



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT



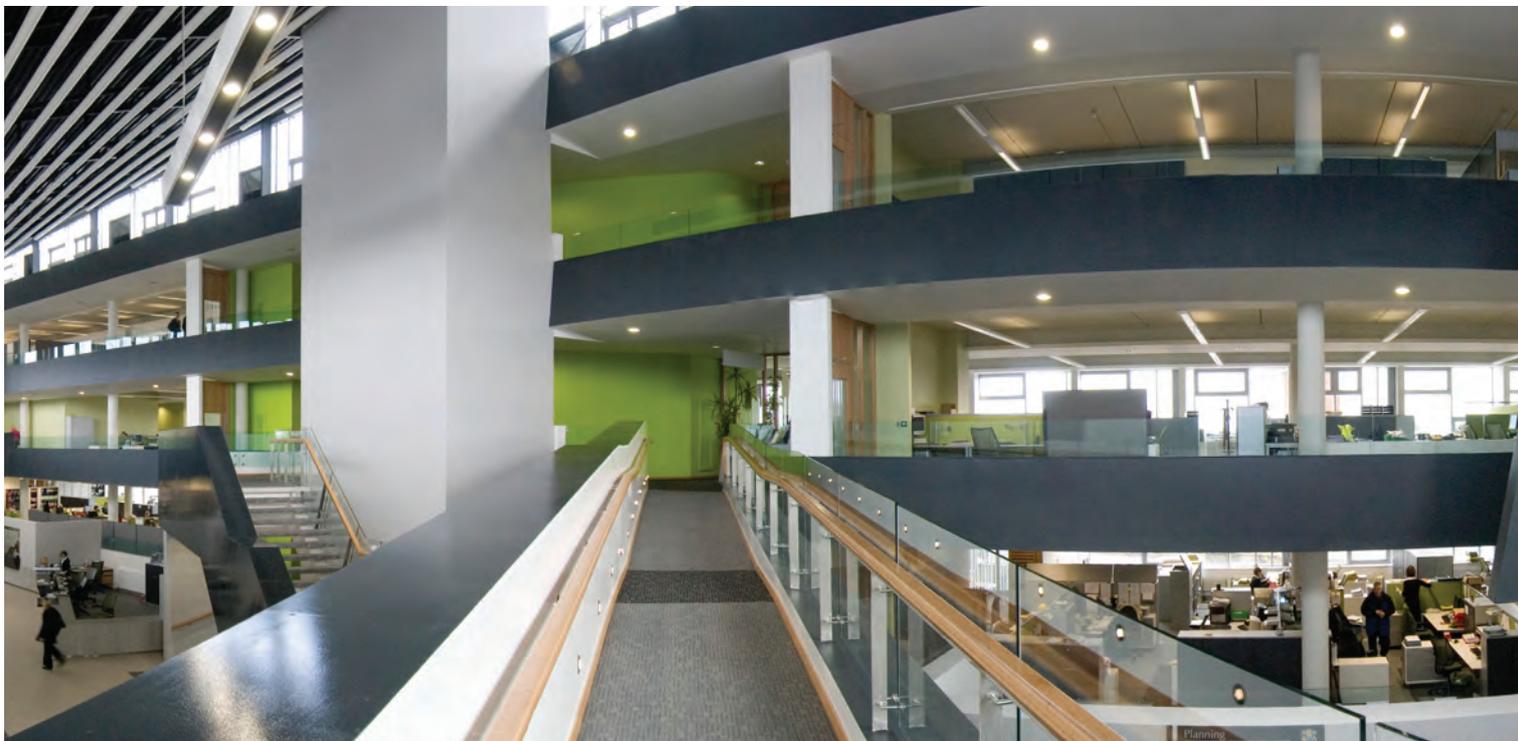


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction by the Mayor and Chief Executive	5
Clare County Councillors	12
Strategic Policy Committees	13
Finance and Support Services Directorate	19
Physical Development Directorate	37
Social Development Directorate	55
Rural Development Directorate	67
Economic Development Directorate	81
Municipal Districts	98
Abridged Financial Statement: Year ended 31st December, 2019	103
Seminars and Conferences attended by Clare County Councillors in 2019	104
Contact information/telephone numbers	105





Cathal Crowe
Mayor



Mr. Pat Dowling
Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION BY THE MAYOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We are very pleased to introduce the Council's Annual Report 2019, which outlines the work of the Council in delivering on a wide range of vital public services and a number of major projects during the year, all of which contributed to putting Clare to the fore in terms of local public service provision. Those include housing, public realm schemes and infrastructure developments, ensuring that our County is an attractive and inclusive place in which to live and invest in.

2019 marked the 120th anniversary of the first ever meeting of the Local Authority which took place in the Grand Jury Rooms of Ennis Courthouse on 22 April 1899. The Council formally commemorated the 120th anniversary at the April Council meeting. The original minutes of the first meeting as well as an original copy of the Local Government Act 1898 were placed on public display to mark the occasion. That flame continues to burn and reignite across County Clare, thus it is with a great sense of pride and accomplishment that we review 2019.

In addition to delivering core local government services across the county, Clare County Council focused and delivered on key strategic objectives, created new opportunities as well as proactively responding to various challenges which presented during the year. The Council is responsible for delivering services to over 118,000 individuals, with a staff of 934 and an annual budget of €117.6m in 2019 and a forecasted capital expenditure of €371m over the next three years. Our County is positioning itself for the future to best plan for the next generation of Clare residents and businesses. During 2019 the Council

was in a position to advance a substantial capital programme resulting in the delivery of some vital infrastructural and amenity projects including the commencement of infrastructure projects such as the County Library project, Ennis South Flood Relief scheme and the completion of projects such as Shannon Town Park and social housing developments at Feakle and Clonlara.

We are very proud of the commitment and dedication of our staff in delivering services which was evidenced in a customer satisfaction survey commissioned by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC), this year. The Council scored well above average in terms of our people's 'Overall satisfaction with their Local Authority'. Furthermore 15 projects were shortlisted in the 'All Ireland Community & Council Awards'; a testament to the number of cross sectional projects that the Council is involved in.

The Local Elections held in May were coordinated by the Corporate team in partnership with the County Registrar's team. The West County Hotel hosted the Election count and was a hive of activity over a long weekend with six new Councillors emerging to further strengthen our team of Elected Members. Councillor Cathal Crowe was unanimously elected Mayor at the AGM on June 7th with Councillor Clare Colleran Molloy as Deputy Mayor. Councillor Mike McKee who also succeeded in getting elected again sadly passed away in November, RIP.

Following the formation of the new Council, a Strategic Policy Scheme 2019-2024 was adopted in October 2019. The

Council established four Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) which reflect the structure and functions of the Council: Social SPC, Physical SPC, Rural SPC, Economic SPC with Climate Change and Biodiversity to be addressed as key agenda items across all SPCs.

One of the highlights of the year was 'The Dubai Duty Free Irish Open' held in Lahinch in July. Clare County Council, worked in partnership with An Garda Síochána, the Health Services Executive, Lahinch Golf Club, Dubai Duty Free and the European Tour, to deliver what can only be described as an outstanding success for the County. Plans and schedules with regard to infrastructure and public realm improvements which were put in place a year in advance all came to fruition. The family entertainment festival co-ordinated by the Council contributed to the electric atmosphere of this great sporting occasion. The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) hosted "A Taste of Clare" whereby a number of artisan food and craft producers showcased a range of local produce in the Championship Village. The Rural Development Directorate, following consultation with The European Tour, commissioned a series of videos highlighting County Clare as a visitor destination. These vignettes were broadcast on Sky Sports and other broadcasters across Europe and the USA (incl. Golf Channel) to an audience of more than 550 million. The successful hosting of this event would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and hard work of all staff and Elected Members working together with the other agencies.

The Social Directorate delivered local initiatives such as the planned maintenance

programme and the establishment of the Clare Homeless Action Team (HAT) which involves an interagency response to homelessness in Clare. In terms of new build, we exceeded our 'Rebuilding Ireland' target for 2019 delivering two new housing developments in Feakle and Clonlara, all of which were allocated in late 2019. The recreational amenities in the County got a welcome boost with opening of 'The Shannon Town Park' in November. This park is one of the key elements in Shannon's revitalisation and regeneration. The contract for the construction of the new County Library at Glór has been signed, with Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring officiating at the turning of the sod before Christmas.

The Council continues to drive our rural development agenda on a national as well as local level. The organisation identified opportunities and ensured that we presented comprehensive project plans in order to secure funding from central government specifically the rural regeneration development fund. We are actively implementing our digital strategy ensuring that people who want to live and work in Clare are attracted and facilitated to do so. Minister Michael Ring officially opened 'The Ennistymon Hub' in December. This 'DigiClare' hub is the fourth in the County with fully operational hubs already in Feakle, Miltown Malbay and Kilrush. The delivery of a range of business, social and community services from this central town location is a key target of the rural development strategy which promotes the development of community-led social enterprises, rural tourism, and SMEs. Down the road, The Cliffs of Moher shuttle bus service was launched aimed at further

enhancing sustainable development and management of tourism across the wider North Clare area. Funding of €465,571 was secured for the 'Doolin Visitor Centre' under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund. The Healthy Clare Strategic Plan 2019-2021 aimed at improving physical and mental health in County Clare was launched in Q1 and is being implemented by Clare LCDC (Local Community Development Committee). It aims to deliver a range of activities that will underpin the health and wellbeing of the people of County Clare. The Council announced a range of funding supports aimed at encouraging community and voluntary groups to take an active part in the development of their communities and to improve the quality of life experience in their areas. This Community supports scheme had a fund of €453,500, being awarded under 10 separate grant schemes.

In the area of Economic development, the Southern Assembly adopted the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy which includes important policy platforms for the delivery of the LNDR, The South Clare/ULSDZ and the Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Strategy. The 2019/2020 academic year commenced in the Ennis Campus of Limerick Institute of Technology, Bindon Street with eight degree programmes now available through the central applications office. Minister Pat Breen officially opened the campus in December. The addition of this educational institution to Ennis will reap many benefits not only for the youth of Clare and surrounds but for local businesses also.

Clare's Local Enterprise Office (LEO) continued to provide support to

enterprises across the County, approving grant funding of €674k to 27 enterprises. 123 different enterprises availed of the mentoring support which is provided by LEO. LEO Clare also grant aided 34 businesses for trading online vouchers.

The 2019 schedule of municipal district works provided for a roadworks programme with a total fund of €33.5m, which was completed successfully. We welcomed news from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in December that the budget for 'Ennistymon Inner Relief Road' has been approved. Work commenced on the Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme, this scheme (€9.7m) represents the final phase of flood defence works throughout the town and includes the townlands of Clonroadmore, Ballybeg and Clareabbey.

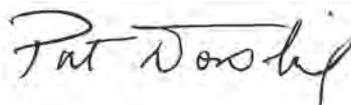
The Fire & Rescue services continued to provide ongoing training to ensure the Council is fully prepared to respond to a major emergency event. A complete major emergency exercise involving all the agencies took place in Shannon Airport in November. Clare County Council signed contracts in September for the delivery of a €2.7 million upgrade and refurbishment of a building in the Quin Road Industrial Estate in Ennis, which will become the new location for the Clare Civil Defence Headquarters. The Quin Road Campus will incorporate a modern Civil Defence Headquarters with full facilities for the Clare Civil Defence Volunteers (currently 90 active volunteer members).

In September 2019 we welcomed the publication of Clare County Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024. This publication was developed with the support and guidance of the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO). In line with the National Adaptation Framework this Strategy creates a roadmap of goals and objectives to be delivered across six thematic areas which the Council has undertaken, to adapt to the effects of climate change and safeguard our way of life.

Clare County Council continues to build strategic partnerships across the business, voluntary, community, education and other sectors. While putting sustainable communities at the heart of everything we do this Council will continue to lead the social, economic, physical, and rural development of our county into 2020 and beyond.



Cathal Crowe
Mayor

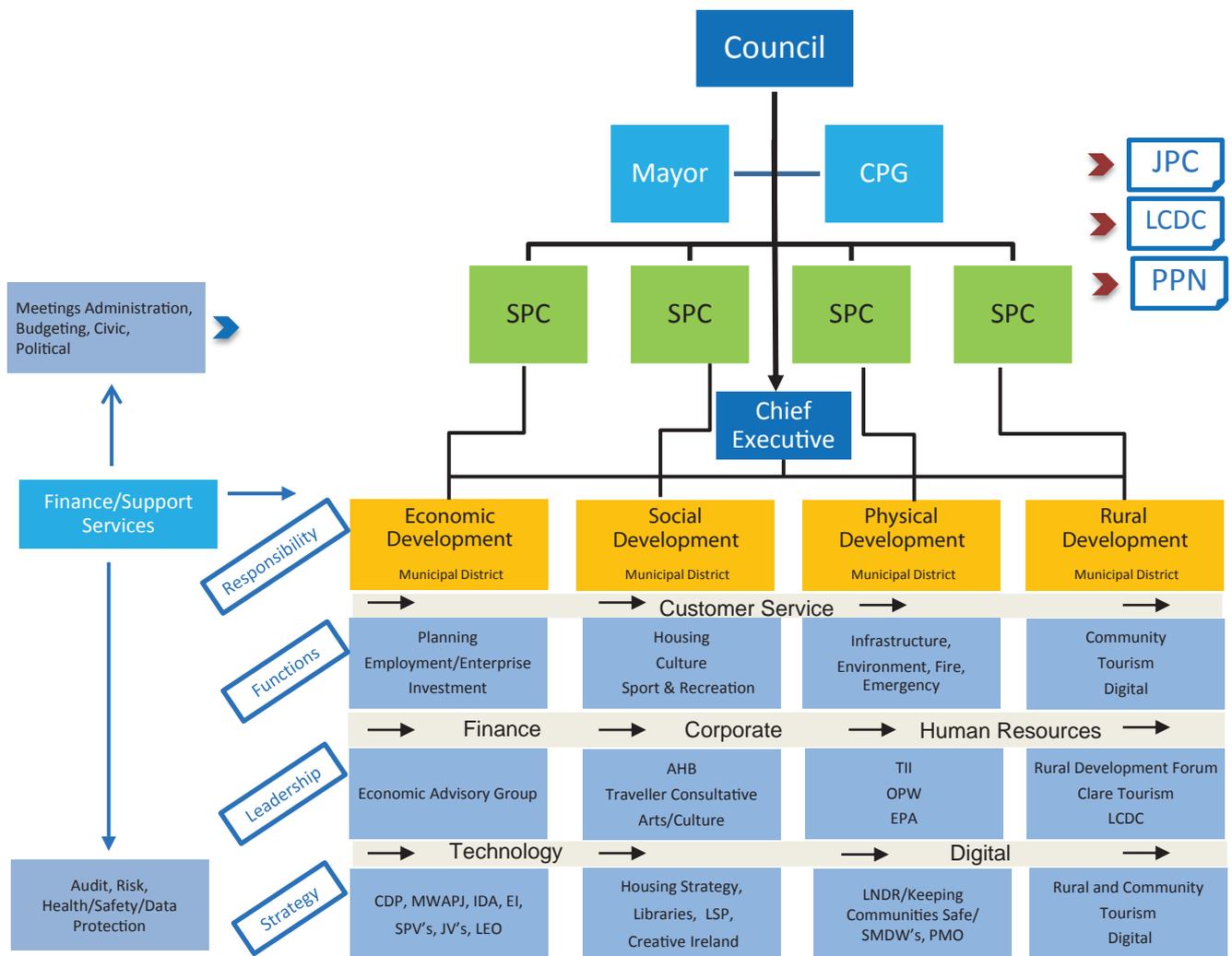


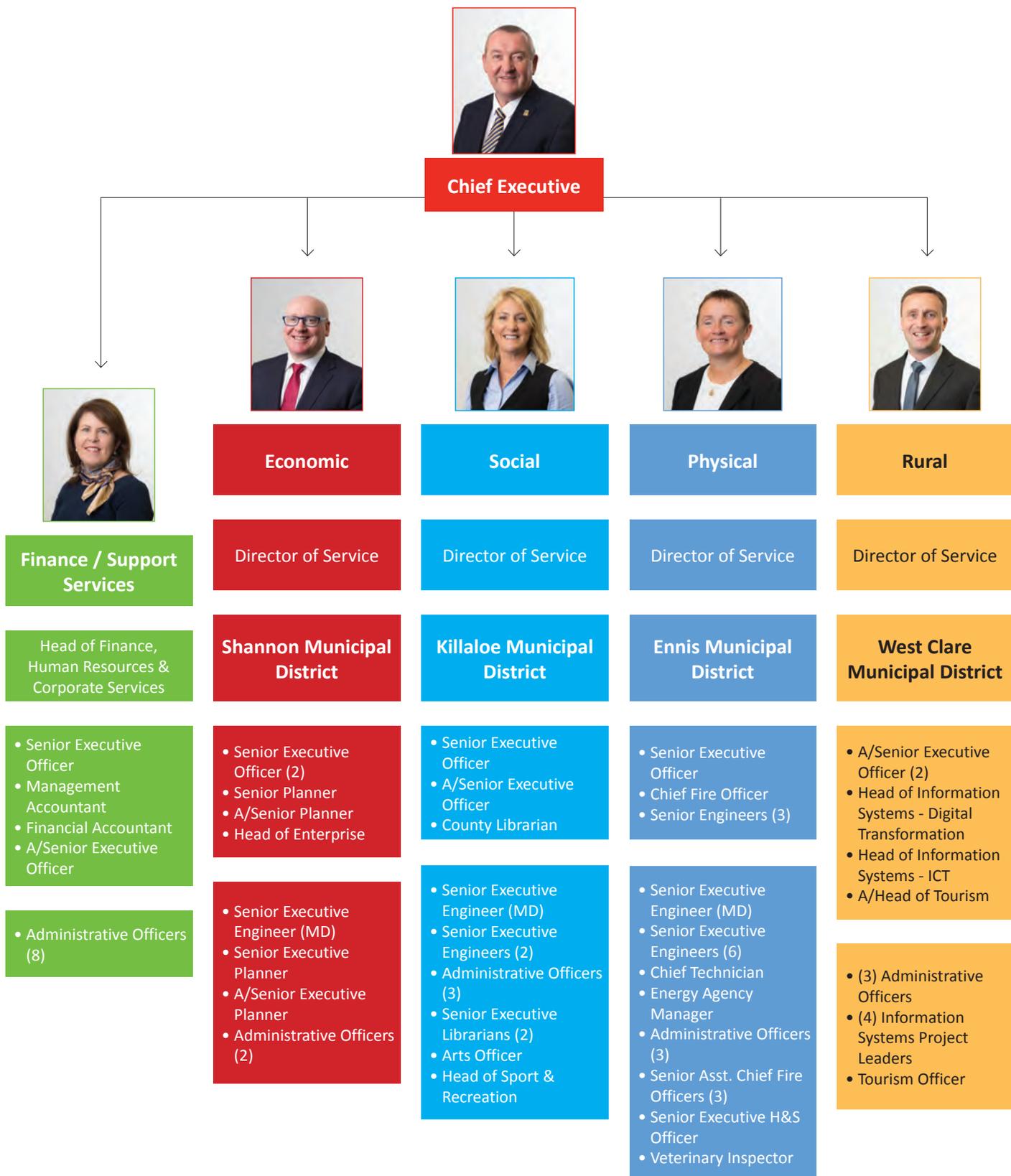
Mr. Pat Dowling
Chief Executive

SPANISH POINT



CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE







CLARE COUNTY COUNCILLORS 2019

Membership of each Municipal District

Ennis Municipal District (7 members)

Ennis Electoral Area: 7 seats



Mary Howard
(Fine Gael)



Mark Nestor
(Fianna Fáil)



Paul Murphy
(Fine Gael)



Clare Colleran Molloy
(Fianna Fáil)



Ann Norton
(Independent)



Pat Daly
(Fianna Fáil)



Johnny Flynn
(Fine Gael)

Mayor

Killaloe Municipal District: 5 members



Joe Cooney
(Fine Gael)



Pat Hayes
(Fianna Fáil)



Tony O'Brien
(Fianna Fáil)



Alan O'Callaghan
(Fianna Fáil)



Pat Burke
(Fine Gael)

Chair

Shannon Municipal District: 7 members



John Crowe
(Fine Gael)



Michael Begley
(Independent)



P.J. Ryan
(Independent)



Pat McMahon
(Fianna Fáil)



Mike McKee (RIP)
(Sinn Féin)



Gerard Flynn
(Independent)

Chair



Mayor of Clare

Cathal Crowe
(Fianna Fáil)

West Clare Municipal District (9 members)

Ennistymon Electoral Area: 7 seats



Shane Talty
(Fianna Fáil)



Joe Killeen
(Fianna Fáil)



Joe Garrihy
(Fine Gael)



Róisín Garvey
(Green Party)

Kilrush Electoral Area: 5 seats



Cillian Murphy
(Fianna Fáil)



Ian Lynch
(Independent)



P.J. Kelly
(Fianna Fáil)



Gabriel Keating
(Fine Gael)



Bill Chambers
(Fianna Fáil)

Chair

Corporate Policy Group (C.P.G.)

