

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Joint address by the Cathaoirleach and the Chief Executive



Cllr. Declan Harvey, Cathaoirleach



Anna Marie Delaney, Príomh Fheidhmeannach

Contents

[To go directly to any Chapter Please Highlight and Click]

Housing SPC	4		
Housing Department	4		
Community, Culture and Emergency Services SPC	9		
Library Service	9		
Community and Culture	19		
Arts Service	31		
Fire Services & Civil Defence	46		
Climate Action, Water, Environment and Transportation SPC	49		
Climate Action	49		
Environment	50		
Water Services	57		
Roads Department	61		
Land Use, Planning and Economic Development SPC	66		
Planning Department	66		
Architectural Services	77		
Heritage	83		
Economic Development			
Local Enterprise Office	88		
Tourism	98		
Corporate and Support Services			
Corporate Services	101		
Finance	112		
Internal Audit	116		
Human Resources	118		
Information Systems	121		
		Municipal District of Tullamore	127
		Municipal District of Edenderry	132
		Municipal District of Birr	141
		Members of Offaly County Council	102
		Service Indicators 2020	147

HOUSING SPC

SPC Chair	Danny Owens MCC	Director Of Services	Sharon Kennedy
<i>Members</i>	<i>Sectoral</i>	<i>Senior Executive Officer</i>	Monica Cleary
Cllr. Noel Cribbin	Mr. John Carroll	<i>Senior Executive Engineer</i>	John Cunningham
Cllr. Robert McDermott	Mr. Tony O’Riordan	<i>Administrative Officer</i>	Lourda Giles
Cllr. Ken Smollen	Ms. Annette Meacle	<i>Administrative Officer</i>	Ann Marie Conneely / Deirdre Hunt
Cllr. Declan Harvey	Ms. Jacinta Dillon		

HOUSING DEPARTMENT

HOUSING FOR ALL – A NEW HOUSING PLAN FOR IRELAND

Housing for All, the government’s plan to increase the supply of housing to an average of 33,000 units per year over the next decade, was launched in September 2021. The measures, outlined in the plan, are supported by over €4 billion in guaranteed State funding every year.

The plan is based on four pathways, leading to a more sustainable housing system:

- 1) Support home ownership and increase affordability
- 2) Eradicate homelessness, increase social housing delivery and support social inclusion
- 3) Increase new housing supply

- 4) Address vacancy and make efficient use of existing stock

The social housing build targets for Offaly County Council are:

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Build	180	67	68	73	75	463

Under Housing for All, local authorities are required to prepare a Housing Delivery Action Plan, which will set out the detail of social housing delivery over the next five years.

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH & SERVICE DELIVERY

Covid-19 Public Health restrictions continued at various levels throughout 2021. While most Housing Services were

deemed as essential services the delivery of many of these services was curtailed. The majority of the Council's building programmes were suspended in line with Covid-19 Level 5 restrictions between January and March 2021.

Many of the Housing processes were adapted to enable services to continue and ensure that essential repairs, emergency housing allocations, HAP, rent reviews, leasing etc. were addressed in a timely manner. Housing continued to work with persons presenting as homeless and many Traveller welfare issues were also addressed.

SOCIAL HOUSING LIST AND ALLOCATIONS

The number of qualified applicants on the Council's Approved Social Housing List remained high during 2021. The Housing Section assists those on the list by means of a variety of Social Housing options. The options available include:

- Tenancy of a Council Property
- RAS Leases
- Long Term Social Housing Leases
- Housing provided by Approved Housing Bodies
- HAP (Housing Assistance Payment).

At the end of 2021 there were 489 qualified applications on the Social Housing Waiting List, with a further 803 in receipt of Housing Support via Housing Assistance Payments (HAP). 314 were supported in

various leasing arrangements and a further 67 had Mortgage to Rent applications concluded with the Local Authority.

Throughout the year, allocations to social housing continued and in all 168 families received keys to their new homes during 2021, i.e., 67 families received keys to their new Council owned properties; 49 were nominated and received keys to Approved Housing Bodies homes; and, a further 27 were allocated to leasing units. During 2021, 25 Mortgage to Rent arrangements were finalized.

SOCIAL HOUSING PROVISION

The Council provides accommodation for those on the Approved Social Housing Support List by a variety of means.

COUNCIL DIRECT BUILD PROGRAMME

The construction of 18 units at Kylebeg, Banagher and 7 at Beechgrove, Belmont commenced in September and November 2021 respectfully. A contractor was appointed for a further 4 units in Moneygall.

Further housing units continue to progress through the stage process with the Department. These, when finished, will provide new build housing schemes in Tullamore, Clara, Ballycumber & Daingean.

TURNKEY DEVELOPMENTS

18 social houses were delivered in turnkey developments in Birr, Daingean and Cloneygowan in 2021. Further turnkey developments in Birr, Mucklagh, Portarlinton, Tullamore and Walsh Island will deliver 62 social housing units in 2022 and early 2023.

APPROVED HOUSING BODIES (AHB)

Offaly County Council continued to effectively engage with a number of AHBs throughout 2021. Working in partnership, the Council assist and support the AHBs and facilitate their access of funding for schemes that receive departmental approval.

In May 2021, Offaly County Council nominated 27 families from the Social Housing Support List to a new Tuath Housing development at Killane, Edenderry.

Working closely with various AHB will see the delivery of a further 141 new build AHB social housing units in the coming years, including:

- Oaklee Housing: 60 new build housing units in Tullamore
- Cluid: 42 new build housing units in Tullamore
- Sophia Housing: 39 units in Portarlinton

SOCIAL LEASING

In line with the Government's commitment to increase the number of new build units, outlined in *Housing for All*, the commencement of phasing out of various Long Term Leasing and Enhance Leasing Schemes took effect.

ACQUISITIONS

The Council and AHB acquired 32 housing units, including 12 Part V units, for allocation across the county.

These output figures across the various programmes represent the continued commitment of the Council to deliver for those on the Approved Social Housing Support List.

EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

Offaly County Council's Homeless Action Team continued to meet on a regular basis throughout the year. The collaborative interagency approach ensured that those presenting as homeless received advice and assistance in an effort to meet their needs. At 31st December 2021 there were 6 families and 19 single people in emergency accommodation.

Offaly is part of the Midlands Regional (Westmeath, Laois, Longford, Offaly) Joint Consultative Homeless Forum which develops and co-ordinates homeless policy in the Midlands Region. The acquisition of Clonamore Hotel by Sophia Housing Association in partnership with Midland Simon was supported by the Midlands Regional Joint Consultative

Homeless Forum and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The facility had been used over recent years to provide emergency accommodation but this new collaborative approach will provide a much enhanced service as persons are assisted in transitioning to long term supported accommodation. The refurbishment of the facility will proceed to tender in 2022 and allow for refurbishment works to commence.

The Peter McVerry Trust was awarded the Housing First 3-year tender by the Midlands Regional Joint Consultative Homeless Forum at the start of 2020. A number of individuals, experiencing long term homelessness in Offaly, were allocated to their new home and continue to be supported by the Peter McVerry Trust during 2021.

The Council's HAP Place Finder continued to work with persons in emergency accommodation or with those at risk of becoming homeless and assisted a number to source HAP accommodation throughout the year.

MAINTENANCE AND REFURBISHMENT

The Council, at year end had 1,969 properties which vary greatly in age, standard and condition.

The Council's maintenance programme, cognizant of the various Covid-19 regulations, continued throughout the year – in all over 3,300 maintenance

calls were logged during the year.

There will always be a constant turnover of housing stock and throughout 2021 44 housing units, i.e., 38 pre-lets and 6 acquisitions, were brought back into use and tenanted.

At the end of 2021 a further 18 units were under repair by contractors; 8 were at tender stage; and, a further 16 were being surveyed in preparation for tender. 133 social units received works under the planned maintenance budget such as replacement of fire detection systems, new doors and windows, boundary works, chimney replacements, new kitchen units.

ENERGY RETROFITTING SCHEME

In October 2021 the Council's initial allocation towards the Midlands Retrofit Programme saw the allocation increase from €3.3m to €4.2m.

The programme, delayed due to Covid-19 and other external factors, continued to be hampered by delays throughout 2021. At year end, 19 homes across the county had retrofit works completed; works on a further 36 units in the Municipal District of Birr were being finalised; 42 homes in the Municipal District of Tullamore were successfully tendered and were submitted to the Department for final approval; and, it is anticipated that following receipt of this approval the balance, i.e., 40 surveyed homes will issue for tender in 2022.

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The Housing Liaison Officers continued to work with tenants and Residents Associations during 2021. Respecting social distancing a number of events and meetings were held with community groups during the year. The Housing Liaison Officers held a Pre-Tenancy Meeting with all tenants in advance of them receiving the keys of the Council house.

An enhanced Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, adopted in September 2020, provided for the establishment of an Estate Management Interagency Committee under the aegis of the Joint Policing Committee. During 2022 this Committee was established on a county wide basis and a number of meetings between senior Local Authority Housing, Environment and Municipal District staff; nominated Elected Representatives; and members of An Garda Síochána met to advance a number of interagency initiatives.

REBUILDING IRELAND HOME LOANS (RIHL)

29 RIHL applications were received in 2021, 11 of which were approved in principle. To the end of 2021, 15 RIHLs, to the value of €1,916,815 has been paid on home loans.

TENANT PURCHASE SCHEME

6 tenants concluded the acquisition of their homes in 2021.

HOUSING AND DISABILITY STEERING GROUP

Offaly County Council continues to provide supports for Older Persons and Persons with a disability. Offaly's Housing and Disability Steering Group continued to meet via zoom in 2021. The forum provides an opportunity to engage with the relevant agencies, including the HSE, AHBs and representatives from each of the disability sectors operational in Offaly. The Steering Group adopted the *Offaly Strategic Plan for People with a Disability, 2022 to 2026*.

The Strategy has regard to a number of national policies and identifies the nature of disabilities to include persons with physical, mental, intellectual and sensory challenges. It aims to ensure that there is a comprehensive and integrated approach to the provision of suitable housing supports for persons with disabilities. The actions identified in the Strategy will be progressed through working collaboratively with the Statutory Agencies, Approved Housing Bodies and Disability Service Providers throughout the county.

In adopting the Offaly Strategic Plan the members of the Housing and Disability Steering Group acknowledged that it will be necessary for the Steering Group to review their objectives and implementation plan to ensure that it encompasses and aligns with the National Strategy's goals and timeframes.

In accordance with objective 7 of *Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland* quarterly updates will be provided by the Housing and Disability Steering Group to the Housing SPC and the Chief Executive.

Offaly County Council reported that 30 persons with a disability received an allocation during 2021, including 3 to HAP supported units. The breakdown of these allocations was: physical 20; sensory 4; mental health 3; and, intellectual 3.

PRIVATE GRANT SCHEMES

€1,600,000 was awarded under the private grant schemes in 2021. Housing in administering the Scheme awarded 138 grants across the three categories that were available to applicants. This grant is 80% funded by the Department.

Grants were awarded under the three grant categories as follows:

- Mobility Aids Grant Scheme - 11
- Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme - 61
- Housing Aid for Older People Grant Scheme - 66

DISABLED PERSONS WORKS ON LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSES

Housing received a significant increase in the funding allocation for Disabled Persons works on Council owned properties in 2021. €958,576 allowed for works on 30 homes, facilitating 8 extensions and 22 adaptations.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

Departmental approval to appoint a Traveller Tenancy Sustainment Officer was received during mid-2021. Under this pilot programme the Traveller Tenancy Sustainment Officer will work with those from the Traveller community with their tenancy, be that a HAP or allocation to a Local Authority unit.

The Local Traveller Consultative Committee (LTACC) met on 4 occasions during 2021. Work on implementing the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 continued.

The Traveller Interagency Group, under the aegis of the LCDC, was established. It is not intended that the work of this Group will impinge on the statutory role of the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee. The work of the Traveller Interagency Group will include:

- Working in a collaborative manner to develop a County Offaly Traveller Inclusion Strategy based on the National Strategy and in pursuance of Objective 6 of Offaly LECP 2016- 2021.
- Seeking access to such funding and supports that may be available to implement the actions arising from the Strategy.
- Reporting at regular intervals to the LCDC.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Housing continued to work in collaboration with the HSE, local and national

Traveller groups, AHBs and the Department of Housing to raise awareness and welfare issues were prioritised. Support and welfare facilities were enhanced at a number of halting sites.

PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

Offaly County Council is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019. For much of 2021 only emergency inspections were allowed under the Covid-19 restrictions. The Housing and IT section continued to develop specific software for private rented inspections and following a tender process Inspex Ltd. were appointed to conduct the inspections in 2022.

HOUSING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Housing SPC met, via zoom, on 4 occasions in 2021.

The SPC reviewed many housing policy areas including:

- Consideration, development and adoption of the *Strategic Plan for People with a Disability 2021 to 2026*;
- Review of the *Differential Rent Scheme*;
- Overview of the *Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland*; and,
- Development of the *Offaly Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 – 2028*.

COMMUNITY, CULTURAL AND EMERGENCY SPC

SPC Chair	Liam Quinn MCC	Director Of Services	Sharon Kennedy
<i>Members</i> Cllr. Clare Claffey Cllr. John Clendennen Cllr. Ken Smollen Cllr. Mark Hackett	<i>Sectoral</i> Mr. Kenneth Bracken Mr. John O'Connor Ms. Madeline Corboy Ms. Thomas Woulfe	<i>Senior Executive Officer</i> <i>Chief Fire Officer</i> <i>Administrative Officer</i> <i>Administrative Officer</i> <i>County Librarian</i> <i>Arts Officer</i>	Ann Dillon Eoin O'Ceilleachair Brian Pey Paula Donovan Eimear McGinn Sally O'Leary

LIBRARY SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Offaly County Library Service continues to deliver on objectives of the national five-year strategy for public libraries: *Our Public Libraries 2022- Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities*. Set against the backdrop of a continued pandemic reality, Offaly Library Service delivered on strategic objectives via innovative technological solutions focused on user engagement, a refined blended delivery of community and cultural events programmes and a particular focus on re-opening all library facilities in a welcoming and safe manner.

IRELAND READS DAY 2021

This new national day of reading encouraged people in Offaly to "Squeeze in a Read" throughout the month of February and especially on Thursday 25th February, Ireland Reads Day. People across Ireland took the pledge

and spent over 900,000 minutes reading on this day alone!

Offaly Library Service embraced the campaign encouraging people of all ages to take the pledge and **#SqueezeInARead**. Library staff hosted many online events for all age groups including Baby Rhyme & Sign, Storytimes & Family Fun Quizzes. The Adult Virtual Book Club was launched as part of the Ireland Reads campaign and continues to grow in success.

Libraries' social media engagement was hugely successful with **783 views**



of our #IrelandReads videos and a total reach of 25,222 on Facebook. Library members embraced the celebrations with many sending photos of family and friends enjoying a good book!

OFFALY LIBRARY SERVICE – COVID-19 RESPONSE

A reimagining of library services continued during 2021. Staff provided core services, collections and responsive, inclusive and safe methods of access to library resources and programmes during another national lockdown from January to May. Offaly Libraries offered *Contact & Collect and Browse & PC by Appointment Services*; quality digital resources and online learning supports and events for all ages. Throughout the remainder of the year a hybrid offering of services was delivered in libraries, with leisure reading, PC access and study provision reintroduced in September. Due to the initial 5-month lockdown from January to May, our libraries were physically open for 7 months in 2021 whilst 'open online' all year.

