

**Minutes of the February Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held in the
Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare on
Monday, 14th February, 2022 at 3:45 p.m.**

Present:

Councillors M. Howard, M. Nestor, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Daly, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, P. Burke, T. O'Brien, J. Crowe, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, G. Flynn, P. O'Gorman, J. Killeen, 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.
- Dr. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, Director of Finance and Support Services.

Present via MS Teams:

Cllrs. J. Flynn, P. Murphy, A. Norton, A. O'Callaghan, D. McGettigan, J. Garrihy, L. Grant, P.J. Kelly,

Apologies: Cllr. S. Talty.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P.J. Ryan presided.

Congratulations.

The elected members extended congratulations to St. Josephs secondary school in Tulla on their success in winning the TUS Dr. Harty Cup Final recently. Compliments were paid to the players, their management team and the catchment GAA clubs for the work put in to bring the players to this standard. The members extended best wishes to the team in the upcoming Dr. Croke Cup All Ireland Secondary Schools Senior "A" hurling championship.

Irish Water.

Cllr. P. Hayes informed the meeting that Irish Water had committed to attend a Council Meeting in the coming weeks to brief the elected members on the following:

- (a) proposals to extract water from the new Shannon source
- (b) Wastewater Treatment in 52 villages and towns in County Clare
- (c) Water leakage and Irish Water issues and problems in the county.

Cllr. P. Hayes requested that correspondence issue to Irish Water requesting confirmation of their commitment to attend a Council meeting.

Votes of sympathy

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

- The Cotter family, Tipperary, on the death of Jerry Cotter RIP
- The Ryan family, Kilkee, on the death of Michael Ryan RIP
- The Dillon family, Kilkee, on the death of Paul Dillon, RIP
- The Culligan family, Lissycasey, on the death of Kathy Culligan RIP
- The Casey family, Darragh, on the death of Mary Anne Casey RIP
- The Noonan family, Sixmilebridge on the death of Pat Noonan RIP
- The Daly family, Tuamgraney, on the death of Peter Daly RIP
- The Mullins family, Cree on the death of Mary Mullins RIP
-

St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York

At the outset it was proposed by Cllr. P. Hayes, seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy and agreed by all the members present that the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive accept the kind invitation of the County Clare Patriotic, Benevolent and Social Association of New York City to attend the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York.

Item 1: Minutes of Council Meetings.

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

“That the Minutes of the January Meeting of Clare County Council held on 10th January, 2022 be adopted and signed.”

Item 2: Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

Item 3: Minutes of Municipal District Meetings.

a. Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 11th January, 2022 be noted.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Burke
Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O'Brien agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Budget Meeting held on the 10th November, 2021 be noted.”

c. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Hayes
Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O'Brien agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Meeting held on the 10th November, 2021 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the Shannon Municipal District Meeting held on the 16th November, 2021 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 2nd November, 2021 be noted.”

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

“That the Minutes of the West Clare Municipal District Meeting held on the 9th November, 2021 be noted.”

Item 4: Minutes of S.P.C. Meetings.

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

“That the minutes of the Economic Development S.P.C. meeting held on 20th September, 2021 be noted”.

Item 5: Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meetings.

The members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 4th January, 2022 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. C. Murphy thanked Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development for providing information requested on derelict sites. Cllr. C. Murphy encouraged continuous engagement with off shore wind developers in order to reap the benefits for local communities. Cllr. C. Murphy voiced concern at the delay in the delivery of the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Kilkee and requested that engagement continue with Irish Water to provide this infrastructure as soon as possible.

Cllr. I. Lynch acknowledged the work being undertaken in re-developing derelict properties into permanent residential properties. Cllr. Lynch welcomed funding allocation for the Kilrush Maritime Training Centre. Cllr. Lynch also welcomed the ongoing collaboration with external agencies in relation to the initiative which seeks to attract sustainable cruise visits to the Shannon Estuary. Cllr. Lynch referred to the restoration of the Manchester Martyrs Monument in Kilrush and requested that local contractors be appointed to carry out works on local projects. Cllr. Lynch requested that updates on the mica be included in the Monthly Management Report going forward as well as identify works being done on green energy projects.

Cllr. J. Killeen acknowledged the role of the Rural and Community Development Officers and welcomed funding allocation under the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme announced recently. Cllr. Killeen welcomed the new pedestrian crossing in Boston which will ensure safe access to Boston National School.

Cllr. J. Flynn informed the meeting that he has received queries from constituents in relation to the public counter in housing and asked when it will re-open in the afternoons. Cllr. J. Flynn welcomed the breakdown in information provided in relation to housing need by area of choice and number of beds approved.

Cllr. T. O'Brien welcomed progress on the Shannon Bridge Crossing in Killaloe and thanked all involved in this project.

Cllr. G. Flynn acknowledged the work done in the Social Development Directorate in providing information to the elected members as requested. Cllr. G. Flynn informed the meeting that he had boycotted the earlier briefing by Irish Water personnel as it was held behind closed doors. Cllr. G. Flynn supported the proposal that Irish Water personnel be requested to attend a statutory meeting of the Council.

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

Report dated 19th January, 2022 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 0.595 hectares at Clonmoney, Crusheen, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 19th January, 2022.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Hayes
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Cooney 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 at Clonmoney, Crusheen, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 19th January, 2022.”

Item 8: Disposal of lands at Ardnaculla North, Ennistymon, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.

Report dated 19th January, 2022 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 0.040 hectares at Ardnaculla North, Ennistymon, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 19th January, 2022.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Killeen
Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Garrihy 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 at Ardnaculla North, Ennistymon, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 19th January, 2022.”

Item 9: Disposal of building (by Lease) at Lodge Road, Sixmilebridge, Co Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.

