

# CLARE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD NEWSLETTER



Clare County Development Board  
Bord Forbartha Chontae an Chláir

Summer 2001

Volume 1, Issue 3

## Fáilte

Welcome to the third edition of our newsletter, keeping you informed of the Board's activities over the past few months. Since the last **edition, there have been a number of highlights for the Board including the well-attended Social Inclusion Conference, Culture Seminar and Heritage Conference, Clare's successful application for a Sports Partnership, the appointment of a County Childcare Committee and the Board's involvement with the Western Rail Project.**

The Board and Working Groups are now fully immersed in the task of developing the vision, goals and objectives for the county's economic, social and cultural development strategy. This stage translates to Step 5 of the eight-step process of planning the Integrated Strategy – an indication of just how much work the Board and its sub-structures have carried out so far. To date, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats pertaining to the broad sectoral themes of the county have been identified.

These and the key strategic issues were derived from consultation with the Working Groups of the Board, the wider consultation groups, Local Area Networks and through the County Development Board meetings. Through this very same consultation process, these issues are now being translated to more specific goals and objectives for the county's future direction.

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## *'The Way Forward Towards a More Inclusive Society in County Clare'*

On the 19th April 2001 in the West County Hotel, Ennis, Ms Síle de Valera, Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, opened a one-day Social Inclusion Conference hosted by the Clare CDB. The aim of the conference was to

bring together all interested parties in the county to highlight the work being undertaken by agencies towards the goal of social inclusion. A key objective was to discover the challenges facing the groups involved in

combating social exclusion so that the main elements of a future social inclusion strategy for the county could then be outlined.

In her speech, Minister de Valera made reference to

national programmes such as the National Development Plan, the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, and the National Anti-Poverty Strategy. The challenge of Social Inclusion in Clare, she said, is about "ensuring that all of its people feel respected and feel they belong". Reiterating the Government's commitment to creating a more inclusive society for all, she stressed, "we need to ensure that the benefits of sound economic management and growth are distributed fairly and, in particular, are used to tackle the underlying causes of poverty and social exclusion". Reliance on economic progress alone is not enough to ensure that no section of society feels excluded. While Clare has benefited considerably from the economic progress of the past few years, there remains a number of main challenges to bear in mind when planning for the future. These include:

- The decline in the viability of farming on small holdings.
- Access to social services by the elderly and people with disabilities, particularly in rural areas.
- The integration of asylum seekers, refugees and Travellers.

- Ensuring equal access to educational opportunities for all sections of society.
- Reducing the incidence of poverty.

Mr. Joe Allen, Department of the Environment and Local Government, spoke about Social Inclusion in the context of local government renewal. He outlined the role and function of the Strategic Policy Committees, the CDBs, the Social Inclusion Co-ordination Working Groups, the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS), the Local Authority Anti-Poverty Learning Network and the Pilot Social Inclusion Units. Given the expanded remit and increased resources of local government, local authorities now have more opportunities than ever before to engage in partnership with other agencies in counteracting social exclusion.

Ms. Julie Smyth of the Combat Poverty Agency spoke about the roots of poverty and social exclusion occurring outside of the communities which experience them. The causes, she said, are to be found in the wider economic, political and power structures of society. In promoting social inclusion, it is vital that those who

experience poverty and disadvantage are empowered to participate in and have a say about the structures and influences on their lives.

Overall, the conference proved to be highly successful. Over 100 people attended and all participants actively engaged in the workshops which were held. A number of key issues were drawn out from the proceedings and workshops of the day. These centred on the Clare CDB Strategy, information needs, the local Area Networks, social housing, education and information technology. Although there is presently a Working Group specifically focusing on Social Inclusion, this conference represented a further effort to ensure that the Board consults extensively in its preparation of the necessary issues for the Integrated Strategy.

*"We need to ensure that the benefits of sound economic management and growth are distributed fairly and, in particular, are used to tackle the underlying causes of poverty and social exclusion"*

*Minister Sile De Valera*



*Photographed at the Social Inclusion Conference L to R Julie Smyth, Cllr Seán Hillery, Joe Allen, Minister Sile De Valera, Eamonn Naughton*

## *My Clare - Insights on Culture of Clare at Burren College of Art*

The Burren College of Art, Ballyvaughan was an idyllic setting for the Culture Seminar hosted by the Clare CDB on the 13th/14th June. All aspects of culture were included such as music, visual arts, dance, literature, sport, language and folklore. Participants represented a broad cross-section of the arts and culture in Clare and

included artists, writers, musicians, poets, sculptors, and those involved in community organisations among others. The main objective of the seminar was to develop a cultural policy for the county which will feed directly into the Integrated Strategy for Co. Clare and also assist the formulation of a Community Development/Cultural policy for Clare County Council.

