



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

TURASCÁIL BAINISTÍOCHTA MANAGEMENT REPORT



Márta 2023
March 2023

Notice to Quits/Tenant in Situ Scheme

Data provided by the RTB indicates a large number of landlords intend to leave the market, with a large proportion of the Notices of Termination (NOTs) issued due to the landlord's intention to sell the property. The exit of landlords from the market both contributes to households becoming homeless while at the same time limiting options for exits.

In light of this, the Government has decided to increase the number of social housing acquisitions under the Housing for All provision from 200 per annum to 1,500 in 2023. **The additional 1,300 acquisitions in 2023 are to be focussed on the acquisition of homes where a HAP or RAS tenant has received a Notice of Termination, due to the sale of the property.**

In order to provide a greater focus on acquisitions in areas of greatest need and to support planning by local authorities, each local authority is being provided with an initial allocation for the number of acquisitions that can be funded. Galway County Council has been allocated 25 units.

This is not a target, but rather to support planning and to allow local authorities to prioritise the acquisitions to be targeted. The Department will keep this under review through 2023. In this regard, local authorities are asked to do the following:

- i. To ensure that their processes and the allocation of resources align with the delivery of social housing acquisitions in 2023;
- ii. To provide the Department with a short report by 31 March on the number of acquisitions that have been completed in 2023 and the number that are in progress; and
- iii. To input details of all acquisitions being progressed on the HDCO tracker (Trabis).
- iv. New acquisition proposals must be added to Trabis at the beginning of the process.

Galway County Council

As of the 20th of March 2023, the council had been made aware of:

- 58 HAP properties on Notice to Quit
- 2 RAS properties on Notice to Quit
- 24 Privately rented on Notice to Quit (not on HAP/RAS but on Housing list)

Galway County Council has been given an allocation of 25 initially to prioritise. While this may not seem very high, a significant number of the tenants on NTQ are in line for Council/AHB allocations. The Allocation scheme approved by the Council allows for those on valid notice to quits to be considered under the Scheme of Letting Priorities. For example, several tenancies allocated for the new estates in Athenry were on validated NTQs.

There are properties throughout the county currently being purchased using the "Tenant in Situ" scheme— 4 have been completed using the tenant in situ circular, 7 more are going through valuation.

A significant number of properties offered to us by owners do not fall into the 'tenant in situ' scheme, and several properties have been proposed by tenants without the landlord's consent.

Other one-off purchases under Disability/Traveller Accommodation/Regeneration will be considered separately from the allocation.

Disability stats 2022

Each year a return is made to the Department on the number of disability allocations made by the Council. This is inclusive of all categories of Disability. Galway County Council's Disability Strategy and subgroup is used as the mechanism under which allocations are proposed.

<p>1 Overall Allocations Please provide the Local Authority total allocations made in 2022</p>	408
<p>2 Overall HAP allocations Of this total: <input type="text" value="408"/> how many were HAP allocations ?</p>	105
<p>3 People with a disability allocations Of this total: <input type="text" value="408"/> how many were allocations to people with a disability ?</p>	102
<p>4 Disability allocation breakdown Please provide a break down of the <input type="text" value="102"/> disability allocations</p>	
Physical	4
Sensory	44
Mental Health	42
Intellectual	12
Total	102
Validate	Yes
<p>5 HAP Disability allocation breakdown Of the total disability allocations of <input type="text" value="102"/> how many are HAP allocations</p>	41
<p>6 Disability allocation breakdown Please provide a break down of the <input type="text" value="41"/> disability allocations under HAP</p>	
Physical	12
Sensory	2
Mental Health	18
Intellectual	9
Total	41

2022 Tenancies created & refusal rate

Over 300 tenancies were created in 2022 into Social Housing Stock in County Galway. Allocations involve using the priority scheme of letting, garda checks, interview of applicants and other assessments with external support agencies etc. this can be a time and resource heavy process.

However, 118 offers of tenancy were declined by people on the Housing List in 2022. The level of refusal was slightly lower than 2021 but remains high with a range of reasons offered. If someone refuses an offer twice without the reason being considered valid then they will be suspended from the housing list for a period of 1 year.

AOC	Applicant indicated they are already in suitable accommodation	Applicant no longer interested in area of choice	Applicant refused offer of accommodation which they deemed unsuitable to their needs	Offer made in low demand estate	Offer refused because a flat was offered rather than a house	Offer refused because of location of house in estate	Other reason specified	Total
Ballinasloe North							1	1
Ballinasloe South	1	6			1		8	16
Ceantar Chois Fharraige		1	1		1		2	5
Conamara Láir		1						1
Conamara Thiar-Thuidh	1	1	4		1		6	13
Conamara Thiar-Theas		2						2
Galway North East		2	1		1		2	6
Gort and Environs	1	5					6	12
Loughrea and Environs		5	1		1		4	11
Oranmore/Athenry		3	3				5	11
Tuam		1	20	5	1	3	10	40
Total	2	3	49	11	2	7	44	118

Tenancy Training Event

On the 20th of March 2020 tenancy training was carried out in Athenry. 39 Tenants received keys for properties in An Ceathru Bhan and Garrai Glas. The Agenda for the morning, held in Raheen Woods included inputs on:

Housing Allocations – rents, tenancy agreement

Maintenance -boilers/gardens/fittings

Environment – waste collection and animal control

Tenancy Enforcement – anti-social behaviour and tenancy

The Community Gardai – community engagement, local station information etc.

Similar events planned at Kinvara (on site), Fana Bhui (date to be confirmed), Ballinasloe (with Cluid)



Tenancy Training at the Raheen Woods Hotel.

Capital

Ongoing works at:

Clifden – **18** Houses snagged and allocations began, **8** apartments due Q2.

Ballinasloe – ongoing build with allocations for Council and Cluid to follow including a tenancy event for **78** households in early summer 2023

Ardrahan – P8 planning advertised for **10** units

Cossmona, Loughrea – final design stage (social and affordable **70** units)

Claregalway – final design stage (social and affordable) **90** units

Tuam – Fana Bhui (**49** units) being tenanted and Weir rd estate being built – **29** units

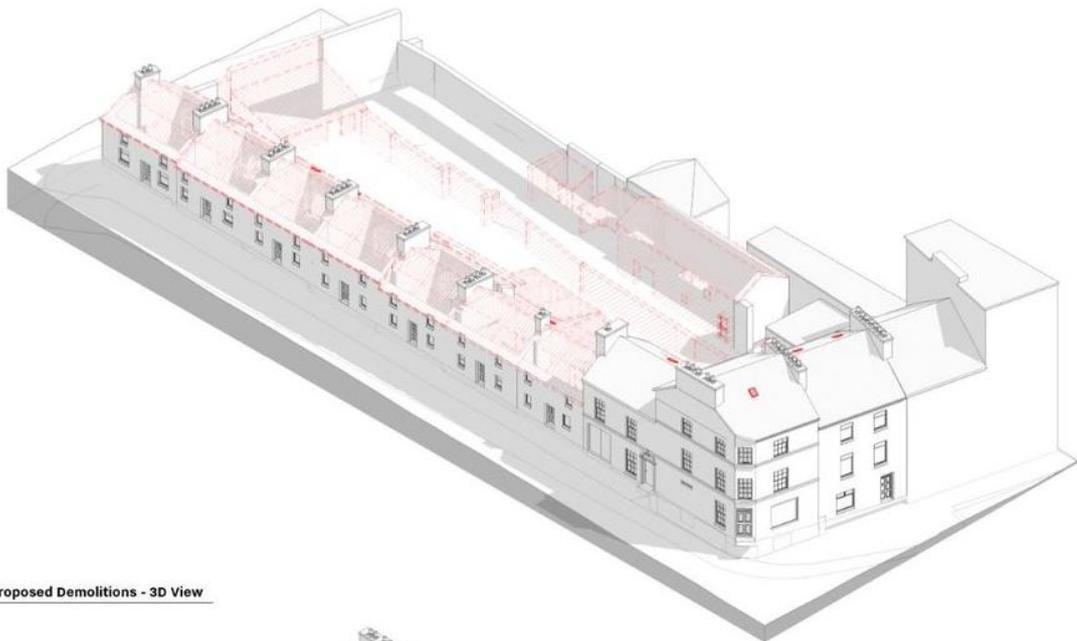
Ahascragh – ongoing build programme – **18** units