The Corporate Policy Group consists of the Cathaoirleach of the day together with the chairs of the Strategic Policy Committees. Each Municipal District is represented on the CPG. It has a statutory basis set out in Section 133 of the Local Government Act, 2001 and has specific functions in relation to the preparation of the annual budget and the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Policy Group meets on a monthly basis with the Council Executive.

Strategic Policy Committees

Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) are structured around the main functions of the Council. They are made up of elected Councillors and other representatives of the Social Partners and other Sectoral interests. Each SPC is chaired by an elected Councillor and is supported by a Director of Service. The task of the SPC is to assist and advise the Council in the formulation, development and review of policy. The SPCs will not be concerned with individual representational or operational issues. Final policy decisions, however, will ultimately rest with the full Council.

Clare County Council adopted a new SPC Scheme (2019 - 2024) in October 2019. The new scheme provides for four SPCs;

- **Economic Development**
- **Physical Development**
- **Rural Development**
- **Social Development**

The climate change agenda and the biodiversity agenda are key policy areas across all SPCs.

Each Councillor is a member of an SPC and each SPC has at least one third of the membership drawn from sectoral interests. The sectoral representatives for the SPCs are drawn from the **agriculture/farming, environmental/conservation, development/construction, business/commercial, trade union, community/voluntary and social inclusion sectors.**

SPC Membership

Economic Development	Members	
Elected Members (7)	Cllr. Pat McMahon (Chair) Cllr. P. J. Kelly Cllr. Pat Daly	Cllr. P.J. Ryan Cllr. Michael Begley Cllr. Gabriel Keating Cllr. Johnny Flynn
Agriculture & Farming (1)	Rosaleen O'Reilly	
Environment/ Conservation (1) PPN	Emma Karan	
Development/ Construction (1)	Pat Keogh	
Business/ Commercial (1)	Pat Morris	
Trade Unions (1)	Seamus Ryan	
Social Inclusion (1)PPN	Elaine D'Alton	

Physical Development	Members	
Elected Members (7)	Cllr. John Crowe (Chair) Cllr. Cathal Crowe Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan	Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy Cllr. Joe Cooney Cllr. Ian Lynch Cllr. Róisín Garvey
Agriculture & Farming (1)	Kieran Woods	
Environment/ Conservation (2)	Aisling Wheeler, James Gillar	
Development/ Construction (1)	Lorchan Hoyne	
Community/ Voluntary (1) PPN	Damon Matthew Wise	
Social Inclusion (1)PPN	Padraic Hayes	
Social Inclusion (1)PPN	Padraic Hayes	

Rural Development	Members	
Elected Members (7)	Cllr. Pat Hayes (Chair) Cllr. Bill Chambers Cllr. Cillian Murphy	Cllr. Shane Talty Cllr. Joe Killeen Cllr. Mary Howard Cllr. Pat Burke
Agriculture & Farming (1)	Denis Tuohy	
Environment/ Conservation (1) PPN	Anny Wise	
Business/ Commercial (1)	Niamh O'Callaghan	
Community/ Voluntary (1) PPN	Eugene Crimmins	
Social Inclusion (1) PPN	Jean Tierney	

Social Development	Members	
Elected Members (7)	Cllr. Gerry Flynn (Chair) Cllr. Tony O'Brien Cllr. Mark Nestor	Cllr. Paul Murphy Cllr. Joe Garrihy Cllr. Ann Norton Cllr. Mike McKee (RIP)
Development/ Construction (1)	Larry Brennan	
Business/ Commercial (1)	William Cahir	
Trade Unions (1)	Tommy Guilfoyle	
Community/ Voluntary (1) PPN	Trudy Leyden	
Social Inclusion (1) PPN	Noel Kearney	

REPRESENTATION OF ELECTED MEMBERS ON COMMITTEES

Appointment of Chair Designate for each of the four Strategic Policy Committees

Cllrs. P. McMahon, P. Hayes, J. Crowe, G. Flynn.

Regional Assembly.

Cllrs. A. O'Callaghan, P.J. Kelly.

Education & Training Board.

Cllrs. A. Norton, P. Murphy, G. Keating, J. Killeen, C. Colleran Molloy.

Local Authority Members Association

Cllr. B. Chambers.

Association of Irish Local Government

Cllrs. J. Crowe, M. Begley, P. Daly.

Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd.

Cllr. C Colleran Molloy

Board of Management of Kilkee Waterworld

Cllr. C. Murphy

Board of Management of Lahinch Seaworld

Cllr. S. Talty

Hunt Museum Trust

Cllr. P. Murphy

Lisdoonvarna Fáilte.

Cllr. J. Killeen.

Board of Glór Irish Music Centre

Cllr. R. Garvey, M. Howard

Clare Sports Partnership

Cllrs. J. Killeen, J. Garrihy.

Local Traveller Accommodation Advisory Committee

Cllrs. T. O'Brien, C. Colleran Molloy, M. McKee (RIP), A. Norton, P. Murphy, J. Garrihy.

Twinning Committee

Cllrs. M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, P. McMahon, P. Hayes, T. O'Brien, J. Crowe, P. Murphy, M. Howard. Cathaoirleach of the day.

County Clare Road Safety Working Group.

Cllrs. C. Murphy, J. Cooney, P.J. Ryan.

County Rural Water Monitoring Committee

Cllrs. R. Garvey, S. Talty, P. Burke.

Active Ennis Sports and Leisure Committee.

Cllrs. M. Nestor, A. Norton, J. Flynn.

Audit Committee.

Cllrs. P. Hayes, G. Keating.

Regional Health Forum West

Cllrs. R. Garvey, C. Murphy, B. Chambers, P. Burke.

Joint Policing Committee.

Cllrs. I. Lynch, A. Norton, M. Begley, P.J. Ryan, B. Chambers, P. Daly, P. McMahon, A. O'Callaghan, J. Killeen (for 2 years), S. Talty (for 3 years), M. Howard, P. Murphy, P. Burke, J. Crowe, G. Keating.

Kilrush Amenity Trust.

Cllrs. I. Lynch, G. Keating.

Board of Clare Local Development Company.

Cllrs. P.J. Ryan, G. Keating, J. Killeen.

Local Community Development Committee.

Cllrs. B. Chambers, C. Murphy, J. Flynn, G. Flynn.

Western Inter County Railway Committee.

Cllrs. A. O'Callaghan, P. Hayes, R. Garvey, J. Crowe, G. Keating.

Standing Orders Sub-Committee.

Cllrs. B. Chambers, C. Colleran Molloy, P. Murphy, J. Cooney, P.J. Ryan, G. Flynn.

Memorial Committee.

Cllrs. C. Crowe, C. Colleran Molloy, A. Norton, G. Flynn, P. Murphy, J. Cooney.

Rural Development Forum

Cllrs. Two Councillors to be nominated from each Municipal District.

Board of Cliffs of Moher

Cllr. S. Talty, G. Keating.

Governing Body of the National University of Ireland.

Cllr. P.J. Kelly.





FINANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE



NOELEEN FITZGERALD
Head of Finance, Human Resources
and Corporate Services



Finance Department

Commercial rates collection

Commercial rates are payable on a diverse range of commercial properties such as factories, offices, shops, hotels and restaurants. The National Valuation Office based in Dublin (www.valuations.ie) determines the valuation that is to be applied to a rated property. Following the consideration of the Council budget each year, the elected members determine the rate to be levied on this valuation. Rate applied in 2019 was €72.99.

Clare County Council billed a total of €43.1m in rates in 2019. Approximately 37% of Clare County Council's revenue expenditure is raised through commercial rates. The collection of rates on commercial properties funds the delivery of a wide variety of essential services. In 2019 collection of rates remained steady and in line with the prior year. The council is aware of the financial difficulties which some ratepayers are experiencing and it remains committed to adopting a practical approach in terms of facilitating rate payers in their payment arrangements.

In 2019, the council continued its commercial rates payment incentive scheme, where commercial rate payers could avail of a grant on their property when all the rates payable on an occupied property have been discharged on time.

The long term vacant property scheme is also in place to encourage business to occupy vacant properties and avail of a grant over the first three years of business. Further details of both of these schemes

are available on the council website.

Also in 2019, the revaluation of rateable commercial properties commenced in County Clare. The revaluation is part of an ongoing national programme to ensure that the rateable valuation of all commercial and industrial property reflect the contemporary business environment. The purpose of revaluation is to bring increased transparency and more equity to the local authority rating system. This process will be on going for the next 2 years and the council is committed to this and engaging with the valuation office and rate payers.

Internal Audit Department

The public spending code compliance report, published in May 2019 for the internal audit department is part of the Council's corporate governance structure. It is an independent appraisal function that reviews activities across all areas. Internal audit provides an independent assurance opinion to management about whether governance and internal control processes are operating effectively. The internal audit department operates to an annual audit plan. The plan is made following consultation with all the Council directorates and finally is agreed and adopted by the audit committee. The plan sets out a schedule of audit reviews and checks for the year. 2018 was also co-ordinated by internal audit.

Motor Taxation Department

The income collected by Clare motor tax offices has more than halved since 2013. In 2019, €7.5 million was collected in total, with each day's revenue being transferred to the Exchequer, daily. Transaction

numbers have also more than halved, with 47,800 in 2019, down from 105,000 in 2013.

The usage of the national online motor tax facility www.motortax.ie continues to grow. Over recent years, Co. Clare's uptake has gone from 47% in 2013 to 73% as at December 2019. There was a further 2% increase between 2018 and 2019. The 73% statistic ranks us 18th in terms of online usage nationally, with 17 licensing authorities having higher online motor taxation than Clare. Cork, Wicklow, North Tipperary, Kildare, Meath and Dublin City Council all have online usage between 82 and 89%.

Non Principal Private Residence (NPPR) Charge

The Local Government (Charges) Act 2009, as amended by the Local Government (Household Charge) Act 2011 and the Local Government Reform Act 2014 introduced a €200 annual charge in respect of all residential property not used as the owner's sole or main residence. This charge has been amended and removed by subsequent legislation; however unpaid charges remain a charge on properties.

During 2019, outstanding NPPR charges continued to be collected as properties are being sold, with in excess of €983k collected in 2019.

Human Resources

In 2019 the Human Resources Department of Clare County Council received a gold certification in the National Human Resource Management Scheme, 'Excellence Through People', awarded by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI).

The HR Department continues to engage through the structures across the organisation to support staff and to identify resource requirement and training. The team are engaged with staff through the lifecycle of their time with us from recruitment to retirement and from learning & development to welfare support.

Matching existing business need and opportunity with the skills and experience and within our operating framework is a key feature of the HR function and central to maintaining equilibrium within the workplace. The introduction of evidence led approaches to support decision making continued to be developed into 2019.

Within our various internal business units, policies and procedures are fundamental to our operations and they continue to be reviewed and updated. There is ongoing analysis of our data to identify emerging needs and trends which further allows us to respond to change appropriately.

The HR Department supports Continuing Professional Development as the skill-sets across the organisation diversify. By December 2019 the workforce numbers stood at 936 with notable increases of staff showing in our crews at municipal district level and in our technical staffing numbers: a reflection of the organisations focus on community, capital projects and our county environment.

The team development plan for 2019 was considered in the context of the 'National People Strategy' - A national local authority HR strategy adopted by the CCMA. Continued focus on staff engagement

through mentoring, leadership, staff updates and engagement through such structures as Partnership, union meetings and the staff liaison network.

The Human Resources Department operates across a number of key areas of activity:

Workforce Management

During 2019 the HR Department worked with the Library Service and FORSA Union to develop and agree a Library Workforce Plan which was then submitted to the DHPLG. The document conforms to a national WRC agreement on libraries and considers the workforce needs over the coming 3-5 years having regard to business need such as the development of a new county library.

Recruitment remains a constant with the increased number to deliver projects and mobility across all roles within the organisation requiring ongoing attention. During the year there were 57 recruitment competitions involving 73 discrete exercises such as short-listing interviews as part of individual competitions. These competitions represent significant engagement with both our existing staff and prospective employees who are, in essence, our customers – in that regard we continue to review our processes and procedures to ensure an efficient, consistent and transparent service.

There was a steady increase in permanent staffing levels in line with declared projections with the level of ‘acting’ arrangements reducing accordingly. Careful monitoring of each grade in line with sanction and available budget continues

and there is ongoing engagement with relevant government departments.

A diversification of skill-focus to such projects as Rural Development, Atlantic Economic Corridor and Tourism coupled with additional staffing resources in areas of key engagement with the community such as our outdoor staff reflects the responsiveness required in this activity area.

The HR Department continues to work closely with the Fire Service to meet the continuing demand for retained Fire-fighters across the county. In 2019 we engaged with third level institutions to place 10 co-op students into the workforce and initiated an apprenticeship in the Machinery Yard - the opportunity to develop further apprenticeships will be explored in 2020.

Learning and Development

The principles of GDPR were promoted and acted upon in 2018 with a strong focus on data retention, statements and our rationale for collecting information. These principles continue to be embedded in 2019. The use of e-Learning in the areas of H&S and Child Protection is forming a key component of the 2019 Team Plan in Human Resources.

In a new departure the Learning and Development team embraced new approaches to delivering training through a number of e-learning initiatives. Child Safeguarding, Manual Handling, GDPR and awareness of Public Sector Duty represent areas of training that are now being promoted through technology. In 2020 it is expected that more training will be

delivered in the Area Offices around the county in our efforts to provide training opportunities to the broadest range of staff.

In addition to formal training courses, a number of staff have participated in the community based Junior Achievement Programme. The Training section also coordinates the Council's applications for Learning & Development related awards and for the NSAI 'Excellence Through People' certification.

The Learning and Development team monitors and maintains the Performance Management & Development System (PMDS). This system plays an important role in setting targets for staff, clarifying roles and responsibilities within departments and identifying and evaluating learning and development activities. The system is currently being assessed with a view to revising the relevant documentation having regard to such initiatives as 'Plain English' and general usability.

Employee Welfare

The Employee Welfare Service is a significant asset for staff. The confidential service includes a number of supports available to employees and presents an opportunity for early intervention should issues arise. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 places obligations on the Council as an employer to safeguard employee's welfare and to act proactively by exercising its duty of care.

The Council's Employee Assistance Policy provides details of the free and confidential Professional Counselling Services available to staff at times of

need, as well as the opportunity to discuss any difficulties with the Employee Welfare Officer should the need arise.

A 'Health Screening' programme was rolled out in 2019 in conjunction with the Partnership Committee with over 400 staff taking the opportunity to attend. The Welfare Officer coordinated a series of talks across the Fire Service – all 7 stations - during the year with information being given on organisational objectives, HR, Welfare, team mentoring, superannuation, training, child safeguarding, the social club and corporate information.

A number of wellness courses were also delivered to staff during the year including: Mental Health Awareness, Mindfulness, Stress Awareness and Time Management.



Industrial Relations

The Council is committed to meaningful consultation with the Unions representing staff in accordance with the various Public Service Stability Agreements.

The Industrial Relations function is dealt with corporately by the Human Resources Department who regularly liaises and consults with the recognised Trade Unions on a wide range of issues and the implementation of change.

Every effort is made to deal with issues in a co-operative and open manner at a local level. The Human Resources department also represents the council at all third party hearings in accordance with best practices with ongoing support from the Local Government Management Services Board.

In personal matters the HR Department actively encourages staff to engage in confidential mediation processes in an effort to address matters early and informally in the interest of all involved.

Superannuation

Clare County Council continues to prepare and manage the data entry and storage systems in respect of Pay and Superannuation but the actual payments process is delivered through 'My Pay', the sectoral Payroll services centre in Laois.

There were further national developments in respect of retirement/superannuation during 2019 - the HR Department organised 4 staff talks during the year and a number of others are planned for 2020. The team in HR continues to engage with

key stakeholders such as MyPay, DHPLG and our staff - current and retired - to ensure that all measures are implemented effectively having due regard to the personal nature of this activity.

Workplace Partnership

The Partnership Committee is a positive forum for the discussion between management and staff outside of the industrial relations arena. There are two new joint-chairs into 2020 - Carmel Kirby, Director of Service (management representative) and Cora Gunter (staff representative /FORSA).

The local Partnership Committee continued to identify initiatives and promote staff engagement in 2019 with a strong focus on the promotion of Health Screening which was available to all staff.



**Local
Authority
National
Partnership
Advisory
Group**

Municipal District Areas

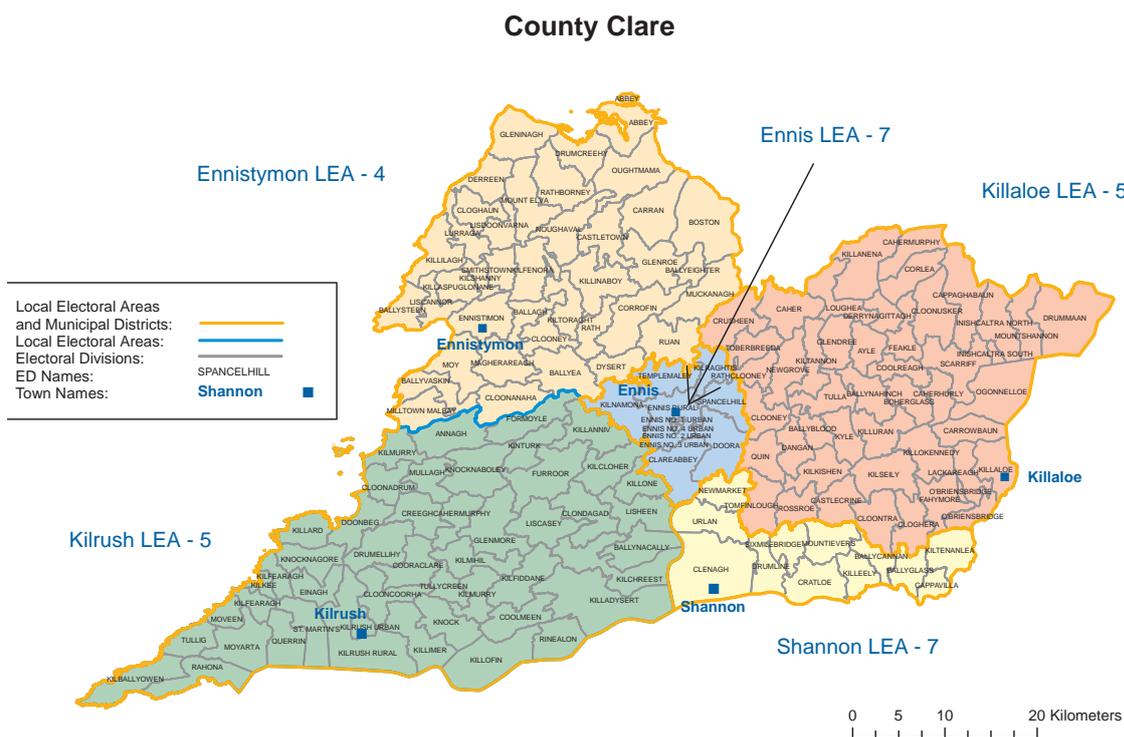
Members meet at area level throughout the year to discuss matters relevant to their particular electoral area. Each municipal district committee has a senior official assigned to it to co-ordinate functions and assist the members in their deliberations. The meetings are attended by the Senior Executive Engineer and a member of the administrative staff in the area. These meetings are generally attended by the press and the minutes of each area meeting are listed on the agenda at a subsequent Council meeting for noting.

Local Elections 2019

Clare County Council consists of 28 elected members representing 5 Electoral Areas and 4 Municipal Districts. Local elections were held on 24th May 2019 to fill 28 seats on Clare County Council. The total electorate was 93,185 with a total poll of 51,253.

Local Electoral Areas

Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee No. 1 Report 2018



Municipal Districts

There are 4 MDs in Clare as follows:

Ennis MD - Ennis Local Electoral Area

Killaloe MD - Killaloe Local Electoral Area

Shannon MD - Shannon Local Electoral Area

West Clare MD - Kilmrush and Ennistymon Local Electoral Area



Corporate Services

The Corporate Services Department provides a support service to the Elected Members and to Council management and administers a number of functions directly to the public.

Meetings of Clare County Council

Clare County Council conducts much of its business at meetings of the full Council. Such meetings are regulated by law.

During 2019, Clare County Council held the following types of meetings

Annual General Meeting	1
Ordinary Meetings	11
Adjourned Monthly Meetings	5
Budget Meetings	1
Special Meeting	4

Meetings of the full Council are presided over by the Cathaoirleach (Mayor) of the Council. In the event that the Cathaoirleach is absent, the Leas Cathaoirleach chairs the meeting. The public and the media have a statutory right to attend meetings of the Council. Council meetings are held on the second Monday of each month with the exception being August, in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

The Annual General Meeting is held in June each year and Councillor Cathal Crowe, who represents the Shannon Municipal District, was elected Cathaoirleach in June 2019 for the ensuing year. Councillor Clare Colleran Molloy, who represents the Ennis Municipal District, was elected Leas Cathaoirleach at that same meeting.