Four speakers gave their views and insights on aspects of culture in Co. Clare – Noel Crowley, County Librarian; Doirín Graham, Rural Resource Development Ltd; Jessie Lendennie, Salmon Publishing

and Muiris O’Rochain, Willie Clancy Summer School. Through the format of workshops, the Culture Seminar focused in particular on the following – Protecting Culture, Fostering Culture, Cultural Infrastructure and the Promotion of Culture. The findings of the workshops will feed into the development of a cultural strategy for the county. With an attendance of approximately seventy people during the two days, the setting combined with the quality of speakers ensured the seminar was an undisputed success.



*Attending the Culture Conference Front to Back Eamonn Naughton, Lelia Doolan, Cllr. Seán Hillery, Cllr. Flan Garvey, Liam Ó Rónáin and John Coll.*

## Heritage of Clare

On 21st/22nd June, a Heritage Conference was held in the Temple Gate Hotel, Ennis. A wide range of people were invited to speak on different aspects of heritage and its relevance to local communities and the county. John Gittens, Director of Cheshire Landscape Trust, spoke about the role of community action in taking responsibility for one’s own heritage. Representatives of Duchas spoke about the role of Duchas in the protection of heritage, while Brendan McGrath, Senior

Executive Planner of Clare County Council, discussed the current situation with regard to heritage in Co. Clare.

In his address, Mr. John Gittens, Cheshire Landscape Trust, stressed community action as one of the prime ways to promote heritage conservation. Such action, he said, can be based in geographical communities, for example, Doonbeg, or in ‘communities of interest’, that is groups sharing a common interest, for example, the Ballyvaughan Folklore Project or the Clare Environmental

Alliance. The challenge with community action is to choose the appropriate level of engagement, which can range from merely giving information to helping a community to become truly empowered. Delegates attending the Heritage Conference participated on the day in one of the following workshops – Built Heritage, Environment and Natural Heritage, Folklore, Local Heritage and Public Participation. The proceedings from these workshops will also feed into the Board’s Integrated Strategy for the county.

## Up the Banner!

The recent successes of the Clare hurling and football teams, the Shannon and Munster rugby teams, and the achievements of many individual Clare athletes have been a source of pride for the supporters of sports in this county. Much of this would not have been possible without the people of the county who invested enormous community resources

in the development of the different sporting facilities and infrastructure, and indeed, the local volunteers who gave generously of their time. Now, for the first time, a new structure will be put in place to co-ordinate and promote the development of sport at county level by building on the existing work of these individuals and sporting bodies.



**New Sports Partnership for County Clare**

On the 25th May 2001 at Quin Community Hall, John Treacy, Chief Executive of the Irish Sports Council, launched the Clare Local Sports Partnership - one of only eight of its kind throughout the country. The key aims of the local sports partnerships (LSP) will be to create greater opportunities for participation by all in sport and to ensure that local resources are used to best effect. The Clare CDB, along with the Clare VEC, the Clare Youth Services, Clare County Council and the Mid-Western Health Board, were instrumental in preparing the successful Clare application.

Speaking at the LSP launch in Quin, Mr. John Treacy said, "The success of the Sports Partnership Proposal for Clare is an excellent example of what can be achieved through the combined efforts of the community and public agencies working together towards a common goal. Such work fully represents a tangible success for the ongoing work of co-ordination, co-operation and partnership which is at the heart of the County Development Board process".

The Local Sports Partnership initiative was established under the Irish Sports Council in recognition that sport is often under resourced at the local level and that fewer people are taking up voluntary roles in society. The Irish Sports Council sees these partnerships as the best mechanism for delivering recreational sport to the

greatest number of people and ensuring that local resources are maximised. The very core of these partnerships is the local involvement and ownership and its inclusive approach to sport encompassing people from all walks of life, cultures and orientations.

The Clare Sports Partnership aims to nurture the passionate commitment to sporting life in this county by co-ordinating and adding value to the work of the different sporting associations within Clare. A Sports Officer shall be appointed with responsibility for developing, promoting and enhancing all sports at every level and age group. A Sports Forum will be formally established and will assist in the preparation and implementation of a local sports strategy. The diversity of different sporting codes and traditions will be valued and respected and sport will be promoted in a manner that maximises opportunities for the participation of all communities, individuals and organisations. The Partnership's strategy will be agreed through a wide-ranging consultative process drawing on the consultative structures established under the auspices of the Clare County Development Board



*Present at the launch of the Clare Sports Partnership  
L to R: Claire Thynne, Jim Lyons, Patricia Dillon,  
John Treacy, Cllr. Seán Hillery, William Moloney,  
Cllr. Flan Garvey and Eamonn Naughton.*

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*"John Treacy"*

## Community and Cultural Development Policy SPC

The inaugural meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee on Community and Cultural Development Policy (SPC 5) chaired by Cllr Michael Hillery, was held on the 31st July 2000. Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) have been established nationwide as part of the government's commitment to the reform of local government. The task of the five SPCs in Clare is to assist and advise Clare County Council in the formulation, review and development of council policy.

The remit of this Committee includes Community Development, Recreation and Amenity Development, Library and Museum Service, and Development of the Arts. The aim is to ensure that council policy in these areas is developed through a process of consultation and that it is linked to the development of the Integrated Strategy by the Clare CDB.

The Committee members are presently working on framing the overall Community and Cultural Development Policy and by November, it is envisaged that a finalised policy document will be made available.

# Children of County Clare

In County Clare, there are 17,839 children under 12 years of age; the provision of adequate and sufficient childcare services is therefore of critical importance. On January 16th 2001 the inaugural meeting of the Clare County Childcare Committee was held in Ennis. Based in part on the work and research conducted by the three ADM groups in the County, this Committee will be responsible for developing and reinforcing the quality of childcare in Clare. The main purpose of

the County Childcare Committee is to develop a County Childcare Plan which meets the needs of individuals and childcare providers within the County. In time, it is envisaged that this Committee will be a substructure supporting the Clare CDB.

The Clare County Childcare Committee is comprised of key local stakeholders such as; parents, voluntary groups, social partners, national government agencies,

together with providers of early years care and education services from both the community and privately managed facilities. Eamonn Naughton, Director of Community and Enterprise, Clare CDB was recently appointed chairperson. Ger Neylon and Michael O'Brien were appointed secretary and treasurer respectively. A Childcare Co-ordinator will oversee the development and implementation of the County Childcare Plan on behalf of the Committee.

## Who's Who in County Clare.....

Much work has been completed on the County Clare Directory of Service Provision. The first phase of an Audit of Service Providers operating in the county, this Directory is a vital step towards planning for integrated service delivery in Clare. It will act as an important resource for the people of Clare as it contains information on the different organisations throughout the county, their location, and the nature of services and/or programmes

which they provide. The Directory is divided into five main sections with a total of over 70 organisations listed - Local Government, Local Development, Social Partners, State Sector, and Countywide Community and Voluntary Groups. The Clare CDB will update this Directory on

an ongoing basis to reflect changes in the services provided within the county.

As the second phase of this process, the Board intends to publish a separate Directory for local Community and Voluntary groups in Clare.

*The County Clare Directory of Service Provision will act as an important resource for the people of Co. Clare.*

## Research Update

The Social, Cultural and Economic Profile of County Clare is now near completion. A draft copy is being designed for final publication before the end of July.

The Clare CDB intends that this Profile will act as a key resource for all individuals and organisations seeking information about life in Clare. It

provides a description of the conditions under which the people of the county live and work. The Profile's primary purpose, however, is to provide the Clare CDB with comprehensive baseline information for strategic planning purposes and to provide a benchmark against which development and progress may be measured in the future. It will also act as a planning resource for local

development organisations and voluntary groups operating within Clare. The Clare CDB intends to update the Profile in the future so as to reflect the changing and evolving nature of the county. The Profile will also be accessible from the web page of the Board ([www.clarecdb.ie](http://www.clarecdb.ie))

# Clare on the Right Tracks

In the past number of months, the co-operation of the Clare CDB has proved to be of vital importance to the establishment and workings of the Western Rail Project.

A Rail Co-ordinating Committee in the Mid-West has been established to undertake pre-development financial, technical and policy research in support of rail access in the region generally, and the development of rail access to Shannon in particular. An analysis of infrastructure in the West highlights that there are major deficiencies in infrastructure and public transport in the seven western counties. Without significant investment, the region's economic development will not be realised. The Rail Co-ordinating Committee in the Mid-West has advocated a spatial and inter-regional approach to the development of rail infrastructure. Arising out of this, the Clare CDB has brought

together the Western region CDBs, the relevant Regional Authorities, Iarnród Éireann and Local Government. This coalition of interest traverses the Cork-Sligo axis and represents a unique approach to addressing the development needs and potential that enhanced rail infrastructure represents.

The Western Rail Project team is currently arranging a submission to the Department of Public Enterprise and the National Spatial Strategy. A proposal for Rail Access to Shannon will be finalised over the coming month. Thus, for the first time, there is now a very real possibility that a Cork-Sligo via Shannon route will be incorporated as a central component of the integrated social and economic development of the Western Region. This will have huge spin-off benefits for the future development of Clare's economy and infrastructure.



