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‘We need a firm focus on O’Connell St plans’

■ Work on multi-million euro project may stretch beyond Easter

NICK RABBITTS

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A WELL-RESPECTED city businessman has called for work on the O’Connell Street revitalisation plan to take place around-the-clock and at weekends.

Tadhg Kearney, who runs a jewellery business at Thomas Street in the city centre, has described the management of the €9.1m project as being “chaotic”.

The former Limerick Chamber president sits on a stakeholder group for the scheme, and says for him, this exercise “has been a complete waste of time”, describing communication from all parties as “very poor”.

He said: “We need to hear firm timelines. We need a firm focus, and not just a continuing saga where we get updates each week where things just go on and on and on.”

“This seems to be just a nine to five Monday to Friday job. If you go on the motorways, you’d find people working at two o’clock in the morning so as not to cause disruption to people in the daytime.”

The businessman’s comments come in a week where the Limerick Leader revealed that it could now be April before the massive project is completed – almost six months later than the final completion date indicated by council at its inception.

In a bid to ensure the latest date is met, the main contractor, Shareridge, has taken the decision to ramp up the number of workers on site by around 15%.

Work on the multi-million euro revamp of Limerick’s main thoroughfare began in April 2021 with a projected completion date



Work on O’Connell Street in the city centre continued this week

PICTURE: ADRIAN BUTLER

of November 2022.

Now, sources with knowledge of the project have indicated it might not be until after Easter when the work is 100% finished.

Once complete, the redevelopment of O’Connell Street will see wider footpaths to allow people to gather, planters, seating areas, and spill-out zones outside businesses.

The new plan will see general traffic being reduced to one lane on the street – and a bus lane, with water features and a central

“ We need a firm focus, and not just a continuing saga where we get updates each week where things just go on and on ”

Businessman Tadhg Kearney

plaza at the Thomas Street/O’Connell Street junction.

Last year, the then mayor of Limerick, Cllr Daniel Butler said work on O’Connell Street was to be largely complete by September 2022 – with the final touches in place two months later.

However, in September, the Leader revealed a fresh completion date of November 25 had been set – but if this was missed, workers would move off site for Christmas and return in

January, with the hope it would be complete early in 2023. Now it appears that it will be more than a quarter of the way into this year before this happens.

Shareridge referred queries from this newspaper to Arup, the council’s representatives on site.

Arup, in turn, referred the Leader to the local authority.

Limerick City and County Council had not commented on the matter at the time of going to press this Tuesday afternoon.

Council director set for Liverpool switch

NICK RABBITTS

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COUNCIL director Nuala Gallagher is to leave Limerick’s local authority to take up a new role in Liverpool.

Ms Gallagher, who hails from Donegal, has, for the last number of years, worked as director of place-making, planning and environment.

In that role, she was responsible for the redevelop-

ment of parts of the Limerick city waterfront, most notably in the last year around Honan’s Quay.

Having previously worked in Bristol, and Newham, East London, which hosted the 2012 Olympics, she is heading back cross-channel to take up the role of corporate director of city development at the City Council in Liverpool, which was the 2008 European Capital of Cul-

ture. Local councillors believe she’ll be a tough act to follow.

Former mayor Daniel Butler said: “Nuala brought an expertise and experience in particular to the public realm that we needed as a city and will now be a huge loss for us. Her creativity, energy and openness to engagement made her very popular on the ground.”

Metropolitan district

leader, Cllr Olivia O’Sullivan, added: “Limerick’s loss is Liverpool’s gain.

“Nuala’s vision for Limerick was a very exciting one, she really got’ our city,”

A director at Limerick Twenty Thirty, the local authority’s development arm, Ms Gallagher has amassed over two decades of experience in development and placemaking internationally, having also worked in New York.



Move: Nuala Gallagher

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McKeogh Gallagher Ryan start off 10th year with three promotions

MCKEOGH Gallagher Ryan, the largest independent group of accounting and tax professionals in the Mid-West, are continuing their upward trajectory.

After celebrating 10 years in business last year they are starting 2023 with three promotions to their management team - David Kennedy to Assistant Manager in the General Practice Division; Jane Hughes to Manager and Chloe Hannon to Assistant Manager in the Tax Department, all based in the Limerick office.

Speaking about Chloe and Jane’s promotions, Tax Partner Mary McKeogh stated: “We are delighted with the contributions Jane and Chloe have made to the firm. Jane was promoted to Assistant Manager last year and quickly proved herself an extremely capable and resourceful manager, with a very busy client load. Chloe joined the firm in 2021 and has quickly established herself as an excellent tax professional – at ease with clients, multi-tasking across compliance and consultancy assignments, and also assisting with training and developing the tax trainees. Both Jane and Chloe work very closely with myself and our Tax Director Anne Hogan, and we are looking forward to their continued success with the firm.”

