



COMHAIRLE | CLARE  
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

# TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

## MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Samhain / November  
2023



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# FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

## CORPORATE SERVICES

### New York Clare Association



Pictured with Paul Keating, his wife Deirdre and sons Shane and Ronan at his presentation of Clare Person of the Year are: PJ Smith, 1st Vice President, UNICANY; Ann Reynolds, Senior Executive Officer, Clare County Council; Maureen C. O'Neill-Regan, President, County Clare PB&S Association of New York, Inc.; Johnny Harvey, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Clare Association; Cllr Joe Cooney, Cathaoirleach, Clare County Council; and Gareth Hargadon, Deputy Consul General of Ireland in New York.

Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney, and Ann Reynolds, Senior Executive Officer, Clare County Council, travelled to New York City, US, during October, where they attended the 135th Anniversary Dinner Dance of the New York Clare Association. The event celebrates the Irish community's contribution to life in New York and acknowledges the strong ties between the city and people who are from, or have connections to, County Clare.

At the event, Paul Keating was honoured as the Clare Person of the Year, to acknowledge his hard work and dedication in keeping the Irish culture and heritage alive in New York. Paul is the son of two Clare natives, Martin Keating of Ballyea and Mary Murray of Caherderry. Having an intense interest in traditional Irish music and dance, Paul is a member of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, and is a previous President of the Clare Patriotic Benevolent and Social Association of New York. As a dedicated journalist, he recently concluded a 20-year run as a weekly columnist for the Irish Voice newspaper, penning 'From the Hob' based on his comprehensive coverage of the local, national and Irish celebration of its native cultural heritage.



Gareth Hargadon, Deputy Consul General of Ireland in New York; Sean Lane, Chairman, NYC St Patrick's Day Parade; Ann Reynolds, Senior Executive Officer, Clare County Council; and Cllr Joe Cooney, Cathaoirleach, Clare County Council.



**Chief Executive addresses meeting of Scottish CEs**

The Chief Executive of Clare County Council, Pat Dowling, was invited to contribute to a meeting of the Scottish CEs to brief them on current issues confronting local government in Ireland and, given Clare County Council being Local Authority of the Year in Ireland, the various initiatives being led by the Council. In addition, the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) facilitated a meeting with the Management Team at East Lothian Council, which is a leading innovator in large-scale affordable and social housing in Scotland.

**Communications**

The Communications Office communicates and promotes Council activities and services and raises public awareness of issues of local and national interest. Media releases issued during October included:

- Clare County Council Launches Draft Climate Action Plan for Public Consultation
- Work to commence on €11.6m Ennis Public Realm Project
- New Vandeleur Café and Restaurant to Create 10 Jobs
- Construction Contract for Kilrush Fire Station Upgrade is Signed.

**Social Media**

The Communications Office monitors and updates social media

channels with creative content to enhance engagement with the public and maintain awareness of the work of the Council.



**Check the Register Media Campaign**

The next national awareness campaign commenced on Monday, 6th November. This campaign is TV and radio led and includes digital ads. The campaign again highlights the changes to the electoral registration process and invites the public to engage with the process specifically to either confirm or update their details – including by adding their date of birth, PPSN and Eircode. The November campaign also includes additional assets which have a youth focus aimed at 16/17-year-olds and young people in general, and older voters who may not realise the request to go to [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie) also applies to them.

This campaign and the campaign led by Clare County Council in October has resulted in a significant increase in the number of individuals, both registering to vote for the first time and those updating their details on [www.checktheregister.ie](http://www.checktheregister.ie)

**PROCUREMENT**

The following Clare County Council tender competitions were published on eTenders in the period from 26th September to 25th October, 2023, inclusive:

Tender Name	RFT ID	Response deadline
Mars Cinema Feasibility Study	2533861	13/11/2023 17:00
Grass maintenance 2024 and 2025 - Ennis Municipal District	2525632	17/11/2023 16:00
Festive Lighting 2024-2025 - Ennis Town	2507491	17/11/2023 16:00
Weed Control 2024 and 2025 - Ennis Area	2506701	17/11/2023 16:00
Cliffs of Moher - Provision of Bus Shelter	2500235	25/10/2023 04:00

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Recruitment Competitions October

#### Competitions Advertised

##### Open

Assistant Civil Defence Officer  
IS Technical Support Officer  
Irish Language Development / Communications  
Officer  
Technician Grade I (Civil, Architectural & Building)  
Temporary Archivist  
Caretaker / Cleaner  
Print Room Attendant  
Retained Part Time Firefighter Panel ( Ennistymon,  
Kilkee, Kilrush, Killaloe & Shannon)

#### Eligibility Exercises & Desktop Shortlisting

Executive Technician

#### Interviews

Temporary Senior Executive Architect  
Temporary Executive Engineer  
Integration Support Worker (Grade VI)  
Integration Support Co-ordinator (Grade VII)  
Executive Technician  
Co-op Student Placements  
Various Salting Routes (Winter Maintenance Programme)  
Winter Maintenance Truck Drivers (Salting) Relief Panel  
Canteen Manager

## ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAMMES / WEBINARS / INFORMATION SESSIONS

**OCTOBER**

Clerical Officer & Analogous Training  
Staff Officer & Analogous Training  
Assitant Staff Officer & Analogous Training  
Difficult Customers & Personal Safety  
Banksman Course  
Work Smarter not Harder Online Course  
Chainsaw Refresher Course  
Effective Business Writing  
Minute Taking for Meetings  
School Warden Training  
Metacompliance cyber security for new starters  
Metacompliance Essential Phishing Awareness

### Essential Skillz Online Training

Health & Safety Induction  
Slips, Trips & Falls

### Health & Safety

ESB Safety Talks  
Serious Incidents Simulated Exercise

### Employee Wellbeing

**World Mental Health Day:** Free Gym/Swim offered to staff, yoga soundbath session was raffled, counselling services and Workplace Buddies advertised and Mental Health Ireland services. Safe talk course provided to staff.

**Menopause Day:** Information issued regarding availability of GP to staff and menopause books raffled.

Remote Working and Wellbeing course offered to staff.

**Flu Vaccine Programme** was available to staff.



# TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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## Contract signing for Inis Cealtra Visitor Experience at the Old Rectory, Mountshannon

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A very significant tourism project to be undertaken in East Clare has moved a step closer following the signing of a contract for the development of the Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) visitor centre in the heart of Mountshannon village.

Overlooking Mountshannon Harbour and Lough Derg, the Old Rectory is an historic period house dating from 1905 and is set to be repurposed and extended into a visitor and interpretative centre for Inis Cealtra (Holy Island).

Clare County Council signed a contract with M. Fitzgibbon Contractors Ltd for the redevelopment of the visitor centre building, which, once completed in 2024, will comprise a

revitalised exhibition area that interprets local stories and the island of Inis Cealtra, a reception area, an upstairs café and rectory garden.

The successful funding awarded for this project which includes the repurposing of the Old Rectory as well as waste-water optimisation works and public realm works at Mountshannon is €4,290,765 from the Department of Rural and Community Development as part of Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) Category 1 funding, with an additional 20% match funding committed from Clare County Council.

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## Contract signing for New Vandeleur Café and Restaurant at Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre

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Clare County Council signed contracts with Martins Construction Ltd. on Monday, 23rd October, 2023 for the development of a 140-seater indoor and outdoor café and restaurant. The new café and restaurant development consists of restoration work and alterations within the existing stable block courtyard to support tourism development, including a café and restaurant, indoor and outdoor dining area, kitchen, office and welfare facilities.

Following a competitive tender process for the restaurant, award-winning Brambles Café chain were awarded the tender for operating the new facility, which will allow for Vandeleur Walled Garden and Visitor Centre to cater for corporate and festive events. It is anticipated that the new facility will open in June 2024. Brambles family-run business produces a world-class

dining experience as evidenced by its service offering at the Cliffs of Moher Experience since 2019. Brambles' ethos of 'farm to fork' through its use of local and Irish products whenever possible is very much welcomed. The proposed new facility is good news for local suppliers and customers as their team at Vandeleur seeks to develop a menu incorporating a strong Clare influence. Brambles' menus currently feature a host of Clare produce having established links with CS Fish, CMK Foods, Kellys Meats, Pynes Potatoes, Burren Smokehouse, Clare Jams, Celtic Leaves, Cleanwell, Cratloe Hills Cheese, Clare Foods and Hurst Botanicals.

Works have been ongoing since 2021 to extensively restore and renovate the site as part of an overall Visitor Development Strategy that also includes the improved use of the 420 acres of surrounding native woodland. Earlier this year, a new interpretive centre was opened together with the newly renovated stable block, a new gardener's maintenance building and public toilet facilities. The Department of Rural and Community Development also has approved funding totalling €245,000, with 25% match funding from Clare County Council, for the recently completed resurfacing of the public carpark and other ancillary service works.

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## Ennistymon Destination Towns

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Representatives of Clare County Council and Fáilte Ireland joined with members of the local community in Ennistymon to mark the successful completion of a Destination Towns initiative that has significantly enhanced the public realm and the visitor experience in the North Clare town.

€500,000 was allocated towards the project by Fáilte Ireland under the Destination Towns scheme, with the Local Authority providing an additional 25% match funding.

Work on the capital project investment commenced in early 2021 following a period of public consultation and has since delivered an extensive array of public realm works aimed at further improving the overall visual attractiveness of the town,

promoting the town's rich heritage, and enhancing pedestrian movement and accessibility.

A key element of the project has been the emphasis placed on increasing dwell time in the town and reducing vehicle dominance through the introduction of gathering areas for social interaction and additional accessible street furniture, pedestrian crossings, bicycle racks, street tree planting, and accessibility improvements throughout the town. The widening of existing footpaths has also resulted in new public spaces being created to encourage outdoor activities, street cafés and additional opportunities for markets and fairs.

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## AVEA Conference in Clare, 23rd-24th October

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Organised by the Chief Executive of AVEA, Catherine Flanagan, and Chair of AVEA, Geraldine Enright, the 2023 Annual Conference of AVEA, Ireland's Association of Visitor Experiences & Attractions, took place in Co. Clare on Monday, 23rd and Tuesday, 24th October. The theme of the Conference was 'World Class Experiences: Local Authenticity.' The focus of the conference is on how, in striving to deliver best-in-class visitor experiences, the visitor must feel an authentic

sense of place, a unique and special feeling that makes great memories.

Anchored firmly in Co. Clare, the conference sought to generate a personal and emotional bond through place-making, and featured elements of Clare's distinctively rich culture and heritage – storytelling, music, landscape and seascape, curiosity, and hospitality.

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## Loop Head Lighthouse represented at the Great Lighthouses of Ireland Conference 2023

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Loop Head Lighthouse was delighted to take part in the Great Lighthouses of Ireland Conference which was held in Belfast in early October. Lighthouse, marine and tourism leaders met over a three-day Great Lighthouses of Ireland conference, planning future growth for lighthouse tourism. The partnership is led by Irish Lights, who founded it in 2015, and is made up of public, private and community sector partners.

The conference opened at the Titanic Hotel in Belfast on Sunday, 8th October, with an introduction by Bobby Kerr and an opening session by Irish Lights CEO Yvonne Shields O'Connor. Ms O'Connor focused on the need to create a vision for developing lighthouse tourism. Kerrie Sweeney, CEO of Maritime Belfast, talked about the unique and successful maritime heritage destination it represents. The gathering then moved to Rathlin Island on Monday, 9th October, to look



at ways to collaborate and develop better visitor experiences for the future. On Tuesday, 10th October, the conference was held at Blackhead Lighthouse in Whitehead, Co. Antrim, where further discussions took place about what's involved in building a community cluster and experiences and the value of offering lighthouse accommodation and visitor experiences.

Eimear Callaghan, Head of Programmes at Tourism Northern Ireland, said the conference provided a welcome opportunity "...

to explore a number of lighthouse related projects in Northern Ireland. This included visits to Maritime Belfast, Rathlin Island and Blackhead Lighthouse in Co. Antrim."

"We want to harness the appeal of lighthouses for the benefit of the wider destination and community. In collaboration with public, private and community partners, our goal is to develop sustainable visitor experiences based around our rich maritime heritage and culture."

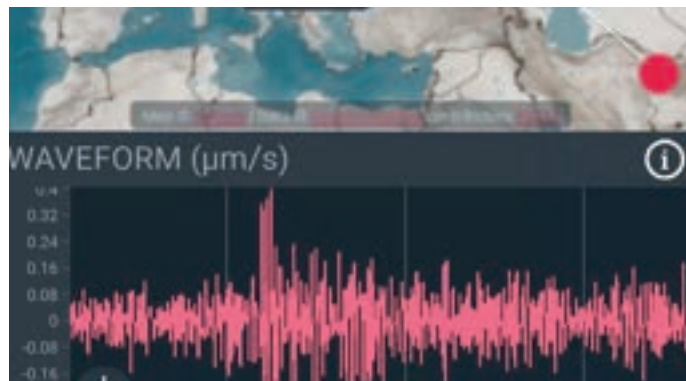
## The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark

### Seismometer

Last month a new Raspberry Pi/seismometer was provided to the Geopark by the Dublin Institute of Advanced Sciences and Geological Survey Ireland. The system uses Raspberry Shake and is a part of an international network of mini seismometers. The seismometer has recorded several seismic events since its installation in the Geopark office in Ennistymon last month. Most notably, it recorded waves from the 6.3 magnitude earthquake which occurred in Afghanistan on 10th October. The seismometer in the Geopark office is one of a network of 15 meters around the island of Ireland.

The live feed from the Geopark seismometer can be seen at:

<https://dataview.raspberrypi.org/#/AM/R98FA/00/EHZv>



The Raspberry Shake seismometer in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark office captured this 6.3 earthquake in Afghanistan on 10th October.

### Launch of the Story of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark Animations

The Geopark team launched their new Story of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark animation series in Kilfenora National School on 6th October to celebrate International Geoheritage Day. The 3rd and 4th class students thoroughly enjoyed learning about the Geopark as they watched the story of its development unfold on the screen before them. They were captivated by the colourful flurry of fossils, rolling limestone hills and underground river systems. The animations were developed by Magpie 6 Media, an animation company

based in Clare. They were funded through a geoheritage grant provided by the Geological Survey of Ireland.

The animations can be viewed at: <https://www.burrengeopark.ie/geopark-animations/>



### Showcase at the Fáilte Ireland – Clare and Limerick Networking Event

The Geopark were busy promoting GEOfood and the Geopark Ambassadors Programme at the Fáilte Ireland – Limerick and Clare Networking event on 18th October. Seán spoke about both projects in a brief presentation and provided more information to interested attendees throughout the day. The presentation encouraged a few more sign-ups for the Ambassadors Programme. GEOfood continues to grow and will be well represented by GEOfood producers and the Geopark at the Burren Food Fayre on 29th October.

## Clare Limerick Networking Event, Fáilte Ireland, Wednesday, 18th October



Clare representatives turned out in strong number to network during the Fáilte Ireland Clare and Limerick Tourism event on Wednesday, 18th October, with a presentation provided by Seán O'Farrell, on The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark.

## AICF Conference



AICF Conference with Milwaukee Irish Fest Founder Colleen Kennedy.

The Association of Irish and Celtic Festivals (AICF) had their national annual conference on international soil this year for the first time since pre-pandemic. The chosen location was Galway, but Clare had strong input by securing a three-day pre-conference tour throughout East, North and South Clare.

The delegation comprised of established Irish Festivals that are organised and run in North America throughout the year. The Milwaukee Irish Festival, while the largest one, is one of many within the United States.

The Visit Clare team were strongly represented at the conference with the provision of showcase demonstrations from Dirty Nellys Irish Coffee Making and Bunratty Mead. In addition, Joan Tarmey, Tourism Officer, provided a lunchtime presentation to the 120 delegation on the best reasons to Visit Clare.

## Scare Clare – Halloween Happenings



The Visit Clare team collated the countywide content for Halloween Happenings as part of 'Scare Clare' local marketing and promotional campaign.

This content was transferred to an e-book on a dedicated webpage of Visit Clare: [www.VisitClare.ie/scares](http://www.VisitClare.ie/scares) with the tagline, 'The County's Halloween Happenings offer something for everyone. Join in the festivities and immerse yourself in the spirit of the season.'

## Miss Ireland promo video on Clare for Miss World 2023



The Visit Clare team hosted Miss Ireland 2022, Ivanna McMahon, on a tour of the county. Ivanna is from Barefield, Ennis, County Clare, and will be representing Ireland at Miss World 2023 in December 2023 in Delhi, India. Her introductory video will spotlight all of the county:

1. Irish dancing / introduction (in Irish and English) at Bunratty Castle.
2. Playing the fiddle at the Cliffs of Moher.
3. Harp at the Burren.
4. Tin whistle in Killaloe.
5. Bodhran / walking through Mountshannon Maze .
6. Drums in Ennis.

## Twinning

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Langenfeld visit to Ennis (23rd October, 2023).

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The Ennis-Langenfeld Twinning relationship is going from strength to strength with thanks to the local and voluntary Ennis Twinning Committee who keep this revived with the support of Ennis Municipal District and the Tourism Department.

A delegation of four from Ennis travelled to Langenfeld in early October to comprise of Councillor Mary Howard, Dara Glynn, Bernard Dilger and Patrick Tiernan (Ennis MD) in a response

formal reception to mark the 10th anniversary of this Twinning Charter.

On 23rd October, another large delegation from Langenfeld was welcomed to the Civic Room of Ennis Municipal District by Mayor of Ennis Municipal District, Cllr Pat Daly. This reception, with music provided from 'Los Paddys', was the start of a week long holiday in Clare for our German friends.

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## Monsters, Misfits, and Mayhem at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park

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A weekend filled with thrills, scares, and family fun as Monsters, Misfits, and Mayhem took place at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park from 28th October to Bank Holiday Monday, 30th October.

This year's programme was guaranteed to thrill and terrify the entire family. From ghosts swooping from the skies to a deathly

torture chamber in the castle basement and from the witches' kitchen to the wicked wake, no gravestone was left unturned at the 26-acre visitor attraction this Halloween.

The park's traditional Village characters abandoned their old-style Irish tweeds for Halloween attire, and the Folk Park was transformed into a cauldron of spooky Halloween activities.

Children of all ages took a ride through the Folk Park on the Halloween Haunted Train where they were on their guard for executioners, convicts, grim reapers, and zombies lurking around every corner. Indeed little monsters were encouraged to keep an eye out for the resident Magician and Puppeteer Extraordinaire as he casts a spell of magical antics on the Village Street throughout the weekend.

At the Golden Vale Farmhouse, Bean an Tís discussed the types of food that typically would have been eaten during Samhain, and recalled the peculiar superstitions of the time. They also hosted Halloween-themed games where guests can participate in traditional Halloween games such as Bobbing for Apples, Blind-Man's-Buff and Snap Apple.

## Halloween: Spooky Season at the Cliffs of Moher Experience



The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre was adorned with Halloween decorations from Tuesday, 24th October, to Monday, 6th November.

The Visitor Centre welcomed ghosts, goblins, witches and wizards in all shapes, sizes and ages. There was some Spooktacular entertainment planned from Saturday, 28th to Monday, 30th October, from a Halloween Clue Hunt, Spooky Story Telling and Face Painting.

## WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT – KILRUSH LEA

Despite the inclement summer weather, we have completed our 2023 Schedule of Municipal District Works (*Roadworks Programme*). In the last month our roadmaking crews have been completing roadworks on Local Improvement & Community Involvement Schemes (LIS & CIS). We are also completing a very beneficial Low-Cost Safety Scheme (LCSS) at Tiermaclane (near the grounds of Fern Celtic FC).

We have carried out other works, in particular footpath improvements and disability access improvements.

