



Offaly County council staff, emergency services, ESB crews, Irish Water personnel, and communication teams braved extreme weather conditions during the recent Storm Éowyn

A new publication, Celebrating 125 Years of Local Government in Offaly was launched paying tribute to all of those who have served the people of Offaly over the past 125 years



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **FilmOffaly's Short Film Award 2025 (now open) Youth Arts Commissions 2025** – Applications run until noon on 17th March.

Climate Action Environment Water & Transportation

ENVIRONMENT

Waste Management

Offaly County Council (OCC) was successful in a prosecution taken under the Waste Management Act, 1996 for the mismanagement of domestic waste at a house in Tullamore. The case was heard on 11th January in Tullamore District Court. It was the defendant's second time in two years to be brought to Court by OCC for the same offence. The Defendant did not have a waste collector and allowed waste to build up around his property, causing an environmental nuisance. There are now bins in place with a waste collector leading to a successful outcome. The Environment continue to advance similar cases where these arise.

Environment Complaints

Summary of Complaints Received by Environment Section for January 2024 and investigated - Total number of 60 complaints.

Category	Number
Abandoned Vehicles	3
Air Pollution	0
Control of Dogs	7
Control of Horses	0
Litter Control	46
Noise Pollution	0
Waste Enforcement	4
Water Quality	0
Building Control	0
Total	60

TRANSPORTATION

Public Lighting: The following is a breakdown of the Public Lighting failures across the County. There are **267** faults on the system at present. **81** of these faults require third party intervention and as such cannot be repaired by the maintenance contractor.

Effective from the 23rd of January all works on the Public Lighting Network on ESB Infrastructure have been restricted and this restriction remains in place as off the 5th of Feb 2025. Our ability to repair and maintain our Public Lighting Stock has been complicated during the month of January due to Severe Weather conditions beyond the control of our Contractor and the previously mentioned restrictions currently in place by ESB.

Therefore, the current actionable faults amount to **186 faults or 1.99 %** of the lighting stock.

The breakdown of the **186** faults across each MD are as follows:

Municipal District	No Of Faults	Total No of Lights in the MD	% fault of MD Lights Only	% fault per MD of the Countywide Public Lighting Stock
Birr MD	46	2962	1.55	0.49
Tullamore MD	77	3933	1.95	0.83
Edenderry MD	63	2405	2.61	0.67

Severe Weather Response: Offaly County Council deployed our Severe Weather Response Plan on two separate occasions in the month of January. Our initial deployment was to mitigate the extremely cold weather during the week beginning the 6th of January.

Our second deployment was initiated on Wednesday the 22nd of January to implement our

preparedness procedures for the incoming Storm Eowyn. Our Severe Weather Assessment Team chaired by our Chief Executive coordinated all elements of the response to Storm Eowyn both the physical response in removing tree's, assisting ESB and the Humanitarian response in facilitating the many Community hubs established across our County.

During the initial phase of our response our 3 Municipal Districts cleared approximately 163 sites from fallen trees and debris across the County.

New Default Speed Limits: Each of our Municipal District Offices are working towards the final stages of the implementation of our new Default Speed Limits. The entirety of our Rural Road network will have a new speed limit of 60km/hr. as compared to the previous speed limit of 80km/hr effective on the 7th of February 2025.

The Statutory Instruction to implement Section 7 in the Road Traffic Act 2024 which legalises the reduction in the default speed on rural local roads on the 7th February 2025, was signed by the Minister of Transport, on 6th November 2024.

Our crews have installed approximately 672 new poles and once complete will have installed 1292 new speed limit signs.

Housing & Integration

To assist us in streamlining the delivery of Housing Services we encourage the use of the following email addresses:

Service	Email Address
HAP Enquiries	hap@offalycoco.ie
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans	homeloans@offalycoco.ie
Housing Inspections – HAP, Leased, Private, etc.	standards@offalycoco.ie
General Enquiries, Maintenance Issues, etc.	housing@offalycoco.ie
RAS & Leasing Enquiries	RAS@offalycoco.ie
Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability Scheme	HousingAidGrants@offalycoco.ie
Anti-Social Behaviour	ASB@offalycoco.ie

Housing Update

- There are 560 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of January 2025.
- A further 462 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 1 signed up for HAP and 2 exited from HAP in January.
- At the end of January 44 single people and 16 couples/families were being supported in emergency accommodation.
- Number of maintenance requests received for month of January was 535.
- Total of housing stock at end of January is 2217.
- 2025 Annual Rent Review, for local authority tenants commenced on Thursday 23rd January with 2,137 rent assessment forms posted to tenants. As of 31st January, 220 (10%) signed rent assessment forms have been received from tenants.

New rents will be effective from the 12th of July 2025.