Williamstown – **7** units being finalised

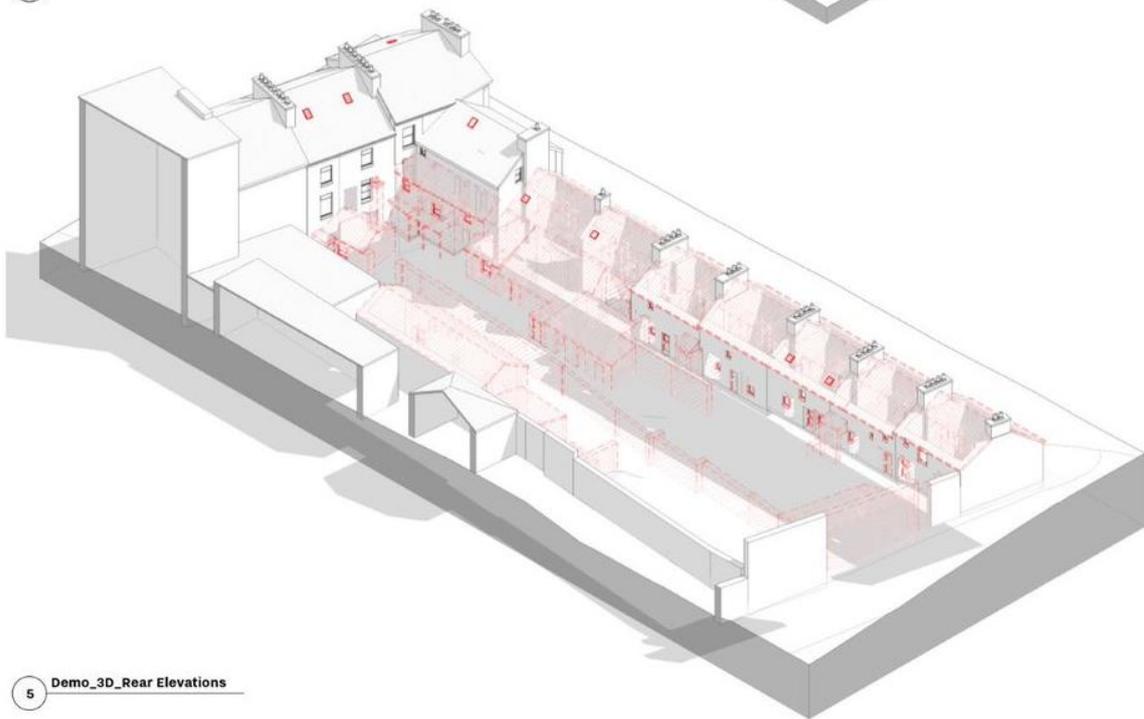
St Josephs, Ballinasloe - **8** units to Part 8 to be advertised in April

Ballymoe – **8** units to construction

Affordable Scheme – proposals with Department for Williamstown and Mountbellew.



4 Proposed Demolitions - 3D View



5 Demo_3D_Rear Elevations

Energy Retrofits



- Ard Ghuire in Gort - Century Retrofit are currently completing 11 properties as an add on to the EE02-2022 contract
- Remaining 9 properties here are to be completed later in the year on a separate contract

- Country Meadows Tuam - C&N are commencing the retrofit of 16 properties on the EE01-2023 contract

- Parkmore in Tuam - C&N are commencing the retrofit of 3 properties here on the EE01-2023 contract

- Castlevew in Headford - C&N are to retrofit 2 properties here on the EE01-2023 contract

- O’Keeffe Park in Glenamaddy - Correspondence ongoing with tenants, will form part of EE02-2023 contract

- Laurence’s Fields in Loughrea - Correspondence ongoing with tenants, will form part of EE02-2023 contract

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The closing date for Expressions of Interest under the Community Recognition Fund was 3rd March 2023 and following that date, appraisal of the applications was undertaken to assess compliance with the terms of the scheme and identify a Programme of Work under the €1.2m having regard to areas with highest numbers and projects where there was a clear need for investment in community infrastructure and facilities which would have tangible benefits to all the community in the future. A consolidated Programme of Works was submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development for consideration and any further clarifications prior to confirmation of projects.

A meeting of the LCDC Funding Evaluation Sub-Committee will be held to consider recommendations under the Community Support Fund prior to submission to the Department of Rural and Community Development for approval before notifications to applicants. The approvals on this Fund have been delayed to coordinate with other deadlines on the Community Recognition Fund and Community Support Schemes, in order to ensure the most efficient allocation of funding across the 3 schemes.

Healthy County Galway administered a Ukrainian Health and Wellbeing Support Fund totalling €38,100 which was introduced to promote the health and wellbeing of Ukrainian Refugees who have sought protection in Ireland as part of the international humanitarian crisis arising from the war in Ukraine. 15 Grants were allocated, and these grants went towards a variety of initiatives ranging from exercise classes, art classes, choirs, youth spaces, St Patricks Day Activities and Family Trips/Outings. Healthy County Galway is planning Health and wellbeing Events to take place in late April on Inis Meáin, Inis Mór, Inis Óírr and Inisbofin and is working with Galway Sports Partnership supporting Older Adults and Community groups in Activator Poles, Boccia and Walking Groups.

Community Development

The Community Support closing date is 10th March and 293 applications have been received across the 3 support schemes for economic development, community development, and cultural development, which will be assessed according to the Scheme Criteria, with funding recommendations to the March Plenary Meeting.

Social Inclusion

A meeting of the Traveller Interagency Group took place on 8th March 2023, at which it was agreed to disband and form a joint City and County Traveller Interagency Group Meeting to promote information-sharing on Traveller initiatives and maximise resources.

A meeting of the Age Friendly Alliance took place on 15th March which agreed a Workplan of age friendly initiatives for the year, and noted the upsizing of the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Pilot programme on a national basis. A meeting of the Older Peoples Council will also take place to discuss projects for the year and a meeting is taking place with HSE staff to progress updating the Directory of Services for Older People.

Public Participation Network

Acting as an Information Hub:

- The PPN sent out 4 Weekly Digest emails (each Friday), 1 Monthly Newsletter along with 9 mass emails to all 1,214 Member Groups.
- Regular updates across the PPN's social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) Updates from various other shareholders shared.
- The PPN answered numerous queries in relation to funding, advice on setting up groups, insurance options for community groups, via phone calls and emails.
- The PPN Website was updated regularly with funding announcements, news from Government Departments, resources for groups and local/ national events.

Building Capacity:

- Meeting with LIFT Leadership training to arrange training session for secretariat members.
- PPN Reps forum meeting with all 30 PPN representatives on 22nd March. This forum assists reps in their roles.
- News, events and funding sections of PPN website updated regularly.
- LGBTQI Interagency meeting, Traveller Interagency Meeting, Climate Action Team Meeting,
- National PPN Supports webinar on Communications and Strategic Planning attended.