### Road strengthening works at Cloonabough, Connolly.



### LIS road at Recallan.



### CIS road at Cloonagown, Kilnanona.



### LCSS at Tiermaclane.



Before



After



Before

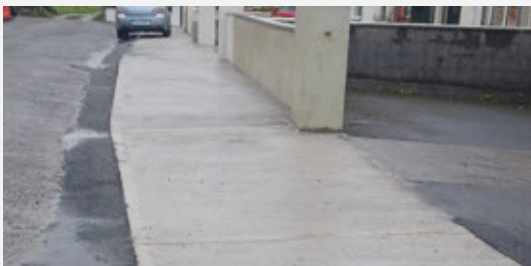


After

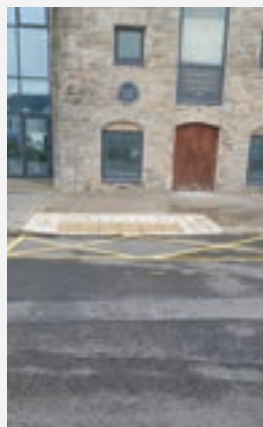
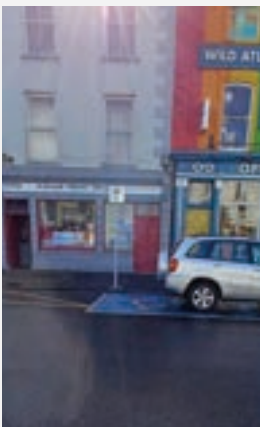
**New footpath at East End Kilkee.**



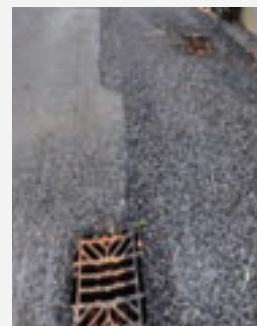
**Replacement footpaths at Shannon Heights, Kilrush.**



**New signs and road markings to improve disability access, Kilrush.**



**Improve existing drainage on Shellshock Road, Kilrush.**  
Houseowner reporting ponding of surface water on the road.



**Install CyKilrush signage.**



**Relocate Atlantic rowers' monument. New plinth for monument and other memorial plaques. Wild Atlantic Way viewing point car park, Kilkee.**



## Vandeleur Walled Gardens

**Clean up of accumulated waste at the Gate lodge entrance**  
 The clean-up was a joint effort between West Clare MD, Clare County Council Environment Section, Clare County Council Housing Section and Coillte with the assistance of Clare Waste (contractors). Staff removed over 20 tonnes of waste from the Vandeleur Gate lodge entrance to the walled gardens. This waste has accumulated over a period of time. This is part of the ever-developing partnership with Coillte at Vandeleur Woods. There are plans to repair the (protected structure) boundary wall in this area and extend the current walks from the Gate lodge entrance to the Turret Lodge entrance which should be a great addition to the walled gardens and to the community resident on this side of Kilrush.



Before



Clean up



After

## Ennistymon LEA

Works have been carried out on the Local Improvement Scheme at Doonagore, Doolin.



# RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## Two Youth Initiatives Kick Off In Cloughleigh

Two new initiatives aimed at increasing youth participation in sporting and recreational activities in Cloughleigh and the wider Ennis West area were announced.

A six-week introductory kickboxing programme for teenagers held at Cloughleigh Community Centre in Davitt Terrace while the all-weather facility in Cloughleigh hosted a Halloween Multi Activity Kids Camp from 31st October to 2nd November.

Organised by the Cloughleigh Residents and Development Group, the initiatives were funded under the Community Support Fund by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered through the Clare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).

The 'Kickboxing For Teenagers' programme was hosted by Ennis-based kickboxing coach Conor Murphy and was aimed particularly at teenagers, aged 13 to 17, living in the Ennis West area.

Halloween Multi Activity Kids Camp for children aged 8 to 12 years featured a range of sports and fun activities that was hosted by Mark O'Donnell, Development Officer with Clare GAA, and Elizabeth McNicholas, Sport Development Officer with Clare Sports Partnership, as well as local community volunteers.



## National PPN Conference

Minister Joe O'Brien, with responsibility for Community Development, Charities and Integration, addressed the National Public Participation Network (PPN) Conference in the Arklow Bay Hotel in Wicklow, confirming the Department's continued support of PPNs into the future. The National PPN Conference 2023 was held on 5th-6th October, 2023, jointly hosted by Wicklow PPN in conjunction with Wicklow County Council and the Department of Rural and Community Development, at which representatives of Clare PPN and Clare County Council were in attendance. Designed to showcase the work of PPNs around the country as key partners in local decision making, this annual event presents a unique opportunity for networking, building on the collaborative work between PPNs and local government. The theme of this year's conference was "Participation in Action" recognising the benefit that PPNs bring to communities and local government, ensuring that the voices and concerns of our residents are heard and addressed.

The conference was attended by 200 delegates from around the country and included a variety of workshops and presentations on collaborative projects between PPNs and Local Authorities together with innovative community schemes initiated by PPNs around the country. Sarah Clancy, Clare PPN Coordinator, was invited to host a workshop on Day 2 on the recent Clare PPN publication, "Towards an Anti-Poverty Strategy for Clare". Other workshops on Day 2 included Tipperary Climate Coaches and Waterford Community Safety Partnership.



## Rural & Community Information Clinics on Community Funding Opportunities

On Monday, 16th October, the Rural Development Directorate began a schedule of walk-in clinics to support community groups and organisations in project development and funding opportunities. The first two events were held in Shannon and Ennis with a strong turnout in both areas with over 40 groups availing of the expertise on the day. Further clinics were held throughout the county in Scariff, Tulla, Kilrush and Ennistymon, which also had strong interest.

The Rural Directorate's Rural Community Development Officers (RCDOs) were on hand to facilitate the clinics. They were also assisted by Kelly Slattery from the Climate Team, John Treacy, Acting Heritage Officer, and Barry O'Loughlin, Biodiversity Officer.

The clinics were aimed at providing community groups and organisations information on upcoming funding streams including:

- Clare Local Area Grants Scheme (CLAGS)
- Community Climate Action Programme
- Heritage Council.

As well as providing information on upcoming funding opportunities the clinics were an opportunity to engage with community groups to advise them on other funding streams that will be coming online in the coming months, and to seek the RCDOs' assistance and knowledge in preparing applications for these national funding streams. It was also an opportunity for newly established community groups and organisations to meet with

the RCDOs, to see what potential grants are available to them and understand how the process works. Groups also had the opportunity to discuss various issues affecting them and to arrange further meetings with the RCDOs for their areas.

Elected representatives were also present at the events to lend their support and expertise.

The clinics were extremely well attended with good engagement from all groups, with the feedback positive from all groups who expressed their gratitude to be able to attend the clinics and on the information that was available. It is anticipated that further clinics will be rolled out in 2024.





RURAL DEVELOPMENT



## Free 'Clare Autism Aware' webinars

A series of free online training webinars were offered to community and voluntary groups across Clare as part of the 'Clare Autism Aware' programme.

Supported by Clare County Council under the Disability Participation and Awareness Fund, Autism Consultant Dr Susan Crawford hosted the multi-level, county-wide training programme which was aimed at an increased awareness of autism spectrum disorder in the wider community.

The series of four Clare Autism Awareness webinars were held on

5th, 12th, 19th and 26th of October.

Given that one in every 65 children of school age has an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis, the webinar organisers hoped the project will have a direct impact on a large number of individuals across County Clare.

For more information, please visit: <https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/clareautismaware>

## Guide for Older Persons unveiled at Clare Age Friendly Strategy Workshop



Back (left to right): Ann Daly, Mary O'Callaghan, James Gallagher, Mary Hogan (Members of Clare Older People's Council); Bernadette Haugh, Senior Executive Officer; Brendan Boyce, Clare Age Friendly Programme Manager; Helen Moloney, Clare Age Friendly Programme; Monica O'Loughlin, Larry Hally (Members of Clare Older People's Council); and Jason Murphy, Director of Service. Front (left to right): Susan Harvey (Clare Older People's Council); Emer Coveney, National Programme Manager, Age Friendly Ireland; Maurice Harvey, Chairperson of the Clare Older People's Council; Cllr Joe Cooney, Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council; Eithne Mallin, Consultant; and Carole Head (Clare Older People's Council).

The Clare Age Friendly Programme, supported by the Clare Older People's Council, has developed a comprehensive guide to the essential services and supports available for older adults and their families in the county.

The Directory of Services for Older People features contact details for public services, community and voluntary organisations and some community based social groups across the county, as well as guidance around entitlements, safety and security, transport and health.

The Directory was distributed to attendees of a workshop held at Treacy's West County Hotel in Ennis where older residents of the county gathered with key service providers from the statutory,

voluntary and community sectors to discuss and share ideas on the Clare Age Friendly Strategy 2023–2027. Round table discussions took place on World Health Organization (WHO) themes, the feedback from which will help to form the content for the new strategy.

Visit [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie) for more on the Clare Age Friendly Strategy 2023–2027.

Copies of the Directory of Services for Older People, which will be formally launched later in the year, are available from local library branches, local authority offices and GPs. Further copies of the Information Guide can be obtained by telephoning (065) 684 6240 or by emailing [agefriendlyclare@clarecoco.ie](mailto:agefriendlyclare@clarecoco.ie)

## Ukrainian Services

The CSO figures show there are currently 4,947 Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BoTPs) in County Clare. Approximately 4,115 are accommodated in 34 multi-occupancy facilities. The remaining people are accommodated in residential settings in formal hosted arrangements through the Irish Red Cross and Clare County Council's 'Offer-A-Home' scheme. We currently have 174 homes offered under this scheme and have accommodated approximately 334 people that were originally living in hotel and multi-occupancy facilities.

Clare County Council established the Community Response Forum to co-ordinate the community-led response in the provision of

assistance and support to Ukrainian nationals as they are accommodated in County Clare. The Forum, chaired by the A/Director Rural Development Jason Murphy, brings together private, community and voluntary organisations acting at local level in response to this emergency. An Internal Response Team has also been set up by the Council to respond to the crisis locally. Clare County Council hosted Regional Ukrainian Community Response Forums in Ennis, Lisdoonvarna, Kilkee and Shannon in September and October which saw a strong attendance and enabled agencies and community groups to discuss localised challenges and responses.

## SPORTS & RECREATION



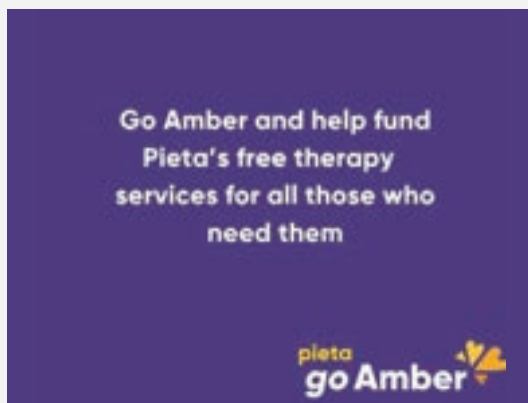
### Active Ennis Leisure Complex

#### Teen gym

Teen gym is running Monday, Wednesday, Friday 4-5pm and Saturday 5-6pm. It gives teens aged between 11 to 15 years old an opportunity to use our gym facility under the watchful eye of an instructor. It has seen a surge in numbers during October with the gym reaching capacity during these hours.

#### Pieta House

We have been raising awareness for the Pieta House Go Amber campaign at our main reception and through social media. Constant fundraising is needed to ensure Pieta can keep their 20 centres open and continue to provide free therapy online, over the phone, and in person. Fundraising also helps them continue to hire and reduce wait times.



#### Like & Share competition

To increase our followers on social media we ran a Follow and Share competition with the winner being picked at random to win 10 free gym or pool passes. This helped promote our social media platforms gaining over 150 new followers.



#### Footfall counters

With the recent installation of footfall counters at our main entrances we have been able to count the traffic into our complex. From 1st to 19th October, we have had a total of 17,344 visitors and an average of 860 visitors per day.

#### Pool

- Our Aqua Aerobics evening class back on Wednesday nights well supported.
- New Adult swimming lessons class full.
- Children's Swimming Lessons taking bookings, limited spaces available.

#### Active Ennis Lees Road, TSP, etc

- Activity at increased levels in Lees Road as we head into darker evenings. Positive figures in comparing Sept 2023

to Sept 2022: bookings up 3.3% to 217; activity hours up 3.9% to 331.5 hours; and revenue increase of 8.2%.

- New external doors due to arrive before month's end for facilities in Lees Road, Cloughleigh, Coote Park and the Leisure Complex.

[www.activeennis.ie](http://www.activeennis.ie) [www.activekilrush.ie](http://www.activekilrush.ie)

Any defects or operational issues can be reported by email to [info@activeennis.ie](mailto:info@activeennis.ie)



## Clare Sports Partnership Updates

### General Updates

- Budgets and Operational Plan 2024 have been submitted to Sport Ireland.
- ESF+ Social Innovation in Sport Officer has been appointed.
- Part-time links worker interviews have been held.
- Our development officers, Lizzy, Pat and James, attended a Regional Development Officer meeting in conjunction with Sport Ireland and other staff from Kerry Recreation and Sports Partnership, Limerick Sports Partnership and Offaly Sports Partnership in Ennis, on 4th October.

### Schools & Youth

- St Joseph's Secondary school, Spanish Point, are in their final week of the post-primary sports hall athletics programme.
- Get Going Get Rowing started in St Patrick's Comprehensive School in Shannon on 10th October.
- Primary schools have been borrowing playground markings and sportshall athletics packs to roll out in their schools, and Active Storytime has been delivered.
- Teen girls have received 3-month gym & swim memberships for Lahinch Leisure Centre as part of a new initiative to target inactive teen girls.
- A 6-week teen boys programme in conjunction with Spartan Fitness in Ennis is beginning on 24th October from 5pm–6pm. The participants will get a taster of strength training, boxing and Muay Thai as part of this programme.

### Education & Training

- We have run 2 SG1 courses and 1 SG2 course over the month of October. An SG3 course is also upcoming in November.
- 2 more Season of Respect (SOR) Level 1 Club Award workshops were completed this month which saw an additional 5 clubs in County Clare attain an SOR Level 1 award.

### Sports Inclusion

- Inclusive gymnastics with Ennis Gymnastics Club is ongoing on Monday and Tuesday evenings.
- Primary School Inclusive Gymnastics has just started and will be catering for 130 Children with ASD.
- We are just finishing our 4th Learn to Cycle course of 2023 in conjunction with ENNIS Voices for Autism and Cycle Right.
- We completed 2 Disability Awareness Workshops in October with 48 people taking part.

### Active Communities

- Our Healthy DOJO programme in conjunction with the HSE, is ongoing until 2nd November. We have 24 participants in total.
- We kicked off two Couch to 5K training programmes in Kilrush and Shannon. We have 75 adults and 27 children taking part.
- Two beginner swimming programmes for female adults in Ennis and Lahinch with 24 taking part.
- Two women in sport intermediate swimming programmes fully booked in Ennis and Lahinch for early November.
- Supported West Clare Cycling Club to establish a youth section within the club. First cycling club to do so in Clare.

### Club Development

- Clubs are still submitting their grant spend report for our record number of grants in 2023.
- We are supporting a new Underwater Hockey club to help set up in Shannon.
- We are supporting a minority sport of curragh rowing – Fergus Curragh Club, with club development.
- We are arranging a REC 3 first aid course for some staff and outdoor clubs for early November.
- We have a Mountain Skills 2 course planned for November supporting walking clubs through volunteer supports dormant accounts.

### Minority Communities

- The membership bursary continues to be open with 8 applications in October so far. We have redesigned the application system to deal with the increase in applications.
- The membership bursary was presented at a CFSN meeting in Northwest Clare FRC.
- We are planning both a fitness workshop and an information stand at Lisdoonvarna Wellness Day on 4th November which targets adult refugees and Ukrainians.
- We are organising Traveller Culture Awareness training for our staff, and we have a meeting with the Clare Traveller CDP upcoming.

*Clare Sports Partnership continue to work with clubs and the community in the active participation in sport in the county. For further details on activities please check out:*

[www.claresports.ie](http://www.claresports.ie)

# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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The Social Directorate continues to face challenges in the remaining months of 2023.

- We are on course, despite the challenges, to meet our Housing delivery targets of 149 units for this year. There are 75 houses completed to date, thereby providing high quality homes to approved applicants on our social housing waiting list. Work on the remainder of these units is at various stages of development.
- We continue to support circa. 80 clients with Notice to Quits in existing private rental agreements. Our staff are actively engaging with these clients to assist them in accessing other housing solutions and to avoid the need for entering homeless services. We are in process of purchasing a number of properties with tenants in situ while AHB purchases are supporting further clients. We continue to provide advice and support to clients who do not qualify for social housing support but may be able to avail of the Cost Rental tenant in Situ program through the Housing Agency.
- The National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 - Implementation Plan was launched nationally earlier this year and staff from the Housing Agency were welcomed to Clare County Council on September 25th where they gave presentations on the plan to members of the Housing & Disability Steering Group, The HDSG are reviewing our own Local Implementation Strategy to ensure alignment with the National Plan and this should be completed before year end.
- Ennis Electoral Area was designated a Rent Pressure Zone from 31st August and this limits rental increases on private rental tenancies to a maximum of 2% per annum. This will hopefully help those currently in private rental agreements with more certainty in relation to future costs.
- Work on the new County Library continues at pace and great progress is now visible on site. This will prove to be a fantastic addition to the town and county and enhance the attractiveness of the town from a visitor perspective.
- The Enhanced Defective Concrete Block [DCB] Grant Scheme went live in mid-July, with the required Department Regulations now in place. The scheme is open and the Councils DCB team are accepting applications online and staff and IT systems are in place to support an online portal so that affected homeowners can continue to submit their applications. A Community Facilitator commenced in mid-September to also assist homeowners with the application process and guide them through the DCB process.
- Expressions of Interest for the delivery of Affordable Housing Schemes by developers at Ennis and Shannon were advertised this month again and is open until end of November. A scheme of priorities for allocating properties should demand for some exceed availability has been approved by the Minister, and was adopted by Elected Members at the September meeting of the Council. A new online portal went live recently at <https://affordable-homes.ie/>
- The Housing team are planning a number of workshops at various locations countywide over coming months highlighting housing options available to households. This has been requested on a few occasions by elected members.

We are confident that the team in the Directorate, supported by the Elected Members, will continue to deal with all challenges and meet targets for the remainder 2 months of the year.

## HOUSING

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For 2023 the housing public counter remains open to the public, without appointment, from 9am until 1pm and by appointment after 1pm. Customers who require appointments in the afternoon can call 065 6846334 to schedule same.

The Clare Homeless Action Team (HAT) office is open by appointment during office hours and can be contacted on **065 684 6291** or by email: [hat@clarecoco.ie](mailto:hat@clarecoco.ie)

### Social Housing Needs Assessment 2023

The Council has finalised the 2023 Social Housing Needs Assessment with over 480 applicants written to seeking

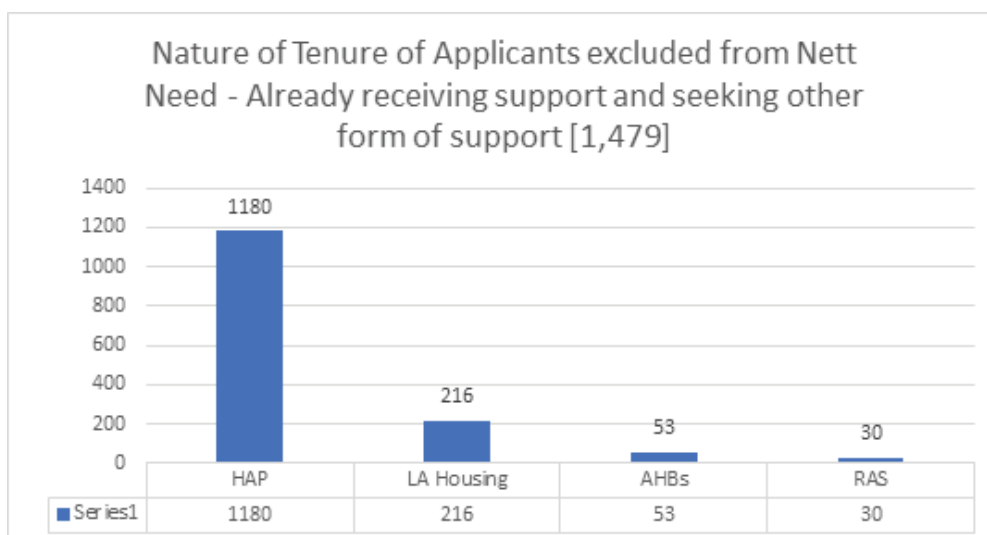
updated information to assess their continued qualification for social housing supports. All Local Authorities are required by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government to complete this assessment for all persons who have applied for social housing support. The purpose of the Assessment is to capture the total number of households qualified for social housing support across the county whose social housing need is not being met, in order to understand the level of need for such support. The "count" date was 1st November, with returns to Department to be completed by November 29th.

**Social Housing Demand - Assessment of housing need**

Our greatest demand throughout the county is for 1 and 2-bed-roomed properties. There are 2,117 applicant households (78%) who have a requirement for this property type. The Allocations/Assessment Team are currently carrying out a review of the areas where the demand for this property type is greatest.

