

**Minutes of the July Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held in the  
Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on  
Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 at 3:45 p.m.**

**Present:**

Councillors M. Howard, J. Flynn, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Murphy, A. Norton, P. Daly, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, P. Burke, A. O’Callaghan, T. O’Brien, C. Crowe, J. Crowe, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, G. Flynn, S. Talty, J. Killeen, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating, C. Murphy, I. Lynch.

- Mr. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive.
- Ms. Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Margaret O’Rourke, Assistant Staff Officer.
- Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development.
- Mr. Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development.
- Mr. Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, A/Head of Finance.
- Mr. Adrian Kelly, Chief Fire Officer.
- Mr. Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.
- Ms. Helen Walsh, County Librarian.
- Mr. John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.
- Ms. Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, Physical Development.
- Mr. John Corry, Administrative Officer, Physical Development.
- Mr. Steve Lahiffe, A/Senior Executive Engineer, Project Management Office.
- Ms. Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development.
- Ms. Siobhán McNulty, Senior Executive Officer, Social Development.
- Mr. Adrian Hedd, Senior Executive Engineer, Social Development.

**Apologies:** Cllr. M. McKee and Cllr. J. Garrihy.

**Absent:** Cllr. R. Garvey and Cllr. M. Nestor.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Cathal Crowe presided.

**Votes of sympathy.**

Votes of sympathy were expressed to the following:

- The McInerney family, Ennistymon on the death of Michael McInerney.
- The Duffy family, Ennis on the death of Denis Duffy.
- The O’Keeffe family, Inch on the death of Patrick O’Keeffe.

- The Kelly family, Donegal on the death of Cllr. Manus Kelly, Donegal, member of Donegal County Council.

A minutes silence was observed as a mark of respect.

At the outset Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe reminded the members that the Draft Climate Change Adaption Strategy, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (S.E.A.) Screening Report and Appropriate Assessment (A.A.) Screening Report will be on public display from Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2019. Submissions and observations in relation to the Draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy may be made in writing to the Director of Service, Physical Development Directorate, Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, County Clare or by email to [climatechange@clarecoco.ie](mailto:climatechange@clarecoco.ie). The closing date for receipt of submissions is 5:00 p.m. Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2019.

The elected members paid tribute to the Council executive, Lahinch Golf Club, the HSE, An Garda Siochána and the Civil Defence for the very successful organisation and execution of the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open Golf Competition held in Lahinch. They stated that it was a standout event that reached a worldwide audience. The video stream showing attractions in Co. Clare broadcast during the event was complimented by the members. The members felt that Paul McGinley's acknowledgement of Pat Dowling, Chief Executive and Clare County Council was a key moment live on TV and that this event will benefit Lahinch and Co. Clare for years to come. Tributes were paid to the 800 volunteers who assisted during the event as well as former Councillors Richard Nagle and Bill Slattery who were instrumental in bringing this event to Lahinch.

Congratulations were extended to Clare FM on winning a Gold Award at the New York Festivals Radio Awards for its recent documentary which told the story of Clare's cave rescue hero Jim Warny.

### **Suspension of Standing Orders.**

The following resolution was proposed by Cllr. P. Hayes and seconded by Cllrs. C. Crowe and P. McMahon.

“We are asking that standing orders be suspended to discuss the present challenges at Shannon Airport with particular emphasis into the loss of services and also the recent decline of passenger numbers.”

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe informed the members that Mary Considine, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Shannon Airport has written to Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator requesting an opportunity to provide an update on Shannon Group at an upcoming meeting of Clare County Council. Cllr. C. Crowe proposed that a special meeting take place on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> July at 3:00 p.m. This was seconded by Cllr. J. Cooney and agreed by the members present. The members welcomed the request for a meeting from Mary Considine and requested that Rose Hynes attend the meeting if she is available.

Cllr. P. Hayes stated that Clare County Council will work in partnership with Shannon Group to examine how the challenges posed at the moment can be dealt with

as there has been a decline in passenger numbers in Shannon airport and this loss of services is critical. He stated that the Irish Aviation Policy is not looking after balanced regional development and that these issues need to be dealt with. Cllr. P. Hayes expressed disappointment that Clare County Council did not receive a favourable response to appointing a nominee to the Shannon Board. Cllr. Hayes also expressed disappointment in relation to funding announcements for Mayo and Waterford airports and no funding being allocated to Shannon Airport.

Cllr. P. McMahon stated that Shannon Airport needs a positive marketing campaign to highlight its advantages.

**Item 1: Minutes of Council Meetings.**

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

“That the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Clare County Council held on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 be adopted and signed.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Murphy agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the June Meeting of Clare County Council held on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 be adopted and signed.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the adjourned June Meeting of Clare County Council held on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 be adopted and signed.”

**Item 2: Matters Arising.**

Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy sought clarification in relation to the regulatory process for granting a licence for 5G.

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development addressed the meeting and stated that following discussion by the members at the June Council meeting the Senior Planner, at the Director’s request, had circulated information to all members in relation to a Section 254 licence application by Cignal Infrastructure Ltd to erect a telecommunication mast to accommodate 2G, 3G, 4G and 5G at Claureen, Ennis. Last Friday the Planning Authority had to make a decision in respect of that licence application (within four months of it being lodged) as otherwise it would have been deemed to be granted. Mr. Conneally stated that the legislation governing Section 254 Licence applications does not allow the local authority to consider third party submissions, as such any submissions received had to be returned to the relevant third party. Mr. Conneally stated that the legislation governing this area is silent, in particular in relation to third party input, however there is an opportunity for third

parties to appeal the Council's decision to An Bord Pleanála who have clear decision-making authority in this area. Mr. Conneally informed the members that a number of these licences have been made and granted in other jurisdictions over the past number of years.

**Item 3: Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meetings.**

The members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 as presented.

**Item 4: 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.

Cllr. G. Flynn requested that the Shannon Flood Relief Scheme be kept on the agenda going forward.

**Item 5. Disposal by way of lease of property at Bindon Street, Ennis Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.**

Report dated 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of an area of property at Bindon Court and No 1A Bindon Street, Ennis, Co. Clare by way of a lease subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“Notice having been served pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Clare County Council approves pursuant to the powers vested on it at Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended, of disposal, by means of a lease, of buildings at Bindon Court and No. 1A Bindon Street, Ennis subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2019.”

**Item 6. Disposal of lands (by deed of exchange) at Drumbiggle, Ennis, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.**

Report dated 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of two areas of lands at Drumbiggle, Ennis subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members.

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

“Notice having been served pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Clare County Council approves pursuant to the powers vested on it at Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended, disposal by means of exchange of lands at Drumbiggle, Ennis, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019.”

