



Annual Report 2024



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

June 2025



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Cllr Alan O'Callaghan
Cathaoirleach



Mr Gordon Daly
Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION BY THE CATHAOIRLEACH AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We are pleased to present Clare County Council's Annual Report for 2024, which highlights the Council's efforts in delivering a wide range of public services and major initiatives throughout the year.

2024 marked a significant milestone year for this local authority as we celebrated the 125th Anniversary of the first Clare County Council meeting, held on 23rd April 1899. Today, Clare County Council continues to provide essential local government services that impact the lives of nearly 128,000 residents, supported by a dedicated staff of over 1,000.

The Corporate Plan 2024 – 2029, adopted on 9th December 2024, outlines our commitment to being a professional, responsive, and agile local authority that leads the social, economic, physical, and rural development of our county, with sustainable communities at its heart.

One of the major highlights of 2024 was the opening of the new De Valera public library and Súil Art Gallery by an Taoiseach, Simon Harris, on 15th November. By the end of December, new library memberships had

more than doubled, and footfall increased across all age categories. The Council's focus on community and cultural services remained strong, with the successful opening of the new De Valera Library and Súil Art Gallery, and the continued support of arts, heritage, and recreational activities. The Clare Age Friendly Programme and our various health and wellbeing initiatives further demonstrated our commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

Despite challenges in the housing market, the Social Directorate exceeded its delivery target of new homes for 2024, providing 156 new properties through various initiatives. The Council also made significant strides in addressing homelessness, supporting those with disabilities, and enhancing housing stock management.

In 2024, the Schedule of Municipal District Works included a comprehensive Roadworks Programme with a total fund of €55.5 million. This programme successfully strengthened and surface-dressed over 239 km of the road network, continued the enhanced bridge

remediation programme with works on 19 bridges, and completed 12 safety improvement schemes.

Significant progress was made on various major capital projects managed by the Project Management Office (PMO). Notable achievements include the advancement of the N19 Shannon Airport Access Road Improvement Scheme and significant progress of the Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing, and R494 Road Improvement Scheme, with the Killaloe Bypass element of the works opened to traffic in December. The Ennis Public Realm Regeneration Project also saw substantial development, enhancing accessibility and encouraging future investment.

In 2024, Clare County Council received an allocation of €3.22 million for 12 projects under the National Transport Authority's (NTA) active travel programme. These projects included detailed design work on the Tulla Road Cycling Scheme, preliminary design work for the Limerick Road Cycling Scheme and the Ardnacrusha to Athlunkard Bridge Active Travel Scheme, as well as various other initiatives aimed at improving pedestrian and cycling infrastructure throughout the county.

Our commitment to environmental sustainability was evident through diverse activities in the Environment Section, including waste enforcement, waste management, environmental awareness, and the maintenance of Blue Flag beaches. The Council also continued its efforts in climate action, with the recruitment of the Climate Action team and the launch of the Community Climate Action Programme.

In collaboration with the Environment Section and funded by the Public Service Innovation Fund, the ICT department developed a digital solution for lifeguards. This innovation streamlined administrative tasks, significantly

reducing the time and effort required for back-office administration. The quality of the solution was acknowledged with the lead developer receiving the National award as Emerging ICT Star in the Public Sector Digital Transformation Awards.

Clare County Council also received the CIPD 'Embracing New Ways of Working' award in 2024, following its first CIPD award in 2023, and was the first local authority to receive the Excellence Through People Platinum standard. These awards recognised the Council's excellence in supporting its people and managers and in embedding new ways of working.

Tourism remains a vital sector for County Clare, with iconic attractions such as the Cliffs of Moher and Bunratty Castle drawing visitors from around the world. The Cliffs of Moher Experience continues to be a major highlight, offering breathtaking views and a rich visitor experience. Bunratty Castle and Folk Park also saw increased visitor numbers, with new offerings and enhanced animation throughout the park, contributing significantly to the local economy.

On 13th May, Minister Heather Humphries officially opened Vandeleur Walled Gardens and Visitor Centre and Loop Head Lighthouse Visitor Experience. Both of these projects were in receipt of Rural Regeneration Development Funding, and the Minister's official opening marked the successful conclusion of each project.

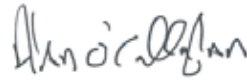
Looking back on 2024, we had a lot to celebrate as a county and a council, not least the All-Ireland success of the Clare Senior Hurling team. Clare County Council was delighted to host the homecoming for the victorious team in the Fair Green (Active Ennis Tim Smythe Park) and the Big Screen at the Fair Green (live broadcast of the game) the previous day.

It was also the year of the Local Election when 28 members were elected to the council on 7th June and the count was streamed live on our YouTube channel, a unique event among local authorities.

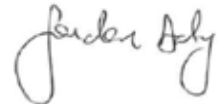
As we reflect on the achievements of 2024, we acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our staff, elected members, community groups, and stakeholders. We also acknowledge Pat Dowling's very significant contribution to the Council and Clare during his tenure as chief executive and wish him well on his retirement.

Looking forward to 2025, we will continue to innovate and respond to the needs of our county, ensuring Clare remains a vibrant place to live, work, and visit. We extend our gratitude to everyone who has supported our efforts and look forward to another year of progress and collaboration.

Le meas,



Cllr Alan O'Callaghan,
Cathaoirleach



Mr Gordon Daly,
Chief Executive





CLARE COUNTY COUNCILLORS 2024

Ennis Municipal District (7 Members)



Pat Daly
(FF)



Mary Howard
(FG)



Paul Murphy
(FG)



Antoinette Baker
Bashua (FF)



Tommy Guilfoyle
(SF)



Clare Colleran
Molloy (FF)



Tom O'Callaghan
(FF)

Killaloe Municipal District (5 Members)



Conor Ryan
(FG)*1



Pat Hayes
(FF)



Alan O'Callaghan
(FF)



Pat Burke
(FG)



Tony O'Brien
(FF)

**1 Co-opted on 19th December 2024
due to the election of Joe Cooney
to Dail Eireann.*

**2 Co-opted on 19th December 2024
due to the election of Donna
McGettigan to Dail Eireann*

Shannon Municipal District (7 Members)



David Griffin
(FF)



James Ryan
(SF)*2



John Crowe
(FG)



Rachel Hartigan
(FF)



Pat O'Gorman
(FF)



Michael Begley
(IND)



Tony Mulcahy
(FG)

West Clare Municipal District (9 Members)

Ennistymon Electoral Area: 4 seats



Bill Slattery
(FG)



Joe Garrihy
(FG)



Shane Talty
(FF)



Joe Killeen
(FF)

Kilrush Electoral Area: 5 seats



Dinny Gould
(IND)



Rita McInerney
(FF)



Ian Lynch
(IND)

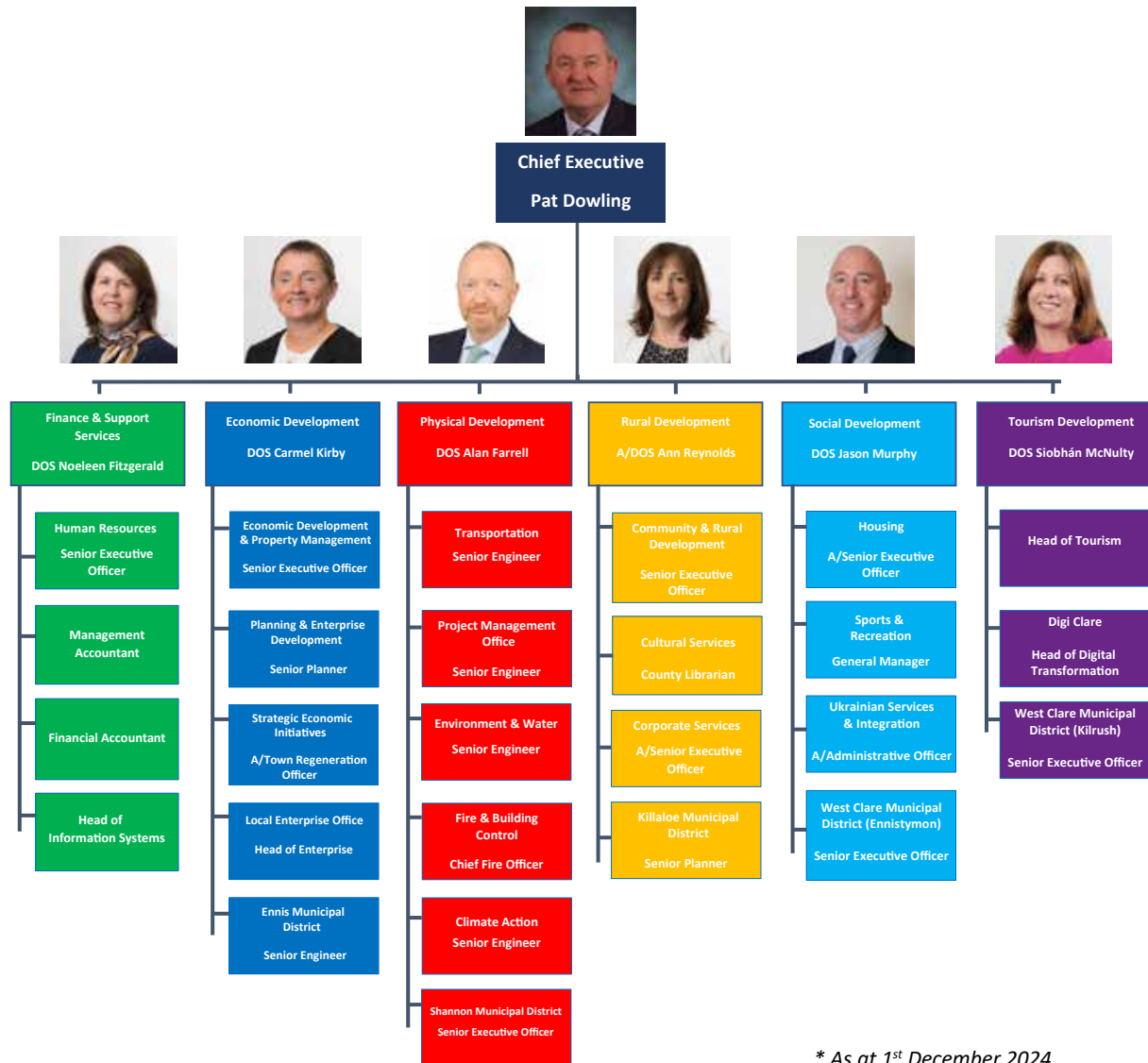


Gabriel Keating
(FG)



Michael Shannon
(FF)

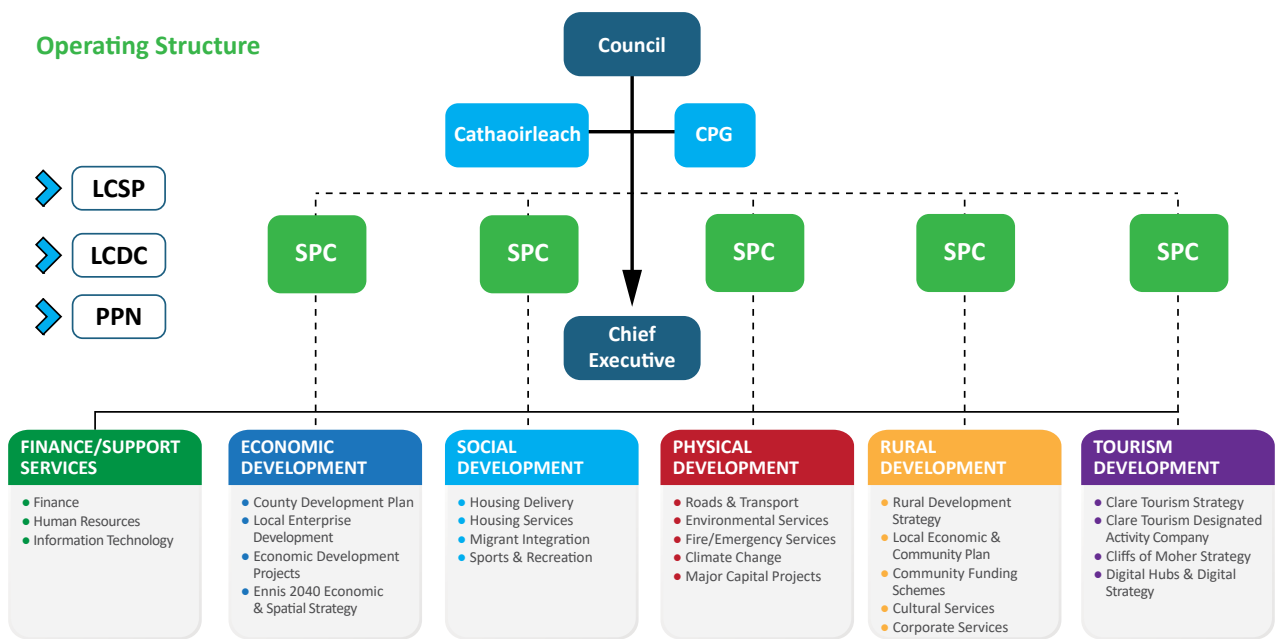
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE 2024



* As at 1st December 2024.

Local Government and Clare County Council

Operating Structure



Municipal District Areas

Members meet at area level throughout the year to discuss matters relevant to their particular electoral area. Each municipal district committee has a senior official assigned to it to co-ordinate functions and assists the members in their deliberations. The meetings are attended by the Senior Executive Engineer and a member of the administrative staff in the area. These meetings are generally attended by the press and the minutes of each area meeting are listed on the agenda at a subsequent Council meeting for noting.

Elected Representatives

Clare County Council consists of 28 elected members representing 5 Electoral Areas and 4 Municipal Districts. Local elections were held on 7th June 2024 to fill 28 seats on Clare County Council.

Municipal Districts

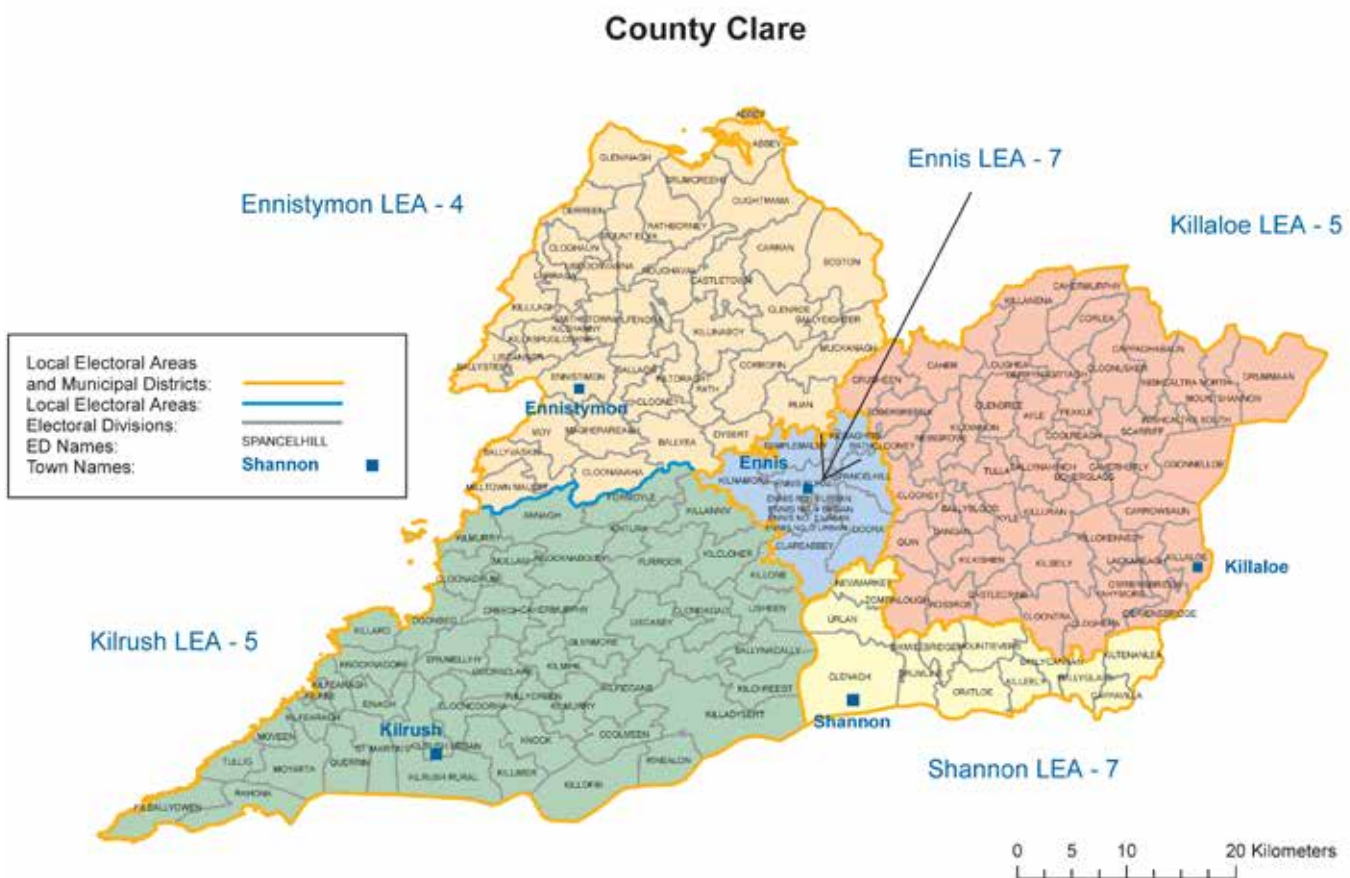
There are four MDs in Clare as follows:

Ennis MD - Ennis Local Electoral Area

Killaloe MD - Killaloe Local Electoral Area

Shannon MD - Shannon Local Electoral Area

West Clare MD - Kiltrush and Ennistymon Local Electoral Areas



Corporate Policy Group

The Corporate Policy Group consists of the Cathaoirleach of the day together with the chairs of the Strategic Policy Committee. Each Municipal District is represented on the CPG. It has a statutory basis set out in Section 133 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and has specific functions in relation to the preparation of the Annual Budget and the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Policy Group meets on a monthly basis with the Council Executive.

Strategic Policy Committees

Strategic Policy Committees (SPC) are structured around the main functions of Council. They are made up of elected councillors and other representatives of the Social Partners and other Sectoral interests. Each SPC is chaired by an elected councillor and is supported by a Director of Services. The task of the SPC is to assist and advise the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy. The SPCs will not be concerned with individual representational or operational issues. Final policy decisions,

however, will ultimately rest with the full Council acting as a body.

Clare County Council adopted a new SPC Scheme 2024 - 2029 in December 2024. The scheme provides for five SPCs as follows:

- **Economic Development SPC**
- **Physical Development SPC**
- **Rural Development SPC**
- **Social Development SPC**
- **Tourism Development SPC**

The Climate Change agenda and the Biodiversity agenda are key policy areas across all SPCs.

Each councilor is a member of an SPC and each SPC has at least a third of the membership drawn from sectoral interests. The sectoral representatives for the SPCs are drawn from the agriculture/farming environmental/conservation, development/construction, business/commercial, trade union, Community/Voluntary and Social Inclusion sectors.

The membership of each SPC is as follows:

SPC Membership

Economic Development SPC	Members	
Elected Members	Cllr. Pat Daly (Chairperson) Cllr. Paul Murphy Cllr. Bill Slattery	Cllr. Michael Begley Cllr. Tom O'Callaghan Cllr. Michael Shannon
Agriculture & Farming	Liam Williams	
Environment/ Conservation	Alex Whyatt,	
Development/ Construction	Shane Joyce	
Business/ Commercial	Pat Morris	
Trade Unions	Vincent Coleman	

Physical Development SPC	Members	
Elected Members	Cllr. Pat Burke (Chairperson) Cllr. Conor Ryan Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan	Cllr. Ian Lynch Cllr. Rachel Hartigan Cllr. Rita McInerney
Agriculture & Farming	Thomas Burke	
Environment/ Conservation	Tom Spillane	
Development/ Construction	Lorchan Hoyne,	
Community/ Voluntary	Maurice O'Sullivan	
Social Inclusion	Veerle Claeys	

Rural Development SPC	Members	
Elected Members	Cllr. Pat Hayes (Chairperson) Cllr. Gabriel Keating Cllr. Dinny Gould	Cllr. Joe Killeen Cllr. Pat O'Gorman
Agriculture & Farming	Denis Tuohy	
Environment/ Conservation	Criosdoir King	
Social Inclusion	Damon Matthew Wise Au	
Community/ Voluntary	Mary Coffey	

Social Development SPC	Members	
Elected Members	Cllr. John Crowe (Chairperson) Cllr. Tony O'Brien Cllr. Tony Mulcahy	Cllr. Tommy Guilfoyle Cllr. Antoinette Baker Bashua Cllr. David Griffin
Development/ Construction	Pat Keogh	
Trade Unions	Andrew Clune	
Social Inclusion	Ria Wolfe	
Community/ Voluntary	Tommy Molloy	

Tourism Development SPC	Members	
Elected Members	Cllr. Shane Talty (Chairperson) Cllr. Mary Howard Cllr. Joe Garrihy	Cllr. James Ryan Cllr. Claire Colleran Molloy
Agriculture & Farming	Tom Lane	
Business/ Commercial	Helen Downes	
Community/ Voluntary	Andy Lambert	

Representation of Elected Members on Committees

Appointment of Chair Designate for each of the four Strategic Policy Committees

Cllrs. P. Daly, P. Burke, P. Hayes, J. Crowe, S. Talty.

Regional Assembly.

Cllrs. T. O'Brien, B. Slattery.

Education & Training Board.

Cllrs. R. Hartigan, A. Baker Bashua, G. Keating, M. Howard, M. Begley.

Local Authority Members Association

Cllr. T. O'Brien

Association of Irish Local Government

Cllrs. T. O'Callaghan, J. Crowe/T. Mulcahy (50/50), M. Begley.

Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd.

Cllr. D. Griffin.

Board of Management of Kilkee Waterworld

Cllr. I. Lynch.

Board of Management of Lahinch Seaworld

Cllr. S. Talty.

Hunt Museum Trust

Cllr. P. Murphy.

Lisdoonvarna Fáilte.

Cllr. J. Garrihy.

Board of Glór Irish Music Centre

Cllrs. P. Murphy, M. Shannon.

Clare Sports Partnership

Cllrs. J. Garrihy, D. Griffin.

Local Traveller Accommodation Advisory Committee

Cllrs. A. Baker Bashua, T. O'Brien, J. Crowe, J. Garrihy, J. Ryan, T. Guilfoyle.

Twinning Committee

Cllrs. A. Baker Bashua, T. O'Brien, J. Crowe, M. Howard, P. Murphy, M. Begley, D. Gould, P. Daly and Cathaoirleach of the day.

County Clare Road Safety Working Group

Cllrs. T. Mulcahy, R. Hartigan, T. Guilfoyle

County Rural Water Monitoring Committee

Cllrs. P. Burke, R. McNerney/M. Shannon (50/50), D. Gould

Active Ennis Sports and Leisure Committee

Cllrs. M. Howard, T. O'Callaghan, T. Guilfoyle.

Active Kilrush Committee

Cllrs. I. Lynch, R. McNerney

Audit Committee

Cllrs. P. Hayes, P. Burke

Regional Health Forum West

Cllrs. R. McNerney, M. Howard, A. Baker Bashua, J. Ryan.

Kilrush Amenity Trust

Board of Clare Local Development Company

Cllrs. T. Mulcahy, M. Shannon, M. Begley

Local Community Development Committee

Cllrs. B. Slattery, J. Killeen, R. Hartigan, J. Ryan.

Western Inter County Railway Committee

Cllrs. A. O'Callaghan, P. Hayes, J. Crowe, G. Keating, D. Gould.

Standing Orders Sub-Committee

Cllrs. C. Ryan, P. Murphy, C. Collieran Molloy,
S. Talty, I. Lynch, T. Guilfoyle & Cathaoirleach
of the Day

Memorial Committee

Cllrs. M. Howard, T. Mulcahy, C. Collieran
Molloy, S. Talty, J. Ryan, I. Lynch.

Rural Development Forum

Cllrs. G. Keating, J. Garrihy, R. McNerney,
P. Hayes, M. Begley, D. Gould.

Board of Cliffs of Moher**Governing Body of the National University of
Ireland.**

Cllr. C. Collieran Molloy

Board of Ennis 2040**County Clare Heritage and Biodiversity
Forum** (formed July 2023)

Cllrs. G. Keating, C. Collieran Molloy, D. Gould.

Local Community Safety Partnership

Cllrs. D. Griffin, R. McNerney, P. Hayes, B.
Slattery, J. Crowe, G. Keating, T. Guilfoyle

Board of Clare Tourism**Board of Shannon Heritage**



FINANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE



NOELEEN FITZGERALD
Director of Finance
and Support Services

The Finance and Support Services Directorate of the council delivers internal services to the Economic, Physical, Social, Tourism and Rural directorates of the council in supporting them in the delivery of services to customers in an efficient manner and providing guidance on implementing best practice in corporate governance. The directorates' objective is to provide the human resources, financial and information systems to support and develop the Council's ability to deliver evolving services to its customers by empowering our staff and enabling them to deliver to their best capacity.

Departments which fall under this directorate include:

- Finance
- Internal Audit
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Human Resources

Finance Department

The Finance department has primary responsibility for a range of functions including financial accounting and reporting, budgeting, commercial rates billing and collection, supplier payments, payroll administration, procurement compliance, the budget process, treasury management and other accounting and compliance activities. The Finance Department oversees effective expenditure controls and debt collection, with the overall objective of providing support services to the Social, Economic, Physical, Tourism and Rural directorates of the council

The Annual Financial Statement gives an overview of the financial position of Clare County Council for 2024. The Council incurred

total expenditure of €311.6m (excluding transfers) during 2024. This comprises of revenue expenditure on operating activities of €186.3m and capital project expenditure of €125.3m. This compares to €272.1m expenditure in 2023 which represents a 14% uplift mainly explained by Housing Capital infrastructure delivery €10m up on 2023, Small and Medium Enterprise supports of €11.2m paid out in the Increased Cost Of Business Grant and the Power up Grant. This level of expenditure indicates the ongoing extent of the day-to-day operations, delivery of central government initiatives and local infrastructure development being undertaken by this council across the County in 2024. The Revenue account records the financial activity on day-to-day operations and reports a near balanced position for the year in line with budgets adopted. The Financial tables in this report outline the result for the year compared to 2023 and is analysed in more detail in the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) for the year ended 31 December 2024 on our website.

Commercial Rates

Commercial rates income is this council's main income source within the Income and Expenditure account for the delivery of services with €45.6m billed and €43.5m collected in 2024, an increase of €2million on the previous year. The support of businesses through the pandemic with Restart, SBAS (Small Business Assistance Scheme) and more recently ICOB (Increased Costs of Business) and PUG (Power Up Grant) has had a positive impact on the receipt of commercial rates. Over the past number of years, this council is collecting more than the net billing in occupied properties, reducing outstanding rates year on year to a level now below that of 2013.

Increased Cost of Business Scheme and the Power Up Grant

In total commercial rates staff administered over €11.2m grants to businesses across County Clare in 2024.

The Increased Cost of Business Scheme (ICOB) and the Power Up Grant were seen as vital measures for small and medium businesses in assisting with rising operating costs. Local authorities, funded through the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, managed the rollout of the grant to qualifying businesses. These supports were not commercial rates rebates, but the grants paid to qualifying business for ICOB was based on their 2023 commercial valuations. The Power Up Grant was a flat payment of €4,000 for each property a qualifying business paid commercial rates on.

Clare County Council paid out over €6.1m to 2,370 businesses in the county for ICOB 1&2. A further €5m was paid to 1,280 qualifying applicants for the Power Up Grant in 2024.

There were also grants paid to both the Tourism Sector and Small and Medium businesses under local approved schemes.

Procurement:

The Council operated to local and national Procurement guidelines and with EU procurement rules. In 2024 particular emphasis was placed on:

- Improving compliance with local and national guidelines and with EU procurement rules.
- Advising staff involved in procurement activities.
- Assisting staff to follow the correct procedures and the roll-out of training to ensure compliance with policies and government circulars.
- Promotion of Green Public Procurement across the organisation through training and support.
- Continued training and adoption of the

new eTenders Platform.

- Revision of the Procurement Policy to reflect Notice of Motions on a) Ethical Considerations and b) the addition to the Policy of a Clare County Council Employment, Supply Chain and Social Considerations Charter.

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit unit is part of the Council's Corporate Governance structure. It is an independent, objective assurance and advisory service designed to add value and improve operations across all areas within Clare Local Authority.

The role of Internal Audit is to provide independent assurance that an organisation's risk management, governance and internal control processes are operating effectively. The council's Internal Audit Charter sets out the role and responsibilities of the Internal Auditor and Management.

The Internal audit unit:

- operate to an Multi-Annual Internal Audit Plan which sets out a schedule of audit reviews and spot checks to be carried out.

Recommendations made are followed up with management.

- interacts with the Council's Audit Committee and the external Local Government Auditor to improve the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes focusing on value for money throughout the organisation.

The Council has implemented a hybrid model of working resulting in Internal Audits being conducted by the Internal Audit Unit and an External Audit Firm. A number of final reports, Recommendation Tables and the Quality Assurance Report were completed throughout the year.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Department

Clare County Council ICT department is part of the Finance and Support Services Directorate. ICT provides Directorates, Municipal Districts, Departments, and over six hundred and sixty



users with ICT services and support. Services include ICT Infrastructure, ICT Applications, Enterprise Software Solutions, Graphical Information Systems (GIS), and Web Services, ICT device allocation and cyber security protection.

The ICT Team is committed to maximising the benefits of ICT services for Care County Council and assisting Directorates and Departments in achieving their objectives. In addition to the operational activities such as, monitoring security, maintaining infrastructure and systems, and providing user support throughout 2024, the ICT department has continued to deliver on business process improvement initiatives, deliver new systems, embraced new technologies improve process automation, and upgraded and improved the capabilities of existing solutions. All underpinned by a focus on information and cyber security.

Highlights in 2024 included:

Lifeguards go digital: In collaboration with the Environment Section and funded by the Public Service Innovation Fund, the ICT department developed a digital solution for lifeguards. This solution streamlined administrative tasks, significantly reducing the time and effort required for back-office administration. The quality of the solution was acknowledged with the lead developer receiving the National award as Emerging ICT Star in the public digital transformation awards for the work on the project.

New Library: The ICT department supported the opening of the new Ennis Library and Art Gallery by providing digital services and gigabit connectivity for the public. This new Library not only enhances traditional library services but also integrates into the gigabit library network. As Government departments, local authorities and private organisations

increasingly shift to online service delivery, the library is well-positioned to support both traditional and digital lifelong learning. For example, library users can now enjoy faster internet speeds, which facilitate online learning, digital research, and even virtual meetings. This enhancement has greatly improved access for members of the public who otherwise might not have the opportunity to engage with information and technology, fostering a more inclusive digital environment.

CIPD Awards: In 2024, Clare County Council received the CIPD award for embracing new ways of working. The ICT department implemented multiple technologies to support the Human Resources Department in providing staff with technologies which supported new ways of working. Staff embraced new digital services and ICT provided improved access when out of the office. These initiatives improved safety for outdoor worker, reduced paperwork and need to work from the office. The Independent CIPD Judges commented, "it resulted in quantifiable and demonstrable benefits on culture, learning and development, and achieved cost benefits."

Housing Grants Application: Working closely with the Housing section, the ICT department developed an online application process that enabled the public to apply online for Housing aid for older people grants, Housing adaption grants for Disabled people and Mobility Aid Grants. The solution supported major efficiencies in backend approval and validation processes. This housing grants solution streamlined operations, reduced processing times, and ensured greater accuracy and efficiency in the process.

ICT support services: In 2024, the ICT department increased the provision of ICT support services to over 660 users, up from 600 at the start of the year. Managing over 9500



Clare County Council was named winner of the 'Embracing New Ways of Working' award at the CIPD Ireland HR Awards 2024.

support call during the year. By addressing technical issues promptly, the ICT department has significantly improved the user experience and satisfaction among Clare County council staff.

Human Resources

The Human Resources (HR) Department leads and manages a significant work programme that focuses on workforce planning, recruitment, Learning and Development, Equality & Diversity and the provision of employee wellbeing supports.

CIPD Award

Clare County Council followed up with another CIPD award (CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development) in 2024 after securing its first one in 2023. The 'Embracing New Ways of Working' award as referenced earlier recognised organisations of any size that could demonstrate how they excel in their support for their people and managers

in embedding new ways of working. Clare County Council was shortlisted in the category along with Bank of Ireland, ESB, KPMG and McKesson Cork. Clare County Council's application demonstrated advances in digital solutions, hybrid working solutions, remote working on sites and many projects which allow more efficient and safer ways of working around the county.

The main activities of the HR section are summarised below.