Promoting Representation:

- PPN Representatives were involved in a number of meetings during the month including the JPC, Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services SPC. PPN reports of these meetings are subsequently uploaded to the PPN website for feedback from groups.
- PPN Secretariat met on the 14th March.
- Secretariat vacancies for Social Inclusion Pilar advertised among the PPN membership.
- National and Local level consultations shared with member groups via email.

Arts Office

Community Support Scheme - Information clinic for arts groups and organisations applying to the Cultural Development strand was held on 06 March. 27 registered and 17 attended. The deadline was 10 March and 51 Cultural Development applications were received.

Artist Support Scheme

- 113 applications were received and total requested amount was **€254,662.90**
- Ethnicity: Arab Irish (1), Asian (2), Black (1), Black Irish (1), Latina (1), Latin American (2) Other white background (18), Prefer not to say (5), White Irish (82)
- Disability: Do not have a disability (77), Have a disability (8), Prefer not to say (27)
- Gender: Female (68), Male (36), Non-binary (2), Prefer not to say (6)
- Location: Athenry (2), Ballinasloe (4), Ballygar (1), Barna (1), Castlegar (1), Claregalway (1), Clarinbridge (1), Clifden (2), Clonbur (1), Corcullen (1), Corrandulla (3), Craughwell (1), Furbo (6), Galway City (13), Gort (3), Headford (10), Inis Mór (3), Inis Oírr (2), Inverin (5), Kilcolgan (4), Kinvara (3), Letterfrack (1), Loughrea (4), Monivea (2), Moyard (2), Moycullen (5),

Oranmore (3), Oughterard (4), Renvyle (2), Roscahill (3), Spiddal (5), Tonabruckey (1), Tuam (12). 31 are based in Gaeltacht areas

- 34 were ineligible; 79 were eligible for shortlisting; 45 applications were shortlisted
- 7 artforms: Dance (1), Film (3), Music (7), Street Arts and Spectacle (3), Theatre (6) and Visual Arts (25)
- Total requested amount for assessment after shortlisting was €109,214.31
- Total amount available to award was €26,000
- A peer panel of 3 Galway County artists assessed the applications on 09 March
- €26,000 was awarded to 11 artists

Artists in Schools Scheme - Deadline is 27 March. An information session for schools was held on 14 March delivered by artist Catherine Sheridan. 4 school staff attended.

Interface - Residencies for Galway County artists deadline was 03 March.

Visual Artists Ireland – Part one of the programme has been published. Funding and Opportunities online event for visual artists will be held on 29 March. Arts Council, Ealaín na Gaeltachta, Creative Ireland, Galway City Arts Office and Galway County Arts Office will present.

Creative Places Tuam – Taking Root Fund panel assessment was held on 02 March. Recipients were [announced](#) on 10 March, €20,000 was awarded to community groups, organisations and artists to make a positive impact on Tuam. Galway County Council supported with funding towards these grants.

Culture Up – Artist in Residence Programme meeting was held on 07 March. Stand Up peer sharing programme begins on 16 March and is a series of online events to further develop this European network.

Public Art - Rina Whyte has been appointed as Public Art Project Co-ordinator for the two Galway County Council/ OPW flood relief schemes. An introductory meeting was held on 10 March and a site visit with stakeholders will take place this month.

Arts Grants: 51 Arts Grants were received on the 10th March and are currently being assessed. Total Budget: €60,000 for consideration by Council in March meeting.

Creative Ireland

Cruinniú na nÓg - Ruth Gordan took on project management for Cruinniú na nÓg 2023. Expressions of interest deadline is 23 March.

Culture Team - Meeting was held on 07 March.

Creativity in Older Years Fund – Expressions of Interest forms for this fund were circulated to partners and Culture Team.

What are the objectives of the Scheme?

The primary objectives of the Creativity in Older Age Funding Scheme are:

- ✓ To support positive ageing
- ✓ To engage with issues surrounding social isolation and/or
- ✓ To develop and establish new forms of creative engagement for older people in the community and/or residential healthcare facilities.

What type of project can be funded?

The *Creativity in Older Age* scheme in 2023 will consist of 2 separate strands to address the above objectives of the scheme.

- 1. Live music performance in residential healthcare settings.**
- 2. Other forms of creative engagement in community and/or healthcare settings.**

The Closing date is the 6th April 2023. Galway County Council can make 1 application under each strand.

Economic Development

The Just Transition Fund (JTF) Emerge Programme webinar for East Galway and Offaly is on Wednesday February 22nd. Promotion of same has been through the Public Participation Network (PPN).

Shared Island project is a unique collaboration with a shared commitment of Galway and Leitrim County Councils partnered with Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to develop Excellence Centres in Food Innovation and Agritech. The initiative is progressing and the first partner meeting took place in Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim on January 26th. A number of activities will be scheduled for the coming months and the various communications concerning this will issue in the course of time.



TIONSCADAL GEOPHÁIRC
**Dhúiche Sheoigheach
& Lochanna an Iarthair**
JOYCE COUNTRY & WESTERN LAKES GEOPARK PROJECT

Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark Project

Launch of Management Master Plan 2022-2028 A strategy for the future

The Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark Project team have developed a Management Master Plan to guide development and stakeholder participation in Joyce Country and Western Lakes aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark.

This strategic document was developed from years of consultation with communities, businesses, funders, other agencies, and other stakeholders. It includes a profile of the geopark region, with the local, regional, national and international policy context underpinning its development.

It outlines the vision for the project, details on governance and staffing, finances and budget, conservation and infrastructure, a comprehensive SWOT analysis and a medium-term action plan.

The Master Plan is available on the geopark’s website and was launched officially in February 2023

Meeting of Funders and Key Stakeholders attended by Galway County Council on 28th February 2023



The Management Master Plan provides the strategic framework and main actions during the seven-year period 2022-2028.

The geopark’s 20 communities (17 villages, 3 towns) and current and future businesses are the ultimate beneficiaries, helping boost local jobs, incomes and to reverse rural population decline.



A renewed application for UNESCO Global Geopark status was submitted in November 2022. **The application dossier includes an important collaboration agreement with the geopark’s four funding agencies Údarás na Gaeltachta, Geological Survey Ireland, Galway and Mayo County Councils, setting the system for governance going forward.**

The UNESCO assessment will take place in 2023 and the result should be known in the early spring of 2024. If achieved, it will be the first Gaeltacht area to gain UNESCO Global Geopark status.



Joyce Country and Western Lakes geopark project

GUTH NA TALÚN | EXPLORE OUR WHISPERING LANDSCAPE

A UNESCO Global Geopark is an area with sites and landscapes of international geological significance. Geoparks have a bottom-up approach and encourage local communities and authorities to come together for the sustainable development, protection and education within that area. This holistic concept has become increasingly popular around the world. UNESCO Global Geopark status adds no further planning regulations to those already in place by EU, national or local government. Currently, there are 3 UNESCO Global Geoparks in Ireland: Marble Arch Caves, in counties Fermanagh and Cavan, Burren and Cliffs of Moher, in Co Clare, and Copper Coast, in Co Waterford. The Joyce Country & Western Lakes geopark region is an aspiring geopark and is expected to apply for UNESCO Global Geopark status.