**Item 7. Disposal of lands at Laghtagoona, Corofin, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.**

Report dated 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of an area of lands measuring 0.24 hectares at Laghtagoona, Corofin, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Killeen  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. S. Talty agus glacadh leis

“Notice having been served pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Clare County Council approves pursuant to the powers vested on it at Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended, of disposal of lands measuring 0.24 hectares at Laghtagoona, Corofin, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2019.”

**Item 8. Disposal of piece of ground at Main Street, Kildysart, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.**

Report dated 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of an area of lands measuring 0.033 hectares at Main Street, Kildysart, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Chambers agus glacadh leis

“Notice having been served pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001, Clare County Council approves pursuant to the powers vested on it at Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended, of disposal of lands measuring 0.033 hectares at Main Street, Kildysart, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2019.”

**Item 9. Report in accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the**

**Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2013 for the proposed development at Ennis Fire Station, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

Report dated 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from Adrian Kelly, Chief Fire Officer was circulated with the agenda together with report from Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner. The report outlines details of proposed development to take place within the confines of Ennis Fire Station, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton

Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

“That pursuant to Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2010, Clare County Council proceed with the proposed development at Ennis Fire Station, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.”

**Item 10. Report in accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2013 for the proposed extension of the existing burial ground at Illaunamanagh, Tullyvarraga, Shannon, Co. Clare.**

Report dated 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development was circulated with the agenda together with report from Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner. The report outlines details of proposed extension to burial ground at Illaunmanagh, Shannon, Co. Clare.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. B. Chambers agus glacadh leis

“That pursuant to Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2010, Clare County Council proceed with the proposed extension to Illaunamanagh Burial Ground at Illaunamanagh, Tullyvarraga, Shannon, Co. Clare.”

**Item 11. Report in accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2013 for the proposed development of gardening allotments at Ballycasey More and Clonmoney West, Shannon, Co. Clare.**

Report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2019 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda together with report from Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner. The report outlines details of proposed development of gardening allotments at Ballycasey More and Clonmoney West (Part of former DeBeers Sports Fields), Shannon, Co. Clare.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“That pursuant to Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning and Development

Regulations 2001 – 2010, Clare County Council proceed with the proposed development of gardening allotments at Ballycasey More and Clonmoney West (Part of former DeBeers Sports Fields) Shannon, Co. Clare.”

**Item 12. Report in accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2013 for the proposed housing development at St. Michael’s Place, Ennis Road, Kilmihil, Co. Clare.**

Report dated 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda together with report from Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner. The report outlines details for the proposed construction of 2 no. dwelling houses at St. Michael’s Place, Ennis Road, Kilmihil, Co. Clare.

Ar moladh Cllr. S. Talty  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. I. Lynch agus glacadh leis

“That pursuant to Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2010, Clare County Council proceed with the proposed construction of 2 no. dwelling houses at St. Michael’s Place, Ennis Road, Kilmihil, Co. Clare.”

**Item 13. Report in accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2013 for the proposed housing development at Ashline, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.**

Report dated 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda together with report from Brian McCarthy, Senior Planner. The report outlines details for the proposed construction of 40 no. dwelling houses at Ashline, Ennis, Co. Clare.

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

“That pursuant to Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2010, Clare County Council proceed with the proposed construction of 40 no. dwelling houses at Ashline, Ennis, Co. Clare.”

The elected members outlined concerns expressed by the Woodhaven Residents Association. Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development referred to meeting held with Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development and the Ennis Municipal District Councillors where these concerns were vocalised. Ms. Haugh stated that house layout types for units Nos 7 and 8 would be reviewed with a view to designing out any potential overlooking subject to the appropriate planning process and in the interim at a minimum obscure glazing will be used to address the issue of overlooking in the Part VIII under consideration by the members. It was agreed to proceed on that basis.

**Item 14. Approval of P.P.N. representatives on the Local Community Development Committee (L.C.D.C.).**

Report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2019 from Monica Meehan, Senior Executive Officer, Rural Development was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the Public Participation Network (P.P.N.) has five seats on the Local Community Development Committee; Community and Voluntary (2), Social Inclusion (2) and Environment (1). Four of those seats are due to be filled and the Clare P.P.N. has recently undertaken an election process for this purpose. The nominations for the forthcoming term of office are:

Ms. Kasia Kowalska – Community and Voluntary College  
Ms. Niamh O’Callaghan – Community and Voluntary College  
Ms. Mary O’Donoghue – Social Inclusion College  
Ms. Theresa O’Donohoe – Environmental College

Ms. Anne Marie Flanagan recently replaced Mr. Dermot Hayes and continues to hold a seat for the Social Inclusion College.

The four nominations were agreed having been proposed by Cllr. P. Hayes and seconded by Cllr. G. Flynn.

**Item 15. Draft SPC Scheme for consideration and adoption.**

Report dated Report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2019 from Ann Reynolds, A/Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services was circulated with the agenda together with Draft Scheme for the Strategic Policy Committees. The report states that the Draft Scheme has been considered by the Councils Corporate Policy Group. Following consideration of the Draft Scheme by the Council the Draft will be sent forward for consideration by the PPN and the national stakeholder pillars.

Following consideration of any submissions received, the Draft Scheme will be before the members for final adoption at the September meeting.

Clause 6.0 of the Draft Scheme set out the sequence of events which have to take place leading to the first meeting of each S.P.C. next October.

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

“That the Council agrees the Draft S.P.C. Scheme as circulated.”

**Item 16. Nomination to the Audit Committee.**

Report dated 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2019 from Pat Dowling, Chief Executive was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the nomination of members was considered by the Corporate Policy Group and the following external members are recommended for appointment:

- Ms. Rose Hally,
- Mr. Austin Slattery
- Mr. Jimmy Browne



Cllr. J. Cooney requested that Cllr. G. Keating replace Cllr. J. Crowe on the Audit Committee. This was seconded by Cllr. G. Flynn and agreed by the members present.

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

“That the following be appointed to the Audit Committee:

Cllr. P. Hayes, Cllr. G. Keating, Rose Hally, Austin Slattery, Jimmy Browne.”

**Item 17. Appointment of Chair of Council’s ‘Working Group for the Action Plan for Rural Ireland’ (formerly CEDRA).**

It was agreed to defer this item to the September Council meeting to allow the groupings agree on the appointment of the Chairperson to the Council’s “Working Group for the Action Plan for Rural Ireland”.

**Item 18. Request to extend borrowing facilities for new County Library.**

Report dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2019 from Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development was circulated with the agenda. The report states that work first commenced on planning for a new County Library in 2013 but it was not until 2015 that the first commitment to funding was received in the form of a €1m ERDF allocation. This was followed in 2016 by a €3m allocation from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government under the Libraries Capital Programme and more recently a further €1m was committed by the Department of Rural and Community Development in 2018. The Council approved borrowing of up to €4.6m in February 2016 towards the balance of the estimated cost at that time.