Corporate Plan 2019 -2024

The Corporate Plan 2019-2024 was adopted on 14th December, 2019. Clare County Council will be a professional, responsive and agile local government that will lead the social, economic, physical and rural development of our county, and to have sustainable communities at its heart.

Strategic Objectives 2019 -2024

Clare County Council operates under five directorates namely Social Directorate, Physical Directorate, Rural and Tourism Directorate, Economic Directorate and Finance and Support Services directorate. These directorates have agreed strategic objectives and supporting strategies as set out below:

Economic Directorate

To facilitate a pro-active economic environment where businesses locate and grow and create sustainable employment to support our communities, thus enhancing the economic value of County Clare.

Social Directorate

To enhance the quality of life for the people of County Clare through the provision of appropriate housing supports to those in need and by enabling and fostering access to information, learning, arts, cultural and recreational opportunities.

Rural and Tourism Directorate

To put in place a process of engagement in a rural development strategy to deliver key projects that will improve the quality of life, social and economic wellbeing of people in County Clare.

Physical Directorate

To deliver, maintain and protect key infrastructure to facilitate the economic, social, physical and rural development of County Clare in a manner which promotes sustainability, accessibility, connectivity and respect for the environment.

Finance and Support Services Directorate

To provide human resources, financial and corporate infrastructure to support and develop the council's ability to deliver evolving services to its customers by empowering our staff and enabling them to deliver to their best capacity.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee has an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting, processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters, as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the Council. It supports the work of the

Internal Audit Department and advises the Chief Executive in relation to the operation and development of the department.

The committee is non-executive and is independent in the determination of its work programme and in formulating any recommendations, taking account of the functions referred to above.

Consequent to the 2019 local elections, a new committee was formed. The new committee will run for the full duration of the Council 2019 - 2024. The committee has five members, three external members and two Elected Members as follows

Austin Slattery, qualified Chartered Accountant (Chairperson)

Ms. Rose Hally

Mr. Jimmy Browne

Cllr. Gabriel Keating

Cllr. Pat Hayes



The committee met 5 times in total in 2019. The committee completes an annual report to Council each year.

CIVIC/MAYORAL RECEPTIONS 2019

A number of Civic/Mayoral Receptions were approved by the Council and held throughout the year. The following people were accorded a Civic Reception/Mayoral Reception to acknowledge their outstanding achievements:-

Mayoral Reception 31st January, 2019



Laura Brennan R.I.P - *in recognition of her work as advocate and ambassador for the HPV Vaccination Programme and for her selflessness and strength in spreading the benefits of obtaining the vaccine.*



Mary Fitzgerald - *in recognition of her lifelong commitment to helping victims and families affected by domestic violence and to celebrate her achievement in being awarded the Christine Buckley Volunteer Award and The Wheel 2018 Community Hero Lifetime Achievement Award.*



Kay Murphy - *in recognition of her commitment and service as President of Active Retirement Ireland.*



Ennis Enterprise Town - *in recognition of Ennis winning the Bank of Ireland Regional Winner 2018 Enterprise Town*



Shannon Enterprise Town - *in recognition of Shannon achieving regional runner up in the Bank of Ireland Enterprise Town Awards.*



Shannon Best Urban Neighbourhood 2018 - *in recognition of Shannon winning the IPB Pride of Place Award under the category Best Urban Neighbourhood 2018.*

Civic Event 8th April, 2019



Clare County Council commemorated the 120th anniversary of the first meeting of Clare County Council in April 1899 following the enactment of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898 at the April 2019 Council meeting.

Civic Reception 13th May, 2019



Emma Barrett - *in recognition of her winning Gold in the Special Olympics Games in Abu Dhabi as a member of Team Ireland's 25m freestyle relay team.*



Noel McNamara - *in recognition of his coaching skills in guiding the Ireland U20 rugby team to their first Grand Slam in twelve years.*



Jean Moloney & Mairead Moroney - *in recognition of them winning Silver in the Special Olympics Games in Abu Dhabi as a member of Team Ireland's golfing team.*

Protected Disclosures Act 2014

Clare County Council confirms that no Protected Disclosures were received in 2019. Consequently no action was required to be taken by Clare County Council in relation to Protected Disclosures.

Business Review 2019

An application was developed in-house to assist Councillors to log and track representations across the various sections of the Council. In addition to installing the app on Councillor's smartphones, each Councillor has been supplied with a Council tablet to access the app. The primary objective of the app is to facilitate Councillors who wish to log and track the status of representations 24/7.

Two new customer service/security agents were recruited, replacing G4 security company as well as facilitating a more focused customer service experience. In March the Council invited members of the public to participate in a customer satisfaction survey as part of its' ongoing review of services. The survey was distributed through a number of online channels as well as hard copy. Overall satisfaction levels with the services provided was good. A review of our customer service documentation was carried out to bring it in line with GDPR legislation and to facilitate clarity on what to expect as a service user dealing with the Council.

Business Review (BR) worked with the national local government service catalogue project team to catalogue 650 public-facing services across Housing, Environment, Planning, Roads and

Transportation, Economic Development, Tourism Development and Local Enterprise. An analysis was conducted of the services provided at MD level in addition to the structure to deliver same. This review also included evaluating successful structures in other Local Government (LG) MDs. BR co-ordinated project submissions for both Chambers Ireland and LAMA awards, 3 were shortlisted for Chambers Ireland awards and 15 projects shortlisted for LAMA awards. The team continued to engage with employees on various initiatives through the staff liaison network.

BR are planning the implementation of a central contact management centre (CMC) with a supporting CRM infrastructure in the Council. A review of the current CRM architecture was carried out as well as investigative work on the GDPR implications of a centralised system. The team continues to engage with external providers and other councils to ensure a viable future-proofed solution is implemented.

Office of the Ombudsman

This office was established under the Ombudsman Act, 1980. Its role is to investigate complaints about administrative actions, delays or inactions, adversely affecting persons or bodies in their dealings with state bodies including Local Authorities.

The Office of the Ombudsman dealt with 23 Customer complaints in 2019. Reports on each complaint was provided by Clare County Council to the Office of the Ombudsman.

Ombudsman for Children

In 2019, no complaint was made to the Ombudsman for Children.

Customer Care Co-ordinator

The Council is committed to providing a quality service to all its customers and has a complaints/comments policy in place. The Council's Customer Care Co-ordinator investigates all complaints/comments received. A person not satisfied with the response provided by the Customer Care Co-ordinator can request to have their case reviewed again by the Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services. In 2019, the Customer Care Co-ordinator responded to 11 complaints received, 3 of which were dealt with under appeal, to the Senior Executive Officer.

Communications and Public Relations

Clare County Council continued to make progress in further enhancing the means by which it communicates with staff, elected members and customers during 2019. The Council continued to focus on social media and now have a combined following of approximately 18,000 people.

The Communications office issued press releases and photographs promoting the full breath of services provided by Clare County Council resulting in extensive local national and international coverage. The primary aim of Clare County Council's information output during the Irish Open was to promote the activities, initiatives and work of Clare County Council in delivering this event. Clare County Council's communications remit during

the Irish open also complemented the work of The European Tour, Lahinch Golf Club, Dubai Duty Free, and An Garda Síochána.



Clare County Council partnered with the Clare Champion newspaper to produce an online live broadcast from the Count Centre at Treacy's West County Hotel for the **Local Election Count 2019**. The initiative was aimed at increasing public awareness and appreciation of Local Government and its Elected Members. The production was broadcast live on www.clarecoco.ie, www.clarechampion.ie and YouTube.



The Graphic Design & Print Service team further enhanced the quality of internal and external communications carried out by Clare County Council, by producing high quality design and print material. Examples include - **Annual Report, Corporate Plan, Heritage and Biodiversity Plans, Age Friendly Report, LCDC Annual Report.**

A newly recruited Irish Language Officer joined the Communications team in 2019. The Irish Language Officer works with all departments to assist them in compliance with the legislation and promotion of the Irish Language in all elements of service delivery.



Records Management

Our Records Management Unit archived substantial volumes of records, which are required to be retained under the National Retention Policy for Local Authority Records. In addition, records were disposed of in accordance with the above policy. Work commenced on the implementation of a new records management system “ADLIB”.

The photographic digital archive continues and additions to the photographic collection are being carried out on an ongoing basis to ensure their preservation.

All Chief Executive Orders, County Council minute books and registers of electors have been gathered, bound and subsequently archived, thus ensuring vital records are permanently and securely preserved.

FOI & Data Protection

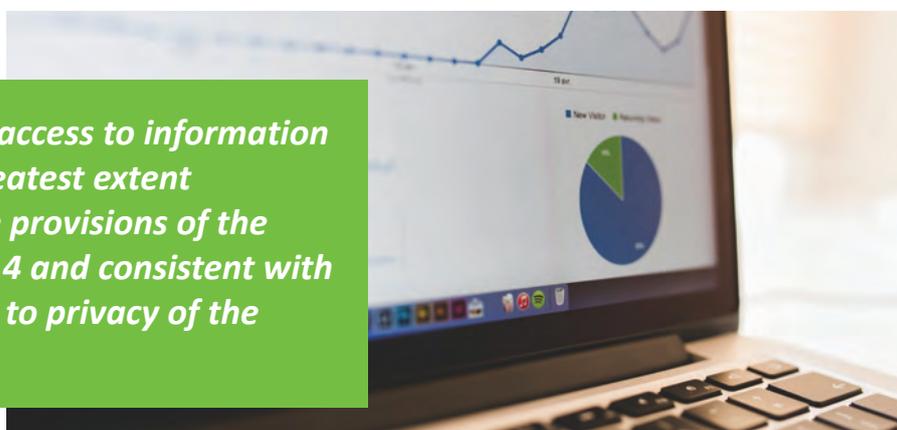
Freedom of information (FOI)

In 2019, there were 165 FOI requests, 15 internal reviews and 3 appeals to the Information Commissioner.

The outcome of valid requests received in 2019 was as follows:-	Granted - 54 Part-granted - 42 Refused - 57 Transferred - 1 Withdrawn/outside FOI - 3
The categories of the requests are as follows:-	Journalists - 53 Business Interest Groups - 8 Oireachtas /Public representatives - 4 Staff - 2 Clients/others - 98

The policy of Clare County Council is:

“To give members of the public access to information held by this authority, to the greatest extent possible, in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy of the individual”.



Further information and an application form is available on the council's website www.clarecoco.ie

The following is a summary of the fee structure in respect of FOI requests:

Search and retrieval costs - €20 per hour plus copying charges

Photocopy per sheet - €0.04

CD Rom - €10.00

There is a minimum threshold of €101 below which no search, retrieval and copying fees can be charged. Once the charge reaches €101, full fees apply;

There is a cap of €500 on the amount of search, retrieval and copying fees that can be charged.

There is a further upper limit on estimated search, retrieval and copying fees at €700 above which an FOI body can refuse to process a request, unless the requester is prepared to refine the request to bring the search, retrieval and copying fees below the limit.

The Freedom of Information Act sets out appeal mechanisms in the event of a refusal of a request, or in relation to deferral of access, charges, form of access etc. Fees are also payable in certain cases on appeal as follows:-

The fee for internal review under Section 21 is now €30 (€10 for medical card holders and their dependants).

The fee for appeals to the Information Commissioner under Section 22 is now €50 (€15 for medical card holders and their dependants).

Data Protection

Clare County Council processes all personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Acts, 1988 to 2018.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies from 25th May 2018. It has general application to the processing of personal data in the EU, setting out more extensive obligations on data controllers and processors, and providing strengthened protections and rights for data subjects.

During 2019, the Data Protection Officer (DPO) provided advice, guidance and support to departments in relation to GDPR, provided training for departments and Councillors to gain an understanding of the GDPR and how best to meet their specific obligations. Data access requests and data breaches are also handled through the DPO.

There were 33 data access requests made under the Data Protection Acts for access to personal data held by Clare County Council in 2019.

Privacy Statement

At Clare County Council we are committed to protecting and respecting your privacy.

The Privacy Statement lets you know how we look after your personal data. It also informs you as to our obligations and your rights under data protection law.

Clare County Council's privacy statement can be found at – www.clarecoco.ie/privacy-statement





PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



CARMEL KIRBY
Director of Physical Development



Roads and Transportation Department

Roads and Transportation is responsible for the design, maintenance and improvement of the national, regional and local road network throughout the county and also has responsibility for road safety, public lighting, hedgecutting, parking management, flood relief works, insurances and arterial drainage.

Schedule of Municipal District works 2019

The 2019 Schedule of Municipal Districts Works provided for a roadworks programme which had a total fund of €33.5m. This programme was completed and all approved allocations drawn from the TII and DTTaS respectively.

Listed hereunder are a number of the highlights/works that took place:-

- **Strengthening/surface dressing of more than 227km of road network.**
- **Continuation of enhanced bridge remediation programme (20).**
- **Completion of a number of safety improvement schemes.**
- **Road safety programme.**



Public lighting

Clare County Council has responsibility for the management and maintenance of over 14,200 public lights in the county (with the exception of those on the motorway network). Public lighting is by far the largest energy consumption component of Local Authority infrastructure and the costs associated with same continue to increase. This is as a result of higher maintenance costs associated with ageing stock, increased consumption costs as more private estates are taken in charge and increasing energy charges.

The key priorities in relation to public lighting include changeover to LED technology, achievement of the 2020 Carbon footprint reduction target and replacement of supporting infrastructure where required. It was announced in late 2018 that the Road Management Office (RMO) had been successful in securing €17.5 million in support from the Climate Action Fund for the LA Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project nationally. This will form part of the funding necessary for the delivery of the project. Clare Co Council has confirmed its participation and has signed up to be included in Region 1 of the Local Authority Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project, subject to Council approval. The current programme indicates that the project will commence in 2020 and it is anticipated that public lights will be changed to LED in the county within a 2 year period.

Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS)

The Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy is being developed at present by the NTA and the strategy is to cover all modes of land transport 2018 to 2040. It is an objective of RSES for the Southern Region to develop a Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy for the Limerick-Shannon area by the NTA, TII, Clare and Limerick Local Authorities and relevant stakeholders integrating priorities and supporting investment in actions under these strategies. The aim of the strategy is to provide a long term strategic planning framework for the integrated development of transport infrastructure and services for the Limerick/ Shannon metropolitan area. A number of meetings have been held with the consultants, NTA, TII and Limerick City & County Council. The Steering Group met for the first time in December 2018 and Clare Co Council provided an input throughout 2019. Clare Co Council supplied background data to the Consultants and the NTA e.g. a list of stakeholders to be consulted, traffic data, the Clare Noise Action Plan. Comments have also been returned by the Transportation and Planning sections on the Baseline Conditions Report and the Demand Analysis Report. The NTA produced an advance consultation report in December 2019 and this was issued by Clare Co Council to both its Elected Members and to the Members of the SPC in early 2020. Clare Co Council had reverted back to the consultants with comments on the advance consultation report in early 2020 and it is proposed that the draft strategy will go on public display in March 2020.

Other Roads activities

Community hedgecutting grant

Clare County Council provided an allocation of €10,000 to continue the Community Hedgecutting Grant Scheme in 2019. 27 grants were approved in 2019. This initiative is facilitating greater awareness among landowners of their responsibilities in relation to management of roadside hedges on their properties.

Community Involvement Scheme

An allocation of €735,000 under the Community Involvement Scheme in 2019 facilitated work being carried out to 27 public roads throughout the county.

Local Improvement Scheme

Clare County Council was allocated total grant funding of €480,720 for local Improvement schemes from the Department of Rural and Community Development in 2019. The grant funding facilitated the approval and completion of LIS works to 12 non public roads in 2019. A further request for grant funding in the amount of €1,037,938 was submitted to the Department in April 2019 to fund a further 22 projects however this funding was not sanctioned.

Clare Co Council Road Traffic Speed Limit Bye Laws 2017

Following an extensive review, (over a period of two years), of speed limits throughout County Clare, on national, regional & local roads, Clare County Council produced Road Traffic Speed Limit Bye Laws which were adopted by Clare County Council in October 2018 became law on 1st June 2019.

Traffic Management

The Council has responsibility for the management and enforcement of traffic throughout the county. Parking bye-laws and pay and display facilities are in operation in Ennis, Kilrush, Kilkee, Lahinch and Doolin. The Council continues to invest in staff and resources to improve the service delivery in this area.

Road Safety

Clare County Council continued to work in partnership with various other stakeholders including the TII, the Road Safety Authority, the HSE and the Gardaí to promote road safety. The Council continued with various initiatives that included Junior School Warden Scheme, Cycle training in schools, Road Safety Week, the Street-Smart resource, distribution of High Viz vests, promotion of road safety through the media and other initiatives to promote road safety.



Roads Performance Indicators

While the indicators for 2019 are not yet compiled, the indicators for 2018 are listed hereunder for Roads

R1 % of roads that received a PSCI condition rating

Description	%
% of Regional rd km that recd a PSCI rating in 24 mths prior to 31/12/2018	100%
% of Local Primary rd km that recd a PSCI rating in 24 mths prior to 31/12/2018	88%
% of Local Secondary rd km that recd a PSCI rating in 24 mths prior to 31/12/2018	70%
% of Local Tertiary rd km that recd a PSCI rating in 24 mths prior to 31/12/2018	84%

R1 B % of roads represented by PSCI condition rating

Road Type	1-4 Rating	5-6 Rating	7-8 Rating	9-10 Rating
Regional	7%	29%	31%	34%
Local Primary	3%	20%	52%	16%
Local Secondary	6%	28%	43%	14%
Local Tertiary	28%	22%	22%	12%

R2 Regional Road Works

Km of Regional road strengthened during 2018	13.6km
Amount expended on Regional road strengthening during 2018	€ 1,784,375
Km of Regional road resealed during 2018	17.7km
Amount expended on Regional road resealing during 2018	€ 465,089

R2 Local Road Works

Km of Local road strengthened during 2018	93.1km
Amount expended on Local road strengthening during 2018	€ 6,022,451
Km of Local road resealed during 2018	123.1km
Amount expended on Local road resealing during 2018	€ 2,001,891

Physical Development SP

The Strategic Policy Committee for Environment and Transportation held three meetings in 2019. This Committee has a membership of 12, comprising of 7 Elected Members and a representative from each of the following sectors:-

- **Agriculture/Farming**
- **Environment/Conservation**
- **Development/Construction**
- **Community/Voluntary**
- **Social Inclusion**

The Chairperson prior to the formation of the new SPC following the Local Elections was Cllr. Joe Cooney and he was succeeded by Cllr. John Crowe.

Issues discussed by the SPC in 2019 included the following:

- Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
- Election Posters
- Fire Station Upgrades update
- Interim Beach Management Report findings
- Dog Owner responsibilities Campaign update
- Litter Management Plan 2019-2021 update
- National Road Safety Event , Glor 20th May 2019 update
- Biodiversity
- Corporate Plan
- SPC Training

Project Management Office

An update on some of the main projects being worked on throughout 2019 is outlined below.

Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs)

The 5 Clare CFRAM schemes, namely Shannon, Kilkee, Springfield, Bunratty and Kilrush continue to be progressed. Project Teams made up of Council, OPW and Consultants are actively working on Kilkee and Springfield with the Shannon Project Team to be appointed in early March 2020 following a tender competition in December 2019. Under Tranche 1 of CFRAMs, the 5 Clare schemes were allocated funding which will enable these significant flood relief works to be progressed, initially to detailed design stage and thereafter, to construction. In addition to the above, with Department approval, the Shannon CFRAM scheme has been expanded to include significant additional works to the estuarial embankments under the new project title of Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme.

In parallel, work continued on a number of other coastal, harbour and minor works schemes throughout the County where the Council has been pursuing feasible solutions in a number of areas with a view to minimisation of flood risk. Among the locations under consideration are Miltown Malbay, Ballyvaughan, Murtyclough, Kilbaha, Quilty, Spanish Point, White Strand, Lough Donnell, Clarecastle, Quin and Liscannor.

Doolin Pier Visitor Services Building

Following the allocation of Category 2 funding under the Rural Regeneration &

Development Scheme, this project is being advanced to Detailed Design and Planning stage. On completion, subject to planning, it will provide a state of the art Visitor Services Building, enhanced parking and improved traffic management at Doolin Pier.

Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme

Following OPW approval, contracts were signed with Ward & Burke Contractors earlier in the year and work commenced on site in April 2019. The project includes 3 main elements, namely culvert works from Ballybeg to the river Fergus, culvert works from St Flannans College to the River Fergus and embankment works along the River Fergus between the Quin Road Bridge and Clare Abbey. Despite difficult ground conditions, deep excavations and rock, significant progress was made throughout 2019. The Contract period is for 27 months with works expected to be completed in late 2021.

