



COMHAIRLE | CLARE  
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

# TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

## MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Aibreán / April  
2024



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## Council visit to New York for St Patrick's Day 2024



Pictured are Cllr Joe Cooney, Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Maureen O'Neill-Regan, President of the New York Clare Association, and Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, at the 2024 New York St Patrick's Day Parade.

Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council, Cllr Joe Cooney, and Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, travelled to New York City, US, during March to meet with the New York Clare Association, as well as participate in

the 2024 New York St Patrick's Day Parade. The itinerary for the New York trip included meetings with representatives from Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland and the IDA.





The Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive met with representatives from Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland, the IDA, and with members of the New York Clare Association. Pictured below right with Cllr Cooney are Cllr Liam Carroll, Cathaoirleach, Galway County Council, and Cllr Dan McSweeney, Deputy Mayor of the City and County of Limerick.



# FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

And the celebrations continued...



This month we celebrated Clare County Council being named as winner in the category, 'Embracing New Ways of Working,' at the CIPD HR awards held at the Mansion HOUSE, Dublin on 23rd February.

To mark the achievement staff were treated to an early tasty Easter treat.

## Extra, extra

The Human Resources Newsletter was issued to all staff in March, including online and hard copies.

**HUMAN RESOURCES Newsletter**

**MARCH 2024 | ISSUE 5**

Welcome to **ISSUE 5** of Clare Co. Council's HR and Learning & Development Newsletter.

Find out more about a course via our L&D webpage where you can register an Expression of Interest in a course on the Intranet page, click on [Expression Of Interest](#), email us at [learnanddev@clarecoco.ie](mailto:learnanddev@clarecoco.ie) or just pick up the phone and ask us!

Attendance at all courses is subject to Line Manager approval.

**COUNCIL WORKPLACE PRACTICES RECOGNISED AT NATIONAL HR AWARDS**

Clare County Council's workplace practices have been recognised at the CIPD HR Awards in Ireland 2024.

The local authority was named winner of the 'Embracing New Ways of Working' award at the Mansion House, Dublin, on Friday, 23rd February.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- 4<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
CPC Module 5
- 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
CPC Module 5
- 4<sup>TH</sup> TO 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
3-Day First Aid Course (New-Entrant)
- 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
Prevention Management of Aggression & Violence
- 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
Child Welfare Awareness Training (Training Room)
- 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
Pre-Retirement Seminar
- 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
CPC Module 5
- 11<sup>TH</sup> TO 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
3-Day Safety Representative Training
- 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
Child Welfare Awareness Training (Council Chamber)
- 26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
Prevention Management of Aggression & Violence
- 27<sup>TH</sup> TO 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
2-Day First Aid Course (Refresher)
- 8<sup>TH</sup> TO 10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL  
3-Day Safety Representative Training

## ICT

ICT, Corporate Services and the Environment Department received a €75,000 grant from the Public Service Innovation Fund (PSIF) to digitalise lifeguards' operations. The project will implement a new online system for the lifeguards to log their activities and reports over the summer months. This will give the management team instant access to up-to-date data and analytics, and cut down the administrative workload of handling paper forms and generating reports manually.

## PROCUREMENT

The following Clare County Council tender competitions were published on eTenders in the period from 23rd February to 26th March 2024 inclusive.

Tender Name	RFT ID	Response deadline	Procedure
Multi-supplier Framework for the Provision of Internal and External Painting Services	3276577	16/05/24	Open
Request for Tender for the Provision of Catering Services	3177624	02/04/24	Competitive with negotiation

HUMAN RESOURCES

**Recruitment Competitions  
March**

**Eligibility Exercises & Desktop Shortlisting**

Acting Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Senior Library Assistant  
Executive Librarian  
Senior Executive Librarian

**Competitions Advertised**

Chief Technician  
Executive Planner  
Assistant Planner  
Community Warden

**Interviews**

Beach Lifeguards & Senior Beach Lifeguards  
Acting Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Senior Library Assistant  
Executive Librarian  
Senior Executive Librarian

Learning and Development

**ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAMMES / WEBINARS /  
INFORMATION SESSIONS**

**MARCH**

3-Day Safety Representative Training  
IPA Local Election Training Workshop was attended by 19 election officials/supervisors from Clare County Council.  
Introduction to Fraud and Control in Organisations  
Pre-Retirement Seminar

**Essential Skillz Online Training**

Health & Safety Induction  
Slips, Trips & Falls

**Health & Safety**

1-D· 2-Day Refresher First Aid  
3-Day New Entrant First Aid  
Child Welfare Awareness Seminars x 4  
CPC Module 5 Training courses x 5  
CSCS Signing Lighting & Guarding at Roadworks  
DSE Assessor Training  
Prevention Management of Aggression & Violence courses x 2

**Cyber Security Courses - Metcompliance**

A short course on Ransomware was issued to all relevant staff

Employee Wellbeing



# RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## Community Recognition Fund

The Community Recognition Fund was first introduced in 2023 to recognise the huge efforts made by communities in welcoming and supporting people coming to Ireland. Through the 2023 allocation, funding of €2.9 million was allocated to community groups and organisations in County Clare. The funds were distributed across two streams in Clare.

Stream 1 funding focused on small-scale equipment grants of less than €2,000. A total of €157,603 was granted to 84 projects under Stream 1. The feedback from community groups in receipt of this grant money has been very positive. It has enabled groups to purchase equipment they may not have been in a position to access, or would otherwise have had to fundraise for.

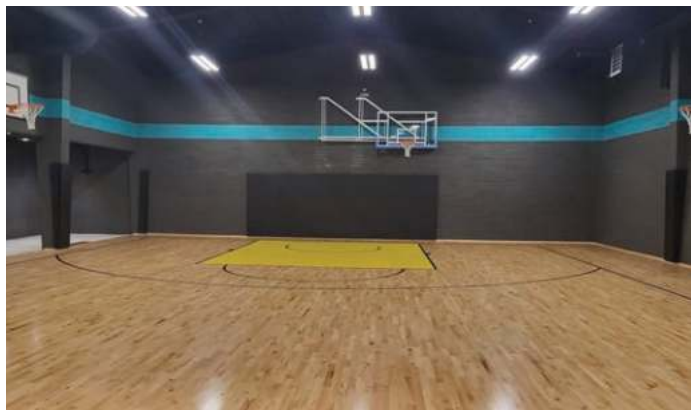
€2.6m of the remaining available funding was allocated across 47 projects under Stream 2 which focused on providing financial support for more larger scale capital projects. Grants ranged from €6,400 up to €272,000. Nineteen of these projects have been completed to date. Projects completed include the construction of a new Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) in Lisdoonvarna; a car park at Doolin National School; the provision of outdoor equipment at Knockalisheen Accommodation Centre in Meelick; the upgrade of Liscannor Community Hall; and the development of a new MUGA at Ballyvaughan Community Field.

All projects are required to be completed before November 2024.

On 15th March, 2024, the Minister announced a further round of funding under this fund with Clare County Council being allocated €2,608,408. For 2024, the Department has set a minimum level of funding of €50,000 and a maximum grant of €500,000 for any one project. Further details will be available on the Council's website in the coming weeks.



Outdoor equipment at Knockalisheen Accommodation Centre which received funding of €21,000 under CRF.



New sports hall/fitness arena at Lahinch Leisure Centre which received funding of €37,000 under CRF.



New MUGA at Ballyvaughan which received funding of €272,000 under CRF.



Eco toilet facility at Lissycasey Cascades which received funding of €15,000 under CRF.

## RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### RDCO

Darren Carroll, Rural Community Development Officer (RCDO) for Killaloe MD, met with members of Fishbowl Youth to discuss their aspirations to renovate and convert a derelict building in Tuamgraney into a dedicated youth centre. The group own the property and the project benefits from full planning permission. Funding opportunities to help bring the project forward were discussed, as was how an extension might be secured for the planning permission, which is due to expire in September 2024.

Darren met with members of Montpelier/O'Briensbridge Community Centre committee to discuss their future project aspirations and potential funding opportunities. A particular point of conversation was how the old primary school section of the community centre, which is currently unused and in a state of disrepair, could be restored and brought back into use as a multi-functional performance and meeting space.



### Age Friendly Programme

Kelly Slattery has taken over in the role of Age Friendly Programme Manager from Brendan Boyce. Kelly is continuing the work commenced by Brendan in developing the Clare Age Friendly Strategy which will launch in the coming weeks. Clare Age Friendly continue to support the work of Clare Older People's Council. Eilish McDonagh, Senior Road Safety Promotion Officer with the Road Safety Authority, attended the monthly Older People's Council meeting on 12th March and presented research findings and analysis of the statistics relating to road traffic fatalities for 2023. The OPC are currently in preparation for the Older People's Council Volunteer of the Year Awards to be held in the Woodstock Hotel, Ennis, on Tuesday, 10th April.



### Healthy Clare

The Healthy Clare Working Group held its first committee meeting of 2024 in March. New members were welcomed to the committee and include Cllr Rita McInerney, Kelly Slattery (Age Friendly Coordinator) and Siobhan Mungovan (Healthy Clare Support Staff). The working group are now looking forward to launching the Healthy Clare 2024 Micro Fund which will support organisations and groups to deliver initiatives that will support the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities under the Healthy Ireland themes of Mental Health and Healthy Weight.

During the month of March, Healthy Clare visited some of the programmes that were supported under the 2023 Healthy Clare Fund. These included:

- Attending the fifth in a series of six talks organised by

Whitegate Community on Friday, 8th March, to help celebrate International Women's Day. The event, which was delivered by Cathy Kolbohm BSc Msc PhD (c), nutritionist, looked to support young women to understand the importance of eating balanced nutritious meals for whole of health and wellbeing.







- The launch of Clare Garden Festival will take place in Ennis Showgrounds on Saturday, 30th March. Clare Garden Festival wants to inspire the people of Clare and beyond to grow their own healthy food and to enjoy gardening for their health and wellbeing. The festival itself will be held on Sunday, 28th April, and celebrates 10 years of the Clare Garden Festival. This year's festival seeks to empower individuals to improve health and wellbeing by building capacity in Clare for growing, cooking and eating well while spending time out in the fresh air.

For more information, please contact the Healthy Clare Coordinator, Samantha McCarthy, on [healthyclare@clarecoco.ie](mailto:healthyclare@clarecoco.ie) and 087-9878785.

- Attending the workshop on Creating Inclusive Homes and Spaces for LGBTQIA+ Youth in Clare on 9th March. Thanks to the support from Healthy Ireland Clare and the Clare County Council, QuareClare were able to organise this crucial event led by Karina Murray. It is vital to foster environments where everyone feels safe, accepted, and celebrated. Together, we are building a more inclusive community in Clare.



- Clare Schoolboys/Girls Soccer League clubs were each given a 'Not Around Us' sign to put up at their respective club venues, that is 21 clubs from Gort to Bunratty and from Kilrush to Mountshannon. Healthy Clare hopes to continue working on the Not Around Us campaign as we move toward World No Tobacco Day to be held on 31st May.



Supported by Clare County Council's Healthy Clare and Greener Clare Offices



## CORPORATE SERVICES

### Freedom of Information & Data Protection

Previous years and 2024 to date - statistics to 22nd March, 2024:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Freedom of Information Requests	152	176	119	156	40
Freedom of Information Internal Review Applications	6	13	8	4	0
Appeals to Information Commissioner	1	4	2	4	1
Data Access Requests - Subject Access Request	5	6	10	10	5
Data Requests - Erasure Request	0	1	1	2	0
Data Access Requests - Third Party Access Requests e.g. Gardaí	20	27	27	29	10

### 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 March 2024 included:

- Clare County Council publishes Climate Action Plan
- Kilrush included in Town Centre First programme
- Fleeting Moments: an art exhibition by Myra O'Reilly
- New Horizons in Shannon.

### 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.

In the period 1st-25th March 2024, the Communications Office:

- Posted 53 times on Facebook, with total followers now 19,219.
- Posted 71 times on X (formerly Twitter), with total followers

now at 8,414.

- Instagram followers are now 3,342.

(Statistics accurate as of 25/03/2024.)

### Register of Electors

Applications continue to be processed for inclusion in the Register of Electors to be eligible to vote in any upcoming election.

Those not already registered, or whose circumstances have changed, are requested to update their details at [www.check-theregister.ie](http://www.check-theregister.ie) to be eligible for inclusion in future elections.

### Business Innovation

The Innovation team, consisting of representatives across all grades and directorates, continue to meet bi-monthly to discuss and progress innovative projects.

The development of an online recruitment application platform is now complete. This has led to increased efficiency, as all job applications are now submitted through an online platform.

Other projects, submitted through the Innovation team, are currently in the development phase.

## CULTURAL SERVICES

### County Library Construction Project

Final stages of construction work continues to progress on the new Clare County Library and Art Gallery building. External wall insulation and render is nearing completion, with external cladding complete on the second floor. Cladding of the main entrance portico steel structure is nearing completion. Mechanical and electrical contractors are near completion of second fix works for both trades. All equipment is installed to the plant room. The comms room is being fitted out in liaison with CCC IT services. Ceiling and internal wall partitions are complete. Skirting and architrave installation is also nearing completion. Sanitary ware will soon be installed. The ductwork for ESB, Eir Networks and the water connection are complete. Ductwork for public lighting is near completion and external ground paving is underway along Causeway Link. 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.



The upgrade to Clare Library website is nearly complete.

Clare Libraries submitted a request for funding equipment to aid accessibility in libraries from Dormant Account Funding.

**Online Resources usage as follows: keen demand for e-audiobooks and Pressreader. Pressreader is an international news stand that allows access to over 7,000 of the world's leading newspapers and magazines from over 100 countries.**

1748 E-Books	3303 E-Audiobooks	1914 E-Magazines
643 Online Courses	2274 Pressreader	49 Transparent Languages



A Seachtain na Gaeilge event in Killaloe Library with 17 pupils from Killaloe Convent Primary School fourth and fifth classes.

**Marketing, outreach & social media**

A paid advertisement was included in *The Clare Champion* for Seachtain na Gaeilge events in libraries and an ad was also included in the Ennis Book Club Festival Brochure. A press release was circulated for Seachtain na Gaeilge events in libraries. Clare Libraries sponsored an event at the Ennis Book Club Festival; Paula Meehan, at the Temple Gate Hotel on Friday, 1st March. This event attracted an attendance of 180 people.

	New Followers	Total Followers	Post Reach /Impressions	Post Likes	Engagement
	80	7514	116900	476	500
	5	2162	4400	36	148
	25	2101	3400	311	871

**Library Activities in Figures**

Total number of in branch events	271
Total audiences at in branch events	3,457
Total number of outreach events	17
Total audiences at outreach events	113
Total number of deliveries	42
Total number of class novels issued	6

**Right to Read**

Clare Libraries hosted a full programme of events in libraries around the county for Seachtain na Gaeilge. Events included Irish language book clubs for adults, Irish language storytimes and rhyme time sessions for children, St Patrick's Day themed craft sessions and a pop-up Gaeltacht.

**Creative Ireland**

The first Shared Island 'Birds of a Feather' event took place in Ennis in February with 54 women gathering from Belfast, Ballinasloe, Inishbofin and Ennis. It was a hugely successful event with three more planned this year. The Voice of the Child world café took place in Barefield National School and Ennis Voices for Autism. This will inform the curation of this year's Cruinniú na nOg festival on 15th June. The open call for Cruinniú na nOg events has now closed and a programme is currently being curated, and will be available in early April. The first Culture Team meeting of 2024 took place with representatives from Libraries, Arts, Museum, Biodiversity, Climate, Age Friendly, Healthy Ireland, Archives, Heritage and Local Enterprise Office.

**Local Studies**

The Local Studies Centre has added another collection to the Clare Libraries and Archives collection. Ninety-six logbooks and daybooks, dating from 1919 to 2015, have been donated by the Ennis Christian Brothers Primary School, providing a near-complete record for over 100 years. The transcription of the 1825 Freeholders and the transcription of entries from the 1821 census are ongoing.



A sample of logbooks from the CBS Ennis Primary School.

### Clare Archives

The Archivist has checked 10 hard drives, circa 160,000 images to identify what archival material they contain, adding metadata and creating finding aid for this material. The Archivist started cataloguing the Barrett collection with 106 boxes moved to Beechpark, recreated archival arrangement, and selecting what is to be digitised.

### Clare Arts Office

Four artists participated in the Artist in Schools scheme with two residencies beginning in Scariff NS and Colaiste Muire, Ennis and two finishing in Rineen NS and Barefield NS. Embrace residencies were completed with Ennis Voices for Autism and Brothers of Charity in Ennis (two groups) and one group in Miltown Malbay. The final PRISM Street Art Works were completed in Ennis and Shannon. Activities under the Creative Places programme in Shannon began with an art exhibition by the Shannon Men's Shed and a singing group in the Family Resource Centre. A meeting of the Creative Places Creative Team took place.

The Archivist has ongoing general archival queries regarding private collections and local authority collections in Clare County Council possession.

The scanner was fixed and a spreadsheet of items generated regarding what has been scanned since 2015 to aid in identifying what is on the hard drives.

Studios in Tulla and Ennis continue to operate at full capacity. Three exhibitions took place in Ennis, Scariff and Kilkee and the Arts Officer officially opened FETAC exhibitions in Ennistymon and Scariff. A networking day for artists from Limerick, Tipperary and Clare was organised in the Limerick City Gallery of Art. An arts and climate partnership project with local authorities in Galway County, Offaly, Cavan and Wexford began. The Arts Office also assisted with the filming of an RTE Crimecall Programme in North Clare. The Arts in the Community programme continued in St Joseph's Hospital, Ennis and in Raheen Hospital. Clare Youth Theatre continued in glór with a performance as part of the Ennis Book Club Festival.

Two Arts in Clare slots happened on Clare FM.