**Current Housing need as of 01/11/2023**

Total Households on Waiting List	2,778
Transfer Applicants (see below)	1,479
<b>Nett Need</b>	<b>1,299</b>

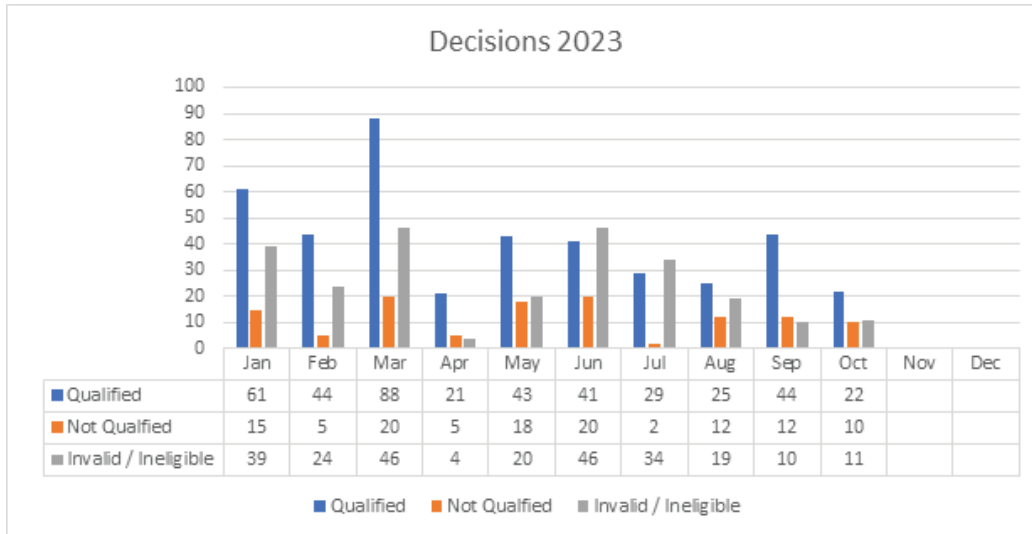


**Housing need by Area of choice and number of beds approved:**

<b>HOUSING AUTHORITY BEDS APPROVED</b>				
<b>FIRST AREA OF CHOICE</b>	<b>1 and 2 beds</b>	<b>3 beds</b>	<b>4 and 5 beds</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
ENNIS	905	206	81	1192
SHANNON	167	29	15	211
CLARECASTLE	127	29	11	167
INAGH/ENNISTYMON/LAHINCH	126	25	4	155
KILRUSH	95	29	7	131
FEAKLE/SCARIFF/WHITEGATE	98	21	4	123
MEELICK/PARTEEN/WESTBURY	67	34	12	113
MILTOWN MALBAY/MULLAGH/QUILTY	73	10	2	85
KILKEE/CROSS/CARRIGAHOLT	64	10	1	75
COROFIN/RUAN	55	17	1	73
NEWMARKET-ON-FERGUS	49	16	4	69
KILLALOE	53	13	2	68
LISDOONVARNA/BALLYVAUGHAN	47	9	3	59
SIXMILEBRIDGE	38	9	7	54
COORACLARE/DOONBEG	35	7	4	46
TULLA/KILKISHEN/BROADFORD	34	6	3	43
CLONLARA	21	6	1	28
KILDYSART/BALLYNACALLY	20	4	3	27
QUIN	17	5	1	23
KILMIHIL	11	5	2	18
KILMALEY	9	2		11
KILFENORA	6	1		7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2117</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>2778</b>

### Newly Qualified Applicants

New income limits became effective on 1st January 2023. To date 418 new applications have been qualified this year which is broadly in line with previous years. Increased income eligibility bands have not had a noticeable effect on our figures.



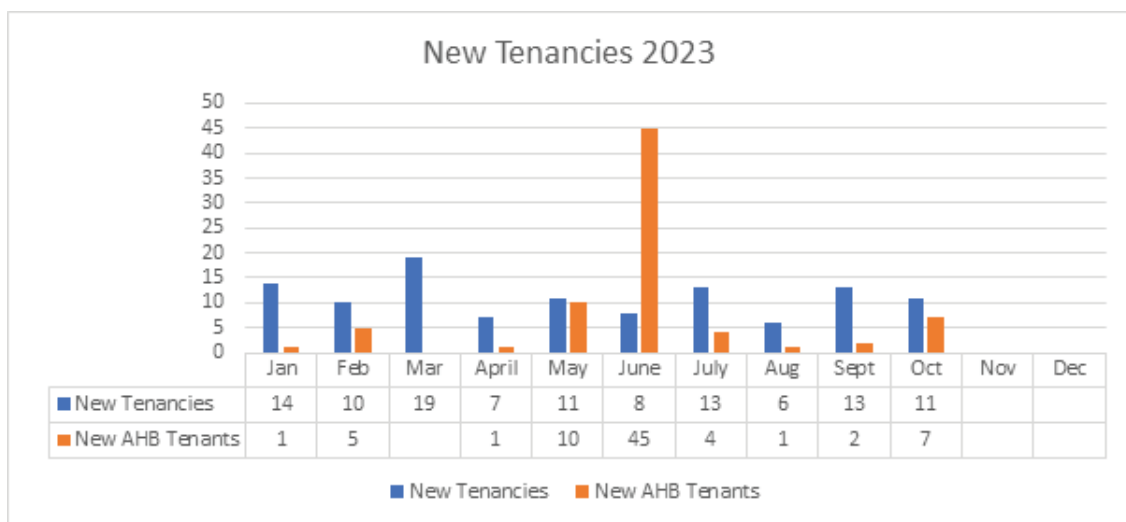
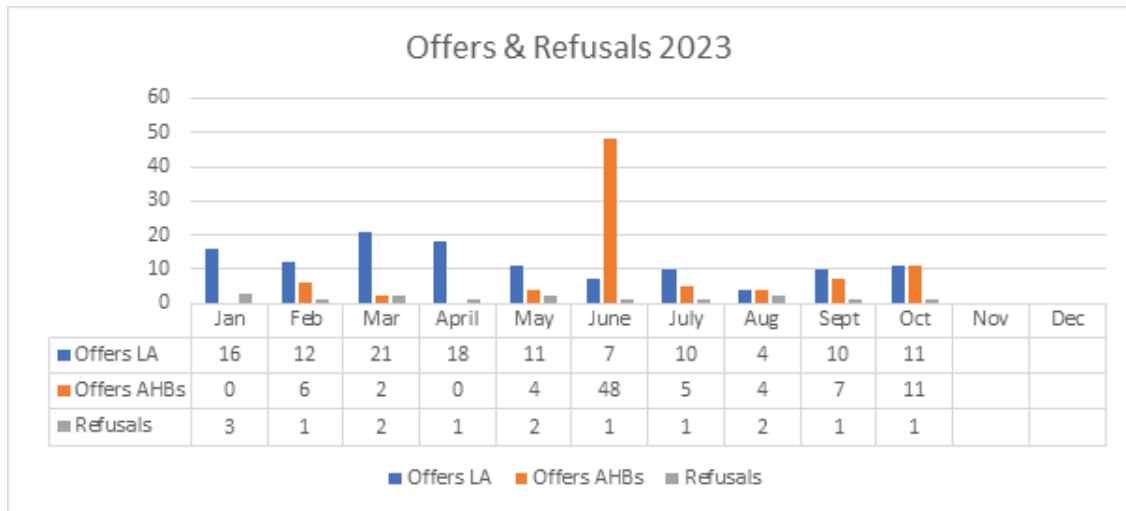
### Housing Allocations

Clare County Council continues to work with the Approved Housing Bodies in relation to the provision of social housing. In this regard the 3 bedrooomed houses located at Ard Ratha Sixmilebridge which are being delivered by Co Operative Housing Ireland (CHI) have been allocated and the three families received their keys to their new homes on 6th October last. These properties were made available for social housing under the Part 5 Scheme which allows a local authority to require developers to set aside a certain proportion of new development for social and affordable housing.

### Allocation 2023 by Basis of Need

Homeless including households that were at risk of homelessness	30%
Medical Needs	28%
Financial	23%
Overcrowding, compassionate, involuntary sharing and unfit	19%





#### Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme

There remains significant interest in the LA Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme with 10 new applications this year to date. We currently have 14 open cases at various stages of the legal process of which upto 4 are expected to complete in 2023. Sale of 7 properties has completed in 2023 to date.

Having consulted with elected members in relation to maintaining our newer stock we have agreed that properties purchased or built since 1st January 2016 will not be available for sale under this scheme. This can be reviewed at end of current Housing Delivery Plan period in 2026. We have also agreed that 1-bedroom properties will not be available under the scheme.

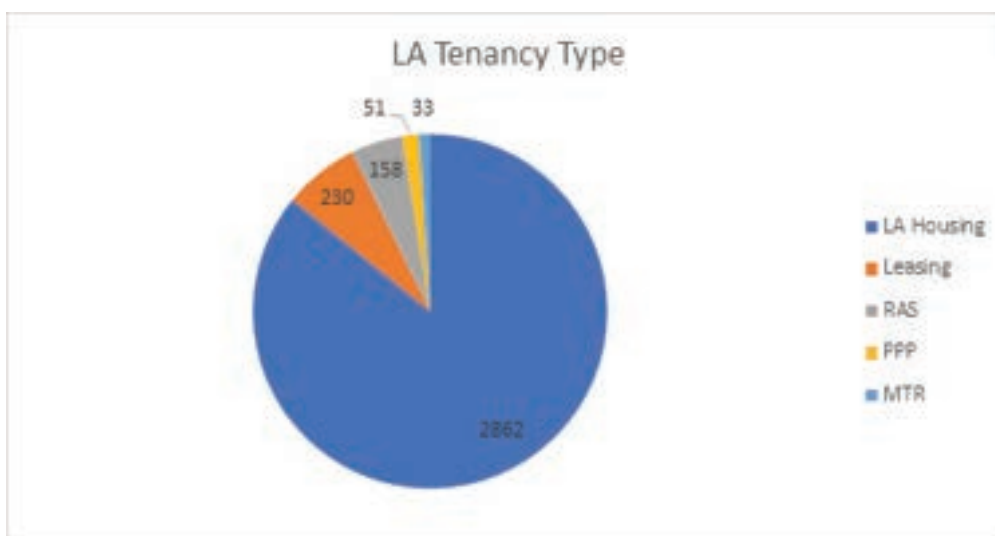




### Housing Tenancies:

\*Breakdown of tenancies by municipal district, (including RAS; long- and short-term leasing; PPP; Traveller accommodation & Mortgage to Rent. *Excludes AHBs*):

29th Sept 2023			
MD	Allocated	Occupied	Total
Ennis MD	4	1290	<b>1294</b>
Killaloe MD		365	<b>365</b>
Shannon MD	3	727	<b>730</b>
West Clare MD	3	952	<b>953</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3334</b>	<b>3344</b>



In addition, we have 1,180 active HAP Tenancies.

Approved Housing bodies are providing approximately 800 tenancies to Social Housing Applicants.

Clare County Council have full nomination rights in respect of the majority of AHB properties and these properties are advertised via our Choice Based Letting System. Nominations are prepared in accordance with a new National Process agreed by LAs and the AHB sector and commenced in July 2022.

### Vacancies

Vacant Stock	Ennis MD	West Clare MD	Shannon MD	Killaloe MD	Total
Traveller Accom	4	5	2	0	11
Derelict Properties	0	0	0	0	0
Projects	2	10	1	0	13
Casual Vacancies	13	14	3	2	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>56</b>

### Estate Management

The Estate Management Team continue to undertake regular routine and response calls to tenants, dealing with ASB complaints as well as inspecting Local Authority tenancies and providing the necessary supports to tenants.

Any matters that need to be brought to the attention of the Estate Management unit can be done so by emailing [asb@clarecoco.ie](mailto:asb@clarecoco.ie).

	23rd of Sept to 25th of Oct	Total year to date
ASB Complaints recd	88	753
Housing Inspections	34	589
Referrals to TSS	0	25
Tenancy Notifications/Warnings issued	19	124
Abandonment Notices issued	3	10
Keys collected from Casual Vacancies	3	51
Repossession Orders	0	1

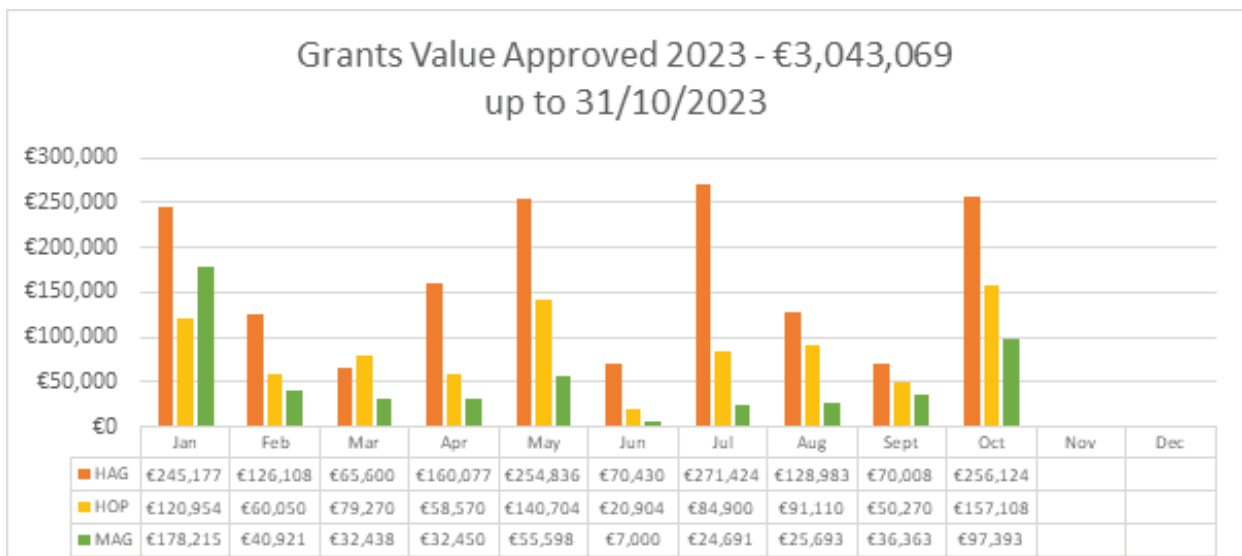
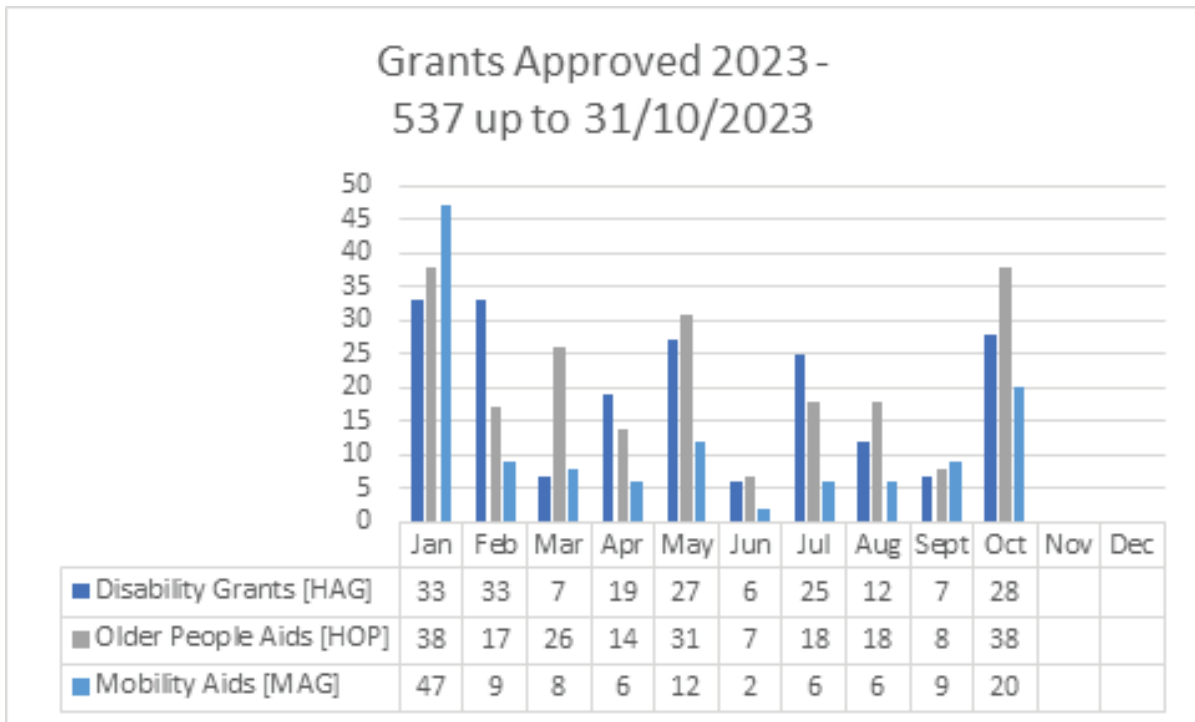
The Tenancy Enforcement team carry out continued patrols of Local Authority housing estates and Traveller sites and have a very visible presence to manage and mitigate against complaints of antisocial behaviour with almost 8,600 observations of tenancies as part of these patrols in the year to date. The working hours of the TEO team are flexible to meet required need, involving working after hours and weekends as the need dictates. The TEO team can be contacted out of office hours, should the need arise, by contacting the Council Emergency Phone no. **(087) 4169496**

**Private Rented inspections:**

1039 inspections carried out up to October 2023. These inspections were carried out on HAP, RTB, RAS and Leased properties, as well as in response to complaints that were received. The team continue to follow up where properties do not meet the minimum rented standards.

**Housing Grants:**

Grants Approved for to date this year:



### Local Authority Home Loan

Full details on the Local Authority Home Loan (LAHL) and eligibility criteria including the Loan Calculator and Information Booklet can be found on [www.localauthorityhomeloan.ie](http://www.localauthorityhomeloan.ie)

Loans data for 2023 up to 26/10/2023: There are currently 46 Local Authority Home Loans Approved in Principle. This includes 4 new approvals in October 2023. Including boxes below:



### Traveller Accommodation

The Department introduced a nationwide Pilot Caravan Loan Scheme in 2022 under Section 25 of the Traveller Accommodation Act 1998. The Department have recently issued a circular confirming that this scheme has now been extended to March 2024.

Clare County Council continue to progress our Traveller Accommodation Program [TAP] and are currently working with the Traveller Community Development Program in preparing a detailed needs analysis around traveller needs in preparation for the next TAP for which consultation is expected to commence in Mid 2024

### Homeless Services [Homeless Action Team HAT]

The demand on the Homeless Action Team within Clare County

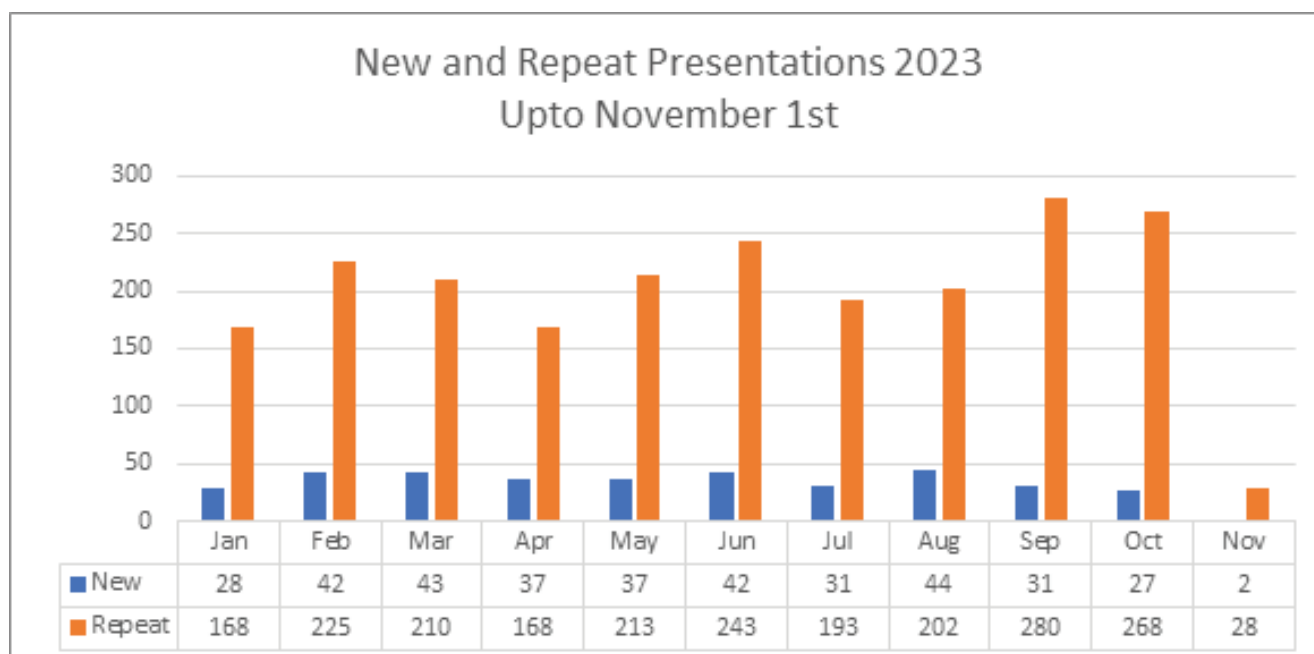
Council continues to rise. This is evident given the increased levels of support being requested from households around areas such as Homeless Services, Advice and Support and the need for Emergency Accommodation within this region. The impact of the cessation of the moratorium on eviction/Winter Eviction Ban (Residential Tenancies (Deferment of Termination dates of certain tenancies) Act 2022), is still being experienced by the Homeless Action Team, which includes an increase in the number of presentations, queries and matters arising around Notice to Quits. This continues to have an impact on both Family and Single Households, while also on Family/Single Households that exceed the Social Housing Income Limits.

