

**Minutes of the July Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held in Glór,
Ennis, Co. Clare on Monday, 13th July, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.**

Present:

Councillors M. Howard, M. Nestor, J. Flynn, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Murphy, A. Norton, P. Daly, J. Cooney, P. Burke, A. O’Callaghan, J. Crowe, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, G. Flynn, D. McGettigan, P. O’Gorman, S. Talty, J. Killeen, J. Garrihy, 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.
- Ms. Helen Quinn, A/Director of Economic Development.
- Ms. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance.
- Ms. Deirdre O’Shea, A/Tourism Officer, Rural Development.
- Ms. Bernadette Haugh, A/Senior Executive Officer, Rural Development.
- Mr. Seán Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.
- Mr. John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.
- Mr. Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Howard presided.

Vote of Sympathy.

At the outset a vote of sympathy was extended to the following:

- The Casey family Ballyea on the death of Paddy Casey.
- The O’Callaghan family O’Callaghans Mills on the death of Eithne O’Callaghan.
- The Barry family Ballyea on the death of Colin Barry.
- The Fleming family Kilkishen on the death of Margaret Fleming.

Item 1: Minutes of Council Meetings.

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

“That the Minutes of the June Meeting of Clare County Council held on 8th June, 2020 be adopted and signed.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. O’Gorman agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the adjourned June Meeting of Clare County Council held on 29th June, 2020 be adopted and signed.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers
Cuidithe ag Cllr. D. McGettigan agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting of Clare County Council held on 29th June, 2020 be adopted and signed.”

Item 2: Matters Arising.

Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy referred to response received from Shannon Group in relation to the closure of Shannon Airport and expressed disappointment that it did not address the matter raised in her notice of motion.

Item 3: Minutes of Municipal District Meetings.

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

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 11th June, 2020 be noted.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Annual General Meeting held on the 11th June, 2020 be noted.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. P. O’Gorman
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Shannon Municipal District Meeting held on the 29th May, 2020 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 3rd March, 2020 be noted.”

e. Ar moladh Cllr. B. Chambers
Cuidithe ag Cllr. I. Lynch agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Special Meeting held on the 21st May, 2020 be noted.”

f. Ar moladh Cllr. G. Keating
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Garrihy agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Special Meeting held on the 9th June, 2020 be noted.”

Item 4: Minutes of Strategic Policy Committee Meetings.

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

“That the minutes of the Economic Development S.P.C. meeting held on 9th March, 2020 be noted”.

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

“That the minutes of the Social Development S.P.C. meeting held on 11th March, 2020 be noted”.

Item 5: Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meetings.

The members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 29th May, 2020 as presented.

Item 6: 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. P. Daly requested an update on the construction of the new County Library. P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that Clare County Council are committed to completing the new library building. He read the following extract from communication received from the contractors Operations Director,

“We remain committed to financing the completion and commissioning of the project and we are continuing to engage with our suppliers and subcontractors in relation to commissioning and certifying the works.”

Mr. Dowling assured the members that he will communicate with them if circumstances change.

Cllr. J. Flynn referred to the Ennis town centre Mobility Plan and stated that a large majority of the public are in favour of it as it keeps residents and visitors safe in Ennis town.

Cllr. C. Murphy commended Clare County Council on works carried out in on the promenade in Kilkee.

Cllr. G. Keating requested an update on public toilets in Kilkee. P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that currently one of the three beach huts on the promenade in Kilkee is being renovated to provide two public toilets.

Item 7: Disposal of property pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000. Proposed disposal of property at No. 8 Gort Road Industrial Estate, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Report dated 29th June, 2020 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of property at No. 8 Gort Road Industrial Estate, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 29th June, 2020.”

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Nestor
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 of property at No. 8 Gort Road Industrial Estate, Gort Road, Ennis, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 29th June, 2020.”

Item 8: Disposal of property pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000. Proposed disposal of area of land to the rear of houses in Kilcornan, Ennistymon, Co. Clare.

Report dated 24th June, 2020 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of an area of land to the rear of houses in Kilcornan, Ennistymon, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 24th June, 2020.”

