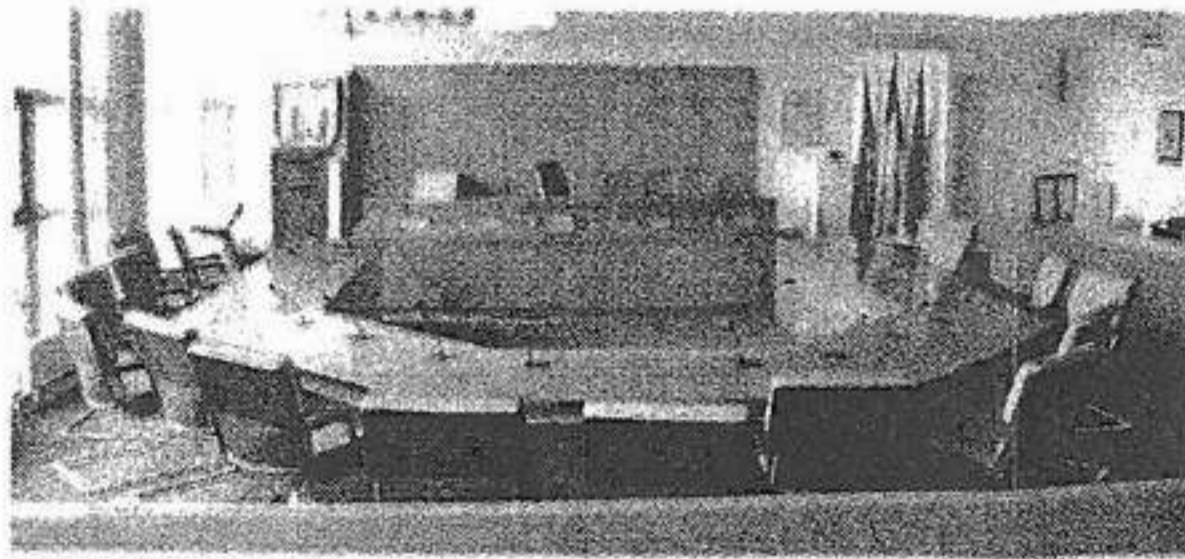


City Council Report



with MIKE DWANE



Westfields: public asked to watch out for weeds

(LL)

New group are to protect wetlands

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Director of services Oliver O'Loughlin told members at this week's meeting of the environmental policy committee that wetlands in areas such as Westfields, Longpavement, Corbally and Baggott Estate were until now "dealt with as individual pieces of ground in individual areas of the city".

But an in-house steering group involving committee members and parks staff working closely with the Parks and Wildlife Service is to



Cllr Jim Long: questioned community grants (LL)

fore taking away the food source of bird life there".
"While we have a nice viewing stand in Westfields, I'd hate to see it turned into a fen and we'd have nothing left to view," he said.
Environmental awareness officer Sinead McDonnell said the plant concerned was azolla filiculoides, or the aquatic mosquito fern.



Mayor Scully: bus lane decision later (LL)

"premier wetland", which was being fed internally from underground springs.
"So far it's working well and hasn't dried up in the summers. It's holding a huge body of freshwater and there should be analysis done to see if it's going to go the way of Westfields and turn into a fen," he said.
Cllr Jim Long said he



Cllr Lily Wallace: wandering horse fears (LL)

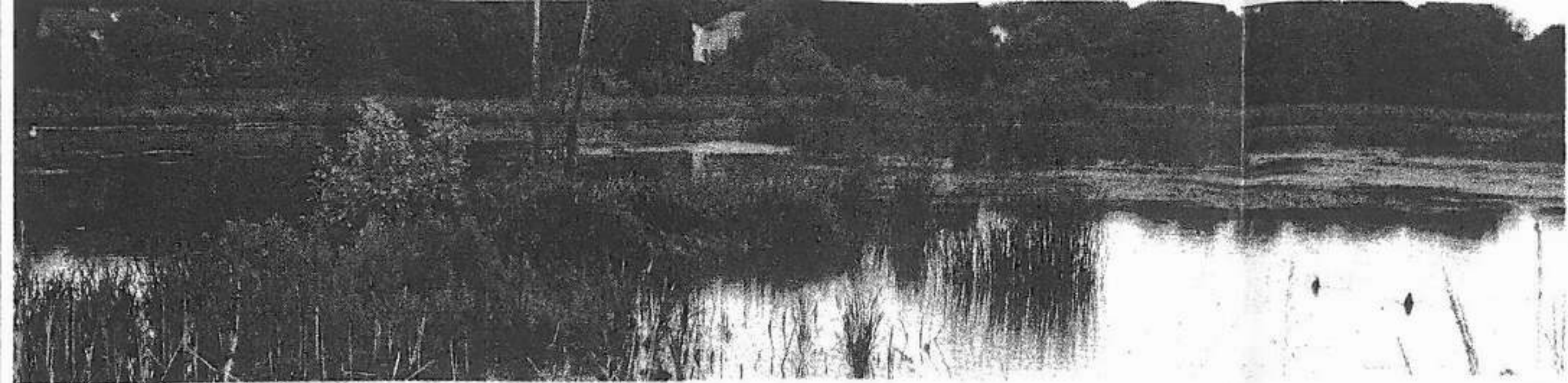
homes.
It is hoped the new steering group will monitor the wetlands and its animal and plant life, obtain aerial photos from Ordnance Survey and hold regular training for Council staff including the development of an emergency response team.

