To: The Cathaoirleach and Each Member of the Municipal District of Adare- Rathkeale

I refer to discussion at April Meeting of the Municipal District of Adare-Rathkeale in regard to Clonshire Church & Graveyard and enclose herewith copy of report prepared by Sarah McCutcheon, Executive Archaeologist.

Clonshire Church was vested in the Burial Board for Rathkeale (subsequently the Local Authority) in 1881. As it is in the ownership of Limerick City & County Council, it is deemed to be a National Monument. It is also a Protected Structure Reg. No. 267 under Limerick County Council's Development Plan 2010-2016. Subsequent to the damage inflicted on the building by an unauthorised member of the public in 2010, a Preservation Order (No. 2 of 2010) was placed on the complex.

It was envisaged that the restoration work would be carried out in two phases. Phase 1 was tendered in 2013 and, including VAT & professional fees was priced at €37,000. An estimated cost for phase 2 rebuilding was €67,000.

To-date a funding stream has not been identified for this work. We have carried out conservation works to churches in the past using a sum from the annual graveyard budget. We have also got a grant from the Civic Structures fund (one building per county); this has been superseded by the Structures at Risk Fund (one public building per county Lk City & County deemed one for Dept. purposes). Other sources are the Heritage Council (once) and LEADER. Every known avenue has been tried but to no avail at this time.

There are over 7000 Recorded Monuments in County Limerick. I attach a screen grab from the Archaeological Survey of Ireland to give a sense of the spread and density of the Recorded Monuments in Adare-Rathkeale. All of these monuments are protected under the National Monuments Act. Some of these are designated as National Monuments, that is that they are significant monuments in public ownership either by the State or the Local Authority. There are approximately 34 graveyards in our ownership.

I recommend that the District Members request that provision be made in the 2017 budget to allow Phase 1 of this project to advance.

At the District Meeting a question was raised as to competences required to make a recommendation in regard to conversation work. I wish to advise you that the following were involved in the recommendation process:

Dr. Nessa Roche, Architectural Conservation Advisor, Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.

Grellan Rourke, Senior Conservation Architect, National Monuments Section, Office of Public Works

Kevin Mullery & Ger Neville, Punch Consulting Engineers

Stephen Gordon, Head of Applied Conservation, Historic Scotland, on the numbering of stone.

Brian K. Duffy, Chief Archaeologist, National Monument Service.

Sarah McCutcheon, Executive Archaeologist, Limerick City & County Council

I hope this clarifies the matter for you.

Caroline Curley
Director of Service.

11th May, 2016

Status:

Clonshire Church and Graveyard; AKA Teampall na Cille and currently locally Bohernakill, RMP: LI021-029001-004 including the church, graveyard and the shafts of two crosses whose location is currently unknown. Townland: Clonshire More (Glebe), DED: Croagh. Civil Parish: Clonshire; Barony: Lower Connello East.

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Historical and architectural background:

In his book *Churches in medieval Ireland*, Ó Carragáin places Clonshire in a 'cluster of late antae-less churches in Limerick… built in a distinctive, regular coursed masonry style that lacks the careful fitting of blocks that one finds in some other clusters' (2010, 137). He suggests they were built for a variety of functions as they vary in size and in their subsequent development. Clonshire (38sqm) he judges to have been 'built to serve a pastoral role' (ibid.). The steeply pitched roof seems to have been a defining characteristic above and beyond any structural function especially as it related to the smaller churches such as Clonshire (ibid., 22). Ó Carragáin estimates Clonshire to have been originally about 8.85m long externally and estimates its gable as a little over 9m high (ibid., 23). Ó Carragáin dates this group of churches to between 1000-1150, mostly 1050-possibly 1130 (ibid., 119).

In the later medieval period the church was enlarged and functioned as the parish church. It would have been during this period that the church was extended to the east, and further developments included the addition of an upper storey and the double bell cote at the west.

Clonshire is mentioned in 1201 (Black Book of Limerick), the manor appears to have been held by the Cathedral in Limerick. Clonshire Castle (LI020-094) is situated *circa* 700m due west of the graveyard and is the likely nucleus for the manor.

Lewis (1837, 380) makes reference to 'the shafts of two very ancient crosses' in the churchyard (RMP LI021-029003/004) the Urban Survey (1989) notes, however, that they 'are no longer visible'. Clonshire Church is described in detail in the Notes and Letters of the Ordnance Survey, including the belfry and window on the west gable and a sketch of the west doorway. More recently, the Urban Survey states that the west gable was 7m high but was not intact, it also refers to 'a small rectangular flat lintelled window.....a bellcote with round headed opes for two bells'.

Interestingly, the first edition Ordnance Survey shows the Graveyard apparently extending as far as the townland boundary to the south, the current boundary appears to be *circa* 30m further north.

