

**Minutes of the February Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held in the
Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on
Monday, 9th February, 2015 at 3:45 p.m.**

Present:

Councillors J. Breen, J. Flynn, P. Daly, A. Norton, T. McNamara, M. Howard, P. Murphy, C. Colleran Molloy, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, M. Begley, T. O'Brien, P. Burke, A. O'Callaghan, C. Crowe, J. Crowe, G. Flynn, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahan, M. McKee, C. Curtin, R. Nagle, B. Slattery, I. Lynch, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating.

- Mr. Tom Coughlan, Chief Executive.
- Mr. Michael McNamara, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Siobhan Garvey, Staff Officer.
- Mr. Ger Dollard, Director of Service.
- Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Service.
- Mr. Niall Barrett, Head of Finance.
- Mr. Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer
- Mr. Adrian Kelly, Chief Fire Officer

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. John Crowe presided.

- At the outset the Cathaoirleach congratulated Adrian Kelly and the Council's Fire and Building Control Section on successfully maintaining their 18001 Safety Management Accreditation recently. The Council's Health and Safety Officer's role was also acknowledged in this achievement.
- The Cathaoirleach reminded members that the Mayor's Charity Banquet is taking place on 28th February and that tickets are still available and urged everyone to support this worthy event which will benefit 3 Clare based charities.

Item 1: Minutes of Council Meetings.

a. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Hayes agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the January Meeting of Clare County Council held on 12th January, 2015 be adopted and signed.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Clare County Council held on 2nd February, 2015 be adopted and signed.”

Item 2: Minutes of Municipal District Meetings.

a. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Slattery
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Chambers agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 11th November, 2014 be noted.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Shannon Municipal District Meeting held on the 18th November, 2014 be noted.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. A. O’Callaghan
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Meeting held on the 19th November, 2014 be noted.”

d. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Daly
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 6th January, 2015 be noted.”

Item 3: Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meetings.

The members noted the minutes of the meetings held on 5th January, 2015 as presented.

Item 4: Nominations to S.P.C.'s.

The Meetings Administrator reported that there was no update available on this and that the Council is still awaiting nominations from a small number of bodies.

Item 5: Monthly Management Report.

The monthly management report attached to the agenda included key activities in the principal service areas and was noted by the members.

Item 6: Draft Corporate Plan 2015 - 2019.

Report dated 4th February, 2015 from Michael McNamara, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the Council are required to prepare a Corporate Plan pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act, 2001.

Revised guidelines in relation to the Corporate Plan were issued by the Department last November and the Council agreed at meeting held on 8th December last to extend the period for the preparation and adoption of the Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019 to the end of September 2015.

Work has since commenced on the preparation of the Plan and the attached Draft has been prepared by the Management Team and considered by the C.P.G. at their meeting last week and is now before the Council for adoption.

The Draft sets out the objectives for the Council over the next 5 years and also outlines supporting strategies to achieve the objectives listed.

Once the Draft is adopted, there will be a consultation process during which feedback and observations will be invited from elected members, staff, through S.P.C.'s, the P.P.N. and stakeholders with an interest or involvement in Local Government.

The final Plan will come back before the members in 3-4 months time once the consultation process has been completed.

Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“That pursuant to Section 134 (9) of the Local Government Act, 2001, the Clare County Council Draft Corporate Plan 2015-2019 be adopted as circulated.”

Item 7: Briefing on storm remedial works at 3:00 p.m.

Steve Lahiffe, Senior Executive Engineer provided an overview of work which has taken place to date and work which is due to take place in the coming months with respect to sites in the county affected by the storms of 2014. The meeting was advised that works will commence on the Kilkee Strand Line on Monday, 16th February. The presentation outlined the total estimated cost of the works required arising from the storms to be €36.8m. The total funding allocated to date is €17.6m. Details of the amounts expended to date and the locations in question were also provided.

In relation to the remaining sites, the strategy proposed was outlined. Mr. Lahiffe also referred to the fact that most of the areas in question were in Special Areas of Protection.

