

**Minutes of the June Monthly Meeting of Clare County Council held via MS
Teams on Monday, 14th June, 2021 at 3:45 p.m.**

Present via MS Teams:

Councillors M. Howard, M. Nestor, J. Flynn, C. Colleran Molloy, 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, S. Crawford, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating, C. Murphy, I. Lynch.

- Mr. Pat Dowling, Chief Executive.
- Ms. Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Margaret O’Rourke, Assistant Staff Officer.
- Ms. Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development.
- Mr. Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development.
- Mr. Leonard Cleary, Director of Rural Development.
- Ms. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, Director of Finance and Support Services.
- Mr. Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Howard presided.

Vote of Sympathy.

- The Linnane family, Moyasta, Kilrush on the death of Eileen Linnane RIP
- The Minogue family, Glendree, Feakle on the death of John Minogue RIP
- The Foley family, Ennistymon on the death of Kevin Foley, RIP
- The Mulcahy family, Shannon on the death of Carmel Mulcahy

The members agreed to adjourn the meeting for ten minutes as a mark on respect.
The meeting resumed at 4:00 p.m.

Item 1: Minutes of Council Meetings.

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

“That the Minutes of the May Meeting of Clare County Council held on 10th May, 2021 be adopted and signed.”

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

“That the Minutes of the special Meeting of Clare County Council held on 24th May, 2021 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. Nestor
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Murphy agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Meeting held on the 6th April, 2021 be noted.”

b. Ar moladh Cllr. P. Hayes
Cuidithe ag Cllr. A. O’Callaghan agus glacadh leis

“That the Minutes of the Killaloe Municipal District Meeting held on the 24th March, 2021 be noted.”

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

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

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

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

“That the minutes of the Rural Development S.P.C. meeting held on 16th February, 2021 be noted”.

Item 5: Minutes of the Corporate Policy Group Meetings.

The members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 30th April, 2021 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. J. Flynn requested an update in relation to Westbrook House planning issues and the ruling by An Bord Pleanála. Cllr. J. Flynn also sought an update in relation to the junction at Shanaway Road on the Lahinch Road; the Corrovorrin Junction on the Tulla Road, the R352 Spencil Hill to Toureen road and the N85 Kilnamona upgrade.

Cllr. P. Burke asked for an update on the Scarriff housing development. Cllr. Burke welcomed the Ministerial approval for the Killaloe Bridge and Bypass project.

Cllr. M. Begley requested an update on the Springfield Flood Relief Scheme.

Cllr. G. Flynn requested that the exclusive use of the Choice Based Letting (CBL) process be reviewed, now that Covid-19 restrictions have been eased.

Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development addressed the meeting and stated that a meeting took place with the Chief Executive and the Ennis Municipal District Members in relation to Westbrook House. Ms. Haugh informed the meeting that a Chief Executive Order using emergency powers to deal urgently with an emergency situation was recently signed so as to regularise the continued operation of Westbrook House as a homeless facility.

In relation to Scarriff housing development, Ms. Haugh stated that the redesign of the scheme has now been informally agreed with the Department and is now with the Council's Planning Department. Ms. Haugh informed the meeting that a meeting will be held with the Municipal District members before submitting the re-design to the Department.

Ms. Haugh informed the meeting that there has been a high level of engagement on the Choice Based Letting across the cohort of applicants.

C. Kirby, Director of Physical Development undertook to revert to Cllr. J. Flynn in relation to the junction at Shanaway Road on the Lahinch Road; the Corrovorrin Junction on the Tulla Road, the R352 Spencil Hill to Toureen road. Ms. Kirby stated that it is hoped that Consultants will be appointed to commence the design process for the N85 upgrade at Kilnamona in the coming weeks.

Responding to query in relation to Springfield flood relief scheme, Ms. Kirby stated that a meeting with the steering group and the consultants is scheduled to take place on Wednesday and an update will be available after that meeting.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and informed the members that the date for agreeing the local adjustment factor for the Local Property Tax has been brought forward and that local authorities have been requested to make a decision on the Local Property Tax adjustment factor before the end of August and not September as has been the practice. Mr. Dowling stated that workshops will be convened with members. Mr. Dowling proposed that this matter would be considered at the Council meeting scheduled to take place on 12th July next. This was approved by the members present.

Item 7: Disposal of lands 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 at Cill Chais, Shannon, Co. Clare.

Report dated 20th May, 2021 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 lands measuring 60 square metres at Cill Chais, Shannon, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 20th May, 2021.

Ar moladh Cllr. G. Flynn
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 of lands at 24 Cill Chais, Shannon, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 20th May, 2021.”

Item 8: Disposal of property at Clancy Park, Ennis, Co. Clare pursuant to Section 183 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000.

Report dated 25th May, 2021 from Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development was circulated with the agenda together with map. The report states that it is proposed to dispose of property at Clancy Park, Ennis, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 25th May, 2021.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard
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 4 Clancy Park, Ennis, Co. Clare subject to the conditions as set out in the notice served on the members dated 25th May, 2021.”

Item 9: Report in accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 as amended for the proposed construction of 8 No. residential units at Kilkee Road, Doonbeg Td, Doonbeg, Co. Clare.

Report dated 9th June, 2021 from Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development was circulated with the agenda together with report from Helen Quinn, A/Senior Planner. The report outlines details of proposed housing development at Kilkee Road, Doonbeg, Td, Doonbeg, Co. Clare.

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Kelly

Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Murphy agus glacadh leis

“That pursuant to Part XI Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII Article 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, Clare County Council proceed with the proposed construction of 8 No. residential units at Kilkee Road, Doonbeg Td., Doonbeg, Co. Clare.”

Item 10: Report in accordance with Part XI, Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part VIII, Article 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, as amended for the proposed Clooney Infrastructure Project, Clooney Village, Co. Clare.

Report dated 8th June, 2021 from Morgan Lahiffe, A/Senior Executive Officer, Killaloe Municipal District was circulated with the agenda together with report from Helen Quinn, A/Senior Planner. The report outlines details of proposed development which will consist of new public footpaths, pedestrian crossing, public lighting, line marking, signage, drainage works and other associated works at Clooney, Co. Clare.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Hayes

Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Cooney agus glacadh leis

“That pursuant to Part XI Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Part VIII Article 81 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, Clare County Council proceed with the proposed development consisting of new public footpaths, pedestrian crossing, public lighting, line marking, signage, drainage works and other associated works in Clooney Village, Co. Clare.”

