



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL ÓN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNACH

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Eanáir / January
2025



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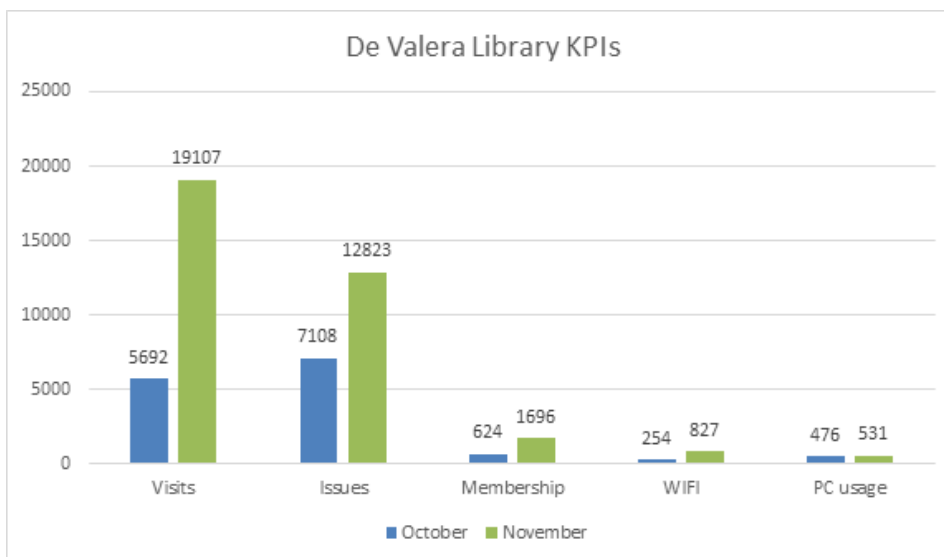
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

CULTURAL SERVICES – LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM & ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT

Clare Libraries

The new De Valera Library opened its doors on the 11th November 2024 with a surge of visitors, and an increase in membership, issues, internet and wifi usage. The following (which is the most up the date data) paints the picture of the exponential growth in usage - from

5,692 and 7,108 visits to the old library in October and November 2023 compared to 19,107 and 12,823 in the same period this year. Likewise membership, wi-fi and PC usage have also shown marked increases.



There were 718 sessions in the Cubbie sensory unit and 219 issues of the Hublet and 53 for the Lapsafe during this time.

Launch of the Clare Parenting website:

There were also a number of events in the library multipurpose room including the Launch of the Clare Parenting website. De Valera Library was delighted to host the launch of a new website for parents in Clare. The website has been designed and developed by the PPFTS team in Tusla and will go live in early 2025. It will provide helpful tips, direct parents to local parenting/family services in Clare and will be a place for local partners and community agencies to advertise upcoming events in their service. Representatives from Tusla, CYPSC, Clarecare and more were welcomed by County Librarian Helen Walsh and were given a talk on library services and a tour of the building by Senior Executive Librarian Úna Kelly.

Attendees were very impressed by the facilities and services available for children, teenagers and students. They were particularly impressed by supports for people with sensory processing disorders including the Cubbie, an immersive sensory space that helps regulate sensory stress through professional, tailor-made programmes.



Helen Walsh hosting launch of TUSLA Parenting website.

Clare PPN Winter Plenary Meeting

Clare PPN were thrilled to host their Winter Meeting in the new library in Ennis. They were given a talk on facilities in the library and enjoyed an evening of networking, singing from the wonderful Éisteacht choir and a selection of Christmas goodies.

They also donated copies of the Clare Anti-Poverty Strategy and the Fair Clare report for library stock. Everyone was delighted to meet up and chat with friends old and new and it was a great opportunity to showcase the new library to member groups.

Online Resources usage

There is strong 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.








Crochet Christmas tree in Scariff Library (started in January 2024).



Sixmilebridge Library - Festive craft session as part of Family Time at your Library.

Marketing & Social media

Library Christmas opening hours were updated on digital signage and social media. New signage for study spaces was designed, printed & installed. A Clare Libraries advert for the upcoming Ennis Book Club Festival 2025 brochure was designed and sent for approval. An Outreach project in Scariff was completed. Participants included the crafting group, members of the library, adults and children who all worked together to produce a sustainable Christmas Tree for the library.

	Total Followers	New Followers	Post Reach/ Impressions	Post Likes
	8,200	209	71,900	2,107
	2,400	15	10,467	591
	2,165	12	3,700	41

Library Activities in Figures

Total number of in branch events	250
Total audiences at in branch events	3,602
Total number of outreach events	11
Total audiences at outreach events	134
Total number of deliveries	5
Total number of class novels issued	6

Right to Read

Children's Services

"Family Time at Your Library" took place throughout the month of December with over 40 family orientated literacy sessions in all libraries in Clare. Events included Sensory Play workshops with Maia Purposeful Play, craft workshops, festive storytimes and movie nights.

Right to Read/ Adult Literacy for Life

The Clare Right to Read Network had their final meeting of the year where they discussed potential collaborative projects for 2025. "The Adult Literacy for Life" Limerick and Clare champions had their final regional meeting of the year where they agreed actions for their strategy for 2025.

Local Studies



Caherlooskaun Tuck Mill Account Book

The Local Studies Centre has received 200 books relating to Irish military history donated by Ger Browne to the new De Valera Library. The main book collection has been reorganized, making 2,000 books available which had been held offsite since 2010. Another archival collection has been added to the Local Studies holdings. An account book relating to Caherlooskaun Tuck Mill in Kilshanny has been scanned. This document contains a wealth of information on farming and the economy in the area during and immediately after the Great Famine and is available for consultation in the Local Studies Centre. Work on the Local Studies Website upgrade is ongoing.

Clare Archives

The publication of 53 volumes of Ennistymon Board of Guardians records on the Digital Repository of Ireland is ongoing. The Gillespie Photographic archive was published on Fotoware. The digitisation and scanning of the Rent Book of Col. George Wyndham, 1st Baron Leconfield. 1847-1864 is ongoing in association with Clare Museum. There were archival queries and the cataloguing of the Barrett collection.

Clare Arts Office

A total of 735 people visited the new gallery Súil since it opened. Three other exhibitions took place in Ennis, Scariff and Kilkee in November. Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee hosted a film and two school concerts and 2 “Arts in Clare” slots took place on Clare FM and on Scariff Bay Radio.

The Arts Office assisted the locations manager of ‘2 Kids walk into a Bank’ starring Liam Neeson with locations in East Clare.

The Arts in the Community programme continued in St. Joseph’s Hospital, Ennis and in Raheen Hospital. Consultations with organisations in Shannon have taken place as part of the Creative Places research programme. Three groups of Clare Youth Theatre continued to meet weekly and 11 Embrace arts and disability programmes were awarded this month and will begin in the New Year. There was also 10 Artist in Schools Programmes awarded. Graham Bulger from Miltown Malbay was awarded the Clare Levelling Access Artists with Disabilities Bursary of €5,000 to record an album of new music.

Social Media Stats:

Facebook 19/11/24-16/12/24					
	Post reach	Post engagement	New Page likes	New Page followers	Total followers
Clare Arts Office	2,470	314	2	6	3,418
Cultúrlann Sweeney	683	121	0	1	2,113
EASI Studios	3	3	0	0	151
Tulla Stables Artist Studios	209	7	0	3	660
CYT - Clare Youth Theatre	72	0	0	1	543
Riches of Clare	67	0	0	0	2,864
Clare Culture Night	164	1	1	3	1,319
Embrace Arts Programme	19	0	0	0	557
Arts In Clare Group	-	-	-	-	3,457
Clare Trad Group	-	-	-	-	2,746
Súil					32
Instagram 19/11/9/24-16/12/24					
Account	Followers	Reach			
Clare Arts Office	886	1,280			
Culture Night	225	2			

Clare Museum



Selection of vintage toys on display in Clare Museum

This month the Museum held a very successful public talk on the Alitalia air crash in Shannon in 1960, with 29 people in attendance. The embroidery group with 12 members attended the museum on Wednesday 4th and 11th. A group from Cavan Active Age group visited the museum on 10th December. Christmas Crafts Workshops were organized for four Saturdays from 30th November, to coincide with the Christmas Artisan Market taking place outside the museum and the hotel. These were facilitated by an artist and catered for 4-7, 8-12, 13-17 age groups and neurodivergent children over the four weekend, 40 booked in for the activities.

The Museum put out a call for vintage toys to be loaned to the museum for a temporary Vintage Toys Exhibition, to run until January. Social media engagement on Facebook increased by 208% during the month and by 114% on Instagram during the same period.

Rural Development Directorate Grant Clinics

Clare County Council's Rural Development Directorate held a series of in-person sessions to support Community Groups/Organisations who may wish to apply for current and upcoming funding schemes for their community. Any group who required guidance and support to inform their ideas or projects were welcome to discuss this with our Rural & Community Development Officers. The RCDO'S were on hand to provide assistance on funding schemes that are set to open for calls for applications from Community Groups in the coming weeks:

- Clare Local Area Grants Scheme (CLAGS) 2025
- Local Enhancement Programme 2025
- Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2024/2025

In person clinics were held throughout the county from the 9th December to Friday 13th December with clinics held in Kilkishen Cultural Centre, Killaloe MD Office, Treacy's Oakwood Hotel, Shannon, Clare Council HQ, The Ritz, The Square, Lisdoonvarna, Corofin Community Hall, Corofin, Clonlara Community Centre Kilrush Town Hall, Miltown Malbay Community Centre. The clinics were extremely well attended with good engagement from all groups, with the feedback positive.

The clinics were also an opportunity to engage with community groups to advise them on other funding streams that will be coming online in the coming months, to seek the RCDO'S assistance and knowledge in preparing applications for these national funding streams. It was also an opportunity for newly established community groups and organisations to meet with the RCDO'S, to see what potential grants are available to them and understand how the process works.

CLARE LOCAL AREA GRANT SCHEME (CLAGS) 2025



The 2025 Clare Local Area Grant Scheme was approved by the Elected Members at the December meeting.

The Scheme will open for online applications on Friday 10th January 2025 and will close again on Thursday 30th January 2025.

The purpose of the Council's Local Area Grant Scheme is to encourage and assist community and voluntary groups to take an active part in the development of their communities and to improve the quality-of-life experience in their areas.

There are 12 categories of support under the scheme as follows:

1. Public Realm Initiatives & Amenity Projects
2. Maintenance of Open Spaces in Private Housing Developments
3. Burial Ground Maintenance, *Boundary Repairs** & Provision
4. Scéim Deontais na Gaeilge. Support for the Irish Language
5. Christmas Lighting
6. Maintenance and Upkeep of Local Authority Estates
7. Tourism Promotion
8. Sustainable Tourism
9. Community Playgrounds
10. Support for the Arts
11. Community Project Development
12. *Support Scheme for Age Friendly Initiatives**

*new for 2025

The Online Application system and scheme guidelines can be accessed from the website at <https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/grants/clarelocalareagrantscheme/>

Enquiries can be made by email clags@clarecoco.ie.

HEALTHY CLARE



Healthy Clare Calendar 2025

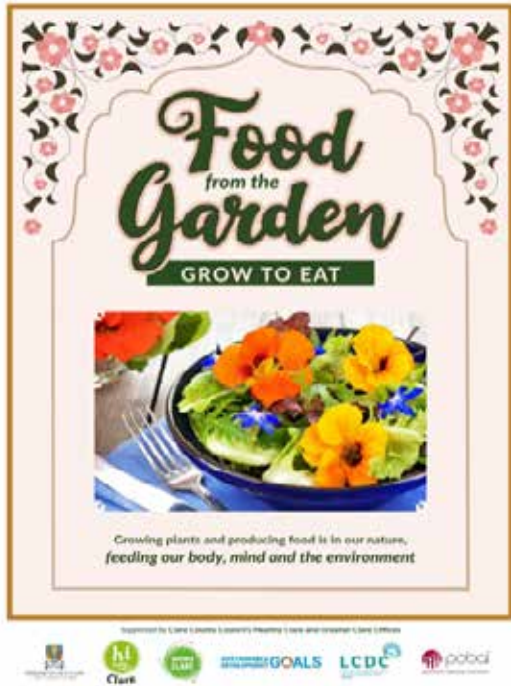
The Healthy Clare calendar is packed with information that emphasises health and well-being throughout the year. The calendar highlights important health dates, ensuring that key events like World Mental Health Day are never missed. Emergency contacts are displayed at the end of the calendar, providing peace of mind with quick access to vital numbers. The calendar also includes support service contacts, offering a lifeline for those in need of assistance.

Each month of the calendar is preceded by beautiful images from County Clare that inspire and uplift, accompanied by quotes to keep individuals motivated throughout the year.

The inclusion of the Irish language in this year's calendar celebrates our rich cultural heritage and promotes the use of our native language.

Copies of the Healthy Clare 2025 Calendar are available in each of the Council Municipal District Offices and in the library services. You can also order a copy by emailing healthyclare@clarecoco.ie

Clare Garden Festival



Under the umbrella of Clare Garden Festival, the 'Food from the Garden' video was introduced during a 'Food from the Garden' workshop with Carmen Cronin and Kitty Scully. The creation of this video reflected the year long initiative to work with community growing spaces and growers to show that it is possible to grow good food throughout the year. The workshop can be viewed on; https://www.claregardenfestival.com/FfGarden_24_8.mp4?fbclid=IwY2xjawHSJ-5leHRuA2FibQixMAABHRigSRVg7B0d6RmIMWl9W-2bPUomB85_IH_wGHtF15n6UBehPpNhC1Hevg_aem_2ssOsmO9DS8aSerIQ3-Kvg

2024 Healthy Clare Micro Funding

Healthy Whitegate 2025 What's happening in January ?

TUESDAY NIGHTS 8-9PM	FRIDAY EVENINGS 6-7:30PM	SATURDAY MORNINGS 8AM-9AM
KETTLE BELLS FOR MEN REGISTRATION VIA CLARE SPORTS PARTNERSHIP	RUNNING MECHANICS FOR CHILDREN REGISTRATION VIA EVENTBRITE (HEALTHY WHITEGATE)	WOMEN'S FITNESS WITH SARAH REGISTRATION (087) 2117262
TUTOR : STEPHEN KILLEN	TUTOR: DAVID MEHEAN	TUTOR : SARAH SMITH KILLEN
WHITEGATE, GAA ASTRO	WHITEGATE, GAA ASTRO	WHITEGATE, GAA ASTRO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
E MAIL - healthywhitegate@gmail.com

The following are examples of some of the projects which were completed and reported on during December 2024.

- **Ennis Hockey Club:** Delivery of hockey classes for older people and people with disabilities.
- **Common Knowledge:** Toward the running of the Rekindle of Old Skills festival.
- **North Burrin Community:** Delivery of an art project in the Burren.
- **Kilmurray/Ibrickane Community Group:** Delivery of mindfulness and positive mental health workshops.
- **GOSHH:** Delivery of counselling sessions.
- **North Clare FRC:** Delivery of play therapy sessions.
- **Whitegate GAA:** Under the title of 'Healthy Whitegate', delivery of mental health workshops.
- **Clare Older Peoples Council:** Creation of a cook book for older adults.
- **Clare Traveller PHCP:** Delivery of a physical activity and nutrition programme for male members of the Travelling Community
- **Ennis CDP:** Delivery of cookery classes and craft classes for female members of the Travelling Community.
- **Clarecare:** Delivery of mindful self care programme for parents.
- **Healthy Clare Promotion and Collaboration**

Not Around Us Campaign

"Not Around Us", is an initiative supporting people and spaces to work towards a Tobacco and Vape Free Clare by promoting environments where it is easier for those who smoke to quit and stay quit and to help de-normalise smoking for the next generation. The campaign is in response to the government's national target for a less than 5% smoking prevalence in Ireland by 2025.

In December, Tulla FC became a 'Not Around Us' team.

If your organisation is interested in participating in the campaign, please link with Samantha McCarthy, Healthy Clare Coordinator via email at healthyclare@clarecoco.ie.

Health and Wellbeing Page Clare Echo

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

December saw a number of features highlighted to include;

- **Week 13:** Highlighting Clare Volunteer Center and International Volunteer Day.
- **Week 14:** A general editorial piece to highlight Cancer Awareness and Prevention.
- **Week 15:** Dedicated to the Rural and Community team within Clare County Council and highlighting funding opportunities.

Fire Service Poster

Working with Clare County Council Fire and Rescue Service an advert advising of Health and Safety during the Christmas period was included in The Clare Echo. If you would like to see a Health and Wellbeing initiative promoted in the Health and Wellbeing page, reach out to the Healthy Clare Coordinator, samccarthy@clarecoco.ie



CORPORATE SERVICES

Freedom of Information & Data Protection:

Previous years and 2024 to date - statistics to 30th December 2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Freedom of Information Requests	152	176	119	156	135
Freedom of Information Internal Review Applications	6	13	8	4	5
Appeals handled by Information Commissioner	1	4	2	4	4
Data Access Requests - Subject Access Request	5	6	10	10	13
Data Requests - Erasure Request	0	1	1	2	0
Data Access Requests - Third Party Access Requests e.g. Gardaí	20	27	27	29	29

Communications

The Communications Office communicates and promotes Council activities and services and raises public awareness of issues of local and national interest.

11 media releases were issued during December 2024, including:

- Clare Residents encouraged to think "Circular" this Christmas
- New Half a Million Euro Vehicle marks further investment in Clare's Fire Services
- Campaign launched to boost County Clare's alternative accommodation offerings

Social Media

The Communications Office monitors and updates social media channels to maintain awareness of the work of the Council.

