



# Clare County Council Community Centre & Community Group Development 2025 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ'S)



An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe  
agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta  
Department of Rural and Community  
Development and the Gaeltacht

Renewed Clare Rural  
Development Strategy

## 2030

**LCDC**  
Comite um Fhorbairt Pobail Aistiuil an Chláir  
Clare Local Community Development  
Committee



Ár dTodhchaí  
Tuaithe  
Our Rural  
Future



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR  
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide general information and guidance to community groups in relation to:

1. The development, management and operation of community centres and
2. Details of the support that are provided by the Clare Co Council Rural & Community Development Officer (RCDO)Team.

The information is presented in a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) format to address key areas and provide the relevant information to support that query.

**Additional information is also available on the Clare Co Council website at [www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/community-participation/rural-dev-officers/](http://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/community-participation/rural-dev-officers/)**

# COMMUNITY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT FAQ'S



## WHAT TYPE OF COMMUNITY GROUP CAN DEVELOP AND OPERATE A COMMUNITY CENTRE?

### The Group should be:

- A Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)
- A Non-Profit Company

### What does a CLG require?

- A CLG requires a minimum of two directors, aged 18 years or over, a company secretary and at least one member. Charities typically require 3 unrelated directors and members.
- It must have a constitution which includes a memorandum and articles of association.
- Members must agree to contribute a minimum of €1 to the company's assets in case of winding up. Members' liability is limited to the amount they agree to contribute, which is at least €1, in the event of the company's liquidation.
- CLG's must also prepare and file annual audited accounts with the Companies Registration Office (CRO)
- The company name must include "company limited by guarantee" or Irish equivalent unless an exemption is granted such as for Charities or Non-Profit organisation.

## COMMUNITY ASSET / PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Asset /building / land must be in the ownership of the developing community group/ organisation?

### What does this include?

- Long term lease - minimum 25 years
- Owned outright (purchased or donated)
  - Title Deeds in the ownership of the community group / organisation.

### Why?

To protect the asset and investment allocated from funding streams financed from public money and local fundraising.

The ownership of the asset is a requisite for the community group / organisation to be able to apply for and draw-down funding if successful.

## HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE NEED AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY CENTER?

Carry out a Feasibility Study - this is a preliminary study to assess the viability and potential issues of a project before a formal application is made.

This study should also be shared with the local community and existing groups.

### Who completes the study?

- Engage an independent consultant
- Member of the community group with the skill set to complete the study.

**Note:** fees may apply

**Carry out a needs analysis / audit of what may be required within a community / locality including details of what is already in place and gaps**

**How to identify / capture existing community support & usage?**

- Town Hall meetings / public consultation involving ALL existing local community groups / entities.
- Follow up and secure:
  1. Documented support from each community group committing to use of facility
  2. Details of requirements by existing groups - scheduling
  3. Is there spare capacity?
  4. Times when facility is NOT in use.

**WHAT DO COMMUNITY GROUPS USING THE FACILITY NEED TO PROVIDE IN ORDER TO USE THE FACILITY?**

- Insurance - current public liability insurance and indemnity to community group/ organisation managing the facility - copy/ written confirmation to be provided before use of the facility.
- Access to an online booking system(?) and online payment facilities?

**Community Centers** can be an existing building being repurposed / refurbished or extended/ new development (Green field site).

**DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY FACILITY**

**How are the project / project stages to be managed?**

Is there a dedicated sub-committee / team with the appropriate skillsets and time available to manage the project or elements of the project without the support of a paid project manager?

**How can a project manager be sourced & funded?**

Best practice - 3 quotes / expressions of interest with quotations and timelines

**Does the project require Planning Permission?**

Do you require the support of a Planning Agent or is there a dedicated sub-committee / member with the appropriate skillsets and time available to manage Planning

**Application Process** and arrange for the supporting documentation which may be required:

- Drawings/ plans, application form & fee, design statement and landscape plan, feasibility study.
- Traffic Impact Assessment
- Ecology Surveys - protected species or habitats - bats/ birds other,
- Environmental Impact Assessments (large developments)
- Archaeological surveys for potential historical findings,
- Structural assessments
- Fire Safety



## FUNDING OPTIONS

**RCDO team** can advise in relation to appropriate funding options  
CLG to consider is there a dedicated sub-committee / team to manage funding applications & drawdown of funding?

### National /Local Funding Schemes:

Funding schemes are announced by the relevant Department and Local Authority Department annually. Details of grants administered on behalf of the Local Authority or the Department is available on the Clare Co Council website - [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie)  
All funding to be acknowledged locally - plaques / media etc.,

### Local Fundraising

Some matched funding may be required depending on the grant(s) being applied for. Some schemes require proof that the community group/ CLG has funds available in a back account.  
What local fundraising will be required: how and by whom and what is it needed for?  
What advertising campaign will be completed?  
How is it intended to keep local community updated - transparency/ ownership and audit requirements.

