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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."*

CLARE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT BOARD NEWSLETTER



Clare County Development Board
Bord Forbartha Chontae an Chláir

Summer 2002

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Fáilte

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Clare County Development Board newsletter. The past year has been the most active period to date for the Board, with the highlight undoubtedly being the launch of the Board's Integrated Strategy in February. Since the last edition, the Board has embarked on a number of major initiatives, including the organisation of the county's first Children's Council, the hosting of seminars on volunteering and on rural development, and the embarking on a rural transport audit and an employment skills audit for the county. This newsletter will also report on the Board's activities with other partnership organisations and programmes within the county such as the County Childcare Committee and the RAPID and CLÁR programmes.

Future editions of this newsletter will endeavour to keep you updated on the implementation of the Board's ten-year Integrated Strategy. The Board is facilitated by the Director of Community and Enterprise, Eamonn Naughton and his team. Office contact details are given on the back page.



Pictured at the launch of the CDB Strategy, L to R: Joe Allen, Principal Officer, Department of the Environment and Local Government; Willie Moloney, former County Manager; Cllr. Richard Nagle, Cathaoirleach, Clare County Development Board; Minister Síle de Valera; and Eamonn Naughton, Director of Service

"Shaping the Future" - Spring Launch of Integrated Strategy

Spring 2002 marked the beginnings of a new partnership era with the launch by Minister Síle de Valera of the Clare CDB's ten-year Integrated Strategy for the Social, Economic and Cultural Development of Co. Clare. Established in February 2000, Clare CDB was given the objective

of enhancing greater co-ordination in the delivery of all services at a local level. For the first time ever, all the key service providers, the social partners, local government, local development agencies, and the community and voluntary sector were involved in agreeing a ten-year strategy for the

development of the county. This Integrated Strategy is the result of 18 months of planning and extensive consultation by the Clare CDB involving local area meetings, conferences, surveys, public consultation sessions and individual submissions.

News Shorts • News Shorts • News Shorts • News Shorts



Pictured at the 10th Anniversary celebrations for the Disabled People of Clare L to R: Eamonn Naughton, Director of Service; Mary McAleese, President of Ireland; Dermot Hayes, Disabled People of Clare

The Disabled People of Clare celebrated their 10th anniversary in April of this year. The Clare CDB gave assistance towards organising the event. To mark the occasion, President Mary McAleese came to address the group at the Temple Gate Hotel in Ennis.

There have been a number of new replacements to the Board since the last newsletter. We would like to welcome the following CDB members: Alec Fleming the new County Manager; Aisling Sharkey and John Everett representing the ADM Groups; Deirdre Frost of the Western Development Commission; Chief Supt. P.P. Kelly, An Garda Síochána; Pdraigín Uí Riordáin, Co Clare VEC; Shay Power, IDA Ireland and Pat O'Hanlon representing the Business/Employers Sector.

There have been a few changes also amongst the staff of Community and Enterprise. Research Co-ordinator, Donal Guerin, left to take up position as Social Inclusion Officer in his native Cork. Our new Research Co-ordinator is Kieran Dempsey. Leonard Cleary, Development Officer, is working alongside the two Community and Enterprise Development Officers. Fiacre Hensey has recently been appointed as the new RAPID Co-ordinator for Ennis. Aileen Carey and Jonathan Quin are currently on student placements with the Community and Enterprise team.

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Launched in Glór Irish Music Centre, Ennis on February 4th of this year, the Integrated Strategy provides a shared vision of Clare up to 2012. Addressing the launch, Cllr. Richard Nagle, Chairman Clare CDB, commended the Strategy as "a groundbreaking initiative which sought to put local communities at the heart of a process usually reserved for officials and experts". "The Integrated Strategy" he said, "presents us with an opportunity to shape the kind of Clare we want to live in ten years from now".

- Devising a Community Care Plan for County Clare
- Providing accessible and efficient public transport in all parts of the county
- Ensuring a balanced spread of development across the county to support rural communities
- Minimising the impact of flooding across the county
- Developing a county tourism strategy based on the needs of small accommodation providers and community based tourism initiatives

The Strategy is underpinned by five fundamental values – inclusion, innovation, integration, sustainability and spatial equality. The following are just some of the key actions laid out within the Strategy:

- Developing supports for farmers to market their produce more effectively
- Cultivating and developing an enterprise and innovation culture throughout the county
- Developing a third-level institute for Ennis
- Tackling poverty and inequality over a five year period through a Social Inclusion Forum

So where does the Board go from here? While visionary, the Strategy is more than a list of aspirations. Speaking at the launch, Eamonn Naughton, Director of Clare CDB said, "What is different about this document is that it is designed to be implemented". The Board and the six sectoral Implementation Groups (formerly known as Working Groups) have now set themselves the task of implementing the 63 objectives and 207 actions contained within the Strategy. As well as detailing the agency, group or organisation responsible for carrying out each objective, the Strategy also sets out a definite time scale for completion of the task.