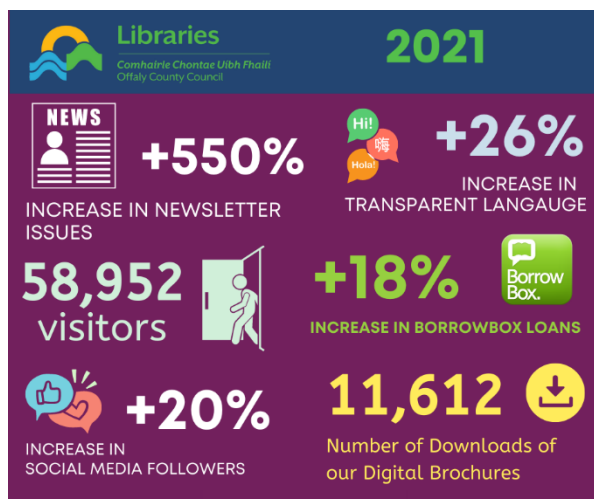


2021 PERFORMANCE

Performance	2021	2020	%
Social Media Followers (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram)	9,314	7,731	+20
Newsletter Issues	14,381	2,211	+550
Transparent Languages	789	626	+26
Issues (excl. renewals)	182,125	162,043	+12
Music Streaming – Freegal	7,693	6,030	+28
BorrowBox Loans	28,178	23,829	+18
Digital Library issues	111,017	105,817	+5

DIGITAL RESOURCES IN OFFALY LIBRARIES

In addition to the national Digital Resources suite of eBooks, eAudiobooks, eNewspapers, eMagazines, Language and Learning eCourses, Offaly Libraries took the opportunity in 2021 to invest in and provide FREE online access to **Comics Plus, IVox books** and a **new eMagazine resource Libby**. Offaly Libraries online newsletter has over 1,285 subscribers with a newsletter produced each month. Library Social Media channels were scaled up by introducing a Youtube Channel. Our social media followers grew to 9,314 in 2021. Our in-house technology offering now includes: Public PCs, WiFi, Contactless Printing, Scanning and Photocopying services, 3D printing facilities and 6 Magic Tables.



GROW IT FORWARD CAMPAIGN

The **Grow It Forward** campaign was designed to help the nation eat well by inspiring and food at home while connecting with friends and family to join them. Packs included seeds for beetroot, carrots, peas, and tomatoes, as well as a growing guide, postcard and gift tags to help you share with others. Offaly Libraries posted out more than **900 kits** to community groups, schools and individuals around the county.



OFFALY LIBRARIES HELPING THIRD LEVEL STUDENTS TO STAY CONNECTED WITH EDUROAM

As part of the **eduroam Everywhere** initiative by HEAnet, Ireland's National Education and Research Network, all Offaly libraries are now connected to the eduroam network. Eduroam stands for education roaming. It provides secure and easy-to-use wifi access in more than 12,000 locations across 106 countries worldwide. Students whose home institution participates in eduroam can simply open their laptop or mobile device within our libraries to have immediate internet connectivity.



966 students connected to the service since its introduction in September 2021.

AGE FRIENDLY LIBRARIES, POSITIVE AGEING WEEK 2021 – A SUCCESS STORY!

Bealtaine 2021 Festival enjoyed much success on our online social media channels with a traditional music session, poetry, book displays and a very popular interview 'Down Memory Lane' between local GAA referee Brian Gavin and Joe Dooley of Offaly GAA fame which was **viewed over 3,500 times**. A successful craft exhibition was also showcased on Offaly Libraries social media platforms. The exhibition displayed local craft talent and included examples of painting, baking, gardening and beautiful knitting and crocheting from patrons countywide. To help our community make full use of our brilliant **free** digital library, Offaly Library Service launched our newest Age Friendly service – Library Digital Ambassadors Programme in May 2021.

Positive Ageing Week 2021 was celebrated online with wonderful contributions from staff poetry readings to a music session from Ballyboy Comhaltas, a video which was **viewed over 1,000 times**.

Offaly Libraries organised free umbrellas for older patrons, branded with the Offaly Libraries logo which proved very popular. 250 umbrellas were handed out over Positive Ageing Week 2021. Kilcormac Library hosted a lovely afternoon of tea and chats in the garden. Our Age Friendly Library



Ambassador, Michelle spoke on Midlands 103 'Chatters & Natters' show in promotion of Offaly Libraries role in Positive Ageing Week 2021 and about our age friendly resources available in all libraries.

LET'S PLAY IN OFFALY



Offaly Libraries were funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as part of the National Play Day Funding Scheme in 2021.

On Friday, 9th July, children in Offaly collected their "build your own" kits for kites, Harry Potter spells and much more from their local library across the county as part of the guided play programme. Play packs with lots of fun toys for different age groups were also available for collection in our libraries for more self-directed play possibilities for children and young people to play in Offaly.

SEACHTAIN NA GAELGE LE ENERGIA 2021

Offaly libraries hosted **14 well attended** events for Seachtain na Gaeilge. Over **150 people participated in our Seachtain na Gaeilge lunchtime talks** kindly hosted by Cllr. John Carroll. Library staff hosted four other online events during Seachtain Na Gaeilge, including Toddler Times through Irish and welcomed the return of Conradh na Gaeilge meetings over Zoom. **Our overall social media reach for the fortnight was over 60,000.**



INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES & VIRTUAL PROGRAMMES:

Restrictions due to COVID-19 during 2021 did not curtail Offaly Libraries innovation and creativity in community and cultural programming. Staff delivered an array of online and hybrid offerings as public health restrictions allowed.

Offaly Libraries acquired SimpleBooklet software making digital brochures of our programmes easily available to patrons. These brochures have been downloaded 11,612 times by members of the public.

SUPPORTING THE FOUR NATIONAL RIGHT TO READ INITIATIVES



Right to Read is a national programme that takes place annually to support literacy and reading development. Offaly Libraries co-ordinated a host of events for each strand of the programme, all of which were a huge success!

SPRING INTO STORYTIME 2021

Library staff “zoomed” into classrooms around the county and hosted 27 live story sessions with 485 children! 54 storytime videos posted online with a total of 4,643 views on Facebook!

SUMMER STARS 2021

Offaly Libraries Summer Stars programme was a combination of virtual and traditional elements in 2021. 51 events were held throughout the Summer and

highlights included Outdoor Storytimes, Online Quizzes and ‘Find your Offaly Olympians’ Treasure Hunts. 1,187 children in Offaly signed up to participate and all children who completed their reading card were entered into a draw to win a Kindle from their local branch library

CHILDREN’S BOOK FESTIVAL

Children’s Book Festival 2021 was celebrated with an array of online events and activities hosted over Offaly Libraries Zoom Platform. Renowned authors, illustrators and sports personalities facilitated live readings, writing workshops, art workshops and Q&A sessions. 3,231 children from 161 school classes participated in these events and 600 Crafty Takeaway bags were distributed to children via their local branch library.

FAMILY TIME AT YOUR LIBRARY

Library staff curated a fun filled Christmas programme with 19 pre-recorded online videos reaching 29,349 people and receiving engagement of 4,907.

78 classes zoomed to the library for Christmas story-times with 1,448 pupils from primary schools and crèches enjoying these festive themed events. The response from teachers and students was overwhelmingly positive.

162 fun Crafty Bags were made available to younger visitors of the libraries and mindful colouring pages were made available to all adult visitors.



FIRST 5 LITTLE LIBRARY INITIATIVE, PHASE 1 & 2

The First 5 Little Library Initiative is a collaborative project between the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA).



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
 Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

The project aims to support the development of little libraries in early learning and care settings and encourage a love of books and reading among our youngest children. Under this initiative, early learning and care settings collected a free book bag along with other resources from their local Offaly library branch. This initiative encouraged membership and use of the library network among early learning and care services and among young children and their families.



Offaly Libraries delivered two stages in the First 5 Little Library Book Bag Initiative via Early learning centres and public library branches.

CREATIVE IRELAND 2021

Creative Ireland supports a number of programming events in the Library. For **Cruinniú na nÓg 2021**, the 12th June was a special day of creativity for children. Offaly Libraries hosted 35 workshops amazing events covering art, science, singing, music and crafts

Clár Eire Iddánach
 Creative Ireland
 Programme
 2017-2022



There was a total of 490 participants for Cruinniú and 7 videos attracted 3,149 views. A first for Cruinniú in Offaly,

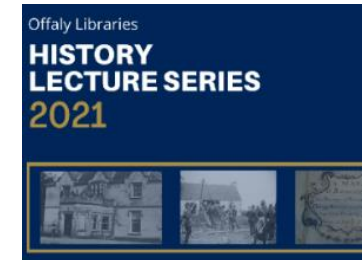
our events were attended by a global audience with children in Spain, the Middle East, America and Australia attending via Zoom! As part of our Cruinniú na nÓg celebrations, we were delighted to welcome back our award-winning Offaly Libraries Comic Con.

An online **Comic Con hosted 10 workshops for children with a 181 participants.** There were 2 online competitions 'Create a Comic Character' and the Cosplay competition.



OFFALY LIBRARIES HISTORY LECTURE SERIES 2021

This was a four part lecture series by Dr. Ciaran Reilly commissioned by Offaly Libraries. Lectures included topics such as: The 'Big House' in Offaly: country houses and estates (commissioned in partnership with Offaly History); and The 1798 rebellion in Offaly. The series was funded by Creative Ireland and videos are available on Offaly Libraries' [Facebook](#) and [YOUTUBE](#) channels to date there have been 3,228 views.



HEALTHY IRELAND AT YOUR LIBRARY

The Healthy Ireland programme went online for 2021 with a total of **19 events** offered online including Online Cyber Safe Kids workshops for primary schools, Writing for Wellbeing course with E.R. Murray and Online Wildflowers Masterclasses with Aoife Munn. These events saw a combined total of **200 attendees.**

A pre-recorded six-part series with Leona McDonnell on Mindfulness during Pregnancy was received positively on our social media with almost 400 engagements and a reach of 11, 385 people.

WORK MATTERS AT THE LIBRARY

This initiative continues to be developed throughout the branch network. We had a very successful series of lunchtime webinars in 2021 with over **60 attendees in total**. The feedback was excellent. Two presentations were also delivered to Business Development Classes in OLDC during 2021.



Work Matters at the Library
SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT

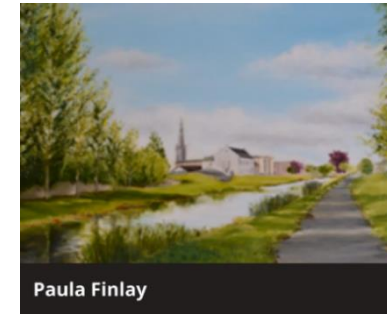
Work Matters at Offaly Libraries
Lunchtime Bite-Sized Webinar
Wednesday, 14th April
1:10pm for 20 minutes
Looking after your mental health while working from home.

Book your place here:
<https://bit.ly/3soWpjv>



DIGITAL EXHIBITIONS

Offaly Libraries displayed 12 Digital Art Exhibitions which animated street facing libraries throughout 2021. Below are a few examples.



OFFALY ARCHIVES

The formal opening of Offaly Archives was a major highlight in 2021. Malcolm Noonan, T.D., Minister of State for Heritage, Virginia Teehan, Chief Executive of the Heritage Council, and Martina Maloney, Chair Designate of the Heritage Council attended on 18 November 2021 and were welcomed by Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, Cllr. Declan Harvey, Chief Executive of Offaly County Council, Anna-Marie Delaney, President of Offaly History, Helen Bracken and Secretary of Offaly History, Michael Byrne. It was a wonderful event and all were impressed by the scale and quality of archives service achieved through this unique partnership project.

Covid-19 restrictions affected nearly all aspects of the service in 2021, but despite closures until May there was an overall increase in researcher visits. Email queries and

online activity also increased and the online catalogue grew in content and usage with 15 catalogues added and 275 digital objects uploaded. There was a 54% increase in user numbers and a similar increase in page views (8,565 users and 62,000 webpage views).

Offaly Archives acquired ten new collections during the year, mostly through donations and there was one notable archive-to-archive transfer of a collection; that being school registers from Parsonstown Model School (1860-1985) and Geashill National School (1889-1972), transferred from the National Archives of Ireland to Offaly County Library's collection. Special projects undertaken by the service included a survey of the Offaly Board of Health records to ascertain the scope of records held. A notable outreach activity on a national project was a showcase of Offaly's Grand jury records in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin/Beyond 2022 Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury. The archivist continued to engage with the wider archival community by providing training seminars and lectures remotely, and offered internships to trainee archivists which proved beneficial to the service.

OFFALY LIBRARIES GRANT AWARDS SUCCESS IN 2021



Offaly Library Service was successful in securing funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development for a variety of innovative and far reaching library programmes and projects.



Offaly Libraries achieved a grant of **€20,392.80 from the Dormant Account Fund (awarded by DRCD)** for Library Supports for socially excluded and disadvantaged communities. This funded the installation of **Hearing Loops in all libraries; improvement of accessibility in Daingean Library; a curated school STEAM programme and an Autumn Parenting Programme**, delivered in partnership with Laois Libraries. All projects were 10% matched funded by Offaly County Council.

OFFALY LIBRARIES 2021/22 SCHOOL STEAM PROGRAMME

This innovative STEAM programme for primary schools in Offaly was a programming first for Offaly Library Service. All 6 national Science festivals were featured in the programme- Space Week, Maths Week, Science Week, Engineers Week, Tech Week and Biodiversity Week with specific workshops to showcase each topic. The aim is to give children the opportunity to engage with and explore **science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM) subjects** in a fun and stimulating environment. There were 23 workshops for the STEAM school programme in 2021 with **56 participating classes with an attendance of 821 students.**



OFFALY & LAOIS LIBRARIES IN PARTNERSHIP: PARENTING SUPPORT PROGRAMME, AUTUMN SERIES



The Parenting Programme covered very relevant topics affecting all areas of parenting babies to teens. The series included a variety of interesting and well-known speakers including Dr David Coleman, Dr Mary O’Kane, and Sarah Sproule. The webinars are a unique way for parents to hear professional experts discuss topics that impact children both in and out of school. In 2021 there were 32 online events with over 600 participants.

DRCD FUNDING SUCCESS FOR MY OPEN LIBRARY UPGRADE WORKS IN LIBRARIES

Offaly Libraries secured a grant of €60,558 from DRCD for My Open Library upgrades in Tullamore and Banagher Libraries. This funding allows for significant improvements in our technology systems and will improve the user experience of MOL services for years to come. The project was 10% matched funded by Offaly County Council and works are nearing completion.



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

HEALTHY IRELAND AT YOUR LIBRARY 2021 FUNDING



Offaly Libraries was successful in achieving grants of €8,749.18 to support public libraries delivery of Healthy Ireland and other library services in line with public health recommendations. This funding supported the creation of Healthy Reading Zones in library branches.

CYPSY FUNDING SUCCESS FOR SENSORY PROVISION IN LIBRARIES

Offaly Libraries was awarded a €5,000 seed funding grant from Laois Offaly CYPSC – delivering a new Sensory Offaly Online Webinar series and additions to the Autism Friendly collections and equipment for the benefit of Offaly citizens countywide.

SENSORY OFFALY ONLINE WEBINAR SERIES 2021

The Sensory Offaly webinar series was organised by Offaly Libraries as part of our larger Sensory Offaly Programme, with support from Laois Offaly CYPSC and Healthy Ireland. This online programme consisted of 14 webinars and workshops which saw an attendance of 141 participants.





The Spectrum Series has been set up by Laois Offaly Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) 'Learning and Development' subgroup in response to a need for greater community autism supports in Laois and Offaly.

The Spectrum Series was a new 6-part webinar series including a webinar on the services available from Laois and Offaly Libraries.

- Increase active membership – encourage users back into library spaces and increase engagement
- Increase promotion via monthly newsletters, interactive online programmes and social media

PRIORITIES FOR 2022 INCLUDE:

- Publish a new Interim Library Development plan for Offaly Library Service
- Progress plans and grant applications for the capital development of a new library and arts base in Edenderry
- Update library building facilities across the county
- Implement the new national Library Management System (LMS)
- Increase promotion of library services especially through online channels
- Libraries at the centre of communities; continue to promote social inclusion and develop innovative partnerships and events
- Increase library engagement by developing traditional and digital collections, services and library technology
- Further promote Offaly Archives Service
- Review and evaluate library service activities to the benefit of the community

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

OFFALY LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Offaly LCDC has been established for the purposes of developing, coordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. Offaly County Council was one of ten “front runner” LCDC’s which commenced operating in February 2014, with formal establishment of the LCDC in November 2014.