### Social Media Statistics: 21st Feb to 20th March, 2024

	Post reach	Post engagement	New Page likes	New Page followers	Total followers
Clare Arts Office	2,055	98	4	13	3,208
Cultúrlann Sweeney	847	194	3	8	2,037
EASI Studios	44	178	4	4	142
Tulla Stables Artist Studios	14	0	0	0	652
CYT - Clare Youth Theatre	66	4	1	1	574
Riches of Clare	101	3	2	3	2,854
Clare Culture Night	91	5	0	1	1,277
Embrace Arts Programme	8	0	2	2	575
Arts In Clare Group	-	-	-	-	3,059
Clare Trad Group	-	-	-	-	2,514

### Clare Museum



Museum Education Officer meets Scariff Active retired group.

social media posts on facebook and a new entry on the museum blog on the museum website.

The museum's Education Officer met with LCETB facilitators and tutors at their Ennis-based facility to set out the various ways in which the museum can contribute to their classes and workshops, e.g. incorporating the museum's embroidery exhibition into crafting classes, hosting workshops related to their courses, such as History classes, and intergenerational projects involving groups using the service. A group of nine secondary school teachers, from various counties, came to visit the museum and assess how they can incorporate county museums into the school curriculum, particularly with respect to the Transition Year programme.

The Museum's Education Officer visited Scariff Library to meet with the library's Age Friendly group. Butter-making paraphernalia was brought out there from the Museum's collection, which prompted a lively discussion amongst the group. Plans were also made to involve the group in the Museum's upcoming 'Museum in a Box' project. The Museum's Education Officer joined the Creative Ireland Clare judging panel for the Creative Communities Grants. A new staff member joined the museum, as a facilities attendant.

The curator appeared on RTE TVs 'Today', on their national treasures section, where he brought eight objects from the museum and talked about them. There have been 46 objects catalogued. There are now over 4,300 items in the museum collection. There were 18

# KILLALOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

## Socio-Economic Study on the merits of reopening Crusheen Railway Station

The focus of work in Killaloe MD in March was the commencement of stakeholder engagement regarding the preparation of a Socio-Economic Study on the merits of reopening Crusheen Railway Station. The re-opening of the Crusheen Railway Station is a long standing objective of Clare County Council and is a priority objective of the Elected Members of Killaloe MD – Strategy and Workplan.

The outcome of this study managed by Killaloe MD is to advance an evidence-based argument for the reopening of Crusheen Railway Station; Provide a socio-economic impact report on the benefits of investment of a Rail stop in Crusheen and be used to inform submissions to various Government Policy Documents and eg All Island Strategic Rail Review and seek the reopening of the rail stop, which was granted planning permission in 2012.

Significant public engagement with the communities of Crusheen and North-East Clare on the study is anticipated over the coming months as part of the process.

## Mountain Bike Trail Centre – ORIS Feasibility Funding

In late 2023 Feasibility Funding was awarded to Killaloe Municipal District under the Outdoor Recreation Improvement Scheme to examine the potential for a mountain bike trail centre in the Slieve Bearnaghs. The receipt of the funding assists with the delivery of an objective in Killaloe Elected Members Strategic Workplan which seeks to maximise opportunities for recreation in the Ballycuggeran/Two Mile Gate area for mountain biking. In March initial stakeholder engagement with a number of agencies commenced in order to define the scope of the study.

## Enhancing the range of services and functions at Killaloe MD – Virtual Attendance of members of public to March Meeting of Killaloe MD



In line with objective of the Elected Members of Killaloe MD Strategy and Workplan to enhance the IT capabilities and usage to enable on-line streaming of Killaloe MD Meetings to a wider audience, recent audio-visual enhancements to the



facilities in Killaloe MD Offices in enabled, for the first time in the MD, the March MD meeting to be attended virtually by members of the public and press. A number of external presentations to the MD meeting were also facilitated online.

Updates at the March meeting of Killaloe MD included briefing of updates on the Shannon Greenway Limerick to Scarriff Section

## March 2024 works/projects Killaloe MD

During the month of February Killaloe MD staff were involved in the following projects:

- Repairs to Bridge Damage at Ardcloney
- Works at Ballysheen Graveyard:

Works are near completion with the discovery of a beautiful double stone while clearing and repairing the ditch (see photos below).



# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## HOUSING

For 2024 the housing public counter will remain 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 065-6846291 or by email: [hat@clarecoco.ie](mailto:hat@clarecoco.ie). Our Ukrainian support team can be contacted on 065-6846577 or by email: [communityresponseforum@clarecoco.ie](mailto:communityresponseforum@clarecoco.ie). Our Local Authority Integration Team can be reached at [integration@clarecoco.ie](mailto:integration@clarecoco.ie)

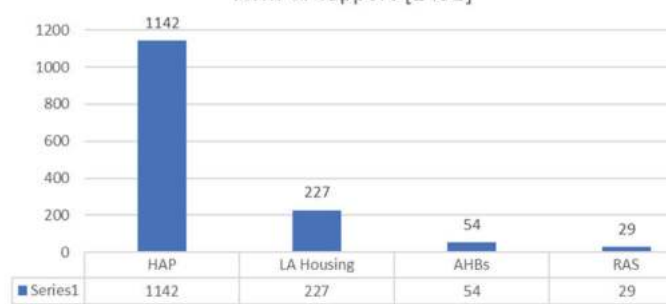
### Social Housing Demand

The highest demand throughout the county remains for 1 and 2-bedroomed properties. There are 2,251 applicant households (77%) 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 20/03/2024:

Total Households on List	2,939	
Transfer Applicants (see below)		1,452
Nett Need	1,487	

Nature of Tenure of Applicants excluded from Nett Need - Already receiving support and seeking other form of support [1452]



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

Count of FIRST AREA OF CHOICE	BEDS APPROVED			
	1 and 2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	Total
ENNIS	969	209	83	1261
SHANNON	178	35	16	229
CLARECASTLE	149	25	10	184
INAGH/ENNISTYMON/LAHINCH	123	27	5	155
FEAKLE/SCARIFF/WHITEGATE	104	26	4	134
KILRUSH	98	28	7	133
MEELICK/PARTEEN/WESTBURY	69	28	13	110
MILTOWN MALBAY/MULLAGH/QUILTY	77	10	3	90
KILKEE/CROSS/CARRIGAHOLT	68	12	1	81
COROFIN/RUAN	61	17	1	79
NEWMARKET-ON-FERGUS	50	20	4	74
KILLALOE	53	13	2	68
LISDOONVARNA/BALLYVAUGHAN	47	11	3	61
SIXMILEBRIDGE	41	12	7	60
COORACLARE/DOONBEG	34	9	5	48
TULLA/KILKISHEN/BROADFORD	36	7	3	46
CLONLARA	25	6	1	32
KILDYSART/BALLYNACALLY	21	4	3	28
QUIN	18	7	1	26
KILMIHIL	14	5	2	21
KILMALEY	10	2		12
KILFENORA	6	1		7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,251</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>2,939</b>

Newly Qualified Applicants



Housing Allocations



Clare County Council purchased a turnkey development located at Garna House, Sixmilebridge in December, 2023. This development comprises 1, 2 and 3 bedroomed apartments which were subsequently advertised on our Choice Based Letting website towards the end of January. All of these units have now been allocated and the new tenants are currently moving into their new homes. These spacious apartments are located in the centre of Sixmilebridge and open onto a quiet, gated courtyard with shops and other amenities closeby.

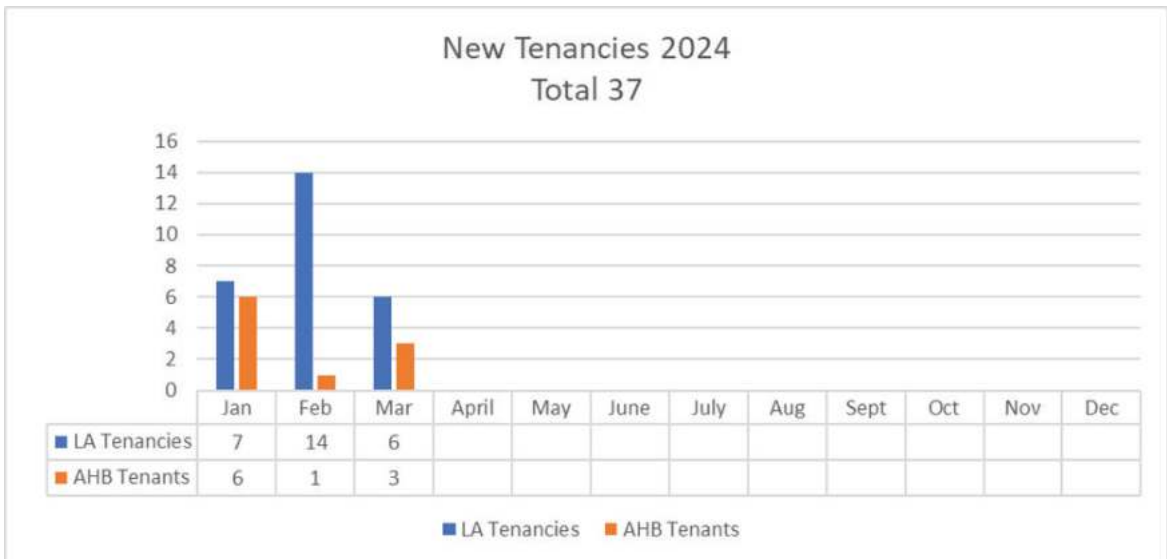


Ann O'Dea, Kevin Kelleher and Máirin Hill, Clare County Council Housing Department, handing over keys of their new apartment at Garna House, Sixmilebridge, to Louise Macbeth & Michael McCarthy.



Mr Val O'Halloran and Ms Noorsabarina Binti Mohamad Saberi receiving the keys to their new new apartment. Mr O'Halloran and Ms Binti Mohamad Saberi in accepting their keys stated: "This, for us, will be a life changing experience, we have been poor for many years. We consider this day the start of our new life."





### Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme

There remains significant interest in the LA Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme. We currently have 16 open cases at various stages of the process, of which up to 7 may finalise sales in 2024.

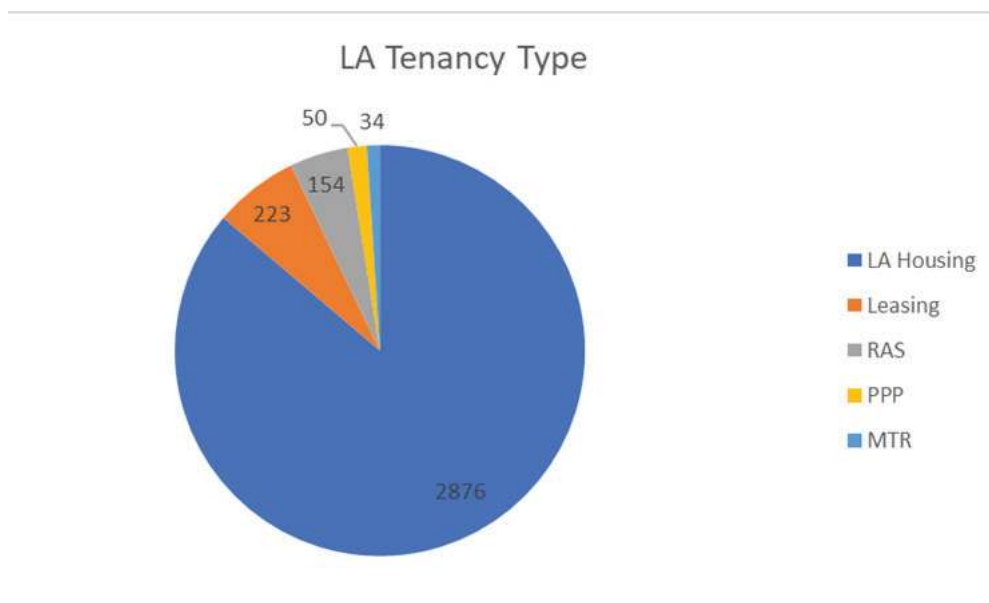
Having consulted with elected members in relation to maintaining our newer stock we have agreed that properties purchased or built since 1st January, 2016, will not be available for sale under this scheme. This can be reviewed at end of current Housing Delivery Plan period in 2026. We have also agreed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

The Department issued a Circular in December 2023 advising of small changes to the scheme including a reduction in minimum income eligibility and adding further income sources as eligible, including certain state pensions and disability payments.

### Housing Tenancies

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

20th March, 2024			
MD	Allocated	Occupied	Total
Ennis MD	4	1,293	<b>1,297</b>
Killaloe MD	0	365	<b>365</b>
Shannon MD	7	734	<b>741</b>
West Clare MD	2	955	<b>957</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3,344</b>	<b>3,357</b>



Approved Housing bodies are providing approximately 800 tenancies to Social Housing Applicants. Clare County Council has 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 Accommod.	3	7	2	0	12
Derelict Properties	0	0	0	0	0
Projects	4	12	1	2	19
Casual Vacancies	16	11	6	3	36
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>67</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.

The team were successful in securing a repossession in court earlier this year in a case where there were continued breaches of a tenancy agreement, and we will continue to seek possessions through the courts in such situations.

The Estate Management Team have started extensive inspections of Council stock this year with almost 180 properties in Shannon inspected during January and a further 190 in Ennis in February and 113 in north Clare in March. It is planned to carry out inspections on 2,000 properties this year in relation to general upkeep of the properties, refuse collection etc. Follow up calls are scheduled in relation to approximately 10% of the properties inspected to date to ensure compliance with issues of concern are addressed.

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). Listed hereunder are details of work being undertaken by the Estate Management team this year to date.

	Total year to date	23rd Feb to 19th March
ASB Complaints recd	170	63
Housing Inspections	483	113
Referrals to TSS (including Tusla)	19	6
Tenancy Notifications/Warnings issued	17	7
Abandonment Notices issued	10	2
Keys collected from Casual Vacancies	11	1
Repossession Orders	1	
Daily Patrols	1,610	452

The Tenancy Enforcement team carry out continued patrols of Local Authority housing estates and Traveller sites and have

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

a very visible presence to manage and mitigate against complaints of antisocial behaviour. The team engage proactively with tenants to help prevent anti-social behaviour and between daily patrols of local authority sites, specific meetings with tenants as well as engaging with local communities and their representatives. 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) 2599568

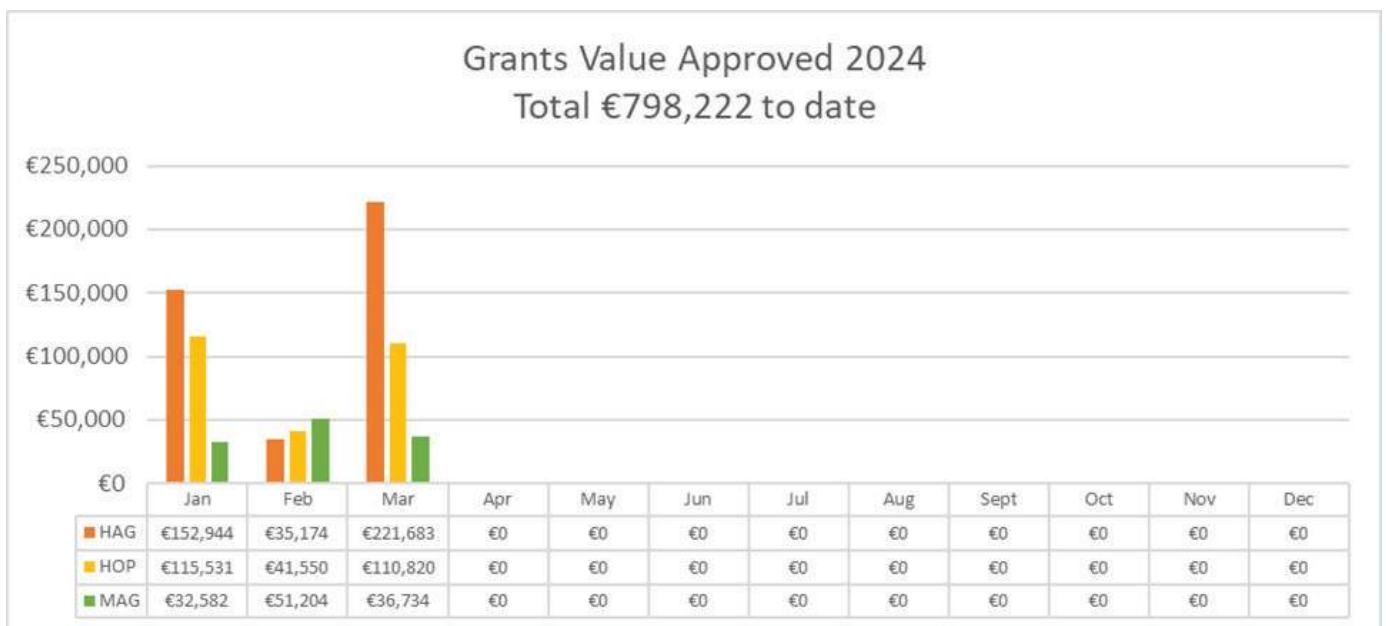
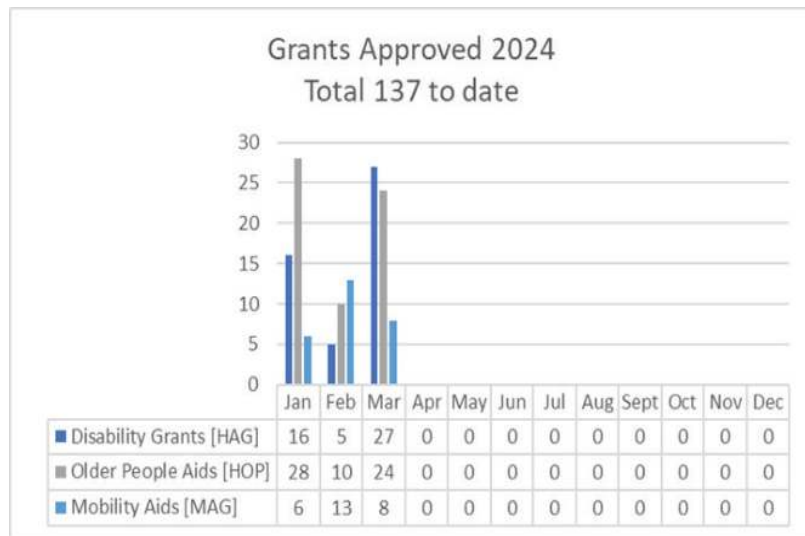
### Private Rented inspections

300 inspections were carried out up to March 2024. These inspections were carried out on HAP, RTB, RAS and Leased

### Housing Grants

Grants approved for to date this year:

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 and Improvement Letters are issued to landlords advising of works required. In most cases the works required are minimal and relate to the requirement for vents, emersion insulation, smoke alarms, window restrictors, and similar type items. Generally landlords engage well with the Council on receipt of improvement letters and items are rectified without need for further intervention. Where a landlord has not engaged or not carried out works an Improvement Notice is issued. 1,105 inspections were carried out in 2023, 6 Improvement Notices were required. To date in 2024 none have issued.