Item 11: Ratification of new Clare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) member.

Report dated 25th May, 2021 from Bernadette Haugh, Chief Officer, Clare LCDC was circulated with the agenda. The report states that according to the statutory guidelines surrounding LCDC membership, members from the community and voluntary sector may serve a maximum of two, three year terms on the LCDC committee. Clare PPN’s Social Inclusion Representative on the LCDC has come to the end of her second term in this position and as a result has served the maximum term as per the statutory guidelines.

Clare PPN has conducted its election process for the vacant seat and has nominated Colette Bradley as one of Clare PPN’s two social inclusion representatives on the LCDC. This was approved by the members having been proposed by Cllr. G. Flynn, seconded by Cllr. D. McGettigan and agreed.

Item 12: Draft Annual Report 2020.

The Draft Annual Report 2020 was circulated with the agenda and was noted and approved by the members present having been proposed by Cllr. P. Hayes and seconded by Cllr. J. Garrihy.

Item 13: Community Support Scheme 2021 – Tranch 2 Grant recommendations.

Report dated 3rd June, 2021 from Bernadette Haugh, A/Senior Executive Officer, Rural Development Directorate was circulated with the agenda. The report states that at their meeting on Wednesday, 12th May 2021, the members of the Working Group for the Action Plan for Rural Ireland considered the grant recommendations under Tranche 2 which included the following support schemes:

- (1) Support Scheme for Public Area and Amenity Enhancement (excluding Residents Associations)
- (2) Support Scheme for Community Development & Social Inclusion Measures and Measures to increase Participation in Sport or Physical Activities.

The total fund for Tranche 2 is **€185,950**

The grant recommendations were approved having been proposed by Cllr. C. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. J. Garrihy and agreed.

Item 14: Clare County Council Draft Beach Bye Laws 2021.

Report dated 3rd June, 2021 from Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development was circulated with the agenda together the Draft Clare County Council Beach Bye Laws 2021. The Directors report and recommendations was also circulated with the agenda. The report states that the Draft Clare County Council Beach Bye-laws went on public display from 7th January, 2021 to 8th February, 2021 inclusive. A total of 38 submissions were received.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard informed the meeting that it was agreed to review the Beach Bye Laws as a result of notice of motion submitted in September 2020 requesting a ban on the use of inflatable toys, designed for use in swimming pools, on our lakes, rivers and beaches. Cllr. Howard recommended the adoption of the Beach Bye-laws 2021 as presented before the Council subject to:

1. the prohibition of personal watercraft from Ballyallia Lake
2. that the prohibition of inflatable toys does not include swimming aids and swimming learning devices designed or intended to support the user

Cllr. M. Howard noted from the report that an ecological study is to be carried out on Ballyallia Lake to determine the future acceptable recreational uses of the lake, and data on the use of personal watercraft at the beaches listed in Schedule 1 will be gathered during the Summer of 2021. It was also recommended that the bye-laws should be reviewed in 6 months to consider these findings.

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

“Pursuant to the Local Government Act, 2001, Local Government Act, 2001 (Bye-Laws) Regulations, 2006, the Maritime Safety Act 2005, the Control of Dogs Act 1986, the Casual Trading Act 1995, the Control of Horses Act 1996, the Litter Pollution Act 1997 as amended, Local Government (Sanitary Services) Acts 1878-1964 Clare County Council hereby adopts the Beach Bye Laws 2021 subject to

1. the prohibition of personal watercraft from Ballyallia Lake
2. the prohibition of inflatable toys does not include swimming aids and swimming learning devices designed or intended to support the user
3. an ecological study be carried out on Ballyallia Lake to determine the future acceptable recreational uses of the lake, and data on the use of personal watercraft at the beaches listed in Schedule 1 will be gathered during the Summer of 2021. The bye-laws should be reviewed in 6 months to consider these findings.”

The elected members acknowledged the work undertaken by Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development and her team in carrying out the review of the Beach Bye laws and welcomed the changes and recommendations. The members agreed that the use of jet skis should be monitored on lakes and it was noted that jet skis have to be registered with Waterways Ireland. Concern was raised in relation to the use of watercraft at Cappa and it was requested that the Council invest in marker buoys in Kilkee.

C. Kirby, Director of Physical Development addressed the meeting and thanked the Councillors for the opportunity to discuss the submissions received. Ms. Kirby stated that the bye laws will be reviewed in six months and that data will be collected on all beaches. Ms. Kirby stated that there is no change in relation to Cappa and undertook to investigate Kilkee in relation to marker buoys. Ms. Kirby agreed that Waterways Ireland do register jet skis.

Item 15: Proposed Ennis 2040 Designated Activity Company (DAC) Loan.

Report dated 3rd June, 2021 from Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy seeks to support compact growth and realise sustainable economic, social and environmental opportunities in Ennis and Clare over the next 20 years. As a long-term strategy, it will not only transform our county town as a great place to live and visit but also position Ennis and Clare as an attractive investment location creating future jobs in the region.

The report continues that the Ennis 2040 (Strategic Development) Designated Activity Company (DAC) is 100% owned by Clare County Council and is a key component to the success and implementation of the strategy and the delivery of strategic development sites. It will support the achievement of the objectives set out in the strategy in terms of employment, climate change, an improved investment location and an accessible place of quality living and tourism.

The report provided details of the Ennis 2040 DAC Board and outlined a number of factors that underpin the need for an Ennis 2040 Strategic Development DAC together with a details of the delivery of a planned works programme and funding.

The report states that Clare County Council is requested to consider approving application for sanction from the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended, for a loan of €10m to finance the works programme of the Ennis 2040 Strategy through the DAC and /or Clare County Council.

The Council is also requested to consider the granting of a loan facility up to €10m from Clare County Council to Ennis 2040 Strategic Development DAC under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

Ennis 2040 Strategy Development DAC will undertake to repay all monies received to Clare County Council as set out in an agreed loan agreement and the report outlined how repayments will be financed

The report concluded that the required €10m loan will be drawn down in stage payments as the work programme progresses and strategic sites have undergone the relevant due diligence, business case study review and loan credential assessments to be deemed appropriate for further development.