THE FUNCTIONS OF OFFALY LCDC

Functions of the Local Community Development Committee are set out under Section 128A of Local Government Reform Act 2014. They are as follows:

- Prepare and adopt the community elements of the 6 year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).
- Implement or arrange for the implementation of the community elements of the LECP.
- Coordinate the management and oversee the implementation of the programmes that have been approved either by the local authority or by agreement between the LCDC and other public bodies.
- Ensure effectiveness, coordination, consistency and the avoidance of duplication between publicly funded local and community development programmes.
- Optimise resources for the benefit of local communities and improve the efficiency with which

publicly funded local and community development resources are used.

LCDC MEETINGS

The Offaly LCDC held 9 meetings during 2021 as follows – 11th February, 11th March, 13th May, 8th July, 9th September, 14th October, 11th November and 10th December. Members participated in LCDC meetings via Zoom and in-house in line with Government restrictions for COVID-19.



May 2021 LCDC meeting

MEMBERSHIP OF OFFALY LCDC IN 2021

The 19 member LCDC has broad representation from public and private interests including business, local development, education, enterprise, agriculture, voluntary and local authority members. The following membership changes occurred during 2021:

STATUTORY INTERESTS: SECTOR – STATE AGENCIES

- Mr. Ryan McKay, replaced Mr. James Carney as Dept. of Social Protection representative;
- Ms. Anne-Marie Keane replaced Mr. Tony Dalton as LOETB representative.

NON-STATUTORY INTERESTS: SECTOR – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK

- Ms. Deirdre Arnold and Ms. Olive O’Sullivan replaced Ms. Liz Fleming
- Ms. Margaret Murphy as elected PPN Social Inclusion representatives.

OTHER CIVIC SOCIETY OR LOCAL COMMUNITY INTERESTS

- Mr. Pdraig Hannon, Construction Industry Federation, replaced Mr. Dominic Doheny, CIF
- Mr. Philip O’Brien, Offaly Tourism Marketing (CLG), replaced Ms. Christina Byrne, Slieve Bloom Rural Development Co-Operative.

Offaly LCDC acknowledges the contribution of all outgoing members during their time as representatives and welcomes new members to the Committee.

Chair and Vice Chair: Cllr. D. Harvey held the position of Chair of Offaly LCDC and Ms. S. McDonagh held the position of Vice Chair of Offaly LCDC.

Statutory Interests (9)		
Sector	Members Name	Organisation
Local Authority Elected Members	Cllr. Declan Harvey	Offaly County Council (Chair)
	Cllr. John Leahy	Offaly County Council
	Cllr. Noel Cribbin	Offaly County Council
Local Authority Officials	Ms. Anna Marie Delaney	Offaly County Council
	Ms. Orla Martin, Head of Enterprise	Offaly County Council
State Agencies	Mr. Ryan McKay	Dept. of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
	Ms. Anne-Marie Keane	Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board
	Mr. Con Feighery	Teagasc
	Ms. Ann Sheerin	Health Service Executive
Non Statutory Interests (10)		
Sector	Members Name	Organisation
Public Participation Network	Ms. Sylvia Sweeney	Community & Voluntary Sector
	Ms. Sinead McDonagh	Community & Voluntary Sector (Vice Chair)
	Ms. Deirdre Arnold	Social Inclusion Sector
	Ms. Olive O’Sullivan	Social Inclusion Sector
	Ms. Rebekah Keaveny	Environment Sector
Local and Community Development	Mr. Brendan O’Loughlin	Offaly Integrated Local Development Co.
Other Civic Society or Local Community Interests	Mr. Pdraig Hannon	Construction Industry Federation
	Mr. Richard Scally	Irish Farmers Association
	Mr. Fechin Daly	Construction Industry
	Mr. Philip O’Brien	Offaly Tourism Marketing (CLG)

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF LCDC IN 2021

The following key priorities were progressed and developed in 2021 by the LCDC:

- Implementation of the Offaly Local Development Strategy and approval of the LEADER/Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 funding and the Transitional LEADER Programme funding;
- Implementation, monitoring and review of Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022;
- Implementation and review of the Offaly Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021;
- Implementation of the Offaly Community Enhancement Programme;
- Implementation of the Community Response Forum and the Community Call Helpline;
- Implementation of the Social Enterprise Capital Grant Scheme 2021;
- Provision of support to the Community Sector and affording a voice through the Offaly PPN Network;
- Implementation of the Offaly Healthy Ireland fund;
- Establishment of the Offaly Traveller Interagency Group;
- Progression and improvement of the health and physical activity status of the people of Offaly by Offaly Sports Partnership.
- Development and launch of Offaly Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 'Active Offaly 2021-2025'.

LEADER/RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2014-2020

LEADER is a community-led approach to local development funded through Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. The main tool for the application of the LEADER approach to area development and involving local representatives in decision-making is the Local Action Group (LAG). Offaly Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is the designated Local Action Group (LAG) and has responsibility for the delivery of LEADER Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and the Transitional LEADER Programme 2021-2022 in the County and for approval of LEADER Funding. The Implementing Partner is Offaly Local Development Company.

During the period 2016-2020 in excess of €6.5m of LEADER funding was invested in innovative community and private enterprise projects throughout County Offaly and expenditure on these projects continues. The aim of the LEADER Rural Development Programme is to promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas and provides funding and other supports such as advice, training and mentoring. The Programme includes 3 themes that reflect the overarching needs of rural Ireland. Each theme contains a number of sub-themes which are considered the key areas in need of the greatest support and have the greatest potential to promote the sustainable development of rural communities.

Theme	Sub-Theme
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Rural Tourism
	Enterprise Development
	Rural Towns
	Broadband
SOCIAL INCLUSION	Basic Services
	Rural Youth
RURAL ENVIRONMENT	Water Resources
	Biodiversity
	Renewable Energy

opportunity to explore and develop projects for funding in thematic areas which are likely to feature strongly in the next EU-funded programme, e.g. projects which address the climate agenda, digital transformation and projects that utilise the Smart Village approach to local area development.

European Union Recovery Instrument (EURI) funding was also allocated to LAGs as part of the Transitional Programme. EURI funding is allocated in line with the EURI objectives and is provided to support local communities and enterprises with an opportunity to respond, recover and adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Transitional LEADER Programme commenced on 1st April, 2021 and acceptance of applications from project promoters for the allocated EURI funding commenced on 30th July, 2021. The total Transitional LEADER Programme Project Allocation for Offaly LAG is €1,780,874 and includes €1,232,913 Transitional funds and €547,961 EURI funds.

Following a capacity building programme with communities who had not benefitted previously from LEADER funding in 2021, a significant number of expressions of interest for LEADER grant supports were received from local community and enterprise groups under the Transitional Programme. During 2021 Offaly LCDC approved 17 Transitional LEADER Programme Projects totalling €356,942.53 and LEADER claim expenditure in the sum of €1,032,426.59 was paid to

TRANSITIONAL LEADER PROGRAMME

Due to delays at EU level in agreeing the new CAP regulations and the wider EU budget for the period 2021-2027, there is a gap between the current 2014-2020 LEADER Programme and the next EU framework Programme. The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, T.D., introduced a Transitional LEADER Programme in April 2021 to bridge the gap between the EU programming periods. The Transitional Programme is delivered through the current LAG and Implementing Partner structures.

One of the main objectives of The Transitional Programme is to provide a particular opportunity for LAGs and Implementing Partners to work closely with communities, and particularly those who have not previously benefited from LEADER funding, to build their capacity in preparation for the next programming period and ensure weaker communities are not left behind. It also offers the

project promoters. (Transitional Claims of €24,613.50 and Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 Claims of €1,007,813.09).

A detailed breakdown of Project Approvals and Claim Expenditure for 2021 in respect of the Transitional LEADER Programme and Claim Expenditure for 2021 under the Rural Development LEADER Programme is outlined as follows:

Theme	Sub-Theme	TRANSITIONAL & EURI LEADER PROGRAMME			RURAL DEVELOPMENT LEADER
		No. OF PROJECTS APPROVED	PROJECT APPROVAL JUL-DEC21	ACTUAL CLAIM EXPENDITURE	ACTUAL CLAIM EXPENDITURE JUL-DEC21
Economic Development	Rural	1	91,756.78	0	87,011.48
	Enterprise Development	2	79,726.51	0	261,758.43
	Rural Towns	1	16,605	0	193,151.96
	Broadband	0	0	0	8,624.99
Social Inclusion	Basic	5	144,674.06	11,577	231,462.23
	Rural Youth	0	0	0	8895.90
Rural Environment	Water	0	0	0	21,130.73
	Biodiversity	1	2,850	2,850	13,540.34
	Renewable Energy	3	21,330.18	10,186.50	182,237.03
Totals		17	€356,942.53	€24,613.50	€1,007,813.09

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY ACTIVATION PROGRAMME 2018-2022 (SICAP)

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is the primary social inclusion programme of Government and provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion at a local level through engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. SICAP is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development with co-funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL). PEIL's priority areas for investment revolve around the activation of the unemployed, social and labour market inclusion, education and youth employment.

Offaly Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is the Contracting Authority for SICAP and oversees, coordinates and manages the delivery of SICAP and directs funding to the Programme Implementer. The Programme Implementer is Offaly Local Development Company who delivers SICAP at a local level as per the Annual Plan, works with target groups and beneficiaries, and reports to the LCDC on progress in carrying out actions and achieving targets.

The Programme aims to address high and persistent levels of deprivation and to target and support those who are disadvantaged, hardest to reach and less likely to use mainstream services through targeted and innovative

locally led approaches. The SICAP Programme has two main goals which are:

Goal 1	Supporting Communities
Goal 2	Supporting Individuals

All beneficiaries of the Programme supports must belong to one of 13 pre-defined target groups which have been set for SICAP:

Disadvantaged Children and Families	People living in Disadvantaged Communities
Disadvantaged Young People (aged 15-24)	People with Disabilities
Disadvantaged Women	Members of the Roma Community
Emerging Needs Group	Members of the Traveller Community
Lone Parents	The Disengaged from the Labour Market (Economically inactive)
Low Income Workers/Households	The Unemployed
New Communities	

The LCDC is responsible for the monitoring, review, and annual planning of the nationally-funded SICAP Programme which is delivered by Offaly Local Development Company across the County with an overall budget of €783,277 for 2021. In 2021, all key performance indicators were achieved and exceeded strengthening community development, providing personal development and well-being supports, providing

education and training, and preparing people for employment. A number of supports were provided to the Emerging Needs Target Group for 2021 'Older People who are Socially Isolated'.

Table: SICAP 2021 Lot Targets and Key Indicators



 Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme LOT TARGETS OFFALY COUNTY (12-1)	TARGET 2021	ACHIEVED 2021
Key Performance Indicator 1 Community Groups	65	86
Key Performance Indicator 2: Individuals	469	512
% KPI 2 Living in Disadvantaged Areas	32%	36.89%
Emerging Needs Group:	Older People who are Socially Isolated	

Table: SICAP 2021 key indicators

 Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme KEY SICAP INDICATORS ACHIEVED	Achieved 2021
Children that received an educational or developmental support	683
Recipients of employment support	64
Progression into self-employment	17

During the course of the year, the LCDC completed and approved:

- The Annual Planning Process and approved the 2021 SICAP Annual Plan.

- The End of Year Performance Review in respect of 2020.
- Mid Programme Review and Statement of Priorities.
- The Mid Year Performance Review of the 2021 Programme.
- SICAP Case Study – Momentum 2021.
- Appraisal of the proposed 2022 Annual Plan.

The Empowering Communities Working Group held meetings on 4th February 2021, 1st July 2021 and 7th October, 2021.

The Pobal Annual Engagement Meeting was held on 7th October, 2021, the main focus being the Mid Programme Review and Statement of Priorities.

EXTENSION OF SICAP PROGRAMME

In July 2021, The Department of Rural and Community Development extended the SICAP Funding Agreement for a period of 12 months, up to 31st December 2023.

MID-PROGRAMME REVIEW AND STATEMENT OF PRIORITIES

Subsequent to the SICAP Programme extension the Minister of State for Community Development and Charities, Joe O’Brien, T.D., requested a Mid Programme Review to be carried out locally, between the LCDCs and LDCs and to collectively agree on a Statement of Priorities for the remainder of the SICAP programme which will inform the strategy and actions of the Annual Plans for 2022 and 2023. This Review examined where the SICAP Programme is at, reflected on where the emphasis should

be in the future and considered priorities for the remainder of the Programme. The LCDC members approved The Statement of Priorities 2022-2023 at the October, 2021 LCDC meeting agreeing the priorities for the Offaly Lot as follows:

- New communities with particular focus on those living in Direct Provision
- Mental Health (including youth)
- Older People and isolation

OFFALY SICAP SUPPORTS

To date under the current Programme which commenced in 2018, Offaly SICAP has provided the following supports:

- Over 11,000 interventions with clients.
- 4,100 children have engaged in projects.
- 209 community groups have been supported.
- Over 1,300 people have accessed training (1027 unique individuals)
- 153 people to self-employment



LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN 2016-2021



The LECP is a six-year plan which sets out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the County. Offaly LCDC has progressed the development of the LECP

in 2021 and a review of the Community and Economic elements of the LECP was completed during Q3 and Q4 2021. Preparations for the next LECP 2022-2027 have commenced.

COMMUNITY CCTV

A grant aid scheme is provided to support local communities wishing to install and maintain Community CCTV security systems in their area, with the aim of increasing public safety and deterring illegal or anti-social behaviour. The scheme makes funding available of 60% of the total capital cost up to a maximum of €40,000 for new community CCTV schemes.

The Community CCTV Grant Aid Scheme is run by the Department of Justice and Equality and continues to be progressed in Offaly, based on the model which is being developed in Laois where a CCTV scheme is approaching approval in Mountmellick.

In Offaly, Project Team meetings to progress applications

have been held since the beginning of 2020. The meetings are attended by the applicant schemes, key officers from An Garda Síochána (AGS), and staff from Offaly County Council's Community, IT & Planning Sections. Meetings have been held with the following Community CCTV schemes to progress their applications:

- Arthur Elliott Community CCTV Scheme (formerly Coolderry/Kilcolman/Aghancon CCTV Scheme)
- Belmont Community CCTV Scheme
- Rahan Community CCTV Scheme
- Portarlinton Business Association CCTV Scheme (mostly in County Laois)
- Edenderry CCTV Scheme

COMMUNITY CALL HELPLINE

Offaly County Council established a Community Call Helpline which operated from 30th March 2020 until October 2021 and which worked in conjunction with the Offaly Community Response Forum.

The Helpline ensured that vulnerable people in the county could contact and ask for support such as delivering food, fuel and other essential household items: prescribed medicines, hot meals and transport to medical appointments. The helplines were manned by staff from the Community & Culture Section. In the initial months of the pandemic when calls were at their highest, six Offaly

Library staff were also temporarily redeployed to assist the Helpline.

An update on the number of calls and how they were responded to was provided to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government each evening at 8pm. A summary of monthly calls received is provided below:

2021	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Total
No.	19	11	9	13	9	3	3	3	4	10	551
%	3.4	2.0	1.6	2.4	1.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	1.8	100

The strengths of the Community Call Helpline in Offaly were:

- The speed with which Community Call Helpline and the Community Response Forum were put into place.
- The hard work of community and voluntary groups across Offaly who put supports in place as soon as possible, e.g. Meals on Wheels services were greatly expanded.
- Offaly County Council, government agencies and community and voluntary groups worked together quickly to identify needs and put in place effective responses to them.
- New relationships were made between organisations who were members of the Community Response Forum, and pre-existing relationships were strengthened.

- The work allowed many vulnerable people who services they were not aware of to be identified and supported.

OFFALY COMMUNITY RESPONSE FORUM

The Offaly Community Response Forum was set up on 30th March 2020 and continued to meet regularly during 2021. The members of the Forum are Offaly County Council, HSE, GAA, OLDC, An Garda Síochána, ALONE, SVP, An POST, Offaly PPN, Local Link, Citizens Information Service, Túsla, IFA, Offaly Traveller Movement, Kildare Volunteer Centre (covering Offaly), Civil Defence, Offaly Library Service, Family Resource Centres, and Offaly Community Services. The Forum ensured an efficient and coordinated response to the Covid 19 pandemic was provided by the relevant agencies and support services.

