# ATHLONE AERIAL



NEWSLETTER ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

Autumn 2013

www.athlone.iwai.ie

Secretary Brian Corcoran brianpacorcoran@gmail.com

# Chairman's Musings of 2013

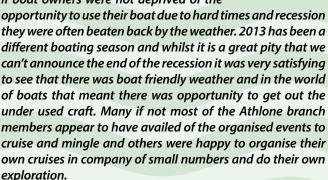


Shannon Boat Rally Parade of Sail in Carrick on Shannon

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It is clearly a co-incidence that the past five years have been dominated on the one hand by recession and on the other by the four bad summers in succession. If boat owners were not deprived of the



Athlone branch had a very successful CIC to Clondra and this was very well organised by Seamus and Anne Carr. Clondra is such a gem in the cruising range of Athlone members for a weekend and the May bank holiday was so well spent in the refurbished facilities at this historic harbour. After a tour of the harbour area hosted by a local historian, CIC competition broke out and boules kits excavated from bilges provided the big attraction, something which carried into the Saturday night's singsong entertainment and presentation.

The June bank holiday CIC was organised by Paul and Rosie King with Barley harbour as the ultimate destination. Saturday afternoon featured an anchor out, or maybe better described as an anchor drag, but in the end all made it safely to Barley and what a BBQ and evening by simple oil lantern Paul had organised. The cruise to and tour on Saints Island with a music night in Coosan Point completed a fabulous weekend.

We also had the wonderful St Hildas day trip and some of us were involved in providing a support service to the Dublin Airport Police and Fire Service Rowing Club who rowed from Lough Allen to Foynes for charity.

Then there was the 53rd Shannon Boat Rally which this year was in the North Shannon. Commodore Martin Donnelly ably assisted by Athlone Vice-Commodore Gerry Macken and Carrick Vice-Commodore Margaret Megan delivered a fantastic programme. Roll on the 54th Rally, next year based in the Athlone area.

We still have the Puddin and Porter weekend 13th -15th September at Lecarrow, that ever improving venue, and the branch CIC to go so let's not give up yet on what has already been a wonderful boating season for Athlone IWAI members.

We have noted that some members have not renewed their membership and so can I please ask those who have still to pay membership to do so now.

Kevin Clabby

Chairman.

### Trekker backpack Cruising in the UK: Canal & River Trust will walk more than 100 miles to capture images

Google Street View allows people to see images of roads worldwide on Google Maps. The Google Trekker (a wearable backpack to capture shots of remote locations) was loaned to the Canal & River Trust. They will use the Trekker system to capture footage of some of most scenic parts of England and Wales's 200-year old waterway network. The Trekker weighs 42 lbs, so it's not for weaklings and is fitted with a 15-angle lens camera to take 360-degree pictures every 2.5 seconds in public places It is the first time the technology has been on loan in the UK. The footage allows millions of people from all over the world to see the canals. rivers and towpaths and might encourage visitors to make a trip to see them. If you think you could do a good job of capturing images of the Irish waterways for Google, you can borrow the trekker.

### **Upcycled Reefer Sails**

Reefer sail off cuts are recycled to help reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and reuse worn out sails. They are recycled into dog and cat beds, into deck chairs, windbreakers or sailcloth bunting. These are not cheap products but obviously weather well, dry quickly and wash easily.



## **Rowing the Shannon**

#### **Keith Rowe**

In July we were fortunate to be able to help out the Dublin Airport Police and Fire Service as they attempted to set a record by rowing the length of the Shannon. The IWAI was asked to provide mother ships which the crew could use to rest on between their one hour shifts on the boat.



Rowing the Shannon

Athlone Branch in the guise of Kevin Clabby Ruby, met the team at Tarmonbarry, taking and accompanied them to Athlone and after an overnight in the Buccaneers Rugby Club, they continued on their journey. I was lucky enough to be able to help for this part of the trip. Both Dave McCabe and I skippered the Emerald Star cruiser which had kindly been loaned by Emerald Star for the challenge. Sam and Shiela Herraghty on Dunross was the other Athlone boat which would accompany them to Victoria Lock. We left from the South side of Athlone lock at 6.30 am and what followed can only be described as inspirational. For the remainder of the day, until 8pm that night, the rowing boat made relentless and steady progress towards its goal (Killaloe). Each one hour crew rowed with all their heart and soul, each one fighting blisters, pain, and tiredness during their shift. The boat only slowed to a crawl to allow crew changes every hour. By the time we reached Victoria, I was exhausted, let alone the oars people. After Victoria Lock, Noel and Jonie Griffin on Ocean Froggie took up the baton from Sam and Shiela. Dave and I continued on in the Emerald Star.

