

Submission No: 153

From: Kevin o'connor [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday 16 November 2020 15:14
To: forwardplan
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Development Plan Review - Bunratty Village
Attachments: BDLA. Submissioin. County Dev Plan 2022 - 2028. v2.docx

To whom it may concern

Please find attached a copy of submission on Bunratty Village in regard to the preparation of the Clare County Development Plan 2023 to 2028.

This submission has been prepared by **Bunratty Local Development Association**.

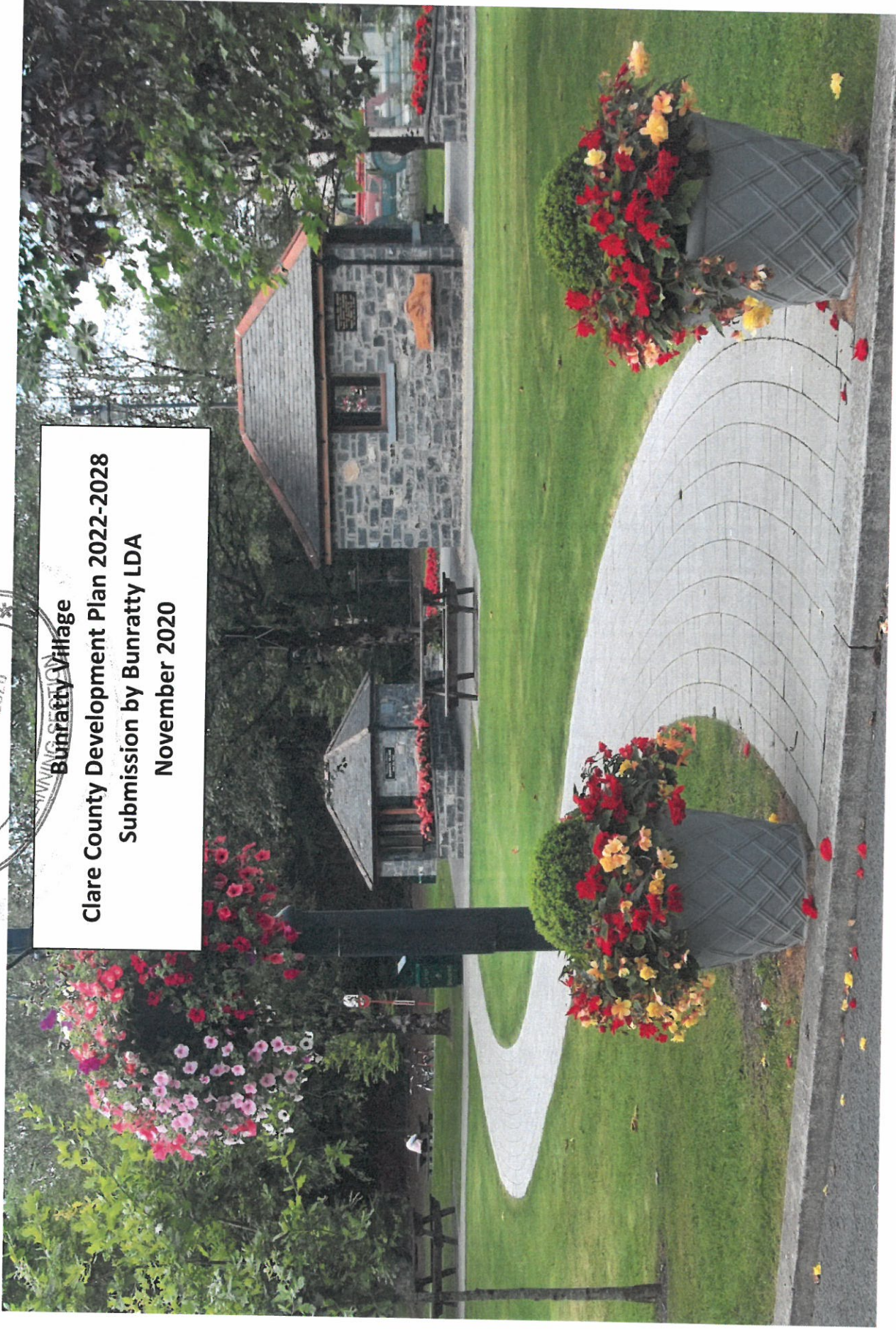
Yours sincerely,

Kevin O'Connor,
Chairman,
[REDACTED]





Bunratty Village
Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028
Submission by Bunratty LDA
November 2020