Housing Capital Programme Update:

- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 no. Older Person's dwellings) – Complete
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) – Complete.
- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – Complete.
- Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane (20 Units) – Part 8 approved in May 2022. Stage 3 to be submitted to the Department once ESB lines on the site are undergrounded.
- Circular Road, Daingean, Site 2 (10 Units) – at Part 8 planning & issued for tender.
- Group Housing, Croghan Road, Birr (4 Units): Completion Q1 2025
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (10 Units) – Tender Stage

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes:

- Respond Housing: 77 Units under construction @ Kingswood, Ardan Lane with full completion in 2025.
- Sofia Housing: 37 Units with Stage 2 approval @ Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Planning Granted in November 2023. Stage 3 (permission to go to tender submitted in Q4 2024
- Sofia Housing, 17 Units @ Clonamore, Tullamore – Complete
- Silverbrook, Tullamore: 15 Units – Complete Q1 2025

Turnkey Developments/Part V:

- Turnkey & Part V: Bog Road, Portarlinton, 33 units – Complete
- Part V: Silverbrook, Tullamore, 20 Complete
- Part V: Redwood, Tullamore, all 11 Units complete
- MacGregol II, Birr, 6 Units – 2 Part V units Complete & 4 Turnkey Units Complete
- MacGregol III, Birr 12 Units – 5 Complete

Retrofit Programme

In deciding on a works programme, local authorities are urged to choose a mix of properties across a range of BERs to allow for homes which need significant expenditure to be balanced out by those needing lesser spend so as to achieve the overall average cost of €34,000 per property. A BER rating of B2 must be achieved.

- 37 Units complete in 2024 (9 over department target)
- Awaiting 2025 Target

Community Development Programme

- Estate Management Funding allocated in Budget 2025 for Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore Municipal Districts to be agreed for projects at Municipal District meetings.
- Housing Liaison Officers are continuing to support established resident committees and engaging with new groups and communities in an effort to support them to establish committees and thereby support the development of their community.

LAND USE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Development Management

	To end January 2025	To end January 2024	Total 2024
Planning Applications	30	38	735
Extensions of Duration Applications	0	0	12
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	1 (2)	10 (2)	71 (36)

During the month of January 2025, the following large planning applications were received:

<p>25/60014 Bord na Móna Energy Ltd</p>	<p>The development of a recreational shared cycle and walkway located on Bord Na Móna lands within the townlands of Cloncraft or Bloomhill, Clonascra, Ballyduff, Clonaderg, Doon Demesne, Lackagh Beg, Lackagh More, Cormore and Corbeg, Corbane, Ballydaly.</p> <p>Bord Na Móna lands within the townlands of Cloncraft or Bloomhill, Clonascra, Ballyduff, Clonaderg, Doon Demesne, Lackagh Beg, Lackagh More, Cormore and Corbeg, Corbane, Ballydaly, Kilcolgan Beg, Turraun, Leabeg, Leamore, Oughter, Derrymore, Bunakeeran, Lumcloon and Broughal in County Offaly.</p>
<p>25/60023 Bord na Móna Energy Ltd</p>	<p>The development of a recreational shared cycle and walkway located on Bord Na Móna lands. The development proposes the following:</p> <p>a) The delivery of a shared</p>

	<p>cycle and walkway on Bord na Móna lands. This will include the repurposing of 18,958 meters ...</p> <p>Bord Na Móna lands within the townlands of Knockballyboy, Clonad, Rathfeston, Gorteenkeel, Island, Clonarrow or Riverlyons, Drumcaw or Mountlucas, Esker Beg, Killeen, Ballyhugh, Mullalough or Cavemount, Coole, Toberdaly, Newtown, Ballycon, Esker More, Colgagh, and Clongarret in County Offaly.</p>
<p>25/60026 Waterways Ireland</p>	<p>The development on the Shannon Navigation, downstream of Victoria Lock, in the townland of Clonaheenogue, Co. Offaly will consist of essential maintenance works to the Shannon Navigation. Waterways Ireland, Shannon Navigation</p> <p>Victoria Lock, Clonahenogue, (river location adjacent to R42WF97) Co. Offaly.</p>

Just Transition

Strategic Partnership Scheme with Failte Ireland

In June 2024, Failte Ireland announced funding to Offaly County Council in the sum of €218k, to fund the planning and design of a 'plaza' / public amenity area off the Main Street in Shannonbridge which will lead down to the Shannon Callows, and the planned Dublin – Galway Greenway, together with the feasibility planning and design of a floating walkway over the Callows. This project will also seek to locate the plaza area and any potential for parking thereon, within the

wider context of parking requirements within the village itself. A tender to secure an architecturally led team to deliver this project was advertised in mid-December 2024 with a closing date of 7th February 2025. It is anticipated that the successful applicant will be appointed by March 2025 with a view to delivering the project by the end of April 2026.

Funding was also secured in the sum of €188k for the provision of high-quality granite pedestrian paving to improve access to Birr Castle Demesne along its boundary at William Street. These works are to commence by the end of February 2025 with an expected completion date of the end of April 2025.