Workforce Planning and recruitment

A strategic workforce planning process was completed and submitted to our parent department in 2023 which sets the roadmap for the planning of our staff resources to meet the evolving and developing services of the council. This document is continuously evolving as the sector meets the additional services and expanding brief of Clare County Council.

The Recruitment Section continues to ensure that the Council is well placed to provide for

the business needs of the organisation and the service needs of our citizens. Recruitment of new staff into the Council continued in 2024 with a total of 95 competitions held through a combination of both online and face-to-face methods.

The Recruitment section led the development and testing of an e-recruitment solution during 2024 and entered a competitive dialogue procurement process for a complete e-recruitment package. Further development and user testing will continue with implementation by the end of 2025.

The Co-operative Education Programme facilitated a number of third level students to gain invaluable work experience in various departments of the Council.

Learning and Development

The Learning and Development Unit continued to arrange delivery of a broad suite of training programmes and workshops to meet the needs of management and staff arising from a combination of requests received through the Performance Management and Development System. In-person and on-line training programmes, webinars and information sessions were rolled out throughout the year. There is an extensive range of programmes

on offer and some are mandatory training, particularly having regard to health and safety obligations.

The Excellence Through People Platinum standard was achieved in 2024. The process included a series of interviews with staff and management and recognises key processes and supports that are in place for staff by the Council.

The Learning and Development Unit launched a **Peer Coaching Pilot Programme** in association with the LGMA and Kingston College, Dublin. 20 staff were trained to QQI Level 6 and are available as coaches to new and existing staff. The **Long Service & Retirement Awards** took place at the Inn at Dromoland in June 2024. Over 150 people attended, and presentations were made by the Chief Executive & Cathaoirleach on the night.

Performance Management and Development System

The Performance Management and Development System is very much embedded in Clare County Council. The system provides for formal conversations between the staff member and the line manager at the start of the year, mid-year and year end. The system promotes the development and



implementation of Team Plans and Personal Development Plans and Training Plans. Pay Increases were delivered to all staff as per the Public Service Agreement 2024-2026. The pay adjustments were made in January, June and October 2024.

Policy Implementation

A further revision to the **Dignity at Work policy** was completed and issued to staff in November 2024. The policy extends to all employees of the Council, Councillors, clients, customers, contractors, volunteers and other business contacts and beyond the place of work to work off site, attendance at conferences or training, and to certain work-related social events and social media sites.

In July 2024, a **Domestic Violence and Abuse policy** was developed for the sector, approved by Management Team and circulated to staff. The policy aims to support employee health, wellbeing and resilience in a safe and secure working environment and to create a workplace culture that does not tolerate domestic violence and abuse or the attitudes which underpin it.

A **Menopause in the Workplace policy** was also developed and circulated to staff. This policy is another step in our efforts to embed a culture of dignity, respect and inclusivity in the workplace and to promote gender equality.

Equality & Diversity

Clare County Council's Equality & Human Rights Working Group completed a draft assessment during 2024 and has also arranged intercultural awareness training and LGBTQ+ awareness training for staff and members. This work will continue during 2025 and will culminate in the preparation of an Equality Action Plan.

Industrial Relations

The Human Resources Department, and Clare County Council as a whole, continued to foster a productive relationship with our colleagues in the unions throughout 2024. This engagement occurred through quarterly meetings of the Partnership forum and through regular formal meetings and ongoing dialogue with individual unions.

Employee Wellbeing

An extensive programme of wellbeing initiatives was rolled out to staff over the year and included the Wellbeing Hub together with programmes on mental health awareness, cancer awareness and prevention, workplace wellbeing day, financial wellbeing, Living Well through Menopause, workplace walking day and flu vaccinations. The annual mass for deceased staff, retirees and members took place in November.

Under the Employee Assistance Programme, Professional Counselling Services continue to be made available to all staff.

Gender Pay Gap Report

Clare County Council published its Gender Pay Gap Report for 2024 on 19th December. The gender pay gap is the difference in the average hourly wage of men and women across the workforce. Employers with more than 250 employees in Ireland are now required to publish their gender pay gap data.

The 2024 report shows a Mean Gender Pay Gap of - 10.29%. This means that on average, females occupy higher paid roles than males. The Median Gender Pay Gap of - 18.61% means that there is a strong representation of females in upper management roles in Clare County Council.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



CARMEL KIRBY
Director of Economic Development

2024 marked a period of strategic progress and resilience for the Economic Development Directorate which includes the service areas of Planning, Property & Facility Management, Town Centre First, Local Enterprise and the Ennis Municipal District. Amid the global economic uncertainties and ongoing transformation across industries, we remained committed to fostering sustainable growth, supporting business innovation, and enhancing the economic well-being of our Clare communities. This report highlights the Directorate's key achievements, initiatives, and partnerships that have driven positive economic outcomes

throughout the County over the past year. Through policy leadership and strong collaboration with industry and government partners, we continued to strengthen the County's economic foundations.

As we reflect on the successes of 2024 and the challenges we have navigated, this report provides transparency, accountability, and a clear view of our priorities moving forward. It also underscores our unwavering focus on building a dynamic, resilient, and inclusive economy in the County that will benefit both current and future generations.

During 2024, the Derelict sites Team increased the level of activity in dealing with Derelict Sites and in particular, advanced additional compulsory acquisition of properties and commenced billing of the Derelict Sites Levy. This is part of a wider Compulsory Activation Programme promoted by the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government under the Vacant Homes Action Plan.

The Council continues to promote new emerging technologies as well as being a leading advocate for the significant economic benefits arising from our Offshore Renewable Energy potential. The many actions included in the Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce Report



Bottlenose Dolphins in the Shannon Estuary - Source Simon Berrow

as well as the advice from the Clare Economic Task Force has resulted in the Council being strategically placed to identify and harness the economic benefits that will undoubtedly accrue from significant investment along the Shannon Estuary and across the County.

Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)

The Committee comprises six elected members of Clare County Council and five sectoral representatives. Three meetings of the Committee were held in 2024 with a range of areas examined, such as the Moving Towards Aerospace Project, the Clare County Council Heritage Plan, Local Enterprise Office and the Local Economic and Community Plan. The Committee saw presentations from Fine Grain Properties, Shannon Airport Group, and updates on key strategic projects including Ennis 2040, the Kilrush Maritime Training Centre, the Roche Site in Clarecastle, the One Shannon Hub and the Data Centre.

2024 also saw changes in the membership of the Economic SPC following the Local Elections and revised standing orders introduced. Special thanks are extended to those who served on the Economic SPC in the previous term. Key focus areas for 2025 will include a review of Clare actions in the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan, the implementation

of the Local Economic and Community Plan, enablement of the offshore renewable energy industry and associated supply chain supports, the implementation of the Shannon Town Masterplan and the Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Strategy, Climate Adaptation and biodiversity, and to stimulate private housing provision.

Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary (SIFP)

The Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce Report was published in July 2023. The Report sets out recommendations for the delivery of up to 30GW of Offshore Floating Wind, facilitated through the Operational and Maintenance phases within the Shannon Estuary by 2050 together with measures to maximise the industrial development opportunities that will accompany offshore wind development. The Report also sets out a vision for the Shannon Estuary to become Ireland's Atlantic Green Digital Corridor with proposed new initiatives in the transport, logistics, connectivity, and tourism sectors.

Clare County Council has continued to lead out on and deliver on the relevant Actions from the Taskforce Report in 2024 as outlined below:

Action	Owner	Progress in 2024
Re-establishment and resourcing of the Shannon Estuary Strategic Integrated Framework Plan Steering Committee to recommence preparatory planning and environmental activities for current and potential new Strategic Development Locations, with adequate support and centrally resourced. Local Authorities to consider collective planning designation for the Shannon Estuary region (potential SDZ or similar) to provide for streamlined and coordinated planning procedures that can meet the industrial and societal needs of the region.	Limerick City & County Council, Clare County Council, Kerry County Council, Shannon Foynes Port Company, DHLGH	The SIFP Steering Group was reconvened by Clare County Council in September 2023 with 4 meetings held in total since then. The Steering Group have also reconvened the Environmental Subgroup which is chaired by the Economic Directorate of Clare County Council. The key focus is to prioritise the Environmental Data gaps identified by the sub-group in order to provide a robust baseline for the Shannon Estuary into the future. This will commence with the preparation of a baseline noise map for the Shannon Estuary.
Establish a Maritime Training Centre of Excellence in Kilrush by 2025, with funding supported by government through existing funding routes	Clare County Council	Clare County Council is committed to the delivery of a Maritime Training Centre of Excellence in Kilrush. The Smart Regions funding mechanism was identified in 2024 as the conduit within which the remaining funding gap could be achieved however, Enterprise Ireland are still in the process of finalizing details surrounding State Aid rules. Once these issues are resolved the Project Team will be in a position to move forward.
Establishment of a working group led by Shannon Foynes Port Company with membership comprising Cruise Europe, Limerick City and County Council, Kerry County Council, Clare County Council, and The Shannon Airport Group to develop key targets for number of cruises docking at Shannon Estuary by 2027/2030 with actions identified to realise this target	Shannon Foynes Port Company	The Economic Directorate has fed into and attended a number of meetings of “Cruise Shannon Estuary” in 2024 as established by SFPC. The potential for marine infrastructure on the northern shore of the Shannon Estuary to provide solutions to tendering passengers from Cruise vessels docked in the Estuary for the Ryder Cup has been identified as a key area of research.

The Economic Directorate is committed to progressing these Actions in a conjunction with our colleagues across all Directorates to meet the relevant due dates.

Roche Masterplan

As one of a number of key strategic projects in the County with huge potential for the future, the Council continues to work closely with the Roche Executive locally and in Switzerland and are engaging fully on progress with the remediation programme which when complete, will leave a significant portion of the 88-acre site ready for “brownfield” development. The Council also continued to liaise with the IDA and other key stakeholders to identify potential development and proposed employment opportunities for the site which would benefit the local community and wider area both economically and socially long into the future.

Planning Department

Planning and Development Act 2024

In 2021, the Government initiated a review of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The planning landscape had changed profoundly over the past quarter of a century since the 2000 Act was introduced and therefore it was clear that the legislation underpinning the planning system required a major overhaul. This process culminated in the signing into law of the new Planning and Development Act 2024 by the President on 17 October 2024. It is intended that the 2024 Act will improve clarity, consistency and ultimately increase confidence in the planning system. This will be achieved through the important reforms including the introduction of mandatory decision-making timelines; a reorganisation of An Bord Pleanála; greater alignment of all tiers of plan making and improvements to the judicial review process.

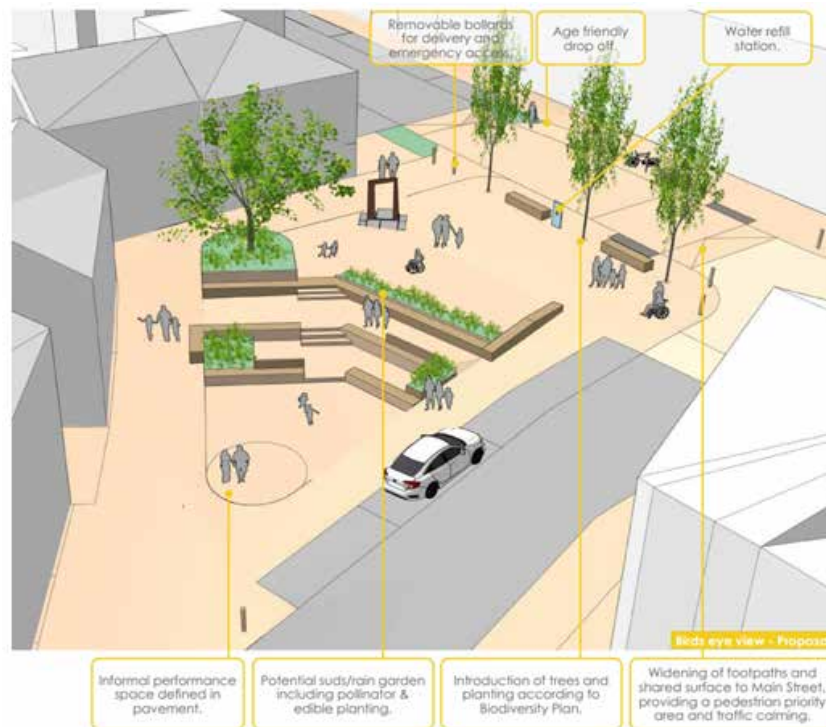
We are now moving into a period over 2025 and into 2026 where the 2024 Act will be commenced and the 2000 Act repealed. This process will take time and the 2024 Act includes for over 120 transitional provisions to facilitate the smooth operational transition from the arrangements under the current 2000 Act to those under the 2024 Act



Residential Zoned Land Tax

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) together with other initiatives across the Council are aimed at activating zoned and serviced lands for residential development. The RZLT was proposed under Housing For All 2021 and was introduced by the Finance Act 2021, with the purpose of activating serviced zoned land that could accommodate residential development to increase housing supply and to ensure regeneration of vacant and idle lands in urban locations. While the administration of the RZLT is the responsibility of the Revenue Commissioners, the statutory responsibility lies with the local authority to prepare and publish maps that show zoned lands within scope of the RZLT.

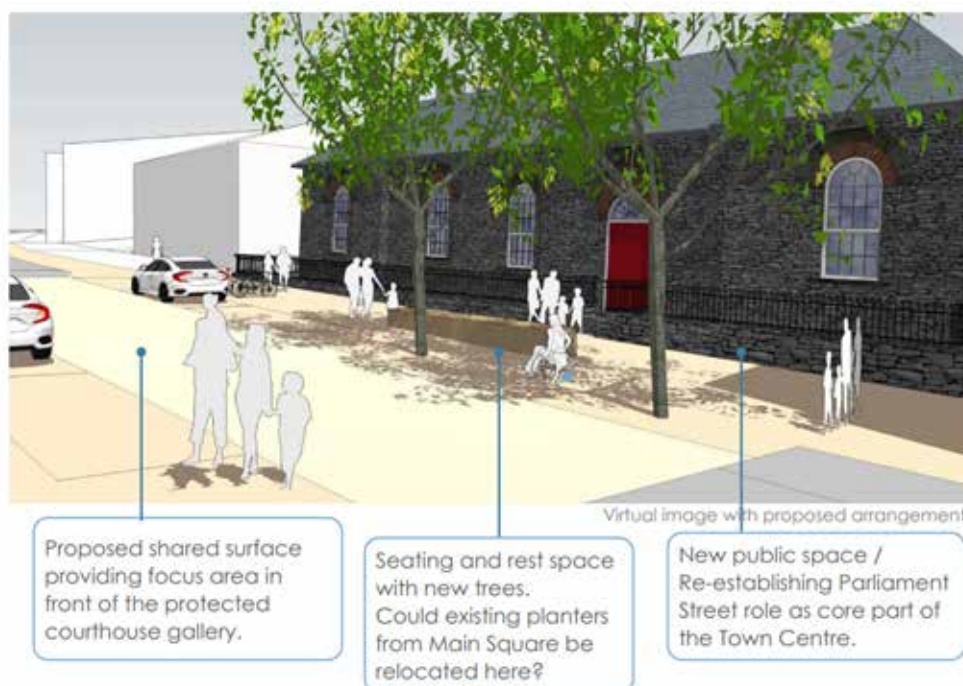
In preparation for the commencement of the operation of the RZLT on 1st February 2025, public consultation on the annual draft RZLT map for 2025 was undertaken in 2024. On Budget Day 2025 a new provision was announced to provide for landowners who



carry out an on-going economic activity on their land which is zoned for residential use to be facilitated to make requests to change the zoning of their land to allow for the economic activity to continue without liability for the tax. When the RZLT Final Map for 2025 is placed on public consultation on 31st January 2025 it will present landowners with the opportunity to make such zoning change requests which will then be considered by the local Authority.

Ennistymon Town and Village Funding

Clare County Council, together with its partners Clare Local Development Company and Ennistymon Town Team, and the design team led by Helena McElmeel Architects, prepared the Ennistymon Enhancement plan which was completed in 2022. In 2023 and again in 2024 Town and Village Funding was awarded for two projects which emanated



from this plan for public realm works at Parliament Street, and at The Square. In 2024 a design team was appointed to bring the proposal to detailed design, through planning consent, procurement and to manage delivery on site.

Planning Consent for the project was received on 07th June 2024 following which tender packages were prepared. It is anticipated that the works will be finalised by year end 2025.

Cappa Town and Village Funding

The Cappa Enhancement Strategy is a planned initiative completed by the Planning Department in close consultation with the local community. The plan was built upon the principle of maximising the potential of the village, while retaining its distinct maritime character and village scale. In 2023, Town and Village funding was awarded for a new access to the beach and existing playground area which would reclaim this area as part of the coastal walk and address safety concerns

of children jumping the wall to shorten their way to the playground. The new access would provide a wide accessible route and open up an expansive view of the water and Scatterry Island from the footpath and road. In 2024 tender packages were prepared on foot of securing planning consent and it is anticipated that the project will be brought to site in 2025.

Corofin Enhancement Strategy

Over a two-and-a-half-year period the Planning Department together with its partner the National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) worked with an award winning multi-disciplinary team to prepare an Enhancement Strategy for the village of Corofin, which was partly funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. This enhancement plan supports the development of projects aiming to breathe life into this communities, tackling vacancy and addressing dereliction within the village. The completed



View 1 - Virtual image - Bird's eye view



View 2 - Virtual image - From start of bridge





plan aligns with Town Centre principles and was utilised as the basis on which to apply for the 2024 Category 1 RRDF funding call. Unfortunately, the project was unsuccessful in that call, however the project partners remain committed to delivering key elements of the project over the coming years. It is anticipated that a further RRDF Category 2 funding call will be made in 2025 and there is potential to revisit this project under that call.

Architectural Conservation

Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS)

The BHIS is designed to assist with the repair and

conservation of structures that are protected under the Planning and Development Acts. In certain cases, the scheme also supports the conservation of structures within Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) where, in the opinion of the local authority, a need for works to enhance the character and appearance of an ACA has been demonstrated. The primary purpose of the scheme is to support privately owned properties in need of repair and conservation.

Works to 14 protected structures was allocated funding of €108,837 under the 2024 Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS). Ten projects were completed. These were:

1. Loop Head Lighthouse - Works to repair

the existing boundary walls.

2. **Cranagher House, Quin** - Repairs and refurbishment of outbuildings and boundary walls
3. **Manus House, Clarecastle** - Repair of existing windows.
4. **Armstead's Building, Ennistymon** - Exterior façade lime restoration
5. **Christ Church, (Spanish Point) Miltown Malbay** - Repairs to roof and guttering.
6. **Thatched Cottage, Killaloe** - Repair of Thatch Roof.
7. **Stone Building (within curtilage of Scariff Workhouse)** - Works to roof and replace windows
8. **St Brigid's Catholic Church, Corofin** - Works to repair pointing of west gable and south.
9. **Glencairn House, Ennis** - Works to repoint and repair external wall
10. **Thatch Cottage, Boston** - Replace thatch roof and replace external timber door.

Historic Structures Fund

The Historic Structures Fund (HSF) is for the conservation and enhancement of historic structures and buildings for the broader benefit of communities and the public. In 2024, funding of €163,409 was allocated to two projects. The projects were:

1. **Lime Kiln, Kilnaboy** - Works for the repair of lime kiln
2. **St Flannan's Cathedral, Killaloe** - Works to repairs the west gable and its stained glass lancet window.

Community Monuments Fund 2024

The Community Monuments Fund provides funding towards our archaeological heritage to help owners and custodians of archaeological monuments safeguard them into the future for the benefit of communities and the public. In 2024, funding of €130,000 was allocated to two projects. The projects were:

1. **Killoo Church** - Works to stabilise and conserve the structure of the church ruin.
2. **Moynoe Church** - Preparation of a Conservation Management Plan.

Section 57 Applications

Section 57 Declarations are issued to owners of buildings or structures that wish to conduct works to their protected structures. A Declaration determines whether works would be considered exempt from planning and can also be used to clarify the curtilage of a protected structure, or what elements are to be protected. 28 applications for declarations were received in the year.

Development Management - Planning Applications

The number of planning applications received in 2024 was 1112. In addition, there were 16 no. Part VIII Local Authority own development applications. Determinations were made in relation to 927 planning applications, of which 851 (91.8%) were granted and 76 (8.2%) were refused. Of the 55 applications determined by An Bord Pleanála during the year, 36 decisions (65%) of Clare County Council were upheld.

E-Planning Project

There were 674 E-Planning applications received in 2024.

Pre-Planning Enquiries

A total of 268 pre-planning applications were received during the year, which enabled applicants to discuss the principle of their proposals free of charge with a Council planning officer.

Development Contributions

Income of €5,760,000 was generated from Development Contributions during 2024. These contributions provide funding towards

capital work programmes on a range of infrastructure including roads, amenity, community, recreation and car parking.

Enforcement of Planning Law

The Enforcement Section of the Planning Department saw a high level of activity during 2024 and the activity is summarised in the following table:

Number of Complaints Received	242
New Cases Investigated	98
Warning Letters Issued	87
Enforcement Notices Issued	22
Legal Cases Initiated	15
Files Closed	43

Taking in Charge of Housing Estates

Eight housing estates were taken in charge by the Council in 2024. The taking in charge team also monitored 25 new developments (689 units) under various levels of construction during 2024. The ongoing monitoring of estates, albeit resource intensive, should ensure that housing developments in the future are finished to a higher standard and that the subsequent taking in charge processes should be more straightforward.



Significant progress was made on remedial / completion works on a number of estates

through engagement with Bondholders, Residents, Developers and Uisce Éireann to bring unfinished developments up to taking in charge standard. During 2024, remedial works were completed in 6 housing estates. The Team continues to finalise Site Resolution Plans and arrange for remedial works contracts, in estates where the Council has claimed and received bond monies.

The One Shannon Hub

The 2022 Shannon Town Centre Masterplan, which was part funded by the Government's Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) called out a number of strategic projects for the town of Shannon, one of which was the development of the One Shannon Hub project. The vision of the project is to create a Business & Civic Centre of Regional Importance in Shannon Town Centre

Throughout 2024 a cross-directorate team, led by the economic directorate brought this master planning vision through its concept design stage. What is emerging is a mixed-use building on a town centre site complemented by an extensive public realm intervention enhancing the approach roads into the town centre, along the R471 and along Bothar na Rinne.

Clare County Council continues to actively engage with stakeholders and landowners to deliver upon the objectives of the One Shannon Hub project with funding streams, including the Urban Regeneration Development Fund being targeted for 2025/2026 to enable delivery of this development.

Town Regeneration Department

Regenerating our Towns

To become more attractive places to live, work & visit

Lár Bailte ar dTús
Town Centre First

THRIVE
Town Centre First
Heritage Revival Scheme

THRIVE Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme underway in ENNIS

SIX
Citizen/Stakeholder
engagement
sessions
undertaken

FIVE Towns in Focus

- Kilrush**
 - Form Town Teams to Drive Progress
- Tulla**
 - Identify Challenges & Opportunities
- Lisdoonvarna**
 - Plan for Progress
- Clarecastle**
 - Implementation
- Sixmilebridge**

Town Centre First Department

The Town Centre First Department has been busy throughout 2024 focusing on five towns including Kilrush, Tulla, Lisdoonvarna, Clarecastle and Sixmilebridge. In addition, a new scheme called THRIVE Ennis has commenced in Ennis Town Centre.

THRIVE Ennis - Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme

The new Thrive scheme provides an opportunity to return one vacant heritage building back into reuse in Ennis Town Centre, whilst addressing community needs. As part of this project, work commenced on a draft Integrated Urban Strategy (Heritage-led) for Ennis with a focus on showcasing the unique heritage and architecture of Ennis. A participatory approach working with citizens and stakeholders is an important feature of this project. Clare County Council lodged a planning application in December 2024 for plans to regenerate/adapt a heritage building - The Cloister - in Ennis. An application for funding under Thrive Strand 2 is expected to be made in April 2025 to bring this project to fruition on the ground.



THRIVE is funded by the government under the ERDF Regional Programmes through the Southern Regional Assembly.

Town Teams, Health Checks and Kilrush Town Centre First Plan

During 2024, the Town Centre First Department worked with communities in Tulla, Lisdoonvarna and Kilrush to establish new Town Teams, and commenced work to establish a further Village Team in Clarecastle. This followed extensive consultation and people were invited to join a Town Team. Three Town Centre Health Checks were undertaken by Queens University Belfast in Tulla, Lisdoonvarna and Clarecastle providing

useful information on issues such as vacancy, vehicular and pedestrian movements and how people view their towns. Training sessions were also undertaken to assist Town Teams to build capacity amongst their newly formed Town Teams.

The preparation of a Town Centre First Plan for Kilrush has commenced with Hasset Ducatez Architects as consultants and with valuable input from cross-Directorate staff and close collaboration with the newly-formed Kilrush Town Team.

The Town Team has actively encouraged participation across the Kilrush area to ensure the plan sets out a vision and projects that will work towards creating and building upon the vibrancy, viability and attractiveness of the town.

Sixmilebridge Town Team and Town Centre First Plan

The Sixmilebridge Town Centre First Plan was the first plan of its kind in County Clare and was officially launched in August 2023. The Sixmilebridge Town Team in collaboration with Clare County Council has focused its efforts on planning and delivering projects in the plan. Background work has commenced to identify upcoming funding streams that align to key projects identified in the implementation plan,

and the Town Regeneration Officer and Rural & Community Development Officer worked with the Town Team to plan and progress these projects. The Town Team was successful in securing funding to bring forward designs for a public realm and pedestrian bridge in Sixmilebridge under the Project Development Measure of the Town Centre First Suite of Supports 2024.

Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy

The primary goal of the Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy is focused on the sustainable economic development of the town. This Strategy coupled with the provisions included in the Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029 (recently adopted) are the central planks for realising and delivering the key changes that are needed to cater for a growing population between now and 2040. Evidence of this population growth has recently been confirmed with the publication of additional information from Census 2022 which shows the population of Ennis is now close to 28,000 people (+ 3000 since 2016).

Sustainability is and will continue to be central to Ennis 2040 activities and priorities. The transformational projects that have been initiated are key to achieving our goal of a '10

Town Regeneration Department
Progress to date

THREE New Town Teams Elected
Tulla, Kilrush, Lisdoonvarna

460+ people engaged in Town Teams Formation Process

Town Centre First Plans
Sixmilebridge completed, Kilrush plan is advancing

THREE Town Centre Health Check Reports Completed
Lisdoonvarna, Tulla, Lisdoonvarna

SIX Training Sessions Delivered for Town Teams

Consultation Process
Give us Your Views On Lisdoonvarna

minute town’ and demonstrating how a county town the size of Ennis can deliver and respond to climate change and ‘town centre first’ living. Over the course of 2023, Ennis 2040 has continued to progress several key town centre projects (estimated total investment of €48m) the details of which are set out below.

Francis St - Affordable Housing

Following lodgement of Section 179a planning exemption in December 2023 a judicial review was lodged in respect of the development proposed of 39 no. housing units. Enabling works were completed in Q1 2024. Tender documentation for construction of the development were published on e-tenders, tenders received were independently evaluated and the preferred contractor identified. In parallel, specific funding approval for this project under the Affordable Housing Scheme is being progressed with Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage (DHLGH).

Abbey St - Retail/Office

In Q1 2024, Public Consultation events were held to present proposed detailed design. The preparation of planning documentation was reviewed and updated to facilitate two-way traffic through the development. Next steps in the project to be determined early 2025.

Harvey’s Quay - Residential / Mixed Use

The detailed design of a mixed-use development (commercial and residential) of this site was completed. The proposed development design was suspended in Q3 2024.

Post Office Field - Amenity Area

This is a key amenity and bio-diverse area located in the centre of Ennis town. It acts as a flood plain at times of high-water levels in

the River Fergus. A masterplan to flesh out the remediation and access options for a suitable parkland amenity / recreational development of this area has been completed by Ennis 2040. Three public consultation events were held in Q1 2024. Following feedback received the scale of the proposed design has been reviewed. Progression to a full planning application to be determined in consultation with Ennis MD elected members.

River Fergus URDF - Amenity

A study of the Fergus riverfront through Ennis Town Centre was undertaken to identify spaces, walking routes and green infrastructure assets and assess the quality and potential spaces to the west / northwest of Harveys Quay and Post Office Field. The central proposal for the Fergus Riverfront is to create a green-blue pedestrian route that follows the river and parks, forming scenic and functional pathways connecting important locations such as residential zones, commercial areas and recreational spaces.

Site Acquisition - Various

Ongoing negotiations in relation to the acquisition of key sites in Ennis Town Centre.

Heritage

Clare County Heritage Plan 2024 - 2030

This Heritage Plan will be key in supporting funding applications for heritage related projects during its lifetime. The Clare County Heritage Plan 2024 - 2030 plan making process was completed and the plan published in 2024.

Clare Heritage Forum

A Clare Heritage and Biodiversity Forum has been established and is representative of a broad range of interest groups, experts and volunteer groups involved with heritage and biodiversity in the county. The Forum has

informed the preparation of the County Clare Heritage Plan 2024-2030, including identifying potential challenges and priorities for heritage in the county. The Forum will guide the implementation of the Plan and monitor its progress over its lifetime.

Spa Wells site in Lisdoonvarna

A heritage-led regeneration plan of the Spa Wells site in Lisdoonvarna was completed. The Lisdoonvarna Spa Wells have a significant historical and cultural value to county Clare and beyond. The project focused on preserving the site's heritage while promoting sustainable development and community engagement.

The Lisdoonvarna Historic Town Initiative provided for a substantial piece of work on the Lisdoonvarna Spa Wells complex of buildings, including a Conservation Management Plan for the 5 main buildings and a Heritage Led Regenerations Plan, Topographical Survey and Business Plan.

Remote Sensing of the Heritage in the Loop Head Peninsula

Data was gathered on the impact of Climate Change on coastal heritage sites at the Loop Head peninsula, carried out by the Centre for Robotics & Intelligent Systems (CRIS) at the University of Limerick. This pilot project used remote mapping technology including Photogrammetry, LiDAR, and Infrared (IR) imaging to map archaeological sites in Loop Head. Loop Head Peninsula was chosen for the study as the area is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and coastal erosion and contains a wealth of heritage.

TY Tasters

TY Tasters is designed to raise awareness with Transition Year and Leaving Certificate Applied students of Clare's rich cultural heritage through direct, hands-on experience in some of the county's traditional skills and in doing so

raises awareness of the opportunities within heritage industries and encouraging them to consider these skills not just as part of our cultural heritage but as viable career options. TY Tasters provided an introduction to traditional skills and training with secondary school Transition Year and Leaving Certificate Applied students. Over 350 students participated, and a number of pupils had hands on experience in working on their own stone carving at Irish Natural IN Stone in Tubber.

The County Cillíní Survey

The County Cillíní (Children's Burial Grounds) Survey is almost complete where 144 Cillíní have been surveyed and the information is now being uploaded onto the Clare iCAN website. The plan in 2025 is to launch the Clare County Cillíní Survey, carry out community engagement and make the information available to all.

Clare (iCAN)

The Heritage Officer continues to work with the Clare Communities involved with Clare (iCAN), including undertaking projects, a schedule of meetings and funding administration. Several new communities are establishing their websites on the portal, engaging in the wider Irish network and carrying out projects.

Clare Community Archaeologist

Clare Community Archaeologist Scheme enables engagement with communities on archaeology. The Heritage Council and Clare County Council funded the employment of a contract Clare Community Archaeologist, who completed community outreach, education initiatives and provided social media information on county Clare's Archaeology.

National Heritage Week 2024 in Clare
Heritage Week 2024 is a vibrant and engaging celebration of our heritage. This year's programme featured 120 local events

throughout the county. National Heritage Week in County Clare featured many outstanding events showcasing the natural, built and cultural heritage of County Clare.

Biodiversity

Local Biodiversity Action Funded (LBAF) Projects 2024

Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer submitted 12 applications under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The LBAF projects aim to deliver important biodiversity actions that align with the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan and the National Biodiversity Action Plan. The following summarises the 2024 LBAF projects which were all completed within agreed timeframes and to a high standard:

- **Return to Nature Clare Church Biodiversity Project:** The 'Return to Nature Clare Church Biodiversity Project' is led through the role of the Biodiversity Officer working in partnership with twelve community groups (ten parishes) across Clare to deliver biodiversity actions on church grounds. Actions included installing nest boxes for red-listed birds species such as barn owl and swift; developing and implementing a pollinator plan and creating wildflower meadows on church lawns, erecting bat roost boxes on trees; installing bird tables and bird feeders to promote biodiversity citizen science initiatives with local communities; planting pollinator friendly native fruit trees; erecting other bird boxes; and erecting pollinator friendly signage. The Biodiversity Officer organised nine biodiversity training workshops.
- **Knocknahila Peatland Rewetting Project:** This project is the first peatland rewetting project to be carried out in West Clare. The project was undertaken by Knocknahila

Biodiversity Community Group in partnership with a local farmer and Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer on a 27 acre bog from 2024 to 2025. A network of peat dams and peat bunds to raise water levels for the establishment of Sphagnum mosses and to provide a wildlife refuge for red-listed birds such as snipe and where possible, curlew and birds listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive (Hen Harrier and Merlin). The work was informed by hydrological and ecological studies and overseen by Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer.