In the three-week period 1-20 December 2024, the Communications Office:

- Posted 72 times on Facebook, with total followers now 21,321.
- Posted 71 times on X (formerly Twitter), with total followers over 8.7K.
- 69 Posts on Instagram followers are now 4,090.

(Statistics accurate as of 20/12/2024)

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

HOUSING

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 065 684 6291 or by email: hat@clarecoco.ie. Our Ukrainian support team can be contacted on 065 6846577 or by email: communityresponseforum@clarecoco.ie or offerahome@clarecoco.ie. Our Local Authority Integration Team can be reached at integration@clarecoco.ie

The Council has launched a new online portal for our Housing Adaptation Grant for Older People and People with a Disability. The availability of the grant application online portal will greatly reduce paperwork, improve the speed of grant processing and allow applicants to see the progress of their grant throughout our approval process.

Clare County Council Housing Grants online application

The Traveller Accommodation Program 2025 to 2029 was ratified by this Council at the December monthly meeting and this program will be overseen by the LTACC over the coming years.

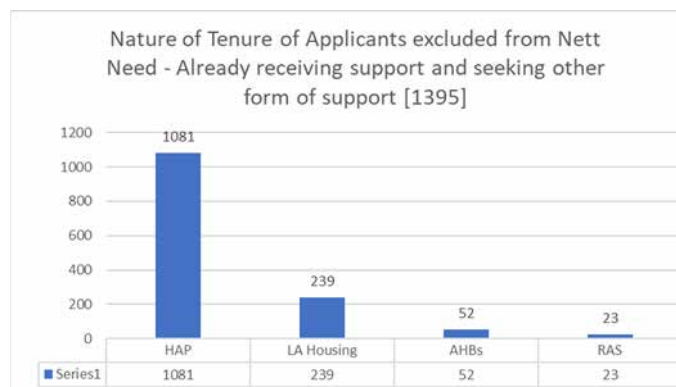
Social Housing Demand

The annual assessment of social housing need [SSHA] was completed on 4th November with return date of 2nd December, 2024. National report on same is expected in Q1 2025.

The highest demand throughout the county remains for 1 and 2-bedroomed properties. There are 2,186 applicant households (77%) who have a requirement for this property type.

Current Housing need as of 18/12/2024

Total Households on List	2,830	
Transfer Applicants (see below)		1,395
Net Need	1,435	



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 and 5 beds	Total
ENNIS	982	198	68	1248
SHANNON	174	35	15	224
CLARECASTLE	150	27	9	186
INAGH/ENNISTYMON/LAHINCH	121	23	6	150
KILRUSH	92	25	7	124
FEAKLE/SCARIFF/WHITEGATE	79	24	3	106
MEELICK/PARTEEN/WESTBURY	66	25	11	102
MILTOWN MALBAY/MULLAGH/QUILTY	70	11	1	82
COROFIN/RUAN	63	15	1	79
KILKEE/CROSS/CARRIGAHOLT	59	15	1	75
NEWMARKET-ON-FERGUS	52	15	3	70
KILLALOE	50	14	2	66
LISDOONVARNA/BALLYVAUGHAN	43	13	3	59
SIXMILEBRIDGE	34	13	5	52
COORACLARE/DOONBEG	32	10	5	47
TULLA/KILKISHEN/BROADFORD	32	8	1	41

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CLONLARA	25	6	2	33
KILDYSART/BALLYNACALLY	21	4	3	28
QUIN	16	5	3	24
KILMIHIL	9	4	2	15
KILMALEY	11	2		13
KILFENORA	5	1		6
Grand Total	2,186	493	151	2,830

Newly Qualified Applicants



Agnieszka Palys and her son Mikolaj receiving the keys to their new home in Baile Uí Loideáin Sixmilebridge from Kevin Kelleher Estate Manager.



Mr Robert Jones receiving his keys from the Allocations Team (L-R) Ann O Dea, Máirin Hill, Robert Jones, Catherine Breen and Kevin Kelleher. In accepting his keys to his new home Mr Jones stated "I am absolutely thrilled to receive the keys to my new home, this is a dream come true for me, this is the best day of my life."

Housing Allocations

Clare County Council continues to work with the Approved Housing Bodies in relation to the delivery of social housing. Phase 1 of the social housing development located at Millbank Roslevan Ennis was recently advertised on our CBL site. This development which is being delivered by Co-Operative Housing Irl (CHI) comprises 15 no 3 bed roomed houses. The allocation process in relation to this development is now completed and the nominated households have been forwarded to CHI.

The new social housing development at Baile Uí Loideáin, Six-milebridge is completed, and the tenants received the keys to their new homes on 12th and 13th December last. This development comprises 4 no 3 bed roomed houses and 11 no 2 bed roomed terraced houses.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme

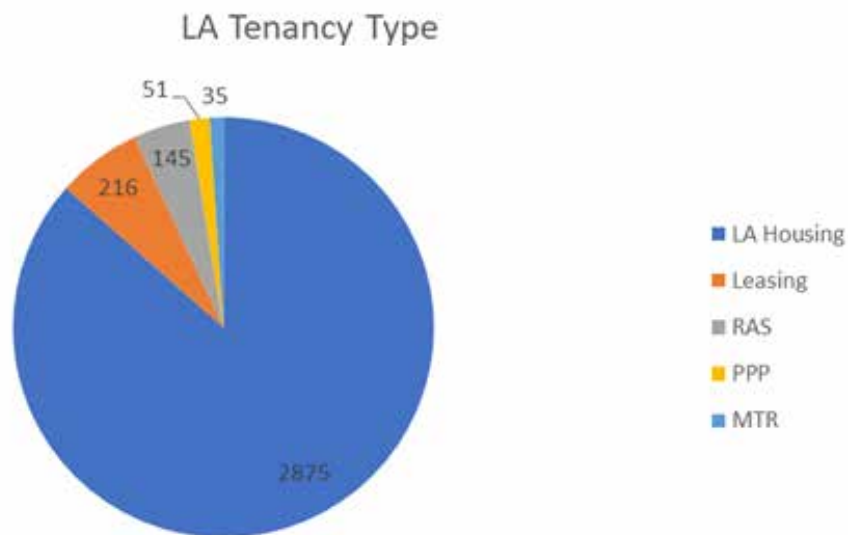
There remains significant interest in the LA Tenant Purchase Incremental Scheme. We currently have 21 open cases at various stages of the process. The sale of seven properties under the tenant purchase scheme completed in 2024 and we expect approximately ten properties to sell under the scheme in 2025

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

Housing Tenancies:

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

18th December, 2024			
MD	Allocated	Occupied	Total
Ennis MD	1	1,284	1,285
Killaloe MD	18	358	376
Shannon MD	13	735	748
West Clare MD	5	952	957
Grand Total	37	3,329	3,366



There are 145 RAS, 217 leases (121 Long term and 96 short term leases) There are 1081 HAP tenancies. Approved Housing bodies are providing approximately 880 tenancies to Social Housing Applicants. Clare County Council have full nomination rights in respect of the majority of AHB properties and these properties are advertised via our Choice Based Letting System. Nominations are prepared in accordance with a new National Process agreed by LAs and the AHB sector and commenced in July 2022.

Vacancies:

Vacant Stock	Ennis MD	West Clare MD	Shannon MD	Killaloe MD	Total
Traveller Accom.	3	6	1	0	10

Derelict Properties	0	0	0	0	0
Projects	6	5	1	2	14
Casual Vacancies	19	19	12	6	56
TOTAL	28	30	14	8	80

Estate Management

The Estate Management Team continue to undertake regular routine and response calls to tenants, dealing with complaints re breaches of Tenancy and ASB as well as inspecting Local Authority tenancies and providing the necessary supports to tenants. The team were successful in securing 3 Repossession Orders in court in 2024. A number of further Repossession Applications will be going through the Courts in the coming months.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The team have been extremely active in carrying out tenancy visits for the period up to end of December and a total of 1,306 tenancy visits have been carried out year to date. It should be noted that the follow up on complaints received and the no of visits carried out **do not correlate** with an increase in instances of asb or tenancy breaches but rather that a more proactive approach is being taken with the team in engaging with tenants.

Any matters that need to be brought to the attention of the Estate Management unit can be done so by emailing asb@clarecoco.ie. Listed hereunder shows details of work being undertaken by the Estate Management team this year to date.

	Total year to date	27th Nov to 31st Dec
Complaints recd re breaches of Tenancy	876	15
Tenancy Visits	1,306	4
Referrals to TSS (including Tusla)	54	2
Tenancy Notifications/Warnings issued	66	3
Abandonment Notices issued	14	0
Keys collected from Casual Vacancies	60	4
Repossession Orders	3	0

The team carry out continued patrols of Local Authority housing estates and Traveller accommodation sites and have a very visible presence to manage and mitigate against complaints of antisocial behaviour. The team also engage proactively with

tenants to help prevent anti-social behaviour, facilitate the daily patrol of local authority sites, arrange specific meetings with tenants as well as engaging with local communities. The working hours of the team are flexible to meet required need, involving working after hours and weekends as the need dictates. The team can be contacted out of office hours, should the need arise, by contacting the Council Emergency Phone no. **(087) 2599568**

Private Rented Inspections:

1042 inspections have been carried out to date. These inspections were carried out on HAP, RTB, RAS and Leased properties, as well as in response to complaints that were received. The team continue to follow up where properties do not meet the minimum rented standards.

Housing Grants:

On Dec 1st, 2024, a revised scheme was introduced renaming the scheme 'Housing Aid for Older People and Disabled People'.

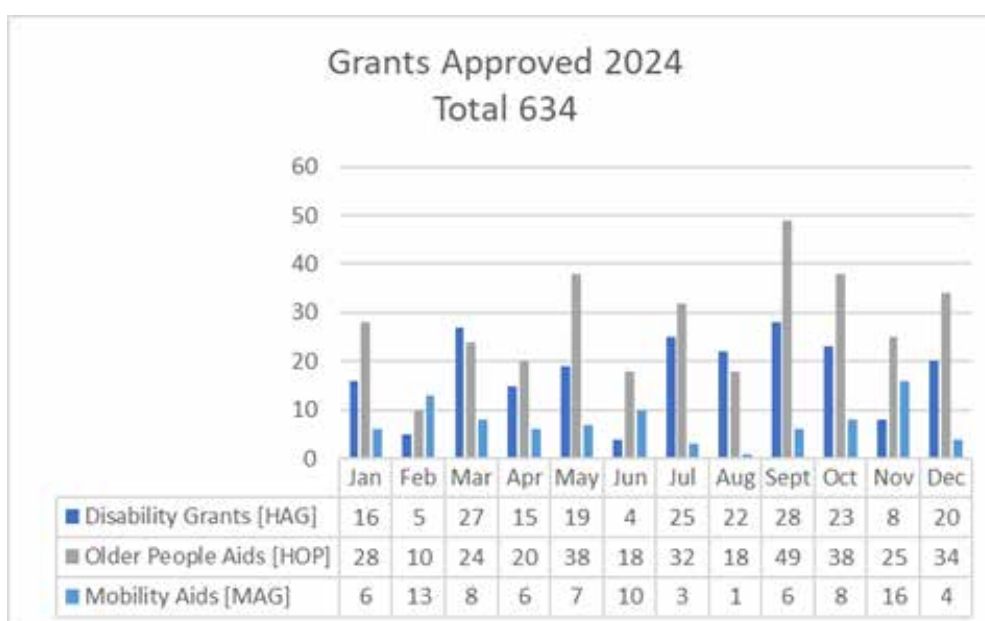
The main changes are

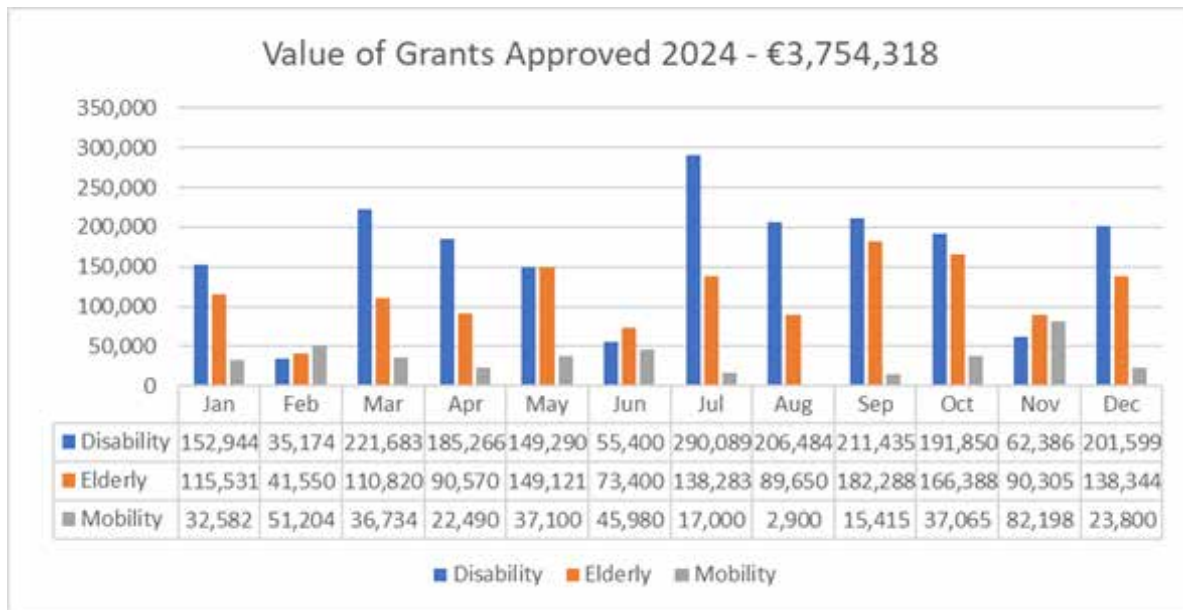
- increases in grant limits and income thresholds
- The removal of grants to buy new fossil fuel boilers
- The Local authority contribution reduced to 15% (from 20%) thus increasing the Exchequer contribution to 85% (from 80%).

The revised application form for **Housing Adaptation Grant for Older People and Disabled People** is available on Clare County Council's website.

The online facility is also available at the following link: [Clare County Council Housing Grants online application](#)

Grants Approved 2024:





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

There are currently 70 Local Authority Home Loans Approved in Principle. Updated figures are outlined as follows:

38 Applications to date in 2024	49 Applications received in 2023
70 Local Authority Loans Approved	5 Local Authority Loans Drawn Down in 2022, 12 Drawn Down in 2023 and 12 to date in 2024

Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan

The Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan was introduced on the 22 July 2024. This is a Government backed mortgage and loan for the purchase and renovation of derelict and non-habitable homes. The property must be eligible for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, whether derelict, non-habitable or simply vacant.

Full details on the Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan (LAPR) and eligibility criteria including the Loan Calculator can be found on <https://purchaseandrenovationloan.ie/>
2 LAPR Applications have been received to date in 2024.

Traveller Accommodation

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

The Homeless Action Team

The level of complex cases presenting to the Homeless Action Team in Clare has continued to increase. Additional demands are being placed on the Homeless Action Team to provide Emergency Accommodation in a safe and appropriate manner. The levels of support, advice and advocacy, being requested from households around areas such as Homeless Services, Housing Requirements, Health supports, Outside Support referrals and the need for Emergency Accommodation within this region is increasing.

There has been a notable rise in the number of presentations of individuals and households experiencing difficulties and concerns around Hospital discharges, Prison releases, Family or relationship breakdown, addiction or mental health concerns, dual diagnosis, and a further increase in the number of households presenting from the Travelling Community.

The level of aggression being experienced by the Homeless Action Team staff and supporting agencies staff has continued to increase in Q4 of 2024. There has also been a level of non-engagement by service users along with refusals of Emergency Accommodation Support offers in this quarter.

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 Homeless services. Other individuals and families were supported in accessing Emergency Accommodation either within our services or through private establishments.

The Homeless Action Team continues to pursue additional emergency accommodation options at a time when accommodation is in high demand generally.

Homeless Services [Homeless Action Team HAT]

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

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Emergency Accommodation Status as of 12th December, 2024:

	Families	Adults	Dependents	Providers
Laurel Lodge	0	13	0	1
Laurel Lodge	0	6	0	0
LL Winter Initiative	0	5	0	1
Cusack Lodge	5	8	8	1
Westbrook	0	20	0	1
WB Winter Initiative	0	1	0	1
Ashford Court	12	17	16	1
Clann Nua	0	13	0	1
EA Families	14	19	19	8
EA Individuals	0	34	0	8
TOTAL	31	136	43	24

In addition to the above numbers many other households engage with our homeless services on a daily basis.

Exits from Homeless Services:

Clare Homeless Action Team continues to focus on exits from homeless services.

During the period 15/11/24 to 12/12/2024 the following exited from homelessness:

Moved to A.H.B Housing	2
Moved to Temp. Accommodation	1
Admitted to hospital	3
Excluded	3
Residential Treatment	1
Tenancy LA	1

DCB Application Map



In addition to the above numbers many other households engage with our homeless services on a daily basis.

Affordable Housing Schemes for County Clare

CCC continue to run Expression of Interest (EOI) Campaigns seeking proposals on options to deliver affordable homes in County Clare. CCC are also engaged with developers with potential for Part V affordable delivery.

To date CCC have received approvals for access to the Affordable Housing Fund for the following developments:

- Tulla Rd Ennis - 10 units.
- Lahinch Rd Ennis - 11 units
- Shannon- 10 units (3 units allocated).

CCC are currently engaged with 4 other developers, that have expressed interest in affordable housing, for potential inclusion on the scheme.

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

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 YQA's (Your Questions Answered) & Ministerial Guidelines published.

