

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL BAINISTÍOCHTA

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Deireadh Fómhair / October



Offaly County Council  
officially open €12.5  
million housing scheme in  
Clara



Tom Shanahan  
Cllr Tony McCormack,  
Beetlejuice  
Jean Ryan  
Cllr Ollie Bryant and  
Aidan Shortall  
Launch  
Púca Spooka 2024

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Professional Artists Support Scheme - CLOSING DATE Monday 20th January 2025 3pm
- Arts Acts Grants - CLOSING DATE Monday 20th January 2025 3pm
- Festival Arts Grants - CLOSING DATE Monday 17th February 2025 3pm

# Climate Action Environment Water & Transportation

## ENVIRONMENT

### Climate Action

#### Tullamore Decarbonising Zone (TDZ)

The series of CARO nationwide workshops aimed at Decarbonising Zone (DZ) activation continued in October with events held in Mullingar (Community Activation), Roscommon (Natural Environmental Opportunities) and finally Thurles (Bioeconomy). The Bioeconomy workshop was delivered in conjunction with Bioeconomy Ireland and Climate -KIC and formed part of the Bioeconomy Ireland Week 14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> October. The workshop commenced with a site visit to the new National Bioeconomy Campus (former Lisheen Mine) where participants got to discuss the challenges and opportunities of the Bioeconomy with the DZ.



### Energy



The Midlands Energy Agency (MEA) organized a 'Fleet Decarbonization' session which was well attended by fleet managers and those responsible for energy across the five midlands counties. The session was facilitated on behalf of SEAI by Mr. Conor Molloy who is the leading industry expert in the area of fleet and transport energy audits in Ireland. A second session is scheduled for Directors of Service responsible for fleet/energy management.

Tullamore welcomed the CCMA national Energy Performance Officer (EPO) workshop which saw EPO's from all the

local authorities across the country come together to discuss national and European policy development around energy while sharing challenges and experiences with regards to measures taken towards current national energy targets.

Offaly County Council, joined nine other public bodies in continuing along the process of preparing for ISO 50,001 Energy Management certification by attending days 8 & 9 of the SEAI Accelerator Programme masterclasses. Much hard work has been expended in order to get the Council's structures, operations and controls in line with accreditation audit requirements ahead of a third party accreditation in 2025.



### Environment Water Quality Farm Inspections

Targeted farm inspections are commencing in accordance with the Good Agricultural Practice Regulations, SI 113 and 393 (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022 as amended. i.e. The Nitrates Regulations.

Members of the Water Quality Team have completed 90 no. farm inspections as part of the National Agricultural Inspection Programme (NAIP) 2024.

### Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (DWWTS) inspections

The Water Quality Team have completed 39 no. Domestic Wastewater Treatment System (DWWTS) inspections as part of the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems 2024.

### Dangerous Structures

Environment Team issued 1 no. Section 3 Statutory Notices on properties situated in Offaly and has updated the Dangerous Structures Register accordingly. Environment Team will proceed in accordance with the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1964

### Waste Management

- Derryclure Landfill- Works are ongoing in Derryclure to meet aftercare compliance requirements stipulated by the EPA.
- There have been four Construction and Demolition illegal sites investigated, these are on-going and brought to completion by the end of the year.
- The Farm Hazardous Waste Collection initiative organised in conjunction with the IFFPG took place at J Grennan and Sons, Tinnycross, Tullamore on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November.
- Tender Documents are prepared for the Historical landfills for groundworks worth €100,000. Tender will be published shortly to the contractors on an existing framework.
- Waste Facility Permit Annual Contributions for 2022 and 2023 was issued in October.

- Training was organised with CCTV Contractor for Offaly County Council with the view of installing CCTV in dumping blackspots to prevent dumping following the introduction of new guidance on Data Protection and usage of CCTV.

### RMCEI

The third quarter review of RMCEI was completed following submission of planned inspections numbers to EPA. the assessment of the progress was reviewed against the targets in Offaly County Councils RMCEI Plan for 2024.

### Environmental Awareness

Offaly County Council is working with the Rediscovery Centre in Ballymun in Dublin on a national project in secondary schools. The topic ReLove Fashion where students are encouraged to design and submit projects to raise awareness on the issue of Fast Fashion. There are 14 projects submitted from Offaly schools, Banagher Youth Group, LOETB and one library. Schools are:

Sacred Heart School
St Brendan's Community school
Oaklands CC
St Mary's Secondary School
Colaiste Naomh Cormac





### Environment Complaints

C Summary of Complaints Received by Environment Section for October 2024 and investigated - Total number of 62 complaints.

Category	Number
Abandoned Vehicles	3
Air Pollution	2
Control of Dogs	4
Control of Horses	0
Litter Control	46
Noise Pollution	2
Waste Enforcement	2
Water Quality	2
Water Services	1

### Burial Grounds

#### St. Mary's Cemetery, Edenderry

We are finalising the main works and the finishing touches to the extension with the contractor. The extension will provide an extra 300 burial spaces in the cemetery. Finalisation and landscaping will take place over the coming months.



### Cemetery Committees

We currently work with 19 cemetery committees, two new committees were formed in 2024, and we look forward to working with them too. We are currently processing our cemetery committee



grants, which should be dispersed by the end of the year. There are grants and assistance available from the CA-ENV-RW section and we welcome engagement from groups that are currently maintaining their local cemetery or planning on forming a committee to do that.