- **County Clare Wetland Survey 2023:** This project field surveyed, mapped and evaluated 21 wetland sites across County Clare. The project will inform appropriate planning and safeguard their protection from pressures associated with development, agricultural improvement, infilling and urban sprawl. Outputs included a final report, GIS mapping and individual site reports for each site surveyed.
- **Ennis Bat Study:** In 2024, field surveys were commissioned by Clare County Council to ground-truth the Circuitscape Bat study that was prepared by the Vincent Wildlife Trust in 2023. 57 static bat detectors were deployed by Bat Eco Services targeted at pinch point locations and ecological corridors identified in the 2023 Bat Circuitscape Desktop Study. The actions associated with this project feed into the Lesser Horseshow Bat Species Action Plan 2022-2026.
- **Burren Protected species Survey:** This project aims to determine the current status of rare, threatened and characteristic plants of the Burren and Aran Islands. The surveys place an emphasis on red data listed plant species and those afforded protection under the Floras Protection Order and follows on from previous surveys. A final report and GPS records of

rare plants was submitted to Clare County Council's Biodiversity Office and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

- **Clare Barn Owl Project 2024:** This project aimed at improving the conservation status of barn owl, a red-listed bird species of conservation concern aimed to assess uptake and breeding status of all nest boxes installed through the Clare Barn Owl Nest Box Scheme (2022 to present), to determine the number that are occupied and to assess breeding success in these nest boxes. The monitoring survey demonstrated that the nest box scheme is having a positive impact in terms of the recovery of Barn Owl in County Clare with approximately 50% of nest boxes occupied.
- **Clare Wetland Story Map:** The Clare Wetland Story Map is a new online digital interactive map that profiles ten wetland sites the public can visit and value in County Clare. It also includes a description of wetland habitats found in County Clare and a list of resources for communities, schools and landowners. The story map is available to view at the link: bit.ly/ClareWetlands
- **West Clare Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Survey:** Survey to detail the distribution and extent of invasive alien plant species (IAPS) (e.g. Japanese Knotweed, rhododendron) along selected regional and local primary roads in West Clare (Doonbeg to Kilrush to Kilmihil to Tarmon in south-west Clare). A key recommendation of the report is to implement a comprehensive long-term Management Plan for the area of West Clare surveyed in the summer months of 2024 that should consider prioritising certain species and areas in the catchment for targeted IAPS control and treatment.
- **Killaloe Invasive Species Treatment and Eradication Project:** Control and reduction of existing Invasive Alien Species on public roads. This project is a continuation of

the recording and treatment of IAS in the Killaloe Municipal District and annual treatment plan. A report outlining locations of treated infested stands, locations and photographic records was submitted to Clare County Council. Records will be submitted to the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

- **Hare's Corner Communications Work Package (Biodiversity Awareness):** The Hare's Corner project offers landowners practical and accessible support in enhancing biodiversity on their land through creation of habitats such as ponds, native orchards, and mini woodlands. A series of videos have been produced in 2025 which feature participating landowners showcasing the transformation of sites managed for biodiversity enhancement actions. The videos document the landowner's experiences and perspective which is hoped to encourage other landowners to partake in the initiative.
- **Mayfly Project:** This project aims to record the mayflies in freshwater habitats across Ireland with the view to complete the red listing to determine the current conservation status of this aquatic species which is a biological indicator of river health. The project will engage with staff (e.g. Biodiversity officers, Heritage Officers) of 28 county councils and LAWPRO to obtain as many samples as possible, improving coverage but also to engage with stakeholders and use social media to communicate the results of the project. A report was produced at the end of 2024 which includes survey coverage of County Clare.
- **Clare Biodiversity Awareness - Connecting People with Nature:** Under this LBAF Project, Clare County Council's Biodiversity Office delivered a number of projects and outreach initiatives. The deliverables are broken down as follows:

- o Clare County Council's Biodiversity Office commissioned the publication of a new wetland guidance 'Community Action: A Beginner's Guide to Wetlands' in conjunction with Monaghan County Council's Biodiversity officer and the Community Wetlands Forum.
- o Pollinator Signs - the Biodiversity Officer commissioned and designed 32 pollinator signs. Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer partnered with Ennis Tidy Towns to install new pollinator friendly signage on the Ennis Roundabouts and were also installed on the grounds of Clare County Council's offices for 'no mow may' and other public areas.
- o National Heritage Week and National Hedgerow Week: A number of specialist talks were funded through this project for National Heritage Week and National Hedgerow Week to

promote engagement and biodiversity awareness with the public.

- o Ordering booklets and information guides to distribute to local communities and individuals to take action for biodiversity and to promote learning including booklets and ID guides to encourage uptake in Citizen Science.
- o Designing and printing banners to promote the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan which will be used to promote the biodiversity of County Clare at public events and consultation days.
- o Hiring a photographer to promote biodiversity work projects of the Council to the general public through print and online media. Some of the photos appear on national print media and local media.



Media coverage of the Return to Nature Clare Church Biodiversity Project

Property Management

The Table below shows the number of property transactions completed by Property Management Unit in 2024 and the full year 2023. As the property market in the County is quite active, we continue to assist many solicitors acting for their clients on issues associated with title, boundaries, old leasehold folios etc.

Transaction type	Full year 2024	Full year 2023
Lease / Sub Lease of Property / Building	6	7
Licence to use property / building	14	7
Grazing Agreement for Lands	22	17
Deed of Transfer signed	9	15
Contract for Sale / acquisition signed	1	1
Deed of Right of Way / Wayleave signed	6	2
Deed of Rectification / Variation signed	4	4
Allotment Agreements signed	40	39

Casual Trading

Under the Casual Trading Act 1995, and the Bye-Laws made thereunder, the Property Management Unit is responsible for the administration of Casual Trading in the County and all casual traders, who trade on a public space, must hold a valid Casual Trading Licence. During 2024, the activity and trading levels improved following return to normal activities post Covid-19.

Derelict Sites

The Derelict sites team are currently dealing with 274 properties that are considered derelict, with a further 33 sites appraised in 2024. We continue to have very high levels of activity and engagement with owners and their representatives. Initial engagement is key to resolution of the issues of dereliction and to gain an understanding of the various reasons why the properties are derelict. There is an increase in planning applications for property refurbishment /extensions and it is clear from driving around the County the level of work ongoing on individual properties. We are promoting the vacant property refurbishment grant if the property is suitable for residential use. The table below provides a snapshot of the activity in 2024 and the comparative figures for 2023.

Derelict Sites	Full Year 2024	Full Year 2023
No. of Section 8(2) Notices issued - Intention to enter site on Derelict Sites Register	36	41
No. of Section 8(7) Notices issued - Entry of site onto Derelict Sites Register	43	24
No. of Section 11 Notices issued - Measures required to render the site non-derelict	27	6
No. of files closed / property removed from Derelict Sites Register	26	15
No. of Notices served to Compulsorily Purchase derelict sites (CPO) (see note below)	7	10
No of Vesting Orders signed	5	5

Compulsory Acquisition of Derelict Sites (CPO)

The Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government launched a CPO activation programme for local authorities and we have made progress in this area since we commenced in 2022. The Government's Urban Regeneration and Development Fund will provide funding for CPO's on a rolling basis in the town of Ennis with the objective being that these properties would then be sold on the open market, with a focus on residential use.

Year	No of CPOs commenced	Current Status
2022	6	3 - CPOs completed and property transferred to Housing for refurbishment works. Two of these are now completed and one has got planning approval.
		1 - CPO completed and sold
		2 - works have commenced and CPO parked for now
2023	10	6 - At Vesting Stage and lodged in Taillte Éireann
		1 - CPO completed and property was sold - Oct 2024.
		1 - CPO completed - being sold in March 2025
		1 - Objection received and CPO rejected by An Board Pleanála
		1 - Works commenced
2024	7	5 - At Vesting Stage and lodged in PRA
		1 - CPO commenced and has been appealed to An Bord Pleanála
		1 - Objection received and An Bord Pleanála has not confirmed the CPO order. The CPO process will be re-commenced in January 2025.

Derelict Site Levy

Determination of valuations on sites on the Derelict Sites Register continued during 2024. Three owners have appealed the valuation to the Valuation Tribunal and while decisions are awaited on two appeals, one appeal by an owner has recently been rejected. The levy is an annual levy while the property remains on the Derelict Sites Register and amounts to 7% of the value of the property, on an annual basis. The Table below shows the levels of activity on the Derelict sites levy for 2024.

Derelict Sites Levy	Full Year 2024	Full Year 2023
No. of properties on which the levy has been billed	9	0
Amount billed in respect of Derelict sites Levy	€124,110	0
Number of properties on which valuations have been requested	40	24
Number of properties on which notices of Valuation have been issued to owners	18	6

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant - for derelict and vacant properties

The level of approvals of the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant by Clare County Council was €19.4 million in 2024, with 321 applications approved in the year. This is a very significant investment in housing in County Clare and the work ongoing around the county on renovations and extensions is very visible. The total number of applications received in 2024 was 214.

The Vacant Homes Team continues to advise applicants on all elements of the scheme and is available to meet with individuals to take them through the process. The contact email address for further information and guidance on the grants scheme is vacanthomes@clarecoco.ie. A number of walk-in advice clinics were held in September and November with over 50 property owners coming in to meet the Vacant Homes Team.

The Grant is boosting the supply of rental properties and properties for permanent residence and will deliver on a key priority of 'Housing for All' National Policy and the Vacant Homes Action Plan, the key objective of which is to reduce vacancy and dereliction in our cities, towns, villages and rural countryside and provide more housing options in the process.

We are dealing with many of the house owners who have completed the works and are making their claims for payment. Approx €4 million was paid out in 2024.

Local Enterprise Office

2024 presented a continuation of economic challenges for businesses in Clare such as inflation, supply chain issues, attracting and

retaining labour and a reduction in spending power from consumers. Despite these headwinds, some sectors of our local economy continued to thrive, most notably in the manufacturing and engineering sectors. Our local enterprises now employ 1,364 people throughout the County.

Training programmes remained a key activity with an increased focus on enhancing the skill set of small business owners and develop their capability to succeed in a very challenging economic environment. 2024 saw a continuing trend of active engagement in our training programmes with 1,324 people availing of this support. Programmes covered topics such as Start Your Own Business, Marketing, Management Development, Financial Management, social media and Digital Marketing. The uptake of our Start Your Own Business Programmes remains strong with 161 participants. Mentoring remained a key support with 270 assignments primarily helping enterprises overcome business challenges, rising costs and developing new markets. There was a higher demand for funding with 28 enterprises being approved funding totalling €655k. One positive trend was an increase in the number of enterprises availing of Productivity supports in Lean, Green & Digital for Business amounting to 38 enterprises supported throughout the county. 11 micro enterprises were granted energy Efficiency Grants to help them reduce energy usage.

Local Enterprise Week

The theme for Local Enterprise Week 2024 (March 4th - 8th) revolved around Exporting, Sustainability, Leadership & Women in Business networking. During the week we ran 15 events on topics covering Start Your Own Business, Planning for Business Growth, Advertising through social media, Exporting, Sustainability and Innovation.



Student Enterprise Awards

Our Student Enterprise Awards remain a key event in our annual calendar. 2024 resulted in the number of schools participating rising to 13 and 164 students showcasing at the County final on the 27th of February. The 3 winners who went on to represent Clare at the national final held in Croke Park on May 9th were:

- **Junior:** Abbie Minogue, Caoimhe O'Halloran and Sophie O'Sullivan from Healthy Hearts at Ennistymon Community School.
- **Intermediate:** Dylan O'Brien, Gerard McWey, Donnacha Melnyk Murphy and Dawid Maslanek , Cross Crafts from St. Annes Community College, Killaloe
- **Senior:** Eimear McGee from Síoda Mara from St. John Bosco Community College, Kildysart

National Enterprise Awards:

Atlantic Clinical Packaging Ltd based in Ennis were Clare's representative at national final at this year's National Enterprise Awards.

The awards, which took place at the Mansion House in Dublin, are in their 25th year and run annually by the Local Enterprise Offices. These awards are designed to celebrate and recognise the many successful enterprises around the Country.

The National trophies were designed and manufactured in Clare specially for the event by Conor Murray, Kikee Forge.

Clare Business Awards

The final of Clare Business Excellence Awards, hosted by Ennis Chamber and sponsored by Clare Co Co took place at a Gala Dinner on the 27th of November 2024 where Lyons Garage Miltown Malbay winning Best Micro Business employing 10 people or less in County Clare.

National Women's Enterprise Day

National Women's Enterprise Day (NWED) was a vibrant and inspiring event hosted on October 17th, 2024, in Dromoland Castle Hotel. The Event aimed to promote, encourage and stimulate female entrepreneurship across County Clare. It featured a diverse range of speakers including keynote speaker Aimee

Connolly of Sculpted by Aimee accomplished entrepreneurs and LEO Client Hannah Rixon, of Kella Leadership as part of panel discussion. The event was MC'd by Ciana Campbell. The day provided valuable networking opportunities, educational sessions, and motivational talks, celebrating the achievements of women in enterprise and addressing real-life subjects affecting women in business, such as finance, marketing, innovation, family, well-being, and mental health. Overall, NWED 2024 was a significant platform for empowering women and fostering a supportive community for female entrepreneurs.





SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



JASON MURPHY
Director of Social Development

The overarching vision for the Social Directorate is:

To enhance the quality of life for the people of County Clare through the provision of appropriate housing supports to those in need across the county, to enhance our sporting facilities and outdoor amenity while encouraging participation and to ensure the development of our public infrastructure and community resilience in North Clare.

The Social Directorate of Clare County Council comprises of the areas of responsibility as per the schematic hereunder:



Housing

Provider of housing solutions and services for people who are in need and who are deemed eligible for social housing support.



North Clare Local Electoral Area:

Area administration of functions with particular focus on the physical environment and the identification of strategic opportunities to strengthen local democracy and enhance the lives of those living in north Clare.



Sport & Recreation

Management and development of the council's sporting facilities, including Active Ennis, Active Kilrush and the development of a County Sport Plan in 2024.



Ukrainian Services / Integration Team

The team is responsible for the strategic management of the Ukrainian & migrant response and coordinates the Clare Community Integration Forum structures.

The Social Directorate continues to deliver on our objectives and work programme and to that end we work closely with the Elected Members and Sectoral interests on our Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) which met on three occasions in 2024 to discuss and agree a range of policies and initiatives to address housing delivery in Clare.

2024 was again a challenging year for the Social Directorate having regard for the challenges in the housing market generally and notwithstanding these challenges we exceeded our delivery target of new homes for 2024. A combination of new properties constructed by the Council and by AHBs, turnkey solutions and void refurbishment program enabled us

to allocate homes to 284 households during 2024.

Housing for All, launched in September 2021, set out a multiannual funding programme for 2022 - 2030 to deliver over 300,000 new homes including 90,000 social and 54,000 affordable homes with an anticipated spend of more than €4bn per annum. There is also a firm commitment to ending Homelessness by 2030.

This document sets the framework for the delivery of housing in the County with an overall build target of 833 new social housing units in the County over the period 2022 to 2026 as per below:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Target	200	149	153	164	167	833
Achieved	256	151	156			

2024 Housing Delivery performance:

In 2024 we again exceeded our target, and we delivered 156 new properties. Through our own capital build programme and by supporting Approved Housing Bodies a combination of 47 units were provided by the Council and 109 units through AHBS (to include Part V).



Completed development at Scarriff



Completed development at Sixmilebridge

We continue to progress with our ambitious programme of delivery for the coming year which includes direct build, turnkey build, acquisitions, buy and renew, approved housing body build and acquisition, and vacant property refurbishment etc, all of which are co-ordinated, supported and delivered by the Housing team in Clare County Council to provide new homes for those on the social housing list.

Housing stock management

During 2024 - 54 vacant properties were refurbished and made available for reallocation throughout the county.

Under the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme, the Council upgraded 47 No. properties to a BER level of B2 or higher. This brought the total No. of upgrades to 154 properties since the introduction of the scheme during 2021.

Under our Planned Maintenance Programme, various significant property improvement works such as roof replacement/repair, kitchen and bathroom replacement, door/ window renewal were carried out to 360 properties. These works renew assets which can no longer be brought to satisfactory standard by maintenance work alone and are essential to provide an adequate standard of property for our tenants.

Responsive Maintenance dealt with 4,822 calls in 2024 or an average of 401 per month.

Affordable Housing Scheme

While affordable housing is a keystone of *'Housing for All'*, the criteria to qualify for funding of local authority led affordable housing is based on a determination of affordability constraint and in the case of a significant number of counties including Clare, the assessment did not satisfy the eligibility requirements.

In July 2023, Clare County Council received approval in principle on foot of a detailed

application to DHLGH, to prove there is potential for affordable housing schemes in both Ennis & Shannon.

After this approval, the affordable housing team had a live expressions of interest campaign to encourage developers to offer units for Affordable Housing.

In 2024, upon successful submissions to the DHLGH funding was approved for:

- Tulla Rd Ennis - 10 units;
- Lahinch Rd Ennis - 11 units;
- Shannon - 10 units of which 3 units have been allocated.

The affordable housing team are currently engaged with other potential developers who have expressed interest in the scheme.

In cases where these developments are located outside Ennis and Shannon, a report which provides an overview of the local housing market and available data on housing demand, pricing and trends which support the provision of affordable housing in the area will be submitted to the department for approval. In addition, CCC are also engaged with developers with potential for Part V affordable housing delivery.

There is an online information portal at <https://affordablehomes.ie/> providing general information to the public with regards to affordable housing.

Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme

The enhanced defective concrete blocks scheme went live in mid-July 2023, for private dwellings, with the finalised Act, regulations, updated YQA's (Your Questions Answered) & Ministerial Guidelines published.

On the 7th of November 2024, The Minister approved an increase in the grant cap from €420,000 to €462,000.

Applications to the scheme can be submitted on-line through our website. The website

includes supporting information to further assist homeowners regarding the application process. Clare County Council DCB Team have also included a video on our website called “how to make on application” to further assist homeowners in the application process. In addition, our team are available to assist with any queries homeowners may have. Our team can be contacted by email at dcb@clarecoco.ie or alternatively by phone at 065-6846385, 065-6846468 & 065-6846309.

Clare County Council continue to administer and validate applications since the commencement of the scheme via the online portal. Clare County Council are engaging with the Housing Agency and the DHLGH and continue to carry out all associated duties.

In December 2024, Clare County Council have issued 31 Remedial Option Grants, with the total value of €9.19m awarded by the housing agency and are awaiting input from the Housing Agency to further process 91 applications with grant amounts to follow.

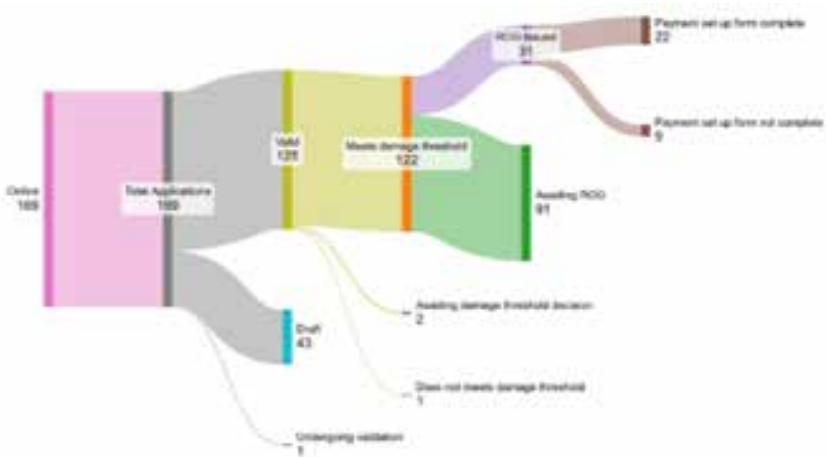
DCB Information in Numbers

	2023	2024
Applications Received	49	76
Grant Options Received from Housing Agency	2	29
Grant Amount Awarded	€330,036	€8,855,233

DCB Application Map



DCB Application Flow Chart - January 2025





Walk in clinics were held in Kilrush, Ennistymon, Scarriff, Shannon and Ennis throughout 2024. These information evenings were held to further assist homeowners on how to make an application to the scheme via the online portal.

CCC intend to hold further information evenings in 2025 to target people with limited digital resources and/or capabilities, to assist them further in making an application and other elements of the DCB application process. Clare County Council continue to engage with the DHLGH to ensure social houses affected by DCB are included in a similar scheme.

Tenant in Situ Acquisitions

During 2024 the Government continued with measures to mitigate against the impacts of the ending of the eviction ban. One such measure was the Tenant in Situ Acquisitions. This is one available avenue when all other options have been explored that do not meet the household's needs, and where the purchase and refurbishment cost can be met from the funding available from the Department of Housing. 8 no properties were acquired during 2024 under this Scheme,

5 no. by Clare County Council and 3 no. by Focus Housing Ireland. The objective is to deal with potential homelessness by tenants due to Notices of Termination having been served by their landlords. In addition, 9 no. properties were acquired to facilitate exit from homeless situations. These measures enabled homeowners to stay in their own home and became tenants of the Council or an Approved Housing Body under the Scheme. The cost rental model for tenants at risk of homelessness, but not entitled to social housing supports, was also in place. This is managed by the Housing Agency and local authorities refer applications received once assessed as being eligible. During the year five such households in Clare were referred for assessment.

Newly Qualified Social Housing Applicants

New income limits became effective on 1st January 2023. A total of 467 new applications were qualified in 2024. Clare County Council continues to process a large volume of applications each month, with an average processing time on valid applications for 2024 of 12 weeks.

Housing Assessments and Allocations

Allocations of social housing tenancies are made in accordance with the Clare County Council Social Housing Allocation Scheme. This Allocation Scheme sets out the priorities and procedures for allocating properties. The Scheme is used in the allocation of standard Council housing units, casual vacancies and long and short-term lease properties. A total of 309 new tenancies were created in 2024, 145 of these were with Clare County Council and 164 were tenancies with an Approved Housing Body (AHB.)

During 2024 properties available for letting continued to be advertised on the Choice Based Letting (CBL) website cbl.clarecoco.ie. CBL gives applicants the opportunity to express an interest in a range of residential properties within their area(s) of preference that are suitable for the size of their household. The list of available properties are displayed from Wednesday to Tuesday every week on the CBL website. The process is designed to be as fair as possible as it gives all housing applicants an equal opportunity to view available properties that meet their needs.

Housing and Disability Steering Group

Clare's Housing and Disability Steering Group met on a quarterly basis in 2024 to review its local Strategic Plan with a primary objective of increasing the level of housing supports provided to those with disabled needs together with the necessary support services. A quarterly update on the progress of the HDSG was provided to both the Housing Agency as well as the Housing SPC. In 2024 Clare County Council allocated 309 properties of which 52 properties [17 %] were allocated to people with disabled needs. The national target is 10% and we are operating well above this target. The Local Strategic Plan was reviewed in 2024 following the issuing of the National

Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 and the related Implementation Plan. The objective of the Strategy is to facilitate access for disabled people to the appropriate range of housing and related support services in a timely manner, delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, which promotes equality and human rights, individual choice, and independent living. The Local Strategic Plan was approved by the Housing SPC & the Full Council in early 2024.

Housing Rents

The collection of housing rent remained strong with an 87% collection rate and a total income of €11,564,578 from 3339 rent accounts during 2024.

Housing Assistance Payment Scheme (HAP)

The Council set up 122 new HAP applications during 2024, including 20 households qualifying for Homeless HAP. The total number of households supported under the HAP scheme at the end of 2024 was 1,058.

Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

There were 145 households availing of this scheme at the end of 2024. During the year, 11 households left this scheme. The majority of those who left availed of alternative housing supports. In addition, the Council works with 17 Approved Housing Bodies in supporting 217 tenancies through the RAS scheme.

Social Leasing

In 2024, the Council provided two types of leasing, short-term leasing up to 9 years and 11 months and long-term leasing from 10 years to 25 years. Under the Government's Housing For All programme, long-term leasing is being phased out, therefore, the Council can no longer enter new long-term leases. However, the Department approved 5 long-term leases

in 2024 and 1 new long-term lease agreement was negotiated in 2024, and 1 property left the scheme. There were 121 overall total number households availing of this scheme at the end of the year. The average term of lease is 16 years.

The Council's target for short-term leasing for 2024 was 5 new short-term leases. In 2024, there were 2 new short-term leases. The target for the year was not met. Council seeing a low uptake from property owners due to a responsibility for the day-to-day maintenance of the property. During the year, 4 households left the short-term lease scheme. This brought the overall total number of households availing of this scheme to 96 by the end of the year. The average lease term is 5 years.

Private Rented Inspections

Privately rented properties are inspected by the Council in accordance with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019. A total of 1,063 private rented properties were inspected in 2024, which includes HAP, RAS, Approved Housing Bodies and leased properties.

Local Authority Home Loan

The Local Authority Home Loan (LAHL) has replaced The Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan (RIHL) since January 2022. The Loan offers a fixed interest rate mortgage over a 25 / 30 year period for credit worthy, first-time buyers with a view to making home ownership more affordable.

A total of 40 Local Authority Home Loan applications were received in 2024 and 17 loan applications were granted provisional approval during this period. A total of 12 loans were drawn down during 2024.

The current fixed rates are 4.00% on loans up to a 25-year term and 4.05% on loans up to a 30-year term.

Local Authority Purchase & Renovation Loan

The Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan (LAPR) was introduced in July 2024. This is a Government backed mortgage and loan for the purchase and renovation of derelict and non-habitable homes. The property must be eligible for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, whether derelict, non-habitable or simply vacant. A total of 2 applications were received in 2024.

Estate Management

The Council has an Estate Management Unit, available to meet with tenants and tenant associations on a regular basis to deal with issues that may occur. The appointment of three Tenancy Enforcement Officers in 2021 has had a positive impact in the management of anti-social behaviour and its impact on the community.

The team continue with the programme of engagement with tenants and the residents' committees to support estate management. Residents are encouraged to participate in the management of their estate, to take ownership, and to be proud of where they live. This Unit is committed to the encouragement and formation of residents' groups within their housing estates.

The Council's Estate Management team manage anti-social behaviour and its impact on the community. The Estate Management team facilitated a large number of call outs in 2024 to deal with instances of ASB as well as operating regular patrolling and engagement with Local Authority tenants.

Homeless Action Team

Health Services and Local Authorities are the lead statutory bodies for addressing homelessness and the needs of people who are homeless in Ireland. Clare Homeless Action Team works in collaboration with the HSE in providing a service within Clare, where a full

time Community Mental Health Nurse and a Public Health Nurse, which is shared with Limerick are on the team. A multi-disciplinary, inter-agency team approach has been adopted and has proved to be most effective in providing outreach and additional specialist supports and linking with mainstream services. The year 2024 brought a variety of varying challenges and complexities to the Clare Homeless Action Team. This year saw a further increase of presentations to the team, along with an increased level of complex needs, dual diagnosis, health concerns both physical and mental health and behavioural challenges being presented by service users. The demand on our service continues to increase each month with significant support around all aspects of homelessness being required from all staff.

The Homeless Action Team has continued to work towards building a service that can appropriately meet the needs of Homeless Clients in Clare. This team provides a wide range of support services including Assessment and Placement, Tenancy Support Services, HAP Place Finder, Housing First, Accommodation Resettlement and Youth Housing Support. The Clare Homeless Action Team faced multiple challenges throughout the year including limited resources, staff related gaps, safety concerns surrounding placements. There was also an increase in 2024 with service users declining opportunities and supports being offered by the Homeless Action Team. There was an increase in challenging behaviours including aggressive, and abuse being experienced by staff both within the Homeless Action Team as well as out supporting service providers.

2024

At the end of 2024, there were 115 adults and 55 dependants in Homeless accommodation. This figure does not include the significant number of singles and family units that

contacted the HAT team seeking placements in Emergency Accommodation.

During 2024, 183 households exited homelessness. A further 49 households moved within Emergency Services to best support their identified needs. These figures represent a significant amount of prevention work and this will continue to be the focus of the service going forward.

An additional 64 households who were not in emergency Accommodation also moved into tenancies, this includes Local Authority Properties, AHB Properties and HAP tenancies. This figure captures the preventative work carried out by the HAT team during the year, where individuals and families were prevented from entering Homeless Services.

Exits		183
Housed	Local Authority = 8 AHB = 16 HAP = 0 Youth Housing = 3 Housing First = 6 Prevention Tenancies - 64	97
Discharged from Services		46
Self-Discharged		35
Discharged to Residential Accommodation		4
Deceased		1 (RIP)

Within these figures a significant amount of work continues to support clients to address presenting issues. Consequently, the team is continuing to foster strong working relationships with all of our working partners in the HSE (Primary Care, Disability, Social Inclusion, Mental Health, Safeguarding and Addiction), Gardai, Tusla (Child Protection, Domestic Violence and Aftercare) Probation and Community Partners to address the ever-

increasing complex needs.

Traveller Accommodation

In accordance with the provisions of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029 was adopted by the elected members of Clare County Council on 9th December, 2024. A copy of the programme is available online at www.clarecoco.ie or can be inspected at the Housing Office, Áras Contae an Chláir, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co Clare V95 DXP2 between 9am and 1pm Monday to Friday.

A number of new tenants were appointed under the Caravan / Mobile Home loan scheme 2024. The scheme closed in March 2024 and a further allocation will be provided for 2025.

Housing Grants

There are three grants available for older and disabled people to help make their homes safer and more comfortable for their needs. The Older People grant is for essential structural repairs, the Disabled People grant caters for bigger changes needed in the home to assist homeowners with mobility issues, and the Mobility Aids grant provides funding for smaller modifications such as ramps, grab rails and other works. Applications are prioritised according to medical priority and the length of time on the waiting list.

On 1st December 2024, the Department of Housing revised the grant scheme by providing increases in the grant limits and income thresholds, and some other measures, all of which have now been implemented.

Clare County Council’s online portal for grant applications was introduced during the year. This will greatly reduce paperwork, improve the speed of grant processing and allow applicants to see the progress of their grant throughout our approval process.

A large volume of applications was again approved and paid during the year. A total of

€3,238,823 was expended on 535 grants as set out in the table hereunder:

Grant type	Number of Grants paid in 2024	Value of works €
Housing Aid for Older People	249	1,036,793
Housing Adaptation Grant for Disabled People	191	1,786,041
Mobility Aids Grant	95	415,989
Total in 2024	535	3,238,823

A number of similar alterations were carried out to our own housing stock during the year. This involved the installation of ramps, level access bathrooms, handrails, stairlifts and other minor works to facilitate the mobility needs of our tenants. A total of 62 properties were adapted with €473,249 spent on these works, which assist tenants in meeting their individual needs and adds to their enjoyment and comfort of their homes.

Ukrainian Services

As the conflict in Ukraine continued, 2024 saw the number of Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection living in our county decrease from 5,508 in January to 5112 in December. The ‘Offer a Home’ scheme continued through the year with a steady stream of offers coming from across the county and by the year end the number of Ukrainian people accommodated under the scheme stood at 522 (approx.) in 177 otherwise unoccupied houses.

Local Authority Integration Team

The Local Authority Integration Teams (LAITs) have been set up in all local authorities in 2024. Their purpose is to help coordinate the different kinds of support available for people who are applying for international protection, refugees, and others in similar situations.

The goal of LAITs is to help IP applicants and refugees become independent, settle into their new communities, and participate in Irish life. They do this by connecting people to important services that can help them integrate into the community.

LAITs provide support for:

- Applicants for International Protection (IP)
- People who have been granted refugee status or other forms of protection, such as subsidiary protection or permission to remain
- Refugees who have been resettled in Ireland through a government programme
- Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTPs)

LAITs operate under the principle of 'Integration from Day One'. This means that LAITs provide integration support to people who need it as soon as they arrive in Ireland.

The work of LAITs isn't meant to replace existing services. Instead, LAITs help connect people with the existing services that are most suitable for their needs. This includes things like:

- Being a direct contact for new arrivals, helping them with any problems they might have when dealing with public services
- Connecting new arrivals with services like

legal help, childcare and healthcare

- Connecting new arrivals with services that improve their ability to live independently, like job training, English classes, education, and apprenticeships
- Guiding new arrivals through the process of applying for financial support, medical help, child benefits, and other services they might need
- Holding meetings in local areas and using community development principles to help those who attend
- Supporting people if they face racism or other unfair treatment, helping them report it to the right authorities
- Helping vulnerable new arrivals get in touch with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other services if they need extra help



In 2024 the team held 97 Integration support clinics in accommodation centres. In total there were 940 attendees that engaged with these clinics, seeking support in areas such as access to education, school places, healthcare, accommodation, financial advice, local amenities and many other areas.