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

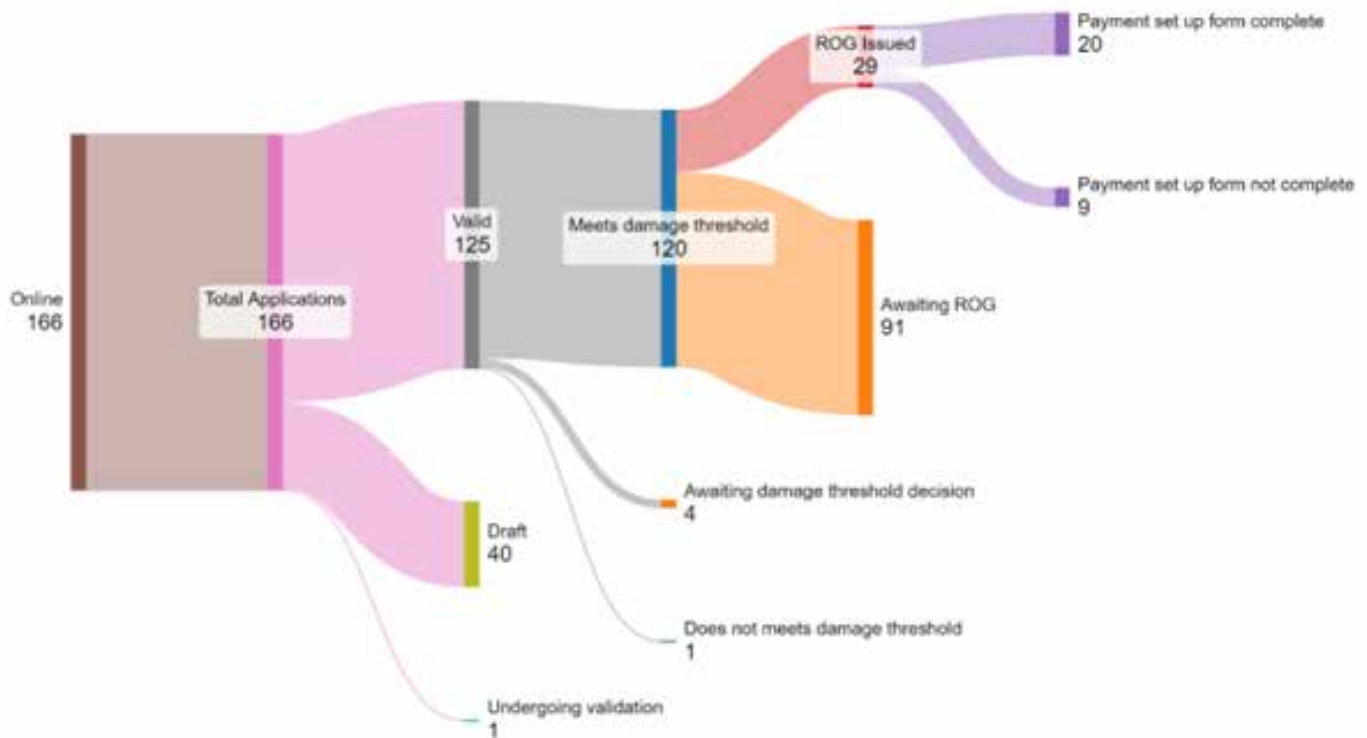
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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

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

To date Clare County Council have issued 29 Remedial Option Grants, with the total value of €8.86m awarded by the housing agency and are awaiting input from the Housing Agency to further process 91 applications with grant amounts to follow.

DCB Application Flow Chart



In 2024, Walk in clinics were held in Kilrush, Ennistymon, Scar-riff, Shannon and Ennis. An information evening was also held in Shannon Library in mid-October last to further assist homeowners on how to make an application to the scheme via the online portal. CCC intend to hold further information evenings in 2025 to target people with limited digital resources and/or capabilities, to assist them further in making an application. Clare County Council continue to engage with the DHLGH to ensure social houses affected by DCB are included in a similar scheme.

Update on capital programme:

Housing capital schemes are progressing well and are at varying stages of design and construction across the County Clare. Doonbeg and Gort Road projects are under construction and these projects are continuing to progress well. Other capital projects are expected to commence in early 2025.



Progress on Gort Road housing development

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Progress on Doonbeg housing development

Approved Housing Bodies

The Approved Housing Bodies completed 29 units at Ennis, 16 units at Quin, 4 units at Tulla and 5 units at Shannon during December 2024. A total of 104 units under the Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) and 12 units under the Capital Assistance

Scheme (CAS) was delivered over the year. They also are working towards delivery of an ambitious programme in 2025. This sector is vital to successful delivery of our targets under Housing for All and we continue to engage with them on housing output and lend support in relation to operational and financial matters.



4 units at Carraig Nua, Tulla by Cluid Housing Association

SHIP Capital	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Scarriff	18	Completed	-	2024
Sixmilebridge	15	Completed	-	2024
Harvey Quay, Ennis	4	Completed	-	2024
No. 3 St Senan's Terrace, Kilrush	1	Completed	-	2024
No. 5 Church Rd. Milltown Malbay	1	Completed	-	2024
No 111 Dun na Hinse, Ennis	1	Completed	-	2024
Main Street Clarecastle	1	Under Construction	Q1 2024	Q1 2025
Clarehill Clarecastle	13	Turnkey - Under Construction	Q3 2023	Q1 2025 (10) Q2 2025 (3)
Garrán Cathaigh, Leadmore Kilrush	14	Turnkey - Under Construction	Q2 2024	Q1 2025
Main Street Clarecastle	7	Turnkey - Under Construction	Q2 2024	Q1 2025
Béal an Inbhir, Kilrush	28	Turnkey - Under Construction	Q2 2024	Q2 2025
38 St Patrick's Terrace, Kilrush	1	Under Review	Q2 2025	Q4 2025
Gort Rd. Ennis	20	Under Construction	Q3 2024	Q4 2025
Doonbeg Lands	8	Under Construction	Q4 2024	Q4 2025
Shallee Drive / Cloughleigh Rd	5	Await Stage 4 approval by DHLGH.	Q1 2025	Q1 2026
Back Road, Kilrush	12	Await Stage 4 approval by DHLGH.	Q1 2025	Q1 2026
Moore Street, Kilrush	16	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH and Part VIII approved. To go to tender Feb 2025.	Q2 2025	Q4 2026
Drumcliff Rd, Ennis	26	Stage 2 approved by DHLGH. S179A under judicial review	-	-
Subtotal	191			
Approved Housing Body Projects	No. approved	Current stage	Start Date	Completion Date
Kilkishen (Circle Hsg. Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	16	Completed	-	2024
Crusheen (Cluid Hsg. Assoc.) CALF Turnkey Part V	3	Completed	-	2024

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Clonroad, Ennis, (St. Vincent de Paul CAS Turnkey)	12	Completed	-	2024
Quin, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey)	36	Completed	-	2024
Carraig Nua, Tulla (Cluid Hsg. Assoc.) CALF Turnkey (Part V)	4	Completed	-	2024
Shannon (Cluid Housing Assoc.)	5	Completed	-	2024
Acha Bhile, Lahinch Rd., Ennis (Cluid Hsg. Assoc.) CALF Turnkey	21	11 units completed 10 units under construction	-	2024
Millbank, Roslevan, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	25	15 units completed 10 units under construction	- Q1 2024	2024 Q3 2025
Loughville, Ennis (Tuath Housing) CALF Turnkey	48	14 units completed 34 units under construction	Q2 2025	2024 Q1 2025
Market Street, Ennis (Co-Operative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Turnkey	14	Under construction	Q3 2023	Q2 2025
63 Shannon Heights, Kilrush (Sophia Hsg. Assoc.) CAS Renewal Const.)	1	At procurement stage	Q2 2025	Q4 2025
71 Shannon Heights, Kilrush (Sophia Hsg. Assoc.) CAS Renewal Const.)	1	At procurement stage	Q2 2025	Q4 2025
Bruachlan, Westbury (Cooperative Hsg. Ireland) CALF Construction	22	Planning granted	Q1 2025	Q4 2025
Subtotal	208			
Total	399			

Ukrainian Services Team

The CSO figures show there were 790 Temporary Protections granted nationally in the past month with an average of 28 granted per day, the number of new arrivals into the Country has reduced by 37 people compared to the weekly figures outlined in the previous Monthly Management Report. There are currently 5,142 Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTP's) living in County Clare, representing a decrease of 47 people in the County compared to figures released previously. There are 1,552 people accommodated in 27 multi-occupancy facilities located throughout the County - this reflects a decrease of 111 people compared to previous figures. 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. There is still huge interest in the scheme since its launch in November 2022, we currently have 255 homes offered resulting in an increase of 3 properties compared to figures released previously. We currently have 4 properties offered that will be available during the month of December. To date our Matching & Relationship Manager has facilitated the accommodation of 522 people that were originally living in hotel and multi-occupancy facilities. The Government has confirmed the Accommodation Recognition Payment Scheme (ARP) is secure until the end of March 2025, it is anticipated we will have a better understanding of the position of this scheme in early 2025.

Local Authority Integration Team

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

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

Who do LAITs support?

LAITs provide support for:

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

How is the support provided?

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

What services do LAITs provide?

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

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

How do I contact my Local Authority Integration Team?

You can contact LAIT's by email. Their integration@clarecoco.ie

3rd December - Clare County Council Integration team were delighted to attend the Irish Red Cross opening ceremony of the renovated old Bank of Ireland building on O'Curry Street Kilkee, which is to be used to house a programme refugee family invited to Ireland by our Government.



5th December - Clare County Council's Integration Forum were delighted to collaborate with the Clare Volunteer Centre on hosting the Clare Volunteer Recognition event last evening in

the West County Hotel. This event was an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the countless hours, skills, and passion that volunteers contribute to communities across Clare. Special thanks to the Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council Alan O'Callaghan for his address and Syl O'Connor MC for the night. Congratulations to all the children from the various schools around the county on their amazing artwork and on being selected as finalists for the calendar competition. Also, thanks to the Lisdoonvarna Crew and St Michael's Villa Community Choir for the fabulous entertainment.



11th December - Clare County Council Integration Team were delighted to collaborate with the An Garda Siochana, Road Safety Authority, HSE Public Health Nursing Service & Clare Haven Services in hosting a Wellness & Safety Information event today in the Lisdoonvarna Pavillion. Special thanks to all who attended this event.



12th December - Thanks to all the who attended the County Community Integration Forum meeting, for the ongoing inter-agency collaboration and for the submissions for the Building Confidence a guide to new arrivals in the County. Looking forward to continuing the great work in 2025. The Clare Integration Forum were delighted to launch the Clare Migrant Integration in Clare Position Paper which provides an overview of demographic changes, achievements, and challenges related to integration, while laying the groundwork for the forthcoming Clare Migrant Integration Strategy. Special thanks to Brendan O'Keefe (People and Place) for the concise overview on the key insights and recommendations.



Launch of Service Directory

The Community Integration Forum were delighted to Launch the Directory of Services Building Connection Guide. This booklet serves as a testament to their work in fostering a warm, welcoming, and inclusive environment for everyone who chooses to call Clare home. This booklet introduces you to a wide range of support services available as a new member of our community. Information on essential services, local resources, and ways to connect with others are provided in this booklet.

Migrant Integration in Clare Position Paper

This position paper, commissioned by the Clare Integration Forum, examines the current landscape of migrant integration in County Clare. It provides an overview of demographic changes, achievements, and challenges related to integration, while laying the groundwork for the forthcoming Clare Migrant Integration Strategy. The paper draws on extensive stakeholder consultations, demographic analysis, and secondary data, offering key insights and recommendations. The evidence captured in this paper underscores the importance of increased investments, deeper and more systematic inter-agency collaboration at all levels, and further supports to ensure community engagement – by migrants and members of the host community - in shaping a cohesive, diverse, and a thriving Clare. While challenges persist, the groundwork laid by the Clare Integration Forum provides a strong foundation for addressing these issues through the forthcoming strategy, and migrant integration needs to be mainstreamed and embedded across all sectors' policies, strategies and work programmes.



SPORTS & RECREATION

Gym & Pool Report

Membership January Special offer

In December we launched our special offer for January, this is three-month membership and Twelve-Month membership which is priced at €150 and €380. With this offer we hope to increase the number of memberships through January while also encouraging people to boost their fitness levels going into the New year.

The affordable pricing provides an excellent opportunity for individuals to explore our state-of-the-art gym and pool facilities. Additionally, we are reminding users that gift vouchers are also available at the facility.

Healthy Clare Blog

We issued two blog posts to the healthy Clare newsletter for December, Tips for maintaining a balanced diet and the benefits of strength training for mental health.

Tips for Maintaining a balanced diet

Maintaining a balanced diet is key to overall health and well-being.

1. Follow the Plate Method

Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits. Reserve one-quarter for lean protein sources (chicken, fish, beans, tofu). Use the final quarter for carbohydrates (brown rice, quinoa, whole-grain bread).

2. Incorporate All Food Groups

Proteins: Choose lean meats, eggs, beans, and nuts. Carbohydrates: Opt for whole grains, fibrous carbs and limit refined carbs. Fats: Include healthy fats like olive oil, avocados, and nuts. Vitamins and Minerals: Ensure variety with colourful fruits and vegetables.

3. Portion Control

Use smaller plates to help with portion sizes. Avoid eating directly from large packages to prevent overeating.

4. Stay Hydrated

Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Limit sugary beverages and high-calorie drinks.

5. Limit Processed Foods

Reduce intake of high-sugar, high-salt, and high-fat processed foods. Opt for fresh, whole foods whenever possible.

6. Read Food Labels

Check for added sugars, unhealthy fats, and high sodium in packaged foods. Look for foods high in fibre and nutrients.

7. Plan Your Meals

Prepare meals at home to control ingredients and portion sizes. Batch-cook and meal-prep to avoid relying on fast food.

8. Practice Mindful Eating

Eat slowly to enjoy your meal and recognize when you're full. Avoid distractions like TV or phones during meals.

9. Snack Smart

Choose nutrient-dense snacks like nuts, yogurt, or fruit. Avoid junk food and sugary treats.

Bonus: Regularly Adjust!!!

Benefits of Strength Training for Mental Health

Strength training offers several benefits for mental health. Here are some ways it can positively impact mental well-being:

1. Reduces Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety

Strength training has been shown to lower levels of depression and anxiety, comparable to other forms of exercise. It promotes the release of endorphins, which are natural mood elevators.

Engaging in resistance exercises provides a sense of accomplishment, which can boost self-esteem.

2. Improves Cognitive Function

Regular strength training enhances brain health by improving blood flow and stimulating the production of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which supports neural growth and cognitive function.

It has been linked to better memory, focus, and reduced risk of neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's.

3. Enhances Self-Esteem and Body Image

As strength improves and body composition changes, many people experience a boost in self-confidence and a more positive body image.

Meeting strength goals can provide a sense of mastery and empowerment.

4. Reduces Stress

Strength training helps lower cortisol levels, a hormone associated with stress.

The focus required during lifting sessions can serve as a form of mindfulness, helping to shift attention away from stressors.

5. Promotes Better Sleep

Engaging in regular strength training has been linked to improved sleep quality, which is crucial for mental health.

Better sleep helps regulate mood and reduces fatigue.

6. Provides a Sense of Community

Participating in group training sessions or working out with a gym buddy can foster social connections, which are vital for mental well-being.

This sense of belonging can combat loneliness and improve mood.

7. Helps with Resilience and Coping

Overcoming physical challenges in strength training can translate to greater psychological resilience.

It teaches discipline and perseverance, which can help in managing life's challenges.

8. Balances Mood with Hormonal Regulation

Strength training supports hormonal balance, increasing levels of testosterone and growth hormone, which contribute to energy levels and mood stabilization.

In summary, incorporating strength training into your routine can be a powerful tool for improving mental health, offering benefits that extend beyond physical fitness to enhance overall well-being.

Christmas Jumper day

On Friday December 6th all staff wore their Christmas jumpers in aid of cystic fibrosis Ireland's appeal. Christmas Jumper Day for cystic fibrosis was great fun. We used it to mark the beginning of Christmas in the leisure centre and teach our young users about giving to others. It was a great opportunity to raise awareness and funds for a worthwhile cause.



Footfall Report Active Ennis Leisure Complex.

The Total Footfall was 22957 up 4% from October (22156). We had an Average Footfall of 765 up 7% compared to October (715). The Lowest recorded Footfall was 463 and the Highest

recorded Footfall was 1026.

The highest total recorded footfall was on Saturday November 9th. The lowest recorded footfall was Friday November 1st. With shorter evenings and weather getting colder may be causing more use of the facilities as well as large numbers participating in school and public lessons.

Lees road

Lees Road experienced declines across bookings, active hours. This is possibly due to seasonal variation. November may have seen poorer weather conditions than the previous year, discouraging outdoor activities.

Despite this, vehicle entries to the park remained high (over 18,000), which was an average of 603 vehicles per day.

Tim Smythe Park

Tim Smythe Park saw increases in bookings and active hours throughout November. The meeting room in Tim Smythe Park was also being utilized by the As I Am Autism charity.