In October 2021 due to the reopening of the economy and society, as well as the fall in demand for the services provided under the Community Call initiative, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage informed local authorities that there was no longer a need to continue the operation of their Community Response Fora and the Forum was stood down.

OFFALY PPN

Offaly Public Participation Network (OPPN) is an independent network of Community and Voluntary groups and organisations. Our Vision has been developed through a bottom up approach encompassing the vision of the PPN

membership across County Offaly. It provides the mandate for PPN representatives to voice the views of the PPN membership/ Offaly citizens in the decision-making processes.

Offaly PPN focuses on supporting the Community sector and providing a voice through the Network for the Community, Social Inclusion and Environment pillars. Providing monthly updates on funding opportunities to Offaly LCDC; also providing information on upcoming consultations and other relevant workshops or training opportunities to the membership. The PPN actively engages in the Community Response Forum and the Community Call Helpline updating the Master Sheet of Contacts for the Helpline. Current membership has increased to 600 groups under the Community, Environment and Social Inclusion pillars.

The PPN contributes at Strategic Policy Committee's and Joint Policing Committees and links with key stakeholders in Arts, Sports Partnership, Healthy Offaly, LEO, Town and Village Planning, Age Friendly Initiatives and a range of Community and Voluntary Support services across the county.

The PPN engaged in the Pride of Place Competition, CCTV actions and completed the Community Wellbeing Statement for the county. In 2021 communications were carried out via Zoom which encouraged ongoing upskilling and coordination on a much greater level among PPN representatives and Community groups across the county.

Offaly PPN Plenary and the Safety and Security workshop with Conor O' Leary Muintir Na Tíre and Sgt. Graham Kavanagh via Zoom, are just some of the online actions in 2021.

Training in 2021 was rolled out during the day and in the evening. This included the following online training:

- Committee Skills Training
- Completing Funding Applications
- Generating an Annual Budget
- Alternative ways of Fundraising

During November 2021, three Funding Opportunities workshops were held in each of the three Municipal Districts. The presenters: OCC, PPN and OLDC delivered via a hybrid model of in person and Zoom.

Elections took place in Spring and Autumn to address vacancies on a range of boards and committees.

OFFALY AGE FRIENDLY PROGRAMME

Offaly Age Friendly continues to work through the Actions in the Age Friendly Strategy 2018 – 2021. Engaging and supporting older people across the county to grow old in a safe environment where they are considered valuable members of society and enjoy opportunities supports and services.

While Covid-19 presented many challenges for the target group, Offaly Age Friendly Alliance continued to meet via Zoom and engaged in a number of key actions.

A SELECTIONS OF AGE FRIENDLY ALLIANCE ACTIONS:

- Connecting the Faithful Newsletter focusing on fun and entertaining articles delivered by Age Friendly Alliance members to households across Offaly in 2021 at regular intervals during the year. The Newsletter is a collaboration amongst the Alliance membership.
- Chatters & Matters Radio Programme instigated by Offaly Older Persons Network. Every Sunday Morning 8- 9 am on Midlands 103. This Strategy Action was initiated by the Older Persons Network through the Age Friendly Alliance: A Tri County Initiative with Laois and Westmeath. The Tri county working group meet fortnightly to develop the content for the programme and review progress on a regular basis.
- Bealtaine events took place throughout the county via the library Services.
- Positive Ageing week. Libraries in conjunction with the PPN, An Garda Síochána and the Library staff presented older people with a bag of goodies including, books, seeds to plant, tea bags and cookies, information leaflets and much more.
- Offaly/Westmeath Music Generation provided an opportunity to learn how to play the Ukulele as an Intergenerational project. It is gaining momentum across the County via online learning.
- As online opportunities gained traction, Offaly Sports Partnership created Age Friendly physical activity programmes including: dancing which people could follow from their own homes.

- Local Link continued to support older people by collecting and delivering groceries and prescriptions and checking in on their clients, primarily Older People while adhering to Covid-19 Guidelines and managing transport needs as required.
- Training took place during 2021 in advance of work in Clara to achieve Age Friendly Town status
- A number of Gatherings took place during 2021 both online and in person including: music, dancing, storytelling and poetry sessions to address social Isolation.
- A writing project was undertaken with OLDC, LOETB and the Older Persons Council which culminated in the production of a book of Short Stories 'The Way We Were'.
- The Age Friendly Interdepartmental Team met on 3 occasions during 2021 focusing on planning for Clara Age Friendly Pilot.
- The Age Friendly Strategy was reviewed and plans are underway for a New Strategy in 2022.

OFFALY COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARDS 2021

Offaly County Council in partnership with the Offaly Independent newspaper held their inaugural Offaly Community Recognition Awards 2021 on Friday 18th June 2021. The awards were held in order to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding community efforts by individuals, groups and volunteers in County Offaly during the past difficult year.

The high number of entries and nominations received

under the 7 categories were an acknowledgement of the outstanding community efforts that individuals and groups have delivered in County Offaly during the Covid pandemic.

Both the Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, and the Chief Executive acknowledged the great variety of community supports which were put in place in County Offaly, and these were reflected in the category Winners and Runners Up.

COMHAIRLE NA NÓG 2021

Comhairle na nÓg are child and youth councils which give children and young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies. In addition to the personal benefits for individual young people, these processes make an important contribution to policy development locally and nationally by ensuring that the voices of young people are part of the decision-making process in areas that affect their lives. The core programme of Comhairle na nÓg centres on young people identifying, prioritising and progressing topics important to them who then try to influence local decision-makers to achieve their desired outcome, impact or change. Comhairle na nÓg represents young people at County Council level and is funded through the Department of Children, Equality Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). Offaly Comhairle na nÓg held 15 meetings in 2021.

The chosen topic for this year's Project was **Climate Action Awareness**.

Trash-Talk App: Development of the "Trash Talk" App. an app for use on apple and android devices which will help schools in Offaly become single use plastic free. The Trash-Talk app was showcased at the virtual exhibition at the ENCORE conference 2021



Plastic-free Schools: Launching a single use plastic free campaign and workshops in 8 secondary schools in Offaly. In order to achieve more awareness about the issue of plastic waste in schools in Offaly, Comhairle na nÓg collaborated with the Environment section in Offaly County Council and organised workshops in a number of secondary schools in Offaly on 'Education for Sustainability'.

Spring-Clean: The Executive completed a Spring Clean Litter Pick around the Tullamore Grand Canal. They succeeded on collecting 8 bags of litter. It was the first time many of them had met in person since restrictions began in March 2020 and it was a fun day!



Ted x Junior: Three of our Comhairle members gave very engaging Ted talks on the world wide platform Ted Junior recorded on stage at the Lexicon Dun Laoghaire. The Comhairle contributed to many consultations but not limited to the following:

- Survey consultation with Galway and Trinity on effects of Covid on teenagers.
- Climate Conversation with the Public Participation Network.
- The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to get the views of children on their experience of being a child in Ireland.
- LOETB Consultation.
- Period Poverty Launch – This initiative was very much welcomed by the Executive who believe that no woman, girl, trans or non-binary person should be excluded from daily activities due to not being able to access sanitary products.
- ‘Women and Diversity in Local Government’. It is hoped this Policy will create more awareness and help more women and more people from diverse backgrounds run for local elections in 2024. The Executive are very proud of the contribution they made to this Policy.
- Consultation and meeting on the naming of the Tullamore Arts centre.

Comhairle AGM - This was held online on 25th November. There was a perfect balance struck of having fun, and learning while getting the voice of the young person heard.

Each part of the AGM was well received by the young people. The Guest Speaker, Mr Duncan Stewart, stirred up passionate ideas and conversations in relation to climate change, the environment and how people can make a difference as an individual and a group. The top 6 potential work topics as prioritised by young people were identified as follows: Mental Health (42%); Facilities for young people (9%); Unbalanced home/school life (10%); Discrimination (6%); Social media issues (10%); Wi-Fi/Internet problems (15%).

Disability Participation and Awareness Fund 2021:

In October 2021 the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth issued a call for proposals from local authorities under a Disability Awareness and Participation Fund (DPAF). The purpose of DPAF 2021 is to provide funding for Local Authorities to support the participation of people with disabilities in local activities, to help remove barriers to community involvement and to support the promotion and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in communities.

On 22nd December, 2021, Offaly County Council was awarded funding of €75,000 based on the application made. It is expected that there will be an annual call for proposals under this fund in future. The implementation period is 1st April, 2022 to 31st March, 2023. The proposed breakdown of the spend reflects the following themes as set out in the 2021 funding call and which cross

a number of Offaly County Council service areas:

1. UNCRPD Promotion within local authorities and/or at local level
2. Disability Awareness Capacity Building and Training
3. Participation and Engagement in community life for persons with disabilities
4. Accessible Public and Community Spaces

ARTS SERVICE

Offaly County Council arts service is charged with investing and developing high quality, imaginative arts activity, with and for the people of Offaly and visitors to the county. In doing so, the arts office advocates for and clearly communicates the significant role that the arts play in enriching the wellbeing of society, of our citizens, and in enhancing the public realm. This is achieved through our strategic planning processes, with an annual programme that is delivered in cooperation with artists, cultural producers, community groups and local stakeholders and, involving regional and national partners. Offaly arts service assists with the development of a range of key county-wide arts programmes such as: *FilmOffaly*, *Music Generation*, *Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival*, *Anam Beo - Arts and Health*, *Culture Night*, along with providing ongoing support and advice to the many artists, creative practitioners, festivals, and community groups undertaking arts and culture projects across the county.

ARTS PROGRAMMING YOUTH ARTS RESEARCH

The research report '*The Makings: Fostering Youth Creativity*', carried out by consultant Angela Ryan Whyte to examine both current and potential arts provision for young people in Offaly, with the purpose to recommend a framework for developing and implementing a new strategic approach for young people's arts provision in the county over the coming five years, was published and launched as part of Culture Night 2021.



YOUTH ARTS FORUM

In direct response to the findings of *The Makings – Fostering Youth Creativity*, the Arts Office commissioned

Youth Arts Facilitator, Oisín Robbins to develop a youth-led Arts Forum/Network. Oisín worked with the Arts Office to develop a number of initiatives with a focus on the age cohort 13-24 years, involving young people in the planning, delivery and evaluation of all programmes for and with young people. Oisín was also commissioned to liaise with youth workers, youth arts facilitators and youth organisations, to develop potential collaborations, funding opportunities, partnerships, with the aim of developing lasting partnerships in the area of youth led youth arts practice. This initiative did face challenges due to Covid-19, the Arts Service plan to evaluate and develop initiatives based on this learning in 2022.

YOUTH ARTS COMMISSION

A new Youth Art Commission was initiated - *Making it with Nature* is a youth led exploration of our understanding and relationship with nature and biodiversity, led by artist Caroline Conway. The project is planned to be completed 2022.

MINI MOVIES

Approximately 100 young people took part in our Mini Movies programme from three schools in Edenderry. The programme was facilitated by Julie Forrester and consisted of learning skills in stop motion animation. The films were launched in Edenderry in October and also featured in OFFline Film Festival.

FILMOFFALY

FilmOffaly continued to attract investment from national and international film-makers.

The FilmOffaly bursary winners for the film *Whale*, and *The Passion* were both completed in 2021. FilmOffaly 2021 bursary winner was awarded to Mixed Bag Media, and included a strong mentorship programme for Offaly Film Professionals.

FilmOffaly worked in partnership with OFFline Film Festival to deliver a FilmOffaly Industry Day, as part of OFFline Film Festival. This opportunity was funded through Offaly Local Enterprise Office.

CREATIVE PLACES EDENDERRY

The Arts Office in conjunction with the national charitable agency, Creative Lives were successful in an application to the Arts Council for funding under their Creative Places scheme. This is an ambitious three year funding stream that will be led by Creative Lives in partnership with Offaly County Council Arts Office and Edenderry Municipal Council. This is a ground up developmental project which has the potential to galvanise and transform the creative and cultural scene in Edenderry. The project will include a steering committee inclusive of Creative Lives, Offaly County Council Arts Office and Edenderry Municipal District, together with Offaly County Library Service, Creative Edenderry, North Offaly Community Development Network and Edenderry Community Cabin.

The ambition of the partners is to facilitate the emergence of a strong cultural identity for the area and support sustainable networks and opportunities for cultural engagement and participation. It will aim to achieve this through open, collaborative methods engaging with the community at grassroots level. The project will work in alignment with plans for the new library and art space.

CULTURE NIGHT OFFALY

2021 Culture Night consisted of 19 online and offline events across Offaly at 11 venues with over 80 artists involved. The night attracted over 500 on the ground and a virtual audience of over 4000. There were four specially commissioned art works for Culture Night, one of which, Dance like a Girl by the Donlon Dance Company featured on RTE Nationwide as a highlighted Culture Night Event. Culture Night is co-funded by the Arts Council.



POETRY TOWN

Tullamore became a 'Poetry Town', for a week, a programme collaboration between Offaly Arts Office and Poetry Ireland. Throughout the week 6 events took place around Tullamore, with Poetry Slams, Poetry Workshops and Reveal of Poet Laureate Cormac Lally reaching seasoned and amateur poets of all ages. Over 23 local poets were involved attracting a ground audience of over 130.

HULLABALOO! OFFALY CHILDREN'S ART FESTIVAL

Hullabaloo! celebrated its 15th annual festival as a combined online and offline series of events taking place over 4-day with high intensity and wide-ranging programme of creative zoom/pre-recorded workshops and shows, for children aged between 3 to 12 years. With music, art, dance, film, literature, painting, craft and much more. The festival is undertaken in partnership with Birr Theatre and Arts Centre working with Offaly libraries and Clara Family Resource Centre.



IN THE OPEN | FAOIN SPÉIR

The Arts Office were awarded funding from the Arts Council to generate a sustained and curated programme of multidisciplinary, inclusive arts activity in public or open spaces in towns and communities around Ireland between July 2021 and April 2022. This is a collaborative partnership, led by Offaly County Council's Arts Office, including Birr Theatre and Arts Centre and Birr Festivals Collective. With the aim to develop an exciting and innovative curated programme of outdoor events, planned for Birr, Lough Boora, (in conjunction with the Sculpture Park) and Tullamore, in anticipation of the opening of the new Arts Centre for the town in 2022. The planning and programming is underway and will be launched in November, with the programme to be completed in April 2022.



ARAS EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

The exhibition programme for the Atrium continued to be suspended as a result of Covid-19 restrictions during 2021.

PUBLIC ART

BANAGHER PUBLIC ART

Writer Jessica Traynor completed a writing project working with the community to create a poetic history of Banagher. The project was developed through a series of workshops with Banagher's writing community plus workshops with local schools. Jessica also worked with Banagher College with musician Elaine Agnew, and St Rynagh's with Music Generation to deliver online workshops and recording with students. A recording of the song and poetry was launched online.



MUSIC GENERATION OFFALY | WESTMEATH

MGOW continued to deliver a hybrid service throughout 2021 combining online workshops and classes with face-to-face activity where possible. Through an online programme MGOW worked hard to develop new ways to keep their amazing community of young musicians and their tutors connected and when it was possible to do so, adapted face to face approaches to make them safe for everyone involved. Many of the courses and ensembles, such as Singfest and Sinfonia moved online, and also included music technology and song writing sessions, instrumental tuition for schools and community groups, an online singing camp in partnership with Music Generation Louth, Sing Ireland and IMRO. All resulting in a jam-packed weekly programme of musical activity. One of the highlights of the online offering was the introduction of the Rock @ 2 – a class developed exclusively for the children and young people attending SEN and ASD units. Each week they zoom in for 30 minutes of music fun. MGOW were also delighted to be able to bring our young songwriters together for the Music Box Residency during July 2021. Building on yearlong online opportunities to collaborate and learn all about song writing, the residency brought young musicians from across Offaly and Westmeath together with music industry professionals. Along with creating further opportunities to develop their song writing skills and learning about recording, the young composers collaborated with a videographer as they storyboarded and filmed videos to accompany their music. The videos were released during a live-streamed launch

as part of Culture Night 2021 activities and the album will be made available from all major music streaming services including Spotify. MGOW were also delighted to be awarded the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2020 for our work in *Sustaining the Arts*.