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Garrihy
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 area of land to the rear of houses in Kilcornan, Ennistymon, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 24th June, 2020.”

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 refurbishment of the Tourist Office and eastern section of the County Museum Building, Friary car park, Clonroad Beg, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Report dated 7th July, 2020 from Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development was circulated with the agenda together with report from Helen Quinn, A/Senior Planner. The report outlines details of proposed refurbishment of the Tourist Office and eastern section of the County Museum Building, Friary car park, Clonroad Beg, 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 refurbishment of the Tourist Office and eastern section of the County Museum Building, Friary car park, Clonroad Beg, Ennis, Co. Clare.”

Item 10: Rural Funding Schemes 2020.

- **CLÁR Programme 2020**
- **Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020.**

Report dated 6th July, 2020 from Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the members of the Working Group for the Action Plan for Rural Ireland met on Friday 3rd July 2020 and recommended 26 projects for submission to the Department of Rural and Community Development for consideration as part of the national competitive process under the Rural Investment Programme 2020. A list of projects was circulated with the report.

The report was noted by the members present having been proposed by Cllr. G. Keating, seconded by Cllr. A. Norton and agreed.

Cllr. M. Begley expressed disappointment that work on footpaths from Barrys Cross to Parteen was not included in the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

Item 11: 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. G. Flynn and seconded by Cllr. G. Keating.

Cllr. J. Flynn welcomed the very extensive Annual Service Delivery Plan and requested that consideration be given to the inclusion of timelines and targets of strategy documents going forward in order to demonstrate quality of work being done.

Item 12: Draft Clare Tourism Strategy.

Report dated 3rd July, 2020 from Deirdre O'Shea, A/Head of Tourism, Rural Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda. The report referred to the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 which has been reviewed following an extensive and comprehensive feedback process. This process reflected the significant changes to the global tourism experience, consequent on the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cllr. C. Murphy commended the work undertaken to produce the Draft Clare Tourism Strategy and acknowledged the importance of tourism to the county and proposed that the adoption of the Draft Clare Tourism Strategy be deferred until the September meeting to allow further input from elected members. This was seconded by Cllr. A. O'Callaghan and agreed by the members present.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the meeting that discussions on the Draft Clare Tourism Strategy have taken place with Councillors and agreed that strong clear statements around tourism in County Clare need to be embedded into the strategy. He agreed that collaborative consensus is required and agreed to defer this item to the September Council Meeting.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard informed the members that Cllr. J. Cooney had requested that Item No. 18 be discussed at this stage. This was agreed by the members present.

Item 18. Hedge cutting and tree limbing.

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

“In the interest of road safety I am calling on Clare County Council to put a major drive into hedge cutting and tree limbing for the month of September, and also create more awareness among landowners of grant available to carry out same.”

John Corry, Administrative Officer, Physical Directorate 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 1st and August 31st 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 fulfil this role is governed by the budget at its disposal. An additional allocation of €10,000 has been provided in the 2020 Schedule of Municipal District Works to facilitate additional hedgecutting by the Council where deemed appropriate bringing to €95,000 the total funding available.

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 and hedges from 1st September.”

Cllr. J. Cooney requested that a major drive be planned for hedge cutting and hedge trimming in early September to accommodate the safety of people. He referred to the recent growth season and expressed concern for walkers and cyclists who have to use the centre of the roads as some minor roads are impassable.

The elected members in supporting Cllr. J. Cooney agreed that many roads are currently impassable and stated that some landowners are not carrying out their responsibilities in relation to hedge cutting.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the members that he will communicate with the Senior Executive Officers in the Municipal Districts in relation to the hedge cutting programme.

Item 13: H.S.E. briefing at 3:00 p.m.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard introduced Dr. Mai Mannix, Director of Public Health, Maria Bridgeman, Head of Service, Health & Wellbeing and Colette Cowen, Chief Executive, UHL to the meeting. Prof. Brian Lenehan, Chief Clinical Director,

UL Hospitals Group, Noreen Spillane, Chief Operations Officer, UL Hospitals Group, Mike Aherne, Communications Manager, H.S.E. Mid West Community Healthcare and Mike Dwane, Communications Officer, UL Hospitals Group were also in attendance.