merville Avenue and Sarsfield Avenue, Garryowen.

□ LIMERICK City Council's €17.1m roads programme for 2006 has been passed this week with two significant amendments.

Cllr John Ryan wanted a reference to Ennis Road deleted from the €1m in funding allocated for green routes and Mayor Diarmuid Scully pledged that a decision on a bus lane there would be made at a later date.

And approval for €12.5m in major capital works, including pedestrianisation of Thomas Street / Bedford Row, the Park Canal Project and the Corbally Link Road was held up as councillors sought clarification on whether monies from development levies was being used to fund the projects.



(LL)

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But an in-house steering group involving committee members and parks staff working closely with the Parks and Wildlife Service is to be set up to more closely manage the protected areas.

"Over time with developments and infrastructure coming on there will be more pressure and there is an onus on us to comply with EU law and protect these very important areas of the city," Mr O'Loughlin said.

Cllr Kathleen Leddin and Cllr Michael Hourigan said they were concerned over the encroachment of weeds over the water at Westfields.

"We already had an in-depth report that went to Europe. We don't want any more reports, we want remedial action to get rid of those brown weeds," said Cllr Leddin.

Cllr Hourigan said this vegetation was "encroaching on the pond area at a rapid pace and seems to be suffocating other plant life and there-



Cllr Jim Long: questioned grants (LL)

fore taking away the food source of bird life there". "While we have a nice viewing stand in Westfields, I'd hate to see it turned into a fen and we'd have nothing left to view," he said.

Environmental awareness officer Sinead McDonnell said the plant concerned was azolla filiculoides, or the aquatic mosquito fern, a plant common in garden ponds that had become naturalised in certain parts of Ireland.

It could have ended up in Westfields, she said, by somebody simply emptying out their fish tank and its spores could be carried to other Limerick wetlands by birds, she said.

Members of the public who come across the invasive plant in other areas of the city are being asked to report it to the environment department at 417190.

Birds could still swim through it and swans could feed under it, Ms McDonnell told committee members, but there would be concern if it completely takes over a water body, blocking out all surface light.

Cllr John Gilligan said Corbally had the city's



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"premier wetland", which was being fed internally from underground springs.

"So far it's working well and hasn't dried up in the summers. It's holding a huge body of freshwater and there should be analysis done to see if it's going to go the way of Westfields and turn into a fen," he said.

Cllr Jim Long said he was concerned about the decimation of the bird population at the Baggott Estate.

A very detailed submission had been "handed in in 2001 in relation to the wetland when there were 180 birds between all species of duck from Ballinacurra down to Rosbrien—now we're down to seven mallard duck in that area and most of them have been shot".

"The manager was asked on several occasions to put No Shooting signs up in that area but no resources ever went into that area," he claimed.

After the meeting, Cllr Long said the ducks had been shot by legitimate hunters and in season but the problem was that it was done in a protected area and shots had been fired close to people's



Cllr Lily Wallace: wandering horse fears (LL)

homes.

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WEST Clare sculptor Jim Connolly has been commissioned to design the bronze statue to the late Richard Harris which will take pride of place on the pedestrianised Bedford Row.

Mr Connolly sculpted the statue of Michael Hogan, the Bard of Thomond, erected at King John's Castle Plaza last year.

DISC parking is to be introduced on estates around Limerick Institute of Technology which have been affected by college students parking cars there.

Mayorstone, Brookville Avenue and Woodview will all have the system introduced, but not Coolraine, which is not yet taken in charge by City Council.

Disc parking is also to be introduced at Sum-

merville Avenue and Sarsfield Avenue, Garryowen.

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In the scheme adopted by the Council, elected members must approve how these funds are spent, Cllr Ryan pointed out.

Remedial and minor projects totalling €4.6m have been passed but group leaders are to meet before the capital projects are finally approved.

MEMBERS of the environment policy committee have been promised a draft document on how to tackle the problem of stray and unlicensed dogs and dog litter at their next meeting.

Attacks by stray dogs and befouled footpaths across the city were highlighted by councillors. Senior executive officer Alan Wallace said them that 957 dogs were seized in the city by wardens last year.