ARTS OFFICE SUPPORTS

ARTS ACT GRANTS

15 groups from the arts, community and voluntary sectors received grants towards arts activities in their community. The projects were selected on the basis of their ability to provide an innovative and high quality engagement with arts activity within particular community settings and sectors.

FESTIVAL ARTS GRANT

The county arts service disburses grants on an annual basis to a wide selection of arts and cultural festival taking place in Offaly. In 2021, Offaly County Council provided financial assistance, advice and promotional assistance to, Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival, OFFline Film Festival, Tullamore International Summer Organ Series, Shakefest, Scripts and Birr Festival of Music, as well as leading out with other festivals such as Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival in partnership with Birr Theatre and Arts Centre. Many of the festivals were able to adapt to an online offering for their audiences.

ARTS IN HEALTH

Anam Beo, Offaly's Arts and Health organisation promotes arts inclusion through the delivery of comprehensive arts projects in care settings. In 2021, Anam Beo was one of the organisations badly affected by the Covid-19 restrictions, with minimal access to their primary target audience. However, through careful planning they were able to work with active age groups, older people and staff in care settings in a response to the pandemic in a distanced way. Anam Beo work in conjunction with HSE care settings in Edenderry, Riada House, Tullamore, Birr Community and Nursing Unit, The Irish Wheelchair Association, Ballinagar and Ballycumber Active Age Group. Anam Beo were funded through Creative Ireland under the Creativity in Older Age scheme to develop a project for older age groups in response to Covid- 19, The project Conversations On Your Doorstep, involved three Offaly artists connecting with people '*on their doorstep*'. The focus was on individuals needs and a gentle process with people in the community who were feeling isolated, where their usual community engagements had been out of reach. There were a total number of 13 participants from Birr Community & Nursing Unit, Birr, Crinkle, Clareen, Tullamore, Killeigh and Lockclose. Artistic outcomes included, Posters with Quotes, an 8 min short film, illustrated voice over clip and visual images.

Anam Beo are also working with Age and Opportunity and other national organisations in the research/development/ implementation of A National Arts and Creative Charter for Older People

CREATIVE IRELAND PROJECTS

The Arts Office continued to lead on a number of Creative Ireland projects including: Creative Edenderry, Community Open-Call projects, Animation Residency and the Tullamore Arts Development Project.

ANIMATION RESIDENCY

Offaly County Council Arts Service, through the Creative Ireland programme, continued to support the Animation Film Residency that enables two film animators to undertake a residency in Birr. This six-month residency offers ongoing mentorship and post-production services and an opportunity to create and show-case new work to audiences of filmmakers and the general public at the OFFline Film Festival.

PROFESSIONAL & VOLUNTARY GROUPS / INDIVIDUALS

The Arts Office is a resource for artists and organisations that require advice, direction and information on developing and promoting a project or their practice. This element of the Arts Service continued to be busy in 2021, with many enquiries from artists and community alike addressing the challenges faced by the Covid 19 restrictions. This element of the service is based on best practice principles in all forms of arts development and is intended to give rise to increased confidence in quality methods and professional approaches.

PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS SUPPORT GRANTS

In 2021 the county arts service continued to provide assistance to professional artists from and living in Offaly. The awards are designed to support the development of artist's professional practice. Thirteen grants were awarded to artists.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING FOR ARTISTS

The Arts Office organized a number of online supports through training opportunities for artists including an online show and tell for Offaly artists giving the opportunity for artists to promote their work and discuss common concerns.

BIRR WRITERS RESIDENCY

The continuation of the successful annual partnership with the St Brendan's House (Tin Jug Studio) in Birr saw four writers awarded with the writers residency. Due to Covid restrictions some of the residencies had to be postponed.

FILMOFFALY MENTORING PROGRAMME

FilmOffaly Mentoring Programme continued to offer opportunities for the development of script writing skills. Ireland's leading Script Writer, editor and mentor Mary Kate O'Flanagan was selected as FilmOffaly's Script Mentor for 2021, she worked with 4 writers selected for the programme. FilmOffaly continued to work with LOETB and Screen Skills Ireland to explore the potential to develop an accredited educational course for film professionals which will assist in the development of the

industry in Offaly.

ONLINE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Arts Office continue to engage the public and artists through our online and social platforms, Facebook, Twitter and our extensive email distribution databases.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

ARTS INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

The Arts Infrastructure Strategy for the County continued to be progressed by People Places Consulting: Caoimhín Corrigan and Siobhán O'Malley. The strategy will explore how all the Arts Infrastructure (existing and planned) can be developed in a collaborative and harmonic manner, resulting in a cohesive, complimentary and self-sustaining network of arts infrastructure that is beneficial to the whole county. This project will be due for publication 2022.

BIRR THEATRE AND ARTS CENTRE

Birr Theatre & Arts Centre continued to provide an extensive arts programme through its annual performance season, its learning and outreach community projects and as an incubation and administrative hub for a considerable number of prestigious arts festivals in Offaly: Birr Vintage and Arts Week, OFFline film festival, Scripts- Offaly film and playwriting festival; Birr Festival of Music and Voice and, as co-producer with Offaly County Council of the Hullabaloo! Children's Arts Festival. Birr Theatre & Art Centre continued to face many challenges throughout the

year as a consequence of Covid-19, but rose to the challenge producing much of their festival work as online events and taking care to maintain their presence to their audience, while supporting local artists on the ground. Offaly County Council provided funding of €38,000.00 to Birr Theatre and Arts Centre in 2021.

TULLAMORE COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE

The Tullamore Community Arts Centre project continued to be developed through 2021, this was based upon the agreement from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht confirming the support through Access Funds of €2 million. In addition to this funding €2.5 million was pledged by Offaly County Council. The Board of the Centre pledged to raise a further €500,000 by way of fundraising.

The Arts Office continued to assess best practice operational and planning options. An Arts Office curated project ran throughout 2021, engaging targeted audiences / local community participation in advance of the Art Centre opening.

LOUGH BOORA SCULPTURE PARK

In 2021, the continuing partnership between Offaly County Council (OCC) and Bord na Móna (BNM), endorsed through a Memorandum of Agreement, which set out the basis of a collaborative partnership approach; saw the continued working of the Lough Boora Sculpture Park Management Committee. The purpose of the Management

Committee is to establish a framework that will enable evolving an exceptional artistic vision for sustaining and developing the *Sculpture Park* at Lough Boora Discovery Park. This will be to establish the future curatorial direction of the Sculpture Park, at the same time as developing a model of governance and management structures that will be required to support this objective. In 2021 the Arts Office finalized a project funded by the Arts Council under the 'Invitation to Collaboration' scheme, to publish a research document titled *Art in Landscape* by Terre Duffy that recommended an operational framework for the Sculpture Park into the future. The Arts Office received further funding from the Arts Council based upon this research to develop a conference / seminar exploring the potential synergies and opportunities between culture, tourism and heritage. The key audience for the seminar will include people interested in and working in the arts, culture, tourism and environment sectors, people living locally who engage with art in the landscape, and experts in their field nationally and Internationally.

EDENDERRY LIBRARY AND ARTS SPACE

The Arts Office continued to work in collaboration with the county librarian in the development of plans for a multi-purpose arts space to be incorporated into the planning of the new library for Edenderry, this will include developments that take place as part of the Creative Places Edenderry project.

OFFALY HEALTHY IRELAND

Throughout 2021 the Healthy Offaly team continued to oversee delivery of the Healthy Offaly plan. The Covid-19 pandemic continued to adversely affect the work of Healthy Offaly in 2021. Amendments to key actions had to be made throughout the year to ensure service delivery continued. In October, Pobal and the Department of Health extended the deadline for completion of all Healthy Ireland funded actions from 31st December 2021 to 31st March 2022. This extension was granted as a recognition of the difficulties counties were experiencing in delivering actions due to Covid-19 Restrictions. Key actions delivered during 2021 included:

FIT CLASS

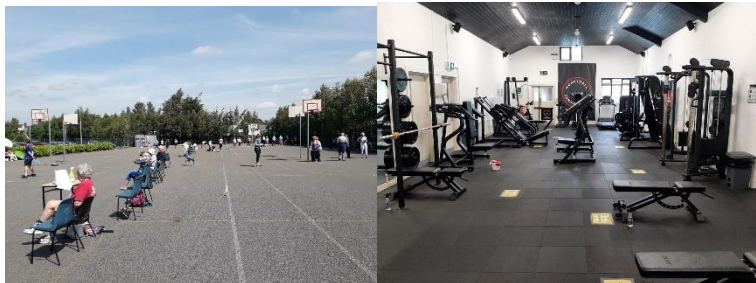
This action was formulated to deliver a targeted physical activity intervention in up to 10 primary schools in the Mid, North and West Offaly area; the programme was supported by a Fit Class coordinator, resources and an end of year (June) testing programme. Covid-19 restrictions have had a detrimental effect on the delivery of the programme; and it has been reconstituted from an in school delivery project, to the development and dissemination of a physical activity diary resource for primary schools in the next academic year (2021 / 2022). The diary provided tips and hints for parents and teachers to encourage activity by the children. The 'Active Me' Diary was very well received by parents, students and teachers alike with many schools using the diary to attain an 'Active Flag' for the school.



L-R Dermot Egan, Healthy Offaly Coordinator, Anna-Marie Delaney, Chief Executive Offaly County Council, Cllr Robert McDermott, Chair of Offaly Sports Partnership

BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES WITH A FOCUS ON RURAL OFFALY

Many of the 'Meals on Wheels' and 'Community Garden' activities being delivered under this action continued without interruption. As restrictions eased from May outdoor walking programmes were recommenced. Other activities to recommence under this action were a Community Gym Initiative in Moneygall, a '5 a side' soccer street league in Scurragh, Birr, Boccia lessons in Bracknagh, and a social walking group in Clareen.



Boccia

Moneygall Community Gym

GROW YOUR OWN & HEALTHY EATING

Moneygall and Bracknagh grow it yourself groups continued to be supported. Bracknagh also purchased a sensory board to support people with disabilities to use the garden. Social farming project sessions have taken place which was part-funded by Teagasc. In Ferbane a new group, Coole Eco-Community has been established. This is a new project that hosted three workshops for local people over September, October and November on foraging, organic food growing. In Ballycumber a polytunnel with materials for planting was provided in late August to continue into the winter months.

Coole Eco Community



ECO SPACES AS PLACES OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Tullamore equine group recommenced since restrictions eased with 6 sessions completed by September comprising up to 15 Children aged 4-16 from Cloncollig Housing Estate. The area was cleaned and the tarmacked area in the estate was painted to facilitate children's games (hopscotch, snakes and ladders etc). A Shinrone sensory group has completed a looped walk and are developing a sensory area by the river and throughout the village. In Lusmagh a planted area in the village green has been developed that compliments a new walking route in the area.

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

Two activities were delivered throughout the ongoing crisis:

- Two Family Resource Centres (Arden View, Tullamore; and Clara) continued to be supported to roll out mental health wellness programmes and crisis intervention counselling for disadvantaged families.
- The Delivery of Fearless Workshops experienced significant challenges throughout the year. In July the action was amended to instead purchase books and printed material as the implementing partners Midland Area Parenting Partnership (M.A.P.P.) could not deliver 'in person' workshop due to restrictions on numbers. In November, however, the M.A.P.P. dissolved completely with

no progress made on the action. The Healthy Offaly Team applied to and have received approval from Pobal to repurpose this action to create three pilot 'social hubs' for older/vulnerable people in the Communities of Kilcormac and Kinnitty. These hubs will bring together people in a relaxed social setting to avail of a series of health and well-being initiatives to enhance physical and mental health. Kilcormac Development Association will oversee the project on behalf of Healthy Offaly at the two locations. These 'Social Hubs' are due to commence activity in Feb. 2022.



Offaly Healthy Homes Christmas hampers funded via the community mental health fund small grants scheme 2020-2021

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH FUND SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

Of the 13 groups supported under the Community Mental Health Fund Small Grants Scheme, the full 13 successfully completed their projects. The total spend under Small Grants was €30,000.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As part of the Community Engagement action several activities were delivered. The following were delivered:

- Offaly Sports Partnership again delivered Offaly's Longest Day project 2021, a 21-day physical activity challenge, in June. In excess of 800 'Longest Day' activity diaries were distributed for the challenge. The challenge was very well received with a good selection of prizes on offer across all age ranges.

- **1:1 Physical Activity supports for older adults and people with disabilities**
This initiative was developed as a direct response to the imposition of Covid-19 health restrictions in

2020 which resulted in the requirement for older adults and people with disabilities to immediately cocoon from mid-March. 2021 saw a number of the original 47 participants from 2020 complete their personalised sport and physical activity programmes in the first half of the year following the re-imposition of Covid-19 health restrictions. A further 35 older adults and people with disabilities also joined the programme throughout quarters 2 and 3 of 2021.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUND

In Quarter 4 of 2020, Healthy Ireland Offaly also secured €67,225 in funding on behalf of Offaly County Council under the Healthy Ireland/Sláinte Care Community Resilience Fund. In partnership with its Community Partners, Healthy Offaly oversaw the animation and delivery of 17 targeted actions all across the County. In addition to Healthy Offaly’s ‘Keep Well’ campaign messages broadcast on radio and print media, a few of the measures to assist the public included a free period products pilot in Council owned publicly accessed buildings, Ukulele lessons from Music Generation section, Play Therapy programmes from the parents First group, and Care Packs distributed by Offaly Local Development Company and North Offaly Community Development Network. In total €67,206 was spent with excellent value



for money achieved in all actions.

MINISTERIAL VISIT

On 27th & 28th September 2021, Frank Feighan T.D., Minister of State for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy visited three Healthy Ireland funded projects. Healthy Offaly were delighted to be selected by the Department of Health for a Ministerial visit. Minister Feighan was keen to see how funding granted by his Department has made a difference to groups in the communities they serve. The three projects visited over the two days were Moneygall Community Garden, Arden View Family & Community Resource Centre and Kilcormac Development Association.



The Minister was extremely impressed by the activities of Healthy Offaly and its partners. He commended the excellent work of all three groups and noted the innovative work practices he has witnessed which was a testament to the resilience of local communities in the County.

PREPARATION OF HIF STRAND 1 ROUND 4

The final quarter of the year was spent preparing the way for Round 4 of the Healthy Ireland programme due to commence in the second half of 2022. An online survey was drafted and sent out to all project implementers. The survey sought to gain learnings from Round 3 with a request for challenges to be listed and improvements suggested. A lot of very useful information was gathered from the survey exercise which will help inform how Round 4 is delivered.

OFFALY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP



Established in 2003, Offaly Sports Partnership (Offaly SP) is a multi-sectoral subcommittee of Offaly LCDC, hosted by Offaly County Council and core funded by Sport Ireland. Supporting inclusive measures to increase and sustain participation in sport in Offaly. Offaly SP seeks to improve the health and physical activity status of the people of Offaly at all life stages and has a specific focus on reaching out to low participation groups.