Any queries raised with regard to the presentation were dealt with by both Steve Lahiffe and Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer.

The Cathoirleach proposed that the Councillors should visit the sites affected throughout the county by storm damage, this proposal was seconded by Cllr. G. Keating and agreed.

Item 8: Accounting.

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Kelly
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That the C.E.O. inform the members of the Council if he has engaged the services of a national accountancy firm to seek financial assistance for the Council from a non-traditional source of income and if so, state

- (a) The circumstances which led to this initiative
- (b) The expected financial return from exercise
- (c) Amount of professional fees associated with effort.”

Tom Coughlan, Chief Executive replied as follows;

“The council has not engaged an accountancy firm to seek financial assistance for the council”.

Cllr. P.J. Kelly also asked if the Council had been in contact with the Revenue Commissioners and the Chief Executive replied that the Council is in ongoing contact with the Revenue Commissioners on a myriad of issues. The Chief Executive also requested Cllr. Kelly to clarify his reference to a possible financial mis-adventure as he was not happy to leave such a suggestion hanging over the Council. Cllr. Kelly responded that he had asked a question and received a reply.

Item 9: Cedra Report.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. C. Curtin agus J. Breen agus glacadh leis

“Cedra Working Group. With reference to the adoption in October 2014 of the notice of motion to establish a Working Group to review the Cedra Report and the subsequent nomination of elected members from each Municipal District to same;

That this Council would now set timelines for meetings, etc. to enable the review and its findings to input, as appropriate, into both

- a) The proposed Clare County Development Plan (2017-2023), and
- b) The proposed Clare Local Economic and Community Plans (2015-2021).”

Gerard Dollard, Director of Service replied as follows:

“The following Members have now been nominated to the Working Group on CEDRA Report:

Ennis Municipal District: Cllrs. Johnny Flynn and Clare Colleran Molloy.

Killaloe Municipal District: Cllrs. Tony O’Brien and Joe Cooney.

Shannon Municipal District: Cllrs. Gerry Flynn and P.J. Ryan.

West Clare Municipal District: Cllrs. Christy Curtin and Gabriel Keating.

The Members will be aware that the Council has commenced a statutory process for the review of the Clare County Development Plan and this process will conclude in 2017. The Council has also received formal guidelines in relation to the preparation of the Local Economic Community Plan (L.E.C.P.) and these have been circulated to the Elected Members. The guidelines indicate that:

“As the framework for the economic development and local/community development of the local authority area, the L.E.C.P. will also be the primary mechanism at local level to bring forward relevant action arising from measures under the Action Plan for Jobs and other statements of Government policy including the report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA).”

There is an extensive process involved in the preparation of the Local Economic and Community Plan with key roles being assigned to the Local Community Development Committee and the Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development and Enterprise.

Given the commencement of the preparation of the L.E.C.P., the review process currently underway for the Clare County Development Plan, the establishing of the S.P.C. for Economic Development and Enterprise and the Local Community Development Committee, the Members may wish to give further consideration to this Working Group as it is clear that the CEDRA report will be a key component to be considered in the preparation of both the County Development Plan and the L.E.C.P.”

After some discussion on the setting up on the Cedra Working Group, it was proposed by Cllr. J. Cooney and seconded by Cllr. T. O’Brien that elected members who are part of the working group would meet on Monday, 16th February at 3:00 p.m. in order to discuss the matter further.

Item 10: Taking in charge estates.

Due to absence of Cllr. M. Hillery who originally submitted this notice of motion, Cllr. T. McNamara agreed to move this motion.

Ar moladh Cllr. T. McNamara
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Chambers agus glacadh leis

"That the director of services would present a progress report on the taking in charge of the 180 housing estates within County Clare to include the number already processed and the planned number of estates to be finalised in 2015."