Background:

On Thursday May 6th 2010 an unauthorised member of the public using a machine knocked the west gable into the body of the church. Limerick County Council was notified on 7th May and inspected the site. On advice the west doorway was propped and the site was fenced off from the public. The Minister, on 15th September 2010 made an order under Section 8 of the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended) undertaking the preservation of the national monument comprising Church, Graveyard and Site of two Cross Shafts, Clonshire More, County Limerick (No. 2 of 2010).

Bradley, J., Halpin, A. & King, H. A. 1989 *The urban archaeology survey: Part XVII (i-iii) County Limerick,* Office of Public Works (unpublished).

Lewis, S. 1837 *A topographical dictionary of Irelan*d, Vols. 1 & 2, London.

Ó Carragáin, T. 2010 Churches in early medieval Ireland, London.

O'Flanagan, M. (ed.) 1929 *Letters containing information relative to the antiquities of the county of Limerick collected during the progress of the ordnance survey in 1840*, Bray.

Westropp, T.J. 1904/05 'A survey of the ancient churches of the county of Limerick', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, XXV, 327-480.

Methodology:

A preliminary meeting was held with Nessa Roche, Architectural Conservation Advisor, Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht on 12.03.13. A site meeting was held with Grellan Rourke, Senior Conservation Architect, National Monuments Section, Office of Public Works and Kevin Mullery & Ger Neville, Punch Consulting Engineers on 17.05.13. Advice was sought from Historic Scotland and provided by Stephen Gordon, Head of Applied Conservation, Historic Scotland, on the numbering of stone. As a result of these consultations it was decided to divide the project into two distinct phases. The second and final phase would be the reconstruction of the west gable and other stabilising works to the building. The first phase (the subject of this application) would be the surveying, recording, retrieval of missing pieces from the detached tumbled debris and replacing within the whole, prior to eventually numbering of the stone from the west gable and finally removal from the body of the church to an adjacent area in the graveyard. All of this work will be done by hand, the suggestion is for 1 or 2 labourers under skilled supervision.

The west wall and returns and gable will be fully recorded and surveyed using elevation drawings (1:10) and photography. During this portion of the works it should be possible to find and relocate within the whole, missing elements which were scattered when the wall was knocked or which were loose and may have been subsequently cleared. Dr. T. O Carrigáin has kindly provided pre 2010 photographs of both faces of the west gable which will be tremendously helpful in the reconstruction. The work will be slow and painstaking. In addition to proper marking and lay-out, some sections of the gable, most notably the top with the bell arches will have to be located. It seems likely that the wall came down in two sections and that this upper piece is actually beneath the main masonry block. The west window was complete consisting on the outer face of 5 jamb stones, head and sill stone; the inner splay is composed of more random stonework. In addition, some stones from the upper courses of the main block have detached on impact. Stones also fell outward, in particular there seems (from pre2010 photos) to have been a loss from the top of the west end of the south wall. These need to be included in the overall plan. The loss of the quoins on the NW corners appears to be historic (pre2010). Mortar sampling to be carried out throughout the dismantling process.

Numbering of stone:

A numbering system to be devised which will provide the best hope of a faithful restoration, this includes a coding that will keep quite small face stones, spalls, or fractured pieces connected to the adjoining identifiable stones. Some stones may be through stones and this needs to be reflected in the marking.