The demands on the Homeless Action Team surrounding assessments and the requirements for assessments to be carried out, with the appropriate actions or referrals put in place following this remains considerably high. The workload of each staff carrying out assessments has increased significantly with an increased level of complex cases presenting.

In conjunction with this there has been a significant rise in the number of presentations of individuals and households experiencing difficulties and concerns around addiction or mental health concerns, dual diagnosis, physical disabilities, and a further increase in the number of households presenting from the Travelling Community.

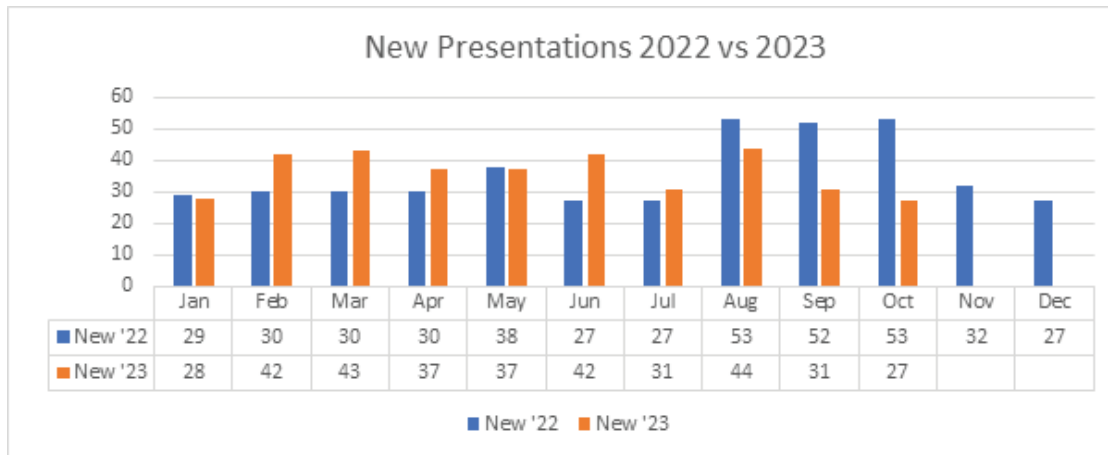
### Presentations to Clare Homeless Action Team [HAT]:

During October there was 295 points of contact to the Homeless Action team. This was made up of 27 new presentations and 268 repeat. A further 6 presentations related to general queries. This figure can be broken down to 180 points of contact regarding single presentations and 109 for family households. Within this figure a total of 99 presentations were in relation to members of the Travelling Community.



**The need of immediate Emergency Accommodation**

- Members of the Travelling Community Seeking Emergency Accommodation
- Discharge from Hospital or Medical Care Settings
- Discharge from After Care/Foster Care (Tusla)
- Family or Relationship Breakdown
- Discharge from Women Refuge Services
- Discharge from Rehabilitation Services
- Prison Releases
- Seeking Homeless HAP Assistance



Prevention and support remains a key factor in the workings of the Homeless Action Team. A number of single and household presentations worked with staff around prevention options and supports which in turned prevented the need for Emergency Accommodation and avoiding entering a homeless situation. Advice regarding legislation on NTQ’s, support from the HAP Place-finder, allocations in advance of homelessness situations, and other supports offered by the team ensured a number of these clients avoided the requirement of being placed within emergency accommodation. This demonstrates both the hard work of staff along with the positive effect the prevention work employed by the HAT Team, which is an equally imperative part of this team’s work.

Other individuals and families were supported in accessing Emergency Accommodation either within our services or through private establishments. However, as Emergency Services and Accommodation remains at capacity with continuous demand for additional capacity, a number of individuals remain overstaying with friends or family until a vacancy presents within Emergency Accommodation.

The Homeless Action Team works with every individual that presents to this service. Unfortunately, during this period there was an increased level of animosity and aggression experienced by the team. This form of behaviour was also experienced by our partner services in Emergency Accommodation where staff safety and welfare has been put at risk. Staff safety within the Homeless Action Team and it’s partner services remains paramount.

The Homeless Action Team continues to pursue additional emergency accommodation options. However, this is proving challenging due to competing demands for accommodation in the County. A significant number of providers within the Hospitality Sector have been contacted by the HAT team in an effort to secure alternative private emergency accommodation, however, this was not successful. Reasons for this would include, tourist season, unable to accommodate large

family compositions and not willing to engage with Clare County Council.

An advertisement was placed in the Clare Champion in September 2023 looking for expressions of interest from local establishments to provide emergency accommodation. There was no response to this to date. The Homeless Action Team are currently engaging with our Communications Department to re-advertise this expression of interest via social media. This is in progress.

Clare Homeless Action team continues to engage with all necessary stakeholders, service providers and local supports in order to adopt a collaborative approach to the tackling of Homelessness.

**Emergency Accommodation Status as of 19/10/2023:**

	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	13	0	1
Laurel Lodge Weather Initiative	0	1	0	0
Cusack Lodge	5	6	11	1
Westbrook	0	15	0	1
Westbrook Weather Initiative	0	1	0	0
Ashford Court	11	17	14	1
EA Families	0	0	0	0
EA Individuals	0	10	0	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>9</b>

It is important to note that the above figures are not a true representation of the significant number of single and family households that have contacted the Homeless Action Team and continue to await placement within services.

13 exits/discharges from EA from 14/09/2023 to 19/10/2023

- 2 exits to OFD- PEA
- 1 exit to private rented-Homeless HAP
- 1 exit to OFD- Clann Nua
- 2 exits to AHB (1 couple and 2 kids)
- 1 exited to LA Tenancy
- 1 exited to LA housing long term lease
- 1 exit to return to partner in private accommodation
- 2 discharges for non use of bed
- 2 discharges for code of conduct

**Inter-Agency Morning - Service Development:**

Clare Homeless Action Team hosted an interagency morning on Tuesday the 17th of October. This was seen by all services as a success and a very valuable development. This Interagency morning was attended by services such as, An Garda Siochana, HSE, Addiction Services, Clare Haven, Tusla, After Care Services, Probation, SICAP, AHB's such as Focus Ireland, Mid West Simon and Novas, Housing First, Disability Services, Mental Health Services and many more. The primary aim of this interagency morning was for all services to come together and become more aware of all the services within this region and increase collaboration and joint working. It is fair to say that this goal was achieved given the high level of positive feedback provide. Three different services gave presentations on the morning, this included Clare Homeless Action Team, Housing First and the HSE Addiction Co-Ordinator. A sincere thank you to all involved in making this day a success.



Finally Please see below a very unexpected but kind gesture given to the HAT team for all the hard work and support by a couple supported by the HAT team during this period.



**Affordable Housing Schemes for County Clare**

CCC have received approval in principle on foot of a detailed application to DHLGH by CCC, to prove there is potential for affordable housing schemes in both Ennis & Shannon. In this regard, DHLGH have requested CCC to submit detailed applications for specific developments so that CCC can gain access to the Affordable Housing Fund (AHF), through the Housing for All programme. In this regard, CCC launched an Expression of Interest (EOI) Campaign running until the end of November seeking proposals from developers to deliver affordable homes in Ennis & Shannon. This EOI is advertised on various social media channels, local newspapers and also local radio. Also, CCC has prepared a Scheme of Priorities (SOP) in accordance with the Affordable Housing Act 2021, which has received Ministerial approval recently, and was adopted by the elected

members at the September Council meeting. This SOP will be referenced regarding the future allocation of affordable homes. CCC have received submissions from developers through this EOI campaign, which are currently being assessed and will continue to engage with these interested parties in the coming weeks.

### Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme

Clare County Council have the relevant staff and systems in place for the administration of the Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks Scheme. The Defective Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks Scheme went live in mid-July for private dwellings, with the finalised Act, regulations, updated YQA's (Your Questions Answered) & Ministerial Guidelines published. Applications to the scheme can be submitted on-line through CCC's website with supporting information to further assist homeowners regarding the application process on CCC's website.

In addition, CCC's Defective Concrete Blocks Team are willing to assist with any queries homeowners may have. This Team can be contacted by email at [dcb@clarecoco.ie](mailto:dcb@clarecoco.ie) or alternatively by phone at **065-6846385** or **065-6846468**.

CCC have received and a number of applications since the commencement of the scheme, through the online portal and continue to validate applications prior to sending them to the Housing Agency for their review and assessment.

A DCB Community Facilitator commenced employment on the 11th September 2023, to further assist the homeowner's with the DCB application process. CCC DCB Team have also included a video on CCC's website recently on "how to make an application" to further assist homeowners in the application process. CCC continue to engage with the DHLGH to ensure social houses affected by DCB also are included in a similar scheme. CCC had a meeting in early October with the DHLGH to get information on the upcoming proposed Social Housing DCB Pilot scheme.

### New County Library Construction Project

Construction work continues to make progress on the new Clare County Library and Art Gallery building. The external composite cladding panel installation, Level 03 primary structure steel frame and all other reinforced concrete works are now complete. Internal blockwork is also complete, with partitions to be completed on second floor office area shortly. Curtain wall and glazing frames installation is nearing completion. Precast Stairs throughout the building have also been installed. Roofing Contractor is on site with main Library roofing membrane complete, with entrance lobby nearing completion. M&E contractors are making good progress with first- fix works for both trades. Plastering is nearing completion on the main external walls and will return when partitions are installed. Floor screeds were poured in mid September in the Art Gallery. Raised Access flooring commenced in early October and is nearing completion, with other main trades like External Wall Render & Cladding to follow thereafter on the external façade. Ceiling and Internal Wall Partitions trades have also commenced on site recently and are making good progress.

The state-of-the-art new build will provide a key resource for research, study, recreation, and art in a centralised location of

Ennis town adjacent to the well-established Glór theatre.



### Update on capital programme:

Works are progressing on the housing capital programme, with schemes in Scarriff, Clarecastle and Sixmilebridge under construction currently. Design work is ongoing on a number of other social housing projects, which are at various stages of development.

On 2nd October, a contract signing was held for appointment

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## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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of a design team for the Back Road, Kilrush proposed housing development. Design team members include Hassett Leyden & Associates as Architect, P.Coleman & Associates as Civil and

Structural Engineers, Tom McNamara & Partners as Quantity Surveyor and Moloney Fox Consulting Engineers as Mechanical and Electrical Engineers.



Contract signing for Back Road, Kilrush proposed development

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Works ongoing on Sixmilebridge project

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Progress on Scarriff housing development

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Works progressing on Clarecastle project

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### Approved Housing Bodies

The Approved Housing Body (AHB) sector is providing a major contribution to our housing delivery figures under 'Housing for All' as outlined in Table below. Working with our Housing Capital Team they have delivered 67 housing units throughout the county to date this year. A further 88 homes are currently at various stages of construction, and a number of other units are

at preparatory stage i.e. at planning or procurement process. We will continue to work in collaboration with the AHB sector and to this end we arrange Forum Meetings with all AHBs operating in the county on a quarterly basis to discuss progress, deal with any challenges and update them on any new regulatory requirements.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Newtown Corofin	1	Under construction.	Q3 2023	Q4 2023
Clarecastle	5	Under Construction.	Q1 2023	Q4 2023
Scarriff	18	Under Construction	Q1 2023	Q3 2024
Sixmilebridge	15	Under Construction.	Q1 2023	Q2 2024
Dún na hInse	1	Under Construction	Q4 2023	Q2 2024
St. Senan's Terrace, Kilrush	5	Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q2 2024
Clarehill Clarecastle	13	Turnkey - Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2024
Drumcliff Rd. Ennis	26	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Part VIII Withdrawn. Determination issued by an Bord Pleanála. S179A process has commenced, and scheme has gone on public display on 26th October 2023.	Q1 2024	Q2 2025
Ennistymon	30	Stage 2 approved. Stage 3 application currently being prepared.	Q1 2024	Q3 2025
Gort Rd. Ennis	20	Stage 2 approved. Planning application submitted to An Bord Pleanála on 16th June 2023.	Q2 2024	Q3 2025
Doonbeg Road, Kilkee	25	Stage 1 approval. Design Team has been appointed and design is progressing.	Q2 2024	Q4 2025
Back Road, Kilrush	12	Stage 1 approval. Design Team has been appointed.	Q2 2024	Q4 2025
Moore Street, Kilrush	21	Stage 1 approval. Design Team appointed.	Q2 2024	Q4 2025
Doonbeg Lands	8	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Application submitted to An Bord Pleanála on 18th August 2023.	Q4 2024	Q4 2025
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>200</b>			
Approved Housing Body Projects	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Kincora Park, Ennis (Saint Vincent de Paul) CAS Construction	1	Completed	Q4 2022	Q1 2023
Limerick Road, Ennis (Cluid Housing Assoc) CALF Turnkey	15	Completed	Q3 2022	Q2 2023
Church Road, Tulla (Cluid) CALF Turnkey (Part V)	2	Completed	Q1 2022	Q2 2023
Roslevan (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	25	Completed	Q2 2022	Q2 2023
Lahinch (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey (Part V)	3	Completed	Q2 2022	Q3 2023
Limerick Road, Ennis (Inis Housing) CALF Turnkey	18	Completed	Q1 2022	Q3 2023
Sixmilebridge (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey (Part V)	3	Completed	Q3 2022	Q3 2023
Derg View Scarriff (Inis Hsg.) CAS Turnkey	4	Under construction	Q2 2023	Q4 2023



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ballyminogue, Scarriff (Focus) CALF Turnkey	4	Under construction	Q1 2023	Q4 2023
Doire More, Tulla Road, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turkey	2	Under construction	Q1 2023	Q4 2023
Quin, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	36	Under construction: 10 units in Phase 1 26 units in Phase 1	Q1 2023 Q3 2023	Q4 2023 Q3 2024
Cluain na Laoi, Kilkishen (Circle Housing Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	16	Under construction: 8 units in Phase 1 8 units in Phase 2	Q1 2023 Q1 2023	Q1 2024 Q3 2024
Acha Bhile, Lahinch Rd., Ennis (Cluid Hsg. Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	33	Under construction 12 units in Phase 1 21 units in Phase 2	Q4 2022 Q1 2024	Q4 2023 Q4 2024
Market Street, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	14	Under construction	Q3 2023	Q4 2024
63 Shannon Heights, Kilrush (Sophia Hsg. Assoc.) CAS Renewal Construction	1	At procurement stage	Q1 2024	Q4 2024
Loughville, Ennis (Tuath Housing) CALF Turnkey	48	Construction to commence	Q4 2023	Q1 2025
Bruachlan, Westbury (Cooperative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Construction	22	Planning application submitted - at further information stage.	Q2 2024	Q2 2025
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>247</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>447</b>			

## CULTURAL SERVICES - LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

### Clare County Library

Work is progressing on the new library for Ennis. Workshops on fitout, IT provision and My Open Library all took place this month between library staff and the design team.

The upgrade of the Clare Library website is also progressing. Staff have received training sessions on creating content for the website.

The drafting of the new Clare Library development plan (2023-2027) is ongoing.



Sewing workshop in De Valera Library




**Online Resources usage as follows, continued demand for e-audio and e-books:**

1833 E-Books	3290 E-Audiobooks	840 E-Magazines
204 Online courses	2197 Press Reader	43 Transparent Languages

**Marketing, outreach & social media**

Library staff attended the “Connect Café” with Employability Clare for Mental Health Week in the Ennis Scout Hall, there was 60 people in attendance. Press releases were issued for Clare History Week and the annual Children’s Book Festival. Print resources and the Codema Home Energy Savings Kit were shared with the Climate Section of Clare County Council for Climate Awareness Week.

A “How to Guide” on accessing the Catalogue, app and Surfbox and the Library Autumn Newsletter were circulated in print and via Mailerlite.

	New Followers	Total Followers	Posts Reach/ Impressions	Post Likes	Engagement
	65	7281	265,200	4199	7900
	11	2141	12700	62	218
	27	2008	3900	259	767

**Library Activities in Figures**

Total number of in branch events	173
Total audiences at in branch events	1,818
Total number of outreach events	3
Total number of deliveries	10



Children meet author Ellen Ryan in Kilkee Library

**Right to Read**

The annual Children’s Book Festival events took place in all 15 libraries in Clare during October. Clare Libraries welcomed the best of Irish writers including Laureate na nÓg Patricia Forde. TV presenter Flor MacCarthy gave an engaging talk to local schoolchildren providing an amazing insight into letters written by children to the Presidents of Ireland. Corrib Kids provided children’s LEGO robotics and coding classes, children’s theatre for junior classes came courtesy of the Barking Dog Company and The Cool Food School promoted healthy eating in fun, hands-on workshops where the focus was on eating healthily and developing healthy habits for life. Biologist, author, radio and TV presenter Éanna Ní Lamhna introduced children to her wonderful new book Wonders of the Wild” and archaeologist and heritage-educator Francesca Callaghan helped children explore how archaeologists use science to find archaeology in the ground and what it tells us about the everyday lives of children in the past.

Other visiting authors include Alan Nolan, Grainne O’Brien and Erika McGann. Illustration workshops were also part of the events offer and the Book Doctor from Children’s Books Ireland’s Book Clinic was hosted at Shannon Library. Music also featured with Stories and Soundscapes workshops facilitated by award-winning musician Etain McCooley. The Children’s Book Festival is a central pillar of the “Right to Read” Government initiative which provides a nationwide focus on library services to children and adults.

**Healthy Ireland**

Nutritionist Gráinne Travers provided an engaging presentation, ‘Eat Well, Age Well, Live Well’, full of practical advice on the importance of making informed food choices to fuel a healthy, active lifestyle in our senior years. The talk tied in well with the nationwide Positive Ageing Week initiative and was very well attended by local active retirement groups as well as the general public in Shannon Library. Chair Yoga classes continued in Tulla Library with two more sessions taking place during the month. Participants enjoyed the social aspect of the classes as well as the benefits of gentle movement. Sixmilebridge and Newmarket Libraries welcomed junior and senior infant classes to an active storytime event where mindfulness, movement and books were enjoyed.

**Creative Ireland**

The Clare County Council Creative Ireland team were successful in securing funding from the Shared Island Fund for its project “Birds of a Feather”. The proposal was just one of two key projects to receive the maximum €250,000 for a large-scale music, dance and crafting initiative to be delivered over 2 years. Ennis Women’s Shed Mná ag Gaire, Ballinasloe Women’s Group, and Ballymac Friendship Group in East Belfast will work together with Clare County Council and Galway County Council over a period of 2 years on a project that incorporates enterprise, crafts, drama and storytelling and will culminate in a theatre production and a book publication.



Class visit De Valera Library during History Week

### Decade of Centenaries

Clare Libraries History Week was held from 16-20 October. The hybrid programme included lectures, exhibitions and talks for children. Lecturers included Myles Dungan, Joe Ó Muircheartaigh, Ida Milne and Paul Minihan. Exhibitions included the Mid Clare Brigade and Compensation Claims of the Revolutionary Years. A highlight of the programme was a lecture by David McCullagh on DeValera held in DeValera Library, Ennis.

### Local Studies

The Local Studies Centre has added several new resources to its collection. A Manuscript Account of the Cratloe & Meelick Dispensaries Since Assizes, 1839 has been acquired. This is a useful addition to the Meelick Dispensaries books acquired earlier in the year. A collection of documents related to the Repeal Association, (1846) have been acquired including receipts signed by Patt Lysaght, and Thomas Steele. A collection of valuation documents and maps related to the Bindon family estates in Clare have been donated. An exhibition was held in the Local Studies Centre for History week, on claims and compensation payments in the period following the revolutionary years. Conservation and listing work on the Barrett Collection is ongoing, and the Dunboyne News Cuttings 1824-1878 transcription project is continuing.

### Clare Archives

The Archivist is presently on a career break and the position of temporary Archivist was advertised in September. Enquiries will be handled via the Local Studies Centre until the position is filled.

### Clare Arts Office

The Arts in the Community programme continued in St Joseph's Hospital, Ennis and in Raheen Hospital. Clare Youth Theatre continued to meet in glór and visited EVA Limerick and Ennis Film Festival this month also. An international exchange programme is being explored for the youth theatre with partners in Paris and Germany. Two "Arts in Clare" slots happened on Clare FM. PRISM Street Art Works continued in Ennis, Tulla and Killaloe and the Creative Places programme in Shannon continued. A panel of artists was established and applications opened for the "Artist in Schools" Scheme and the "Embrace Arts and Disability" Programme. The research publication, "Levelling Access in the area of Arts and Disability", a major national research project was launched. This was undertaken with Arts Offices in Clare, Mayo and Galway City. Music in Health meetings and Visual Artists Support meetings were held with partners in Limerick and Tipperary Arts Offices.



Inis Creative Writing Group moved into the EASI Studios along with one other artist. All studios in Tulla and Ennis are now operating at full capacity. Three exhibitions took place in Ennis, Scariff and Kilkee. Over one hundred and sixty people attended music and film events in Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee in October. Eight meetings were held with artists and visits were made to Burren College of Art and Ennistymon Courthouse Galleries. The Arts Office Facebook groups membership grew to 5,219 and Facebook pages were followed by 9,722 people in this period.