Gerard Dollard, Director of Service replied as follows:

“Significant resources have been applied to the area of Estates/Taking in charge since 2012 to deal with a range of complexities and legacy issues that exist on such developments. In 2012 the Planning Authority compiled a Register of over 180 estates which were all at various levels of completion, inadequately completed/unfinished or not taken in charge and have continued to work on the resolution of these developments through engagement with Developers (where developers exist), Receivers/ Liquidators/Bondholders/Agents on behalf of bondholders and residents.

In 2012 the Planning Authority successfully progressed the Taking in charge of 7 developments. In 2013, 14 developments were taken in charge with a further 16 developments reaching a satisfactory conclusion in 2014.

It is anticipated that circa 20 estates will be taken in charge in 2015 with significant progress being made in the resolution of many others. The availability of some funding from 2014 Annual Financial Statement will assist in making further progress in 2015.

A major issue being dealt with in 2014 and 2015 to date has been the threat of disconnection of public lighting supply on some 70 different developments throughout the county. The Council has engaged extensively with Electric Ireland and has successfully managed the situation to date. The Council recently received a commitment from Electric Ireland that disconnections of public lighting will be deferred pending further discussions with the Council.

The Planning Authority will continue to engage with all interested parties to continue to make progress in this area in the interests of the residents on developments affected.”

Item 11: Legal Fees.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Curtin
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That the Chief Executive Officer provide a Tabular Statement of Legal Fees paid by Clare County Council in 2013 and 2014 and in that context inform the Council of the Progress and Procedure to-date in the Procurement Process for Legal Services for the County now that the Contract with the County Solicitor is nearing the end.”

Michael McNamara, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services replied as follows:

“Below are details of legal fees paid in 2013 and 2014 by supplier:-

Legal Fees Paid (V.A.T. inclusive) by supplier	2013		2014
Michael P. Houlihan, Solicitors	468,151	Michael P. Houlihan Solicitors	612,027
Patrick G. Quinn	44,966	James Connolly S.C.	49,338
James Connolly S.C.	36,235	Patrick G. Quinn	40,291

John Callinan & Co. Solicitor	17,848	Hugh Hartnett	26,700
S.T. O’Sullivan & Co. Solicitors	16,331	Shane Murphy S.C.	21,525
David Nolan S.C.	11,040	Michael F Collins B.L.	11,575
Leahy & Partners	7,698	McMahon & Williams Solicitor	10,176
Peter Shanley B.L.	6,150	Patrick Whyms B.L.	9,865
Crimmins Howard Solicitors	5,530	Luan O Braonain	6,765
Other	25,837	David Quinn B.L.	6,378
		Other	44,817
Total	639,787		839,455

The Council invited tenders on 1st December 2014 for the provision of legal services for a 6 year period. The tender submissions received have been examined and the short-listing exercise has now been concluded. Those firms that were successful at Stage 1 will be requested in the coming weeks to submit detailed tender proposals to the Council. A final decision will be made on the basis of these detailed tender proposals received. It is hoped to have the matter finalised before 31st March 2015.”

The Chief Executive responded to a number of queries raised and advised that the fees outlined for specific years may not directly relate to that year in question as it is common for cases to take a number of years to resolve and fees are not paid until cases are finalised. The Chief Executive advised the members that he would be happy to distribute to them a copy of the tender document which had been advertised but that he would be unable to report on any tenders received to date as the tender process has not been completed. He also confirmed that there is no charge for attendance by the County Solicitor at Council Meetings.

Item 12: Public Consultation.

Ar moladh Cllr. R. Nagle
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Slattery agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council would immediately put in place a protocol that would outline clearly how individuals and communities are to be consulted concerning any proposals that directly affect them.”

