



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL



Memo

To: Helen Quinn, Senior Executive Planner, Planning Dept. Aras an Chontae
From: Helen Walsh, County Librarian, County Library HQ.
Date: 12th October, 2020
Subject: De-listing of libraries at Shannon, Kilrush, Newmarket on Fergus, Ennis and Ennistyon.

During the mid-1970's and early 1980's a number of library branches were constructed in the county – the architect was Anthony O' Neill. The design used reflected a Scandinavian approach allowing for a lot of glass and wood in the composition of the buildings. Over the course of the intervening years – these libraries have encountered problems with regard to rotting external timbers, loosening of window panes, issues with flat roofs and major deficits in heat retention and a lack of capacity to reach modern SEAI standards. The library in Ennis built in 1975 has been assessed as at end of life and is being re-developed as a new library for the county at the glór site. Considerable expenditure has gone into bringing Kilrush library up to SEAI standard. The other remaining libraries are all on trajectories for intervention as funding allows.

Internally – all the libraries comprised of a simple open plan design which no longer works in modern libraries where events and programmes require closed off dedicated spaces for public use such as digital spaces, multi-purpose lecture spaces for workshops, sensory spaces, etc. These listed buildings need to be allowed to move with the demands of a modern library service and allow the Local Authority to compete for grant aid for redevelopment. The external design has been proven over the years to be incompatible with a wet, cold climate and the internal structural layouts have hindered library provision to the public. I request that these buildings be de-listed as a matter of priority for the library service.

Helen Walsh, County Librarian

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