

Subject: Urgent Appeal for Assistance with Cleragh Village Water Scheme Crisis

Esteemed Committee Members,

I am here to speak on behalf of the resilient community of Cleragh, situated in Kiltimagh, County Mayo. Over the span of twelve years, our villagers comprised over 30 homes have persevered through arduous trials in the pursuit of securing a reliable water scheme. Despite our unwavering dedication and numerous collaborative efforts with Mayo County Council's Water Department, our journey has been fraught with complexities and setbacks.

Year after year, we have been assured that grants have been secured and the project has gone out to tender, yet we have not seen the light at the end of the tunnel.

While the County Mayo Water Department has provided sporadic guidance and engagement, regrettably, our progress has been hindered by inconsistencies, communication lapses, and bureaucratic obstacles. Our residents, grappling with contaminated wells and bureaucratic red tape, endure daily hardships exacerbated by the seasonal plight of dry wells during the summer months. Compounding our plight, the ongoing challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have further underscored the urgent need for a dependable water supply.

Recent revelations stemming from our committee's diligent efforts, including three Freedom of Information requests, have brought to light disconcerting truths. It has come to our attention that crucial applications to Irish Water were delayed until prompted by our inquiries. This delay has only prolonged the suffering of our residents, who have endured misinformation, unclear guidance, and the looming threat of displacement due to water scheme challenges.

Moreover, despite our community's commitment to financial contributions and successful grant procurement, transparency surrounding fund allocation for our water scheme project remains elusive. This lack of clarity not only undermines our collective efforts but also erodes trust in the process.

In light of these pressing challenges, we implore the esteemed committee to recognise the gravity of our situation and urgently explore avenues for resolution. Time is of the essence as we strive to secure access to safe and reliable water for the well-being of our village and its cherished residents. We humbly request your support in expediting this process, whether through liaising with higher authorities or engaging advocacy groups.

Your prompt attention to our plight will not only alleviate the suffering of Cleragh's residents but also reaffirm the values of compassion and solidarity upon which our community stands.

With sincere gratitude for your consideration and assistance,

Tom Carney on behalf of Cleragh Water Scheme Committee

Good Afternoon to you all and thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Alan Ivers, I was born, raised and still living in the Cleragh/Lisduff area of Kiltimagh.

I grew up in a family of 13 in a house with no running water, but that was in the 1980s. We are now in 2024 and I still cannot believe we are in exactly the same situation, homes with no access to clean running water.

I am lucky to live at the upper end of Lisduff and have access to a private group water scheme, less than a ¼ km from my neighbours who do not have access to running water.

I own my original family home in Cleragh, this house is rented by a family, 2 adults and 3 children for the past 5 years.

This family has had a constant struggle with problems associated with living in a house with no running water, water is supplied by a private well. This well is old and unreliable, unfortunately, every summer it will run dry no matter how much rainfall we get.

There is constant problems with appliances such as shower and washing machine as a result low pressure or when the well runs dry, often times a plumber is required to address these issues even when supply is restored. As you can imagine this leads to a great deal of added expense and unhappy tenants.

I will give you an example of last summer, the well ran dry for a number of weeks. Mayo Co Co had installed a tap at Lisduff school, approx. 1km away. This meant the village had access to water but unfortunately this was a far cry from being able to stand under your shower in the morning and have water flowing to wash yourself with.

I as the landlord had to take on the very challenging task of going to the tap morning, noon and night to fill water into a large tank, bring it back to my well and empty it in, imagine my dismay watching half of it soak into the ground before there was any glimmer of water holding at the bottom of the well. I was having to carry out this task at 6 o'clock in the morning so the family would have water when they got up and before I went to work. I had to come home at lunchtime to do the same thing and again in the evening. It was never ending. I was praying for rain as was all my supportive neighbours. Eventually it did come but so did the need to replace my water pump which had now burnt out.

I dread facing this again as we approach another summer without water in our village. I have spoken my tenants about finding alternative accommodation but unfortunately, as we all know, there isn't any.

We now have some new young families moving into the village, these families will have the same struggles as my parent did, we are talking generations here. I see my own children who will possibly be hoping to continue to live in the village before too long as they grow up, at this rate of going they will have to continue this fight. A struggle and fight that is going on over 30 years.

We appreciate the efforts that have been made in recent months and feel that we are closer than ever before but I am now calling on you to please see this through to the end. Whatever funding is required must be applied for and made available for the completion of this project.

Thank you for your attention.