Report dated 18th January, 2022 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 (by lease) of building at Lodge Road, Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 18th January, 2022.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Crowe
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. O’Gorman 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 lease) of building at Lodge Road, Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 18th January, 2022.”

Item 10: Disposal of property at McMahon Villas, Clonroadmore, Ennis, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.

Report dated 1st February, 2022 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 property at McMahon Villas, Clonroadmore, Ennis, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 1st February, 2022.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Daly
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, of disposal of property at McMahon Villas, Clonroadmore, Ennis, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 1st February, 2022.”

Item 11: Disposal of building (by Lease) at the County Museum, Arthur’s Row, Ennis, Co Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.

Report dated 1st February, 2022 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 (by lease) of building at the County Museum, Arthur’s Row, Ennis, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 1st February, 2022.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy
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, of disposal (by lease) of building at the County Museum, Arthur’s Row, Ennis, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 1st February, 2022.”

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, as amended, in relation to the construction of 18 No. residential units at Ballyminoge, Scarriff, Co. Clare.

Report dated 7th February, 2022 from Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development was circulated with the agenda together with the Chief Executive’s report dated 7th February, 2022 (including Clare County Council’s screening for appropriate assessment and determination), which had been prepared by Garreth Ruane, Senior Executive Planner, under Delegation Order HR151 dated 9th April 2021. The reports outline details of a proposed housing development at Ballyminogue, Scarriff, Co. Clare and the members were asked if there were any issues that they wished to raise in respect of the report circulated.

Cllr. J. Flynn raised concern in relation to the potential of flood risk and quality of Scarriff river due to its proximity to the river.

Cllrs. J. Cooney, T. O'Brien and P. Hayes complimented the Social Development Directorate team in bringing this development to this stage. The members stated that several meetings between Councillors and the executive had taken place and that all concerns and issues raised, including the flooding risk, were addressed by the Council executive. The Councillors informed the meeting that houses would have been preferable to apartments at this location but the Council had to adhere to directives from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The members also stated that there had been engagement with local landowners and that this development will be a major asset to the people on the housing list as well as the town of Scarriff.

As the Chief Executive's report had been duly considered by the members, in accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 80 and 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, as amended, and as there was no proposal to vary or modify the development, and as there was no proposal to refuse the development, accordingly, the development can proceed as outlined.

Item 13: Fix date for March Council meeting.

It was agreed that the March Council meeting will take place on Monday, 7th March, 2022 having been proposed by Cllr. J. Crowe, seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy and agreed by the members present.

Item 14: Application considered by Memorial Committee to be approved by full Council – inscription on existing stone bench at Cappa, Kilrush, Co. Clare.

Report dated 21st January, 2022 from Colette Costelloe, Administrative Officer, Corporate Services was circulated with the agenda. The report states that at a Memorial Committee meeting dated 20th January, 2022 it was agreed that going forward any submissions received for memorials should continue to be considered by the Memorial Committee but should then go before full Council for approval.

One application was received and considered by the Memorial Committee on 20th January, 2022 as follows:

Inscription on existing stone bench at Cappa, Kilrush, Co Clare.

It was proposed that inscription be placed on an existing stone bench at Cappa, Kilrush.

The report states that approval has been received from the Senior Executive Engineer, West Clare Municipal District & Executive Architect, Planning.

It was unanimously agreed by the Memorial Committee that this proposal is acceptable and go before full Council for approval.

This was approved by the members of the Council having been proposed by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy and seconded by Cllr. G. Flynn.

Item 15: Museum Standards Programme for Clare Museum.

Report dated 24th January, 2022 from Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development was circulated with the agenda. The report states that in order to meet the standards of the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI) of which the Heritage Council are the awarding body, Clare Museum is required to submit evidence of formal approval and adoption by the Museum's governing body, Clare County Council, of the following documents:

- Clare Museum Strategic Management Plan 2021-2023
- Clare Museum Workplan 2021 – 2022
- Clare Museum Disaster Plan, including for the Beechpark Store
- Clare Museum Care of Collections Strategy 2021-2023.

A central objective of the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland is to ensure a sustainable future for the museum collections and to maintain services to a high professional standard. The members endorsed the plans and policies as presented.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O'Brien agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council adopt the Clare Museum Strategic Management Plan 2021-2023.”

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O'Brien agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council adopt the Clare Museum Workplan 2021 – 2022.”

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O'Brien agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council adopt the Clare Museum Disaster Plan, including for the Beechpark Store.”

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O'Brien agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council adopt the Clare Museum Care of Collections Strategy 2021-2023.”

Item 16: Draft Community Support Guidelines 2022.

Report dated 2nd February, 2022 from Bernadette Haugh, A/Senior Executive Officer, Rural Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda together with the Clare County Council Community Supports Scheme 2022 Guidelines for Applicants. The report states that the scheme was approved by the members of the Working Group for the Action Plan for Rural Ireland on 25th January 2022.

The Budget for the scheme is €90,500 for 2022 and reflects an increase of €15k for the Community Playgrounds category.

The following are the Support Schemes for 2022:

- 1) Support Scheme for Public Area and Amenity Enhancement (Max Grant

- €3,000)
- 2) Support Scheme for Community Development & Social Inclusion Measures (Max Grant €1,500)
 - 3) Support Scheme for Community Playgrounds (Max Grant €3,000)
 - 4) Support Scheme for Burial Ground Maintenance and Provision (Max Grant €600 for Maintenance and €8,000 for provision of extension)
 - 5) Support Scheme for Community Wifi (Max Grant €2,000)
 - 6) Support Scheme for the Best Kept Local Authority Estate (Max Grant €500)
 - 7) Support Scheme for the Arts
 - 8) Support Scheme for the Irish Language (Max Grant €800)
 - 9) Support Scheme for Christmas Lighting (Max Grant €300)
 - 10) Support Scheme for Tourism Marketing & Promotion
 - 11) Support Scheme for Sustainable Tourism
 - 12) Support Scheme for Town/Village Paint Works

The elected members approved the 2022 Community Support Scheme having been proposed by Cllr. J. Cooney, seconded by Cllr. P. Hayes and agreed by the members present.