P. Dowling welcomed the H.S.E. personnel and thanked them for attending the Council meeting. Mr. Dowling stressed the strong collaboration that has taken place with public bodies during the Covid19 pandemic. He stated that we have been very well served in the mid west region as the H.S.E. has shown incredible leadership and have been committed to the cause in fronting the Covid 19 fight. Mr. Dowling acknowledged the ongoing correspondence and communication with the H.S.E. in the mid west region.

Colette Cowan, Chief Executive Officer, UL Hospitals Group addressed the meeting and briefed the members on Covid 19 impact on UL Hospitals Group under the following headings:

- New ways of working – national guidance
- Resumption of services – safe care and safe staff
- Ennis hospital
- Capital developments across UL Hospitals Group
- Capital builds – future plans and
- Challenges in relation to patient safety, staff fatigue/stress/exhaustion, new Government and new decisions, resources to manage services changes, winter 2020/2021 and balancing bacteria/virus.

Maria Bridgeman, Chief Officer, H.S.E. Mid West Community Healthcare provided a presentation on Covid 19 addressing the following issues:

- Covid 19 Mid West Community Healthcare response
- Covid response support team
- Testing/swabbing
- Community assessment hubs
- Additional bed capacity
- Isolation facilities
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Transport
- Psychosocial support
- Contact tracing for Healthcare workers
- Challenges

Dr. Mai Mannix, Director of Public Health Mid West discussed the following in her presentation:

- Public Health and how it is organised in Ireland
- Public Health Medicine

- Health Protection Surveillance Centre
- Medical Officer of Health
- Notifiable diseases
- Pandemic response structure
- Testing/case finding
- Contact tracing
- Covid 19 Epidemiology Mid West

The elected members thanked the H.S.E. personnel for attending and for providing the regular updates during the covid 19 pandemic. The elected members raised queries in relation to the following:

- Covid 19 testing by GPs
- Re-opening adult disability services in the community
- Respite care for parents caring for family members with physical or intellectual disabilities
- Current and planned use for Inis Guile
- Renew leadership and issue strong message in relation to covid 19 going forward
- Covid 19 tracker app
- Clear guidelines in relation to international travel
- Outsourcing procedures to private hospitals
- Storing personal medical records
- Welcome injury unit and outpatient unit in Ennis hospital
- Establish Covid 19 test centres in airports
- Update on health centre in Sixmilebridge
- Are facilities in place to social distance people on trollies in hospitals
- Is there a backlog in elective surgeries
- Address vulnerability in private nursing homes
- Managing public spaces for recreation
- Identification of human remains following death from covid 19
- Is there a plan to increase home care for people in rural areas
- Future of St. Joseph's hospital, Ennis
- Commend Ennis Town mobility plan
- Unwillingness of rough sleepers to co-operate with services available
- Illegal encampment on Tulla Road area – serious concerns for local residents
- Provision of PPE and cleaning products for schools

- Pressure on ambulance service due to lack of transport when discharging patients
- No work for Irish people who responded to Ireland on call to assist during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The queries raised were addressed by Colette Cowan, Chief Executive Officer, UHL, Maria Bridgeman, Chief Officer, H.S.E. Mid West Community Healthcare and Dr. Mai Mannix, Director of Public Health Mid West.

Motion for the purpose of dealing with urgent business.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard informed the meeting that she had received a motion for the purpose of dealing with urgent business and this motion may be proposed in accordance with Standing Order No. 42. This was agreed by the members present.

The following resolution was signed by Cllrs. A. O’Callaghan, P. McMahon, P. O’Gorman, D. McGettigan, P.J. Ryan, M. Begley, C. Murphy, J. Garrihy, P.J. Kelly, J. Killeen, M. Nestor, J. Flynn, A. Norton, G. Flynn, J. Crowe and M. Howard.

“Request that we open a discussion on the possibility of Clare County Council taking over and running Shannon Heritage sites in Clare.”

