greenway – Sean Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Capital Projects

Sean Lenihan, Senior Engineer provided update on the Greenway. He also advised that submissions were now being invited from the public in respect of the Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme, please see www.kilkeefrs.ie
7. Update on Draft Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 from Leonard Cleary, Director of Service

Leonard Cleary, gave a brief update. There was support from the members that there would be a full meeting to discuss.

8. **Burren Tourism Signage Plan**

- proposed date for briefing session 18th September
- detail of Fáilte Ireland grant and conditions
- strategic approach to signage needs.

9. **Rural towns and villages**

Discussion on achieving a balance in service supports and investment to both struggling and higher performing population centres.

Discussion was had with emphasis placed by the members on the need for the MD to be strategic to be more productive. It was also pointed out that smaller towns need help to get increase their capacity to develop.

John O'Malley advised that the West Clare MD and Rural Development were currently looking at this.

Rural Development, Planning & Economic Development, Social

10. **Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. Garrihy**

In light of the recent and ongoing engagement on Clare's new tourism strategy I ask if the Terms of Reference for The Cliffs of Moher 10 year strategy and the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark traffic/visitor management plans have a focus on the impacts / relationship connectivity and benefit of what is one of Ireland's greatest attractions with regard to the impact on the surrounding local North Clare Towns and villages.

In light of the seismic multifaceted impact of Covid 19 can we examine the TOR of all strategic planning in the MD to ensure the changed environment is being factored in to this future planning which is now more important than ever to show a way forward and indeed living with the pandemic.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Killeen.

Geraldine Enright, Director Cliffs of Moher replied:

The Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 is an ambitious and exciting 20 year strategy with a number of key objectives that will set out the future development of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience by way of architectural master planning and plans to deliver economically for the wider local economy in a sustainable way. The challenge of this strategy for the iconic site, part of the Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Geopark and a Signature Point on the Wild Atlantic Way is to deliver a world class visitor experience utilising best practice visitor management and environmental management principles to ensure the future of the natural assets is safeguarded and conserved as well as minimizing any adverse effects on the quality of life for those who live in the area. The opportunity is to provide adequate facilities on-site while securing a continued contribution to the wider economy to ensure a commercially sustainable tourism attraction into the future, while maintaining the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience market position. To reflect the national strategic importance of this visitor experience to the whole of Ireland, this strategy is being prepared with the support of Fáilte Ireland. The strategy will therefore need to set objectives that deliver for the economy in a local, county, regional and national context. Customers of the Cliffs of Moher and key stakeholders will be facilitated with the opportunity to contribute their views to the consultants preparing the strategy. Most

importantly, the local tourism industry in Clare and the host communities and villages that welcome visitors to the area - and through which visitors' daily traverse - will need to have an opportunity to contribute their ideas.

In response to second part of the motion, **John O'Malley's A/SEO** advises that the West Clare MD are in agreement that the terms of reference of all strategic planning works in the area take into consideration the effects of the current pandemic. Future planning will take account of the challenges faced and the West Clare MD are continuing to work to ensure that we are best placed to take advantage of the opportunities that arise through coordinated strategic planning for the area.

The DOS, Leonard Cleary at the meeting advised that a full briefing session would be arranged with the elected members with Geraldine Enright and subsequently with the consultants.

11. **Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. Garrihy**

In light of the challenges facing our schools reopening that we engage at a local level with all schools to ensure maximum support possible from Clare County Council and our staff is available to ensure the return to school is managed in a successful manner. Should additional support or resources be necessary particularly in the area of traffic management I propose making contact with the Covid Community Response networks for each specific area who may be able to assist also.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Talty.

Reply from John O'Malley, A/Senior Executive Officer, West Clare MD replied:

The West Clare MD will provide any assistance where it can if called upon.

12. **Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr. Garrihy**

Following the issues with beach closures and water quality along the West Clare coast in recent high summer season I ask that Clare County Council Environment section engage intensively with all responsible agencies and stakeholders to establish the cause of the deterioration in water quality with a view to ensuring every possible action is taken to avoid a recurrence.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Talty.