Item 17. Shannon Estuary.

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

“That a report be made available detailing the employment related projects being pursued in the Shannon Estuary.”

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:

“The Programme for Government (June 2020) states that Government “*will consider the potential of the Shannon Estuary in terms of regional economic development across transport and logistics, manufacturing, renewable energy and tourism, and develop a strategy to achieve this potential, with support from the Exchequer*”.

From a Local Authority policy perspective, you will be aware that Clare County Council led the development by a multi-agency steering group comprising and implementation of the *Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary (SIFP)*. This land and marine-based plan, the first of its type to be developed in the country, has informed decisions, policy and in particular significant investment decisions in and along the Estuary. Moneypoint and Cahercon are identified in the SIFP for a Strategic Development Locations.

There are very real opportunities for both Moneypoint and Cahercon and all of Clare to play a key leading role in the establishment of a hub for offshore wind energy together with the route to market and supply chain associated with the Offshore Renewable Energy industry. In this regard Clare County Council have been actively supporting and liaising with the key Offshore Renewable Energy companies seeking to build Offshore Floating Wind farms off the Clare Coast. These companies will utilise the Shannon Estuary, for manufacturing, assembly, servicing, and associated

supply chain requirements of the large-scale turbines and critically to provide onshore access to the national grid. In this regard the SIFP has informed the zoning of 1200ha. for employment purposes. A recent report by the Shannon Foynes Port states that a mid growth scenario for offshore energy could yield up to €12Bn by 2050, an investment which will lead to huge jobs growth.

Clare County Council recently met with a delegation from Simply Blue Group with respect to their Western Star Offshore Floating Wind project. They highlighted the supply chain and route to market (RtM) challenges and opportunities presented by the Shannon Estuary and by extension their Western Star Project. They visited Cahercon pier and were given an overview of the SIFP, Clare County Development Plan and the associated Wind and Renewable Energy Strategies in the context of the potential which the northern shore of the Shannon Estuary has to offer this emerging market. Simply Blue Group in conjunction with Shell intend to develop floating offshore wind off the Clare coast and will be engaging with the planning process in due course.

Clare County Council have also been actively assisting ESB in their Green Atlantic proposal at Moneypoint in terms of planning, the provision of environmental data pertaining to the Shannon Estuary and overall economic development.

The Council's Economic Directorate has committed to meet on a regular basis with potential Offshore Wind Developers to deal with strategic planning matters, developments at the national level, planning policy and the interface between terrestrial and marine planning to inform the future economic development of the Shannon Estuary in line with the Programme for Government.

Kilrush Maritime Training Centre

As has been the case in Norway and Scotland education and training providers ramped up to meet offshore wind skill needs in advance of the developments in Offshore Floating Wind. Similarly, Ireland needs to be prepared for this education and training opportunity which will also bring a significant economic benefit to all of the communities not only along the northern shore of the Shannon Estuary but to the entire of West Clare and beyond.

Clare County Council in anticipating this training and skills shortfall have been proactively engaged with the Mid West Renewable Energy Group led by the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan and in addition the Mid-West Renewable Energy Research and Education Cluster to identify the future skills needs and the training requirements associated with the Renewable Energy Sector. The need for such a training facility in close proximity to where this potential lies off the western seaboard and to where various Offshore Floating Wind companies are looking to establish will ultimately be a key economic driver and unique employment opportunity. It is desirable that such a Maritime Training facility would be located in Clare. In this regard, you will be aware of the proposal to establish such a training facility in Kilrush, in the heart of the rural community in County Clare. The Kilrush Maritime Training Centre seeks to provide specialist infrastructure and training within the Maritime sector specifically in relation to mandatory safety training required for working at sea. This development will deliver new job creation opportunities for the local community and act as an economic stimulus with wider regional positive

impacts offering new opportunities on a significant natural asset unique to the region and to Ireland. The facility if developed could attract 1200 visiting trainees p.a. staying in local accommodation and creating 28 Full Time jobs supported with an annual direct employment income €489,438 p.a.

Shannon Foynes Port Company (SFPC)

Ireland has set a target of 5GW of offshore wind in the Climate Action Plan by 2030. For the West Coast to play a part in this and for the coastal economies to benefit, connection to the existing grid at Moneypoint is critical. Green Hydrogen production as is planned by ESB at Moneypoint is also critical to this sector. Clare County Council is committed to working with EirGrid, the ESB and SFPCo in developing national policies around grid connection, green hydrogen production and the changes needed to meet this target in the lead in to 2030 and beyond. Clare County Council are working closely with SFPCo as the statutory authority for the 500sq/km Shannon Estuary to establish the Shannon Estuary as a Global Centre of Excellence in terms of Floating Offshore Wind, to provide the complete supply chain for the manufacturing, assembly, staging and operation/maintenance for this Offshore Floating Wind Sector.

The attached is a summary of current Offshore Renewable Energy projects associated with the Shannon Estuary.

