

## CORRESPONDENCE

### MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK

JULY, 2020

- Email dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2020 from the Chairperson, Aviation Task Force, in reply to Notice of Motion from Members, that the Council oppose the decision by Aer Lingus to lay off its Shannon Airport staff, calls on Aer Lingus to commit to retaining cabin crew staff at Shannon and to engage with the Forsa union about their long term strategy for the airport and calls on the newly established Shannon Airport task force to restore 24 hour operations at the airport.
- Email dated 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 from the Office of the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, in reply to Notice from Members, calling on the Minister for Finance to reduce the V.A.T. rate in the tourism and hospitality sector from 13.5% to 9% in an effort to support and stimulate the industry during this difficult period.
- Letters dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2020 from the Office of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 from the Office of the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 from the Chief Executive Officer, Shannon Group in reply to the following Notice of Motions from Members :
  - I will move at the next meeting that this Council write to Shannon Group, requesting an urgent meeting with the Council, to discuss the crisis that is unfolding and to take a wider view of the tourism sector across the Mid West and sit down with Limerick City and County Council and unions to see how jobs can be retained.
  - I will move at the next meeting that the Council seek an explanation from Shannon Heritage on why King John's Castle will only reopen for the period of July 20th to August 31st 2020 giving just a six-week window to encourage leisure tourists, instead of working to extend the season with other providers in the local tourism industry as they try to rebuild following the Covid-19 outbreak.

## Carroll, Siobhan

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**From:** Clune, James  
**Sent:** 22 June 2020 16:27  
**To:** Carroll, Siobhan; Williams, Peter  
**Subject:** FW: Your letter of 18th June 2020

**From:** Chris J Horn <chris.horn.at@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 22, 2020 4:22 PM  
**To:** Clune, James <james.clune@limerick.ie>  
**Cc:** Yvonne Kennedy <yvonne.kennedy@shannongroup.ie>  
**Subject:** Your letter of 18th June 2020

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Dear James,

Mary Considine's office kindly forwarded a letter which you had written to me in my role of the (national) Aviation Task Force, reporting to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

I note the intention to move a motion calling on Council to oppose the decision by Aer Lingus to lay off its Shannon Airport staff.

Very best wishes  
Chris Horn

## Carroll, Siobhan

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**From:** Clune, James  
**Sent:** 26 June 2020 19:28  
**To:** Carroll, Siobhan  
**Subject:** FW: FIN-MO-02220-2020

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

----- Original message -----

**From:** Customer Services <customerservices@limerick.ie>  
**Date:** 26/06/2020 16:54 (GMT+00:00)  
**To:** 'Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform' <minister@finance.gov.ie>  
**Subject:** RE: FIN-MO-02220-2020

Dear Michelle,

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your email.

I have forwarded same to James Clune for his attention.

*Regards*  
*Patricia G*

***Le gach dea mhéin***  
***Seirbhísí Custaiméirí***  
***Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Luimnigh***

***Customer Services***  
***Limerick City & County Council***  
***Telephone: 061 556000***

**From:** Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform <finance-mo-correspondence@cloud.gov.ie>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 26, 2020 4:48 PM  
**To:** Customer Services <customerservices@limerick.ie>  
**Subject:** FIN-MO-02220-2020

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Our Ref: FIN-MO-02220-2020

Mr James Clune

Meetings Administrator

Limerick City & County Councils

[customerservices@limerick.ie]

Dear Mr Clune

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your recent correspondence on behalf of the Metropolitan District of Limerick which I have brought to the attention of the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, Mr Paschal Donohoe TD.

Yours sincerely

Michelle O'Connor

Private Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform

**A Member of the Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform staff. The Minister is a Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act, 2015 (details available on [www.lobbying.ie](http://www.lobbying.ie)).**

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*Tá an fhaisnéis atá sa ríomhphost seo (agus in aon cheangaltáin) faoi rún agus is don fhaighteoir/do na faighteoirí beartaithe é agus é/iad sin amháin. Mura tusa an faighteoir beartaithe, níor cheart duit an teachtaireacht seo ná aon chuid di a úsáid, a nochtadh, a choipeáil, a dháileadh ná a choinneáil. Sa chás gur trí earráid a fuair tú an ríomhphost seo, tabhair fógra dom láithreach faoi sin agus scríob gach cóip den ríomhphost seo ó do ríomhchóráil(s). Tabhair faoi deara go bhféadfaidh an ríomhphost seo agus aon fhreagra air bheith faoi réir iarraidh ar a eisiúint de bhun an Achta um Shaordáil Faisnéise*