Forward Planning

Draft Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031

The last day for receipt of submissions to the Draft Joint Portarlington Local Area Plan was

January 2nd. A total of 32 no. submissions were received during the consultation period. The Planning Section is currently preparing a Chief Executives Report on submissions received which will be issued to elected members in coming weeks.

Residential Zoned Land Tax

The Final RZLT Map for 2025 was published by the Council on January 31st, 2025. This map reflects the outcomes of submissions and servicing changes since the publication of the annual draft maps last year which have taken certain lands out of scope of the tax. The lands shown on the Final Map will be liable to pay the RZLT for the first time on February 1st.

REGENERATION

**REGENERATION
Town Centre First**

As part of the Town Centre First initiative, community engagement workshops were held in Kilmalogue and Daingean in October 2024. These workshops provided an opportunity for local residents and stakeholders to discuss the strengths, challenges, and opportunities within their towns, helping to shape future Town Centre First plans.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of local needs, online surveys were also conducted alongside the in-person workshops. The feedback gathered was then collated and analysed by Dr. Shane O’Sullivan and Tracey Conroy from the Technological University of the Shannon. Their findings were presented at follow-up workshops in Kilmalogue and Daingean on 21st and 22nd January where further

discussions took place with the community.

These engagement sessions have been highly valuable, offering deep insights into the aspirations and priorities of the people of Kilmalogue and Daingean. The findings will play a crucial role in informing the next steps towards Town Centre First plans, ensuring that the foundation data gathered is from the community.



Kilmalogue Workshop



Daingean Workshop

Funding Information Evening – January 28th 2025

On Tuesday January 28th, the Regeneration Department in conjunction with many other council sections, held an additional informative drop-in session to discuss the various supports available for Community Groups and those interested in the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant. The event took place from 4pm to 9pm in the Tullamore Court Hotel.

Representatives from various departments across the Council were present, including Regeneration and attendees were provided with comprehensive information on a range of supports, including:

- Town & Village Renewal Scheme
- Outdoor Recreation Scheme
- Rural Regeneration Development Fund
- Community Centre Investment Fund
- Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

Attendees also had the opportunity to discuss their individual cases and queries with the relevant officials leading to valuable conversations around the revitalisation of communities and vacant properties in the County.



RRDF - St. Joseph's Convent, Ferbane

The redevelopment of St. Joseph's Convent, Ferbane, funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development through the Rural Regeneration Development Fund, with match funding from Offaly County Council's Local Property Tax, aims to transform the historic convent into a multipurpose community, enterprise, and learning hub.

Since securing funding in 2021, significant progress has been made. Following public consultations, the appointment of Kenny Lyons Associates as the architect-led design team, and the development of preliminary designs, the project is now advancing toward the formal planning stage. In January 2025, the design team, in collaboration with Offaly County Council's Regeneration Section, presented draft designs to the Members of Birr Municipal District and members of An Síolán. The proposal, which includes an urban garden, a linear river park, and multifunctional spaces, was well received. The 3D models as illustrated below, showcased the potential for the revitalisation of St. Joseph's Convent and for the Town of Ferbane in general. In the coming months, the project will enter the Part 8 planning

process, allowing the public and statutory bodies to review and provide feedback on the final design.



3D models showing the view of the proposed refurbished Ferbane Convent.

Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund - LSSIF

Offaly County Council welcomes the announcement of €8.9 million in funding under the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund for the development of the new Edenderry Swimming Pool & Fitness Centre. This funding represents a significant investment in North Offaly, ensuring the delivery of a state-of-the-art aquatic and fitness facility that will serve the local community for generations to come.

The initial step to progress this development is to hire a specialist design team to design the project through planning and supervise construction.

The new facility will include a FINA-standard six-lane 25m swimming pool, a learning pool, a hydrotherapy recovery area, a sauna and steam room, and a strength and conditioning gym catering to both competitive and recreational users. This development will not only enhance health and fitness opportunities but also position Edenderry as a hub for aquatic sports in the region. It will also be a key element of the Blundell masterplan, which was prepared in 2019/20. The project, in conjunction with the new Edenderry library and Arts Base, will represent a very strong vote of confidence in the masterplan with a significant amount of grant aid, in addition to local match funding, a considerable amount of which will come from the local property tax fund.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

Get in touch!

The start of the year is a good time to remind businesses of the financial grant supports for business growth.

Business expansion grants provide financial support for entrepreneurs and small businesses looking to grow their operations, facilitating investment in equipment, staff, or market expansion.

Feasibility grants assist in conducting thorough assessments before implementing business plans, ensuring informed decision-making and minimising risks.

Priming grants are available to businesses in the first 18 months to help you offset some of those start-up costs - from salary to capital expenditure, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.

Together, these grants form a comprehensive support system, empowering businesses to navigate challenges, conduct thorough research, and secure the necessary resources for sustainable growth. This multifaceted approach enhances your potential by addressing various aspects crucial to business development. We are encouraging businesses in Offaly to reach out to initiate a discussion about their requirements using a variety of channels including our newsletter, flyers and information sessions.

LEO Offaly Business Breakfast – first of 2025!