2021 saw Offaly SP secure €425k in funding to deliver a

range of inclusive measures to increase and sustain participation in sport in Offaly; publish its newest strategic plan, "Active Offaly, 2021 – 2025"; fulfil its governance requirements under Sport Ireland's "Governance Code for Sport"; and restructure its management committee following the launch of "Active Offaly 2021 – 2025.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the members of the outgoing management committee; and we look forward to working with the new management committee in the delivery of the new strategic plan



Yet again, Covid-19 had significant impacts on the delivery of Offaly SP's sport and physical activity programmes but the following sport and physical activities were delivered in 2021: -

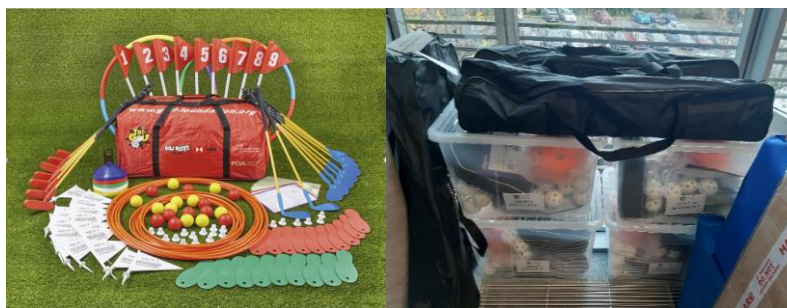
- Online fitness programmes including strength and conditioning for 22 women and girls' teams across seven sporting disciplines including boxing, camogie, golf, ladies football, rowing, rugby and soccer; dance programmes for 20 adults and older adults; and the Operation Transformation minimum fitness programme for 55 adults.
- A sports inclusion development programme which focuses on increasing the participation of people with disabilities, including those experiencing mental health difficulties, in sport and physical activity led out by Jean Brady, Offaly SP's Sports Inclusion Development Officer (SIDO)
- Schools programmes including spring / summer fitness programmes across 25 primary schools; virtual sprint programmes for 2,400 primary school pupils in the towns of Tullamore, Edenderry, Portarlinton, Birr and Clara; a multi-sport programme for 15 primary schools; and a winter fitness programme delivered in 18 schools with the support of the south Offaly sports hub.
- Covid-19 return to sport supports including return to sport grant schemes for 90 clubs and organisations; and return to sport challenges across eight sporting

disciplines including athletics, camogie, GAA, golf, hurling, ladies football, rowing and rugby.

- Longest day challenge 2021 – with 2,000 sign ups, the "*longest day challenge*" commenced on 1st June and ran until the 21st June. Each participant committed to taking part in some kind of daily physical activity everyday between the 1st and 20th June; and to log their daily physical activity in a specially commissioned diary for the challenge
- Online and in person education and training opportunities – safeguarding 1, child protection training for 180 volunteers; and sports first aid for 25 volunteers.

Funding through the Dormant Accounts Disbursement Fund was secured to: -

- Deliver sports leadership training for 312 young people across five secondary schools in Offaly.
- Continue to support the work of the South Offaly Sports Hub established in 2017.
- Establish a new community sports hub in Daingean.
- Support the participation of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity through the provision of all ability equipment for seven schools and clubs / organisations in the county.



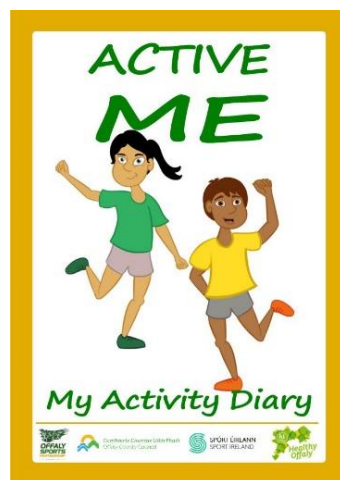
Adapted equipment for schools, clubs & organisations – Tri golf & All ability kits

translated into Irish and disseminated among the three Gaelscoileanna in Offaly.

Therapeutic physical activity supports for people with disabilities and their support networks - one fourth of a wider community mental health support programme, this activity element was designed to support delivery of therapeutic physical activity programmes for children with disabilities, their parents and family members (e.g. therapeutic riding, July provision, etc.). Among the projects delivered as part of this activity in 2021 were three July provision days for over 100 children from nine primary schools, multi-sport camp for children with additional needs and their siblings and an inclusive GAA Cúl camp for 20 children with additional needs and their siblings

Funding secured through Healthy Ireland saw Offaly SP coordinate delivery of: -

"Active Me" – replacing delivery of the in school "Fit Class" programme which was unable to go ahead due to ongoing Covid-19 health restrictions, the "Active Me" resource was developed by Frank Fahey of Fizzical Ltd. and illustrated by Andrea Cooke. The resource provides hints and tips for parents and teachers to encourage children to be more physically active on a daily and weekly basis; and in much the same way as pupils have a homework journal to ensure that they are keeping their school work up to date, the activity diary encourages a prioritisation of daily physical activity also. 10,000 "Active Me" diaries were distributed; with an additional 100 diaries



1:1 physical activity supports for people with disabilities – following the success of the 2020 programme, another 35 people with disabilities have been supported with individualised programme; while 20 children with disabilities were supported to learn how to cycle.



EMERGENCY SERVICES

The aim of the Offaly County Council Fire Authority is to protect the public from fire and to preserve life and property. The Fire Service is an organisation established and maintained in accordance with Sections 9 and 10 of the Fire Services Act, 1981. Offaly County Fire and Rescue Service provides a total fire service to the community 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

The Fire Authority provides a number of services ranging from the emergency response to incidents such as fires, road traffic accidents, chemical incidents, etc., to ensuring the fire safety of the community and built environment through certification, inspection, enforcement and education. The Authority also provides information and training on fire safety management and fire fighting

OPERATIONS

In 2021 Offaly County Fire and Rescue Service were alerted to 563 incidents, this consisted of 325 fire incidents and 238 other emergency incidents. The response to these calls came from 5 stations located throughout the county. The Fire Service continued to operate with strict protocols during the Covid Pandemic. The Section 26 Fire and Emergency plan formed the basis for the Fire Service work program 2021.

There is a very strict training regime in the Fire Brigade as is necessitated by the sometimes difficult and dangerous environment in which Firefighters work. The Covid

pandemic resulted in a very limited training program being implemented in 2021 and in limited use of Tullamore BA Training Centre to facilitate Breathing Apparatus Training. The Covid pandemic also has had an effect in recruitment and a number of recently retired firefighters were re-engaged to ensure that the minimum manning levels in stations were maintained.

EQUIPMENT AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

In addition, the Councils commitment to training for fire fighters, and research into the latest equipment and technology ensures that our fire crews are best equipped to respond quickly, safely and effectively to the full range of emergency incidents that we attend.

Funding of €80,00 was obtained in 2021 from the National Directorate for the provision of 2 new vans and miscellaneous equipment.

The site which has been identified for a new Fire Station in Clara is located in Raheen. In 2021 the Fire Services engaged with our Housing section who are developing the lands adjoining the proposed fire station and tenders were sought for the appointment of design consultants. Offaly Fire Service finalising the preliminary design and cost plan for a new station at this site and made a submission for funding to the National Directorate of Fire and Emergency Management.

The Breathing Apparatus Training Centre in Tullamore is utilised for the training of Offaly Firefighters and is leased by other Fire Authorities and non-Local Authority organisations. A detailed preliminary appraisal for the proposed expansion of facilities at Tullamore Breathing Apparatus Training Centre was submitted to the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management. This €1.1 million project will extend the existing drill training yard into the adjoining lands and provide a training support block. Approval for this project has been granted and design consultants were appointed in 2021.

FIRE PREVENTION AND BUILDING CONTROL

Offaly County Council Fire Service assessed 72 Fire Safety Certificate applications. The Fire Service also dealt with license applications. In total 52 fire safety inspections of premises took place.

Offaly Fire service has developed a Community Fire Safety Strategy which focuses on Home fire safety. This Strategy aims to complement the existing services provided by the Fire Service and aims to develop programmes which shift the current focus of responding to fires towards involving the community in preventing the outbreak of Fire's. The Covid pandemic severely limited our activities in this area during 2021.

The Building Control function of Offaly County Council is integrated into the fire service. This function also includes the inspection and monitoring of new works to monitor for

compliance with all the requirements of the Building Regulations, 1997. In 2021 there were 240 commencement notices. 67 buildings were inspected, which represents 12.6% of new buildings notified to the local authority.

MAJOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Both the Local and the Regional Major Emergency Plan were maintained, reviewed and revised by the Major Emergency Development Committee.

Throughout the pandemic Offaly County Council have participated weekly and fortnightly meetings of the Regional Steering Group and the Regional Working Group for Major Emergency Management to coordinate the interagency response to the pandemic both regionally and locally.

OFFALY CIVIL DEFENCE REPORT 2021

The Covid19 pandemic restrictions have curtailed many normal Civil Defence activities, however the organisation has been active since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, carrying out various Covid19 support roles for both the Health Service Executive, and responding to the needs of the local community when requested.

This work has included the delivery of samples from the Tullamore Covid19 test centre to various laboratories nationwide, the erection of a temporary morgue in Tullamore General Hospital, and the delivery of food and

medication to vulnerable members of our local community who are cocooning.

Civil Defence was also involved in the collection of PPE and the delivery of same to the Tullamore Covid19 test centre. However ongoing Covid19 restrictions during 2021 have prevented Civil Defence carrying out some necessary training, and this will require an additional focus on training post pandemic.

CLIMATE ACTION, ENVIRONMENT, WATER & TRANSPORTATION SPC

SPC Chair	John Leahy MCC	Director Of Services	Tom Shanahan
<p><i>Members</i></p> <p>Cllr. John Foley Cllr. Mark Hackett Cllr. Peter Ormond Cllr. Neil Feighery</p>	<p><i>Sectoral</i></p> <p>Mr. Enda Bracken Ms. Doloreen Brereton Mr. Pdraig Hannon Mr. Roger Guiney Mr. Shane Lambert</p>	<p>ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES</p> <p><i>Senior Engineer</i> <i>Administrative Officer</i> <i>Senior Executive Engineer</i> <i>Senior Executive Engineer</i> <i>Senior Executive Engineer</i></p> <p>ROADS, HEALTH AND SAFETY</p> <p><i>Senior Engineer</i> <i>Administrative Officer</i> <i>Senior Executive Engineer</i></p> <p><i>Health and Safety Officer</i></p>	<p>Mary Hussey Mark Maken-Finlay Joe Coleman Martin Quinn John McNally (Acting)</p> <p>Jean Ryan (Acting) Phyllis Hughes Willie Ryan (Acting)</p> <p>Dennis Gibbons</p>

CLIMATE ACTION

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY AWARENESS

Climate Change & Energy awareness continues to be key area where the Council is required to show leadership in both promoting public awareness and in changing mind sets towards climate change and energy management.

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 provides for the approval of plans, a national mitigation plan and a national adaptation framework, by the Government in relation to climate change for the purpose of pursuing the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050.

In September 2019 Offaly County Council adopted the Offaly Climate Change Adaption Strategy.

In 2020 a cross sectional Climate Action Steering Group was formed. This group are tasked with ensuring Climate Action is mainstreamed into all sections of OCC work, and also provide a conduit to report on how projects identified in the Climate Adaptation Strategy are progressing.

Specific training was made available for members of the Climate Action Team in 2021 and Climate Action Training was provided on-line to all indoor staff. Climate Action Leadership Training was provided to the Management Team, Senior Management Group and elected representatives at an interactive scheduled session. Scheduled interactive training sessions will also be provided for outdoor staff. A number of projects are being progressed under the banner of Climate Change, from drainage, flood relief, to biodiversity and paperless offices. These projects are being carried out by a number of different sections throughout the organisation.

ENCORE CONFERENCE

ENCORE CONFERENCE 2021; Regional Collaboration for a Green and Sustainable Transition. This conference was hosted by the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, the 14th Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe, ENCORE 2021 took place online on the September 24th 2021. The bi-annual conference of the ENCORE Network, ENCORE 2021, hosted 'virtually' from Tullamore in the Irish Midlands, was attended by political representatives

from across Europe and wide-ranging stakeholders.

The conference culminated in the signing of the 'Tullamore Declaration' by member regions - a statement of common intent which will guide regions to effectively exert their collective influence on the formulation of environmental policy within the European Union.

ECONOMIC CONFERENCE

On Tuesday 12 October and Wednesday 13 October 2021, a virtual conference entitled 'Climate Action Economic Opportunities – Local Authorities Supporting Enterprise', took place, supported by Ms Anne Marie Delaney.

This conference is part of the work of the Climate Action and Economic Opportunities project steering and working groups convened under the Business, Enterprise, Innovation and Urban/Town Economic Renewal (BEIUR) Committee of the County and City Management Association (CCMA).

The conference was building on the success of the inaugural conference in October 2019, and facilitated sharing of the latest research undertaken by the local government sector to explore how local authorities can, through their economic remit, support, encourage and nurture new and existing business and enterprise as they transition to a net-zero economy through innovation,

digitalisation and the adoption of more sustainable practices.

The conference showcased examples of how businesses are pivoting to capitalise on new opportunities and in doing so are becoming green economy pioneers, with the

support of local authorities in areas such as: Renewable energy, Circular economy, Research and innovation, Rural working hubs, New technologies, Bio-economy and SMART cities.

ENVIRONMENT

BURIAL GROUNDS

Part VIII approval was granted for the extension of Kilcoursey and Kilreaghan cemeteries. Kilreaghan extension works have been successfully completed. Tender documents are currently being drawn up for Kilcoursey with commencement on site expected to follow in early 2022. The extensions of Cappincur, Cloncrane and Clonmacnoise burial grounds will be further investigated in 2022. Resources will need to be allocated annually in the coming years to fund the necessary works.

Eleven grants, totalling €22,500.00 were paid to Community Burial Ground Committees that maintain and improve their local burial ground.

VETERINARY SERVICE

FOOD SAFETY

Our Veterinary Department is responsible for carrying out functions in relation to Food Protection and Disease Control. It implements the terms and conditions of a service contract which has been agreed between the

Council and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and which runs to 31st December 2021. The contract covers the official controls on food safety carried out by the Council.

In April 2020 Offaly Co. Co. officially took over control and management of the Veterinary function in Co. Westmeath on the basis of a shared service agreement between the two counties.

CONTROL OF DOGS

Our Veterinary Section manages the Dog Service in accordance with the Control of Dogs Act, 1986. Since January 2019 we have been providing the Control of Dogs service directly. During 2021 our Control of Dogs staff dealt with 160 complaints including control of dogs issues, surrender of dogs and dog breeding establishment complaints. We also assisted An Garda Síochána in a number of raids and one checkpoint.

Control of Dogs	2018	2019	2020	2021
No. of Dog Licenses sold	2,826	2733	2719	2286
On the Spot Fines issued	15	40	4	
No. Stray Dogs in Dog Pound	225	137	108	190
No. of Dog Breeding Establishments Registered	4	3	3	3

CONTROL OF HORSES

Under the Control of Horses Act 1996, all local authorities are responsible for the control of horses in their area including the collection of stray horses on public land. A total of 164 horses were seized by the Local Authority in 2014 and this reduced to a total of 4 in 2021 indicating that the downward trend in horse seizures is continuing.

Control of Horses	
Year	No. Seized
2011	59
2012	50
2013	60
2014	164
2015	101

2017	60
2018	16
2019	13
2020	8
2021	4

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Council continues to operate three Civic Amenity Sites (CAS) in Birr, Derryclure and Edenderry. These accept a wide range of materials for recycling and complement our existing Bring Bank facilities. Charges apply for all waste brought to these facilities, with the exception of electrical items, glass packaging and batteries.

DERRYCLURE LANDFILL

The Council continues to operate a waste acceptance facility at the site, where waste from domestic customers and local businesses is accepted and transported off site for reprocessing. The aftercare costs of the landfill are a financial burden on the Council, however we are currently discussing opportunities for the landfill with relevant bodies.

RECYCLING FACILITIES

There are currently 40 bring banks in the County for glass, aluminum & steel cans recycling on both private and public

sites. We work with a service provider, Glassco Ltd. to empty and recycle these bring banks.

There was a change in rates during 2021, as this industry came under pressure due to economic activities.

EASTERN MIDLANDS REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015 - 2021

The Waste Management Planning regional structure was changed to three regions in line with the 2012 Government Policy document "A Resource Opportunity- Waste Management Policy in Ireland". Offaly is in the Eastern/Midlands Region, as defined under "Putting People First". The new Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 was launched on the 14th May 2015. The Council staff work with our Regional colleagues to implement the policies of the plan.

WASTE ENFORCEMENT

The Council investigates all illegal waste activities and instigate legal proceedings as appropriate with a significant number of successful prosecutions. The Council inspected and audited the operations of Waste Collector Permit holders and Waste Facility Permit Holders in the functional area including vehicles and premises.