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

(details on Clare Co Council website)

- **Clare Co Council:**
  - Rural & Community Development Officer (RCDO) Team
  - Heritage Officer
  - Climate Action Team
  - Environmental Officer
  - Healthy Ireland Coordinator
  - Age Friendly Coordinator
  - Arts Officer
  - Local Municipal District Office
- **Leader Funding** - Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) & development officers
- **Sports Capital Funding** & Clare Sports Partnership
- **National Funding streams managed through Clare Co Council** - see [www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/grants/](http://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/grants/)

## LONGTERM MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE & OPERATION OF THE FACILITY

**What happens once the community center project has been completed and is available for use?**

The following must be considered for the long-term management and viability of the facility:

**How is the facility going to be managed?**

- Dedicated full-time staff
- Part-time staff with volunteer support
- Volunteers only





### **How will booking the facility be managed and paid for?**

- Online booking system & online payment system - what are the associated costs?
- If no online booking/payment system- what will be in place, who will operate and manage it and report to the Board of Directors etc.

Is there a dedicated / member / sub-committee / team to oversee and manage these systems?

What provision will the CLG make for addressing the ongoing maintenance of the property?

### **COMMUNITY GROUP-SUCCESSION PLANNING & GOVERNANCE**

This should be included in the Memorandum of Understanding and the Constitution of the CLG and required serious consideration and implementation once the project is completed and operational to avoid volunteer fatigue and ensure involvement of new members going forward.

# COMMUNITY GROUP DEVELOPMENT FAQ's



## WHO PROVIDES SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY GROUPS?

### The Rural & Community Development Officers (RCDO's) Team

The role of the Rural & Community Development Officers (RCDO's) is to build the capacity of voluntary community leaders and organisations in Co. Clare and to assist with identifying projects which will provide communities and the county with an identifiable comparative advantage in terms of securing national funding for projects. Projects supported by the RCDO's are aligned to the objectives of the LECP 2024-2030 (Local Economic and Community Plan) and the Clare Rural Development Strategy 2030. This work is underpinned by community engagement that is based on established community development principles and practices. By working collaboratively with the Elected Members of Clare County Council and each of the four Municipal District offices, the RCDO Team provides a crucial link between local communities and the local authority. This support to community groups in terms of community engagement and capacity building includes collaborating with other dedicated teams in the council such as the Climate Action Team, Integration Team, Heritage and Biodiversity Staff, Environment Awareness Team, and the Town Centre First Team.

The RCDO Team also works with community and voluntary groups to provide additional sustainable community development supports, including group restructuring, inclusivity and governance training, succession planning and project development. The RCDO's current work

program has a county wide focus across the four MD's in terms of project development and funding.

To find the Rural & Community Development Officers for your area please see Clare Co Council website at: [www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/community-participation/rural-dev-officers/](http://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/community-participation/rural-dev-officers/)

## WHAT AREAS CAN THE RCDO TEAM ASSIST AND SUPPORT COMMUNITY GROUPS?

### Governance Support:

- Assist groups in establishing strong governance structures, including constitutions and financial transparency.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide training on compliance, procurement, and governance standards.
- **Grant Application Guidance:** Help identify suitable funding streams and review applications.
- **Networking:** Connect groups with agencies and stakeholders to strengthen applications.

### Community Group Preparation

- **Structures & Governance:** Register as a legal entity, maintain audited accounts, and adopt safeguarding policies.
- **Fundraising & Match Funding:** Explore local fundraising, sponsorship, and bridging finance options.
- **Planning & Permissions:** Secure planning approval and consents early.
- **Grant Research:** Common schemes include CCIF, LEADER, CLÁR, CEP, Town & Village Renewal Scheme.

## Characteristics of Successful Applications

- **Clear Demonstration of Need:** Show gaps in local provision and community demand.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Link project to LECP and national strategies.
- **Value for Money:** Provide realistic budgets and strong cost-benefit justification.
- **Community Buy-In:** Evidence of consultation and letters of support.
- **Sustainability:** Include energy efficiency measures and long-term financial plans.
- **Capacity to Deliver:** Track record or partnerships that ensure compliance and timely delivery.

## Avoiding Duplication

- Assess existing facilities and services in the area.
- Consider shared-use models or partnerships to maximise resources.
- Demonstrate how the new centre complements rather than displaces smaller centres.

## Long-Term Management

- Develop a business plan for operations, staffing, and maintenance.
- Explore income streams such as room hire, events, and social enterprise.
- Plan for governance succession and volunteer engagement

## How can a community group contact the RCDO Team?

Contact details for the RCDO team are available on the Clare Co Council website at [www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/community-participation/rural-dev-officers/](http://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/community-participation/rural-dev-officers/)