### Clare Museum

The Museum hosted a series of public talks supported by the Night Time Economy fund. A total of 60 people attended four talks in October. Some cataloguing took place and there were a number of uploads to the website. A new entry was also added to the Museum blog. There were a number of Halloween workshops for primary school pupils, based on the traditions around the Celtic festival of Samhain. Two videos for History week were recorded and placed on YouTube: one is an update on the Georgina Frost collection which the curator has been cataloguing all year and the other was on another collection. The Museum monthly lecture series will resume. Speakers are confirmed for talks in November and December and February and April of next year.

## KILLALOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

### October 2023 works/projects Killaloe MD

During the month of October Killaloe MD staff were involved in the following Projects:

#### Embankment Stabilisation of the R-466 Broadford to Bridgetown road at Cloonyconry

Embankment stabilisation works being undertaken under a 2 week road closure, works are still ongoing to complete this project with land boundary fencing, drainage, topsoil and hedging yet to be planted.



Killaloe MD roads crew have recently carried out much needed drainage works and upgrading of existing paths at Tulla Graveyard



Killaloe MD offices and staff hosted and assisted with the Community and Rural Development Information Clinics hosted in Killaloe MD Offices, Scarriff and in Tulla during October. Arising from the meetings, staff from Killaloe MD have since commenced support to a number of community groups and organisations in project development across the MD.

An application under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2023 was submitted by Killaloe MD in October for the upgrade and enhancement of a walkway and 480m trail to link the settlement of Tuamgraney to the existing Killaloe-Ballycuggeran-Ogonelloe walkway, thus completing a 13km rural walkway from Killaloe-Scarriff along the shores of Lough Derg.

# PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Town Centre First

#### Sixmilebridge Town Centre First Plan

On foot of the launch of the Sixmilebridge Town Centre First Plan engagement took place on the 19th September with the Town Team to identify a list of projects for delivery. Consideration of possible funding streams is ongoing as a means to secure delivery of these enhancement projects.

## FORWARD PLANNING

#### Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

On the 3rd August 2023 the Minister of State in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage issued a final Direction to Clare County Council regarding the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029. This followed the Minister's consideration of the Chief Executives' Report on the submissions received by the Planning Authority on the Draft Direction (which had been issued to the Council on 18th April) and the recommendation of the Office of the Planning Regulator.

The Minister's Direction requires the Planning Authority to reinstate the zoning objectives and associated text to that of the Draft Clare County Development Plan as they relate to specific zoning objectives for lands identified in Kilrush, Killaloe, Mullagh, Liscannor, Broadford, Cooraclare, Ballynacally and Ennis, as well as to remove the provision for 'Existing Accesses onto National Secondary Roads' under 'Exceptional Circumstances' of section 11.2.9.3 of the Plan. The Direction is deemed to have immediate effect from the date of issue on 3rd August 2023 and the requirements set out in the Direction are incorporated into the relevant volumes of the Development Plan. A Special Council Meeting was held on Monday 18th September to which Oireachtas Members were invited to attend, where the issues relating to the Ministerial Direction and the policies as they relate to the County Development Plan were discussed.

The Direction is available for viewing on the Council website <https://clarecdp2023-2029.clarecoco.ie/stage3-amendments/adoption/ministerial-direction-on-clare-county-development-plan-2023-2029-52489.pdf>

The Forward Planning Section are currently updating the Interim Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 to reflect the Ministerial Direction and once completed, this will form the final Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029.

#### Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2024-2030



The Forward Planning section took the opportunity to participate in the Council's Rural & Community Information Clinic at Shannon on the 16th of October to raise awareness on the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan (LAP) 2024-2030. This event was hosted by the Council's Rural and Community Development Department as part of a series of walk-in information clinics across the county during that week. A number of attendees discussed matters concerning the LAP with the Forward Planning section's representative. The consultation feedback from the clinic will help to inform the preparation of the Draft LAP.

Engagement has also progressed with both the secondary and primary schools within Shannon. The Forward Planning team will visit Transition Year groups in Shannon after the mid-term break to undertake a practical workshop to raise the awareness and gain their insight and perspective in relation to the town of Shannon and to get their ideas and opinions on how Shannon should grow in the future. Each of the primary schools in Shannon has returned completed workbooks from their 5th and 6th Class groups which had been prepared and issued by the Forward Planning team, the contents of which focus on topics relevant to the LAP and will help to inform the preparation of the Draft LAP.

The Draft LAP will include Land Use Zoning Objectives for Shannon Town and Environs, and also contain analysis and policy objectives relating to, for example, local transport, flood risk, public realm, habitats and environment. Procurement of transport consultancy services has taken place, while the Forward Planning section is liaising with the project team for the Shannon Town and Environs Flood Relief Scheme.

### Clare County Heritage Plan 2023-2029

During the last several months, significant progress has been made in the preparation of the draft Clare County Heritage Plan 2024-2030. The initial pre-drafting phase concluded successfully, and key milestones, including the Heritage and Biodiversity Action Forum and the Clare Heritage Plan Review 2017-2023, were completed. Additionally, a thorough public consultation was conducted, encompassing online surveys, written submissions, and observation methodologies, which have provided valuable insights for the draft's content.

The public consultation stage for the preparation of the Clare County Heritage Plan incorporated the Heritage Week Public Consultation Events, which took place in mid-August. These sessions played an important role in assimilating community feedback, giving better community context for the plan. By the end of September, the survey findings and analysis were concluded, which provided further clarity to the draft. This draft is ready for public viewing and will undergo an additional round of public consultation in November. After this conclusive phase, we anticipate finalising the Plan in early December for adoption in the New Year.

Between the 16th and 20th of October, community clinics were held in Shannon, Ennis, Scarriff, Tulla, Kilrush, and Ennistymon. These clinics were attended by the Acting County Heritage Officer to heighten awareness surrounding the preparation of the heritage plan. The attendance and engagement at these events underscored their significance. Engaging directly with community groups and individuals proved invaluable, offering rich insights, and fostering collaborative involvement in shaping the draft of the plan.

### Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

The RZLT is a new tax aimed at activating existing planning permissions, increasing housing supply and regeneration of vacant and idle lands in urban locations.

The first phase of the RZLT process, which began with the publication of a Draft Map on 1st November 2022, has concluded following receipt of An Bord Pleanála's decision in relation to 15 appeals. The Bord has confirmed the Planning Authority's determination in all cases except one.

The second phase of the RZLT process commenced with the publication of a Supplemental Map on 1st May 2023 has also concluded. Four submissions were received during the public consultation stage. All submissions were assessed, and landowners were notified of the Planning Authority's decision by 1st August 2023. No appeals were made to An Bord Pleanála.

The next step is to prepare the Final Map which is due to be published on 1st December 2023. This work is currently underway. The Tax was due to come into effect on 1st February 2024 however, as announced in Budget 2024 and set out in the Finance (No. 2) Bill 2023, it will now come into effect on 1st February 2025.

### Public Realm Enhancements at Cappa Village, Kilrush

The Forward Planning team were successful in securing funding to deliver works at Cappa Village under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2022. The project arises from the Cappa Enhancement Strategy which identified key sites to sustainably develop the village while preserving its maritime character and scale. The funding provides for a new connection to be made from an existing recreational amenity to the adjoining coastal walk. This will further usage and increase connectivity with adjoining residential areas while opening up views to the Shannon Estuary. The project initiated in early October with a meeting of the steering group. A public consultation event was held in Cappa Village at the end of October and was well attended by the local community. The findings from the public consultation will inform the next stage of the design development, and this will continue into November.

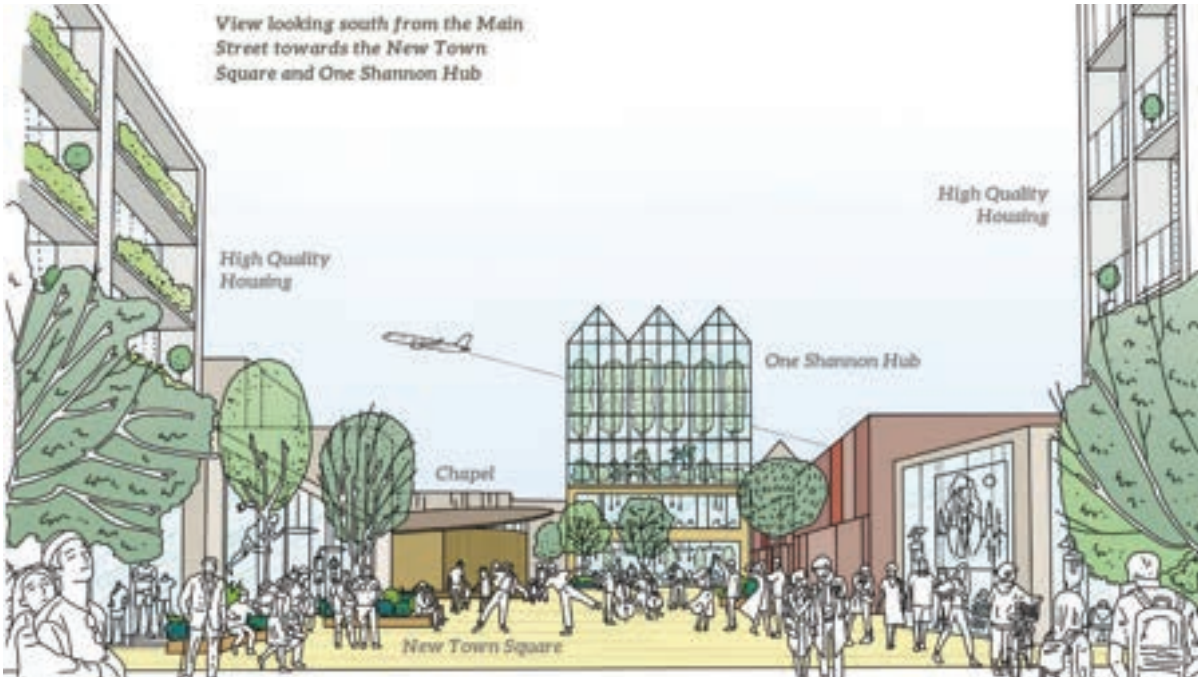


*Public Consultation Poster for the proposed Public Realm Enhancements at Cappa Village, Kilrush*

Public realm works at Parliament Street, Ennistymon: The Forward Planning team were successful in securing funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2022 to undertake public realm enhancement works at Parliament Street, Ennistymon. This follows on from the Ennistymon Enhancement Plan, where Parliament Street was identified as an area with high potential to contribute positively to the streetscape of Ennistymon town centre. This plan-led project proposes to enhance the public realm offering at Parliament Street to make it a more pedestrian friendly, age-friendly, and accessible street. Helena McElmeel Architects have been appointed to lead a multi-disciplinary design team. The project initiated in October with a meeting of the steering group. Work on the design development will continue into November.

### One Shannon Hub

The One Shannon Hub is the key transformational project to emerge from the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan. The One Shannon Hub is located in Shannon Town Centre, and combines a town hall, an adaptable performance and community space, library, and flexible co-working spaces. The new development will also feature public realm improvements to the town square adjacent to the site. BDP Architects and Tom McNamara & Partners will provide specialist consultancy services on the project. The concept design stage is underway, and meetings were held with the project team and cross-directorate steering group in October. It is anticipated that the concept design stage will conclude in early 2024. It is envisaged that the public consultation phase will be undertaken in early December.



The proposed One Shannon Hub, Shannon Town Centre Masterplan.

### Kilrush Maritime Training Centre

Senior Officials from Clare County Council accompanied by Cathaoirleach Joe Cooney and Councillor Ian Lynch travelled to Halifax in Nova Scotia together with Newfoundland in Canada on September 24th as part of a study visit to research the potential for the establishment of the Kilrush Maritime Training Centre and to experience firsthand the variety of simulators, virtual and augmented reality technology available to the project in terms of the provision of Maritime Safety Training.

As part of the study visit Cathaoirleach Joe Cooney was invited by the Mayor of Halifax Mike Savage to attend City Hall where he attended with Councillor Lynch and given a warm welcome. They were also accompanied on the visit by the Honorary Consul for Halifax in Canada Brian Doherty and the Head of Mission from the Embassy of Ireland in Ottawa, Dymphna Keogh.



Brian Doherty (Honorary Consulate Irish Embassy), Cathaoirleach Joe Cooney, Mayor of Halifax Mike Savage, Councillor Ian Lynch, Dymphna Keogh (Head of Mission Irish Embassy)



Carmel Kirby Director of Economic Development, Helen Quinn Acting Senior Planner, Cathaoirleach Joe Cooney, Brian Doherty (Honorary Consulate Irish Embassy), Sheila Downes Environmental Assessment Officer, Councillor Ian Lynch at the Irish Embassy Office in Halifax.

The Mayor, discussed areas of common interest such as the emerging Offshore Renewable Energy sector in Halifax and Ireland, trade and economic development together with the wide variety of maritime industries located not just in Halifax but across Nova Scotia. Councillor Lynch and the Cathaoirleach Joe Cooney raised the absence of a direct flight from Shannon to Halifax as a key priority. A transatlantic flight historically had been in place and its re-establishment could open the entire east coast of Canada to a new tourism market together with the many economic development links. The Mayor of Canada committed to investigating this potential opportunity further.



*Delegation from Clare County Council visiting Survival Systems Training Limited.*



*Cathaoirleach Joe Cooney with Mayor of Halifax Mike Savage*

The study visit also incorporated visits to several Maritime Safety Training facilities similar to the proposal for the Kilrush Maritime Safety Training Centre. Senior council staff together with Councillor Lynch and Cooney met with Survival Systems Training Centre (SSTL) in Halifax where the delegation from Clare got to experience first-hand the pool facility and training building, the capabilities such a facility can provide in terms of HUET (Helicopter Underwater Evacuation Training), together with Hoist Emergency Response Training along with STCW and others.

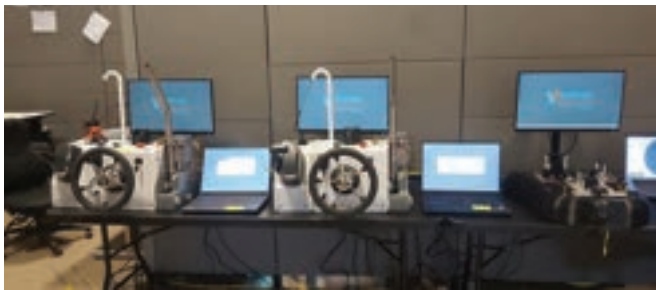
SSTL delivers training on-site at its Dartmouth centre, or as a satellite delivery project at the client's premises. SSTL's customized training solutions overcome critical challenges for organizations seeking to manage risk and respond to emergencies. SSTL are global leaders in the provision of advanced and innovative solutions to maritime safety training and in the manufacture of cutting-edge technology. Survival Systems have trained thousands of employees from over fifteen hundred companies around the world across a multitude of industries including oil & gas, seismic, aviation, marine and industrial.

Clare County Council have been liaising with Virtual Marine a manufacturing company based in Newfoundland who focus on the provision of simulated solutions for maritime safety training. Representatives from the delegation got to experience first-hand the various simulators from freefall lifeboats to Fast Rescue Boat with hook trainer and Free Fall Lifeboat on Motion. Seeing the equipment first hand allowed the team to experience the space and dimension requirements to accommodate the various pieces of equipment and infrastructure. This can range from desk-top simulators to headsets to full Fast Rescue Boat simulation. New regulatory approvals at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) have created an opportunity for Kilrush Maritime Training Centre to provide training such as coxswain training via simulation. The provision of such training directly on the marina in Kilrush at the mouth of the Shannon Estuary would place the centre as a global leader in cutting edge training. Simulation allows for skill enhancement in a hands on, realistic, risk free environment. The ability to frequently practice in realistic scenarios using simulation technology is proven to increase the confidence and competence of seafarers. SSTL were the first company to bring lifeboat simulation to the offshore oil and gas industry which places them as world class leaders in this sector.



*Councillor Lynch experiencing the Fast Rescue Boat with Hook Trainer.*





*Desktop Simulators*

As a follow on to the meeting with SSTL the Irish Delegation were accompanied by Trade Commissioner with the Canadian Embassy in St. John's, Ian Murdoch to the Marine Institute Memorial University St. Johns Campus. This provided an opportunity to visit the state-of-the-art Centre of Simulation with 360-degree visuals, motions systems and technology providing unprecedented realism. The Centre for Simulation is one of the few simulation centers in the world where mariners can train for challenging offshore situations in an environmental that doesn't just mimic reality but looks and feels unquestionably real. Capt. Christopher Hearn, Director of the CMS, and Maria Halfyard, Manager, Business Development, Research and Strategic Partnerships, provided invaluable advice from their experience of running such a centre having been in business for almost 30 years.



### Visit of French Ambassador to Ireland, H.E. Vincent Guérend

Tuesday the 10th of October, the Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney, Cathaoirleach of West Clare Municipal District, Cllr. Ian Lynch, and senior Council management representatives welcomed the French Ambassador H.E. Vincent Guérend together with the Honorary Consul Dr Loic Guyon and their Head of Economic Development Gaultier brand gazeau to Árás Contae on Chláir.

The visit by the French Ambassador to Clare County Council was subsequent to an initial meeting held with Dr Loic Guyon the Honorary Consul of France in Árás Contae an Chláir on the 16th of May 2023 to discuss the potential of reestablishing the twinning of Kilrush with the town of Plouzané in France and the potential opportunities it presents in the context of Clare County Councils proposals for a Maritime Training Centre in Kilrush. The twinning of Plouzané in Brittany, with Kilrush in County Clare is one of the oldest twinning's dating back to 1982. Saint-Sané, the Irish monk of the Vth century and founder of the parish of Plouzané, was originally from

Kilrush and buried on the island of Scattery or Inis Cathaigh. The twinning of Kilrush with Plouzané presents a unique opportunity to establish links with the European Institute for Marine Studies (IUEM), the French Institute for Ocean Science and Campus Mondial De La Mer all located Plouzané. The training and research undertaken at these centers are closely aligned with the overall Vision of Clare MEZ and for the Marine Training Centre in Kilrush.

During the visit, the Ambassador heard from Ennis Chamber of Commerce with respect to the designing of a mural in memory of Ennis-born James Bartholomew Blackwell (1763-1820), who served in the French army and played a leading role during the storming of the Bastille in 1789. The mural will be unveiled later this year where it is hoped the Ambassador will return to undertake the honours.

Ambassador Guérend together with his delegates also visited Moneypoint Power Station and heard of their plans around transitioning to a carbon neutral economy and the ambitious "Green Atlantic at Moneypoint" project. Members of the Twinning Committee met with the French delegation at Vandeleur Walled Gardens to discuss the priorities around this very important twinning and the next steps in the process in terms of convening an online meeting with the Mayor of Plouzané in November.



*French Delegation lunch at the Vandeleur Walled Gardens.*

Members of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group discussed the potential cooperation with the Plouzané-based European Institute for Marine Studies with respect to marine science and research and in particular around Bottlenose Dolphins for which the Lower River Shannon SAC is designated.

The visit continued to Kilrush Marina where the delegation viewed the new Digital Hub together with Clare County Council plans for the development of the Kilrush Maritime Training Centre at Creek Lodge. The trip culminated with a boat ride to Scattery Island facilitated by members of the Twinning Committee.

This was an extremely important and progressive day for the Clare MEZ project and indeed the revitalisation of this important twinning. A follow up meeting is being scheduled for November where the twinning committee will formally meet and explore the opportunity presented by the French delegation for Sea tech week in Brest, France in October 2024. Sea Tech Week® is organised by Technopôle Brest-Iroise through Campus mondial de la mer, France's premier community of experts in studying and working with the ocean, located at the tip of Brittany. It is anticipated that Sea

Tech has the potential to market the Shannon Estuary as a international leader in Renewable Energy and Energy Security to an international audience together with launching the Kilrush Maritime Training Center to the maritime market.



*Carmel Kirby – Director of Economic Development; Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney; French Ambassador to Ireland, H.E. Vincent Guérend; Councillor Ian Lynch; and Chief Executive Pat Dowling*

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## CONSERVATION AND BUILT HERITAGE

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### Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS)

The 2023 Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) works are completed. The inspection of projects have been carried out and the final reports will be issued to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in November 2023. It is anticipated that the advertisement for the 2024 Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) will be announced in November 2023.

### Historic Structures Fund

The 2023 Historic Structures Fund (HSF) works are completed. The inspection of projects have been carried out and the final reports will be issued to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in November 2023.

It is anticipated that the advertisement for the 2024 Historic Structures Fund (HSF) will be announced in November 2023.