Inspection Type	No. of Planned Inspections set out at the start of 2021	No. of Completed Inspections at the end of 2021
Routine Waste Inspections	189	176
Non-Routine Waste Inspections	124	123
Routine Litter Patrols/Investigations	1100	858
Routine Water/Wastewater Inspections	737	412
Non-Routine Water/Wastewater e Inspections	45	51
Routine Air/Noise Inspections	37	27
Non-Routine Air/Noise Inspections	50	14
Routine producer Responsibility Inspections	48	12

Inspection Type	No. of Planned Inspections set out at the start of 2021	No. of Completed Inspections at the end of 2021
Planning inspections	131	242

teacher training seminar as well as making a financial contribution to the schools for their environmental projects.

WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

The River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (RBMP) was published in April 2018 which sets out the current status of our waters and Irelands implementation strategy to comply with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. In practical terms the work will be progressed by the Water Quality staff in Offaly Co. Co. in parallel with the LAWPro Catchment Assessments Teams who are charged with assessing the Priority Areas for Action (PAA's) identified in the RBMP.

In 2021 a large body of work was completed in relation to the 3rd Cycle Characterisation of waterbodies which will feed into the 2021-2027 RBMP. This work was done in conjunction with the EPA and LAWPro.

The Water Quality function within the Environment & Water Services Section undertakes a number of roles to support River Basin Management Plan, specifically:

- The co-ordination of sampling for the EPA's national monitoring program of waterbodies in Co. Offaly.
- Liaison with and support to LAWPro in their work in PAA's in Co. Offaly.
- Participation in the Water Framework Directive Operational Committees in both the Eastern & Midlands Region, and also the South East Region.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

The Council continued its extensive programme of Environmental Awareness in 2021. Campaigns around recycling, food waste, dog fouling, schools calendar competitions saw huge engagement with the public and gained a strong foothold in the area of environmental awareness.

The Council continues to support community groups through funding streams such as Community Environmental Action Fund (previously Local Agenda 21 Fund), Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Awareness Community Grants.

In 2021 the Council also supported 233 clean-ups carried out by various individuals and community groups, by providing bags, pickers, gloves and removing filled bags to an authorised site.

GREEN SCHOOLS AWARENESS PROGRAMME

The Council continues to support the Green Schools Programme by frequent visits to the schools, facilitating free workshops to the schools, arranging the annual

- The enforcement of Section 4 licences for discharges to surface and ground waters.
- The investigation of complaints relating to a range of water linked issues.
- The inspection of various enterprises, including domestic, commercial and agricultural sites to assess impacts to waters.
- The assessment of agricultural planning files.
- The inspection of Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems under the EPA's National Inspection Plan.
- The identification of significant pressures impacting on water quality at risk of not achieving Good Status under the Water Framework Directive.

In 2021, each of these roles were advanced by Water Quality staff. The Council achieved the operational monitoring programme of the rivers within the County and also investigated activities and facilities impacting on groundwater's and surface waters. 12 Domestic Wastewater Treatment systems were inspected in 2021 in accordance with EPA National Inspection Plan requirements.

The EPA Water Quality Report 2013-2018 was published in late 2019, and the following is a summary of Water Quality in Co. Offaly:

- Of the 76 river bodies monitored in Co. Offaly – 3 are High Status, 32 are Good Status, 27 are

Moderate Status and 14 are Poor Status (i.e. 54% below the WFD target of Good Status)

- Comparing the current monitoring in Co. Offaly with the previous EPA report (2010-2015 data), 55 river bodies showed no change, 13 declined and 6 improved.
- There are 2 high status sites in Co. Offaly – which will be included in the "Blue Dot Catchments Programme."

The Council are committed to advancing water quality in the county, recognising the links between water quality and the Councils goals throughout Co. Offaly, from Enterprise to Tourism. We are committed to working closely with the Local Authority Waters Program Office (LAWPro), towards shared national goals.

A detailed submission has been returned to the EPA regarding the 3rd Cycle Characterisation to be considered in the Departments Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027, covering both the Midlands & East WFD Region and the South East WFD Region. A draft version of the new RBMP has been published in Q3 of 2021, this will be open to public consultation from late 2021 and into early 2022.

AIR QUALITY & ENVIRONMENT

The Council continues to comply with EU Directives and National Legislation on Air Quality and Pollution and implement direction from the Department in this area and

work with customers and communities to resolve issues in relation to air, noise and odour.

NOISE ACTION PLAN

The European Communities (Environmental Noise) regulations implements EC Directive 2002/49/EC (END) on assessment and management of environmental noise in Ireland. The END requires Member States to prepare and publish, every 5 years, strategic noise maps and noise management action plans for transport noise sources

Under the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 140 of 2006) Offaly County Council prepared a Draft Noise Action Plan 2018 – 2023 relating to environmental noise to which humans are exposed in the county. The environmental noise relevant to Offaly is transportation noise (road traffic noise) but does not apply to nuisance noise (domestic and neighbourhood noise). This Noise Action Plan was adopted in late 2019.

As required, the next phase will see Offaly commence Round 4 of this noise mapping and action planning cycle in early 2020. Under the regulations, all Local Authorities are responsible for strategic noise mapping of non-National major roads, i.e. all roads with more than 3 million vehicle passages per year.

CATCHMENT FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES (CFRAM)

Offaly is affiliated to three CFRAMs the Shannon, Eastern

and South Eastern. There are 8 Areas of Further Assessment within Offaly with varying proposals from flood forecasting and public awareness to individual property resilience and construction of new flood defense walls.

The Plans have been finalised and approved by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. They were adopted by Offaly County Council in July 2018.

The Government has agreed an increased allocation of funding for flood relief activities totalling €430m in its Capital Investment Plan for the period 2016-2021 with the annual budget allocation rising from €45m to €100m by 2021. The capital allocation included in the Plan for flood risk management in 2018 is €70m and in 2019 is €80m. The enhanced investment programme will enable the OPW in collaboration with the relevant Local Authorities, to begin the process of preparation and planning for the structural works and schemes that are recommended under the CFRAM Plans.

The Council will continue to work in collaboration with the OPW to planning for the structural works and schemes recommended under the Catchment based Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies (CFRAM) in Offaly, (Shannon, Eastern and South Eastern) plans enabled by enhanced investment programme.

In collaboration with the OPW, with funding from the minor works programme the flood defense scheme in

Portarlinton was completed in 2020. The Council have made a number of further applications to the OPW for other areas requiring flood relief in the county. These locations include Rahan where funding approval is ongoing and Geashill where the application process is progressing.

The Barrow Drainage Board was abolished in 2015. Offaly County Council and Kildare County Council continue to carry out joint channel maintenance works by agreement in order to maintain the Barrow system in both Counties. Works in County Offaly will be completed by the Edenderry Municipal District office.

TULLAMORE LIVING RIVER PROJECT

In 2019, the Tullamore Living River Project was launched in collaboration with LAWPro and several other Irish and UK based environmental stakeholders. Funding for the first phase of the Project, was secured from LEADER in 2020. Construction mainly took place in 2021.

The Tullamore Living River project sets out measures to improve the Tullamore river ecosystem function as it flows through Tullamore town as identified in Tullamore Living River- Feasibility Assessment Report finalised in July 2019. This Feasibility Assessment was a collaboration with Inland Fisheries, OPW, NPWS, Tullamore Tidy Towns and Offaly County Council established after a one day clean-up of the River at The Town Park in July 2017.



NATIONAL WASTE COLLECTION PERMIT OFFICE (NWCPO)

As of the 31st of December 2021, there are 2,003 waste collection permits on the NWCPO register and 249 applications pending. 391 permits were due for renewal in 2021 and of these 272 review applications were received. There were 172 new applications received in 2021. The NWCPO has maintained service delivery consistent with that provided prior to COVID-19. Systems and processes were modified as necessary to prioritise and delegate the workload.

HOUSEHOLD KERBSIDE WASTE COLLECTIONS

There are currently 52 (46 active) waste collectors. The NWCPO continues the assessment of applications for household kerbside waste collections, including audits of the systems and processes used by the waste collectors.

ISO 9001 CERTIFICATION

The office received certification for the ISO 9001 standard in November 2014. The office has maintained this certification and continuously enhances the processes used and service provided through the ISO standard.

REVIEW INITIATION

Permit breaches and convictions are notified to the NWCPO by all local authorities. The NWCPO continues to progress the initiation of reviews where permit breaches have been notified. Permits are viewed and revoked as required by legislation.

IS SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

The functioning of the IT Team within the NWCPO is critical to its operation and that of the waste regulatory sector as a whole. NWCPO systems are now an integral part of waste data gathering, enforcement and reporting at local, regional and national level.

The following is an outline of the IS systems operated by the NWCPO:

These systems include:

- **Environmental Information Management System (EIMS)** – used to manage the waste collection permit application process and maintain waste collection and facility registers
- **NWCPO Admin Portal** – used by the NWCPO team to manage data not available on the EIMS

- **Permit Holder Portal** – Website for Waste Operators to manage their permit and complete their annual returns
- **EDEN Portal (Local Authority Portal)** – used by LA's to view NWCPO files and pending applications, view waste data and validate annual returns. This will also host a national register of closed landfills.
- **NWCPO website** – used by operators to download forms and the public to search for permits

Initial preparatory and development work has been undertaken to develop an online application form. The system will be developed on a phased basis and in a continuous improvement model. Where other development work is being undertaken, the requirements of the new system are considered and integrated where possible.

A new contact management system is being investigated to better manage emails received through our four group email accounts. This will be then integrated into the online application from system.

A WASTE ACTION PLAN FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

"A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy" was launched on the 4th of September 2020 last. The policy specifically identified new roles for the NWCPO as well as introduced new policies that will impact on current operations and require measures to be taken. The scoping of works required and preparatory systems development is ongoing.

WATER SERVICES

Offaly County Council delivered Water Services in accordance with the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Irish Water (IW) and the Annual Service Plan for 2021. Water Services are 100% funded by Irish Water who are now the Statutory Authority for water services and all major decisions around funding of services will be approved by Irish Water.

The delivery of Water Services under the SLA, although challenging, is an opportunity to retain a level of water services activity within Local Government and to influence water services investment and policy in the future.

Local Authority remains the Water Services Authority in connection with Group Schemes, Small Private Supplies (SPS) and domestic wastewater treatment systems (septic tanks).

DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

The EPA Drinking Water Report 2020 shows that Offaly had 21 public supplies. Offaly had a 100% microbiological compliance rate and a 100% Chemical Parameter Compliance rate in 2020, and an Indicator rate of 98.77%.

Working with IW the Council continues to improve and upgrade the Water Supply Schemes throughout the County.

Watermain Rehabilitation Works were completed in Newtown and on the Clara Road, Tullamore and in Croghan.

Leak detection and pressure management have reduced the consumption of water in Public Water Schemes (PWS) in Offaly since the beginning of 2020. Leak repair, Find and fix works are ongoing in Edenderry, Tullamore, Ferbane, Banagher, Ballybeg (Dromakeenan) and Clonbullogue.

There has been a saving of 4,243 m³/day since January 2018 in Offaly where average consumption in January 2018 was 24,839 m³/day compared to 20,596m³/day in September 2021.

WASTEWATER

Full secondary treatment is now provided in all public sewerage schemes in Offaly with a significant improvement in quality standards compliance being achieved as a result. There are 14 Wastewater Treatment Plants in Offaly with

Discharge Licenses serving agglomerations with populations greater than 500. Meeting the stringent limit values on these licenses is challenging but considerable progress has been made.

WATER SERVICES CAPITAL SCHEMES

The Irish Water Capital Investment Plan identified new Capital project priorities in Offaly. A number of projects have progressed through the Capital Programmes, Disinfection Programme and Capital Maintenance funding mechanisms. The major upgrade of the Tullamore, Birr and Clonaslee Water supply is ongoing.

Under the Disinfection Programme upgrades to the Water Treatment Plants at Clonbullogue, Walsh Island, Coolderry, Toberdaly, and Edenderry are ongoing.

It is envisaged that greater emphasis will be placed on completing low cost small scale projects through the Capital Programmes and Capital Maintenance Programme which will facilitate the upkeep and improvement of existing schemes and the replacement of end-of-life assets. This approach will be beneficial to our County given the large number of small schemes.

In 2021, we continued to engage with IW on prioritising infra-structural improvements in Offaly. There is a rigorous health & safety inspection and management regime in place across all water services infrastructure and this is driving an ongoing programme of Significant Health and Safety Improvement Works. There is also a significant investment

in plant replacement and process optimisation through the Capital Works Programme and a countywide Disinfection Programme

HEALTH & SAFETY

There is a rigorous health and safety inspection and management regime in place across all water services infrastructure and this is driving an ongoing programme of called the HSQE programme. There is also a significant investment in plant replacement and process optimisation through a minor works programme.

MULTI-ANNUAL RURAL WATER PROGRAMME 2019-2021

The Council remains the Water Services Authority in connection with Group Schemes, Small Private Supplies (SPS) and domestic wastewater treatment systems (septic tanks). The Council will continue to support the Group Water Scheme Sector in conjunction with the National Federation of Group Water Schemes financially, administratively and technically. The Council will support the Rural Water Programme and ensure submissions are made to the Department and funding secured for Offaly.

The Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2019 – 2021 is ongoing. Of the 19 projects across the county that were approved for grant funding for capital projects under MARWP 19-20, 7 have been completed to date and the other 12 projects are at various stages of planning and construction. Annual subsidies amounted to €386,831.00 and advance subsidies €586,929.00

Name of GWS
Eglish/Rath/Drumcullen GWS
Ballykilleen
Boher/Leamonaghan
Cadamstown
Mountlucas
Ballinagar
Killeigh
Tubber
Clareen/Aghancon
Bracknagh
Ballyboy
Mountlucas
Derries, Rahan

A total of €973,760.00 was paid in 2021 to the Group Water Schemes for GWS Subsidies to support group water scheme to operate to their full potential and deliver potable water to their customers.

DOMESTIC WATER AND DOMESTIC WASTE WATER GRANT SCHEMES

Under Measure 8 of the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2019-2021 a revised Private Water Supply (Well Grants) and Domestic Waste Water Treatment grant scheme was announced by the Dept of Housing, Planning and Local Government in June 2020.

WELL GRANTS

The application process and the level of grant payable have been revised. The main revision of the scheme is that the applicant must provide three quotes for the proposed works, the introduction of a Water Treatment Grant of up to €1000.00 and the percentage of the approved cost of works that can be claimed by the applicant has been increased from 75% or a max of €2,031.58 to 85% or €5,000.00, whichever is the lesser. There are also new grants available for Well Rehabilitation and Water Treatment Systems up to €3,000.00 and €1,000.00 respectively.

DOMESTIC WASTE WATER TREATMENT GRANTS:

This grant may be available to householders where they have been identified by the Local Authority under various

GROUP WATER SCHEMES SUBSIDIES

river basin and catchment area plans and they must meet specific criteria (an applicant cannot self declare for these grants). The percentage of the approved cost of works that can be claimed by the applicant has been increased from 75% to 85% or €5,000.00, whichever is the lesser.

REVIEW OF THE RURAL WATER SECTOR

The National Rural Water Review Group was established in 2016 with representatives from six Local Authorities, WSTO, National Federation of Group Water Schemes and the DHPCLG. The purpose of this group is to identify an improved service delivery model for the Rural Water Sector. Options in relation to the future structure of the Rural Water sector is due to be reported on in the near future.

ROADS SERVICES

The 2021 Initial Roads Budget was as follows:

Roads Allocations 2021	
Transport Infrastructure Ireland	€2,319,755
Department of Transport Tourism & Sport	€12,447,240
National Transport Authority	€3,579,655
Offaly County Council (Own Resources)	€1,867,130
Total	€20,213,780

Offaly County Council allocated an additional €949,500 for Public Lighting and a Central Management Charge (support services) of €3,110,127. In 2021 Offaly County Council received additional funding as follows: -

Roads Additional Funding 2021	
TII Pavement Scheme N62	€257,400
TII HD15 & HD17 Minor Works Fencing Retrofit	€37,716
TII HD 15 & HD17 Minor Works N52 RSI I	€98,600
TII HD 15 and HD 17 – RSI	€328,438
TII Capital Maintenance Works > €50,000	€195,160
TII Capital Maintenance Works < €50,000	€221,663
DCRD Local Improvement Scheme	€545,240
DCRD CLÁR	€47,025
DCRD Greenway ORIS	€1,358,366
DCRD Greenway	€1,105,597
DOT Climate Change Adaptation	€694,469
Shannon Monastic	€19,806
Additional Outdoor Infrastructure	€226,455
Total	€5,135,935

Offaly County Council received an initial roads allocation of €2.32m from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) for maintenance and improvement of the National Road Network in 2021. The allocation included €450k for a pavement scheme for the N52 Ballynacard East & West completed in 2021.