In moving this motion Cllr. R. Nagle referred to Blakes Corner, Ennistymon and expressed his serious concern about the process used by the Council in notifying the affected parties in the town. He also referred to the press release issued immediately after the meeting without the knowledge of the Municipal District Chair or members. He said it was absolutely essential that a protocol be put in place outlining how individuals and communities are consulted concerning proposals that directly

affect them. The Chief Executive in response said he respected the role of the elected members and referred to the various scenarios the Council have to deal with from time to time such as Part VIII applications, Development Plans, major Roadwork or Infrastructural Projects. He also said that he would always ensure that members were briefed first in all such occasions. In relation to the specific project referred to by Cllr. Nagle at Blakes Corner, the Chief Executive said that he was not happy with the way the matter was dealt with and apologised to the members in this regard. He stated that Council staff should have met with the affected parties after the members had been told. He also stated that he was not happy with aspects of the press release issued.

Item 13: Gritting programme.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Cooney
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Burke agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council include all regional roads on their gritting programme in inclement weather conditions in the interest of road safety.

Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer replied as follows:

“When excluding the motorway network which is directly the responsibility of the National Roads Authority the total length of road incorporated in Clare County Council’s salting programme is 654 km – which includes all of the national secondary route network (185 km.) 437 km. of regional roads and 32 km. of local roads. These routes represent a total of 15.3% of the entire County network which is consistent with the national average target of 15%.

There are a total of 635 km. of regional roads in County Clare which means that almost 200 km. will have to be added to the current schedule to facilitate the requirement of this Notice of Motion. As things stand at present the winter maintenance scheduled routes are distributed as equitably as possible across the County taking account of traffic demands facilitation of access to towns and villages and provision of coverage for at least one strategic route between centres where more than one option is available. Available resources are stretched to facilitate the current schedule which in general terms is working very well and the capacity isn’t available at present to facilitate extending the service in the manner suggested. If the service were to be extended more resources would be required and the nature of such an extension should be based on an overall review of the current service and the assessment of potential individual route extensions rather than an overall extension to incorporate all regional roads.”

In further reply to queries raised Mr. Tiernan stated that a review could be done to look at areas of concern to members but stated that resources were not available to include all regional routes.

Item 14: Septic Tanks.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Hayes
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“I am asking for a report into the recent regulations governing septic tanks,

(a) How many inspections were carried out since the introduction of these new laws,

(b) What grant aid has been paid to date.

(c) Are the public aware of these grants and the costs associated with improvement works.”

Anne Haugh, Director of Service replied as follows:

“(a) How many inspections were carried out since the introduction of these new laws

88 inspections have been carried out by Clare County Council since the introduction of these laws.

(b) What grant aid has been paid to date

As of 31st January, 2015 grant-aid of €18,976.69 has been paid out to 6 applicants.

(c) Are the public aware of these grants and the costs associated with improvement works.”

If a member of public fails an inspection, details of the grant available and the grant application form are sent out with the Advisory Notice. Details of grants are also available on Clare County Council’s website.”

Cllr. P. Hayes thanked Ann Haugh, Director of Service for her reply.

Item 15: Wild Atlantic Way.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Murphy
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard

“Wild Atlantic Way, I am proposing that Clare County Council actively pursue a meeting with Deputy Michael Ring in order to lobby for an alternative route to the current leg by ferry from Killimer to Tarbert. The proposed alternative route to follow the coastline of counties Clare and Limerick.”

Discussion continued on this motion which had already been moved at the January meeting.

Gerard Dollard, Director of Service replied as follows:

“The concept behind the Wild Atlantic Way was towards achieving tourism product that could be marketed on an international basis. A detailed study, research and preparation for the launch of the Wild Atlantic Way was designed to bring together existing tourism product and package it in a very attractive way for the international market. In Clare, there was significant consultation at local level and at community meetings in the overall development of the concept. It is clear that the branding has been successful and, while it is at the very early stages, there is no doubt that the potential for the Wild Atlantic Way to be marketed as a major tourist attraction has huge potential.

It is important that the overall integrity of the concept would not be diluted to such an extent that the idea no longer has international marketing appeal and consequently does not deliver the visitor numbers that would be expected. I am aware that there is considerable representation from many parts of the country seeking to have additional routes added to the Wild Atlantic Way. In some cases, the rationale for adding the route does not support the concept of the Wild Atlantic Way and would have an adverse effect in terms of undermining the potential of the Wild Atlantic Way.