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## HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

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### ‘Return To Nature’ Clare Biodiversity Initiative

In August, the Irish Bishops Conference announced to commit to managing 30% of church grounds for Biodiversity by 2030. Clare County Council’s Biodiversity Officer Barry O’Loughlin engaged with the Bishop of Killaloe Fintan Monahan and Laudato Si Officer Jane Mellett to sign up parishes across Clare to carry out Biodiversity actions on their church grounds. Several online meetings were held, and a PowerPoint presentation was given by Clare’s Biodiversity Officer to develop the initiative in Clare. The aim is to have Clare as a pilot county to lead on biodiversity actions and to reach a target of 10

parishes to sign up to the ‘Return to Nature’ initiative. An email was circulated through the Church’s network by the Bishop of Killaloe. There was significant interest and enthusiasm expressed for the initiative including from neighboring counties such as Tipperary. The 10 Clare parishes that have signed up for the initiative are Kilkee, Kilmaley, Clarecastle, Broadford, Kilrush, Killimer Cooraclare, Inagh-Kilnamona Mullagh and Milltown-Malbay. In mid-October, Clare County Council’s Biodiversity Officer gave an online PowerPoint presentation to the Laudato Si’ Animator’s meeting. Biodiversity actions will comprise a range of measures such as providing a haven for pollinators to link in with the ‘All Ireland Pollinator Plan’,

installing bird nest boxes for endangered birds such as barn owl, kestrel and swifts, bat roost boxes; eradicating invasive species, training, reducing pesticide use and chemicals. The initiative will involve working closely with the local community and it is expected that biodiversity actions will be implemented in 2024.



Article on 'Return to Nature' biodiversity initiative as published by the Clare Champion (13th October).

### Community Foundation Ireland Biodiversity Fund: Clare Communities

Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer met with over 15 communities across Clare in September and October to assist and advise communities to implement biodiversity actions (e.g. bird nest box installation, habitat management, native woodland conservation schemes, bat roost box installation in appropriate locations, invasive species eradication and biosecurity, outreach communications, pollinator initiatives) and submit applications under the Community Foundation Ireland Biodiversity Fund. It is an objective to get community groups to apply for funding to develop a Community Biodiversity Action Plan under strand 1 of the funding and implement biodiversity actions under Strands 2 and 3 of the fund. The funding also helps communities to identify their project partners and work with the local church, schools, farmers at the edge of villages and towns and green spaces. The funding stream will also help map habitats and invasive species which will strengthen and address knowledge gaps around baseline ecological datasets and invasive species. A site visit was also undertaken with the Woodland League and Galway County Council's Biodiversity Officer to discuss a potential collaborative biodiversity educational initiative to work with local schools around The Forest of Aughty in counties Clare and Galway.

### Community Information Day Clinics – Biodiversity

Clare's Biodiversity Officer met over 30 community groups during the week of the 16th of October to discuss biodiversity actions across Clare's Four Municipal Districts (Shannon, Kiltaloe, West Clare and Ennis). Three information days were held at six different locations (Shannon, Ennis, Scarriff, Tulla, Kilrush and Ennistymon) to discuss biodiversity funding streams including the Community Foundation Ireland Biodiversity Fund, Heritage Council funding, Local Biodiversity Action Fund and Creative Ireland funding. Guidance was given to communities to develop and fund a community Biodiversity Action Plan and work with farmers, schools and interested parties to implement a range of biodiversity actions including bat and bird nest box installation for rare and threatened species, native tree planting, pollinator friendly management practices, community outreach and engagement. Communities were also asked what their vision for the next Clare Biodiversity Action Plan

2024-2030 would entail. The knowledge share day coincided with Climate Action Week and there was a huge interest among communities to take action for biodiversity!



Clare's Biodiversity Officer Barry O'Loughlin at the Community Information Day in Ennistymon

### Lesser Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan: Clare Site Visit

The Steering Group of the Lesser Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan met recently in County Clare, visiting two roosts to view enhancement work and discuss future actions. Practical conservation measures at site level and landscape level are an important part of the Action Plan (published in 2022) which aims to guide and inform conservation management of lesser horseshoe bats in Ireland. Lesser Horseshoe Bat is an Annex II listed species of the EU Habitats Directive with several Special Areas of Concern (SACs) designated across Clare for the species. Clare's Biodiversity Officer was in attendance.



Steering Group members of the Lesser Horseshoe Bat Species Action Plan (Photo Credit: Vincent Wildlife Trust)

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The table below shows the number of planning applications processed during the month of October 2023, together with the year to date figures. Fifty four percent of planning applications received in October were received by electronic means.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS	October	Year to date 2023
No. of planning applications received	97	1011
No. of Planning Decisions made	74	802
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	6	31
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	18	185
No. of Section 5 applications	8	84
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications (in respect of Part V of the Planning & Dev Act 2000)	5	39
Submissions received regarding Compliance	17	254

## PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

The table provides a summary of Enforcement activity for October, 2023.

New complaints received	11
New files opened	06
Files closed	6
Warning Letters issued	11
Enforcement Notice issued	0
Legal	0



Clare Attendees of the National Women's Enterprise Day in the Clayton Hotel, Limerick.

## LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

- **The Trading Online Voucher Scheme**, which provides grant support to small businesses to develop an ecommerce website. In October, four further applications were approved bring the year total to thirty.
- **Mentoring:** LEO Clare has continued with a strong requirement for all our Mentoring Options including mentoring in Starting a Business, Finance, Digital Marketing, Export Development. In October 18 mentoring applications have been assigned.
- **Training:** LEO Clare held twelve training courses and events over the month of October which saw almost 170 participants register. These included training digital marketing, pricing workshop and export event and start your own business. We also started our four-part training in partnership with Creative Ireland for the creative and Artistic businesses.

### National Women's Enterprise Day

Empowering Business Together was the theme of the Local Enterprise Office's (LEO) Midwest conference for female entrepreneurs who took part in Ireland's National Women's Enterprise Day on 19th October in the Clayton Hotel. 140 women from the Region spent the day networking and learning from leading industry experts while tapping into the extensive supports available from LEOs in Clare, Limerick, and Tipperary.

Ciana Campbell, former RTE broadcaster and award-winning journalist was MC and the keynote speaker was Fiona O'Carroll a leader in business growth and mindset who spoke about the importance of building a peer network, how to continuously grow and develop core business skills.

### North American Celtic Trade Association Visit

Local Enterprise Office Clare recently hosted a 'Meet the Maker' event in association with the North Atlantic Celtic Trade Association at the Old Ground Hotel. At the event, ten local producers who are supported by LEO Clare, met with twelve retail buyers from North America in the hopes of forging connections & exporting products into the US market. The ten local businesses showcased a range of their products which reflected the landscape, raw materials, creativity, craftsmanship & general ethos of County Clare. Local retail buyers from Shannon Airport & Shannon Heritage were also in attendance. The event was attended by Cathaoirleach an Chlair, Joe Cooney. Tom McGrath, President of NACTA, mentioned in his speech that the event reflected the county and the communities in each and every product on show and the retailers in North America want those products on their shelves. Feedback from the majority of local businesses have confirmed that orders have been placed & connections have been made for potential future orders, which is a fantastic outcome for all involved.



Attendees from the NACTA Event including both Clare and North American Business owners. Also pictured Cathaoirleach an Chlair, Joe Cooney and Deirdre Keating Senior Enterprise Development Officer LEO Clare.

### Moving Towards Aerospace

Clare Co Co through LEO Clare are currently a partner in an Interreg Project titled 'Moving Towards Aerospace'. The primary objective is to determine how to support Clare based Micro/SMEs developing a supply chain within the aerospace sector factoring in digital transformation and sustainable practices. There are 7 partners in the programme representing regions in the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, Spain, Czechia and Romania. This is a 3–4-year project. LEO Clare recently participated in the second partnership meeting which took place in Andennes, Nordland County, Norway. Nordland County Council are developing launch facilities in this location to facilitate launching satellites for future research and data gathering.

## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

### Property Transactions and Conveyancing

The Table below shows the number of property transactions completed by Property Management Unit 20th October, together with the totals for 2023 to date and the full year 2022.

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. In addition to the Table below, significant property transactions are underway which will add to the economic development of the County and these are related to individual projects.

Transaction type	October 2023	Year to date 2023	Full year 2022
Lease / Sub Lease of Property / Building	1	6	4
Licence to use property / building	1	7	13
Grazing Agreement for Lands	0	17	22
Deed of Transfer signed	4	13	19
Contract for Sale / acquisition signed	0	1	2
Deed of Right of Way / Wayleave signed	1	1	6
Deed of Rectification / Variation signed	2	3	10
Allotment Agreements signed	0	39	39

### Lease of former Garda Station at Inagh to Inis Housing Association

Following the acquisition of the former Garda Station building on the Miltown road in Inagh from the Office of Public Works, we have now entered into a lease with the Inis Voluntary Housing Association. The Inagh Housing Association has merged with the Inis Housing Association and this will bring greater strength and support to the association and its work. Their new building will be a focal point for the tenants of the Association in Inagh and surrounding area. The official opening was a day of welcome and congratulations to both bodies and Cllr Ian Lynch, Chair of the West Clare Municipal District did the honours in the presence of the local Parish priest, Fr. Martin Shanahan, Emer Watson of Inis Housing Association and Frank Gunter of the Inagh Housing Association. The executive of Clare County Council was represented by Carmel Greene of the Property Management Unit and Padraig Mac Cormaic of the Housing Department.



### Lease of Lisdoonvarna Library from Lisdoonvarna Fáilte

While the Lisdoonvarna Library has been at its current location for many years, it was only in October that the formal lease arrangements were entered into. The Council is grateful to Lisdoonvarna Fáilte and the Spal Wells Trust for ensuring that the Library can continue its presence and good work in Lisdoonvarna.

### Casual Trading

As we come to the close of the Summer and Festivals season, the licences to be issued between now and year end will be for Kilrush Horse Fairs on various dates and some Christmas related events.

## DERELICT SITES

The Derelict sites team are currently dealing with 252 properties that are considered derelict, an increase of 13 properties since the last monthly report. The activity in recent years has substantially increased with 69 derelict properties identified and reported on in 2022 and to date in 2023, we have opened files on 51 new properties. Initial engagement with owners or their representatives is key to resolution of the issues of dereliction and to understand the various reasons why the properties are in a derelict stage. The level of activity in the property market for vacant and derelict properties has increased and of the properties we have identified as derelict, a number of them have been brought to the market and some are at 'sale agreed' stage. We continue the engagement with the new owners of those properties to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990. Due to the Vacant Property refurbishment Grant (see details below), there is a noticeable increase in the number of derelict and vacant properties on the market at the current time.

We are also seeing the outcome of sales agreed in recent months, with planning applications for refurbishment increasing and works commencing on individual properties. We are advising owners of properties of the grant for refurbishing vacant and derelict properties to residential use and the amalgamation of the Vacant Homes Team and the Derelict Sites Team earlier in 2023 is accruing benefits. With time and effort, working with owners, financial institutions and other departments, there are definitely options for positive re-development and revitalisation of many such derelict sites.

The table below provides a snapshot of the activity in September and the year 2023 to date, together with comparative figures for the full year 2022.

Derelict Sites	October 2023	Year to date 2023	Full Year 2022
No. of new files opened	12	51	69
No. of Section 8(2) Notices issued – Intention to enter site on Derelict Sites Register	2	32	33
No. of Section 8(7) Notices issued – Entry of site onto Derelict Sites Register	2	20	22
No. of Section 11 Notices issued – Measures required to render the site non-derelict	0	0	0
Notice of Valuation of Property for Derelict Sites Levy	2	3	0
No. of files closed / property removed from Derelict Sites Register	0	10	21
No. of Notices served to Compulsorily Purchase derelict sites (CPO) (see note below)	0	10	6
No of Vesting Orders signed	1	9	4

### Compulsory acquisition of Derelict sites (CPO)

2022	Of the six CPOs that were initiated in 2022, four have been vested in Clare County Council. The CPO process on two more properties have been ceased as works have commenced on them following engagement with the owners/reputed owners. We are working with the Housing Department to return the three properties to living accommodation, following refurbishment or re-development and one property will shortly be put on the market for sale.
2023	Of the ten CPO's initiated in 2023 to date, nine are at the Vesting stage, one has recently been advertised and submissions are awaited.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has launched a CPO activation programme for local authorities and has set targets for CPOs for each local authority.

In addition, the 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. A particular emphasis will be on properties that have potential for residential use.

**Derelict Site Levy**

Determination of valuations on the derelict sites which are on the Derelict Sites Register has commenced and notices have issued to four property owners. One of these has appealed the valuation to the Valuation Tribunal and a decision is awaited. 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.

## VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANT - FOR DERELICT AND VACANT PROPERTIES

Applications for the Croí Cónaithe Vacant and Derelict Property Refurbishment Grant are still being received by those who wish to renovate a vacant or derelict property for their residential use or for rental. The detail on the number of applications (as at 20th October) is shown in the Table below.

This measure will boost the supply of rental properties and options for permanent homes and will deliver on a key plank 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.

### Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant



No. of Applications Submitted		Overall %
Year 2022	33	13%
Year 2023	214	87%
<b>Total no. of Grant Applications</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Proposed use of Grant aided property</b>		
Private Residence	186	75%
Rental Property	61	25%
<b>Decisions Made</b>		
Approved	112	45%
Rejected	12	5%
Withdrawn	19	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>Applications in progress</b>		
In Progress	14	
Further Information Requested	67	
Awaiting Technical Inspection	23	
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>42%</b>

Key items to note include:

- There was a significant increase in applications during the Summer months and the processing time for applications has reduced with additional resourcing to the Team. Technical inspections are being undertaken on a weekly basis.
- The percentage of the total applications to be made available for rental remains constant at 25%.
- Since May 2023, the time period for completion of works is 13 months from the date of grant approval and this may be challenging for applicants to achieve.
- The revised maximum grant amounts introduced in May 2023 are being applied to all existing approved applications.
- We have processed our first payment under the Grant, including the signing of the Deed of Charge. Some more claims for payment are on hands, following completion of works.
- The applications in rural areas account for 58% of all applications and those in towns and villages account for 42%. This has remained fairly consistent since the grant was introduced.

Full details of the scheme and eligibility criteria are published on the Council’s website. The contact email address for further information and guidance on the grants scheme is [vacanthomes@clarecoco.ie](mailto:vacanthomes@clarecoco.ie). We continue to meet individual owners to guide them through the process and to ensure they have all the documentation when submitting their application.

Based on the applications received and the revised grant levels, there is a potential investment of €4.5 million by Government in the refurbishment of vacant and derelict properties in County Clare to be returned to economic use as permanent homes.



# ENNIS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

## PROJECT WORK

### Connecting & Co-creating

Ennis MD continued works on the NTA funded 'Connecting and Co-Creating Ennis' project. The overall aim of this project is to provide enhancements to footpaths and walkways, drop kerbs and seating areas on walking routes around and through the town. During October crews carried out works on new pedestrian crossings and footpaths at French Court and on the Ardlea Road. New surface water drainage was also provided in these areas.



### Community Recognition Fund - Clare Crusaders Clinic

Ennis MD recently installed new drainage, kerbing and surfacing within the car park of the Clare Crusaders Clinic in Barefield. This project, which received funding under the Community Recognition Fund, will significantly improve accessibility for over 450 children who avail of free therapy and specialist treatment at the clinic. Line marking will also be installed in the coming weeks.



### Ballybeg Footpaths

Ennis MD continue to work on Phase 2 of the Ballybeg footpath project. This new scheme has been very well received by the locals and provides a vital pedestrian route between the Kilrush Road and various estates in the Ballybeg area. The scheme also includes new public lighting and drainage works.



### People's Park Clarecastle

Ennis MD recently installed foundations for a new Outdoor Gym facility within the People's Park in Clarecastle. Gym equipment has been carefully selected following extensive consultation with many community groups, both young and old, within Clarecastle. This equipment will be installed shortly.



## ROADWORKS

### Tulla Road Surface Overlay

Ennis MD recently completed resurfacing works on a 1100m section of the Tulla Road (R352). The road is used by over 2,500 motorists on daily basis and provides a vital link between the town of Ennis and East Clare.



### Line marking

Ennis MD have continued both the refreshing of existing road marking and the installation of new road marking throughout the district. New centre line marking recently installed within Doora Village (image) will help slow traffic due to the perceived tightening of the lanes.



### Road repair works

Potholes and road repair works have been carried out recently throughout the Ennis Town Centre area, including Bishopscourt, Rossanore, Barrack St, Francis Street and Cloughleigh. These works will continue in areas of road distress over the coming weeks. Road repair works also extended to the Cloister Carpark in Ennis.

### Trip Hazard Repair works



Trip hazard and footpath repair works were carried out in Abbey Street Carpark, Lower Market Street, Old Mill Road and O'Connell Square. Works included paving reinstatement, kerb repairs and enhancements to dropped kerbing to improve accessibility.

## ENNIS 2040 ECONOMIC & SPATIAL STRATEGY – IMPLEMENTATION

### Ennis Public Realm Update

Contract documents were signed with Shareridge Ltd on the 23rd October, 2023 allowing works proceed to site, marking a very important milestone on this project.

### Ennis Transport Plan Update

Systra Ltd have been appointed to undertake the Area Based Transport Assessment (which will form part of the upcoming Local Area Plan for Ennis). Systra Ltd are currently carrying out a Baseline Assessment of the Plan and Surrounding Area with the first round of public consultation anticipated to commence mid-November 2023.

### Ennis Cycle Lanes Update

Tulla Road: approx. 2.2km in Length. Currently undertaking detailed design. It is anticipated that construction should start in Q3 2024.

Limerick Road: A contract will be signed in the coming weeks for the Concept Development, Feasibility and Preliminary Design of a Cycle Scheme linking Clarecastle to Ennis (at St. Flannans College, Flannans Drive, Eire Óg Gaa and the Ennis National School.) The Lahinch Road and Gort Road cycle schemes are at inception stage.

### Public Ennis Town Bus Service Update

Ennis MD continue to liaise with the National Transport Authority to deliver this important infrastructural project which is projected to commence in Q1 2025.

### Post Office Field Masterplan

This is a key amenity and biodiverse area located in the centre of Ennis town. It acts as a flood plain at times of high water levels in the River Fergus. Currently a masterplan to flesh out the potential amenity, biodiversity enhancement and access options for this area is underway. It is expected that this work will be completed by November 2023 at which point further engagement will take place with stakeholders as to how this amenity project can be funded & taken forward.

### Francis St

Departmental approval for the construction of Affordable Housing for Ennis was secured by Clare County Council Housing Department during Q1 2023 which presented an opportunity to explore the potential of the Francis St site for an affordable scheme. Site investigation works are underway and are due for completion early November. Applications are being prepared in conjunction with Clare County Council Housing Department in respect of Affordable Housing Funding.

### Abbey St

A Concept Design for this location is being finalised with public consultation to follow. Site investigations are underway and are due for completion early November.

### Harvey's Quay

A Concept Design for this location is being finalised with public consultation to follow. Site investigations are underway and are due for completion early November.

### Ennis 2040 TY Project - 2023/2024

Following on from the successful transition year projects in Ennis secondary schools last year, the programme is being rolled out again this autumn. Introductory presentation to TY Students of Ennis Community College and Gaelcholaiste an Chlair have been completed. Other schools will commence their projects in the coming months.

### Ennis 2040 Website

Ennis 2040's new website went live in October.

# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

## TRANSPORTATION

### Roadworks Programme and Operations

The 2023 Schedule of Municipal District Works (Annual Roadworks Programme) is nearing completion despite the inclement weather conditions encountered during the year.

### Strategic Transportation

#### Transportation Progress Update

##### Active Travel

The following is a brief overview of the activities within the Active Travel office:

Tulla Road Cycle scheme:

- On-site meeting with the NTA held recently and the detail design is progressing.

Athlunkard to Ardnacrusha Active Travel Scheme:

- Preparation for the appointment of a consultant is ongoing.
- Procurement of Traffic Surveys to assess the existing origin – destination movements and traffic volumes including pedestrian movements.

Bothar Sioda, Shannon Rapid Implementation Active Travel Scheme

- Topographic survey has being procured and final survey is to issued to Clare County Council.
- Initial Design Scoping has being completed following site walkover.

Limerick Road (incl. St. Flannans Drive) Cycle scheme:

- Meeting has recently taken place with Tobin Consulting Engineers. Work will begin shortly on the Concept Design and Route Selection Phase. Contract signing taking place at the beginning of the month.

Connecting & Co-creating Ennis:

- Junction tightening works are continuing along Clon Rd with French Court recently completed.

'Safe Routes To School' program:

- A site walkover was completed for St. Mochullas National School with the Outline Delivery Plan expected from An Taisce shortly.
- The NTA visited the Holy Family National School to go through the preliminary design proposals for the scheme. Discussions are ongoing, it is hoped to progress to the next phase in the coming weeks.
- Construction works will begin at Clonmoney National School Scheme as soon as the contractor can mobilise on site.
- The week-long "School Street" trial for An Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Cíosóg has been arranged i.e. signage designed and leaflet information given to school for distribution to parents. This trial will involve students walking, cycling or park and striding to school.
- A topographical survey in Glenina Residential estate and the green areas around An Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Cíosóg has been undertaken, this is required to develop the SRTS design.

Ennis Town Local Transport Plan:

- The appointed Consultant Systra is continuing to compile all relevant information that will help form and shape the Local Transport Plan including:
  - preparing and assessing the traffic and pedestrian movements throughout Ennis
  - Locations of future proposed bus stops.