The Ennis Municipal District elected members welcomed this proposal and supported the recommendation as they felt it will provide significant improvements to the capital town by creating jobs and attracting national and foreign investment. It was stated that strengthening the capital town will lead to positive development across the entire county as 50% of Ennis jobs occupied by Clare people are for people living outside of Ennis.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard informed the meeting that a submission had been received from Cllr. P.J. Kelly which was read by Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator as follows:

“I wish to propose the following amendment to item 15 on the agenda today,

‘That consideration of this item be deferred until such time as a pro rata investment and development plan for rural Clare is ready for consideration of the members of the Council.’”

Cllr. G. Flynn thanked Cllr. P.J. Kelly for submitting the amendment and acknowledged that his fears are well founded in these times of uncertainty. Cllr. G. Flynn felt that all parts of Clare are entitled to investment and stated that he would not be supporting this loan application.

Meetings Administrator, Ann Reynolds stated that the document received was not a valid amendment, as it was recommending a new proposal. Ms. Reynolds stated that the current proposal, per the agenda item needs to be considered by the members.

Cllr. P.J. Kelly stated that he did not expect the amendment submitted to be rejected and requested the legal basis for rejecting the amendment.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive addressed the meeting and stated that the agenda for the meeting had been agreed and issued and that suggesting a change to the programme would necessitate changing the entire agenda.

Cllr. P.J. Kelly stated that he was not against investment in Ennis but he wanted equal investment in the rest of the county. Cllr. Kelly informed the meeting that he would like to examine the impact of this investment and outlined the serious issues being experienced in rural Clare due to decline in rural villages, schools closing and serious infrastructure problems. Cllr. Kelly requested that a definition on what constitutes an amendment be read out for the record.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the members that the DAC will be wholly owned by Clare County Council as a legal entity which will be set up privately under the consideration of Clare County Council. Mr. Dowling also informed the members that communication with Minister O'Brien is ongoing in relation to the provision of infrastructure projects across the county. Mr. Dowling undertook to compile a list of financial grants received in County Clare since his appointment.

The elected members expressed disappointment that discussion on this topic had resulted in an urban rural debate and it was felt that all 28 Councillors were voted to represent the people of County Clare to work together in unison. It was agreed that the Councillors want to see Ennis develop as providing jobs in Ennis will enable people to stay in the county.

Concerns were expressed by the members in relation to raising a loan for a company outside the control of Clare County Council and the potential impact this will have on the Councils finances. The elected members shared the view that balance is required across the county in relation to development of rural towns and villages as there are several infrastructural projects that need to be delivered. The members requested an unequivocal commitment that this model of development be rolled out across the entire county.

Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator advised that in order to continue this discussion, a suspension of Standing Orders was required, as the time for dealing with headed items had exceeded the time allocated as per Standing Orders. This was agreed by the members present having been proposed by Cllr. G. Flynn and seconded by Cllr. T. O'Brien.

The elected members suggested that a decision on this item be deferred to allow for more time for briefings and clarity on the issues raised. It was also suggested that a working group be established comprising of elected members from each grouping who will formulate the Plan, where greater accountability will be provided for the Council and Councillors.

Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator read out the definition of amendment to a motion as per Standing Order No 31 as requested by Cllr. P.J. Kelly.

Cllr. G. Flynn as Chairperson of the Standing Orders Sub Committee stated that the Standing Orders are written with flexibility and can apply to items other than notice of motions.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive stated that this is a substantive issue and acknowledged the points raised by the members. Mr. Dowling stated that updates on this project have been provided on a regular basis in the Monthly Management Report and that a democratic decision is required. Mr. Dowling informed the meeting that a Chief

Operating Officer will be appointed to manage the plan and the successful candidate will be supported by existing staff who will be allocated to the project. Mr. Dowling stated that the Chief Officer will report directly to the Chief Executive and will also report to the elected members.

Cllr. J. Flynn proposed that a vote be taken on this decision. This was seconded by Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy and agreed.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard called for a vote which resulted as follows:

In favour: Cllrs. M. Howard, M. Nestor, J. Flynn, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Murphy, A. Norton, P. Daly, J. Cooney, P. Hayes, P. Burke, A. O’Callaghan, J. Crowe, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, P. O’Gorman, S. Talty, J. Killeen, J. Garrihy, B. Chambers, G. Keating, C. Murphy, I. Lynch. (23)

Against: Cllrs. T. O’Brien, G. Flynn, D. McGettigan, S. Crawford, P.J. Kelly. (5)

Abstained: Nil.

Not Present: Nil.

The Cathaoirleach declared the vote carried.

Ar moladh Cllr. J. Flynn

Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy agus glacadh leis

“Approval of €10m loan by Clare County Council to finance a planned works programme for the Ennis 2040 (Strategic Development) Strategy and Granting of Loan Facility to Ennis 2040 (Strategic Development) DAC.”

Item 16: Proposed change to Ennis 2040 Designated Activity Company (DAC) Board Membership.

Report dated 3rd June, 2021 from Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development was circulated with the agenda. The report states that the Ennis 2040 Strategic Development Designated Activity Company (DAC), was established in December 2020 to deliver a programme of targeted investment and property development in line with the objectives set out in the Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy.

In October 2020, two elected members were proposed to sit on the Board of Directors of the Ennis 2040 Strategic Development DAC, namely Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy and Cllr. Mark Nestor, and in conjunction with the other Board members have been actively engaged in progressing the objectives of the Ennis 2040 Strategy.

As Cllr. Mark Nestor has decided to resign from the DAC Board with effect from June 2021, there is a vacancy to be filled. It is proposed that Cllr. Johnny Flynn and Cllr. Ann Norton would be considered for nomination to the Ennis 2040 DAC Board to ensure a balanced representation across the Council.

This was agreed by the members present having been proposed by Cllr. J. Garrihy, seconded by Cllr. J. Killeen and agreed by the members present.

Item 17: Lahinch and Environs Regeneration Partnership ('LERP')

Report from Noeleen Fitzgerald, Director of Finance and Support Services was circulated with the agenda. The report states that following on from the previous report to Council in September 2020, the regeneration and retrofit of Lahinch SeaWorld Building and services has continued despite some Covid-19 restrictions on construction projects in the intervening months.