As I Am is a charity that provide evidence-based advice, resources, and guidance that the community can trust. Alongside this, they strive to make Irish society a more inclusive and accepting place, where Autistic people have the same chance as others.

www.activeennis.ie www.activekilrush.ie

SPORTS & RECREATION

Any defects or operational issues can be reported by email to info@activeennis.ie



ESF+ Sport4Empowerment Programme

General update on your operational plan:

- The Pilot with Swim Ireland continues: The 7 Traveller men completed the initial lessons, mixed ability within the group; a further 4 lessons are required to bring 2 up to an equal standard. Still need to get pool time suitable to the group.
- The pilot project in Lisdoonvarna targeting Ukrainian Refugees in conjunction with Weightlifting Ireland is going to be expanded. Currently one iteration with a group of cancer survivors who formed a Dragon Boat club with Clare Sports Partnership assistance will be the first group this will now commence in late January.
- Fabio has commenced his work experience with Clare Sports Partnership, and through this experience, I hope to empower him to merge his personal talents and knowledge of the community to co-design a programme specifically for the Roma community. After focus groups with Roma Youth, we have designed a Yoga (Namaste Yoga Ennis) for the teen girls and Strength and Fitness for Boys (with Spartan Fitness) - aiming for a late January start. Many of the Roma community leave Ennis for the Christmas period and its lead up to return to Slovakia/Czech Republic.
- Further liaising with GAA Games to develop an adult introduction to GAA aimed at International Protection Applicants. Designing an introduction to GAA for Adults. The ultimate aim is to create a football team comprised of 'New Communities', with an exhibition game in Cusack Park. Going to join CLDC and CISC on their outreach to gauge interest and find a suitable location to host. Still progressing.
- Have been approached by GAA to run a Cul Camp over the Easter for IPA's children, Sponsored by Kelloggs. Will be coordinating 3 other camps via ESF officers in other counties for same cohort.
- Research Funding - Have moth balled the collaboration with Clare Haven on the 'Participatory levels of Children

from domestic violent household in team sports' until January - when their staffing issues hope to be resolved. UL are submitting an ethics proposal for the research currently.

- Liaising with Clare Traveller CSP to do 'walkability audits' from traveller-specific accommodation using the National Roads Authority templates - 4 completed.
- A formal referral system to the ESF+ role from SICAP, Local Area Employment Service, Employability, Traveller CPD, Focus Ireland, and Probation Service has been initiated. This is for individuals who present to these services, have had training, are interested in training, or need support getting active/sport again. 10 clients have been referred and met so far.

Active Communities (Walking/Running/Cycling/Swimming):

1. **Bike Week 2025 Event Application:** Clare Local Sports Partnership, in collaboration with Clare County Council, is currently accepting event suggestions for Bike Week 2025. Schools, clubs, and communities are encouraged to submit their proposed events for May 2025. The deadline for submissions is 5 pm, Wednesday 11th December 2024.
 - Maximum funding: €500 per event.
 - Eligibility: Event applications must be submitted by a club official or committee member.

Swimming Initiatives:

- **Banner Mile for January:** The Banner Mile event, aimed at swimmers of all abilities, sold out within 24 hours. The Banner Mile is on in three locations: Shannon, Lahinch, and Ennis.
- **Shannon Swimming & Leisure Centre:** Starting 7th January 2025 for 11 weeks, at 7:45 PM, registration fee €100.
- **Lahinch Leisure Centre:** Starting 8th January 2025 for 10 weeks, at 8:00 PM, registration fee €95.
- **Active Ennis:** Starting 9th January 2025 for 10 weeks, at 8:00 PM, registration fee €95.
- Lahinch is also considering hosting the main swimming event in March 2025.

Community Sports Hubs:

1. **Shannon Sports Hub:**
 - Teen Girls Introduction to Boxing Programme: A boxing programme for teenage girls commenced on 18th November 2024, running until 16th December 2024 at Shannon Boxing Club. The aim is to empower teen girls, boost their confidence, and improve fitness through boxing. It is designed for beginners and requires no prior

experience. Shannon FRC Homework Club: I attended the Homework Club activity evenings at the Shannon Family Resource Centre on Monday, 25th November and Tuesday, 3rd December. The sessions involved team-building activities and games, offering students a chance to bond and socialize in a supportive environment.

- **Kilrush Sports Hub:**
- **Walk County Clare Completion (31st October):** The Walk County Clare initiative concluded with 13 participants completing a total of 871 km. Two participants were awarded Garmin watches as a prize. The event encouraged physical activity and community engagement.
- **2025 Programmes:** Three programmes are planned for early 2025:
- **Taekwondo for Women 18+:** Commencing 14th January 2025.
- **Couch to 5K:** Run by West Clare Tri Club.
- **Strength and Conditioning Programme for Parents at St. Senan's:** Originally scheduled for mid-November, now rescheduled to 9th January 2025.

Ethnic Minorities:

1. Karate Classes for Ukrainians:

- Anastasia from Northwest Clare FRC is submitting an invoice for €300 to cover the facility hire for the karate classes for Ukrainians in Ennistymon.
- Ukrainian Integration Support Fund: A funding application has been developed for ethnic minority groups, particularly Ukrainians. This initiative will support physical activity programmes and provide exercise equipment to enhance the integration of Ukrainians residing in the area.
- Funding available: Up to €150 per applicant.
- The goal is to expand outreach to more ethnic minorities and design further integration-focused programmes.

123 Move with Me Initiative:

1. Update on 123 Move with Me:

- **Train the Trainer Scheme:** On 26th November 2024, I met with Rachel from Limerick Sports Partnership to develop the Train the Trainer Scheme. This programme will focus on equipping key workers and healthcare professionals to deliver physical activity initiatives.
- **Equipment Packs:** I am reviewing the current stock of equipment packs, ensuring their contents are suitable for upcoming projects. We are considering an initial rollout of 30 packs per LSP to facilitate training for key workers and primary healthcare projects.

Scheduling Meeting: Rachel and I will meet with John & Phelim in mid-January to finalise the presentation and delivery details for the programme rollout

Sports Inclusion

1. Inclusive gymnastics with Ennis Gymnastics Club has changed to Monday / Tuesday evenings. 70 children attend these sessions
2. Eire Og / Corofin GAA and Wolfe Tones GAA All-stars Inclusive Clubs are now running outdoor sessions for over 40 children with a disability
3. Parteen Meelick have started their All-Stars inclusive club journey with CSP, which will be developed in the months ahead.
4. Derg AC have received funding through Dormant Accounts SIDP for an inclusive Athletics and Cycling Programme
5. Clare Comets basketball all-stars continue to run their indoor sessions on Saturdays in Ennis National School
6. Both Derg AC (Saturday mornings) and Tulla AC (Thursday evenings) continue to run sessions for over 40 children with a disability.
7. In conjunction with Clare Co Co and Movement Experts Ireland, Clare LSP is running an inclusive whole-school physical activity programme
8. Following the success of the autism programme with West Coast Surf Club, we are investing in a wheelchair-type surfboard for people with a physical disability. In the coming months, we plan to upskill and train volunteers, with the aim of having new participants in the water by April 2025.

Older Adults

9. The weekly exercise classes that support our tutors in delivering to over 300 older adults in County Clare are on-going
10. Banner Balance (a falls prevention programme) for older adults continues to run weekly with 12 participants in conjunction with the HSE.
11. Work is continuing to engage with active retirement groups across the county; new two active engagement groups (Clonlara) will have physical activity built into their weekly meetings thanks to CSP.

SPORTS & RECREATION

Outdoor Recreation:

- The five CORP consultations went ahead in five locations across Clare with a total of 47 people partaking.
- Online focus groups went ahead targeting both land and water sports clubs and providers.
- We held a CORC meeting on 7th November.
- The next CORC meeting is Thursday 12th December at which the consultant Humphrey is presenting Emerging themes on the CORP.
- Jess attended the IAAT conference with the other OROs. This was very informative with updates from National stakeholders in the outdoor sector. A useful seminar was on the use of AI in the outdoor industry and 11 tools to use.
- A copy of the feedback from the Youth workshop on the Outdoor Recreation plan has been sent to Jess and forwarded to Humphrey. A meeting was held to discuss the engagement of youth and best practice.
- Humphrey Murphy has launched two questionnaires: one for the general public and another specifically targeting older adults and the disability sector. Jess worked closely with James to ensure the wording in the questionnaires was appropriate and that they were distributed to the relevant target groups.
- Jess attended a Community of Practice meeting with OROs from across the country via Microsoft Teams, updating each other and sharing best practices.
- A discussion is being held about ORIS with different stakeholders and Jess will be attending a clinic run by the RCDOs.
- A November report is being prepared to fulfil reporting requirements to the council

Schools:

- Borrowing of playground markings and sports hall athletics packs by primary schools is ongoing
- Pilot primary school Cricket programme with Munster Cricket in St. Senan's primary school in Kilrush is ongoing
- TY Sportshall Athletics programme began in St. Joseph's Secondary School in Spanish Point on November 14th

Community Youth: (Teen boys/Teen Girls)

- Our teen boys surfing programme, with Ben's Surf Clinic in Lahinch concluded on November 1st. 8 teen boys attended the programme, and feedback was extremely positive with some boys asking for surf boards for Christmas
- Attended CYPSC meeting on November 11th via zoom
- Attended Comhairle Steering Group meeting on November 28th

Community: (Adults)

- Healthy DOJO Kilrush concluded on November 14th. Participants attended weekly circuit and yoga classes. Feedback on the programme has been positive

Website/Social Media

- Website kept up to date
- Social media posts being scheduled/shared as required

Men on the Move:

Lahinch intermediate programme took place during November. This was a follow on from the introduction programme that took place in September and October. The intermediate programme seen 8 of the original 13 participations take part and enjoy another 6 week programme.

Women in Sport:

- The Women In Sport intermediate swimming lessons continued for the month of November in Ennis and Lahinch, with 23 women taking part. These programmes are a follow on from the beginner swimming lessons that were completed during September and October.
- The Women In Sports Leadership started November 9th with a teambuilding day in Derg Isle, Scariff. 9 Women took part on the day in a variety of land and water activities. The course then had its first two workshops during the month of November with Sports Psychologist Nollaig O Sullivan. The workshops were based around the areas of goal setting and understanding the different types of personalities and how they affect the different styles of coaching.
- A Her Moves schools' collaboration with Shannon Comp took place on November 25th in Shannon Leisure Centre. The programme was a learn to lift full day experience where the girls were brought through the theory of resistance training and were able to watch demonstrations and then participate in various resistance training lifts. 17 girls from transition year took part in the programme and the feedback from the girls was extremely positive, with some of the girls wanting a follow on programme in the new year.

Club Development:

- Safeguarding 1 and 3 courses took place during the month of November which a high attendance at both courses.
- I completed the Understanding Physical Literacy tutor training at the Sport Ireland Campus in Dublin

on November 16th. This will allow us to offer the Understanding Physical Literacy course to clubs, coaches and wider community in the new year.

- We received 3 more ad hoc club grant applications this month. The outcome of these grants are due to be decided during the month of December. There are now 6 applications in total.
- The club newsletter was sent to all clubs at the end of November to keep them up to date with Decembers news and events. Some feature pieces included the Outdoor Recreation Survey and the Volunteer In Sport award details.

West Clare Links Project:

- The community programmes as part of the West Clare Links project begin during the month of November. The first community-based programmes to be rolled out for this project included a Men on the Move programme in both Kilkee and Kilrush and a Women on the Move in both Kilkee and Kilrush. 45 people participated between the first 4 programmes with waitlists in place for 3 of them. Each participant was asked to complete an

anonymous survey before starting the programme. The survey focused on areas such as mood and substance use. The participants will be asked to complete a similar survey at the end of the programme and we will compare the data and use the findings to help us plan for future programmes.

- There was also a specific programme for Ukrainian ladies which takes place twice per week for 6 weeks. This programme was ran due to conversations we had with various organisations which highlighted substance use being a problem within the Ukrainian ladies community in the area. We sourced a Ukrainian female tutor who will be running the programme. We also liaised with organisations which had Ukrainian key workers to advertise the programme out and help translate the information. 8 women signed up for the programme initially, with 2 more showing up on the programme start date.
- Two referred participants to the links programme were also linked in with the community-based women on the move programme after completing their initial 6-week block of personal training with the instructor. Both women enjoyed the first class and then decided to bring family members to the second class.

NORTH CLARE LEA

Footpath, Roadford, Doolin

- Before and after works of new public footpath at Roadford, Doolin. New public lighting to be completed in January 25



Ennistymon Car Park

- Works ongoing with demolition of derelict/dangerous structures in Monastery Lane, Ennistymon to facilitate provision of new public car park.



Speed Limit Review

- Work progressing on the installation of updated speed limit signs on local roads and in urban speed limit areas.



North Clare Integrated Transport & Traffic Plan

- The North Clare LEA have been very proactive on continuing on delivering on objectives in order to improve Transport & Traffic related issues in North Clare.

Road Safety

- Advance warning road markings at Coogullia Cross (Garrihy's Cross), Doolin.



TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Delegation from Galway City Council visit to Loop Head



On 17th December Loop Head Lighthouse, Vandeleur Walled Garden and Visitor Centre as well as Ennistymon Digital Hub were delighted to receive a delegation from Galway City Council led by their Chief Executive, Leonard Cleary.

The purpose of the visit was to showcase tourism and digital capital projects delivered in Clare and to share information on how similar projects could be delivered in Galway City.

Christmas 2024

A Festive Feast: Bunratty's Christmas Celebrations



Bunratty Castle and Folk Park had a magical Christmas season this December, hosting three unique festive experiences. The 23rd annual Christmas Experience transformed the 26-acre park into a winter wonderland. Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, the Grinch, elves, and other beloved characters filled the park with holiday cheer. Visitors were delighted by colourful characters, train rides, puppet shows, magic performances, and dazzling light displays.

Meanwhile, within the historic castle, Santa, Mrs. Claus, and their elves hosted daily 'Breakfast with Santa'. Young and old enjoyed a delicious pancake feast and a captivating show in the 15th-century Main Guard. As night fell, the world-renowned Bunratty Castle Entertainers traded their medieval attire for festive ball gowns and tuxedos. The enchanting "Christmas at the Castle" banquet featured festive music, merriment, and song, captivating audiences six nights a week. Together, the

three experiences welcomed approximately 40,000 visitors throughout the month, making it a truly memorable holiday season at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park.

Santa brings Christmas joy to Hospital's Neonatal Unit



Despite his busy schedule meeting children from across Ireland at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park, Santa Claus made a special visit to the Neonatal Unit at Limerick Maternity Hospital.

Santa's visit brought joy and comfort to the premature babies and their parents, many of whom will be spending Christmas in the hospital. This heartwarming gesture was greatly appreciated by the hospital staff and families alike.

Bunratty Castle Entertainers bring festive cheer to Local Nursing Homes



In the spirit of the season, the talented Bunratty Castle Entertainers brought joy and festive cheer to the residents and staff of Corbally House Nursing Home and Athlunkard Nursing Home. Clad in their iconic medieval costumes, the entertainers performed a captivating Christmas concert featuring beloved carols and holiday classics. Their performance uplifted the spirits of everyone in attendance.

Generations celebrate Christmas together in Liscannon and Ennistymon



Senior infants from Liscannon National School performed the Nativity Play. (image from Dec 2023)

The Cliffs of Moher Experience and two North Clare schools continued their annual tradition of engaging with local care home residents during the Christmas season. Pupils from Liscannon National School and Mol an Óige Steiner National School in Ennistymon visited St. Dominic Savio Nursing Home in Liscannon and Ennistymon Community Hospital to perform Christmas carols and nativity plays. Liscannon National School visited St. Dominic Savio Nursing Home on Tuesday, December 17th, while Mol an Óige Steiner National School visited Ennistymon Community Hospital on Thursday, December 19th. The Craft & Gift Store and the Cliffs View Café sponsored gifts and provided treats for both events, continuing their support from previous years. Staff at both care centres received home-cooked treats as a gesture of thanks for their work, and residents were given small gifts from the Craft & Gift Store. Children and staff from both schools are scheduled to visit the Cliffs of Moher Experience in 2025 as recognition for their participation.

Christmas Breakfast at the Cliffs of Moher Experience



The annual Cliffs of Moher Experience Christmas Breakfast was held over two days, Wednesday, December 18th and Thursday, December 19th at the Cliffs View Café. The money raised for the three nominated charities (Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind Clare Branch, Sláinte an Chláir and Brothers of Charity Service Ireland Clare Branch) will be totalled and split evenly to the three chosen charities. The breakfast morning consists of Cliffs of Moher Experience staff coming together for some festive fun and fundraiser raffles will take place to raise more funds for our three chosen charity.

Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre

Vandeleur Walled Garden and Visitor Centre welcomed Santa during December as well as hosting Christmas markets on the weekend of 14th December, which hosted up to 30 local traders, providers and artists exhibitions. These events brought a significant boost to Kilrush with shuttle buses organised to and from the town and garden.

Shannon Chamber President's Lunch

The Shannon Chamber President's Lunch, featuring guest speaker Alice Mansergh, CEO of Tourism Ireland, took place on Tuesday, December 10th, 2024, at Dromoland Castle Hotel. The event focused on the performance of the tourism sector against targets, the contribution of tourism products in the Shannon region to sector growth, and strategies for increasing regional tourism footfall in the coming years.

Clare Tourism Development (East) representing Clare County Council was proud to be the anchor sponsor of the recent Shannon Chamber of Commerce President's Lunch at Dromoland Castle. This event gathered prominent business leaders and tourism professionals from the Midwest region.

Keynote speaker Alice Mansergh, CEO of Tourism Ireland, delivered an insightful presentation on the tourism sector's performance, the contributions of Shannon region products to growth, and strategies for increasing visitor numbers.

Stephen Hanley, General Manager of Clare Tourism Development (East), highlighted the significant developments and improvements made across the organization's portfolio in the past year. He also outlined the exciting plans for 2025 and beyond, emphasising the positive impact on the region's tourism offerings.