Reply from Brendan Flynn, Senior Executive Engineer, Environment replied:

The recent advisory notices and prohibition notices were issued on the advice of the Health Service Executive to first and foremost protect public health. In general Clare blue flag beaches enjoy excellent water quality throughout the summer season. However during periods of high rainfall the water quality of some beaches is affected by run-off from the surrounding catchment area. The path of the run off through drainage ditches, streams and rivers is a natural occurrence and unfortunately this can at times impact the quality of the receiving waters e.g. our beaches. The Environment

Section is continually monitoring the bathing waters to safeguard the health of the public who use these fantastic amenities.

The Environment Section also liaises on a regular basis with landowners to ensure compliance with the Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) Regulations 2017. The Regulations set out a number of basic requirements designed to protect waters from pollution by agricultural activities. In conjunction with the EPA, through a risk based approach, we also inspect domestic waste water treatment systems to ensure compliance with the relevant standards.

Clare County Council also work with LAWPRO (Local Authority Waters Programme) to monitor Agricultural effects on water quality. Site specific inspections are also undertaken to promote a more sustainable agricultural practice to ensure our water bodies are protected. The Council also work closely with Irish Water under our Service Level Agreement and continue to identify deficiencies and deliver improvements to waste water infrastructure which may also impact bathing water quality.

Cllr. Talty noted in the response that there was no reference in the response to public infrastructure, stormwater or housing developments.

13. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Joe Killeen**

We call on Clare County Council to explore ways of persuading Google to stop directing traffic on to minor roads that are not suited physically or infrastructural to the volume and nature of traffic being directed there.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Kelly.

John Corry, Administrative Officer, Transportation Department replied:

I fully agree with the sentiment of this Motion and Clare Co Council Roads department have already alerted Google of certain instances where they are directing traffic on to minor roads not suitable for such traffic. I will arrange for further communication to issue to Google.

14. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Joe Killeen**

We call on Clare County Council working in conjunction with relevant parties to re-establish the Burren Lowlands in Ruan, Tubber, Boston, part of Corofin, as a recognizable destination for Angling, Hiking and other Outdoor Pursuits.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Garrihy.

Carol Gleeson, Manager, Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark replied:

The Council's Tourism Department will liaise with Fáilte Ireland and the Burren Lowlands Group regarding the re-establishment of the Burren Lowlands as a destination for outdoor pursuits. The Rural and Community Department will provide the necessary supports through the Rural & Community Development Officers.

15. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Joe Killeen**

We call on Clare County Council to carry out an assessment of the positive and negative impact of the Staycation Period to identify improvements that can be put in place in the future.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Talty.

Carol Gleeson, Manager, Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark replied:

The Tourism Taskforce will assess the performance of County Clare during the staycation period. Failte Ireland has provided supports and recommendations, details on their website, and these are in line with guidance from Government and in collaboration with many other agencies who are aligned with, work or support the tourism industry. The following are the supports provided.

- Sector specific operational guidelines for the tourism industry to ensure the safe re-opening of tourism businesses.
- Restart Grant Plus scheme.
- Business start up support with LEO's.
- A €26m COVID-19 Adaptation Fund for tourism and hospitality businesses.
- Website listing portal.
- Domestic Sales Campaign.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Talty.

The CCC staff were thanked by the elected members for the work undertaken in a shortened but especially busy summer season.

16. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Cillian Murphy**

That Clare County Council undertakes a Walkability assessment for Kilkee, to include an assessment as to how accessible it is for those with reduced or seriously impaired mobility, and layout a proposed schedule of works that would be required to address any identified issues.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Lynch.

Alan Kennelly, SEE, West Clare MD (Kilrush) replied:

In October 2019, a pilot Walkability Audit was conducted in Kilrush by the Clare Age Friendly Programme, National Disability Authority (NDA) and the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. The objective of the Walkability Audit was to increase awareness of the specific spatial needs of people with a wide range of ages and abilities, including older people and persons with disabilities. It is anticipated that the evidence-

based learnings collected on the walkability audit, will help to improve, develop, repair and maintain the urban environment in Kilrush in the future.

It is the intention of the NDA that their Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool be used for replication in other cities, towns & villages throughout Ireland. In this regard, there is no reason why a similar study of the town of Kilkee could not be carried out in the near future.