The report continues to state that the project commenced as a €2m project that has developed into an expanded scope project value of €5.8m. Funding challenges were met by the board of Lahinch SeaWorld (LSW) together with this councils support, securing additional funding from a number of other sources in order to complete this project (in addition to the RRDF €1.6m). The total project funding includes loan finance to the Lahinch Seaworld board.

The report states that the Chairman of the Board of Lahinch Seaworld has now written to the Chief Executive of Clare County Council requesting support to deliver on the final element of this project - reintroducing a kids pool and a universal changing facility into the overall project. Details of secured commitments for additional funding were outlined in the report. The additional supports requested from this council at this time are:

1. Additional grant funding to this €5.8m project of €200,000.
2. Advance of lease payment to the value of €160,000.
3. Continued supports on future governance and operation on site.

Under this RRDF grant application, this council has completed €1.5m of public realm works in partnership with several local community groups in the area to a cost of €0.4m of own Council funding.

In order to include the final elements of the kids pool and universal changing facility, Ms. Fitzgerald recommends that Under 66 of the Local Government Act promotion of interests of local community this request for match funding on the basis that it has been matched by the local groups funding efforts 2:1 and in total the Clare County Council finance represents 13% of the overall project value which will be secured as a charge on the property.

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

“In accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001, Promotion of interests of local community, the approval of Council is sought for additional supports to Lahinch and Environs Regeneration Partnership ('LERP') - Regeneration and retrofit of LSW Building & Services (LSW project) as set out below :

1. Additional grant funding to this €5.8m project of €200,000.
2. Advance of lease payment to the value of €160,000.
3. Continued supports on future governance and operation on site.”

Item 18. Planning permission.

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Kelly

Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Flynn agus glacadh leis

“That the discriminating practice of refusing planning permission to people because of address or geographic location be discontinued by the necessary amendments to the present County Development Plan.”

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:

“In Clare County Council no discriminating practises exist in the Council’s exercise of the Planning function and I refuse to accept the insinuation that any such practice is taking place or would even be tolerated. Again, I think it is important to re-clarify that Planning is a regulatory function which by its operation results in the implementation of a statutory decision-making process resulting in the grant or refusal of planning permissions. Thankfully, in Clare over 90% of developments are granted permission.

The planning application and assessment process is one of the most open and transparent systems of decision-making in all of Government. All planning applications are assessed having regard to *inter alia*, the provisions of the Planning & Development Act and associated Regulations, the policies and objectives of the current Clare Development Plan and the relevant Ministerial (Section 28) Guidelines and Circulars. In all cases the planning file and associated planning reports are available for viewing in the planning office and online and the Council’s decision can be appealed to An Bord Pleánala, the national planning appeals body and thereafter judicially reviewed in the Courts.

In addition, I wish to confirm that no amendments are being proposed to the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (as varied), nor do I envisage that any are necessary at this time.

As the members are aware the process for making a new Clare County Development Plan commenced on the 18th September 2020. In line with the statutory timelines the draft Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 will be placed on public display in mid-August 2021 when there will be the opportunity for the public to make submissions on the content of the Draft Plan. As per attachment this Draft Plan will include policies and objectives that are County Clare specific but which align with current national policy and which include National Policy Objective 19 of the National Planning Framework and RPO 27 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region, both of which relate to rural housing.

Finally, I can assure the elected members that the assessment of all rural housing applications is in accordance with current national guidelines and legislation, and that this will continue with respect to the implementation of the new County Development Plan.”

National Policy Objective 19

Ensure, in providing for the development of rural housing, that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence, i.e. within the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment, and elsewhere:

- o In rural areas under urban influence, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;
- o In rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.

RPO 27

Rural

To support rural economies and rural communities through implementing a sustainable rural housing policy in the Region which provides a distinction between areas under urban influence and other rural areas through the implementation of National Policy Objective 19 regarding Local Authority County Development Plan Core Strategies.

Local authorities shall:

- a. Include policies for the protection of the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements as key priority within Development plans;
- b. Have regard for the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements. Core Strategies shall identify areas under urban influence and set the appropriate sustainable rural housing policy response which facilitates the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic, social or local exceptional need to live in a rural area and siting, environmental and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans;
- c. Having regard for the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements, in rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the sustainable provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans;
- d. Provide for flexibility in zoning and density requirements to ensure that rural villages provide attractive easily developed options for housing.

Cllr. P.J. Kelly expressed disappointment with the response as he felt that people are being denied benefit due to where they live as planning permission is being declined along scenic routes.

The elected members noted that it is a reserved function to pass the County Development Plan and then it can be interpreted by the executive. It was felt that national policies are not in line with each county as Clare has a considerable amount of landscape on scenic routes which are considered to be visually vulnerable. The members called for a common sense approach to be used when people apply for planning permission as it is important to achieve a balance. The members requested that Clare County Council allocate extra resources to the pre planning stage.

Item 19. ICT systems.

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

“That Clare County Council carry out an independent review of the Councils ICT systems in order to establish its systems ability to withstand cyber attack in order to protect sensitive information it holds.”

Noeleen Fitzgerald, Director of Finance and Support Services replied as follows:

“Clare County Council has implemented a multiple layered approach to cyber security including but not limited to strong access and password controls, end user awareness training, managed firewall services, latest virus protection technology, multifactor authentication, encryption, email and web filtering, patch management, network activity monitoring and backups. All the above which are in place strengthen the council’s systems ability to withstand cyber-attack and protect any sensitive information and systems.

The council has established an Information and Cyber Security committee taking membership from all directorates with specific terms of reference to continuously review and update policies and practises in this area. We also have in the past and will continue to engage independent Information and Cyber security experts to periodically review and test existing controls, provide recommendations where improvement can be made or recommend new technologies that can be utilised to improve existing controls and protection against cyber security attacks.

The council recently experienced an attempted cyber threat and were successful in maintaining the security of both data held and out systems. We have ongoing monitoring and review of our systems in place as technology advances and cyber security attacks become more & more complex. Clare County Council will continue to focus on protecting against cybersecurity attacks allocating the required resources where required.”

The elected members discussed the impact of cyber attacks and requested that Clare County Council put budget in place to invest in cyber security and engage with specialists in relation to the possible risks.

Item 20. Social and affordable housing need.