Moneypoint

Green Atlantic @ Moneypoint – Phase 1

- First phase underway of the multi-billion-euro project at Moneypoint
- €50m synchronous compensator to stabilise energy, granted planning permission by CCC, construction has commenced on site.
- First in the country and the world's largest flywheel used for grid stability
- <https://www.esb.ie/our-businesses/generation-energy-trading-new/green-atlantic-atmoneypoint>

Floating Offshore Wind

Moneypoint (Offshore Floating Wind)

Moneypoint Offshore Wind Farm is ESB and Equinor's flagship floating offshore wind development project proposed in Ireland. If developed, the project will be delivered in two phases. The first phase, Moneypoint Offshore One is located 16km off the Clare /Kerry Coast. The expected capacity from the first phase is estimated to be 400MW with the final windfarm area likely to be in the order of 70km². The second phase, Moneypoint Offshore Two would be located a further 20km west of Moneypoint Offshore One, taking the total project capacity to between 1GW – 1.5GW. The latter phase would have a likely area of 200km².

The expected capacity output of the project could provide enough energy to power up to 1.5 million homes.

Simply Blue Western Star (Offshore Floating Wind and Wave Energy)

Simply Blue Energy is developing the Western Star project off the west coast of Clare, which will consist of a floating windfarm situated at least 35km offshore, co-developed with a wave energy conversion array, approximately 4km from the coast.

The proposed FOW component of the Western Star Project will be located at least 35km off the west coast of Co. Clare. The innovative floating technology proposed for this project will allow the turbines to be located far from shore and in waters over 100m deep where traditional fixed bottom turbine foundations would be uneconomical.

The proposed WEC portion of this co-development project will first focus on a two-step phased installation initially with 5MW capacity before building up to a 30MW demonstration array. The site will be located 4km off the west coast of Co. Clare and will consist of an interconnected array of devices, each generating energy with the rise and fall of the surface of the sea and feeding it back to land via an export cable.

DP Energy Clarus Offshore Floating Wind

Clarus Offshore Wind Farm is the name chosen for DP Energy and Iberdrola's offshore wind farm off the coast of Counties Clare and Kerry.

Located off the West Coast of Ireland, the Clarus Offshore Wind Farm project will utilise Floating Offshore Wind (FOW) technology and upon completion, will have the potential capacity of up to 1 GW.

Inish Offshore Wind

Inis West 1 is preparing to investigate the feasibility of developing an Offshore Windfarm approx. 11km off the coast of Kerry at the mouth of the Shannon Estuary. To carry out the necessary survey work, a Foreshore Investigatory Licence Application and supporting documentation has been submitted to the Marine Planning and Foreshore Section of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. This licence, if granted, will be valid for 5 years.

Inis West 2 is preparing to investigate the feasibility of developing an Offshore Windfarm approx. 16km off the coast of County Clare. To carry out the necessary survey work, a Foreshore Investigatory Licence Application and supporting documentation has been submitted to the Marine Planning and Foreshore Section of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. This licence, if granted, will be valid for 5 years.

Tidal Energy

DesignPro Renewables are currently awaiting a decision in relation to their Foreshore Licence Application for the testing of 2 pre-commercial tidal energy devices just off Cahercon Pier on the northern shore of the Shannon Estuary. The approval of this licence would allow the renewables company to progress the development of their device to full commercialisation without the need to travel internationally to achieve this.”

Cllr. P.J. Kelly informed the meeting that he felt that the response was aspirational and sought clarification on funding allocations for Kilrush Maritime Training Centre and Cahercon Pier. Cllr. Kelly also queried if Moneypoint will be used as an international transshipment port in future.

The elected members agreed that Central Government should assist in developing an overall plan for the future development of the Shannon estuary. It was suggested that this issue warrants a meeting of the West Clare Municipal District.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the members that there is continuous engagement with the ESB in relation to Moneypoint and that there is a clear plan on the steps the facility will take into the future. Mr. Dowling stated that Clare County Council are working closely with the ESB so that the local economy and communities will benefit in future.

In relation to Cahercon, Mr. Dowling stated that it was never in the Councils ownership and that it would take significant investment to bring it back into use. Mr. Dowling stated that there is a commitment to find the optimum solution going forward. Mr. Dowling undertook to prepare a report updating the elected members on the maritime proposals for West Clare.

Item 18. Property letting market.

Ar moladh Cllr. L. Grant

“The unregulated short-term letting market is contributing significantly to the housing shortage in our county. The purpose of the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2019 was to ensure that properties, which may have been advertised as short-term lettings, be brought back onto the long-term market for long-term tenants. As the local planning authority, Clare County Council are responsible for monitoring and enforcing these new rules.

With that in mind, I call on Clare County Council to provide detailed information on:

- how many planning applications for short-term lets have been received since 1st July 2019, and how many have been approved, rejected, or are still pending in some form.
- how many enforcement cases have been opened, completed, or are pending against short-term lets since 1st July 2019, and to give an overview of their current status in tabular form.”

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:

“The Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2019 took effect from 1st July 2019 and introduced a number of legislative changes which were applied to areas designated as “rent pressure zones” under the Residential Tenancies Act 2004, or areas that have been subsequently designated as “rent pressure zones”. There are no rent pressure zones in County Clare. The changes introduced in this Act were primarily aimed at addressing the impact on the private rental market of the use of residential properties for short-term tourism type letting, in areas of high housing demand. For areas outside of rent pressure zones, the planning requirements remained relatively unchanged.

This Act defines “short term letting” as the letting of a house or apartment or part of a house or apartment, for any period not exceeding 14 days.

Planning permission is not normally required in County Clare in the following situations:-

- Where a property is rented out under the rent-a-room scheme.
- Where the owner is ‘home-sharing’. Home-sharing is where a homeowner rents a room or rooms in their principal private residence for short-term lets while they are also occupying it. In this situation, you can offer unlimited short-term lettings for less than 14 days at a time.
- Where you rent out your entire principal private residence for short-term visitors for less than 90 days a year while you are temporarily away. The 90 days do not have to be consecutive.