Prior to the lunch, the Clare Tourism Development (East) team held productive meetings with representatives from Fáilte Ireland's Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Wild Atlantic Way, and Commercial Development teams. The discussions focused on new additions to the portfolio and potential collaborations and activities.



The Clare Collection

Bunratty Castle and Folk Park named Best Tourist Experience in Clare



Bunratty Castle and Folk Park is thrilled to announce that it has been awarded the prestigious "Best Tourism Experience" title at the recent Clare Business Excellence Awards hosted by Ennis Chamber.

This recognition is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and passion of the entire team at the attraction. The team's commitment to providing exceptional visitor experiences has been instrumental in achieving this honour.

In addition to the "Best Tourism Experience" award, Bunratty Castle and Folk Park was also shortlisted for "Best Use of Digital Marketing and Social Media." Craggaunowen was also a finalist for "Best Tourism Experience."

Miki Travel Webinar Tourism Ireland

The Miki Travel Tourism Ireland Webinar took place on Wednesday, 4th of December. Melanie Lennon, Sales & Marketing Manager for Clare Tourism West & Northwest presented on the webinar. There were 152 agents registered with 110 attendees online from locations across Asia. The webinar was recorded and sent to everyone who registered with contact details and the Clare Tourism West attractions offering was made available to all agents.

Atlantic Awakening Luxury Experience



French Luxury Travel Buyers at the Cliffs of Moher Experience, with Tourism Ireland representatives from France.

The Cliffs of Moher Experience hosted French luxury travel buyers as part of the Atlantic Awakening Luxury Package. The itinerary included a guided early morning tour of the Cliffs of Moher Experience, led by a local guide, offering an exclusive opportunity to experience the landmark in the quiet and atmospheric early hours. Each participant received a Crafted in Clare Giftbox, featuring locally made products, as a memento of their visit. The package also included a Burren-inspired breakfast at the Cliffs View Café, showcasing the region's culinary offerings. The initiative aimed to highlight the unique, high-end experiences available in Clare to an international audience.

Complimentary Admission to Clare Residents Promotion



The Cliffs of Moher Experience offered complimentary admission to all County Clare residents and holiday homeowners throughout December until January 5, 2025, as part of its Christmas offering. This initiative saw a remarkable response from local residents. Clare residents, as ambassadors for the Cliffs of Moher, had the opportunity to enjoy the visitor centre beautifully adorned with Christmas lights, shop for unique local gifts in the Craft and Gift Store, and experience the exciting new 4D Ledge attraction.



A stunning December sunset at the Cliffs of Moher Experience was recently captured by a member of the on-site staff. Staff members regularly share incredible images like this in the Cliffs of Moher Experience WhatsApp group, showcasing the beauty of the landscape in all its seasonal variations. These daily contributions provide a great content for social media etc.

Bunratty Castle Entertainers stand with ADAPT in 16 Days of Action Campaign



The Bunratty Castle Entertainers are honoured to have participated in ADAPT Domestic Abuse Services' impactful 16 Days of Action campaign. This wonderful campaign raises awareness of gender-based violence and calls for its eradication. The Entertainers joined forces with the Gardai, Traveller Community Health Care Workers, UHL Medical Social Workers, Mary Immaculate Dramatic Arts Society students, and staff from TULSA to shine a light on this critical issue. To donate to this worthwhile cause visit <https://www.idonate.ie/advanced-donation-form/adaptservices>

VISIT CLARE

Nationwide: Coverage of Clare during the 10-year anniversary of the Wild Atlantic Way



Ennis and county-wide featured heavily in this Nationwide production to mark the 10th anniversary of the Wild Atlantic Way. This feature episode reached over 394,000 viewers on primary airing on RTE with further forecasted viewers on digital platforms.

Experience the Magic of Ennis this Christmas



The Visit Clare marketing campaign of our Capital town continued, with 3 paid video campaigns to promote the Magic of Ennis at Christmas time. These ran for a fortnight on the lead up to the turning on of the Christmas lights on Thursday, 28th November and the final video displaying wonderful scenes of Ennis and local business, was scheduled through to Christmas Day. The social media local business cross promotion on Ennis also continues.

Reach: 24,236 focussed on the local domestic market.

Clare Christmas Crackers



Following the invite to the trade for submissions of their Santa Experiences, markets and local offerings to the Clare Christmas Crackers campaign, we are heavily promoting these daily, with a Visit Clare prize, across the social media platforms.

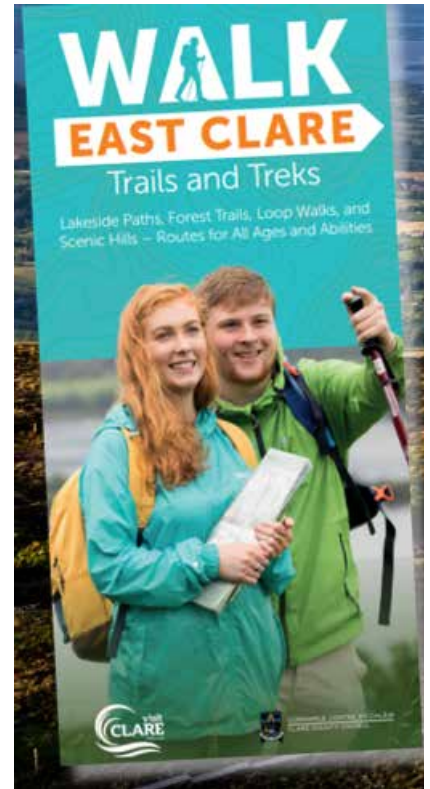
Video promotion: Fly into the Heart of Clare through Shannon Airport



The new 'Fly into the Heart of Clare through Shannon Airport' video has recorded a reach of 192,539 on social media. Paid adverts have also been shown before movies at all cinemas nationwide (80 cinema venues, 560 screens), for 8 full weeks, close to the movies starting, for maximum impact. This campaign exceeded the target audience of 300,000 to nationwide cinemas.

Walking promotion: A top priority for 2025

Walking will be a key focus in the Marketing & Promotion strategy for 2025, beginning with a new East Clare Walking Guide; a dedicated section on the website with walking profiles, video clips and 'Great Idea' Walks.



Alternative Accommodation in Clare



The Tourism Department and Fáilte Ireland have launched a campaign aimed at stimulating interest and potential investment in alternative accommodation offerings in County Clare. Webinars have been developed and are located here to view www.visitclare.ie/register.

The joint initiative follows a comprehensive review of campervan and RV parking facilities within Clare and the completion of the Fáilte Ireland accommodation audit, which identifies the need to deliver additional tourism accommodation across the County.

Landowners and individuals interested in developing alternative accommodation attended a site visit to Beds Of Silk Luxury Glamping in Labasheeda. In addition, Martin O'Brien, Chairperson of Barrow Valley, Graiguenamanagh Camper Park and Hub, visited two potential sites in Clare in order to share learnings on the potential development of Campervan and RV facilities.

KILRUSH LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA, WEST CLARE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The clock on Kilrush Town Hall has recently been refurbished and is now working again, just in time for Santa.



Schedule of Municipal District Works 2024

In the last month the West Clare MD has carried out drainage works along the public road network and some footpath works in Cooraclare.



Storms Bert & Darragh

Crews from the West Clare MD were involved in the cleanup after Storm Bert (Friday 22nd Sat 23rd November) & Storm Darragh (Friday 6th & Saturday 7th December).



Storm Bert - Flooding near Quilty.

Cooraclare Footpath. Drainage - Ballyea.



Drainage - Baltard.



Storm Darragh - near Kilmaley.



Drainage - R474.



Storm Darragh - near Kilrush (left) and near Sliabh Callan.



Drainage - R487.

Recruitment Competitions December

Eligibility Exercises & Desktop Shortlisting

- Assistant Engineer -EE
- Resident Engineer - EE
- Senior Staff Officer - EE
- Administrative Officer - EE
- Staff Officer - EE

Interviews

- Community Safety Co-Ordinator in LCSP (Grade VII)
- Assistant Staff Officer - Final Interviews
- Retained Part-time Firefighters (Shannon, Kilkee & Kilrush)

The following competitions were advertised:

- Assistant Chief Fire Officer
- Acting Senior Engineer
- Environmental Patrol Warden - Confined
- Foreman - West Clare MD -Kilrush - Confined
- Foreman - Ennis MD - Confined
- Foreman - West Clare MD - Ennistymon- Confined
- Retained Driver Mechanic - Confined
- Technician Grade I (Civil, Architectural & Building)

TRAINING PROGRAMMES / WEBINARS / CONFERENCES/ INFORMATION SESSIONS DECEMBER

- LGBTIA+ Inclusion Workshop
- NALA Plain English Webinar - Writing for the Web
- PMDS Line Managers Training

Essential Skillz on-line Courses:

- Health & Safety Induction
- Slips, Trips & Falls

Health & Safety:

- 3-Day First Aid Course
- Abrasive Wheels
- Banksman
- Manual Handling
- Ride on Roller
- Surface Dressing for Operatives

Employee Wellbeing

In December the Wellbeing Hub focus was Financial Health.
Christmas Jumper Day for Cystic Fibrosis Friday 6th December

Unions

The Human Resources Department engages with Unions on various matters.

PROCUREMENT

The following Clare County Council tender competitions were published on eTenders in the period from 25th November- to 31st December inclusive:

Tender Name	RFT ID	Response deadline	Procedure
Single Supplier Framework - Dog Fouling related Supplies	4882435	31/01/2025 12:00	Open
Competitive Dialogue Procedure Pre-Qualification Questionnaire for an Automated Recruitment Software Solution	4838049	17/01/2025 14:00	Competitive dialogue
Establishment of Multi-Party Framework Agreements for General Design Consultancy Services incl Affordable and Social Housing Projects for Clare County Council (Projects Less Than €5m Value)	4751832	15/01/2025 16:00	Restricted

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Town Centre First Supporting and empowering Town Teams

A series of training sessions to assist Town Teams in both Lisdoonvarna and Tulla took place in December with an external trainer under the Town Centre First capacity building measure which was funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development. Such training will provide vital support, advice and templates all geared at empowering Town Teams going forward.



Tulla Town Team Executive



Lisdoonvarna wider Town Team

THRIVE Ennis - Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme

Further citizen and stakeholder engagement sessions were held on Monday, 9th December with great engagement and feedback from schools and members of the public.



Members of the public engaging in citizen and stakeholder engagement session in the Civic Room, Ennis on the evening of 9th December 2024.



Students from Colaiste Muire participating in a stakeholder engagement session at the Civic Room, Ennis on 9th December 2024.



The Council hopes to apply for Thrive Stream 2 funding in March 2025 to bring this project to fruition on the ground. THRIVE is funded by the government under the ERDF Regional Programmes through the Southern Regional Assembly.

FORWARD PLANNING

Kilrush Maritime Training Centre

Work is continuing on the Kilrush Maritime Training Centre Project



to identify a suitable funding stream to cover the remaining funding gap within the project. The Project Team are liaising with Enterprise Ireland in relation to the Smart Regions Fund and discussions on this should conclude in the coming weeks at which point Clare MEZ DAC can decide on the suitability of this scheme for Kilrush Maritime Training Centre.

Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary

The SIFP Steering Group met in Limerick City and County Council on the 6th of December where it was agreed the Environmental Sub-Group, which is chaired by Clare County Council, would progress with the procurement of a specialist consultant to undertake the preparation of a baseline noise map for the Shannon Estuary. It is anticipated that this would be the first step in the process of developing a background anthropogenic noise map against which future developments within the estuary could be benchmarked and assessed against. It is anticipated that as a first step in the process, a noise modelling system will be used to prepare a useable, GIS-based noise map which can inform the future long-term monitoring required in the Shannon Estuary. The preparation of a noise map for the estuary delivers on a key objective of the SIFP and will inform the future plan led approach to the potential development of the ORE sector and the preparation of a DMAP in the future.

Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

The Residential Zoned Land Tax will come into effect on 1st February 2025. This will be based on the RZLT Final Map for 2025 tax liability, which will be published on 31st January 2025, identifying lands to which the RZLT applies.

The RZLT annual review process will also commence on 1st February 2025 with the publication of the Annual Draft Map for 2026.

There will be the opportunity to make written submissions on the Final Map 2025 up until 1st April 2025 when landowners may request a change to the zoning of their land included on the final map. In relation to the Annual Draft Map 2026, landowners and members of the public can make submissions in relation to the inclusion or exclusion of lands on the RZLT map up until 1st April 2025.

The purpose of the RZLT is to activate land that is zoned and serviced for residential or mixed use to increase housing supply and to ensure the regeneration of vacant and idle lands in urban locations. Local authorities are responsible for the preparation of mapping identifying lands considered 'in scope' and the Revenue Commissioners are responsible for the collection of the tax. RZLT is an annual tax charged at 3% of the market value of 'in scope' lands.

Both RZLT maps will be published on the Clare County Council

website along with information on the RZLT and how to make a submission. Maps will also be available for members of the public to view at the Council offices.

CONSERVATION AND BUILT HERITAGE

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	November 2024 up to & including 31/12/2024	Total (Valid) Year to date 2024
No. of Section 57 Declaration Requests received	6	28

HERITAGE

Lisdoonvarna Historic Town Initiative HTI

The Historic Town Initiative for Lisdoonvarna has produced a comprehensive Heritage-Led Regeneration Plan and a Conservation Management Plan of the Spa Wells complex. This work includes a detailed condition assessment of the existing properties, architectural drawings, an outline schedule of essential works, a ten-year management and maintenance plan, ecological appraisal and preliminary budget estimates. A Business Case to support the Heritage-Led Regeneration Plan and the Conservation Management Plan and a Topographical Survey of the Spa Wells complex is also being undertaken as part of this work.

Clare Cillíní Survey

142 Cillíní have been identified in Clare, spread across the county. This apparently is a remarkable number when compared with most counties.

Cillíní (also known as Kyles, Kyleens, and Cealluraigh) are informal communal graveyards, principally used for interring unbaptised infants, from the 16th to the 20th centuries.

It was believed that unbaptised children (stillborn babies or unbaptised neonates that died soon after birth) could not go to Heaven. While these children were not considered sinners by the church, but because they were unbaptised were not be treated as members of the Church. The Catholic Church's response to this dilemma was the notion of limbo, a state which offered respite but not in the presence of God; a sad shadowy

place described in Irish as *dorchadas gan phian* – darkness without pain.

Cillíní date predominantly from the post-medieval period (mid-sixteenth century) to the mid-twentieth century, though a number of medieval examples have also been recorded. Still-born children, strangers and cases of suicide were considered ineligible for burial in consecrated ground.



Map of the known distribution of Cillíní sites in Clare and an individual Cillíní site.

Current Heritage Funding

1. The 2025 Historic Towns Initiative Scheme

The 2025 Historic Towns Initiative scheme has now opened for applications. The Historic Towns Initiative 2025 aims to provide support to historic towns engaged in a programme of heritage-led regeneration. More details can be found on the Heritage Council website at the following link: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/funding/historic-towns-initiative-2025>

2. The Community Monument Fund for the care and conservation of archaeological monuments was announced before Christmas and deadline for completed applications is the 31st of January.

3. Heritage Organisation Support Fund 2025 The Heritage Organisation Support Fund (HOSF), which provides financial support to not-for-profit NGOs working in the heritage sector, is now open for applications.

4. The Heritage Stewardship Fund, which provides financial support for staff in local authorities, state agencies and educational institutions with responsibility for heritage programmes, is now open for applications. The scheme's primary target is staff working in public sector organisations whose core remit may not be fully focused on heritage, but whose work has an impact on heritage. Application to be with the Heritage Council by Wednesday 15th January, 2025 at 5pm.



BIODIVERSITY

Local Biodiversity Action Fund Project: Clare Barn Owl Nest Box Scheme

In 2024, funding from the Local Biodiversity Action Fund (administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service) and Clare County Council was used to carry out monitoring of 16 barn owl nest boxes. In the summer of 2023, one year after the installation of the initial 16 nest boxes, 7 of the nest boxes that were surveyed were occupied, with four having breeding pairs, a remarkable return for less than a year after their installation. Of the 20 nest boxes installed for the scheme to date (four additional nest boxes were installed in early 2024), ten have thus far been used by Barn Owls (50% occupancy rate). Of the boxes in use, seven have been used for nesting by Barn Owls. Two nest boxes that were installed at the end of February 2024 were used for nesting during the 2024 breeding season, thereby showing the high demand for suitable nesting sites for Barn Owls, particularly in West Clare.

It is clear that the Barn Owl population of County Clare is continuing to increase, with a near doubling of the number of known active sites over a three year period in the county. It is

also evident that suitable nesting sites may be limiting population growth in some parts of the county, such as in West Clare, as evidenced by the rapid uptake of newly installed nest boxes and the high proportion of occupied nest boxes that have thus far been installed. This part of the county has areas of suitable foraging habitat with large areas of bog and non-intensive grasslands, however mature trees with cavities for nesting are lacking due to the exposed nature of the landscape, and derelict buildings are limited (with several derelict buildings already occupied by Barn Owls).

11 additional nest boxes are currently being installed through the 'Return to Nature Clare Church Biodiversity Project'. Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer is working with BirdWatch Ireland's Alan McCarthy and John Lusby and local farmers throughout the county. These nest boxes will be monitored for occupancy in 2025.



Barn owl nest boxes installed during December 2024 as part of the 'Return to Nature Clare Church Biodiversity Project'.