The Business Breakfast on 30th January at The Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore, was a huge success. We were thrilled to see a large number of attendees, including many new faces engaging with LEO Offaly for the first time. This event marked the beginning of a series of business breakfasts, and we look forward to meeting more business people at future events.

The breakfast was interactive, engaging, and practical, attracting a significant crowd. The presenter, Muireann Fitzmaurice, gave a fantastic presentation with practical examples and participants left with a list of new tools to try out! We are excited to welcome her back for Local Enterprise Week in March.

Stay updated on our next Leo Offaly gathering by checking our [events booking page](#).



Showcase 2025

Four businesses from County Offaly recently exhibited at Showcase 2025 benefiting significantly from the exposure to both international and domestic buyers. Participants in the Local Enterprise Office Showcase arena received valuable mentoring in finance, marketing, and branding, which greatly assisted them in preparing for this important trade show. Showcase provides an excellent platform for rising stars in the Irish craft and design scene, offering them the opportunity to display their creations to buyers from around the world. This exposure not only enhances their market reach but also fosters potential business growth and development.

The two businesses from Offaly in the Local Enterprise Showcase area were [Shannon Bergin Illustration](#) and [Heart on My Sleeve](#). The two Offaly businesses on the main floor were [Shannonbridge Pottery](#) and [Whiskey Craft Ireland](#).

Showcase, Ireland's Creative Expo, is one of the country's largest international trade shows. Over 3,350 buyers visit the event from across the world, including Ireland, the UK, the USA, Mainland Europe and the Far East.



Midlands Food and Drink Network Event

The Midlands Food and Drink Network recently hosted an event at Woodfield Cafe in Birr, bringing together food and drink producers, food tourism operators, Offaly County Council, LEO Offaly and other support agencies. This gathering was part of a series of County Network Events held across the region.

The event aimed to provide producers with the opportunity to discover new ways to grow their businesses in a relaxed and friendly environment. The network is open to all, from seasoned professionals to those just starting out, and has exciting plans for 2025, including events, trade shows, support services, training, and skill development.



This initiative is part of the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan Pathway for Just Transition project, co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the EU Just Transition Fund Programme 2021-2027.

Local Enterprise Week 2025

Mark your calendars and save the dates, because Local Enterprise Week 2025 is just around the corner! Get ready for a power-packed week of inspiration, knowledge, and networking that will raise the business game for all. From insightful workshops to engaging events, we have an exciting lineup tailored just for you. Don't miss this opportunity to connect, learn, and propel your business forward. Stay tuned on our [website](#) and social media channels for updates and new events.



The Student Enterprise Programme

is an educational and fun-packed initiative that teaches second level students what it's really like to be an entrepreneur and set up and run their own business over the course of the academic year. In 2024/2025 there are over 10 schools from all over County Offaly participating. Prizes in various categories will be awarded at the County Final which will be held on 4th March 2025 in the Tullamore Court Hotel. The overall winners in the Senior, Intermediate and Junior categories will go forward to the National Finals which will be held in the Mullingar Park Hotel in May 2025.



Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund

The Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund (DTIF) is a €500 million challenge-based fund established under Project Ireland 2040. It is one

of four funds set up under the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2027. It is managed by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and administered by Enterprise Ireland.

Find out more: [Enterprise.gov.ie/DTIF](https://www.enterprise.gov.ie/DTIF)

Most of our courses are **FREE OF CHARGE!** Whether it is starting a business or growing a business there is something suitable for everyone. Full details and links to book are here: <https://bit.ly/3B5LTku>

Upcoming Events		See All Events >
05/02/2025	How to use TikTok for marketing (Beginners)	Book online
06/02/2025	Website Health Check (1:1 Mentoring) Clinic 6th Fe...	Book online
12/02/2025	Small Business Accounts	Book online
19/02/2025	How to use Chat GPT to improve your digital market...	Book online
20/02/2025	Grant Application Workshop – How to Complete your ...	Book online
24/02/2025	Start Your Own Business Course Evenings	Book online
06/03/2025	Digital Marketing and Website Mentoring Clinic	Book online

Community, Culture and Emergency Services

Community Recognition Fund 2024:

The Community Recognition Fund (CRF) was first introduced on 24 January 2023 to recognise the huge efforts made by communities, villages and towns where the highest level of new arrivals are located and where there is a clear need for investment identified.

Under CRF 2023 funding of €6369,691 was allocated to 26 projects with works completed during 2023-2024. A second Fund of €1,002,542 was allocated to Offaly on 15 March 2024 for projects over €50k in value. Eleven projects were approved under Window 1 in August 2024 valued €702,000. The projects are located in Tullamore (4), Birr (2), Banagher (3), Edenderry (1), Geashill (1).

The remaining funding of €300,542 will be allocated under a joint Window 2 and 3 in January 2025 with priority given to towns which have not received funding to date/towns with arrivals after Window 1 closed. A total of 16 projects were submitted for approval before the closing date of 10th January 2025 - Clara (6), Daingean (2), Moneygall (2), Portarlinton (1), Tullamore (1), Banagher (1), Edenderry (1), Birr (1) and 1 countywide.