However, there may be specific conditions in the original planning permission that prohibit the subsequent letting or sub-letting of all or part of a property and in these instances, planning permission is required before the property can be let.

Clare County Council has received three planning applications for short-term letting since 1st July 2019 and all three applications were granted.

The Council has opened enforcement files regarding the use of 5 properties during this period. Three of these files remain under investigation, one file was closed after the applicant applied for and received retention planning permission and one file was closed as the property was subsequently sold.

Given the above situations this is a difficult area to enforce.”

Cllr. L. Grant expressed concern in relation to the lack of houses available for long term rent and believed that incentives should be offered to house owners to make houses currently available for short term rent available long term.

Carmel Greene, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development confirmed that Clare has not been designated as a rent pressure zone.

Item 19. Zoned land tax.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Cooney
Cuidithe ag Cllr. T. O’Brien agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council outline details of when zoned land tax will come into effect on the different rates that may apply to the different zoning designations.”

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:

“On the 22nd December 2021 the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage issued a Circular (NRUP 06/2021) which informed Local Authorities of the enactment of the Finance Bill 2021 which includes provisions for the introduction of the Residential Zoned Land Tax. The purpose of the new tax is to assist in land activation for residential purposes, as set out in the Housing Policy Objective 15.2 of **Housing for All**. The Residential Zoned Land Tax will in time replace the Vacant Site Levy which will remain in operation until the new tax measure comes into effect.

Provisions within the Finance Act 2021 (Part 6, Section 80) set out criteria to facilitate the identification of lands which fall within the scope of the tax. The intention is to activate and bring forward the development of housing on lands that are suitably zoned and serviced as indicated on maps which are to be prepared by each local authority for its functional area. The maps are to be based on the development plan and where relevant, local area plan zoning maps and the process for preparing the maps is set out in the Finance Act 2021 and includes provisions for landowners to make submissions on their lands proposed inclusion or exclusion. The legislation also sets out certain lands which are to be excluded from the scope of the tax e.g. where land is required for provision of healthcare or education, where the derelict sites levy is payable etc. There is also provision for landowners who find their lands fall within the scope of the proposed maps to make a request to the planning authority to consider an amendment to the zoning objective on their land. The Department of Housing propose to issue a ministerial policy directive to assist Planning Authorities regarding such requests.

All lands zoned solely or primarily for residential development or for a mixture of uses, which includes residential use in a development plan or local area plan before 1st January 2022 and remains zoned for these uses, is liable for consideration under the Residential Zoned Land Tax. This is intended to encourage activation of existing planning permissions and incentivise suitable lands without planning permission to commence the process of engagement with the planning authority.

The provisions of the Finance Act 2021 set out specific dates for actions and processes to be undertaken by the Planning Authority and An Bord Pleanála in facilitating the introduction of the Residential Zoned Land Tax which will become operational on the 1st February 2024. The Revenue Commissioners will manage the process of collection and enforcement of the tax. The tax is set at 3% of the site value, to be self-assessed by the landowner, with liability and enforcement arrangements to be managed by the Revenue system.

The map that identifies lands that fall within the scope of the tax must be updated by Local Authorities annually, commencing in 2024. This will include any lands that come within the scope of the tax from the 1st January 2022. Publication of the final updated map will be on the 1st February 2025 and on the same date annually thereafter.

Guidelines under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 are to be published to assist Planning Authorities in implementing the tax measure.

As soon as I am in receipt of these guidelines I will go through the detail of same with the elected members.”

The elected members outlined concerns being raised by constituents in relation to zoned land tax and thought that clarification is needed before the Draft County Development Plan can be adopted. The members felt that people need certainty in relation to the zoned land tax and agreed that it is imperative that a briefing is provided on the impact it will have on the communities they are representing.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the members that it is not the intention that this issue will delay the County Development Plan process and stated that guidelines will be issued. Mr. Dowling stated that it is proposed to hold a workshop when the

guidelines are available to discuss the concerns raised and clarify constituents questions.

Item 20. Ryder Cup 2027.

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

“As the "real gate way" to the planned Ryder Cup in 2027 I am requesting Clare County Council to establish and lead a joint marketing campaign with Limerick, Tipperary and Kerry County Councils to ensure a united approach that will maximise the potential of Shannon airport and the Shannon Estuary for the anticipated numbers of visitors and media attention this event will bring.

I also request that a cross directorate strategy is developed to harness and maximise the potential for cruise ships ahead of the event by identifying and enhancing infrastructure along the Shannon estuary as well as developing visitor package bundles/itinerary to attract visitors to experience what wonders Clare has to offer.”

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

“The Tourism Department in collaboration with the Clare Tourism Advisory Forum has begun preparations for the planned Ryder Cup. Such preparations have been included into this year’s Strategic Marketing Plan. The plan for this year, is to enhance the promotion of Clare’s top-quality links, coastal and parkland golf courses, via print and digital postcards as well as the ‘Visit Clare’ Calendar to be promoted internationally.



The newly developed website www.visitclare.ie to launch later this year, will keenly focus on such assets in Clare with additional iconic golfing imagery to be provided for the Marketing Resource Bank.

The Tourism Department are also working closely with Shannon Group on the development of additional ‘Visit Clare’ collateral at key locations within Shannon

Airport to interrupt the fully independent visitor market and as such, increase the dwell time within the County of Clare.