Ennis Town Cycle Counters:

- Cycle Counters have now been installed and are operational at the following locations around Ennis:
  - Tulla Rd
  - Gort Rd
  - Kilrush Rd
  - Lahinch Rd
  - Limerick Rd North
  - Limerick Rd South

<b>Public Lighting</b>	<p>The PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project) has commenced in Clare with surveying works completed in the Shannon MD &amp; ongoing in the Ennis MD.</p> <p>For the benefit of Councillors, public lighting faults can be reported online at <a href="https://enerveo.com/report-a-fault/republic-of-ireland">https://enerveo.com/report-a-fault/republic-of-ireland</a>, by Phone (0818-372772) or via Local Authority Identification (<a href="https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/roads-and-transport/road-maintenance-issues/report-a-broken-streetlight">https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/roads-and-transport/road-maintenance-issues/report-a-broken-streetlight</a>).</p> <p>The public lighting section and its contractor Enerveo are continuing to work with ESB Networks to address the asset unbundling requirements at locations across the county.</p>
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## Road Design Office

### TII Road Safety Projects

Project	Progress Update
HD17	<p><b>N85 Lahinch Road/Shanaway Road</b> An interim design solution which includes for a raised pedestrian crossing has been prepared to address concerns at the junction of Lahinch Road and Shanaway Road in Ennis. A Road Safety Audit was carried out for the proposal and a Pedestrian Crossing Assessment is currently being prepared. A letter of Intent has been issued for the appointment of a Traffic/Pedestrian Count Surveyor as part of the Pedestrian Crossing Assessment.</p> <p><b>N67 Doonbeg</b> A Pedestrian Crossing Assessment will be prepared to identify the possibility of introducing a pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of the Church in Doonbeg. A letter of intent has been issued for the appointment of a Traffic/Pedestrian Count Surveyor as part of the Pedestrian Crossing Assessment.</p> <p><b>N67 Mount Charles Terrace, Kilkee</b> The Feasibility &amp; Options Report has been approved at Gateway 1 by the TII and will now proceed to Preliminary Design Stage.</p> <p><b>N67 St Patricks Church New Quay</b> The Feasibility &amp; Options Report has been approved at Gateway 1 by the TII and will now proceed to Preliminary Design Stage.</p>
<b>Noise Action Plans</b>	Strategic Noise Mapping & Noise Action Plans Agglomerations Technical Working Group Meetings and Workshops are ongoing.
<b>Fence Retrofitting Programme</b>	An inventory of boundary fencing within the Clear Zone of national roads where a speed limit of 100km/h applies is currently being prepared to comply with the TII standard of replacing post & rail fencing with a tensioned wire mesh restraining system. A Fence Retrofit Assessment Report has been submitted to the TII for approval for the replacement of a concrete post and rail fence on the N68 at Drummeen, Ennis.
<b>Periodic Speed Limits</b>	<p>Periodic speed limit assessments have been submitted to the TII for approval for the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N67 New Quay National School</li> <li>• N67 Rinneen National School</li> <li>• N68 Caherea National School</li> </ul>

Other Projects 2023

Project	Progress Update
<p>Bridge Rehabilitation Programme</p>	<p>Ballycloghessy Bridge Section 50 granted by the OPW. Contractor appointment on going and due to start on site 01/11/2023.</p> <p>Construction works 90% completed, bar snagging on the following bridges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cloghera Bridge</li> <li>• Crean Bridge</li> <li>• Drimeen Bridge</li> <li>• Gortnaglough Bridge</li> <li>• Gortnagonella Bridge</li> <li>• Inchiquin Bridge</li> </ul> <p>Construction works 90% completed, bar snagging following bridges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alagha Bridge</li> <li>• Ballybran Bridge</li> <li>• Dromore Bridge</li> <li>• Gortalassa Bridge</li> <li>• Wyndham Bridge</li> <li>• Knockanena Bridge</li> </ul> <p>Contractor appointed and due to start on site 01/11/2023 for the following bridges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erinaghmore Bridge</li> <li>• Rathmeehan Bridge</li> <li>• Mahonburg Bridge</li> </ul> <p>Contractor appointed to the following bridges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poulmagun Bridge</li> <li>• Ballykeel North Bridge</li> <li>• Boolyduff Bridge</li> <li>• Drumellihy Bridge</li> </ul> <p>N85 Culvert Replacement</p> <p>Consultant appointed for the design of a replacement culvert on the N85 at Fountain, Ennis. Vegetation cleared upstream and downstream to allow for survey</p>
<p>Liaison with NTA regarding bus shelters</p>	<p>The NTA has approved 15 bus shelters for the 2023 programme. Works are completed at 14 locations.</p> <p>The following is an update of progress with respect to the final bus shelter at Clarisford:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NTA have approved the works. Works are programmed for early December.</li> </ul> <p>Bus Eireann’s contractor has applied for their road opening licences for the following bus stop upgrades.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doolin</li> <li>• Rainbow Hostel</li> <li>• Fanore</li> <li>• Liscannor</li> <li>• Doolin Hostel</li> <li>• Fisher Street, Doolin</li> <li>• Cliffs of Moher</li> <li>• Kilnaboy</li> </ul>

<b>Low-Cost Safety Schemes 2023</b>	<p>Construction works commenced on the following Low Cost Safety Schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cloonamirrin R352</li> <li>• Killaloe L3084</li> <li>• Ardnacrusha</li> <li>• Sixmilebridge Shannon Road</li> <li>• Ballkeel South Kilfenora</li> <li>• Kilnaboy R476</li> <li>• Tiermaclane</li> <li>• Ardnacrusha</li> </ul>
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## Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Team are continuing with their schedule of Annual Safety Statement and Risk Assessment Reviews and schedule of Safety Inspections in order to inspect, monitor and advise on the implementation of the Clare County Council Occupational Health and Safety Management System.

The Trial of the ProWorks Traffic Management Software has been completed with 32 Tablets rolled out to Transportation Staff in each of the Municipal Districts in order to select and record Traffic Management Plans and Safe System of Work Plans at each roadworks site using the ProWorks App.

An Internal H&S Audit Plan has been approved by the Safety Management Committee in order to conduct an Internal H&S Audit of each Directorates Compliance with the Clare County Council Occupational Health & Safety Management System by the end of 2023.

Serious Incident Simulated Exercise Workshops continue to be delivered in each Municipal District and across a range of Departments in Clare County Council during 2023.

During October the ESB Public Safety Manager delivered 6 Separate Safety Talks in each Municipal District and at the Safety Monitoring Committee Meeting on working near overhead power lines and underground services.

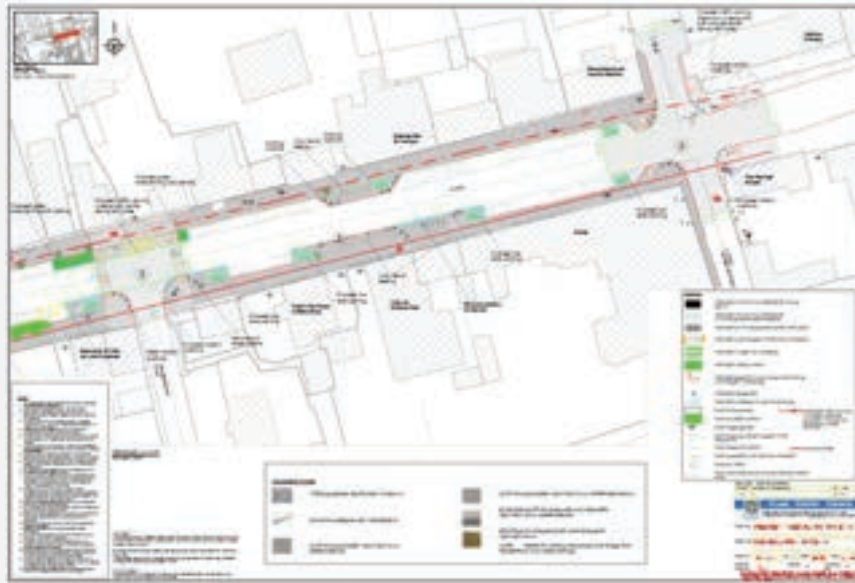
## General Design Office

Project	Progress Update
Vandeleur Walled Gardens, Kilrush, Courtyard Pergola	Quotations received.
Vandeleur Walled Gardens, Kilrush - Upper Carpark.	Works completed on site; minor snagging items have been closed out.
Vandeleur Walled Gardens, Kilrush - Courtyard Paving	Courtyard paving and guarding and handrail to pedestrian crossing. Pricing drawings completed, quotations received and approved, construction works ongoing on site.
Town and Village Renewal Schemes	<p>Clonlara - Works started on site 18th September 2023, construction ongoing.</p> <p>Parteen – Redesign currently ongoing. Revised section 38 notice published in Clare Champion 13th October 2023.</p> <p>Drumgeely (Pictured) - Contractor appointed – Works commenced on site on 18th October 2023. Photo of work showing start of new stone wall raised flower bed.</p>



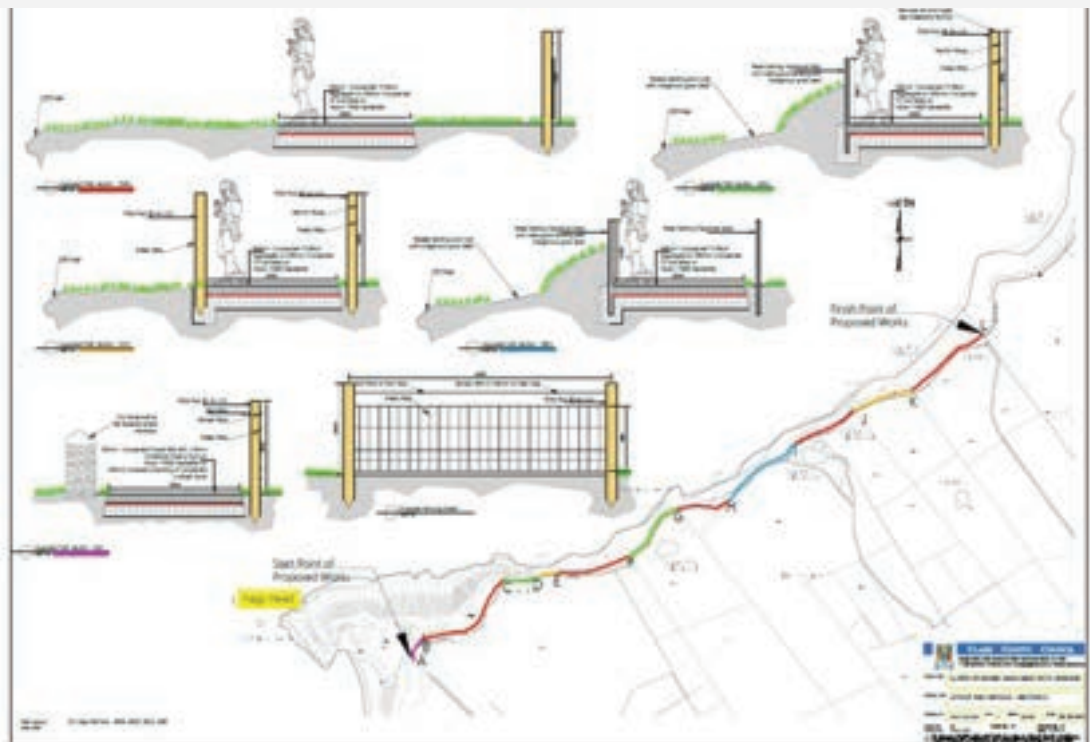
Mountshannon – Public Realm and Mobility Plan

Section the Section 38 notice has been on display since 6th October and the last date for public submissions is 7th of November 2023. Works will include upgrading of existing footpaths and construction of new footpaths, new kerbing and permeable paving with bicycle racks, seating and planting.



Burren Way Walking Trail

Section 5 (Exempted Development) for the next section of Upgrade Works on the Burren Way Walking Trail. The works will consist of repair and reinstatement of existing path, stone walls and fencing.



## CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Progress throughout October on the Major Capital Projects being managed by the PMO is as outlined below.

Doolin Pier Visitor Services Building

We are still waiting for a response for the Department on our request for additional funding for this project.

Ennis Public Realm Regeneration (Project B)

Contract documents were signed with Shareridge Ltd. allowing the works proceed to site on the 23rd October 2023, marking a very important milestone on this project. The works requirement within the contract obliges Shareridge to have a Public Liaison Officer (PLO) as part of their Team who is based in their Project office in Ennis Town Centre. The PLO will engage extensively with affected parties before and during the works and will also be convening routine meetings with the public throughout the construction programme. The public and traders are encouraged to take every opportunity to meet with the project team to ensure that needs are communicated, and disruption is minimised wherever possible. Affected/interested parties are invited to email [ennispublicrealm@shareridge.ie](mailto:ennispublicrealm@shareridge.ie) if they wish to be added to mailing list for weekly updates from Shareridge on the progress of the project.

Public Consultation will be ongoing regarding the Statutory Road Closure process for each phase of the project. The first Road Closure was granted for Phase 1A in October, and subsequent Road Closure notices will be advertised in coming weeks and months as works dictates. As part of the works programme, we will be facilitating Uisce Eireann (Irish Water) with significant upgrade and replacement works to a large section of the foul sewer running through the Town Centre. We are delighted that these additional works, paid for by Uisce Eireann, can be accommodated as they will resolve long-standing legacy issues with the sewer as well as future proofing capacity in the town for many years to come.

Some disruption/inconvenience during the works phase will be experienced but is unavoidable in major civil and infrastructural works of this nature. It is expected that the longer-term benefits in terms of user amenity and accessibility will far outweigh the shorter-term inconvenience and the Publics, Residents and Traders cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated.





<p>Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake's Corner)</p>	<p>The third party challenge to An Bord Pleanála's decision to confirm the CPO is still before the Courts with the next date for mention being mid-November. On conclusion of same, Clare County Council will determine the next course of action. If the Boards decision is upheld, we will move at pace to complete the detailed design, tender the works and appoint a contractor to carry out this critical and much awaited infrastructure.</p>
<p>Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass</p>	<p>Despite the recent extreme weather events (Storm Agnes and Storm Babet) work is progressing well across the Project.</p> <p>Rock breaking and Earthworks mass haul and deposition operations continue on the main cutting of the Killaloe Bypass section with material being placed at the Kincora Roundabout section.</p> <p>Drainage and service diversion works were completed at junctions of Bypass with Hill Road and Creevroe Road. These works necessitated separate road closures each of 5 working days duration.</p> <p>Road construction activities and associated tasks are progressing well on the Bypass.</p> <p>Marine Works are progressing well for the Shannon Bridge Crossing element. Central Pier pre-cast "bathtub" sections have now been installed. De-watering activities are progressing. West Pier 2 pile cap reinforcement is being fixed. West Pier 1 diaphragm is progressing. East Pier 1 is nearing completion. East and West Abutments are constructed.</p> <p>On the R494 Upgrade, the new replacement railway bridge foundations and slabs are completed. Earthwork retaining structures to the abutments are in progress. Installation of the Kilmastulla Bridge edge beams are in progress. Culverts, Attenuation Ponds and Embankments are at various stages of construction. Tarmac to the southern lane of the R494 between Chainage 1800 &amp; 2400 is imminent.</p> <p>Work to the railway bridge has necessitated a road closure to through traffic for a period of 9 months. However, local access is maintained to all affected properties and businesses. Signage and Diversionary routes are in place. Regular Traffic Management Meetings with the major stakeholders including the Gardaí continue to take place.</p> <p>Landowner Accommodation Works are also progressing along various sections of the R494, Ballina to Birdhill Road.</p> <p>Additional project specific information including monthly drone footage on the scheme is available on <a href="https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/capital-projects/roads-and-bridges/killaloe-bypass-shannon-bridge-crossing/">https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/capital-projects/roads-and-bridges/killaloe-bypass-shannon-bridge-crossing/</a></p>
<p>Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme</p>	<p>Following a recent Planning Workshop between the Council and our scheme consultant JBA/JB Barry, all planning level and landownership drawings can now be updated and re-issued. In the coming weeks, the Council will issue a request for a pre-application consultation with An Bord Pleanála. The Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is also scheduled to be completed by the end October. All baseline surveys for the EIAR (Environmental Impact Assessment Report) have been completed. The Options Report is currently being updated with the findings of the CCAP (Climate Change Adaptation Plan). The revised Buildability Report has been reviewed and assessed onsite. The Project Team led by the PMO, continue to progress and complete the various requirements for the Planning Application with a view to submission of same in 2024.</p>
<p>Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)</p>	<p>Following our recent meeting with the LIHAF Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) our colleagues in Housing have provided an additional submission on the mechanism's that are currently in place to assist in the delivery of housing for the site. This, along with updated total scheme cost estimates are now under consideration by the Department. Discussions with the relevant landowners is ongoing regarding the acquisition of the necessary lands for the scheme. It is hoped that all lands necessary can be acquired by agreement however, we may have to consider the CPO process for acquisition of any remaining lands necessary but this would be our last option. To that end, our Consultants RPS are preparing the relevant maps &amp; schedules should the need arise.</p>
<p>Quin Flood Relief Scheme</p>	<p>Work is progressing well on site with the Piling contractor now mobilised to start installation of the 40 Piles required. We are well advanced in terms of the RC (Reinforced Concrete) wall construction. Back-of-wall drainage has also commenced.</p>

Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass



Quin Flood Relief Scheme



Lough Donnell Culvert Repair works	Following completion of the main scheme works, the Contractor has commenced demobilisation and will be leaving site in the next 2 weeks. There are some minor works and snags outstanding and these will be completed in the coming weeks.
N19 Shannon Airport Access Road	<p>A Draft Preliminary Design has now been prepared for the Preferred Option identified during Phase 2 of the Project. The issues identified during the recent Design Peer Review Process are currently being considered by the project consultants FTC, with the view of updating the design drawings which will be published on the project website in due course.</p> <p>Over the month of October, works continued with regard to the EIAR chapter compilation. It is expected that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) along with Development Consent Application will be made to An Bord Pleanála in Q2 2024 with an Oral Hearing likely to follow. As always further information and associated literature on the project can be accessed via the scheme website <a href="http://www.shannonaccess.ie">www.shannonaccess.ie</a></p>
Remediation of sites containing ACM	Following completion of Environmental Screening exercises this year, review is currently being undertaken regarding the statutory approval aspects associated with the Remediation works. Tenders in respect of disposal of bulk soil material were published in the summer of 2023 and submissions are now in place, defining the receiving locations and transport requirements for the bulk materials to be removed. These details will be incorporated into tender documents for a separate works contract tender in respect of the excavation and remediation of the sites.
Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme	<p>Consultation Day was held on Wednesday 25th October in Treacy's Oakwood Hotel, Shannon, the feedback from which will be used to present the Emerging Preferred Options for Fluvial (River) and coastal defences being considered.</p> <p>The licence required from the Dept for the underwater Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) is expected to be issued in the coming days and a second consultation with NPWS is scheduled in the coming week to discuss the coastal proposals.</p> <p>The Project Steering Group continue to work closely with scheme consultant RPS in the development of the fluvial options for the scheme. As a result, RPS have now issued the Draft Options Development Report for our review. Initial comments and observations from Clare County Council and the OPW have been returned to RPS for consideration/inclusion. A contractor for the underwater Archaeology Impact Assessment (AIA) has been appointed and will commence the survey in the coming weeks following issue of the required license.</p>
Springfield, Clonlara FRS	The contractor has now completed all works on the scheme and has officially handed the site back to Clare County Council. Prior to handover, a test run was carried out where the penstocks on the Illaunygrenan were closed and the pumps engaged. All operated satisfactorily and as expected. Due to the current period of heavy rainfall, we are monitoring matters on the ground carefully. The ESB have advised they are discharging 135 cumecs at Parteen Weir currently with further releases necessary while repairs are ongoing at Ardnacrusha. Clare County Council are liaising with the ESB in this regard and will engage the pumps at Springfield if necessary, providing welcome comfort and support to the local community affected.
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 1: Kilrush to Kilkee)	The 'Option Selection Report' is being revised to include requirements of the new Transport Appraisal Framework (TAF) introduced recently by the Department of Transport (DoT). For best effect, the Emerging Preferred Route Corridor Public Consultation (PC3) is now likely to commence in early January following completion of the Option Selection Report and TII Peer Review process rather than in a rushed and busy Christmas period for all. Individual landowner meetings are ongoing and will continue with TII have recently given approval to appoint 2 full time Land Liaison Officers as required by the Code of Best Practice.
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 2: Ennis to Ennistymon)	Studies of environmental sensitivities, including protected sites and flood prone areas are underway. The successful completion of a peer review of the Option Selection Report for Section 1 will inform the preparation of the equivalent report for Section 2.