The LCDC Evaluation committee will meet in early February to assess applications, and their recommendations will be presented for adoption to the LCDC meeting on 13th February 2025. The Department is due to announce the approved projects in May 2025. All projects under CRF 2024 must be completed and funding drawn down by October 2026.

Public Participation Network:



January was a busy month for Offaly PPN as work got underway to complete the Workplan for 2025 and to allocate the Budget to actions for 2025. The Secretariat met on two occasions in January to direct, assist and sign off on both the Work Plan and Budget.

PR work was undertaken to promote the PPN via local news media with Articles prepared and published in local Papers. Staff & Secretariat members contributed to this piece of work.

All PPN Rep Positions were filled on SPC's, however; a number of vacancies will arise on the Secretariat in 2025 and PPN promotion is key to encourage ongoing engagement.

A Funding information Event took place in the Tullamore Court with stands from Offaly County Council, Offaly Local Development Company, Laois Offaly ETB and a ranger of other Service providers too. This was well received and considered timely.

Staff participated in Canva training via Offaly LEO which will prove very valuable in providing a more professionalised approach to our social media and Website presence.

Work is underway to finalise content for the PPN Municipal District meetings which will take place on:

- Feb 10th Edenderry MD Edenderry Town Hall 7.00 -8.30pm
- Feb 11th Tullamore MD Killeigh Community Centre 7.00 -8.30pm
- Feb 17th Birr MD Marian Hall 7.00 - 8.30pm

ARTS PROGRAMMING

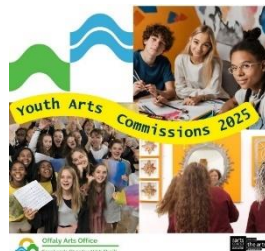


Mini Movies Programme 2025

Offaly County Council Arts Office has received 6 proposals/quotation from Professional Film Facilitators for the delivery of a six-day programme of film workshops to schools in Offaly. The assessment of the applications will take place on Friday 31st January and applicants will be contacted in the first week of February. The programme will consider either animated or live action. Mini Movies are both action and stop motion short movies created by children and young people. This year we have selected and contacted 3 rural schools: Rhode (NS) Kilcormac College, (secondary) and Geashill (NS) as potential project participants.

The 2025 Youth Arts Commissions

The 2025 Youth Arts Commission call-out is currently advertised with a deadline in February 2025.



The Youth Arts Commissions enables artists to work with youth groups and communities to develop projects that will enable engagement between professional artists and young people (13+), facilitated by youth organisations, youth leaders and schools. The goal being to build secure relationships with relevant partners for the development of Youth Arts in the county. The voice of the young people is a priority for this programme.

Arts Newsletter

The Arts Office continues to produce a bi-monthly newsletter *Offaly Arts Alert*, offering updates and information on Arts Office event sand opportunities etc. as well

as promoting and sharing funding and bursary opportunities that might be of interest to artists and communities that have a shared interest in the Arts. The Newsletter for Jan- Feb was disseminated at the beginning of January by email and on social media.

FilmOffaly

We are excited to be launching the 2025 Film Award on January 29th at the Esker Arts Centre, Tullamore. The chief attraction on the night is a screening of six of the previous award winners, all 100% shot in Offaly. The event is free, and it's hoped that the screenings will help create a buzz around FilmOffaly's activity, as well as an opportunity for local filmmakers to find out more about the award. It's planned that Darren will give a quick into to the award before the screenings, and he will be available afterwards to answer questions. The competition will be open for entries from 30th January. Writers can submit their scripts to enter, and the prize will be 12,000 towards the production of their short film- provided it is shot entirely in Offaly. There will also be script workshops for the four scripts to make the final shortlist.

The award-winning film for 2024's award (For The Cure) is now into the post-production stage. We have received the first rough cut of the film and it's currently awaiting feedback. It's expected that there will be another couple of passes before the film is fully finished.

January has seen us working on our first reports for Pobal to recoup and maintain our EU funding. This consisted of two reports – one financial, and the other dealing with non-financial goals. The reports were submitted on time and the project is officially on track to meet its goals. We are awaiting feedback from

Pobal with the next reporting period being early July.

Darren was invited by the Midlands Regional Enterprise group to deliver a presentation on FilmOffaly and the Just Transition Funding. This group meets weekly and is for anyone who has received EU funding to share info about their project and learn about what other teams are doing. The presentation was recorded and is expected to be uploaded to their YouTube channel soon.

Planning has continued for FilmOffaly's activities for the duration of the JTF fund. It's expected that this will be ready for February, with a three-year plan to follow.

Funding Opportunities



Offaly County Council Arts Office has closed its application process Arts Act Grant and Professional Artist Support Grant, and the assessment of applications is planned for the first

week of February.