LBAF Project: Survey of the locations and extent of rare, threatened and characteristic plants of the Burren

Funding provided by the Local Biodiversity Action Fund (administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service) and Clare County Council was used to support surveys for plants in the Burren and Aran Islands. This LBAF project aims to continue to survey and determine the current status of rare, threatened and characteristic plants of the Burren and the Aran Islands. Many of these species are listed on Flora Protection Order (FPO) and red data books. Details of the date recorded, abundance, location, threats and conservation status in both local and national contexts has been recorded for additional species in 2024. Over 30 species were recorded in 2024. A database was set up in 2021 and has been added to in 2022, 2023 and 2024. This database is available for viewing on the www.burrenbotanist.ie website. Results from this survey are available to the general public and interested parties as an educational resource, highlighting the importance of these plants and the need for ongoing monitoring to secure their conservation for future generations. Habitat and close-up photographs have been recorded for each plant, images are also available on Instagram @burren_botanist.



Dropwort (*Filipendula vulgaris*) recorded during the flora surveys (Photo Credit: Sinead Keane).

Tidy Towns Biodiversity Presentation

On the 10th of December Clare County Council's Biodiversity Officer gave a presentation to Tidy Towns groups consisting of Ennis, Quin, Clarecastle, Kilrush, Parteen, Doonbeg, Kilmurry, Shannon and others at the Buttermarket Building in Drumbiggle. The presentation covered a range of topics including potential biodiversity enhancement actions that communities can undertake, community biodiversity action plans, funding opportunities to support community biodiversity action plans, citizen science projects that community groups can take part in such as BirdWatch Ireland's Irish Wetland Bird Survey (IWeBS) and the Irish Garden Bird Survey. Information was provided on resources and identifying key partners in the community to deliver biodiversity actions including farmers, schools, church grounds, GAA clubs, sport complexes, etc. and highlighting rare species by profiling species through murals and school talks. The biodiversity presentation was delivered along with other talks including Clare County Council's Rural Development Officers, Climate Action Team and Councillor Mary Howard.



DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The table below shows the number of planning applications processed during the month of December, together with the end of year figures. Sixty seven percent of planning applications received in December were received by electronic means.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS	December	2024
No. of planning applications received	106	1112
No. of Planning Decisions made	87	925
No. of decisions notified by An Bord Pleanála	3	55
No. of pre-planning enquiries received	16	268
No. of Section 5 applications	7	99
No. of Section 97 Exemption Cert applications (in respect of Part V of the Planning & Dev Act 2000)	0	37
Submissions received regarding Compliance	19	258

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

December Statistics (23rd November to 31st December 2024 inclusive)

New Complaints Received	18
New Files Opened	8
Files Closed	3
Warning Letters Issued	8
Enforcement Notices Issued	2
Legal Proceedings	3

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

- Mentoring:** LEO Clare continue to experience a high demand for mentoring support throughout the year, primarily in the areas of Starting a Business, Finance, Digital Marketing, Export Development and Brexit. At year end, approx. 330 mentoring sessions had been assigned by LEO Clare.
- Training:** In December, LEO Clare finalised several training programmes for 2024 including management development, start your own business & bookkeeping programmes. Over 1,320 people participated in training courses provided to businesses in Clare in 2024.



Presentation on biodiversity actions and funding sources to local Tidy Towns groups.

Loop Head Tourism Networking Event

On the 4th of December a presentation to businesses at the Loop Head Networking Event held in Kilkee was given by the Biodiversity Officer. It covered how businesses could get involved in promoting biodiversity in a sustainable way and sign up to initiatives such as the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and the guidance document 'Businesses: Actions to Help Pollinators'. The presentation also covered enhancement actions for red-listed bird species such as swift and barn owl and actions undertaken at visitor destination sites such as Loop Head and Vandeleur Gardens, Biodiversity Conservation Plans for visitor attraction sites, business investment into nature such as ReFarm Project, earth check, outreach initiatives to promote biodiversity including the Clare Wetland Story Map, murals on buildings to champion and raise awareness of rare protected species in the Kilkee local area (e.g. Chough). The presentation also covered tourism and business-related actions outlined in the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 (in prep) and 'Business for Biodiversity' online resource.



The Loop Head Tourism Networking Event

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Productivity Supports:** With rising prices affecting all businesses, LEO Clare has various productivity supports to assist businesses offset higher input costs. In 2024, LEO Clare approved 19 Green for Business applications, 15 Energy Efficiency Grant applications, 6 LEAN applications & 11 Digital for Business applications.

December Evaluation Committee Meeting

The Local Enterprise Office Evaluation and Approvals Committee (EVAC) held their sixth evaluation meeting of 2024 on 3rd December. Four projects were brought forward comprising 3 Business Expansion grants and 1 Feasibility grant businesses were approved €134k in funding. In 2024, 27 enterprises availed of grant support totaling €656k.

LEO Clare Export Accelerator Programme

This year, LEO Clare piloted an Export Accelerator Programme in which 6 local Clare businesses took part. The programme

concluded in December with businesses attending a post-programme assessment workshop where the individual businesses presented their export related support needs. All 6 businesses were successful in winning new business directly from this pilot programme.

Women in Business Networking Event

Local Enterprise Office Clare hosted a Women in Business networking event at the Inn at Dromoland on 11th December. The keynote speaker was Geraldine Jones. Geraldine is the founder and CE of Skin Formulas, an award-winning Skin and Body care brand based in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. Geraldine has been at the helm from the brands initial concept and launch in 2019 and has established Skin Formulas as one of the leading Irish skincare brands today with over 160 stockists offering their products to customers. The event was attended by approx. 30 local female entrepreneurs and was deemed highly successful.



Deirdre Keating & Helen Pilkington, LEO Clare with Geraldine Jones & female entrepreneurs from across Co Clare

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Property Transactions and Conveyancing

The Table below shows the number of property transactions completed by Property Management Unit up to 19th December, the activity in 2024 and the corresponding figures for 2023.

The property market in the County continues to be quite active, albeit that there is a shortage of supply, particularly in the residential sector. The Property Management unit continues to assist many solicitors acting for their clients on issues associated with title, boundaries, old leasehold folios etc. We are also processing a number of applications for first registration of Council property and assessing the various properties we own for correct title.

Transaction type	December 2024	Year to date 2024	Full year 2023
Lease / Sub Lease of Property / Building	0	6	7
Licence to use property / building	0	14	7
Grazing Agreement for Lands	0	22	17
Deed of Transfer signed	1	9	15
Contract for Sale / acquisition signed	0	1	1

Deed of Right of Way / Wayleave signed	0	6	2
Deed of Rectification / Variation signed	2	4	4
Allotment Agreements signed	40	40	39

Shannon Allotments

Due to the recent storm, repairs will be carried out to fences and posts in the Shannon Allotments. The work being done by the allotment holders even during the winter period is really good and the Allotment Association works closely with the Property Team on any issues that may arise from time to time.

No. of files closed / property removed from Derelict Sites Register	1	26	15
No. of Notices served to Compulsorily Purchase derelict sites (CPO) (see note below)	0	7	10
No of Vesting Orders signed	0	5	5

Compulsory Acquisition of Derelict Sites (CPO)

In 2023, The Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government launched a CPO activation programme for local authorities which set targets for CPOs for each local authority. We had commenced a number of CPO's in 2022 and the Table below sets out the status of those CPO's commenced in 2022, 2023 and to date in 2024.

DERELICT SITES

The Derelict sites team are currently dealing with 274 properties that are considered derelict. We continue to have very high levels of activity and engagement with owners and their representatives. 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 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 a consistent number of planning applications for property refurbishment /extension and it is clear from driving around the County the level of work ongoing 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.

The table below provides a snapshot of the activity in December and the comparative figures for the full year 2023. The engagement with owners has proved very positive and helpful in addressing issues.

Derelict Sites	December 2024	Year to date 2024	Full Year 2023
No. of new files opened	7	33	28
No. of Section 8(2) Notices issued - Intention to enter site on Derelict Sites Register	0	36	41
No. of Section 8(7) Notices issued - Entry of site onto Derelict Sites Register	3	43	24
No. of Section 11 Notices issued - Measures required to render the site non-derelict	0	27	6

Year	No of CPOs commenced	Current Status
2022	6	3 – CPOs completed and property transferred to Housing for refurbishment works. Two of these are now completed and Part VIII permission has been got for the other property.
		1 – CPO completed and sale closed in August 2024- New owner has commenced works
		2 - works have commenced and CPO parked for now
2023	10	6 - At Vesting Stage and lodged in Taillte Éireann
		1 – CPO completed and property was sold at auction in October 2024 and approved by elected members in December 2024
		1 - Title received in December 2024 and following clear out, will be on the open market in Spring 2025
		1 - Objection received and is under appeal. Further work is needed on this one
2024	7	1 – Works are being commenced
		5 - At Vesting Stage and lodged in PRA
		1 - CPO commenced and has been appealed to An Bord Pleanála
		1 - Objection received and An Bord Pleanála has rejected not confirmed the CPO order. The CPO process will be re-commenced in January 2025.

In addition, the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund will provide funding for CPO's on a rolling basis in the town of Ennis with the objective being that these properties would then

be sold on the open market. A particular emphasis will be on properties that have potential for residential use. One such CPO is with the PRA for registration and works have recently been completed in order to safeguard the property in the interim. A second CPO commenced in August 2024 and has been lodged with Tailte Éireann. A particular focus on properties in the town of Ennis has resulted in a number of properties coming to market or making plans for site development.

Derelict Site Levy

Determination of valuations on the derelict sites which are on the Derelict Sites Register commenced in 2023 and notices have been issued to 18 property owners in 2024. Threewo owners have appealed the valuation to the Valuation Tribunal and while decisions are awaited on two appeals, one appeal by an owner has recently been rejected. The levy is an annual levy while the property remains on the Derelict Sites Register and amounts to 7% of the value of the property, on an annual basis. Assessment of valuations and billing of the levy will be further progressed during 2025 and it is intended that when all properties on the Derelict sites Register will be valued for the purposes of billing

the levy. This levy will go towards the cost of billing and collection of the levy and resourcing of derelict sites function.

The Table below shows the levels of activity on the Derelict sites levy as of 20th December 2024.

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

VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANT - FOR DERELICT AND VACANT PROPERTIES

The level of approvals of the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant by Clare County Council is at €19.4 million as at 17th December 2024 (321 grant applications approved), with further approvals due to issue. This is a very significant investment in housing in County Clare and the work ongoing around the county on renovations and extensions is very visible. The Vacant Homes Team continues to advise applicants on all elements of the scheme and is available to meet with individuals to take them through the process.

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

A number of walk-in advice clinics were held in September and November with over 50 property owners coming in to meet the Vacant Homes Team for advice regarding making their applications, information required etc. These were held in Ennis, Miltown Malbay, Scariff and Sixmilebridge. Any applicant can meet with the Vacant Homes Team on Mondays in Áras Contae and Chláir by appointment.

The breakdown of Grant approvals by Municipal District is shown in the Table below.

Amount approved by Local Electoral Area (incl those with grant funding paid out)			
Local Electoral Area	No of applications approved	Total amount approved (€)	% of total number of Grants Approved
Kilrush LEA	115	€7.1 million	37%
Ennistymon LEA	63	€3.9 million	20%
Ennis LEA	49	€2.8 million	14%
Killaloe LEA	58	€3.5 million	18%
Shannon LEA	36	€2.1 million	11%
Grand Total	321	€19.4million	100%

We continue to have high levels of enquiries and applications for the Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, with 488 applications received since 2022 to date. We are in the top eight local authorities in the Country in relation to application numbers. Our response time for initial assessment of new applications is generally four weeks.

At present, we are dealing with many of the house owners who have completed the works and are making their claims for payment. The final site inspections are organised and we have completed 78 final inspections in 2024. To date, we have processed 66 payments of the grant amounting to €3.775 million and there are a number of claims for payments on hands . The

level of claims for payment is increasing every day and the Team work closely with owners on this process, which includes legal and financial work.

Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan.

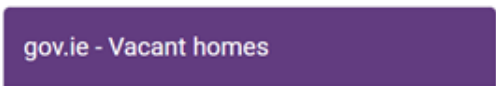
A new loan has been launched by Government called the Local Authority Purchase and Ren-ovation Loan. It is a government-backed mortgage and loan that helps people to buy and renovate a derelict or uninhabitable home. The loan is for first-time buyers, and ‘fresh start applicants’, who have been unable to get funding from commercial lenders. It is an extension of the Local Authority Home Loan. The applicant must qualify for the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant to get this loan. The Housing Department will administer this loan and work closely with the Vacant Homes Team.

Other Points of Information

1. Changes to the grant were announced recently to be in line with the *Energy Performance of Buildings Directive* (EU/2024/1275). In order to meet the timeline in Article 17(15), the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant will no longer fund the installation of stand-alone boilers powered by fossil fuels, for new applications from 1st December 2024. This is being notified to all new applicants

2. The breakdown of applications between urban and rural areas has remained consistent - 56% of applications are for rural areas of the county and 44% for properties in towns and villages.
3. To date, 71% of applications are for properties to be used as principal private residence (333 properties) and the balance of 29% are for rent. This has remained fairly consistent in recent months.
4. To date 20% of applications have been either withdrawn or refused. This can arise if the purchase of a property falls through, if the property has not been vacant for the two year period or where proof of eligibility criteria is not possible. We assist applicants on all elements of the application process and are receiving positive feedback in this regard.

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.



ENNIS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Even though December is a relatively short work month, none the less, it was an extremely busy time for the hardworking Ennis MD Team. The Christmas Lights and Street Decorations were upgraded and improved this year and as well as planning and presenting a superb Festive season programme of events, there were many other works and projects progressed across the Municipal District during December. Some of the key ones include the following:

Christmas in Ennis



The Ennis MD team scheduled and facilitated the ‘Christmas in Ennis’ programme of activities which included street entertainment, events at Glor and the Santa train, ensuring fun and frolics for the four weekends leading up the Christmas. The primary objective was to contribute to the town’s vitality, increase footfall, leading to a boost for the retail and hospitality sectors. Secondly these local cultural events had the aim of fostering a sense of community, connecting people with each other and the town, thus increasing dwell time. The team also leveraged social media to promote the town and communicate

the message that Ennis is open for business.

Local talent was witnessed with great street performances from the Ennis Ukulele Group, St. Michaels Villas’ Choir and Comhaltas. The two festive events in Glor which Clare County Council selected and subsidised were sold out. The Santa Train was a big hit with full carriages of adults and kids navigating the streets of Ennis and engaging with pedestrians along the way for two weekends in December. Local businesses responded well to the ‘Christmas Window Display’ competition which was run in collaboration with the Clare Champion.





was installed in O’Connell Square which enabled fantastic Christmas imagery to be projected onto a large wall opposite which added greatly to the festive atmosphere. Ennis MD, in association with our colleagues in the Councils Gardening Section, planted the unfinished public realm planters and installed lighting to Christmas trees in key locations. Our crews completed all types of enhancing works throughout the town over the Christmas period which greatly added to the atmosphere and was hugely welcomed by Business people and Visitors alike.



Christmas Lighting

As mentioned above, Ennis MD added additional facets to the festive lighting offering this Christmas. Over 500 meters of new festoon lighting was purchased and installed to light O’Connell Street with two new lighting to the 10 meter high Christmas trees to the Abbey Street carpark and Market roundabout. A new 6-meter-high Christmas tree provided a focal to the entrance into the Christmas market area and town via the Temple Gate Hotel Plaza, with additional lighting installed to the Museum and hotel buildings to this area. Picket fencing around the tree and a mulched area proved a social media location, where many festive family photos were taken. With the consent of two key property owners, a projector



Storms Bert & Darragh

Ennis MD crews dealt with two significant storm events during late November and early December. Storm Bert was a significant rainfall event which led to flooding of local roads especially within the Kilnamona area. Storm Darragh which arrived 2 weeks later included a significant 'red' wind event which felled many trees throughout the district. Both events occurred during weekends with many outdoors workers making themselves available to assist and react to the numerous issues which arose. Crews assisted with road closures, the removal of trees, branches and debris and the clean-up operation in the aftermath of both events. The crews also provided support to An Garda Síochána and the Fire Service during these severe weather events. The intervention of Ennis MD crews ensured roads were promptly reopened and the safety of motorists, pedestrians and other road users was not compromised.



Co - Creating Works 2024

The Co-Creating Projects for 2024 came to completion in December with the installation of the raised courtesy crossings and line marking. Ennis MD has now completed 10 of these junction improvement schemes during 2024 in various locations throughout Ennis and have received positive feedback from the public in terms of the increased pedestrian connectivity that these junctions have created.



Doora Village - Traffic Calming and Footpath

The new traffic calming and footpath scheme at Doora Village was completed during the past month. The works involved installing new drainage and the construction of a new footpath from Noughval Drive to the pedestrian entrance of the church on the School Road. The works have resulted in providing greater accessibility for patrons to the church grounds and will reduce the speed of traffic passing through the village and improve the overall safety of the School road junction.



Illegal Dumping Clean Up's

Having been brought to the attention of Ennis MD, our small works crew carried out clean ups of multiple incidences of illegal dumping in and around Ennis. These areas included Cloughleigh, Bridge View Estate, Parnell Street and Golf Links Road. Each incident was reported to Clare County Council Environment Department for further investigation. Also, along with our colleagues in the Housing and Environment Section, we arranged a pre Christmas clean up of the area resulting from an illegal encampment in a Residential area of town.



Trip Hazard & Footpath Repair Works

Trip hazard repair works were carried out in multiple locations around Ennis Town Centre. Areas repaired included Abbey Street Carpark and the Lower Market Area. Other defect repair works to public footways included locations at Dun Na Ri, Fernhill, Ivy Hill & Dalcassian Park in Ennis. These works included surface water infrastructure repair works and full bay concrete repair works to a number of the footways in the area. Road defect repair works were also carried out on the Kilrush Road in Ennis during this time.