### 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)

There are currently 57 Local Authority Home Loans Approved in Principle. Updated figures are outlined as follows:



### Traveller Accommodation

Clare County Council continue to progress our Traveller Accommodation Program [TAP] 2019 – 2024.

We have also commenced preparation of the next 5-year Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAPs) for adoption by 31st December, 2024. Preparation of the new plan will require housing authorities to consult with adjoining housing authorities, the HSE, approved housing bodies, the Local Traveller Consultative Committee, other local Traveller representative groups, community and interest groups and the public in general. Housing authorities, following consultation, must make an estimate of the current and projected accommodation needs of Traveller families arising over the five-year programme. We are currently working with the Traveller Community Development Programme in preparing a detailed Traveller led needs analysis in preparation of same. It is expected that draft plan will be available for public consultation in Q3 2024.

### Homeless Services [Homeless Action Team HAT]

The number of complex case presentations to the Homeless Action Team continues to increase along with the increase of households seeking emergency accommodation.

This is evident through the increased levels of support, advice and advocacy, being requested from households around areas such as Homeless Services, Housing Requirements, Outside Support referrals and the need for Emergency Accommodation within this region. Within this period there has been an increase in presentations of households who have been assessed as Non HRC Compliant. While such households are not eligible for services in the area, the amount of work and interactions each staff has had with such households has increased and placed considerable pressure on all team members.

In conjunction with this there has been a significant rise in the number of presentations of individuals and households experiencing difficulties and concerns around family/relationship breakdown, hospital discharges both medical discharges and discharges from the APU, addiction or mental health concerns, dual diagnosis, and a further increase in the number of households presenting from the Travelling Community.

Prevention and support remain a key factor in the workings of the Homeless Action Team. Several single and household presentations worked with staff around prevention options and supports which in turn prevented the need for Emergency Accommodation and avoiding entering a homeless situation. 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, several individuals remain overstaying with friends or family until a vacancy presents within Emergency Accommodation.

The Homeless Action Team continues to pursue additional emergency accommodation options. This continues to prove challenging due to demand for accommodation. The Council has completed the purchase of an additional property for emergency accommodation. This will be available for homeless women and children. A service provider is being procured through tender process to manage the accommodation and provide the necessary supports.

### Emergency Accommodation Status as of 21/03/2024

	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	13	0	1
Laurel Lodge Weather Initiative	0	6	0	0
Cusack Lodge	5	8	10	1
Westbrook	0	15	0	1
Westbrook Weather Initiative	0	2	0	0
Ashford Court	11	18	16	1
EA Families	5	8	10	3
EA Individuals	0	9	0	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>10</b>

### Exits/Discharges from EA 23/02/24 to 21/03/24

- 2 – Discharged to Own Front Door
- 1 – Discharged to Winter Initiative
- 3 - Discharged: Breach of conditions / Non-use of bed space

### Notices to Quit

We continue to support circa. 60 clients with valid Notices to Quit 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. Since eviction ban was removed we have supported a further 95 households through various solutions including allocations of LA properties, AHB properties, purchase through tenant in Situ Scheme, new HAP properties, etc. In addition, a small number of clients are being supported through the transboundary scheme where they are renting in border areas outside of Clare boundary, and a number of households have been referred to the Housing Agency as they may be able to avail of the Cost Rental Tenant in Situ programme through the Agency.

### Affordable Housing Schemes for County Clare

Clare County Council continues to run Expression of Interest (EOI) Campaigns seeking proposals on options to deliver affordable homes in County Clare.

Clare County Council have been successful in securing approval for the first Affordable Housing Scheme in County Clare under the new Affordable Funding Scheme. Approval has been received for 10 properties in Oakwood View in Shannon and the first of these were advertised in early March with applications being accepted online since 28th March.

Three further submissions are currently under consideration by the DHLGH for inclusion on the scheme, with two other submissions to go to DHLGH in the coming weeks.

A new online information portal went live recently at <https://affordablehomes.ie/> providing general information to the public.

### Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme

The Defective Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks [DCB] Scheme went live in mid-July 2023, for private dwellings, with the finalised Act, regulations, updated YQAs (Your Questions Answered) and Ministerial Guidelines published.

Applications to the scheme can be submitted online through our website. The website includes supporting information to further assist homeowners regarding the application process. Clare County Council's DCB Team have also included a video on the Council's website recently on "how to make an application" to further assist homeowners in the application process. In addition, our team are available 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, 065-6846468 and 065-6846309.

We have received 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. Housing Agency have carried out coring and testing on a number of properties and remediation options for the first batch of applications have commenced.

Clare County Council's DCB Team continue to hold workshops in each electoral area to further assist homeowners on how to make an application to the scheme via the online portal. These workshops were targeted for people with limited digital resources and/or capabilities, to assist them further in making an application. So far in 2024, Walk in clinics have been held in Kilrush, Ennistymon, Scarriff, Shannon and Ennis.

Clare County Council continues to engage with the DHLGH to ensure social houses affected by DCB are included in a similar scheme.

### Update on capital programme

Our Capital team Housing Delivery target for 2024 is 153 units and the team is working hard to ensure this is achieved and indeed exceeded. Schemes in Scarriff and Sixmilebridge are under construction and are progressing well. Design work is progressing on a number of other social housing projects, which are at various stages of development. .



Progress on Sixmilebridge project.



Progress on Scarriff housing development.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Approved Housing Bodies

The Approved Housing Body sector are busy progressing with the schemes outlined below while some other projects are at initial stages. The Housing Department continue to provide a co-ordinating role and is holding meetings with all these bodies to ensure projects are progressed in line with targets set out in our Housing Delivery Action Plan.

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Scarriff	18	Under Construction.	Q1 2023	Q3 2024
Sixmilebridge	15	Under Construction.	Q1 2023	Q3 2024
111 Dún na hInse	1	Under Construction.	Q4 2023	Q2 2024
Main Street Clarecastle	1	Under Construction.	Q1 2024	Q3 2024
38 St Patrick's Terrace, Kilrush	1	Contractor Appointed.	Q1 2024	Q4 2024
St. Senan's Terrace, Kilrush	1	Under Construction.	Q3 2023	Q2 2024
Clarehill Clarecastle	13	Turnkey - Under Construction.	Q3 2023	Q4 2024
Garrán Cathaigh, Leadmore Kilrush	14	Turnkey – Under Construction.	Q4 2023	Q4 2024
Drumcliff Rd. Ennis	26	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Judicial Review Proceedings have been initiated in relation to S179A.	-	-
Ennistymon	30	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Project on hold.	-	-
Gort Rd. Ennis	20	Stage 2 approved. Permission granted by An Bord Pleanála on 2nd January 2024. Tender for construction contract currently being prepared.	Q2 2024	Q3 2025
Doonbeg Road, Kilkee	25	Stage 1 approval. Design Team has been appointed and design is progressing.	Q3 2024	Q1 2026
Back Road, Kilrush	12	Stage 1 approval. Design Team has been appointed and design is progressing.	Q3 2024	Q1 2026
Moore Street, Kilrush	16	Stage 1 approval. Design Team appointed.	Q3 2024	Q1 2026
Doonbeg Lands	8	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. Application submitted to An Bord Pleanála on 18th August 2023.	Q3 2024	Q3 2025
Shallee Drive / Cloughleigh Rd	5	Stage 1 approval. Design Team appointed and design is progressing.	Q3 2024	Q3 2025
<b>Subtotal</b>	206			
Approved Housing Body Projects	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
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	Q2 2024 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	Q2 2024 Q3 2024
Acha Bhile, Lahinch Rd., Ennis (Cluid Hsg. Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	21	Under construction 11 units in Phase 2 10 units in Phase 3	Q3 2023 Q1 2024	Q3 2024 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	Q3 2024	Q3 2025

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## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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Loughville, Ennis (Tuath Housing) CALF Turnkey	48	Under construction: 16 units in Phase 1 32 units in Phase 2	Q1 2024 Q1 2024	Q4 2024 Q1 2025
Crusheen (Cluid Housing Association) CALF Turnkey (Part V)	3	Under construction	Q3 2023	Q2 2024
Clonroad, Ennis, St. Vincent de Paul CAS Turnkey	12	Under construction	Q1 2024	Q4 2024
Bruachlan, Westbury (Cooperative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Construction	22	Planning application ongoing - at further information stage.	Q4 2024	Q4 2025
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>173</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>379</b>			

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## UKRAINIAN SERVICES

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The CSO figures show there were 208 Temporary Protections granted nationally last week, this represents an increase of 84 people compared to figures outlined in the March Monthly Management Report of 124 weekly Temporary Protections. There are currently 5,596 Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTPs) living in County Clare, representing an additional 77 people in the County compared to figures released in March. There are 3,343 people accommodated in 39 multi-occupancy facilities located throughout the county. 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 206 homes offered under this scheme, with an average of one home being offered each week. To date our Matching & Relationship Manager has facilitated the accommodation of 412 people that were originally living in hotel and multi-occupancy facilities.

Recent changes to all new BOTPs arriving in Ireland took effect from Thursday, 14th March, 2024. This means that those who seek accommodation from the State, can choose to avail of

state supported emergency short-term accommodation, food and support services for up to a maximum of 90 days. After that they will have to leave the accommodation they are in and make their own arrangements. This state-provided emergency accommodation will be provided only in centres designated by the Minister which will likely be in large group settings, with services and integration supports. These changes are necessary so that Ireland can continue to provide humanitarian support to those fleeing war in Ukraine. Under the revised policy, an allowance will be paid to BOTPs while they are accommodated in fully serviced designated accommodation centres. They will receive a weekly payment of €38.80 per adult and €29.80 per child. This payment will be made by the Department of Social Protection on behalf of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth in lieu of social welfare payments. BOTPs will also have access to Child Benefit and Additional Needs Payments, where they meet relevant eligibility criteria. Those BOTPs opting to make independent arrangements on arrival (e.g. friends, private rental, "pledge"/Offer a Home) will be entitled to apply for social welfare equivalent to Irish citizens, subject to the same condition.

## SPORTS &amp; RECREATION



## Active Ennis Leisure Complex Gym & Pool Report

### Community Games

On Friday, 15th March, the Community Games County Finals were held in our pool. Boys and girls from around Clare competed for an opportunity to represent their county in Kilkenny at the National Finals in June. The event saw fierce competition and was run very well by the coordinators.



### Classes

Class numbers for our “Body Blast” and “Lunch Crunch” were very busy with upwards of 20 participants in most classes. We continue to promote our classes using social media and encourage all levels to participate. Our Fitness Studio also remains very busy with a range of classes from Pilates and Yoga to Chair Exercise. We continue to have a lot of interest from Instructors in renting our studio and have a wide variation of Classes. Instructors/practitioners can rent the hall using our online booking system.

### Footfall Report Active Ennis Leisure Complex

It was a busy month for the Active Ennis Leisure Complex in February with total visitors of 26,053, up 7% compared to January. This is an average of 898 visitors per day.

Average daily footfall for February was up by 7% (898) compared to January (809). The increase overall can be explained by the large amount of footfall on Saturday, 24th February, due to gala being held. The total recorded was 2,583, which was 58% higher than the highest recorded footfall in January (1,110).

### Lee’s Road

February saw a busy period for Lee’s Road. 19,272 vehicles entered the park in February, an average of 664 per day. Revenue also increased a total of 22.7% for February.

The pitches in Lee’s Road saw a lot of use in February. Pitches performed well in the main, but the weather took a toll on the playing surface and several weekends were lost to the inclement weather.

### Kilrush

In December bookings for facilities in Kilrush saw an increase of 82.9% and the number of active hours also saw an increase of 82.9%. Revenue also increased by 53.2% in December.

**[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)**



### General Updates

- Pat Sexton is the new Programme Manager in Clare Sports Partnership.
- Our new and improved website launched on March 5th.
- Jessica O’Keeffe has been appointed Outdoor Recreation Officer.
- Our development officers attended a Regional Development Officer Conference on March 11th in the University of Limerick.
- CSP staff took part in Diversity, Inclusion and Anti Racism Training with the Irish Refugee Council on Tuesday, Feb 27th.

### Schools & Youth

- Get Going Get Rowing will hopefully launch in Colaiste Mhuire Ennis after the Easter holidays.
- Borrowing of playground markings and sportshall athletics packs by primary schools continues.
- Our annual primary school Sportshall Athletics County Finals took place on Wednesday, March 20th and Thursday, March 21st, in Corofin GAA hall. Over 400 children from 11 different primary schools took part in this year’s competition.



### Education & Training

- Safeguarding courses continue to be delivered. The full list of safeguarding courses is available on our website.
- Both Inagh Kilnamona GAA club and Fern Celtic FC have achieved their Season of Respect Level 2 award.
- Our next Disability Awareness Training is on April 22nd.
- Sports First Aid Course took place in Ennis on March 9th and had 12 participants. Other upcoming first aid courses include Shannon (March 23rd) Lisdoonvarna (April 13th) and Kilrush (September 14th).

### Sports Inclusion

- Inclusive gymnastics with Ennis Gymnastics Club is ongoing on Monday and Tuesday evenings. There are 50 children who attend these sessions.
- The brand new integrated physical education programme with TY students and students from the ASD hub in St. Caimin's Secondary School in Shannon continues to be delivered.
- Eire Og / Corofin GAA All-stars Inclusive Clubs are back running indoor sessions for over 40 children with a disability.
- Clare Comets Basketball All- Stars continue to run their indoor sessions on Saturday's in Ennis National School.
- Both Derg AC (Saturday mornings) and Tulla AC (Thursday evenings) continue to run sessions for over 40 children with a disability.

### Older Adults

- We continue to support our tutors in delivering weekly classes to over 300 older adults in County Clare.
- We have commenced an Activator Pole walking programme in Killaloe with 12 participants.

### Active Communities

- 49 people are taking part in our Banner Marathon Walking Challenge in March.
- 36 people have now completed their ten-week swimming programme – The Banner Mile.
- Men on the Move (Kilrush and Shannon) 38 participants
- Women on the Move Kilrush (43 ladies).
- Safeguarding 1 for Shannon Sports Hub Clubs (18 participants).
- Sports equipment bought for seven sports clubs in Shannon Sports Hub.

- Funding for Kilrush Basketball Club for two outside hoops in Kilrush.

### Club Development

- Through volunteer supports, dormant accounts, we are supporting 4 clubs that were identified in hub areas that need assistance with coach education such as running a NGB course.

### Minority Communities

- Our Winter Wellness programme has been extended due to popular demand. This programme takes place on Fridays with Kasia doing Dance fitness. This presents an excellent chance for integration, with both Ukrainians and local Irish residents participating. Doolin Yoga have commenced body conditioning classes every Tuesday for a six-week period, welcoming all individuals at a nominal fee of €2 per session.

### ESF+ Sport4Empowerment Programme

- Continue to work with Swim Ireland on a project to bring a group of traveller men - from not being able to swim through to being certified swim coaches. We are working on surmounting the literacy issues and time commitment from the group. Working in conjunction with Swim Ireland, Traveller CPD, CLDC. CLDC have committed partial funding for the project.
- The development of a 'Haven Club' concept for children in residential care for families utilising domestic services, is progressing. TUSLA Foster Care and Early Family Intervention teams are on board and very anxious to support the development. A Steering group of stakeholders will be created to further pursue the concept. TUSLA will be part of this and will advise on Safeguarding.
- Research on the participatory levels in sport and impact on children from Domestic Abuse settings in pursuing activities is negligible. I've spoken to Sport Ireland Research and Development team about funding a piece of research on the topic with Clare LSP, a researcher in Trinity College Dublin has expressed interest in pursuing. There is an 18k grant available.
- Have held further one to one discussion with International Protection Applicants in Ennis and Miltown Malbay, and Roma Community Leaders about potential initiatives.

## WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT - NORTH CLARE LEA

### Schedule of Municipal District Works 2024

We have commenced works as part of the 2024 Roadworks Programme (RWP).

#### Overlay works carried out at Rineen, Miltown Malbay



#### Overlay works carried out at N67, Lisdoonvarna



#### Overlay works carried out at Lisdoonvarna Car Park



#### Overlay works carried out at Doolin



#### Doolin Pier

Temporary toilet blocks and staff facilities installed at Doolin Pier for 2024 ferry season



#### Ongoing works to Doolin Pier Car Park



#### North Clare Integrated Traffic and Transport Plan

The process of developing the Transport and Traffic Plan for North Clare is ongoing with a comprehensive consultation process underway between Clare County Council and the local communities in North Clare. In the short term, Clare County Council is seeking to identify early intervention measures that will alleviate traffic congestion at key pressure points in North Clare.

# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

## TRANSPORTATION

### Roadworks Programme and Operations

#### Strategic Transportation



<b>Active Travel</b>	<p>The following is a brief overview of the activities within the Active Travel office:</p> <p>Tulla Road Cycle scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Detailed design for this project is ongoing, this is being undertaken by AECOM Consulting Engineers. Regular on-line progress meeting continuing. Aecom have been tasked with additional design work such as a section of footpath on the Newpark Rd. and the incorporation of 12 Bus Stops. Arborist and drainage surveys are complete and are currently being reviewed by Aecom.</li></ul> <p>Ennis LTP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Systra Consulting Engineers are working with relevant stakeholders and progressing the Local Transport Plan for Ennis.</li></ul> <p>Limerick Road (incl. St Flannan's Drive) Cycle scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The first Draft of the Concept and Route Option Design of the scheme was received this month. The Active Travel Office will be submitting the Concept Design and Route Option Selection Report to the NTA for approval, in order to progress to the next phase in the coming weeks.</li></ul> <p>Connecting &amp; Co-creating Ennis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This project will continue through 2024 with a number of junction-tightening and raised crossings planned. Works have been completed at Marian Avenue/Newbridge Rd junction.</li></ul> <p>‘Safe Routes To School’ programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Clonmoney National School: Construction works for this scheme are progressing well with footpath improvements around the school nearing completion, pencil bollards installed, public lighting erected, school wall relocated and rebuilt, and junction kerbing realigned. Works are expected to be fully complete in the coming weeks.</li><li>Holy Family National School: This scheme will be split into two phases with the Preliminary Design with the NTA for approval to progress to the Statutory Approval Phase.</li><li>The Options Selection phase for An Gaelscoil Mhíchíl Cíosóg Safe Routes to School are currently being developed by the Active Travel Section.</li></ul> <p>Clare Bridges - Pedestrian &amp; Cycling Connectivity Barry Transportation are currently developing the preliminary design for 11 Bridges throughout the county.</p>
<b>Public Lighting</b>	<p>Survey works continue as part of the PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Programme) with surveying in the Killaloe Municipal District throughout March and survey works commenced in the West Clare MD on the 19th March. Completed survey works currently stand at 75%.</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 continues to work with our public lighting maintenance contractor Enerveo and ESB networks in an effort to reduce outage numbers and timelines. Increased repair times are present due to significant infrastructure works required at some locations in order to meet the requirement to meet ESB Networks Minimum requirements for Public Lighting. Such repairs are future proofing and allowing for reduced outage areas and timelines going forward.</p> <p>The public lighting section has, and continues to seek additional resources where possible from both our maintenance contractor Enerveo and ESB Networks.</p>

## Road Design Office

### TII Road Safety Projects:

Project	Progress Update
<p><b>HD17</b></p>	<p><b>N85 Lahinch Road Ennis Pedestrian Crossing</b> Feasibility Report &amp; Gateway 1 approval letter submitted to TII (01/03/24)</p> <p><b>N85 Shanaway Junction</b> Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit to be carried out and submitted with Design report to TII.</p> <p><b>N67 Doonbeg Pedestrian Crossing</b> A feasibility report is being prepared.</p> <p><b>N67/L2030 Doonbeg Buildouts</b> Feasibility Report &amp; Gateway 1 approval letter submitted to TII (21/02/24) A Design Report was submitted to TII .</p> <p><b>N68 Cranny Cross Junction</b> Design report being prepared for Vehicle Activated Signage at this location.</p> <p><b>N85 Clareabbey Roundabout Pedestrian &amp; Cycling Facilities</b> Feasibility Report &amp; Gateway 1 approval letter submitted to TII (21/02/24) Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit to be carried out.</p> <p><b>N67 Ministers Place, Kilkee</b> A concept landscape design proposal has been prepared and is being progressed to preliminary design. A lighting design has been prepared.</p> <p><b>N67 Mount Charles Terrace</b> An updated feasibility report has been submitted to TII (08/03/24) A stage 2 Road Safety Audit is to be carried out.</p> <p><b>N68 Rocky Road Roundabout Pedestrian Crossing</b> A traffic/pedestrian survey has been carried out.</p> <p><b>Lahinch Pedestrian Crossing</b> Pedestrian &amp; Traffic survey to be carried out W/C 18th March.</p> <p><b>Inagh Pedestrian Crossing</b> Pedestrian &amp; Traffic survey to be carried out W/C 18th March.</p>
<p><b>Noise Action Plans</b></p>	<p>Strategic Noise Mapping &amp; Noise Action Plans Agglomerations Technical Working Group meetings and workshops are ongoing. It is planned to advertise a public consultation period for the Draft Limerick Clare Agglomeration Noise Action Plan starting on the 5th April 2024 for a period of six weeks. Work is progressing on the Draft Clare Noise Action Plan.</p>
<p><b>Fence Retrofitting Programme</b></p>	<p>A Fence Retrofit Assessment Report for 2024 is ongoing. 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 &amp; rail fencing with a tensioned wire mesh restraining system. Projects on the N68 have been submitted to TII for their approval. An allocation of €50,000 was provided by TII for 2024.</p>

**Other Projects 2024:**

Project	Progress Update
<p><b>Bridge Rehabilitation Programme</b></p>	<p>Repairs were carried out on the Ardclonney Bridge R463 under the Bridge Rehabilitation Grant.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
<p><b>Safety Improvement Works on Regional and Local Roads</b></p>	<p>The following allocations were provided for Low Cost Safety Schemes in 2024:                      Current Progress.                      R471 Bothar Mor, Shannon €90,000, Design complete, scheduled to go for Section 38 next week.                      R-352/L-4066 Bodyke Village €50,000, Design has commenced                      L2016/L6044 Querrin L2016 / L6044 €40,000, Draft design complete,                      L-4118 Gaurus, Ennis, Co. Clare €15,000, Ennis MD completed design                      R-478-64/L5142 Lough South Doolin €74,000, Design completed                      R-481-17/L5180 Ballybreen Kilfenora €35,000, Design has commenced                      L-4608 Rosslvan, Ennis €40,000, Design has commenced                      R484 Kilmihil Village €40,000. Design complete, Gone to Section 38 stage                      R-471/L-3046 Harrold's cross €55,000, design complete, discussions with landowners ongoing.                      L3312 Bealach Buí €45,000, Design Complete, Gone to section 38 stage                      R474/L8344 Connolly €45,000, survey completed, design to commence shortly                      Total €529,000</p>
<p>Liaison with NTA regarding bus shelters</p>	<p>Works have been completed on the replacement of the bus shelter in Lahinch.</p>

**Health and Safety**

The Annual Management Review of the 2023 Annual Safety Report was conducted on the 4th March, 2024. At this meeting the following Top Level H&S Objectives for 2024 were approved and issued to Senior Management for implementation in conjunction with the Annual Safety Inspection and Audit Plan for 2024.

1. Continue to Focus on digitalisation of elements of the Occupational Health & Safety Management System in order to improve efficiency, effectiveness and minimise paperwork through utilisation of the following;
  - ProWorks
  - ArcGis
  - Meta Compliance
  - Online E-learning Modules
  
2. Expand the Scope of the ISO 45001 accreditation commencing with the following Directorates/Departments;
  - Physical Directorate
  - Housing
  
3. Develop a Work Programme to complete DSE Assessments for all staff that are outstanding

The Health & Safety Team commenced their programme of work for 2024 starting with the updating and communication of the Clare County Council Occupational Health & Safety Management System and ongoing revision of routine Risk Assessments and Safety Statements. The implementation of the programme of work will be monitored throughout the year by the Health & Safety Teams ongoing reviews of Safety Statements, Risk Assessments and H&S Audit and Inspection plans.

CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

<p><b>Doolin Pier Visitor Services Building</b></p>	<p>Following on from environmental evaluation of land use options, and re-engagement with appointed design team in 2023, the council are at present liaising with the department with a view to securing additional funding necessary to bring this project to Statutory Consent stage.</p>
<p><b>Ennis Public Realm Re-generation (Project B)</b></p>	<p>The appointed contractor Shareridge Ltd. is now fully mobilised to site and an intensive works programme is now well under way. Six crews are now working throughout the town centre, following a significant advance in project activity in line with agreed programme and phasing plan.</p> <p>Advance sewer works are being completed in O’Connell Street ahead of the Public Realm works. The laying of these foul sewers will enable the installation of essential medium voltage infrastructure, and the retirement of the existing legacy cabling which must be removed to facilitate construction of the shared surface pavement. The foul sewer works is focused on the completion of the linear section of O’Connell Street between the Old Ground hotel and Carmody street. Once completed, it will be possible to install the new medium voltage cable in April 2024, thereby allowing the Public Realm works to be completed on western side of O’Connell Street.</p> <p>Concrete pours are being prepared and advanced along central carriageways on sections of O’Connell Street and High Street. Kerbs have been laid in tandem in preparation for laying of paving in coming weeks.</p> <p>Road Closures are now in place for O’Connell Street, and High Street, and further road closures will be advertised during 2024 to facilitate the works programme and to complete certain foul sewer replacement works in advance of the streetscape works.</p> <p>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 is engaging extensively with affected parties as the works progress and, in advance of commencement of every work phase. The public and traders are encouraged to take every opportunity to meet with the project team to ensure that their needs are communicated, and disruption is minimised wherever possible. The contractor and design team are also convening fortnightly drop-in meetings, as well as issuing weekly progress update bulletins. Affected/interested parties are invited to email <a href="mailto:ennispublicrealm@shareridge.ie">ennispublicrealm@shareridge.ie</a> if they wish to be added to mailing list.</p> <p>It is unavoidable that there will be disruption with a major civil and infrastructural works of this nature but every effort is being made to keep this to a minimum while allowing the necessary access to allow timely completion. It is expected that the longer-term benefits in terms of user amenity and accessibility will far outweigh the shorter-term inconvenience. The cooperation and understanding of all stakeholders in this regard is greatly appreciated.</p> <div data-bbox="427 1563 1449 1870" data-label="Image"> </div>



**Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake's Corner)**

The Judicial Review process is ongoing.

**Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass**

Progress remains steady despite intermittent adverse weather. Milestones achieved include opening of Creeveroe Road Stagger Junction, installation of backspan edge girders and cross-girders to West Abutment and opening of Kilmastulla Bridge for traffic. Upcoming milestones include mobilisation and assembly of 600t crane and opening of Shantraud Roundabout to through traffic. The railway bridge section opening on the R494 is on programme for Friday 3rd of May. Whilst the R494 will be open to through traffic after this date there will be Traffic Management arrangements in place whilst the remainder of the works both online and offline are completed towards the new Roolagh roundabout.

**Killaloe Bypass Section**

Kincora: Kerbs installation in progress. Pavement activities have commenced – first half of roundabout has been paved. Accom. Wks scheduled to commence next week.



Main Cut to Hill Road: Topsoil to batters in progress. Pavement activities are well advanced. Prep works to pedestrian path and 2-Way Cycle Track in progress.



Hill Road to Creeveroe Road: Prep works to 2-Way Cycle Track and concrete to pedestrian path in progress.

Creeveroe Road to Shantraud: Preps to Cycle Track and concrete to Footpath in progress.

Shantraud Roundabout: Pavement laying to 2nd half of roundabout in progress. Masonry wall in progress.



**Shannon Bridge Crossing Link**

Shantraud to Clarisford Junction: Pavement activities have commenced.

Clarisford to West Embankment: Embankment settlement ongoing.



**Shannon Bridge**

East Abutment: Diaphragm poured.

West Abutment: Formwork and temporary works in progress.



East Pier 1: Prepping for conc. pour to top node. Pour scheduled to be completed by W/E 22nd March.

West Pier 1: Stitch pour scheduled to be completed before Easter break.

Spans 1,2,5 &6: Installation of formwork in progress.

**R494 Upgrade**

Section 7 (South of Rail Bridge): Watermain installation completed.

Section 7 (North of Rail Bridge): Kerb installation commenced. Pavement activities in progress. Local Access Road ramp under construction.

Section 6 (Northbound Lane): Road construction activities in progress.

Section 3: Attenuation Tank 2 installed.

Section 2 (Northbound Lane): Road Construction activities in progress. Accom. Works commenced.

Section 2 (Southbound Lane): Accom. Wks. continue.

Section 1: Works to Pumping Station in progress. Accommodation works in progress.

**Kilmastulla Bridge**

Installation of kerbing, services and footpaths commenced.





**Rail Bridge**

Waterproofing to deck complete. Asphalt activities due to commence. Stitch pours to PC parapets to be completed W/E 22nd March. VRS scheduled to be installed W/C 25th March.

**RW03** (Shannonside Embankment): VRS completed.



Additional project specific information including monthly drone footage, traffic management plans etc. is available on: <https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/capital-projects/roads-and-bridges/killaloe-bypass-shannon-bridge-crossing/>

**Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme**

A third ‘in-person’ public consultation event was held in the Sweeney Memorial Library, Kilkee on 6th March. Prior to the event from 26th February, a draft set of fluvial planning drawings and reports were displayed in the library and made available to view on the project website, [www.kilkeefrs.ie](http://www.kilkeefrs.ie). The event was well attended on the day and feedback received both during and after the event was generally positive and supportive of the proposed scheme.

Final updates of the planning drawings and documents are now underway in preparation for the submission to An Bord Pleanála.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

<p><b>Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)</b></p>	<p>Discussions are ongoing with the Department of Housing and to that regard, CCC await a favourable response from the LIHAF Management Committee of the Department which will enable us to move forward with the Infrastructure &amp; Housing delivery.</p> <p>Discussions regarding the acquisition of the necessary lands for the scheme continue with the relevant landowners affected. It is hoped that all lands can be acquired by agreement however as a scheme delivery assurance measure a CPO will be instigated. CPO schedules and deposit maps are currently being prepared with the intention to publish in the coming weeks subject to legal review.</p>
<p><b>N19 Shannon Airport Access Road</b></p>	<p>Phase 3 (Design and Environmental Evaluation) stage is currently ongoing with Phase 4 (Statutory Consent) stage progressing thereafter.</p> <p>The scheme proposes a combination of active travel measures, improvements to public transport, along with new and improved road infrastructure between Drumgeely roundabout and Knockbeagh Point roundabout on approach to Shannon International Airport.</p> <p>The Project Team and scheme consultants FTC &amp; Co are currently engaging with the various project stakeholders such as TII Project Services departments, The Shannon Airport Group, Shannon Commercial Properties, Future Mobility Campus Ireland, etc., in preparation of submitting this project for Statutory Consent in mid-2024.</p> <p>The preparation of the various Chapters of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) continues with a final draft expected to be completed for review in the coming weeks.</p> <p>Phase 5 (Enabling and Procurement) &amp; Phase 6 (Construction) will progress thereafter which are subject to timely consents, no legal challenge, funding, etc. The construction contract is estimated to be in the region of 18 months in duration.</p> <p>Discussions continue regarding the necessary Land Transfer Agreements between The Minister for Transport, The Shannon Group and Clare County Council and 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>
<p><b>Quin Flood Relief Scheme</b></p>	<p>A wet March has largely restricted works during the period. However, recent weather windows have allowed for some finishing works to recommence, such as topsoiling and hedge reinstatement. The final precast headwall was also placed in recent days. Outstanding accommodation and finishing works will be completed in the coming weeks as weather permits.</p>
<p><b>Remediation of sites containing ACM</b></p>	<p>A review of Statutory approval aspects is ongoing in advance of issue of tender documents for a works contract in respect of the excavation and remediation of the sites. Proposals for the disposal of bulk soil material were received in the summer of 2023, thereby defining the receiving locations and transport requirements for the bulk materials to be removed.</p> <p>The sites continue to be routinely monitored and maintained as required by Council staff in accordance with our agreed approach following discussion and consultation with the EPA.</p>
<p><b>Shannon Town &amp; Environs Flood Relief Scheme</b></p>	<p>Clare County Council have completed their review of the Buildability Report and the EIAR Scoping Report, the latter of which will be issued to stakeholders for comment in the coming days.</p> <p>A meeting with the Marine Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) was held on 29th February to discuss the requirements of the Marine Area Consent (MAC) that are relevant to the scheme.</p> <p>The specialist for the ‘Lagoon Monitoring’ programme has been appointed and works commenced in late March. Preparations for the bat survey contract are nearing completion with surveys due to start on site shortly.</p>

**West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 1: Kilrush to Kilkee)**

Public Consultation 3 commenced on Friday 15th March 2024 and will conclude on 12th April 2024. The Consultation involves displaying the ‘Emerging Preferred Route Corridor’ and encouraging feedback from the public and potentially affected landowners. All landowners along the proposed corridor received an invite to individually view/discuss the proposal with the Project Team.

The information will be on display to the public at the following locations;

- Sweeney Memorial Library Kilkee
- Kilrush Public Library
- [www.westclarerailwaygreenway.ie](http://www.westclarerailwaygreenway.ie)

**In person Information sessions were held from 3.30pm to 8.00pm on:**  
**Wednesday 20th March at Sweeney Memorial Library, Kilkee**  
**Thursday 21st March at Kilrush Public Library**

We invite submissions from the public and interested stakeholders.



*(L-R) Rico Raymundo & Rebecca Bailey (ROD Consulting Engineers), Gráinne Reddan (Clare County Council), Deirdre Neff (ROD), Gemma Rothwell (ROD), John Bligh (Project Agronomist).*



*(L-R) Declan Phelan (Independent Agronomist), Gráinne Reddan (Clare County Council), John Leahy (Clare County Council), Alan Farrell (Clare County Council), John Bligh (Agronomist).*

**West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 2: Ennis to Ennistymon)**

Work continues on the ‘Option Selection Report’ and it is due to be completed in Q2, 2024.

**West Clare Railway Greenway (Sections 3 & 4: Ennistymon to Miltown Malbay to Moyasta)**

The Project Team are finalising the Consultation Report following Public Consultation 1.

**Other Greenway Proposals**

No update this month.

General Design Office

**Ennistimon Hub Derelict Building Refurbishment**

A Part VIII planning application has been submitted for the refurbishment of a former retail storage building located on Monastery Lane. The proposed development, designed by the General Design Office, will provide an independent Office building which will augment the existing Ennistimon Digital Hub.



**Vandeleur Gardens new Gardener's Yard Enclosure Wall**

A Part VIII planning application has been submitted for the construction of a new enclosure wall adjacent to the Vandeleur Gardens stable block. This wall will provide an enclosed and secure Gardener's yard.



**Inis Cealtra Visitor Centre Mountshannon**

Refurbishments works on the proposed new visitor centre are progressing well with the construction phase of the project due to be completed in mid-December 2024.



**Town and Village Renewal Scheme**

**Clonlara** - Construction works concluded. Snagging and final account concluded. Handover from contractor complete.  
**Parteen** - Contractor appointed.

## FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

### Training Courses

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service personnel underwent a number of training courses during March, including Emergency Services Driving Standard (ESDS) Tests and QQI accredited Transportation Incidents Course held at Ennis Fire Station Training Centre.