Offaly County Council Arts Office offers a number of grant schemes to assist in the development and promotion of the Arts across the county.

The Festivals Grant call-out deadline is on February 14th and reminders of the deadline are planned to be announced on social media channels.

Collaborations

Business Development Report – OFFLine Animation Residency

Following an assessment process with a panel, a contractor has been selected to conduct

the OFFline Animation Residency in Birr. The contract for the services is being prepared and the contractor (Culture Works) is expected to commence their research and work on the report in February, with a deadline of April 2025.

Creative Places Edenderry

CP Edenderry is in the process of assessing application for SEED funding - these grants are open to anyone in the Edenderry Community and the surrounds who has an idea for a creative or artistic cultural project that they would like to explore and develop, which will benefit the Edenderry Community.

Creative Places, Edenderry, a project funded by the Arts Council, led by Creative Lives in partnership with Offaly County Council Arts Office and Edenderry Municipal District was awarded a 4th year of funding by the Arts Council and goes from strength the strength hosting an array of different arts-based activities, workshops and events in a wide range of art forms including Visual Arts, Music, Poetry, Playwriting, Creative Movement; Dance; Ceramics; Drama; Radio, Photography.

www.creativeplacesedenderry.ie

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Public Art Commission: Esker Arts in collaboration with Lough Boora

Following a call out for public art commission proposals for Esker Arts, in conjunction with Lough Boora Sculpture Park the panel has shortlisted 5 professional artists for Stage 2. Proposals are expected to be submitted by February 21st. Offaly's Arts Office are seeking proposals that will demonstrate how artist(s) will work collaboratively with communities of both Esker Arts and Lough



Boora Sculpture Park. Offaly County Council is looking for an imaginative project that demonstrates an innovative approach, enabling creative dialogue between stakeholders and communities, while representing best practice within the realm of public art practice.

Lough Boora Sculpture Park

The Arts Office funded by Creative Ireland and supported by Bord na Móna have commissioned a new maintenance programme for Lough Boora Sculpture Park to take place through 2024-2025. Artist Michael Burke, Sculpture Works, has carried out a review and report and works having been taking place throughout the summer.

Edenderry Library and Arts Base

The Arts Office continues to work in close collaboration with the county librarian in the development of plans for a multi-purpose Arts space and Artist's Studios to be incorporated into the planning of the new library for Edenderry including the audience and participant development as part of the Creative Places Edenderry project.



HEALTHY OFFALY

After a very busy year 2 of the Healthy Ireland Fund Round 4 programme all our action evaluation reports are now completed. Edufit (commissioned to complete the evaluation of the actions) submitted their final reports in January 2025. A total of eight projects were evaluated in 2024 as part of the Healthy Offaly Healthy Ireland Round 4 funding. Projects were aligned to one of two Healthy Ireland Outcome Indicators either (i) increase the percentage of adults and children meeting physical activity guidelines, or (ii) decrease

the number of adults who are overweight and obese. All partners engaged with the evaluation process and the full details of the reports will be circulated shortly.

To summarise the reports, it should be noted that all projects that were delivered in 2024 as part of the Healthy Offaly Healthy Ireland Round 4 funding successfully achieved their aim of either increasing adult physical activity participation (+40%), child physical activity participation (+86.4%) or decreasing total body weight among adults in Offaly (-0.99%). This is a very positive outcome and demonstrates clearly that the interventions applied made a real impact in the target groups.

The year 2 financial and progress reporting to Pobal and the Department of Health continues with all expenditure incurred across all actions to be uploaded to Pobal's online reporting system. Progress reporting will be based on the assessments provided by Edufit and will fall under the two outcome indicators as previously outlined. Three of the year 2 actions will continue in 2025 they are: Kilcormac Development Association's 'Active Ageing for Kilcormac', Bord Na Mona's 'Cycling without Age' project and the FAI's 'Traveller Mens Football Team action.

Other projects to note are the Healthy Offaly led 'Did I Ever Tell You?' Memory book project. The tri-county collaboration comprising of Kildare, Offaly and Westmeath local authorities was launched on December 4th 2024, with an artist networking event, bringing together the project's artists from each county for collaboration and idea sharing.

Anam Beo, an artist's group based in Birr, were commissioned to deliver the Offaly project and are currently working in four care home sites in the County. The sites

being visited by artists are Birr Community Care Home, Clara Day Care, Riada House Tullamore and Ofalia House Edenderry. The project is supported by Creative Ireland under the Creative Health & Wellbeing in the Community Scheme. Anam Beo have been selected by Creative Ireland to deliver a presentation on the Offaly project at the Creative Ireland 'Creative Health & Wellbeing' third network gathering in Dublin on 5th February. This is a major coup for our project and reflect very positively on the Offaly County Council implementation team and their implementing artists.

LIBRARY SERVICE



We look forward to celebrating a national day of reading with **Ireland Reads Day on Tuesday 25th**

February.