The elected members outlined details of recent meeting held with Shannon Heritage staff and relayed the fears and uncertainty being experienced by them in relation to their future employment. The members expressed disappointment that Shannon Heritage attractions in Clare will close on 31st August. The Councillors acknowledged the positive role Clare County Council plays in promoting tourism in County Clare and requested that the Council enter negotiations with Shannon Heritage with a view to taking over and managing these tourist attractions. The elected members emphasised the importance of keeping these attractions open in order to attract the domestic tourist market to County Clare particularly during this period when people are being advised to holiday in Ireland. The potential negative impact to the area due to the loss of the Halloween, Christmas and Winter Music Festival events was echoed by the members.

The members emphasised that the important element in this discussion is that these facilities remain open and that staff remain in their jobs. It was also affirmed that the Council should not inherit the debt accrued by Shannon Heritage.

It was noted that Clare County Council needs to fully analyse the implications of any potential takeover of these tourist attractions and will need to acquire full knowledge of all components associated in this regard.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and acknowledged the unambiguous wish of the Council. He stated that Shannon Heritage has six tourism products in County Clare that attracted up to 1 million visitors in 2019 a number that has doubled since 2013. He also stated that 80% of visitors to Bunratty are international visitors and this will be severely impacted due to current travel restrictions. Mr. Dowling advised the members that a further meeting with Shannon Heritage personnel is scheduled this week and undertook to engage in discussion on the basis of the Councillors unanimous wish. Mr. Dowling stated that there are complexities that will have to be examined and that a very comprehensive due

diligence will be undertaken. Mr. Dowling stated that he will continue to keep the Councillors updated on matters.

Item 15. County Development Plan.

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Kelly

Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Killeen agus glacadh leis

“That the proposed draft County Development Plan provides for the removal of constraints on rural house being built in areas of declining population.”

Helen Quinn, A/Senior Planner replied as follows:

“The preparation of a new Clare County Development Plan is due to commence in September 2020. The plan when finalised will span the period 2022-2028. In considering the objectives to be included within this new plan relating to rural housing the Planning Authority will be guided by the following:

- The legislative requirements as set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended
- The National Planning Framework
- The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region
- Section 28 Ministerial guidelines expect that in the next few months new guidelines will be issued relating to the preparation of Core Strategies, Housing Need Demand Assessments and Rural Housing. In this regard the Planning Authority will ensure that the objectives of the draft plan are in line with all the relevant Section 28 Guidelines & legislation in place at the time of drafting.
- Environmental legislation and codes of practice
- Local factors including landscape designations and transportation corridors.

As part of the plan preparation currently underway, the Planning Authority will draft working papers on key topics and an issues paper for circulation in early September both of which will include rural housing. I intend to communicate the content of the draft working papers to the elected members in the coming weeks.”

The elected members expressed concern that a blanket ban on one off housing could be a detriment to rural Clare as there has to be opportunity for people to move into an area.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive outlined the process of preparing a new County Clare Development Plan which is due to commence in September and this will take into consideration the collective will of the Council.

As there were nine items remaining on the agenda, Cllr. P.J. Ryan proposed that the meeting be adjourned until Monday, 20th July, 2020. This was seconded by Cllr. P. McMahon and the members present agreed to recommence at 3:45 p.m. on Monday, 20th July.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____

**Minutes of the adjourned July Meeting of Clare County Council held in Glór,
Ennis, Co. Clare on Monday, 20th July, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.**

Present:

Councillors M. Howard, M. Nestor, J. Flynn, P. Murphy, A. Norton, P. Daly, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, P. Burke, A. O’Callaghan, T. O’Brien, J. Crowe, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, G. Flynn, D. McGettigan, P. O’Gorman, S. Talty, J. Killeen, J. Garrihy, P.J. Kelly, G. Keating, C. Murphy, I. Lynch.

- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, Deputy Chief Executive.
- Ms. Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Margaret O’Rourke, Assistant Staff Officer.
- Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development.
- Mr. Gareth Ruane, A/Senior Executive Planner, Economic Development.
- Ms. Bernadette Haugh, A/Senior Executive Officer, Rural Development.
- Ms. Deirdre O’Shea, A/Head of Tourism, Rural Development.
- Mr. Seán Lenihan, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.

The Leas Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Pat Burke presided.

Item 14. Choice Based Letting System.