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

“Ask the CEO to outline his short, medium and long term projection of social and affordable housing need in Clare, his best estimate of likely build by the Council and housing bodies over these periods, the Councils role if any in encouraging private housing provision and if the policy changes should be encouraged by Council.”

Anne Haugh, Director of Social Development replied as follows:

“The social housing need for the County is assessed annually, the reported need for 2020 is a net need of 1209 households in need of social housing in the County, this is an increase on the 1070 households reported in the 2019 Social Housing Assessment.

The monthly management report contains the up to date information on approved social housing projects both direct build and projects with Approved Housing Bodies.

Affordable housing will be considered by this Council on the publication of the Affordable Housing scheme on which we are waiting.

In addition the Governments new multi-annual housing programme ‘Housing for All’ is due to be published in Q2 2021 and this document will set the new targets for delivery of social housing in Clare over the next five years. At a national level an additional 10,000 social housing units per year are required to be delivered over the duration of the programme. We are advised that a separate additional target will require to be met under the leasing and affordable housing delivery streams.

The new County Development Plan will set the framework for the delivery of housing in the County over its lifetime. To that end the Council is in the process of drafting a Housing Strategy to support the County Development Plan, the strategy will provide for the delivery of both social and affordable housing in a planned way into the future taking account of projected population increases in the County.

Policy changes to support the delivery of social housing have been considered by the Social Directorate SPC and communicated to the Minister for Housing.”

The elected members discussed the obstacles that exist in relation to the provision of affordable housing due to lack of available serviced sites, increase in the costs of materials due to Brexit and the number of families returning to live in rural areas. It was noted that there is a housing crisis along coastal communities as families cannot find houses to rent on an annual basis as they have to vacate during the tourist season. The members felt that there is a need to have affordable houses available for people who want to live there permanently.

It was agreed that Items No. 21 and 22 be taken together.

Item 21. Lifeguards at blue flag beaches.

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

“I request that Clare County Council consider engaging full-time lifeguards from mid-May until mid-September at all of our Blue Flag beaches.”

Item 22. Lifeguards at blue flag beaches.

Ar moladh Cllr. P.J. Ryan

Cuidithe ag Cllr. M. Howard agus glacadh leis

“That this council would consider providing lifeguard cover on all blue flag beaches in Clare every weekend for the month of May from 2022 on and full-time cover for June and September.”

Cyril Feeny, Senior Engineer, Physical Development replied as follows:

“We experienced a very busy summer bathing season in 2020 at our blue flag and green coast beaches and so far in 2021 the indications are that due to international travel restrictions we will enjoy another busy season due to the popularity of these wonderful natural amenities.

The lifeguard service commenced at Lahinch, Spanish Point, Fanore and Kilkee on the 5th of June and will remain in place fulltime 7 days a week until Tuesday, 31st August. The service commenced at White Strand Miltown Malbay, White Strand Doonbeg, Cappa, Mountshannon, Killaloe (Ballycuggeran) and Ballyallia also on the 5th of June for the bank holiday weekend and for subsequent weekends in June. Full time 7 days a week service is scheduled to start on Monday 28th June at these beaches and also at Seafield and Bishops Quarter until the end of August.

With the exception of Ballyallia, Seafield and Bishops Quarter, the 9 blue flag beaches will also operate a lifeguard service on the weekends of September 4th to 5th and 11th to 12th 2021. Lifeguards are on duty from 11:00am to 7:00pm on days of operation of the lifeguard service.

With regard to the provision of a lifeguard service in May and September, there are a number of factors to be considered. Generally, the water temperature and overall sea state conditions are not as conducive to beach activities in the month of May compared to later in June and through the summer months. Atlantic swells in particular in May can create very unfavourable conditions for beach activities. The number of visitors to the beaches in the May and September timeframe would also be far less than in the busy summer holiday period.

The Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008 designate the bathing season from the 1st June to the 15th September each year. Local authorities work with the EPA and HSE to monitor bathing water samples during that period to safeguard public health. In order to deploy lifeguards, who also inform the public of any bathing water quality issues, the bathing season regulations would need to be amended and the required sampling regime initiated for any revised dates.

However, a more fundamental issue is the fact that the vast majority of our lifeguards each year are drawn from the 17 to 23 year old cohort. They are in fulltime education and are simply not available to provide a full lifeguard service in the month of May/June or fulltime in the month of September as they are either sitting exams or attending / returning to secondary school/university.”

The elected members discussed the issues that arose at the county’s beaches as people flocked to the coast to enjoy the sunshine recently. Compliments were extended to Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development and her team who responded to the

issues raised at short notice. The elected members requested that funding be made available and changes implemented to avoid being in the same situation again. The members asked that the situation be reviewed at the end of the current tourist season and have adequate plans and resources in place going forward. It was suggested that the national emergency services, voluntary and professional, link together to enhance resources available to support and develop an on-call system in order to expand the services. It was felt that there needs to be a visible symbol on our beaches to inform people when it is not suitable for swimming.

Tributes were paid to the local surf schools personnel who provided assistance to people and it was noted that people need to take responsibility for themselves also.

C. Kirby, Director of Physical Development thanked Clare McGrath, Water Safety Officer, Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer and the lifeguards who responded quickly when the situation arose. Ms. Kirby stated that Clare County Council is promoting Clare as a county for outdoor activity and committed to a continuous review of activity during and post summer in advance of next summer.

Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer addressed the meeting and agreed that people are using beaches more often than previously. Mr. Feeney stated that the advice received from Water Safety Officer is that if a flag flies at the beach it implies that a lifeguard is on duty. Mr. Feeney provided an outline of the process involved in creating a panel of lifeguards and informed the meeting that the bathing season is defined by the EPA having considered water quality results, rainfall and other elements.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive agreed that circumstances have changed and that this issued needs to be reviewed in the context of next year. Mr. Dowling noted that Clare is a tourist destination, more people are staycationing at home and undertook to review how the Council does its business in order to plan for future years.

Adjourned meeting.

It was agreed that the remaining items would be dealt with at the adjourned meeting scheduled to take place on Monday, 21st June, 2021 at 3:45 p.m.

P. Dowling, Chief Executive informed the meeting that he had another engagement at this time and that a Deputy will be appointed to attend.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____

Minutes of the adjourned June Meeting of Clare County Council held via MS Teams on Monday, 21st June, 2021 at 3:45 p.m.