The original programme launched by Fáilte Ireland involved the launch of the Wild Atlantic Way as Phase 1 of the project with further “loops” being added to allow the visitor an opportunity to veer off the Wild Atlantic Way and take in other locations in the vicinity of the route. This is currently a work in progress with Fáilte Ireland and the development of the loops are awaited.

The Council will be meeting with Fáilte Ireland shortly to discuss ongoing progress in relation to the Wild Atlantic Way initiative. The ideas suggested in the motion will be raised as part of those discussions.”

After some discussion on this matter, a number of members reported that they were not in favour of the proposal as submitted. Cllr. P. Murphy then submitted the following revised proposal to the meeting:

“I am proposing that Clare County Council, when engaging with Fáilte Ireland in relation to the Wild Atlantic Way initiative, suggest the development of the two following “loops”,

- i. a Shannon/Fergus Estuary route to incorporate the natural coastlines of Counties Clare and Limerick and
- ii. a “Circle of Clare” to include towns, villages and attractions of mid and east Clare similar to the Ring of Kerry.”

This was seconded by Cllr. M. Howard and agreed by the members present.

Item 16: Clare’s Atlantic Way.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. O’Callaghan agus glacadh leis

“Maximise Clare's Atlantic Way Tourist Potential.

In light of successful existing inland Tourist attractions such as;

Air Venture Shannon; Bunratty Folk Park; Cragganowen heritage, etc. That Clare County Council in conjunction with others, such as Shannon Heritage, should urgently plan, develop, and market at least 6 new inland tourist attractions to ensure maximum economic benefit & tourist bed nights retention in Clare from the tourism expected to be generated by the Wild Atlantic Way along our Counties Coastline.

These proposals could consider for example; Clare Food and Crafts at proposed Ennis Covered Market; West Clare Railway Greenway; Ballyalia Lake to Clarecastle Harbour Water, Cycling and outdoor pursuits Hub; Ennis Abbey and Medieval Gaelic Town, Ennis Trad, Clare Library genealogical services; etc.”

Item 17: Cumann Na mBan.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“On the 100th Anniversary of the founding of Cumann Na mBan, and in recognition of those women who served and who played a vital role in securing the independence of the State that a building, park or piece of infrastructure in County Clare be named Cumann na mBan in recognition.”

Cllr. C. Crowe in seconding the motion referred to a motion on similar terms which he moved in 2014 and which was also approved by the Council.

Item 18: Trees.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. O’Callaghan agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council put in place a program to eradicate ivy from trees throughout the county due to health and safety concerns and in view of recent tragic accidents caused by fallen trees and the possibility of ivy on trees being a factor as outlined recently by a family that lost a loved one.”

Tom Tiernan, Senior Engineer replied as follows:

“Notwithstanding the fact that ivy growing around the trunks of trees can add to their bulk and mass it is my understanding that there is generally no adverse impact to the health of a tree by virtue of the fact that there is ivy growing on it. I am not aware that the concept of ivy growing on trees has ever been identified as a health and safety issue of any significance. While a connection may have been made with the fact that ivy was growing on the tree in question in relation to the sad case referred to in the Notice of Motion there doesn’t seem to be a general problem in this context. In my view the concept of developing a program to eradicate ivy from all trees throughout the County would be elaborate and expensive and would be disproportionate in terms of what would be achieved by the exercise. Notwithstanding the fact that Clare County Council would have no funding to take on such an endeavour I would equally feel that it is unlikely that funding would be available from any other source.”

In light of issues raised by Cllr. G. Flynn, Mr. Tiernan agreed to seek advices from Teagasc in relation to the matters raised.

At this point it was proposed by Cllr. C. Crowe, seconded by Cllr. A. O’Callaghan that the meeting would be extended by 10 minutes. This was agreed by the members present.

Item 19: Sheltered accommodation.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. P. Murphy, M. Begley agus J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council request an update from Minister Paudie Coffey in housing concerning funding for a much needed scheme of sheltered accommodation at the county Daycare Centre, Clarecastle.”

