

**Please note that this is the Original Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (adopted on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2021). Following the adoption of Variation No. 1 & Variation No. 2 on the 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2024 and Variation No. 3 on the 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2025, this Plan has now been superseded by the Consolidated version.**

**The Consolidated version of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (incl. Variations 1, 2 & 3) is available to view at this link [HERE](#)**

## 1.0 Village Context/Character

Clonard is located in the south west of County Meath, 5km east of Kinnegad, 7km west of Longwood and 13km west of Enfield. The village developed along the former N4 National Primary road from Dublin to Galway (now Regional Road R148). It originated as an ecclesiastical centre founded by St. Finian in 520 A.D. Clonard has three Protected Structures and one item on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) within the development boundary. There are a number of National Monument Service Zones of Archaeological Potential and Notification in close proximity to the settlement.

The land use pattern in Clonard consists of a very limited village core area which is somewhat sprawling from the petrol station at the western end of the village to a Public House (The Monastery Inn) at the eastern end of the village. In between, there are community uses both north and south of the Main Street primarily consisting of a national school, church and community hall.

<b>Position in Settlement Hierarchy</b>	Village
<b>2016 Population</b>	347
<b>2011 Population</b>	339
<b>Percentage Change 2011-2016</b>	2.30%
<b>Housing stock 2016</b>	128
<b>Number of units completed 2016-2019</b>	0
<b>Committed units not yet built</b>	0
<b>Population Projection 2027</b>	397

<b>Education Facilities</b>	St Finian's Primary School
<b>Community Facilities</b>	Church; Community Hall; GAA grounds.
<b>Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)</b>	None
<b>Protected Structures</b>	3, (St. Finian's Catholic Church; St. Finian's Catholic Church Railings; and St. Finian's Shrine)
<b>Zone of Archaeological Potential</b>	There is a National Monument Services Zone of Archaeological Notification within the settlement area. There are five zones of Archaeological Potential in proximity to the Village.
<b>Natura 2000 Sites</b>	Molerick Bog Natural Heritage Area is located approx. 1.5km to the north-east. Mount Hevey Bog SAC is approx. 2.5km to the north-west.
<b>Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</b>	Flood Zone A and B encroaches on lands towards the northern boundary of the village. Manage flood risk and development in line with approved policies and objectives as set out in Vol. 1 Chapter 6: Infrastructure.

**Water Services Infrastructure/Capacity**

Clonard Water Treatment Plant-Capacity  
Constrained. Clonard Wastewater  
Treatment Plant-Capacity Constrained.

## 2.0 Vision

The vision for the development of Clonard over the Plan period is to promote the future development of the village in a sustainable manner in order to conserve and enhance the established natural and historical amenities of the village. The focus of the village statement is to consolidate the shape of the village, promote backland infill development rather than extend it further along any of the approach roads. Only natural/organic residential growth is to be promoted in line with the Development Plan Core Strategy. A central tenet of this Plan will be the creation of a positive relationship with the rural hinterland.

## 3.0 Opportunities

Minimal development has taken place in the period of the previous Development Plan. Nevertheless, the village has the potential to accommodate limited infill development as an alternative to one-off housing. The village is aptly positioned to capitalise in a sustainable way on local heritage and tourism offerings.

## 4.0 Land Use Strategy

The land use strategy for Clonard is to facilitate incremental/organic residential development and services commensurate with the needs of the village's population while continuing to promote natural and historical amenities.

### 4.1 Settlement and Housing

There are two existing multiple unit residential developments in Clonard, both constructed on the northern side of the R148 (former N4 National Primary road). By reference to the provisions of the Core Strategy and the land use zoning objective map, there is adequate land zoned for residential uses to cater for the future housing needs of the village over the lifetime of the Development Plan.

## 4.2 Economy and Employment (Including Retail)

Clonard is identified as a Level 4 Retail Centre in the County retail hierarchy. It has a small range of retail services, primarily a local convenience shop, a public house and a hairdresser. The village would benefit from a greater range and variety of such facilities. There are lands also zoned for E2 'Enterprise' use on the western side of the village to reflect and support the existing employment uses at this location.