Community Clean Up's

Related to the above, Ennis MD, along with local residents groups and Ennis Tidy Towns assisted with a community clean up of the Holywell Estate Ennis. Similar community clean ups have been carried out in recent weeks in Abbey Court and the Hawthorns estate in Ennis.



Ennis Flood Relief Upgrade Works - Pump Stations

Ennis MD, in conjunction with the OPW, carried out upgrades to the pumps servicing the Island Car Park, Ennis. This pump station facilitates the surface water management for the catchment that includes Circular Road, Cusack Road and the various Housing estates adjacent to this area including Hermitage, Cloughleigh etc.

Other upgrade works include electrical and filter maintenance of the Woodquay pump station and also the replacement of the Screens in the Francis Street Pumping Station.

Other Key Strategic works

In addition to the aforementioned, Ennis MD staff continue to work on the Town Bus Project, the Area Based Transport Strategy and also, on a cross-directorate basis with our colleagues and the various Government Departments in advancing a number of other works throughout the Town and Environs. These include the Ennis Public Realm Project, the LIHAF Access Road project and the Tulla Road and Clare Road Active Travel Projects. We also work closely with our DAC colleagues in developing the ambitious plans outlined in the Ennis 2040 Economic & Spatial Strategy, with the 4 main proposals currently being progressed under the Strategy being Francis Street, Post Office Field Masterplan, Abbey Street (Riverside proposal) and Harvey's Quay.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

Roadworks Programme and Operations

The 2025 Schedule of Municipal District Works (Annual Roadworks Programme) will be developed as soon as the TII, DoT and NTA grant allocations are received.

Strategic Transportation

Active Travel	<p>The following is a brief overview of the activities within the Active Travel office:</p> <p>Ennis Local Transport Plan: Systra Consulting Engineers have presented the Final Draft of the Ennis LTP to Clare County Councils Planning Section, Ennis MD and the Active Travel Section for comment.</p> <p>Limerick Road (incl. St. Flannans Drive) Cycle Scheme: The final report on the Environmental Screening and Road Safety Audit has now been received. The project has been screened out so no further environmental reports are required. The Road Safety Audit report brought up a number of considerations which have now been addressed with the consultant. Further comment and clarification are required from the NTA prior to submission of the final Preliminary Design Report. It is proposed that a public consultation will take place during the month of January.</p> <p>Ardnacrusha to Athlunkard Bridge: A site walkover meeting was held with the consultant recently. This identified a number of challenging constraints and in particular the section from Barrys shop in Ardnacrusha to the car dealership at the junction of the R464/R463. A number of options will need to be developed for this section.</p> <p>Safe Routes To School program: Holy Family National School Phase 2: Phase 2 of this scheme recently received Section 38 approval. The project can now move to the detailed design and procurement phase. It is anticipated that construction will begin in Q1 of 2025 subject to funding being made available by the NTA.</p> <p>Bridge Permeability Project: The National Transport Authority funded an assessment of 11 bridges throughout Clare. This assessment, Clare Bridges- Pedestrian and Cyclist Connectivity, has now been completed. It is recommended, that if any of these connectivity measures are to be progressed then they should be treated as individual schemes and as part of a wider active travel measure for that area.</p> <p>Connecting & Co-creating Ennis: The proposed measures for 2024 have now been completed, as part of this multiannual project. 10 uncontrolled raised crossings were completed in 2024 in the areas of Marian Avenue, Cloughleigh Road, Circular Road, Sandfield Park, College Road, Cottage Gardens and Greendale.</p> <p>Ennis National School: Construction is underway on this scheme with expected completion by the first quarter of 2025.</p>
Public Lighting	<p>Electric Skyline, the Maintenance Contractor for Clare County Council continue to work on the repair of existing and new faults in the public lighting network across the county. The Public Lighting Section continues to liaise with Electric Skyline and ESB Networks to try to progress repairs at the earliest opportunity and also work to secure additional resources where possible.</p> <p>Storm Darragh impacted upon the repairs to public lighting in the second week of December with a stand down of ESB Networks crews imposed on Public Lighting due to emergency repairs to the ESB Network. Whilst all parties endeavour to undertake repairs at the earliest opportunity, weather events such as Storm Darragh impact significantly upon repair times.</p>


For the benefit of Councillors, public lighting faults can be reported via Local Authority Identification (<https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/roads-and-transport/road-maintenance-issues/report-a-broken-streetlight>).

The PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project) continues with the retrofitting of existing luminaires to LED in the Shannon MD, with retrofitting works also having commenced in the Ennis MD this week. 421 Luminaires have been retrofitted to date to the 11th December. Survey Works in West Clare continue ahead of the commencement of retrofitting works in 2025 in the area.

It should be noted that the presence of the PLEEP retrofit team in Clare has a knock effect on the repairs to existing lights. Due to Health & Safety requirements, it is necessary to maintain an exclusion zone between Public Lights crews working on network lights and hence it is not possible for work crews to work simultaneously in the one area. Clare County Council are working with the PLEEP Team and Electric Skyline to maximise output of both work crews



Road Design Office

Project	Progress Update
<p>Bridge Rehabilitation Programme</p>	<p>Rehabilitation work has been completed on 18 Bridges across the Municipal Districts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rathmeehan Bridge, • Rinnagonnaght Bridge, • Miltown Bridge, • Ardclony Bridge, • Derry Bridge, • Formerla Bridge, • Aughyvackeen Bridge, • St Coelmans Well Bridge, • Bunshoon Bridge, • Tooreen Bridge, • Clondreddan Bridge, • Lissanair Bridge, • Kylea Bridge, • Willbrook Bridge, • Rapepark Bridge, • Doon Bridge, • Breavagh, • Blackweir. <p>Shragh Bridge is at design/tender stage and will form part of the 2025 bridge rehabilitation programme.</p> 

<p>Safety Improvement Works on Regional and Local Roads</p>	<p>Low Cost Safety Schemes in 2024:</p> <p>Safety Works have been completed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R471 Bothar Mor, Shannon • R-352 Bodyke Village • L-4118 Gaurus, Ennis, Co. Clare • R-478-64/L5142 Lough South Doolin • R-481-17/L5180 Ballybreen Kilfenora • L-4608 Rosslevan, Ennis • R-471/L-3046 Harrold's cross • L3312 Bealach Buí • R474/L8344 Connolly • R478 Moher Hill • L1056 Curraghdoo, Kilshanny <p>A safety works project to improve sight lines at Johny Macs Cross, Querrin has commenced and will be completed in 2025 subject to the availability of funding.</p> <p>Specific Improvement Grant Ogonolloe €100k:</p> <p>Works completed by the MD included carriageway narrowing, build outs , enhanced bus stops and a pedestrian crossing.</p> <p>Construction works are substantially completed and further works will be carried out in 2025 subject to the availability of funding.</p>
<p>Default Speed Limits</p>	<p>Default Speed Limit Update:</p> <p>The MDs are continuing to erect new 60kph speed limit signs on the local rural road network in advance of the implementation date of the 7th February 2025.</p> <p>More detailed advice regarding the introduction of the 30kph urban default speed limits is awaited from the DoT.</p>

TII Safety Improvement

<p>HD17</p>	<p>N85 Lahinch Road Shanaway Junction Improvements & Pedestrian Crossings</p> <p>The Preliminary Design has been approved in the TII Departures Portal. The statutory consent process for a mini roundabout and two raised pedestrian crossings will commence.</p> <p>N85 Clareabbey Roundabout</p> <p>Feasibility & Options report has been approved at Gateway 1. Clare County Council are awaiting formal approval from TII to make the appointment of engineering consultants to develop a preliminary & detailed design for pedestrian and cyclist facilities at this location.</p> <p>Minsters Place, Kilkee</p> <p>Clare County Council have requested funding from TII to advance this project to Part 8 & construction stages.</p>
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Health and Safety



The Health and Safety Team have completed their Annual Schedule of Safety Inspections, Safety Statement and Risk Assessment Reviews.

The following top-level H&S objectives approved by the Safety Management Committee in March 2024 have been completed;

- ISO 45001 Accreditation received in the Physical Directorate and Housing Department
- Development of a Work Programme to complete DSE Assessments for staff that are outstanding
- Continued Focus on digitalisation of elements of the Occupational Health & Safety Management System in order to improve efficiency, effectiveness and minimise paperwork through utilisation of the following;
 - ProWorks
 - ArcGis
 - Meta Compliance
 - Online E-learning Modules

The Health & Safety Team will now commence preparation of the Annual Safety Report 2024 in order to develop Top Level H&S Objectives for 2025. PMO update for Monthly Report for January 2025 Meeting

CAPITAL DELIVERY / PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

<p>Doolin Pier Visitor Services Building</p>	<p>Following a review of area needs, the council have briefed Elected members in recent weeks. The immediate priority is to improve local access, and the MD are progressing construction of footpaths between Fisher Street and Doolin Pier, thereby ensuring that pedestrian facilities are in place along this busy route.</p>
<p>Ennis Public Realm Regeneration (Project B)</p>	<p>With the switch-on of the Christmas lights, and the opening up of the newly paved streets, the town has its first opportunity to fully experience the benefits of the investment made to date. The contractor has fully demobilised for the festive season, and the full expanse of shared space streetscape has been unveiled along O’Connell Street, and at High Street.</p>  <p>The newly installed raised planters have been extensively planted and decorated, and under the warm glow of Christmas lighting, the impact and benefits resulting from the months of intense construction activity are clear to be experienced and enjoyed. The high-quality Public Realm design ensures that a shared surface multi-modal pavement is in place throughout the town centre. An intensive works programme will resume in January on O’Connell Street with civils and paving crews being deployed to new works areas at O’Connell Street (Cathedral area) and O’Connell Square. O’Connell Street provides a vision of what is yet to come for other areas of the town centre (Barrack Square and Street, O’Connell Square, and Bank Place), all due for completion in 2025.</p> 
<p>Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake’s Corner)</p>	<p>The Judicial Review process is ongoing.</p>
<p>Killaloe Bridge, Bypass & R494 Upgrade</p>	<p>Progress has been steady over the past month despite some adverse weather.</p> <p>Major Deliverable achieved: Opening of Killaloe Bypass to the public on 18th Dec. 2024</p> <p>Major Milestones achieved in recent weeks include: Re-opening the R496, Pavement Wearing course laid from Birdhill to Lough Derg Equestrian Centre, Pavement wearing course laid to main bridge and pavement binder layer laid to Roolagh Roundabout.</p> <p>Upcoming Milestone: Removal of temp. traffic management on the R494 and opening of the new road to two-way traffic (from Birdhill to Tipp Co Co Picnic Park) by Fri. 20th Dec. 2024.</p>

Killaloe Bypass Section

Kincora: Roundabout and Bypass substantially complete. Accom. Wks. to CPO 101 (Ballyvalley House) nearing completion.



Main Cut to Hill Road: Substantially complete.
Hill Road to Creeveroe Road: Substantially complete.



Creeveroe Road to Shantraud: Substantially complete.
Shantraud Roundabout: Substantially complete.

Shannon Bridge Crossing Link

Shantraud to Clarisford Junction: Pavement binder layer laid.
Clarisford to West Embankment: Pavement binder layer laid.

Shannon Bridge

Pavement wearing course laid. Installation of movement joints completed. Viewing gallery doors and stair installed. Stainless steel handrails nearing completion. Architectural lighting complete. Earthworks to western embankment in progress.



R494 Upgrade

Section 7 (South of Rail Bridge): Practically complete.



Section 7 (North of Rail Bridge): Mainline practically complete. Watermain and road re-surfacing to local tertiary road outstanding. Accom. Works to Shannonside and adjacent properties nearing completion.

Section 6: Mainline practically complete. Accom. Wks. nearing completion.

Section 5 (Chainage 1350-1750): Culvert installed. Kerbs slip formed. Pavement wearing course laid.



Section 4 (Chainage 950-1350): Accom. Works to Fort Henry Estate in progress. Culvert installed. Land drain installed. Kerbs slip formed. Pavement wearing course laid.



Section 3 (Chainage 650-950): Pavement wearing course laid.

Sections 2: Approx 50% of Pavement wearing course laid. Accom. Works in progress. Road open to two-way traffic.

Section 1 Roolagh Roundabout: Testing and Commissioning Works to Pumping Station continue. Accom. Wks at an advanced stage. Roundabout constructed. Pavement basecourse and binder layers laid. R496 reopened.



Kilmastulla Bridge

Practically complete.

Rail Bridge

Practically complete.



RW03

Practically complete.

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


The Archaeological testing tenders have been assessed and the contract has been awarded. The licence for these works will now be applied for to the DAU and works will be scheduled in early 2025. The Planning application is currently with An Bord Pleanála. Liaison with property owners for the necessary temporary and permanent land acquisitions is ongoing.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)	<p>The tender for the infrastructural element of the scheme was published on eTenders on the 25th of October with a submission return date extended to the 6th of December 2024. Seven submissions were received and RPS are now completing a tender evaluation and recommendation for the preferred contractor. Currently over 70% of the land parcels required for the road have been acquired/ agreed terms including the parcel of lands where the first approx. 225 housing units will be delivered. There is positive engagement with all remaining landowners, and to that regard we are hopeful of reaching terms by agreement shortly. Discussions continue with the Department of Housing / LIHAF Management Committee. Work has commenced on a revised Grant Agreement which will enable us to move forward with the Infrastructure & Housing delivery in 2025.</p>
N19 Shannon Airport Access Road	<p>The design team continue to work towards the finalisation of the Statutory Documentation required as part of the proposed planning application for submission to An Bord Pleanála in 2025. As part of Phase 3 – Design & Environmental Evaluation, the project team have recently published an update for the project which identifies additional environmental mitigation measures of low canopy tree planting between Fergus Road and Drumgeely Road. Updated drawings are available at the below link with hardcopy maps on display at Clare County Council’s Head Office in Ennis and Shannon Municipal District Office. This Update is also available to view on the project website www.shannon-access.ie</p> <p>Positive 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 www.shannon-access.ie</p>
Remediation of sites containing ACM	<p>A Planning Application in respect of the remediation of the subject sites is currently being prepared, and will be submitted in coming months, with a view to approval in 2025. The sites continue to be routinely monitored and maintained as required by Council staff in accordance with approach following as agreed with the EPA.</p>
Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme	<p>RPS are currently updating the Options Report and Buildability Report following CCC’s review. Works on the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) Chapters are ongoing. Topographical surveys and wintering bird surveys will continue into early 2025. The Maritime Area Consent (formerly Foreshore License) application has been issued to the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA).</p>
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 1: Kilrush to Kilkee)	<p>The Project Agronomist and Project Liaison Officers, will be in contact with landowners / farmers to arrange meetings on site to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development in line with the ‘The Code of Best Practice for National and Regional Greenways 2021’. This engagement will commence early in the new year following the Christmas period. The design of the route has been developed in detail to permit agreement of accommodation works with affected landowners to be advanced.</p>
West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 2: Ennis to Ennistymon)	<p>Work continues on development of the third non-statutory public consultation on the ‘Emerging Preferred Route Corridor’. Public Consultation No. 3 expected Q2 2025, subject to peer review and TII approval process. Preparation of the Options Assessment Report well underway.</p>
West Clare Railway Greenway (Sections 3 & 4: Ennistymon to Miltown Malbay to Moyasta)	<p>The design team continues to develop potential route options to allow potential route corridors to be put on public display in the second non-statutory public consultation. A Constraints Study Report is being finalised with a view to holding the second public consultation in Q1 / Q2 2025.</p>
Other Greenway Proposals	<p>No update this month.</p>

General Design Office

Vandeleur Gardens Yard Wall and Storage Container	Revised Part 8 planning application to include greenhouse restoration being prepared to be submitted early December 2024. Fire Safety Certificate for storage container completed and submitted to building control November 2024.
Town and Village Renewal Scheme	Parteen - Contractors works are complete, electrical sub-contractor works to public lighting columns complete. Awaiting public lighting connection by ESB networks.



FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL SECTION

Training Courses

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service personnel underwent a number of training courses during December, including Emergency Services Driving Standard (ESDS) Refresher Training and Managing Fire Service Incidents Course (Module 1) held at Shannon Fire Station.



New Class B Fire Appliance

Clare County Council took delivery of a new vehicle worth over half a million euro on Monday (December 9, 2024) at Ennis Fire Station. This new Class B Fire Appliance represents a significant investment into the Fire Service in Clare and will further enhance the response capabilities of Ennis Fire Brigade to emergencies in the Ennis area and surrounds. At a cost of €549,000, the state-of-the-art vehicle was fully funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage under their Fire Appliance Procurement Programme 2023 - 2025. Built by HPMP Ltd in Carlow, the new vehicle contains a full range of firefighting equipment, including portable pump, generator, ladders and crash rescue equipment. It is built on a Scania P360 18 Tonne Chassis supplied by Westward Scania, Strokestown. The coachwork is a copolymer plastic construction, with an integrated 1,800 litre water tank.



Storm Darragh - Fire Service Response

On Friday evening 6th December last, all personnel that were on-call for that period were required to be on standby at their Stations from 20.30 – 02.00 to ensure (a) personnel did not have to travel to the Stations as Storm Darragh Status was designated a Status Red Warning (Wind). As per other recent weather events, the Officer in Charge was required to carry out a Dynamic Risk Assessment (DRA) if alerted to any incidents to determine whether or not it is safe to attend at the time of the alert. In general, only life at risk calls should be attended during the peak of the storm. If not attending an incident for a period, calls would be prioritised and attended when it was safe to do so.