From here on the weather took a turn and the wind came up. By the time we reached Lough Derg, it was getting wild. We were blessed to have Noel's knowledge of the lake to guide us and find the least worst route through. This is where the crew of the boat shone through. They fought horrible squalls and large waves, sometimes moving two strokes forward and one back for hours. They never lost heart, in fact the good humour on the mothership was infectious. They supported and encouraged each other until finally, in the late afternoon, they rounded Parker Point. The psychological battle was won. Once they were in the relative shelter of the Clare shoreline, the crew settled into a steady push for Killaloe. We arrived in at about 8pm. The crew were exhausted but unbelievably, ready for a pint. We were exhausted having just watched them.

We were indeed fortunate to have met and spent the day with such a fantastic group of people. They were tireless, good natured, inclusive, tough and without doubt inspirational. Next time I say I'm too tired to get up and do something tough, I'll just think of that day and tell myself to cop on!

#### **Membership Benefits**

#### REPRESENTATION

The IWAI is the respected voice of Ireland's inland waterway users, lobbying and advising government bodies, the waterway authority, as well as other bodies on all matters connected with the waterways including navigation, facilities, moorings, heritage and future developments.

#### **IWN MAGAZINE**

Members receive the Inland Waterways News magazine published quarterly. The magazine is packed with boating information and articles on all aspects of the navigations, reports, association, waterways, and branch news.

#### **BOAT RALLIES + CICS**

Boat Rallies and regular Cruise in Company events are organised by the Athlone branch. These are fun social events for all the family on water. Rallies are family oriented fun events with activities for all ages including games, competitions, watersports, training and boat handling fun events on the major rallies over a week. Once you are a member of a branch you can participate in any of those events.

# St Hildas's residents special boat trip

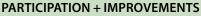
#### **Kevin Clabby**

In 2003 the Special Olympics World Games came to Ireland, the first time it was held outside of America. Athlone was the host town to Bharat (India) and the Athlone branch of IWAI played its part. A fleet of boats was mustered at the Athlone town jetties and the Bharat Special Olympics team, officials and Athlone hosts were brought for a trip on Lough Ree and then to their destination at Hodson Bay for a reception.

That even showed that boaters could play a part in sharing the wonderful waterways at and around Athlone with those who do not have access normally and especially those less fortunate that most of us. In 2004 we provided a similar opportunity for the St Hilda's special needs residents and what a wonderful evening they and we all had.

Such an event did not happen again until this year and on 14/06/2013 we hosted the St Hilda's special needs residents and what an honour it was to be part of this. The weather was not pleasant on the day but as there was a likelihood that the





Funds are raised to improve existing navigations and to restore derelict ones. Work parties are a very social way of participating in this work. In addition there are mooring points on the navigation system that members can moor up to.

#### **WEB FORUM**

The IWAI hosts an active web forum discussing all matters related to boating and enjoying the inland waterways. Everything from advice on navigations, moorings, water levels, boat and engine maintenance, equipment, restoration projects, buying a boat, waterways heritage, rallies, cruise in companies and training are popular matters for discussion.

#### SUPPORT THE AIMS OF IWAI

Supporters of the IWAI include users of the waterways such as boaters, anglers, walkers, canoeists, kayakers, sailers, watersports enthusiasts, waterways residents, boat builders, marine businesses and people interested in the heritage of Ireland's waterway network. Your continued support is important to us, please REJOIN, you can now join on the IWAI's new online system, IWAI Online365, go to www.iwai.ie and click "join/renew" at the top of the page.



event would not be re-scheduled if it was cancelled we agreed with St Hilda's management that we would press ahead. To say we were rewarded with gratitude is an understatement from a group of people who appreciate the little things in life. The trip was shorter that originally planned due to the weather and having set off from the town jetties we cruised up the lake a little and returned to Lough Ree Yacht Club where there was food and refreshments.

Many thanks to all who made their boats and themselves available and to Michael McDonald who provided the Viking cruise boat especially for the wheelchair bound clients, to Liam and Mary Farrelly who provided a bus to take everyone back to the St Hildas centre, to Supermacs for the food and to Lough Ree Yacht Club and Commodore Alan Algeo for their wonderful facilities.

This is an event which should take place annually so please watch out for next year's event.



## June long weekend CIC

#### **Paul King**

Our June long weekend CIC was a big success this year, with 22 boats in attendance, and we were lucky with the weather, which was bright and sunny throughout, although at times very breezy.

The fleet assembled at Hodson Bay on Friday night, for a casual night and get together. On Saturday morning, we departed on our tour of Lough Ree, arriving soon afterwards at Quaker's Island, where we dropped anchor and rafted off to have a spot of lunch, and to explore the magnificent history of the island. Everybody had great fun as we brought the ribs as close to shore as possible, with piggy backs the rest of the way for the ladies provided by Gerry Macken who was unfortunate enough to have waders!

Then it was a short trip across the lake to the much under visited Barley Harbour, where the fleet rested overnight. The wind was quite strong, which made mooring a little difficult, but our usual sense of camaraderie saw us tied up safe and snug before too long. After our marquees were erected, we had the commodore's wine and cheese, then everyone got down to the business of socialising and playing lawn games, and we enjoyed a communal barbeque. As dusk came, we fired up the campfire and parraffin lanterns, creating the perfect atmosphere, and Peter Lee lit up the trees with his LED's. We finished the evening with some great music and song.



**Exploring Quakers Island** 





Swan guarding jetty on Saints Island

On Sunday morning it was on to Saint's Island for a historical tour which was enjoyed by everyone, and our guide and host, Kieran Crowley deserves a special word of thanks. Time restraints meant that we didn't get to cruise the river Inny, so it was straight on to our last destination, Coosan Point. A great night was had by all, and we danced the night away to an acoustic session by local band, The Smokes. A perfect close to a perfect weekend!

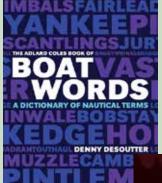
I hope everyone enjoyed themselves as much as I did!

### **Book Corner**

#### The Adlard Coles Book of Boatwords

by Denny Desoutter **Published: Bloomsbury** 

Over 1500 nautical terms are explained in this down to earth glossary aimed at the layman, covering all areas of boating. Boatwords was originally compiled by the former editor of Practical Boat Owner magazine.



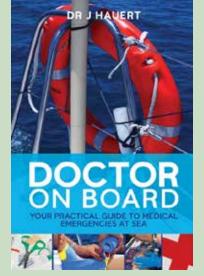
Traditional Boats of Ireland

#### **Doctor on Board**

by Jürgen Hauert **Published: Bloomsbury** 

This book shows the medical novice exactly how to tackle a wide variety of medical situations that might arise, with the help of diagnosis advice and detailed step by step photos. Written

specifically for the layman, each procedure is shown in detail and described in non-medical language.



#### **Traditional Boats of Ireland**

by Criostóir Mac Cárthaigh **Published:Collins Press** 

This book marks the first attempt to set down on paper, illustrate and record some 60 different and varied types of craft operating around the entire Irish coast.

# Doing the Shannon Rally

**Kevin Clabby** 

Our first Shannon Rally was in 1999. We had just purchased our first boat but we had not really used it yet. Then there was a spell of fantastic sunshine in the last week of July 1999 and I was driving past Lecarrow and decided to drop in

and check out the harbour. I had never heard of the Shannon Rally or this concept of community boating and so to see this fleet of eighty or so boats crammed into this small harbour was quite a surprise. Having enquired from someone what was going on I soon found myself filling up an entry form and the following morning the first of our 15 Shannon Boat Rallies began. We just did about six days of that first Rally as we were a little unprepared generally and we had a six month old baby. That baby is now in junior cert year.

We had already replaced the boat immediately prior to the next rally of 2000 and we have done every rally since. Many of the people we met on the first rally are still there and the committee has rotated with new blood coming on board to organise the rally all the time. I have served on the committee on eight of the fifteen rallies to date having been asked by the branch to serve on the 2003 committee. Those eight have not been consecutive as I was off the committee for three years in the middle.





Many thanks to Fiona Hoey, Crannagh for photographs.







Most of the boating contacts I have made were made on the rally and I know this is the story for most people. There are many who do the rally for their children and many who do it because they have always done it. Some do the rally for the social, musical, competitive and sporting elements in the rally but one thing is for sure everyone does it for boating reasons. Even if you think you are a well accomplished boat handler there is always something new to be quietly observed, some new contact to be made, location to learn about if only in discussion with fellow ralliers and so the process of being a better informed, safer and more competent boater continues even if you do not engage in healthy and open competition for the prestigious Premier award.

And if you have a few nights in the spring and early summer to devote to the four pre-rally committee meetings and want to give a little back don't be shy. I may be asking for Athlone members to boost the numbers on the committee for the 54th rally in 2014.

# Keeping your phone safe while on water

This year I noticed while on the river that a number of people had bought various kinds of waterproof pouches for their iphones. I suppose if all your contacts, all your photos songs and messages are on your phone it would be very very inconvenient to loose it. By far the best device is the dedicated Otter Box which is both waterproof (underwater submersion to 6.6 ft. for 30 minutes) and shockproof (endures 10 ft. drops). The touch display functions are not impaired behind the transparent screen. They also have protective cases for a whole range of phones and electronic equipment. The company set up its European headquarters in Cork in 2010 and now has a staff of 16. Over the next year it is hoped that OtterBox EMEA will create 50 new jobs.



### Branch meeting, Presentation from CSIG and Financial Contribution

The June branch meeting took place in Lough Ree Yacht Club and was followed directly followed by presentation on the Electronic Navigation Charts for the River Shannon by the CSIG - Charts Special Interest Group. Following a detailed presentation from the work of the survey teams and a range of questions from the members it was agreed to make a substantial donation to the project to assist them buy essential equipment. The branch felt that this was a long term investment that the whole association would benefit from.

### Green & Silver 2013 Part 1

#### **Nora Sleator**

It was a cold April morning when "Walkabout" left Portaneena in the Inner Lakes and headed north up L. Ree, on what was to become a nearly three month voyage, following the Green and Silver route. 21 days of travelling, some very short, some long, brought her and her crew back to Athlone at the end of June.

The plan to complete the journey originated when the skipper, Louis Sleator, stood in the dry bed of the Royal Canal swinging a slash hook just east of Cloondra, back about thirty years ago. Many of us thought it would never be possible. Along the journey we thought frequently of the men and women, including Eddie Slane, Sean Fitzsimons, Dermot O'Brien and Reggie Redmond who dreamed of accomplishing this journey.

While the skipper remained the same, the crew varied according to time available. It included myself, Nora Sleator, our daughter Niamh, Robert Maitland and our logistic officer Mary Gallagher ie the sister who kindly drove all over the country dropping us off and collecting us.

Louis and Niamh made the start going to Cloondra on Tues 2nd of April, the only thing worthy of note being the weather-freezing cold but not as cold as the following day, when Louis continued to Abbeyshrule, nearly getting frostbite on the way after losing a glove. Fortunately his brother lives there and was able on arrival to provide heat and sustenance.

By the weekend of the 13th, the First Mate, myself, had arrived home from warmer climes and we progressed as far as Coolnahay and then Mullingar. The Sunday proved to be one of the most stressful days of the entire trip. Just short of Mullingar we ground to a halt with what turned out to be a tyre wrapped around the prop. Despite assistance from WI we had no option but to send for a sub-aqua diver, eventually contacted with the help of Damien Delaney. The wind had strengthened dramatically while this was in train, and so the Skipper, despite plans to proceed on to Mary Lynch's, in fact decided it would be foolhardy and so stopped in Mullingar for the night. Our WI friend locked him in to the harbour, but I was still less than happy to have to leave him there alone and travel home to Dublin for work the following day.

Monday 15th - Louis continued with the help of WI to Thomastown, and was duly collected by Mary. As the date for the opening of the Effin Bridge was approaching



Walkabout crosses the M50



Skipper and first mate on the Liffey

faster than he would like, he returned on Wed 17th and spent a very wild, windy night there before moving on to Jackson's bridge, just short of Maynooth, and finishing the journey to there the following day. At this stage we had caught up with the HBA barges also heading in for the Dublin Rally.