<p>West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 3 &amp; 4: Ennistymon to Miltown Malbay and Miltown Malbay to Moyasta)</p>	<p>It is intended to undertake initial Public Consultation on the Study Area in the coming months. The necessary Information documents and associated mapping for same are being finalised.</p>
<p>Other Greenway Proposals</p>	<p>Works are continuing on the Greenway proposals at Shannon, Bunratty and Sixmilebridge. A cross directorate meeting between the PMO, Planning, Roads and the Shannon MD took place recently to discuss options and issues.</p> <p>Clare County Council is part of the UL to Scarriff Greenway being led by Waterways Ireland but funded by TII. Much of which runs through Clare and a significant part of same will utilise the Cycling and Pedestrian elements of the Killaloe Bridge and Bypass Project.</p>

## FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

### Kilrush Fire Station Contract

Approval has been received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for the construction of a new 2 Bay Appliance Facility and general upgrade works at Kilrush Fire Station. A key feature of the construction of the new 2 Bay Appliance Facility will be the introduction of environmentally friendly initiatives into Kilrush Fire Station. A number of remedial works are also required to the existing Fire Station to enhance environmentally friendly initiatives in the station, provide Disabled Access to the station and to revamp the station that is now 25 years old. This project is being funded by the Department with total grant aid of €425,757.00 inclusive of VAT.



### New Class B Fire Appliance Funding

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD, has announced funding for a new Class B Fire Appliance at a cost of €520,000.00 for Clare County Fire & Rescue Service. It is expected that the new appliance will be based at Ennis Fire Station.

### Emergency Management Exercise at ESB Moneypoint

Clare County Council participated in a Major Emergency Management Exercise at ESB Moneypoint on the 19th October 2023. Over 60 people from ESB, An Garda Síochána, Health Service Executive, National Ambulance Service, Shannon Foynes Port Company and the Emergency Services Communications

Centres participated in the exercise.

### National Fire Safety Week



National Fire Safety Week took place from the 9th to 15th October 2023. This year's theme was "Safer Together". An interview with Denis O'Connell, Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer was aired on Clare FM's Morning Focus show. The interview highlighted the on-going program of "Home Fire Safety Checks" where firefighters go out to the homes of older people and those living alone to give fire safety advice and to fit smoke detectors where required. To date, circa 180 homes have availed of the Fire Safety Visit by firefighters and the program is on-going.

### Training Courses

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service personnel attended a Breathing Apparatus Refresher Training Course in Bray. Two new recruit firefighters from Shannon and Kilrush Fire Stations successfully completed a 3 week QQI accredited Firefighting Skills Course at Castlebar Fire Station and have now joined the crews in their respective stations.

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## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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Fire & Building Control Section Main Activities	Sept 2023	Oct 2023 (Up to 20.10.23)	Year to Date
Emergency Calls Attended	81	50	768
Fire Safety Certificates Received	10	2	80
Fire Safety Certificates Granted	6	4	68
Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	0	4
Disability Access Certificates Received	6	1	44
Disability Access Certificates Granted	5	2	37
Commencement Notices Received	35	26	354
Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	0	0	5

(Note: In the Oct Monthly Report, the Sept figures related to 1st- 25th September due to timing of report)

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## CLARE CIVIL DEFENCE

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### Clare Civil Defence

We are delighted to advise that following a recruitment competition Stephen Hayes has been appointed as Civil Defence Officer for Clare County Council. We wish Stephen continued success in the role.

#### Operational Duties:

- Civil Defence provided medical cover at a large number of events in October including Club Hurling & Football Quarter Finals, Semi Finals & Finals; Clare Crusaders Charity Cycle; Harley Davidson Charity Motorcycle Event (Liscannor); Ennis Garda Station Open Day.
- Clare Civil Defence was tasked by An Garda Síochána to assist in a search for a missing person at the Cliffs of Moher. Volunteers conducted searches in Liscannor and Galway Bay over an 18 day period.

#### Members Training & Professional Development

- Members participated in weekly training set out by Civil Defence instructors - this training included boat training, vehicle training, search training and use of drones.
- Cardiac First Responder Advanced Training.
- First Aid Responder Training.
- Volunteer Equipment Management System (VEMS) Training.
- Induction Training for 12 new recruits.

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## ENVIRONMENT

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### Environmental Awareness

#### An Taisce Green School Seminars

An Taisce online Green School seminars for Clare took place on the 4th October 2023 for the themes Litter and Waste, Water, Biodiversity, Global Citizenship Litter and Waste, Global Citizenship Energy, GC Marine, GC Food and Bio. There was 40 Clare Schools in attendance.

#### Sustainable Development Goal Champions (SDG) programme

Our Environmental Awareness Officer presented to the Department of Rural and Community Development on Clare County Councils SDG Champion programme as part national SDG Week. The SDG Accelerator tool was completed for Kilkee Green Hub Business initiative and the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).

## ENVIRONMENT

### Oil Tank – Safe Check campaign

A campaign to raise awareness about the prevention of oil leaks from home heating oil tanks was launched. The purpose of the campaign is to ensure homeowners know their own home heating tank and store oil safely and securely without posing a risk to water, environment, or human health.

A Your Say webpage was developed which provides information on siting and installation of a home heating oil tank, the importance of checking for leaks and what to do if there is an oil leak or a suspected leak - <https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/know-your-home-heating-oil-tank>

A media release was issued, and adverts placed in the Clare Champion and Clare Echo newspapers.



### Burning of Waste Halloween campaign

A media release was issued to make the public and business aware to not to supply any waste material to persons who do not hold a valid waste collection permit. As part of this campaign, it was highlighted that the uncontrolled burning of waste, particularly in bonfires, is illegal and releases toxic pollutants into the air, which are known to be damaging to our health and environment. Adverts were placed in the Clare

Champion and Clare Echo for 2 weeks leading up to Halloween. This message was further promoted through social media.



### October Awareness Campaigns

The following were promoted on social (@ClareCoCo and @GreenerClare) and print media during October:

- 1) My Waste Circular Living campaign
- 2) Sustainable Development Goals - SDG 15, SDG 16, SDG 17
- 3) National Tree Day 2023
- 4) Community Water Development Fund 2024
- 5) Mattress Collection days
- 6) Household Hazardous Awareness Campaign

### Gardening

While the Gardening Team continued through the late autumn season with required maintenance works, news filtered through that Ennis had won the Communities in Bloom competition.

Judging of this prestigious award is spread across several categories, a particular emphasis is placed on plants and floral displays in public spaces and within the community. In particular, the judges commended the works of the Gardening Team, noting that "Beauty, diversity and

sustainability are the benchmarks of choices for the ground beds that are so well placed around Ennis”, and the pollinator friendly planting programme as implemented by the team receiving a special mention by judges.



**Water Enforcement and Laboratory Scientific Services**

The table below summarises the work of the scientific teams to date in 2023:

Water Enforcement Scientific Team	October 2023	Jan - October 2023
Audits/Inspection of Section 4 licenced premises	5	23
Bathing Water Monitoring	0	236
Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Inspections (NIP Plan)	55	118
Monitoring Inspections of Section 4 licenced premises	5	38
Planning applications (Agriculture)	2	28
Planning applications (Domestic)	15	341
Planning applications (Large Developments)	2	15
Planning applications (Forestry)	10	86
Pollution complaints received	12	84
Private Commercial Drinking Water Supplies	14	40
Private/Public Group Water Scheme supplies	37	139
Rivers	12	223
Warning & advisory letters issued	1	7



The result reflects the ongoing efforts of the team to both enhance public spaces to the benefit of the public and environment, work is already underway for the 2024 season with maintenance works being undertaken of planter beds, and planting and propagation of new plants for next spring currently ongoing at the Council nursery.



### National Surveillance Monitoring Programme for Radioactivity in Drinking Water.

The European Union (Radioactive Substances in Drinking Water) Regulations 2016 (S.I 160 of 2016). provide for the monitoring of water intended for human consumption to assess compliance with parametric values and in the event of an exceedance of the parametric values the undertaking of remedial action to improve the quality of water for the protection of human health from a radiation protection point of view.

To determine the water supplies likely to exceed the parametric values for Indicative Dose and Radon a risk-based approach to monitoring is adopted, taking into consideration:

- The population served.
- The volume supplied (m<sup>3</sup> /day)
- The type of water supply i.e., surface water or ground water supply

Using this risk-based approach, a national surveillance monitoring programme of all regulated water supplies with a volume supplied of greater than 100 m<sup>3</sup> per day shall be carried out over a six-year period.

Seven private supplies in Clare were sampled for indicative dose & radon analysis on the 18th of October 2023. Samples were required to arrive at the laboratory Office of Radiation Protection and Environmental Monitoring for analysis within 24 hours of sampling.

## Waste Enforcement

### Anti-Dumping Initiative 2023

#### Vandeleur Gardens Cleanup

An inter-agency clean-up was carried out at the Vandeleur Gardens, Kilrush recently, involving Clare County Council, Coillte and private contractors where a total of 28.8 ton of waste was removed from the site. The damaged section of the wall, over which the dumping occurred was temporarily repaired, with a permanent fix planned for the immediate future. The wall is a protected structure, at the back entrance to the Vandeleur Gardens, which had been damaged.

#### Mattress Amnesty Days

Mattress Amnesty Days were held in Kilfenora and Kilrush marts on and in Scarriff mart on October 7th. A total of 167 mattresses were collected in Kilfenora, 85 mattresses were collected in Kilrush and 234 were collected in Scarriff.

#### Household Hazardous Waste Amnesty Day

A Household Hazardous Waste Amnesty Event was held at the

Central Waste Management Facility in Inagh on October 14th. 17.5 tonnes of Household Hazardous Waste was collected from the public and transported off-site by a Hazardous Waste Disposal Company, at a cost to Clare County Council of €21,296.36.

The breakdown of waste is as follows: 9,358kg waste paint cans, 325kg waste detergents, 404kg waste oil, 151kg herbicides/pesticides, 206kg waste medicines, 133kg machine coolant/ cutting fluid, 274kg waste petroleum products (petroleum, kerosene, diesel), 443kg waste adhesives and sealants, 403kg empty paint-related packaging, 1569 kg drums of waste oil, 350 kg empty plastic containers , 120kg waste oil filters, 154kg waste aerosols, 2,820kg waste paint-related material, 653kg waste batteries, 65kg solid waste materials contaminated with hydrocarbons.

This cost is being recuperated under the Anti-Dumping Initiative Funding. Local radio, newspaper and social media were used to advertise these events.

### Shopping Trolleys, Shannon

There is a history of complaints regarding the removal of shopping trolleys from supermarkets in the Shannon area. It is a densely populated residential area.

Our Community Wardens continue to:

- liaise with the supermarkets, to provide staff to do weekly collections.
- issue fines where appropriate.

Clare County Council developed a pilot project to link in with Shannon Tidy Towns, Shannon Active Retirement Group and local councillors, whereby 36 wheelie shopping bags were purchased, the Greener Clare logo was printed on them, and these bags will be presented to elderly residents. This is a multi-organisation approach aimed at alleviating the problem of shopping trolleys causing nuisance, litter and pollution.

### Solar Compactor Bins and Hallowe'en Cleanups

Solar Compactor Bins, which had previously been leased by Clare County Council were purchased to achieve cost savings.

Skips have been provided by Clare County Council at a location prone to stockpiling and burning waste at hallowe'en. It is hoped that this will eliminate air pollution and reduce the number of Fire Brigade callouts to this location over the hallowe'en period.

### Solid Fuel Regulations 2022

Samples of coal have been purchased by Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council,



Laos County Council, Meath County Council and Offaly County Council on foot of a joint grant application funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) to investigate compliance with Air Pollution Act 1987 (Solid Fuels) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 529 of 2022).

These samples are being transported to an accredited laboratory for testing to monitor compliance with the Solid Fuel Regulations 2022.

## Waste management

Further to the recent Office of Government Procurement (OGP) Tender for various waste streams at our 5 Civic Amenity Sites and 3 Waste Transfer Stations, the successful tenderer has begun site mobilisation and new compactors are being installed that will enable better site management and collection of certain waste streams. The contract was signed with Clean Ireland on the 9th October 2023.



## Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Audit

The EPA carried out an audit of the Inagh Civic Amenity Site and the Ballyduff beg Closed Landfill in late October 2023. The final report will be issued in due course, but no non-compliances were identified during the Audit.

## Ending of exemption for agricultural green waste burning

The Waste Management (Prohibition of Waste Disposal by Burning) Regulations 2009 makes it an offence to dispose of waste by burning. An initial five-year exemption was provided for the permissible disposal of waste by burning where it was done as a final measure after the preferred alternatives had been assessed, the local authority was notified and the material to be burned consisted only of uncontaminated wood, trees, tree trimmings, leaves, brush, or other similar waste generated by agricultural practices. This exemption has been extended on several occasions.

In early October the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications issue a reminder to all Local Authorities that the practice of burning agricultural green waste will end on the 30th of November 2023.

# CLIMATE ACTION

## Climate Action Plan Development

A key milestone was reached in the development of the Climate Action Plan with the Draft Plan going on public display on Tuesday October 10th. Councillors were given a comprehensive briefing on the contents of the plan on Friday Oct 6th. The draft plan aims to position County Clare as a national leader in climate action and strengthen the delivery of effective climate action at local and community levels, through place-based climate action. Actions are being developed under a number of thematic areas as informed by the pre-draft Public Consultation.

Clare County Council now invites any interested parties to make submissions or observations with regard to the Draft Climate Action Plan. Submissions/observations may be made during the period from 12th October 2023 to 4.00PM 23rd November 2023 inclusive. Submissions received will be taken into consideration before the making of the Clare Climate Action Plan.





Community Climate Action Programme



Community Climate Action Officer, Kelly Slattery, along with colleagues from the Rural Development, Heritage and Biodiversity sections of Clare County Council held a series of community information clinics around the county from the 16th to the 19th of October. The information clinics, which took place in Shannon, Ennis, Scariff, Tulla, Kilrush, and Ennistymon, were very well attended by community groups and organisations representing a diverse range of community organisations.

The main objective of the information clinics was to provide information, support and advice to community groups and organisations on support and potential funding available through Clare County Council for community projects and initiatives.

Administered through the Climate Action section, Clare County Council has been allocated €572,000 under Strand 1 of the initial phase of The Community Climate Action Programme. The funding aims to support and empower rural and urban communities, in partnership with the local authority, to shape and build low carbon communities by undertaking positive climate action. Ahead of the official launch of the funding, the information clinics provided community groups and organisations with an opportunity to meet with the

Community Climate Action Officer, to learn more about the programme, and to discuss potential climate action projects and initiatives.

Energy

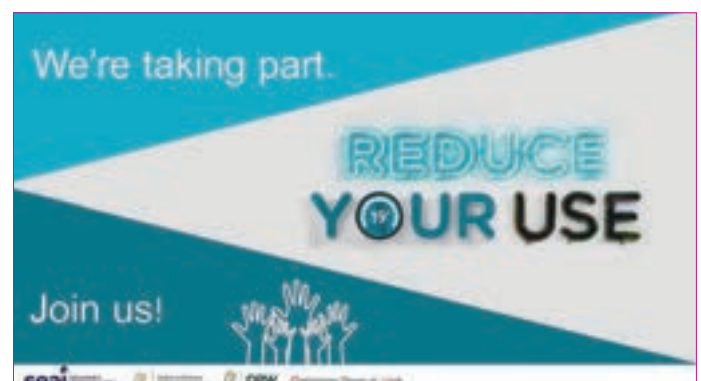
The role of Limerick Clare Energy Agency manager has been filled, the role is a shared resource between Limerick County and City Council and Clare County Council. From a Clare County Council perspective the role will focus on the monitoring and reporting of our energy consumption as well as working with facilities management across the council in relation to projects that will reduce both our emissions and consumption.

Reduce Your Use Campaign 2023/2024

Clare County Council will once again partake in the Reduce Your Use Campaign.

Reduce your Use is a joint initiative of SEAI and the Office of Public Works which supports public bodies to run a winter energy awareness campaign for staff and to undertake recommended actions on heating, lighting, operating hours and audits.

The campaign will run from October 2023 to March 2024. and will provide energy awareness materials and support to energy teams in each local authority. The Climate Team will be engaging with staff over the winter months on this campaign.



## WATER

### Asset Transfer

Following an assessment of the water and wastewater networks in County Clare, 384 sites have been identified for potential transfer to Úisce Eireann to date. Following on site surveys, 71 of these assets have been determined to be duplicate, non-operational assets or assets which Úisce Eireann will not accept. Of the remaining 313 assets, 221 have now been fully transferred to Úisce Eireann. The 92 assets remaining to be transferred are divided into the following four categories:

- Internal Query (12 assets) – These consist of assets for which need further investigation or information / approval from another council section to proceed, or sites under transfer via a different section of the council.
- National Special Projects Office (NSPO) (57 assets)– This is a department within Úisce Eireann dealing with special projects which includes facilitating the Asset Transfers from Local Authorities. Most assets in this category are folios under third party ownership but where long standing use and some evidence of previous land dealing is present. Úisce Eireann are now advocating that property in long term operational possession but not in the Council name be obtained by the adverse possession process. Circular L1 2022 has confirmed department support for this approach. All assets which have not

yet transferred will be examined to see if they can be progresses using this method.

- Outstanding assets to be reported on (0 assets) – All identified sites have now had reports completed.
- With County Solicitor (23 Assets) These assets are now with the County Solicitor to progress by ordinary transfer or by adverse possession processes.
- A review of assets which were originally determined to be disused is underway.

### Rural Water Programme

The Rural Water Team continues to support group water schemes to ensure a robust and sustainable quality and quantity supply of water is available.

The Clare Rural Water Programme awaits the publication of the 2022-2025 Multi Annual Rural Water Programme. This is the leading to frustration amongst the GWS's who have already engaged in the process and have submitted bid details to the Clare Rural Water Programme.

Under the 'Grant for the Improvement of a "Private Water Supply to a House" 67 applications have been received to date in 2023.

## SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

### Sixmilebridge Carpark at railway station re-opened.

The Council carpark adjacent to Sixmilebridge railway station has re-opened to vehicular traffic. The access point has enhanced security measures including an overhead height restriction barrier and configured bollards for traffic calming. The Shannon MD office worked closely with officials from Irish Rail in this regard. The co-operation and assistance of the local people of Sixmilebridge is acknowledged and appreciated.



### Athletics grounds Shannon

Shannon Municipal District received funding under the Community Recognition Fund to clear the disused and vastly overgrown 8 acre athletics site in Shannon. The site clearance works have recently been completed and reveal the true extent and potential of the grounds.

In order to maximise the future use of the site, quotations are now being sought for the compilation and preparation of a Feasibility Study. The Study will inform a strategic approach that will be used to differentiate the Athletics site for potential future funding submissions. This exciting project will provide a clear picture of the development options in the wider sporting context within the Shannon MD area.





**Springfield, Clonlara – handover of operations to Shannon Municipal District**

The Office of Public Works officially handed back the flood protection operations at Springfield in Clonlara to Clare County Council on Friday 13th October. The meeting was attended by OPW, a representative of Clare County Council Project Management Office, the Senior Executive Engineer from Shannon Municipal District and the consultant Byrne Looby and Partners. Shannon Municipal District will now manage the Operation and Maintenance of the facility into the future. Shannon MD will continue to engage with locals on an ongoing basis particularly during spells of prolonged heavy rainfall.



**Outdoor Exercise Equipment**

In keeping with Shannon MD’s ethos of ongoing development of high-quality off-road cycle and pedestrian infrastructure, Shannon MD has worked collaboratively with Shannon Leisure Centre to identify the most appropriate locations and types of outdoor gym equipment for installation at various walking trails throughout the Municipal District. Funding for the provision of the outdoor gym equipment was secured through the Community Recognition Fund. The scenic trail looped walk on the Shannon estuary is earmarked as one of the first locations for installation. In addition, a ‘Meditation Area’ will be incorporated into the works. The provision of this equipment will greatly benefit everyone and assist people in becoming more fit and healthy.

**Attendance at luncheon event with Minister Simon Coveney**

Pictured at a recent luncheon event were Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan, Shannon MD with Simon Coveney, T.D., Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment who was the keynote speaker and Anne Griffin, A/Senior Executive Officer. Insert photo of Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan, Minister Simon Coveney and Anne Griffin.



Summary Of Other Works	
Newmarket on Fergus	The Mural is completed and is now a must-see focal point within the village.
Sli na Slainte route underway	Works have commenced on the Sli na Slainte route off the roundabout near Town Centre/Lidl in Shannon. This route will link in with existing walkways within the heart of Shannon town.
Bothar na Sioda	Clearance works carried out on Bothar na Sioda road verge.
Town Village Renewal Schemes	Works are underway and steady progress is being made (Clonlara); Works have commenced at (Drumgeely)
Ballycasey More, Shannon.	Works to connecting pathway currently underway
Hedgecutting	Hedgecutting is ongoing throughout the MD at Cratloe, Sixmilebridge, and various other locations.
Low Cost Safety Schemes	Works commenced in Rossmanagher, Sixmilebridge road junction and at Barry's Cross in Ardnacrusa. 
Footpath works – connecting with embankment walkway	Upgrade of footpath from embankment walk at side of St Senan's school in Shannon.
Part M compliance works	New footpath works to ensure Part M compliance at Shannon Banks
Tree maintenance	Tree contractor carrying out tree maintenance throughout the MD
Liaising with Gardai	Ongoing liaison on various matters