

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL BAINISTÍOCHTA

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Bealtaine & Meitheamh / May & June



**Banagher
Marina & Environs
Masterplan Launch**

Back row L-R: Cllr. John Leahy, Andrew Murray (A/Director of Services OCC), Cllr. John Carroll, Carol Nolan T.D., Cllr. John Clendennen, Cllr. Clare Claffey, Ann Dillon (Director of Services OCC)

Front row L-R: Minister of State Pippa Hackett, Brian Treacy (Waterways Ireland), Cathaoirleach Eddie Fitzpatrick & Chief Executive Anna Marie Delaney

**Launch of
Derryounce
10 Year Plan**



Front Row L-R: Andrew Murray, A/Director of Services, OCC, Anna-Marie Delaney, Chief Executive, OCC, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick, OCC, Olwen Cummins, A/Town Regeneration Officer, OCC, Ian O'Brien, Executive Planner, OCC.

Back Row L-R: Mick Cullen, Local User. Colm Powell, PCDA, Lisa Kealey, Bord na Mona, Cllr. Aidan Mullins, LCC & PCDA, Mary Keogh, PCDA, Elaine Moore, LCC, Jesper Peterson, Coillte, Paul Jordan, Coillte.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Heritage Week

Planning is underway for 9 days in August – Saturday 17th to Sunday 25th August.

Land Use, Planning and Economic Development Services

PLANNING

Development Management

	To end Jun 2024	To end Jun 2023	Total 2023
Planning Applications	327	325	695
Extensions of Duration Applications	4	9	20
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	7 (2)	135 (57)	181 (73)

During the month of May 2024, the following large planning applications were received:

24/58 Martin Dooley	Demolishing existing dilapidated house for the provision of 4 no. residential units, Ferbane, Co. Offaly
24/60160 Enda McIntyre	5 No. 1 bed glamping pods, 2 No. 2 bed glamping pods, connection to public amenities, access and all ancillary works, Shannon Harbour, Co. Offaly
24/60175 William Grant and Sons Irish Manufacturing Ltd.	Construction of a solar PV development with an installed capacity of up to 2.6 MWdc (MEC=0) Tullamore Distillery, Tullamore Co. Offaly
24/60187 Cedarglade Limited	Construction of 2 no. New Retail units, Collins Lane, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

During the month of June 2024, the following large planning applications were received:

24/60204 Kim Darby	Permission for the erection of No.4 glamping pods. Togher, Croghan, Tullamore, Co. Offaly R35C2H7
24/60216 KKCDP CLG	Construction of a new single storey community sports shed with an internal and external artificial grass area. Kilcormac Co. Offaly

Forward Planning

Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

Landowners who made submissions requesting their lands be removed from 2025 annual draft RZLT maps were notified of local authority decisions in advance of July 1st as required by legislation. A total of three sites are to be removed from RZLT maps following consideration of criteria contained in Section 653B Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 (as amended).

Just Transition

Offaly County Council signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with Failte Ireland in November 2023. On foot of this, OCC submitted by the closing date of 29th February 2024, applications under the Failte Ireland Schemes C and D – State Agency and Local Authority Strategic Partnerships – EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme (2023-2026) under the EU Just Transition Fund(EUJTF) 2021-2027.

On **19th June 2024**, Failte Ireland announced the results of these applications. Offaly County Council were successful as follows:

Shannonbridge Plaza to Callows €218,000

This project is for the development of a sustainable visitor experience in the heart of Shannonbridge in County Offaly. The focus of the project is on the planning and design of a 'plaza' / public amenity area off the Main Street 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.

Birr Destination Town – Paving at William Street €188,000

This project has the objective of enhancing the visitor experience in the Town Centre of Birr, Co. Offaly. This will be done by the improvement of pedestrian connections to visitor amenities and attractions. ('Walkable Urbanism')

The paving element consists of the provision of high-quality granite pedestrian paving to improve access to Birr Castle Demesne along its boundary at William Street. The path will be significantly widened as part of this development, which will also serve to slow vehicular traffic. This serves to enhance the already significant works which have been undertaken in the vicinity of Birr Castle, including the new visitor entrance and improvements to the access roads to the castle such as in Green Street.

Heritage Team – April to June 2024

The Offaly Heritage Forum met in May in the County Archives Building in Axis Business Park.

Offaly County Council projects

World Heritage Site – Astronomical Observatories of Ireland - UNESCO project

The Council continues to support the work of the Astronomical Observatories of Ireland (Birr, Dunsink and Armagh) to progress their application to proceed to the Tentative List for Irish sites to be considered for World Heritage Site status. Attended two key meetings in Birr on 23 April and Armagh on 24 June.

Clonmacnoise Master Plan

This project commissioned by the OPW and Failte Ireland a year ago by Denis Byrne Architects has been signed off by the OPW and in June €7.8 million euros has been announced under the Failte Ireland EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme (2023-2026) to upgrade the visitor experience at Clonmacnoise.

Biodiversity

Offaly Biodiversity Action Plan 2025 - 2030

The pre-draft public consultation ended on April 24th with 30 submissions received. The Biodiversity Working Group met on May 1st to consider all public submissions and suggested actions. An internal OCC think-in on May 20th was held to engage with colleagues across relevant sections of OCC. The draft plan is currently progressing and will be discussed at the Biodiversity Working Group meeting on June 10th with next steps scheduled also.

Local Biodiversity Action Funding

The National Parks and Wildlife Service has agreed funding for 12 projects with a total contribution of over €90,000 funding awarded. Funding has been approved for the projects listed below.

- *Geashill Biodiversity Action Plan update*
- *Community Biodiversity AP Actions Support*
- *Invasives - Treatment of Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed*
- *Tullamore Living River Project*
- *BirdWatch Ireland Shannon Callows – Surveys and Outreach*

- *In Your Nature* podcast – support for 2024 series
- *Citizen Science + Outreach* programme
- *Syngefield Demesne Biodiversity Management 2024* (wetland creation)
- *County Hedgerow Survey*
- *Mayfly study*
- *Alpine Newt eDNA* following on from discovery of a significant population in the Shinrone area in 2023.

Partnering with Local Communities and Societies

The funding level for this grant scheme run directly by the Heritage Council has increased to 100%. Four Offaly applications were successful.

- *Lis Church* - €30,000 for conservation of the entrance railings
- *Birr 2020 Vision* – conservation of vault at St Brendan’s Church, Birr
- *Birr Scientific and Heritage Foundation* – conservation of archive material for the Van Gogh exhibition.
- *Shinrone burial ground survey* with Shinrone Heritage and researcher Stephen Callaghan.

Birdwatch Ireland – Barn Owl Conservation



Assisting with local monitoring in Offaly with positive trends showing for nesting population

Creative Ireland

Oversight for the Offaly Creative Ireland programme which has a budget of c. €200,000 and a cross-department team in the Council. A range of community projects which incorporate aspects of heritage are underway having received funding offers. Cruinniú na nOg is a substantial day focused on Creativity for Children which was delivered by the library service on Saturday 15 June.

Tidy Towns Support Programme

Worked with Community Section to host a talk for the Tidy Towns Network by judge Christy Boylan providing insights into how the judge’s judge!

Built Heritage

Historic Towns Initiative funding of €80,000 - Heritage Council - Birr Courthouse

Work on the cross-directorate Council team to progress the Part VIII planning process with consultants Howley Hayes Cooney. Liaising With Birr 2020 Vision Working group that proposed the Creative Court concept.

Offaly’s Built Heritage Show

The two-day show was hosted on Oxmantown Mall in Birr and featured talks in Birr Theatre and skills demonstrations on the Mall, in addition to a range of Children’s workshops.

Held on the weekend of 15 & 16 June. led by the Irish Georgian Society, it received funding and assistance from Offaly County Council through the Heritage Stewardship grant from the Heritage Council. Rachel McKenna, senior executive architect led the liaison with support from the Municipal District and the heritage team for promotion and awareness.



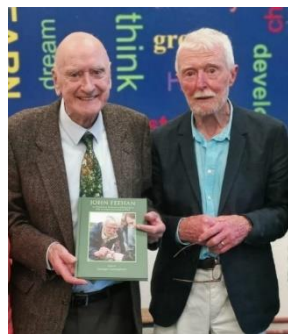
Lime Mortar for Homeowners of Vernacular Buildings

Supported four Offaly owners to attend this national training held on 10 & 11 May in Birr so they can carry out repairs on their properties.

Heritage Council – Heritage Plan funding

A book by Stephen Callaghan on Bully's Acre burial ground in Birr and 'Step into Nature' by Rachel McKenna will both be supported under this year's funding. In addition, a film documenting the unique story of God in the Bottle and Offaly's two county makers by Mixed Bag Media is underway following Rachel McKenna's research for her book 'Traditional Architecture in Offaly'. This will be launched during Heritage Week in the Esker Arts Centre.