As the project has advanced through the various stages of design, planning and procurement the scope and cost has had to evolve to accommodate such revisions as:

- Design to NZEB (Near Zero Energy Building) standard in accordance with the EU Energy Performance in Buildings Directive.
- Increased specification for fully accessible toilets
- Compliance with planning conditions
- Construction cost inflation (@ approx 6% per year)

The project which is due to go to construction in the coming months will be a landmark building replacing the existing 1975 construction which has outgrown its capacity to function as the modern library which is needed to cater for the expanded and diverse needs of our citizens. Complimenting the existing theatre facility at Glór, the new library and Headquarters together with the Local Studies centre and proposed gallery space will effectively create a “cultural hub” in the centre of Ennis linking the performing, visual and literary arts provision in a manner which should greatly increase footfall and contribute to the economic and social vibrancy of the town centre.

The Council has recently submitted an application for additional ERDF funding towards the project costs and it is intended also to resubmit an application in response to any future calls under the URDF Scheme.

To proceed with the project which is now with the Department of Rural and Community Development for Stage 4 approval, sanction from the Council is sought to extend the existing loan approval by a further €2.5 million if required, while continuing to reduce our reliance on loans by exploring all other potential funding options.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

“That in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act 2001, the Council hereby approves the raising of a loan of up to €7.1million towards the cost of the new County Library.”

### **Item 19. Annual Service Delivery Plan.**

The Annual Service Delivery Plan was circulated with the agenda and was noted by the members having been proposed by Cllr. I. Lynch and seconded by Cllr. G. Keating.

Cllr. I. Lynch requested clarity in relation to the West Clare Railway Project, the review of commercial rates in the county, and advancing the Clare elements of the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for Moneypoint and Cahercon.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive noted the concerns raised by Cllr. I. Lynch and stated that the 2019 Annual Service Delivery Plan is an organic piece of work that outlines the broad objectives and service delivery for the current year. He informed the members that the Council are looking at schemes and incentives in relation to rates and that the Council must maintain its income base. Mr. Dowling stated that discussions are ongoing with the management of Moneypoint in relation to future situations that may arise.

The elected members referred to the development of a local economic plan to address the imminent closure of Roche in Clarecastle; the preparation of a County Clare Brexit position paper, the threat of lack of connectivity in Shannon Airport, the need to get decision to install flood relief in Springfield, Clonlara and the potential reduction in rates income due to activity at Moneypoint.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive thanked the members for their comments. He advised the members that the Council are commencing the process of producing a new Corporate Plan for the next five year period which will include extensive consultation with elected members. This will then result in the production of Annual Service Delivery Plans. He advised the elected members to examine what they wish to achieve when workshops are held at Municipal District level and to prioritise projects before the Plans are brought to the full Council.

### **Item 20. County Development Plan.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Kelly

“That a special meeting be convened to address the issues in the County Development Plan application which are restricting the development of rural Clare.”

**Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:**

“The Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 adopted and in force since January 2017 has a core objective to seek to achieve a County Clare with diverse and strong rural communities and economy. The Development Plan includes a specific chapter on Rural Development and proactively seeks to work toward the creation of strong and vibrant rural communities and the betterment of our rural areas.

Since the coming into effect of the Development Plan, there were 198 single rural houses permitted in the open countryside in 2017 with 17 refused. In 2018 there were 205 single rural houses permitted with just 7.6% of planning applications refused.

This annual number of single “one-off” rural houses permitted, is an increase of the rate of ‘single houses’ permitted in the years prior to 2017. This clearly indicates that the objectives of the County Development Plan as applied are not preventing single rural dwelling houses being permitted in the open countryside areas across Clare.

Within the areas of the county which are experiencing depopulation, it is Council policy to favourably accommodate demands from all persons seeking to build a permanent place of residence in the countryside. The Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 also provides multiple opportunities for people to develop residential in our 88 towns and rural villages. In 2018 a successful pilot village study was undertaken by the Planning Authority for six small villages in an initiative to identify barriers to their growth and identify measures to assist in their revitalisation.

In considering the development of rural Clare one also has to examine the level of vacant residential units, in rural areas in particular. In April 2016, County Clare had an overall vacancy rate of 19.6%. Nationally, this is the 7th highest vacancy rate. There were 10,925 vacant housing units recorded in County Clare and of these, 4,792 were holiday homes. There were six settlements in County Clare where there was a greater than 40% vacancy rate (Liscannor, Kilkee, Lahinch, Ballyvaughan, Mountshannon & Doonbeg) all of which are rural settlements.

The National Planning Framework (N.P.F.) and the draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (R.S.E.S.) both identify and promote the regeneration of rural areas through objectives they set out for both rural towns, and villages as well as countryside areas. The N.P.F. requires that Planning Authorities ensure that, in providing for rural housing, a distinction is made between areas under urban influence and elsewhere. In this regard the N.P.F. states that it is a requirement that in certain areas of the countryside that applicants for rural housing “*demonstrate a functional economic or social requirement for housing need*” to live in the countryside. Upon the adoption of the R.S.E.S. the objectives of the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (as varied) will be reviewed in order to ensure alignment with both national and regional policy at that stage if required.

At a national and regional level it is intended that a particular focus will be to look at how the rural towns and villages of the county can be strengthened in such a way that they can become drivers of development for their wider area, which will involve a co-ordinated approach with key stakeholders like Irish Water. The Council is committed to embracing this objective to ensure the County Development Plan continues to provide a strong land-use framework for the future sustainable growth of the county.

Within and in partnership with other sections of Clare County Council there are also a number of economic development initiatives which apply to rural areas, which include:

**Local Enterprise Office (LEO)** based in the Economic Directorate Clare County is the first-stop-shop for anyone seeking information and support on starting or growing a business in County Clare. The functions of LEO are as follows:

- To support business start-ups and promote a ‘can-do’ business culture.
- To increase the job potential of new and existing micro and small businesses.
- To increase the number of innovative businesses with potential to export.
- To be proactive in response to the needs of their clients.

**Clare County Councils Rural and Community Development Officers** who are based in the Rural Directorate of Clare County Council. An Officer has been assigned to each of the four Municipal Districts areas. Their role is to work with communities in the implementation of the Rural Development Strategy of Clare County Council.

**Clare County Council Arts Office** works with artists of all disciplines (painters, musicians, dancers, writers, actors etc.) and communities throughout the county on a variety of programmes and projects. The Arts Office supports arts events, programmes and artists in a variety of ways annually, including the provision of public art projects, sculptures and community projects.