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan

Cuidithe ag Cllr. I. Lynch agus glacadh leis

“That this Council would ensure that the Choice Based Letting system does not disenfranchise housing applicants who are not computer literate or have other literacy problems.”

Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development replied as follows:

“Choice Based Letting (C.B.L.) is a system which will enhance the allocation of properties it does not override the Social Housing Allocations scheme which is the overarching policy in relation to allocations. The Council decides which properties to advertise on C.B.L., there will be cases where properties are allocated in line with our Allocations Scheme and are not advertised on C.B.L. To date, properties for the elderly or which suit people with disabilities or with mobility issues (adapted houses) have not been advertised on C.B.L.

Choice Based Letting (C.B.L.) is available to those on the Social Housing list with certain housing stock (including leased homes and voluntary housing properties) being made available for letting advertised on our dedicated C.B.L. website

www.cbl.clarecoco.ie

The system itself is very user friendly and is comparable to many other platforms regularly used by customers of Clare County Council. That said it is recognised that a

number of our applicants may need support, guidance and assistance in using this system and these supports are available from Council staff and support service agencies. In addition the Council work closely with the H.S.E. Disability Services to ensure their service users are aware and supported when a suitable property is advertised on C.B.L.

All elected representatives have access to the C.B.L. site to view available properties and help constituents to negotiate the site.

In March we commenced a roll out programme for the new C.B.L. system, the initial training event was open to all housing applicants and was held in the foyer of Áras Contae an Chláir. The intention was to continue with additional sessions in a number of libraries across the county. Regrettably, due to the unforeseen circumstances presented by Covid19, this has had to be postponed. We hope to be in a position to hold such training sessions in the future.”

The elected members expressed concern that housing applicants who are not computer literate may miss out on potential properties. It was suggested that a text alert system be introduced.

A. Haugh, Director of Social Development outlined that the Choice Based Letting system has been rolled out by each local authority. Its objective is to reduce turn around time in letting properties. She stated that it has been very positively welcomed by housing applicants as they can see pictures of potential properties when making decisions. Ms. Haugh informed the members that it is hoped to resume a training programme for all housing applicants on the Choice Based Letting system in the near future.

Item 16. Alternative waste water treatment processes.

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

“That the planning department of Clare County Council give due consideration to alternative waste water treatment processes in any planning applications and the standard percolation test should no longer be the determining factor by which rural housing is deemed acceptable on a site.”

Helen Quinn, A/Senior Planner replied as follows:

“In assessing planning applications for rural houses, and associated on-site wastewater treatment systems, the Planning Authority are guided by E.P.A. Guidelines, namely the E.P.A. *Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e ≤ 10)*. This code of practice provides a national framework of best practice in relation to the development of wastewater treatment and disposal systems, in unsewered rural areas. In addition it is a requirement of the Development Plan as set out under Objective CDP 8.27 to permit developments in compliance with the aforementioned guidelines.

The Planning Authority assesses applications in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and based on site suitability reports, the EPA Guidelines, and in-house environmental/engineering expertise.

All options provided by the E.P.A. Code of Practice are considered in the planning assessment, which include for standard septic tank systems, secondary treatment systems and tertiary systems.

The Planning Authority understands that aspects of the current E.P.A. Code of Practice are currently under review and it is anticipated that such review may widen the acceptable parameters of percolation rates. If alternative disposal methods are also proposed under any revision to the guidelines then these too will be considered as part of any assessment. For now, however the Planning Authority will continue to comply with, and be guided by, the E.P.A. Code of Practice.”

The elected members provided examples of planning applicants who cannot get planning permission on their own lands due to inability to pass percolation tests and requested that Clare County Council be open to promoting alternative waste water treatment processes while complying with national guidelines.

Gareth Ruane, A/Senior Executive Planner informed the members that the Planning Authority are guided by E.P.A. Guidelines and that current guidelines are being reviewed. Mr. Ruane stated that the planning section will establish a liaison group with planning agents and architects and will host workshops with experts on waste water treatment when the new guidelines are issued.