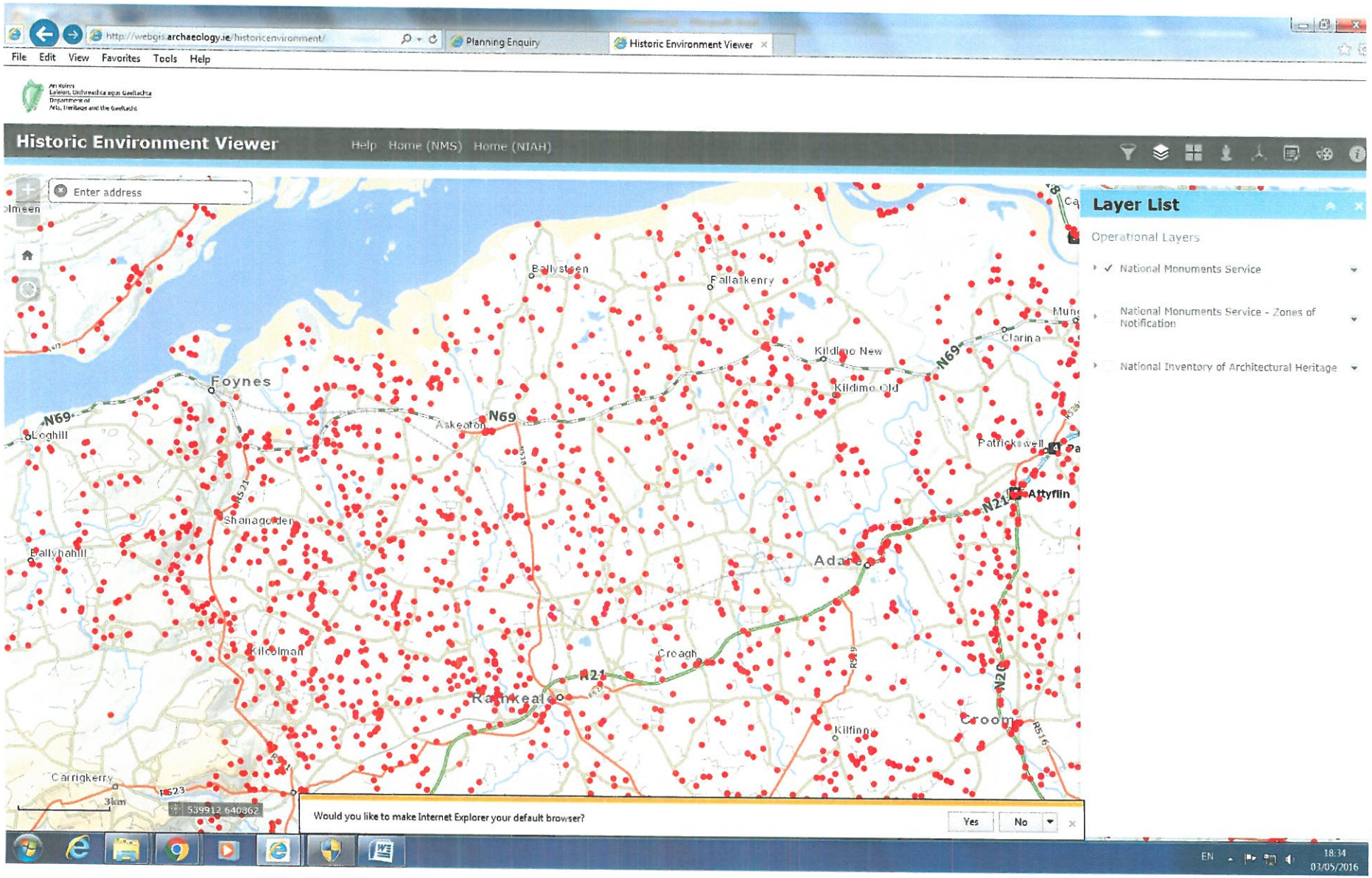
One of the recommendations in regard to numbering was to use a proprietary semi-sacrificial anti-graffiti barrier or coating on which a more permanent paint or marker type could be applied. This has the advantage of lasting longer, particularly if the stones are stored in a sheltered position. The barrier and numbering can later be removed by pressure water or steam which should have a minimum impact on the stone. Trials will be carried out. If in trials this proves to impact on the surface of the stone then most if not all sacrificial barriers can be removed by hand using warm water and a medium nylon brush (pers. comm. Stephen Gordon, Head of Applied Conservation, Historic Scotland).

It is intended to number the stone on the faces of the gables. This will accomplish several things and is most suitable in this particular circumstance. Numbering on the outer face i) provides one consistent, identifiable surface for numbering, ii) avoids rougher sides, iii) identifies the outer face, iv) enables a reapplication of the numbering prior to reconstruction in the event of any failure and v) allows for checking of the reconstruction during phase 2.

The sequence followed is likely to be i) number the exterior face which is lying uppermost, this will include the remaining uppermost courses in the west wall and any missing elements located during the works, remove this to the graveyard; ii) remove the core material (likely to exist just at the base as the wall narrows upwards) and store in the graveyard;. iii) at this point the rear of the inner face will be exposed, as far as possible these should be temporarily numbered in position, i.e. on the rear side, before being moved and more permanently marked on the outer face.

Storage:

There is ample room in the graveyard to the north of the church. There is a flat area here, free of grave-markers and immediately adjacent to an E/W concrete path which also extends southwards beside the west wall of the church. Limerick County Council has fenced off an area 12m x 12m for this purpose. It is proposed to create a retained, thick layer of sand, sufficient to contain differing sizes and thicknesses of stone such that a reasonably fair face will be observed on the surface. It is proposed to erect protection over the stones, a poly-tunnel was discussed but this might not be appropriate in a graveyard. Fencing and shelter will be provided to give a measure of weather protection and to discourage interference with the stones. On the latter point, the access to the graveyard passes two houses including their back gardens and stable yard so coming and going to the graveyard is over-looked. In addition, apart from a relatively plain window surround for the west window there are no architectural pieces of note in the gable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