The Bibliography of books and articles by John Feehan was launched in Birr on 10 May – supported by Offaly County Council – documenting the most extraordinary range and number publications.



Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites

Funding has been approved and the following sites are proceeding to arrange for works to commence on site.

- *Monasteroris medieval church, Edenderry, €120,000*
- *Killeigh Chapter House – phase 2 - €90,393*
- *Ballintemple Church medieval church near Walsh Island - €100,000*
- *Lemanaghan Castle, consolidating the ruins - €30,000*
- *Seir Kieran graveyard wall Clareen - €30,000*

Just Transition – Conservation and Pollination Programme 2021- 2023 (2024)

This programme is drawing to a close. Final works include wrought iron repairs to the

coffin stand at Kilmurryely near Shinrone and masonry works at Kilbride church nr Ballycowan.

The unique wrought iron coffin stand at Kilmurry-ely undergoing conservation by Paul Devlin with input from Howley Hayes Cooney conservation architects.



Offaly Public Participation Network

Co-hosted a Dusk Chorus Walk in collaboration with Offaly and Laois PPNs at Derryounce Bog on 10 May.



Dusk Chorus Walk Ballycumber



PPN Dusk Walk Derryounce bog

Offaly Heritage YouTube Videos Wildflowers of Offaly

John Feehan and collaborators Roisin Gilmore and Tina Claffey have added 13 more videos to the *Wildflowers of Offaly* series making it a huge resource with access and feedback from people across the world!

The Lemanaghan Monastic Site video series

This has been released over the past two months which was commissioned by the community group in 2023 and supported through Heritage Plan funding.

REGENERATION

Rural Regeneration Development Fund Edenderry Phase III

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, announced on 13th May, a grant of €12.2m for the Edenderry Regeneration Project – Phase 3. This grant, awarded under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund, will allow for the redevelopment of 33/34 JKL Street, the former Tesco Supermarket site into a new Town Centre development consisting of a newly constructed Community Library and Arts Space with outdoor programming areas. The development also includes a new pedestrian and cycle connection from JKL Street to Blundell Avenue and to the greater Blundell Area, site boundary treatment and enabling works and public realm improvements including biodiversity landscaping, accessible parking, resting area and an urban plaza.

This grant requires match funding of 20% from Offaly County Council's resources of €3m which Offaly County Council has committed to. The total project cost is €15.2m.



Banagher Marina & Environs Masterplan Launch

Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, Eddie Fitzpatrick officially launched the Banagher Marina & Environs Masterplan at Crank House, Banagher on Friday 12th April 2024.

The Marina Master Plan was funded through the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund in partnership with Offaly County Council and sets out a vision to enhance the marina to improve the built fabric, waterway access and green infrastructure. The plan will act as a catalyst to drive future regeneration projects to sustain tourism and improve the social and economic development of Banagher.

Town & Village Renewal Scheme Town Centre Suite of Supports



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



The Town Centre First Suite of Supports replaces supports previously available for the



Lár Bailte ar dTús
Town Centre First

development of Town Centre First plans, town health-checks and the Project Development Measure (PDM) through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

Kilmalogue and Daingean were both awarded €10,000 each under the Town Centre First **Town Team Support Fund Measure 1**. These funds will be used to

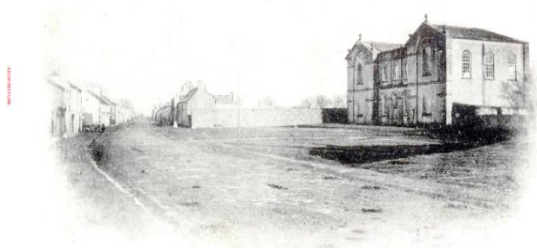
establish Town Teams and to support town research and data collection which will help identify the key priorities for these towns and assess the vitality, resilience and performance of the town centres which will help to develop high quality project applications for available funding schemes in the future.

TVR 2022 Project Development Measure - Daingean Town Hall

Consultants Howley Hayes Cooney presented the final draft of the conservation masterplan at a stakeholder meeting which included Daingean Development Group, elected members and Regeneration staff on Thursday 30th May.

Howley
Hayes
Cooney

Daingean Courthouse
Daingean, Co. Offaly



Howley Hayes Cooney intend to issue a final plan in the coming weeks at which point an official launch will be arranged. Howley Hayes Cooney will continue to progress detailed designs etc. to secure planning permission under the Part VIII approval process.

Shinrone Library Public Engagement Event

A public engagement event was held in the former Shinrone Library building on 15th May 2024. The aim of the event was to give members of the public an opportunity to see the building and for Council staff to gather local input at an early stage in the process thereby ensuring that local

knowledge informs the end uses and opportunities for the property over the coming years.



For those unable to attend the in-person event, an online consultation option was available. The event proved very worthwhile with over 30 members of the public attending and some great suggestions as to what the building might be used for following refurbishment.

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme

Derrynounce 10 Year Plan Launch

The Derrynounce 10 Year Plan was launched by Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick on 20th May in Portarlington Golf Club. This plan is supported and funded by the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) 2021, under the Department of Rural and Community Development and will, in time have an extremely positive impact in the area from an economic, social and environmental perspective.



Community Centre Investment Fund Grants to upgrade existing Community Centres

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD,

announced on 14th June a capital fund of €20m under CCIF 2024 Refurbishment Grant which will provide funding of up to €100,000 to upgrade existing community centres in both urban and rural areas.

A wide range of works eligible for funding including Refurbishment of Kitchens & Toilets, Upgrades to Windows & Doors, Energy Efficiency Upgrades & Improving access for people with disabilities. Funding will be available under 2 Categories, with grants of between €10k and €100k available:

Category 1: Small scale projects/improvements to facilities - €10,000 to €25,000

Category 2: Larger scale projects - €25,001 to €100,000

A minimum of 5% match funding is required for Category 1 and 10% for Category 2. All applicants must register as users on the online portal in advance of the application process which will open on 29th July 2024. The closing date for applications is 29th August 2024.



Community Centres Investment Fund 2024

Refurbishment Grant

Category 1 and 2 Application Guidelines

Department of Rural and Community Development



TOURISM

With the holiday season well up and running the Tourism Team are out and about creating content for social media and building awareness;

Radio Campaign



New radio ads for Offaly were broadcast on Today FM, Newstalk, 98FM & Spin 1038 over

a period of 3 weeks in May & June. Highlighting the 'Offaly' great county we are and the 'Offaly' good things to see and do! The campaign included a weeklong promotion on the very popular Ray Foley afternoon show on Today FM, w/c 1st July.



Influential Visit!

The Tourism team organised Offaly resident and popular influencer Rachel Gorry to take a quick weekend trip of the county in late June, promoting our activities, accommodation, places to eat and heritage.



With a huge following of 272K on Instagram, her reels reached a massive audience and helped us grow our followers.

FAM Trips

A group of travel journalists from Benelux visited Offaly in May, spending 3 days on the Water with Silverline Cruisers. An

Italian TV channel filmed in Offaly staying overnight in Tullamore and a group of German influencers also visited. They were here as guests of Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland. Total estimated exposure is close to 3 million

TV Exposure



Offaly featured in the unique music series 'Ireland in Music' in April & May. Sponsored by Offaly County Council tourism dept., filming took place in Birr Castle Demesne and Lough Boora Discovery Park. The series can be watched back on the [RTÉ Player](#).

Fáilte Ireland Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme

Over €406,000 funding was awarded in June to Offaly County Council through Fáilte Ireland Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme, part of the EU Just Transition Fund. This funding will assist in the development of two projects including the development of a sustainable visitor experience in the heart of Shannonbridge, the gateway to Clonmacnoise, and showcase that Birr is a centre for tourism through the enhancement of existing attractions and by the strengthening of connectivity between attractions.

This first round of approved investment grants for projects under the EU Just Transition Fund, also included €7.8m for the Redevelopment of the visitor centre at Clonmacnoise, including refurbishment

and extension of buildings to enhance the experience for visitors. €3.6million was announced towards the creation of up to 79km of new walking and cycling trails, across suitable parts of the Bord na Móna landbank including large parts of lands in East & West Offaly.



LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

LEO Offaly Business Breakfast Series continued in May with guest speaker, Pádraic Ó Máille. Padraig gave his presentation on 'The 30 Day Year - How To Achieve More In 30 Days Than Many Do In A Year' to the large crowd of entrepreneurs and business owners who attended the event in The Bridge House Hotel on May on Wednesday, May 29th. Throughout the morning the Local Enterprise Office Offaly Team were on hand to discuss business supports and grants.