A geopark is/does/will:		A geopark isn't/doesn't/won't ever be:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An initiative built from the ground up – increasing local jobs and income 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ A national park, nor is it a stepping stone to becoming one
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote sustainable development in local communities, and in the education, tourism, and agri-food sectors 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ A new legislative designation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Have UNESCO Global Geopark status for 4 years, which needs to be revalidated in order to retain the status 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ A permanent designation or status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work with landowners on how best to highlight local heritage 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Mean automatic access to private or commonage land
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Explore and celebrate the links between our local communities, the way we live on and work the land, and the Earth 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Change or disrupt any current government farm-related payments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Raise the profile of our local area and community life to increase the number of visitors 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Add any further planning regulations to those already in place by EU, national or local government

Find out more by visiting www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie or www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/earth-sciences/unesco-global-geoparks/ emailing info@jcwgeopark.ie or calling +353 (0)94 900 0245.



Stay up to date through the geopark website www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie and social media / facebook Twitter and Instagram @JCWLGeopark

Regeneration

Athenry

A meeting of the Athenry Town Team took place on Wednesday 22nd March in the Raheen Woods Hotel. The meeting was the first official meeting of the team and was well attended by representatives from across the community. The Director of Services and staff from the Regeneration Team as well as the lead consultants were in attendance and presented on the plans for the town. This included feedback on the public consultation process for the Market Square and wider public realm outlining the preferred emerging option, the branding, wayfinding, interpretation, Tidy Towns development and several other key projects which will assist the

development of the town. Each of the representatives present were asked to link back with the stakeholders they represented and to provide feedback to the regeneration team.

The evening meeting was preceded by a site visit to the BIA Innovator Campus where the town team members were given a presentation on the development and a walkover of the site. Peter Feeney, Chairperson of the Board and staff from BIA were in attendance to raise awareness of the opportunities the project provides in terms of the town development as well as wider economy.



Gort

A meeting of the internal steering group across the various departments including ERCD, roads and planning meet in relation to the Gort Town Centre First Plan and the rural regeneration works.

URDF Third Call

Distinct from previous URDF funding calls, the third funding round will not be a competitive bid process. This third round of funding will act as a dedicated revolving fund within each local authority so as to address the financial barrier and risk faced by local authorities in seeking to tackle long term vacant and derelict buildings and sites across URDF towns and cities. Each local authority will receive a financial allocation relative to their size, the number of URDF towns located within their functional area and the level of vacancy and dereliction within those URDF areas. Final allocations and the eligibility criteria, parameters, and monitoring and reporting requirements for the revolving fund will be determined following the completion of a number of regional workshops with the relevant local authority staff.

The fund will be available to cover the acquisition costs of a property or site and also any civil or design works which may be required to de-risk or improve the site/building to make it more attractive for reuse, development by others or onward sale. The intention is that the fund would be replenished from the proceeds received from the end use/user, thereby allowing the local authority

to put in place a rolling programme to tackle long term vacancy and dereliction without recourse to significant borrowing and the associated financial risk. The revolving fund is intended to act as an additional and much broader tool for the activation of long term vacant and derelict buildings and sites. Therefore, where a local authority has identified a vacant site or building as being potentially suitable for the advancement of a social and/or affordable housing development, funding for any such project should be sought using existing funding programmes run by the Departments Housing Divisions. Galway County Councils return specified selected properties in both Tuam (16) and Ballinasloe (17).

INFRASTRUCTURE & OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE

Athlone to Galway Cycleway



Following the publication in December 2021 of the Emerging Preferred Route Corridor for the Galway to Athlone Cycleway project, consultations with individual landowners have been undertaken to identify a preferred route. These consultations have resulted in the identification of a preferred route that provides a continuous cycleway from Ballyloughane Beach in Galway City to Athlone Castle. Where feasible, the route has been amended following discussions with landowners and others to address identified issues whilst ensuring the continuity of the route, end to end. The preferred route starts near Ballyloughane Beach to the east of Galway City and then proceeds close to or through the following settlement areas: Oranmore, Rinville, Clarinbridge, Kilcolgan, Kinvara, Gort, Woodford, Portumna, Meelick, Clonfert, Ballinasloe, Shannonbridge, and Athlone Castle. It links places of interest, established tourism centres, public parks, and outdoor amenities.

The entire preferred route will be published online the week of 27th March 2023. You can view the maps on the project website: <https://www.galwaytoathlonecycleway.com/>

In addition, four public information events are to be held from March 28th to 31st between 3pm and 8pm at the following venues:

Date	Venue	Location	Time
Tuesday 28 th March	Oranmore Lodge Hotel	Oranmore	3pm to 8pm.
Wednesday 29 th March	Lady Gregory Hotel	Gort	3pm to 8pm.
Thursday 30 th March	Portumna Town and Community Hall	and Portumna	3pm to 8pm.
Friday 31 st March	Shearwater Hotel	Ballinasloe	3pm to 8pm.

Following the publication of the preferred route the project team will be continuing with the design and environmental evaluation of the cycleway. In addition, the Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement process will commence in accordance with the *Code of Best Practice National and Regional Greenways* (December 2021).

The Project Liaison Officers for the cycleway will continue to engage with landowners. The next steps will include discussions with landowners on facilitating engineering and environmental surveys within their landholding where these are deemed necessary.

Appointment of Consultants for The N84 Galway – Headford Travel Corridor

The N84 Galway – Headford Travel Corridor is a radial route linking Galway City and the Town of Headford and the northern areas of the county, before continuing into County Mayo. It is used by significant numbers of commuters. The road which is the subject of the proposed scheme is above capacity and experiences serious traffic congestion at peak hours, is prone to flooding in extreme weather events and has a number of road safety issues. It is unimproved over the entire length of the proposed scheme and is substandard in terms of width, alignment, drainage, and pavement quality.

Galway County Council (GCC) is proposing to appraise transport options from Galway City to the northern extents of Clonboo village.



GCC has gone to the market seeking to appoint a consultant to consider all options to upgrade or improve the N84 from its intersection with the proposed Galway City Ring Road and the Village of Clonboo, taking the project through the initial phases of the TII Project Management Guidelines. The brief for the appointment of consultants includes for an examination of all ranges of multi modal transport solutions for provision of a sustainable transport solution.

It is envisaged that The N84 Galway – Headford Travel Corridor project will be classified as a Major Project (greater than €20m) under the 2016 Project Appraisal Guidelines for National Roads (Updated October 2020). All assessment and reporting work carried out by the Consultant shall comply with the TII Project Management Guidelines, TII Project Managers Manual for Major National Road Projects, TII Project Appraisal Guidelines and the TII Cost Management Manual.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Project Management Guidelines (PMG) divide the evolution and progression of a project into an eight-phase process (Phase 0 to Phase 7 Inclusive) as illustrated below. Each phase sets out specific processes and deliverables.