### RURAL WATER SERVICES



#### Capital

Applications for capital funding for from the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2024 to 2026 were submitted to the Rural Water Unit, Dept of Housing, in April, and all projects have been reviewed and passed stage 1 of the application process. Stage 2 of the application process involves consideration by the RWU's Expert Panel for consideration. The Rural Water Unit have recently announced their decision on a portion of the grants and we are advising the Group Water Schemes of that decision.

#### Subsidy

We have completed the payment of annual and advance subsidies to the Group Water Schemes. We have paid a total of €1,069,594.00 in subsidy support to 15 group water schemes.

#### Grants

Information and grant application forms for Well Grants, Domestic Lead Remediation Grants, and Domestic Waste Water Treatment are available on [www.offaly.ie](http://www.offaly.ie) or from the CAERW section by contacting 057 9357403.

## **Veterinary**

### **Control of Dogs**

So far this year we have cared for over 180 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 76 complaints so far this year and has assisted AGS in a number of instances. The team have carried out inspections of premises under DBE and Animal Health and Welfare legislation and successfully prosecuted an operator for a breach of DBE regulations.

### **Control of Horses**

To date in 2024, we have dealt with 15 complaints, there have been no seizures to date.

### **Veterinary Inspections**

Offaly County Council continues to operate the Shared Service Agreement for Veterinary Services in the Westmeath County Council administrative area.

## TRANSPORTATION

### 2024 Winter Service Plan

The 2024 Winter Maintenance Program commenced on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October and will run up to the end of April 2025.

### 2024 Annual Roads Program

Works across all Municipal Districts under the 2024 Annual Roads Program are now substantially completed. The 2024 program included the completion of the Grand Canal Greenway. The official opening of the completed 70km of mainline section occurred on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 and was presided over by Minister of State Mr. James Lawless TD.

Further Highlights included;

- Active Travel Schemes at Cloghan, Edenderry Harbour, Kilcormac
- Commencement of our Regional Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy
- Appointment of Technical Consultants to the Birr Transport Options project formerly Birr Southeastern Distributor Road
- Grand Canal Greenway Trailhead at Ballycommon
- Reconstruction of 1.75 km of the R400 as part of our Peat Roads Pilot Scheme 2024 which is ongoing
- Completion of Land Acquisitions for the construction of the Monasteroris Road Widening Project
- Submission of Clara Western Relief Road to the Department of Transport for funding

under the Strategic Regional and Local Roads Program for 2025

- Implementation of new Default Speed Limits for all Local Roads. The implementation date has now been deferred to the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2025.

### Public Lighting

The following is a breakdown of the Public Lighting failures across the County. There are **196** faults on the system presently. **31** 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 **165 faults or 1.77 %** of the lighting stock.

The breakdown of the **165** 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
<b>Birr MD</b>	55	2962	1.86	0.59
<b>Tullamore MD</b>	88	3933	2.24	0.95
<b>Edenderry MD</b>	22	2405	0.91	0.23

# 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	<a href="mailto:hap@offalycoco.ie">hap@offalycoco.ie</a>
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans	<a href="mailto:homeloans@offalycoco.ie">homeloans@offalycoco.ie</a>
Housing Inspections – HAP, Leased, Private, etc.	<a href="mailto:standards@offalycoco.ie">standards@offalycoco.ie</a>
General Enquiries, Maintenance Issues, etc.	<a href="mailto:housing@offalycoco.ie">housing@offalycoco.ie</a>
RAS & Leasing Enquiries	<a href="mailto:RAS@offalycoco.ie">RAS@offalycoco.ie</a>
Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability Scheme	<a href="mailto:HousingAidGrants@offalycoco.ie">HousingAidGrants@offalycoco.ie</a>
Anti-Social Behaviour	<a href="mailto:ASB@offalycoco.ie">ASB@offalycoco.ie</a>

## Housing Update

- There are 549 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of October 2024.
- A further 500 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 2 signed up for HAP and 7 exited from HAP in October.
- At the end of October 39 single people and 17 couples/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 were issued to Social Leasing Scheme and HAP tenants on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024, these rents became effective from the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2024. Leasing tenant queries can be directed to [RentReview@offalycoco.ie](mailto:RentReview@offalycoco.ie).

and HAP queries can be directed to [hap@offalycoco.ie](mailto:hap@offalycoco.ie)

- Social Housing Assessments (SSHA) 2024 has commenced. All relevant approved applicants on Offaly County Council's Social Housing Support List, using the current address provided by the applicant, have been written to and completed forms were due for return by Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024. The summary of needs to be completed on the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and returned to the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. If any applicant has changed accommodation or contact information since the last SSHA they must request an SSHA Update Form – forms are available on <http://www.offaly.ie/eng/Services/Housing>
- or from the Birr, Edenderry or Tullamore Municipal District Offices.

## 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) – Stage 3 approval was granted on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024. Tender will be issued in Q4 2024.
- Group Housing, Croghan Road, Birr (4 Units): Stage 4 approval was granted on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023. Contractor Appointed & construction has commenced. Completion Q1 2025
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (10 Units) – Stage 3 application lodged with DHLGH in Q3 2024.

### Approved Housing Bodies Schemes

- Respond Housing: 77 Units under construction @ Kingswood, Ardan Lane with completion in Q4 2024 & Q1 2025
- Sofia Housing: 37 Units with Stage 2 approval @ Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Planning Granted in November 2023. Stage 3 (permission to go to tender) to be submitted in Q4 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 in 2024.

### 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
- MacGregol, Birr 12 Units – 5 Units on-site

### 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.

- 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.
- 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.