Please mark your calendars for our future dates in our every growing popular breakfast series.

- Wednesday 25th September 2024
- Thursday 14th November 2024



Offaly Job Fair 2024

LEO Offaly provided sponsorship and participated at Offaly Job Fair 2024 held in the Tullamore Court Hotel on 15th June. Offaly Job Fair 2024 provided a unique opportunity for jobseekers to meet representatives from companies in Offaly across a wide range of sectors and industries, and to secure a new and improved work-life fit in the County. Offaly Job Fair had so much to offer with a range of roles available for all skillsets and qualifications in sectors, from hospitality and financial, to retail, pharmaceutical, manufacturing and engineering to name a few. LEO Offaly was on hand to discuss options for self-employment and part-time start-up opportunities.

Public Consultation for Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan

The Tullamore Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan is available inspection in the offices of Offaly County Council, Áras an Chontae, Tullamore Municipal

District, Tullamore Library during normal office hours from 13th of June 2024 to 11th July 2024. A successful open day was held in Tullamore Library on 20th June.

The Tullamore Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan, jointly commissioned by Waterways Ireland and Offaly County Council, has provided the prism through which future transformation and regeneration of the harbour area can be envisioned. Grafton Architects as the appointed consultancy team, have culminated their assessment of the study area in a Masterplan that reimagines the harbour area through a catalogue of scaled development opportunities. The Masterplan study area also includes the Grand Canal Harbour and adjacent lands, the Canal Spur Line enabling access into the harbour basin, and Young's Store - a three-storey former warehouse with an approximate floor area of 275 square metres fronting the canal along Convent Road.

Networking for a Sustainable Tomorrow – LEO Offaly in Conjunction with Climate Action

On Monday June 17th Ronan Berry from Midlands 103 Radio facilitated the **Networking for a Sustainable Tomorrow** event. Ronan's insights and expertise in sustainability and business provided valuable guidance and inspiration to a large audience in Esker Arts Centre. Like-minded entrepreneurs and business owners shared invaluable insights. Offaly County Council Climate Action Team shared the success story of the



2GoCups. Local Enterprise Office Offaly shared insights into business supports and grants.

LEO Grant Workshops

LEO Offaly have a number of in-person Grant Application Workshops planned for 2024. These new workshops provide valuable insights on navigating the application portal, avoiding common errors, and providing essential financial information for Feasibility, Priming, and Business Expansion Grants. Participants will also learn about projections, cash flow vs. profit & loss, budgeting, and creating an impactful short video. A great resource for anyone applying for a grant. Our next [Grant Information Workshop](#) will be held on Thursday 22nd August at 11am.



Grow Your Business Programme

Offaly Local Enterprise Office is pleased to offer a Grow Your Business Programme from 10 October to 28 November 2024. This programme will focus on developing a strategic approach to growing a business while gaining a greater understanding of the Business Purpose, Customer Value Proposition and Business Model with practical guidance on Pricing, Finance, including profitability and margin analysis & Cash-flow, Sales & Marketing and Personal Effectiveness, while at all times keeping focus on the ultimate goal of helping participants to devise a strategic growth plan, with specific, measurable objectives and actions.

Training Events

LEO Offaly will continue a series of in-person events focusing on LEAN, Green and Digital for Business over the summer months.

Full details are available on www.localenterprise.ie/offaly. 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 >
11/07/2024	Embracing Technology - The Role of AI in the Creat...	Book online
16/07/2024	How to use Canva to design eye-catching graphics f...	Book online
25/07/2024	Generative AI for Digital Marketing - How to use C...	Book online
22/08/2024	Grant Application Workshop - How to Complete your ...	Book online
03/09/2024	How to use Instagram for Marketing – Level 1	Book online
04/09/2024	Start Your Own Business Course Evenings	Book online
05/09/2024	A Digital Marketing Plan for your Business	Book online

Housing

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 552 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of June 2024.
- A further 558 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 7 signed up for HAP and 12 exited from HAP in June.
- At the end of June, 31 single people and 19 couples and families were being supported in emergency accommodation.
- The 2024 Rent Review of Social Leasing Scheme Tenants (Rental Accommodation, Short Term Leasing, Repair & Lease and Mortgage to Rent) and HAP Tenants is complete. Approx 662

rent letters will issue to Social Leasing Scheme and HAP tenants on Friday 28th June 2024 and these rents will be effective from the 13th July 2024. Leasing tenant queries can be directed to RentReview@offalycoco.ie and HAP queries can be directed to hap@offalycoco.ie

Housing Capital Programme Update

- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 no. Older Person's dwellings) – Due for completion in Q3 2024.
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) – Construction commenced. Completion Q3 2024.
- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – Project started on site in March 2023. Due for completion in Q4 2024.
- 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) – Stage 2 approval was granted on 27th February 2023. New Part 8 planning process; Stage 3 will be lodged with the DHLGH in Q3 2024.
- Group Housing, Croghan Road, Birr (4 Units): Stage 4 approval was granted on 21st November 2023. Contractor Appointed & construction has commenced.
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (10 Units) – Stage 2 approval received 30th Nov 2022. Stage 3 approval application to be lodged with DHLGH in 2024.

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes

- Respond Housing: 77 Units under construction @ Kingswood, Ardan Lane with completion in Q2 2025
- Sofia Housing: 37 Units with Stage 2 approval @ Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Planning Granted in November 2023. AHB is preparing tender documents (Stage 3/August 2024)
- Sofia Housing, 17 Units @ Clonamore, Tullamore – Midlands Region Statutory Management Group continue to work with Sophia Housing, the Dept and HSE, to ensure adequate staff and resources to open Clonamore safely and fully supported.

Turnkey Developments/Part V

- Turnkey & Part V: Bog Road, Portarlinton, 33 units – Complete
- Part V: Silverbrook, Tullamore, 15 Complete, 5 remaining
- Part V: Redwood, Tullamore, All 11 Units complete
- MacGregol, Birr, 6 Units – 2 Part V units Complete & 4 Turnkey Units Complete
- Carrick Hall, Edenderry - 22 Units (18 Turnkey & 4 Part V's) approval received in July 2023. Awaiting commencement

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.

- 120 Units complete to date
- DHLGH have advised target for 2024 of 28 Energy Efficiency Retrofit Program Units
- 28 Units complete in 2024

Community Development Programme

- Estate Management Funding for Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore Municipal Districts have been agreed at Municipal District meetings. Works will be scheduled to commence for all approved works.
- Housing Liaison Officers are continuing to support established resident committees and engaging with other groups and communities in an effort to establish them and thereby support the development of their community.
- Housing staff will provide *Games on the Green* in a number of local authority estates scheduled to take place in July in collaboration with Offaly Sports Partnership,

Community Culture and Emergency Services

Local Enhancement Programme 2024

On the 22nd May 2024 the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, and Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities, Joe O'Brien TD, announced the 113 successful projects in Co. Offaly under the main programme of the Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) 2024. An additional announcement was made on 5th June 2024 by the Minister in respect of the 14 successful Women's Groups in Offaly who were awarded €27,099.89 under the same Programme. The successful projects can be viewed on the www.offaly.ie website.

The Local Enhancement Programme 2024 provides vital support to community groups to help them improve their facilities. It supports small-scale funding for projects which range from purchasing equipment to minor renovations to buildings. These investments allow community groups to carry out the invaluable work they do on behalf of others in local areas throughout the country.

Community Recognition Fund (CRF)

Offaly was allocated €1,002,543 under the scheme specifically targeted at capital projects that are located in communities, towns and villages that are hosting the Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and/or International Protection Applicants ('new arrivals') including towns identified for the rapid build homes programme. The scheme aims to promote the development of facilities that will be used in the future by all members of the community.

A meeting of the LCDC Evaluation Committee was held on 28th May 2024 to assess the 31 submissions which were received and to decide which projects to recommend for approval to the Department. The Department of Rural and Community Development will consider the recommendations from the LCDC in detail over the coming months and will advise the LCDC which projects may proceed to the next stage. The final window for submission of projects under the CRF 2024 will be in January 2025. Details will be provided through Offaly PPN, the Council website and social media. All projects are due to be completed by November 2026.

Age Friendly Strategy 2024-2029



The Offaly Age Friendly Strategy 2024-2029 was adopted by

Offaly County Council at its meeting in Cloneyhurke on the 20th of May 2024. The Strategy sets out the ambition and goals of the Offaly Age Friendly Programme over the next 6 years. It should be seen as a continuation and enhancement of the goals and targets outlined in the previous strategy.