Cllr. J. Flynn requested that the issue of an illegal encampment adjacent to the Castle Rock housing estate on the Tulla Road, Ennis be discussed and he informed the meeting that three residents from Castle Rock were present in the public gallery. Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. P. Burke stated that this would be discussed at the end of the meeting and this was agreed by the members present.

Item 17. CRM system to record notices of motions.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Murphy

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. J. Garrihy, I. Lynch, J. Flynn, P. Hayes, G. Flynn, M. Nestor, J. Killeen, P. McMahon, P.J. Kelly, M. Howard agus B. Chambers agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council research and implement, within an agreed timeframe, a publicly accessible CRM system to record all notices of motion, replies and follow up actions to avoid duplication, to track recurring issues and to ensure effective management of all issues raised by elected members.”

Ann Reynolds, A/Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services replied as follows:

“Clare County Council has a number of CRM systems all operated from internal IT servers. Each CRM meets a different business requirement, has its own workflow and its own particular set of customers and defined staff user logins. Examples include Environmental Complaints, Roads Complaints, Unauthorised Development, Derelict Sites and Notice of Motions. These systems were all custom built internally based on business requirements. The Corporate Services Department manages the Notice of Motions CRM for Council meetings and currently logs and tracks all Notice of Motions. The review of and integration of CRMs has been identified as an area for business improvement. The Business Review Team has commenced work on a review of all Customer based CRMs with a view to developing a central Customer

CRM system. This work ceased during the COVID-19 pandemic and is due to recommence in the coming weeks. An option to include a Councillor Motions module will be explored as part of this project proposal.

Separately a Councillor Cases application was developed and launched in late 2019 to enable Councillors to log and track representations electronically. This is a web based app with defined user logins and passwords.

A paperless meeting solution is also being examined with potential additional functionality for logging and tracking notice of motions. Both options require further review and consultations with relevant stakeholders and development of a proposal which will include the scope of the project, timelines and costs.”

The elected members felt that it is important to track administrative actions following meetings. They also emphasised the importance of informing constituents of progress on requests in order to provide a layer of transparency and accountability. It was felt that this system would avoid repeat motions being discussed at meetings and it was suggested that a working group be established to put best practice in place.

Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator agreed that tracking notice of motions and actions is important and welcomed the proposal to establish a working group to review options and agree a suitable solution. Ms. Reynolds informed the members that it is possible to run reports from the current CRM system.

Item 19. Marketing support for tourism networks.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Killeen
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Garrihy agus glacadh leis

“We wish to acknowledge and commend the role played by Clare County Councils Tourism Team in their efforts to get the tourism industry back up and running.

We call on Clare County Council to provide emergency marketing support and support funding for the tourism networks in the county to aid content creation, video graphics and other promotional tools to sell Clare to the domestic market as the top holiday destination in Ireland.”

Deirdre O’Shea, A/Head of Tourism replied as follows:

“Consequent on the extraordinarily challenging period for the tourism industry during 2020, Clare County Council and Clare Tourism have heavily promoted and targeted the domestic market to Visit Clare. This effort has been made as a measure of supporting the recovery of local tourism.

Outlined below have been the key elements of **Strategic Marketing Plan** to date:

Clare County Council sponsored the week long Dermot and Dave Show on Today FM on the week of the 29th June. This sponsorship was enhanced by the provision of generous daily prizes from local tourism businesses and hospitality across the county.

There has been a suite of domestic marketing advertisements designed and used on national print media to include the Irish Independent, RTE Guide and Irish Daily Mail. During this campaign generous prizes were again provided from local tourism businesses and hospitality and advertised as part of these advertorials.

Sample Adverts:



Following on from the success of the first video produced ‘Dream of Clare’ released during the Covid-19 lockdown period, a second video ‘its all there in Clare. Under the Gaze of Loophead Lighthouse’ was produced. This video was released on social media as well as having a digital marketing campaign launched on platforms to include Extra.ie; Evoke.ie and Rollercoaster.ie.

All of this promotional collateral for Clare is widely available for sharing to all of the Clare tourism industry, via the newly designed Clare Tourism Trade Blog, set up on the Visit Clare Website.

On an annual basis, the Clare County Council tourism budget allocates a significant amount to tourism networks and in particular for marketing and promotion activities. This funding is advertised and processed through the annual Community Supports Scheme.”