Ennistymon Inner Relief Road & Bridge Crossing (Blakes Corner)

Progress continued throughout 2019 by the steering group led by Clare County Council and including the TII, the Mid West Regional Design Office (MWRDO) and our Consultants Roughan O'Donovan. A significant milestone was achieved in December with the approval by TII of the total scheme budget which allowed the project appraisal to be completed and submitted to TII for their consideration and review. Following this, we will be in a position to finalise the CPO documentation in preparation for its publication at the earliest juncture and submit to An Bord Pleanála.

Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass

Work continued throughout the year in relation to the necessary land acquisitions and the various technical and other enabling works required to complete the detailed design and contract documents. The tender process was initiated in December 2019 with the publication on e-tenders of the information notice and it is expected that we will go to tender in early Summer 2020 and award the contract in late 2020 subject to department approval.

Lahinch Coastal Protection Works

Following the award of contract to Keating Construction early in 2019, work commenced on site in February and was satisfactorily completed by the end of June 2019. The works have been tested by the elements on a number of occasions since and have performed as expected. A final survey of same will be carried out before the defects period ends in Summer 2020.

Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)

The design of the link road between the N85 Roundabout at Laureen and the Lees Road/Drumcliff Road Intersection was completed in late 2019 and the additional supporting information required for planning permission is being gathered, following which we will be in a position to submit for Part VIII application in early March 2020. In terms of the housing element of the proposal, the Council continues to explore all possible options with a view to delivering 200 units of housing in the areas.

Limerick Northern Distributor Road (Phase 2)

The project appraisal plan which included the project brief, business case, traffic modelling and cost benefit analysis, was submitted to the Department of Transport earlier in the year for review by their Strategic Research and Analysis Division (SRAD). Given that the LNDR is now proposed to intersect with Junction 28 of the M7 Motorway, the TII are also being consulted. In November they requested additional traffic counts and modelling to be carried out and this work is ongoing. Following final approval of the project appraisal, we will be in a position to advance the preliminary design, environmental impact assessment report and CPO through the statutory processes required.

N19 Shannon Airport Access Road

A significant milestone for this project was reached in early 2019 with the approval of the TII to appoint consultants. Following the drafting of the tender documents, we ran a competition in late summer, the outcome of which was the appointment of Fehily Timoney & Assocs along with Clandillon Civil Consulting under a joint venture as Consultants for the scheme in October 2019. The project team has now completed the relevant data gathering and are currently assessing the various options available. Once completed, the Project will provide a high quality road improvement scheme on the N19 National Primary Road between Drumgeely roundabout and Knockbeagh Point roundabout (for a distance of approx 2.2km) on the approach to the airport and it will add significantly to the infrastructure facilitating Shannon Airport, Industry in the region and the wider Shannon community.

N85 Kilnamona Realignment Scheme

As a result of survey work carried out earlier in the year, a significant cut and fill imbalance was identified which rendered the original preliminary design non-viable. Following discussion with TII, it was agreed to consider a scope change extending the length of works from the initial 3km to a 4.5km section. It is now necessary to appoint new Technical Advisors and the procurement of same is now being progressed.

West Clare Railway Greenway

Clare County Council are at the preliminary stage of delivering a world class, sustainable, fully accessible, multi-modal Greenway that will connect communities and other destination points and that will attract a strong community benefit and economic return on investment.

The West Clare Railway Multi-Modal Greenway Project will benefit both urban and rural areas of Co. Clare by linking Ennis, our vibrant largest town to the Rural areas of Corofin, Ennistymon, Lahinch, Miltown Malbay, Quilty, Doonbeg, Moyasta Kilrush and Kilkee.

The route of the Greenway is to follow the entire length of the former West Clare single gauge railway line covering a distance of circa 85km. The 20km length between Kilrush and Kilkee as illustrated in Figure 1.1 below is emerging as the preferred initial phase of the project due to already established community buy in and support for the project as well as positive feedback from initial discussions with landowners. However, our plan includes the delivery of other priority sections such as Ennis to Ennistymon, which can

be progressed in parallel subject to the availability of funding and timely consents.



Minister Boxer Moran turning the sod for Ennis South FRS: April 2019



Photo montage of new Bridge at Killaloe



1.1 Indicative Route of West Clare Railway Greenway



Contract signing for N19 Shannon Airport Access Road: Oct 2019

Roadworks

The resurfacing of the access road to the Lees Road complex was completed in February.

Carmody Road/Kilrush Road Junction

Following on from works carried out by the ESB at the Junction of Carmody Road and Kilrush Road, Ennis MD carried out scheduled improvement works at this location.

Abbey Street & O'Connell Street Footpaths

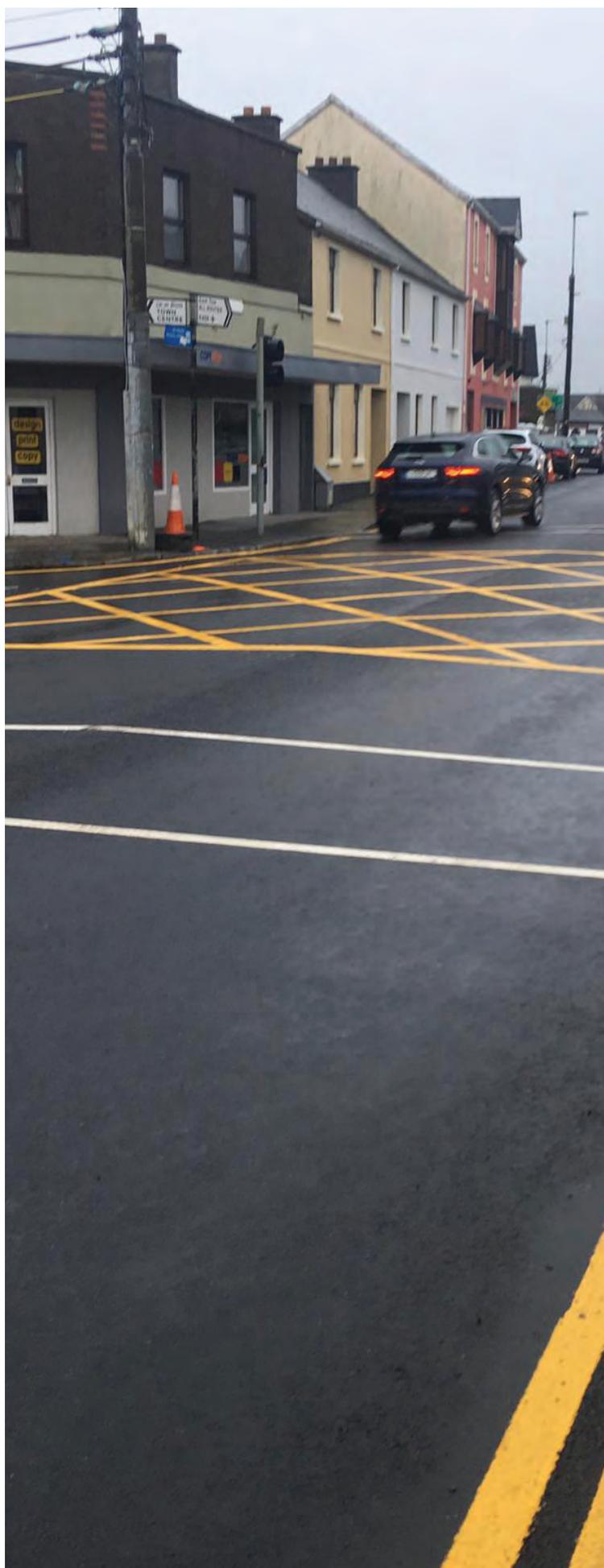
Works were completed on the rejuvenation of the limestone footpaths on Abbey Street and O'Connell Street. As two of the main thoroughfares in the town, the considerable footfall had eroded the original finish of the limestone footpath making them prone to slippery conditions when wet. Specialised vacuum shot blasting allowed normal pedestrian and business activity to carry on unimpeded by the process. The works brought the slip resistance to a specification that exceeds British standards.

Church Drive surfacing works

Surfacing of public laneways to the rear of Church Drive in Clarecastle was undertaken under the Community Involvement Scheme in May 2019

Drumcliffe Cemetery

Ennis MD resurfaced approximately 1500Msq of new footpath in Drumcliffe cemetery, completing 10 sections. The works were funded by the Rural Directorate and provides greater accessibility for all visitors to the graveyard.



Ennis Municipal District Award Achievements

Purple Flag

In 2019 Ennis successfully retained its purple flag status. The purple flag standard, launched in 2012, is an accreditation process similar to the Green Flag award for parks and the Blue Flag for beaches. It allows members of the public to quickly identify town & city centres that offer an entertaining, diverse, safe and enjoyable night out. Ennis was the first town in Ireland to have been awarded Purple Flag accreditation. The purple flag committee which consists of Ennis MD staff, Ennis Chamber, Business representatives and Elected Members welcomed the assessor's report in which Ennis achieved 'Above Standard' recognition in broad appeal, policy envelope and wellbeing.

Clarecastle Peoples Park

The Peoples Park in Clarecastle has been completed and received widespread praise. The Project was awarded €50,000 under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS). The works included the provision of a new boardwalk and outdoor teaching area, footpath upgrade to encourage and promote movement through the park, signage and bollards, CCTV, park lighting and a biodiversity area.

Clare Food and Drink Fleadh

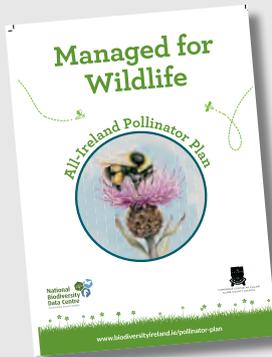
The Clare Food and Drink Fleadh, developed through "Promote Ennis", a joint Ennis Chamber and Ennis Municipal District initiative, ran its inaugural festival from the 26th - 29th September. The festival celebrated the amazing food sourced, grown and produced sustainably across the county, as well as the award-winning craft

beers and whiskeys brewed and distilled in Clare. The festival hosted over 70 events, and is deemed a huge success. It was one of only 15 new events North and South of the Island which attracted the maximum financial support (€5,000) from 'Taste the Island'. Margaret O'Brien of Ennis Chamber led the event supported by Ennis Municipal District, the businesses around Ennis and Clare and the many volunteers.



Ennis Tidy Towns

Ennis was named Ireland's Tidiest Large Urban Centre at this year's national Tidy Town's competition. The county capital was just one point behind the overall winners. Credit to all the volunteers who were supported by the staff of Ennis Municipal District and Clare County Council. Ennis was also named winner of the Regional Pollinator Award 2019.



Fire & Building Control

Fire Service Operations

Emergency Call-outs to Incidents

The Fire Service attended 1,047 call-outs in 2019 which is a slight increase of 2% on the number for 2018. There was 1 fire fatality in 2019 in County Clare. Chimney fire callouts increased slightly from a historical low of 79 in 2018 to 81 for 2019. There was also an increase in domestic fires in 2019 from 42 to 53.

Provision of Training & Exercises

The delivery of a comprehensive training programme for Fire Service Personnel was provided in 2019. The training courses provided included; breathing apparatus, chainsaw, emergency traffic management, pump perator, hazardous incidents, emergency services driving and officer training.

A Major Emergency Table-top Exercise was carried out in Shannon Airport in November.

Provision of new Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

New Wild-land Fire-fighting personal protective equipment and accessories were purchased for all personnel following a competitive tendering process.

Energy Saving

The heating and lighting in Kilrush Fire Station was replaced with a new energy saving lighting and heating.

Capital/Procurement

A new Class B Fire Appliance was ordered at a cost of €451,141.86. The Fire Appliance is due for delivery in May 2020. We received delivery of new Paratech Stabilisation Struts at a total cost of €14,507.85

Clare County Council applied to the national directorate for Fire & Emergency Management for Capital Grant Aid funding to develop a new Workshop and Spare Appliance Storage Shed at Ennis Fire Station at a total cost of €1,229,935.67. Approval has been received recently.

Fire Service Performance Indicator		2018	2019
F1	The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E expenditure data for 2016 divided by the population of the LA area per the 2016 Census figures for the population served by the fire authority as per the Risk Based Approach Phase One reports.	50.64	46.02
F2 - B	Average time taken, in minutes to mobilise Fire Brigades in Part-Time Stations in respect of Fires	5.62 min	5.50 min
F2 - D	Average time taken, in minutes to mobilise Fire Brigades in Part-Time Stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents	5.42 min	5.23 min
F3 - A	% of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	32.3%	43.36%
F3 - B	% of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	44.4%	38.02%
F3 - C	% of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	23.4%	18.61%
F3 - D	% of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	34.6%	37.27%
F3-E	% of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	48.3%	44.06%
F3 - F	% of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	17.1%	18.72%

Recruitment & Retention

Recruitment and retention of retained personnel continues to be a challenge throughout the country. In Clare in 2018, 16 personnel were taken on, and completed their initial training courses. Unfortunately 14 left the service in the same period.

Successful Open Days in Shannon in October realised a significant increase in the number of applicants for Shannon Fire Station. This may be reproduced in other stations.

Health & Safety

In April 2019, Clare County Fire & Rescue Service maintained the OHSAS 18001 Health & Safety Management System Standard for the implementation of their Safety Management System throughout the Service following a surveillance visit by the National Standards Authority of Ireland.

Fire Prevention

A total of 106 fire safety certificate applications were received in 2019, an increase of 9.3% on the 2018 figure of 97. Fire prevention officers assessed 106 Licence applications. These apply to pubs, hotels, community centres and theatres throughout the county.

Fire safety advice and guidance is provided to crowd events being run throughout the county. Fire prevention staff played a significant role in the planning of the Irish Open 2019 to ensure the event was safely run in a safe manner.

The risk based inspection programme was

continued - these include nursing homes, apartment buildings & hostels. The initial inspections had been carried out in recent years and officers are now carrying out re-inspections on some areas.

Fire safety promotions are carried out through the provision of fire safety talks to interested groups and the schools program - where fire-fighters visit local schools.

National Fire Safety Week took place from 7th - 14th October. Activities carried out during the week included the use of social media for fire safety messages and fire safety promotions at marts, where fire safety material and smoke detectors were distributed.

Fire Service Performance Indicator	2018	2019
P5-A % of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2018 that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt	65.57	61.54
P5-B % of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2018 that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant	32.79	24.60

Building Control

A total of 9.6% of buildings notified to us through commencement notice were inspected by building control staff in 2019.

There is an online submission of commencement notices into the national building control management system (BCMS). A technical desk study of every Commencement Notice is carried out and where issues are identified, a follow-up is carried out by the particular Fire Officer involved.

A total of 79 disability access certificate applications were assessed by the building control Section in 2019, an increase of 14% from 2018. Staff completed a “Construction Product Regulations” market surveillance campaign of distributors and manufacturers of wastewater treatment systems in Co. Clare to primarily check that the CE Marking has been correctly applied to the products and that all of the required documentation as required by the construction product regulations was in place.

The three Fire Officers within Building Control commenced a level 6 Certificate with LIT in ‘Near Zero Energy Buildings’ (nZEB). The course commenced in September 2019 and will be completed in August 2020.

Fire Service Performance Indicator	2018	2019
P1 Buildings Inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority	16.5%	9.6%

Major Emergency Management

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service continues to provide secretariat to the Council’s Major Emergency Management Committee. Clare County Fire & Rescue personnel also participate in

- The Mid West Regional Working Group and associated sub-committees
- Shannon Airport Major Emergency Management Site Specific Group



Ongoing training was provided to personnel who may be involved in delivery of key roles in the response to a Major Emergency to ensure Clare County Council is prepared for responding to a Major Emergency event.

An Interagency Workshop was carried out at Shannon Airport for personnel that will be involved at a senior level in the event of an emergency. Full Major Exercise "Exercise Silver Axe" took place at Shannon Airport in November.

An interagency table top exercise was carried out at Limerick Tunnel in October.

Dangerous Structures

Building control staff dealt with 16 Dangerous Structure complaints in 2019. There was a difficulty in getting builders/property owners to carry out required works due to financial constraints. This resulted in the Local Authority having to provide funds from its own resources to carry out works to remedy dangerous situations on private properties on a number of occasions, with recoupment of the funds being difficult to get afterwards.

Expectations for 2020

In relation to Fire Service operations it is planned to commence construction of the new workshop and spare appliance storage shed at Ennis Fire Station. There is a substantial annual training programme planned for Fire Service Personnel and delivery of a new Class B fire appliance is expected.

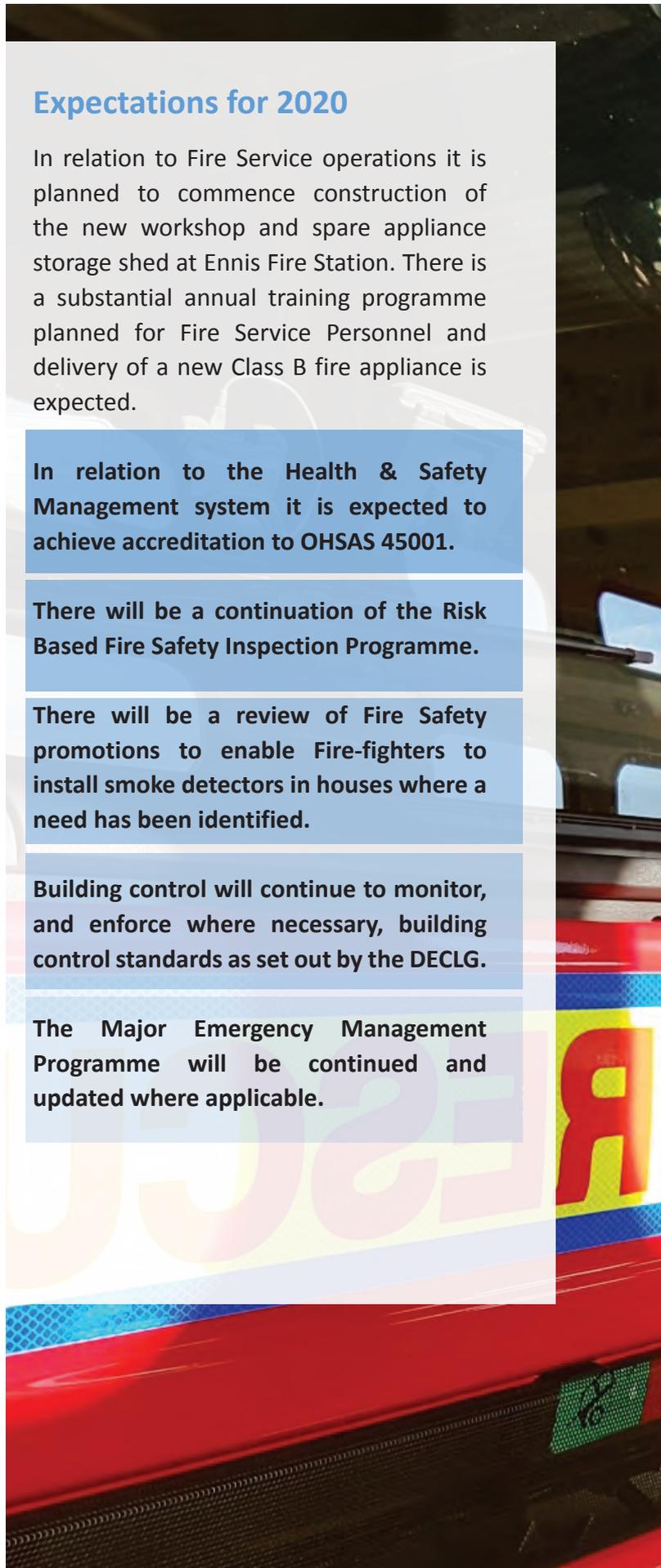
In relation to the Health & Safety Management system it is expected to achieve accreditation to OHSAS 45001.

There will be a continuation of the Risk Based Fire Safety Inspection Programme.

There will be a review of Fire Safety promotions to enable Fire-fighters to install smoke detectors in houses where a need has been identified.

Building control will continue to monitor, and enforce where necessary, building control standards as set out by the DECLG.

The Major Emergency Management Programme will be continued and updated where applicable.







SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



ANN HAUGH
Director of Social Development



The Social Directorate of Clare County Council comprises of three areas of responsibility as per the schematic hereunder:



Housing

Provider of housing solutions for people who are in need of housing and who are deemed eligible for social housing support



Sports and recreation

Provision of facilities for participation in active recreation, sport and physical activity.



Cultural services

Provision of library, Arts and Cultural services in County Clare

The overarching vision for the Social Directorate is:



To enhance the quality of life for the people of County Clare through the provision of appropriate housing supports to those in need and by enabling and fostering access for all our citizens to information, learning, arts, cultural and recreational opportunities.