The Council will continue to support and further harness the tourism potential of the village which is of significant economic value. This Plan ensures that there is adequate land zoned for further commercial growth should need/demand arise over the lifetime of the Development Plan.

## 4.3 Water Services Infrastructure

There are significant constraints on the capacity of the existing water and waste water infrastructure. Until supply and capacity issues are addressed, there is limited scope for existing infrastructure to accommodate further residential and commercial development.

## 4.4 Movement

Movement and access within the village is centred along the main street (the R148) which is vehicle dominated to the detriment to the public realm of the village. It is important to improve the movement of pedestrians and cyclists through the area and to manage vehicular traffic passing through the village.

In terms of public transport, by virtue of its location on the former N4 National Primary route, Clonard is served by regional bus routes from Dublin / Dublin Airport to counties Mayo, Roscommon and Longford. In addition, residents of Clonard can avail of the rail service in nearby Enfield. The development of public transport bus links is critical to ensure a better modal split in favour of public transport away from the private motor vehicle.

## 4.5 Cultural and Natural Heritage

There are a number of buildings and structures of historical significance in Clonard namely St. Finian's Catholic Church and the associated railings and shrine. The surrounding environs to the village hold considerable cultural and heritage assets many of which attest to the ecclesiastical history of the area. Of particular significance is the area of Archaeological potential which includes the ecclesiastical centre to the east of the village and motte (outside the settlement boundary).

The built and natural heritage of the Clonard area are important resources that must be protected and enhanced to add to the local sense of place and belonging, and also to increase the attractiveness of the area to residents and visitors. Meath Tourism has developed a Heritage Trail for Clonard: *“Through the Centuries in Clonard”* which highlights the significance of the built heritage of the village. The Plan seeks to support the tourism potential of the village.

There are no Natura 2000 sites within the village although the Kilwarden River to the north of the village flows to the River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002299) and the River Boyne and River Blackwater Special Protection Area (Site Code: 004232). The nearest Natura 2000 site to the village is the Mount Hevey Bog Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 002342) approximately 2.5km to the north-west. The Molerick Bog Natural Heritage Area is located approximately 1.5km to the north-east of the village.

#### **4.6 Green Infrastructure**

Whilst there are several open space areas within housing developments, the village is lacking in structural/landscape open space. Much of the environs surrounding the village are of high amenity value although not in public ownership. Facilitating organic growth of the village, commensurate with its needs and infrastructure capacity, will help ensure the environs to the village retain their amenity value. There may also be potential in strengthening Clonard’s tourism potential through continued support in developing the Clonard Heritage Trail and sensitive incorporation of the Clonard River.

#### **4.7 Social Infrastructure**

Social infrastructure in the village comprises of St. Finian’s school, the community hall, St. Finian’s church and the GAA development. Lands north of the school are zoned for community use and can facilitate new or expanded services in the future should such need arise. Cluain Ionaird C.L.G. has developed a new GAA facility to the west of the village centre. The Council supports the provision of dedicated pedestrian/cycle connections to this facility from the village centre. The provision of a playground is also promoted to improve community infrastructure in the village.

The Council is satisfied that sufficient lands are available for social/community uses to cater for both existing and future populations over the period of the Development Plan.

The Clonard Renaissance Community Plan is also acknowledged as setting out the community’s aspirations for the village.

## 4.8 Urban Design and Public Realm

The sprawling pattern of development has resulted in an elongated settlement form. The village lacks a defined focal point and would benefit from this. Whilst the village largely retains its rural village character, it would be desirable to see the public realm and streetscape improved to enhance that character, reduce the actual/perceived dominance of roads and vehicles, and improve the village aesthetics.

## 5.0 Town/Village Development Policies and Objectives

The Policies and Objectives set out below are in addition to those included in the Written Statement in Volume One of the County Development Plan. To avoid repetition, Policies and Objectives have only been restated where they have particular relevance to the settlement. These Policies and Objectives should therefore be read in conjunction with the Policies and Objectives and Development Standards in Volume One of the County Development Plan.