The elected members acknowledged the work being done to re-start tourism in the county and welcomed the success of recent media campaigns in attracting tourists to Co. Clare. It was agreed that Clare County Council should continue to engage with tourism networks within the county and work collectively to disperse and balance tourism in the whole county. It was noted that the recent large influx of domestic tourists brings responsibility to the council in managing litter and traffic. The Councillors present agreed that a visible presence from An Garda Síochána, H.S.E. and Clare County Council will be required going forward to facilitate safety at beaches. The members felt that financial support should be provided to local authorities to assist with the costs associated with managing tourist areas.

Noeleen Fitzgerald, Deputy Chief Executive addressed the meeting and agreed that the recent tourism marketing campaign was an immense success. She informed the members that engagement with tourism networks is ongoing. Referring to the level of tourists in the county, Ms. Fitzgerald stated that the council has to address the consequences of demands and management and is working on promoting the public health message. She informed the members that the Gardai have been present at several locations and they have dealt with traffic management issues and will continue in this regard.

Item 20. Revenue generated from sale of graves.

Ar moladh Cllr. S. Talty

“What revenue was generated from the sale of graves in each of the last 4 years, 2016-2019. Can this be broken down by Municipal District?”

Bernadette Haugh, A/Senior Executive Officer, Rural Development replied as follows:

“The Burial Ground Management function falls within the remit of the Rural Directorate. There are 30 Council owned revenue generating burial grounds in the County, the largest of which are Drumcliffe (Ennis Municipal District), Reilig Nua & Scariff (Killaloe Municipal District), Ballycannon & Illaunamanagh (Shannon Municipal District) and Ennistymon (West Clare Municipal District). As you will see from the table set out hereunder the total amount of revenue generated from Burial Grounds over the 4 year period 2016 – 2019, was €299,794, with the cost of a plot ranging from €15 (single plot) up to €735 (double plot) depending on the location of the burial, based on the burial ground fees in place since 2009.

The annual revenue from the sale of burial plots countywide provides an average of €74K and the burial ground management function incurs a significant outlay in terms of expenditure on an annual basis of circa 162K towards maintenance and the salaries of Caretakers/Registrars, with any shortfall met from the Council’s own resources. The maintenance of the county’s burial grounds has become reactionary due to general deterioration of burial grounds (including a further 20 non-revenue generating burial grounds) which has given rise to significant works in response to public safety concerns i.e. dangerous trees and boundary walls.

Clare County Council wishes to acknowledge the substantial work carried out by communities in burial grounds across the County, supported by grant funding under the annual Community Support Scheme.

| Municipal District | Qty Revenue Generating Burial Grounds | Revenue from Burial Grounds Per Annum | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|
| | | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | Total 2016-2019 |
| INCOME | | | | | | |
| Ennis | 2 | 24,675 | 21,525 | 18,585 | 25,200 | 89,985 |
| Killaloe | 8 | 14,250 | 9,370 | 13,760 | 9,095 | 46,475 |
| Shannon | 6 | 32,010 | 23,520 | 32,255 | 24,550 | 112,335 |
| West Clare | 14 | 17,955 | 11,865 | 10,154 | 11,025 | 50,999 |
| TOTAL | 30 | 88,890 | 66,280 | 74,754 | 69,870 | 299,794 |
| | | | | | | |
| EXPENDITURE (i.e. Maintenance, Machine Hire, Plinths, Repairs, etc.) | | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | Total 2016-2019 |
| County Burial Grounds | | 33,902 | 64,400 | 43,041 | 36,347 | 177,690 |
| Drumcliffe Burial Ground | | 52,415 | 33,342 | 21,790 | 53,935 | 161,482 |
| Shannon (Illaunnamanagh) | | 4,912 | 3,810 | 0 | 151 | 8,873 |
| Salaries Registrars/Caretakers | | 48,000 | 48,800 | 48,889 | 45,983 | 191,672 |

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| BG Priming Grants/Community Support Scheme | 29,857 | 32,714 | 22,047 | 26,615 | 111,233 |
| TOTAL | 169,086 | 183,066 | 135,767 | 163,031 | 650,950 |

Cllr. S. Talty stated that burial grounds are long lasting memorials and it is important to maintain them to a standard we would be proud of.