LAIT collaborated on a number of key

networking and collaborative events and total numbers attended for these events were in excess of 1200 individuals, attached are details of these events.

- 16th April Community Meet and Greet Event in Scarriff Gaa Hall
- Meeting with TFI local Link to highlight areas where extra transport links were requested from Migrants
- Collaboration with Clare PPN with voter registration of Migrants in Shannon
- Lait team assisted PPN with Voter registration in Clare Lodge and Magowna House IPAS Centre
- 15th May Attended the Say Hello Mental Health Event in the FET Campus Scarriff,
- LAIT facilitated introductory meetings of East Clare Community Co-Op and IPAS Centre Scarriff
- 17th May Refugee Week Food Event in the Tate centre in Limerick
- 21st May Community Information Clinic in Ballyvaughan to celebrate World Day of Culture, diversity, dialogue and development 2024
- 25th May LAIT team collaborated with CISC, and CLDC to Host Africa Day celebration in CBS Ennis
- Collaborated with Clare Sports Partnership in the development of a Clare Sports Plan, held workshops with communities in 4 areas in Clare to gain community input in Sports plan
- 18th June Community Information session Derg Active alliance in Scariff
- 22nd June Intercultural event to celebrate refugee week in collaboration with CISC and CLDC in CBS Ennis



Migrant Integration in Clare - Position Paper

The Local Authority Integration Team hosted Workshops with all Community Integration Forum Stakeholders and Elected Members throughout October 2024. These Workshops were the beginning of a process to deliver a Position Paper that will inform the onward development of a Migrant Integration and Intercultural Strategy. The Position Paper, commissioned by Clare's Community Integration Forum, provides a stocktake of achievements, baselines, issues, challenges, and opportunities to date. People and Place, a Maynooth University and All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO) spin-out consulting group, were procured to facilitate, research and develop the Position Paper.



The paper identifies clear trends for Clare using CSO data to demonstrate the demographic changes over the last 20 years, it details the achievements, and challenges related to integration, while laying the groundwork for the forthcoming Clare Migrant Integration Strategy. The paper draws on extensive stakeholder consultations, demographic analysis, and secondary data, offering key insights and recommendations. The evidence captured in this paper underscores the importance of increased investments, deeper and more systematic inter-agency collaboration at all levels and further supports to ensure community engagement - by migrants and members of the host community - in shaping a cohesive, diverse, and a thriving Clare. While challenges persist, the groundwork laid by the Clare Integration Forum provides

a solid foundation for addressing these issues through the forthcoming strategy, and migrant integration needs to be mainstreamed and embedded across all sectors' policies, strategies, and work programmes.

Launch of Service Directory

The Community Integration Forum was delighted to Launch the Directory of Services Building Connection Guide on the 12th of December 2024. This booklet serves as a testament to their work in fostering a warm, welcoming, and inclusive environment for everyone who chooses to call Clare home. This booklet signposts new members of our community to a wide range of support services that are available. Information on essential services, local resources, and ways to connect with others are provided in this booklet. Looking forward to continuing the great work in 2025.



Sports and Recreation



Active Ennis Leisure Complex

Classes and Fitness Studio

Class numbers for our “Body blast” and Lunch Crunch” were very busy in 2024 with upwards of 20 participants in most classes. We continue to promote our classes using social media and encourage all levels to participate. Our Fitness studio also remains very busy with a range of classes such as HIIT, Pilates, Yoga, Irish dancing and frequently used by Clare Water Safety for Lifeguard courses. We continue to have a lot of interest from instructors in renting our studio and have a wide variation of Classes.

Teen Gym

Teen Gym continued to grow in popularity over 2024, with pre booking necessary, the Gym was often booked out for these times. During school holidays the Teen Gym Hours are extended to meet the demand while the teens are off school. Teen Gym has been successful in integrating teens into a Gym Environment and helping improve their Fitness and Self Confidence.

Healthy Clare Blog

We issued multiple blogs in 2024 for the healthy Clare Ireland newsletter. The blogs encompass healthy eating tips and exercise tips. Some topics that were covered in the blogs were tips for maintaining a balanced diet, benefits of strength training, benefits of strength training for bone health, macronutrients and micronutrients, benefits of strength training for mental health, and tips for maintaining a

healthy weight. We aim to provide readers with actionable and safe tips that can help improve their health and wellbeing.

Viewing Area refurbishment

In 2024 we refurbished our viewing area, changing the floor and reconditioning the seating. The viewing area is an important aspect of our complex, gathering a large footfall, especially from parents watching swimming lessons. Works began in early April when the old flooring and seating were removed. The new flooring was put down and reconditioned seating was re-installed towards the later part of April. The bathrooms in the viewing area were also refurbished with new tiles on the floors.



Footfall report

Over the last 12 months we have recorded the footfall in the Leisure Complex. We have had a total of 250,471 enter the complex in 2024, with an average footfall per day of 688 people. The highest recorded footfall in a day was 2,583. Our monthly average footfall was 20,873 with the Highest recorded month being February with 26,055 and the lowest recorded month being August with 13,709.

An Taisce Green Flag Award

John O’Sullivan Park and Tim Smythe Park have retained their green flag status for 2024, The Green Flag is awarded by An Taisce and

recognizes a facility meeting the benchmarked standards for parks and green spaces.

Active Ennis John O'Sullivan Park, Lee's Road

Every Saturday morning at 9am a Park Run was held. This Run was very popular and gave runners a scenic route for their run through the forested area of the park.

Lees Road Synthetic Running Track held Multiple events throughout the year, including Clare Community Games Finals and Regional Community Games Finals were both held during the Summer of 2024 with over 4,000 attendees over these two days. The Clare County Athletics Finals were also held and had 1,500 attendees. The Astro pitch also played host to the FAI Primary Schools Finals in March.

Active Ennis Tim Smythe Park

In June 2024 the "Relay for Life", a 24-hour charity walk, took place in Tim Smythe Park. This is the 5th year of the "Relay for Life" raising fund for the Irish Cancer Association. The 24-hour event had many Cancer Survivors taking part. The Survivor's lap was an inspirational way the start the Event, with Cancer Survivors of all ages walking the first lap of the Relay.



Ennis Invite Swimming Gala and Community Games.

In February 2024 the pool hosted the Ennis Invite Gala. This Gala hosted swimmers from all over Munster and had over 500 participants.

Also, in February we hosted the Clare Pony Club Swim Gala. In April the swimming pool held the St Francis Credit Union Community Games where clubs competed from all over Clare. The winners went on to represent Clare in the National Finals.

Health & Wellbeing Age Expo

In October Active Ennis hosted a stand at the Healthy Clare "Health & Wellbeing Age Expo". In this stand we displayed information about our facilities and different classes we run for older adults. We also demonstrated some Chair Exercises that could be done by older adults.

Throughout the year we hosted the Swim-a-Mile programme, Women-in-Sport Swim programme, plus two additional Swim Programmes for male and female members of the Travelling Community.



Swim Lesson Programmes

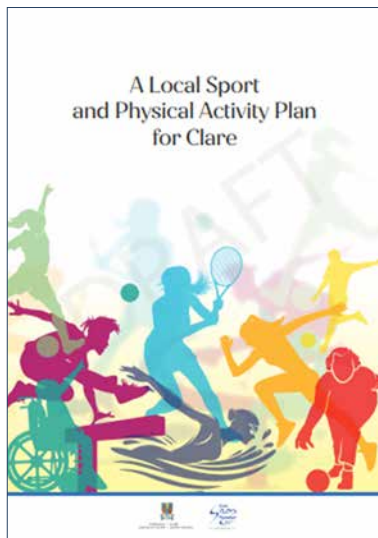
We also continued to provide swim lessons to Schools and the Public throughout 2024. Provision was made to 40+ schools, primary and secondary schools. Public lessons are being delivered to circa 1,200 children and adults.

Our Aqua Aerobics class has set an all-time high all year round. We continue to provide services to Sub-Aqua Club, Underwater Hockey Club, Clare Water Safety, Clare Pony Club, Killeen Swim School, Ennis Swim School and Ennis Swim Club.

Active Kilrush

Usage for the facility rose significantly in 2024. To further enhance the facility the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) has been completed and is ready for use in 2025. Sports Capital Funding was attained for this Development in 2022 with Clare County Council securing this Funding.

Local Sport and Physical Activity Plan for Clare



Clare County Council is one of 4 pilot counties to launch a draft framework of a new five-year sports plan which will aim to improve physical activity in disadvantaged areas and across all socio-economic backgrounds.

A countywide focus group of 587 residents were surveyed in preparation for the plan and revealed some startling findings.

The plan has 9 strategic priorities including tackling the drop off rate of teenage girls, keeping the ageing population active, increasing participation in disadvantaged areas and growing minority sports.

The Draft Local Sport and Physical Activity Plan was open to public consultation for the month of November where members of the public could put forward their views and ideas.

Among the key elements of the plan is to increase public participation in non-sporting physical activity and explore the potential

to develop connections to primary care and access for those with disabilities.

Sport Ireland Local Sports Plan Templates

On 21st November Sport Ireland launched a national framework to support local authorities in developing and implementing Local Sports plans.

As Clare was one of 4 pilot counties for developing a Local Sports Plan Jason Murphy Director of Services and John Sweeney, CEO of Clare Sports Partnership were invited to a panel discussion at the launch. The Secretary Generals from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage also contributed to the event with Sport Ireland's CEO Dr. Una May and Director of Participation Louise Burke.

The templates which will assist Local Authorities develop a Local Sports Plan were piloted with a Development Group from counties Clare, Laois, Cavan and Carlow.

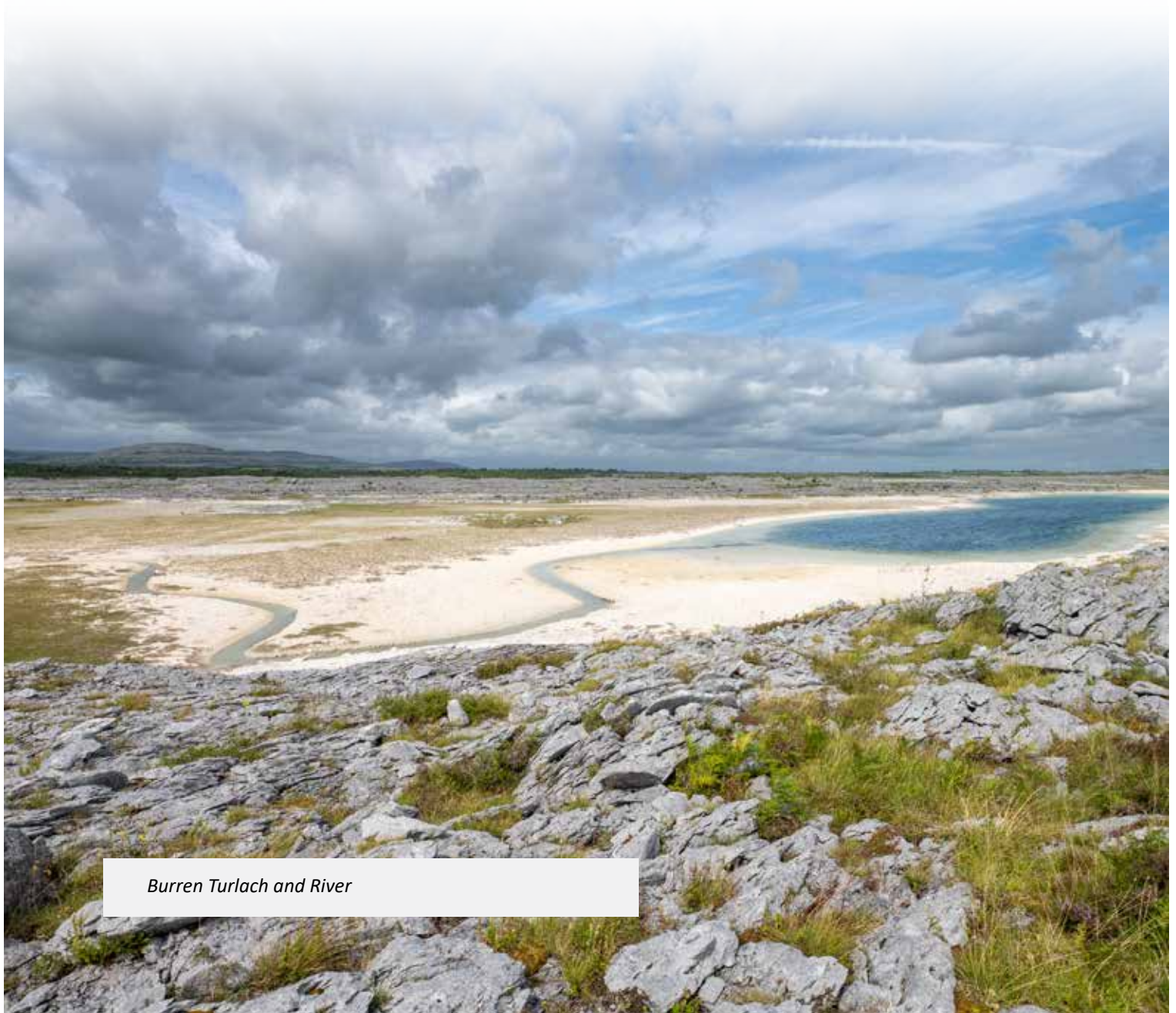
It is envisioned the new Local Sports Plans will play a key role in the National Sports Policy target to increase participation rates in sport and physical activity nationwide and will ultimately promote each county's health and wellbeing.



Panel Discussion Director of Participation for Sport Ireland, Clare County Council, Clare Sports Partnership, Laois County Council



Jason Murphy, John Sweeney CEO Clare Sports Partnership, Brendan Boyce, Kay Nolan, Louise Burke Director of Participation Sport Ireland, Feargal Ó Colligh Secretary General Department of Sport, Dr. Una May CEO of Sport Ireland, Oisín Foley Sport Ireland, John O'Neill S3 Consultants.



Burren Turlach and River



RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



ANNE HAUGH
Director of Rural Development
Retired August 2024



ANN REYNOLDS
A/Director of Rural Development
From October 2024

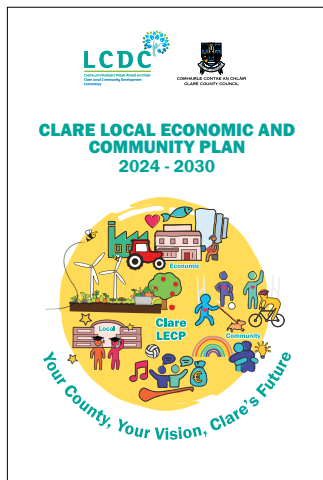
Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2030

The Clare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), a statutory committee of Clare County Council, is responsible for the development and implementation of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) covering the period 2024 to 2030. Adopted in April 2024 the LECP 2024-2030 outlines six high-level goals, 36 objectives with 27 actions to be implemented during the first two years

under the responsibility of each identified lead agency. The objectives and actions will guide economic and community development in the County and act as a key reference document for all publicly funded bodies and groups operating in County Clare who will be working collaboratively for the benefit of County Clare

A reporting platform is in development to enable biannual progress updates from lead agencies. Additionally, each lead agency will

present to the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) to showcase delivery of actions and outcomes.



Clare Comhairle Na nÓg



The Clare Comhairle Na nÓg initiative, spearheaded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, serves as a forum for individuals aged 12 to 18 to express their opinions, deliberate on possible reforms, and suggest creative ideas for beneficial transformations. This council collaborates with Clare Youth Service, which oversees a range of initiatives and ventures in partnership with its young participants. Two Annual Youth Conferences were organised in 2024, hosted in Ennistymon and Ennis, respectively, to accommodate all participants. These gatherings provided a vital forum for young individuals to convene, exchange perspectives, and address relatable community issues. A notable highlight of the year was the involvement of Comhairle Na nÓg in the Healthy Clare Period Poverty initiative. Their contribution took the form of a video to support the importance of addressing period poverty while promoting inclusivity and awareness. Their participation and input into

initiatives is truly representative of the needs and aspirations of young people in County Clare.

Pride of Place

Clare once again demonstrated its commitment to community excellence at the 2024 IPB Pride of Place Awards, held in November, at the Hillgrove Hotel in Monaghan. Hosted by Monaghan County Council in association with Co-operation Ireland, the event celebrated the outstanding achievements of communities across Ireland. **Lisdoonvarna Fáilte** claimed the Inclusive Communities category award for its extraordinary efforts in fostering inclusivity among local residents, Ukrainian refugees, and individuals living in Direct Provision. In addition, **Circular Clarecastle** was a runner-up in Category 4 (Population 2000-5000) for its year-round activities, including festivals and environmental initiatives, which foster community pride and engagement.



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Government Funding - National Schemes

The Department of Rural and Community Development administers several funding programmes through the Council. In 2024, these schemes supported various projects, as outlined below:

- **Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF)**

In May 2024, funding of €8,765,000 was awarded for the Scariff Integrated Rural Regeneration Project. This project will deliver a range of integrated interventions in the town centre, including the renovation of a vacant derelict building into a community and enterprise hub along with the enhancement of Market Square to create a defined sense of place and arrival.

A fourth call for Category 2 applications under the RRDF was announced in October 2024. Category 2 projects provide funding for the initial planning, design, and technical works required for large-scale developments.

- **CLÁR**

A total of €693,129 was allocated to 15 projects in the following locations:

Doonbeg, Killaloe, Broadford, Tulla (x2), Scariff, Moy, Ennistymon, Kilrush (x2), Kilkee (x2), Whitegate, Crusheen, and Kildysart.

- **Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme**

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2024 was launched in October 2024. Funding is available under this scheme to support the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure or the necessary maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure. Funding applications in respect of the Scheme are required to be submitted to the Department in quarter 1 2025.

- **Community Recognition Fund**

The Community Recognition Fund supports and rewards communities that have welcomed people from Ukraine and other countries. In 2024, the remainder of the projects funded under the 2023 Scheme were completed.

In April 2024, the Department announced an additional €2.608 million for projects in County Clare. Of this, €1.7 million was awarded to 20 projects under Window 1 in 2024, with the remaining funds to be allocated in January 2025.



Sensory Garden Killaloe - CRF funded project

Community Enhancement Programme (LEP)

The Local Enhancement Programme was launched in January 2024, with a total of €166,000 allocated for County Clare. Of this, €138,380.55 was designated for capital funding, while €27,676.11 was specifically reserved for women's group expenses. Administered through the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), this programme provides financial support to communities, local groups, and clubs for essential repairs, small capital improvements to their facilities, and the purchase of equipment for community use.

A total of 88 groups successfully secured funding, including 11 groups that received support under the ring-fenced women's group funding.

Clare Local Area Grant Scheme

Funding of €690,000 was allocated to just over 500 projects being delivered under the Council's Local Area Grant Scheme in March 2024. The allocations to community and voluntary groups supported a broad range of projects including public realm, grass cutting

in private housing developments, Christmas lighting, the arts, Irish language, tourism promotion and sustainable tourism.

Burial Grounds

The Burial Grounds Unit remains responsible for managing 29 operational burial grounds across the county. Routine maintenance, including grass cutting and general upkeep, is carried out during the spring and summer months by both in-house caretakers and external contractors. Additional work in 2024 included plinth provision, hedge cutting, and footpath improvements. Grant funding was also awarded to over 60 community groups to support the upkeep of burial grounds in their local areas.

Planning for future burial space continues to be a priority. In 2024, a Part 8 planning application for the extension of Carrowmore Burial Ground was approved. Progress was also made on the proposed expansion of the County Burial Ground at Drumcliff. Additionally, financial assistance was provided to Feakle Community Council to help enhance the capacity of their burial ground.

Community Playgrounds

The Rural & Community Development Directorate continues to collaborate with local communities to support the operation of community playgrounds. Community groups received grant assistance to help manage these facilities, with a particular focus on insurance and upkeep. A total of €85,000 was allocated to 20 Community Playground Committees to support their ongoing operation and maintenance.

Healthy Clare Programme and Initiatives



Healthy
Clare

Healthy Clare Micro Fund 2024 was launched as part of Healthy Ireland Round 4. The fund supports community and voluntary groups in implementing health and wellbeing projects. The fund encourages local participation in improving health, reducing inequalities, and fostering a healthier environment for all.



The fund supported targeted actions of Healthy Weight and Positive Mental Health Promotion and is supported by Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), Healthy Ireland, Department of Health, Pobal and Creative Ireland.

The Healthy Clare team secured €25,000 from the Department of Health to continue the Local Authority's **'Free Period Products' initiative** in Clare. The project aims to destigmatise periods, combat period poverty, and de-gender periods. In 2024, 1,500 boxes of period products were distributed across the county. Clare Comhairle Na nÓg created a video highlighting the programme's impact on young people, which will be launched in 2025 with support from the Department of Health. This initiative ensures greater accessibility to period products while promoting inclusivity and awareness.

The third **Healthy Clare 2024 Calendar** was created in partnership with members of the Healthy Clare Working Group. 2,000 calendars were distributed to communities across Clare via Clare Libraries, the local MD offices, and at reception at the Áras.

The **'Living Well Through the Menopause'** event, hosted by Healthy Clare and Clare

County Council HR Department, took place on October 17th in Glór, with funding from Creative Ireland.

Opened by Director of Service, Noeleen Fitzgerald and Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy, the event featured keynote speaker Dr. Máire Finn from Centric Health Ennis Medical. Building on a 2023 staff talk, the 2024 event was extended to the community, attracting over 250 attendees. The event received positive feedback, highlighting its role in raising awareness and supporting individuals through menopause.



Clare Age-Friendly Programme

The Clare Age Friendly Programme had a successful year, marked by events and initiatives promoting inclusivity, health, and community participation for older people in County Clare.

A key highlight was the Clare Older People's Volunteer of the Year Award 2024, held on April 10th at the Woodstock Hotel, Ennis. Over 170 attendees celebrated local volunteers, with Bríd Dilleen receiving the award for her extensive contribution to the community, including work with Ennis Tidy Towns, Banner GAA Club, Probus, Clare Volunteer Centre,

Guide Dogs for the Blind, and the Irish Cancer Society.

During Positive Ageing Week, the Health and Wellbeing Age Expo 2024 took place at Treacy's West County Hotel, drawing over 600 attendees. This event showcased essential services for older people and featured speakers, tech support, and interactive sessions based on WHO's Age Friendly themes. A major milestone at the Expo was the launch of the Clare Age Friendly County Strategy 2024 - 2030 - A Collective Ambition, introduced by Cathaoirleach Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan. The strategy outlines a collaborative plan to enhance the quality of life for older residents. The Clare Age Friendly Programme also hosted a Dementia Awareness training session, the "Virtual Dementia Tour," on October 18th. Delivered by Trained2Care, this event helped Clare County Council staff, the Clare Older People's Council, and the Clare Age Friendly Alliance understand dementia's challenges and identify practical ways to improve the lives of those affected.

Additionally, an intergenerational Climate Action workshop was held in Kilfenora's Common Knowledge Centre, with participation from Clare Older People's Council, Clare Cultural Companions, and Clare Youth Service's UBU programme. Supported by the Clare Creative Arts Fund, the event fostered cross-generational discussions on environmental responsibility.

This year's initiatives underscore the Clare Age Friendly Programme's commitment to making County Clare a more inclusive, supportive, and age-friendly community.

Joint Policing Committee

The Clare Joint Policing Committee (JPC) was established in 2009 under the Garda Síochána Act 2005 to provide a platform for consultation, discussion, and recommendations on policing matters within Clare County Council's administrative area. The JPC also monitored

crime trends, anti-social behaviour, and contributing factors.

In 2024, two JPC meetings were held, featuring presentations on:

- Road Safety initiatives
- Age-Friendly Homes and security devices for older people
- Domestic abuse
- The Drug-Related Intimidation Reporting Programme

The final JPC meeting took place on May 27th, 2024, as these committees are being replaced by Local Community Safety Partnerships. It is envisaged that the new structures will build on the work of the JPCs, with the aim of giving local people a stronger voice to identify and tackle community safety issues.



Rural & Community Development Officer (RCDO) Team

The Rural Development Directorate of Clare County Council organised a series of walk-in clinics across the four Municipal Districts to support community groups and organisations in project development and funding opportunities. These sessions also focused on key areas such as Community Climate Action, Biodiversity, and Heritage and were facilitated by the Rural & Community Development Officers (RCDOs) in collaboration with the

Environmental Awareness Officer, Biodiversity Officer and the Community Climate Action Officer.

Ongoing engagement by the RCDO team continues to strengthen community groups by building their capacity, equipping them with essential skills, and ensuring they have the necessary structures in place to secure funding and successfully implement key community projects.

Corporate Services

The Corporate Services Department provides a support service to the Elected Members and to Council management and administers a number of functions directly to the public.

Meetings of Clare County Council

Clare County Council conducts much of its business at meetings of the full Council. Such meetings are regulated by law.

During 2024 Clare County Council held the following types of meetings:

- Annual General Meeting - 1
- Ordinary Meetings - 10
- Adjourned Monthly Meetings - 4
- Budget Meetings - 1
- Special Meetings - 2

Meetings of the full Council are presided over by the Cathaoirleach of the Council. In the event that the Cathaoirleach is absent, the Leas Cathaoirleach chairs the meeting. The public and the media have a statutory right to attend meetings of the Council. Council meetings are held on the second Monday of each month with the exception being August. The statutory meetings are hosted in the Council Chamber , Áras Contae an Chláir, and via MS Teams

The Annual General Meeting is held in June each year. Councillor Alan O'Callaghan, who represents Killaloe Municipal District, was

elected Cathaoirleach in June 2024 for the ensuing year. Councillor Mary Howard, who represents Ennis Municipal District, was elected Leas Cathaoirleach at that same meeting.

Corporate Plan 2024 - 2029

The Corporate Plan 2024 - 2029 was adopted on 9th December 2024. Clare County Council will be a professional, responsive and agile local government that will lead the social, economic, physical and rural development of our county, and to have sustainable communities at its heart.

Strategic Objectives 2024 - 2029

- **Housing for all** Facilitate the supply of housing, both public and private, in the county to provide sustainable, quality, and affordable housing options.
- **Economic Growth** Facilitate a proactive, sustainable and carbon neutral economic environment where businesses locate and grow and create sustainable employment supporting our communities, thus enhancing our economic capacity.
- **Physical Infrastructure** Deliver, maintain, and protect key infrastructure to facilitate the economic, social, physical, rural and tourism development of County Clare in a manner that promotes sustainability, safety, accessibility, connectivity, and respect for the environment.
- **Sustainable Tourism** Make Clare a globally renowned sustainable and vibrant destination, easily reached and traversed, and recognised for its rich cultural assets, its stunning and open-space landscapes, its compelling array of remarkable experiences, and for its welcome and exceptional hospitality.
- **Quality of Life** Improve the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of people in Clare, facilitating access for all to housing, employment, education, healthcare,

transport, recreation, amenities and cultural activities.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee has an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting, processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters, as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the Council. It supports the work of the Internal Audit Department and advises the Chief Executive in relation to the operation and development of the department.

The committee is non-executive and is independent in the determination of its work programme and in formulating any recommendations, taking account of the functions referred to above.

Consequent to the 2024 local elections, a new committee was formed. The new committee will run for the full duration of the Council 2024 - 2029. The committee has five members, three external members and two Elected Members as follows:

- Mr. Jimmy Browne (Chairperson)
- Ms. Bríd Darcy
- Mr. John Kilroy
- Cllr. Pat Hayes
- Cllr. Pat Burke

The committee met 5 times in total in 2024. The committee completes an annual report to Council each year.

Civic/Mayoral Receptions 2024

Civic Reception - Newmarket on Fergus Celtic FC

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Joe Cooney hosted a Civic Reception to honour 2023 FAI Junior Cup winners, Newmarket Celtic.



Pictured with Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney, are: (L-R): Newmarket Celtic FC manager, Paddy Purcell, and Newmarket Celtic FC captain, Eoin Hayes

Mayoral Awards

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Joe Cooney hosted Mayoral Awards on 19th April 2024 - conferring awards on the following worthy recipients:

- **Clare Juvenile Handball** - for their hard work in bringing our county to the pinnacle of sporting achievement in this field.
- **Rachel Akers** - a standout athlete contributing to Ireland's success in track and field.
- **Caimin Jones** - has been instrumental in the development of handball in County Clare for many years.
- **Clare 22nd Battalion Association** - which was established in 2013 to remember those who served in the unit from 1959 to 2005.

- **St. John's National School, Cratloe** - who created a coded pulse reader called "Racing Hearts", which claimed them the Best Project Book award at the 2024 Mini Scientist Grand Final.



Pictured are recipients of the Mayoral Awards with the Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney.

125th Anniversary of Clare County Council

Clare County Council celebrated the 125th Anniversary of Clare County Council's first Council meeting on Monday 8th April. This was attended by past and current elected members of Clare County Council. At the commemoration the minutes of the first meeting held in Ennis Courthouse on the 23rd April 1899 were read out.



Certificate of Recognition presented to the Clare Soroptimists



Mayoral Reception - Leas-Chathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Mary Howard, held a Mayoral Reception for His Excellency Archbishop Séamus Horgan at Áras Contae an Chláir on Thursday 1st August 2024 to acknowledge the work Archbishop Horgan has done in his church ministry and in the communities in which he has served, from Bodyke all the way to the Philippines.



Mayoral Charity Ball 2024 - Cathaoirleach Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan hosted the Mayor's Charity ball 2024 to celebrate a winning year for Clare Senior Hurlers and raise funds for a worthy charity - Down Syndrome Clare.



Register of Electors

Clare County Council is responsible for the compilation of the Register of Electors for County Clare. The Boundary of the Dail Constituency of Clare is the same as the county boundary of Clare in accordance with the Electoral amendment (Dáil Constituencies) Act 2017.

The Electorate can now access www.checktheregister.ie to register to vote, and update their details, including PPS number and Eircode. Every person aged 18 years of age or over and who permanently resides at a particular address within the state is eligible for inclusion on the Register of Electors. From the age of 16, people can apply to be on the pending register. Their application will be activated once they turn 18 years of age.

There were 3 elections held in 2024 - a Referendum was held in March, Local Elections were held in June and a General Election was held in November. This led to an increase in the number of electors registering to vote.

The total number of Local Government electors on 31st December 2024 Register of Electors in Clare is 100,881.

Protected Disclosures Act 2014

Annual Report of Statistics - Internal Reports made under section 6 of the Act

1 No. Protected Disclosure was received via internal reporting channels in the calendar year 2024 and was closed with no further action taken.

Annual Report of Statistics - External Reports made or transmitted under sections 7, 7A, 10C and 10D of the Act

No reports were received via the external reporting channel established under section 7(2B) of the Act.

Business Innovation 2024

Clare County Council's Business Innovation team, consisting of representatives from each

Directorate worked on delivering the actions contained in the Business Innovation Strategy. At our Innovation meetings, the Innovation representatives bring forward Innovative proposals from their Directorate for consideration. Employees can also submit proposals directly to the Innovation Lead team.

In 2024 Clare Co Co was successful in obtaining a grant award of €75,000 from the Public Service Innovation Fund. This grant funded the development of a digital lifeguard system to automate the reporting process of the daily duties of Lifeguards. The digital system was developed in collaboration with the Environmental and ICT team. It has been a huge success for management of daily lifeguards reports. We were delighted that Bhavesh Patadiya won the Rising I.T. Star award at the Public Sector Digital Transformation Awards for his work on this project.

Other projects developed through the Innovation team in 2024 include:

- GIS Tree Database - Development of a tree survey application and a dashboard for physical development section.
- Residential Tenancies Board Inspections Survey - an Application and Dashboard which provides a comprehensive GIS-based solution for managing and tracking inspections of Private rented Homes under the council's remit.

Customer Care Co-Ordinator

The Council is committed to providing a quality service to all its customers and has a complaints/ comments policy in place. The Council's Customer Care Co-ordinator investigates all complaints/comments received. A person not satisfied with the response provided by the Customer Care Co-ordinator can request to have their case reviewed again by the Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services. In 2024, the Customer Care Co-ordinator responded to

27 complaints received, 6 of which were dealt with under appeal, to the Senior Executive Officer.

Our Customer Services Team continued to provide excellent customer service, working with members of the public who presented at Áras Contae an Chláir, assisting them with their queries and directing them to appropriate services.

Communications and Public Relations

The Communications Office communicates and promotes Council activities and services, supports internal communications across the local authority and provides additional supports to events and campaigns.

In 2024, the Communications Office issued more than 210 media releases, resulting in extensive local and national coverage, and responded to press queries from local and national media.

The Communications Office updates social media channels to enhance engagement with the public and maintain awareness of the work of the Council. The Council's corporate social media accounts now have a combined following of approximately 37,190.

During 2024's severe weather events, the Communications Office provided regular updates and advice to the public via local and national media, social media channels, and the news section of the Clare County Council website.