Having consulted with Fáilte Ireland, it is confirmed that there is a new golf tourism development strategy being developed to ensure the region maximises the legacy benefits of hosting the Ryder Cup in Adare in 2027. This will include leveraging the suite of European Tour events being hosted in Ireland annually (Irish Open, Legends tour, Challenge Tour) as well as leveraging the publicity around the Ryder Cup being hosted in the mid-west region in 2027. Collaboration with the Shannon Region Sports & Conference Bureau will leverage the event to increase the hosting of Business Events and Conferences using the opportunity to showcase high-quality imagery and develop possible itineraries for delegates in Clare and the Mid-West.

Fáilte Ireland's guiding principles in the golf strategy will be to drive a balanced regional spread of visitors to the regions and a more even spread of golf visitors throughout the year.

To achieve this Fáilte Ireland will be working closely with key stakeholders, local authorities, destinations and strategic tourism assets to fully leverage the potential benefits.

Clare County Council will continue to work with Fáilte Ireland and neighbouring local authorities to make every effort in ensuring that the potential of Shannon Airport and indeed the County of Clare will benefit from one of the world's greatest sporting event, being hosted in our neighbouring county."

The elected members agreed that this is an opportunity to attract people to the west of Ireland as it will provide a substantial economic benefit to the area. The members agreed that a marketing campaign is essential and that Clare County Council, Shannon Group and external agencies should work together to advertise Shannon Airport as the gateway for the Ryder Cup.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive agreed with the members that preparation should commence immediately and informed the members that a meeting has been arranged with the Chairperson of Shannon Group and Chief Executives from Clare, Limerick, Tipperary and Galway local authorities this week. Mr. Dowling undertook to work with Shannon Group to explore every opportunity.

Item 21. Shannon Heritage.

Ar moladh Cllr. A. O'Callaghan

"With still a lot of uncertainty within the staff of the Shannon Heritage sites and their future, I am asking that this council would give an update on what the situation is at on taking these sites in charge."

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:

"Clare County Council continues to engage with the National Government and Shannon Group PLC as part of a detailed and robust due diligence process to consider

the potential transfer by Shannon Group PLC of Shannon Heritage (Clare-based sites) to Clare County Council as a subsidiary company.

Clare County Council has engaged experienced specialist services to examine a range of topics including Human Resource, Operational and Financial, Property and Assets, Capital Investment, ICT, Legal and Taxation relating to the Shannon Heritage properties, namely Bunratty Castle & Folk Park, Craggaunowen Bronze Age Park, Knappogue Castle & Gardens, and the retail unit within Cliffs of Moher Experience. Technical Due Diligence (TDD) reports on buildings /property are required as part of the potential transfer of Shannon Heritage DAC to Clare County Council as a subsidiary company.

Regular communication and consultation with Shannon Heritage staff and Elected Members is a key part of the ongoing process. A number of sites visits have occurred recently. In anticipation of National Government approval of the proposed transfer, Clare County Council will shortly commence the recruitment process for a small number of tourism roles to ensure that adequate staff capacity is in place at the time of transfer. These roles will be created to support Clare County Council's tourism remit of overseeing the management, development, and promotion of a portfolio of signature visitor attractions and sites throughout Clare, including the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience, Loop Head Lighthouse, Vandeleur Walled Gardens, Inis Cealtra Visitor Experience /Holy Island (*currently under development*) and the Clare-based Shannon Heritage sites.

Clare County Council and Shannon Group are working with the relevant National Government Departments to secure national funding for the proposed transfer. This is necessary to enable the local authority to manage operational and capital costs. These include staff costs, recovery from the impact of the pandemic, capital refurbishment /development and important conservation works. The local authority will not be in a position financial to proceed with the transfer until the national funding package is in place.”

Cllr. A. O’Callaghan outlined concerns being raised by Shannon Heritage staff and acknowledged that the local authorities will not be in a position to take over Shannon Heritage sites until funding is made available.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and stated that he wished to reassure the Councillors and the public that a senior officer has been appointed to work on this project and that the services of Human Resources, legal and others have been employed to deliver due diligence in order to obtain a good outcome for the county and the Council. Mr. Dowling stated that he has met with the staff to get acquainted and to reassure them. Mr. Dowling acknowledged that there are costs involved and that Clare County Council cannot be exposed to unforeseen expenditure. Mr. Dowling stated that he has met with Government Ministers in relation to this and expressed hope for a positive outcome as soon as possible and that sites will be refreshed and operational this tourist season. Mr. Dowling stated that Shannon Heritage will continue to operate the sites until the legal handover is complete.

Item 22. Rural small towns.

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

“In the context of the Government Town Center First strategy, Housing for All strategy, the focus on addressing dereliction, Climate Action and Challenges recognised for Rural Clare in formation of our county development plan I call on Clare County Council to commit to prioritising Rural Small towns for future Regeneration Projects under RRDF, T&V Renewal, and other schemes and to focus our resources to strategically build well planned and integrated projects in our Rural Small towns which play such a critical role in the future and vibrancy of Rural Clare.”

Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development replied as follows:

“Clare County Council is fully committed to prioritising small rural towns for future regeneration projects. This is expressed in several Council strategies and plans adopted by the Elected Members. This is also supported by National Policy and National Government funding.

There are several regeneration projects already being delivered in small rural towns in the four municipal districts. Many more regeneration projects are at design and research stage. It is important that projects are at a shovel-ready stage before applying for grant funding and where possible are part of a master plan for an area. Secondly, that projects that are not yet designed are at a minimum at pre-feasibility stage before applying for design grant funding. Many of these projects take several years to bring forward due to complexities on-site and particularly issues with ownership registration of some vacant derelict properties.

The need for regeneration of rural towns has been discussed on a cross-directorate basis. At a practical level for rural towns, within available staff capacity this involves cross-directorate working between staff colleagues in Municipal Districts and numerous Council Departments. Recent National Government funding and resources has assisted this ongoing initiative.”