Item 21. Irish yoga owners.

Due to the absence of Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy, this motion was proposed by Cllr. S. Talty, seconded by Cllr. A. O’Callaghan and agreed by the members present.

“That the Minister for Finance

- (1) categorise Irish Yoga Studio owners (as distinct from yoga teachers providing yoga classes) as “providers of facilities for sport and physical education” akin to gym facilities, and thereby qualify for the lower V.A.T. rate of 9% instead of 13.5%, to preclude them being lumped together with individual service providers and yoga teachers, who do not have a fraction of the ongoing running costs of yoga studios; and
- (2) that the Minister explain specifically why his position is that he cannot lower the V.A.T. for yoga studio facilities, claiming that he is being blocked by EU law in doing so; and
- (3) that the Minister explain the rationale of distinguishing Yoga Studios from Gyms in terms of V.A.T. treatment in light of the fact that he is giving an unfair advantage to Gyms (who had their V.A.T. lowered in 2011), likely causing many more yoga studios to close down and cease providing the employment that they do, while also depriving the much needed benefits of yoga exercise in these times of great stress in our society.”

Item 22. Ennis General Hospital.

Ar moladh Cllr. D. McGettigan
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“This motion requests that Clare County Council calls on the health minister to upgrade Ennis General Hospital to model three hospital where it will enable it to assist the health service to deal with the backlog that is occurring in various procedures and operations that have been deferred or cancelled during the Covid pandemic.”

The elected members in supporting this notice of motion, agreed that Ennis hospital should be upgraded to model three status.

Item 23. Framework of environmental standards.

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

“To call on the Government and the EU to put in place a transparent robust framework of environmental standards to enable consumers to make informed decisions when purchasing cars, other goods and services.”

The elected members agreed on the importance of labeling in order to inform consumers of long term savings when purchasing goods and services.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard presided at this point.

Illegal encampment.

Cllr. J. Flynn requested that the issue of an illegal encampment adjacent to the Castle Rock housing estate on the Tulla Road, Ennis be discussed. Cllr. J. Flynn stated that this illegal encampment is on private lands and expressed concerns in relation to environmental hazard, covid 19 hazard and traffic hazard. He informed the meeting that this development is a cause of distress for the residents in the estate and it is in breach of public health guidelines.

The elected members present agreed with Cllr. J. Flynn and stated that residents are witnessing inappropriate activity by the residents in the illegal encampment.

Queries were raised in relation to the powers available to Clare County Council to deal with this illegal activity. It was agreed that a multi agency approach is required to resolve this issue. The members noted that the Gardai have not been informed of trespass on these lands.

Noeleen Fitzgerald, Deputy Chief Executive addressed the meeting and stated that this is a specific trespass issue on private lands which is primarily an issue between an Garda Síochána and the landowner. Referring to Covid 19 concerns, Ms. Fitzgerald stated that Clare County Council will engage with the H.S.E. Mid West Community Healthcare service. She informed the members that communication will issue to An Garda Síochána in relation to the traffic hazard mentioned.

Item 24. Comhfhreagras/Correspondence.

Correspondence.

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:

1. Correspondence dated 16th June, 2020 from the Office of the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation in relation to The National Small Business Recovery Plan.
2. Correspondence dated 26th June, 2020 from the Department of Rural and Community Development in relation to the Local Improvement Scheme.
3. Correspondence dated 30th June, 2020 from Shannon Group in relation to Shannon Airport's hours of operation.
4. Correspondence dated 2nd July, 2020 from the Office of the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection regarding illness benefit.
5. Resolution circulated by Kerry County Council in relation to the V.A.T. rate on the tourism industry.

6. Resolution circulated by Carlow County Council in relation to Black Lives Matter protest in Guildhall Square in Derry.

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 Annual Conference taking place in Longford on 4th & 5th March, 2020.

The Meetings Administrator informed the Members that the estimated average cost per Councillor attending this Conference was €444.49.

It was agreed that Cllr. P. Murphy attend this Conference.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____