This commission is for the provision of the below outlined tasks required to progress the project through the following phases -

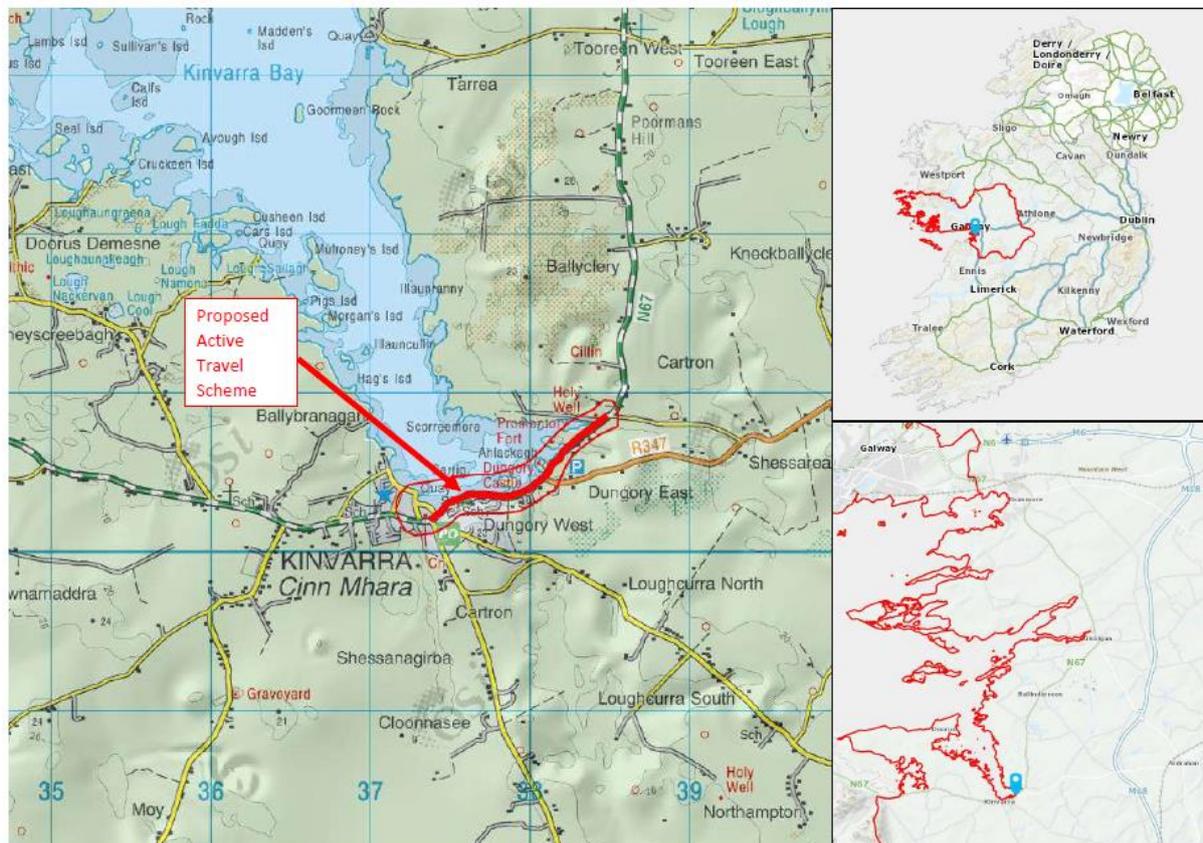
- Phase 0: Scope and Pre-Appraisal – to ensure project alignment with current TII strategic programmes and plans, and
- Phase 1: Concept and Feasibility – to develop and investigate in further detail the feasibility of the Project and project management structure.
- Phase 2: Options Selection – Stage 1 – Preliminary Options Assessment

The tender return date is **April 6th, 2023.**

[Appointment Of Consultants for the N67 Kinvara Village Active Travel Scheme](#)

Roughan O’Donovan/AECOM has been appointed as the design consultants for the N67 Kinvara Village Active Travel Scheme. The proposed scheme will link Kinvara Village to Dunguaire Castle (a length of approximately 790m) and continue further east and tie into the recently completed

footpath / cycleway delivered as part of the 'N67 Ballinaderreen to Kinvara Phase 2 Road Realignment' project, a length of approximately 470m. The proposed scheme will also overlap with the preferred route corridor option for the Athlone to Galway Greenway scheme, which is proposed to travel through Shannonbridge, Portumna, Gort and Kinvara before continuing onwards to Kilcolgan and Oranmore before reaching Galway City.



On behalf of Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Galway County Council (the Contracting Authority for this project) invited tenders for Technical Consultancy Services for Phases 3 and 4 of the Project Management Guidelines (PMG) using Mini Competition TII Framework - Lot 1B, Multi-disciplinary Engineering & Other Consultancy Services for the N67 Kinvara Village Active Travel Scheme.

[Works at Corry's Field Loughrea near completion.](#)

Corry's Field was bequeathed to the townspeople of Loughrea and the nation by the Corry family. It is now in the care of Galway County Council, more specifically the Loughrea Municipal District of Galway County Council. The then Town Commissioners opened "Lt. Col. Dan Corry Memorial Park", on the 30th of May 1999. The park is an amenity of great importance to the town and hinterland.

This project is funded by the Department of Transport under the 2020 July Stimulus funding. It was delayed pending planning application to An Bord Pleanála, which approval was successfully received in 2022. There is a narrow timeframe for works in respect of ecology and that is why the works were programmed for completion in March/April. The works are approx. 85% complete and will be fully completed in late April.



Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2023

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme is designed as a support to owners and custodians in caring for our built heritage and ensuring that it is protected into the future.

The aim of the Built Heritage Investment Scheme is to leverage private capital for investment in a significant number of small-scale, labour-intensive conservation projects and to support the employment of conservation professionals, craftspeople and tradespersons in the repair of the historic built environment.

The 2023 Built Heritage Investment Scheme includes ring fenced funding for conservation repairs to thatched structures to maximise the availability of financial assistance to such owners, helping them offset other costs.

The Minister has accepted the recommendation of Galway County Council and proposes to allocate funding to the projects as detailed hereunder:

Projects	Funding Allocated
Thatch, Middle March Kilcaimin, Maree	€20,000.00
Thatch, Newtown Lynch, Doorus, Kinvara	€5,650.00
Thatch, Ballyconlough Tuam	€15,000.00
Thatch, Tynagh ,Loughrea	€20,000.00
Thatch, Cloonaglasha, Tuam	€10,000.00
Thatch, Gortrevagh, Oughterard	€8,000.00
Thatch, River Road, Spiddal	€10,000.00
Rose Cottage , Kilcolgan	€10,000.00
Thatch, Cluide, Corrandulla	€4,000.00
Thatch Frenchfort, Oranmore	€9,000.00

Thatch Killeeely Mor , Kilcolgan	€3,984.00
2 Ellis Workshops, Letterfrack	€2,941.00
Prospect House , Athenry	€12,000.00
St. Peter & Paul Church, Ballymacward, Ballinasloe	€6,000.00
Creggs House	€10,000.00
Thatch, Cluide, Corrandulla	€3,000.00
St Patrick's Church Glenamaddy	€15,000.00
Thatch Oranhill	€6,359.00
Church of Immaculate Conception , Oughterard	€12,485.00
Ourr Lady of the Wayside , creeragh, Kylemore	€15,000.00
Kilcummin Parish Church , Oughterard	€6,407.00
The Old School House , Oranmore	€10,000.00
Clareville House , Oughterard	€10,000.00
8 St Patrick's St. Portumna	€9,310.08
Thatch Inis Meain	€9,310.08
Crumlin Park House , Ballyglunin, Tuam	€13,208.00
Stowlin House, Eyrecourt	€4,000.00
Total Funding	€260,654.16

The Minister's approval is subject to the following:

- All works carried out under this scheme must be in accordance with the terms of the Circular BHIS23/1 and follow good conservation practice, including the requirement for works to be overseen by appropriately qualified conservation professionals as necessary.
- Relevant statutory requirements for ministerial notification or consent in respect of work to monuments must be met in all cases. Confirmation of any required notifications and consents must be provided by applicants to the local authority when making a claim for funding.
- The onus is on the local authority to ensure that applicants comply with statutory planning requirements in respect of protected structures, proposed protected structures and architectural conservation areas.
- The onus is on the applicant to comply with all other relevant statutory requirements, including but not limited to EU Habitats Directives, foreshore licenses, Safety, Health and Welfare legislation, and the Planning and Development Acts.
- The total value of all public funding provided for individual projects must not exceed 50% including funding received from other public agencies.
- Where projects are also being funded through LEADER, applicants should contact their LEADER company for advice as funding awarded under the BHIS may impact on LEADER funding.
- The local authority must ensure that tax clearance requirements in respect of public sector grants are adhered to by applicants, contractors and sub-contractors and that the Department is publicly acknowledged in all advertisements and publicity in relation to this scheme.

