

new handbook which aims to harmonise the rules for council tenants across the county.

At a home and community meeting, members were shown the new tenancy handbook.

Cllr Tom Neville, Fine Gael, said: "I have a number of reservations on this, for example the responsibility of the tenant around safety issues. There are going to be legacy issues that are not the responsibility of the tenant."

He asked: "What criteria are being used when it

Quinlivan said: "There are a small number of tenants who do cause mayhem in certain areas of the city. Have we taken any court cases against these tenants?"

He was told there are a number of cases pending.

Amid the concern, Mayor Liam Galvin proposed the handbook be circulated to all 40 councillors, and if any issues had arisen, they should write to the Strategic Policy Committee meeting.

An official from the

tenants do not empty their septic tanks. In Annacotty, they are not compelled to mend a shower. In Rathkeale they are. There is a huge lack of uniformity across this local authority."

She said the passing of the document was necessary to ensure the local authority remains financially viable.

"We have a very small maintenance budget. There is a huge diversity of service and we cannot afford to continue as it is killing us," she told councillors.

year mandate, Tanaiste Joan Burton has said in Limerick.

Despite opinion polls showing her party sliding, the Social Protection Minister was bullish about her colleague Jan O'Sullivan's chances on a visit to the city.

"Labour is absolutely ready for the battle. It's going to be a tough battle, but I think Jan is made of tough stuff," Ms Burton said, "I think Jan in particular is out talking to people."

Limerick City is expected

from Sinn Féin councillor Maurice Quinlivan and Cllr Cian Prendiville of the Anti-Austerity Alliance, with others entering the fray.

Some political observers have predicted that Cllr Quinlivan will unseat Ms O'Sullivan. But Ms O'Sullivan - who was first elected to the Dail following a by-election upon Jim Kemmy's death - is confident.

"It is going to be a battle. But I have always been a very dedicated public representative for Limerick.

other candidates," she said.

However, the Education Minister believes her record in serving Limerick will see her over the line.

"I believe I have consistently represented Limerick well. I believe I am available in a way not all public representatives are in the sense that I do regular clinics. And I also have had a very important job at national level."

That said, she is not underestimating the challenge.

Major renovations planned for Glenstal's church

DONAL O'REGAN

THE COMMUNITY of Glenstal Abbey is planning €750,000 worth of "exciting renovations" to its church - the first Benedictine one built in Ireland since the Reformation.

The Abbot of Glenstal, Mark Patrick Hederman, says the windows, after 60 years, have begun to fall in.

"The original heating system, abetted by the radiant gas-fired system from the 1980s, is valiantly but extravagantly failing to heat the vast spaces around them. The wiring is antiquated to the point of danger and the amplification no longer fit for purpose. The only obstacle remaining is the money to pay for this exciting renovation," said Abbot Hederman. Underfloor heating will put paid to the days of frozen knees on frosty morns.

He says the dynamic centre of every Benedictine monastery is its church.

"Every other thing that happens in the monastery receives its energy and is given sense and meaning by our worship in that church. This is the identifying hallmark of all that we do and are. It was with this in mind that the Glenstal community, who were founded in 1927, built the first Benedictine church in Ireland since the Reformation.

"In 1951 Dom Sebastian Braun OSB, a monk from Maredsous, Belgium - from where Glenstal Abbey was founded in 1927 - started designs for a new church. His designs were based on 12th century Romanesque architecture deriving from early Christian basilicas," explained Abbot Hederman.

A vast scheme was drawn up but his "flamboyant designs" were unrealistic and would never be completed.

"In 1958 when the church was blessed, a spate of letters went to the press expressing disappointment with the

squatness of the church as unfitting for a Benedictine Abbey. They had built a body without a head," said Abbot Hederman. The monks always knew they would have to finish the church.

"Every church needs regular maintenance, and every generation needs its own spiritual ambience. In 1979, twenty-three years after its opening, the church was revisited. The re-decoration which then took place went beyond a necessary new coat of paint. By daring use of colour, an attempt was made to remedy structural difficulties of length and height, endemic to the inherited building," said the abbot.

The ceiling's colour scheme of vibrant red and green flows in a Celtic pattern through the proscenium arch in an attempt to link the nave and sanctuary.

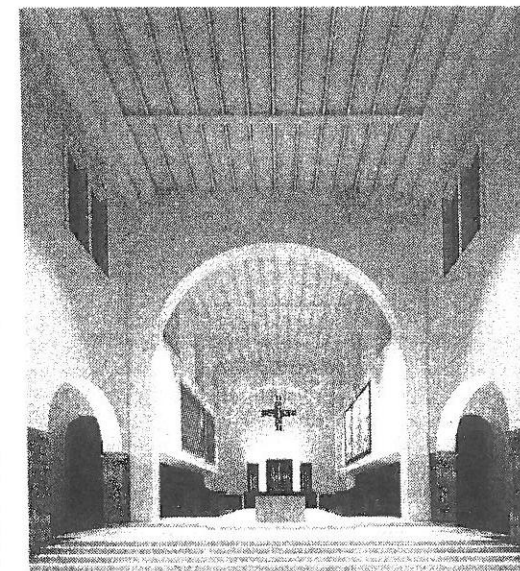
"It was so flamboyant that one of the monks vowed he would never again look at the

ceiling but would keep his eyes fixed on the floor; another said it was no longer a church but a discotheque," said Abbot Hederman.

Through his connection with the le Brocquy family he met Hughie and Clare O'Donoghue.

"I invited them to visit Glenstal. We all agreed that the spaces above the choir stalls in our sanctuary in the church at Glenstal Abbey might be a good place to hang some of his work. They suggested his Blue Crucifixion which we could borrow on permanent loan from the Irish Museum of Modern Art, and the The Red Crucifixion, which they have in their own studio, and which they would donate to us as an outright gift," said Abbot Hederman, who describes it as a "unique privilege" for Glenstal.

And so starts a new chapter in the story of Glenstal Abbey's church. Work is hoped to commence shortly.



An artist's impression of how the church in Glenstal Abbey will look after once work is completed

EX: LIMERICK LEADER

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