### Shannon Fire Brigade Recognition Award

A recognition award was presented to members of Shannon Fire Brigade following their involvement in the recent Coady-Coleman Tragedy. The award was presented to the crew on behalf of the people of Shannon Town by Cllr. McGettigan during the St. Patrick's Day Parade, who read out a prepared statement of gratitude on behalf of the family. The award honours the crews tireless dedication past, present and future.



Fire & Building Control Section Main Activities	Feb 2024	March 2024 (Up to 20.03.24)	Year to Date 2024
Number of Emergency Calls Attended	85	40	285
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received	9	3	22
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted	7	4	18
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	0	1
Number of Disability Access Certificates Received	8	3	14
Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted	1	1	8
Number of Commencement Notices Received	33	41	118
Number of Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	4	2	8

*(Note: In the March Monthly Report, the February figures related to 1st- 26th February due to timing of report)*

## CLARE CIVIL DEFENCE

### Operational Duties:

- Civil Defence provided medical cover at a number of events in March including Run the Banner (Quilty); Run Clare (Ennis); St. Patrick's Day Parade in Ennis & Shannon; National Hurling League Clare vs Kilkenny (Cusack Park); National Football League Clare vs Antrim (Cusack Park) and Ladies Football League Clare vs Antrim (Gurteen).
- Clare Civil Defence assisted An Garda Síochána with two missing person searches at the Cliffs of Moher over a 21 day period. Both searches have since been stood down with no trace of the missing persons.
- Clare Civil Defence Volunteers were tasked by An Garda Síochána at 19.30 p.m. Tuesday 12th March to assist with a high risk missing person search in Lahinch. Volunteers responded and conducted a search of the area around the missing 91 year olds home. Shortly after 22.00 p.m.



the person was located by friends and the search operation was stood down.

### 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.
- Assistant Civil Defence Officer attended Major Emergency Management Training in Limerick.

### Long Service Awards

Tánaiste and Minister for Defence Micheál Martin TD presented long service medals to over 100 members of Civil Defence from across the country at a national ceremony in Trinity College, Dublin. The medals were awarded for 30, 40, 50 and even 60 years of service in the Civil Defence.

Speaking at the event, the Tánaiste said: "I am delighted to



formally honour the long and distinguished years of service of these Civil Defence members with the award of long service medals. As we see on a constant basis, the Civil Defence plays an essential role in so many aspects of daily life, whether responding to search and rescue, flooding, or other events." The Tánaiste also acknowledged that Civil Defence volunteers focussed on the value of their service both to the State and their local communities and noted the camaraderie and community spirit of the Civil Defence

Two Clare Civil Defence Volunteers were presented with 40 and 30 year medals respectively, First Officer Mr. Brendan Fitzgerald was presented with a 40 year medal and First Officer Mr. Shane Moylan was presented with a 30 year medal. A huge congratulations to both Brendan and Shane for their unwavering commitment and dedication to providing a professional and valued service to the community.

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## ENVIRONMENT

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### Environmental Awareness

#### Launch of Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024 - 2030

The National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2024-2030 was launched during March at Limerick Twenty Thirty Garden International. As a Local Authority we look forward to accelerating our transition to a circular economy where resources are reused or recycled, as much as possible, and the generation of waste is minimised. Full details of this plan can be viewed at <https://www.mywaste.ie/national-waste-management>



#### An Taisce Green Schools

Clare County Council supports and encourages active participation in the An Taisce sponsored Green Schools programme. Our Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) carries out Green School assessments and makes recommendations to An Taisce on the awarding of a Green Flag. In March our EAO meet with 13 schools to undertake assessment visits.

#### National Spring Clean 2024

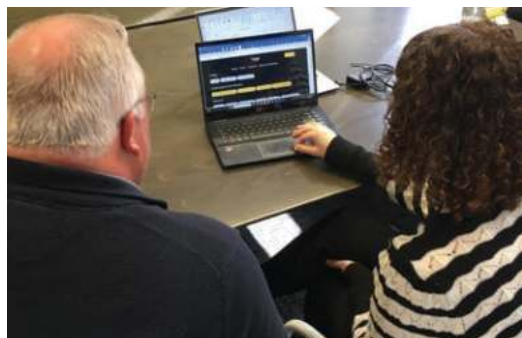
This year, to date, 114 groups have registered for the National Spring Clean in Clare. Groups have been advised that they can avail of free passes to our Waste Transfer facilities. Since January 2024, 46 free passes have been issued to community groups and 21 groups have been supported with Greener Clare clean up packs.

#### Community engagement

Clare County Council Greener Clare team upon request delivers presentations and talks across Clare. This is great opportunity for raising awareness within communities to an already available audience that would not necessarily attend an environmental talk. During March our EAO met with 30 members of an Active Retirement Group at Dún an Óir, Kilkee to deliver a circular economy workshop.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

In support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Champions Programme our EAO delivered mentoring on SDG mapping using the SDG Accelerating Action Tool to Clarecastle Tidy Towns and Seamus Murrphy, Rural Development Directorate. As part of the mentoring exercise the National Spring Clean was aligned to the SDGs.



### Communication campaigns

The Environment Section used print and social media campaigns in March to promote food waste separation, leaving no trace, National Tree Week 2024, National Spring Clean 2024, Stop Food Waste Day and dog owner responsibility.

### Access to Information on the Environment (AIE)

Our Environmental Awareness Officer is the designated Information Officer (AIE Officer) under the Access to Information on the Environment Regulations for Clare County Council. In total 6 AIE requests have been received up to the end March 2024.

### Gardening

With March living up to the old saying of being a month of many weathers, the Gardening Team continued their work with the start of grass cutting season, the installation and maintenance of hanging baskets, and the commencement of spring planting at various public locations.

### National Tree Week 2024

What is now something of a tradition, the Team engaged with various community groups and Tidy Town representatives from across Co. Clare to provide free trees as part of the national 'Tree Week' campaign. The team provided 1,000 native tree species to 20 voluntary community groups, together with providing the necessary advice on how and where the plant trees to ensure they establish and thrive in future years. The strong interest shown in this annual campaign demonstrates the importance of such initiatives and provides a platform for Clare County Council to raise awareness on the value of trees for the benefit of biodiversity, climate change, water quality and flooding mitigation.

National Tree Week was held from 3rd March to 10th March 2024. Interested groups could apply online through our community engagement page at <https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/national-tree-week-2024>. This was also promoted through our Rural Development Directorate and Clare PPN as well as through our social media channels. Our EAO also participated in an interview with Scariff Bay Radio promoting National Tree Week and the availability of trees to community groups. Perhaps the most important task undertaken during March by the Team is the preparation and transplanting of juvenile

plants, known as 'plugs', which will be grown on in polytunnels over the coming weeks (Insert Gardening Photos 01 & 02). These plants and flowers will be subsequently planted across various public and green spaces over the summer season to provide the colourful and vibrant displays that are strongly welcomed by both the public and Tidy Towns' adjudicators.

### Water Enforcement and Laboratory Scientific Services

The table below summarises the work of the scientific teams to date in 2024:

Water Enforcement Scientific Team	March 2024	Total YTD 2024
Bathing Water Monitoring	Season starts in June	Season starts in June
Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Inspections (NIP Plan)	5	24
Public queries processed with regard to DWWTS grants	2	15
Monitoring Inspections of Section 4 licenced premises	4	30
Planning applications (Agriculture)	2	8
Planning applications (Domestic)	19	61
Planning applications (Large Developments)	2	7
Planning applications (Forestry)	3	36
Pollution complaints received	7	43
Private Commercial Drinking Water Supplies	4	21
Private/Public Group Water Scheme supplies	34	104
Rivers	50	61
Warning & advisory letters issued	0	3
Farm Inspections (NAIP)	10	10

### Bathing Water Annual Reporting Requirements

Clare County Council has reported details of all identified bathing waters for the 2024 bathing season, the monitoring calendars for same, and public participation information from the 2023 bathing season to the EPA by 24th March 2024. This information was submitted using the Bathing Water Information System (BWIS) application in EDEN.

### Waste Enforcement

#### Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Workshop

The Waste Enforcement team attended the "Sharing Our Experiences in Waste Enforcement" workshop held in Portlaoise on the 6th and 7th March. This event was facilitated by the EPA. In attendance were over 190 delegates from the EPA, the local authorities, the Regional Waste Authorities (WERLA's) and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC).

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## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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Maria Carey, head of Waste Enforcement, gave a presentation at the event, on Clare County Council's successful prosecution taken against seven importers of second-hand vehicles in 2023. This case was the first of its kind to be taken by a local authority under The European Union (End-of-Life-Vehicles) Regulations 2014. The outcome of the case, and the judge's comments have been relayed to the Department of Environment Climate and Communications (DECC), to be considered when reviewing the licence of the compliance scheme operator, the approved body ELV Environmental Services (ELVES).

### S.I. No. 508/2009, Food Waste Regulations

Inspections were carried out in March on 11 commercial premises under the Food Waste Regulations 2009 and (Waste Management (Collection Permit) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2023). These regulations require all commercial premises to have a 3-bin system in place and to segregate food waste. Follow-up actions are ongoing with the relevant businesses.

### Authorised Treatment Facility Inspection

Audit inspections have been carried out on several Authorised Treatment Facility in March. Corrective actions are being implemented by the operators in conjunction with the Waste Enforcement team.

### Waste Facility Permit / Certificate of Registration Inspections

Inspections of 6 permitted facilities were carried out by the Waste Enforcement team in March to monitor compliance with their permit. Compliance with permit conditions will ensure positive environmental outcomes for the receiving environments.

### Environmental Monitoring (Illegal Dumping/Litter)

The Waste Enforcement Team continued to respond to complaints. A total of 96 complaints relating to litter and waste were received in March. All of these are currently being investigated, followed up and appropriate enforcement action will be taken. 10 Litter Fines were issued in March, 2 have been paid to date.

### Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI)

The Environment Section have submitted our Annual RMCEI Plan for 2024 to the Environmental Protection Agency. This provides a summary of all resources, inspections, monitoring and sampling and enforcement actions to be taken by the Environment Section for the year ahead.

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## CLIMATE ACTION

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### Climate Action Plan

*Publication:* The Climate Action Plan has now been fully published on the Clare County Council website along with a copy of the plan being available for viewing at Aras an Chlair. The Natura Impact Report and SEA Environmental report were also finalised as well as the appropriate Environmental Authorities being furnished with the Notice of Adoption and the Climate Action Plan.

*Implementation:* The Climate Action Plan covers the years 2024 to 2029. 96 main actions listed in the plan require a further implementation plan to provide the architecture on how to develop out the actions. Work on the Implementation Plan is ongoing in conjunction with directorates across the organisation.

*Climate Action Steering Committee:* Governance will be key to the successful implementation of the Climate Action Plan. In this regard, the first meeting of the Climate Action Steering Committee met on Wednesday February 28th. Led by Director Alan Farrell and the Climate Change Coordinator Morgan Lahiffe, the committee will seek to drive forward the implementation of actions across the Authority prioritising a collaborative approach to Climate Action. The Steering Committee will meet at least once every quarter and will report on progress at this forum as well as discussing challenges ahead. At the first meeting of the Committee, the Director asked the representatives to pull out key actions they can deliver in the short term and to start planning for the medium and long term actions as there needs to be a strong focus on delivery.

### Community Climate Action Programme

The deadline to apply for the Community Climate Action Fund closed on February 28th. Following extensive community engagement, the volume of applications was very encouraging. There are 79 applications for Strand one of the programme and three applications for Strand 1a (Shared Island Fund). This far exceeds the amount of funding available. Whilst there is €572,000 of funding available, it is noted that Clare County Council received over €2,500,000 worth of applications. There is a positive geographical spread of applications with 9 received from Ennis, 17 from Shannon, 19 from Killaloe and 33 from West Clare. The applications received cover a variety of the thematic areas with a number of applications meeting more than two thematic areas. Projects include; solar, energy upgrades, rainwater harvesting, biodiversity, food production, sustainable travel and a variety of other projects. The projects are currently being reviewed and will be scored under the following criteria:

• relevance & impact	• achievability
• innovation & scalability	• partnership approach
• value for money	• governance arrangements

Approximately 10% of the fund will be small projects (up to €20,000), 40% of the fund will be medium sized projects (between €20,000 and €50,000), and 50% of the fund will be large-scale projects (between €51,000 and €100,000). A portfolio of chosen projects will be submitted to the department for ministerial approval by April 24th.

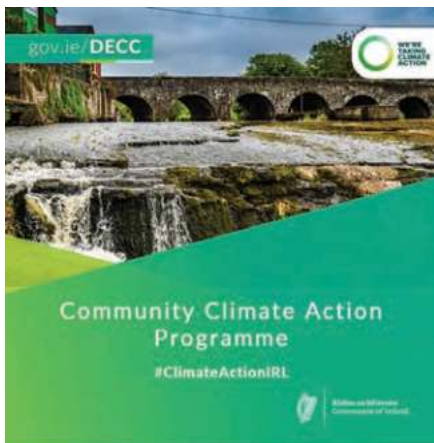
Please contact the Community Climate Action Officer Dara De-



ver on ddever@clarecoco.ie / communityclimate@clarecoco.ie for further information.

Please see the table below detailing the Programme timelines:

Project Milestones	Dates
Online portal open for expression of interest (applications)	06/12/2023
Online portal closed for expression of interest (applications)	28/02/2024
Confirmation of Ministerial approved projects	17/07/2024



**Energy & Climate Awareness**

Raising awareness of Climate Change and building the public literacy in this regard are key actions with the Climate Action Plan.

The Climate Team collaborated with Tipperary Energy Agency to develop two webinars aimed at raising awareness of Renewable Energies.

Webinar 1 on Solar Photovoltaic took place on February 22nd via Zoom. The webinar covered the basics of Solar Photovoltaic for householders including potential costs, payback periods and availability of grants. The webinar also touched on PV for the Agricultural sector.

Webinar 2 covered the area of Anerobic Digestion. Participants were given an introduction to what Anerobic Digestion is, its uses and national objectives in relation to same.



**NZEB Fundamentals Awareness Course:** The Climate & Energy section partnered with the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board in March to provide training to 14 Clare County Council staff members from the Housing and Climate sections in relation to NZEB awareness. The course was held at the College of Further Education and Training, Green Innovation Campus in Raheen, Limerick. It is hoped to roll this free resource out to relevant staff over the medium term.



**Reduce Your Use**

The Reduce Your Use campaign for Winter 2023/24 continues with email, online and social media engagement, led by the Energy Management Team, providing guidance on how to reduce energy consumption in the home and the workplace. Reduce Your Use supports public bodies to encourage staff to cut energy waste over the winter months and implement operational actions that reduce energy consumption. Staff of Clare County Council are receiving biweekly reduce your use emails. Further information on the Reduce Your Use campaign and guidance can be viewed on the Reduce Your Use Your Say Engagement Page: <https://yoursay.clarecoco.ie/reduce-your-use-campaign-2023-2024>

## WATER

### Asset Transfer

Following an assessment of the water and wastewater networks in County Clare, 383 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 312 assets, 222 have now been fully transferred to Úisce Eireann. The 90 assets remaining to be transferred are all in varied stages of the asset transfer process and the transfer team is actively working with all involved to progress. These are divided into the following categories:

- **Internal Query (16 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) (47 assets)** - Assets are proposed to this department within Úisce Eireann to obtain their agreement for the Asset Transfers from Local Authorities. Most assets now being dealt with in this category are folios under third party ownership but where water assets are present and operational, often for decades. Department Circular L1 2022 proposes that property in long term operational possession but not in the Council name be obtained by the adverse possession process and provides for grant support to Councils for this process. These folios will then be transferred on to Úisce Eireann.
- **With County Solicitor (27 Assets)** These assets are now with the County Solicitor to progress by ordinary transfer or by adverse possession processes.

### Rural Water

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 long-awaited Multi-annual Rural Water (MARWP) 2024-2026 framework document was formally published in late January 2024 and applications are currently being processed from Group Water Schemes for funding. The Rural Water Team is continuing to assist Group Water Schemes with their applications and in the selection of the most suitable funding measure within the 2024 – 2026 programme. The final date for submission of bids to the Department under the MARWP is the 12th of April 2024. Group Water Scheme Taking in Charge applications continue to be progressed by the Clare Rural Water Team

The Rural Water Team is working with Group Water Schemes in assessing the need to carry out emergency works and applying to the Department for exceptional urgent capital works for once off funding as they arise. Applications for Group Water Scheme annual subsidy which is available to fund operational costs of group water schemes providing water for domestic use continue to be processed by this office.

All applications under the ‘Grant for Improvement Works to a Private Water Supply’ under the Rural Water Programme continue to be processed by the Rural water Team. Post works final inspections for 2023 works within the last 12 months and pre inspection for 2024 are ongoing.

## SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

### St Patrick's Day Parade Shannon

The sun shone for the St Patrick's Day Parade in Shannon. There was a great buzz and excitement as the parade kicked off at 2pm as families and parade goers lined the streets and in the town centre of Shannon. Shannon Municipal District assisted the organising committee with the provision of barriers and ensured that the streets were clean and free from litter in the days leading up to the parade and in the aftermath of the parade.

A number of people who had given a lot to Shannon over the years were honoured on the day at a stand in the town centre. Cllr Pat McMahon received a well deserved Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of his 49 years political service to the Area. The Certificate was presented by Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan on the day. Others that were honoured included Shannon Fire & Rescue Service, Alan Cunningham (former Principal St Caimin's Community School), Richard Park (Shannon Scouts), Sr. Jo Cantwell (community work), Derek Clune (Shannon Tidy Towns). There was also a special remembrance

for Rory Lynch and the late Dylan Coady Coleman. The St Patrick's Day Parade in Shannon was a true coming together of the community with an appreciation for those that have contributed to make it the wonderful place that it is.