1. Introduction:

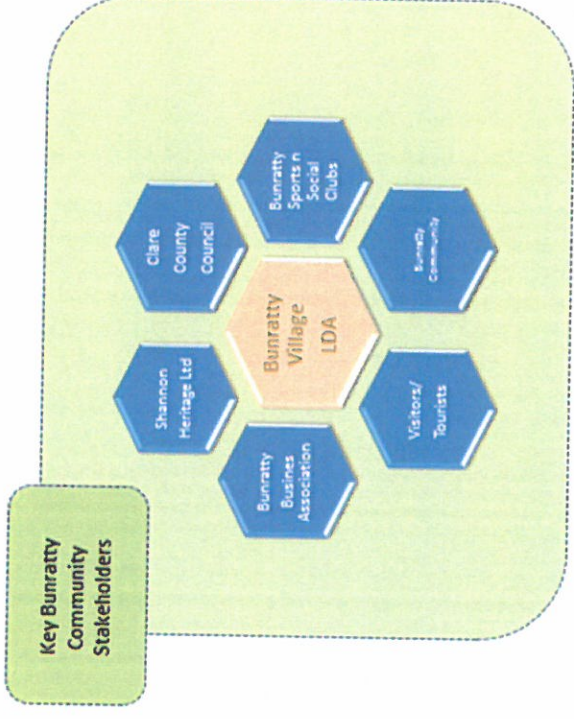
Bunratty Local Development Association is pleased to prepare this submission as part of the 2022-228 County Development plan at a time when it has been severely impacted by the COVID 19 Pandemic. Air traffic has virtually ceased through Shannon airport, which has decimated the tourism industry on which Bunratty and the economy of the western seaboard is so dependent. It is estimated that 600 jobs within and around the village in hotels, pubs, restaurants, B&Bs including Bunratty Castle and Folk Park have closed or are open on a short-term basis. This underscores the vulnerability of the local economy as it exists and the need to strengthen and diversify the overall product offering so that Bunratty is not dependent on a single attraction but through ongoing village improvements can become a **'destination'** in itself.

2. Bunratty Village Context

Bunratty Village - the southern gateway to Clare is an ancient place developed on a strategic defensive site first occupied by the Vikings in 967AD and lies on the northern shore of the Estuary, where the Ratty River or the Owenagarney River as it is sometimes known, meets the Shannon. Over the centuries the village has developed around the historic toll bridge and the famous Castle and today stands adjacent to the M18, one of the busiest motorways in Ireland. It is unlike the typical Irish village without a post office, a church or school and a small but growing local community base. With the restoration of the Castle in 1959 and the development of the Folk Park, the village evolved into a leading Irish tourist hub, with distinctive green wooded public spaces offering great potential as a green environmentally friendly village.

3. Bunratty Local Development Association

BLDA - Bunratty Local Development Association (BLDA) is a local community group established in November 2012, to protect, enhance and develop the village to reach its full potential. The BLDA has worked intensely to raise the standards and to improve the streetscape throughout the village area, over the past period, working closely with Clare County Council land and local Business's.



4. Bunratty Key Strategic Issues

Bunratty Key Strategic Issues



4.1 Bunratty Strategic Goals

- There is very strong need for a comprehensive integrated physical development plan, for the village, similar to plans prepared for Heritage Towns in the past – to plan the long-term strategy for the future development of the village to an attractive location for visitors to visit and an enjoyable place for the local community to work and live.
- Provide necessary supports and enhance the role of Bunratty as a major Tourism attraction in the country.
- Designate Bunratty to Heritage Area Status.
- Support Shannon Heritage aims to develop Bunratty Castle and Folk Park, under their separate plans to invest in new products and experiences to broaden the appeal of the Castle and Folk Park.
- Promote the redevelopment of the derelict Shannon Shamrock Complex site through all avenues available.
- Provide additional Community Facilities for the local resident population including the zoning of land for the provision of community facilities.
- Improve the finish and visual image of the approaches to the village and in particular the western approach.
- Provision of public realm improvements throughout the village area to help the village develop to a higher level and regain its role as a leading national tourism destination
- Develop a new Amenity Park overlooking the river area, to highlight, support and safe guard the existing habitats and biodiversity in the area.
- Development of a walkway / cycleway from Shannon to Bunratty and also from Bunratty to Sixmilebridge.

4.2 Investment and New Products

- Like many towns and villages throughout the country the need for investment is critical especially in derelict and under used sites some of which tend to be hoarded for future speculative type investment. The Council should activate its powers under current derelict site legislation.
- Proposed investment to improve and upgrade Bunratty Folk Park should be supported
- Action on the large existing derelict hotel site needs to be undertaken

4.3 Jobs and Enterprise

- Action required to protect and secure existing employment through stimulative supports
- The promotion of new enterprises increased
- Joint ventures with the new management of the Folk Park to facilitate new tourist and craft related SMES

4.4 Environment and Biodiversity

- Given the heritage and history of the village - create a clear planning policy for small sensitive housing developments only in Bunratty
- All developments should also provide for community improvements
- Increase environmental enforcement - in 2019 80 Beech trees were felled by developers in Bunratty and no action was taken.
- Improve presentation of environmental sites

4.5 History and Heritage

- Strengthen the overall heritage and historical presentation and access of the village – outside the Folk Park
- Improve information panels and signage
- Increase promotion and provision for the arts including additional sites for more art and sculpture features in the heart of the village

4.6 Community Facilities

- Increase levels of support for community organisations active in improving the village such as Bunratty LDA
- Develop circular walking trail around the village

- Progress development of Shannon Town to Bunratty walkway along the Estuary bank
- Assist Community to provide better sport and social facilities in the village

4.7 Key Objectives Going Forward

- Provision of traffic calming throughout the village area including the provision of a pedestrian crossing.
- Pedestrianise the old Bunratty bridge.
- Development of looped walks throughout the village area.
- Improve the level of public lighting in the village and in particular on the road link located between the creamery and the Bunratty Castle Hotel.
- Develop Iconic arrival sign at the main entrance to the village and improve the information signage throughout the village area.
- Provide additional car parking throughout the village area.
- Improve the vehicular access to Bunratty Graveyard
- Provide public lighting and a footpath on the Low Road to improve and make safe visitor access to the local B and B guesthouses located in this area.
- Extend the footpath network servicing the Hill Road and the Low Road.

Bunratty Co. Clare

**Bunratty LDA
County Development Plan
Submission
2020-2028**