Ms. Karen Fennessy (*Age Friendly Development Officer, Rural Development Department*) believes that a consultant is required to prepare a Walkability Audit in Kilkee, so procurement will apply and a funding source will have to be identified as a Walkability Audit is not included in this year's budget.

Cllr. Talty committed to make a payment from his GMA to allow for a study to be carried out.

17. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Cillian Murphy**

That CCC engage with all relevant stakeholders with a view to engaging a temporary Harbour Master, or similar position, to manage Kilkee pier and slipway during the 2021 summer season. This should include all financial, legal and practical considerations.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Lynch.

Alan Kennelly, SEE, West Clare MD (Kilrush) replied:

Clare County Council is aware that on the slip & pier in Kilkee there is interaction between those using the slip to launch pleasure craft and those (*often of reduced mobility and / or elderly*) who use the slip and its environs because it allows safe and manageable access to the sea.

As Kilkee is not a commercial pier it is unlikely that a Harbour Master will be appointed. However given the issues highlighted this year at Kilkee slip & pier, the West Clare MD will soon embark on a review of operations at the slip and pier with a view to arriving at a solution acceptable to all.

John O'Malley advised that he would check with Clare County Council's Project Management Office a review of piers report.

18. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Cillian Murphy**

That CCC undertake to deliver a master-plan for Doonbeg Pier and surrounds to ensure best use is made of the potential of this amenity for locals and visitors alike.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Garrihy.

Alan Kennelly, SEE, West Clare MD (Kilrush) replied:

As the request is for the preparation of a long term plan, the West Clare Municipal District will forward this request to our colleagues in both Rural Development and Tourism. We will revert to Councillor Murphy once a reply has been received.

Physical Development

19. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Shane Talty**

While welcoming the commitment to bring forward the Miltown Malbay water-mains refurb & also the excellent work being done between Irish Water, Clare County Council & local group water schemes to improve scheme infrastructure. Can we now get a timeline for the upgrade and increasing capacity of the Rockmount reservoir. Increasing capacity in Rockmount is key to building resilience into the group scheme network.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Lynch.

Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Water Services and Environment Section replied:

We have forwarded the Motion to Irish Water and are awaiting a reply.

It was noted that the response was disappointing as it was the standard reply. It was asked that an officer from Irish Water would be asked to address the West Clare MD giving a full briefing on the value of current projects and going through a timeline for what is planned.

20. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Shane Talty**

Will Clare County Council increase the capacity of the water storage tank at the Public Toilets at Fanore Beach. Increased demand this summer has shown that the current system is insufficient.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Garrihy.

Enda MacNamara, SEE, West Clare MD (Ennistymon) replied:

Clare County Council will carry out works to the toilets at Fanore Beach to increase water storage capacity.

21. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Shane Talty**

Can works be carried out in Baunslieve, Inagh to alleviate persistent flooding on the road near property V95Y8R2. Surface water lodges in the event of even modest rainfall.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Murphy.

Alan Kennelly, SEE, West Clare MD (Kilrush) replied:

Clare County Council has recently cleared a number of roadside drains in this area. While spot flooding may still be an issue during very heavy rainfall, it is hoped that these measures will alleviate flooding on most occasions.

22. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Ian Lynch**

In the interest of traffic safety and continuity of flow Clare County Council request that TII construct a filter lane on the N68 to allow traffic to turn safely on to the L2044 reducing the risk of a collision from the traffic travelling towards Kilrush on the N68.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Garrihy.

John Gannon, SEE, Transportation Department replied:

This junction has been identified and is included in the counties TII Road Safety Inspection Procedure (HD15 schemes). The Road Design Office, Clare County Council, will consider this option as part of the design process in conjunction with the TII.

23. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Ian Lynch**

That the engineer provide details of what efforts have been taken by Clare County Council to secure funds to carry out much needs strengthening works to the R483 from Kilrush to the Tullabrack cross to address the sinking of the road which is resulting in unsafe conditions for traffic.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Murphy.

Alan Kennelly, SEE, West Clare MD (Kilrush) replied:

600 linear metres of this road is included in this year's roadworks programme, and will benefit from full width road restoration or a surface overlay. Works will hopefully be completed by the end of October 2020. This section of the R483 is currently governed by a temporary 50 km/h speed limit for road safety reasons.