- Housing Staff delivered a total of 10 sessions of games on the green in 7 LA estates during the Summer months to encourage children to participate in their local communities. This initiative has been delivered in partnership with Offaly Sports Partnership and the housing section for a 4th year for children between the ages of 6 and 12. Over the 10 sessions a total of 80 children attended the games and there was a great mix of age ranges from 6 to 12 and a good balance of boys and girls attending the sessions.



## LAND USE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

### Development Management

	To end Oct 2024	To end Oct 2023	Total 2023
Planning Applications	600	578	695
Extensions of Duration Applications	11	15	20
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	67 (35)	172 (70)	181 (73)

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

<b>24/60389 JYSK Limited</b>	Change of use of existing catalogue retail store to retail warehouse, Unit D, Tullamore Retail Park, Cloncollog, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. R35 NH32.
<b>24/60411 Tullamore Vita Stilo Limited, t/a Capital Homes</b>	The construction of 78no. dwellings. Clara Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
<b>24/60415 Clara Town Football Club</b>	To install a 65 x 35-meter astro turf pitch and 700-meter-long walking track. Lissanisky, Clara, Co. Offaly.

### Just Transition - Local Economic and Community Plans Scheme

Earlier in 2024, Offaly County Council successfully secured the sum of €253k to fund a dedicated resource for the FilmOffaly office. Competitive interviews were held in August 2024 with the successful applicant

commencing on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024, under the management of the Council's Arts Officer. This development resource will be tasked with developing and implementing a three-year FilmOffaly Strategic Development Plan, managing the day-to-day running of the film office, while also promoting Offaly as a film location.



### 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. Tender documents are currently being prepared in order to engage a consultant in early 2025 to undertake this project.

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. It is estimated that these works will commence in early 2025.

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## REGENERATION

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### Town Centre First

#### Ferbane Town Centre First Plan

On Tuesday, October 22nd, Offaly County Council, Ferbane Town Team, and Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) hosted an information gathering workshop at Gallen Community School in Ferbane. The event saw an excellent turnout, featuring highly interactive and productive sessions that yielded valuable feedback on the town of Ferbane.



*Back L-R: Padraig Boland (Town Champion), Colm Beirne, Feargus McGarvey, Olwen Cummins (Town Regeneration Officer, OCC), Kieran Guinan, Justin Daly, Eamon Dooley*

*Front L-R: Gemma Darcy, Anne Galvin, Joshua Cannon, Roisin Lennon, Edel Waldron. Missing from photo Aoibhinn Molloy Roche*

Dr Shane O’Sullivan, Technological University of the Shannon, presented the main statistics of the town of Ferbane, which were based on the results of the 2016 and 2022 census as well as outlining how Ferbane compared nationally. The community participants then identified and discussed the town’s strengths and opportunities as well as the challenges it faces; business and services currently serving the town as well as other ideas to make Ferbane a more vibrant place to live, work and visit.

All this information will feed into the Town Centre First Plan which is currently being developed by the Town Team in Ferbane.

The plan will guide the regeneration of Ferbane, build on the positive initiatives taking place and set a new vision for the town’s future by identifying key projects for development.

A questionnaire was also launched on the night for any of the community that could not attend. The closing date for the questionnaire was **12 noon** on the **8<sup>th</sup> November**.

### Ferbane Walkability Audit

Offaly County Council conducted a Walkability Audit of Ferbane’s town centre on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> October. The purpose of the audit was to examine how accessible the main pedestrian routes are for people of mixed ages and abilities with both positive and negative aspects identified. The routes incorporated the main services such as shops and businesses, schools, church, health centre, sporting facilities etc.



20 local community representatives were invited to participate in the audit and were supported by technical and administrative staff from Offaly County Council and by An Garda Síochána. A debriefing session was held in the Heritage Centre at the end of the audit at which the group



discussed their findings. A report on the audit will be compiled in the coming weeks by the regeneration section and used for the Town Centre Plan first phase “understanding Ferbane”

### **Funding under Measure 1 – Town Team Support Fund – Kilmalogue and Daingean**

Earlier this year Kilmalogue and Daingean were awarded €10,000 each by the Department of Rural and Community Development under **Measure 1 - Town Team Support Fund**. These funds will be used to complete health checks in Kilmalogue & Daingean. All the information gathered during the health check will be the foundation for the future Town Centre First Plans for Kilmalogue and Daingean.

On October 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Offaly County Council and Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) hosted an information gathering workshop at Daingean Town Hall and Coláiste Iosagáin, Kilmalogue. The events were both very well attended and featured engaging productive sessions that produced valuable feedback on both towns.

Dr Shane O’Sullivan, Technological University of the Shannon, presented the main statistics of Daingean and Kilmalogue, which were based on the results of the 2016 and 2022 census as well as outlining how it compared nationally. The community participants then identified and discussed the towns strengths and opportunities as well as the challenges; business and services currently serving the towns as well as other ideas to

make the towns more vibrant places to live, work and visit.



*Community workshop in Kilmalogue*



*Community workshop in Daingean*

Questionnaires were also launched on the night for community who could not attend to complete. The deadline for completion of the questionnaires was **12 noon** on the **8<sup>th</sup> November**.



### National Women's Enterprise Day Midlands Regional Event



Businesswomen from across Longford, Laois, Offaly, and Westmeath came together in the Crypt in St. Mel's Cathedral to celebrate National Women's Enterprise Day (NWED). An annual Local Enterprise Office (LEO) initiative that is now in its 18th year, this year was bigger than before with over 2,200 attendees at 14 LEO-led events across the country.