**Clare Local Community Development Committee (L.C.D.C.)**, which comprises representatives from local government and from local development and community interests. The L.C.D.C. ensures that there is a coherent approach and meaningful citizen and community engagement in the scoping, planning, delivery and evaluation of local and community development programmes. Through the implementation of the community elements of the L.E.C.P., Clare County Council works in partnership with local communities to promote quality of life and well-being, address the needs of disadvantaged communities, pursue labour activation schemes, support rural transport initiatives and enhance towns and villages across the county.

**Clare Local Development Company (C.L.D.C.)** working in parallel with Clare County Council provides a diverse range of supports and services to community and voluntary groups, social inclusion target groups, small businesses, farm families and potential entrepreneurs. There are two funding programmes which provide support to Business Start ups, through the LEADER and SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme) Programmes. SICAP is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by POBAL. CLDC offers a range of supports for persons who want to start their own business under the SICAP programme, including:

- Back to work Enterprise Allowance
- Start your own business courses
- Developing a business plan
- Enterprise grants
- Mentoring

**LEADER** and the Clare Local Development Company provide a range of supports for different forms of enterprises and small businesses under the categories of:

- Tourism Destinations
- Tourism Products
- Enterprise
- Rural Broadband
- Renewable

**Clare Public Participation Network** comprises over 170 community and voluntary groups from across the county and is one of the main links through which the local authority connects with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors. It provides the opportunity to create greater synergies between local government and local and community development and places local and community development at the heart of local government.

**Clare County Council Rural and Community Directorate** provides a Community Supports Scheme, an Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and the Town and Village Renewal Scheme which all assist in the development of a range of community led projects as follows;

Community Supports Scheme:

- Streetscape shop front improvement & community amenity projects
- Public area enhancements
- Social inclusion and participation in sport or activities
- Community playgrounds (for existing playgrounds)
- Support scheme for burial ground maintenance and provision
- Support scheme for community Wi-Fi
- Best kept local authority estate
- Support scheme for the arts
- Support scheme for the Irish language

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme is part of the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development and provides funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure or the necessary maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in Ireland. There are three measures under this scheme: measure 1 is administered by the Clare Local Development Company and measures 2 and 3 are administered by Clare County Council on behalf of the Department of Rural and Community Development. The scheme seeks to support those sporting and recreational pursuits based on use of the resources of the countryside that contribute to healthy active lifestyles and the economic and tourism potential of the area for both local communities and tourist visitors alike.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Rural and Community Department of Clare County Council administers the Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) on behalf of the Governmental Department of Rural and Community Development. The TVRS is an initiative under

the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development 'Realising our Rural Potential' and is part of a package of national and local support measures to rejuvenate rural towns and villages throughout Ireland. The scheme focuses on measures which have a clear economic impact on rural towns and villages.

**The Tidy Towns Competition** is organised by the Department of Rural and Community Development with SuperValu being the main sponsor of the competition.

**Pobal** works on behalf of Government to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion and development. The role of Pobal is to provide management and support services to circa 23 programmes in the areas of Social Inclusion and Equality, Inclusive Employment and Enterprise, and Early Years and Young People. Clare County Council administers these programmes on behalf of the Department of Rural and Community Development, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, as well as the Department of Health/H.S.E. and a number of EU bodies.

**Department of Planning, Housing and Local Government- Community Water Development Fund** which aims to support communities in progressing water related projects and initiatives, delivering benefits locally whilst also helping to meet the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland and the wider EU Water Framework Directive. This fund is open to all community and voluntary groups to assist in the protection and management of water quality, both locally and in the wider catchment.

Grants awarded range from up to €5,000; up to €10,000 and up to €25,000.

**Childcare Facilities** The Clare County Childcare Committee provide guidance in terms of all aspects of the provision of Childcare Facilities in County Clare and provides comprehensive and current best practice information on all forms of childcare within the county including details as to standards, regulation, staff training requirements and funding.

**Vacant Buildings** The Housing Department of Clare County Council operates numerous schemes in terms of assisting and promoting the reuse of buildings that are currently vacant as follows;

Long Term Leasing Scheme provides the following benefits:

- Takes the uncertainty of being a landlord for terms of 10 to 20 years.
- Guaranteed rental income of between 80-85% of the market rent each month.
- No management of tenants.
- No rent or arrears collections.
- No maintenance of the property after the first six months of the lease.
- No advertising or administration fees.

Repair and Leasing Scheme aims to assist property owners to bring vacant properties in need of repair back into use.

- Property is leased to the Local Authority or Approved Housing Body for minimum period of 5 years.
- Repairs up to a max. of €40,000.00 are paid for.
- Guaranteed rent on a property that has not been generating an income.

- No loss of rent during vacant periods.
- No dealing with tenants or day to day maintenance.

Buy and Renew Scheme is an alternative to and complements the ‘Repair and Leasing Scheme’

- Aims to support Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies to purchase and renew housing units that require remediation and make them available for social housing use in areas of housing need.
- The focus is on older housing stock and derelict properties.

Rental Accommodation Scheme (R.A.S.)

- Local Authority will enter into contractual arrangements for medium to long term periods with landlords to secure private rental accommodation for R.A.S.
- Guaranteed rental income of up to 95% of the market rent each month.
- Landlord receives payments from Local Authority for the duration of the R.A.S. contract, even during vacant times between tenancies.
- 100% tax relief on mortgage interest, as an expense against rental income.

Clare County Council - Long Term Vacant Property Incentive Scheme aims to:

- Encourage businesses to occupy long term vacant commercial premises that have previously been occupied for commercial rates purposes.
- Give incentives to businesses to occupy vacant premises by lowering entry costs through support and a grant related to the level of rates payable on the property.
- Provide business supports through the Local Enterprise Office.

**Local Agenda 21** is a fund administered by the Water, Waste and Environment Section which promotes sustainable development by assisting small scale, non-profit environmental projects at local level.

**Rural Regeneration and Development Fund**, as part of Project Ireland 2040, the Government has committed to providing an additional €1 billion for a new Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (“the Fund”) over the period 2019 to 2027. The Fund provides investment to support rural renewal for suitable projects in towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas. It is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development. The Fund provides an opportunity to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland, to make a significant and sustainable impact on rural communities, and to address de-population in small rural towns, villages and rural areas. The objective of the Fund is to support coordinated and integrated projects between Government Departments, State Agencies, Local Authorities, other public bodies, communities and, where appropriate, philanthropic funders and/or the private sector, which will have an impact on sustainable economic and social development in rural areas.

This Council during the last RRDF competitive bid process received amongst the highest funding levels in the Country.

In conclusion I am satisfied that the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (as varied) taken in conjunction with the various supports provided by Clare County

Council supports rather than restricts the development of our rural communities and for the above reasons it is evident that the Council is working hard to encourage rural economic development across the board. In this regard I believe that the current Plan is working and I do not consider it necessary for a special Council meeting to be held at this point in time.”