The overarching goal of the strategy is that Offaly should be a good place in which to grow old. The actions contained in the strategy seek to ensure that the supports and services required are properly coordinated and that the needs and requirements of older people are met. The voice of our older citizens is articulated in the surveys and consultation which were conducted during 2022 and 2023 and

This collaborative initiative brought together eleven ladies from the Offaly community, including Chair and Vice Chair of Offaly OPC, Molly Buckley and Frances Kawala, to reminisce about their cherished memories of Charleville Castle, culminating in a display of their creative expressions for the wider community to enjoy.



Frances Kawala pictured at the exhibition launch in Tullamore Library.

Frances Kawala pictured at the exhibition launch in Tullamore Library.

Under the expert guidance of LOETB tutor Pauline McNelis, the participants embarked on a six-week journey down memory lane. Through sharing and reflection, they unearthed a treasure trove of anecdotes, recollections, and heartfelt moments associated with Charleville Castle. These memories were immortalised through the art of felting.

Tullamore Age Friendly Train Station

In 2023, MacDonagh Station, Kilkenny won the Transport Award at the Age Friendly Ireland Annual Awards in Wexford. MacDonagh Station became Ireland's first Age Friendly Train Station after undergoing the World Health Organisation's four stage process to be recognised as Age Friendly. Ultimately Iarnród Éireann intends that all of its stations achieve the same WHO Age Friendly status.

Building on the success of MacDonagh Station, Tullamore Station is one of ten stations that Iarnród Éireann have initially identified across the Irish Rail network to

concentrate on, with a view to also being recognised as Age Friendly. Our Age Friendly team met with members of Iarnród Éireann in early June 2024 for an initial site visit. Watch this space for further updates!

Public Participation Network

The month of May was a very eventful month for the PPN with lots of activities taking place including:



Participation in the Offaly Laois PPN's Biodiversity Dusk Walk at Derrynounce Lakes with Ricky Whelan. It was a great evening of learning and networking with members from both Offaly & Laois PPN in attendance.



Offaly PPN also Participated in Offaly Sports Partnership Bike Week attending the Women's Spin event in Ferbane.

Preparation is underway in the compilation of a Brochure for Disability Awareness Week coordinated by the PPN June 10th – 14th 2024. This is an awareness raising piece of work that takes place annually with services and supports opening their doors to the general public.

As a precursor to Disability Awareness Week, a disco took place on May 20th 2024 for young people with disabilities in conjunction with ODN, OLDC, Tullamore Community Gardai and Tullamore Credit Union.



Offaly PPN partnered with Offaly Older Persons Network, Offaly Age Friendly, LOETB, Offaly Libraries and OLDC to deliver a creative arts piece which culminated in the Project exhibition launch taking place in Tullamore library on May 21st. A lovely evening showcasing the work of the participants and their feltwork pieces were on display. There are plans to move the exhibit to other library spaces too.



Other activities this month included participation in Offaly Volunteering Week, attendance at the Killeigh Community Centre Open Day and the Biodiversity event with Bracknagh Heritage.



To end the month, we held the launch of the PPN Community Energy Charter, a first in the country with lots of interest from across the country in utilizing this model.



This was a collaborative piece of work, where Offaly PPN sourced Leader funding to produce the Charter. Green Offaly were successful in their tender and carried out the work on the Charter.



Members of the Collaboration include PPN membership, Offaly CoCo, Climate Action Team, Offaly LCDC and OLDC. Speakers on the day included Ann Dillon Offaly CoCo Director of Services; Brian Flynn Community Voluntary Worker with An Síolán in the Ferbane Area and John Aston ELSA Earning Local Support for Energy Projects.

Environmentalist Éanna Ni Lamhna launched the Community Energy Charter which was attended by a broad spectrum of people from Offaly and further afield.

The Launch took place in Esker Arts Centre, the perfect location with excellent support from Sean and the team to ensure the



venue, sound and lighting were at their optimum.

A call out went to Artists Nationwide to depict the theme Energy. This artistic display was very effective as the rolling backdrop.



On May 3rd 2024 Offaly Comhairle na nÓg joined with JIGSAW - as part of JIGSAW's National Fundraising Campaign; **Colour Climb** - for a sunset hike on Friday the 3rd of May in the Slieve Blooms starting at Kinnitty Castle.



Members meetings were held, and the group developed a proposal to develop Book Clubs in branches of Offaly Libraries. Members believe that having **Book Clubs** in local libraries throughout the county, specifically for teens, could have a positive impact on the mental health of teenagers in Offaly. Their proposal was circulated to Offaly Library Branches explaining their

rationale, practicalities of how to run the clubs, event ideas and promotional ideas.

May began with the welcome news that the 2023 annual programme and Healthy Ireland Coordinator salary returns were paid by Pobal on receipt of all queries answered in relation to both 2023 annual returns being completed in April.



This funding will allow an ambitious programme of work for 2024 to be delivered. All actions for 2024 have now commenced with a progress update due to be provided by partners at the Healthy Offaly Subcommittee June Quarterly meeting. Just a reminder on the projects being delivered this year.

1. 'Minding Me' is a twelve-week exercise and health education programme for over 65's hosted and delivered by Tullamore Library and their partners Edufit. The budget assigned is €4,982.65.
2. The 'Cycling without Age' project in Lough Boora Discovery Park will provide an online booking system for rickshaw bicycle and to purchase second bicycle and storage shed for use by volunteers to bring those older or infirmed into areas of the park that would previously have been inaccessible to them. €27,952.20 has been set aside for this venture.
3. 'Active Aging for Kilcormac' is an initiative provided by Kilcormac Development Association and Crinkle Sports & Recreation Centre to provide a series of weekly Boccia, Pickleball, Activator Poles classes for older adults to increase physical activity levels and enhance wellbeing. Light refreshments are provided after each session to encourage participation. The cost of this action is €9,600.
4. 'Creative Dance and Movement Edenderry' seeks to increase physical activity levels among its participants by providing free dance and movement workshops and classes for children, young people and adults in the local community. The budget is €20,000.
5. 'Exercise your way to wellness' is a joint initiative between Edenderry GAA and Exwell Medical to provide group exercise classes to increase physical activity and lower obesity levels among chronic illness sufferers in the Edenderry area. The cost of this action is €19,050.
6. The 'Drop & Move' project aims to increase the percentage of adults meeting their recommended levels of physical activity (150 minutes per week). OSP have selected 10 locations in the County where adults are already congregating in the community e.g. GAA youth training, village halls etc. and providing a physical activity programme for them. Drop & Move was piloted last year and returns for a second year.
7. The 'Traveller Men's Football Team' action was set up last year to improve the physical and mental health status of male Travellers in Co. Offaly. The project returns for a second year. Traveller men's interest in football is the medium through which this will be achieved. The associated budget is €20,000.

8. The 'Children's Afterschool Physical Activity Programme' seeks to increase the percentage of children meeting the recommended physical activity guidelines (60 minutes per day). This is also a 2023 action which has returned for 2024. It will be run as a 12-week programme, consisting of 1 hour session x 3 days per week for 7 – 10 and 11 – 13-year-olds, respectively. The budget assigned is €9,000.

9. The 'Invest in Yourself' programme will offer an opportunity for people with clinical lifelong conditions from the area referred by the GP, to avail of a supervised exercise class, twice a week for 6 months for 30 people. Clara C&FRC have engaged the services and expertise, of EXwell Medical, who have a track record of providing appropriate community-based rehabilitation programs. The budget assigned is €17,400. 'Invest in yourself' was piloted last year and returns due to increased demand.

10. Healthy Offaly have partnered with Offaly Athletics to provide financial support for the Healthy Offaly 5K Road Race Series 2024. This support will encourage 'couch to 5k' and 'fit for life' runners to take up and maintain running to increase physical activity levels. The series has a huge reach with over 300 participants at each of the eight races.

11. 'Activator Poles for Portarlinton' is a joint initiative between Healthy Offaly and Healthy Laois to provide 24 pairs of walking poles and kit bags to Portarlinton Library to add to the lending offering. This will

facilitate older adults in particular to 'get out and active' by borrowing the poles from their local library.

June

The month of June has been a very busy one for Healthy Offaly. All actions are progressing well with updates provided from all partners at the Healthy Offaly quarterly subcommittee meeting on 18 June 2024. The quarterly meeting [report](#) has been updated with summarised reports from the implementing partners.

The Healthy Ireland Coordinator visited six of the eleven funded actions with further visits planned to the remaining actions in the coming weeks. Participants, Tutors, and project administrators were consulted on how the action was progressing and if there were any issues that needed to be resolved.



At the Healthy Offaly Subcommittee, a literacy awareness presentation was delivered by Tamara Latham from Laois Offaly Education and Training Committee (LOETB). Implementing partners such as the Football Association of Ireland and Clara Community & Family Resource Centre are currently working with LOETB to increase literacy awareness and to develop skills to deal with an unmet literacy needs.