Over 150 Midlands-based businesswomen attended the event held on Thursday, 17 October. The event was organised by Local Enterprise Offices Longford, Laois, Offaly, and Westmeath.

Orla Martin, Head of Enterprise Offaly said, "As women in business, we can always learn from each other. Education and support are essential for female entrepreneurs, especially in a competitive environment. The Local Enterprise Offices in the Midlands have been providing valuable resources and guidance for the women of the region for many years."

National Women's Enterprise Day is a wonderful opportunity for women to network, learn, and inspire each other in business. By supporting, uplifting, and empowering one another, we can achieve more than we could alone. It is really important to celebrate and share our experiences,

tips, and tricks with other women who want us to succeed.

With the theme of 'Making it happen', this year's NWED aimed to encourage businesswomen to grow their business idea, to take the next steps and to innovate. The day also highlights supports, including funding, mentorship, and training available to female entrepreneurs.

### Offaly Business win New & Innovative Award at the National Organic Awards!



Congratulations to Garryinch Wood Exotic Mushrooms for winning the New & Innovative Award at the National Organic Awards! Pictured above are Jim O'Toole, CEO Bord Bia; Joe and Dolores Gorman, Garryinch Wood Exotic Mushrooms, with Minister of State, Pippa Hackett. Located along the picturesque banks of the River Barrow, this family-run organic mushroom farm has over 30 years of experience cultivating exceptional Shiitake and White Beach mushrooms. Their commitment to quality and sustainability, using wooden blocks sourced from sustainably managed forests, showcases the dedication and innovation that defines the organic sector in Ireland.



## LEO Offaly Business Lunch and Learn



On 3<sup>rd</sup> October in The County Arms Hotel, Birr LEO Offaly hosted a Lunch and Learn Event; Mastering Your Brand Story with Una Ryan from The Marketing Eye.

The event was well-attended by business professionals from Offaly, focused on helping participants master their brand story and ignite business growth. Key highlights included gaining expert insights into storytelling techniques to deeply connect with audiences, differentiating brands in a crowded market, and strategies to unleash business potential. The session provided valuable networking opportunities and practical advice on achieving lasting success.

## Business Breakfast

The next business breakfast event is scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> November, where a successful Offaly businessperson, Declan Lenahan, will share their Entrepreneurial Story, Lessons Learned, Advice, and Tips for Business Owners. Full details are available on the website.

**LEO OFFALY**  
BUSINESS BREAKFAST

Join us for an inspiring business breakfast featuring Declan Lenahan, a local entrepreneur with a business based in Clara. Declan has over 30 years experience in building successful companies.

Hear about Declan's journey from an idea to creating a multimillion-euro business right here in our community. Declan's story showcases the incredible potential for success in a small town.

**FREE**

localenterprise.ie/offaly 8 am - 10:00 am Thursday, Nov 14th Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore

Upcoming Events		See All Events >
06/11/2024	How to use TikTok for marketing (Beginners)	<a href="#">Book online</a>
12/11/2024	How to use Chat GPT to improve your digital market...	<a href="#">Book online</a>
14/11/2024	Business Breakfast - A Business that Works from Cl...	<a href="#">Book online</a>
19/11/2024	How to use the latest AI tools for video, voice an...	<a href="#">Book online</a>
25/11/2024	Start Your Own Business Day Course	<a href="#">Book online</a>
27/11/2024	Generative AI for Digital Marketing - How to use C...	<a href="#">Book online</a>
04/12/2024	How to create and use reels for marketing on Insta...	<a href="#">Book online</a>

## Training Courses

Local Enterprise Office Offaly

# 2024

Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil  
Local Enterprise Office

BOOK ONLINE

TODAY!

[www.localenterprise.ie/offaly/training-events/online-bookings](http://www.localenterprise.ie/offaly/training-events/online-bookings)

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly provide a range of training courses and workshops designed to assist with the establishment and/or growth of local businesses. Whether it is starting a business or growing a business there is something suitable for everyone. Your first point of contact to discuss what supports your business needs and can avail of is the Local Enterprise Office Offaly.

How to use Instagram for Marketing - Level 2	Practical Guide to Income Tax for Businesses	One to One Mentoring Session to discover how you can maximise efficiency
Trading Online Voucher Webinar	Mastering Your Brand Story - Networking Lunchtime Event	Start Your Own Business Evening Course
Start Your Own Business Day Course	Christmas Marketing	How to use TikTok for marketing (Beginners)
Digital Marketing Programme	Website Review & Analysis Mentoring Clinic	How to use Chat GPT to improve your digital marketing
Grow Your Business Introductory Webinar	Small Business Accounts	How to use the latest AI tools for video, voice and image creation
One to One Marketing Mentoring Session	Grow Your Business Programme	How to create and use reels for marketing on Instagram
Offaly Business Breakfast: Ready to Export (MORE!)	Digital Marketing and Website Mentoring Clinic	
	How to submit your Income Tax Return on ROS	

For further details on all our courses visit [localenterprise.ie/Offaly](http://localenterprise.ie/Offaly)

Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Phoirt  
Offaly County Council



An Roinn Fiontar,  
Tráda agus Fiontacha  
Department of Enterprise,  
Trade and Employment

# Community, Culture and Emergency Services

## Local Community Development Committee:



Offaly LCDC held its monthly meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024. Agenda items included the Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) update on the Implementation Plan 2024 and 2025 and an update from Offaly Sports Partnership including recent Offaly Sports Capital Allocations.