Cllr. P.J. Kelly outlined concerns in relation to rural planning and stated that planning applications are being withdrawn in order to avoid refusal due to visual impact on the landscape.

Cllr. G. Flynn stated that he wished to second this motion for debate. Cllr. G. Flynn stated that the establishment of the rural directorate is a positive action taken by Clare County Council. He informed the meeting that if a site is suitably zoned it will get planning permission.

Cllr. J. Flynn stated that he would not be in favour of convening a meeting to discuss the executive functions in relation to planning.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. C. Crowe informed the members that a review of the County Development Plan will take place at the end of this year.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that he would not be in favour of holding a public meeting to review executive functions of the Council. He informed the members that he fully stands over the professionalism and bone fide which planning staff carry out their tasks. Mr. Dowling advised that the members in exercising their reserved function will be reviewing the County Development Plan later in the year.

Cllr. P.J. Kelly requested a definition of “visual impact” and a definition of the process from which “visual impact negative” is decided.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive agreed to provide written clarification on this.

The members referred to visually obtrusive wind turbines overlooking the river Shannon and stated that local people are being refused planning permission due to potential developments being visually obtrusive and queried how these decisions are made.

It was suggested that the review of the County Development Plan should incorporate a review of and the Development Levy Scheme.

It was agreed that a workshop would be scheduled in September to commence the review of the County Development Plan.

## **Item 21. Cost of cleaning up illegal dumping.**

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Murphy

“For the last available financial year, what has been the cost to Clare County Council for cleaning up the illegally dumped household waste across the county?”

### **Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development replied as follows:**

“Illegally dumped household waste continues to pose a significant and growing challenge for the Environment based Waste Enforcement Team and indeed across all Directorates of Clare County Council.



It is difficult at this time to quantify an exact cost as it is a multi Directorate response to deal with this issue. However we estimate that for 2018 the cost for the Council was approximately €175,000 to deal with illegally dumped household waste. The Physical Directorate primarily deal with roadside rubbish mainly through the Municipal District Roads Staff. This can range from a small shopping bag left on the street to multiple large bags of refuse or furniture/white goods etc deposited on the side of rural roads. The Community Wardens as part of their duties respond to specific complaints of dumping and where possible remove the offending items directly. The Social Directorate respond to issues regarding social housing and Council tenants and deal with that type of illegal dumping through the tenancy agreement and their own resources. We also provide passes to Community Groups who have completed a local area clean up to our network of Civic Amenity Sites as part of the annual An Taisce Spring Clean month. The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment through their National Anti-Dumping Initiatives also provided additional funding of €40,000 in 2018 to Clare County Council. This was allocated by the Council to assist with clean-ups, other initiatives as well as actions to deter further illegal dumping.”

**Item 22. Watermains replacement contract.**

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council provide an update on the watermains replacement contract south of Doonbeg village on the N67 and a timeline for its completion.”

**Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development replied as follows:**

“We are continuing to work with Irish Water and other stakeholders to develop a solution to replace the watermain immediately south of Doonbeg village on the N67. The solution is complicated by the existing road construction whereby the road sits on top of a raised bog rampart for a significant section of where the watermain is to be replaced. This makes a traditional solution whereby the road is excavated and backfilled or directional drilled cost prohibitive because of associated road reinstatement costs. Unfortunately until a cost effective solution is developed we are not in a position at this time to provide a timeline for its completion.”

Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Development stated that discussions are ongoing with Irish Water to find a solution to this watermains replacement contract.

**Item 23. Hedge cutting policy.**

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

“That Clare County Council implement the road hedge cutting policy before schools reopen, in the interest of road safety.”

**John Corry, Administrative Officer, Roads and Transportation Department  
replied as follows:**

“Clare County Council’s hedgecutting policy is set against the background that local authorities have an overseeing role and responsibility to ensure that public roads are free of obstruction and impediment including the requirement that overgrown trees, verges, hedgerows etc. do not interfere in any way with the effective and safe operation of the public road network.

Under Section 70 of the Roads Act 1993, landowners are responsible for trees, hedgerows etc. on or inside their boundaries adjacent to public roads. The Act obliges landowners and occupiers to take all reasonable care to ensure that such trees, hedges and other vegetation are not or could not become a danger to people using or working on a public road.

Section 40 of the Wildlife Act, 1976 as amended by Section 46 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 restricts the cutting of hedges during the growing season i.e. between March 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup> each year. Therefore, unless such hedgecutting has to be carried out during this period to facilitate public health and safety, all works of this nature should be implemented between September 1st and the end of February.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Council does provide a budget on an annual basis to facilitate hedgecutting along the most strategically important routes across the county. The extent to which the Council can fulfill this role is governed by the budget at its disposal.

The Community Hedgecutting Grant Scheme has since its introduction by Clare County Council in 2013 been intended as a means of making landowners aware of their responsibilities and an encouragement to them to actively take on that responsibility on the ground. Both objectives have been achieved and in particular significantly increased numbers of landowners are now maintaining and managing their own roadside hedgerows. Clare County Council will advertise the availability of the Community Hedgecutting Grant Scheme in the coming weeks to facilitate those wishing to cut trees & hedges from 1<sup>st</sup> September.”

The elected members stated that hedges need to be trimmed for health and safety reasons, to make roads passable and improve visibility at junctions. It was noted that some farmers take responsibility for hedgecutting and others don’t but consistency is required. The members acknowledged that there is unprecedented growth this year and there are also environmental factors.

John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Physical Development addressed the meeting and informed the members that notices are served on landowners who are not complying with hedgecutting requirements. He outlined details of grant assistance available to landowners who carry out hedgecutting. Mr. Leahy advised the elected members to notify the area offices of dangerous junctions and that verge trimming can be arranged when appropriate.

**Item 24. Lough Derg/East Clare tourism promotion.**

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

“That -

(i) Clare County Council strategise for the development of a world class tourism product that centers on Lough Derg and encompasses the towns, villages and other water courses (tributaries and lesser lakes) of East Clare.

(ii) That Clare County Council apply for major capital investment in the Lough Derg/East Clare region vis-a-vis Fáilte Ireland’s ‘Platform for Growth’ fund and European Union funding.

(iii) That Clare County Council and the Shannon Group embark on a new joint marketing campaign to energetically promote the Lough Derg/East Clare region.”

**Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:**

“The Council is currently undertaking a tourism strategy for the county which will set the direction for tourism product development, marketing / promotion and public and private investment over the next ten years. The strategy will set out a clear strategic direction for tourism growth. The main objective is to highlight actionable recommendations which will guide and stimulate investment and development. This in return can maximise the potential of tourism to deliver net economic benefit for the communities within which it takes place without negatively impacting the natural, social, cultural and environmental assets which provide the cornerstone of the tourism product in Clare. My response to the above points are as follows:

(i) The Inis Cealtra Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan advocates for a project of scale for East Clare. Category 2 funding of €20,500 has been secured under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund which will advance the design of this project so that capital funding can be secured. The Inis Cealtra project once implemented will be of a world class tourism experience. A number of initiatives have been undertaken in recent years which will complement this project and these include the Lough Derg Canoe Trail (which included the provision of trail infrastructure including service blocks), Lough Derg Signage, the Killaloe to Ballycuggeran amenity walk, the Lough Derg Blueway Marketing and Promotion Programme etc. The Lough Derg Amenity Trail at a cost of over €600,000 is currently being implemented and is being funded under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and Clare County Council.

The Council works in close partnership with Waterways Ireland, Fáilte Ireland and other relevant stakeholders who recognise the contribution that East Clare and Lough Derg makes to tourism in general.

(ii) The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport Shane Ross recently launched Fáilte Ireland’s new **Platforms for Growth** initiative which is set to transform the tourism landscape across the country. The Council is engaging in the process and intends to apply to this fund for the Inis Cealtra project. The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund is also current and is another possible funding source.

- (iii) The Lough Derg Marketing Group which is chaired by the Chief Executive of Tipperary County Council and includes representatives of Clare, Tipperary and Galway County Councils implements a number of marketing and promotion initiatives each year. The Group secured the Lough Derg Stimulus Fund a number of years ago which funded significant projects around the lake. The Group is currently finalising the Lough Derg Destination Strategy 2019-2024. The Tourism Officer sits on this group.”

The elected members agreed that this project has huge potential and needs to be part of the Councils Annual Service Delivery Plan.

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development welcomed input from the elected members and outlined details of the hidden heartlands brand. Mr. Cleary stated that there is a need to distribute tourism in the county and that a major investment in transport and accommodation is needed.

## **Item 25. Tourism in Co. Clare.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Killeen

Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. McMahon agus glacadh leis

“Calls on Clare County Council to encourage the development of a comprehensive co-ordinated inter-connected mini bus service to progress slow tourism and increase revenue from tourism in the county.”

### **Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:**

“The members will be aware of the recent piloting of a shuttle bus service for the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience. The aim of the service is to further enhance the sustainable development and management of tourism in the local area.

The shuttle service is a pilot project for the immediate towns on the main routes into the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience where the traffic issues are. It will be reviewed at the end of the season. At present there is no plan to roll out the service further for 2019 and it is a case of inviting the industry to help in making it a success and building upon it in the future.

An analysis of the costs will be undertaken at the end of the season in order to determine viability and extension.

The Council is currently undertaking the preparation of a Tourism Strategy for the County which no doubt will feature ‘transportation’ as a challenge.”

Details of mini-bus services from villages and towns in north Clare to tourist attractions were outlined. The elected members suggested that the transport providers be co-ordinated so that they are inter connected. It was noted that there will be a gain for tourism, businesses, villages and towns in Clare and that locals and tourists should be encouraged to support the routes for development and growth in tourism into the future.

L. Cleary, Director of Rural Development stated that the shuttle bus service will be evaluated at the end of the season and that the Tourism unit will engage with business

groupings in other towns and villages with a view to providing bus services to tourist attractions.

**Item 26. Shannon Airport.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon

“In view of the wide spread concern regarding passenger numbers at Shannon Airport, masked somewhat by positive announcements at the commercial arm, that Clare County Council give serious consideration to initiate a campaign to revitalise public support for the Airport in Co. Clare Mid West and further afield.”

It was agreed that this item be deferred to the Special Meeting taking place on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2019.

**Item 27. Housing Workshops.**

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. P.J. Ryan agus glacadh leis

“I am calling on Clare County Council to put housing workshops in place for the public in each Municipal District and have officials present from the different sections of housing.

The purpose of these workshops would be to provide members of the public with information and advice concerning the various options that could be explored in the provision of accommodation to suit their needs. (Social/Leasing/Loans etc). The current situation for a lot of people is presenting huge barriers in sourcing accommodation.”

**Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development replied as follows:**

“Currently the Housing team meet with service users in the Municipal Area offices, invariably these are housing assessment/estate management meetings. This service negates the need for service users to travel to Ennis. These meetings are pre-booked in line with the practices of other service areas of Clare County Council.

To cater for the variance in individual circumstance particular to housing customers it is considered more efficient to avail of the services centrally located in Áras Contae an Chláir. Further the detail of the relevant schemes and other relevant information is available on line at [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie)

That said and in consideration of this request we will organise a ‘roadshow’ workshop in each of the Municipal Districts to advise those seeking accommodation of the services and supports available to assist in securing accommodation. These events will be scheduled for September; once the venue and date is determined these events will be publically advertised.”

Cllr. G. Flynn welcomed this innovative initiative.

**Item 28. Unauthorised encampments.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Murphy

“Illegal encampments in County Clare but particularly adjacent to the M18 Motorway. What is Clare County Council's position in relation to the following issues related to these unauthorised encampments;

- i) The volume of caravans/motorhomes in tight areas and the risk to life in the event of fire personnel being unable to attend to a fire?
- ii) The volume of gas cylinders in use at these sites and the subsequent risk of multiple explosions in the event of a fire?
- iii) The lack of proper sanitation and resultant public defecation at these encampments?
- iv) The volume of children and subsequent risk to their safety and wellbeing as a result of being in such close proximity to busy roads?
- v) The non-attendance at school of these children?
- vi) The monies that will have to be spent by this council in cleaning up after these sites are vacated?
- vii) Securing these locations in order to prevent a repeat?”

**Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development replied as follows:**

“I can confirm that the encampments along the M18 Motorway at Skehanagh are unauthorised illegal encampments. Clare County Council did not facilitate, nor were we party to the occupation of lands at these sites. I can advise that the appropriate notices have been served by Clare County Council on persons occupying these sites. The notices have not been complied with and will be followed up legally. The Council have further reported the matter of trespass at the Skehanagh roundabout to An Garda Síochána.

The resolution of a number of the points raised (points i), ii) and vi)), is reliant on the removal of the encampment itself and the Council is using all of its statutory powers in this regard. Item iii) is within the remit of the Public Health service of the HSE. Points iv) and v) raised are a matter of parental responsibility and fall within the remit of other state agencies including Tusla, and the Department of Education.

We continue to work closely with An Garda Síochána to prevent unauthorised encampments and to protect Council owned lands.”

Leonore O’Neill advised that a multi agency approach is being taken in relation to this matter. She explained that Clare County Council did exercise its statutory powers by serving a trespass notice to the illegal occupants of this site. She advised that the site has been vacated and secured by Council personnel.

## **Item 29. Housing Grants Schemes.**

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton

“Re- open applications for all Housing Grants schemes.