Mr. James Clune  
Limerick City and County Council  
Corporate Services  
Merchants Quay  
Limerick  
V94 EH90

 June 2020

Our Ref: CHG-MO-00824-2020

Dear Mr Clune,

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your recent correspondence to Josepha Madigan, TD, Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, in connection with Shannon Heritage and King John's Castle in Limerick.

As this issue would fall under the remit of the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, I have forwarded your correspondence to their office for attention and direct reply.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Francis  
Private Secretary



An Roinn Iompair,  
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt  
Department of Transport,  
Tourism and Sport



Oifig an tAire | Office of the Minister

Mr. James Clune  
Limerick City and County Council  
Corporate Services  
Corporate Headquarters  
Merchants Quay  
Limerick



25th June 2020

Ref: TTAS-MO-02594-2020

Dear Mr. Clune,

On behalf of the Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, Shane Ross, T.D., I wish to thank you for your letter regarding the Shannon Group and Shannon Heritage, the contents of which have been noted.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Smith" is placed below the salutation.

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Chris Smith  
Private Secretary to Minister Ross

*The Minister is a Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act, 2015 (details available on [www.lobbying.ie](http://www.lobbying.ie))*

T: +353 (0) 61 712 228  
E: Info@shannongroup.ie

www.shannongroup.ie

GRÚPA NA sionainne  
shannon GROUP

Eitlíocht | Maoin | Turasóireacht  
Aviation | Property | Tourism



Mr. James Clune  
Meeting's Administrator  
Limerick City & Co. Council  
Corporate Headquarters  
Merchants Quay  
Limerick

July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Dear Mr.Clune,

I refer to your recent letter of June 18<sup>th</sup> re Kings John's Castle.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound and catastrophic effect on tourism in Ireland and on Shannon Group and Shannon Heritage revenues in 2020. The outlook for this year, and beyond, is stark and the scale of the losses which Shannon Group and Shannon Heritage is facing is unprecedented. Urgent actions are required to prevent further losses within the Group and Shannon Heritage, which are unsustainable and in particular in Shannon Heritage where there is no short to medium term prospect of a return to pre-COVID-19 levels of revenue.

In March 2020, following the Government public health direction, Shannon Heritage was required to close all of its visitor attractions and its entire revenue stream evaporated immediately. Due to its heavy reliance on international tourism, Shannon Group made the commercial decision, following the temporary reopening on 29th June to close Bunratty Castle & Folk Park and King John's Castle on 31st August 2020. In addition, the following sites will not open in 2020: Craggaunowen Castle, Dunguaire Castle, Knappogue Castle and the retail unit in the Adare Visitor Centre.

King John's Castle is very dependent on international visitors. In 2019, 74% of the visitors to the castle were international, with almost 40% of those from the USA. Given the Covid-19 pandemic, it is unlikely that we will have any international visitors for the remainder of 2020. We have marketed the King John's visitor experience extensively for the domestic market in order to mitigate to some degree the loss of international visitors in July and August.

However, based on forward bookings received for the next six weeks, it is clear that the level of domestic visitors will not increase significantly on prior years. To open beyond August 31<sup>st</sup> will increase the losses already being incurred by Shannon Heritage. When the schools open in September, the domestic market will dry up and given the current social distancing challenges it is unlikely that we will have any school tours to the attraction in 2020.

We have not taken this decision lightly and understand the impact it has on our employees and tourism businesses in the region. However, we have been forced to take these difficult decisions in the near term to ensure that the site will have a viable future.

The reality is, we need to limit the losses being incurred and ensure the financial viability of Shannon Heritage and the individual attractions so that the company and King John's Castle is well positioned to recover when international visitors return to Ireland and our employees, who are temporarily laid-off can return to what they love and do best. We are in dialogue with them on this. We know it is a difficult time for everyone, but by taking the necessary measures now, we stand the best chance of preserving jobs.

Kind regards,



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Mary Considine  
Chief Executive Officer