Present via MS Teams:

Councillors M. Howard, M. Nestor, J. Flynn, C. Colleran Molloy, 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, S. Crawford, P.J. Kelly, B. Chambers, G. Keating, C. Murphy.

- Mr. Leonard Cleary, Deputy Chief Executive.
- Ms. Ann Reynolds, Meetings Administrator.
- Ms. Margaret O’Rourke, Assistant Staff Officer.
- Mr. Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development.
- Ms. Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development.
- Ms. Noeleen Fitzgerald, Director of Finance and Support Services.
- Mr. Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Development.
- Mr. John Gannon, Senior Executive Engineer, Physical Development.

Absent: Cllr. I. Lynch.

The Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Howard presided.

Item 23. Speed limit review.

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

“That Clare County Council give an update as to when the next speed limit review is to take place and that traffic calming around towns and villages be included in same in the interest of road safety.”

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

“A National Speed Limit Review is initiated every 5 years by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). The last Speed Limit Review in Clare was completed in 2018. Traffic calming schemes are assessed on a case by case basis and are submitted to the Department of Transport and to The National Transport Authority for funding. Particular locations are highlighted annually by the Municipal District Offices and funding is sought by Clare County Council from the above government bodies to implement these traffic calming schemes.”

The elected members outlined concerns raised by constituents in relation to speed limits entering towns and villages. It was noted that recent lifestyle changes has resulted in more people walking and cycling and the members agreed that the speed

limits need to be reviewed and reassessed with a view to reducing the speed limits on roads approaching towns and villages and residential areas.

Carmel Kirby, Director of Physical Development informed the meeting that the next review will be initiated in 2023 and stated that there will be a long lead in period and ongoing engagement with Councillors in the early stages.

John Gannon, Senior Executive Engineer, Physical Development addressed the meeting and stated that the next speed limit review is set by the standards authority namely TII. Mr. Gannon acknowledged the concerns raised by the members and stated that there are physical construction measures options available to address some of the issues raised.

Item 24. Littering.

Ar moladh Cllr. D. McGettigan
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. O’Gorman agus glacadh leis

“We are all aware of the rise in littering throughout our areas in the county.

I feel it has reached unprecedented proportions at this time.

I call on the environment department to further investigate and take action accordingly, particularly in terms of hazardous type waste (i.e discarded face masks, broken glass etc).

And further that bins specifically intentioned and designed for bio hazardous waste material be widely provided.

Perhaps on the strength of the above proposal that consideration be given to the recruitment of more litter wardens to combat the said hazardous conditions and also creating environmentally beneficial and much needed employment.”

Cyril Feeney, Senior Engineer, Physical Development replied as follows:

“We are always guided by the HSE in matters pertaining to public health and in particular issues surrounding the disposal of face masks during the current global Covid-19 pandemic. The HSE have provided the advice below in relation to mask disposal and further information is available on the following link;

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/face-coverings-masks-and-covid-19/how-to-wear.html#removing>

To safely dispose of a single-use mask:

1. Remove it from behind - do not touch the front of the mask.
2. Throw it away immediately into a closed bin.
3. Wash your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

Dispose of single-use masks in your general 'black bag' waste bin at home or work, or a litter bin if you are outside. Take them home with you if there is no litter bin. Do not drop them as litter. Do not put single-use masks in a recycling bin. They cannot be recycled.

Based on the HSE advice we do not believe that special bio-hazard bins need to be provided for the disposal of face masks commonly worn by the public. In general, litter including broken glass, can be deposited in all our public street bins.

The National Litter Polluting Monitoring System report for 2020 which was published in May 2021 indicates that there has been a slight decrease in litter pollution from 2019 to 2020 in general across the country. We will be aiming to continue this downward trend in county Clare.

The Council are also availing of additional funding as part of the €5m national package announced by Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan. The funding will be utilised for litter infrastructure i.e additional bins, awareness campaigns to encourage people to dispose of their rubbish thoughtfully and supporting community groups in maintaining their towns and villages. The Council have also been allocated €5k from the Outdoor Summer Assistance fund which can be used in the provision and maintenance of public amenities such as our Parks, Beaches and pedestrianised streets.

We are also employing an additional 12 temporary staff across the county to deal with litter management for the summer period. These staff will complement the existing street cleaning staff already deployed in the Municipal Districts to ensure high standards of litter management can be maintained over the coming months.”

The elected members agreed that this is a country wide problem and that enhanced education measures are required in order to tackle the problem of littering. The members also agreed that people need to take personal responsibility in relation to waste disposal. The members stated that the perpetrators of illegal dumping should be ‘named and shamed’. It was felt that the privatisation of the refuse collection service has alleviated the fly tipping situation.

Compliments were extended to the volunteers, community groups and tidy towns groups who carried out litter picking on roadsides recently.

Item 25. Preparation for summer staycation season.

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

“We call on Clare County Council, Fáilte Ireland, National Parks and Wildlife Service, other relevant agencies, pubs and restaurants to come together to assess their facilities in preparation for the Summer Staycation and make the changes necessary including temporary emergency parking, provision of extra toilet facilities and refuse collection in order to promote greater preparedness for the anticipated influx of tourists.”

Leonard Cleary, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:

“In the post Covid Tourism context, visitors are encouraged to spend more time outdoors experiencing the Clare Tourism attractions. Clare County Council works with Fáilte Ireland, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Gardai and other relevant agencies, including the hospitality sector, to provide facilities and appropriate parking. The Council is conscious that some visitor attractions are located in

environmentally sensitive areas and therefore will have to work closely with NPWS. At present there are no short-term works being carried out.

A cross-directorate approach to future inter-agency working will be needed as Council services will involve tourism, planning, traffic/roads, community, environment departments and Municipal District Offices.

As restaurants, bars and hotels reopen post- Covid 19 the availability of public conveniences will be extended throughout the county. The Council is providing additional toilets in Fanore and Diamond Rocks, Kilkee. It is a challenge to provide them in more remote locations without causing more hazards in that it is difficult if they are not maintained continuously. The Council has increased our resources at numerous facilities with additional waste collection services.”

The elected members acknowledged that while tourists into our county are very welcome, extra resources and manpower is required to accommodate them. Council staff were commended on the work being undertaken to facilitate tourists in tourist destinations. The members agreed that parking and toilet facilities are serious issues at some locations. It was felt that agencies need to work collaboratively in order to provide an enjoyable experience for visitors to County Clare.