The elected members agreed that future sustainable living in rural towns and villages needs to be prioritised. Concerns were expressed in relation to the sustainability challenges that exist in relation to derelict buildings, housing, land tax and zoning. The members welcomed resources being allocated to regeneration projects. The members believed that people should be encouraged to build and live in their local areas. The members agreed that investment in rural towns and villages is necessary to ensure people have viable communities going forward.

Item 23. Assessment of secondary and minor roads.

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

“That this council would carry out a full condition assessment of all secondary and minor roads in each Municipal District as the surface and drainage of these roads has greatly deteriorated over the last number of years.”

John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Physical Development replied as follows:

“There are 188 km National Secondary and 4112 km Non-National Roads in County Clare. The National Secondary Network is funded by T.I.I. and the Non-National network by the Department of Transport.

Both funding agencies have provided the Local Authority with asset management tools namely the T.I.I. GEOAPP and the Pavement Management System for Non-National Roads.

Regular condition surveys are carried out on both networks. The findings of these surveys determine the prioritization of maintenance, rehabilitation & drainage improvement works on the road network. However, these works are limited to the amount of funding that is available to the County Council.”

The elected members acknowledged the good work being done on some roads and felt that there are roads in disrepair due to lack of funding and staff resources. The members agreed that an assessment of secondary and minor roads should be undertaken and improvements carried out as the people using these roads deserve to have better road conditions. The elected members agreed that more funding is needed to get these roads up to standard.

John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Physical Development addressed the meeting and informed the members that the 2022 allocation is due in the coming days and on receipt of this allocation the plan for 2022 will be prepared and brought before the elected members. Mr. Leahy stated that the Council aims to increase the percentage of roads network re-surfaced year on year.

Item 24. Hedgerow cutting programme.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Killeen

Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. O’Gorman agus glacadh leis

“We call on Clare County Council to continue the hedgerow cutting programme. We call on Clare County Council and media outlets to redouble their efforts to make landowners aware of their responsibility in maintaining roadside hedgerows in the interest of health and safety of all road users in advance of the fast approaching March 1st deadline.”

John Leahy, Senior Engineer, Physical Development replied as follows:

“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.

The obligations of landowners in relation to the maintenance of hedgerows and the upcoming date of March 1st when restrictions on the cutting of hedges during the growing season comes into effect are currently highlighted on the Council’s website and social media channels.

Where landowners are not in compliance with the provisions of Section 70 of the above act, hedgecutting notices are served.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, it should be noted that the Council does provide a budget on an annual basis to facilitate hedgecutting along the most strategically important routes across the county and we have highlighted this hedgecutting issue with the Municipal Districts.

The Community Hedgecutting Scheme operated by the Council also enables landowners and community groups to access funding to assist with the cutting of hedgerows. A total of 34 grant applications have been approved from September 2021 to date under the scheme. We will urge landowners to avail of this scheme when it is advertised again in August 2022.”

During discussion, the elected members felt that there is a cohort of people who are not aware of their responsibilities in relation to hedgecutting. The elected members agreed that a media campaign should be introduced in order to raise awareness of peoples responsibilities as well as the deadline for hedgecutting. Compliments were paid to the landowners who carry out hedgecutting on a regular basis. The members suggested that when the Council cuts hedges, non-compliant landowners should be invoiced accordingly. The members believed that legislation should be updated in order to extend the hedge cutting season.

It was agreed that Items No 25 and 26 be discussed together.

Item 25. Supreme Court Decision.

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

“That Clare County Council provide a report on the impact to the Council as a Housing Authority of the very recent Supreme Court decision.”

Item 26. Supreme Court Decision.

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

“That Clare County Council members be informed of the implications to Clare County Council and all local authorities of the Supreme Court Judgment issued on 31 January, 2022, granting the appeal discontinuing the injunction requiring Travellers to vacate the illegal encampment site on the Kilrush Road, Ennis, County Clare.”

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and stated that he would read out a brief statement in relation to the Supreme Court finding, the basis for it and the current status of the proceedings. Mr. Dowling advised that this is a short summary of the facts and the status quo of the proceedings by way of explanation of the Supreme Court decision, which, although, of significance in terms of its findings, is limited in its effect as described. The proceedings have not concluded and are ongoing. Mr. Dowling concluded by saying that as the matter is still sub judice it would not be appropriate for him to elaborate any further on the extant court proceedings.

Cllrs. J. Flynn and C. Colleran Molloy stated that they accepted and appreciated the clarity and preciseness of the Councils position in relation to this situation.

Role of Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. J. Killeen, Leas Cathaoirleach took the role of Cathaoirleach at this point.

It was proposed by Cllr. P. McMahon, seconded by Cllr. T. O'Brien and agreed by the members present that the time be extended to 7:00 p.m. in order to complete the business of the meeting.

Item 27. Eradicate gender based violence.

Ar moladh Cllr. D. McGettigan
Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Murphy agus glacadh leis

“I call on Clare County Council to run a media campaign working alongside safe Ireland, local groups, women's aid and the national Women's Council, on violence against women.

I also call for this Council to add services available in Clare to their website as is done through the Stillhere.ie website.

We need to put plans and actions in place to help eradicate gender based violence in our society.”

During discussion the elected members agreed that cultural change is needed in order to address the ongoing issue of violence against women. Concerns were raised in relation to the limited amount of refuge spaces available for women. The members felt that this is a societal issue that needs discussion, education, funding and additional resources.

Item 28. Shannon Doc.

Ar moladh Cllr. T. O'Brien
Cuidithe ag Cllr. I. Lynch agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council invite senior management of Shannon Doc to address the council regarding their planned service provision for County Clare going forward, and to answer any queries or concerns which the elected members may have.”