Healthy Offaly are at present are working with LOETB and a coalition of other partners to deliver a Community and Family Fun Day in St. Columba's Place Housing Estate, Clonminch, Tullamore in mid-August. The purpose of the event is to connect with the community through a series of Health and wellbeing initiatives in a fun and interactive manner to residents of the estate and neighbouring estates.

Organisations such as Offaly Local Development Company, the HSE, Tullamore Family Resource Centre etc. are working alongside LOETB and Healthy Offaly to discuss services each provide with local residents and to engage in a more impactful manner with the communities they strive to serve.

Healthy Offaly have engaged the services of Crinkle Sports and Recreation Centre to provide games and activities for young and not so young that will incorporate a numeracy dimension for all participants.



Bike Week 2024

A range of events were delivered as part of national Bike Week including club events in Daingean, Ferbane and Tullamore; and the running of the second annual Grand Canal Greenway Cycle from Edenderry to Ferbane. 65 participants took part in the club events; while 150 took part in the Grand Canal Greenway Relay. Tullamore Cycling Club also hosted stage 1 of the Rás Tailteann 2024



Africa Day 2024

Offaly Sports Partnership hosted its third annual Africa Day event in the Tullamore Harriers for over 300 participants from seven counties and nine schools. Over 100 participants were children of African descent



Urban Outdoor Adventure Project

Tullamore - seven further schools' splash and dash days, two community splash and dash sessions and the first of five summer camps were delivered. Additionally, canoe polo, open boating and kayak programmes for people with additional needs were also delivered. To date 650 participants have been reached with the available programmes

Photos of each session can be found at <https://westoffalytraining.com/adventure/>



Ace Spring Athletics

The culmination of our ACE spring athletics programme with three days of regional competition held in Crinkill, Edenderry and Tullamore, followed by the finals in the Tullamore Harriers



Youth Sports Leadership Programme

The culmination of our youth sports leadership programme for 100 TY students across four schools – Ard Scoil Chiaráin Clara, Coláiste na Sionna Banagher, St Brendan’s Birr and Tullamore College

Community Games Support

The culmination of our community games support programme for over 250 children between the ages of 8 and 14 years in four locations – Banagher, Daingean, Ferbane and Rhode.

Inclusion and Community Sports Development

Ongoing delivery of programmes as part of the sports inclusion and community sports development programmes. Among the programmes delivered as part of the sports inclusion programme were 1:1 physical activity supports for people with additional needs, learn to ride and learn to swim programmes. Among the programme delivered as part of the community sports programme were older adult in sport mornings



Learn to Swim

Ongoing delivery of programmes in each of our three sports hubs, Daingean, Mucklagh and Ballycumber. Ongoing delivery of the Healthy Offaly drop & move programme; as well as the Wellness unLAOISed programme. Staff members also attended various Sport Ireland network days, and other local meetings across the months of June and July

For more information on the work of Offaly Sports Partnership, check out www.offalysports.ie or our social media feeds on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

ARTS

Arts Strategy 2024-2028

The new draft Arts Strategy 2024-2028 is currently being designed and will shortly be available online on the Arts Office Website.



Lough Boora - Art in Landscape: Festival of Change



The Festival of Change took place in early April this was a joint project between Offaly County Council, Mayo County Council, and Visual Artists Ireland and supported by the Arts Council's Invitation to Collaboration Scheme. A synopsis video of the events was released via the Offaly Arts YouTube Channel and is available to view at

<https://youtu.be/yEQQgbJncfw?si=3VPybNe4GgZjOyRt>

On Saturday, 6th April, Storm Kathleen led to the postponement of some events at Lough Boora Sculpture Park. These events will now take place on **Saturday 22nd June**

at Lough Boora Sculpture Park, facilitated by the Arts Office with support from Esker Arts and Bord na Móna.



The day commenced with Soil Portraits led by Dr. Eileen Hutton, artist and lecturer at The Burren College of Art. On this guided walk and talk, visual artist Eileen Hutton discussed the temporary installation of soil chromatography 'trail markers' located along sections of the Sculpture Trail in Lough Boora. The workshops offered an immersive way to approach the unique landscape of Lough Boora.

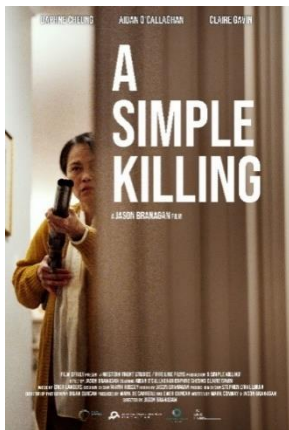


Another event, 'La na Móna,' was a curated theatrical experience by Rita Duffy and Nuala Hayes, a performer and storyteller, who offered a whimsical journey through Lough Boora Sculpture Park, with much diversion, entertainment, and inspiration for participants. This surreal and multisensory adventure in the rejuvenated natural setting featured surprise guests including renowned whistle player Séan Ryan, storyteller Michael Creagh and

Druid/Seanchai Eimear Burke. Séan Craven and Seamus Barnes brought the past to life with their recounting of the working lives of Bord na Móna workers, whilst actors from local drama group TADS brought fictional characters, inspired by the surroundings to life, to the delight of the audience present.

National treasure in theatre and storytelling circles, Nuala Hayes riveted the crowd with her interpretation of a character based on Marina Carr's 'Catwoman' before artist Rita Duffy led the group through the guided experience which was peppered with music provided by Eoin and Muireann Carton. The performance featured Nuala Hayes, Rita Duffy, Séan Craven, Seamus Barron, Frank O' Brien, Laura Molloy, Ciara Kinnarney, Monica Daly, Ursula Harte, Fionnuala Corrigan, Séan Ryan, Eimear Burke, Eoin Carton and Muireann Carton.

FilmOffaly Award 2023



Our FilmOffaly Short Film Award winner 2023 *A Simple Killing* by Mark Conway, with the production team, Jason Branagan, (Director) Mark de Carreau, (Actor, Producer) Emer Durcan (Producer)

and Brian Durcan (Cinematographer) of Western Front Studios had its international premiere at Raindance, to be shortlisted for this festival is a major achievement.

Film Offaly Award 2024

The call for the FilmOffaly 2024 Award closed on **Monday 11th March 2024**. The award saw a great response from filmmakers across Ireland with 46 scripts

submitted. The shortlisting, workshops and interviews for the FilmOffaly Short Film Award 2024 took place in May and June and the winner has been notified. Announcement of the winner will hopefully be made in July following signing of contracts.

FilmOffaly Resource Development Project

Film Offaly was successful in a recent application to the **Just Transition** fund receiving funding of €252,985 for a two-year programme. The new initiative which will be a huge boost for film in Offaly over the coming years. As part of the approved funding the two-year fixed term post of Film Officer has been advertised by Offaly County Council in June – closing date is for 18th July 2024.

Funding Opportunities

The 2024 Youth Arts Commissions

Two projects have been undertaken having received arts office funding: Emma Barone's visual art project, '*Creative Spaces Art Programme – Empowering Youth Through Creativity*' with at-risk young people in the Birr area. Music Generation Offaly's *Songwriting Project* in collaboration with Tolú Makay centres around vocal health, songwriting, and recording.



Culture Night 20th September 2024

The Culture Night and Hullabaloo coordinator roles have been filled and we are delighted to welcome Emma Hanley as co-ordinator for both programmes in 2024. Two opportunities were open to the public:

Professional Artists proposals for an artist commission – a project and presentation as part of the 2024 Culture Night Offaly programme. This year sees a new focus on young people, sustainability and diversity with strands developed for projects under these criteria.



And for **Communities and Venues** - Offaly County Council's Culture Night Event Fund which supports the cost of events programmed for Culture Night 2024. **Both awards deadlines are now closed and the programme is under development.**

Hullabaloo! Offaly's Children's Arts Festival

Planning for the 2024 festival is underway with delivery partners Birr Theatre & Arts Centre and Esker Arts, along with Offaly Libraries and Clara Family Resource Centre and Creative Places Edenderry, working alongside the Arts Office and



programme coordinator Emma Hanley. The artists facilitator callout is also now closed with work now taking place on the development of the programme.

Creative Places Edenderry

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, continues to host 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.



Creative Places Edenderry ran an open call for artist commission proposals from local, national, and international professional artists, creatives or arts organizations/collectives that sought to collaborate artistically with individuals or groups in Edenderry on creative projects that would create an artistic impact for the people and place of the area had the opportunity to apply. Following an evaluation process that included a variety of stakeholders including a Community Panel, the following four projects received funding.