The Communications Office also oversaw the Live Streaming of the Local Election Count in June, a unique event among local authorities. The live online programme had more than 23,000 views over the course of the two days. In July 2024, the communications office played a key role in organising the homecoming for the victorious Senior Clare All Ireland Hurling Team in the Fair Green (Tim Smythe Park). More than 35,000 people attended the "Homecoming Event".

More than 5,000 people attended the Big Screen at the Fair Green (live broadcast of the game) the previous day, an event in which Communications played a key role.

The Clare FM Summer Tour 2024 in association with Clare County Council was central to the Summer Communications Strategy, as the council worked in collaboration with the radio station to bring outside broadcasts to each MD. These OBs helped to showcase the work of the local authority in each area.

Clare County Council supported several worthy causes during 2024, with the Communications Office helping to raise awareness of local and national initiatives.

The Monthly Management Reports, reporting the progress made by Clare County Council directorates during the preceding month. In September the redesign of 'The Banner Bulletin' staff newsletter began, with the first edition of the new look magazine/e-zine published just in time for Christmas. It was agreed that the publication would continue on a bi-monthly basis.

The Communications Office continued to provide news items for the main Council website.

The Graphic Design and Print Service staff continued to enhance the quality of internal and external communications carried out by Clare County Council, by producing high-quality design and print material, and advising on best design practices.

Progress on Implementation of the Official Languages Act in 2024

Introduction

The Official Languages Acts aim to ensure that public services are available in both Irish and English, promoting the use of the Irish language. Clare County Council is committed to adhering to these regulations and enhancing bilingual service delivery as per our Language Scheme.

Promoting the Irish Language is particularly

important to Clare, given the county has the second highest proportion of Irish speakers in the country at 47% as per the last census, second only to Galway, and given that Ennis, our county town, is designated as an Irish Language Network under the Gaeltacht Act 2012.

Key Achievements in 2024

- **Signage:** An Irish Language Signage Policy for Clare County Council was drafted to provide clear guidelines and establish best practice in producing compliant signage across all areas of the council.
- **Staff Training:** In-house Irish language classes began in September 2024 at upper beginner level, with 27 staff members undertaking the 10-week course. Another 6 staff members completed a customer service skills workshop, and 15 more staff members attended general one day Irish language workshops.
- **Advertising:** There was a marked increase in Irish language advertising in 2024 as the council worked to achieve the requirements to do 20% of its advertising in Irish and to spend 5% of its advertising budget with the Irish language media. The council fell just short of the 20% target, reaching 19.1% of its advertising in Irish while great progress was made towards the 5% target, achieving a 2.1% spend. Both figures were substantially up from minimal levels in 2023 and earlier years.
- **Publications:** Progress was made in bedding in arrangements to complete translations in time to publish major documents simultaneously in both languages, as per the requirements under the Act. The 2023 Annual Report was published in both languages and the Corporate Plan 2024-2029 was published simultaneously in both languages.
- **Customer Service:** Enhanced customer service by upskilling staff at the customer

service desk and in area offices. Most signs and notices at all public-facing desks in the Áras are now bilingual.

Conclusion

Clare County Council remains dedicated to the full implementation of the Official Languages Acts, ensuring that the Irish language is preserved, promoted and normalised within the community. We will continue to work towards enhancing our bilingual services and supporting the use of Irish in all aspects of public life.

Office of the Ombudsman

This office was established under the Ombudsman Act, 1980. Its role is to investigate complaints about administrative actions, delays or inactions, adversely affecting persons or bodies in their dealings with state bodies including Local Authorities. The Office of the Ombudsman dealt with 27 customer complaints in 2024 which were referred to Clare County Council for a response and report.

Ombudsman for Children

In 2024, 1 complaint was made to the Ombudsman for Children.

Freedom of Information & Data Protection

Freedom of Information

The policy of Clare County Council is to give members of the public access to information held by this authority, to the greatest extent possible, in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy of the individual. In 2024 there were 120 FOI requests received and handled under the Act. 5 FOI decisions on those requests were the subject of internal reviews. A further 15 requests were received which were invalid under the Act, but these were handled outside of the FOI Act, with the cooperation of the requester.

The outcome of the requests handled under the FOI received in 2024 was as follows: - granted - 26; part-granted - 57; refused - 31; transferred - 1; withdrawn - 5. The categories of requester in 2024 were as follows: - journalists - 15; business interests - 14; public representatives - 1; staff - 3; clients - 22 & others - 65.

Data Protection

Clare County Council processes personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Acts, 1988 to 2018. There are extensive obligations on data controllers like the Council, and strengthened protections and rights for data subjects. During 2024, the data protection officer (DPO) of the Council provided advice, guidance and support across the organization in relation to GDPR and the Law Enforcement Directive (transposed into Irish law by Part 5 of the 2018 Act). The DPO provided training to increase understanding and to assist sections of the Council to meet their specific obligations.

Data requests are also handled through the DPO. In 2024, there were 42 data access requests made under the Data Protection Act/GDPR for personal data held by the Council, comprising of 29 third party access requests and 13 data subject access requests.

Records Management

In 2024, the Record Management Unit continued to archive large volume of records which are required to be retained under the National Retention Policy for Local Authority Records. In addition, records were disposed of in accordance with the National Retention Policy for Local Authority Records. The ADLIB Records Management database system is used to record all files which are archived and disposed.

Archival records are stored at both Quin Road Record Management facility and Beechpark depot.

Records management has collected all Chief Executive Orders, County Council minute books and registers of electors that will be bound and subsequently archived, thus ensuring vital records are permanently and securely preserved.

Carbon Emissions

Report for calendar year 2024 under Public Sector Climate Action Mandate in CAP24 on Compliance with Circular 1/2020:

Total KMs travelled via flights:	172.475
Tonnes of CO2 applicable:	12.7824
Amount remitted to Climate Action Fund, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications for 2024:	€715.81

Motor Taxation

The Motor Tax section has responsibility for dealing with motor tax applications for vehicles registered with addresses in County Clare. All motor tax receipts are remitted on a daily basis to the central exchequer. €4.95m was received by Clare Motor Tax Office for the period January to December 2024. The online motor tax system is managed by the Department of Transport and, in 2024, 82.81% of Clare transactions were online.



De Valera Library

Cultural services (Library, Arts, Museum and Archives)

Library Service

One of the major highlights of 2024 was the opening of the new De Valera public library and Súl art gallery which was officially opened by an Taoiseach, Simon Harris on 15th November. To end of December - those joining up as new members have more than doubled and there is increased footfall in all age categories. In November there were 19,107 visits compared to 5,692 to the old branch the previous month with 12,823 items issued to the public compared to 7,108. Registered members joining rose from 624 in October to 1,696 in November alone. Of particular note, is the use being made of the new facility by those with accessibility issues, students in all age groups with high demand for study spaces coming from those in 3rd level education. Saturdays are particularly busy with families and small children in attendance. The additional footfall has also benefitted glór, in particular, the café which is reporting increased business due to the

co-location of the two buildings beside one another.



An Taoiseach Simon Harris opening new De Valera Library in November 2024

The annual bookfund provides for the purchase of stock - 24,406 physical items and 23,728 electronic resources were added to stock consisting of latest publications and back stocking in areas in need of special attention. The following titles were the most popular in 2024.

Adult Fiction	Resurrection Walk	Connelly, Michael, 1956-	103
	Our little cruelties	Nugent, Liz	84
	The secret hours	Herron, Mick	79
Adult Non-Fiction	Emotional resilience: how to safeguard your mental health	Barry, Harry	55
	Body on fire: how inflammation triggers chronic illness and the tools we have to fight it	Aggarwal, Monica	39
	Good inside: a practical guide to becoming the parent you want to be	Kennedy, Becky	35
Child	Tom Crean - Ice Man: the adventures of an Irish Antarctic hero	Smith, Michael	132
	The Twits	Dahl, Roald	131
	Under The Hawthorn Tree	Conlon-McKenna, Marita	122
			385

Marketing, outreach & events Clare Libraries

Clare Libraries published eight media releases in 2024 and they were included in the Clare Champion, Clare Echo & Clare Herald covering topics such as the “Ireland reads” day in February, Seachtain na Gaeilge in March and the opening of the new library in November. Clare Libraries attended 4 outreach events including a Parent Wellness event in Shannon, Ennis Active retired, the Age Friendly Expo and Clare Pride. There was an increase in Clare Libraries Facebook followers in 2024 of 770. Instagram grew from 2,101 followers to 2,469 followers. The number of followers on X remained the same. Clare Libraries invested in paid marketing on three occasions, promoting library services, and specific events. Clare Libraries also gave two interviews on Clare FM in 2024. Clare Libraries distributed marketing material throughout the library network, and Council offices as well as outside organisations. Clare Libraries published three newsletters and two ebulletins which were distributed in print and via Mailerlite.

No of events	Audience Numbers	Class Novels - Sets Issued	Home deliveries
2,681	35,513	201	81

Grants

Clare Libraries service received two grants, Dormant Accounts funding provided for accessible furniture and other resources, Healthy Ireland grant aid was used for programming events.

Right to Read



Summer Stars event - chess in Kilkee Library

The promotion of literacy is paramount to the work of the library service both locally and nationally.

The Clare Right to Read network met three times during 2024. Collaborative initiatives included facilitating “My Baby and Me” classes and Smartphone Classes in branches, cross sector promotion of services, and the lending of audio-visual equipment to Clare Youth Service for their media studies course. Clare Libraries partnered with the LCETB and Limerick City and County Libraries in a project called “Library Literacy Champions” which was funded by the ALL Collaboration and Innovation Fund. A total of 11 library staff from each library authority received training in plain English, literacy awareness and introduction to literacy and ESOL services provided by the LCETB. The “My Little Library” campaign ran from June to December. Children aged between 4 and 6 years were invited to collect a Little Library bag containing a book and a card wallet and registered for library membership.

The four main children’s programmes ran throughout the year - Spring Into Storytime, Summer Stars, Children’s Book Festival and Family Time at your Library.

Children’s Services

Teen Week was held in March and was hosted by Kilkee and Kilrush libraries. Events included “Fighting Words” workshops, author talks and workshops in comic book drawing and writing.

Ennistymon Library hosted the “Whole Wide Bus Tour” in April. The bus tour was an initiative of the Laureate na nÓg Patricia Forde, who toured Ireland with a selection of Irish authors and illustrators to give talks and workshops to children in libraries and schools. Clare Libraries were also awarded a grant by Foras na Gaeilge to run two 6-week comic book writing workshops in Irish. The workshops ran in Shannon and Ennis libraries.

Healthy Ireland at your library

A total of 33 Healthy Ireland at your library

(HIAYL) events were delivered throughout the library branch network in 2024 with an overall attendance of 571 people. Four online chair yoga classes were delivered to 79 participants, which included residents from nursing homes, day care centres, together with individuals throughout the county. Two wellness events for parents, carers and guardians were facilitated in Kilrush and Ennistymon libraries in partnership with Tusla, Clarecare and the Family Resource Centres with 115 people attending. Deirdre Doyle from the “Cool Food School”, visited 3 libraries, worked with 63 children and showed them how to make simple healthy treats, which were much enjoyed by all.

Creative Ireland



Crafting, Birds of a Feather

It was a productive 2024 for Creative Ireland Clare with the recruitment of the Creative Communities Engagement Officer, dedicated to managing the Creative Communities project awards, Cruinniú na nÓg and the Shared Island project ‘Birds of a Feather’. In 2024 Creative Ireland Clare invested over €307,000 in 158 projects and engaged with 66,937 members of the community and beyond. Highlights included a visit to Inishbofin Island for ‘Birds of a Feather’ gathering, where women from Ennis, East Belfast and Ballinasloe spent 3 days crafting, building friendships and story sharing, with a 3-page article featured in the Irish Times Magazine detailing the visit,

written by Deirdre Falvey. Another highlight was an intergenerational Climate Action Workshop, bringing together participants from Clare's Older People's Council and Clare Youth Service, demonstrating the positive nature of cross departmental collaboration. Finally, the creation of 'U Create - a creative concept for Cruinniú na nÓg 2025 for seldom heard voices' was initiated.

Local Studies

Furniture, equipment, and 26,000 items from the old Local Studies building were moved to a new repository. Local Studies assumed management of the Archives service. The Local Studies Librarian conducted a number of outreach activities, including presentations in Ennis, Newmarket, Sixmilebridge and Ennistymon. Exhibitions commemorating 125 years of Local Government in Ennis and the diaries of women in Clare in the 19th and 20th centuries in Sixmilebridge were produced. The staff also created several online presentations, one of which, on the Ordnance Survey in Clare, received 800+ views. Several scanning projects, such as the rate books for several parishes have been completed and transcription projects continue. This includes 1821 census returns, 1825 Freeholders' lists, and addendums to memorial inscriptions from the Church of Ireland graveyard in Kilrush, and Clare-born soldiers in the U.S. Civil War. The Dunboyne Clippings collection - Births, marriages, and deaths have been completed. A number of Acquisitions for 2024 were made including the personal library of Paddy Hogan TD, and the Power Family Collection of Clarecastle.

History Programme 2024

Decade of Centenaries funding of €15,000 was received from the Dept of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media for the support of local history scholarship and commemorations. This funding was used to

appoint a Historian in Residence, Terry Dunne, to curate History Week in October. Terry gave two branch library lectures, recorded an online talk and co-ordinated the programme. Eleven historians participated in History Week and there were 3,000 views of History Week videos on Clare Libraries Youtube and several physical branch lectures were also held this year.

Arts

Arts Council supported programmes in 2024 included The Arts & Education programme which delivered arts projects with 10 artists in 18 primary schools. Clare Youth Theatre resumed with a membership of 38 young people. Music Generation Clare had their most successful year countywide.

The Embrace Arts and Disability Programme delivered 18 arts projects in disability settings with 12 artists countywide. Working with Mayo and Galway City Arts Offices the Levelling Access Arts and Disability Report was produced and a disability arts bursary was awarded to Graham Bulger, musician. The Shannon Creative Places Research and Development Award concluded with projects taking place with the Family Resource Centre, Brothers of Charity, Youth Services in Shannon as well as the Clare Mela which attracted almost 2,000 people to the Town Park. Culture Night in September saw 39 events attended by 2,500 people in 17 locations. A total of 36 exhibitions took place and the new Súil Gallery opened in November. The annual Riches of Clare Concerts took place in Kilfenora, Feakle and glór with 16 sessions. Arts and Health projects continued in hospitals and day care centres countywide and the Bealtaine Choirs free open air concert featured 6 choirs from the county performing at the Courthouse Ennis to hundreds of people. Artist studios operated at 90% capacity with significant demand for more spaces. A total of 95 grants

for artists, communities and festivals were approved through the Community Supports Scheme. Street Art was commissioned in Ennis, Lahinch, Liscannor, Ennistymon, Killaloe and Tuamgraney. Assistance was provided to 26 film projects in 2024 and Bi-weekly media slots continued with Clare FM and the professional development scheme for artists supported 7 individual artists

Museum



Ballycar Sliothar

The Museum collection has 4,456 items catalogued with 178 new items added to the museum database during the year. The year has been characterised by an increase in museum activities due to the appointment of an Education Officer. Monthly public lectures for adult learners were held in every month throughout the year. There was outreach activity to Cloughleigh, Killaloe, Scariff, Ennistymon and Miltown Malbay, a further 40 objects were added to the photographic archive on the museum website, along with ten blog entries, while 230 posts were made to Facebook. The curator also featured objects from the collection on RTEs 'Today' show, including Kathleen Griffin's Autograph Book, a dress from the Clare Embroidery Collection and the Uniform of the Deputy Lieutenant of Clare. The number of followers on the Clare Museum Facebook page is now over 1,500, an increase of about 200 in a year. There

was a temporary exhibition on the Liverpool Ceili Band that ran all summer, and the total number of visitors for the year was 24,317, up from 22,062 in 2023.

Archives

The Archives Service in 2024 continued to provide access to its collections involving general archival queries, the most popular being access to Poor Law Union/Board of Guardians records. Archives have continued the digitisation project scanning all recent accessions including roll books and private material. Donations were received throughout the year including significant collections of roll books from Knockanean NS and schools in the Crusheen area dating back to 1840. Material continues to be uploaded to the Digital Repository of Ireland including the Scariff Board of Guardians (1921) and Ennistymon Board of Guardians (1839-1924) and the Corporation Book of Ennis (1660-1810). The Barrett Collection continues to be processed to both file and item level.

glór

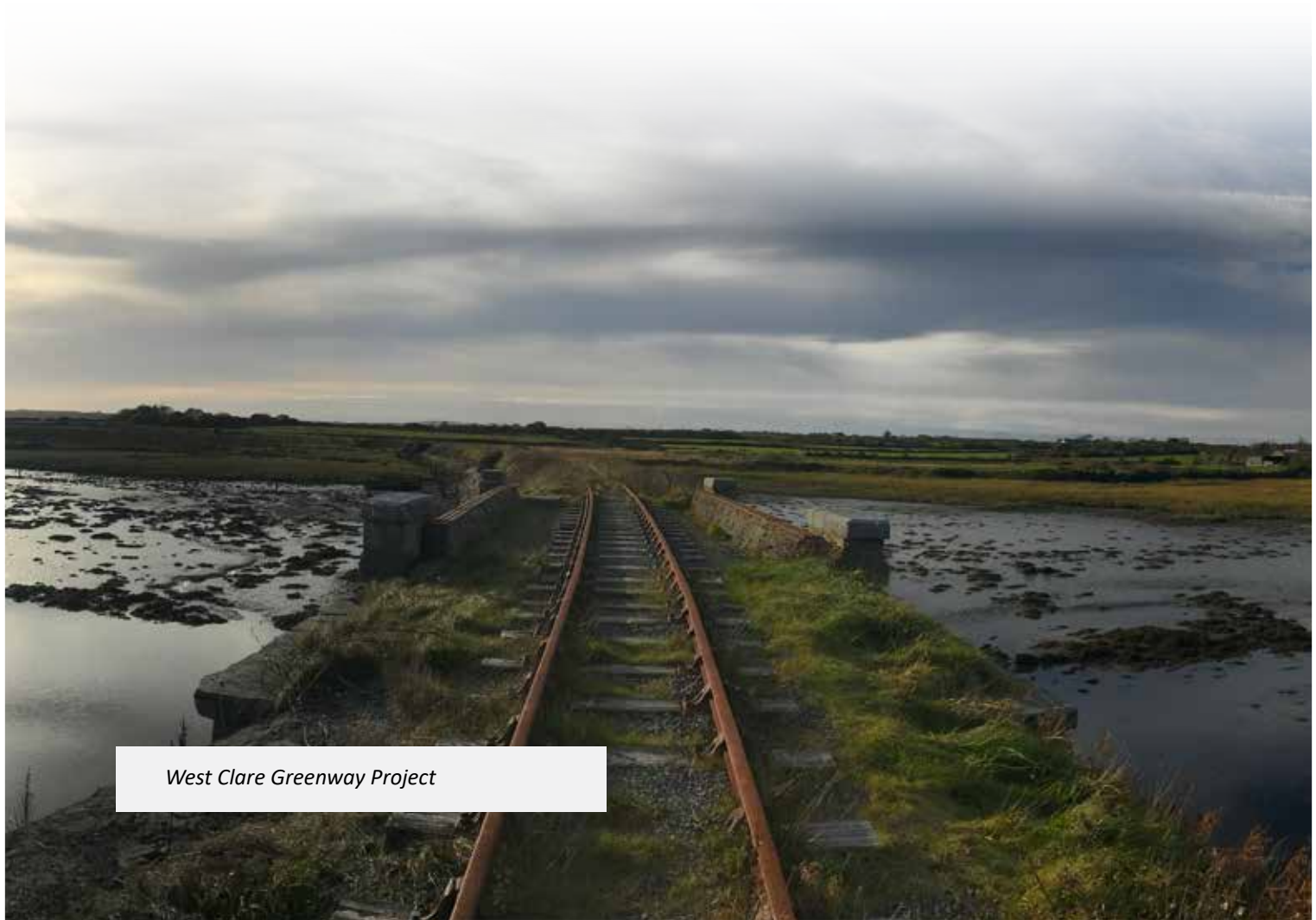
2024 saw an increase in both activities and audiences at glór. A total of 718 individual events and activities were presented and hosted over the course of the year, a 16% increase on 2023. The range of activities engaged a total audience of over 86,000s, representing a 25% increase in attendees and participants when compared to the previous year. Of note, the number of opportunities for the community to explore their own creativity increased by 58% resulting in an increase in individuals' participation of 236%. As the impetus for glór's foundation, the traditional arts remain an integral component of focus, and 47 different traditional arts performances presented across the year in that genre alongside a vibrant participation programme within that genre also.

glór were delighted to host, partner with, and

provide support to a range of local festivals over the course of the year including; Ennis Book Club Festival, Fleadh Nua, Ennis Trad Festival. glór also continued to provide a home to a wide range of local community and creative groups including Clare Youth Theatre, Music Generation Clare, QuareClare, Inis Creative Writers, Ennis Musical Society, Ennis Players, The Ennis Panto and many more. A range of

supports were offered to artists throughout the year with a focus particularly on Clare's local creative community, including Artist to Artist mentoring, Creative Circles and a range of showcase programmes and own productions which highlighted the depth of artistry in the region.





West Clare Greenway Project



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



ALAN FARRELL
Director of Physical Development

Roads and Transportation Department

Roads and Transportation co-ordinate the design, maintenance and improvement of the national, regional and local road network throughout the county and also has responsibility for road safety, public lighting, hedgecutting, parking management, active travel, insurances, health & safety and arterial drainage.

Schedule of Municipal District works 2024

The 2024 Schedule of Municipal Districts Works provided for a Roadworks Programme which had a total fund of €55.5m. This Programme was completed and all approved allocations drawn from the TII, DoT and NTA respectively.

Listed hereunder are a number of the highlights/works that took place:-

- Strengthening/surface dressing of more than 239km of the road network.
- Continuation of enhanced bridge remediation programme. Works were carried out on 19 bridges in 2024.
- Completion of 12 Safety Improvement schemes.

Public lighting

Clare County Council has responsibility for the operation and maintenance of approximately 15,200 public lights throughout the county. The Council engaged a new contractor in 2024 with the appointment of Electric Skyline as its maintenance contractor in October. The Council continues to engage with Electric Skyline and ESB Networks in the replacement

of lighting units that reach end of life with replacement of more energy efficient LED lighting. Necessary requirements to meet ESB Networks standard requirements for public lighting infrastructure necessitate additional civil works and cable replacement at some locations and this can lead to extended repair times. Given that Public Lighting is the most significant consumer of energy across the Local Authority, gains in energy efficiency in the public lighting sector is hugely welcomed in meeting targets under the Clare Climate Action Plan. A significant reduction in energy consumption has been achieved in recent years in excess of 25%, with in excess of 80% of all public lighting across the county now comprising of LED lighting.

Clare County Council continues its participation in Region 1 of the Local Authority Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP). The contract for the region was tendered in Autumn of 2020 and the Design Build Works Contract was signed with Le Cheile Consortium in late December 2021. Retrofitting under the PLEEP Project commenced in Clare in October 2024 and shall continue into late 2025. The retrofit of these lights will significantly reduce the level of carbon emissions attributed to the public lighting assets in Clare County Council.

Active Travel 2024

In 2024 Clare County Council received an allocation of €3.22m for 12 projects under the National Transport Authority's (NTA) Active Travel Programme.

Detailed design work on the Tulla Road cycling scheme was completed. Preliminary Design Work was progressed for both the Limerick Road Cycling Scheme and Ardnacrusha to Athlunkard Bridge Active Travel Scheme.

A variety of other projects were undertaken in 2024, including Safer Routes to School Schemes at Clonmoney, Holy Family and Ennis National Schools, Junction Tightening and Improvements at a number of locations

around Ennis and a number of permeability links and pedestrian crossing points around the County.

Other Roads activities

Community Hedgecutting Grant

Clare County Council provided €24,000 to continue the Community Hedgecutting Grant Scheme in 2024 and 42 grants were approved. This initiative is facilitating greater awareness among landowners of their responsibilities in relation to the management of roadside hedges on their properties.

Community Involvement Scheme

An allocation of €594,000 under the Community Involvement Scheme in 2024 facilitated work being carried out to 7 public roads throughout the county.

Local Improvement Scheme

Clare County Council was allocated total grant funding of €1,209,821 for Local Improvement Schemes from the Department of Rural and Community Development in 2024. The grant funding facilitated the approval and completion of LIS works to 20 non public roads in 2024.

Traffic Management

The Council has responsibility for the management and enforcement of traffic throughout the county. Parking bye-laws and pay and display facilities are in operation in Ennis, Kilrush, Kilkee, Lahinch and Doolin.

Roads Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators for 2024 are set out below;

R1 % of roads that received a PSCI condition rating

Description	%
% of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating in 24 months prior to 31/12/2024	97%
% of Local Secondary road that received a PSCI rating in 24 months prior to 31/12/2024	98%
% of Local Tertiary road that received a PSCI rating in 24 months prior to 31/12/2024	91%

R1 B % of roads represented by PSCI condition rating

Road Type	1-4 Rating	5-6 Rating	7-8 Rating	9-10 Rating
Local Primary	2.5%	20.5%	54%	20%
Local Secondary	8%	24.5%	49.5%	16%
Local Tertiary	29%	23%	30%	9%

R2 Regional Road Works

Km of Regional road strengthened during 2024	12.16km
Amount expended on Regional road strengthening during 2024	€4,554,622
Km of Regional road resealed during 2024	17.90km
Amount expended on Regional road resealing during 2024	€664,566

R2 Local Road Works

Km of Local road strengthened during 2024	91.72km
Amount expended on Local road strengthening during 2024	€11,352,407
Km of Local road resealed during 2024	123.28km
Amount expended on Local road resealing during 2024	€2,727,339

Health & Safety

In 2024 a key H&S Objective for Clare County Council was a continued focus on digitalisation of elements of the Occupational Health & Safety Management System in order to improve efficiency, effectiveness and minimise paperwork through utilisation of the following tools;

- ProWorks/ArcGis
- Meta Compliance
- Online E-learning Modules

This was achieved by issuing additional handheld devices for using the ProWorks software, delivering internal training in its use in order to enable staff in the MDs select routine Traffic Management Plans, complete Safe System of Work Plans and access utility drawings on site in an electronic format, thus enhancing their effectiveness, efficiency and minimising paperwork on site. Meta Compliance and online E-Learning Modules were used to deliver H&S Training to indoor staff in key risk areas.

Another Key Objective established by Clare County Council was to expand the scope of the ISO 45001 accreditation commencing with the Physical Development Directorate which included Transportation and Shannon Municipal District including Roads.

This was achieved by the establishment of a steering group at senior team level by the Director of Service to co-ordinate the extension of the ISO 45001 Accreditation.

The Steering Group identified ISO 45001 co-ordinators at department Level, formed operational teams and ISO 45001 awareness training was provided to the co-ordinators.

The ISO 45001 co-ordinators, supported by the operational teams, closed out observations/ compliance gaps identified during the gap analysis and internal safety audit.

The external NSAI audit took place in November 2024 and the Physical Development Directorate was successful in its accreditation to the ISO 45001 Standard on Occupational Health and Safety.

Physical Development SPC

The Physical Development Strategic Policy Committee held 3 meetings in 2024. This Committee has a membership of 11, comprising of 6 Elected Members and representatives from the following sectors:-

- Agriculture/Farming,
- Environment/Conservation
- Development/Construction
- Community/Voluntary
- Social Inclusion

The Chairperson as the SPC is Cllr. Pat Burke.

Issues discussed by the SPC in 2024 included the following:

- Climate Action Plan
- Roadworks Programme

- Fire & Building Control Department
- Deposit Return Scheme
- Clare Greenway Projects
- Draft Noise Action Plan
- North Clare Integrated Transport & Traffic Plan
- Lifeguard Innovation Project

Project Management Office

National and Non-National Roads Projects

N19 Shannon Airport Access Road

Work continued throughout the year with the design and evolution of the plans for the N19 Shannon Airport Access Road Improvement Scheme. The design team continue to work towards the finalisation of the statutory documentation required as part of the proposed planning application for submission to An Bord Pleanála in 2025.

N67/ N85 Ennistymon Inner Relief (Blake's Corner)

Following An Bord Pleanála's confirmation of the CPO for the N67/ N85 Ennistymon Inner Relief (Blake's Corner) project in late 2022, the decision was subsequently challenged in the High Court. The Judicial Review process was ongoing throughout 2023 and 2024 and the awaited outcome will determine the next steps in the delivery of this critical infrastructure.

Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing & R494 Road Improvement Scheme

The contract for the Killaloe Bypass, New Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Upgrade Project was awarded in February 2022 with construction work commencing on site in August 2022.

Significant progression of the works was achieved by the Main Works Contractor, John



Sisk & Sons Ltd., with the Killaloe Bypass element of the works opened to traffic in December 2024. It is anticipated that the entire project will be complete by mid-2025.



Ennis Public Realm Regeneration Project B

This, the second phase of the Ennis Public Realm Regeneration Project, represents a significant investment by Clare County Council and central government to enhance accessibility for all and to encourage continued and future investment. Under the €11.6m scheme, the streets (O'Connell Street, High Street and Bank Place) will become more accessible by replacing conventional streetscapes with shared surface pavements. Squares and civic spaces (O'Connell Square, Barrack Square, Cathedral) will be transformed

through the delivery of expanded plazas incorporating urban planting, street trees, an interactive public fountain, and provision for performance/event spaces at the Height and at Barrack Square. Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street will be developed as a 'café quarter' which will deliver a higher-quality civic space encouraging people to meet, relax and avail of local retail.

Additionally, the contract includes extensive refurbishment of the combined sewer on behalf of Uisce Éireann (Irish Water), representing a further €2m investment in the town's infrastructure. We are delighted that these additional works, paid for by Uisce Éireann, can be accommodated as they will resolve longstanding legacy issues with the sewer as well as future proofing capacity in the town for many years to come.

The project's advancement to construction stage has followed years of extensive planning and consultation with the business community, residents, public and elected members. The ongoing works, which are scheduled to be completed in late 2025, follow the successful delivery of significant public realm enhancements at Parnell Street, and town laneways and bow-ways in 2020 and 2021.

Greenway Projects

In 2024, work continued at pace on the West Clare Railway Greenway Project.

- **Section 1 (Kilrush to Kilkee):** The 'Emerging Preferred Route Corridor' was published. Individual landowner negotiations were progressed and are ongoing in advance of submission to An Bord Pleanála.
- **Section 2 (Ennis to Ennistymon):** Work progressed throughout 2024 on developing the 'Emerging Preferred Route Corridor,' with publication expected in later in 2025.
- **Sections 3 & 4 (Ennistymon to Miltown Malbay to Moyasta):** The 'Study Area' was published in 2024, and work is progressing on the 'Route Options' which is due for publication early 2025.



Other Greenway proposals being worked on in 2024 included the Limerick to Scarriff Greenway project in conjunction with Waterways Ireland, as well as a smaller proposal in the Shannon area which will feed into a larger scheme between Ennis, Shannon and Limerick

Flood Relief Schemes

Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme is currently at Stage 2 Planning. An application for approval for the development has been made to An Bord Pleanála under 177AE of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended. We hope to move to Stage III Detailed Design & Tender in 2026 subject to approval from An

Bord Pleanála.

Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme is currently in the latter stages of Options Assessment, Scheme Development & Design. It is scheduled to move into Stage 2 (Planning) in Q4 2025.

Other projects being worked on by the PMO throughout 2025 include the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) Road and Housing proposal in Claureen, Doolin Pier Visitor Services Building, as well as various coastal erosion and minor works schemes.

General Design Office

The GDO has continued to deliver many small to medium projects on behalf of various sections in 2024.



Scarriff Rural Regeneration Project - Phase 1



Cliffs of Moher Walkways



Bellevue House

Environment Section

The Environment Section has responsibility for a diverse range of activities including waste enforcement, waste management, environmental awareness, gardening, scientific services (laboratory, water, air, noise), veterinary services and Blue Flag beaches. The 2024 work programme was largely driven by an extensive regulatory framework.

Beaches and amenities

The Environment Section monitors 14 bathing areas and has 8 Blue Flags and 5 Green Coast Awards, all checked for compliance with 193 water samples taken during the season. All bathing areas monitored achieved “excellent” quality status. Beaches and related activity are covered by our Beach Bye-laws which were revised and adopted in June 2021. In total, 52 lifeguards provided services on Clare’s beaches for the extremely busy summer season 2024.



Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental inspections (RMCEI)

Across all Environment thematic areas, Clare County Council undertook 5,699 routine and 1,725 non-routine inspections. The Waste Enforcement team received and investigated 1,031 complaints relating to litter and waste. A total of 100 litter fines and fixed payment notices were issued. In addition, Clare County Council served 214 legal notices for breaches of litter and waste legislation. In

total, 252 letters were issued under the Waste Management bye-laws. The Council continues to avail of Anti- Dumping Initiative funding to combat illegal dumping. We have investigated 193 complaints relating to water, air and noise pollution. To check environmental compliance and to protect water quality, 119 inspections were carried out at licensed facilities. In addition, 145 domestic wastewater treatment systems were inspected. The Environment section also received and reported on 632 planning applications. All the above aims to ensure protection of our local environment.