The elected members informed the meeting that recent local media reports referred to financial allocations being made to Shannondoc and the members thought it would be appropriate to request a briefing on the services being provided.

Item 29. Forestry licences.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Garrihy
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. C. Murphy, J. Cooney, P. Murphy, J. Flynn agus D. McGettigan agus glacadh leis

“We call on the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Minister for Transport to put in place a system of compensation and indemnity as a component of the licensing system for forestry. It is anticipated that this compensation fund will

cover the cost of repairs and maintenance to damage caused to the public road network by forestry planting, maintenance and harvesting.

“We further call on the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Minister for Transport to make it a requirement that forestry license holders - prior to commencing licenced forestry activities - consult with the relevant local authority with a view to minimizing damage to the public road network.

If this motion is passed we request it is shared with all other local authorities.”

The elected members believed that forestry operators should have to provide a bond for road repairs similar to other development agencies. The members also thought that engagement between local authorities and forestry operators should be enhanced in order to avoid recently repaired roads being damaged.

Item 30. Promote West of Ireland Tourism product.

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

“Call on the Government to support the Shannon Group build regular access to at least one of the major European hubs by promoting the West of Ireland Tourism product in their hinterland.”

The members felt that new all year round routes to and from Shannon Airport would benefit the hospitality industry in the area.

Role of Cathaoirleach.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. P.J. Ryan, resumed the role of Cathaoirleach at this point.

Item 31. Summer Job Scheme.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Daly
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. J. Crowe, T. O’Brien agus G. Keating agus glacadh leis

“We request Clare County Council to make contact with the Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys with a view to considering bringing back the “Sumer Job Scheme” for students between 16 and 19 years that can get six weeks work, with local authorities, during the summer recess. We also request that this be circulated to Clare Oireachtas Members.”

The elected members considered that in previous years this was a very valuable scheme for students in rural communities who worked in upgrading their local graveyards as well as helping local tidy towns groups and sports clubs.

Item 32. House acquisition.

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

“That Clare County Council would ask the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government to exempt those local authorities with high numbers of holiday/second homes from the general embargo on the acquisition of houses within locations most affected.”

The members noted that the focus for local authorities is on house construction and not in house acquisition. The members considered that this policy should be re-examined as there are several properties vacant and on the market that local authorities are not allowed purchase.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the members that local authorities are not permitted to purchase houses and that there is a national issue around buying private houses.

Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development responded to queries raised by the members and stated that funding at national level is putting the focus is on building houses and that specific individual case has to be made when purchasing houses.

Item 33. Passport renewal.

Ar moladh Cllr. A. O’Callaghan
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. P. McMahon, P.J. Kelly, M. Howard agus P.J. Ryan agus glacadh leis

“In light of recent weeks where the lead time for passports is taking months to receive, especially first time passports, that this council would write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney to put resources in place to address this issue.”

The elected members outlined the process involved in obtaining passports and described the experiences of constituents by the delay in the system. The members urged people to check their passports and apply on time if planning to travel.

Item 34. V.A.T. payments on goods coming into the country.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard
Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“Clare County Council requests An Post and the Revenue Commissioners to streamline their rules regarding V.A.T. payments on goods coming into the country from the USA and UK, taking into consideration the high level of non-deliveries and return of those goods.”

The elected members believed that there needs to be clear information in relation to charges being incurred for goods coming into the country. The members also felt that people should be encouraged to shop local where possible.

Item 35. Household Benefit Package.

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

“I am calling on the Minister for Finance to broaden the Household Benefits Package and include exemption from property tax for those people that are under extreme pressure to meet day to day expenses in light of the rising cost of living and their struggle to survive on a very low level of income.”

Cllr. G. Flynn requested that this be circulated to other local authorities and Oireachtas members.

Item 36. Talking Therapy Sessions.

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton
Cuidithe ag Cllr. D. McGettigan agus glacadh leis

“Minister for Mental Health and Older People, Mary Butler, announced the launch of Talking Therapy Sessions on a no-cost basis to individuals impacted by the pandemic.

This will provide Counselling and Psychotherapy sessions, in over 15 languages, through a €1 million dedicated fund.

I am asking Clare County Council to write to the Minister and ask for this funding to be increased for the hiring of professional supports and proper funding put in place for face to face therapy and proper assessments done in proper time frames, for adolescents with mental health problem, as without an assessment proper therapy can't be put in place which is having detrimental effects on young peoples lives.”

Item 37. School Transport Scheme.

It was agreed that this item be deferred to the March Council meeting.

Item 38. Comhfhreagras/Correspondence.

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:

1. Correspondence dated 17th January, 2022 from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in relation to staffing and organisational arrangements necessary for carrying out the functions of the local authority.
2. Correspondence dated 25th January, 2022 from the Department of Health in relation to children with Spina Bifida and additional mobility needs.
3. Correspondence dated 3rd February, 2022 from the Department of Health regarding the recruitment of posts for diabetic services provided by the University Hospital Limerick Group.
4. Resolution circulated by Waterford City and County Council in relation to the retention of a full-time air sea rescue service at Waterford Airport.
5. Resolution circulated by Leitrim County Council in relation to children suffering from Spina Bifida and/or Hydracephalus.

6. Resolution circulated by Leitrim County Council in relation to increase grant limits for Community Wastewater Connection Networks.
7. Resolution circulated by Sligo County Council calling on the H.S.E. and the Department of Health to end the practice of pursuing patients, including cancer patients with private debt collection agencies.
8. Resolution circulated by Cork County Council in relation to the provision of special parking spaces at schools in the county for persons with hidden disabilities.
9. A.I.L.G. elected members February 2022 training.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____