Where a project has not commenced works by 15 September 2023, the Department, following consultation with the local authority, reserves the right to reallocate funding to another local authority.





Amendments to the Planning and Development Act

The Planning and Development and Foreshore (Amendment) Act 2022 (No. 47 of 2022) (PDF(A) Act) was enacted in December 2022. The PDF(A) Act makes a number of amendments to the provisions in sections 4 and 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the Act) and inserts a new section 179A providing an exemption for local authorities from the ‘Part 8’ local authority “own development” approval process and specifies exempted development status for the provision of specified forms of housing developments on designated State lands. These newly commenced provisions provide for the following:

1. Amendment of section 4 of the Act to provide that housing developments being constructed by local authorities under section 179A of the Act are classed as exempted development.
2. Amendment of section 179 of the Act to ensure that the local authority “own development” approval process under section 179 of the Act is not applied to housing developments constructed under section 179A of the Act.
3. The insertion of a new section 179A into the Act requiring a Chief Executive to inform the elected members of a local authority of proposed housing developments which it is intended to progress under the exemption as well as to give public notice and enable public inspection of the proposals in a prescribed manner. This new provision, which is a temporary time-limited measure to help expedite the provision of housing by local authorities in the context of the need to accelerate the

delivery of housing supply, will be mandatory for local authorities in strictly defined circumstances where the following criteria are satisfied:

- the land is owned by the local authority or another specified State Body;
- the land is zoned for residential development;
- the proposed development does not materially contravene the development plan or local area plan for the area;
- the proposed development is in accordance with the relevant local authority's housing strategy;
- the land is serviced or will be serviced with the necessary supporting infrastructure or facilities within the timeframe of the development;
- the proposed development is not required to undergo environmental impact assessment (EIA) under the EIA Directive or appropriate assessment (AA) under the Habitats Directive; and
- the development works in question are commenced by no later than 31 December 2024.

The Planning and Development and Foreshore (Amendment) Act 2022 (Commencement) (No. 2) Order 2023 [S.I. 107/2023] has been signed, providing for the commencement of Section 179A of the Planning and Development and Foreshore (Amendment) Act 2022 with effect from 08 March 2023.

Planning and Development (Section 179A) Regulations

To supplement the provisions in new section 179A of the Act, the Planning and Development (Section 179A) Regulations 2023 [S.I. 101/2023] were signed by the Minister on 08 March 2023. These regulations set out the steps local authorities must take in order to comply with the new section 179A.

The new regulations which amend the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (2001 Regulations), set out the following:

- New article 39A requires local authorities to submit quarterly reports on the use of the exemption and enables the Minister to request information on the number of potential sites available for use under the exemption within the functional area of a local authority.
- New article 81A:
 - requires the Chief Executive to formally notify the elected members of the proposed housing development prior to issuing a site notice and newspaper notice, which must be issued at least eight weeks prior to the commencement of works. (It is further recommended in this regard that the Chief Executive should informally signal in advance, the proposed development to the relevant local elected members prior to the formal notification of the placing of the site notice and the public advertisement.) This eight week notification period is consistent with the eight week timeframe in section 50 of the Act within which a judicial review challenge against a planning decision must be initiated post the making of the decision;

- sets out the information and details that must be included in the site notice and newspaper notice and where a site notice must be located;
 - requires local authorities to screen proposed developments for EIA and AA and that only where a proposed development is screened out from requiring the undertaking a full EIA or AA, the proposed development may proceed under the new exemption. If EIA/AA is screened in and is required to be undertaken in respect of the proposed development, the standard Part 8 process for the approval of local authority “own development” proposals under section 179 of the Act of 2000 must be used instead.
- New article 82A requires the local authority to notify the relevant prescribed bodies of proposed developments with the list of prescribed bodies being the same list as that used under the Part 8 approval process.
 - New article 83A requires that the documents, plans and particulars of the proposed housing development must be entered in the planning register and made available for public inspection. Local authorities are further required to make the documents relating to the proposed housing development available for inspection on their website and in the offices of the local authority.
 - New article 85A provides transitional arrangements regarding ongoing ‘Part 8’ processes for housing developments. Where a local authority has published a notice for a housing development under article 81(1) of the 2001 Regulations and section 179 of the Act prior to the commencement of section 179A of the Act, it shall continue to apply the process under section 179 of the Act to that proposed development.

It is important to note that the key role of elected members in setting the overarching framework for the development of their local area through the adoption of the development plan, associated zoning objectives and the adoption of the local housing strategy is not impacted by these temporary arrangements. The elected members will also retain their "Part 8" approval powers for all other forms of local authority own development proposals i.e. roads, bridges, waste facilities, swimming pools, fire stations, libraries, any other development works with a cost exceeding €126,000 etc. Any local authority housing proposals that are not commenced by 31 December 2024 will require "Part 8" approval by the elected members in the normal manner.

Galway Public Libraries:

Citizen Science Kit

Galway Library Service is one of ten Local Authorities to pilot the **Citizen Science Kit**.

Launched by The Heritage Council the **Citizen Science Kit Pilot Programme** is an initiative that will empower the public to collect information about biodiversity in their local area. Through the programme, and in partnership with the Library Service, people can now access specialised equipment to collect valuable data by using the kit which includes nets, magnifying glasses and swatches to help identify species.

The initiative is designed to assist an increasingly engaged public, many of whom are eager to contribute to the preservation of our biodiversity but who lack the tools to do so. It is expected that the kits will be used by students looking to conduct their own studies, amateur ecologists wishing to produce their own biodiversity action plans and by community groups such as Tidy Towns, River Trusts and Field Clubs who want to gather information to bolster local biodiversity projects. In all cases, records gathered should be sent to Ireland's National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC), whose role it is to collect and manage data and information about Ireland's biodiversity. When records are submitted to the NBDC, it helps researchers to monitor changes in biodiversity and identify areas of conservation concern. Records submitted inform conservation strategies and provide evidence for policy decisions. Species records should be sent to Ireland's National Biodiversity Data Centre.

The kits are free to loan but anyone wishing to borrow a kit must be an adult member of the library service. While the kit is not heavy it is a bulky item, measuring 3ft x 1 ½ft, for that reason anyone wishing to borrow the kit must have their own transport.



Public Services Innovation Fund 2023

The Innovation Fund is a competitive fund that aims to support innovative ideas from across public service organisations and turn them into a reality with funding available from €25,000 up to €60,000.

The project that was submitted was awarded €45,000 and is a pilot initiative between libraries in Galway, Wicklow and Wexford and Citizens Information Services aiming to enhance access to Citizens Information particularly for people with transport or technology challenges

Project Title: Working collaboratively with the library network to provide access to a Citizens Information service

Organisation: Citizens Information Board in collaboration with Galway County Council, Wicklow County Council and Wexford County Council

Sector: Non-Commercial State Agency

Amount Awarded: €45,000

This project will build on the rural library network as a trusted community hub with reliable, well-informed staff and leverage this resource to link people to Citizens Information Services (CIS) using technology. The project team will source and install soundproof workspace pods for two libraries, into which IT support can be installed and facilitate a private meeting with citizens and the Citizen Information Centres (CICs).