Waste management and licenced landfills

The waste management section provides five recycling centres, three of these are also waste transfer stations and we provide 54 bring banks sites countywide (including seasonal). The Central Waste Management Facility (CWMF) landfill, Doora Landfill and Lisdeen Landfill continued to be monitored in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) waste licence requirements.

Historic Landfills

To date the Council has 1 approved Certificate of Authorisation for a closed historic landfill in and 1 draft Certificate of Authorisation from the Environmental Protection Agency. Progress on funding applications has been made and works including monitoring is ongoing at several designated historic landfills. The relevant regulation is the Waste Management (Certification of Historic Unlicensed Waste Disposal and Recovery Activity) Regulations, 2008.

Water Framework Direction and the River Basin Management Plan

A total of 50 river and 19 lake sites were monitored in compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency monitoring programme. The Council continues to

collaborate with the Local Authority Waters Programme and a series of productive meetings were held throughout the year to develop a plan to the advance Water Action Plan 2024.

Water/wastewater services

During the year, 71 private supplies (public Group Water Schemes, private Group Water Schemes and private commercial supplies) were monitored and achieved a compliance rate over 97.1% across the various parameters measured. We also carried out an audit of 1 private water supply scheme in 2024. In addition, 30 Environment Protection Agency licensed or certified municipal Uisce Éireann plants were monitored.

Education and awareness

Through the Environment section's Greener Clare programme, the following initiatives continued to be supported during 2024 - National Spring Clean, An Taisce Green Schools, Clean Coasts, Blue Flag Beach Programme, National Spring Clean, Gum Litter Taskforce, MyWaste.ie. Leave No Trace, Circular Economy Academy, National Food Waste Recycling Week 2024. Awareness raising campaigns developed during 2024 included the promotion of Sustainable Development Goals, cigarette butt litter, Greener Christmas, Invasive Alien Species. Funding received through the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) Anti-Dumping Initiative and Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Grant Scheme supported the promotion of various anti-littering messages including, the use of unauthorised waste collector, dog owner responsibility, household waste byelaws, illegal dumping, waste prevention, littering including cigarette butt littering. Events / initiatives by the Water Community Office were also promoted as well as the DECC Clean Air Campaigns.

Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), dog and horse control.

Clare County Council is an official agent of the FSAI. In 2024, a total of 3,192 beef animals and 25,087 sheep were slaughtered in County Clare plants overseen by our veterinary inspector. In total, 237 stray dogs were picked up and 182 dogs were surrendered, while 39 dogs were seized by the Dog Warden. In addition, 74 dogs were reclaimed by their owners, 158 rehomed and 217 rehomed in consultation with the Dogs Trust and other rescue groups. 3,012 Dog Licences were issued during 2024. 16 straying horses were seized in 2024, 13 were reclaimed by their owners.

Gardening section

The Gardening section continued to maintain high standards in ensuring the attractiveness of our towns and villages and worked closely with community groups on landscaping matters. The All-Ireland Pollinator policy action items were implemented with increased pollinator friendly species and perennial flowers being planted. The Áras continued to implement the "No Mow May" initiative and was a hub for biodiversity and wildlife.



The Gardening Team continued to enhance public spaces throughout Ennis and the Market Sq roundabout was a particularly well developed space using pollinator friendly perennial planting scheme. In addition the team was instrumental in assisting Ennis MD over the Christmas period in providing the

suitably themed “gift wrapped” planters as part of the public realm works.

Shannon Estuary Anti-Pollution Team

The Shannon Estuary Anti-Pollution Team (SEA-PT) comprises of Local Authorities, the Shannon Foynes Port Company, and other organisations who operate in the vicinity of the Estuary. Each year an exercise involving a simulated pollution incident is held to test the response capabilities of SEA-PT members. Clare County Council was the host for 2024. The 2-day event on the 17th and 18th April was attended by 99 people, covering 16 Local Authorities, relevant organisations along the Estuary and appropriate state agencies.



Fire & Building Control

Capital/Procurement

A New Class B Fire Appliance was completed and delivered to County Clare in November 2024 at a cost of €549,041. The appliance is now operational in Ennis Fire Station. Approval was granted for a Scorpion Class B Fire Appliance at a cost of €974,160 which is currently in build and will be based at Kilrush Fire Station. 2 new vans were delivered and went operational at Killaloe & Kilrush Fire Brigades in early Summer 2024 at a cost of €168,000. Refurbishment of an Emergency Tender for Ennis Fire Station is ongoing at a cost of €349,935, expected delivery date of Summer 2025.

A new 2 Bay Storage Facility was completed in June 2024 at Kilrush Fire Station along with general upgrade works of the existing Fire Station. The works included the installation of PV panels and rain harvesting tanks at a cost of €450,000.

Recruitment & Retention

In 2023, the WRC made recommendations surrounding the Terms and Conditions of Retained Fire-fighters and the recommended staffing levels in stations. Clare County Council continue to implement the recommendations which included an increase in the number of retained Fire-fighter posts in the Brigade from 78 to 90 personnel. Significant progress has been made in increasing numbers through continual recruitment drives, open days at the stations and social media.

Fire Service Operations

The Fire Service attended 1,306 call-outs in 2024 resulting in a increase of 28.16% on the number for 2023. Chimney Fire Callouts decreased by 19% from 62 in 2023 to 52 in 2024. There was a 11% increase in Domestic Fires from 40 in 2023 to 45 in 2024.

Health & Safety

In 2024, Clare County Fire & Rescue Service retained accreditation to the ISO 45001 Health & Safety Management System Standard for the implementation of their Safety Management System throughout the Service following an audit by the National Standards Authority Ireland.

Fire Prevention

A total of 126 Fire Safety Certificate Applications were received in 2024, an increase of 26% on the 2023 figure of 100. Fire Prevention Officers carried out 101 inspections and they assessed 69 Licence applications, these apply to pubs, hotels, community centres and theatres throughout the county.

National Fire Safety Week took place from 30th September to 6th October. Clare County Fire & Rescue Service have an ongoing campaign which involved Firefighters visiting the homes of older people and carrying out 'Home Fire Safety Checks', this includes supplying and fitting smoke alarms if required. In 2024 smoke alarms for the hard of hearing were also made available.

Building Control

A total of 1,198 buildings were notified through the BCMS in 2024, this represented a 67% increase on the number of notified buildings in 2023. 66 buildings were inspected by Building Control staff in 2024. A total of 68 Disability Access Certificate applications were assessed by the Building Control Section in 2024, a 21% increase in applications received in 2023.

Major Emergency Management

In 2024, Clare County Council personnel were provided with training for the following roles - Information Management and On-Site Co-ordination. The training was provided at a Regional Level with Tipperary County Council, Limerick City & County Council, HSE West and An Garda Síochána

Clare County Council participated in the Emergency Management Exercises in 2024 at:

- Shannon Airport
- Limerick Tunnel.

Dangerous Structures

Building Control staff dealt with 18 Dangerous Structure complaints in 2024, this was a significant increase on the 7 Dangerous Structure complaints received in 2023.

Fire & Building Control Performance Indicators		2024
F1	Cost per Capita	€63.96
F2-B	Average time taken, in minutes to mobilise Fire Brigades in Part-Time Stations in respect of Fires	5.10 min
F2-D	Average time taken, in minutes to mobilise Fire Brigades in Part-Time Stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents	4.95 min
F3-A	% of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	36.29%
F3-B	% of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	45.71%
F3-C	% of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	18.01%
F3-D	% of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	28.84%
F3-E	% of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	45.77%
F3-F	% of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	25.40%
P5-A	% of applications for fire safety certs that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt	53.25%
P5-B	% of applications for fire safety certs that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant	41.56%
P1	Buildings Inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority	5.5%



Handover of new Class B Fire Appliance at Ennis Fire Station

Expectations for 2025

Capital projects that we intend to progress include buildings, fleet and equipment.

Approval has been granted for capital grant aid funding for professional services to carry out significant redevelopment works at Ennis Fire Station, it is expected to have the lead consultants in place in 2025

Work ongoing on two other vehicle projects, Scorpion Class B Fire Appliance and the refurbishment of the Fire Service's Incident Command Unit in 2025, with expected delivery in early 2026.

Other projects being progressed in 2025 include the preparation of a grant aid request for funding for Battery Operated Hydraulic Rescue Equipment.

It is intended to retain accreditation to OHSAS 45001 as part of Clare County Council's Health & Safety Management System.

It is planned that there will continue to be a substantial fire safety awareness campaign which will include a media campaign. The "Home Fire Safety Checks" by the Fire Service will continue to target specific vulnerable groups in 2025 with the installation of smoke detectors and provision of fire safety advice.



Fire Service Transportation Course at Central Fire Station in March 2024

Civil Defence

In 2024 Clare Civil Defence Volunteers continued to support their communities during all different types of events. The Junior Tour of Ireland, 24-hour Relay for Life, Little Blue Heroes charity cycle and Munster Senior Hurling Championship games were just some of the many events that Volunteers provided support for.

Civil Defence Volunteers assisted An Garda Síochána with 24 separate missing persons search operations, this was a significant increase on 2023 missing person search operations. Volunteers continue to use Drone Technology as a pivotal part of these search operations, this technology has proven to enhance the effectiveness of the response and safety of volunteers when assisting in these types of operations. In July of 2024 Clare Civil Defence with the assistance of Clare County Council and the Civil Defence Branch of the Department of Defence were able to secure grant funding to purchase a new state of the art Drone which is purpose built for Search & Rescue.

Training for Volunteers continues at the Clare Civil Defence Headquarters, Quin Road, Ennis, with an average of 50 volunteers receiving training every week across the various disciplines within Civil Defence. In 2024, training commenced for sixteen new Volunteers who were enrolled in the Recruits Basic Training (RBT) program which provides the minimum training standard set out by the Civil Defence Branch of the Department of Defence. Three Volunteers completed the Powerboat Level 2 course and joined the Boating Team within the Unit. Five Volunteers have completed A1 & A2 Drone Operator training with the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA). This will further enhance Drone Operations within Civil Defence.

Clare Civil Defence with assistance from the Clare County Council Health & Safety team achieved the ISO:45001 accreditation under the Physical Directorate in late 2024. Clare Civil Defence is only the second Civil Defence unit in the country to achieve this award.

2024 saw the rollout of the new Civil Defence uniform to all units around the country. This modern uniform, welcomed by both Volunteers and Officers, is more practical as well as comfortable, progressive and suitable for the roles that Civil Defence provide to the community.

Clare Civil Defence hosted the first regional competition in over 6 years. The competition (Exercise Mike Whiskey) had teams from Limerick and Galway travelling to Clare to participate. There were 3 sites in the morning covering all disciplines and a Foot Drill competition and teambuilding in the afternoon, followed by dinner in the West County.

It was with the greatest sadness in August 2024 that we learned of the passing of our colleague and friend 3rd Officer Mr. John Cuddihy. John was a true friend to all of us here at Clare Civil Defence, his big smile and even bigger laugh has left memories that will last a lifetime. Earlier in 2024, John received his 20-year service award with Clare Civil Defence, a remarkable achievement and one we know he was extremely proud of.

Civil Defence Volunteers continue to provide unwavering support to their communities through their work with Clare Civil Defence, some of which can be difficult and challenging at times. It is important to highlight, in particular, the core group of senior staff / volunteers who without them this work simply can't happen. The knowledge and experience they pass on to the newer volunteers every week during training cannot be measured.



End of year picture with volunteers in the new uniform



Volunteers carrying 3rd Officer John Cuddihy to his final resting place



Volunteers during medical training night



Volunteers taking part in the regional exercise

Climate Action

The Climate action team within Clare County Council play a crucial role in advancing climate policy at the local level. The team's objectives include developing and implementing Local Authority Climate Action Plans (LACAPs) that align with national climate objectives.

The Community Climate Action Officer commenced in February 2024 taking over the management and roll out of the Community Climate Action Programme. All roles are fully funded by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. The Climate Team were initially tasked with the successful development and publication of the Climate Action Plan and supporting the implementation of same over the coming years. The Climate Action Plan is the pathway forward for Clare County Council in realising their own Climate targets but also enabling and supporting communities going forward towards achieving their Climate goals.

Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Plan reached its final development stages and was adopted at the February 12th full council meeting. Clare County Council's Climate section proceeded through the various stages of development in collaboration with all stakeholders including elected members, SPCs, the council executive, partners and communities. The Plan charts a course towards the 51% reduction of greenhouses gas emissions by 2030 within Clare County Council, an increase in Energy efficiency to 50% by 2030 and supporting Climate Action across County Clare's various sectors.

The public consultation process concluded with the development of a comprehensive Chief Executive's report detailing any alterations to the Draft Plan. The total number of submissions on the Draft Plan received

was 148 which indicates a significant level of interest by the communities and partners across the county. The Climate Action Steering Committee was formed following the adoption of the Clare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 in February 2024. This committee is responsible for oversight and strategic input to the Climate Action Plan implementation and is comprised of senior management across all Directorates of Clare County Council. The Committee met three times in 2024, with one of these meetings taking the form of a Climate Action Workshop involving speakers from the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) and UCC.

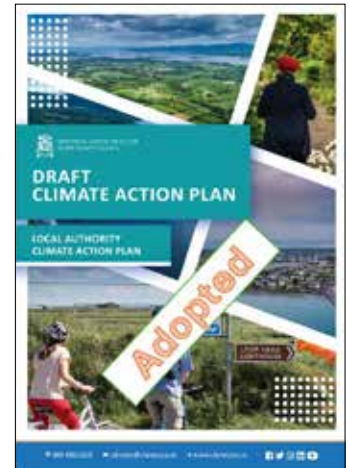
The monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the

LACAP occurs at SPC level and full council. The Climate Action Team also present an Annual Report on the implementation of the plan at Full council meeting. The first of these reports was presented at the March 2025 council meeting.

The Annual report includes commentary on the successes and challenges related to implementation over 2024. Actions across all areas including Governance, Built Environment, Transportation, Communities and Partnership and the Natural Environment are detailed within.

Community Climate Action Programme

The Community Climate Action Programme closed for submissions on 28th February, 2024. A rigorous evaluation of all applications followed as the programme was oversubscribed, receiving over €2.5million worth of applications. The projects were reviewed and scored under the following





CCAP Launch



College Green Residents

criteria; relevance & impact, innovation & scalability, value for money, achievability, partnership approach and governance arrangements. The thematic areas of the programme are; Community & Energy, Travel, Food and Waste, Shopping and Recycling. The Community Climate Action Programme received approval for twenty-six projects from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications in July 2024. Twenty-three projects are funded under Strand 1: 'Building Low Carbon Communities' for €572,000. This funding is for organisations and community groups with projects and initiatives which address the challenge of climate change. Three projects are funded under Strand 1a: 'Shared Island Community Climate Action.' The value of these projects is €236,663. 50% of this funding is for the Northern project partner. The Strand

1a projects support cross-border and all-island community climate action partnerships between community organisations in County Clare and in Northern Ireland.

A number of the projects commenced in Q3 2024. Some of these projects have already been substantially delivered. These include the installation of a solar light by Doonbeg Tidy Towns. Smith O'Brien's GAA Club have installed a large solar PV system on their club house. Crusheen GAA Club along with their northern partner Trillick GAC in Co. Tyrone, were successful in securing funding through the Shared Island Project and are implementing their cross border project. Mike McTigue Community Centre have retrofitted their community centre with new triple-glazed windows. Scariff Rugby Club have retrofitted their main pitch lighting to LED lighting as part

of the programme. Ennis Men's Shed have installed a Solar PV system on their workshop as part of their project. College Green Residents Association held a community event to plant a native woodland area in their estate. These projects will continue to be implemented throughout 2025 with a final completion date for all projects of February 2026.

Energy

Energy Management

Clare County Councils ISO50001 Energy Management accreditation was retained in February 2024 via a surveillance Energy Audit from the NSAI. The surveillance audit is designed to assess our ongoing commitment as an organisation to energy management and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the internationally recognised ISO 50001 Standard and accredited by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI). The audit concentrated on one significant energy user and assesses energy data from throughout the year.

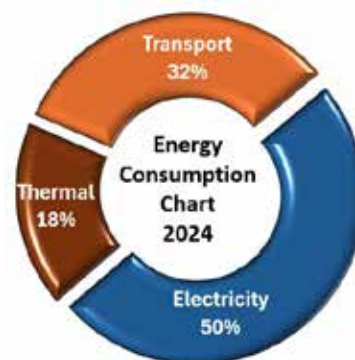
Clare County Council have completed a Gap to Target analysis which details where we will create carbon reductions and energy efficiency increases over the next 5 years.

Clare County Council via the Climate and Energy section have, throughout 2024, led the development of the Mid West Energy Unit, a project management unit with deep retrofitting as its focus, in collaboration with the SEAI, Limerick City and County Council and Kerry County Council. Clare will act as lead authority in this unit where 50% funding will be provided by the SEAI towards approved projects. The work of the unit begins in early 2025.

The Energy Management team, comprising members from various directorates and led by the Energy Performance Officer, convened multiple times in 2024 to analyse consumption patterns and strategise the advancement of

energy projects. Notable projects developed in the energy and carbon sectors during 2024 include:

- The Public Lighting retrofit continued in 2024. 82% lights in the county are now retrofitted to LED and will continue through the PLEEP project in 2025. This represents a significant drop in energy consumption despite the addition of approximately 2500 lights since the baseline.
- The introduction of (HVO) Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil in our HGV fleets offsetting more than 500 tonnes of carbon emissions. More than 200,000 litres of HVO was used in 2024
- Design & Procurement for Buttermarket PV Solar installation
- Procurement process for single party framework re Energy Audits.



Awareness

The Climate and Energy team have engaged across many forums throughout 2024 towards creating awareness at staff level and at community level in relation to Climate action. Through the 'Reduce Your Use Campaign' the Energy team aim to build awareness around the organisation in relation to reduction of energy use both in work environment and at home.

The Climate section hosted an Energy Awareness and SDG awareness day in September 2024

The Climate section has interactively participated with Tidy Towns, Kilkee business

community groups, retirement groups along with developing and running a Climate awareness/Age friendly workshop in May 2024 as well as a Senior Management Climate Action workshop focused on beginning the implementation of the LACAP.

Water Services

Future Delivery Of Water Services

The Master Co-Operation Agreement (MCA) and the Data Sharing Agreement between Uisce Eireann and Clare County Council was signed by the Chief Executive on the 5th May 2023. The MCA replaced the existing Service Level Agreement on the effective date. The effective date for Clare County Council was the 20th September 2023. Under the new MCA Uisce Eireann have now assumed direct management and control of the staff and the water services functions. In addition Uisce Eireann are also responsible for the management of health and safety.

Asset Transfer

Following an assessment of the water and wastewater assets in County Clare, 384 sites have been identified for potential transfer to Uisce Eireann to date. Following on

site surveys, 71 of these assets have been determined to be duplicate, non-operational assets or assets which Uisce Eireann will not accept. Of the remaining 313 assets, 224 have now been fully transferred to Uisce Eireann. The 89 assets remaining to be transferred are divided into different categories and a pathway has been developed to transfer those assets to Uisce Eireann.

Rural Water Programme (RWP)

During 2024, €190,899.00 was invested in progressing upgrade works on 10 group water schemes allocated funding under the Multi Annual Rural Water Programme.

The Annual Subsidy Grant was also administered to 29 schemes with overall subsidy funding of €1,801,522.00 provided to these schemes.

In addition, under the Rural Water Programme 59 grant applications were administered during 2024 for bored well grants with €211,816.00 paid out to householders.

The Clare Rural Water Programme Office in 2024 continued to assist schemes in their application to be taken in charge by Uisce Eireann and many of these applications are at various stages of progression.





Vandeleur Gardens, Kilrush, Co. Clare



TOURISM DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



JOHN O'MALLEY

A/Director of Tourism Development
13th May 2024 to 3rd November 2024



SIOBHÁN MCNULTY

Director of Tourism Development
From 4th November 2024

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark



Fossil find: The Geopark had a great start to 2024, which saw Dr. Eamon Doyle's recent

fossil find of a 315 million-year-old discovery being the first of its kind in Ireland. This gained national media exposure and featured on Virgin Media News, the Irish Independent, the front page of the Irish Times, RTE and other regional and local media channels.

Geopark Academy

The second Geopark Academy took place over the weekend of May 25th/26th at the Burren College of Art. Ten speakers presented on a broad range of recent research in the area including Geology, Archaeology, DNA analysis, Tourism, Art and marine seafloor mapping on Saturday, and we had a guided tour of the history of Kilfenora, Lemenagh Castle, Kilnaboy, Corrofin and Dysert Castle lead by Edel Barry, Frank O'Grady and Dick Cronin on Sunday. Over 50 people took part, and the event was a great success with presenters representing Trinity College Dublin, University of Galway, ATU, Burren College of Art and of course the Geopark. There was great feedback with many of the participants asking if we would be doing it again next year, which we hope to, as it showcases the region as a place of research and interest for educational tourism.



Re-accreditation of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark Code of Practice

60 businesses from across north Clare and south Galway have been given official recognition for their participation in an environmental initiative that is transforming the development of sustainable tourism

across the Burren region. Developed with EU LIFE funding and launched by the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark Code of Practice in 2016, the Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism is the only sustainable initiative of its kind in Ireland and in the network of 169 Geoparks spread across 44 countries.

From a hotel harnessing all its electricity needs through hydropower to an artisan food producer embracing sustainable practices, the Code involves members of the Burren Ecotourism Network measuring and making reductions in environmental output as well as promoting local produce, conservation and taking part in community outreach and advocacy initiatives, networking events and green purchasing.

Twinning

Birmingham

The Lord Mayor of Birmingham travelled to Clare weekend in February, to initiate efforts by Clare County Council and Birmingham City Council to explore the establishment of economic links between the UK's second largest city and the Shannon area, including the airport and industrial zone.



Councillor Chaman Lal and key figures from Europe's largest local authority arrived at Shannon Airport before embarking on a comprehensive two-day tour of County Clare.

The itinerary included meetings with business



leaders in Shannon, including representatives of the Shannon Airport Group, Future Mobility Campus, EI Electronics and Jaguar Land Rover, ahead of a Shannon Chamber business lunch, featured a keynote address by Darragh O'Brien TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Councillor Lal also visited the Cliffs of Moher Experience, enjoyed a cruise on Lough Derg, and attended the Bunratty Castle Medieval Banquet.

The Lord Mayor's visit follows his acceptance of an invitation from the Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Councillor Joe Cooney, and Chair of the County Clare Twinning Committee, Councillor Tony O'Brien.



On the invitation of the subsequent Lord Mayor Councillor Ken Wood, a Clare delegation made a return visit to Birmingham in November. During this visit, the County

Clare delegation, led by Cathaoirleach Alan O'Callaghan attended a day long Birmingham Ireland Business Investment Showcase, hosted by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham Ken Wood and Deputy Head of Mission, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland, Orla Mc Breen.



The event was investment focussed and also showcased the economic relationship between EI Electronics / AICO and Birmingham as well as presentations on why to invest across the regions. There was also a roundtable business to business (B2B) engagement with significant learning transferred back and forth. These economic ties are the foundation of what is intended to develop as a formal cultural, social and tourism link between Birmingham and Clare (Shannon MD) given the connectivity long standing direct flights between both regions.



Phoenix, Arizona:

Based on the long-standing Ennis - Phoenix 'Sister Cities' relationship, a delegation went to Phoenix, Arizona in September 2024 and held meaningful engagements and shared learnings with the Arizona Office of Tourism and Visit Phoenix company. Detailed promotional presentations were delivered to the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) Arizona Chapter, with a dedicated Q&A forum held on how to facilitate itineraries for future visits to Clare. Highly engaging meetings were also held with the Irish Cultural Centre and Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix to discuss future potential musical exchanges between both parties. An Explore County Clare Event and Presentation was also delivered to a large audience, predominantly the Irish diaspora and / or the fully independent traveller market at the Irish Cultural Centre in Phoenix.

Visit Clare Marketing and Promotion

Domestic Marketing

The Visit Clare 2024 'Be a Tourist in Your Own County Clare' event built upon the success of the one day event in 2023 and was once again extremely successful. The event is designed to encourage residents to explore their own county, revisiting popular sites or discovering lesser-known areas, with attractions offering generous discounts, such

as 50% off admissions. Following its success in 2023, the event was expanded into a two-day event in 2024, held on April 20 and 21, with locals enthusiastically participating and rediscovering their County.



The wide range of experiences to be enjoyed at discounted prices included going full Willy Wonka at a real chocolate factory, taking a cave tour, stepping back in time at Craggaunowen and Bunratty, sailing to the Aran Islands, watching sheepdog demonstrations, and exploring a botanical tribute to Ireland's rich natural history in West Clare.

Clare is home to some of Ireland's best known visitor attractions including Bunratty Castle and Folk Park, Cliffs of Moher Experience, Aillwee Burren Experience, Doolin Cave, Craggaunowen, Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre, Shannon Aviation Museum and OPW Ennis Friary, all of which featured in the promotion.

Other participating attractions included Wilde Irish Chocolates, Loop Head Lighthouse, Irish Seed Savers, Doolin Ferry, Killaloe River

Cruises, Caherconnell Fort & Sheepdog Demonstrations, Doolin Cave, Moher Hill Open Farm, Lahinch Leisure Centre, Charm Bee Studio and Café, Tulla Guided Walk, and Taste The Atlantic - The Salmon Experience.

International Marketing

Less than one month after Clare lifted the Liam McCarthy at Croke Park, The Banner was once again raised high in August when the County is placed on centre stage at the world's largest celebration of Irish music and culture. A Clare County Council-led tourism delegation is travelling to Wisconsin for the Milwaukee Irish Fest (15-18th August) to target US holidaymakers who are planning overseas holidays for 2025.

'Fly Shannon' was the focus of the promotion with four scheduled services between Shannon Airport and JFK, Newark, Boston Logan and Chicago O'Hare airports.

Condé Nast Accolade

Clare County Council was delighted that County Clare was recognized by Condé Nast Traveler as one of the best places to visit in Europe for 2025 for its 'Eco-conscious stays and a celebration of traditional crafts'. This recognition reflected the ongoing commitment in marking Clare a more vibrant and sustainable destination, as

outlined in our 'Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 -Guiding our Journey to a Vibrant New Future in Tourism'. Clare's foundation in sustainability and tradition is being further strengthened through its pursuit of an ambitious Global Sustainable Tourism Council certification. This process relies on transparent and evidence-based decision-making, informed by data collected from residents, businesses, and visitors. This acknowledgment by the Condé Nast Traveler was a testament to the work of our strategy, including communities, businesses and other stakeholders who are offering not only outstanding experiences to visitors but are working to manage their social, cultural, economic, and environmental resources. For more information www.visitclare.ie/sustainable and www.visitclare.ie/strategy2030



Loop Head Lighthouse and Vandeleur Walled Garden and Visitor Centre

On the 13th May, Minister Heather Humphries officially opened Vandeleur Walled Gardens and Visitor Centre and Loop Head Lighthouse Visitor Experience. Both of these projects were in receipt of Rural Regeneration Development Funding and the Minister's official opening marked the successful conclusion of each project.



The team at Vandeleur Walled Garden and Visitor Centre were delighted to announce the full line up for the Vandeleur Festival Kilrush 2024 with something for everyone. The festival was a great success for music lovers, art enthusiasts and families and was successful in generating an economic boost to the town of Kilrush with the shuttle bus service that was organised to bring festival goers to and from the town to the gardens.

Inis Cealtra Visitor Experience (The Rectory, Mountshannon)

During 2024, work continued at the Rectory with construction of the extension and the double height curved ceiling completed. The complexity of such a feature and finished result is testament to the high standard of craftsmanship involved. The tender for the fit out of the visitor interpretation centre was also announced in late 2024. The Arts Office Clare County Council also commenced the Percentage for Arts Scheme for the Rectory.

The Design Team coordinated and conducted the final checks for the Part 10 An Bord Pleanála Planning Application for Holy Island which was lodged before year end.



Alternative Accommodation Webinars

In line with one of the key strategic objectives of the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030, the Tourism Department commissioned two key reports namely:

1. Accommodation Audit for County Clare, completed in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland.
2. Comprehensive Review of Campervan and RV Parking Facilities within Clare.

As a follow up to these reports, and in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, the tourism department organised a two-part webinar series and a site visit to a luxury glamping facility in West Clare aiming to stimulate interest and potential investment into alternative accommodation offerings here in Clare - it remains available to view here www.visitclare.ie/register.



The webinar event was hosted by Crown & Canopy who are leading experts in the area of alternative outdoor and off grid accommodation and provided landowners and those seeking to develop alternative tourist accommodation with essential insights and practical guidance. The event also shared information on financial, and training supports available through the LEADER programme and Clare County Council's Local Enterprise Office.

There was an overwhelming response to the initiative and support provided by the Tourism Development Department.

In addition to this, the Tourism Department hosted a site visit to potential interested parties to a Clare glamping site in Labasheeda.

Bunratty Castle and Folk Park

Bunratty Castle and Folk Park welcomed 341,155 visitors during 2024, a welcome 8% increase in visitors over the previous year. The visitor enjoyed the new offerings such as the medieval courtyard, jaunting car rides, a Victorian carousel, and enhanced animation throughout the park. Banquet attendance at Bunratty and Knappogue Castles also saw slight gains despite the impact of increased costs.

This growth across all sites can also be attributed to effective national and international marketing campaigns. Internationally, the team strategically diversified its outreach, reducing reliance on the US market by actively pursuing opportunities in European and emerging markets. Furthermore, the annual calendar of events was expanded and tailored to attract diverse demographics and special interest groups, while also reflecting the unique character of each site and the changing seasons.



The addition of an outdoor forge and Social

Media star Eoin Reardon, wood turning craftsman, added significant theatre to the courtyard of Bunratty Castle throughout 2024

Accolades for Bunratty

Bunratty Castle and Folk Park celebrated a double victory in 2024, receiving the “Best Tourist Business” award at the Clare FM Best of Clare Awards in May and the “Best Tourism Experience” in Clare at the Ennis Chamber of Commerce’s Clare Business Excellence Awards in November. These prestigious accolades recognize the hard work and dedication of the entire Bunratty team



Christmas at Bunratty



Bunratty’s inaugural Christmas parade in December 2024, organised by Bunratty Castle and Folk Park with local businesses and Clare County Council, drew over 3,000 people and delivered a significant economic boost to the village. The festive event, featuring 400 participants and culminating in the Christmas lights being switched on by Megan O’Brien of Down Syndrome Clare, officially launched the park’s Christmas season.

From November 28th to December 23rd, Bunratty Castle and Folk Park transformed into a winter wonderland, offering three popular Christmas experiences: the beloved Santa grotto, the charming Breakfast with Santa, and the festive Christmas at the Castle banquet. These attractions drew over 40,000 visitors, making Bunratty a festive destination in County Clare.

Craggaunowen



Craggaunowen celebrates 50 Years in Operation

On September 30th, 2024, Craggaunowen celebrated its 50th anniversary, bringing together past and present staff, local dignitaries, and community members. This milestone year was further highlighted by a 27% increase in visitor numbers, a direct result of significant investments made since Clare County Council assumed management of the site.

Craggaunowen also gained significant global exposure in 2024 by being featured in Tourism Ireland’s “Home of Halloween” advertising campaign. This campaign, utilizing TV, cinema, and digital platforms, reached 12 key tourism markets worldwide, including the US, Canada, Australia, and across Europe. The campaign’s centerpiece, a 60-second film showcasing Ireland’s unique history, has garnered 14 million views.

New Folklore Trail at Craggaunowen - installed 2024



Knappogue Castle

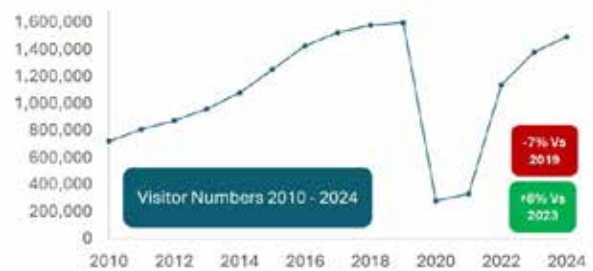
Knappogue Castle project works commenced in 2024 aiming towards offering a five star residential experience and formal gardens. The latter, once completed, will reflect the gardens created by Beth Andrews in the 1970s and will add significantly to the overall product offering. It is hoped that the Castle works will be completed in early 2026 and be a considerable draw for high end spenders where a luxurious package will be created to cater for their every need.

Cliffs of Moher

Business Activity

The Cliffs of Moher Experience welcomed 1,495m visitors in 2024, 42% of all arrivals came by coach (1% on public transport), 55% by Car, and 3% walkers and cyclists.