2019 saw the delivery of two local authority housing developments, these are the first local authority schemes delivered in the County since 2014. 2019 also saw the Council exceeding Rebuilding Ireland targets, set by the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government, as per the table hereunder:

2019 Performance v Target:

	Target	Output
Build	100	90
Acquisition	31	36
Leasing	80	26
Sub-total	211	152
HAP	250	289
RAS	14	59
Sub-total	264	348
TOTAL	475	500

The Social Directorate, under its Housing function, centrally delivers the management and maintenance of social housing services in the County. Activity and progress in this area is reported monthly in the Management Report. To deliver on our objectives we work closely with the Elected Members and Sectoral interests on our Strategic Policy Committee (SPC), which met on five occasions in 2019, to discuss and agree a range of policies and initiatives which are or have been implemented.

Local initiatives such as the planned maintenance programme, the establishment of the Homeless Action Team (HAT) and the successful delivery and pipeline for additional social housing is positively impacting on service users living in County Clare.

Hereunder is a synopsis of some of the services and initiatives that the Housing team were involved with in 2019:

Planned Maintenance & Energy Efficiency

The maintenance, comfort and affordability of our housing stock are forefront consideration in the management of the Council's social housing stock of approximately 2,600 dwellings. In order to better manage the maintenance of our housing stock, Clare County Council commissioned a stock condition survey of all local authority owned properties. This survey information was then used to create cost reports, to profile required expenditure on the stock over the next 30 years. Our award winning planned maintenance programme is now being used as the pilot for a national planned

maintenance programme for all 30 other Local Authorities.

This Council has been to the fore in addressing fuel poverty and the comfort of local authority housing. To this end we are nearing completion of works under the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government Energy Efficiency Programme.

Homeless Action Team

Individually and collectively staff work with and for customers, many of our customers are vulnerable and/or have additional need, in particular those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. To this end Clare County Council initiated an interagency response to homeless services in the County. The Clare Homeless Action Team (HAT) office opened on 1st February, 2019. Clare's new service provides an interagency, integrated approach to homelessness. 2019 has seen a significant number of successful exits from homeless services. In addition during 2019 this Council opened our first family HUB, 'Cusack Lodge', to provide accommodation and support to homeless families. We also purchased 'Westbrooke House' to secure accommodation for homeless persons and reduce our dependency on accommodation providers in the County. These facilities provide security to those who experience homelessness.

Capital Project delivery

2019 has seen the completion of the first 'own build' local authority housing schemes since 2014. The schemes at Feakle and Clonlara comprising 22 new homes were completed and allocated in late 2019. The impact for our customers was that 22 households had new A2 rated

energy efficient homes in time for Christmas.

Furthermore we are working closely with the DHPLG to ensure a strong delivery pipeline to meet the targets set under ‘Rebuilding Ireland’.

In addition to the local authority’s own direct build activity, the Council works in collaboration with the Approved Housing Body sector to augment the number of new homes we can provide for those in need of housing in the County.



Feakle Housing Development 2019



Clonlara Housing Development Phase II 2019

Housing Assessments and Allocations

During 2019, 138 households were appointed tenants of Local Authority properties with a further 17 households appointed tenants of leased properties. In addition just shy of 50 households were nominated and allocated properties by Approved Housing Bodies. Over 200 households were housed during 2019 in the County.

Rebuilding Ireland Affordable Loan

50 ‘Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan’ applications were received in 2019 up to 31st December 2019 and 29 loan applications were granted provisional approval during this period. 41 loans were drawn down since the introduction of



the scheme in February 2018. The loan scheme offers a fixed interest rate for credit worthy low to middle income first time buyers with a view to making home ownership more affordable.

Vacant Homes Strategy

We are working in a cross directorate capacity to identify and address vacancy in towns and villages across the County. We commenced this project during 2019 with a focus on the villages of Broadford, Sixmilebridge, Tuamgreaney and Tulla. At year end we had examined 80 properties and are pursuing 22 which we have determined as vacant, with negotiations on-going, to purchase 2 with a further 4 purchases being explored (subject to available funding).

The primary difficulty with vacant homes is ascertaining ownership, however once ownership is established there are often issues such as title/legal/financial/mortgages/probate etc. which need to be addressed. The result is that significant resources are invested in pursuing individual properties with limited return.

Traveller accommodation

During 2019 this Council adopted a new Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2019 - 2024 on the 14th October 2019. This programme sets out housing targets for Traveller households. Traveller accommodation continues to present challenges with 30% of Traveller specific accommodation vacant at the end of 2019. This is despite the fact that there is rapid growth in young Traveller households. The council continues to work with relevant agencies & groups on initiatives to develop

a framework to deliver integrated support services to the traveller community.

Housing Grants

All three grant schemes were closed to new applications during 2019 to facilitate the clearing of a substantial backlog of applications on hand. During this time applications for priority 1 applicants were accepted and processed.

The backlog of applications has been addressed and in 2019 a total of 416 grants were approved and paid to disabled and elderly persons in private accommodation to facilitate the continued occupation of their houses at a cost of €3,008,463. This is broken down by grant category in the table hereunder:

Grant type	Number of approvals in 2019	Value of works €
Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability	106	1,4612,095
Housing Aid for Older People	186	900,057
Mobility Aids Grant	124	646,311
Total in 2019	416	3,008,463

The three grant schemes reopened to all in January 2020 with a new single application form for all grant types.

Sports and Recreation



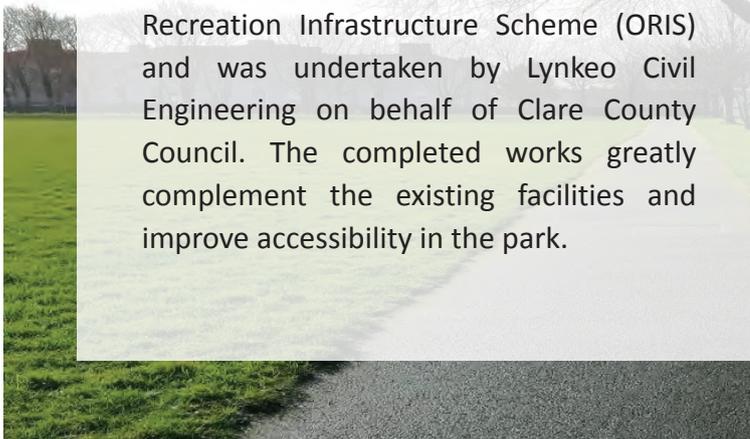
Active Ennis/Kilrush continue to improve facilities to increase participation in sport in the County. Works to the Leisure Centre continued during 2019, a great boost to this facility is the installation of Wi-Fi.

Both John O'Sullivan Park and Tim Smythe Park were awarded the 'Green Flag' in 2019. This scheme, awarded by An Taisce, is the benchmark standard for parks and green spaces which recognises and rewards the best green spaces and environmental standards.

Other projects completed in 2019 include;

Tim Smythe Park - footpath upgrade

This project saw some 250m of tarmac path laid to upgrade the existing walkways in the park. The project was funded, to the value of €18,399, from the 2019 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) and was undertaken by Lynkeo Civil Engineering on behalf of Clare County Council. The completed works greatly complement the existing facilities and improve accessibility in the park.



John O'Sullivan Park, Lee's Road, Ennis.



The entrance road to John O'Sullivan Park Lee's Road was completed early in 2019. This greatly added to the facility and enhanced the user experience.

parkrun

Takes place every Saturday morning at 11am. This event is a free & timed 5k run/walk and is suitable for runners, walkers, buggies and dogs on leads.



Tim Smythe Park - Footpath upgrade

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan

In support of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan an area near the Skateboard Park in John O’Sullivan park was planted with Pollinator friendly flowers and shrubs. Over the coming years the team will be rolling out more pollinator friendly planting within the parks in support of the plan.



ACTIVE KILRUSH - The Sports Hub

During September a new initiative was run by Clare Sports Partnership and the local sports clubs in Kilrush. Every Monday evening Clare County Council provided free usage of the Astroturf and all facilities in Active Kilrush to attract local children to “taster” sports events in Kilrush. The goal was to get more young people involved in sports and to join sports clubs in the area. This project is continuing into 2020.

Sports Capital Funding

Two projects were approved in the 2018 Sports Capital Grant namely:

- **upgrading of Cloughleigh astro turf**
- **refurbishment of Active Ennis sports facilities dressing rooms, toilets, showers**

The two projects approved for funding under the 2017 Sports Capital Grant, the construction of dressing rooms at Tim Smythe Park and Active Kilrush progressed to planning during 2019.

Erasmus + Atlantic Youth Project

The **Second Transnational Atlantic Youth Project** took place in Moulin Mer, France during the last week in May 2019. This event saw in excess of 120 pupils partake in the first European sea class at Moulin Mer Sailing Centre.

During this second transnational project, we had 25 students and their 4 teachers travel from Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon and Scariff Community College to represent Co. Clare.

They were part of a total of 109 international students and their accompanying teachers/adults who were involved during all 5 days in various aspects of maritime activities and riches.

The students were motivated to learn and support one another individually and through teamwork, to be open to new cultures and nationalities, and willing to develop new relationships. ‘a true European “Classe de mer” dedicated to inclusion’.



Library Service

The Library Service is currently running a number of programmes under the remit of “Our Public Libraries 2022” which is the national strategy for libraries adopted by each Library Service nationwide - specific programme areas cover initiatives around literacy for children **Right to Read**, health of the citizen **Healthy Ireland** and **Age Friendly Libraries**, support to enterprise and employment **Work Matters** and both the **Creative Ireland** and the **Decade of Centenaries** Programmes.

Library Statistics 2019

	Library Membership	Books issued	E-resources	Internet sessions	Wi-Fi	No of scheduled activities for public
2019	19,549	559,016	29,194	34,038	14,700	1,926 with attendance of 34,637
2018	19,702	605,949	22,045	37,000	10,500	1,751 with attendance of 30,495

The above table is a snapshot of the performance indicators in Clare County Library in 2019 which included 24,033 items added to stock.

Some of the highlights of these programmes include under “Right to Read” - locally delivered initiatives “Spring Into Storytime” in April, “Summer Stars” the annual summer reading programme for children and the “Children’s Book Festival” in October. “Family Time at Your library” was promoted during the month of December which attracted 765 visitors including children and parents for a variety of art, craft and reading related events. For “Spring into Storytime” in April each of the 15 library branches provided one special story time for young children and their parents with several branches offering regular story sessions on a weekly or monthly basis also with 755 children and parents attending. Approx., 2,180 children participated in “Summer Stars”, the summer reading programme delivered through all branches of the service.

A total of 1,879 primary school children along with their teachers attended 60 “Children’s Book Festival” events in October spread throughout the Clare library branch network.

Support continued for **Seachtain na Gaeilge** with library activities totalling 12 events for primary and secondary schools with 380 pupils attending. **World Book Day** was celebrated with author visits and writing workshops and **Science Week** events were hosted by Kilrush and Kilkee libraries in November 2019. Other family focused events which took place in

all Clare library branches and ranged in variety, included Library Welcome and Information Sessions and library tours, My Baby and Me classes for new mothers, Christmas Art and Craft workshops and Library Online Resources demonstrations. An exciting and innovative project involving Clare County Library, iBby Ireland and Poetry Ireland resulted in a unique literacy project for Syrian families at Ennistymon Library. Over the course of 7 workshops stories of Syria and Ireland were shared, written, illustrated and collated under the expert guidance of author Debbie Thomas and author and illustrator Tatyana Feeny.

Phase 2 of the 'Healthy Ireland' at 'Your Library' programme commenced building on the success of phase 1 which established the library as a valuable source within the community for health information. Both the Creative Ireland and Decade of Centenaries programmes ran at full capacity during the year. There were several highlights to our 2019 cross directorate Culture Team programme. These included an archaeological famine house excavation with Clare Museum in Ballinruan, support to the innovative Arts Office Project 'Vision Symphony', the continued success of the 'Cultural Companions' programme and the iCAN Irish Community Archive Network project which is led by the National Museum of Ireland and Clare County Council Heritage Office. The 'Cruinniú na nÓg' children's programme included over 21 free events held throughout the county. The Creative Ireland allocation for 2019 was €96,774. A funding allocation of €10,000 was provided by the Dept. of Culture for the Decade of Centenaries Programme. The highlight of this programme was our 'Decade of

Centenaries History Week' which took place in September. It included over 20 events including a History Ireland Hedge School where a panel of four historians and archivists discussed the War of Independence in Clare at a Saturday event in the Temple Gate Hotel.

Phase 1 of Library IT integration with Council IT was completed with HQ and Scariff library, both joined the Council IT system during 2019.



Arts Service

The 'Riches of Clare' concert series held 19 concerts in Ennis with a further 2 in Kilfenora and Feakle. Over 2,500 people attended the concert series. The Arts Office continued to support the development of Music Generation hubs countywide, reaching over 2,300 young people, as well as hosting their Musicale festival in Kilkee and including performances by young musicians in Cruinniú na nÓg. 16 schools participated in our 'Artist in Schools Scheme' throughout the county, engaging 13 artists across all artforms. 682 primary school students got to work with professional artists in 2019. Clare Youth Theatre continued to meet weekly in glór and a dozen members represented Ireland at the InterTwined Youth Theatre Festival in Germany. 3,500 people attended more than 50 events in 18 locations county-wide as part of Culture Night in September. 'Creative Ireland' supported an outdoor screening in Shannon as part of Culture Night, as well as the 'Vision Symphony', an Arts Council Project which saw blind musicians perform a new symphony in glór with the Irish Memory Orchestra. A further 18 arts projects took place with disability organisations countywide, engaging 14 artists. A year long theatre residency took place in the Dulick Centre and our 2018 residency in St. Anne's Special School with the artist Shona McGillivray was presented at the 2019 National Arts in Education Day as a model of good practice in integration amongst children. Boga Boga integrated dance project was also launched which saw 90 people participate, 40 of whom



were disabled. 30 exhibitions were held in Kilkee, Scariff and Ennis. The Courthouse Gallery continued to draw thousands of visitors to Ennistymon. Tulla Stables Studios operated to full capacity with a further 3 artists and 3 groups using the EASI studios in Ennis. The Arts Office commissioned artworks for the roundabouts in Ennis for the Irish Open. 61 individual artists, events and festivals were supported by our annual grants and bursary schemes and 3,500 people attended events in Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee throughout the year. A film residency with film maker John Haugh, was also established there. Our participation in the 'WRAP fund' secured filming of the motion picture 'Calm with Horses' in Kilkee in March and the confirmation of the RTE drama SMOTHER in Lahinch for 2020.

were disabled. 30 exhibitions were held in Kilkee, Scariff and Ennis. The Courthouse Gallery continued to draw thousands of visitors to Ennistymon. Tulla Stables Studios operated to full capacity with a further 3 artists and 3 groups using the EASI studios in Ennis. The Arts Office commissioned artworks for the roundabouts in Ennis for the Irish Open. 61 individual artists, events and festivals were supported by our annual grants and bursary schemes and 3,500 people attended events in Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee throughout the year. A film residency with film maker John Haugh, was also established there. Our participation in the 'WRAP fund' secured filming of the motion picture 'Calm with Horses' in Kilkee in March and the confirmation of the RTE drama SMOTHER in Lahinch for 2020.



County Museum

Clare Museum had 27,000 visitors during 2019. A total 1,057 school children from 21 schools visited the museum. The museum also worked with the LCETB, meeting with students from six of their courses including sewing, local history and literacy courses. The museum compiled a new education programme and updated its exhibition policy during the year. Stone Age and Iron Age objects were purchased for a loan

box for school teachers. A mobile activity cart was made to hold the materials for visiting children and primary school educational activities. There was also a series of monthly public talks for Independent Learners and these have been well attended. An enhancement of the excavated material from Poul nabrone, already on display, was launched in June. Objects from the storeroom related to the War of Independence in Clare have been on temporary display since May. The museum's collection, loan, disposal and education policies were all updated at a recent Strategic Policy Committee meeting.

glór

2019 was glór's 18th year in operation and has been very positive both in terms of engagement and creative production, and the plan is to accelerate even further in 2020, through artist initiatives, co-productions and new partnerships. Glór has developed a new set of strategic goals for 2020-2022 and its vision through implementation of this plan is to be a leading multi-disciplinary arts centre of excellence.

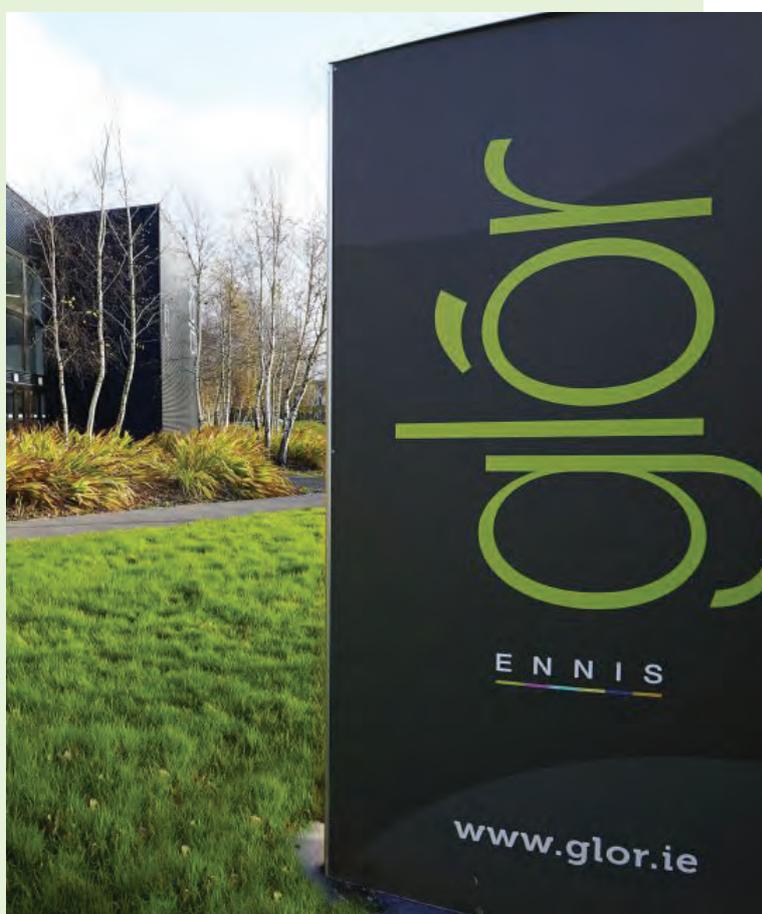
In 2019 glór welcomed over 55,000 people through its doors, and presented 490 performances, exhibitions and events.

Glór has developed an extensive artist development programme, supporting a range of artists, both emerging and established, to create work, and to sustain a living as an artist.

2019 highlights included co-productions of new work, Sweet About Me by Jacinta Sheerin (currently Associate Artist at glór), Cleft by Rough Magic, The Vision Symphony by Irish Memory Orchestra produced with Clare Arts Office, and our own production of MÓRglór honouring Mary McNamara,

and our new series of trad called Studio Sessions in the autumn.

In 2020 glór plans to work with approx. 60 community organisations and 120 artists/companies/promoters to present approximately 520 events with the aim of engaging 58,000 people.





RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



LEONARD CLEARY
Director of Rural Development



Rural Development Strategy and Forum

Throughout 2019, Rural Development has progressed a number of strategic objectives including the piloting of the Clare Local Lift project on the Loop Head peninsula, capacity building and other supports to community and voluntary groups and the opening of the 'Hub' in Ennistymon which offers hot-desking, meeting room and office space.



Local Community Development Committee

The Local Community Development Committee had another busy year of managing an extensive range of strategic programmes and activities. The highlights include: the launch of the Healthy Clare Strategic Plan 2019-2021, approval of €374,100 in Healthy Ireland funding; approval of €151,017 under the Community Enhancement Programme (CEP)/ Men's Shed Funding, a budget of €872,448 for the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP); publication of the Clare Survey undertaken by Behaviour & Attitudes; presentations on Universal Design and Homeless Services; the inclusion of new benchmarking data in the Local Economic and Community Plan in order to improve monitoring of the delivery of actions.

The Local Government Audit Service carried out an audit of the 2018 CEP and SICAP Programmes.



Public Participation Network

A service level agreement for 2019 was finalised between the PPN and Clare County Council and an annual work plan agreed for the year. The Secretariat supported by two part-time Co-ordinators and a Support Worker drives the work of the PPN.

The 2019 operational costs of the PPN were met from a Department grant of €75,700 and a contribution from Clare County Council of €35,000.

Age-Friendly Strategy

Clare County Council co-ordinates the delivery the 'Age-Friendly Strategy' for the period 2018-2022 with eight agencies leading or supporting the delivery of the various actions. In 2019 actions in the strategy were progressed including a walkability study of Ennis & Kilrush towns by older people and the establishment of a Cultural Companions Programme for social connectedness. In 2019 the Council's Chief Executive attended a ceremony on behalf of the Clare Age Friendly Programme where the World Health Organisation (WHO) acknowledged Ireland as the first Age Friendly Country in the world. County Clare is a member of the Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities that have pledged to meet the needs of their older residents.