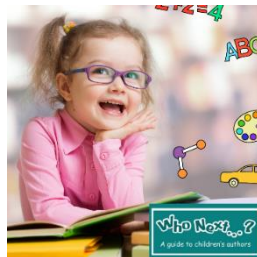
We are very excited to welcome three celebrated authors to our libraries on the day to mark the event:

Donal Ryan - Tullamore Library at 18:30

Patricia Gibney - Birr Library at 18:30

Anne Griffin - Edenderry Library at 18:30

Library members can [access their library account](#) online to view their loans, reserve and even order books from other libraries around country.



We offer some ingenious digital services to help readers find books that suit their reading style. [‘Who Else Writes Like?’](#) is a free, online recommendation service that will suggest authors you may like based on your preferred authors.

We also offer a child-focussed service called [‘Who Next?’](#) that will help parents make informed decisions on their child’s reading progression.

Library Outreach Event: Connecting with our Communities

Our library staff were on hand to help the public get set up with their free library

membership in the Bridge Centre, Tullamore on Wednesday 29th January.



Our library service has never been more accessible, with no registration fees and the eradication of late fines, all members of our community can [enjoy their library](#) free of charge.

[Pop into your local library](#) or [join online today](#) to discover all the invaluable services offered for free in our libraries across the county.

New! ‘Seed Library’ to be Piloted in Edenderry Library



Offaly Libraries are pleased to report that Edenderry Library will soon pilot a Seed Library to help people grow their own food.

This is part of our commitment to sustainability through our community events and supports achieving our Sustainable Development Goals.

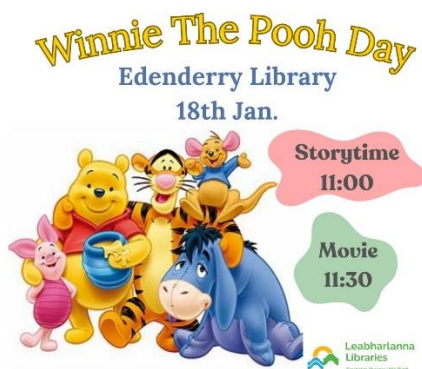
In addition to sourcing seeds, novice gardeners can also utilise our [book collections](#) and [online resources](#) to help them along the way.



An official launch of the Seed Library will take place on **Wednesday, 12th February** with a 'Grow Your Own' delivered by **Aoife Munn**.

All those interested in learning more about this exciting new initiative are invited to [contact Edenderry Library directly](#).

Winnie the Pooh Day at Birr Library



Birr Library invited families to a very special celebration of Winnie the Pooh Day on Saturday, 18th January.

15 children enjoyed a story about the beloved bear's antics before taking part in some crafts, games and a movie screening.

School Supports at Offaly Libraries



We love it when students come to visit us in the library!

Classes are very welcome in all our libraries to swap books, attend events and maybe even take part in a story time.

We invite all teachers to get in touch with their local library to learn about the many benefits of registering for a Teacher's Library Card, including:

- Borrowing 30 items for up to 3 months
- Direct access to [Classroom Book Sets](#)
- Free Licenses available for TTRS
- A varied programme of annual events



We would also like to highlight our [local studies resources](#) and free access to historical newspapers to support students with their history projects.

Cosy Crafts at Ferbane Library



Ferbane Library are hosting Cosy Crafts for kids every Saturday morning. On Saturday, 18th January, children created and decorated these cute mugs of tea.

For more information on upcoming crafts, [please contact Ferbane Library directly.](#)

New! Plot Twisters Movie Club



All are welcome to join a new movie club at Tullamore Library!

We will be screening fan favourite films every third Thursday morning of the month. Join us for our next screening on February 20th at 11:00.

[Contact Tullamore Library](#) directly for more details.

Staying Connected Digital Literacy Classes



We welcome the return of Staying Connected digital literacy classes, delivered through LOETB at various library locations beginning this January:

Birr Library	Clara Library	Kilcormac Library
Tuesday, 14 th Jan	Wednesday, 15 th Jan	Thursday, 16 th Jan

Booking is advised and [contact details for each library can be found here.](#)

LOETB Ceramics Workshops at Edenderry Library

LOETB will offer Ceramic Workshops in Edenderry Library, every Tuesday from 13:30 – 15:30, beginning 25th February.

A poster for a 5-week Ceramics Class. The poster features the LOETB logo, the text '5 Week Ceramics Class', 'Starting Tuesday 25th February 2025', 'Venue: Edenderry Library R45 RX48', '1:30pm-3:30pm', and contact information: 'Edarby@loetb.ie' and '046 973 2128'. There are also illustrations of hands working with clay.

Booking is essential for these workshops as spaces are limited.

Please contact LOETB directly by emailing edarby@loetb.ie or by phoning 046 97 32128.

Digital Support Clinics:

Every Monday at Tullamore Library

Offaly Libraries are pleased to partner with LOETB in delivering their Form Filling and Digital Support Clinics, hosted in Tullamore Library every Monday morning from 10.30 – 12:30.