Overall numbers -7% of 2019 results, the average number travelling on a coach increased by 27% and the total numbers arriving by coach are -15%. Furthermore, there is a 32% reduction in the number of coaches on the roads. A detailed analysis for 2024 reveals that "day trip coaches" operating under licenses carry just 12% of the overall passenger numbers.



Meeting digital objectives, the trend to book a visit in advance is continuing to increase with advances in technology and promotion of digital assets. All trade group activity is booked in advance with up to 23% of Fully Independent Travelers (FIT's) booking in advance. Visits to the website reached 464,000 and there were 106,000 downloads of the multi lingual Cliffs of Moher App and Audio Guide.

Visitor distribution and capacity management are key objectives of the management of the site and wider hinterland with a key focus on moving FIT (Fully Independent Travellers) and coach visitors away from the peak hours. Effective visitor management actions have led to 8,200 less coaches versus 2019 with 33 onboard passengers versus 26 in 2019 and 2% shift in to off peak periods.

The main markets are US, Canada, Ireland, Germany, UK and Rest of the world with visitors coming from more than 100 countries across the globe.



The Visitor Experience and offer available continues to be enhanced and is supported by professionally trained staff as seen with the recent investment in the 4-d Ledge experience which has significantly improved the offering within the visitor center. The visitor experience is further enhanced with a calendar of rich cultural heritage and events spread throughout the year and with targeted marketing initiatives

to support objectives. This has resulted in a 4.87 out of 5 satisfaction from surveyed visitors.

Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040

A draft of the Fáilte Ireland supported Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 and site masterplan has been published. The strategy will inform future sustainable developments at the Cliffs of Moher Experience delivered over 20 years focussing on four pillars:

- Enhancing Economic Benefits Across the Region,
- Providing Sustainable Access,
- Optimising the world Class Experience,
- Transforming the Natural Landscape.



The draft strategy has reached a milestone with the completion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the AA/NIS. The SEA is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully

integrated into the preparation of plans and programmes prior to their final adoption as a planning application to An Bord Pleanála. The objectives of SEA are to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to promote sustainable development.

In November 2023, Clare County Council undertook Statutory and Non-Statutory consultation with the relevant bodies such as the EPA, Dept Agriculture, Department Rural and Community, Department of Environment in relation to the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The observations from these consultations were considered in the final SEA and published in the Final draft of the COM Strategy 2040 document available to view on the Cliffs of Moher website.

This final draft was issued for further Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultation for comment. The ministerial NIS consultation was completed on Friday the 26th July 2024. The SEA Consultation with the Statutory and non-Statutory bodies is complete.

A number of key initiatives and outputs were identified and are underway, including progression of a site masterplan, monitoring of visitor dwell times, development of a visitor management plan, a habitat management and conservation plan, execution of a bird survey programme, development of a coastal walk management plan, traffic and transport



plan for North Clare, publication of an activity summary report, a sustainable transport solution, education and community initiatives.

Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk

An oversight group comprising Clare County Council, Clare Local Development Company (CLDC), Fáilte Ireland, and the Department of Rural and Community Development, determined that a Management Plan for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk was required to set out how the trail will be managed, protected, and maintained in the future.

In January 2024, Tobin Consulting Engineers were appointed to prepare a management plan for the operation, maintenance, investment, marketing including financial modelling, visitor management, transport and parking for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk with the input and involvement of landowners and other stakeholders.

Tobin completed stakeholder consultations with local community groups, landowners, IFA, local businesses. Desktop research was undertaken to identify national & international comparators along with intercept visitor surveys. A draft report outlining the key proposals is due end Dec 2024.

€500K was awarded to the Department of Rural and Community Development through the (ORIS) Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme to fund the upgrade and repair of a section of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk following a successful application. The recommendations outlined in the Tobin Management Plan will determine the future of the Coastal Walk.

Digital and Broadband Department

In 2024 the DigiClare network of remote working hubs experienced a further increase in footfall throughout its 11 locations countywide with 60% of our users during the summer months being non-regular or first-time users. These include tourists

and holidaymakers visiting the area which emphasizes the importance of the DigiClare network in facilitating the so-called group of “workcationers” who are currently seeking to combine leisure trips with remote working. It also highlights the important role of the hubs in helping to attract visitors to the county.

The Hub facilities were also in demand within the communities where they hosted a number of digital focused programs. These included programs for age friendly groups, Coding classes for children and juniors and Creative Artificial Intelligence training programs for businesses and the marketing sector.

The provision of a single I.C.T Infrastructure to support the newly established Clare Tourism Development D.A.C. was well advanced. This provides for the amalgamation of a number of our tourism sites under the umbrella of Clare Tourism Development. These sites were previously managed by Shannon Groupon behalf of Shannon Heritage and have now been transferred into the ownership of Clare Co Council.





Killaloe Bypass - Shannon Bridge Crossing



MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS

Clare County Council has four Municipal Districts: Ennis, Killaloe, Shannon and West Clare.

Ennis Municipal District

Overview of Works carried out

As well as some notable stretch performances in the delivery of the Councils core services throughout Ennis and environs, 2024 saw a number of very exciting milestones achieved and delivered by the Ennis MD staff. We continued to maintain and upgrade the local and regional road network throughout the District with over 35km of roads either recycled, surfaced dressed or overlaid. Other welcome developments within the Municipal District included the installation of road safety measures at Barefield National School, various traffic calming projects, and the installation of bus stops on the R458 at Manusmore, Clarecastle. Crews also reacted to various weather events that occurred throughout the year. This included the spreading of grit during cold spells and also dealing with issues which arose from both flooding and wind events.

In 2024, Ennis MD continued works on the NTA funded *Connecting and Co-Creating Ennis* project which provides for improvements to footpaths and walkways, drop kerbs and seating areas on walking routes around and through the town. 2024 works included new raised pedestrian crossings and junction improvements at over 10 locations throughout the town. The completed works will increase the safety and comfort of pedestrians throughout Ennis. The Connecting and Co-creating project is a key element in the strategy to make Ennis Irelands first '10-minute town'. Throughout the year Ennis Municipal District provided support and assistance to our colleagues in other departments including Active Ennis, Housing, Planning and Environment.

Manusmore Bus Stops

Ennis MD completed the construction of two new rural bus stops as an addition to the TFI 343 Route on the R458 at Manusmore,

Clarecastle. The request for these two new bus stops was initiated by a notice of motion following representations from the residents of the locality. Clare Co. Co. in conjunction with the NTA have now delivered these bus stops to an operational stage which will provide connectivity and accessibility to services in Ennis and surrounding towns and villages for the residents of Manusmore.



Traffic Calming Measures

In 2024 Ennis MD recently installed various traffic calming measures throughout the district. These include on the R 458, Skehanagh, Clarecastle, R 469 Quin Road, L 4180 Lees Road and in Gaurus. These traffic calming measures involved the installation of rumble strips and enhanced SLOW markings at these locations.

A further traffic calming and footpath scheme was completed in Doora Village in late 2024. The works involved installing new drainage and the construction of a new footpath from Noughval Drive to the pedestrian entrance of the church on school road. The works have provided greater accessibility for patrons to the church grounds and have reduced the speed of traffic passing through the village.

Low Cost Safety Projects

The junction between Summerhill and the Market roundabout was designed and constructed by staff of the Ennis Municipal District under a Low Cost Safety Scheme. The reduction in the width of the carriageway reinforces the one-way street to Summerhill with soft landscaping introduced resulting in a safer and more accessible crossing point. The feedback since the works were completed has been extremely positive.



A further Low Cost Safety Scheme was implemented in Millbank, Roslevan. This work included junction improvements, footpath extensions and the introduction of speed ramps and raised pedestrian crossings.



Road Safety Measures - Barefield National School

Ennis MD staff installed improved road safety measures in the vicinity of Barefield National school in 2024. The aim of the works is to increase the visibility to the front of the school and increase the safety for both school children, parents, teachers and those in vehicles.

A summary of the works that were carried out were as follows:

- Installation of new solar powered advance

school warning VMS signs.

- Installation of designated bus set down and visitor parking areas.
- The addition of two new School Ahead triangular warning signs on the carriageway.
- The refreshing of all the line marking in the vicinity of the school and the road centreline through Barefield village
- Installation of bollards around the footpaths and road junction adjacent to the school.



Other Key Strategic works

In addition to the aforementioned, Ennis MD staff continued to work throughout 2024 on a cross directorate basis with our colleagues and the appropriate Government Departments in advancing the Ennis Public Realm works, the LIHAF Access Road project, the Tulla Road and Clare Road Active Travel Projects as well as working closely with our DAC colleagues in developing the ambitious plans outlined in the *Ennis 2040 Economic & Spatial Strategy*.

St Patricks Day Parade

The 2024 St Patricks Day Parade in Ennis was again a huge success with locals and visitors



alike lining both sides of the streets for the best vantage points since early morning. There was a brilliant atmosphere at Aras Contae an Chlar, with over 1,400 participants involved in the Parade. Thousands of spectators lined the streets from New Road to Bindon Street. The theme of the festival was *'Remembering the Past - Embracing the Future'* with Maura O'Connell ably fulfilling the role of Grand Marshall.

All Ireland Homecoming

Ennis MD were delighted to host and organise the homecoming for the Clare Hurling team who won the All-Ireland Senior Hurling Championship 2024 in July. A crowd in excess of 35,000 in attendance at Tim Smythe Park, Ennis on Monday, July 22nd. The players received a marvellous reception from the people of Clare. The electric atmosphere generated an experience which will dwell long in the memories of Clare people.

Ennis Municipal District also a live screening of the match in Tim Smythe Park on July 21st. The crowd of circa 4,000 also enjoyed pre-match entertainment at this family friendly event.

Ennis MD staff contributed strongly to the organisation of both events including the preparation of Tim Smythe Park, coordination of the stage set up, installation of crowd control barriers and implementation of traffic management plans. The crews were also responsible for cleaning up the site following the conclusion of both events.



Christmas

The EMD team scheduled and facilitated the 'Christmas in Ennis' programme of activities which included street entertainment, events at Glor and the Santa train, ensuring fun and frolics for the four weekends leading up to the Christmas. The team were also involved in the erection of Christmas lights with several new festive light offerings on show for 2024. The primary objective was to contribute to

the town's vitality, increase footfall, leading to a boost for the retail and hospitality sectors. Secondly these local cultural events had the aim of fostering a sense of community, connecting people with each other and the town, thus increasing dwell time. The team also leveraged social media to promote the town and communicate the message that Ennis is open for business.



Mayoral Awards

In March Mayor of Ennis Municipal District, Cllr. Pat Daly, hosted a mayoral reception in the Council Chamber, Aras Contae and Chláir to honor sporting achievements and volunteers who strengthen community pride & spirit. The following individuals and groups were honoured;

- **ENNIS MD TIDY TOWNS GROUPS** for the collective commitment of their volunteers to enhancing their local community and

promoting sustainability.

- **U12 ENNIS TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB** were recognised for their amazing journey and dedication culminating in becoming U12 National Trophy Champions 2023.
- **MARIE ROCHE** was honoured for a lifetime of commitment to athletics in the community, inspiring and motivating young people all over the county.
- **ST. MICHAELS VILLAS' CHOIR** received the mayoral award in recognition of their

community spirit & pride of place. The Choir opened up the ceremony with a lovely rendition of 'Clare my heart my home' and performed again at the end. There was a lovely atmosphere in the Chamber with over 100 people in attendance for the event.



Mayor Award Choir Group



Mayor Award Barefield TT



Mayor Award Clooney Spencilhill TT



Mayor Award Clarecastle TT



Mayor Award Ennis TT



Mayor Award Kilnamona



Mayor Award Marie Roche



Mayor Award St. Michaels Villas Choir



Mayor Award Ennis Team FC



URBACT Delegation visit to Ennis

Ennis MD is the Irish Representative in a transnational project called Econnecting under the EU URBACT Programme. The other 8 Countries involved are Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Slovenia, Hungary, Estonia and Montenegro. The purpose of the URBACT project is essentially to share learning and experiences with other Large Towns and Cities that have similar opportunities and challenges to Ennis. In particular, the Econnecting Project focuses on sustainable urban-rural mobility solutions within the 30-minute territory. The mission is to advocate inclusive, digital, and ecological strategies, fostering the community engagement in co-designing climate-resilient towns. The network promotes accessible and welcoming cities, good governance for proximity territory, humanised and sustainable mobility, green communities, and a gender-balanced development.

Ennis LTP

The Ennis Local Transport Plan is being developed using the National Transport Authority (NTA) Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) methodology. The transport issues and objectives were identified, options assessed, and drafts of the Ennis Local Transport Plan have been compiled and reviewed by the end of 2024. The Strategic Environmental Assessment scoping report and

screening report for Appropriate Assessment are being drafted for submission to prescribed bodies in early 2025. The intention will be to proceed to public consultation in Q1-2 2025

Ennis Town Bus Service

The Ennis Municipal District, Clare County Council Transport Section have been working with the National Transport Authority Town Bus Team to enable the provision of the Ennis Town Bus Service. Significant lobbying by Ennis Municipal District Councillors, Clare County Councillors and Oireachtas Members has resulted in the Ennis Town Bus Service being included in the NTA 2024 budget. Work on progressing the bus stop preliminary designs has commenced in 2024. The Ennis Town Bus Service will initially provide two routes North-South and East-West, operating at 30minute intervals in both directions. It is expected that the Ennis Town Bus Service should be operational by end of 2025 or early 2026.



Killaloe Municipal District

Municipal District meetings were held bi-monthly during 2024. The members of Killaloe MD focused on a number of strategic priorities for the MD and wider East Clare area in addition to the enhancement of provision of local infrastructure, services, facilities and amenities in the towns, villages and rural areas of the district.

Civic Reception for the Mayor of Derry & District of Strabane, Cllr. Lilian Seenoi-Barry

On 2nd August, Killaloe Municipal District hosted a Civic reception for the Mayor of Derry & District of Strabane, Cllr Lilian Seenoi-Barr. Cllr Seenoi-Barr, the Kenyan Irish political and community activist known for her commitment to social justice, equality, and human rights, was Elected as Mayor of Derry & District of Strabane in June. Born in Kenya, Lilian's early life was shaped by the challenges and inequities she observed in her Maasai community, sparking a passion for advocacy that would guide her life's work. In her late twenties, Lilian migrated to Derry, where she quickly became an influential figure in local politics and community activism.

In recognition of Cllr Lilian-Seenoi-Barr's Election as Mayor of Derry & District of Strabane; her raising awareness about issues such as racial inequality, Nighttime economy, Women's Health and Housing; and the continuation of North-South socio-economic and political cooperation evident in our Municipal District by the presence of Waterways Ireland Regional Office in Scariff and tourism initiatives on Lough Derg, R. Shannon.

L. Erne and the Ulster Canal navigation system, the Elected Members of Killaloe Municipal District consider it appropriate that a Civic Reception was awarded to Cllr Lilian-Seenoi-Barr.

A large gathering attended the civic reception in the Municipal District offices and marked the first occasion that a MD in County Clare hosted such an award.

Civic Reception for the Mayor of Derry & District of Strabane, Cllr. Lilian Seenoi-Barry



General Municipal Allocations

The Elected Members adopted the General Municipal Allocations at the July meeting of the MD with an overall allocation for 2024 of €245,000. This fund enabled the Councillors to work with the Executive to ensure the projects were prioritised throughout the MD where funding streams were not present.

Examples of works funded and Communities funded in 2024 from the Elected Members GMA were:

- Footpaths, Pedestrian Crossing and Road improvements across the MD
- Community groups and initiatives such as Tourism East Clare, Scariff Bay Radio, Michael Cusack Centre, Tulla Court House, Derg Active Alliance, Tidy Towns and Community Councils, were some of a number of areas which also received funding



Councillors of the Western Inter-County Railway Committee pictured with local West on Track members and officials.



Killaloe MD Elected Members Strategy and Workplan:

“Killaloe MD Elected Members Strategy and Workplan” setting out a shared vision between the Elected Members and staff of Killaloe Municipal District and defining the strategic objectives and priorities for East Clare and the supporting projects and mechanisms required for implementing and achieving those objectives.

One a long-standing objective of Clare County Council and is a priority objective of the Elected Members of Killaloe MD - Strategy and

Workplan is the ***re-opening of the Crusheen Railway.***

There was significant background studies, assessment and engagement with the community over the last year and in particular engagement by the Elected Members and Senior Planner of the MD with Irish Rail.

The overall proposal also received endorsement of the Western Inter-County Railway Committee following meeting in Crusheen last April. The committee comprises elected representatives from the seven County Councils of Mayo, Galway, Sligo, Leitrim,

Roscommon, Donegal, Galway City and County Council in addition to the Elected Members from Clare, Cllrs P. Hayes, A. O'Callaghan, J. Crowe and G. Keating.

This was followed up by a meeting in September of between the Cathaoirleach and Elected Members of Killaloe MD, Senior Planner Brian McCarthy and Jim Meade CEO of Irish Rail and Sinead Clair Delivery Manager of Irish Rail. At a positive, constructive and open discussion, the CEO of Irish Rail acknowledged the significant progress and initiatives the MD and Local Authority have taken to advance the case and proposition for the reopening of the Rail Station, since the initial meeting hosted in 2023. The Members and Senior Planner outlined the purchase of an adjoining landbank to facilitate any infrastructural works required by Irish Rail, the collaboration of a number of key stakeholders and the launch of a Socio-Economic Report prepared by Repucon on the benefits of Re-opening Crusheen Railway Station.

Crusheen Mobility Plan

Throughout 2024, there were significant consultation and engagement with the community of Crusheen to draft a Mobility Plan for the village, this included schools' art competition, village walking tour, on-line survey's and 2 public meetings took place with Killaloe MD staff and Helena McElmeel Architects, with over 350 submissions to the emerging plan.

The Mobility Plan will plan how we can enhance the footpaths, streets, public lighting in Crusheen and make sure we provide for new infrastructure e.g. pedestrian crossings, cycle paths, bus shelter, pathways to ensure Crusheen is a pleasant and sustainable village for everyone of all ages and abilities to safely walk, cycle and travel from our homes to the school, the shop and other community and recreational facilities.

In particular it is envisaged that the mobility

plan will guide the coherent, plan-led, cost-effective development and investment by Killaloe MD of public infrastructure in the settlement e.g. footpaths, traffic calming and guide future funding applications.

Scarriff Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

In May Killaloe MD received notification of the awarding of €8,765,000 to Clare County Council by the Department of Rural and Community Development for our Category 1 Scarriff RRDF project. Clare County Council will match fund this to bring the total project value to €10,956,000. This is a significant funding announcement for Scarriff and East Clare.

The project is located in the Market Square and comprises of 3 elements, all integrated.

1. The renovation of an existing vacant derelict 2 storey building and rear premises in Scarriff Town centre and their conversion to a Community & Enterprise Hub
2. The development of a greenfield site to the rear of the building to use as a car park associated with the Community & Enterprise Hub and for car parking use as part of wider enhancements to Scarriff Town Centre.
3. Enhancement of public realm of Market Square (town centre) of Scarriff

The work and level of information that went into the submission of the RRDF application and the resultant significant funding announcement (for the full amount of the application sought) reflects the dedication and priority the staff working together with our Elected Members of Killaloe MD have for Scarriff and the communities of East Clare. The application also in particular reflects the commitment shown by the community and all stakeholders to this project over the years.

Following due diligence with the Department and completion of required procurement, it is anticipated that works on the Community & Enterprise Hub and associated car park



**Killaloe Municipal District obtains €8.765 million in RRDF funding for
Redevelopment of Scarriff Market Square, New Community & Enterprise Hub and Carpark**

could commence as early as December and once completed, in line with the request from Community groups, the works to Market Square will subsequently commence in 2025.

Department of Rural & Community Development Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Schemes (ORIS)

Tuamgraney Trail Head & Trail Linkage Project

Killaloe MD received funding approval of €192,000 under the ORIS for the provision of an outdoor recreation and amenity project enabling direct walkable access from the settlements of Scarriff/Tuamgraney to the existing 12km section of Killaloe/Lough Derg/Ogonelloe greenway and walking trail.

It is envisaged that the project will be undertaken by the outdoor staff of Killaloe MD. IN advance of commencement, there will be a requirement to have regard to the location and timing of the anticipated Limerick-Scarriff-Lough Derg Greenway currently being prepared by Waterways Ireland and TII.

In addition to planning for the extension of the route, in May/June Killaloe MD undertook significant maintenance works of the existing

route in particular hedgerow cutting and footpath repair



Ballycuggeran Enhancement Works

Enhancement works continued in Ballycuggeran/Two Mile Gate with the installation of wheelchair accessible pathways, disability hoists, rest areas, and forest themed outdoor play area. The location of Ballycuggeran, connecting East Clare - Killaloe - Limerick City and with the increasing focus on Lough Derg Blueway and the ever increasing popularity of outdoor pursuits, there are ever increasing numbers of visitors to the Ballycuggeran Area, increasing pressure on existing services and on particular demands for

amenities, facilities and the visitor-experience.

Mountain Bike Trail Centre - ORIS Feasibility Funding

Feasibility Funding was awarded to Killaloe Municipal District under the Outdoor Recreation Improvement Scheme to examine the potential for a mountain bike trail centre in the Slieve Bearnaghs. The receipt of the funding assists with the delivery of an objective in Killaloe Elected Members Strategic Workplan which seeks to maximise opportunities for recreation in the Ballycuggeran/Two Mile Gate area for mountain biking. In March initial stakeholder engagement with a number of agencies commenced in order to define the scope of the study.

Town and Village Renewal

Killaloe Courthouse

Killaloe Courthouse, derelict and vacant for several years since its last use, has been acquired by Clare County Council, which is now seeking how best to re-use and reimagine the building and grounds. The building is a Protected Structure and its location, within the heritage town centre of Killaloe, provides a key opportunity to revitalise and reimagine

the building, while also encouraging footfall and activity to this area of the town centre.

The building was identified by Clare County Council as an Opportunity Site in the Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Strategy. In elaborating on the potential for the re-use of the Courthouse and lands, the Strategy indicated that a feasibility study on the re-use of the building was required. There is a necessity to bring the Courthouse back to a viable and economically sustainable use.

In July, following the receipt of Town and Village Renewal Grant funding, Hourigan Drake Architects were appointed to undertake a Feasibility Study on the proposed re-use of the Courthouse. To coincide with National Heritage Week a public consultation event and tour of the Courthouse was organised over two days by Killaloe MD to invite the public to the disused Courthouse and obtain views on how best it should be re-used.

Tobermurragh, Killaloe

Funding of €225,000 was received for Tobermurragh Park enhancement works. The project will help to realise the full potential of this centrally positioned green space, and result in a revitalised, more attractive and



Extract from Clare County Council's 'Masterplan of Tobermurragh and Bane Field, 2016'

accessible Community Park to serve both the local community and visitors to the town. Key elements of the project include:

- public realm enhancements within the park, including the provision of seating and new paved surfacing at the Holy Well and viewing areas;
- installation of new signage and interpretation boards relating to the area's history and ecology;
- upgraded walkways, including installation of raised timber boardwalk through the park's marshland area;
- new stone wall along its roadside boundary; and
- invasive species removal and vegetation management.

The park is owned by Clare County Council and has been subject to a detailed masterplanning exercise in the 'Masterplan of Tobermurragh and Bane Field' 2016. The project is also identified in the 'Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement & Mobility Plan' 2022, which outlines a strategy to revitalise and reconnect the towns by re-imagining public spaces and connecting key land- marks with considered pedestrian and cyclist routes.

The project has full planning consent and is a key element in the enhancement of Killaloe, providing the town with a centrally located and high quality public green space.

Schedule of Municipal District Works 2024

Restoration Improvement Programme 2024 - 27km of road upgraded totalling €3,584,949

Restoration Maintenance Programme 2024 - 39.28 km of road upgraded totalling €828,119

Drainage Works Grant

Works totalling €183,141 carried out including the upgrading of pipework and drainage ditches across the MD.

Footpaths

Multiple upgrades to footpath infrastructure across the MD including footpaths at Crossroads Killaloe, St. Flannan's Drive, Killaloe, Church Street, Tulla, Miltown Road, Tulla, Quin Village. This was delivered using the IPB Grant in conjunction with partial contributions from Councillors GMA.

Local Improvement Scheme

Upgrade works to 2 private roads in the MD were carried out in 2024, totalling €79,000

Community Involvement Scheme

Upgrade works to 2 public roads in the MD were carried out in 2024, totalling €180,000

Bridge Rehabilitation Works

Upgrade, repair and emergency works to 7 bridges, in the MD were carried out in 2024, totalling €168,304

Climate Adaptation and Resilience Works Grant

Road and drainage improvement works were completed in 2024 at several locations throughout the MD, totalling €306,927.

Specific and Safety Improvements Grants

Improvements were completed on the R352/ L4066 Bodyke Village, R471/L3046 Harrold's Cross and Ogonnelloe Traffic Calming Scheme, totalling € €239,917 in 2024.

Discretionary Improvement Grant

Improvements were completed throughout the MD in 2024, totalling €170,024, including bridge and pavement preventative maintenance, traffic safety works, hedge cutting, signage replacement, road markings upgrades, and unplanned macadam repairs.

Service Provision

Service provision carried out by the Supervisors and Outdoor staff included - road maintenance

of all types, including expenditure of €200,791 on Regional roads, and €504,344 on Local road maintenance. Works also involved severe weather and winter maintenance emergency callouts, aiding An Garda Síochána and the Emergency Services, Traffic management, and responding to complaints from the general public.



Road Restoration Improvement Works



Climate Change Works at Ayle



Maintenance Works in Quin Village



Tulla Footpaths



Scarriff National School Footpaths

Shannon Municipal District

Introduction:

The Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday the 25th of June 2024. The outgoing Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan spoke of the partnership approach between the MD Members, Communities, businesses, Government Departments and Agencies which has resulted in considerable achievements in this MD. These achievements included the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure projects in Ballycasey and Newmarket on Fergus, Town & Village Renewal Schemes in Clonlara, Bunratty and Drumgeely. She said that it was great to see the completion of the flood relief works at Springfield and the advancement of the Shannon Flood Relief Scheme as these are key infrastructural projects in the MD. Donna McGettigan noted that a key part of her role as Cathaoirleach was the promotion and advancement of the MD, and this included the Shannon Loop Walk project being shortlisted for the Local Government in Excellence Awards. Infrastructural improvements which included road and footpath works throughout the MD

and low-cost safety schemes at Barry's Cross and Rossmangher. Significant improvements in amenity services such as Sli na Slainte route and outdoor exercise equipment in Shannon town and a public consultation event on the concept design for the One Shannon Hub was held. Cllr Donna McGettigan stated that she was particularly honoured to host the Cathaoirleach's Special Recognition Awards Ceremony which saw due recognition given to individuals in our communities.

Nominations were sought and Councillor Pat O Gorman was elected Cathaoirleach of Shannon MD for the next 12 months. He was proposed by Cllr. David Griffin and seconded by Cllr Tony Mulcahy. Cathaoirleach Pat O Gorman spoke of the huge honour it was for him and that he was committed to serving the people of Shannon Municipal District. Cathaoirleach Pat O Gorman firstly thanked everyone for voting for him and stated that his main priorities include the progression of the One Shannon Hub Project, N19 upgrade and Shannon Flood Relief Scheme. Other priorities included the securing of funding for our towns and villages to enhance amenities for these communities, the provision of public amenities such as the Shannon to Bunratty Greenway



project and onto Sixmilebridge, the continuing improvements of our roads and infrastructure, supporting our community groups through our Community Grants Scheme, promotion of the work achieved in the MD, building on the success of Shannon Airport through a close working relationship with Shannon Group and the upgrading of N19 into airport. The continued expansion and upgrade of Bunratty Castle and Folk Park facilities was also a priority for Cllr O Gorman. He said that he looks forward to building on the positive working relationship with the Executive of the Municipal District.

Donna McGettigan was elected Leas Cathaoirleach, and she was nominated by Cllr Michael Begley and seconded by Cllr John Crowe. Tributes were paid to PJ Ryan, Pat McMahon & Gerry Flynn. Their valuable and honourable service to the Municipal District was acknowledged and appreciated by all.

Their fellow Elected Members of Shannon Municipal District include; - Councillor Tony Mulcahy, Councillor Michael Begley, Councillor John Crowe, Councillor Rachel Hartigan and Councillor David Griffin. The Elected Members play a vital role in representing and advocating for their communities and in improving the quality of life for the residents of the Shannon Municipal District through the delivery of various projects and initiatives during 2024. Some of the highlights of 2024 include the following notable projects and events.

International Bike Day event

To mark World Bicycle Day, a luncheon cycle event was organised. The short, fun cycle took place from Shannon Free Zone to Shannon Town Centre.

Employees from Shannon companies took to their bicycles to celebrate World Bicycle Day, marking Shannon's inaugural participation in this annual global celebration of the humble two-wheeler. This unique lunchtime event was organised by Shannon MD, Shannon Chamber

and Fine Grain Properties with the support of Shannon Town Centre, HSE, CoMotion, and The Bike Doc, Ballycasey. One of the main aims was to create greater synergies and connections between the industrial zone and Shannon Town itself. Thanks to the generosity of CoMotion, operators of the shared bicycle scheme in Shannon, the majority of cyclists availed of the offer to use CoMotion's electric bikes free of charge, resulting in a sea of colour emblazoning the bikes as they wove their way from Shannon Free Zone, across the pedestrian overpass on the N19, onto Drumgeely Road and into Shannon Town Centre.

Shannon Municipal District staff took up warden positions along the route to ensure cyclist safety. The cyclists stopped off at the Town Centre for a light lunch, free health checks provided by HSE staff, bike repair advice from Ballycasey-based The Bike Doc, and ice cream cones compliments of Fine Grain Property. Councillor Donna McGettigan welcomed the cyclists to Shannon and said that World Bicycle Day was an ideal opportunity to promote cycling as a reliable, sustainable, affordable and accessible means of transport for all. The Council is working to respond to the needs and expectations of the community by providing safe cycling infrastructure through its Active Travel Programme and optimising existing infrastructure more efficiently. Greenway projects are being advanced throughout the County with one from Shannon to Bunratty currently being progressed.



Mela Festival held in Shannon Town Park

A wonderful free family day was held in Shannon Town Park. Shannon MD ensured that the Park was looking its absolute best for the Festival which was attended by hundreds of people. Fidget Feet and Clare County Council teamed up with Creative Places Shannon and Shannon Tidy Towns to bring an impressive lineup of music, dance, children's entertainment and much more to the Town Park. Clare Mela performances were all amazing and it was wonderful to see the young dancers from Shannon perform their dance so professionally and confidently. Clare Mela, is a free award-winning arts event to celebrate cultural diversity.

Pride of Place Competition

Judging took place in Newmarket on Fergus and Bunratty for the Pride of Place national competition. Great effort was put in by both communities in showcasing the works carried out in these areas and the strong community spirit that abounds. The valuable work undertaken to make these communities the success that they are was evident for the judges to see. The judging process involved presentations and a tour of the villages. The judges were extremely impressed by the work being undertaken by the communities and the strong links with the Municipal District staff which was evident on the day. Well done to both for the excellent entries.



Special Recognition Awards

Shannon Municipal District was privileged to host a Special Recognition Award Ceremony. The event honoured and celebrated some outstanding contributions to communities by people who demonstrated leadership, commitment, determination, and hard work at local level. A formal Recognition Scroll was presented to the 12 recipients along with a commemorative plaque by Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan.

The recipients were:

- Joe Buckley, Damian O Rourke - nominated by Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan,
- Jimmy Begley, Margaret Grace - nominated by Cllr John Crowe,
- Lauren McElligott, Tom Golden - nominated by Cllr PJ Ryan,
- Siobhan O Driscoll, Grainne Hayes - nominated by Cllr Pat McMahon,
- Noel Madden, Enda Griffin - nominated by Cllr Michael Begley,
- Mary Deegan/Cratloe Community Council, Susan Madigan - nominated by Cllr Pat O Gorman.



Future Mobility Campus Day

Representatives from Shannon MD attended the MaaS4IRL Mobility Day at Future Mobility Campus Ireland (FMCI) who had the opportunity to hear about cutting-edge projects, join guided tours and network with other attendees. MaaS4IRL is a research project in conjunction with the Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics at

University of Galway. The demonstrations were of key automotive dataset gathering vehicles and projects. This innovative event was supported with financial contribution from Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and the Department of Transport under the SEAI Research, Development & Demonstration Funding Programme. Speakers at the event included Russell Vickers of Future Mobility Campus Ireland, Dr. Rafiqul Haque from University of Galway, Dr Gearoid Hynes

on community development principles and practices.



Working collaboratively with An Garda Siochana

2024 saw regular communication and collaboration between the Gardai and the MD in addressing community needs and concerns. Initiatives such as neighbourhood watch and school awareness programmes are spearheaded through this joint approach. This allows for the implementation of multifaceted solutions to address problems like anti-social behaviour and crime.