Sarah Walmsley and Elizabeth Drwal | Reflections and Resonance an intergenerational performance-making

project. It seeks to celebrate living in Edenderry with the canal used to symbolise the enriching and fluid experience of change. **John Maguire - Children's Halloween Event** working with St. Mary's Primary School, four different local dance troupes for a performance that includes Ballet, Irish, Line, and Hip-Hop dancers.

Laura Phillips - Community Doodle Mural
A collaborative mural that will be displayed at the Youth Café in Edenderry. The mural will take shape over a series of engaging workshops held throughout the summer, where children will be invited to contribute their unique doodle designs, bringing together their shared creativity while honouring each child's individual style.

Eden FM Community Radio | Echoes of Edenderry: Embracing Diversity Through Shared Stories -with a passion for community development, inclusivity, and diversity, this project offers the people of Edenderry to have a chance to have their stories told.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Esker Arts

Esker Arts has been a hive of activity across the months of May and June with a range of workshops in a wide variety of artforms, as well as excellent local theatre such as Croí a new musical play by Offaly artists Cormac & Lorraine Reilly celebrating the culture and traditions of the peatlands, directed by Colin Hughes, plus touring music and theatre shows, such as Nuala



Hayes, storyteller and well-known actor, in a special YARN performance as she tells some of Peig's story. The Film club also continues to be a popular feature.



Exhibitions for May / June include **The Bigger Picture**, presented in association with Offaly Traveller Movement. This is a photographic project undertaken by Offaly Traveller Movement Youth Project with photographer Eva Donlon. The focus was to develop a series of photographs to challenge stereotypes, and to showcase the pictures to the wider community. Every photo taken features only members of the Traveller Community



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, starting with a review and report on the sculptures and a maintenance schedule to commence in 2024. Artist Michael Burke, Sculpture Works, has carried out a review and report and some minor works having been undertaken.

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 Studio's 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.

LIBRARY SERVICE

Summer Stars Reading Adventure



As part of the national Right to Read initiative, the **Summer Stars Reading Adventure** encourages children to keep reading over the summer months.



Offaly Libraries celebrated the launch of Summer Stars in June with a special visit from Roald Dahl's beloved BFG, who delighted school children in Birr and Tullamore

Libraries with stories, jokes and Whizzpoppers!

There are plenty of events organised for children over Summer with weekly story times and crafts as well as fun scavenger hunts and weekly prize draws on offer in all our library branches!

All children are welcome to take part in the adventure, collect their progress stamps and receive their rewards along the way.

Children who complete their Summer Stars booklet will receive a certificate and medal.



Right to Read at your Library

Cruinniú na nÓg, Saturday 15th June



Cruinniú na nÓg is Ireland's national day of free, creative activity for children and young people up to 18 years

of age.

This year Offaly Libraries, on behalf of Offaly County Council, organised a diverse range of workshops in all **eight library locations and an International Protection Centre.**



Over 1,000 children took part in creative activities, including workshops on music, art, illustration, sensory planting, STEM, creative writing, and traditional and modern crafts as well as Silent Discos in Tullamore and Edenderry libraries.



Offaly Libraries also commissioned key **development projects** as part of Cruinniú na nÓg, with **students from 11 Primary and Secondary schools** around the county

learning new skills including circus skills, upcycling sewing workshops, filmmaking, music, and songwriting.

The outcomes of each of these projects were unveiled on the day of Cruinniú na nÓg in various library branches and can be viewed on [our Youtube channel here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CN-KHJAKM2G).



On June 15th, children also availed of **Free Craft Kits** to suit all ages. All activities, development projects and craft kits were kindly funded by **Creative Ireland**.

Bealtaine Festival, May 2024

Bealtaine Festival
Age & Opportunity

Offaly Libraries successfully delivered a vibrant and varied programme of events to **226 participants** in celebration of Bealtaine Festival in May.

We welcomed **91 attendees** to Air Fryer Cookery Workshops, facilitated by LOETB and Clara Library patrons enjoyed a visit by local author, Tom Minnock, who read excerpts from his book 'Down The Decades'.



Tea and Coffee mornings were also on offer in our libraries as well as Book Talks,

Music & Song with Clara's Active Retirement Group, Glass Painting, and a Resin Workshop in Edenderry.



Bealtaine is an Age & Opportunity Arts initiative. Offaly Libraries Bealtaine programme is kindly co-funded by **Creative Ireland**.



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



Accessibility Grant Success

Offaly Libraries has successfully secured funding under the **Dormant Accounts Fund 2024** – Library Supports for Marginalised, Socially Excluded and Disadvantaged Communities to the amount of **€13,558.70**.



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development



This funding will allow our libraries to provide more accessible equipment and assistive technologies to support the elderly and people with disabilities. The initiative will be match funded by Offaly County Council to the value of 10% of total eligible costs.

The Art of Reading Book Club

The highly anticipated [Art of Reading Book Club](#) came to Tullamore Library on 11th of

June with an audience of **almost 60 attendees**.

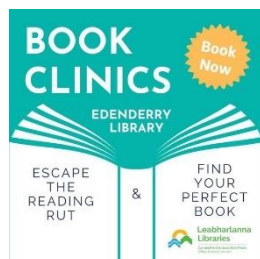


Hosted by the Laureate for Irish Fiction, Colm Tóibín, in conversation with Irish author Belinda McKeon, they discussed her acclaimed novel *Solace* and answered questions posed by the audience. The event was enjoyed by all attendees and is available to watch on-demand through the [Arts Council website](#).

Book Clinics at Edenderry Library

Staff in Edenderry Library are now offering one to one consultations for those who find themselves stuck in a reading rut!

Staff will help you find the perfect book to encourage you to fall back in love with reading once more. Contact [Edenderry Library](#) for more info.



Sensory Offaly

Our Sensory Spaces have welcomed **621 visitors** so far in 2024!

Bookings for the Sensory Room in Tullamore can be made via our [online reservation system here](#) and the Sensory Space at Edenderry Library can be booked by phoning 046 97 31028.

As part of our Sensory Offaly programme, **55 children** in four libraries took part in Ready, Steady Play sessions in May.



More information on **Sensory Offaly**, including our **Sensory Book**, **Sensory Equipment** collections and **Sensory Room facilities** [can be found here](#).

Refugee Week, 17th – 23rd June

Offaly Libraries celebrated Refugee Week with book displays, story times and free promotional bookmarks offered in all our branches. Edenderry Library staff partnered with Offaly County Council's Integration Team to celebrate Refugee Week, offering story time to 75 children from St. Mary's NS Edenderry.



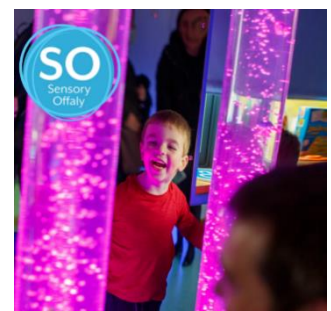
Healthy Ireland at your Library

Offaly Libraries offer a



comprehensive collection of books on health and wellbeing, available to borrow from all library branches.

In addition to book collections, Healthy Ireland at your Library aims to enhance



current health information and awareness

through a curated programme of events throughout the year.

In May, **110 students** from 3 schools took part in **internet safety**, presentations delivered by CyberSafeKids in Tullamore, Edenderry, and Birr libraries.



Mindfulness workshops were also delivered to **51 students** in Birr and Tullamore Libraries.

Offaly Libraries STEAM Programme

Offaly Libraries STEAM programme continues to support and promote STEAM subjects to the young minds of Offaly with coordinated events and activities planned during the school summer break.



Biodiversity Week, May 2024



Offaly Libraries celebrated Biodiversity Week with a range of related story times, crafts and book displays on offer in May.

Lego Free Play, Weekly Events



Currently, five of our libraries offer weekly **Freeplay Lego sessions** – Tullamore, Edenderry, Clara, Birr & Kilcormac. Children with a mind for engineering are invited to come and let their creative side thrive.

STEM Saturdays this Summer



Birr and Edenderry Library will offer exciting new activities for the Summer months via 'STEM Saturdays'. Various STEM activities will be on offer every Saturday morning to keep young minds active and inquisitive.

Midland Astronomy Club



Tullamore Library are delighted to host Midlands Astronomy Club each month. At their last meeting, Seanie Morris brought meteorites where children got to hold a piece of 4.6-billion-year-old solar system history!

Meet Your Future Series

Every Thursday at 11:00 over Summer, children aged 6+ are invited to meet guests with an interesting career including a Barista, a Garda, a Fire Fighter and a Scientist! Bookings can be made directly with Edenderry Library.