Intended Outcomes:

1. Enhancing access to services to citizens who are without access to the internet, or skills to engage with digital content or lack the necessary hardware to access internet services.
2. Enhanced collaboration between stakeholders (Libraries and CISs) in optimising a joint service to clients. Supporting the implementation and achievement of the Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework with an expectation in 90% of services conducted online by 2030
3. Expected reduction in associate costs and environmental impact to citizens who no longer need to travel to CIC locations to use CIC services.

Period Poverty Mitigation Measures

Period Poverty:

Period poverty is something that affects people all over the world. Period poverty means not having access to the products needed during a period, such as pads, tampons, menstrual cups, or pain relievers to help with cramps. This could be because of problems affording these products, or having difficulty accessing them for social or cultural reasons. It is a growing issue in Ireland particularly since the onset of the pandemic.

Who does period poverty affect?

Anyone could be affected by period poverty at some point in their lives.

The impact of period poverty:

Period poverty can affect people in more ways than you might think. Aside from the inconvenience of not having any sanitary products, it can have an emotional, social, and physical impact.

How to help people in period poverty:

Galway County Council has secured funding for the purposes of supporting period poverty mitigation measures.

Galway Library Service has sourced dispensers and products that will be available in public bathrooms. We are working with a company called **We are Riley** who provide 100% organic, bleach, toxin and chemical free products.

We are presently rolling this service out to all our service points.

This is a wonderful service to have available for those who might not have access to period products for any reason.



Digital Equity and Social Inclusion Programme

DRCD Libraries Development and Community Support have announced €150,000 capital funding for a Digital Equity and Social Inclusion Programme to purchase modern equipment in public libraries.

This measure will support the provision of modern equipment in public libraries that improves accessibility for people with a disability and those with sensory needs, autism, or older members of our community.

It includes Assistive Technology and Equipment which is equipment that can help a person with a disability perform activities that might not otherwise be possible. Assistive products maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence, thereby promoting their well-being e.g. assistive devices and headphones that will enable the visually impaired to use library resources, wheelchair-accessible shelving, customizable workstations, and wayfinding etc.

Sensory overload in public places, including libraries, can be overwhelming for those on the Autism Spectrum (ASD). Sensory resources are hugely beneficial to the families and carers of people with ASD and can be considered under the initiative e.g. sensory packs, sensory pods etc.

The aim of this funding is to:

- provide supports in tandem with the **Sensory Libraries** initiative, and

- provide a public libraries **Digital Equity and Social Inclusion Programme**.

Funding of **€5,000** initially to Library Authorities who submit an eligible proposal with a value of €5,555.55 or more. DRCD will reallocate any unclaimed or surplus funding to Library Authorities whose proposals exceed €5,555.55 and they will do this on a pro rata basis based on the population of local authorities, as published in the 2022 census.

Grant aid will be a maximum of **90% of the total eligible cost** incurred.

Decade of Centenaries Celebration

The launch of two projects entitled *1921: A Dialogue through Poetry and Music and Artists & Activists: 1922 Women in a Changing Cultural Landscape* undertaken by Galway Public Libraries in 2021 and 2022 as part of Galway County Council's Decade of Centenaries programme took place in Ballinasloe Library on Saturday, March 11th, 2023.

Launched by First Woman Sabina Higgins with the Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway, Cllr. Michael Maher.

A Dialogue through Poetry and Music is a collaboration between five poets and musicians who were commissioned to create new poetry and musical works on the theme of 1921. Participating poets included Emily Cullen, Louis de Paor, Luke Morgan, Noelle Lynskey and Nuala O'Connor. They were joined by musicians Ciaran Cannon, Dana Lyn, Ger Fahy, Emily Greaney with Tomás and Róisín Mannion.

Artists & Activists: 1922 Women in a Changing Cultural Landscape highlighted the role of women as artists and creatives in the early twentieth century by showcasing the contributions of specific women who revolutionized Irish art including 'domestic' art pieces such as weaving, embroidery and clothing. The project included 4 commissions covering the fields of music, song, dance, and craft. Participating creatives included Jean Moran, Bernadette Divilly, Sharon Murphy and Áine Sheridan.



Decade of Centenaries Project Launch

CORPORATE SERVICES

“An Choill Bheag” initiative rolled out for Palace Grounds in Tuam

Galway County Council in conjunction with An Taisce, is spearheading the rolling out of a new initiative entitled ‘An Choill Bheag’ for the Palace Grounds in Tuam. An Choill Bheag is a long-term educational programme, with an emphasis on educating young people on native ecosystems. It also centres around practical sustainable tree planting and long-term woodland and eco-system education and management, and the associated practical skills required for same. In addition, it places a strong emphasis on creating the woodlands habitat that are studied and managed as part of a longer-term educational initiative.

Transition Year students from the Presentation Convent in Tuam have begun a series of plantings of small, dense, biodiverse woodland areas within the Palace Grounds. Having the local school and its TY students involved helps to ensure that the planting will be well looked after as other similar plantings have demonstrated that in working in partnership with local

schools that there is less of a likelihood of damage being done to the planting when local teenagers are looking after them.

The species of tree planted are all native and are suitable to the individuality of the Palace Grounds and its diverse ecosystem. Cardboard obtained from local business in Tuam is also being used to place around the base of the new trees. The use of the Cardboard will prevent the grass from growing around the tree and choking its development, and the cardboard itself then will rot into the ground after a year or two.

This together with the Green Flag Award which was awarded to the Palace Grounds over two consecutive years in 2021 and 2022 together with the Green Heritage Site Award for the Palace Grounds demonstrate that Galway County Council is proactive in relation to biodiversity and the protection of the natural environment. Over the past 3 years Galway County Council have instigated a Pollinator Friendly element to the Palace grounds, leaving almost a fifth of the grassland to grow into wild meadow. Pathways have been provided through this meadow so that its vibrant colours can be enjoyed by everyone using the park. It is hoped to extend this area to one third of the grassed areas over the next two years. This facility is used extensively by schools to educate the pupils on biodiversity and the natural environment.

Galway County Council will apply to retain the Green Flag and Green Heritage Awards for the Palace Grounds for 2023 and are hopeful that the score achieved will increase this year due to the great work undertaken in the park by the CES team, gardener, ground crew and Tuam Tidy Towns. An application has also been made for significant funding for the Palace Grounds to the Community Recognition Fund to assist with the further development of the Park into the future and its continued enjoyment by locals and the many visitors for years to come.





Leisure Centre Playground, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

Maintenance works have taken place recently at our Playground adjacent to the Leisure Centre in Ballinasloe. The necessary repairs to the wet pour and clean-up of the existing equipment. The overgrown trees and shrubbery have been heavily cut back from the playground fence with the assistance from our outdoor general operators.



Before and After, Leisure Centre Playground, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.



Scoláireachtaí Gaeltachta Phádraig Mhic Phiarais 2023 de chuid Chomhairle Chonta

Ar an 13 Márta bhronn Cathaoirleach Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe an Comh. Michael 'Moegie' Maher teastais ar bhuaiteoirí scoláireachtaí Phádraig Mhic Phiarais do 2023.

Bronnadh 12 scoláireacht ina iomláine agus beidh dhá scoláireacht ar fáil chun freastal ar na coláistí Samhradh seo a leanas:

- Coláiste Chamuis, An Tulach / Camas / Ros an Mhíl
- Coláiste Chiaráin, An Cheathrú Rua
- Coláiste Chonnacht, An Spidéal
- Coláiste Lurgan, Indreabhán
- Coláiste Sheosaimh, Carna / Cill Chiaráin
- Spleodar, Ros Muc / Corr na Móna / Leitir Mealláin / Leitir Móir



ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Awareness

National Tree Week 2023

National Tree Week 2023 will take place this year from 19th March - 26th March 2023. The Tree Council of Ireland and Coillte are partnering for National Tree Week and this year’s theme is “Biodiversity begins with Trees”.

