

Submission No: 050



Submission on behalf of Shannonbanks Community Development Project:

The above committee was formed in the Summer of 2020 following our community working along side Charlie Jackson and Ger Dineen, Consultants and our distribution of a survey (mostly through the medium of apps such as What's app and Viber and social media due to Covid 19 restrictions) to the community with regard to issues, needs and concerns of residents. This process was enabled by the Clare LEADER programme.

Shannonbanks is an estate built in the 1970's on the banks of the River Shannon. There are approximately 800 people living here. Shannonbanks is an urban community on the edge of Limerick city but proudly part of County Clare being just over the border. As such, subsequently, being on the extremities, we are largely overlooked in relation to any development plans in County Clare.

Our community was very clear in their views regarding what they would like and felt Shannonbanks needed going forward.

Our riverbanks/walk: We have a beautiful river walk spanning the length of the estate. The path is narrow and cracked, broken and no longer fit for purpose. It would not be safe for a person in a wheelchair to use it, nor anyone vulnerable to falls. Certainly it is difficult to keep a safe distance from people walking or cycling/travelling towards you unless you go into the grass. This is not ideal, especially with the current Covid 19 restrictions. 60% of our residents here in Shannonbanks are aged between 55-90+ so obviously they need to be able to access and use the path safely. It is on their doorstep and so it's sad that many are unable to use it due to it being unsafe. It needs to be widened and resurfaced. This is something that was requested repeatedly on the surveys submitted.

The riverbanks are completely overgrown. There is hogweed, bushes, trees, reeds, and general overgrowth along with garden waste dumping which has pushed out the riverbank out so far that it is, now, difficult to see the actual river from a large portion of the riverside walk. Although, for safety reasons, this might be a good thing, but it looks shabby, unkempt, neglected. It needs to be tidied up and perhaps the river itself be more accessible to those who wish to engage in water sports. The likes of a marina or a boardwalk was something which was identified on the survey as a possibility. However, we do also have a serious flooding issue here and were badly flooded in 2009, since then we have had to use pumps to protect us from flooding, although during high tides/storms etc we are still impacted. We are very concerned about the long term threat of flooding in our estate. Since the flooding in 2009 many houses in the estate are uninsurable! We need a proper flood defence put in place, before, perhaps, we attempt to construct a marina or boardwalks.

There was also a call for seating, bins and lighting. Although lighting is a major issue as the lights down by the riverbank are very inadequate, add to that the uneven surface of much of the footpath and this makes it far more dangerous to navigate in the dark. Many use the path as a shortcut coming from Limerick back into the estate. Bins and seats are often a contentious issue in estates, due to, perhaps, the worry of attracting anti-social behaviour, however, they did come up frequently on the survey. Seating would certainly be of great

benefit for the older residents who relayed their difficulties using the footpath (uneven surface, too narrow) as also finding it difficult to walk the length of the path without getting tired. Seating would solve this issue. Also it would a great way for older people or indeed any residents to socially interact albeit socially distanced. Amongst our elderly residents there was a resounding call for an active retirement group and/or a community garden. In Shannonbanks we are blessed with large green areas and, certainly, a community garden would an option, this could, perhaps, tie in with the active retirement group. The riverbanks being cleared and tidied would also aid this possible venture.

The majority of those who completed the survey were concerned about the maintenance of footpaths, lighting and green areas throughout the estate. Many of our footpaths are in bad repair and rather than being replaced the holes are just being refilled which isn't ideal. Many footpaths are uneven, broken and dangerous. Lighting in many parts of the estate is not fit for purpose and inadequate. Many green areas are not adequately maintained.

Shannonbanks also has quite a sizable population of young children/teenagers. There are no facilities for children of any age in our estate. There are plans for playgrounds both in Co Clare approximately a mile from the estate and in Limerick less than a mile away from the estate so this is positive news for the area. However, if the riverbanks were developed the likes of a kayaking club, boating club could be set up which would definitely benefit the youth of the estate. Also, perhaps a basketball or tennis court as there is ample space in the estate as I mentioned before.

In conclusion, we are an estate on the outskirts of Limerick city, just over the border of County Clare. We are located on the banks of the River Shannon. Our riverbanks and river walk are badly in need of repair and replenishment. We have a beautiful source of natural beauty on our doorstep, however, it is not easily accessed by the majority of our residents due to broken and uneven surfaces leading to the river walk and the walk itself (path way) being uneven, broken and too narrow. We are at threat of flooding and need this to be addressed and a long term plan to be made. Our riverbanks are overgrown and neglected with the river not even visible from parts of the river walk due to overgrowth, the banks itself has extended further out into the river. We would love to make our river walk and river bank more accessible, more comfortable and a place that could be enjoyed by young and old. Seats for those who need them, river sports activities for our young and not so young! Lighting which makes it easier and safer to use our river walk during Winter. Much of the estate would benefit from new lighting and the resurfacing of avenues and especially footpaths. The physical appearance of our estate (especially along the riverbank) could be vastly improved with the measures I mentioned above. At present it is quite abysmal due to ongoing neglect, for many, many years now.

Funding for a community garden especially for our large population of elderly would benefit them physically and mentally, as this is something that would bring them together and a social outlet. It could be set up as part of an active retirement group. If we were to accomplish this along with the redevelopment of our beautiful riverbank and river walk I think it would prove to enhance the lives of ALL residents from the very young to the very old for decades to come and make the residents of Shannonbanks proud of this unique estate which is crying out for attention.

Thank you for reading my submission.

Kind regards,

Annemarie Mc Nally Rice