The aim of Clare CDB is to bring about real change in Clare, and to make a positive impact on people's lives. Because the Strategy will unfold over a ten-year period, the CDB has a crucial responsibility to monitor and review the Strategy on an on-going basis. In other words, it needs to constantly ask itself whether the actions that have been agreed are still relevant in light of changing economic and social circumstances within the county. Does the implementation of the Strategy improve the quality of life for the people of Clare? The Board would like to take this opportunity to invite our readers to submit their views at any time on any of the actions being implemented.

"...a groundbreaking initiative which sought to put local communities at the heart of a process usually reserved for officials and experts".

"The Integrated Strategy presents us with an opportunity to shape the kind of Clare we want to live in ten years from now".

Cllr. Richard Nagle

Innovating Our Economy – Progress Report and Future Actions

Since the launch of the Integrated Strategy, a number of major projects related to economic development have already begun: proposals for a fibre-optic connection to West Clare, an employment skills audit for the county to increase the competitiveness of our local workforce, and proposals for a third-level institute for the county.

Kilrush Industry and Enterprise Task Force

In West Clare, a lead has already been taken with the establishment of the Kilrush Industry & Enterprise Task Force.

The Task Force comprises a partnership between local industry in West Clare, public sector

agencies and the community. The aim of the Task Force is to progress economic development in Kilrush Town, which serves as the capital of the West Clare hinterland. A twelve-month set of priority economic actions has been agreed and is currently being progressed by the Task Force. These include advanced proposals for the development of a fibre-optic high speed telecommunications link to the area. Other projects being progressed by the West Clare Task Force include examination of the development of a hotel for Kilrush, decentralisation of Government Offices and maximising the benefits of the Town Renewal Tax Incentive Scheme.

Employment Skills Audit

The Clare CDB has designed a study to identify the nature and extent of any

employment skills deficit in Clare and to recommend appropriate training responses to bridge the gap. In conjunction with the Kilrush Industry and Enterprise Task Force and FÁS, West Clare was chosen as the pilot for the Employment Skills Audit survey. The second phase is currently underway in Shannon and will go county-wide in 2003 in order to identify current and future skills required by businesses. Every type of business from the local pub to the large factory was asked to participate and each employer in Clare will be asked to "play their part" in making Clare a more competitive economy.



The Local Area Networks are continuing to hold regular meetings in their respective areas. At these meetings, attendees are kept informed and updated on progress of the implementation of the Integrated Strategy. Local issues, which are relevant to the communities, are also discussed. These are then brought forward to the Clare Community Forum and to the Community and Voluntary representatives on the CDB where they are addressed at Board level. The CCF representatives on the Implementation Groups regularly provide feedback to

their respective Area Networks and to the CCF in general. Having received initial financial assistance of €31,000 in 2001 by the Department of Environment and Local Government, a further €31,000 was made available in early summer to further support the activities and development of the CCF. The CCF has recently completed a constitution for the Forum and has drawn up an Action Plan for 2002-2003. It is proposed to shortly appoint a full-time Development Officer for the CCF to work with both the networks and the Community Forum.

This position will be co-funded by the Community and Enterprise Directorate Clare Co. Council and the Community Forum itself. The CDB, in association with the CCF, are currently working on producing an updated Directory of the Community and Voluntary Sector of Co. Clare. This database will contain key information on organisational aims, key services provided, contact details, etc. of all Community and Voluntary groups in the county. To date, over 400 questionnaires have been sent out.

News Shorts • News Shorts • News Shorts • News Shorts

In response to a number of calls by Councillors in the Shannon region, Clare County Council, with the assistance of the Shannon Town Council and FAS, is pleased to announce that it will soon be appointing a Development Officer for the town of Shannon. Shannon, the second largest town in the county, has a young population but is failing to attract the funding and services required to ensure a good quality of life in the area. It is anticipated that the Development Officer will be appointed by Autumn 2002.