See offaly.ie/Edenderry-Library for more.

Pride Month, June 2024

Offaly Libraries coordinated a fantastic array of inclusive book displays in our libraries to help support Pride in Offaly.



Rainbow-themed craft sessions and 'Be Kind' story times were also hosted as part of our Summer Stars offerings in celebration of Pride Month.

Bloomsday at Áras an Uachtaráin



On Sunday, June 16th, members of the Offaly Libraries team attended a Bloomsday Garden Party at Áras an Uachtaráin, hosted by President Michael D Higgins and his wife, Sabina.

In his speech, President Higgins stressed that libraries should be "developed, extended and protected" so that they may "continue to be special places of learning." A full video of the speech is available to view on president.ie.

Le Cheile i nGaeilge ag an Leabharlann



Offaly Libraries offer a collection of stock in the Irish language for all ages in branch, with a greater variety also available through the [national catalogue](#).

Irish Language titles in eBook and eAudiobook formats are also available through the [BorrowBox](#) service. Borrowers can use [Transparent Languages](#) to assist them in Irish language learning and [LOTE for Kids](#) offers stories through Irish and through Irish Sign Language.

[Check out our bilingual Irish Language Supports brochure here.](#)

Fáilte Isteach

Conversational English Classes

Fáilte Isteach are conversational English classes taking place weekly in Tullamore and Edenderry Libraries. Delivered in partnership with the Offaly Local Development Company, new learners and



volunteers are always welcome. Please ask in branch for more details. Visit offaly.ie/find-your-local-library

Offaly Libraries Comic Con Returns!



Following the hugely successful instalment last September, which saw 1,300+ people through the door, we are delighted to announce the return of Offaly Libraries Comic Con this September!

Taking place in Tullamore Library on Saturday, 14th of September, this full day event will celebrate the creative, the cosplay and, of course, the comics.

Offaly Libraries can't wait to unveil another exciting programme of family friendly activities and events. More details will be announced over the Summer months. Watch this space!

"I'll Meet You There" Exhibition



Local artist, Andrea Moore, will showcase her collection of illustrated drawings, celebrating the significant role that the Public House has played in the community of Birr. The collection was officially launched on Wednesday, 3rd of July and will remain on display until July 27th.

'Camouflage' Exhibition



Artist Nasrin Golden exhibited a selection of photography-based mixed media works at Tullamore Library this June. Nasrin has presented her work in solo and group exhibitions worldwide, including Tehran, Kuala Lumpur and Vancouver.

'Shake Your Tail Feathers' Exhibition



Local artist, Kate Furlong, displayed pieces from her fabulous collection entitled 'Shake your Tail Feathers' in Edenderry Library this June.

Book Clubs at Offaly Libraries



Read Offaly Libraries latest [blog post](#), which is all about our book clubs. A key aim of the National Public Library Strategy is that *"Every library user has access to a book club that is suitable for them in terms of age and reading level by the end of 2024"*.

Offaly Libraries have **14 book clubs** across the county catering to all age groups. See below for a taste of what our book clubs are reading this month!



If you would like to join any of our existing clubs, [please check out the details for each here.](#)

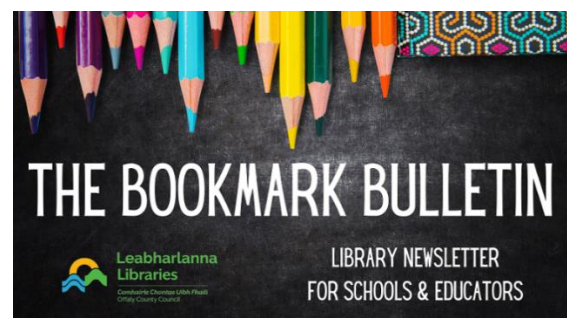
Alternatively, should you wish to **establish your own book club** in one of our libraries please get in touch by emailing askthelibrarian@offalycoco.ie and staff will be happy to help!

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 **3,104 subscribers** to the general newsletter and **131 teachers** subscribed to the school newsletter.



Climate Action Environment Water & Transportation

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Action

Climate Action Initiatives:

Offaly County Council in collaboration with the LOETB Mount Lucas and the SEAI brought the Mount Lucas Retrofitting rig to Tullamore from the 4th -7th June. The fully-equipped mobile NZEB (Nearly Zero Energy Building) unit that allows training on energy upgrades and retrofitting, was parked in the Bridge Centre car park over the course of the 4 days delivering a range of formal and informal training from the mobile rig. This included having an SEAI Advisor on-hand all week to advise on building retrofit options to improve energy efficiency.



This week-long initiative also delivered NZEB (Near Zero Energy Buildings) Fundamental Awareness one day course (in Tullamore Library) and a very informative session on Climate Conversation for the over 60's by Jacinta Barrins, Founder of 60+ Climate Drive.



Free Climate Conversation for the over 60s with emphasis on easy and motivational (50 minutes)

- Q1 : What Causes Climate Change..... the science explained in 3 simple steps
- Q2: What is the connection between what "I" do and climate change?
- Q3: What can I do to reduce climate change related emissions?

Do you produce greenhouse gases?



Contact: Jacinta Barrins: email: CC60PLUS@outlook.com
Mobile: 0871603768

Would you like to learn more about Nearly Zero Emission Buildings? (NZEB)

LOETB and Offaly County Council present:
City & Guild approved

NZEB Fundamental Course

On 6th of June for 1 day at 10:00am to 5:30pm
at Tullamore Library
Free of charge

Brought to you by LOETB in collaboration with Offaly County Council

To register your interest by emailing climate@offalycoco.ie or complete an EOI at the following link:

Environmental Management Green Schools Programme

Twelve schools received their Green Flag at the annual Green Schools Awards in Athlone in May for their environmental work over the past two years. All schools have been participating in the programme for many years and their work was on show when they were assessed by Offaly County Council's Environmental Awareness Officer. Below is a list of schools and the flag they were awarded.

School	Environmental Theme (Flag)
Scoil Bhride, Clara	Biodiversity
St. Broghans NS, Bracknagh	Global Citizenship Litter & Waste
Lumcloon NS	Biodiversity
Ard Scoil Chiaran Naofa, Clara	Global Citizenship Litter & Waste
SS Peter & Pauls NS, Horseleap	Global Citizenship Litter & Waste
Scoil na Croise Naofa, Geashill	Global Citizenship Marine Environment
Colaiste Naomh Cormac, Kilcormac	Travel
St. Cronans NS, Lusmagh	Global Citizenship Marine Environment
Scoil Bhride, Kilcruttin, Tullamore	Global Citizenship Marine Environment
Oxmantown NS, Birr	Global Citizenship Litter & Waste
St. Joseph's NS, Arden Rd., Tullamore	Global Citizenship Marine Environment
St. Francis BNS, Clara	Global Citizenship Marine Environment

Ard Scoil Chiaran Naofa, Clara



Scoil Bhride, Clara



St. Joseph's NS, Arden Road, Tullamore

Litter Management
National Litter survey report

IBAL recently published (24th June) results from Survey 1 (of 2) and Tullamore has

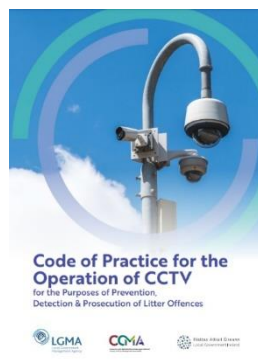
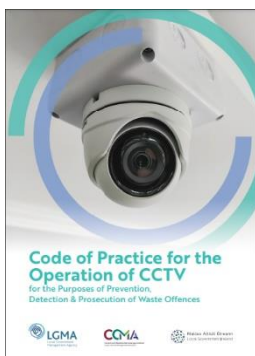


improved since 2023 where they achieved 23rd place out of 40. The first survey of 2024 shows improvement to reach 19th place out of 40. This classifies Tullamore as “Clean to European Norms”. A positive comment was made regarding the action which OCC undertook in relation to the removal of bring banks at Daingean Road car park. However, it is planned to re-install the bring bank in the coming months.

Background - Since 2002, Irish Business Against Litter has commissioned An Taisce to carry out litter surveys of our main towns and cities according to international standards. The towns and cities are then ranked in a league table format.

CCTV

Following the recent adoption of the CCTV Codes of Practice for litter and waste offences and the use of drones for illegal waste activities, as well as the guidance documents and templates issued by WERLA, the Environment Section has established an **Oversight Board**. This is the initial step in implementing CCTV and it is hoped that when all procedures are in place that the Section can successfully



install CCTV for littering and illegal dumping in litter black spots subject to funding.