In addition over 700 linear metres of adjacent roadway (*the other side of Tullabrack Cross*) benefitted from a surface overlay in 2019. So by the end of 2020 over 1.3 km of this section of road will have been upgraded.

24. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Ian Lynch**

That Clare County Council water services provided schedule of repairs, by date, carried out the water main on the R483 from Kilrush to Cooraclare, Total linear meters of water main and road network repaired, and total cost charged to Irish water associated with the repair of the water main and roads infrastructure repair And Irish Water to update the WCMD on the allocation of funds to replace the perished asbestos main.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Murphy.

Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Water Services and Environment Section replied:

We have forwarded the Motion to Irish Water and are awaiting a reply.

25. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. PJ Kelly**

That the area on the N68 opposite funeral home in Lissycasey be resurfaced as a traffic lay-by.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Lynch.

Alan Kennelly, SEE, West Clare MD (Kilrush) replied:

We will resurface the hard shoulder adjacent to the funeral home in Lissycasey. We will also resurface a section of the hard shoulder at the entrance to the western end of the village

26. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. PJ Kelly**

That the footpath on Kilrush Road, Kildysert be restored.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Lynch.

Alan Kennelly, SEE, West Clare MD (Kilrush) replied:

Clare County Council will investigate the footpath on the Kilrush Road (*or Kerry Road*) in Kildysert village with a view towards repairing any localised flaws or defects. As an example I believe that some deficiencies in the footpath have been caused by planted trees failing.

27. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. PJ Kelly**

That the road at Boulnamiele, Kilmihil which has been damaged by forestry work be repaired.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Murphy.

Alan Kennelly, SEE, West Clare MD (Kilrush) replied:

Clare County Council are in contact with the forestry developer and we are hopeful that this road will be repaired shortly.

28. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Gabriel Keating**

That Clare County Council provide an update on the provision of the driver feedback signs for the village of Carrigaholt.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Talty.

Alan Kennelly, SEE, West Clare MD (Kilrush) replied:

Clare County Council hope to erect a number of driver feedback signs (*DFS*) in the West Clare MD in the near future.

While speeding is one of the leading causes of death on our roads, and DFS are a very successful traffic calming initiative, DFS are not a mandatory requirement. DFS are relatively expensive, and to date tend to have been erected where elected members have – very kindly & graciously – agreed to make some of their GMA available for the purpose.

As Cllr. Keating has agreed to make some of his GMA available for DFS in Carrigaholt, Clare County council hopes to order & erect signs for Carrigaholt in 2020.

29. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Gabriel Keating**

To request Clare County Council to address the flooding issues at the Quay at Rhynagonaught, Doonbeg.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Murphy.

Alan Kennelly, SEE, West Clare MD (Kilrush) replied:

Clare County Council will investigate the issue in this location with a view towards addressing the flooding issue. Part of the problem may be caused by a recently constructed a reinforced concrete wall. A core may have to be drilled through this wall, which will require a specialised contractor.

30. **Notice of motion submitted by Cllr. Gabriel Keating**

To request Clare County Council to install on the road to Cree Village leading to Cree East, a channel to link the gullies already in place to avoid ongoing flooding on to the road from Cree Village Cross to Lenihans Garage on L2048.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Talty.

Alan Kennelly, SEE, West Clare MD (Kilrush) replied:

Clare County Council will have these gullies cleaned shortly. If, subsequently, spot flooding remains an issue at this location Clare County Council will install a dished channel to improve the effectiveness of the gullies.

31. **Any other business**

Cllr. Lynch noted the success of the Aqua Park in Kilrush in attracting visitors to the Kilrush area and whether WCMD could engage further with the operators for the following season.

Cllr. Lynch also took the opportunity to compliment the work of the lifeguards at Cappa this season. He also asked that the WCMD would liaise with Planning in regards the Cappa Plan.

It was agreed that next meeting would take place at 4pm on Tuesday 3rd November in the Council Chamber, New Road, Ennis.

This then concluded the business of the meeting.

**Signed: Cllr. Joe Garrihy,
Cathaoirleach**

**Signed: John O'Malley,
Meetings Administrator
Dated this 3rd day of November 2020.**