### Sixmilebridge Town Team

At a recent launch of the Town Centre First Phase 1 plans in Adare, Co. Limerick, representatives of Sixmilebridge Town Team attended with Minister Heather Humphreys and Minister of State, Kieran O'Donnell T.D., along with Council officials. An Expression of Interest under the 'Development Measures' Town Centre First Funding stream has since been submitted by the Town Team. This funding will assist the community group in moving key priority projects towards being shovel-ready. (footbridge project). Kilrush was announced as the next town that will benefit from a Town Centre First plan.

expressed to his family. A book of condolence was opened at the MD offices in Shannon. May he rest in peace.



*Paddy Ryan, General Operative, RIP.*

### Outdoor Exercise Equipment installed in Shannon

Shannon MD has installed durable outdoor exercise equipment at various locations at and near the embankment walk in Shannon. The funding was sourced through the 2023 Community Recognition Fund from the Department of Rural and Community Development. The MD offices worked closely with Shannon Leisure Centre to bring their knowledge and expertise to bear when choosing the most appropriate pieces. The equipment is robust and of the highest standard. The various pieces of equipment include fitness trainer, cross trainer, bicycle, rower, climbing frame and a meditation area. These clustered outdoor callisthenic gym pieces will add significantly to the outdoor recreational offering in Shannon by expanding the benefits associated with regular exercise to a greater number of people. Cathaoirleach Donna McGettigan and Cllr Pat O Gorman were on hand recently to try out the new outdoor exercise equipment and demonstrate the importance of keeping physically active.



### Remembering Paddy Ryan, General Operative with Shannon MD (R.I.P)

Paddy Ryan, General Operative with Shannon MD, sadly passed away unexpectedly. Paddy was fondly known as 'Pony' to everyone who knew him and was a familiar face around Shannon town driving the mini-road sweeper. Paddy was an exceptional colleague and a diligent worker. He went about his work quietly and efficiently and was greatly admired and well respected by his fellow colleagues and Councillors. An adjournment took place at the March Municipal District meeting of Shannon MD as a mark of respect and deep sympathy was



## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



### Other relevant works

<b>Surface Dressing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shannon MD is preparing for the Surface Dressing pro-gramme of works for 2024.</li> <li>Area of works includes Clonlara, Cratloe, Shannon town, Urlanmore</li> </ul>
<b>Grass cutting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grass maintenance contractor has started the grass cutting contract which includes strimming works,</li> <li>It is currently too wet for any major grass cutting to take place.</li> </ul>
<b>Drainage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shannon MD crews have been working on our drainage programme, works areas include Shannon town, Cratloe, Meelick, Sixmilebridge, Clonlara.</li> </ul>
<b>Footpaths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The footpath capital contract tender is complete and a contractor has been appointed.</li> </ul>
<b>Tree Maintenance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A tree maintenance contractor has been appointed for 2024.</li> </ul>
<b>Road Marking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road marking contractor has been appointed for 2024.</li> </ul>

# PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Town Centre First

Clare County Council has welcomed the inclusion of Kilrush in the Town Centre First programme, which focuses on the social and economic revival of towns across the country. Kilrush Town will benefit from funding to produce a Town Centre First Plan. Working in collaboration with the local community, Clare County Council has already produced a Town Centre First plan for Sixmilebridge, which was included in Phase 1 of the programme and was officially launched on 1st March 2024 by the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, and Minister of State with responsibility for Local Government and Planning, Kieran O'Donnell TD. In additions, under the Suite of Town Centre First Supports for 2024, three towns in Co. Clare will benefit from Town Team Supports with

up to a maximum of €10,000 per Town Team, while Expressions of Interest were invited for project proposals that would benefit from a Project Development Measure worth €50,000. For the latter two, decisions are awaited from the Minister for Rural & Community Development confirming beneficiaries.

The Town Centre First Programme is supported by Government through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Town Centre First Heritage Revival (THRIVE) Scheme and the Historic Towns Initiative. The Town Centre First Policy is to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit.

## FORWARD PLANNING

### National Planning Framework

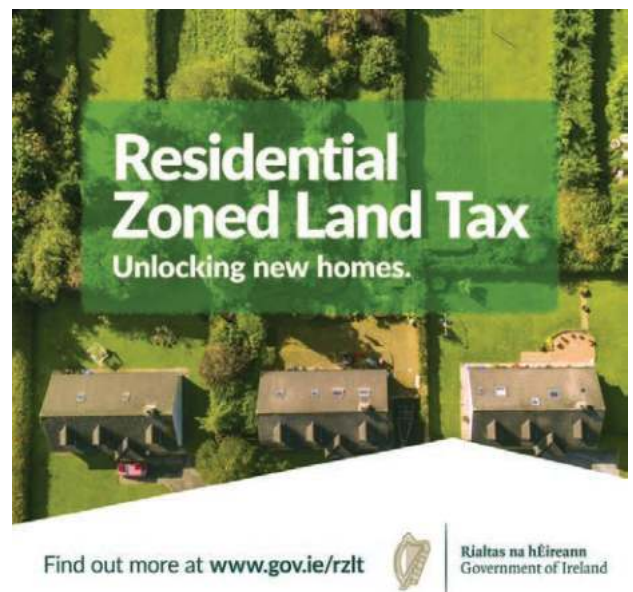
On 5th March 2024 the Government announced its decision to defer the approval of a revised National Planning Framework. This was in light of the extent of recent demographic change and the implications for future population projections and structural housing demand and the need to wait until the full suite of data required to properly consider matters relating to demographics and population projections has been received from the Economic Social and Research Institute (ESRI). The proposed revised timeline for the revision process now means the publication of the draft revised NPF for public consultation will be in June 2024, followed by an Amendment stage in August 2024 and a finalised NPF published, subject to approval, in September 2024. Clare County Council will be engaging through the consultation process and make the necessary submissions throughout this process.

### Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

The Residential Zoned Land Tax Annual Draft Maps were published on 1st February 2024. A public notice was issued in both national and local papers advising submissions on the Annual Draft Map can be made up until 1st April 2024 for the inclusion/exclusion of specific sites, and 31st May 2024 for rezoning requests on lands identified on the annual draft map.

The consultation period for making submissions on the inclusion/exclusion of specific sites for the RZLT is closing on 1st April 2024. The next step is to consider the submissions received. The Council is required to notify those who made submissions

requesting their lands to be removed from the scope of the RZLT, of its decision, by 1st July 2024. Following this, if they wish to do so, submitters can appeal the decision to An Bord Pleanála. The closing date for appeals is 1st August 2024.



### One Shannon Hub

During March, the project delivery team continued their work on The One Shannon Hub project. The project has now moved into the final stages for the preparation of a concept design, which will be used to inform a future URDF funding application.

It is hoped that this concept design phase of the project will be completed in the coming months.



**Kilrush Maritime Training Centre**

Work is continuing on the preparation of a funding application under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund – Smart Innovation Scheme for Kilrush Maritime Training Centre. The application is being made under Stream one of the Scheme where €145 million euro is being made available to infrastructure projects which provide innovative capabilities to the region in line with the strategic and regional objectives of both the Mid-West Enterprise Plan 2024 and Ireland’s Smart Specialisation Strategy.

**HybridLabs**

HybridLabs is a unique new large-scale Dutch Irish offshore renewables project led by UL in collaboration with ESB, Shannon Foynes Port Company together with many Dutch Universities and agencies as key stakeholders. The Dutch Irish research project will seek to accelerate the deployment of offshore renewable technologies for both electricity and hydrogen production. HybridLabs has been funded €10m by the Netherlands Science Foundation NWO to address energy transition needs whilst also strengthening the offshore food and ecological transitions. The HybridLabs project seeks to maximise opportunities and leverage the respective strengths of all Dutch and Irish parties in this competitive, international initiative. Clare County Council are one of 16 Cooperation partners on this new and exciting project with Kilrush Maritime Training Centre providing a link to the Offshore Renewable Energy supply chain. A key focus from the Irish perspective will be in supporting economic development using the Shannon Estuary ORE Supply Chain as a Living Lab.

**Shannon Estuary as digital-physical FLOW ‘Living Lab’ learning framework with internat co-development (eg HybridLabs as IRL-NL initiative, to be replicated)**

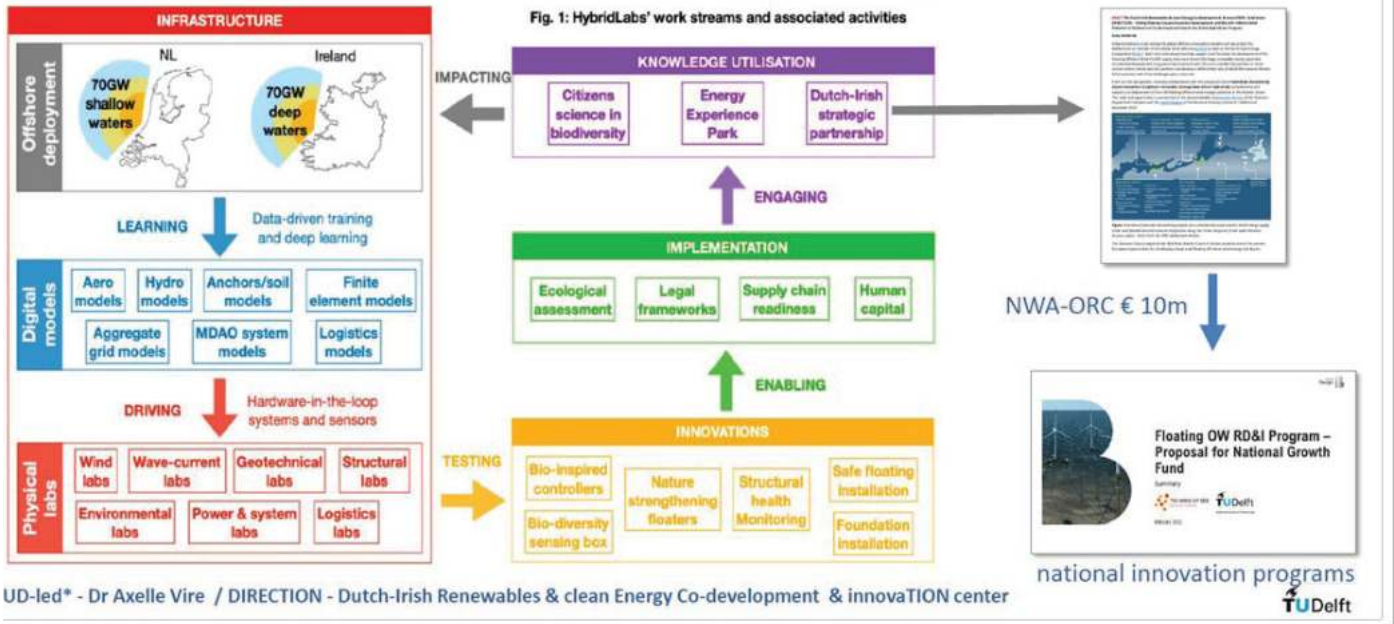


Figure 1 HybridLabs’ work streams and associated activities.

The first meeting of Work Package 4 – Impact enhancing research took place on 27th February with the Economic Directorate participating in the introductory discussions with the Eindhoven University of Technology, Port of Amsterdam, Crosswind, Shell, Heerema and others across a wide cross section of industry. The aim of this work package is to enhance

long-lasting and positive impacts of the Hybrid Lab’s research development from different perspectives including technical, ecological, societal and legal which will ultimately de-risk the proposed innovations.

## CONSERVATION AND BUILT HERITAGE

### Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS)

The 2024 round of the Built Heritage Investment Grants were announced on 14th March 2024.

Twelve projects amounting to €96,000 were awarded and two ringfenced projects were awarded €12,837.

Key: Blue shaded boxes are projects to be funded under the ring-fenced thatch stream

Our Ref No.	Projects	Funding Allocated
BHIS24/CE01	Stone Slate Cottage, Liscannor	€3,500.00
BHIS24/CE02	Loop Head Lighthouse	€8,550.00
BHIS24/CE03	Cranagher House, Quin	€8,550.00
BHIS24/CE04	Manus House Clarecastle	€8,550.00
BHIS24/CE05	Armsteads Building, Ennistymon	€8,550.00
BHIS24/CE06	Christ Church, (Spanish Point) Milltown Malbay	€8,550.00
BHIS24/CE07	Stone Building (Within Curtilage Of Scariff Workhouse)	€8,550.00
BHIS24/CE08	Hector Street Mills Kilrush	€8,550.00
BHIS24/CE09	St Brigid's Catholic Church Corofin	€8,550.00
BHIS24/CE10	Glencairn House	€8,550.00
BHIS24/CE11	Stone Slate Cottage, Milltown Malbay	€8,550.00
BHIS24/CE12	Barnlick House Clarecastle	€7,000.00
BHIS24/CE11	Thatched Cottage, Killaloe	€3,000.00
BHIS24/CE12	Cottage Boston	€9,837.00

### Historic Structures Fund

The 2024 round of the Built Heritage Investment Grants were announced on 14th March 2024.

Two projects amounting to €163,409 were awarded.

Clare - €163,409

Clare County Council	St. Flannan's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Killaloe	Continue ongoing work to prevent water ingress to this unique early 13th century church in Killaloe. The central tower, cast iron windows, parapets and rainwater goods have been repaired with the aid of the HSF 2021 and 2022. Phase 3 will see significant repairs to the west gable, the stained glass lancet window, and the buttresses of the north and south walls, to prevent serious damage from water ingress.	€153,409.00
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Clare County Council	Lime Kiln, Ennis	Repair and restoration of historic vernacular structure forming part of Kilnaboy Geopark Heritage Trail for Tourists to the Burren National Park Region	€10,000.00
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### Section 57 Applications

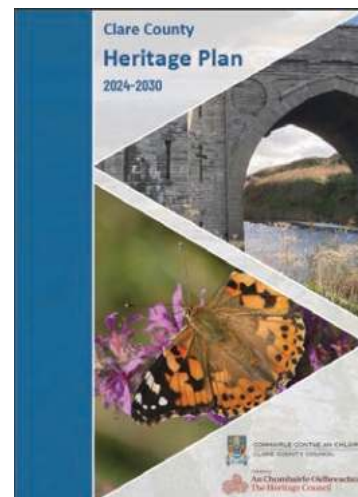
Section 57 Declarations are issued to owners of buildings or structures that wish to conduct works to their structures. A Section 57 Declaration determines whether works would be considered exempt from planning. A Section 57 Declaration can also be used to clarify the curtilage of a protected structure, or what elements are to be protected. There is no fee for a Section 57 Declaration.

Section 57 Declarations	March 2024 up to & including 20/03/2024	Total (Valid) Year to date 2024
No. of Section 57 Declaration Requests received	6	12

## HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY

### Clare County Heritage Plan 2024-2030

At the March Council meeting the Clare County Heritage Plan 2024-2030 was endorsed by the Elected Members marking their continued commitment to heritage preservation and enhancement through the delivery of the plan's objectives and actions over the next six years. The Heritage Plan will be key in supporting funding applications for heritage related projects during the lifetime of the plan.



### Heritage Office 2024 Funding Success

Funding of €107,500 has also been secured from the Heritage Council for 6 projects which include:

1. Traditional Crafts and Trade TY Tasters Project - Approved for €5,250, this initiative aims to introduce Transition Year students to traditional crafts and trades, offering practical, hands-on experience.
2. Lisdoonvarna Historic Towns Initiative Project - Approved €50,000 funding for the preparation of a heritage-led regeneration plan for the Spa Wells site which progresses an element of the Lisdoonvarna Heritage Plan & Design Guide as it relates to the Spa Wells site.
3. Clare Heritage Branding and Site Display - Approved grant of €14,250, this project includes developing branding and innovative site displays for heritage sites throughout Clare, increasing accessibility and public engagement.
4. Heritage Stewardship of Loop Head Decarbonisation Zone - Awarded €8,000, this project focuses on integrating heritage conservation with sustainable environmental practices in the Loop Head region.
5. Clare Community Archaeology Scheme - Awarded €20,000 to support community-led archaeological initiatives, promoting local heritage stewardship and participation.
6. Heritage Guardians: Clare's Time Travelers - Receiving €10,000, this educational project is designed to engage the community, especially the younger generation, with Clare's rich historical narrative.

Each project aligns with the key focus areas of the recently endorsed Clare County Heritage Plan 2024-2030, to engage the community in heritage conservation, enhance educational outreach, and promote sustainable heritage practices. The diversity of the funded initiatives, from educational programmes to community archaeology and sustainable heritage management, reflects a holistic approach to preserving and enhancing our county's heritage.

### UNESCO World Heritage Capacity Building Workshop

Staff from the Heritage Office attended a recent UNESCO World Heritage Capacity Building Workshop at UCD's O'Brien Centre for Science. This comprehensive workshop was designed to bolster the capacity of professionals involved in heritage conservation, providing them with the latest knowledge and best practices in managing World Heritage sites. The workshop included sessions on:

- Understanding of World Heritage Systems: Provided insight into the operational guidelines of World Heritage sites and the factors impacting them both globally and within Ireland.
- Management and Conservation: The importance of the Heritage place approach and management systems, highlighting the criteria that sites must meet to be considered of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).
- Challenges and Solutions: Current challenges facing World Heritage sites in Ireland, specifically conservation monitoring and reporting mechanisms, with an emphasis on inclusive, people-centred approaches to heritage

management.

- Networking and Collaboration: The importance of fostering relationships that could support local heritage initiatives.

### Heritage Officer Training & Development Programme

The Heritage Officer participated in a Training & Development Programme hosted by the Heritage Council in Kells, Co. Meath, on the 5th and 6th of March, 2024. The Heritage Council set out its strategic priorities, with particular insight into those relating to Heritage Week 2024 and the Traditional Farm Buildings Programme.

### Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2024

The Heritage Office has provided support to local communities in preparing applications for the Community Heritage Grant Scheme, which concluded on March 25th. The assistance took various forms, one-on-one consultation sessions, and guidance on formulating strong application narratives that reflect each project's value and potential impact. Projects supported included those that related to conservation efforts, educational initiatives, and cultural heritage events. These projects are rooted in the communities' unique histories and aspirations for heritage preservation and education.