### Policy

It is the policy of the Council:

#### Settlement and Housing

##### CLO POL 1

To promote the future development of Clonard as a compact settlement and encourage development which will consolidate the distinctive character of the village, and preserve and enhance the quality of the village's built and natural environment, while catering for the needs of all sections of the local community to ensure that the village develops in a sustainable manner, as an attractive place to live, work recreate and visit.

### Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

#### Settlement and Housing

##### CLO OBJ 1

To secure the implementation of the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan, in so far as is practicable, by ensuring the household allocation for Clonard as set out in Table 2.12 of the Core Strategy is not exceeded.

**CLO OBJ 2**

To support and encourage residential development on under-utilised land and/or vacant lands including 'infill' and 'brownfield' sites, subject to a high standard of design and layout being achieved.

**Economy and Employment****CLO OBJ 3**

To consolidate the central area of the village for commercial uses.

**CLO OBJ 4**

To provide opportunities for the expansion of the employment base in Clonard.

**CLO OBJ 5**

To support proposals to further develop and strengthen the tourism potential of Clonard building on the work by Boyne Valley Tourism in developing the Clonard Heritage Trail.

**CLO OBJ 6**

To encourage the provision of tourism facilities and offerings, including 'day-tourism' in conjunction with continued development and promotion of the Royal Canal Way. A tourism focal point such as St. Finian's Church of Ireland could assist in 'drawing' tourists from the Royal Canal Way to the village centre.

**CLO OBJ 7**

To manage flood risk and development in line with the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. (see Volume 4 Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment).

**Movement****CLO OBJ 8**

To promote new internal village movement, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, north of the R148.

**CLO OBJ 9**

To investigate potential for park-and-ride facilities and enhanced / off-road bus set-down areas including the provision for bus shelters and tourist bus parking.

**CLO OBJ 10**

To explore the possibility of providing an amenity walkway along the Kilwarden River from the village centre to the Clonard Bridge.



**CLO OBJ 11**

To facilitate enhanced set-down and traffic calming measures in the vicinity of the school.

**Cultural and Natural Heritage****CLO OBJ 12**

To work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to develop cultural tourism initiatives based on Clonard's monastic heritage e.g. Turas Columbanus.

**CLO OBJ 13**

To encourage the use of the former Church of Ireland (outside the village) as a visitor/community centre.

**CLO OBJ 14**

To seek to provide for civic open space and interpretative signage at or near the centre of the village in conjunction with relevant stakeholders.

**CLO OBJ 15**

To protect the Zone of Archaeological Potential from unsympathetic development and maintain a visual distinction between the village and the ecclesiastical centre and moat.

**CLO OBJ 16**

To support the reuse of the Cowplot on the outskirts of the village for active/passive recreational facilities.

**Social****CLO OBJ 17**

To support the provision of a community playground.

**CLO OBJ 18**

To facilitate the identification of a site and/or building for multi-purpose community use.

**CLO OBJ 19**

To protect existing community infrastructure/facilities where appropriate and support their development and expansion if required.

**CLO OBJ 20**

To facilitate and support the implementation of Clonard Renaissance Community Plan and other community led projects to generally enhance the village whilst ensuring that the projects which emanate from same are consistent with the development objectives contained in this Written Statement for the village.

**Urban Design and Public Realm****CLO OBJ 21**

To facilitate public realm improvement works for the village focusing on traffic-calming to achieve better balance between the needs of the pedestrians / cyclists / public transport and those of the private car.

**CLO OBJ 22**

To promote public realm improvement works that would give better definition and legibility to village core. Examples include building out footpaths, introducing angled parking, pedestrian crossing(s) to define the street and improved public lighting, planting / landscaping and sculpture.

**CLO OBJ 23**

To investigate the potential for further traffic calming and pedestrian crossing measures in vicinity of “Paddy’s Bar”.

**CLO OBJ 24**

To ensure that all new development respects the scale, form and character of the village.