All are welcome to attend these drop-in clinics which offer free and confidential supports for a variety of online, digital and smart device services.

International Lego Day Celebrations



As part of our STEAM programme, our libraries celebrated **International Lego Day**, Tuesday 28th January with special after school Lego Free Play sessions.



318 children escaped the Wintery weather in Birr, Clara, Edenderry and Tullamore Libraries and took part in fun

Lego building challenges and play.

XL Bully Registration Sessions

Offaly Libraries, in partnership with Offaly County Council, held vital registration sessions for XL Bully dog breeds ahead of new legislation coming in from 1st February.



Council staff were on hand in Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore Libraries to help owners complete their registrations and obtain their certificate of exemption.

Local and National Newspapers: Available through Borrowbox!

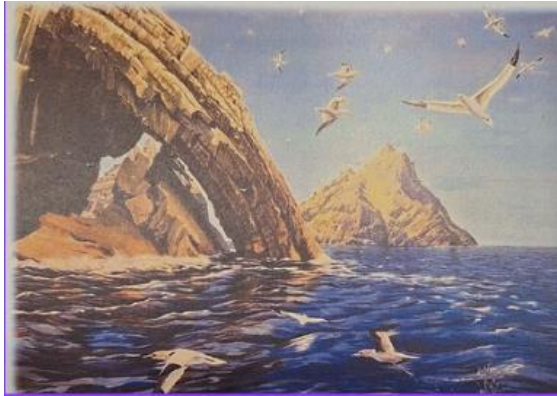


Borrowbox now offers free access to local and national eNewspapers, as well as eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines, all from one convenient, user friendly app!

ePress titles include; **The Offaly Independent, Irish Independent and Sunday Independent, Westmeath Examiner, Herald, Sunday World and Ireland's Own**, as well as a broad range of regional and local titles.

[Find out more about the Borrowbox app](#) here or drop in to your local library where our friendly staff will help get you set up.

'The Legend of Skellig Michael' Exhibition at Birr Library



Birr Library were delighted to present an exhibition of works created by artists, Christopher John O'Donoghue.

The collection comprises of oil paintings depicting landscapes inspired by Skellig Michael.

The exhibition was officially launched on Wednesday 14th January to an audience of **50 attendees**.

Rose Cutler Exhibition in Tullamore Library

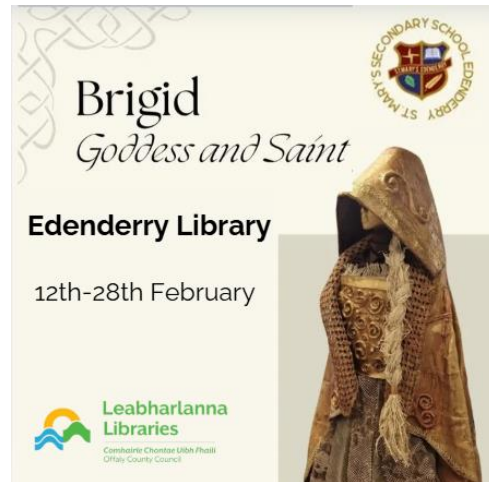


Local artist, Rose Cutler enjoyed the launch of her first solo exhibition of works in Tullamore Library on Thursday, 23rd January.

Guided and support by the LOETB, Rose is presenting a collection of painting in various mediums, including oil paints, acrylics and watercolours.

The exhibition will remain on display to the public for the month of February.

Brigid Goddess and Saint Exhibition at Edenderry Library



We look forward to hosting the Brigid Goddess and Saint Exhibition at Edenderry Library this February, from Wednesday 12th to Friday 28th.

Sign up for our Library Newsletters

A quick reminder that the best way to keep up to date with all library programmes, developments and new services is via [Offaly Libraries Newsletter and by following our social media channels.](#)

Currently we have **10,000+** subscribers to the general newsletter and **134 teachers** subscribed to the school newsletter.

[Click here to subscribe!](#)



Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Finance

Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 31 January 2025

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr Budget 2025 €m	Preliminary Value to Jan 2025 €m	% Year To Date
Payroll costs	40.01	2.15	5.4%
Grants and Subsidies Income	56.55	0.91	1.6%

OCC to 31st Jan 2025

	<u>Rates</u> €m	<u>Rents</u> €m	<u>Loans</u> €m
Opening Balance Jan 1st, 2025	2.34	0.49	0.05
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers*	1.63	0.70	0.00
2025 Cash Collected to 17th Jan	0.16	0.72	0.05
Closing Balance Jan 31st, 2025	3.81	0.48	0.00

*Rates demands not yet generated for 2025, estimate provided for January invoicing

<u>2024 Cash collected to Jan 31st</u>	2.40	0.69	0.02
% Collection at this point in 2024	7%	105%	235%

Bank Overdraft to 31st Jan 2025

	-	-	%	YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date			4	13%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to Jan 31st 2025 YTD Estimate				€2,854
Bank Administration and transactional charges to Jan 31st 2025 YTD Estimate				€2,888