Gerard Dollard, Director of Service replied as follows:

“In January 2014 the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government issued a Call for Proposals to Housing Authorities for the Capital Assistance Scheme for Approved Housing Bodies, 2014-2016. Authorities were asked to submit a short list of prioritised proposals (no more than 5) to the Department for consideration for funding. The criteria to be used in assessing the proposals to include:

- 1) The extent to which the proposals address the housing need as identified in the Housing Needs Assessment 2013.
- 2) Value for Money – Proposals should be cost effective and fit-for-purpose and be in compliance with Public Spending Code and Capital Works Management Framework.
- 3) Prioritised projects should be in a position to progress without delay following funding approval, with some recoupable expenditure to be incurred in 2014.

A proposal to develop sheltered accommodation was received from the Clarecastle Daycare Centre Company Ltd., which was included in the prioritised proposals submitted to the Department by Clare County Council. That funding application was not successful, however it is expected that a Call for Proposals will issue from the Department shortly and a renewed application can be considered under that Call.”

The following resolution was then proposed by Cllr. P. Murphy, seconded by Cllrs. G. Flynn, J. Cooney and M. Begley and agreed by those present.

“That the expected application for sheltered accommodation by Clarecastle Daycare Centre Company Ltd. is given priority one status by Clare County Council when the call for proposals for the Capital Assistance Scheme is issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.”

Standing Orders.

Cllr. J. Breen proposed that Standing Orders be examined with a view to having correspondence listed earlier on the agenda than heretofore. It was agreed that the Standing Orders Sub-Committee would consider this proposal.

Conferences.

Reports on Seminars/Conferences attended.

With regard to seminars/conferences attended, reports completed in accordance with Section 142 of the Local Government Act 2001 were made available at the meeting.

A.I.L.G. “In Service” Training taking place in the Brehon Hotel, Killarney on 17th February, 2015.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €530.95 including conference fee of €125.

It was agreed that Cllrs. C. Curtin, T. O’Brien, A. O’Callaghan, P.J. Kelly and B. Chambers attend this Conference.

A.I.L.G. Annual Conference taking place in the Nuremore Hotel, Carrickmacross on 12th/13th March, 2015.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €428.56.

It was agreed that Cllrs. C. Curtin and T. O’Brien attend this Conference.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____

Minutes of the adjourned February Meeting of Clare County Council held in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on Monday, 16th February, 2015 at 3:45 p.m.

Present:

Councillors J. Breen, J. Flynn, P. Daly, A. Norton, T. McNamara, M. Howard, P. Murphy, C. Colleran Molloy, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, M. Begley, T. O'Brien, P. Burke, A. O'Callaghan, C. Crowe, J. Crowe, G. Flynn, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, M. McKee, C. Curtin, R. Nagle, B. Slattery, I. Lynch, M. Hillery, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating.

- Ms. Anne Haugh, Deputy Chief Executive.
- Mr. Michael McNamara, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Siobhan Garvey, Staff Officer.
- Mr. Ger Dollard, Director of Service.
- Mr. Niall Barrett, Head of Finance.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. John Crowe presided.

Item 20: Days out by rail.

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Chambers agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council write to Iarnród Éireann and request that they include a profile on Clare in the "Days Out by Rail" booklet that is available in all stations across Ireland including Ennis Station.”

After a brief discussion on this item G. Dollard advised that he was not familiar with the booklet but would carry out some research on it with a view to obtaining a higher profile for the county going forward.

Item 21: Civic Reception.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. A. Norton, P. Daly, T. McNamara agus M. Howard agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council give appropriate recognition to Mr. Keith Whyte's achievement in winning the 100 km. ice-marathon on union glacier on the Antarctic and his many previous achievements in ultra-distance running.”

Item 22: Air ambulance service.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Breen
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Curtin agus glacadh leis

“I am again calling on the Minister for Health to provide an air ambulance service in Co. Clare.”