Across the county, Fire Service personnel dealt with various storm related damage - trees down and debris on roads, construction fencing blown onto roads and even a corrugated shed in one incident. The primary objective of the Fire Service was to ensure that secondary roads were kept open, and where identified, local roads were also dealt with to ensure business continuity when people started travelling on Saturday morning. All seven Brigades of Clare County Fire and Rescue Service responded to a total of 81 emergency calls related to the storm.



Station Open Days

Clare County Fire and Rescue Service are holding Open Days at all seven Fire Stations throughout the county during the month of December. Such events are a useful way for all crews to meet the public they serve while promoting fire safety in the home. It also gives members of the public the opportunity to engage with their local crew and get a better understanding of the work the firefighters carry out. Such events also promote recruitment opportunities within the service.

Fire & Building Control Section Main Activities	Nov 2024	Dec 2024 (Up to 13.12.24)	Year to Date 2024
Number of Emergency Calls Attended	149	102	1230
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received	11	4	112
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted	11	3	93
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	2	0	6
Number of Disability Access Certificates Received	10	0	60
Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted	3	5	52
Number of Commencement Notices Received	60	41	519
Number of Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	0	0	17

(Note: In the Dec Monthly Report, the Nov figures related to 1st-21st Nov due to timing of report)

CLARE CIVIL DEFENCE

Operational Duties:

- Civil Defence provided medical cover at a number of events in December including Clare Run (Clonlara); Young at Heart Christmas Party (Woodstock Hotel) and Fin Swim (Ennis).
- Clare Civil Defence were tasked by the Clare Garda Division to assist with a missing person search in the Spanish Point area. The search was later stood down when the person was located safe and well.



Members Training & Professional Development

Members participated in weekly training set out by Civil Defence Instructors. 9 members attended a Search & Rescue Seminar on the 14th December. Clare Civil Defence Officers attended CPC Training.

Health & Safety

Following an audit of the Safety Management Systems by the NSAI, Clare Civil Defence achieved ISO 45001:2018 accreditation.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Awareness

An Taisce Green Schools Programme

This month our Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) issued a media release celebrating secondary school participation in the An Taisce Green School Programme. The media release acknowledged the efforts of participating schools and highlighted the impressive achievement of St John Bosco Community College Kildysart receiving 7 Green flags. This media release received excellent coverage in The Clare Champion and The Clare Echo. Currently 14 of the 16 secondary schools are engaging with the programme.

Secondary School	Location
Kilkee Community College	Kilkee
St. John Bosco Community College	Ennis
St. Michael's Community College	Kilmihil
St. Flannan's College	Ennis

Ennistymon Community College	Ennistymon
St. Anne's Community College	Killaloe
Kilrush Community School	Kilrush
St Patricks Comprehensive School	Shannon
St. Joseph's Secondary School	Spanish Point
St. Joseph's Secondary School	Tulla
Rice College	Ennis
St. Caimin's Community School	Shannon
Ennis Community College	Ennis
Mary Immaculate Secondary School	Lisdoonvarna

Table: List of post primary schools engaging with the An Taisce Green Schools Programme

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Our Environmental Awareness Officer also provided support to Kilrush Community School who are making great strides to achieving their Green Flag for Global Citizenship and Energy as well as St Caimin's Community School in Shannon. Earlier this month a support visit was also provided to Doora NS who are re-engaging with the An Taisce Green Schools programme.

Community support

Our Environmental Awareness Officer participated in the Clare County Council Rural Development Directorate's Community Funding Information Clinics held throughout the month at Kilkishen Cultural Centre, Scariff MD Office, Treacy's Oakwood Hotel in Shannon, The Ritz in Lisdoonvarna, and Corofin Community Hall.

The clinics provided a great opportunity to engage with community groups and share advice on a wide range of topics, including: My Waste Ireland online resource; waste prevention strategies for communities; the Green Clubs programme; greening of festivals and events; biodiversity and invasive species management; climate action; organising community clean-ups; responsible dog ownership.

The sessions were well attended, with active participation from community members keen to learn about the supports and resources available for their environmental and sustainability efforts.

As part of the campaign, the following key themes and resources were promoted:

- Circular living and climate action
- Online resources: mywaste.ie and stopfoodwaste.ie
- The Sustainable Development Goals
- Christmas and New Year opening hours for Recycling Centres
- Recycling of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and batteries
- Clare County Council's bottle banks



Sustainable Christmas campaign

A comprehensive sustainable Christmas media campaign was delivered during December, which incorporated a media release, newspaper advertisements, radio adverts, and a social media presence. The campaign encouraged people to embrace a sustainable Christmas by preventing waste, reusing items they already have, and recycling materials that can no longer be reused.

Our Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO), Karen Foley, featured in an interview on Clare FM News, while the campaign received coverage in The Clare Echo.

Sustainable tourism promotion

Our Environmental Awareness Officer presented on the Kilkee Green Business Hub at the Loop Head Tourism Sustainability Event. It was a great opportunity to promote business participation in the Kilkee Green Business Hub initiative and encourage other Loop Head businesses to become involved. This event also provided a platform to highlight the importance of good waste management and raise awareness of the Commercial Waste Regulations.

Awareness Campaigns

During the month of December awareness campaigns were delivered on Leave no Trace, Clean Air and Oil Tank Safe Check. Campaigns included social media and print media promotion with the Clare Champion and the Clare Echo.

Gardening

With the temporary suspension of construction activity on O’Connell St, Ennis for Christmas, the Gardening Team was tasked with enhancing the public space with a festive planting programme.

Working in collaboration with the Ennis Municipal District and the Project Management Office, the Gardening team planned and prepared a series of Christmas themed decorative planters that have been installed at multiple locations around the town centre.

In addition, the existing permanent planters were planted with

a selection of Christmas themed plants and colour schemes. These planting works has been warmly welcomed by both the business community and public, and undoubtedly brought an extra degree of Christmas sparkle to Ennis Town.

Behind the scenes at the Gardening Nursery, planning and preparations for the 2025 growing season continues in earnest, with the team waiting to take delivery of new plant stock in early January to ensure planting and gardening works will be maintained to the same high standards as delivered in previous years.



Water Enforcement and Laboratory Monitoring Scientific Services

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

Water Monitoring & Enforcement Scientific Team	December 2024	Total to date 2024
Bathing Water Monitoring	Monitoring season finished for 2024	182
Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant Inspections (NIP Plan)	1	95
Public queries processed regarding DWWTS grants	5	39
Monitoring Inspections of Section 4 licenced premises	0	75
Planning applications (Agriculture)	6	48

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Planning applications (Domestic)	35	419
Planning applications (Large Developments)	2	30
Planning applications (Forestry)	0	77
Pollution complaints received	12	135
Private Commercial Drinking Water Supplies	0	62
Private/Public Group Water Scheme supplies	7	234
Rivers	1	244
Farm Inspections (NAIP) (Routine Planned & Unplanned)	1	104

On the 13th December, the Water Pollution Team received a report of an oil spill incident on the Inch River, near the Lahinch Road, Ennis. The Team undertook an extensive investigation in conjunction with Ennis Municipal District and Inland Fisheries Ireland.

The investigation entailed a detailed inspection of the general riverine environment, in addition to conducting inspections of nearby domestic properties and an assessment of both the storm and sewer network.

Upon identifying the source of the oil leak (a domestic kerosene tank), and the underground pathway to the river, the Environment Section and Ennis MD developed and implemented a booming strategy to contain the leak and prevent oil from dispersing along the river.

The Environment Section has engaged with the homeowner to advise on and oversee the necessary corrective measures and will continue to monitor the situation to ensure no further pollution of the Inch River or other receptors can occur.



Waste Enforcement

Inspections of Permitted and Unpermitted Sites

Inspections of 3 permitted and 1 unauthorised facilities were carried out by the Waste Enforcement team in December. Follow-up enforcement action is ongoing in the case of the unpermitted site. Fines were issued under the Waste Collection Permit Regulations 2007 for breaches of the collection permit conditions.

The permitted sites were inspected to monitor compliance with their permit conditions, to achieve positive environmental outcomes for the receiving environments. There has been progress on both permitted sites since they were last inspected. One site has found a new outlet for farm plastic and are working through reducing the stockpile on site. The same site is also progressing an Article 28 application with the EPA to achieve end-of-waste status for glass.

The other site was in receipt of the first load of defective concrete blocks because of the Defective Concrete Blocks Grant Scheme. Information was given as regards storage of same. In December, 2 warning letters were issued under the Waste Management Act 1996, because of unauthorised waste activity.

Joint inspections with An Garda Síochána

On Wednesday, December 12th a joint inspection took place at 2 roadside locations of interest in Southeast Clare. In attendance were 3 members of An Garda Síochána and 3 members of the Waste Enforcement team, Clare County Council.

The 2 locations were chosen as they are on a direct route to remote locations from Southeast Clare, which are illegal dumping blackspots. No illegal waste movement was detected on the day.

Two small scale fuel delivery merchants were stopped, and information was given regarding the responsibilities of delivery merchants under the Air Pollution Act 1987 (Solid Fuels) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 529 of 2022).

Air Pollution Act 1987 (Solid Fuels) Regulations 2022.

A Retail Register for Clare regarding the sale of solid fuels in Co. Clare has been compiled. Follow up letters communicating the results of these surveys were issued to 122 retailers in the county, advising them of the findings of the survey, and their responsibilities under the Regulations. Follow-up inspections to check compliance will take place in Q1 2025.

Waste Enforcement Complaints Investigation

The tables below summarise the work of the Waste Enforcement team in November 2024, in response to complaints:

Waste Enforcement Complaints	December 2024	Total YTD 2024
Litter	1	93
Dog Fouling	0	43
Waste Presentation	1	29
Dumping	26	696
Waste complaints (total)	40	1,734

Waste Enforcement Inspections	November 2024
Cert of Registration	2
Waste Facility Permits	1
Unauthorised Sites	1

Waste management

Below is a table indicating waste materials collected at all our Civic Amenity Sites for November, which is the most recent dataset available.

Civic Amenity Site Waste Streams (KG)	
Item	November (latest Data)
Bulky items	44,980
Cardboard	15,498
Dry Recyclable	590
Paper	2,540
Green Waste	40,960
Mattresses	3,880
Municipal Waste	111,470
Plastic	3,100
Timber	95,680

CLIMATE ACTION



Projects have continued to progress as part of the Community Climate Action Programme. Works taking place this month include:

- Ennis Tidy Towns purchased an e-cargo bike for use as part of their works
- Clooney Spencilhill Community Development commenced their works with site clearance and native planting as part of their rewilding project.
- Smith O'Brien's GAA Club installed a large solar PV system on their club house. This consisted of a 40KW and 48KW of batteries.
- College Green Residents Association held a community planting day to plant a native woodland area in their estate.

Clooney Spencilhill Community Development rewilding project. Site clearance and native planting.



Smith O'Briens GAA Club have installed a large solar PV system to help decarbonise their Club House. The system includes 40KW of panels and 48KW batteries.



Walking Track Installation in Trillick GAC (County Tyrone) working in partnership with Crusheen GAA as part of a Shared Island Project



The Climate Team hosted an information stall at the Quin Community Energy Fair on November 26th. This event was also the launch of the Quin Community Energy Master Plan. It provided members of the community with the opportunity to speak to solar PV providers, insulation experts and a one stop shop to find out about what grants are available to retrofit your home. The climate team spoke to people about the next phase of the Community Climate Action Programme.

Quin Community Energy Fair



Energy

Regional Energy Unit

It has been agreed that the local authorities of Clare, Limerick and Kerry are to collaborate by establishing a regional energy unit to seek to realise major energy retrofits on existing local authority building stock. By forming a regional energy unit, where Clare County Council will be the lead authority, the partnering local authorities will be able to secure matched funding from Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) by entering their National Building Retrofit Pathfinder Programme.

Due diligence checks are ongoing at present to de-risk the partnering local authorities prior to Clare County Council formally entering into a Funding Agreement with SEAI. Clare County Council will enter into Service Level Agreements with Limerick City & County Council and Kerry County Council. It is anticipated that the new regional energy unit will be operational in Quarter 1 2025 and remain in place for a three-year period during which time planning, design, procurement and construction works will be carried out on selected local authority building stock to introduce energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures to assist all partners in meeting their national target obligations by 2030.

Monitoring & Reporting

As a public body, Clare County Council was tasked with compiling and submitting the following obligatory data reporting for the year 2023 to SEAI by the November deadline:

- Energy-saving projects: report on implemented and planned energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects within the organisation.
- Building register: populate and maintain a detailed and up-to-date asset register including floor area, heating system type, etc.
- Vehicle procurements: provide an up-to-date vehicle inventory and report on existing and proposed vehicle procurement contracts.
- Business travel: report annual data on business travel including vehicle mileage, commercial flights, ferries and public transport journeys.

District Heating

Clare County Council has prepared and submitted an application seeking funding under the European Union City Facility (EUCF) to complete a feasibility study on the potential viability of a district heating network for Ennis. A district heating network seeks to capture and utilise waste heat from industrial processes to provide heating to homes and businesses within a municipality via a network of underground insulated pipework. Waste heat sources have been identified within the environs of the town along with suitable anchor loads (large energy users) within the town which typically determine the economic viability of a district heating network. A decision on the application is expected to be made by the end of Quarter 1 2025.

WATER

Rural Water Programme

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

The Department has decided to take a phased approach to approval of funding with a focus on water quality issues for the first phase, namely Measures A1, A2, A3, A6 and A7. Funding applications for the Taken in Charge of Public Group Water Schemes under Measure A6 are not part of this first phase of funding. In addition, the Expert Panel is continuing its work in its evaluation of applications received under Measure A4, A5 and A9. We have informed all successful Group Water Schemes.

On the 16th of December the Clare Rural Water Programme Office held an update meeting in relation to the Multi-annual Rural Water Programme 2024-2026 announcement. The purpose of this meeting was to update the schemes recommended for funding under Measure A6 Taking-in-charge of group water schemes and assist in the development of a pathway to successful project delivery. The following group water schemes were invited to attend.

Bodyke PriGWS	Proposed Connection to UE Network via newly constructed interconnector
Raheen PriGWS	Proposed Connection to UE Network via newly constructed interconnector
Ranaghan PriGWS	Proposed Connection to UE Network via newly constructed interconnector
Tubber Monreagh PriGWS	Proposed Connection to UE Network via newly constructed interconnector

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 continues to be processed by this office, 26 applications have been received for 2024.

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, 39 applications have been received to date for 2024. Post works final inspections for works within the last 12 months are ongoing.

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

SHANNON MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Shannon Christmas Lights

Families were encouraged to bask in festive cheer as the Christmas lights were turned on at Shannon Town Park on Monday the 2nd of December. Festivities got underway at 5:30pm where there was music from DJ Chris Walshe, carol singing from the Shannon Gospel Choir and a special visit by Santa and Mrs Claus. The ceremony to switch on the lights followed on from that at 6pm, with Shannon MD Cathaoirleach Pat O’Gorman having the honour of lighting up the town. The night was thoroughly enjoyed by elected members, local authority officials and the public.



New Housing Development in Sixmilebridge

Cllr O’Callaghan Officially opened The Baile Uí Loideáin development in Sixmilebridge. This development provides fifteen new social housing units through a direct build scheme by the local authority.

Launch of the Gardaí Christmas Dinner Delivery.

The launch of the now annual festive initiative took place at the Shannon College of Hotel Management on the 2nd of December. Multiple agencies, statutory bodies, NGO’s, private industry and local community groups were in attendance. This festive initiative is a collaborative project between the local Gardaí, The Shannon College of Hotel Management and local businesses. Between December 9th and 13th, Shannon Gardaí brought hot meals, a mince pie and a Christmas hamper of essential foods and treats to elderly and vulnerable people living in Shannon, Cratloe, New Market-on-Fergus and Sixmilebridge.



Bunratty's Christmas Parade

On the 28th of November more than four hundred singing parade participants wound their way through Bunratty village to the courtyard of Bunratty Castle for the annual switching on of the Folk Park's Christmas lights. Santa arrived on a spectacular horse-drawn sleigh. The procession featured more than one hundred elves, Christmas characters, the Tulla Pipe Band, animals from the Folk Park, and members of the All-Ireland winning Clare senior hurling team. In the evening, the sounds of Christmas were provided by the Bunratty Brass Band and two local choirs. The parade marked the beginning of Christmas at Bunratty.



- Installation of a new pedestrian crossing and associated works on
- R-471 Bothar Mor, Ballycasey, Shannon. This crossing is due a new ESB Networks connection.



Works Underway

Ongoing tree maintenance and hedge cutting in:

- Shannon town,
- Sixmilebridge,
- Westbury,
- Newmarket on Fergus,
- Clonlara.
- Jetting and cleaning out sections of the drainage network in Westbury and Shannon Town environs.
- Installation of a new pedestrian crossing on Beechwood Grove and Inis Orga, Sixmilebridge. Installation of a new speed ramp in Inis Orga, Sixmilebridge.

- Installation of '30km/hour Children at Play' new safety road signs to housing estates in Shannon and Westbury, Corbally, Co Clare.
- Installation of 200m of a new section of footpath on the R462 & L-3166 Cratloe. Installation of a new pedestrian crossing on the L-3166 Cratloe. This is due a new ESB Networks connection.



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



- A new footpath has been constructed outside numbers 46 to 50 Chill Chais, Shannon.



- Extension of parking bays to facilitate Disabled Parking Bay works. This includes a drop kerb and the extension of a footpath beside Newmarket on Fergus Church.



- After Storm Darragh, Red Alert for County Clare, the Shannon Municipal District removed fallen trees and brash in various locations across the district.



- Construction of a new pedestrian crossing at Beechwood Grove, Sixmilebridge.