That Clare County Council overturn the previous decision to severely restrict applications for housing grant schemes which is causing hardship on people and re-open applications for all Housing Grants schemes.”

**Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development replied as follows:**

“It was decided by the Council at its October 2018 meeting to suspend the acceptance of new private house grant applications due to the volume on the waiting list, the lack of financial resources to deal with these applications and the consequent inability to approve and finalise payments within a reasonable timeframe. The exception to this being Priority 1 cases, with the appropriate letter of referral from the H.S.E., which are still being accepted and approved.

The justification for the October decision remains and to reopen the various grant schemes at this time will generate an expectation that Clare County Council cannot fulfill as the existing backlog has not yet been cleared.

The following is the current position:

**(1) 2019 applications issued with approval documentation**

<b>Grant type</b>	<b>No. Approved and works not yet completed</b>	<b>Value of works committed to</b>
Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability	33	€402,396
Housing Aid for Older People	125	€558,298
Mobility Aids Grant	81	€47,021
<b>Total applications approved but not claimed at 30/6/2019</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>€1,307,715</b>

**(2) Applications accepted and in the workflow**

<b>Grant type</b>	<b>No. awaiting approval</b>	<b>Approximate value of works</b>
Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability	30	€500,000
Housing Aid for Older People	27	€162,000
Mobility Aids Grant	43	€215,000
<b>Total applications received for first 6 month of the year</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>€877,000</b>

It is worth noting that 100 Priority 1 applications have been received from the closure of the scheme in October 2018 up to the end of June 2019. These new priority applications will generate an estimated financial commitment of €900,000. Projecting this trend forward will result in a financial exposure of between €1.4million and €1.6 million by year end for Priority 1 applications.

Taking committed approved grant expenditure and the Priority 1 applications together requires a budget allocation of ~€3 million. The 2019 budget allocation is €2,205,380 with 20% (€441,076) of this to come from own resources. It is intended to apply for an additional budget allocation to meet the current demand and process the applications on hand.

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government are undertaking a national review of the various grant schemes, Clare County Council are participating in this review. It is recommended we await the outcome of the review prior to reopening the schemes.

To reopen the schemes at this juncture will lead to a significant increase in applications; this will generate expectation from applicants that their funding will be approved and at this time we are not in a position approve same. The reopening will only serve to increase waiting times and thus the waiting list into 2020.

We are committed to re-opening of the schemes in early 2020 as by that stage we will have discharged the backlog and will be in a position to accept new applications under all schemes. We will continue to work with those most in need and endeavour to provide grant assistance to the most vulnerable.”

The elected members noted that these schemes require urgent funding from central government. P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the members that a national review is taking place on these schemes and Clare County Council have contributed to this process. Following discussion, Cllr. J. Flynn requested that this notice of motion be deferred until early 2020.

### **Item 30. Brexit.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. McMahon

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. A. O’Callaghan agus P.J. Ryan agus glacadh leis

“In case of a disorderly Brexit I will ask the Chief Executive what plans have Clare County Council to deal with the fallout.”

### **Noeleen Fitzgerald, A/Head of Finance, Human Resources and Support Services replied as follows:**

“Brexit negotiations are still ongoing internationally and also at a national level with a lot of uncertainty remaining. Preparations have advanced in the local government sector and locally here in Clare County Council to enable the council to address the scenario’s that will emerge once there is an agreement. Whatever the outcome, this council’s is likely to have to address very real effects of Brexit but equally there are opportunities to be explored.

In late 2018 representatives across this councils executive participated at a conference on Brexit “*the implications for local authorities*” that included sessions on the



economy, housing market, and particular concerns of local authorities. There are challenges for import and export in business, housing provision, tourism market, travel arrangements, but equally there are opportunities that will be explored in the areas of tourism and foreign direct investment (FDI).

This council, through the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) has focused on assisting our various enterprises assess their potential individual exposure to Brexit and inform them of the various supports available to them. The Local Enterprise Office has run various seminars, mentor seminars, customs roadshows and workshops for local businesses. This information is outlined on our Leo web link <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Clare/Financial-Supports/Brexit-Information/>.

In addition the councils Local Enterprise Office is engaging three Brexit special consultants that will be responsible for engaging on a one to one basis with those enterprises that we identify as potentially being impacted by Brexit. These specialists will also be available to meet specific individual requests we may receive.

For our larger, SME's there is similar information provided via Enterprise Ireland. Another avenue we direct local businesses to is Intertrade Ireland who has very valuable information and supports. The Economic Directorate is also working on a strategy focusing on economic development via our diaspora. Many multinational companies are domiciled in the UK and serve their European markets from the UK. With the increased transit costs envisaged there is an opportunity to win some FDI in Clare to service their European Markets.

Brexit may have an impact on inward tourism from some markets based on exchange rates or a perceived return of a border. But equally there are opportunities here that are being explored. Passengers currently transiting through the UK, particularly from the USA, may present an opportunity to win new business. The tourism strategy will address tourism as a whole and opportunities to be explored.

The council will continue to monitor the Brexit negotiations and address the challenges and opportunities that emerge.”

### **Item 31. Reports on policies and bye laws.**

Ar moladh Cllr. I. Lynch  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“Prior to the adoption of a motion/proposal, which amends existing or introduces new county wide policy or bylaws, that a written report be presented to the members from each of the S.P.C. to ensure a fully informed debate on the potential impact both positive and negative of the said motion/proposal prior to it's adoption.”

Following discussion, Cllr. I. Lynch requested that this notice of motion be withdrawn and stated that he will make a submission as part of the current review of the S.P.C. scheme.

### **Item 32. Make Way Day.**

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Murphy  
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. P. Burke agus M. Howard agus glacadh leis

“The purpose of the Make Way Day is to promote the following;

- i) Recognising that people with disabilities have the same right to use and enjoy public spaces that we all share.
- ii) Acknowledging the obstacles which people with disabilities face in their daily lives, including badly parked vehicles and bicycles, billboards, over-grown hedges and other ill-placed hazards.
- iii) Understanding that most obstacles are caused by thoughtlessness and genuine lack of awareness.

Make Way Day 2018 took place on September 26th and was supported by nineteen local authorities.

We are calling on Clare County Council to annually support and promote a local #MakeWayClare campaign as part of the wider "Make Way Day" national campaign and to support the appointment of a local coordinator for the Make Way Day 2019."

**Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:**

"The date of the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2019 has been set as the *Make Way Day*. Clare County Council will work with the Disability Federation of Ireland (D.F.I.) to identify ways the Council can support and promote the *Make Way Day*. Part of the initiative will encourage participants to draw attention to the challenges posed by everyday obstructions within our towns.