Item 23: Broadband.

Ar moladh Cllr. I. Lynch
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Keating agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council

(a) Call on the Minister for Communication, Energy and Natural Resources the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and An Taoiseach to intervene as a matter of urgency in the delivery of adequate communication services within County Clare. The lack of poor communication network throughout the county is a serious hindrance and deterrent to job creation and sustainable communities within County Clare. The recently announced National Broadband Plan is not sufficient in meeting the immediate need of our county to ensure that we are on a level playing field with all other counties.

(b) Request that Eircom provide an explanation in to the delay of fiber broad band been rolled out within the county, with an accurate update on proposed dates and also to establish a dedicated contact for public representatives to deal matters arising.

(c) Request the Communication Regulator to issue an advice sheet for customers rights in relation to contracted services for broadband and telecommunication, stating courses of action available for remuneration of bills where the service provided does not reach the speeds or connectivity contacted.”

Item 24: Small Firms Association.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P.J. Ryan agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council formally support the Small Firms Association’s campaign to stop discrimination against the self-employed.”

It was agreed that a representative of the Association be invited to a future Council meeting to facilitate a discussion on this matter.

Item 25: Clare Local Development Company.

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That this council would request Minister Alan Kelly to clarify the position regarding Clare Local Development Company.”

Item 26: Magdalene Laundries.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“I believe that as a Council we should acknowledge the historical role that the Council has played in committing young girls and women to the Magdalene Laundries.

I firmly believe that Clare County Council remember and recognise in a tangible way the suffering and torment of both mothers and babies at not just the Kilrush Mother and Baby home but those who were sent to the Magdalene Laundry. This must be done in an open and public way not just through an apology but by a public reminder of what happened and must not be allowed to happen ever again.”

After some discussion on the matter, it was agreed to check the records from a previous meeting where this subject had been discussed with a view to ascertaining the most appropriate means to give effect to the motions adopted.

Item 27: Irish Water.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Crowe
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Hayes agus glacadh leis

“That the members of Clare County Council:

- (a) Invite senior Irish Water officials to attend a monthly meeting that is held in public with local media present.
- (b) Resolve to boycott attending any 'in-camera' meetings with Irish Water officials.”

After some discussion on the matter, all members present agreed with part (a) of the notice of motion but many members expressed their disagreement with part (b) of the proposal which dealt with the boycotting of meetings with Irish Water.

The Cathaoirleach called a vote on part (b) of the motion which resulted as follows;

In favour: Cllrs. J. Breen, T. McNamara, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Hayes, C. Crowe, G. Flynn, M. McKee, C. Curtin, M. Hillery, P.J. Kelly. (10)

Against: Cllrs. J. Flynn, P. Daly, A. Norton, M. Howard, P. Murphy, J. Cooney, M. Begley, P. Burke, A. O’Callaghan, J. Crowe, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, I. Lynch, B. Chambers, G. Keating.
(15)

Abstentions: Nil.

The Cathaoirleach declared the proposal relating to part (b) lost.

Item 28: Sale of Aer Lingus.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Crowe
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. M. McKee, J. Crowe, P.J. Ryan agus P. McMahon agus glacadh leis

"Clare County Council calls on the government to oppose the sale of Aer Lingus to I.A.G."

The Cathaoirleach advised the members that the Minister has undertaken to meet him and a number of other Cathaoirligh on this issue and that he would advise the members on the outcome of that meeting.

Item 29: Equalisation fund from property tax.

Ar moladh Cllr. T. McNamara
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Hayes agus glacadh leis

“That this council asks the Minister for The Environment, Community and Local Government Mr. Alan Kelly to confirm if the equalisation fund from the property tax can or is being used by any the following local authorities to fund knock airport: Galway, Galway City, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo, or Leitrim.”

Votes of congratulations.