Jane Hughes is based in Portlannington, County Laois, a



Onwards and upwards at McKeogh Gallagher Ryan: Mary McKeogh, Anne Hogan, Jane Hughes, David Kennedy, Chloe Hannon, Aileen O’Neill and Eoin Gallagher

Chartered Tax Advisor and graduate from Maynooth University. As the firm’s Tax Manager she supervises and manages our large tax department while also working on her own caseload of VAT consultancy, succession planning, corporate tax advisory and compliance assignments. Jane is analytical and technical, and brings a clear-thinking positive demeanour to her role.

Chloe Hannon is from New-

port, County Tipperary, a Chartered Tax Advisor and first-class honours graduate from TUS Moylish. As the firm’s Assistant Tax Manager she works closely with the Tax Partner and senior management team, training junior staff, working with our personal and corporate tax clients providing compliance and advisory services.

David Kennedy is from Ballysimon, County Limerick, a

Chartered Accountant and an honours graduate from TUS Moylish. As the firm’s Assistant Audit Manager he works closely with the Audit Partner and senior management team on statutory audits, accounts production and audit exempt engagements for a broad range of our corporate clients from pharma and aviation companies to family-owned businesses and manufacturing enterprises.



Many commercial buildings are being repurposed for residential use

Vacant businesses to be turned into homes

LEADER REPORTER

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LIMERICK City and County Council has received contact from 75 homeowners seeking to convert vacant commercial premises into homes.

The information, published by Minister of State Kieran O’Donnell, revealed that since 2018, the local authority had received these notifications, which will pave the way for 151 new homes following the conversion of empty business premises.

In 2022, council received notifications of conversions of six former

pubs aimed at providing 17 homes.

In total, it received notifications of 23 exempted developments which are aimed at providing 38 new homes.

Nationally, 260 notifications indicated the intention to provide 665 homes.

Mr O’Donnell said: “These figures show that extra homes in Limerick are being provided due to these regulations that make it easier to convert certain vacant commercial premises, including vacant spaces over ground-floor premises, into housing. Crucially, these regulations also en-

courage town centre renewal, a government priority. That is why these exemptions were extended until the end of 2025 last year.”

The Fine Gael man added: “This government is determined to eradicate the blight of vacancy and dereliction that afflicts many of our towns. We have many schemes and supports out there to help people convert a derelict building or premises into a home. We are running a national campaign to alert the public to these supports and I hope to see many more conversions of such properties in Limerick in the year ahead.”

Engineering showcase returns

A SPECIAL event showcasing the appeal of a career in the engineering sector is to make a welcome return to Shannon Airport this week.

Explore Engineering, formerly known as Limerick for Engineering, is an industry-led group with strong and direct links to education.

Each year, they get together to hold a showcase, with representatives of a

number of companies from across the region invited to take part.

Among the more than 60 firms to be represented at the event, which takes place this Thursday from 5pm to 9pm are Johnson and Johnson, Arup, Dell, Kirby Group Engineering, Kostal, Jaguar Land Rover and Analog Devices.

Staff from third level institutions will also be on hand to provide information on the courses re-

quired to get into engineering, including Technological University of the Shannon, Mary Immaculate College and the University of Limerick.

To find out more see explore-engineering.ie

Attendees can get to meet and hear from engineers working in diverse roles, and experience the number of career opportunities available in the Mid-West in this sector.

MATTHEWS AUCTIONEERS

**Antiques & Jewellery Auction
This Tuesday 7th March
Commencing 12 Noon**



12 Noon Lots 1 - 686 Antiques, Collectables, Household, etc.
Several Part & Full House Clearances
6pm Sharp Lots 1,000 - 1,508 Jewellery, Gold, Silver, etc.
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(L-R) Mary McKeogh, Jane Hughes, David Kennedy, Chloe Hannon & Eoin Gallagher

McKeogh Gallagher Ryan

Where Direct Relationships Count

PROMOTION ANNOUNCEMENT

We are delighted to announce the following appointments in our Limerick office:

JANE HUGHES
as Manager in our Tax Department

CHLOE HANNON
as Assistant Manager in our Tax Department

DAVID KENNEDY
as Assistant Manager in our General Practice Division

WE WISH THEM CONTINUED SUCCESS IN THEIR NEW ROLES.

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