## BIODIVERSITY

### 'Community Foundation Ireland' - Clare Biodiversity Projects

Eleven projects (nine reported) in Clare have received funding from the Community Foundation Ireland Biodiversity Fund to carry out biodiversity enhancement actions. Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer met with many of the community groups awarded funding last September and October to highlight opportunities through the CFI and assisted in the process. Local groups will work with ecology experts to increase awareness and develop local biodiversity action plans within their communities. Other local communities with community biodiversity action plans will implement actions such as the installation of bat roost boxes, barn owl boxes, grey wagtail and dipper nest boxes, pollinator friendly tree planting, creating a sensory garden, etc. The biodiversity officer has been advising community groups in relation to actions.



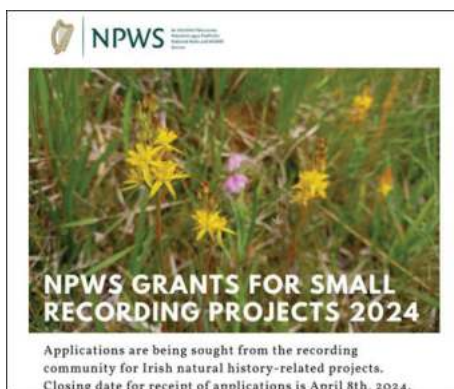
Clare Biodiversity Projects as reported by Clarelive.



### Funding Opportunities: NPWS Grants for Small Recording Projects 2024

NPWS Grants for Small Recording Projects 2024 is open. The primary aim of these grants is to support and encourage the current network of naturalists recording in Ireland and to develop the next generation of specialist recorders. Grants are aimed at volunteers, unpaid recorders, or groups, societies and associations of recorders who have limited/no access to financial supports for their work. Grants have covered the entire range of Irish natural history and the subjects of those awarded in 2023 included support for a conference on Irish moths; a book on Irish natural history; specialist equipment to assist disturbance-free surveys of birds and mammals; providing specialist training in invertebrate identification techniques; and species surveys of bees, bats, ferns, orchids and egg-laying skates amongst others. Closing date is 8th April 2024.

For more information visit: <https://www.npws.ie/news/npws-grants-small-recording-projects-2024?fbclid=IwAR1O15xPyBDY76sN9TMSOuPV-FARaVGzxmLIJlyPTYEff8TOU32i4x8F-s>



### EU Nature Restoration Law Passed

On 27th February 2024, the European Parliament passed the EU Nature Restoration Law. The new law sets a target for the EU to restore at least 20% of the EU’s land and sea areas by 2030 and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050. The EU nature restoration law, agreed with member states, will restore degraded ecosystems in all member states, help achieve the EU’s biodiversity and climate objectives and enhance food security. To reach the overall EU targets, member states must restore at least 30% of habitats covered by the new law (from forests, grasslands and wetlands to rivers, lakes and coral beds) from a poor to a good condition by 2030, increasing to 60% by 2040, and 90% by 2050. Ireland’s fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan was launched on January 25th at the National Botanic Gardens in Dublin. It commits to putting a national Nature Restoration Plan in place by 2026 to contribute to the ambition of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and global restoration targets.

### Tullaheer Bog Walk

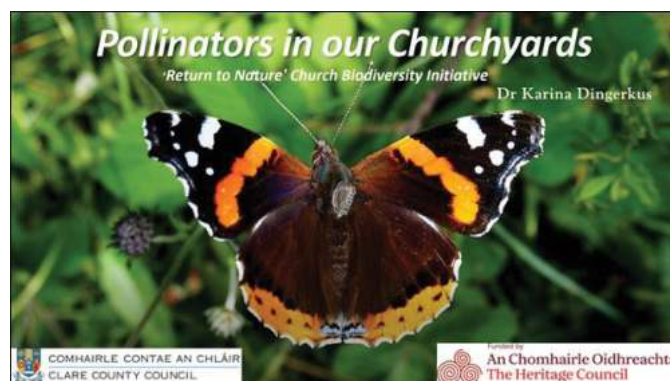
On 24th March Clare Biodiversity Officer Barry O’Loughlin gave a talk on peatlands at Tullaheer Bog to members of West Clare Wildlife Club and other locals in attendance. Attendees learned about the important role of bogs in the provision of ecosystem services and how community biodiversity action

plans have a role to play in the conservation of local wetlands. Locals learned about the historical uses of peatlands and plant species, wildlife that depend on the bog and the conservation management measures required to ensure functioning healthy ecosystems. The event was well attended with the local NPWS ranger present.



### Pollinator Talk

Clare County Council’s Biodiversity Officer organised a pollinator talk given by Dr Karina Dingerkus on 20th March with over 12 community groups in attendance. The talk aimed at raising awareness around pollinator friendly mowing regimes for declining pollinators. In her talk, Karina explained why letting grass grow is important for providing a nectar and pollen source for declining pollinators and the ways local communities could get involved through citizen science projects such as the bumblebee monitoring scheme. The talk covered pollinators such as bumblebees, moths, hoverflies, butterflies and solitary bees. There was huge interest from communities to get involved and each group will receive a bumblebee identification swatch and a butterfly identification swatch from the Biodiversity Officer to assist communities with identification of pollinators to partake in the schemes. Habitat loss and changes in management has seen drastic declines in pollinator species (>50% decline since 1980). Pollinators contribute €59 million each year to the Irish economy through home produced crops.



## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The table below shows the number of planning applications processed during the month of March (to 25/03/2024), together with the year to date figures. Sixty-one per cent of planning applications received in March were received by electronic means.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS	March (to 25/03/24)	Year to date 2024
No. of planning applications received	70	228
No. of Planning Decisions made	47	202
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	6	16
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	17	56
No. of Section 5 applications	8	30
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications (in respect of Part V of the Planning & Dev Act 2000)	4	12
Submissions received regarding Compliance	13	54

March with a total of 203 clients signing up to courses. These courses included training in leadership, social media, business planning & website planning.

### Local Enterprise Week 2024

Local Enterprise Office Clare hosted 15 successful events throughout Local Enterprise Week 2024 from 4th-8th, with 192 participants taking part in training and 95 attending locally hosted events. The events focused on promoting sustainability for business success in Hair, Beauty and Wellness sector; an expert panel discussing on how to navigate and understand the Export journey; and a female focused Women in Business event hosted by Sinead O’Brien of Sineads Curvy Style teaching how to build a brand with style.



Women in Business event LEW (L-R Sinead Dixon Slattery and Helen Pilkington, LEO Clare; Sinead O’Brien; Deirdre Keating, LEO Clare; and Theresa Mulvihill).

## PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

January 2024 stats are as follows (up to the 22nd March 2024):

New complaints received	2
New files opened	15
Files closed	5
Warning Letters issued	8
Enforcement Notice issued	3
Legal	0

### Clare National Enterprise Awards 2024

An Ennis business has been announced as this year’s winner of the Clare Final of the National Enterprise Awards for 2024 for the Local Enterprise Office. Atlantic Clinical Packaging Ltd took the top prize of €2,500 and will now represent Local Enterprise Office Clare at the National Final at the Round Room, Mansion House in Dublin on the 23rd May 2024. Atlantic Clinical Packaging is owned by Michael Considine and supplies a range of sector-specific medical and non-medical products to drug addiction treatment agencies and charities around the world.



Clare NEA 2024: (L-R Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise LEO Clare; Michael Considine of Atlantic Clinical Packaging Ltd; and Cathaoirleach Cllr Joe Cooney, Clare County Council).

## LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

- Mentoring: LEO Clare continue through 2024 with a strong requirement for all of our Mentoring options including mentoring in Starting a Business, Finance, Digital Marketing & Export Development. So far in March, 12 mentoring applications have been assigned.
- Training: LEO Clare training programmes were in high demand during Local Enterprise Week 2024 & throughout

## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

### Property Transactions and Conveyancing

The table below shows the number of property transactions completed by Property Management Unit up to 20th March and also shows the final figures for 2023.

As the property market in the county is quite active, we continue to assist many solicitors acting for their clients on issues associated with title, boundaries, old leasehold folios, etc.

Transaction type	March 2024	Year to date 2024	Full year 2023
Lease / Sub Lease of Property / Building	0	1	7
Licence to use property / building	2	6	7
Grazing Agreement for Lands	0	17	17
Deed of Transfer signed	0	2	15
Contract for Sale / acquisition signed	0	0	1
Deed of Right of Way / Wayleave signed	0	4	2
Deed of Rectification / Variation signed	0	0	4
Allotment Agreements signed	40	40	39

### Shannon Allotments

The renewal of the agreements for the Shannon Allotments are all completed. It is planned to meet with the Shannon Allotment Association in April.

### Casual Trading

The renewal of the annual Casual Trading Licences is ongoing and licences are being granted for some annual events, including Farmers Markets in Kilrush being held in March and June.

## DERELICT SITES

The Derelict Sites team are currently dealing with 261 properties that are considered derelict. We continue to increase levels of activity and to date in 2024, we have identified and commenced engagement on 11 additional properties which we consider to be derelict. A total of 127 derelict properties were identified in the years 2022 and 2023. Initial engagement with owners or their representatives is key to resolution of the issues of dereliction and to gain an understanding of the various reasons why the properties are in a derelict state. Where derelict properties



Carmel Kirby, Director of Economic Development; Cllr Joe Cooney, Cathaoirleach; Pat Dowling, Chief Executive; and Padraic McElwee, Head of Enterprise.

### Student Enterprise County Final 2023/24

Local Enterprise Office Clare has announced that teenage entrepreneur, Eimear McGee from St John Bosco Community College, Kildysart, will represent Co. Clare at this year's Student Enterprise Programme National Final in Mullingar on Thursday, 9th May. Eimear's business, Síoda Mara, was the Senior Category winner of this year's competition.

The students all took part in the Clare County Final on 27th February, which was held at the Treacy's West County Hotel. An estimated 1,200 students from 16 participating schools took part in the annual programme locally.

In the Junior Category, the winning business representing Clare at the National Final is Healthy Hearts from Ennistymon Community School. In the Intermediate Category, Cross Crafts from St Annes Community College, Killaloe will be representing Clare at the National Final.



SEA Co Final Senior Winner.

are sold by the owner, we commence engagement with the new owners of those properties to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990.

We are also seeing the number of planning applications for refurbishment works and extensions increasing and works commencing on individual properties. We are advising property owners of the vacant property refurbishment grant if the property is suitable for residential use. With time and effort, working with owners, financial institutions and other departments, there are definite options for positive re-development and revitalisation of many such derelict sites.



Left: Property in Kilrush (before). Right: Property in Kilrush (after).

The table (right) provides a snapshot of the activity in March (up to 20th March) and the comparative figures for the full year 2023.

Derelict Sites	March 2024	Year to date 2024	Full Year 2023
No. of new files opened	2	11	58
No. of Section 8(2) Notices issued – Intention to enter site on Derelict Sites Register	4	16	41
No. of Section 8(7) Notices issued – Entry of site onto Derelict Sites Register	1	8	24
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 – Section 22	0	1	7
No. of files closed / property removed from Derelict Sites Register	3	5	15
No. of Notices served to Compulsorily Purchase derelict sites (CPO) (see note below)	0	2	10
No of Vesting Orders signed	0	0	9

### Compulsory Acquisition of Derelict Sites (CPO)

The Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government has launched a CPO activation programme for local authorities and has set targets for CPOs for each local authority. We commenced this programme in 2022 and the table below sets out the status of those CPOs commenced in 2022, 2023 and to date in 2024.

Year	No of CPOs commenced	Current Status
2022	6	3 – CPOs completed and property transferred to Housing for refurbishment / re-development
		1 – CPO completed, title got and is almost sale agreed- mid March 2024
		2 - works have commenced and CPO parked for now
2023	10	7 - At Vesting Stage and lodged in PRA
		1 - completed recently and is intended to be put on open market for sale in coming months

		1 - Objection received and has been referred to An Bord Pleanála
		1 - Works have commenced and CPO parked for now
2024	2	1 – At Vesting Stage and lodged in PRA
		1 - Objection received and has been referred to An Bord Pleanála for decision

In addition, the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund will provide funding for CPOs 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. One such CPO is with the PRA for registration and works have recently been completed in order to safeguard the property in the interim.

### Derelict Site Levy

Determination of valuations on the derelict sites which are on the Derelict Sites Register has commenced and notices have been issued to eight 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. This will be further progressed in 2024 when all properties on the Derelict Sites Register will be valued for the purposes of billing the levy. Clare County Council will be billing the levy as per the budget adopted for 2024. This levy will go towards the cost of billing and collection of the levy and resourcing of derelict sites function.

### Survey of Vacant and Derelict Properties

The team is currently carrying out surveys of vacant and derelict properties in towns and villages around the County. Based on the Geo-directory data on vacancy and dereliction, the

Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government has asked the Council to validate the data that they hold. To date, we have passed the figure of 1,900 individual surveys completed (with the data being uploaded digitally). It is intended that the survey work will be completed in March 2024 and once compiled, we will assess the priority areas for further action, work on getting information on ownership and making contact with owners. The data collected will be the basis for future policy direction and will guide the work programme of the Derelict Sites Team and the Vacant Homes Team. The data collected will also support the work being done by Town Teams under Town Centres First policy.

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

We continue to have high levels of enquiries and applications for the Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant. As of 19th March, we have received 344 applications for the grant and we are in the top 10 local authorities in the country in relation to application numbers. Our response time for initial assessment of new applications is generally three to four weeks. To date we have processed seven grant payments and claims for payment will be increasing in the coming months as work is being completed by property owners on the grants approved in 2022 / 2023.

The table below sets out the status of applications.

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Applications (Note analysis is by date application was received)						
Decision	Current Status	2022	2023	2024	Grand Total	%
Application in Progress	In Progress		1	29	30	9%
	Further Information Requested	2	61	22	85	25%
	Awaiting Technical Inspection		14	5	19	6%
<b>Total Applications decided</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>39%</b>
Decision Made	Approved	14	143	3	160	47%
	Grant Funding Paid Out	3	4		7	2%
	Grant Funding Withdrawn	2			2	1%
	Withdrawn	9	18	1	28	8%
	Rejected	1	12		13	4%
<b>Total Applications decided</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Points of Information

1. To date, 56% of applications are for rural areas of the county and 44% for properties in towns and villages. This has remained fairly consistent in recent months.
2. To date, 72% of applications are for properties to be used as principal private residence (248 properties) and the balance of 28% are for rent. Note – The option to apply for the grant for rental purposes was only introduced in May 2023.
3. To date in 2024, in three months, we have received double the number of applications that we received in six months in 2022. All enquiries are professionally dealt with to provide as much support to the applicants as possible.
4. A review of the Grants Scheme is being undertaken by the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government. We will feed into this review and will bring the concerns and suggestions of the elected members to their attention.
5. Based on the applications approved to date and the revised grant levels, there is a potential investment of up to €7.5 million by Government in the refurbishment of vacant and derelict properties in County Clare to be returned to economic use as permanent homes.
6. We are currently following up on requests for additional information issued in 2022 and 2023.

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

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. We will consider holding further one-to-one clinics around the county during 2024.

## ENNIS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The Ennis MD team continued to deliver and progress a range of services and projects throughout March. A highlight of the month was the team's leadership and management in once again hosting a fantastic St Patrick's Day Parade with nearly 50 groups and over 1,400 people participating and a crowd of up to 5,000 people throughout the town enjoying the spectacle. The main updates on the various projects/initiatives are as follows.

### Mayoral Awards

Mayor of Ennis Municipal District, Cllr Pat Daly, hosted a mayoral reception in the Council Chamber, Aras Contae and Chláir, on Friday, 1st March, where the following individuals and groups were honoured:

- Ennis MD Tidy Towns groups which included the following for the collective commitment of their volunteers to enhancing their local community and promoting sustainability.
  - o Kilnamona Development Association
  - o Spencil Hill / Clooney Tidy Towns
  - o Barefield Tidy Towns
  - o Clarecastle Tidy Towns
  - o Ennis Tidy Towns
- U12 Ennis Town Football Club were recognised for their amazing journey and dedication culminating in becoming U12 National Trophy Champions 2023.
- Marie Roche was honoured for a lifetime of commitment to athletics in the community, inspiring and motivating young people all over the county.
- St Michael's Villas' Choir received the Mayoral Award in recognition of their community spirit and pride of place.

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



## St Patrick's Day Parade



The Ennis St Patrick's Day Parade 2024 was a real success with attendees coming from near and far to enjoy the festivities in the glorious March sunshine. Ennis Municipal District would like to thank all of the participants in this year's parade, who responded imaginatively to the theme of 'Remembering the Past – Embracing the Future'. Grand Marshal for this year's parade, all the way from Nashville, Tennessee, was Ennis' very own Maura O'Connell, and the two-time Grammy award nominee proved to be a very popular choice. A delegation from Ennis' twinning town in Germany, Langenfeld, led by the Mayor of Langenfeld Frank Schneider and members of the city administration and twinning committee, also participated in the parade and really enjoyed the experience of St Patrick's Day in Ennis.

## Public Bus Service Update

Ennis MD staff continue to liaise with the National Transport Authority to deliver this important infrastructural project, which is projected to commence in Q1 2025. The NTA Town Bus Planners, Ennis MD staff and our colleagues in the Road Design Office continue to meet on a monthly basis and are presently working on NTA's Draft layout for the proposed Bus Stop at Friars Walk/Museum. We are currently reviewing the DRAFT Bus Stop locations and optimum route from the Railway Station to Clarecastle for final approval. The 343 Bus Service to Shannon Airport and onwards to Limerick is to be upgraded.

are scheduled with the Council's Road Design and Active Travel teams, Ennis MD staff and Systra to work through the long list of options. Following same, we will again meet with the NTA to further consider the emerging preferred options.

Related to same, Ennis MD staff are progressing work on the Development of a Streetscape Allocation Framework for Sustainable Mobility with University College London (UCL) by considering street classification and trip generation while we await the outcome of the Local Transport Plan process to advance the more detailed work on streetscape allocation.

## Additional Carparking at Waterpark House Campus

This proposal is currently going through the Part VIII process and it is expected that the Chief Executives Report once completed, will be coming before the May meeting of Ennis MD Members for information and the full Council Membership for decision. The outcome of same will inform our next step.