Presentations were delivered from Ballycommon Technology & Training Centre (BTTC), highlighting the services they provide for Rural Communities, and the Climate Action Officer presenting the OCC Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and the Community Climate Action Fund. Funding opportunities available to communities and individuals were detailed to members.

## Public Participation Network

Offaly PPN held their Municipal District Meetings



in the three MD's during the Month of October. All three were well attended with robust discussion and suggestions towards 2025 actions.

Guest Speakers included Ruth Gaj McKeever Community Water Officer LAWPRO and Martina Moore Regional Manager Community Loan Finance Clann Credo.

Municipal District PPN meetings:

- Oct 7<sup>th</sup> Tullamore MD Mucklagh Community Centre
- Oct 15<sup>th</sup> Kilcormac MD Kilcormac St Joseph's Hall
- Oct 15<sup>th</sup> Edenderry MD Edenderry Parish Hall



## Oct 8th Comhairle Na Nog AGM

Offaly PPN staff were facilitators at the Comhairle Na nÓg AGM. It was a great event and offered us an opportunity to introduce the PPN at the tables we facilitated to the young people. This also gives an insight in the key areas of interest among young people and the key priorities that want to focus on for the year ahead.

Offaly PPN presented the Funding Opportunities report at the October LCDC meeting. The National PPN Conference was held in the Strand Hotel Limerick on Oct 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>. Offaly was well represented with PPN staff Bridie & Carol in attendance along with Johnny Dunne and Seamus Rourke from the Secretariat

and Community Staff - Acting SEO Lourda Giles and AO Brian Pey.

Limerick PPN hosted the event in conjunction with Limerick County Council. The Conference was opened by the Mayor of Limerick followed by workshops and discussion on the PPN on its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Four PPN's presented and facilitated Workshops on the Friday morning including:

- Cavan PPN: Wellbeing of Staff & Volunteers in PPN's
- Tipperary PPN: Climate Coaches Programme
- Limerick PPN UL Citizens Assembly
- Offaly PPN: Community Energy Charter

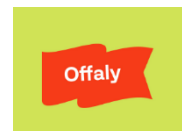
Rebekah Keaveny and Bridie Costello Hynes presented on the Community Energy Charter. The Community Energy Charter was well received with interest from a number of PPN's.



Offaly PPN are currently organising the PPN Plenary which will take place on 14<sup>th</sup> November in the Tullamore Court @7.00pm. Guest Speakers: Ombudsman Ger Deering followed by an update on the Community Energy Charter. There will also be Organisations/ Groups with Information stands on the evening too.



**Comhairle na nÓg**  
Your Local Youth Council



The Annual Offaly Comhairle na nÓg Youth Conference was held on October 8<sup>th</sup> in Mucklagh Community Centre. The event was attended by over 100 Young people representing all Second level Schools throughout the County. Guest Speaker, Jordan Conroy member of the National Rugby Sevens team, addressed the room with an inspiring talk on Mental Health. Cathaoirleach Tony McCormack spoke on the importance of the Youth Voice in Local decision and policy making.

Two Workshops were held which all attendees participated in. These were



facilitated by members of the CNN steering committee representing a number of Agencies and sectors: CAMHS HSE, An Garda Síochana, Offaly Libraries, PPN, Jigsaw, Offaly County Council and OLDC Staff. The young people identified and discussed the issues that are most important to them. A vote at the end of the workshops saw Mental Health voted as the topic that young people would like CNN to continue focus on in 2025.



As a follow on from the Youth Conference new members were invited to join, they completed expressions of interest forms. The Comhairle Coordinator will follow up with these in November. The day was a great success and ended with a dance off!

### Age Friendly Programme

Among the key Age Friendly actions being progressed in 2024 is the plan to make Tullamore train station an Age Friendly Train Station in accordance with the recognised WHO process. A walkability audit was completed on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024 attended by members of Offaly Older Persons Council, Offaly Age Friendly Alliance, Offaly Disability and Equality Network, and by staff from Iarnród Éireann, AFI and Offaly County Council. The audit was carried out in the context of the National Sustainable



*Age Friendly Audit of Tullamore Train station on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024*

Mobility policy which sets out to progressively make public transport systems more accessible for people with disabilities, people with reduced mobility and older people, using an integrated universal design approach. The walkability audit survey and checklist were developed with reference to the World Health Organisation's Guidelines for Age Friendly Environments and the National Transport Authority's Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool.



The audit is designed to assess accessibility and user experience. The route started at the car park outside the station, the ticket offices, platforms, and followed the public footpath up the hill to the traffic lights and pedestrian crossing. There were 24 participants in all, including a wheelchair user, a person with reduced mobility and a person with visual impairment.

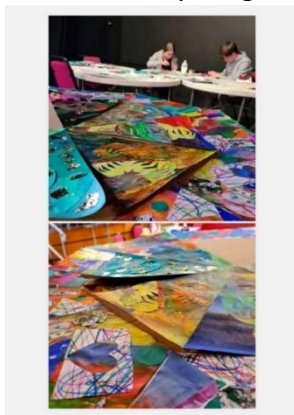
After the walkability audit, participants held a meeting to discuss and record their observations and findings in relation to improvements which need to be implemented at the station and surrounding access points. Improvements and additions to be considered include upgrading of signage and information provided, staff training, tactile paving, disability and age friendly car parking spaces and improved access to toilet facilities.

The issues identified will be addressed over the coming months by a dedicated steering group who will oversee implementation of the recommendations.