In conjunction with the Tree Council of Ireland and Coillte, Galway County Council are distributing tree saplings to community groups, schools and other voluntary organisations.

School Presentation

Litter and Waste Management presentation given to Lackagh National School as part of their Environment Week programme.

New Tenants Presentation

A presentation on waste management and waste enforcement was presented to new Galway County Council tenants. This included advice on waste segregation, bulky goods disposal and enforcement issues.

Schools Anti- Litter Poster Competition 2023



As part of Galway County Council’s 2023 Anti - Litter programme, students throughout the county are invited to participate in an Anti-Litter Poster competition based on the theme of ‘Keep County Galway Litter Free’. The competition categories are as follows:

- Junior Primary category is for entries from Junior Infants – 3rd class
- Senior Primary category is for 4th – 6th class •

Secondary School category.

Catchment Management

- Significant time and resources were spent on the completion of the RMCEI Returns for 2022 and on the preparation of the 2023 Plan during February. As part of this, two members of staff attended online workshops provided by the LGMA.
- A number of water pollution complaints were investigated during February. Enforcement included issuing of a Section 12 Notice under the Water Pollution Act for a leaking farm slurry lagoon and another Section 12 Notice for storing farmyard manure without the proper effluent controls in place.
- Follow-up with previous Section 12 Notices issued continued.
- 3 farms were cross reported to the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine.
- 15 river monitoring sites were sampled as part of the Water Framework Directive monitoring programme.

Drinking Water

- The BWN (boil water notice) on the Spiddal PWS (public water supply), and specifically the Rossaveal area that is served by the Rossaveal Reservoir, which was issued on the 24th of October 2022, is still in place. Works have been completed and a 3-day Verification Programme has been organised for next week 28th to 30th March 2023, with the hope of lifting the BWN.

Solid Fuel Regulations

The current Solid Fuels Regulations took effect from 31 October 2022, and apply equally across the State.

The primary focus of these regulations is on improving air quality and improving people's health outcomes, by restricting the retail, online and commercial sale of smoky fuels, including smoky coal, turf and wet wood. These fuels are proven to be a major contributor to air pollution in Ireland.

The thresholds which now apply are:

- Coal products and manufactured solid fuels must have a smoke emission rate of less than 10 grams per hour. This is the same as was previously in force in Low Smoke Zones.
- Manufactured part biomass products must have a smoke emission rate of less than 5 grams per hour.
- Coal products and manufactured solid fuels, including manufactured part biomass products, must have a sulphur content of less than 2% by weight on a dry ash-free basis, and subject to a market assessment, from 1 September 2025 this will be reduced to 1%.
- Fuel products which are 100% biomass products (including wood products and wood logs), supplied in units of two cubic metres or less, must have a moisture content of less than 25% (from 1 September 2025, this will be reduced to less than 20%).

- Wood logs supplied in units of two cubic metres or more must now be accompanied by a notice outlining the need to store and season wet wood until it is sufficiently dried.
- It is now not possible to sell turf via retail, online or other media, in public houses or other public places.

The Regulations also place certain obligations on producers, importers, and retailers of solid fuels.

The enforcement of the Solid Fuel Regulations will require a dedicated resource, which is not available at present in the Environment Section.

Deco Paints Regulations

4 certificates under the Deco Paints Regulations were issued to garages in February.

Planning

8 planning files were assessed, and reports provided to the planners. One member of staff attended a pre-planning meeting in relation to a large housing development in Gort.

Waste Management and Enforcement

Significant time and resources were spent on the completion of the RMCEI Returns for 2022 and on the preparation of the 2023 Plan during February.

Multi Agency Checkpoints

Waste enforcement checkpoints attended by Waste Enforcement Officers, Community Wardens and the Gardai were carried out on 1st of February in the Ballygar and Mountbellew areas. Numerous cases of illegal dumping have been reported in these areas over the past couple of years.

Burial Grounds

Part 8 planning permission was granted for the extension of the burial grounds at Duniry.

There has been some comment recently about Local Government arrangements in Galway with particular reference to whether the boundary between City and County might be adjusted. In that context the following information may be of assistance to the council on this matter.

In 2015, the relevant Minister appointed an independent statutory committee to review the local government arrangements in Galway. The terms of reference asked the committee to make recommendation on:

- a) whether the boundary of Galway City should be altered and, if so, recommendations with respect to the alteration of the boundary; or
- b) whether Galway City Council and Galway County Council should be unified

The committee considered these and other options and including an enhanced shared services arrangement or no change at all. Ultimately it concluded that an amalgamation of Galway City and County Councils was favoured to maximize the potential of the region and grow a sustainable economic base into the future.

Subsequently, in 2016, the Minister established an expert advisory group to carry out further detailed examination and planning arising from the report of the review committee. In its two interim reports, the expert advisory group advised that it did not identify any technical or administrative obstacles to amalgamation but that, in meeting with elected members and staff, the revenue under-funding of both authorities, particularly Galway County Council, in addition to staffing constraints had been impressed upon them. The group recommended that those existing deficiencies in respect of both the human and financial resources be resolved as an essential prerequisite to the amalgamation process.

Neither the report of the Statutory Committee on Local Government Boundary Arrangements nor the reports of the Expert Advisory Group recommended an extension of the city boundary into the county area. The boundary extension option was assessed and, while noting some pros for an extension, the committee set out the following cons with such an idea;

- an extension that includes Parkmore is seen as creating difficulties for the county, which would lose the significant commercial rates associated with Parkmore.
- If a wider extension to include Barna, Oranmore, Maigh Cuillin, Athenry is envisaged, the county would lose a substantial element of its income base population. Also, for the city, there is a question of whether local property tax from areas such as Barna and Oranmore would be enough to cover the services to be provided by the city.
- Depending on the scale of the boundary extension, the county could be adversely affected in that its standing and presence could be perceived to be downgraded. The voice of the county and its constituent parts could carry less weight in future deliberations on economic and social development. Enlarging the scale of the city's influence could result in more people and investment being drawn in from the balance of lands in the county to the detriment of and the viability of the more peripheral areas of the county.
- A boundary extension could weaken the county and has the potential to adversely affect morale and motivation in what might be seen as a downgraded county.

- It is difficult to envisage meaningful efficiency savings associated with boundary extension, as it primarily relates to a reconfiguration of boundaries and the associated transfer of resources. There would inevitably be some transition costs associated with this option.
- Based on previous experience with regard to boundary changes, arrangements would need to be put in place that would
 - (a) determine the level of compensation that the city would need to give to the county (issues around agreeing the amount of revenue lost and gained, land and debt transfers, etc.) and
 - (b) ensure a rigorous, agreed system for transfers between the councils.
- The county submission makes the case for a permanent arrangement rather than a transfer that phases out over time, as the value would reduce over time to the detriment of the county. There would be scope for disagreement between the city and the county about what should be included, and this would likely take some time to resolve. Some form of independent arbitration process would likely be required.

The foregoing represents the most recent comprehensive analysis of the local government arrangements in Galway. It did not recommend an extension of the city boundary into the county area - and for good reason. A boundary extension into the county area, would undermine the viability of the County and would have to be strenuously resisted.

In any event, until such time as the Minister decides to look again at the organisation of local government in Galway, the current arrangement will remain unchanged.

Mise, le meas,

Mr. Jim Cullen

Chief Executive

Galway County Council

24th March 2023