Environment Complaints
Complaints June 2024 received and investigated in June - 71no. in total

Category	Number
Abandoned Vehicles	2
Air Pollution	3
Control of Dogs	10
Control of Horses	0
Litter Control	44
Noise Pollution	2
Waste Enforcement	8
Water Quality	2
Water Services	1

Waste, Air and Noise Management
Waste, air and noise complaints

Waste, Air and Noise Team received the following number of environmental complaints since 1st January 2024

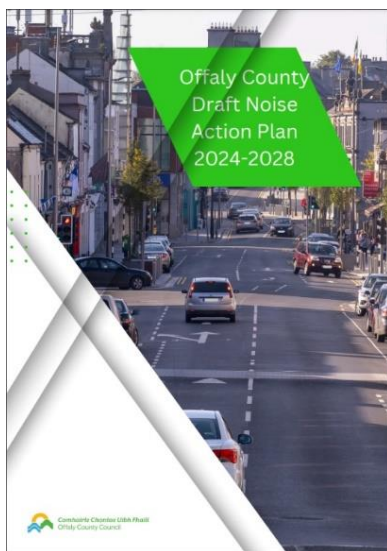
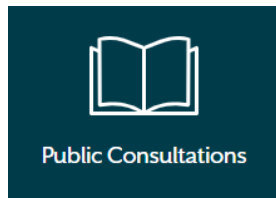
- 54 Waste complaints, 50 cases are inspected, 18 are closed, 20 referred to Housing for action, open cases will be resolved pending further enforcement action.
- 13 noise complaints, all inspected – 3 are closed, open cases will be resolved following further enforcement action.
- 7 Air Quality complaints, all were investigated and resolved, no further action required.

Noise Management

The Draft Noise Action Plan was completed in May 2024 and has been advertised in local newspapers, the Offaly County Council website and a hardcopy displayed for public access at the Municipal District offices in Edenderry, Tullamore and Birr. The Draft version was also translated into Irish and both versions uploaded to the Offaly County Council website. Prior to been sent out for public consultation the

Draft NAP was also presented to the Councillors the Climate Action, Environment & Transport SPC meeting in May and any queries received were reviewed and acted on.

The Public consultation period ended on 5th July and any submissions will be reviewed and the final draft will be completed and forwarded to the EPA prior to publishing.



Waste Management

Anti- Dumping initiative approved for 3 projects – value of €80,000.

- ADI Project 1 – Project to address dumping in Chancery Close, in co-operating with Tullamore MD and Housing Estate Management.
- ADI Project 2 - Mattress Amnesty to happen shortly at Birr Civic Amenity site,
- ADI project 3 – CCTV at Bottle-banks, currently advancing extensive procedures and documentation to facilitate this project.

Deposit Return Scheme inspections commenced 1st June 2024 on the retail sites, generally all sites are complying, some bedding in issues with Return Scheme, reporting to WERLA for assistance.

Burial Grounds

St. Mary's Cemetery, Edenderry

Works have commenced in June on the extension to the cemetery and should be substantially complete in August.



RURAL WATER SERVICES



Capital

Applications for capital funding from the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2024 to 2026 were submitted to the Rural Water Unit, Dept of Housing, by 12/04/2024. Applications for a total of 36 projects were submitted, seeking funding to the value of €2,513,838.00. We are currently waiting for the announcement of funding from the Rural Water Unit.

Subsidy

We have received subsidy applications from 14 GWSs and the payments of these will be made by September.

Veterinary

Control of Dogs

In the first half of the year we have cared for over 100 no. dogs in the dog shelter and on average 15% of the dogs are reclaimed by their owners, 15% are rehomed by the Care of Dogs Team and the other 70% are rehomed through animal rescue charities.

The Control of Dogs team has also dealt with 47 no. complaints so far this year and has assisted AGS on a number of occasions.

Control of Horses

To date in 2024, we have dealt with 11 no. complaints, there have been no seizures to date.

TRANSPORTATION

Speed Limit Review and preparation for the introduction of new National Default Speed Limits

In line with Department of Transport Circulars RST-02-2024 and Circular RST-03-2024 we now must prepare to implement the new speed limit requirements across our Local Road Network. The initial review which has now commenced will only focus on the application of a 60km/hr default speed limit to all of our Local Roads and will be enacted by the Government in November 2024(tentative date). The full speed limit review requires the following changes.

- All Local Roads (Primary/Secondary and Tertiary) will have a default speed limit of 60km/hr.
- All Regional and National Secondary Roads will have a default of 80km/hr.
- Designated Urban Roads will have a Default Speed limit of 30km/hr.

The implementation of default speed limits for both the National Secondary road network and the Urban roads are tentatively scheduled for enactment in the first half of 2025.

Birr North Distributor Road

Contract Tender documentation has now been completed for the Birr North Distributor Road Project. Offaly County Council are now awaiting approval to issue these documents to the market place with the intention to commence construction in 2024.

Regional Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy

Offaly County Council in our roles as the lead authority have completed the procurement and tender assessment stages for the appointment of a Specialist Consultant to formulate our Regional Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy. Approval to proceed with the appointment which is 100% funded from Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland(ZEVI) has been received. The appointment process will be completed in July 2024 and the report delivery has an initial indicative 9-month timeline for delivery.

R400 Peat Roads Pilot Scheme

Contract Tender documentation has now been completed for the 2024 R400 Peat Road Pilot Scheme. Offaly County Council

are now awaiting approval to issue these documents to the market place with the intention to commence construction in September of 2024.

Public Lighting Maintenance Contract

The procurement and tender assessment stage related to our updated Public Lighting Maintenance Contract has now been completed. The successful maintenance contractor will be appointed and in place by the end of July 2024.

The following is a breakdown of the Public Lighting failures across the County. There are **124** faults on the system presently. **27** of these faults require third party intervention and as such cannot be repaired by the maintenance contractor. These anomalies are being addressed by the yearly public lighting capital program.

Therefore, the current actionable faults amount to **97 faults or 1.04 %** of the lighting stock.

The breakdown of the **97** 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	4	2962	0.14	0.04
Tullamore MD	82	3933	2.08	0.88
Edenderry MD	11	2405	0.46	0.12

The number as shown above are most likely distorted by seasonal variations and in order to offset same a full visual fault survey of the lighting inventory will commence in July 2024.

PLEEP

Works on the physical installation of new LED lights under the PLEEP is now underway and as of the 28th of June 636 of the total 4989 lights currently included within the contract have now been upgraded to LED units.

Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Finance

Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 31 May 2024

Draft Consolidated Revenue Account Income & Expenditure Summary by Service Division to 31 March 2024

	Expenditure €	Income €
Housing & Building	4,183,853	3,757,806
Road Transport & Safety	5,347,162	3,139,088
Water Services	932,541	949,985
Development Management	3,377,777	1,766,598
Environmental Services	2,839,693	756,685
Recreation & Amenity	1,363,872	79,318
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	136,253	32,323
Miscellaneous Services	1,977,702	2,191,313
Local Government Fund / GPG		2,993,647
Gross Rates Income		4,611,790
	20,158,853	20,278,553
Surplus to 31st March 2024		119,700

OCC to 31st May 2024

	<u>Rates</u>	<u>Rents</u>	<u>Loans</u>
	<u>€m</u>	<u>€m</u>	<u>€m</u>
Opening Balance Jan 1, 2024	2.58	0.64	0.04
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers	17.01	3.50	0.21
2024 Cash Collected to end of May	11.15	3.72	0.19
Closing Balance May 31st 2024	8.44	0.43	0.06
<u>2023 Cash collected to May 31st</u>	7.26	3.12	0.25
% Collection at this point in 2023	154%	119%	75%

Bank Overdraft to 31st May 2024

Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date	24	% YTD 16%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to May 31st 2024 YTD		€2,148
Bank Administration and transactional charges to May 31st 2024 YTD		€21,513

Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 30 June 2024

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr Budget 2024 €m	Preliminary Value to June 2024 €m	% Year To Date
Payroll costs	35.68	17.09	47.9%
Grants and Subsidies Income	50.31	22.50	44.7%

OCC to 30th June 2024

	<u>Rates</u> €m	<u>Rents</u> €m	<u>Loans</u> €m
Opening Balance Jan 1st, 2024	2.58	0.64	0.04
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers	17.02	4.34	0.21
2024 Cash Collected to end of June	12.57	4.41	0.23
Closing Balance June 30th, 2024	7.03	0.57	0.01

2023 Cash collected to June 30th

	10.88	3.84	0.30
% Collection at this point in 2023	116%	115%	77%

Bank Overdraft to 30th June 2024

	-	-	% YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date		24	13%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to June 30th 2024 YTD (Estimate)			€2,598
Bank Administration and transactional charges to June 30th 2024 YTD (Estimate)			€25,815