### The 2025 Youth Arts Commissions

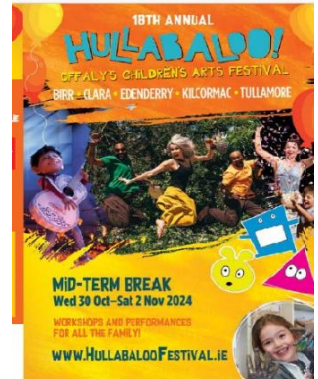
The Youth Arts Commissions enables artists to work with youth groups and communities to develop projects that will enable engagement between professional artists and young people (13+), facilitated by youth organisations, youth leaders and schools. The goal being to build secure relationships with relevant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



the young people is a priority for this programme. The 2025 call is currently being developed and will be available for artists, youth groups and organisations to apply before the end of 2024.

### Hullabaloo! Offaly's Children's Arts Festival

Offaly's Children's Arts Festival brings an extravaganza of creativity, art making and fun experiences for all the family. Now, in its 18th year, Hullabaloo! Offaly's dedicated arts festival for children under 12 runs from Wednesday 30 October - Saturday 2 November in Birr, Clara, Edenderry, Tullamore and this year is growing even bigger to include activities in Kilcormac. Supported by Offaly County Council Arts Office, Hullabaloo! is coordinated by Birr Theatre & Arts Centre and Esker Arts with Creative Places Edenderry, Offaly Library Services, Clara Family Resource Centre and Kilcormac Development Association.



### FilmOffaly

#### FilmOffaly Resource Development Project

Darren Lee joined the Arts Office in early October in the two-year fixed term post of Film Officer. This is a temporary post to deliver a project co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the EU Just Transition Fund Programme 2021-2027. Darren is currently familiarising himself with FilmOffaly's activity so far, and working to refresh our systems, and rejuvenate the brand as well as beginning to outline future strategy for this project.



### FilmOffaly Award 2023

In addition to the screening at OFFline. A Simple Killing has been receiving some festival attention. It recently had its US Premiere at the Newport Beach Film

Festival. The film was also shown at Westival in Westport, where it was screened as part of a programme of Western Front Studio's shorts, followed by a Q&A. with the producers.

### FilmOffaly Award 2024

Pre-production for The Cure, the winner of the 2024 is progressing well and filming is planned around 12th and 13th November, most locations have been found with a final recce planed shortly. The production will be based in and around the Banagher Area and is expected to use local extras and Production Assistants/Runners.

### OFFline Film Festival

The OFFline Film Festival took place in Early October. The Film Offaly 2023 winner, A Simple Killing formed part of the Made In Midlands screenings, followed by a Q&A with local filmmakers. The Arts Office's commissioned Mini Movies were also a great success with students of St Brendan's Boys School, Mercy Primary School and St Brendan's Community School, taking part and attending the screenings.

### Birr Writer's Residency Review

In 2024 Offaly the Arts Office commissioned a review to examine the Arts Office supported, **Birr Writer's Residency** now in its tenth year. Birr Writer's Residency offers professional writers' accommodation and workspaces for six nights, at Brendan House in the centre of Birr, County Offaly. The purpose of the residency has been to provide an opportunity for artists to focus on a writing

project (current or new) in a tranquil environment which supports and values high professional artistic development. It is open to professional writers of any genre, e.g. literary fiction, poetry, playwrights, journalism or travel writing. The review will consider the potential growth of the residency going forward and will include a consultation process with key stakeholders. Consultants Culture Works were awarded the commission following on open call and evaluation process. The review started in September and is currently ongoing due to be completed in 2025.

### 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 Nov- December was disseminated at the end of Oct.

### Social Media / Website

We continue to be very active on all our social media outlets and work to keep our website updated.

### Funding Opportunities - The 2025 Arts Grants

Applications will be opening in November for the Offaly Arts Grants 2025 including the **Arts Acts Grants, the Festival Arts Grants** and the **Professional Artists Support Scheme**.

### Professional Artists Support Scheme -

CLOSING DATE Monday 20th January 2025 3pm

**Arts Acts Grants** - CLOSING DATE Monday 20th January 2025 3pm

**Festival Arts Grants** - CLOSING DATE Monday 17th February 2025 3pm

## Collaborations 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 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.

Creative Places Edenderry is a community based project to connect, create and develop artistic and cultural activities to enhance the community engagement and spirit within Edenderry.

Activities are advertised on [www.creativeplacesedenderry.ie](http://www.creativeplacesedenderry.ie) The Creative Places Edenderry Facebook and Instagram Pages and include: The Monday Music Group, Visual Arts group for and by people who identify as disabled, ActiviTEA group and the Community Social. Creative Edenderry is also one of the programming and partners of the Hullabaloo Festival 2024, as well supporting partners to John Maguire and the Gemini Players with their upcoming production of 'The Witch Had it Coming! There will be other

events/training sessions, opportunities and meetings including

- Community Forum meeting
- Artists Collective
- Training Session
- Seed Funding grant opportunities

## Offaly County Council Municipal Collection Exhibition – Esker Arts

The Arts Office is currently working with Esker Arts to present *Saibhreas* an exhibition of works from Offaly County Council's municipal collection of visual art. Offaly County Council has been collecting art since the early 2000s and the collection now comprises over 500 works by local, national and international artists. The Collection includes painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, print and mixed-media works.

This will be the first time the Collection has been displayed in a purpose-build visual arts gallery and Esker Arts' Croghan Gallery will be the perfect setting for showing works, many of which have strong connections to County Offaly. The exhibition will run from 15<sup>th</sup> Nov until 20<sup>th</sup> December.

## INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

### Esker Arts

Esker Arts continued to be a hive of activity across the month of October with a range of workshops in a wide variety of artforms, as well as excellent local theatre. A sell out show for October was Roddy Doyle's *The Snapper* produced by Colin Hughes Promotions and a multimedia concert for all the family by The Whistleblast Quartet. Towards the end of the month Esker Arts were preparing for the Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival for their younger audiences and the Eagla Fest 2024, with a line-up of bone-chilling films for the older audiences.

### 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.



October 31<sup>st</sup> was the deadline for completion of year 2 of our Healthy Offaly funded actions. Financial and progress reports have steadily been received from all implementing partners and will be entered into Pobal's online database of year end reporting.

Also, the post programme surveys which all implementing partners were required to fill out with their participants were sent to our programme evaluators, for analysis to determine the effectiveness of the interventions. These reports (one for each action) will be circulated to all relevant stakeholders when completed at year end.

In other news, Healthy Offaly was busy in October attending presentations on the 'Not Around Us' no smoking/No vaping campaigns in public spaces, *Enabling Wellbeing Environments* from Healthy Ireland Local Government office and the providing of some merchandise resources

for the FAI's 'Kick Fit' blitz for women over 40's. A huge part of the work of Healthy Offaly is attending these information and networking sessions to work with other agencies and partners in implementing the broader wellbeing agenda. Finally, the Healthy Offaly Coordinator contacted the Birr, Tullamore, Edenderry Municipal District offices this month with a view to requesting some time to present to the elected representatives and staff on progress of the roll out of Round 4 of the Healthy Ireland Fund. The Municipal Districts have included the Healthy Offaly Round 4 update on their November meeting agendas.

### SPORTS

Programme highlights from October include: -



Ongoing delivery of the Sport 4 Empowerment programme funded by the European Social Fund+. Among the programmes delivered were recreational / social sport programmes with a focus on volleyball for 35 people; as well as the FITtS (Friendship, Integration and Teamwork through Sport) programme for 30+ children in Banagher.

Two recreational / social sport programmes with a focus on volleyball were delivered. The first programme was delivered in Edenderry; and has resulted in the establishment of a new volleyball club in the town. The second programme is being delivered in Tullamore, and it is hoped that similar to Edenderry, a second volleyball club will also be established as a result of this initial six week programme. Participants on both programmes include international protection applicants and refugees.



The FITtS programme commenced in Banagher in October and is catering for 30+ children. Participants include international protection applicants, refugees and local children

Ongoing delivery of the ACE schools programme in eight schools. The six week programme will culminate in a week of “Fast Feet” regional competitions in November.

Ongoing delivery of programmes as part of the community sports and sports inclusion development programmes.

Among the programmes delivered as part of the community sports development programme were physical activity programmes for 45 adults and older adults including activator poles, pickleball and social walk leadership training; and community games athletics in Ferbane.

Ongoing delivery of programmes in each of our three sports hubs, Daingean, Mucklagh and Ballycumber.

Among the programmes delivered in the Daingean sports hub were physical activity programmes for 120 adults and older adults including exercise classes (chair yoga, Pilates, strength & conditioning); and the ACE schools programme in two schools within the catchment area of the sports hub.

Among the programmes delivered in the Mucklagh sports hub were physical activity programmes (Drop & Move, and activator poles) for 80 adults and older adults, adapted physical activity programmes for 15 people with additional needs, and after schools’ programmes (basketball and Rinka fitness) for 90 children

Among the programmes delivered in the Ballycumber sports hub were physical activity programmes for 75 adults and older adults including exercise classes (boxercise, Pilates, strength & conditioning) racquet sports (badminton and pickleball), recreational / social darts and walking football.

For more information on the work of Offaly Sports Partnership, check out [www.offalysports.ie](http://www.offalysports.ie) or our social media feeds on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

## LIBRARY SERVICE

### Children's Book Festival



Offaly Libraries celebrated Children's Book Festival, one of the four central pillars of the national **Right to Read** initiative, during October. An array of exciting events, story times and visits to schools occurred countywide.



We welcomed Irish children's authors, Emer Conlon, Leona Forde, Niamh Donnellan and Eve McDonnell to deliver some fascinating workshops for primary school children. Students were also enthralled by workshops with poet and illustrator, Paul Tubb, as well as Cookery Classes from the Cool Food School.



Overall, Offaly Libraries' Children's Book Festival was a huge success during the month of October!

### HULLABALOO! OFFALY'S CHILDREN'S ARTS FESTIVAL

Hullabaloo is Offaly's Children's Arts Festival, taking place during the October mid-term, led out by OCC Arts Service and supported by Offaly Libraries.



Frighteningly fun events were arranged to entertain and delight all children as part of Hullabaloo's Halloween themed offerings at Birr, Clara, Edenderry, and Tullamore Libraries.

Attracting over 200 attendees, these included fantastic shows facilitated by the Tallest Smallest Theatre, a Hogwarts Experience, and plenty of Halloween themed story times and craft sessions,



## Offaly Libraries STEAM Programme



Some exciting STEAM events were held across the county this past October, celebrating two key weeks in our STEAM calendar: **Space Week** and **Maths Week**.



**Over 60 attendees** enjoyed a Stellar Saturday at Birr Library, with a special visit by Little Towns Scientist, Dr. Niamh Shaw. VEX Robotics and VR Headsets were also on hand to enhance the experience.