Cathaoirleach Pat O Gorman welcomed Sergeant Seamus Mulligan and Sergeant Denis Lavin to the September meeting of Shannon Municipal District. The presentation to the Members covered a wide range of topics including the current garda operating model, larger divisions, crime statistics, juvenile liaison programme, community engagement areas and the future focus of the local gardai. Sergeant Mulligan advised that neighbourhood watch, business watch, community information briefings and school visits will be their focus in the coming months. He also stated that targeted patrolling including higher visibility on the ground, and an increased focus on road traffic issues including drug driving detections will be to the policing forefront also. The importance of reporting crime incidents was highlighted to the Members. The strong working relationship between the Members and An Garda Siochana was acknowledged at the meeting



from Cityswift and many more. FMCI provides research and development infrastructure as well as services for the mobility sector and is also equipped with test vehicles, smart city infrastructure covering 12km of roads, a dedicated low speed testing area and a drone R&D flight hub.

Rural and Community Development Officer

The Rural and Community Development Officer gave a briefing to Shannon MD Members on his role before the September MD meeting and the Senior Executive Officer from the Rural & Community Directorate was also in attendance.

The Rural and Community Development Officer works diligently with local community groups of all sizes, building the capacity of voluntary community leaders and organisations to identify and source funding for projects, which will assist in ultimately providing their areas with an enhanced quality of life for its residents. Identifiable Projects should have a particular focus on the LECP (Local Economic and Community Plan) and the Clare Rural Development Strategy. The work is underpinned by engagement that is based



Building strong networks with key stakeholders at Culture Night

Culture Night was celebrated in September 2024 and Shannon MD worked closely with Shannon Community Partnership on facilitating this event.

Throughout the day and night, there was a series of events for the whole family to enjoy including folklore storytelling from Balor Otherworld at Shannon Library, followed by dancing at the crossroads with the Kirby family, a drumming circle led by Brian Fleming, and a choir performance at Drumgeely Plaza. Shannon was delighted to that Blackie O'Connell & Eoghan Neff brought their unique and talented music playing to Drumgeely. Their performance was an unforgettable auditory experience.

A very interesting and captivating short art film was also shown that focused on the early days of Shannon New Town 'Sionna Go Brea: A Journey into Shannon's Beginnings', brought insight to some of its original residents. This evocative film offered a glimpse into the town's unique history and the experiences that shaped its community. Yarn Bombing also added colour and excitement to the event. The yarn bombing of a Volkswagen beetle car that was on display on the night was amazing and had to be seen to be believed.



Corporate Plan Workshop

Cathaoirleach Pat O Gorman and Leas Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan attended a group workshop on the preparation of the new Corporate Plan for Clare County Council. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Sean O'Riordáin. This was a very interactive and practical event which garnered the views of the Members as well as senior staff on the future corporate priorities for the Council. It will serve as the Council's strategic framework for actions during the lifetime of the elected Council and it will play a key role in achieving the vision for the county of Clare.

Shannon Airport Sunflower Initiative

In October Shannon Airport hosted an event to announce they had joined the global Hidden Disabilities Sunflower initiative. This allows passengers with hidden disabilities to avail of a lanyard which indicates they would appreciate an offer of support from the airport team. This event was attended by Cathaoirleach Cllr. Pat O'Gorman, Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr Donna McGettigan and A Griffin, Acting Senior Executive Officer from Shannon MD. Mayor of



Councillor visit to Ardnacrusha Power Station

Clare Alan O Callaghan and Cllr Mary Howard were also in attendance on behalf of Clare County Council.

An Choill Bheag

Is a project currently being run by the EEU of An Taisce and LEAF Ireland - An Choill Bheag (AnCB) initiative. These are small, dense, biodiverse native woodland habitats planted on school and community grounds, providing a space for people and wildlife. It involves communities and students in every stage of the process: from planning and planting through to maintenance. An Choill Bheag (AnCB) is based around practical sustainable tree planting. These habitats provide an educational and recreational resource for schools and communities, enabling people to participate in Citizen Science, Woodland Skills, Nature and Wellbeing. Planting little woods also helps mitigate climate change, increases biodiversity, provides space for pollinator plants to grow, provides an outdoor learning space and much more.

Shannon Municipal District Office has engaged with An Taisce to deliver this project over the last 18 months, initially four schools agreed to participate in Shannon Town: St John's, St Senan's, St Conaire's and St Aidan's. A planting session took place on the 14th of November.

Cathaoirleach of the Shannon Municipal District Pat O'Gorman and Leas Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan assisted the staff and children of St Aidan's National School plant trees on the day.



Councillor visit to Ardnacrusha Power Station

The elected Members together with staff from Shannon Municipal District attended a briefing with ESB engineering staff on the operations of the Ardnacrusha Power Plant. The role of Parteen Weir was discussed as well as the importance of ensuring a coordinated approach by all the relevant Agencies to flood risk management.

A guided tour of the facility was also provided which proved very informative. The Ardnacrusha Hydro Station was the first electricity generating station operated by the ESB and was pivotal in the development of Ireland in the 20th Century and beyond

Community Grants

During 2024, a total funding allocation of €24,000 was awarded to various groups and organisations including sporting, cultural, historical and community groups under the Community Grant Scheme of the Shannon Municipal District. The objective of the grants scheme is to encourage and support local community organisations and community groups active in the cultural, artistic and community development areas of the district.

Official Switching on of Lights for Christmas

Families were encouraged to bask in festive cheer as the Christmas lights were turned on at Shannon Town Park on Monday the 2nd of December. Festivities got underway at 5:30pm where there was music from DJ Chris Walshe, carol singing from the Shannon Gospel Choir and a special visit by Santa and Mrs Claus.

The children were overjoyed to meet Mr & Mrs Claus who had taken time away from the North Pole to visit Shannon. The ceremony to switch on the lights followed on from that at 6pm, with Shannon MD Cathaoirleach Pat O’Gorman having the honour of lighting up the town. The night was thoroughly enjoyed by elected members, local authority officials and the public.



Summary Of Other Works

Schedule of Municipal District Works	Restoration Improvement Programme and Restoration Maintenance Programme carried out during 2024.
Hedge cutting	Hedge cutting work was carried out throughout the MD in 2024.
Tree Maintenance	Tree contract carried out tree maintenance throughout the MD.
Mini Road Sweeper	The mini road sweeper has been a fantastic asset to the MD and has been utilised across the district.
Road Markings	Upgrade maintenance across the district
Footpaths	Upgrade & maintenance across the district
Shannon MD	Installation of new speed limit signs across the district.
Renewal Town & Village Projects	Bunratty, Clonlara and Drumgeely, Shannon.
Low-cost Safety Schemes	Sixmilebridge and Shannon
Drainage work	Clonlara, Westbury, Meelick & Shannon
Traffic Calming Measures	Across the district
Shannon Industrial Estate	Jetting of drainage network.
Green Flag Retained in 2024	Shannon Town Park retained the prestigious Green Flag Award in 2024 - made possible through collaboration with a number of Bodies working to ensure the highest standards.

West Clare Municipal District

Kilrush LEA

The overarching vision for the WCMD is:

The regeneration and sustainability of our towns and villages with a view to making West Clare the best place to live, work and visit in that order of priority.

Municipal District meetings were held bi-monthly during 2024. The members of West Clare MD discussed the provision of services within the area and looked to progress the strategic development of facilities and amenities in the towns and villages in the district.

The Local elections were held in 2024 with the election of Councillors Dinny Gould, Rita McNerney, Ian Lynch, Gabriel Keating and Michael Shannon to the Kilrush LEA. The AGM of the West Clare MD took place on 1st July 2024. Councillor Rita McNerney was elected Cathaoirleach with Councillor Bill Slattery elected Leas Cathaoirleach.



The members also adopted the budgetary plan and agreed a General Municipal Allocation of €441,000 for 2025 at their budget meeting on 11th November 2024.

Members exercised their powers throughout the year in:

- Consideration and adoption of the Schedule of Municipal District Works for 2024
- Taking in charge of roads in estates in accordance with S11 of the Roads Act 1993
- S183 Disposal of Council owned properties at various locations within the MD
- S38 Traffic calming measures at a number of locations.

Strategic Workplan:

During 2024 elected members along with the Executive continued in the delivery of the Strategy and Work Plan for the West Clare Municipal District which was developed in 2020. The plan sets out thematic based actions and tasks for the period 2019-2025.

Service Provision

Service provision carried out by the Supervisors and Outdoor staff included - road maintenance of all types, emergency callouts, aiding An Gardaí and the Fire Service, Traffic management, responding to public complaints and dealing with environmental issues.

Continuing service provision in the Kilrush Offices included:

- Collection and receipting of monies e.g. housing rents, commercial rates, motor tax etc.
- Assisting with customer queries and dealing with customer complaints
- Accepting and processing various applications - housing applications, scaffolding licences, Road Opening Licence applications etc.
- Liaison with Elected Representatives
- Administration towards the delivery of the SMDW.

Amenities

Summer 2024 brought large numbers to the blue flag beaches and amenities in West Clare. The significant footfall put considerable pressure on the MD crew to prepare and

maintain the facilities to the high standard expected.

Sad passing of Retired Councillor PJ Kelly



The September Meeting of West Clare MD was fully adjourned as a mark of respect to the late PJ Kelly (RIP), long serving former member of West Clare MD.

The members passed on their condolence to PJ's wife Maura, daughters Alma & Aoife and son Barry John. In paying tribute to PJ, he was remembered for his long service to Clare County Council, his passion for rural & community matters and his expertise in the field of planning law.

Works undertaken in the Kilrush LEA in 2024 included:

- Footpaths, including improved disability access, in Cross, Kilkee, Kilrush, Lissycasey, Kilmihil, Killadysert, and Kilmaley
- Beaches - maintaining our seaside towns & villages to a high standard during the summer season. This included the hiring of seasonal beach operatives.
- Street Cleaning - Crews in Kilrush and Kilkee dedicated to street cleaning. Both crews also service satellite villages.

- Climate Change Adaptation projects including in Fodera, Quilty and Querrin



- Kilkee Cliff Walk
- Storms Bert & Darragh late 2024



- Number of Low Cost Safety Schemes completed in 2024 in Connolly and Querrin
- Emergency Storm damage repair works were completed in 2024 at the sea wall in Knock



- A number of Bridge repair projects were carried out in 2024 including at Ballycloghessy

- Large scale public realm works carried out in 2024 including Place Du Plouzane, Marian Estate, Chapel Street and N67 overlay Doonbeg.

Mars Cinema Feasibility Study



Completed in 2024 by Tourism Development International Ltd consultants, to support a future grant application to ensure the development progresses to the next stage of construction of a flagship facility for the town of Kilrush.

Active Kilrush Multi Use Games Area



Works completed in 2024 to provide basketball, tennis, volleyball and other sporting games facilities for the community. This is a joint project delivered collaboratively by Kilrush Electoral Area, Active Kilrush and Clare Sports Partnership.

Schedule of Municipal District Works 2024

Restoration Improvement Programme 2024 - 22km of road upgraded totalling €3,291,000
Restoration Maintenance Programme 2024 - 39km of road upgraded totalling €913,946

Additional Restoration Improvement funding 2024 totalling €401,089

Drainage Grant

Works totalling €214,000 carried out including the upgrading of pipework and drainage ditches across the Kilrush LEA.

Grass Cutting

Contractors were appointed to maintain public green areas in Kilrush & Kilkee.

Local Improvement Scheme/Community Involvement Scheme

A number of upgrade schemes were carried out under both LIS and CIS funding in 2024.

Ennistymon LEA

North Clare Traffic & Transport Plan

In recognition of the growing challenges posed by seasonal visitor traffic and local transport needs, the West Clare Municipal District has embarked on the creation of a North Clare Integrated Transport and Traffic Plan. This ambitious initiative, spearheaded by the Physical Directorate, brings together the expertise of the Tourism Directorate and the dedicated involvement of the West Clare Municipal District. By addressing critical capacity and infrastructure concerns, the plan aspires to create a seamless and sustainable transport experience for both locals and visitors.



The establishment of a Steering Group marks a significant milestone in the project, ensuring a coordinated and inclusive approach. Following thoughtful discussions, the draft Terms of Reference have been unanimously agreed upon by the West Clare Municipal District and the North Clare Community Group (NCCG). This collaborative effort reflects the strength of community participation, as evidenced by the productive meeting held at the Falls Hotel, En-nistymon in 2024. The plan's development continues, with Clare County Council engaging directly with local residents and stakeholders to ensure that all voices are heard. Additionally, the Council is identifying immediate solutions to alleviate traffic congestion at key hotspots, demonstrating its commitment to proactive intervention.

Ongoing Actions & Achievements

The North Clare LEA is steadfast in its efforts to address transport and traffic challenges, achieving meaningful progress through innovative initiatives:

Clockwise Trial for Buses, Caravans & Campervans

Launched on August 1st, this trial has revolutionised traffic flow during peak periods. By optimising routes and reducing bottlenecks, it ensures a smoother travel experience for all road users. This initiative has earned praise from both tourists and residents for its effectiveness and foresight.



Enhanced Signage

Strategically placed directional signage continues to guide road users with clarity and efficiency, helping locals and visitors navigate the area safely while reducing confusion on busy roads.



Appointment of Traffic Ambassadors

Introduced in early July, Traffic Ambassadors played an invaluable role in assisting tourists with route recommendations and providing local knowledge. Their efforts, which concluded in September, have not only enhanced visitor experiences but also gathered critical data on traffic patterns. This data is being analysed to shape future strategies, ensuring informed and impactful decision-making.

Schedule of Municipal District Works

As part of the 2024 Roadworks Programme, the District has prioritised essential upgrades to road infrastructure, benefiting communities through improved safety and accessibility,

these included but were not limited to:

- Overlay works at Rineen, Miltown Malbay have ensured smoother driving conditions and extended road durability.



- Overlay works at N67, Lisdoonvarna have enhanced connectivity for local residents and visitors alike.



Speed Limit Review

The installation of updated speed limit signage across local and urban roads, including estate signage in Corofin, exemplifies Clare County Council's commitment to ensuring safer roads for all. These measures contribute to enhanced road safety, particularly in residential areas, fostering a sense of security and well-being in the community.



Flooding Response

The aftermath of Storm Bert saw quick action from outdoor crews mobilized to tackle flooding issues during the weekend of

November 24th-25th. Their tireless efforts have mitigated damage in affected areas such as Ballyvaughan, showcasing the District's dedication to protecting communities and addressing emergencies with urgency and care.



Beach Amenities

The tireless work of beach operatives at North Clare's Blue Flag beaches and Doolin Pier has ensured pristine coastal spaces for locals and visitors to enjoy.



Raymond Toomey and Brian McNulty, supported by the new staff canteen in Lahinch, exemplify the commitment to maintaining world-class beach facilities that promote tourism, recreation, and community pride.

Showers at Lahinch Beach: Newly installed showers, including a foot shower, enhance the experience for beachgoers by adding convenience and comfort to their visits.



Litter Management

- **Street Cleaning:** Early morning street cleaning initiatives in Lahinch have contributed to a cleaner and more welcoming environment for residents and visitors.



- **Large Capacity Bins:** New high-capacity bins in Doolin and along the Lahinch Promenade ensure effective waste management, supporting the community's efforts to maintain the area's natural beauty.

Ennistymon Initiatives

- **Public Realm Improvement Works:** Approved at a Special Meeting of Clare County Council on July 26th, this project will bring significant upgrades to the Square and Parliament Street in Ennistymon. These improvements include enhanced footpaths, pedestrian-friendly raised tables and crossings, revised on-street

parking layouts, and new paving, lighting, and street furniture. These changes will elevate the town's aesthetic appeal while promoting accessibility and inclusivity for all.

- **Monastery Lane Car Park Development:** The tendering process for the demolition of buildings at Monastery Lane is completed to create 45 much-needed parking spaces. Work commenced in September 2024 and is ongoing, this initiative will ease parking pressures and support local businesses by improving access to the town.
- **Public Toilet Refurbishment:** The refurbishment of public toilets adjacent to Ennistymon Library is complete, and reopened in early 2024. These upgrades will provide modern and accessible facilities, benefiting both locals and visitors.



- **Bat Preservation Measures:** In alignment with environmental conservation efforts, bat boxes have been installed to facilitate the safe transfer of bats, allowing demolition work at McInerney's Lane to progress while safeguarding local wildlife.



STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT) FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

The Income and Expenditure Account Statement brings together all the revenue related income and expenditure. It shows the surplus/(deficit) for the year.

Expenditure By Division	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure	Net Expenditure
	2024	2024	2024	2023
	€	€	€	€
Housing and Building	34,115,918	34,702,911	(586,993)	(624,502)
Roads, Transportation & Safety	45,933,590	31,402,554	14,531,037	12,159,233
Water Services	12,329,060	11,701,689	627,371	233,966
Development Management	49,555,385	47,829,445	1,725,941	(1,497,779)
Environmental Services	17,730,805	4,192,987	13,537,818	13,103,216
Recreation & Amenity	12,926,593	1,623,574	11,303,018	10,249,547
Agriculture. Education, Health & Welfare	771,741	371,821	399,921	310,555
Miscellaneous Services	9,067,656	15,514,435	(6,446,779)	(4,936,108)
Total Expenditure/Income	182,430,749	147,339,415		
Net Cost of Division to be funded from Rates and Local Property Tax			35,091,333	28,998,127
Rates			45,555,852	44,497,281
Local Property Tax			11,640,129	7,861,963
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfer			22,104,648	23,361,116
Transfers from/(to) Reserves			(21,965,538)	(23,123,816)
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year			139,110	237,300
General Reserve at 1st January			3,349,552	3,112,252
General Reserve at 31st December			3,488,663	3,349,553

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (BALANCE SHEET) AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2024

	Notes	2024	2023
	1	€	€
Fixed Assets			
Operational		647,344,577	605,318,447
Infrastructural		2,263,886,131	2,263,886,131
Community		1,105,138	1,105,138
Non-Operational		46,698,108	46,868,108
		2,959,033,954	2,917,177,824
Work-in-Progress and Preliminary Expenses	2	109,070,565	91,980,616
Long Term Debtors	3	70,395,309	49,218,724
Current Assets			
Stock	4	115,804	742,230
Trade Debtors & Prepayments	5	41,981,517	32,889,290
Bank Investments		55,308,186	66,830,373
Cash at Bank		11,879,885	11,336,270
Cash in Transit		28,079	28,600
		109,313,471	111,826,764
Current Liabilities			
Bank Overdraft		-	-
Creditors & Accruals	6	54,188,428	60,030,457
Finance Leases		-	-
		54,188,428	60,030,457
Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)		55,125,043	51,796,307
Creditors (Amounts greater than one year)			
Loans Payable	7	94,583,669	89,993,886
Finance Leases		-	-
Refundable Deposits	8	8,634,968	6,948,536
Other		35,038,763	22,002,208
		138,257,399	118,944,630
Net Assets / (Liabilities)		3,055,367,472	2,991,228,842
Represented By			
Capitalisation	9	2,959,033,954	2,917,177,824
Income WIP	2	103,381,091	90,736,596
General Revenue Reserve		3,488,663	3,349,553
Other Specific Reserves		-	-
Other Balances	10	(10,536,236)	(20,035,131)
Total Reserves		3,055,367,472	2,991,228,842

SEMINARS/CONFERENCES/TRAINING ATTENDED BY CLARE COUNTY COUNCILLORS IN 2024

Conference entitled “The Finance Act” held in Carlingford, Co. Louth on 12th - 14th January 2024. (1 member attended)
LAMA Spring Training Seminar entitled “Building for Success” held in Donegal Town, Co. Donegal on 19th - 20th January 2024. (15 members attended)
AILG Elected Members Training Module 1 entitled “Elected Members Briefing” held in Dundalk on 25th January 2024. (1 member attended)
AILG Annual Training Conference 2024 held in Arklow, Co. Wicklow on 14th - 15th February 2024. (15 members attended)
Conference entitled “The First Home Scheme” held in Carlingford, Co. Louth on 23rd - 25th February. (2 members attended)
Conference entitled “A Practical Guide to Personal Taxation” held in Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 1st - 3rd March 2024 (10 members attended)
The Suck Valley Way Conference entitled “The Rise of Loneliness on The Emerald Isle” held in Roscommon on 13th - 14th March 2024. (3 members attended)
AILG Elected Members Training Module 2 entitled “Local Election 2024 Preparation” held in Kilkenny on 21st March 2024. (11 members attended)
AILG Elected Members Training Module 2 entitled “Local Election 2024 Preparation” held in Athlone on 23rd March 2024. (1 members attended)
AILG Elected Members Induction Training held in Mullingar on 11th July 2024. (6 members attended)
AILG Elected Members Induction Training held in Cork on 13th July 2024. (9 members attended)
AILG Autumn Training Seminar held in Monaghan, on 11th - 12th September 2024. (17 members attended)
AILG Elected Members Training Module 4 entitled “Overview of the Planning System” held in Tipperary on 26th September 2024. (9 members attended)
AILG Elected Members Training Module 4 entitled “Overview of the Planning System” held in Tullamore on 28th September 2024. (3 members attended)
Conference entitled “A Practical Guide to Budget 2024” held in Carlingford, Co. Louth on 13th - 15th October 2023. (7 members attended)
Conference entitled “A Practical Guide to Budget 2025” held in Carlingford, Co. Louth on 11th - 13th October 2024. (1 member attended)
LAMA Autumn Seminar entitled “Community Engagement and Irelands Place in Europe Going Forward” held in Navan, Co. Meath on 17th - 18th October 2024. (15 members attended)
AILG Elected Members Training Module 5 entitled “Local Authority Finance and Budget Process” held in Sligo on 24th October 2024. (1 member attended)

AILG Elected Members Training Module 5 entitled “Local Authority Finance and Budget Process” held in Limerick on 2nd November 2024. (2 members attended)

AILG Elected Members Training Module 6 entitled “A Councillors Guide to Home Upgrade Grants” held in Waterford on 14th November 2024. (9 members attended)

Conference entitled “Corporate Governance” held in Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 22nd - 24th November 2024. (2 members attended)

Contact information/telephone numbers

- **Clare County Council**
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
Telephone: (065) 6821616,
email: customerservices@clarecoco.ie,
website: www.clarecoco.ie

Hours of business: 9:00am to 5:00pm,
Monday to Friday

Note:

**Public Counters at Planning
Department and Cash Office:**

9:00am to 4:00pm

Housing Department:

9:00am to 1:00pm

Emergency contact number: (087)

2599568 (outside office hours only)

- **Motor Tax**
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
Telephone: (065) 6844661,
9:00am to 3:30pm Monday to Friday
email: motortax@clarecoco.ie
Public Counter 1:15pm to 3:00pm
Monday to Friday

- **Clare County Museum**
Tel: (065) 6823382,
email: ClareMuseum@clarecoco.ie
- **Active Ennis Sports and Leisure
Facilities**
Tel: (065) 6821604,
- **Glór Music Centre**
Tel: (065) 6845370

Direct dial in facility

To facilitate our callers all sections have a direct dial in facility. Individual sections can be contacted by dialling the following numbers:

- Archives, (065) 684 6402
- Arts Office, (065) 6899084
- Broadband & Digital, (065) 6899055
- Central Cash Office, (065) 6846208
- Corporate Services Department, (065) 6846209
- Environment Department, (065) 6846331
- Environment anti-litter freephone, 1800 606706

- Finance Department, (general queries), (065) 6846329
- Fire and Emergency Services Department, (065) 6846302
- Freedom of Information, (065) 6846405
- Group Schemes, (065) 6866119
- Housing Department, (065) 6846334
- Human Resources Department, (065) 6846415
- IT Department, (065) 6846339
- Local Enterprise Office Clare, (065) 6846229
- Partnership Facilitator, (065) 6846268
- Planning Department, (065) 6846232
- Records Management, (065) 6846387
- Register of Electors, (065) 6846363
- Revenue Department, (065) 6846530
- Transportation Department, (065) 6846333
- Road Design, (065) 6846479
- Rural and Community Department, (065) 6846222
- Tourism Department, (065) 6846283
- Veterinary Services Department, (065) 6846560
- Water Safety, (065) 6846270
- Rural Water Services, (065) 6866119

Municipal District offices

- Ennis, (065) 6866133
- Killaloe, (061) 640815
- Shannon, (061) 362319
- West Clare, (065) 7072283/
(065) 9054310

Library branches

- Corofin, (065) 6837219
- De Valera Branch Library, (065) 6846353
- Ennis Library Headquarters, (065) 6846350, website: www.clarelibrary.ie
- Ennistymon, (065) 7071245
- Kilkee Sweeney Memorial Library, (065) 9056034
- Kilmihil, (065) 9050528
- Killaloe, (061) 376062, Fax (065) 376062
- Kilrush, (065) 9051504
- Lisdoonvarna, (065) 7074029
- Local Studies Centre, Ennis, (065) 6846271
- Miltown Malbay, (065) 7084822
- Newmarket-on-Fergus, (061) 368411
- Scariff, (061) 922893
- Shannon, (061) 364266
- Sixmilebridge, (061) 369678
- Tulla, (065) 6835919

Other useful numbers

- Central Waste Management Facility, Ballyduffbeg, Inagh, (065) 6836960
- Scariff Recycling Centre and Transfer Station, (061) 921735
- Shannon Recycling Centre, (061) 364483
- Lisdeen Recycling Centre and Transfer Station, (065) 9060175
- Ennis Recycling Centre, (065) 6893705



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STATEMENT OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL (SIFC)

Introduction

I, Carmel Kirby, Interim Chief Executive (CE) of Clare County Council am responsible for the annual financial statement (AFS), prepared by the Director of Finance, in accordance with the accounting code of practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

I certify that the financial statements of Clare County Council for the year ended 31 December 2024, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents *fairly the financial position* of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the audited body conform with the statutory or other authorisation under which they purport to have been carried out.

The AFS reports on the day-to-day activity of Clare County Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines Clare County Council overall financial position as of the 31st of December 2024.

The *Statement of Comprehensive Income* represents expenditure and income on the day-to-day running of Clare County Council.

The key sources of income for Clare County Council are as follows:

	Current Year	Previous Year
	€'000	€'000
Goods and Services	56,986	58,205
State Grants & Subsidies	90,353	64,498
Other Contributions (as appropriate)	0	0
Rates	45,556	44,497
Local Property Tax	11,640	7,862

Income from State Grants and Subsidies increased by €25.9m , a 40% increase on the previous year explained predominantly by €11.2m grants administered for the Increased Cost of Business and Power Up initiatives of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment in supporting the SME sector, €3.7m in grants received and paid out for Vacant Properties returning to use , €2.5m in Road Grants and €4.8m in supports for the operations of the council under FEMPI, Rates revaluation and WRC Fire Cost . 2024 was also the first year that this council received 100% of its Local Property Tax income direct to the revenue account €3.8m additional income.

Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2024 is as follows:

	Current Year	Previous Year
	€'000	€'000
Income	204,535	175,062
Expenditure	182,431	151,701
Transfers to Capital	21,966	23,124
Exceptional Item	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for	139	237
Prior Year Adjustment	-	-
Opening Revenue Reserve	3,350	3,112
Closing Revenue Reserve	3,489	3,350

The Annual Financial Statement gives an overview of the financial position of Clare County Council at 31st December 2024. I am pleased to report a positive outcome with the 2024 Statement of Comprehensive Income (Income and Expenditure Account) as summarised above showing a near balanced position in the year. The table compares the 2024 financials with 2023 with the increase in income as outlined above matched by a corresponding increase in expenditure in administering the grant schemes referenced. A more detailed overview of the year is carried in the Annual Financial Statement 2024 report to members included as part of the AFS which is available on the Council's website.

The *Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)* represents the total financial activity of the council for the year together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

- Assets both recently constructed/purchased and historical assets
- Work in progress and preliminary schemes- mainly roads and housing
- Long Term Debtors – housing loans
- Current Assets- including Stock, Debtors, Cash at bank
- Current and long term liabilities- mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings
- Various Reserves/Balances

The Net Assets of Clare County Council at the end of 2024 total € 3.1bn and are as follows:

	Current Year	Previous Year
	€'000	€'000
Fixed Assets	2,959,034	2,917,178
Works in Progress	109,071	91,981
Long Term debtors	70,395	49,219
Current Assets	109,313	111,827
Current Liabilities	54,188	60,030
Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)	55,125	51,796
Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year)	138,257	118,945
Net Assets/(Liabilities)	3,055,367	2,991,229

The increase in Fixed Assets and Work in progress in 2024 over previous year is explained by the completion of the New Library in Ennis and the ongoing construction of the Shannon Bridge Crossing at Killaloe , together with an increase in Local Authority Housing stock in the year.

A Statement of Funds Flow was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

System of Internal Financial Controls

As Interim CE of Clare County Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by Clare County Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to Clare County Council. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

Financial control environment

As Interim CE of Clare County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.

- There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

As Interim CE of Clare County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

- procedures for key business processes have been documented
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority and
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

Procurement compliance

Clare County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

Internal audit and Audit Committee

As Interim CE, I can confirm that Clare County Council has an internal audit function with appropriate training provided to personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Clare County Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Clare County Council has an effective audit committee which carries out an annual effectiveness review of their activities. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- I. to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it;
- II. to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function;
- III. to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its Interim CE in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings;

- IV. to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and
- V. to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in Clare County Council.

Risk and control framework

Clare County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.

A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

As Interim CE, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the draft Annual Report submitted to Council members by 30 April 2025 and thereafter included in the published Annual Report prepared and adopted by the Council by 30 June 2025.

Signed by:


Interim Chief Executive

Dated:

14/4/2025.



Governance Statement

[for transitional use only in advance of full implementation of the Code]

Purpose

The purpose of this governance statement is to provide relevant information on the governance structures and governance arrangements within the local authority including on council, committees, senior management and related areas. It demonstrates our commitment to effective governance, recognises key legislative and good governance requirements and affirms the Council's compliance with the Local Government Code of Governance obligations.

Good Governance

Fundamentally, good governance in the local government sector and wider public sector is about delivering priorities, achieving objectives, behaving with integrity and acting in the public interest, in ways that are consistent with legal, regulatory and government policy obligations. Governance refers to the framework of rules, relationships, systems and processes by which the local authority is directed, controlled and held to account and whereby authority within an organisation is exercised and maintained. It encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship and leadership, direction and control.

Good Governance Principles

CORE PRINCIPLE 1 - Good governance means focusing on the purpose of the authority, on outcomes that deliver sustainable economic, community and wider societal benefits and on implementing a vision for the local authority.

CORE PRINCIPLE 2 - Good governance means promoting and demonstrating public service values through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

CORE PRINCIPLE 3 - Good governance means members and officials working together to achieve a common purpose within a framework of clearly defined functions and roles.

CORE PRINCIPLE 4 - Good governance means developing the organisational capacity and the leadership capability and competencies of members and officials to operate effectively and fulfil the purpose of the organization.

CORE PRINCIPLE 5 - Good governance means taking well-informed and transparent decisions and managing risks and performance.

An Roinn Seirbhísi Corparáideach
Stiúrthóireacht Forbairt Pobail

Áras Contae an Chláir, Bóthar Nua, Inis, Co. an Chláir, V95 DXP2

Corporate Services Department
Rural Development Directorate

Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare, V95 DXP2

CORE PRINCIPLE 6 - Good governance means engaging openly and comprehensively with local people, citizens and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

CORE PRINCIPLE 7 - Good governance means actively contributing to the furtherance and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by delivering on the priorities and actions within the Climate Action Plan and the provisions of the Climate Act.

Our Commitment to Good Governance

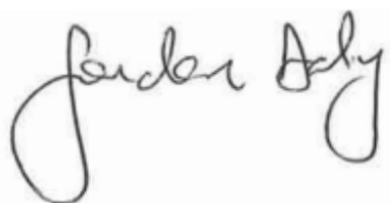
As the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive of the council, and on behalf of the elected members, management and staff we confirm that;

1. We recognise governance principles as the fundamental bedrock and philosophy on how we operate as a governing body and as an executive.
2. The compliance of this Council with the Local Government Code of Governance has been reviewed and assessed.
3. The Statement of Internal Financial Control is included in the Annual Report.
4. Compliance with legal and regulatory obligations are acknowledged and adhered to.
5. There is clarity of roles and responsibilities based on the reserved and executive functions and based on committee terms of reference.
6. Codes of Conduct and ethics declarations for members and employees are in place.
7. Procedures are in place for the making of protected disclosures in accordance with section 21(1) of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 and confirmation that the annual report required under section 22(1) of the Act has been published.
8. The Council and Committees review their own performance on a periodic basis.
9. We initiated a review of appropriate governance oversight arrangements in respect of subsidiary, associated and related companies.
10. As part of our commitment to effective oversight and accountability, we continue to enhance our overall assurance framework utilising external and internal assurance sources to ensure good performance as part of our governance culture.



Cathaoirleach

Date: **29th May 2025**



Chief Executive

Date: **29th May 2025**



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