Item 26. Waste water treatment plant for Kilkee.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Murphy

Cuidithe ag Cllr. J. Garrihy agus glacadh leis

“That Clare County Council would request a report from the EPA, to be issued within 14 days, detailing the steps they have taken so far in holding Irish Water to account on the lack of progress in developing a waste water treatment plant for Kilkee

- a) to adequately protect the Kilkee Reefs SAC
- b) to adequately protect bathing water quality in Kilkee Beach
- c) to protect the public who use the beach in Kilkee.”

At the outset Cllr. P. Burke queried if this notice of motion should be dealt with at Municipal District level as it refers specifically to Kilkee. Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard stated that this item was discussed at C.P.G. and it was considered a Council notice of motion. The elected members agreed that it could be considered a countywide issue as the issues raised are also of national importance and agreed to proceed with the item. Cllr. G. Flynn advised that, as the motion is presented it would be considered a municipal district motion.

The elected members expressed concern at the inadequate control being taken by state agencies. It was noted that there is a public health and environmental health hazard occurring due to untreated waste water flowing into bathing area in Kilkee. This has resulted in Kilkee beach being closed on numerous occasions. The members expressed disappointment that no prosecutions have been taken by the IPA due to Irish Water failure to comply with public health guidelines.

Item 27. Bi-lingual packaging on consumer goods.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Nestor
Cuidithe ag Cllr. P. Murphy agus glacadh leis

"I'm requesting that Clare County Council write to Minister Catherine Martin and Minister of State Jack Chambers, requesting the Government to carry out a feasibility study regarding the provision of bi-lingual packaging on consumer goods on sale in Ireland."

The elected members agreed that bi-lingual packing on goods would increase awareness of the Irish language and may assist in people gaining improved fluency in Irish. It was also felt that it would provide a greater opportunity to preserve and promote the national language which should be encouraged.

Item 28. Menopause care.

Ar moladh Cllr. C. Colleran Molloy
Cuidithe ag Cllrs. A. Norton, D. McGettigan agus S. Crawford agus glacadh leis
"Due to "the huge unmet need" as described by Dr Deirdre Lundy (an expert in menopause care & HRT prescribing, who advises GPs throughout Ireland) on Liveline with Joe Duffy (May 13th, 2021) that Clare County Council call on the Minister for Health and the Department of Health to recognise the need to address all forms of womens' health by:-

1. Providing funding and support both in hospitals and in general care for menopausal care.
2. Initiating a campaign to inform the public of the multiple and diverse symptoms attributable to menopause.
3. Providing all necessary resources to train and up skill Irish GPs on menopausal care.
4. Including HRT "body identicals" in drugs scheme.
5. Communication with health insurance companies to ensure that menopausal care coverage is provided."

The elected members discussed recent coverage of menopausal care on a national radio programme. Concern was expressed at the lack of GP training in Ireland to address the effects of menopause which affects everybody directly or indirectly. It was noted that the symptoms are far ranging and the members called on the Government to address the issues raised in the motion in order to dispel the myths and develop greater awareness, understanding and an improved approach medically and holistically for menopausal care.

The members agreed that this notice of motion be circulated to other local authorities.

It was agreed that Items No. 29 and 30 would be taken together.

Item 29. Aer Lingus cabin crew base at Shannon International Airport.

Ar moladh Cllr. M. Howard

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. P.J. Ryan, A. O’Callaghan, G. Keating agus J. Garrihy agus glacadh leis

“Clare County Council requests our Oireachtas members in the region to put forward and support a motion in Dáil Éireann calling on the Government to intervene and reverse Aer Lingus decision to close the cabin crew base at Shannon International Airport and secure the retention of early morning and late evening Heathrow slots as well as transatlantic connectivity from Shannon.”

Item 30. Aer Lingus cabin crew base at Shannon International Airport.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. O’Gorman

Cuidithe ag Cllr. G. Keating agus glacadh leis

“I call on Clare County council to engage with The Shannon Airport group and the Government as a matter of urgency:

- To impress on all concerned the importance of maintaining an Aer Lingus cabin crew base at Shannon Airport.
- To protect the jobs of the Aer Lingus staff.
- To ensure that the Midwest and West of Ireland has direct connectivity to both London Heathrow, New York & Boston, a vital part of maintaining and creating jobs in the region.”

Liam Conneally, Director of Economic Development replied as follows:

“Clare County Council is committed to the promotion of economic development and the creation of jobs across Clare. The Council continues to work collaboratively with Shannon International Airport/Shannon Group and relevant stakeholders such as the IDA, EI, Failte Ireland and others to support them to address the regional economic challenges brought about by Covid-19 and Brexit, and the impact of the recent Aer Lingus announcement.

In recent months, Clare County Council convened a Clare Economic Taskforce to inform and guide appropriate economic measures that will stimulate job creation in County Clare and provide increased connectivity in and out of the region via Shannon International Airport. The Taskforce recognises the significant impact the pandemic and recent Aer Lingus announcement has had on Shannon International Airport and, in support of the Government’s aviation recovery taskforce report, has been actively working to address matters of aviation both locally and nationally.

In addition, the Council’s Shannon Town Masterplan, Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy and the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 give specific and strategic priority in relation to improving air connectivity to Clare and the region – *Clare County Council will work collaboratively with Shannon Airport to secure and sustain new routes that will improve air connectivity to the west of Ireland and increase air arrivals.*

Following the special meeting convened on the 24th May 2021 by Clare County Council to discuss the Aer Lingus decision to close its cabin crew base in Shannon Airport, it was agreed that Oireachtas Members would undertake to bring the concerns of all Councillors raised at this meeting to national Government. The Council awaits the outcome of this action.

In the meantime Clare County Council will continue to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders to support and deliver sustainable employment and economic growth in County Clare, Shannon International Airport and the wider Mid-West region.”

The elected members referred to the special meeting of Clare County Council held recently and expressed disappointment that no update has been received from the Government or the seven Clare Oireachtas members. The members reiterated the view that the Aer Lingus base needs to remain in Shannon and that everything possible must be done to retain connectivity in the region in order to support investment. The members felt that connectivity with Heathrow, New York and Boston needs to be re-instated and restored. The elected members agreed that the Oireachtas members must expend energy at government level to get Aer Lingus to re-instate and fully operate the services at Shannon Airport. It was also felt that local authorities, Chambers of Commerce and major business players in the area should assist Shannon Group. It was agreed that travel agents and tour operators need to be incentivized to encourage airlines to use Shannon Airport.