**30 students** from St. Brendan's Secondary School were invited to a Q & A with retired NASA astronaut, Steve Swanson, who spoke about his experiences working on the International Space Station.



### Steven Swanson Astronaut Visit

Some **24 events** were delivered to over **550 attendees** during Space Week, including Rocket Making workshops, story times and crafts.

**Maths Week** enjoyed similar success, with **241 attendees** discovering the fun side of maths through a series of Micro: Bits workshops.

**Midlands' Astronomy Club** continue to meet in Tullamore Library and their last meeting featured lectures with Sean McKenna on Comet A3, and while Bob Campbell spoke about "Telescopes: How-to's and choosing the right one".



Lego Freeplay sessions and STEM Saturdays, delivered as part of our STEAM offerings, continue to be well attended in libraries around the county, with **over 1,730 attendees** so far in 2024!



Check out our [website](#) for information on upcoming Science Week events, including a Biodiversity event with Midlands Science.



## Positive Ageing Week



Positive Ageing Week (PAW) was celebrated in all our libraries this October with a range of Age Friendly events, catering to over **177**

**attendees.**

Needle Felting and Glass Painting workshops received an excellent reception with **42 attendees.** The workshops will return in November due to popular demand.



Music Sessions were on offer with performances by the Gramophone Society and Silver Strings. Garda Information Sessions and Social Coffee Mornings proved very popular with all attendees.

In Birr and Clara Libraries, **40 Retirees and Transition Year students** put their heads together for our Intergenerational Pop Quizzes.



A 6 week Intergenerational Vex Robotics programme was launched during PAW. Grandparents, parents and children will come together to build Vex Robots.

**12 families (36 individuals)** are now taking part weekly, unleashing creativity, sparking curiosity and making memories that will last a lifetime.



Offaly Libraries and Offaly County Council, in partnership with Offaly Local Development Company, are delighted to announce an Age Friendly digital skills programme using Acorn Tablets. The training will be run directly from Banagher Library and facilitated by West Offaly Training.



Designed with the older person in mind, Acorn Tablets are easy to use, easy to navigate and uncluttered, making online communication

and access to the internet simple and rewarding for even the most inexperienced user.

Participants will learn essential skills like sending emails, video calling, browsing the internet and accessing online services.

## Parenting Support Programme

Offaly Libraries, together with Laois Libraries, continues to co-deliver a free series of talks and workshops for parents.



Supported by Laois Offaly Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC), the Parenting Support

Programme invites experts to discuss a broad range of parenting topics currently impacting our children.



In Edenderry Library, Parent & Child Yoga took place on October 16<sup>th</sup> and was very well received by all participants. **DESSA (Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency)** delivered an Effective Advocacy Talk, on 30<sup>th</sup> October outlining supports available to parents of children with additional needs.

In Tullamore Library, Offaly Domestic Violence Support Services presented a talk on Teen Dating Violence. The team gave practical strategies to discuss coercion and consent with teenagers. Dr. Mary O’Kane, a regular contributor to radio shows on Newstalk, and RTE, and host of ‘Perfectly Imperfect Parenting’ on Dublin City FM, discussed why our flaws are necessary for a child’s independent development.



### Offaly Libraries & the LOETB

The LOETB are facilitating a 6-week health literacy course in Tullamore Library which began on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September.



Attendees are exploring health and well-being topics to increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and skills to support healthy choices. Guest speakers will discuss movement, nutrition,

explain health services and how to use technology.

### Birr Art Group Art Exhibition



Birr Library will host a collection of art works produced by Birr Art group, who meet every Wednesday from 18:00 in Birr Library.

The exhibition was launched, on 6<sup>th</sup> November.

### Art Exhibition at Tullamore Library



Members of Rehab Care launched a stunning collection of paintings on 8<sup>th</sup> October, bringing a riot of colour to the windows of Tullamore Library. The beautiful pieces were much admired by all visitors over the month of October.

## Mary & Maura Exhibition at Edenderry Library



A wonderful exhibition of art is currently on display at Edenderry Library. Locals of Edenderry, Mary and Maura, are presenting a joint collection of their works for the month of November.

## Join the Library and sign up for our Library Newsletter

Join the library and get access to over 12 million items nationwide. It couldn't be easier – simply [join online](#) or drop into your local branch to join.



Keep up to date with all library programmes, developments and new services by [subscribing](#) to the **Offaly Libraries Newsletter** and by following our social media channels.

## Local Newspapers Now Available on Borrowbox!



Local newspapers are now available on BorrowBox anytime, anywhere!

Titles include the **Irish Independent and Sunday Independent, the Herald, Sunday World, Ireland's Own** as well as a range of regional and local titles.

More details on Borrowbox here: [www.offaly.ie/borrowbox](http://www.offaly.ie/borrowbox)

*Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive*



# Finance

## Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 31 October 2024

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr Budget 2024 €m	Preliminary Value to October 2024 €m	% Year To Date
Payroll costs	35.68	28.86	80.9%
Grants and Subsidies Income	50.31	47.26	93.9%

### OCC to 31st October 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	16.69	7.22	0.38
2024 Cash Collected to end of October	15.12	7.39	0.42
Closing Balance October 31st, 2024	4.15	0.48	0.00

### 2023 Cash collected to October 31st

	13.39	5.90	0.45
% Collection at this point in 2023	113%	125%	92%

### Bank Overdraft to 31st October 2024

	-	-	% YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date		26	9%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to 31October 2024 YTD		(Estimate)	€18,435
Bank Administration and transactional charges to October 31 2024 YTD		(Estimate)	€52,285