## Co Creating Programme

Included in the Co Creating programme for 2024, is the construction of a number of raised table uncontrolled pedestrian crossings throughout the town which will allow for a safer and more accessible route of travel for pedestrians. The first of these was completed during March at the junction of Steels Terrace and Marian Avenue.



## Ennis Transport Plan Update

Meetings were held throughout March with our Technical Advisors Systra, the National Transport Authority (NTA) Planners and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) regarding the DRAFT Objectives and Transport Options. Further meetings

### Pedestrian Bollards

Ennis MD crews recently installed new pedestrian bollards at the entrance of Clarecastle public park. The bollards allowed for the removal of the previously existing timber entrance gate and results in greater accessibility to the park while also enhancing the overall look of the surrounding area.



### Tree Maintenance

Highlighted in the autumn tree condition survey, Ennis MD has completed substantial maintenance to the mature trees in front of the courthouse on Newbridge Road and New Road. In line with the Nesting season restrictions, general tree maintenance has been suspended as of March 1st. However, monitoring of overhanging trees will continue and where necessary, mitigation may be carried out in the interest of road and public safety. The monitoring and management of this work has been greatly streamlined with the introduction of our new Tree Management software developed by our colleagues in the Council's ICT Department.



### Other Key Strategic Works

In addition to the aforementioned, Ennis MD staff continue to work alongside our colleagues in the Project Management Office who are managing the Ennis Public Realm project where during the month, we carried out some media promotion to highlight that the Pubs, Restaurants and Shops are very much open and welcoming of business during the works. We also continue to work with our colleagues in the Road Design Office in relation to the Active Travel Projects and the General Design Office on various concept proposals as well as our colleagues in Ennis 2040 in progressing the ambitious plans outlined in the Ennis 2040 Economic & Spatial Strategy. The four main proposals currently being progressed under the Strategy are as follows:

#### Francis St

Demolition and Enabling works are progressing on the site while the site hoarding has been enhanced with graphics showing what the planned proposal is expected to look like subject to approval.

#### Abbey Street

Public consultation has now been completed. Views of those who provided comment are under review and will be carefully considered in the context of preparing and submitting a planning application for this development.

#### Harvey's Quay

Concept Design and finalisation of proposed scheme is ongoing. Discussion continuing with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage regarding the proposed development.

#### Post Office Field Masterplan

Draft Master Plan recently completed for this location with public consultation expected to take place in the coming weeks.



# TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

## Site Visit to the Inis Cealtra Visitor Centre (The Rectory)



Aldo Andreucetti, Clerk of Works from the General Design Office, led a site visit to The Rectory, which is being refurbished to become the Inis Cealtra Visitor Centre. The intention is for this attraction to form part of the Clare Tourism East portfolio of attractions. In this regard, Stephen Hanley, General Manager (Clare Tourism East), and Adrienne O'Flynn, Sales & Marketing

Manager, also took part in this visit for information sharing and knowledge sharing purposes. The DigiClare Team (Urban McMahon and Thomas McMahon), Head of Tourism and the Tourism Officer (Deirdre O'Shea and Theresa Hughes Lannon) all took part to view the works under construction and the design plans.

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## Craggaunowen is set to undergo a significant upgrade during 2024

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Clare County Council has announced that the popular East Clare visitor attraction reopens to the public for the 2024 season on St Patrick's Day.

Centred around a 16th century castle, the 20-acre site recreates what life would have been like for the Bronze Age inhabitants of Ireland and features reconstructions of ancient Irish architecture, including a dolmen, crannógs and the original 'Brendan Boat' used by Tim Severin during his 1973 recreation of the transatlantic voyage of St Brendan the Abbot.

Amongst the works earmarked for completion during 2024 is the upgrade of Craggaunowen's signature crannógs and woven hut lake dwellings, along with the bridge that connects them to the remainder of the site. A new playground themed on St Brendan's Voyage will be developed, while significant upgrades to the public carpark, public toilet facilities, fencing and pathways will be carried out.

Other developments include the installation of wayfinding signage throughout the site and an audio-visual experience to complement the 'Brendan Boat'.

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## Bunratty Entertainers ignite a love of the arts among young students

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The talented Bunratty Castle Entertainers brought the magic of

music and performance to Corpus Christi School in Moyross, Limerick. Through an engaging workshop and performance, the entertainers inspired young minds to explore the world of creative expression. They showcased the joy and possibilities of pursuing music and performance as a career path. These entertainers believe in fostering a love for the arts from a young age, and we're thrilled to have played a role in sparking creativity at Corpus Christi.

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## Shannon Heritage/Clare Tourism fly the Clare Flag in Western USA

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Shannon Heritage / Clare Tourism East were delighted to join Tourism Ireland, along with 12 tourism companies from the island of Ireland and 4 American based tour operators, on a sales mission across the Western United States last week, showcasing the Shannon Heritage / Clare Tourism portfolio visitor experiences.

The US market remains the top overseas market for the Shannon Heritage portfolio. The trip, aimed at inspiring and influencing US travel agents, to deliver more regional and long stay visits to Ireland, included events in Austin, Dallas, Phoenix and Denver, provided an excellent opportunity to present our future plans, alongside our new range of luxury experiences across the portfolio.

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## Shamrocks and Shenanigans at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park

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Bunratty Castle was lit up in green throughout the St Patrick's Bank Holiday Weekend as part of a comprehensive programme of entertainment kickstarting the 2024 tourist season at the popular County Clare visitor attraction.

The 26-acre folk park site celebrated Ireland's patron saint and national holiday by hosting family-fun activities on Saturday 16th March including live Irish traditional music, train rides, a woodworking workshop hosted by TikTok sensation Eoin Reardon, and demonstrations of the crafts, stories and traditions of old.

Meanwhile, the Bunratty Castle Entertainers were thrilled to



participate in the 2024 Ennis St Patrick's Day Parade for the first time on Sunday, 17th March. The award-winning group of entertainers were be joined by Bunratty's Irish Wolfhounds Rían

and Míde, who took up permanent residence on the grounds of the popular visitor attraction last summer.

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## Easter family fun at Bunratty and Craggaunowen

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A comprehensive Easter programme of family-friendly activities and entertainment for all ages have been announced for Bunratty Castle & Folk Park and Craggaunowen

The popular County Clare visitor attractions will come alive over Easter bank holiday weekend with everything from circus acts to storytelling and train rides to living history reenactments.

At Bunratty Castle and Folk Park highlights include Circus Performances, Stilt walking & Fire Eating, Traditional Music, Storytelling & Baking, Living History Re-enactments & Blacksmith Demonstrations as well as special appearances by the Easter Bunny, Spring Chick and lots of other seasonal characters.

Meantime on Bank Holiday Easter Monday, April 1st, visitors to Caggaunowen will be treated to a "eggciting" array of seasonal activities including puppet shows, magic tricks, with Conor the Clown, Traditional Woodworking with local craftsman Jack Pinson, Legends and Fables with Caoimhin the Celt, along with lots of opportunities to unleash your inner Easter Bunny with costume competitions, Easter trails and more.

For tickets and further information visit [www.bunrattycastle.ie](http://www.bunrattycastle.ie) and [www.craggaunowen.ie](http://www.craggaunowen.ie)

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## 4D Ledge Experience Upgrade

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A €320,000 upgrade to the virtual reality cliffside experience at the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare has been completed. Located within the Cliffs of Moher Experience Visitor Centre, the Ledge 4D experience takes visitors on an interactive 3-minute tour of the cliffs and combines stunning visuals of the world-famous cliffs on a calm summer's day, both above sea and underwater, with the environmental effects of west of Ireland wind and spray of Moher mist. State-of-the-art projectors, an upgraded sound system and a tiered standing area to allow for improved viewing conditions also have been installed to add to the overall authenticity of the experience mirroring a real-life bird's eye view of the Cliffs of Moher over and underwater.

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## St Patrick's Day at the Cliffs 2024

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Every year, Ireland comes alive with the vibrant celebrations of St Patrick's Day. At the Cliffs of Moher, we welcomed visitors from all around the world to celebrate St Patrick's Day with us. From the 16th to the 18th of March, visitors had the opportunity to get their face painted, meet St Patrick and learn his story in the visitor centre. There was huge engagement from the visitors

and meeting St Patrick made their experience even more memorable. Visitors were delighted to take pictures with the St Patrick's Day decorated backdrop, showcasing the springtime spirit and Irish heritage at the Cliffs of Moher Experience.



### Tourism Together in Clare, Thursday, 6th March, Inn at Dromoland



200 tourism operators from across Clare gathered at The Inn At Dromoland last week for the annual 'Tourism Together' Networking Event 2024, which featured a keynote address by travel writer and Irish Independent Travel Editor Pól O'Conghaile. The event was organised by Visit Clare and supported by the Clare Tourism Advisory Forum. See Visit Clare on social media for more.



Clare tourism operators unite to address sector challenges. 200 tourism operators from across Clare gathered at The Inn at Dromoland to discuss the urgent need for increased collaboration and the development of new initiatives.

### Visit Clare supports and initiatives to the Trade for 2024

**Visit Clare Supports and Initiatives 2024**

<p><b>'Share Clare' Free Marketing Resources</b></p> <p>This is where you will find thousands of photos of Clare that you are free to use to promote the County and your business. You will also find social media visual posts, pdf brochures, and more.</p> <p>See Details on: <a href="http://www.VisitClare.ie/share" style="color: white;">www.VisitClare.ie/share</a></p>	<p><b>Stay Informed via Our 'Visit Clare' Newsletter</b></p> <p>We will share news, views, research, and business opportunities through our occasional tourism newsletter. Sign-up at the link below so that you don't miss out. Advice business colleagues too!</p> <p>Sign Up: <a href="http://www.VisitClare.ie/trade" style="color: white;">www.VisitClare.ie/trade</a></p>	
<p><b>Are you Looking Good on VisitClare.ie?</b></p> <p>When someone visits VisitClare.ie, they've taken the first step towards visiting or exploring Clare. Make sure your business stands out and captures their interest. You can submit your profile or make change requests below</p> <p>Submit Details via: <a href="http://www.VisitClare.ie/web" style="color: white;">www.VisitClare.ie/web</a></p>	<p><b>Link to VisitClare.ie</b></p> <p>Adding this icon to your website and linking to VisitClare.ie amplifies our collective voice. It wins more business for Clare and for you. Adding the icon is a collective step towards increasing Clare's visibility.</p> <p>Download the icon: <a href="http://www.VisitClare.ie/pledge" style="color: white;">www.VisitClare.ie/pledge</a></p>	
<p><b>For Hotels Only</b></p> <p>Participate in the Clare "Lucky Breaks" Campaign to be actively promoted by Visit Clare Tourism. No cost to participate - but the initiative is about now underway. If you are not in, you are missing out.</p> <p>Sign-up via: <a href="http://www.VisitClare.ie/join" style="color: #00838f;">www.VisitClare.ie/join</a></p>	<p><b>For Attractions, Activities &amp; Communities</b></p> <p>Visit Clare Tourism is encouraging residents of Clare to embrace their inner tourists and explore parts of the county and attractions &amp; activities they may not be familiar with or haven't visited for a long time. See participation details.</p> <p>Details at: <a href="http://www.VisitClare.ie/be2024" style="color: #00838f;">www.VisitClare.ie/be2024</a></p>	<p><b>For Attractions &amp; Activities</b></p> <p>The "Funday Sundays" initiative is designed to bolster Sunday business for visitor attractions and activity providers in Clare. You can see participation conditions and submit your offers via the link.</p> <p>Details at: <a href="http://www.VisitClare.ie/create" style="color: #00838f;">www.VisitClare.ie/create</a></p>

During the Tourism Together Networking Event, Deirdre O'Shea, Head of Tourism, outlined the resources and promotional campaigns available to the Clare Tourism Trade providers under #TourismTogetherInClare.

### Burgermeisters Visit to Ennis and Clare from Langenfeld, Germany

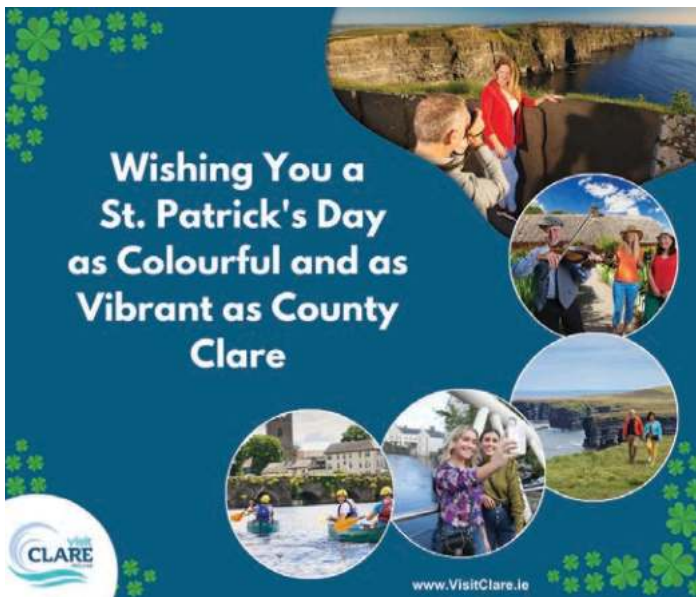




Upon formal invite from Mayor of Ennis, Councillor Pat Daly, to attend the St Patrick's Day parade, Burgermeister of Langenfeld, Mr Frank Schneider and a delegation were welcomed to Clare.

The Visit Clare team were delighted to welcome and host the delegation to explore the delights of County Clare, starting and ending the day in Ennis.

## St Patrick's Day celebrations across the county



### St Patrick's Weekend Events in County Clare

**St Patricks Weekend Parades 2024** Please note some parades are on the Saturday

Explore the quaint charm of St. Patrick's Weekend celebrations across County Clare with a variety of intimate parades showcasing local pride and tradition. From Fanore to Killoe, discover the heartwarming spirit of community in these cherished festivities

**Doolin, SUNDAY, March 17:** The parade starts at 2pm from Doolin Pier, winding through Fisherstreet and Roadford.

**Doonbeg, SATURDAY, March 16:** The parade starts at 3.30pm and features the Tulla Pipe Band. The parade theme is 'Going Back to Our Roots.'

**Ennis, SUNDAY, March 17:** County Clare's largest parade. It starts at 11.00am, with the parade theme being 'Remembering the Past - Embracing the Future.'

**Ennistymon, SUNDAY, March 17:** The parade starts at 3pm.

**Fanore, SUNDAY, March 17:** The parade will depart from Fanore Beach at 1pm, following the scenic coast road to arrive at the viewing stand opposite O'Donoghue's pub. Family entertainment is guaranteed with music all day. A monster raffle with lots of fabulous prizes will be held.

**Killaloe-Ballina, SUNDAY, March 17:** The parade will start at Ballina GAA Complex at 2.15pm and make its way through the main street of Ballina, across the bridge, and up the main street in Killaloe, finishing in the Green, passing the reviewing stand. Lots of colour, noise, and fun guaranteed!

**Lisdoonvanna, SATURDAY, March 16:** The Tulla Pipe Band will lead the parade, which starts at 1.00pm. It promises to be a fantastic family and community day.

**Scarriff, SUNDAY, March 17:** The parade, celebrating its 35th year, leaves Hassetts in Tuamgraney at 3pm led by the Tulla Pipe Band and finishes in Scarriff Town Centre. Children's entertainment on the day.

**Shannon, SUNDAY, March 17:** The parade (start time to be confirmed) will include groups, horses, and helicopters! Afterwards, there will be a gig from 4-10pm.

**Sixmilebridge, SUNDAY, March 17:** The parade starts at 12.00 noon. Afterwards, it's family fun with activities for everyone, including a pet farm, dancing, and performances in the square, and some stalls to enjoy.

The Visit Clare Team invited event organisers in Clare to send in details of any festivities or special events that celebrated the event in the county, whether they were organising parades,

concerts, or workshops, or any event that celebrates our heritage and welcomes visitors to our county during this time.

## Clare Lucky Hotel Breaks



Twelve Clare Hotels have signed up to the “Lucky Breaks” campaign by the Visit Clare Team. It is designed to promote County Clare as a wonderful destination and to spotlight the

participating ‘Lucky Breaks’ hotels in our marketing efforts.

This initiative offers visitors holidaying in Clare the chance to win a return stay at the hotel they stayed at. There is no cost for hotels to participate. The commitment required from hotels is to: agree to provide one return break as a prize to a winning guest who stays with them between March 1 and October 31, 2024, and, importantly, agrees to issue the competition entry leaflets supplied by us to guests.

As part of our focused marketing efforts, we will be promoting these hotels across local and regional channels

## Marketing & Promotion: Spotlight on the Website across the Visit Clare platforms



There are weekly promotional campaigns scheduled across the Visit Clare platforms (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn), directing traffic to the VisitClare.ie website.

These posts highlight opportune promotional and seasonal

events, along with, our towns and villages, while spotlighting the range and variety of tourism businesses within the County, featuring Accommodation, Attractions, Activities, Festivals & Events, and dining providers.

# WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT - KILRUSH LEA

## Schedule of Municipal District Works 2024

We have commenced preparations for the 2024 Roadworks Programme (RWP).  
Drainage works & existing surface prep. works.



**Resurfacing of the first section of road as part of the 2024 RWP**  
L-6086 Tullaher (near the Kilrush to Doonbeg road).  
(Road recycling followed by tar, spray & stone chippings resurfacing).



## Road Safety

Tree limbing to remove a road safety and traffic safety hazard.



## Collapse of Sea Wall at Knock

A section of the sea wall at knock collapsed during Storm Debi. A section of the edge of the R-473 carriageway was compromised by the collapse. The sea wall has been rebuilt. Works continued to blend the new RC retaining wall with the existing sea wall.



## Edge repairs to N68 carriageway

6 repairs were carried out to damaged sections of the N68 carriageway edge.



## Road edge repairs

Carried out repairs to the edge of the public road at a junction on the R-474 (near Connolly).



## Place de Plouzané

Commenced drainage works in the Place de Plouzané car park prior to resurfacing.