- Cllr. P. Hayes proposed a vote of congratulations and best wishes to Kathleen Hayes Rollins Snavelly who resides in the United States and formerly from Feakle who celebrated her 113th birthday recently.
- Cllr. M. Howard proposed a vote of congratulations to Allan Aughey, Mayor of Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council, South Australia on his being awarded an Order of Australia Medal recently.

Item 30: Comhfhreagras.

Correspondence.

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:

1. Correspondence dated 3rd February, 2015 to An Taoiseach from Cllr. John Crowe, Cathaoirleach, in relation to the potential sale of Aer Lingus.

2. Correspondence dated 28th January, 2015 from the R.N.L.I. Lifeboats in relation to contribution they received from Clare County Council.
3. Correspondence dated 29th January, 2015 from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport concerning the provision of funding for footpaths by the National Roads Authority.
4. Correspondence dated 29th January, 2015 from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport regarding the Local Improvement Scheme.
5. Correspondence dated 15th January, 2015 from the National Roads Authority in relation to the M18.
6. Correspondence dated 12th January, 2015 from the Department of the Taoiseach regarding immigration reform measures in the United States.
7. Correspondence dated 27th January, 2015 from the Department of Health concerning funding to applicants under the Nursing Homes Support Scheme and the issues of back payment.
8. Correspondence dated 12th January, 2015 from the Department of Health concerning Accident and Emergency services at Ennis General Hospital and Limerick Regional Hospital.
9. Correspondence dated 13th January, 2015 from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform regarding the ban on the recruitment of local authority workers so that general operatives can be hired urgently by Clare County Council.
10. Correspondence dated 2nd February, 2015 from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in relation to staffing moratorium including the recruitment of general operatives by Clare County Council.
11. Correspondence dated 30th January, 2015 from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in relation to the staffing moratorium including the recruitment of general operatives by Clare County Council.
12. Correspondence dated 16th January, 2015 from the Office of the Minister for Education and Skills in relation to recognition status of Irish Sign Language.
13. Correspondence dated January, 2015 from the Office of the Minister for Justice and Equality in relation to registering prepaid SIM cards.
14. Correspondence from County Clare Patriotic, Benevolent and Social Association of New York City Inc. issuing an invitation to the Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council and the Chief Executive to attend the Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York in March.
15. A.I.L.G. "In Service" training dates for elected members 2015.
16. Elected Member's Training Seminar entitled "Sustainable Tourism Development" being held in the Connacht Hotel, Dublin Road, Galway on 20th & 21st February, 2015.
17. 26th Colmcille Winter School entitled "The Future of Local Government in Ireland under the New System" being held in Colmcille Heritage Centre, Church Hill, Co. Donegal on 27th & 28th February, 2015.
18. Seminar entitled "E.U. Support Programmes for Irish Regions" being held in the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co. Louth on 27th & 28th February and 1st March, 2015.
19. Seminar entitled "The new Companies Act 2014" being held in the Clonakilty Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork on 6th – 8th March, 2015.

20. Training Seminar entitled “The Councillor and Irish Water” (Water Services Bill 2014) being held in the Silver Tassie Hotel, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal on 6th – 8th March, 2015.
21. A.I.L.G. second annual conference 2015 being held in Nuremore Hotel, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan on 12th – 13th March, 2015.

Conferences.

Reports on Seminars/Conferences attended.

With regard to seminars/conferences attended, reports completed in accordance with Section 142 of the Local Government Act 2001 were made available at the meeting.

A.I.L.G. “In Service” Training taking place in the Brehon Hotel, Killarney on 17th February, 2015.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €30.95 including conference fee of €25.

It was agreed that Cllrs. G. Flynn, P. Daly and J. Crowe attend this Conference.

A.I.L.G. “In Service” Training taking place in the Welcome Inn Hotel, Castlebar on 26th February, 2015.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €79.11.

It was agreed that Cllr. A. Norton attend this Conference.

A.I.L.G. “In Service” Training taking place in the Nuremore Hotel, Carrickmacross on 12th/13th March, 2015.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €28.56.

It was agreed that Cllr. A. Norton attend this Conference.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____