**A Rail Co-ordinating Committee in the Mid-West has been established in support of rail access in the region generally, and the development of rail access to Shannon in particular.**

## Audit of Social Inclusion Measures

As part of the co-ordination of Social Inclusion measures, the Office of the Director of Community and Enterprise in each local authority area is required to identify what agencies are providing social inclusion measures to specified target groups. The objective of the Audit is to assist CCDB co-ordinate the delivery of all Social Inclusion measures in County Clare and to identify areas of

overlap and duplication. As part of the process, questionnaires will be designed to enable the identification of needs of target groups. Upon completion of analysis of the questionnaires, we envisage being able to identify some of the issues of concern to each target group (finance, available services, support networks, employment, education and training, transport, childcare facilities

and housing). The Social Inclusion Working Group will provide direction and co-ordination to the research programme being carried out in Clare. Active support and co-operation will also be forthcoming from the Community Forum, the Social Inclusion Consultation Group, the CDB and all the relevant agencies.

# Funding For Forum

## *Update on Community Forum and Local Area Networks.*

Earlier in the year, the Department of the Environment and Local Government approved a total sum of £24,000 to be administered through the office of the Director of Community and Enterprise. This funding is used to support the activities and ongoing development of the Clare Community Forum (CCF). As a prerequisite to this funding, the Forum has been working on a number of issues including: the agreement of a work programme, ongoing development and training supports, and the structures and management of the CCF.

Due to the Foot-and-Mouth crisis, all local Area Network meetings this earlier year have had to be postponed. The issues arising from the previous round of the five

local Area Network meetings have been brought forward for the attention of the various Working Groups of the Board in the preparation of the Integrated Strategy. In recognition of the role of local community organisations as legitimate partners in the long-term planning of the county, the Community and Enterprise Office continue to pledge their support to the ongoing work of the Area Networks and the CCF by making available any necessary resources - administrative, personnel, etc.

In April a development planning session was organised for the Forum and facilitated by the Community Workers

Co-operative. The aim of the session was to explore views on how the Forum should operate while ensuring the fullest possible participation by the Community and Voluntary groups in the CDB process.

A further meeting was held in May to update members of the Community Forum of progress to date in the preparation of the Integrated Strategy. Additional representatives from other community organisations within different Area Networks were invited to further enhance the flow of information on key issues. The Community Forum has also recently appointed an executive with Mr. Michael Nagle as its chairperson.

**The Community and Enterprise Office continue to pledge their support to the ongoing work of the Area Networks and the CCF by making available any necessary resources — administrative, personnel, etc.**



*Members of the Clare Community Forum at a recent meeting held in Ennis.*

**Clare County Development Board**

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**We're on the Web!**  
**[www.clarecdb.ie](http://www.clarecdb.ie)**



## Mission Statement of Clare County Development Board

"To shape and support a strategy  
which will ensure that all the people  
and the places of the county  
are valued and  
respected"

### *News Shorts • News Shorts • News Shorts • News Shorts*

- At the June 2001 meeting of the CDB Board held in Kilrush Cllr Sean Hillery stepped down as Chairperson have successfully served a two year term of office. Tom Prendeville replaces Tom Glynn on the Board as the new representative from the Town Authorities. Mr Pat O'Hanlon replaces Seamus O'Sullivan as the new representative of the Employers/Business Pillar.
- The Clare CDB will endorse Kilrush UDC's proposal for decentralisation.
- On 9th March 2001, Minister Síle de Valera launched the Clare CDB web site, which outlines the role and activities of the Board. The site will be updated on a regular and ongoing basis. The web address is [www.clarecdb.ie](http://www.clarecdb.ie). Our e-mail address is [dceoff@clarecoco.ie](mailto:dceoff@clarecoco.ie).
- At the Social Inclusion Conference, Minister Síle de Valera also launched the setting up of a research group in local authorities. Research officers from Clare, Donegal, Kerry, Mayo and North Tipperary attended the launch and a work programme is currently being prepared by the group.
- Since the New Year, a number of new members have been taken on board to the Office of Community and Enterprise in Clare County Council. Ms. Maeve Reddan has been appointed as a clerical officer. Ms. Annette O'Regan, a student on placement from UL is assisting in the analysis and collaboration of research. Ms. Martina Reddington, a student on placement from NUI Galway, will assist in the carrying out of an audit of social inclusion measures for Co. Clare.
- The Community and Enterprise Offices have recently moved from the County Council offices on New Road, Ennis. Our new address is Quin Road Business Park, Ennis. Tel: 065 – 6846 222. Fax: 065 – 6829 558.

*We would welcome input from our readers regarding any article. New articles also welcome.*