Government Funding – National Schemes

The Department of Rural and Community Development channels a number of funding programmes through the Council. In 2019, the schemes attracted projects and funds as listed below:

- **Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2019 - €721,109 to six projects located in Bunratty, Clarecastle, Kilbaha, Ogonnelloe, Quilty and Sixmilebridge**
- **CLÁR Initiative 2019 - €217,811 to six projects located in Lissycasey, Scarrif, Ennistymon, Crusheen, Annagh and Cooraclare**
- **Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2019 - €126,721**
- **Rural Regeneration and Development Fund 2019 - €900,000 to a project in Tulla**

Tidy Towns

A briefing session for all Tidy Towns groups took place during March 2019 which included guest speakers and useful tips on how to make improvements to local areas. One to one clinics were also organised which included advice on the application process for the national Tidy Towns competition.

Ennis won Ireland's 'Tidiest Large Urban Centre' and Kilrush and Ennis received a gold medal award. Ballyvaughan, Mountshannon and Ballynacally received bronze medal awards.

Property Marking Scheme

During 2019, the Council launched the property marking scheme and organised a number of demonstration events around the County at various marts, agricultural shows and within towns and villages. These events were organised in association with An Garda Síochána and have proved of great benefit to local areas.

Pride of Place

Pride of Place is an annual all-island competition run by Co-operation Ireland. It aims to recognise and celebrate the vital contributions that communities make to society.

Clare was represented in this year's competition by: **Bunratty Local Development Association and Ennis Tidy Towns.**

Burial Grounds

The Burial Grounds Unit works with voluntary committees who assist in the maintenance of burial grounds throughout the county. The committees avail of small scale funding through the Community Supports Scheme which funds some of the costs. The ongoing commitment of these groups is invaluable.

The Council finalised the design and planning for the extension of the burial ground at Illaunamanagh, Shannon and has commenced the planning for a new county burial ground on the Kildysart Road, Ennis.

Community Support Scheme

Funding of €416,483 was approved under the Council's Community Supports Scheme in March 2019. The allocations to community and voluntary groups supported a broad range of projects including public realm, social inclusion, participation in sport, community wifi, the arts, Irish language and sustainable tourism.

Inaugural Clare Community Awards 2019

Clare County Council held its inaugural Clare Community Awards on 7th March 2019 in Hotel Woodstock in Ennis. The awards ceremony was hosted by Clare County Council to celebrate the valuable contribution made by community groups and volunteers to their local area from right across County Clare. The awards honoured those people who give freely of their time to give something back to their local community, and in doing so deliver a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits for those areas.

Carrigaholt volunteer, Mags Keane and Clarecastle were named 'Volunteer of the Year' and 'Community of the Year' respectively at the inaugural Clare Community Awards ceremony. Other winners on the night included Shannonside Winterage Music Festival, Sixmilebridge (Best Festival/Event), Kilrush Tidy Towns (Community Environmental Award), Laghtagoona, Corofin (Best Kept Private Residential Area), Pairc na Coille Residents Association, Ennis (Best Kept Public Residential Area), Lisdoonvarna, Doolin, Kilfenora & Kilshanny Community Games

(Community Enhancement Award) and Clare Youth Action (Community Innovation Award).

The awards ceremony was attended by more than 200 community representatives, Elected Members and representatives of Clare County Council. The ceremony was presented by television and radio personality Marty Morrissey.

Clare Comhairle Na nÓg

Clare Comhairle Na nÓg is a Department of Children and Youth Affairs initiative which aims to provide an opportunity for young people in the 12-18 age range to identify the issues that are important to them, discuss some of the changes they would like to see and bring forward ideas and suggestions for bringing about change. The Council contracts the Programme to Clare Youth Service who co-ordinates a number of initiatives with the student members.



Representatives from Clare County Council, Minister of State Pat Breen, award winners and MC Marty Morrissey pictured at the inaugural Clare Community Awards 2019.

Joint Policing Committee

The overall aim of the Clare Joint Policing Committee (JPC) is to facilitate consultations, discussions and recommendations in relation to the policing of County Clare. JPC members comprise of Elected Members, Oireachtas Members, Community and Voluntary representatives, An Garda Síochána, and Local Authority Officials. Four meetings were held in 2019. Following the local elections in May 2019 a new JPC was formed and they held their first meeting in July 2019. New community representatives were nominated and attended their first meeting in October 2019 which was held at the Burren College of Art, Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare.

An Garda Síochána provided updated policing statistics at each JPC meeting. A number of issues were addressed in response to the statistics provided as well as matters in relation to drugs, breathalysers, Garda presence on the streets, anti-social behaviour, youth projects, Garda schools programmes, illegal encampments, traffic management, road safety, and domestic violence. In February, members of the JPC attended the Clare Garda Youth Awards which recognised the achievement of young people in County Clare, individually or as part of the community. In April, a presentation was given on the blueprint for safety which provides justice system agencies with the tools and templates to systematically identify and close gaps in interagency processing of domestic abuse crimes. In October, the JPC welcomed a presentation from the Irish Farmers Association on rural crime and its effect on people. It looked at initiatives that the community can use to help each other, by taking precautions and working alongside the Gardai, to protect themselves and their property.





Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience

1.6m visitors were welcomed to the Cliffs of Moher in 2019, visitor numbers were up 1.55%. Fully Independent Travellers (FIT) make up 56% of all arrivals with the remainder 44% group tour business. The Cliffs of Moher in 2019 accepted three prestigious awards, Irish Independent Reader Travel Award for Ireland's Favourite Visitor Attraction, CIE International Service Excellence Award and ITIC – Best Visitor Attraction on the Wild Atlantic Way over 50,000 visitors. The following initiatives supported by the Cliffs of Moher Board were delivered over the course of the year.

- The Cliffs of Moher Shuttle Bus was launched in June, a fantastic service for visitors to the North Clare towns and villages of Ennistymon, Lahinch, Liscannor, Doolin and Lisdoonvarna to and from the Cliffs of Moher. The service ran for June, July and August transporting staff and visitors.
- The fully refurbished O'Brien's Tower reopened in June with a fantastic experiential guided tour product telling the history of the Cliffs of Moher since the 1800's.
- The Reid family who own 'Brambles' took over the Cliffs View Café in May with a focus on home cooked food, baking and for the first-time barista coffee is available.
- The dynamic pricing model coupled

with online booking and extended opening hours is delivering success with 15% of all visitors redistributed into the off peak times of the day before 11am and after 4pm, improving the levels of comfort for visitors and spreading traffic more evenly over the course of the day.

- Local open days were held in December with 300 Co. Clare residents visiting to enjoy the festive atmosphere with discounts available in the cafes and Gift Shop.
- Cliffs of Moher staff are taking part in the Junior Achievement Program in the local north Clare primary schools educating children from the local area about the Cliffs of Moher.

The Cliffs of Moher is at a pivotal point in its development, a multi-disciplinary team of consultants has been appointed to undertake a piece of work called Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 for the iconic site. The Failte Ireland supported strategy will inform future development plans for the site, will be guided by a steering committee and is expected to be delivered early 2021. Shorter term plans for 2020 include a full toilet refresh of all the toilets in the visitor centre, opening of an additional grab and go area, introduction of a new fully electric mobility vehicle for visitors and an enhanced calendar of events.

Tourism

Launch of the Shannon Estuary Way

The Shannon Estuary Way is a looped drive of c.297km (135 miles) that circumnavigates the Shannon Estuary. Along the route, there are eleven new viewing points featuring stories and imagery from local communities under the concept of ‘big skies and sheltered waters’. The viewing points are located at: Knock Pier; Labasheeda Quay; Killadysert Pier; Crovraghan Pier; Clarecastle Pier; Tullyglass Point; Ringmoylan Pier; Ballysteen Pier; Boland’s Meadow; Killeery Pier; Glin Pier.

Clare County Council and Failte Ireland worked in partnership to design and install new signage along the route to ensure visitors can follow the route in either clockwise or anticlockwise direction. This signage project was completed in March 2019 when the Shannon Estuary Way was officially launched.



L-R: Philomena O'Connell (Clare County Council), Minister O'Donovan, Siobhan King (Failte Ireland); and John O'Malley (Clare County Council).

Tourism Networking Event

A networking event was held on 28 February 2019 in the Inn at Dromoland. There was a great turnout at the event with participation of over 100 tourism trade partners.

The Burren Discovery Trail

A second looped drive of the Wild Atlantic Way, designed to disperse visitors across the Burren was initiated by Failte Ireland, Clare County Council and Galway County Council. Consultations, survey work and design of interpretative panels progressed during 2019 with Part VIII Planning granted to proceed for the Clare interpretive points in December 2019. Locations in Clare include, Lough Bunny; Corofin; Kilneaboy; Kilfenora; Ennistymon; Lisdoonvarna; Gregan’s Wood and Corkscrew Hill.

Dubai Duty Free Irish Open (DDFIO) 3-7 July 2019

Lahinch in County Clare played host to the prestigious Dubai Duty Free Irish Open from 3-7 July 2019.

The objectives were:

1. To host the DDF Irish Open and to showcase Lahinch, County Clare and indeed Ireland as a vibrant tourism destination on the world-stage.
2. To engage and encourage communities and businesses surrounding Lahinch in the planning, preparation and delivery of a “Festival atmosphere” like no other.
3. To leverage community benefits that would provide a legacy long after the event.

DDFIO Marketing Campaign

The marketing campaign involved many different elements with the promotional video footage of County Clare taking centre stage. Clare County Council, following consultation with the European Tour Productions, commissioned a series of videos showcasing County Clare as a visitor destination. These vignettes were broadcast on Sky Sports and other broadcasters across Europe and the USA including the Golf Channel to an audience of more than 550m homes.

Destination pieces were covered at the top of each broadcast to showcase County Clare and Ireland, using imagery and scripts provided by Clare County Council. Both brands - the 'Wild Atlantic Way' and 'Ireland's Hidden Heartlands' were strongly featured in the broadcasts. Lahinch Golf Club with the reputation as one of the premier events on circuit this side of the Atlantic also featured in broadcasts.

The event was developed to broaden the appeal to families with the 'Lahinch Family Fest 2019' involving music and street entertainment; the Burren Rocks Tour appealed to those interested in the geology; and the Best Dressed Windows Competition was widely promoted to engage with businesses and communities. All were widely promoted through social media channels Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Revalidation of the Geopark as a member of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network 2019-2023

This took place in July following a detailed evaluation with UNESCO evaluators. The revalidation process was very successful and will continue for a period of four years.



Representatives from Clare County Council and Burren Ecotourism Network members meeting with the UNESCO evaluators during the 2019 accreditation process.

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark

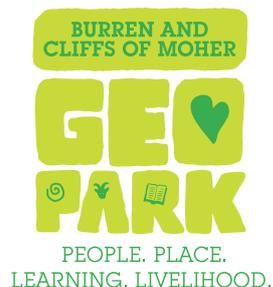
We continued to develop the Geopark as a sustainable tourism destination and implemented a work programme which supports locally based tourism enterprises through the Burren Ecotourism Network.

The Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism is central to this work in the development of sustainable tourism programmes, in conservation projects with local communities, and in cultural sites and trail management and monitoring. The Code of Practice which is the only one of its kind in Ireland has provided a standard that monitors waste output along with water and energy usage and assists businesses in becoming increasingly more efficient. 45 businesses in the Geopark completed the Code of Practice in 2019.

As a member of the Global Geoparks Network, the Geopark participated in European Geopark meetings and the Irish

Geoparks Forum which work closely with the Geological Survey of Ireland to promote geological education and tourism in Ireland and abroad. The Geopark Work Programme is part-funded by the Geological Survey of Ireland. The Geopark is also a partner on a European Interreg Atlantic Area Partnership Programme which will see the development of a tourism route of Geoparks along the Atlantic.

Initiatives undertaken during the year included the geology evening course “Stone, Water & Ice” now in its 10th year, the International Geology Summer Field School in June and the Global Ecology Course which were run in partnership with the Burren outdoor education centre, Caherconnel Fort and Burren College of Art respectively. A new Fossil Discovery in Doolin dating from 350 million years ago attracted considerable national and international headlines.



During 2019, the Burren Geopark team hosted international delegations including a group from Saimaa Geopark, Finland.

Strategic Plan for Clare County Council Tourism Department

During 2019, Clare County Council in a funding partnership with Shannon Heritage undertook the development of an evidence based, forward looking, innovative tourism strategy which will set the direction for tourism product development, marketing / promotion and public and private investment over the next ten years. There were in excess of ten public consultation workshops held throughout the County, all submissions were recorded in order to formulate the final document.

In late 2019, Clare County Council appointed an Acting Head of Tourism following the Council's commitment to provide a dedicated Tourism Department within the Rural Development Directorate.

Broadband, Digital and Information Technology Department

Clare County Council's broadband, digital and information technology department is responsible for the provision of information communications technology services to all employees of Clare County Council. The Council's network now covers 15 different locations throughout the County supporting approx 600 users.

These sites include the Municipal District offices in Shannon, Killaloe, Kilrush and Ennistymon where access to all Council information and services is available. Access to services such as motor tax, account enquiry, payment and online planning enquiries are facilitated in these locations. In 2019 a number of system upgrades were carried out to ensure the integrity of Clare Co Council systems and to ensure information is protected at all times. This included infrastructure upgrades and also the installation of our firewall solution.

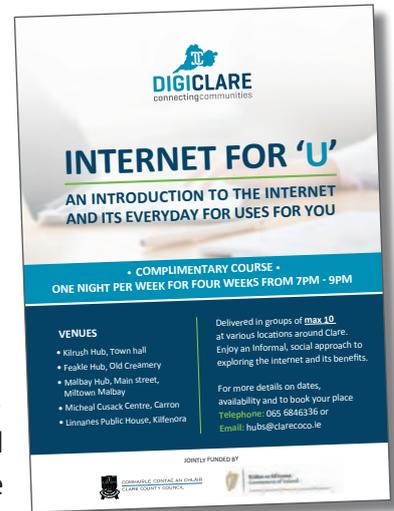
Also the ability to work remotely was introduced to members of staff within the organisation in 2019. This provides them with a more effective and efficient method of working and communicating with access to information and Council systems being readily available.

Clare Digital Strategy

The Clare Digital Strategy which was adopted in 2018 provided a vision and associated roadmap for supporting the digital economy in the county over the next 5 years. In this regard the Digital and Broadband Dept has been active in a number of areas ensuring that these objectives are met.

Digital Innovation Programme

An application for funding was successful under this initiative entitled 'The Internet for 'U'' project its aim was to provide a programme of Digital familiarisation targeting various sectors of our communities through the provision of customised classes and workshops. Delivered in our Digital Hubs in partnership with small local providers the initial phases of this programme involved members of our farming community and also members of our age friendly community. This programme proved highly successful and popular and it will be continued for the foreseeable future.



Ennistymon Multi-service Innovation Centre

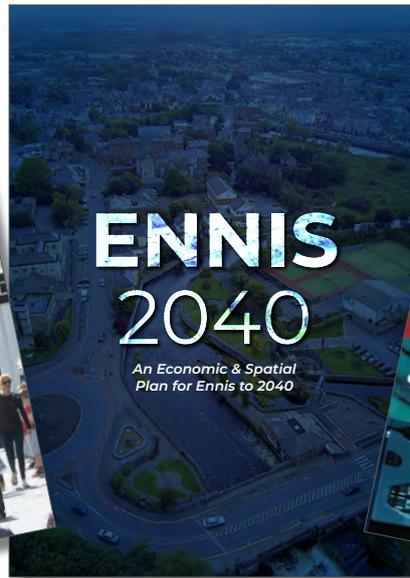
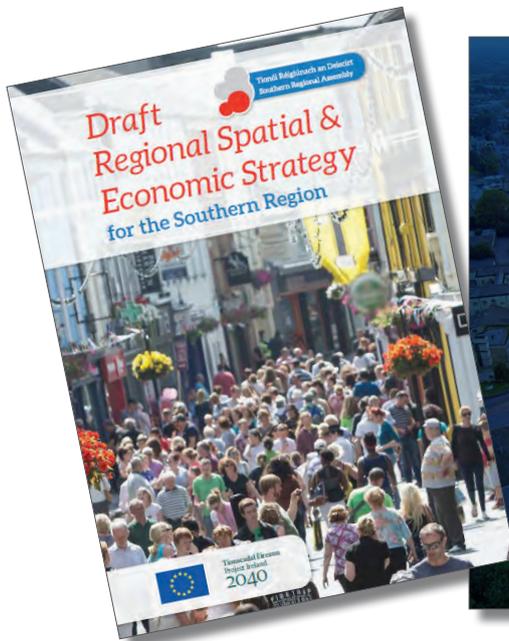
In 2019 funding was secured for the development of a Multi - Service Innovation Centre in Ennistymon under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund. This centre accommodates and supports private enterprise and individuals through the provision of hotdesks, office space, incubation units, meeting rooms and training facilities. These facilities are available to local residents and community groups, E-Workers and commuters and visitors who need office space and internet connectivity. Full details of these services and facilities are available on www.digiclare.ie.

Public and social services are also delivered as part of this project in partnership with the North West Clare Family Resource Centre. This organisation provides a range of services and development opportunities that address the needs of individuals, groups, families and community groups in the region.

The Centre was officially opened in December 2019 by Minister Michael Ring, and has proved to be popular and successful.







ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE



LIAM CONNEALLY
Director of Economic Development



Economic Development

2019 was another busy year for the Council's Economic Development Directorate. Increased activity in the planning and development area would indicate a strong growing economy in the County. Jobs growth in the County continued to increase as highlighted by LEO's performance. The presence of JLR and ELS in Shannon are considerable additions to Clare's economy. A part of a multi-agency response the Council's assistance was also provided to Molex, Roche and Avara to prepare a skills matrix and training of the workforces seeking new job opportunities. Throughout 2019 the Council continued to work closely with the ESB in relation to the future of the Moneypoint Power plant.

In March, Variation No. 1 of the Clare County Development Plan was adopted by the elected members which will facilitate the development of the Ennis Data Centre Campus at Junction 13 (Tulla Road) on the M18. A planning application for the Data Centre Campus development is expected to be submitted in 2020.

During the year L.I.T established a permanent third level Campus in Ennis town.

In December 2019 the Southern Assembly adopted the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) which includes important policy platforms for the delivery of the Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR), the South Clare/UL SDZ and the Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Strategy.

The tender process for spatial and economic consultants to prepare the Shannon Town Centre Strategy was commenced in 2019.

Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)

Three meetings were held during 2019 and following the local elections in May 2019, the Council's Committee was reconstituted. The Committee comprises 7 elected members of Clare County Council and 6 sectoral representatives and is supported by the Director of Service. The first meeting of the new Economic Development SPC was held in December 2019 and the SPC members were briefed on the role of the Directorate, the key issues for the SPC in the coming five years and the projects currently underway including the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. Climate Change and Biodiversity will be standing agenda items for the new SPC during the length of its tenure.

Third Level Education- Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT)

Following a strong collaboration on the property solution, the Ennis Campus of LIT was officially opened in Bindon Street, Ennis on the 16th December 2019 by Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Pat Breen. An investment of approximately €1 million was made by the Council on the vacant building in the town's historic centre to bring it to the standard required for a modern education campus. This shows the commitment of LIT to Ennis and allows them to provide an expanded level of daytime undergraduate education through the CAO, as well as opening up the possibility of new evening courses and professional education. The new facility adds to the educational options available to people locally, while at the same time responding to the needs of business and industry in Clare.



The new LIT Campus in Ennis came about as a result of a strong working relationship between Clare County Council and LIT and demonstrates the foresight of the Council in prioritising the presence of a Third Level Institution in Ennis as a key objective. This will sustain population growth and new employment opportunities for the County. A total of eight degree programmes are now available through the CAO at LIT Ennis Campus- www.lit.ie.

South Clare Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ)

In April 2018, the Elected Members committed to the preparation of a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) application for University of Limerick's (UL)/South Clare campus. The SDZ application will transform a 325 acre greenfield site beside UL's existing 125 acre Campus in County Clare into an education/employment/residential University zone. In the process, it is anticipated that at least 3,500 jobs will be created and simultaneously UL will seek the EU designation of Europe's first University Town.

The Council has met with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government officials who have requested that additional work i.e. preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Economic Appraisal be undertaken which will accompany the SDZ application

to Government. Also during this time the Council and UL have been in discussions to set up a designated activity company to make the SDZ application. It is anticipated the full SDZ application will be lodged with Government by mid 2020.

Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Plan

Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy is an initiative of Clare County Council to prepare an Economic Development, Spatial and Marketing Strategy for Ennis Town and Environs Area to 2040 and beyond. Clare County Council continued to work with their consultants Avison Young in 2019 and while the project has been somewhat delayed by the requirement to prepare an SEA and AA Screening of the project as well as a flood risk assessment this work is necessary for the Ennis 2040 implementation phase and would have to be completed at County Development Plan review stage. It is anticipated the Strategy will be completed in 2020, and that its implementation will promote and guide the development of Ennis in the coming 20 years and more immediately will inform the preparation of the Clare County Development Plan review.



Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary (SIFP)

The Bird Usage Survey for the River Shannon and Fergus Estuary SPA was completed by McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan in 2019 and is the most comprehensive waterbird survey of the River Shannon and Fergus Estuaries

that has ever been undertaken, with year-round coverage of approximately 85% of the SPA. A total of 70 waterbird species were recorded across the survey. More than 20,000 waterbirds occurred in all the months across the traditional winter counting period (September-March) with the numbers peaking at nearly 44,000 in December. During the survey, internationally important numbers of two Special Conservation Interest species, Whooper Swan and Black-tailed Godwit were recorded. However, there are striking apparent declines in numbers of Light-bellied Brent Goose, Shelduck, Pintail, Scaup, Lapwing, Bar-tailed Godwit, Knot, Dunlin.

Our Ocean Wealth Summit 2019, SeaFest

Attendance at the Our Ocean Wealth Summit, part of SeaFest held in Cork in June 2019 provided the opportunity to further promote the zoned Marine Related Industry sites along the northern shore of the Shannon Estuary in County Clare. Significant interest and input to the proposed development of the Clare Maritime Economic Zone at Cahercon was given at the event. Discussions took place with a number of statutory and non statutory bodies in order to gain their expertise and input into the overall aspiration and planning of the project. A number of connections were made with key players in the maritime sphere at the “Irish Maritime Industry Showcase” which will be utilised to further progress the project in the coming months.

Cahercon Marine Centre of Excellence

Clare County Council led the development of the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary. The SIFP identified a number of strategic sites in the Shannon Estuary, including Cahercon, and the site was zoned for marine related development in the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023. The Development Plan and the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy identified a number of sites suitable for off-shore wave energy renewable technologies.

In 2017 the Planning Department with the assistance of Enterprise Ireland undertook a feasibility study on maximising the development potential of the Cahercon marine related site. The feasibility study identified a number of potential developments in Cahercon. The vision for the Cahercon facility in the document is to create;

- A specialist commercial training facility providing maritime training courses and value-added training for non-seafaring personnel taking up positions at sea,
- A facility to include field research labs, marine equipment, and marine transport for a large national and international third-level field research marketplace,
- A field testing base for marine renewable device developers for secure R&D and to build on the planned activities of a current developer on site.

In 2018, Enterprise Ireland awarded the sum of €1.7 million for the purchase of specialist training equipment, personnel and office/lab kit out for a multipurpose facility that will assist to deliver international cruise training, house an international field research centre and marine renewable testing and training location. In 2019, a business case for the proposed development was commenced along with the preparation of a partnership agreement with potential partners for its delivery.



Photograph at announcement by EI of funding for Cahercon Marine Centre of Excellence

Cahercon House

A feasibility study was undertaken of the heritage resource, value and potential of Cahercon House, Estate and adjoining maritime landscape to fully understand the heritage context of Cahercon House and environs and to inform future development, to add value to the public amenity, enjoyment and viable heritage based attractions at the site and contribute to tourism potential of the Shannon Estuary Way. The study was comprehensive and presented many ideas with potential for development and has explored the heritage and historical context of Cahiracon House and will inform the development possibilities.

A Heritage Week event took place in Kildysart Community Centre in August 2019 which looked at the history and heritage of the house and grounds and their relationship with the surrounding communities on the Shannon Estuary. Over 100 people attended on the night.



Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC)

The AEC is the term applied to a non-administrative or “linear” region along the Western seaboard, stretching from Kerry to Donegal, and includes County Clare. The aim is to build and increase collaboration within the AEC that maximises its assets, attracts investment and creates jobs and prosperity in the region. A key objective of the AEC is to drive significant regional development, complementing and balancing Ireland’s East Coast.

During 2019, the Clare County Council completed an audit of enterprise space in Ennis and Shannon. We have also provided relevant information to businesses who are seeking space and property solutions in order to attract new business to the County.

Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)

While no specific funding call was made under this scheme in 2019, arrangements were made to procure Economic and Spatial

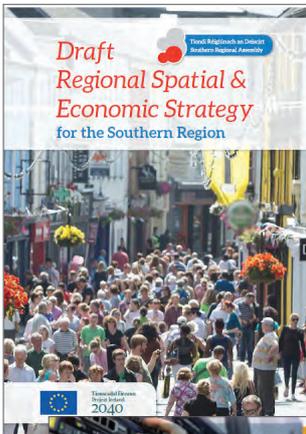
consultancy partnership in order to prepare a Shannon Town Masterplan. The Consultants will be appointed in early 2020. A further call for applications under this scheme, which is focused on the towns of Ennis and Shannon will be made by Government in January 2020.

Planning

Forward Planning

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Southern Regional Assembly engaged with Local Authorities in 2019 to draft and finalise the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region for the period 2019-2031 which was adopted in November 2019. The RSES provides a long-term regional level strategic planning and economic framework, in support of the implementation of the National Planning Framework, for the future physical, economic and social developments for the Southern Region. The strategy is available on: <http://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/regional-spatial-and-economic-strategy>.

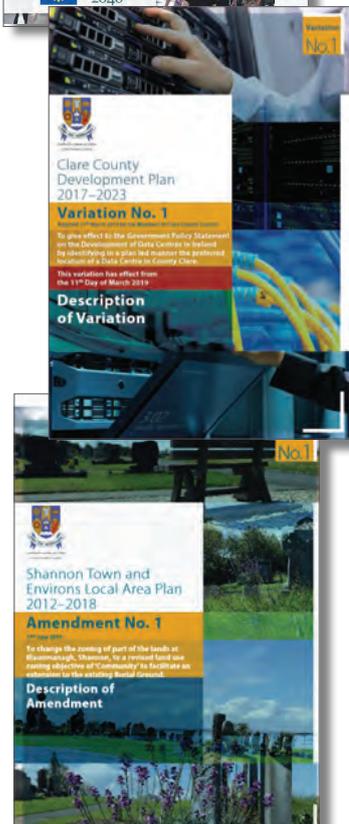


Variation No 1 to the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023

The variation No. 1 to the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 was adopted by the Elected Members on 11th March 2019. The reason for the variation was to give effect to the Government Policy Statement on the development of Data Centres in Ireland by identifying, in a plan-led manner, the preferred location of a Data Centre in County Clare. Environmental consultants completed a Strategic Environmental Assessment, a Natura Impact Report and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the subject lands of the proposed Development Plan variation.

Amendment No 1 to the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018

Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 was amended by the Elected Members on 17th June 2019 to facilitate a change in land use zoning on lands identified for a graveyard extension at Illauamanagh Graveyard. The Amendment included an Appropriate Assessment - Natura Impact Report and a Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environmental Report.



Shannon Town Park

Clare County Council officially opened Shannon Town Park, Bóthar Linne, Shannon in November 2019. The €1.5m project was part funded under the Sustainable Urban Development Priority of the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014 - 2020, European Regional Development Fund, Southern Regional Assembly and Clare County Council Development Contribution Scheme 2017 - 2023. The main aim of the park is to contribute to the recreational amenities of Shannon Town and the revitalisation, regeneration and improvement of the urban environment in the designated urban centre of Shannon as part of an integrated urban design strategy.



Proposed Visitor Signage Plan for Kilrush Town and Cappagh Village

A Visitor Signage Plan for Kilrush Town and Cappagh Village was commissioned by Clare County Council. The Plan was developed by Helena McElmeel Architects in close collaboration with the Planning Department of the Council. The design of the signage stems from a strong emphasis on reflecting the natural and built heritage form of Kilrush, Cappagh and their surrounds. The Irish Round Tower, Scattery Island provided the inspiration for the cohesive void between the informative element and the materiality element with the proposed landscape elements reminiscent of the maritime coastal landscape familiar to Kilrush.



Proposed Signage

Ennis Town Centre Health Check

A Retail Town Centre Survey was undertaken for Ennis in 2019 and is available from the Planning Department.

Vacant Sites Register

A progress report on the implementation of the Vacant Site Levy legislation was submitted to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in December 2019.

During the year, the Planning Department

carried out an assessment of lands across the County where the levy may apply in accordance with the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended 2018). Notices under the Act were sent to the owners of 15 sites in Quarter 4 2019 in order to advise the land owners of the process and to advise that submissions in respect of the proposed entry could be made in writing to the Planning Authority within a specified time frame and to advise of the appeals process to An Bord Pleanála.

Currently, there are a number of appeals with An Bord Pleanála in relation to sites that have been included on the Council's Vacant Site Register and the Planning Authority has made observations on the appeals and awaits the final decision of An Bord Pleanála.

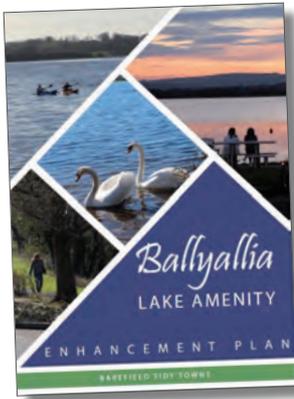
Architectural Conservation

During 2019, fifteen Section 57 declarations were issued relating to works on protected structures. Support was given to the public, elected members, tidy towns and community groups on various conservation issues.

Funding for protected structures and buildings in ACAs was provided in 2019 by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht through the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Historic Structures Fund (HSF). In total, grants totalling €60K were provided to assist works on 8 projects under the BHIS and €15,000 of grant aid was provided under the HSF in respect of works undertaken at Ross House, Killaloe.

Public Realm Enhancement Plan for Ballyallia

Barefield Tidy Towns secured LEADER funding and engaged The Paul Hogart Company to complete a public realm enhancement plan for the Ballyallia Lake area of Ennis. The Planning Department acted as an advisor to the local community group and liaised on their behalf with the appointed consultants, over a 2 year period with the plan being completed in 2019.



The objectives of the plan were to:

- Inform future improvement works in the area
- Form the basis of planning and funding applications
- Identify opportunities for enhanced public usage
- Ensure that amenities are safe and attractive
- Create linkages with the wider green infrastructure network.



Pilot Project on 6 Village Studies

Following the 2018 briefings to the Elected Members of the respective Municipal Districts in 2018, initial public consultations were held in relation to the carrying out of village studies in the villages of Broadford, Whitegate, Flagmount, Cooraclare, Mullagh and Carrigaholt and the feedback was incorporated into the preparation of the village studies.

In late 2018, the Planning Department presented the main findings and recommendations of the Village Studies to the local communities, including exploring opportunities for growth and regeneration, along with recommendations, information and guidance for the local communities. The feedback from the communities has been collated and the village studies were finalised in 2019.



The Turret Lodge, Kilrush

Clare County Council and Kilrush and District Historical Society were successful in securing funding for a heritage-led regeneration project in Kilrush, under the Historic Towns Initiative 2019. This is a joint undertaking by the Department Of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Heritage Council which aims to promote the heritage-led regeneration of Ireland's historic towns.

The sum of €190,000 was allocated for the conservation of the Turret Lodge and the conversion of the gate lodge, to a small genealogy and exhibition space. An additional €50,000 is being provided by Clare County Council towards the project.

The Turret Lodge, which dates back to 1845, is a notable landmark on the south bank of the river at the rear of the Churchyard, controlling access between the town and the Vandeleur demesne. The concept for

this project originated from the Kilrush and District Historical Society.

Generally the scope of works included roof repair works, removal of external cement render, repairing, repointing and re rendering with a lime based render on the ground and first floor, removal of vegetation growth on the walls, repairs to the masonry on the archway and crenellations, repairs to the external shed, surround walls and steps, repairs to the floor and ceilings with the installation of new windows and doors.

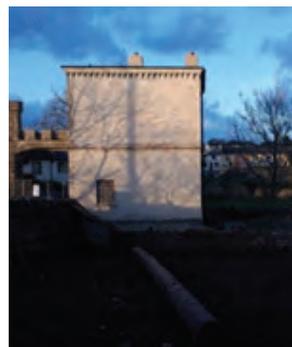
The project team worked closely with Kilrush and District Historical Society on this project that will further enhance the town as a visitor location. Kilrush is one of Ireland's best examples of a heritage town and restoring this building will add to the heritage value of Clare's overall tourism product. The project is due for completion in early 2020.



Before and after images of internal remedial work



Before and after images of external remedial work



Heritage

Heritage Week

Heritage Week took place from 17th to 25th August 2019 and was the 17th annual celebration of County Clare's built, natural and cultural heritage coordinated locally by the Planning Department and the Heritage Council, with support from Fáilte Ireland and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

National Heritage Awards 2018

Kilrush and District Historical Society accepted a "Le Chéile san Eoraip Award" at the National Heritage Awards 2018 ceremony in Dublin on 6th February 2019. 'An Exhibition of Kilrush Ceramics' celebrated the once nearly forgotten ceramics industry in a small West Clare town, and its European connections and was one of the Clare events during National Heritage Week 2018. From 1961 to 1983, Kilrush Ceramics, owned by Ueblacker (later Rosenthal), employed over 100 people. The exhibition showcased a selection of its colourful and quirky products made at the factory and explored its history in an Irish and European context.

New National Heritage Plan

As a response to Heritage Ireland 2030 seeking to recognise the vital role heritage plays in our community, our economy and our society, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht sought public submissions on a new Heritage Plan which will help shape the priorities for Ireland's heritage for the next 10 years. The Planning Department made a submission to the plan.

National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage

A joint expression of interest application has been submitted to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage recognition for Spencilhill International Horse Fair.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity Resource Manual for all Local Authority Staff

A bespoke Biodiversity Resource Manual is currently under development for local authority staff and Elected Members. This will be innovative in its approach and capable of being updated over time. The project and manual, which is the first of its kind in Ireland, can be replicated by other local authorities across the country. This initiative is part-funded by the National Parks and Wildlife Service under the National Biodiversity Action Plan Grant (NBAP) 2019-2021.

Community Biodiversity Plans

The Heritage Officer supported the biodiversity training for communities rolled out by the Clare Local Development Company (CLDC), who commissioned Burrenbeo to provide the training to 16 communities at 4 separate locations throughout County Clare. This work culminated in "Working together for nature - An exhibition of community biodiversity plans" where 15 local community biodiversity action plans were launched. Biodiversity training continues with interested communities, individuals and farmers.

Certificates of Achievement to Transition Year Students

Certificates of Achievement were presented to 36 transition year students at St. Anne's School, Killaloe in May 2019 for their biodiversity project as part of the Tobermurragh/Banes Field school programme in Killaloe. This education initiative was part of the Tobermurragh/Banes Field Ecological Study and Invasive Species Eradication programme undertaken in 2018.

Burren in Bloom 7th to 9th June 2019

The 2019 'Burren in Bloom' festival had a focus on pollinators. Clare County Council hosted an event as part of the Burren in Bloom festival 2019 confirming the Council's commitment to the Pollinator Plan for Councils. Una Fitzpatrick from the National Biodiversity Record Centre gave a talk to the Council on pollinators in June and this was followed by a walk to the Fair Green (Tim Smythe's Park) for more practical advice on Pollinator friendly planting. Staff, Ennis Tidy Towns, teachers from Colaiste Muire School and members of the public attended on the day and a good number of bumble bees were identified at Tim Smythe's Park.

All Ireland Pollinator Plan

A presentation was made to Clare County Council Management Team on the 'All Ireland Pollinator Plan'. A preliminary evaluation of the current practices and intended improvements required under the Pollinator Plan for local authorities illustrates that Clare County Council is very committed to playing its part, leading by example and providing support for action by communities.

Reading Your Local Landscape Training

In 2019 'Reading Your Local Landscape' training took place in Kilrush and Killaloe. Reading the Local Landscape training is now gone from a 12 to a 20 week practical course. The central aim of the course is to empower local community members to discover, recognise, promote and conserve their unique local heritage resources. Reading Your Local Landscape Training is funded by the Creative Ireland programme and is a collaboration between Clare County Council and Limerick Clare Education Board and is in line with the Clare Creative Ireland Strategy to enable creativity in the community.



A Showcase from Reading Your Local Landscape Programme was held at the Further Education and Training Centre, Kilrush Campus, 5th June 2019, while the showcase for Killaloe is planned for early 2020. Participants of the course were awarded their certificates of achievement and gave a presentation of their projects, celebrated their achievements and spoke about the learning from this unique course on the night. Forty eight students have completed the 'Reading Your Local Landscape' training over the past two years.

Clare Community Heritage Archive Website iCAN

Clare iCAN inaugural meeting was held on 22nd May 2019 with five community groups where the pilot Clare Community Heritage Archive and Website Network met as a group. The communities involved - Clarecastle, Kilkee, Scattery Island Heritage Group and Shannon are working in the background to consolidate the heritage information provided and prepare for a full public launch of the Clare Community Heritage Archive Website iCAN in March 2020.

Errina Canal

An appraisal of the heritage (built, cultural and natural) landscape of the Errina Canal was undertaken which compiled heritage information and data to show the heritage significance of the canal. The project has assessed the general condition of the Errina-Plassey section of the former Limerick- Killaloe navigation. This study was allocated funding from The Heritage Council in 2019.

A built heritage baseline inventory and preliminary visual condition survey has been prepared for the Limerick Navigation Errina-Plassey Canal; River Shannon - Drummeen to Parteen Weir; Upstream of Parteen. The primary purpose of the report is to provide the historical context for the study area, identify sites and features of built heritage interest within the extent of the waterway lands and describe the nature of identified built heritage assets.

Development Management - Planning applications

The number of planning applications received in 2019 was 1,018, similar to the number received in 2018. In addition there were 18 Part VIII Local Authority own development applications, some of which included housing developments resulting in a total of 71 new dwellings being permitted. Determinations were made in relation to 916 planning applications, of which 856 (93.4%) were granted and 60 (6.6%) were refused. Of the 42 applications determined by An Bord Pleanála during the year, 28 decisions of Clare County Council were upheld.

Pre-planning enquiries

A total of 303 pre-planning consultations took place during the year to enable applicants to discuss the principles of their proposals free of charge, with the Council planning officer.

Development contributions

The sum of €3,090,890 was collected during 2019. These contributions provide funding towards capital work programmes on a range of services, including roads, amenity, community, recreation and car parking. The Council continues to collect water and sewerage contributions on behalf of Irish Water on planning permissions granted prior to January 1st 2014.

Enforcement of Planning Law

The Enforcement Section of the Planning Department was busy during 2019 and the activity is summarised in the following table:

New Cases Investigated	111
Warning Letters Issued	82
Enforcement Notices Issued	19
Legal Cases Initiated	3
Files Closed	242

Taking in Charge of Housing Estates

Twentyfour (24) housing estates were taken in charge by Clare County Council in 2019. Progress was made on the completion of many other estates through engagement with bondholders, developers, contractors and residents.

The taking in charge team in the Planning Department proactively monitored 15 new developments under construction during 2019. This ongoing monitoring of estates, albeit resource intensive, should ensure that housing developments in the future are finished to a higher standard and that subsequent taking in charge processes should be more straightforward. There was a noticeable increase in activity in this area during 2019.

The Planning Department continued to finalise site resolution plans and to arrange for remedial works contracts to be put in place on several estates where the Council were in receipt of bond monies. Significant contracts were substantially completed in Gort Leamhan/ Gort na hAbhana, Ennis and in Abbeycourt/Abbeyville, Ennis during 2019 as well as works on a number

of smaller developments throughout the county.

In developments where the bonds, for a variety of reasons, are insufficient to complete the required works, it is hoped that a national incentive scheme, similar to that provided by the Department in 2016 would become available to the Council, which would assist in the completion of such developments.



Images of Gort Leamhán, Ennis, before and during the remedial works.

Property Management

The Property Management unit advanced a number of property refurbishment projects, some of which were done in conjunction with the community organisations, who were in occupation of the properties.

In addition, significant progress was made in rectifying and registration of title to Council owned properties and dealing with queries from the public. The Council leases and licences property to many community groups and also has some commercial leases and these are managed as a key support to other directorates. Long term leases and sales are subject to the approval of the elected Council.

During 2019 the following Lease and Licence Agreements were administered by the Property Management Unit throughout County Clare.

Renewal of Lease Agreements	9
New Lease Agreements	5
Renewal of Licence Agreements Property	11
New Licence Agreements	8
Files Closed	242

Shannon Allotments Project

A new site at Ballycasey was sourced for the relocation of the allotments in Shannon from their current site in Illaunamanagh, as this area of land is required for the extension of the burial ground. Construction commenced in late Summer 2019 and the project comprises 39 allotments of varying sizes. The completion of the project is planned for Spring 2020, when the weather is more suitable for planting. A new allotment association was formed and the Council will facilitate the new group as they get established on the new site.

