

Clare County Council Launches two major funding initiatives for Community Groups & organisations in Co. Clare

Clare County Council are today launching two grant schemes aimed at providing funding opportunities to community groups and local organisations throughout the county.

Clare County Council's *Local Area Grant Scheme 2023* together with the *Community Support Fund 2022* under the Department of Rural & Community Development's Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) will see a combined funding of €728,325.00 allocated to Co. Clare providing significant financial support and benefit to groups and organisations throughout the county.

Welcoming the launch of both schemes the Cathaoirleach of Clare Co. Council, Cllr. Tony O'Brien noted that *"in these times of financial uncertainty it is hugely beneficial to be able to provide this level of funding support and assistance to the various groups and organisations that are the lifeblood of communities across the County"*.

Acknowledging the launch of Clare Co. Council's *Local Area Grant Scheme* and the Department of Rural & Community Development's *Community Support Fund*, the Chief Executive Pat Dowling welcomed the timing of these funding supports for Community Groups and organisations in Co. Clare which he added *"will provide them with a much needed injection of funds allowing them to meet their ongoing operational costs and plan for projects and initiatives to improve the quality of life for communities in Clare."*

Clare Local Area Grant Scheme 2023

The Clare Local Area Grant Scheme, previously known as the Community Support Scheme, is a Council led grant Scheme that provides funding for local communities to assist them with various projects that fall within the relevant categories of the Scheme. In addition to local community projects, the Scheme also includes funding to support artists and organisations who stimulate public interest in, promote knowledge, appreciation, and practice of or improve standards in the arts.

For 2023, applications are being invited under 9 separate grant support categories as follows:

- 1. Support Scheme for Public Realm Initiatives and Amenity Projects (Max Grant €2,000)**

Applications are invited from community groups for small scale projects that will enhance the appearance of outdoor public amenity areas and public spaces – see Scheme guidelines for more details.

- 2. Support Scheme for Maintenance of Open Spaces in Private Housing Developments**
Applications will be accepted from private resident associations/groups for funding towards grass cutting and landscaping works within private housing estates. - see Scheme guidelines for details.
- 3. Support Scheme for Community Playgrounds (Max Grant €3,000)**
Applications are invited from Community Playground Committees for funding to assist them in the operation of community playgrounds. see Scheme guidelines for details.
- 4. Support Scheme for Burial Ground Maintenance and Provision (Max Grant €600 for Maintenance and €8,000 for provision of extension)**
Applications are invited from community groups to assist them in the upkeep of burial grounds e.g. grass cutting costs.
- 5. Support Scheme for the Best Kept Local Authority Estate (Max Grant €500)**
Applications are invited from social housing residents associations for funding to assist with the upkeep and appearance of their estate.
- 6. Support Scheme for the Arts**
Applications are invited from Artists and Arts organisations for funding for Arts Events and Projects / Organisational Support - see Scheme guidelines for details
- 7. Support Scheme for the Irish Language (Max Grant €800)**
Applications are invited from community groups for exhibitions, projects or other events which stimulate public interest in the Irish language, provide a knowledge, appreciation and practice of the Irish language or improve the standard of the Irish Language
- 8. Support Scheme for Tourism Marketing & Promotion**
Applications are invited from new and established Tourism Networks for projects that market and promote Clare as a destination- see Scheme guidelines for details
- 9. Support Scheme for Sustainable Tourism**
Applications are invited from community-based Tourism Operator Networks for projects that contribute to the continuous improvement in sustainable tourism practices.

Online applications can be made from **9am, Friday 13th January 2023**.

The Online Application system and scheme guidelines can be accessed from the website at <https://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/grants/clarelocalareagrantscheme/>

The Closing Date for submission of online applications is 5pm, Friday 3rd February 2023

Enquiries can be made by email clags@clarecoco.ie.

Community Support Fund 2022

The Community Support Fund 2022, under the Community Enhancement Programme funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development is focused on supporting groups in disadvantaged areas with a provision of €10 million being made available in grant funding nationally towards energy and running costs and enhancing the facilities available to communities. The Community Support Fund is open to groups and organisations in Co. Clare seeking assistance towards their energy/ operating costs, and capital funding towards repairs & improvements to their facilities. There is also a support fund for Women's Shed Groups.

Welcoming the funding, the Chief Executive, Pat Dowling acknowledged that *“the Community Enhancement Programme has a focus on supporting groups in disadvantaged areas and is aimed at addressing disadvantage as identified in the Clare Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). Delivered locally by the Clare Local Community Development Committee(LCDC) this programme allows flexibility for each LCDC to decide on local priorities in administering the fund.”*

Chairperson of the Clare LCDC, Paul Patton, (Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board) speaking about the funding highlighted that *“the 2022 Programme provides vital support to community groups in order to help them with their day to day running costs and improve their facilities especially at this time with mounting energy costs and other challenges that they are facing”*. The Community Support Fund supports small-scale funding for projects which range from assistance with operational and energy costs to larger scale projects including necessary improvements or repairs to their facilities. Mr. Patton acknowledged that this is a significant funding scheme and encouraged community groups and organisations to avail of the funding this year.

Bernadette Haugh, Chief Officer of the Clare LCDC stated that *“this year’s funding is a welcome addition to help support community groups & organisations to carry out their day to day activities and improve existing facilities to allow them to continue the invaluable work they do in their respective communities across the County.”*

The 2022 round of funding allocated to Clare by the Department of Rural & Community Development is €301,325.00.

Online applications can be made from **9am, Friday 13th January 2023**.

The closing date for submission of online applications under the Community Support Fund is **4pm Friday 31st March 2023** and further details can be found at <http://www.clarecoco.ie/services/community/grants/communityenhancement> or email cep@clarecoco.ie, telephone 065-6846498.

In order to support Community Groups/Organisations who may wish to apply for either funding scheme, the following walk-in information clinics will be held across the County at the following locations and times:

Tuesday 17th January	Pavilion Community Hall, Lisdoonvarna 10AM - 1PM
	Scariff MD Office, Scariff – 10 am – 1 pm
	Corofin Community Hall, Corofin 2PM - 5PM
	Cnoc na Gaoithe Tulla Comhaltas Cultural Centre, Tulla , 2-5 pm

Thursday 19th January	Treacy's Oakwood Arms Hotel, Shannon 10am – 1pm PM
	Buttermarket Civic Room, Ennis 2:00PM – 5PM
	Kilrush Hub, Kilrush – 10 am – 1 pm
	Lissycasey Community Hall, Lissycasey - 2 -5 pm