The Clare CDB intends to update the Social, Economic and Cultural Profile of Co. Clare once the results of the 2002 Census are made available. If there are any communities or groups throughout the county, which have or are conducting their own piece of research or profile of their areas, we would be very grateful if you could forward a copy of such research to our Research Co-ordinator, Kieran Dempsey. Such research can range from parish publications, to local surveys, directories (e.g. numbers of businesses/sports facilities/etc. within the area) or more detailed area profiles.

The SPC (Strategic Policy Committee) on Community and Cultural Development Policy are in the process of finalising a Community and Cultural Development Policy for the county. This policy will complement the social and cultural strategic aims contained within the Integrated Strategy.

Clare CDB both attended and supported the Clare Lifelong Learning Exhibition on the 18th and 19th April 2002. The Exhibition, which had over 1200 visitors over the two days, was held in the Temple Gate Hotel, Ennis.

Clare CDB co-hosted with Shannon Development and Lisdoonvarna Fáilte a symposium in the Pavilion, Lisdoonvarna on "Wellness and Living" on 10th May 2002. The conference was well attended and presentations were made by keynote speakers such as Dr. Kathy Fulcher, a private health and leisure consultant, Brian Neeson, Mid-Western Health Board and Richard Brennan, author and Alexander Technique trainer.

Kilkee debates future for Rural Development

Kilkee Town Council and the Clare CDB were the hosts of a national conference on Rural Development at the Kilkee Bay Hotel, April 26, 2002. The conference, entitled "The future for Sustainable Rural Areas", raised many issues pertinent to the revitalisation of the rural economy and addressed such factors as the rapid changes in agriculture and world trade policy, environmental demands and regulations, and the emergence of new technology. Minister Síle de Valera launched the proceedings. In addition, there were contributions from Clareman and IFA

Chief Economist, Con Lucey; Tom Shanahan, Chief Agricultural Officer, Teagasc, Co. Clare; Maria Heneghan, National Rural Tourism Specialist, Teagasc, Athenry; Freddie O'Mahony, Rural Enterprise Consultant, and Ciaran Lynch, Director of Rural Development, TRBDI (Tipperary Rural and Business Development Institute).

The conference highlighted a number of key issues worthy of further attention. Rural tourism was discussed as a substantive aspect of rural development. However it was felt that there

was a definite lack of a cohesive national policy regarding tourism marketing and development for rural areas. Con Lucey, IFA, stressed the need to provide more off-farm jobs in rural areas but warned that this may not be the definitive answer to the low income and adjustment problems in agriculture. Planning is also needed to ensure that our environment is managed as a resource for the people, as an essential ingredient for our tourism industry and to ensure that the county can still retain a viable farming sector.



Pictured at the Kilkee Conference L to R: Tom Carey, Director of Service; Eamonn Naughton, Director of Service; Minister Síle de Valera; Cllr Richard Nagle, Cathaoirleach, County Development Board; Josephine Cotter-Coughlan, Town Clerk, Kilkee Town Council

"Planning is needed to ensure that we manage the environment, as a resource for our people and as an essential for our tourism industry. And it is needed to ensure that we still retain a viable farming sector and a modern food industry"

Con Lucey, IFA

Seminar to promote Voluntary Effort in Clare

A successful conference on volunteering in the 21st century attracted a large attendance from Clare community and voluntary sector organisations on November 22nd and 23rd, 2001. Organised by the Clare Citizens Information Service and the CDB, the event was held in the Temple Gate Hotel, Ennis and was aimed at providing a forum for people to discuss their views in relation to volunteering and to make recommendations.

Professor Chris Curtin, NUI Galway, delivered the keynote presentation, which examined the role of the voluntary sector today. Cllr. Richard Nagle informed attendees that a third of the adult population is regularly involved in some form of voluntary activity in areas

as diverse as sport, arts, culture and heritage, youth, education, agriculture, justice, environment, community and administration. A variety of speakers presented papers on subjects such as the motivation of volunteers, the relationship between the state and the community and voluntary sector and embracing diversity. Susan Kelly, Manager of Volunteering Ireland and a member of the National Committee on Volunteering, assured delegates that voluntary work is now a critical item on the national agenda.

In addition to guest speakers, the conference also included inputs from local and community activists working on the ground and a series of workshops which allowed volunteers to share their experiences.

Clare Sports Partnership

Launched just over a year ago, the Clare Sports Partnership was given the task of developing a strategic plan to co-ordinate and develop all sports in the county. The Board of the Partnership, of which Martin O'Loughlen, Clare CDB, is a member, has since appointed a Sports Co-ordinator. The Board is currently spearheading the planning, and co-ordinating of this ambitious plan for sport in the county. A series of regional consultative meetings were held throughout March and April 2002 to invite the public to contribute to planning for sport in the county. It is intended that the strategy, which will feed into the Clare CDB Strategy, will be finalised by late Autumn 2002.



Clare Equality Partnership

The Clare Equality Partnership, a partnership comprising social partners, local authorities, employment services, and education and training providers, was set up to participate in the new EU initiative EQUAL. This initiative aims to distribute equitably the benefits of our economic success to ensure that employment opportunities and participation in society are open to all. Clare CDB is proud to be a member of this Partnership of which there are 21 members. An EQUAL Co-ordinator with the Clare Equality Partnership will be appointed in Autumn 2002.

Clare County Childcare Committee

Now well into its second year of existence, the County Childcare Committee has prepared a Strategic Plan for Childcare in Co. Clare (2001-2006). The Childcare Committee, with the help of public consultations and submissions received, drew up the plan, which has since been submitted to and approved by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Underpinning the Strategy is the Committee's mission to "support the development of safe, nurturing and acces-

sible care for all children so that individual choice and capabilities are respected". As part of their year 1 Action Plan, the Committee will employ two Development Workers who will work in both rural and urban areas of the county in order to address the plan's priorities. The Committee has had close links with the Clare CDB since its inception, Nora Daly is presently a member of the Committee. The City/County Development Boards have been given responsibility for co-ordi-

nating the implementation of the National Children's Strategy at a local level throughout the country. In Co. Clare, the Clare CDB structure is in an ideal position to reinforce, enhance and provide co-ordination around children's issues at county level. The Clare Childcare Co-ordinator, Karen McCarthy, can be contacted at 065 - 6864 862.



Politics in County Clare in Safe Hands

Strong political ambitions among the youth were clearly evident this summer in Co. Clare. The first Comhairle na nÓg (Children's Council) was held at the West County Hotel, Ennis on Wednesday 12th June 2002. It was organised by the Clare CDB, with inputs from the ISPCC, Clare Youth Services and childcare workers from the county. The main objective of the day was to consult with children on issues of local and national importance. 75 children, ranging from 7 to 17, attended on the day representing all parts of the county and all sectors of the community. Cllr Richard Nagle, delivered the opening address where he congratulated all concerned and announced that the purpose of Comhairle na nÓg was to commence "the establishment of permanent structures in Co. Clare to ensure that children are given a voice in issues that affect them". He then wished all the potential young councillors well for the future.

All children present were very enthusiastic and participated wholeheartedly in the day's proceedings which included two workshops on 'Play and Recreation' and 'Our Environment'.

Four representatives from the county are now being selected to attend the 2002 Dáil na nÓg, along with children from all over the country. The Dáil na nÓg will be held in the Mansion House, Dublin in late September 2002.



Pictured at the Comhairle na nÓg in Ennis - June 2002 Back L to R: Alec Fleming, County Manager; Cllr Richard Nagle, Cathaoirleach, Clare CDB; Eamonn Naughton, Director of Service; and Front L to R: children from Ballyea National School - Kelly Power; Paul Flanagan; Shane Brennan and Laura Shanahan.

RAPID Renewal for Ennis

Ennis was selected as one of the 20 towns countrywide by ADM (Area Development Management Ltd) for inclusion within the RAPID II Programme, launched in early Spring 2002. RAPID stands for 'Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development'. The chief aim of the Programme is to ensure that disadvantaged areas within all towns selected under RAPID, are re-vitalised and

renewed. The intention is that within such areas, National Development Plan investment will be front-loaded to meet the needs of the communities. A RAPID Co-ordinator for Ennis, Fiacre Hensey, has recently been appointed and has already begun the consultation process on prioritisation of projects for inclusion in the Area Implementation Plan with the community/voluntary sector, the social partners, the local authority and the relevant agencies. Some of the key areas that the development plan will address are issues such as housing, education, training, social services and policing. An Area Implementation Team has been established which

comprises local agency personnel, representatives from local development sector and residents from the local community. The Team will prepare and implement a plan that addresses the needs of the town. The RAPID Programme will work at a local level under the auspices of the Director of Community and Enterprise, Clare County Council. The Equality, Poverty Reduction and Community Development Implementation Group, which is linked to the CDB, will monitor the RAPID programme in Clare. Fiacre Hensey, the Ennis RAPID Co-ordinator can be contacted at 065 – 6846 222.

CLÁR for Clare

In early December 2001, Minister Éamon Ó Cuív hosted public meetings in Spanish Point and in Feakle to discuss the effects of the new Government programme, CLÁR, on the areas in Clare targeted under this programme. CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Ard-Riachtanais/Programme for Revitalising Rural Areas) is a programme designed to tackle the problem of depopulation in selected rural areas through the reprioritisation of National Development Plan funding and a dedicated budget of €25.4 (£20) million. The budget operates by providing matching funding to Government departments and other state agencies for special projects urgently needed for rural development. As with the RAPID programme, priority investments identified by these areas and which are eligible under the initiative include infrastructural projects such as roads and water sewerage schemes. Other eligible projects are those

that will provide basic social infrastructure such as child-care, care of the elderly and other social services for vulnerable groups. Until now, the main reason for not providing services in rural areas has been due to the decline in population. Speaking at the launch of the CLÁR programme last October, Minister Ó Cuív said, "I believe that the very lack of population should be a priority reason for getting investment rather than a reason for not getting it". "For far too long" he added, "the problems of our rural communities have been put on the back burner, and thought unsolvable".

In Co. Clare, areas targeted for inclusion in the CLÁR programme are parts of North and West Clare, also North East Clare. Clare CDB is co-ordinating this programme in the county and so far, a number of substantial grants have been approved.

"I believe that the very lack of population should be a priority reason for getting investment rather than a reason for not getting it. For far too long the problems of our rural communities have been put on the back burner, and thought unsolvable".

Éamon Ó Cuív

Pictured at the launch of CLÁR in Spanish Point – Willie Moloney, former County Manager; Minister Éamon Ó Cuív; Cllr Richard Nagle, Cathaoirleach, Clare CDB; Eamonn Naughton, Director of Service



Third Level Institute

The launch of a third-level educational institute prioritising courses relevant to Clare's economy is one of the central aims of the action plan relating to economic development, innovation and skills capacity. The Strategy aims to have advance plans in place for such an institute by 2003. From its Ennis base, the institute will seek to enable people from all parts of the county to access courses through distance learning.

Supporting Shannon Airport

One of the priority actions to be delivered on over the coming period is to formulate a strategy for the long-term development of Shannon Airport as a hub for Europe and North America. Aer Rianta, as part of the implementation of the CDB Strategy, will deliver this strategy for investment and development in Shannon. The role of Shannon Airport, as an international gateway for the country and as a key economic driver for the region, needs to be recog-

nised and supported. Through implementing the identified infrastructure actions of the Integrated Strategy, the role of Shannon Airport as an instrument of regional development will increase the Western region's capability and competitiveness as a whole.



Reaching out to Rural Clare

The North Clare Network, established under the auspices of the Clare CDB and which is representative of all community/voluntary groups in North Clare, is in the process of establishing a transport service for the disabled, the elderly and isolated people in North Clare. The Network has already prepared a feasibility study and transport business plan which has clearly demonstrated the

need for this service.

Throughout the CDB's research analysis and local consultation programme, the issue of rural transport had emerged as an immediate priority for the people of the county. Already ECAT (East Clare Accessible Transport) has proven to be an excellent model in the planning and delivery of locally managed rural transport initiatives. As part of the

Government's rural transport policy, Clare CDB has conducted a Rural Transport Audit. The Audit, which was completed in late Spring, will be complemented by a number of CDB actions to be implemented this year. These include the establishment of a 'Transport Forum'; supporting organisations such as ECAT, the North Clare Network and EIRÍ Corca Baiscinn; and the promotion of research into usage of rural transport services.

Still on Track

Rail infrastructure in Clare received its biggest boost in decades with the call in early April this year for submissions to the Strategic Rail Study commissioned by the Department of Public Enterprise, now under the auspices of the Department of Public Transport. Last year, former Cathaoirleach of Clare CDB, Cllr. Sean Hillery was instrumental in co-ordinating a partnership of the key local and public authorities in the Mid-West Region in submitting a case for the development of rail access to Shannon as part of the upgrading of the rail-link between Cork and Sligo.

The Department of Public Transport's Strategic Rail Study is designed to provide the Government with a

basis for planning a rail services development policy for the next twenty years. Among the routes it has included for assessment is a new service between Ennis, Shannon Airport and Shannon town and Limerick. Such a service would have major benefits for the economy and infrastructure of Co. Clare.