Quin Road Campus Project

Contracts for the redevelopment and refurbishment of a vacant building in the Quin Road Industrial Estate in Ennis were signed in September 2019 and the Project will deliver a new Headquarters for Clare Civil Defence. Phase 1 of the overall development will be completed during the first quarter of 2020.

The Quin Road Campus will incorporate a modern Civil Defence Headquarters with full facilities for the Clare Civil Defence Volunteers (currently 90 active volunteer members), training facilities and an area to store and manage the fleet of operational vehicles used by Civil Defence. The fleet currently includes 3 ambulances, 3 4x4 jeeps, a communications vehicle, Search & Rescue van, Mini-bus and Operational Support Van, as well as 2 Boats, 1 Rescue Watercraft and a Rescue Raft. The building will also house a Records Management Centre for Clare County Council. This new campus will complement our objective of increasing the services that we can provide to the people of Clare, it will attract new volunteers and allow training to be delivered to the highest possible level. In particular the training facility will provide scope for collaboration with other parties in the facility.



Supporting Primary Level education

Under a national agreement, Clare County Council works with the Department of Education and Skills to acquire sites for new schools. The Council is finalising agreements to acquire lands in Kilrush for the site for Gaelscoil Uí Choimín, which originally opened 25 years ago.

The Council agreed to sell lands in Shannon to the Department of Education to provide a new school for Gaelscoil Donnacha Rua. The Department will now advance to planning stage for this school, which will provide the school with permanent buildings and a bright future.

The Council is working with the Department of Education to source a site in Ennis for a new school site for Ennis Educate Together and discussions are ongoing in relation to this.

Casual Trading

Under the Casual Trading Act 1995, and the Bye-Laws made thereunder, the Economic Development Directorate is responsible for the administration of Casual Trading in Co. Clare. All casual traders, who trade on a public space, must hold a valid Casual Trading Licence.

During 2019 the following licences were granted for County Clare.

	Annual Licences	Special Event Licences
Ennis	11	3
Kilkee	5	
Ennistymon	1	
Doolin Pier	1	
Killaloe	15	1
Total Licences issued 2019	33	
Lahinch - Dubai Irish Open Golf event		3
Milltown Malbay - Willie Clancy Festival		7
Lisdoonvarna - Matchmaking Festival		2
Kilrush - 4 no. Horse Fairs		16
O'Briensbridge - Wellness on the Water Event		1
Total Event Licences in 2019		33



Difig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office
An Clár • Clare

Local Enterprise Office

2019 was another successful year for Local Enterprise Office Clare. We currently support 239 enterprises that provide employment to 1,384 people. In 2019, our enterprises created 120 net jobs bringing the total number of jobs created by Clare enterprises since the establishment of the Local Enterprise Office in April 2014 to 872 net jobs.

During 2019 we approved grant funding of €673,500 to 27 enterprises supporting the potential creation of 104 new jobs over the next 3 years. In 2019 we placed an increased focus on up-skilling our local entrepreneurs through training programmes, workshops, seminars and events at which 1,003 people attended the 76 events/programmes run. Mentoring support is proving the most effective means of assisting enterprises and 123 different enterprises availed of this support during the year.

Aside from our normal supports we also assist enterprises with small grants interested in exporting and trading online. In 2019, 14 enterprises availed of our Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters and 34 availed of our Trading Online Voucher.

This year we transferred five companies to Enterprise Ireland bringing the number of enterprises we have transferred to Enterprise Ireland over the last 5 years to 20. At the time of transfer these companies employed 536 people.

Brexit has been very much at the forefront of our activities. We have introduced a range of supports including an online

assessment tool of Brexit risks, training in customs documentation and “one to one” free mentoring support.

Our student enterprise programme aimed at promoting enterprise to 2nd level students continues to grow in popularity with over 900 students participating in the programme which commenced in September 2019.



A number of notable events took place in 2019 such as the Irish Open in Lahinch where Clare County Council and Local Enterprise Office Clare had a presence and successfully showcased County Clare in general as well as 16 local businesses in the areas of food, art and health products.



Dromoland was the venue for the regional National Women’s Enterprise Day which attracted 165 business women from Clare, Limerick and Tipperary and included a number of high profile guest speakers such as Sonya Lennon (TV presenter and



entrepreneur, Florrie Purcell (The Scullery), Jean McCabe (Willow), Fiona Steed (ex. Irish Rugby player) while Ciana Campbell was MC on the day.

During the year, Local Enterprise Office Clare partnered with a number of local bodies to run events aimed at promoting

and developing entrepreneurship in Clare. Our partners included, Clare Local Development Company (LEADER), Ennis and Shannon Chambers of Commerce, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Intreo), Shannon Group and Mid West Regional Skills Forum



Municipal Districts

There are four municipal districts in the County, which provide a range of local services at local service centres in Ennis, Scariff, Kilrush and Shannon.

Municipal District of Ennis

Following the Local Elections in May 2019 and LEA boundary changes, the Municipal District of Ennis now comprises 7 Elected Members representing Ennis and the surrounding environs of Clarecastle, Barefield, and Kilnamona. Six of the existing Ennis MD Councillors were returned together with new Councillor Mark Nestor. In June 2019, Cllr. Johnny Flynn was elected as Mayor of the Municipal District of Ennis, replacing Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy, who had held this prestigious role for the previous 12 month period.



Ennis Municipal District supported 22 Festivals & 17 Community groups in 2019.

Festivals & Events

St. Patrick's Day Parade 2019

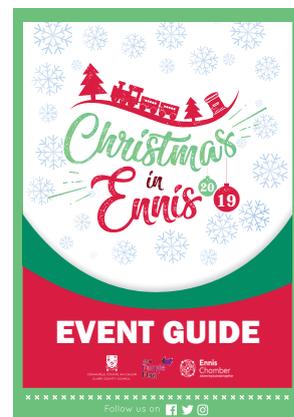
Thousands of people lined the streets for the 2019 Ennis St. Patrick's Day Parade on Sunday, 17th March, where more than 50 groups representing the many aspects of life in County Clare participated in the annual parade showcasing the County's artistic, cultural, sporting and community group. There was also significant international participation in this year's parade where a group called "The Friendly Sons of the Shillelagh Pipes and Drums" of more than 80 people from New Jersey in the USA travelled to Ennis to participate in the parade.



Mary Fitzgerald, the founder of Clare Haven Services and Haven Horizons, was Grand Marshal who together with the Mayor Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy led the parade through the streets of Ennis.

Christmas in Ennis 2019

Ennis Municipal District co-ordinated a significant programme of events for "Christmas in Ennis 2019" running over four consecutive weekends. Up to 4,000 people gathered in the vicinity of O'Connell Square where the crowds were entertained by MC Colum McGrath, special guest Emer Considine (AKA "The Eimearnator"), Mickey & Minnie Mouse, and of course Santa Claus together with a host of street entertainment & musical performances, culminating in a festive lighting spectacle.



The switching-on of the lights also launched the Lions Club of Ennis Remembrance Tree initiative, in aid of Cahercalla Hospice. Music was provided by the Cloughleigh Samba Band & Cloughleigh School Choir. Christmas Street Radio from 14th to 24th December added to the ambiance throughout the town for shoppers & visitors.

New initiatives this year included 'Music in the Market'; a fun filled family day at the Market Building and Retro Drive-In Movies which brought festive classics such as 'The Polar Express' and 'National Lampoon's Christmas' to a captive audience at the Clare Co-operative Marts.

The highly anticipated Ennis Christmas village located in Abbey Street car park did not disappoint showcasing creative crafts and delicious food in its festive surroundings, with a large fun carousel and Santa's grotto being the highlights of the

weekend of 13th to 15th December which concluded with a light projection show.

The hugely popular Christmas Express Charity train made a welcome return yielding over €5,000 for five local charities over the three day initiative.



Munster Fleadh

Ennis welcomed back Fleadh Cheoil na Mumhan from 14th to 22nd July 2019; the largest provincial Fleadh in Ireland where circa 50,000 people enjoyed competitions & musical entertainment from thousands of musicians, singers, dancers and storytellers. Visitors from the six counties of Munster joined for this annual celebration of our Irish cultural traditions. Ennis Municipal District Staff facilitated the event through financial assistance and logistical support.

Municipal District of Shannon (Shannon MD)

The year was also marked with sadness following the passing of Cllr. Mike McKee. Cllr. McKee served on the Shannon Town

Commissioners/ Shannon Town Council from 1985 to 2009 and subsequently on Clare County Council from 2014 to the time of his passing. He served with unwavering dedication and commitment to the community of Shannon, surrounding areas and the County of Clare. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

All six sitting councillors in the Shannon Municipal District retained their seats in the local elections of May 2019. The municipal district expanded to a seven councillor district, with a corresponding boundary increase to take in the Clonlara area. At the annual general meeting of the Municipal District of Shannon in 2019, Councillor Gerard Flynn was re-elected as Cathaoirleach with Councillor Pat McMahon re-elected as Leas Cathaoirleach.

The Shannon Municipal District adopted a General Municipal Allocation of €189,100 for the year. This allocation provided funding for 38 sporting, cultural, historical and community groups and for the execution of a number of public area improvement works projects throughout the district.

During 2019 a scoping report was prepared on the feasibility of the Shannon to Bunratty Greenway. Further survey work will be required in 2020.

The tender process for the spatial and economic consultants to prepare the Shannon Town Centre Strategy was commenced in 2019. The consultants will commence the strategy in Q1, 2020 with a view to completing the work by Q3, 2020.

Following the announcement of €27m for the upgrade of Shannon Town Flood

defences in December 2018, the OPW, in conjunction with Clare County Council's Project Management Office and the Shannon Municipal District, commenced a detailed fact finding and data gathering exercise and the tender for consultants for the scheme was advertised on 5th December 2019.

The Shannon Municipal District team continued to deliver a high quality service to the people living in the Shannon Municipal District including the execution of 26 projects under the Roads Grants allocation, 40 smaller scale projects funded via the General Municipal Allocation funds, guidance and advice to multiple community groups in relation to projects and the resolution of hundreds of maintenance matters in public areas.

Projects included the rehabilitation of concrete roads in Aidan Park, construction of pedestrian crossing in Newmarket on Fergus, lighting improvement & speed reduction measures on the R462 in Sixmilebridge, upgrade of pedestrian crossing at Báthar Na Luchra, installation of a pedestrian crossing on the R462 at Cratloe, district wide footpath remediation contract and the remediation of flooding and resurfacing of the industrial estate access road at Ballymurtagh amongst many others.

Municipal District of West Clare

The elected members of the West Clare Municipal District met regularly during 2019 to consider the provision of services and the improvement of facilities and amenities in their district. The members met with numerous representatives from local community groups throughout the

year to discuss issues relevant to their areas. As well as the statutory meetings, one Special Meeting took place during the year to discuss the Irish Open & the future of Moneypoint on 16th July 2019. The meeting to consider the Budgetary Plan for the West Clare Municipal of €201,700 for 2019 took place on 30th October 2018. The General Municipal Allocation facilitated funding of a number of community projects in 2019.

In May 2019, following the Local Authority elections, 5 new Elected Members were elected to the West Clare Municipal District. The West Clare Municipal District boundaries were also amended following the Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee No1 Report 2018. Cllr. Bill Chambers was elected Cathaoirleach at the Annual General Meeting in June 2019 and Cllr. Joe Garrihy was appointed as Leas Cathaoirleach. It was also agreed at the AGM that the structure of the meetings agenda would be amended such that all business related to particular Directorate were grouped together for consideration. A Workshop facilitated by Sean O'Riordain took place with the West Clare Municipal District in September 2019 to agree a Strategy and Work Programme for the lifetime of the Municipal District.

Some of the issues discussed and agreed at West Clare Municipal District Meetings during the year included:

- Consideration and adoption of the Schedule of Municipal District Works for 2019.
- Taking in charge of roads in a number of estates in accordance with S11 of the Roads Act 1993

- Taking in charge of private roads in accordance with S11 of the Roads Act 1993
- S183 Disposal of Council owned properties at various locations within the Municipal District
- S38 Traffic calming measures at a number of locations
- Holding a Special Meeting to discuss:
 - Lahinch Irish Open
 - Future of Moneypoint

Killaloe Municipal District

The members of Killaloe MD met regularly during 2019 to discuss the provision of services within the area and to progress the strategic development of facilities and amenities in the towns and villages in the district. The members met with representatives from local communities throughout the year to discuss issues relevant to their areas and also received regular updates on the major new capital projects planned for the area.

The Local Elections held in 2019 saw significant changes to the boundaries of Killaloe Municipal District and had the effect of reducing the number of Elected Members from 6 to 5. The first AGM of the new Municipal District was held in June and Councillor Pat Burke was re-elected Cathaoirleach, having also held that position the previous year. Councillor Pat Hayes was appointed as Leas Cathaoirleach. Funding was provided towards a number of important projects under the General Municipal Allocation and the members adopted the budgetary plan and agreed an increased General Municipal Allocation of €227,321 for 2020 at their budget meeting on 6th November 2019.



ABRIDGED FINANCIAL STATEMENT: YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

Income and Expenditure	2019	2018
	€'000	€'000
State Grants	41.8	38.8
Local Property Tax	6.5	6.5
Goods and Services	38.1	36.4
Commercial Rates	43.0	42.8
Income from Other Local Authorities	0.1	0.1
Pension Levy		
Total Income	129.5	124.5
Total Expenditure	116.8	113.3
Surplus / (Deficit) for year before transfers	12.8	11.2
Transfers to / from Reserves	(12.2)	(10.5)
Overall Surplus / (Deficit) for Year	0.54	0.69
General Revenue Reserve / (Deficit) - Opening	1.9	1.2
General Revenue Reserve / (Deficit) - Closing	2.5	1.9
Balance Sheet	2019	2018
	€m	€m
Fixed Assets	2,770.2	2,754.5
Work in Progress and Preliminary Expenses	36.9	27.6
Long term Debtors	21.0	19.1
Current Assets	66.2	60.1
Current Liabilities	(35.3)	(37.3)
Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)	30.8	22.8
Creditors (Amounts falling due after more than one year)	(82.9)	(79.5)
Net Assets	2,776	2,745
Financed by		
Capitalisation Account	2,770.2	2,754.5
Income Work in Progress	37.0	24.3
Specific Revenue Reserve		
General Revenue Reserve	2.5	1.9
Other Balances	(33.6)	(36.2)
Total Reserves	2,776	2,745

SEMINARS/CONFERENCES/TRAINING ATTENDED BY CLARE COUNTY COUNCILLORS IN 2019

- **The Finance Act 2018, Carlingford, Co. Louth.** 11th - 13th January 2019
(1 Member attended).
- **Association of Irish Local Government Training, Module 1, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.** 19th January 2019
(10 Members attended).
- **Association of Irish Local Government Training, Module 1, Horse & Jockey, Co. Tipperary.** 24th January 2019
(10 Members attended).
- **Philip Lane Lecture, NUI Galway.** 5th February 2019. *(1 Member attended).*
- **A guide to EU Educational Programmes, Carlingford, Co. Louth.** 8th-10th February 2019 *(1 Member attended).*
- **Association of Irish Local Government Annual Conference, Longford.** 20th-22nd February 2019
(23 Members attended).
- **Local Authority Members Association Spring Seminar 2019, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim.** 6th-7th March 2019 *(19 Members attended).*
- **Association of Irish Local Government Training, Module 2, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.** 21st March 2019
(18 Members attended).
- **Association of Irish Local Government Training, Module 2, Arklow, Co. Wicklow.** 23rd March 2019
(2 Members attended)
- **Velo City - Best Practice for Cycling, Dublin.** 25th -28th June 2019
(1 Member attended).
- **Association of Irish Local Government Training, Module 3, Horse & Jockey, Co. Tipperary.** 13th July 2019
(16 Members attended).
- **Parnell Summer School, Avondale, Co. Wicklow.** 13th August 2019
(2 Members attended).
- **Association of Irish Local Government Autumn Seminar, Monaghan.** 11th - 13th September 2019
(20 Members attended).
- **The Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, Dundalk, Co. Louth.** 19th-21st September 2019 *(1 Member attended).*
- **Association of Irish Local Government Training, Module 4, Dundalk, Co. Louth.** 12th October 2019
(13 Members attended).
- **Local Authority Members Association Autumn Seminar, Ennistymon, Co. Clare.** 17th - 19th October 2019
(2 Members attended).
- **NFLA Energy Policy Seminar, Dublin.** 18th October 2019
(1 Member attended).
- **Housing Agency Annual Conference, Dublin.** 6th November 2019.
(3 Members attended).
- **Leadership and Collaboration Seminar, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.** 9th November 2019 *(1 Member attended).*
- **Entitlement to Health Services, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.** 15th to 17th November 2019 *(2 Members attended).*
- **Association of Irish Local Government Training, Module 5, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.** 21st November 2019
(2 Members attended).
- **Association of Irish Local Government Training, Module 5, Little Island, Cork.** 23rd November 2019 *(10 Members attended).*

- **Inspiring Sustainable Tourism Conference, Croke Park, Dublin.** 27th November 2019 (1 Member attended).
- **Climate and Biodiversity Workshop, Dublin.** 4th December 2019 (3 Members attended)
- **Irish Social Welfare System, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.** 6th - 9th December 2019 (5 Members attended).

- **Communications Training** (1 Member attended).
- **Community Owned Energy in Ireland - Western Development Commission, Athenry, Co. Galway.** 11th December 2019 (1 Member attended).

Contact information/ telephone numbers

Clare County Council, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Telephone: (065) 6821616

Fax: (065) 6828233

Email: customerservices@clarecoco.ie

Website: www.clarecoco.ie

Hours of business: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Monday to Friday.

Note: *Planning Department, Housing Department and Cash Office 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Emergency contact number: (087) 4169496 (outside of office hours only)*

Motor Tax, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Hours of business: 9:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Monday to Friday

Telephone: (065) 6844661

Clare County Museum

Telephone: (065) 6823382

Email: ClareMuseum@clarecoco.ie

Active Ennis Sports and Leisure Facilities

Telephone: (065) 6821604

Fax: (065) 6823655

Glór Music Centre

Telephone: (065) 6845370

Direct dial in facility

To facilitate our callers all sections have a direct dial in facility. Individual sections can be contacted by dialling the following numbers:

- **Archives and Records Management,** (065) 6846414
- **Arts Office,** (065) 6846684
- **Broadband, Digital and IT Department,** (065) 6846377
- **Central Cash Office,** (065) 6846208
- **Civil Defence,** (065) 6822199
- **Corporate Services Department,** (065) 6846209
- **Environment Department,** (065) 6846331, fax (065) 6846444
- **Environment anti-litter freephone,** 1800 606706
- **Finance Department,** (general queries), (065) 6846329
- **Fire and Emergency Services Department,** (065) 6846410
- **Freedom of Information,** (065) 6846405
- **Group Schemes,** (065) 6866119
- **Higher Education Grants,** (065) 6846320
- **Housing Department,** (065) 6846334

- **Human Resources Department,** (065) 6846415
- **Local Enterprise Office Clare,** (065) 6846230
- **Partnership Facilitator,** (065) 6846435
- **Planning Department,** (065) 6846232
- **Register of Electors,** (065) 6846363
- **Revenue Department,** (065) 6846530
- **Transportation Department,** (065) 6846312

- **Road Design,** (065) 6846479
- **Rural and Community Department,** (065) 6846222
- **Tourism Department,** (065) 6846511
- **Veterinary Services Department,** (065) 6846358
- **Water Safety,** (065) 6846270
- **Water Services Department,** (065) 6866116

Municipal district offices

- **Ennis,** (065) 6866133
- **Killaloe,** (061) 640815
- **Shannon,** (061) 362319
- **West Clare,** (065) 7072283/9054310

Library branches

- **Corofin,** (065) 6837219
- **De Valera Branch Library,** (065) 6846353
- **Ennis Library Headquarters,** (065) 6846350, website www.clarelibrary.ie
- **Ennistymon,** (065) 7071245
- **Kildysart,** (065) 6832113
- **Kilkee Sweeney Memorial Library,** (065) 9056034
- **Kilmihil,** (065) 9050528
- **Killaloe,** (061) 376062, Fax (065) 376062
- **Kilrush,** (065) 9051504
- **Lisdoonvarna,** (065) 7074029
- **Local Studies Centre, Ennis,** (065) 6846271
- **Miltown Malbay,** (065) 7084822
- **Newmarket-on-Fergus,** (061) 368411
- **Scariff,** (061) 922893
- **Shannon,** (061) 364266
- **Sixmilebridge,** (061) 369678
- **Tulla,** (065) 6835919

Other useful numbers

- **Central Waste Management Facility, Ballyduffbeg, Inagh,** (065) 6836960
- **Scariff Recycling Centre and Transfer Station,** (061) 921735
- **Shannon Recycling Centre,** (061) 364483
- **Lisdeen Recycling Centre and Transfer Station,** (065) 9060175
- **Ennis Recycling Centre** (065) 6893705



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL