

Clooney Spencilhill Community Development Plan 2019 -2024

Prepared on behalf of the Community by a Voluntary Community Planning Group

October 2019



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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You can view, print or download this plan at this link: www.clooneyspencilhill.ie/plan



Introduction

This document is the result of a process initiated in autumn 2018 with the support of Clare County Council and finished with support from Clare Local Development Company. The process leading to this plan was led by a group of local volunteers who worked closely with facilitators whose role was to guide and inform the planning process. The actions proposed in this plan have been informed by the needs, interests and concerns of those living in the area.

Members of the planning group invested a great deal of personal commitment in attending meetings, taking on tasks, and reflecting on the needs brought forward by their community. The members of the planning group were as follows:

- Tom Larkin
- Shane Greene
- Linda Hale
- Maria Keane
- Maria Kennedy
- Pamela McGrath
- Ger O'Halloran
- Joanne Perill
- Maureen Quinlan

The impact of volunteers across the broad spectrum of activities to be found in the community is enormous, and a great deal of gratitude is owed to them. Sincere appreciation is due to those who committed to this planning process.

Clooney Spencilhill

Clooney & Spencilhill are two neighbouring villages located very close to Ennis on the main road to east Clare, the Tulla Road (R352). These communities are just a 5-10 minute drive from Ennis and have little retail activity in them as a result; there are two pubs, Duggan's and Norrie Henchy's and a filling station with a local shop. Key community assets are the churches in Clooney and Maghera, Clooney National School, Clooney Quin GAA Grounds, the Clare GAA's Centre of Excellence and Rathclooney Lake (O'Brien's Big Lough) which is used for birdwatching and pike fishing. The Clooney House buildings are in ruins, but the surrounding land offers opportunity for walking routes. And Spencilhill is home to the horse fair made famous, worldwide, by the song *Spencilhill*.

Looking forward, the two communities are set to be adjacent to a 1 million square foot data centre located at the M18 motorway junction with the Tulla Road. Land was zoned for the data centre in March 2019. Permission has also been granted by Clare County Council for two solar farms, one in Clooney and one in Spencilhill.

This area of Clare has a rich biodiversity, including deer, pine martens, moths, lizards, butterflies, badgers, foxes, wildflowers and trees¹. Ken Bond of UCC has written about The Moths and Butterflies of Rathclooney².

The area also maintains a strong interest in traditional music and GAA.

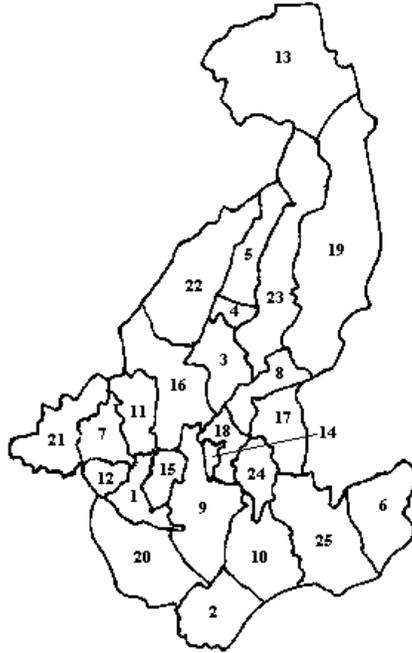
The task of this process was to allow residents to identify aspects of community life and which could be improved upon and ways to build a strong future.

¹ <http://www.leenorganics.com/what-to-do/>

² <http://www.leenorganics.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Moths-and-butterflies.pdf>

Community Profile

This is a boundary map of Clooney Parish (Bunratty Upper) showing townlands.



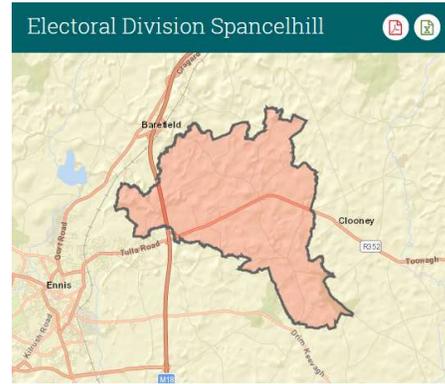
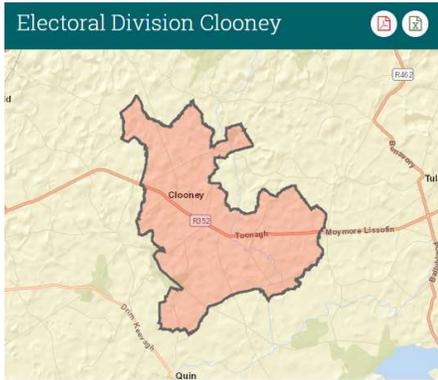
1. ▶ Ballycrighan	2. ▶ Ballyhickey	3. ▶ Ballyvergin	4. ▶ Ballyvroghaun Eighter
5. ▶ Ballyvroghaun Oughter	6. ▶ Caherloghan	7. ▶ Cahershaughnessy	8. ▶ Carrahan
9. ▶ Clooney	10. ▶ Corbally	11. ▶ Cranagher	12. ▶ Curraghmoghaun
13. ▶ Derrycalliff	14. ▶ Feenagh	15. ▶ Kilgobban	16. ▶ Knockanoura
17. ▶ Knockaphreaghaun	18. ▶ Lassana	19. ▶ Maghera	20. ▶ Moyriesk
21. ▶ Muckinish	22. ▶ Rathclooney	23. ▶ Rylane	24. ▶ Sraheen
25. ▶ Toonagh			

Unfortunately, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) does not provide population data by parish or townland, but CSCDG's best estimate is 750-800 people resident in Clooney Parish. Using data from Pobal maps³ the population change for the 'Small Area' containing townlands within the Spencilhill ED between 2006 and 2016 was 0.09% - less than a 1% increase. Figures in the profile that follows include estates on the edge of Ennis, these don't build a fully accurate picture of the population within the Parish boundary but are useful to consider.

³ <https://maps.pobal.ie/WebApps/DeprivationIndices/index.html> - Small Area 037145002, 2016 by Small Area layer.

In order to look at the full population profile, we can only examine data gathered by the CSO and presented by Electoral Division (ED). This analysis follows:

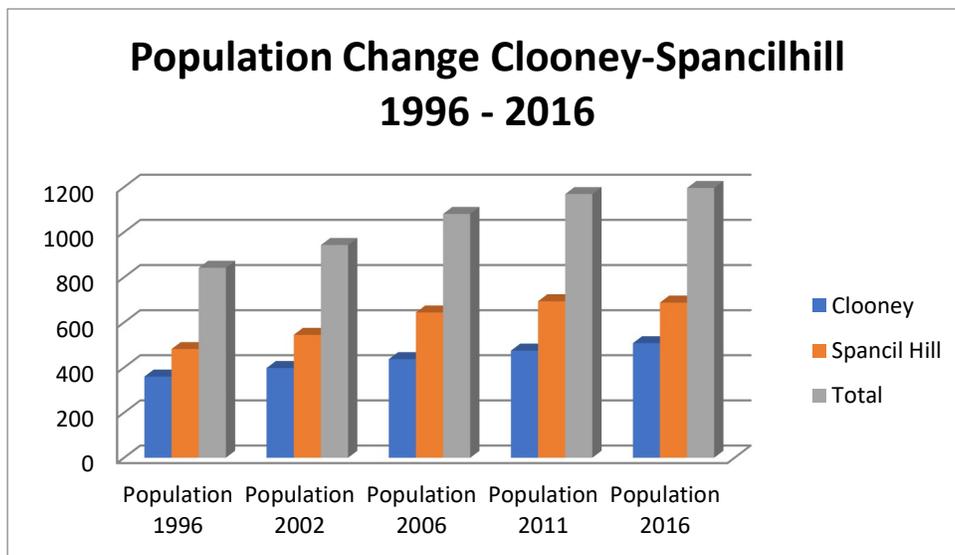
Outline maps of Clooney and Spencilhill Electoral Divisions (EDs)



Population and Population Change

The population of Clooney (Clooney and Spencilhill Electoral Divisions) as per Census 2016 is 1,196 individuals. This represents a 2.3% increase of population since the 2011 Census (n=27).

In the last twenty years (1996 – 2016), the population of the area has increased by 42% (increase equals 354 individuals), with substantial population growth in each ED.



The division of male: female in 2016 is essentially 50:50 (n=613:583 respectively).

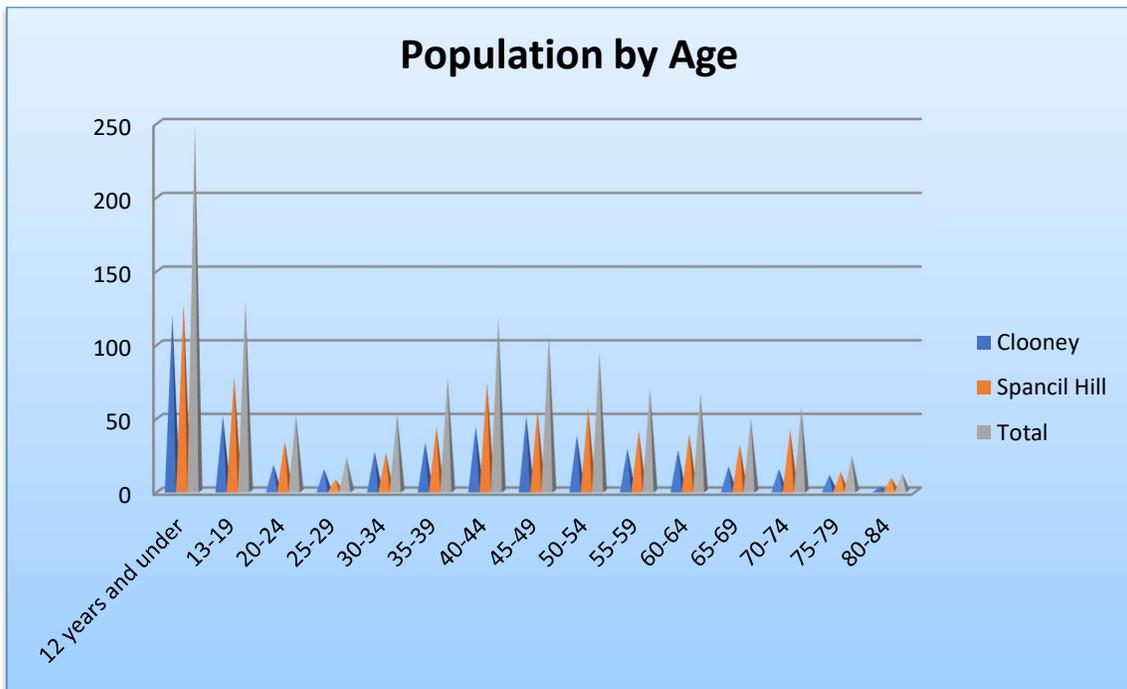


Population by Age

Age Dependency

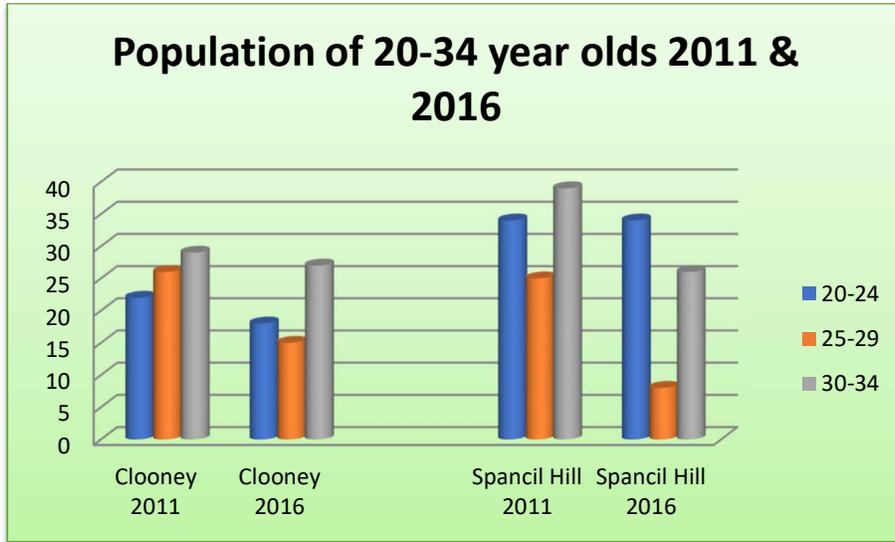
Dependents are defined for statistical purposes as people outside the normal working age of 15-64. Dependency ratios are used to give a useful indication of the age structure of a population with young (0-14) and old (65+) shown as a percentage of the population of working age (15-64) (<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp3oy/cp3/aad/>)

In 2016, the age dependency ratio for both Clooney and Spancilhill was 37% (as per Pobal Maps) compared to a national average of 53% (CSO). Children aged under 14 years account for 24% of the overall population across the two EDs while those aged 65+ comprise 13% of Clooney's population.



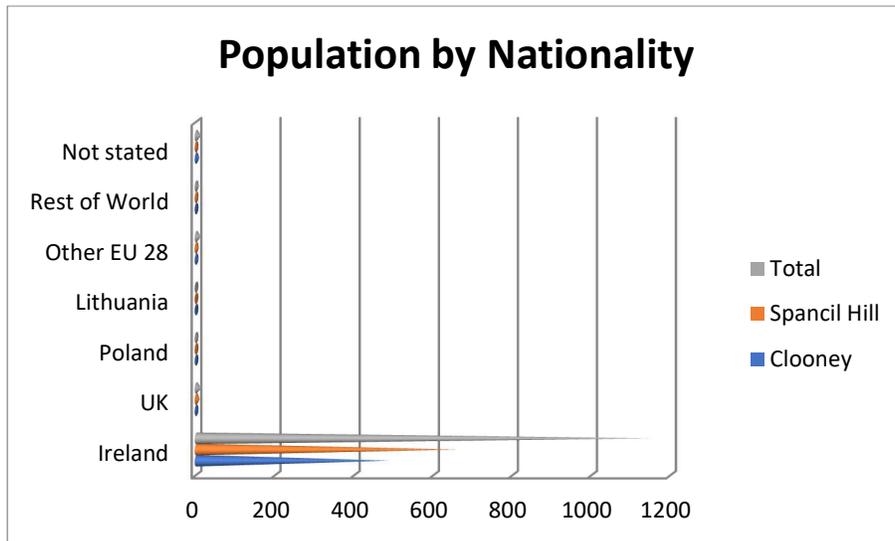
There are 362 children and young people aged under 18 years in Clooney, comprising 30% of the population.

It is also worth noting that the numbers of population experience a notable decline in the 20-34 age brackets and this is made more evident by a comparison of 2011 and 2016 figures. In particular the drop in the numbers of 25-29 year olds in both areas is particularly notable (n=28 or 55% reduction).



Population by Ethnicity

Clooney Population by Birthplace & Nationality

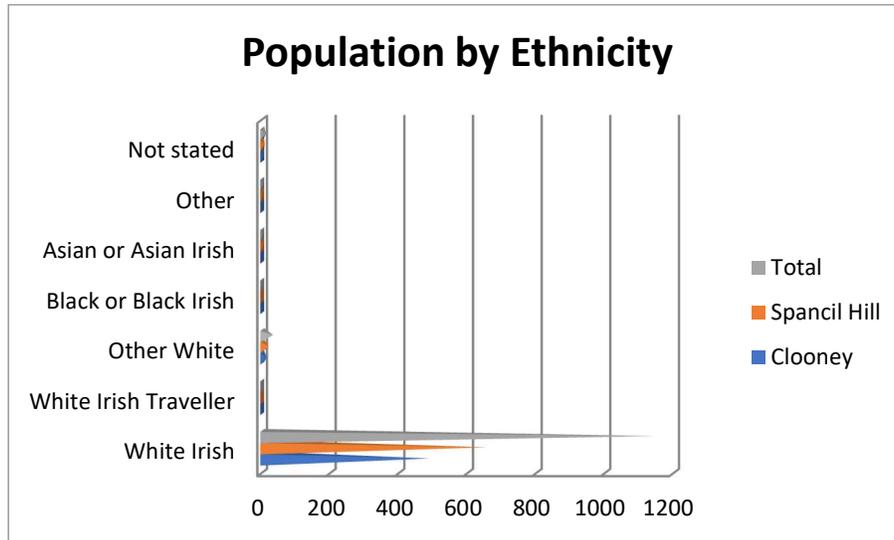


Observations

- 96% of Clooney's population is comprised of Irish nationals.



Population by Cultural or Ethnic Background



Observations

Little cultural or ethnic diversity in Clooney and Spencilhill.

Deprivation

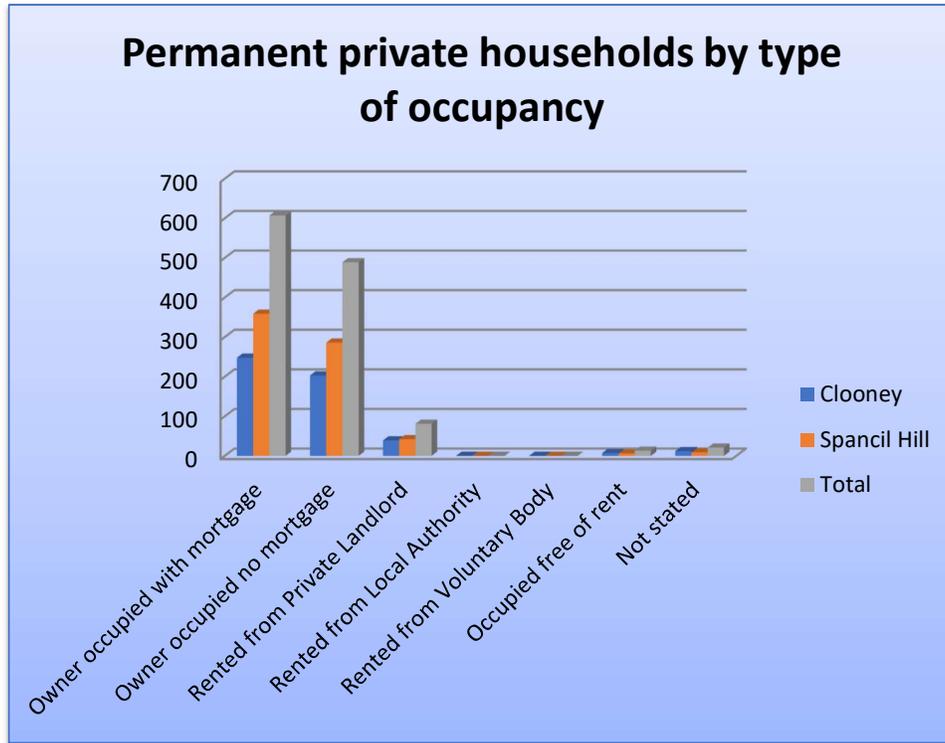
The Pobal HP Deprivation Index is the main index used in Ireland to identify levels of disadvantage and deprivation as well as identifying areas with the highest concentrations of disadvantage. It classifies areas according to levels of advantage or disadvantage on a scale of;

- Extremely disadvantaged
- Very disadvantaged;
- Disadvantaged;
- Marginally below average;
- Marginally above average;
- Affluent;
- Very affluent
- Extremely affluent.

Based on Census 2016, both Clooney and Spencilhill EDs are described as *marginally above average*.



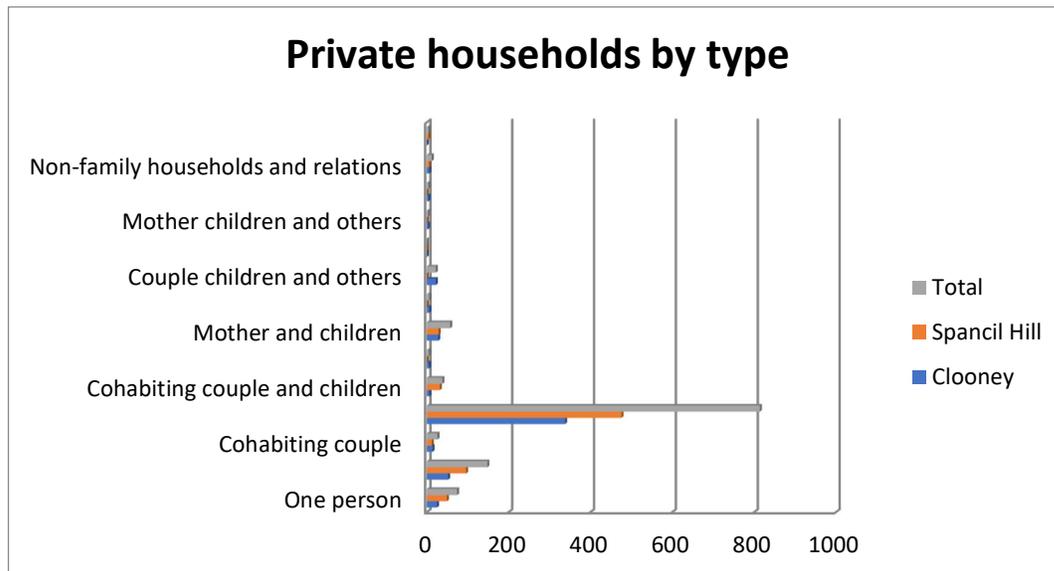
Household Occupancy



Observations

- As per Census 2016, 91% of Clooney’s population is living in owner occupied accommodation.
- Just under 7% of the Clooney population lives in rented accommodation, all of which is rented from Private Landlords. No resident of Clooney-Spencilhill rents from the Local Authority.

Private Households by Type





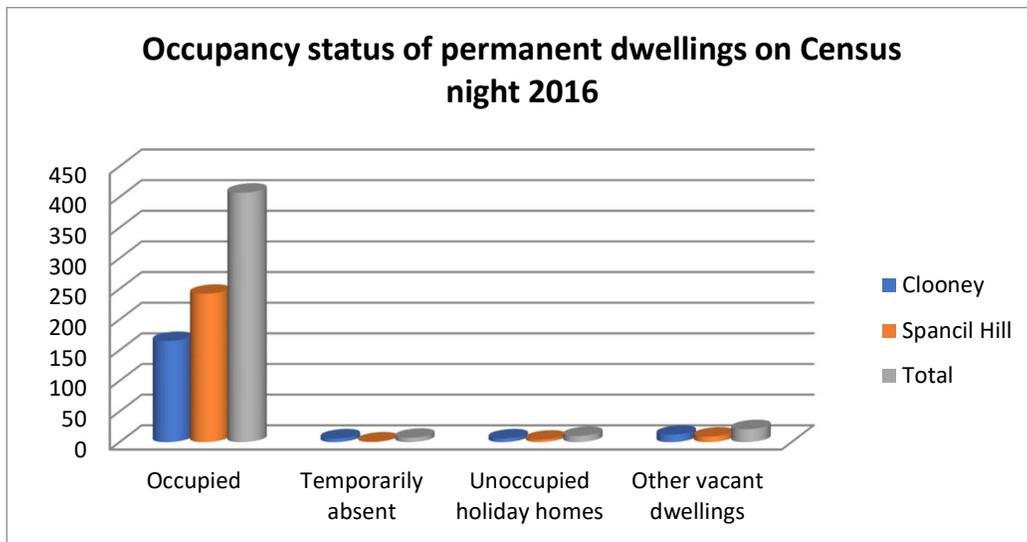
Observations

- Married couples with children comprise 67% of all individuals living in private households as per Census 2016. In addition, married couples account for a further 12% of Clooney’s population with persons living alone comprising 6%.
- Lone parent households – which tend to be one of the most marginalised groups in Ireland – comprise 5% of the population in Clooney (fathers and children = 0.4% and mothers and children = 4.6%).

Occupancy Status of Permanent Dwellings

Observations

- From a total of 445 listed buildings across Clooney-Spencilhill in Census 2016, 91% of dwellings were in use while over one in ten dwellings was vacant or unoccupied on Census Night.



Education & Employment

Education

- Census 2016 shows that the proportion of the Clooney population that has completed only a Primary Education is as follows

Clooney	Spencilhill
6.5%	7%

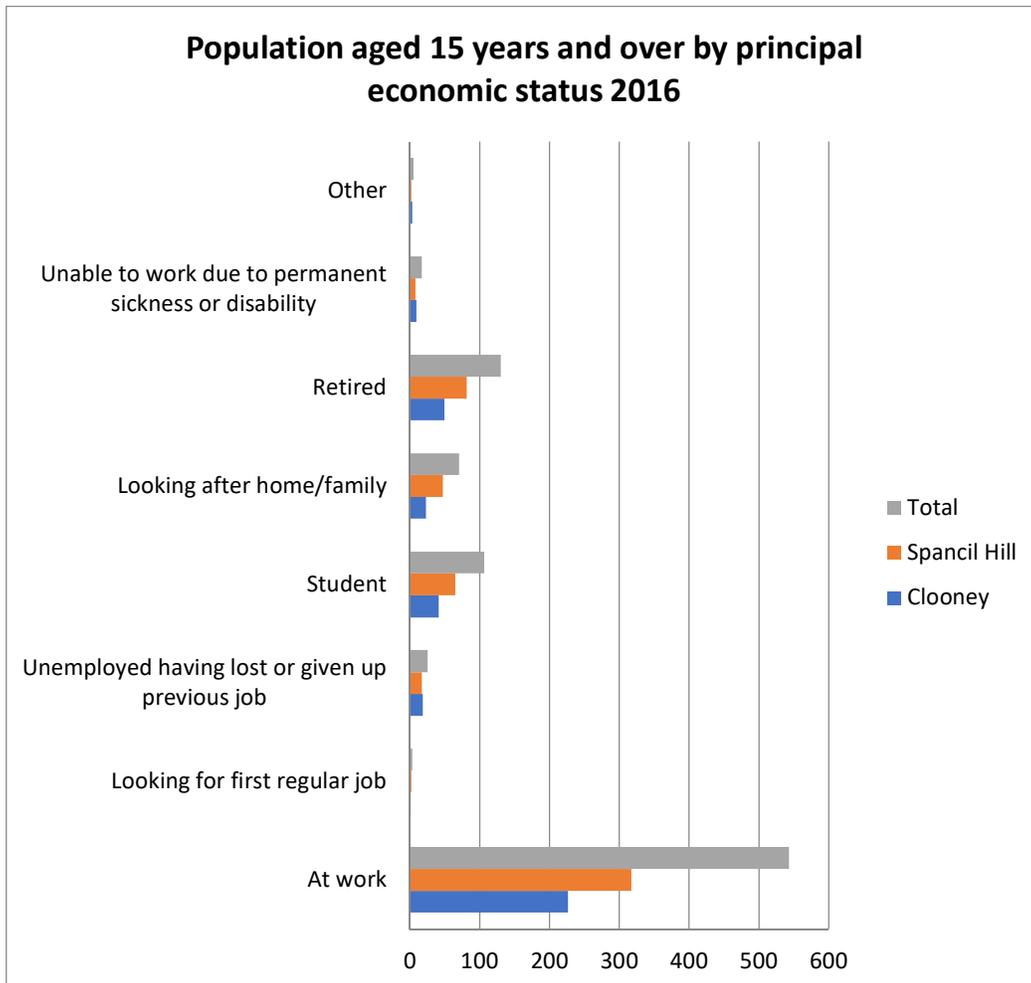


- The proportion of the Clooney population that has completed a Third Level Education is as follows.

Clooney	Spancilhill
39%	40%

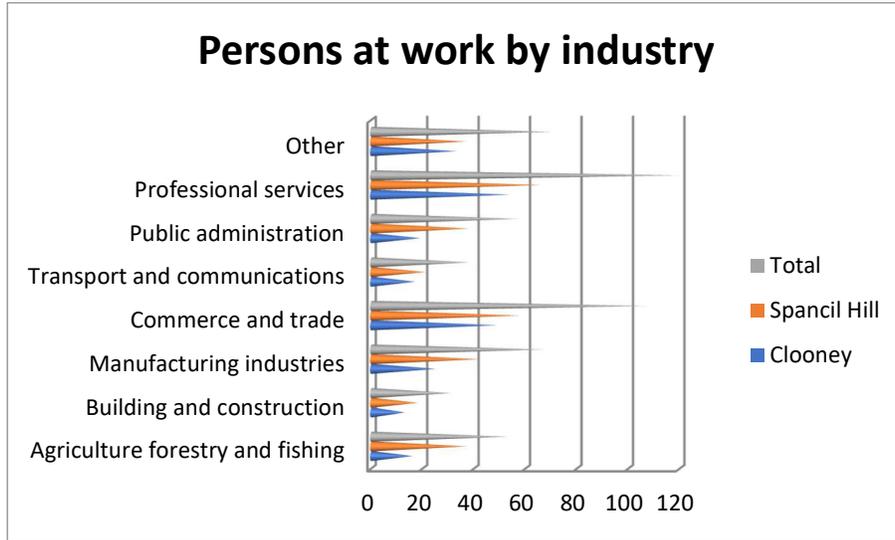
Employment

- 60% of the working age population is at work in Clooney-Spencilhill. 12% of that population are students while 14% is retired.
- 2.7% of the population is unemployed. This rate is very low compared to other rural communities in Clare.
- Seventeen individuals (or 2%) of the working age population unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability.



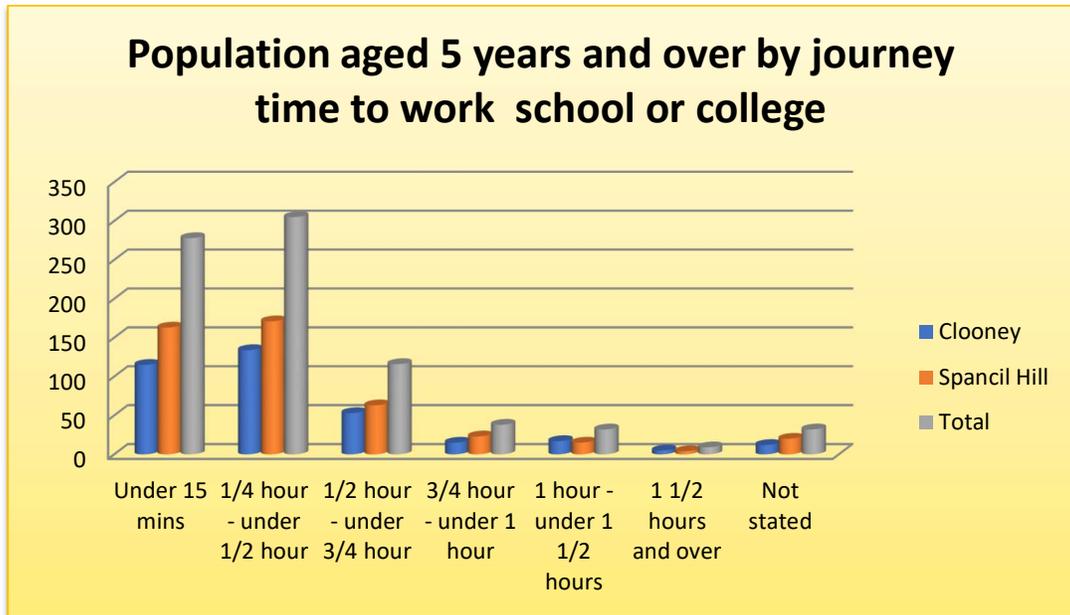


Persons at Work by Industry



- Of the working population in Clooney parish, 25% is involved in professional services and 16% in Agriculture and Forestry. Approximately 13% of workers involved in Commerce and Trade and 11% in Other.

Commuting



Observation:

- Vast amount of travel to work or school is local. 72% of residents commute under 30 minutes daily while a further 14% commutes between 1/2 and 3/4 of an hour.



Disability

Persons with a disability 2016

	Clooney	Spencilhill	Total
Male	21	32	53
Female	18	27	45
Total	39	59	98
% of population	7.7%	8.6%	8.1%
No of full-time carers	23	26	49



Clooney & Spancilhill Community Development Planning Process

In late 2018, a group of residents from Clooney and Spancilhill came together with concerns about their community. Despite the community's proximity to Ennis and its steadily growing population, the community had no venue for community activities or meetings, the number of pupils in the school was declining and there was frustration at the lack of progress on infrastructural needs such as road safety measures and broadband.

The group met several times with the Rural and Community Development Officer with Clare County Council and undertook a public consultation. A survey was developed and circulated, and a public meeting was held in February to ascertain residents' views on *the Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats* (SCOT) facing the community.

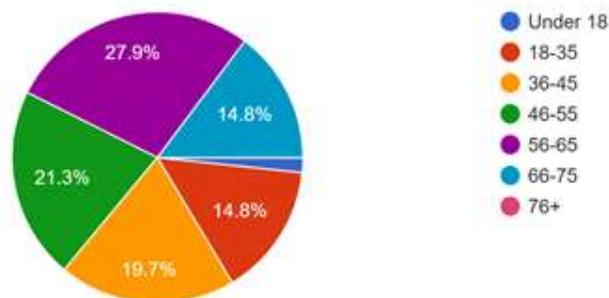
Having examined the results of the survey and the SCOT analysis, the group decided to formalise itself by electing officers and naming the new group the Clooney & Spancilhill Community Development Group (CSCDG). The new group moved quickly to form its first sub-groups:

- Tidy Towns
- Heritage & Walk Development
- Environmental Sustainability
- Broadband Development

At this point, the newly formed CSCDG started working with an independent consultant contracted by Clare Local Development Company. The consultant was tasked with pulling together this community development plan using demographic data from the Central Statistics Office and information gathered through the consultation actions.

Survey Respondents:

Age

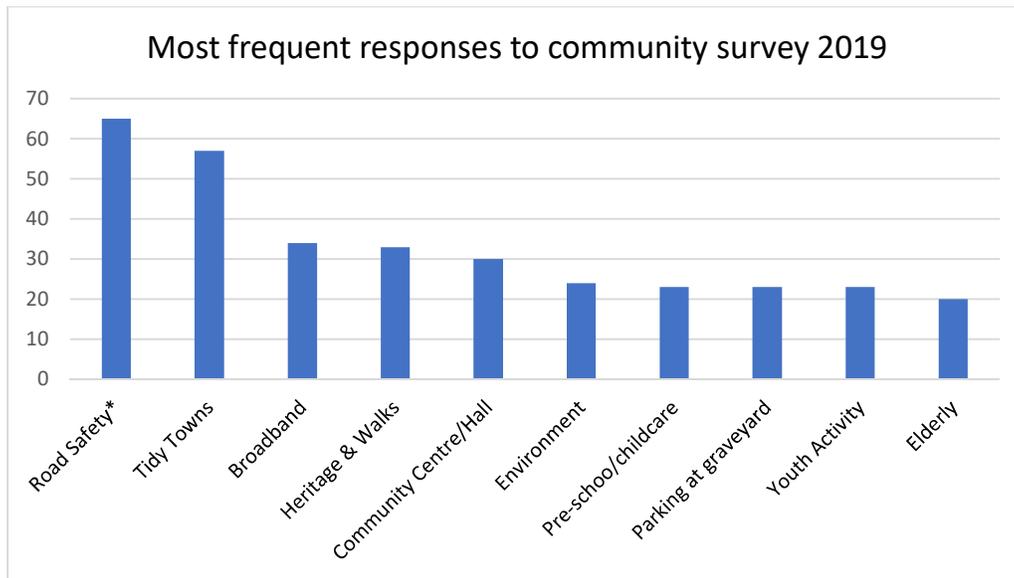


The gender breakdown of respondents was 53% female and 47% male.



Survey Results

There was a lot of desire for new activities and services from respondents. The most common suggestions for improving the quality of life in the area were:



*Road safety includes - reduce speed / lighting / footpaths / road maintenance / hedge cutting / signage / road markings / bollards

Other suggestions were:

- Community activities/groups - all ages
- Community Alert Scheme
- Develop Rathclooney Lake for fishing
- Ease planning permission process
- Fitness classes
- Graveyard maintenance
- Housing development
- Improve look of commercial and derelict buildings
- Map of graveyard
- Meet new residents
- More Community Festivals
- Parking at NS
- Phone coverage
- Public Transport
- Sports
- Stop toxic weed killer
- Support local business
- Wastewater treatment

Other suggestions for groups and activities that residents would like to take part in.

- Yoga
- Badminton
- Cycling, walking and running groups
- Golf
- Tennis
- Book club – young and old
- Irish language group
- Choir
- Speech & Drama
- Card games / gambles



The survey asked people to indicate whether they were interested in seeing the following activities and services introduced into the community – the response was very positive to all of them:

- Fitness/mobility activities
- Amateur dramatics
- Music events / sessions
- Active retirement group
- Arts and crafts for young people
- Arts and crafts for older people
- Children’s sports activities
- Pre-school education
- Before school supervision
- Mother/parent & toddler group
- Men’s Shed
- Youth Group
- Set dancing/line dancing
- Social nights for older people
- Improve transport links
- Knitting club
- Tidy Towns Group



Prioritised Actions

In accordance with the responses we received, the Clooney Spancilhill Community Development Group (CSCDG) have prioritised the following areas of activity to focus on:

- Road Safety
- Tidy Towns
- Broadband
- Heritage & Walks
- Community Facilities & Infrastructure
- Environment

The actions CSCDG will pursue under these themes are:

Road Safety:

The priority action is to upgrade the main road R352 from East Clare Roundabout Junction 13 to – the Tulla side of Henchys pub.

The CSCDG committee will lobby for upgrade and improvements to priority blackspots -

- Spancilhill (Duggan’s pub to the Clooney side of Spancilhill Cross)
- Remove bend at Ennis side of Clooney village
- Level road before and after Henchy’s pub, widen road / crossroads and have proper road junction installed

Broadband:

- Research all Broadband Suppliers in the Clooney, Spancilhill, Rathclooney and Maghera areas in order to provide a recommendation to the wider community on which supplier can best meet the needs of the area.
- Determine whether a Community Broadband scheme is feasible and if Broadband suppliers can provide this service.

Culture & Natural Heritage:

- Research and determine feasibility of off-road walks for walking/heritage trails
- Develop knowledge of and pride in our local heritage sites

Community Facilities & Infrastructure:

- CSCDG committee will endeavour to identify a suitable location for a community centre/hall.

CSCDG is aware that the following facilities and services are needed in the Clooney Spancilhill area:

- Pre-school / childcare
- Community playground
- Parking at Clooney School
- Wastewater treatment
- Parking at Clooney Graveyard



Tidy Towns:

CSCDG will submit annual applications to the National Tidy Towns Competition. Priority actions are:

- Enhancing the visual landscape of the area by defining entry, exit and focal points of the villages
- Improve signage
- Organise anti-litter initiatives

Environmental:

In response to concerns about climate change and the Climate Emergency declared by the Irish Government, Clooney Spencilhill Community Development Group has decided to pursue actions to improve environmental sustainability.

- CSCDG will explore sustainable energy community initiatives and increase awareness of actions to reduce carbon emissions, e.g. home insulation grants and renewable energy initiatives.



Next Steps

This plan reflects the needs, interests and concerns of the community as identified by its residents in late 2018 and early 2019. Sub groups have been assigned to each prioritised action and a timeline given for completion; the steps required to implement each action will be determined by the sub group that has taken it on.

The planning group is extremely grateful to everyone in the community who assisted in this process, especially those who completed the survey and attended the public consultation meeting.

And Finally!

More can be achieved if additional volunteers and resources become available! If you can help, please email clooneyspencilhillcdg@gmail.com or contact us via our Facebook page 'Clooney/Spencilhill Community Development Group'.

You can make donations to our activities through our Go Fund Me page:
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/clooneyspencilhill-community-development>

You can download this full-length version of our plan at this address
www.clooneyspencilhill.ie/plan