As a former bargee Louis reckoned we would be well advised to travel ahead of the barges, and so having been delivered by car, I joined him and we made a very early start on the Saturday morning 20th April en route to Castleknock. Having travelled the N4 for so many years alongside the canal it was a somewhat weird experience to make the journey by water. While passing through one lock we met a lady home on holidays from England who had never seen the lock being worked before. I think it was one of the highlights of her holiday.

The Deep Sinking lived up to its reputation as a very special part of the canal. While John Dolan on Float No.1 very kindly let us go ahead of him, in retrospect it may have been better to wait behind, as he removed an obstruction or two along the way. On arrival in Castleknock we moored near the lock on the northern bank, tucked in behind "Lone Ranger" and Graham Liddy.

We waited there until the May Bank Holiday when boats had assembled to make the journey into Dublin for the Dublin Rally. At skippers briefing on Friday 3rd May we met old and new friends also Dublin bound. "Aquarius", with it's motley crew from Carrick Boat Club, was to be our travelling companion for much of the way. By now

we had been joined by Robert Maitland from Whitehead who was to help crew for the journey in. On Saturday morning we were in the second lock leaving at 07.20. As "Walkabout" headed out across the Aquaduct over the M50, I was scrambling up the bank to the roundabout above in order to get some photographs of this amazing junction.

The locks on the way were manned by volunteers from the Dublin Branch and Waterways Ireland personnel. This obviously made our journey considerably easier. From Castleknock to Ashtown one could almost have been out in the middle of the country, so removed was it from the city which we knew was close by. After that, as we got closer to our first stopping point at Shandon Gardens Phibsborough, the city encroached more and more. On reaching our destination at 10.30 we tied up and waited for the rest of the Rally boats to catch up. The Rally had linked in with Phizzfest and there were many activities on during the afternoon including water polo on the stretch ahead of us. It was an opportunity to have some friends aboard and we were delighted to be joined for a short while by Tish Enright, Maeve Kelly and Fiona Hoey.

Word went around that we were to move ahead when the festivities were over and spread out between the locks heading down towards "Brendan" at Lock No.2. This would help in getting us through the "Effin" bridge the following day with the least delay. Having been joined by our niece Sinead for the trip, we progressed down to Lock No 4 and tied up in the shadow of Mountjoy jail for the night.

Another early start on Sunday morning saw us moving ever closer to the Liffey. The weather was proving very kind to us and continued so for the day. As all who have made the journey into Dublin by either canal will probably agree, it is at times a somewhat surreal experience to be passing through very familiar territory by a completely different route. Passing under Croke Park, the lock under the North Strand and then the "Eiffin" bridge, the latter being supervised by six or so men in Hi Vis jackets, leaning on a car, brought us into the first part of Spencer Dock. The water level when we arrived did not permit us to pass under Sherrif St bridge and so commenced our longest wait. Boat after boat passed us by, until some hours later the level was eventually lowered enough to allow us through. A quick passage through the sea lock brought us out onto the Liffey. At last a bit of open water! The skipper was happy to be able to blow a few cobwebs out of the engine. Although eager to explore the new waters he was somewhat hampered by the First Mate, me, whose dislike of tidal waters brought his enthusiasm to an abrupt halt and we headed for the sea-lock into Ringsend. A queue had built up due to problems at the lock and so we had another wait, time for a cuppa, while attached to shore by a line hanging on a hook on the quay wall far above.

Once again WI assisted by IWAI members helped us through the lock and into the basin. So different from our previous visit in 2000. While passing through the sealocks we had been given navigation directions, and our mooring instructions and so we made our way to our berth for the next three weeks in the inner basin. The sense of accomplishment was huge. Not an easy journey at times, but one that we greatly enjoyed overall.



**Dublin Rally in Ringsend Basin** 

# Tall Ship Astrid will be raised from the sea

The Dutch-owned tall ship ran aground on rocks close to Kinsale on 24 July. All 30 crewmembers were rescued in a large scale multiagency rescue operation. Experts believe it is possible to salvage the 95-year-old vessel, which was converted into a sail training ship in the 1980s at Portland Harbour.

# New Look Website www.athlone.iwai.ie

Keep up to date with all our news and events on the branch's new look website.