The members requested an update in relation to invitation issued to An Taoiseach, An Tainaiste and the Minister for Transport to meet with a delegation of Councillors to outline their concerns for the benefit of Shannon Airport and the Mid West Region.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard advised that a Mayoral alliance had met and will meet with incoming Mayors to work on a programme going forward. Cllr. Howard informed the meeting that correspondence had issued to An Taoiseach, An Tánaiste and the Minister for Transport but no response had been received to date. The members requested that further correspondence issue in this regard.

Item 31. Board of Shannon Group.

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

“That Clare County Council calls on the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan TD to appoint the CEO of Clare County Council to the Board of Shannon Group; it is vital that the Local Authority is represented on this important Board as we rebuild Shannon Airport in the wake of Covid-19 as our driver of economic activity in County Clare, the Mid-West and Western Regions.”

The elected members agreed that the Chief Executive of Clare County Council should be appointed to the Board of Shannon Group due to his role as the leader of local government in Clare. It was felt that the Chief Executive has a good understanding of how Shannon Airport works and has an overall view on how it can progress in the future. It was noted that the former Clare County Manager was a Ministerial appointee and did not represent Clare County Council on the Board of Shannon

Group. Clare County Councils ongoing support of Shannon Airport was also noted by the members.

Item 32. Free HSE PCR test.

Ar moladh Cllr. A. Norton

Cuidithe ag Cllr. C. Collieran Molloy agus glacadh leis

“With international travel resuming on 19th July, and many families eager to get some sunshine, I ask that this Council write to the Minister for Health requesting that the free H.S.E. PCR test be allowed to be used for all under 18 year olds. The state has imposed the restrictions and it is not fair that the families who have been on lock down since March 2020 should have to bear this extra cost especially since there is no time line available for vaccinating under 18s. The cost of the PCR test is multiples of the cost of the vaccine and will add over €600 for a family with 3 children. Whereas a family of adults will not have this cost if vaccinated.”

The elected members noted that national travel will be permitted from the 19th July next and that people would like to travel for various reasons including visiting family members and sun holidays. The members observed that there is currently no plan in place to provide vaccinations to children and young teenagers and it was felt that as the Government and the H.S.E. are making the decisions it is unfair to penalise people who wish to travel due to the size and age of their family by incurring the cost of PCR testing.

Item 33. Patient accompanied at A&E Department.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Daly

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. J. Crowe, J. Killeen, P. McMahon agus S. Talty agus glacadh leis

“We ask Clare County Council to make contact with the H.S.E. re: visitation to the Accident and Emergency Department at University Hospital Limerick, so that a person accompanying a patient to the A&E, can be allowed to stay in the very large seating area, while the patient is being treated.”

The elected members discussed constituents experience when referred to A & E in University Hospital Limerick recently. It was noted that when a patient has been registered the person accompanying them is being asked to leave and wait until the person has been treated and that this is a particular burden on vulnerable patients who need support. The members agreed that it is unacceptable to ask a partner, family member or neighbour to wait for hours, often in cars, while the patient is being treated. The members requested that this policy be reversed and that the H.S.E. provide adequate socially distanced seating areas in University Hospital Limerick.

Item 34. Fracking.

Ar moladh Cllr. P. Hayes

Cuidithe ag Cllrs. C. Murphy agus T. O'Brien agus glacadh leis

“Clare County Council call on Government to put forward a global ban on fracking being proposed by Ireland at the United Nations General Assembly on climate-mitigation, public-health, environmental-protection and human-rights grounds.”

The elected members stated that Clare County Council was the first council in Ireland to ban fracking through its County Development Plan and this in turn led to a national ban on fracking. It was felt that the time is right to propose a united ban on fracking worldwide. The members felt that Clare County Council can be to the fore in addressing environmental challenges as it is important to discuss environmental concerns locally, nationally and globally. The negative and detrimental impact of fracking was discussed by the members.

The members agreed that this notice of motion be circulated to other local authorities.

Item 35. Comhfhreagras/Correspondence.

- Cllr. G. Flynn referred to a notice of motion unanimously passed by Clare County Council in relation to the Land Development Agency Bill and referred to response received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Cllr. G. Flynn felt that this is denying the right of the elected members as it is removing their powers and their reserved functions.

Correspondence.

The following correspondence was circulated with the agenda:

1. Correspondence dated 4th May, 2021 from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in relation to the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act, 2015.
2. Correspondence dated 8th June, 2021 from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in relation to the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act, 2015.
3. Correspondence dated 7th May, 2021 from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in relation to the Land Development Agency Bill.
4. Correspondence dated 14th May, 2021 from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in relation to the Proceeds of Crime Acts 1996 – 2016.
5. Correspondence dated 28th May, 2021 from the Department of Rural and Community Development in relation to decentralizing the Department of Rural and Community Development.
6. Correspondence dated 18th May, 2021 from Deputy Cathal Crowe in relation to decentralizing the Department of Rural and Community Development.
7. Correspondence dated 18th May, 2021 from Deputy Cathal Crowe in relation to maximum household income thresholds.
8. Correspondence received from Deputy Michael McNamara in relation to decentralizing the Department of Rural and Community Development.

9. Correspondence dated 17th May, 2021 from Deputy Joe Carey in relation to decentralizing the Department of Rural and Community Development and the maximum household thresholds.
10. Correspondence dated 12th May, 2021 from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in connection with income thresholds.
11. Resolution circulated by Leitrim County Council in relation to tenant purchase scheme.
12. Resolution circulated by Meath County Council in relation to Circular LG 4/2019.
13. Resolution circulated by Limerick City & County Council in relation to one off rural housing.
14. Resolution circulated by Sligo County Council in relation to bereavement allowance.
15. Resolution circulated by Sligo County Council in relation to enacting legislation to deal with stalking.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. M. Howard informed the members that this was her final meeting as Cathaoirleach of Clare County Council and extended thanks to all present for the courtesy and compassion shown to her during her term as Cathaoirleach.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____
Riarthóir Cruinnithe

Signed: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____