In addition to supporting the Make Way Day, Ennis Municipal District Office in conjunction with the Age Friendly Development Officer and in line with the principles guiding the Clare Age Friendly Strategy carried out a walkability study of Ennis in early 2019. It is the Council's intention to review the existing National Accessibility Audit against the 2019 walkability study and to engage with accessibility groups to discuss specific practical examples of accessibility issues. The data gathered would then be checked against the existing audit and a list of priority actions drawn up for the Ennis Town Centre Area. A local co-ordinator will be assigned within the Council with responsibility for liaising with local disability groups and raising awareness regarding the Make Way Day, the distribution of Make Way Day stickers, and to ensure is so far as possible to increase peoples' awareness of the challenges that everyday obstructions to footpaths, roadways and circulation infrastructure i.e. parked cars on footpaths, bikes chained to railings, overhanging branches, bollards etc. can cause."

Cllr. P. Murphy read out a letter he had received with 20 signatures in relation to Make Way Day.

Cllr. M. Howard asked for an update on the JAM initiative that was approved by Clare County Council in September 2018. Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator responded and stated that the JAM initiative has been implemented by Clare County Council, customer service staff have received training and the JAM sign is at the Customer Service Desk.

Cllr. C. Crowe stated that he had also received a copy of the letter read out by Cllr. P. Murphy and that he met representatives of the group together with Cllr. J. Flynn. Cllr. C. Crowe proposed that the group be invited to the Council Chamber prior to the September Council meeting to outline to the full Council what it is like to be a Clare person with a disability in 2019. This was supported and agreed by the members present.

**Item 33. VAT applied to sunscreen.**

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. Norton agus glacadh leis

“Clare County Council requests Minister for Finance Mr. Paschal Donohoe to consider the necessity of a VAT rate of 23% currently applied to sunscreen. We request the removal of this rate or at the very least a reduction of this lifesaving product.”

**Item 34. University Hospital Limerick.**

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton  
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. I. Lynch, C. Murphy, C. Crowe, B. Chambers, J. Flynn agus C. Colleran Molloy agus glacadh leis

“In recognition of the fact that the reconfiguration strategy to centralise trauma care in Limerick has failed in its objective to provide safer care for patients, and that the consistent overcrowding at UHL can be addressed by reversing the closures to Ennis, Nenagh & St John’s hospitals, for the Council to -

- Call on the Minister for Health, Simon Harris TD to make an unannounced visit to Ennis and Limerick hospitals.
- Request that the Minister immediately initiate work to reopen Ennis A&E on a 24 hour basis, Nenagh A&E, St. Johns A&E and the upgrading of Ennis Hospital to a model 3 hospital.
- Request that the Minister meet with Clare County Council elected representatives and TD’s together with the TDs in Limerick and North Tipperary to discuss the future of the health service within the UL Hospitals group.
- Request an urgent public meeting with members of the HSE Executive and Department of Health to explore ways in which the trolley crisis at UHL can be eased by looking at alternative ways to utilise the facilities in Ennis, Nenagh and St Johns Hospitals.”

The elected members outlined difficulties being experienced by people in Clare in relation to the delivery of health services in the county. It was noted that University Hospital Limerick is still experiencing overcrowding. Disappointment was expressed that Clare Oireachtas Members are not addressing the problems being experienced in UHL. The Cathaoirleach advised that he is in discussions with neighbouring local authorities with a view to convening a joint meeting to discuss Shannon Airport and health services in the region.

**Item 35. Ardnacrusha Power Station.**

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Begley  
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Crowe agus glacadh leis

“In light of the emphasis on green energy I am requesting Clare County Council to ask the ESB if it has any plans to increase the generating capacity of Ardnachrusha Power Station.”

**Item 36. Local Improvement Schemes.**

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

“That this Council would request Michael Ring, Minister for Rural and Community Development to increase the funding available for LIS schemes (Local Improvement Scheme) as there has been a big increase in applications for this fund in recent times.”

**John Corry, Administrative Officer, Roads and Transportation Department replied as follows:**

“Since the Department of Rural and Community Development introduced funding for Local Improvement Schemes (LIS), in the latter part of 2017, Clare Co Council have been allocated grant funding of €2,386,308, facilitating works being carried out to 69 roads.

Clare County Council were approved an LIS allocation of €480,720 for 2019 which is facilitating works being carried out to 12 roads. A further application was submitted to the Department in April 2019 seeking additional funding of €1,037,938 which would, if approved, facilitate works being carried out to 22 further roads.

There is a very significant demand in Clare for the LIS with a total of 238 applications on hand awaiting grant funding before they can be considered further.”

**Item 37. Comhfhreagras. Correspondence.**

**Correspondence.**

**The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:**

1. Correspondence dated 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from the Department of Justice and Equality regarding Haven Horizon’s proposal on the Blueprint for Safety.
2. Correspondence dated 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in relation to reducing the use of plastic bottles.
3. Correspondence dated 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from the Commission for Communications Regulation in relation to 5G testing.
4. Correspondence dated 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from the Department of Health concerning folic acid.
5. Correspondence dated 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 from the Department of Health concerning the policy on medical card assessment.
6. Resolution circulated by Leitrim County Council in relation to the ban on the use of glyphosate.

7. AILG autumn training seminar 2019 being held in Hillgrove Hotel, Old Armagh Road, Monaghan on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2019.

## **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.

#### **AILG training entitled “120 years of Irish Local Government” taking place in Longford Arms Hotel, Longford on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2019.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €394.19 including conference fee of € It was agreed that Cllrs. C. Crowe and M. Begley attend this Conference.

#### **LAMA 2019 Spring Training Seminar taking place in the Bush Hotel, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim on 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €73.29 including conference fee of €180.

It was agreed that Cllrs. C. Crowe and B. Slattery attend this Conference.

#### **AILG training taking place in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2019.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €25.05 including conference fee of €5.

It was agreed that Cllrs. M. Begley and B. Slattery attend this Conference.

#### **AILG training taking place in Arklow, Co. Wicklow on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2019.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €82.38 including conference fee of €5.

It was agreed that Cllr. C. Crowe attend this Conference.

#### **AILG training taking place in Thurles, Co. Tipperary on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2019.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €300.36 including conference fee of €5.

It was agreed that Cllrs. A. Norton, C. Colleran Molloy, J. Cooney, P.J. Kelly, P. McMahon, A. O’Callaghan, J. Killeen, P. Daly, C. Crowe, G. Keating, J. Crowe, P.J. Ryan, B. Chambers and M. Begley attend this Conference.

#### **Velo-City taking place in IFC Dublin on 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2019.**

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €1,658.37 including conference fee of €50.

It was agreed that Cllr. R. Garvey attend this Conference.

The meeting then concluded.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Riarthóir Cruinnithe**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cathaoirleach**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_