If you want to contribute contact athlone@iwai.ie or the webmaster siobhanbigley@gmail.com



### Reminder Text Alert Information System

We have set up a SMS (texting) information system, to allow the branch, to Text members with timely information and updates, like meeting reminders, cruise in company start dates etc. This is an OPT-IN service.

TO JOIN TEXT IWAI TO 51444. This is a free service and costs you nothing. Your number will never be used for anything else but branch information by text.

# Lough Ree lifeboat Open Day Coosan Point 31st Aug 2013

#### **Brian Corcoran**

Another fine event was held today 31st Aug in the Lough Ree RNLI Lifeboat station at Coosan Point Athone. The Open Day ran from Noon until 4PM and it was attend by in excess of 300 visitors from the general public. Kids of all ages from two to eighty two were mightily impressed with the Lifeboat operations, aptly demonstrated by Lifeboat Operations Manager Damien Delaney and his crew of



Robbie West gives CPR demonstration at the Lifeboat Open Day

28. They launched the 'Dorothy Mary' 7.5M Rigid Inflatable Lifeboat five or six times through the afternoon, with crew changes after each launch.

Light refreshments in the form of Tea's Coffee's and Lolipops (for the eighty two year old's) were provided by Catering Crew members Rafter, Finnegan and McCabe.

The Lough Ree Lifeboat station has been one of the busiest inland stations within the RNLI, having had 38 'shouts' or call outs since its inception in July 2012, 24 of those shouts have been in this year and it's yet only August! When the station was established in July 2012 it was given 'temporary' status on a trial basis by the RNLI, however having been so busy and such a valuable asset on Lough Ree the RNLI this year it is hoped that the station will be upgraded to 'permanent' status. This is a great reflection on all of the volunteers that provide their time to support the station, crew, fundraisers, operations team and of course those that need rescuing without whom the service wouldn't exist.

A key part of the service is the National Coast Guard Service based in Malinhead who manage and co-ordinate all 'shouts' when casualty's call the Emergency Services on VHF Channel 16, Phone 999 or 112. To add to the excitement of the day Rescue 118, the latest Sikorsky S92 Helicopter based in Strandhill Sligo also gave a demonstration over the Coosan Lough, they dropped their winch man to the water over the Lough Ree Lifeboat, a great spectacle for all to see.

Watch out for the RNLI Lifeboat collection boxes in your local hostelries & garages and don't be afraid to fill them with your loose change.



Succession Planning at its best... Deputy Launch Authority

#### **MEMBERSHIP FEES:**

(Note that membership is from January to January)

Single Membership: €44.00Family Membership: €55.00

#### **Branch Notice Board**

AGM of Athlone Branch IWAI will be held in Lough Ree Yacht Club on Friday December at 8.30pm.

#### Agenda (Draft)

- 1. Apologies
- 2. Correspondence
- 3. Minutes of 2012 Annual General Meeting
- 4. Matters Arising
- 5. Chairperson's Report
- 6. Hon. Secretary Report
- 7. Hon. Treasurer Report
- 8. Election of Athlone Branch Officers
  - Chairperson
  - Vice Chairperson
  - Hon. Secretary
  - Hon Treasurer
  - PRO
  - Webmaster
  - Child Protection Officer
- Shannon Boat Rally 2014
  Committee and Athlone Branch
  Vice Commodore
- 10. Branch Calendar of Events 2014
- 12. AOB

#### Next Branch Meeting Friday 11th October

Lough Ree Yacht Club, at 8pm followed by finger food, drinks and sing song with De Band.

## **End of Season Cruise-In-Company**

#### **Saturday 12th October**

Commodore: Ian Craig

**Saturday Afternoon:** Sailing Regatta with J24s, with a crew of 5, Everybody can get the opportunity to sail these competively. Inexperienced sailors will be given a short introduction to sailing. Final Details to be confirmed.

**4 pm:** Fleet to cruise to Glasson Hotel and Golf Club.

**8pm – till Late**: End of Season Branch Buffet at Glasson Hotel and Golf Club with entertainment from Paul Hull.

**Sunday Afternoon:** Fun activities on the grounds of the Golf Club, an opportunity try your hands on a Segway, archery, shooting, and some other fun games.

Ticket pricing for the Buffet and CIC is to be finalised.