Photo: N52 Ballinacard East & West Pavement Scheme

Offaly County Council received a capital allocation of €1,000,000 from TII for the N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link in 2021. Westmeath National Roads Office perform the role of Project Manager on behalf of Offaly County Council as the Lead Authority. Consulting Engineers were appointed in 2019 and the Planning and Design Stages commenced. In 2020 two public consultations were held and a third in 2021 to facilitate the selection of the preferred route.

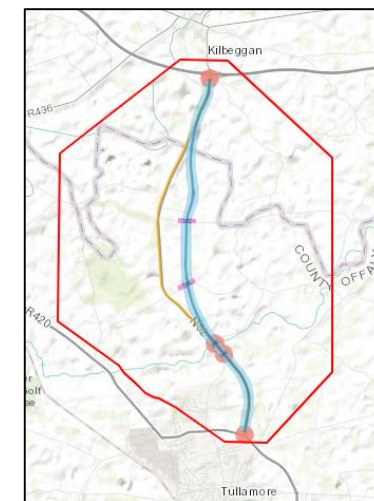


Photo: N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan – Emerging Preferred Route

Offaly County Council received the 2021 Regional and Local Road Grant Allocation of €12,447,240 from the Department of Transport. The allocation included a specific improvement Grant of €900,000 for Edenderry Inner Relief Road.



Offaly County Council received an allocation of €3,439,000 to continue active travel works in the County.

Photo: Pedestrian Crossing in Clara

Offaly County Council received €735,500 in 2021 for Community Involvement Schemes to progress schemes across the three Municipal Districts.

The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) announced funding of €47,025 for Local Improvement Schemes in 2021. The Roads section and three Municipal Districts progressed the list of schemes as advertised in 2020.



Offaly County Council received an allocation of €47,025 under CLAR 2021. The Roads section will work with the community groups to progress these schemes in 2022.

Photo: CLAR works in Lough Boora Parklands

The Department of transport approved additional funds in 2021 under the Offaly Grand Canal Greenway Fund for the extension to the Offaly Greenway from Daingean to Edenderry. In 2021, 4 of 5 proposed stages of the section were substantially completed. Works will continue into 2022 to conclude unfinished sections under this allocation.

Photo: Greenway Parking in Turraun



Offaly County Council was successful in obtaining €800,000 in approved funding for 7 no. applications Pollagh, Ferbane, Mucklagh, Cloneygowan, Daingean, Kilmalogue and Mountbolus submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development under the 2020 Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The three municipal districts worked with Road Design and Planning to plan and design the schemes for implementation in 2021. Some works are ongoing.

Offaly County Council (OCC) at present maintain/repair and upgrade c.9000 public lights in the County. To date 38% are now LED lighting units. The tendering process for the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP) has just concluded. Kilkenny County Council are acting as Lead Authority on behalf of the (9) Counties in



this Region and it is hoped that works will commence in Q2 of 2022.

Projects undertaken and completed during 2021 including initial and additional funding are detailed below.

NATIONAL ROAD GRANTS 2021 National Roads

2021 National Roads Projects	
Ordinary Maintenance	€129,194
Winter Maintenance	€190,000
National Route Energy Reducing Public Lighting Schemes	€86,744
Pavement Schemes N62 to Ballynacard East & West	€450,000
HD28 NS Pavement Renewals	€257,400
Road Safety Schemes (RSI's)	€427,038
HD15 & HD17 Minor Works Fencing Retrofit	€37,716
Capital Maintenance Works	€195,160
Capital Maintenance Works <€50,000	€221,663
N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link (Stage 0)	€1000,000

NON NATIONAL ROAD GRANTS 2021 Non National Roads

2021 Regional & County Roads Projects	
Restoration Improvement Grant	€5,707,500
Restoration Maintenance Grant	€1,637,000
Discretionary Improvement Grant	€1,813,500
Bridge Rehabilitation	€344,950
Safety Improvement Works	€300,000
Speed Limits, Signs, PSCI	€28,000
Roads Training Grant	€47,500
Drainage Works	€446,993
Community Involvement Scheme	€735,500
Pilot Scheme Testing on Roads over Peat	€40,000
Specific Improvement Grant Edenderry Inner Relief Road/Birr Distributor Road	€900,000
Local Improvement Schemes	€545,240
CLAR Schemes	€47,025
Offaly Greenway Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme	c.€2,450,000
Active Travel	€3,439,000

ROAD SAFETY 2021 INITIATIVES

A number of Road Safety Initiatives the Road Section progressed in 2021 where possible with Covid 19 restrictions and will continue in 2022. Sample initiatives included: -

- Supplied Hi-Vis vests for Positive Aging Week to the Libraries together with road safety leaflets to include in over 100 gift bags for this week;
- Circulated weather alerts and road safety authority notifications to Councillors and staff and uploaded on Council's web site, Facebook and Twitter;
- Road Safety presentations delivered to a number of national schools in collaboration with the RSA
- Collaborated with the Road Safety Authority in relation to their "Check it Fits Service" prior to COVID 19.

Offaly County Council will work closely with the Road Safety Authority in any campaigns being delivered. In 2021 there were a total of 134 fatalities on Irish roads. This compares with 146 in 2020. There were no fatalities in Offaly in 2021.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Climate Change & Energy awareness continue to be key areas where we are required to show leadership in both promoting public awareness and in changing mind sets towards energy management.

In 2021 Offaly County Council achieved the energy efficiency saving of 33%. OCC will continue to work in conjunction with the Midland Energy Agency in an effort to achieve the objectives as set out in the 2030 and 2050 targets.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE & PLANNING SPC

<i>SPC Chair</i>	Eamon Dooley MCC	<i>Director Of Services</i>	Stephane Duclot
Members	Sectoral	PLANNING:	
Cllr. Eamon Dooley Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick Cllr. Frank Moran Cllr. Tony McCormack Cllr. John Clendennen Cllr. Sean O'Brien Cllr. John Carroll	Mr. Dominic Doheny Mr. Eihmin Shortt Mr. John O'Connor Mr. Pat Walsh Mr. Don Gibney	Senior Planner Senior Executive Planner Administrative Officer	Andrew Murray Lorraine Mitchell, Carroll Melia Gabriel Conlon
		ARCHITECTURE & CONSERVATION Senior Executive Architect Heritage Officer	Rachel McKenna Amanda Pedlow
		REGENERATION Administrative Officer Staff Officer Executive Planner	Olwen Cummins Arlene Gilfoyle Ed Kelly
		LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE: Head of Local Enterprise Office Administrative Officer	Orla Martin James Hogan

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Land use policy is implemented by means of the County Development Plan (which includes town, village and sráid plans), Local Area Plans. Development Management

involves the processing of planning applications and the taking of appropriate enforcement action where necessary.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

The following table sets out the trend in the number of planning applications received and decided by the Council over the past number of years.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Year	No of Applications	No. Granted	No. Refused	Total Decided
2013	261*	191	15	206
2014	310*	272	12	284
2015	375*	263	12	275
2016	441*	313	16	329
2017	519*	378	29	407
2018	607*	411	46	446
2019	616*	436	35	471
2020	674*	412	58	470
2021	831*	529	46	575

(*This figure includes applications which were invalid)

Extensions of Appropriate Period

Year	No of Applications	No. Granted	No. Refused	Total Decided
2015	37	35	3	38
2016	20	23	0	23
2017	13	13	0	13
2018	10	10	1	11
2019	13	12	1	13
2020	6	6	0	6
2021	13	11	2	13

The continued recovery in the country's economic activity, was reflected in a continued increase in the number of planning applications received in 2021. There was a further sustained trend of large renewable energy projects being applied for in the county and this trend continues into 2022.

The Council participated in one Strategic Housing Development application in 2021 (Clonminch, Tullamore), which was the second such SHD application on the site. The number of larger housing applications submitted saw a very significant increase in 2020 and onwards into 2021. Over 40 such larger multi-unit developments i.e >10 units were submitted to planning in 2021.

During 2021, 11 large scale solar farm applications were processed for Planning. One such application was accompanied by a Strategic Infrastructure Development process through An Bord Pleanala for Grid Connections.

VACANT SITES REGISTER

A Vacant Site Register has been established which currently does not include any vacant sites. Work planned for early 2020 had to be deferred due to the COVID 19 pandemic and the resourcing issues it posed.

The vacant sited register is to be replaced by a vacant land tax, to be collected by revenue. The process must

commence in 2022 with the preparation of a zoned and vacant land map for public consultation in Q4 2022 / Q1 2023.

COMPLIANCE/ENFORCEMENT PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

- Warning Letters 30
- Enforcement Notices 2

During 2021, 57 new enforcement files were opened.

RENT PRESSURE ZONE

Tullamore was added to the list of Rent Pressure Zones in 2020 and a new resource was employed to monitor the requirements from late 2020. The position became vacant in late 2021. Work had been ongoing to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and take appropriate action where deemed necessary.

DERELICT SITES

There are 19 sites on the Derelict Sites Register at the end of 2021, 12 within the Tullamore Municipal District Area and a further 7 at various sites around the county. Constraints caused by covid 19 significantly curtailed works in this area. Identification of any properties which may be suitable for the provision of social housing is a continued focus of the Council.

UNFINISHED HOUSING ESTATES AND TAKING IN CHARGE

There are currently 4 estates in County Offaly named on the Unfinished Housing Development list. This figure represents the significant amount of work completed in this area and as a result has seen a year on year annual reduction in the number of estates on the list, down from 34 on the first survey in 2012. Progress is continually being made on a number of listed unfinished developments with the expectation that this trend will continue in 2022.

Department funding for taking in charge private housing estates was made available in 2016 and has been exhausted, with no new funding streams available at present. Taking in Charge of private housing estates is a continuing scope of works. There were no estates taken in charge in 2021. Six further estates are at the final stages and intended for presentation to elected members, for their approval in 2022. Two application forms requesting a private housing estate is taken in charge were received by Offaly County Council in 2021.

LIAISON WITH LOCAL

The Planning Section assists the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) which was set up within the County Council in 2014. Such assistance includes pre-planning advice and meetings for new clients or expanding businesses.

FORWARD PLANNING

ADOPTION OF OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021 - 2027

The Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 was adopted on 10th September 2021 and came into effect 6 weeks later on 22nd October 2021.

PREPARATION OF LOCAL AREA PLANS

Following the adoption of the County Development Plan Local Area Plans must be prepared for Birr and Tullamore, Edenderry in conjunction with Area Based Transport Assessments and Masterplans.

OFFALY GREENWAYS

The development of the Grand Canal Greenway continued with further significant steps made in 2021, despite the Covid-19 pandemic. Further, the pandemic has generated additional demands for amenities close to home and the usage of the sections completed thus far was a striking aspect of 2020 and 2021 as people made use of them, within the restrictions.

Council staff sit on both the overall Grand Canal Greenway steering group with Waterways Ireland, South Dublin Co. Co. and Kildare Co. Co. and sub-groups on Marketing & Interpretation and Maintenance, with the aim of delivering the greenway from the centre of Dublin to Shannon Harbour, a distance of c.130km.

The Offaly Grand Canal Greenway is being promoted on www.visitoffaly.ie.

DIGBY BRIDGE TO TURRAUN (LOUGH BOORA DISCOVERY PARK) WEST

National Greenway Strategy Fund approval of €2.35 million was received in 2019, subsequently increased to €2.65m to complete the final 20km of the 34km stretch from Daingean to Lough Boora Discovery Park.

2021 saw the completion of the link from Digby Bridge to Daingean. The last phase of this part of the Grand Canal Greenway is a switch from the south bank which is an on-road shared section to a more off-road route on the north bank between Heneseys Bridge and Pullough. The Part 8 for this section was prepared during 2021 for public display in Jan. / Feb. 2022.

Funding for a high quality link from Leabeg to Lough Boora Discovery Park was approved by TII in December 2021, having been progressed between the Council and the Department of Transport during the year. It will proceed to final design stage and part 8 planning in Q1/2 2022, resources permitting.

Just transition Funding of €782,500 (inclusive of 15% OCC match funding) was secured in Nov. 2021 to upgrade some of the existing cycling and walking paths in Lough

Boora Discovery Park to enhance the connections between the Grand Canal Greenway and the Discovery Park visitor centre. These upgrades will be complete by spring / summer 2022.

DIGBY BRIDGE TO EDENDERRY – EAST

Offaly County Council received an allocation of €3.1 million in Budget 2021 to complete the greenway from Daingean to the county boundary at Edenderry (23km).

This element was largely developed during 2021 with final completion to Edenderry in early 2022. Waterways Ireland will deliver the final stretch from Edenderry town, past Blundell aqueduct to the county boundary towards Ticknevin. It is hoped that Kildare County Council and Waterways Ireland will be in a position to deliver the stretch to Ticknevin at the earliest opportunity

GREENWAY FUNDING - FUTURE

Funding for Greenways switched from the Dept. of Transport to Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in 2021.

The Council has engaged positively with TII and will continue to seek funding to complete the greenway to Shannon Harbour. This will result in a 71km continuous greenway across the county with a 7km link to the county boundary – Kilbeggan Branch.

GRAND CANAL GREENWAY, 'KILBEGGAN BRANCH' & TULLAMORE TO MULLINGAR GREENWAY

The greenway from Tullamore (Ballycommon) to Kilbeggan (c.14km) is complete, delivered by Offaly & Westmeath County Councils in partnership with Waterways Ireland. In 2020, the Council was successful in securing funding from the Carbon Tax Fund towards a Feasibility Study for a greenway link from Kilbeggan to Mullingar. This study was commenced in 2021, managed by Offaly County Council. An agreement with Westmeath County Council under section 149A of the Local Government Act is in place.



*First section of the
Kilbeggan link of the
Grand Canal Greenway
constructed in 2020*

GRAND CANAL GREENWAY – TULLAMORE URBAN STRETCH

It is expected that The Tullamore Urban Stretch of the Grand Canal Greenway, which has been allocated funding under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund 2018, will be constructed in 2021, having been the subject of an amended Part 8 to reflect revised standards for segregation from pedestrians.

SHANNON MONASTIC GREENWAY FEASIBILITY STUDY

This study was funded by the Carbon Tax Fund 2020 and commenced in Q2 2021. It is being carried out by Tobin Consulting Engineers and Land Use Consultants on behalf of Offaly & Westmeath County Councils. Offaly County Council is the project lead. An agreement with Westmeath County Council under section 149A of the Local Government Act is in place. This study will be finalised in 2022.

REGENERATION

OUTDOOR RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME 2020

KINNITY & SLIEVE BLOOM MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme provides funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure. On 22nd March, 2021 Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys T.D., announced a €500,000 grant for Kinnitty and the surrounding hinterland of West Offaly with significant

match funding of €275,300 from Offaly County Council.

- This project consists of the 'Route to the Trails' is to be a seamless, safe and attractive connecting cycle and pedestrian link from the centre of Kinnitty Village to the existing Mountain Bike trails and walking / hiking routes starting in the Kinnitty Forest behind Kinnitty Castle. Final design will be to take place in Q2 2022 with procurement shortly thereafter.

- The 'Kinnitty Woods Loop' a novice trail (2km). It will be a new component to the Slieve Bloom MTB trails (National Scale Centre) allowing younger and novice cyclists to develop cycling skills and confidence to promote use of the mountain bike trails. It will therefore increase the scope of the MTB offer to a wider audience. This will be developed by Coillte, commencing in summer 2022.

- The "Rediscovering Castle Bernard's Historic Bridges" aspect of the project is to further enhance the very extensive walking and hiking offer of the area (many waymarked walks start in the forest behind the Castle) and in particular to showcase aspects of the Kinnitty Castle Demesne's fine outdoor heritage e.g. its historic bridges and associated demesne walks. The bridges element is largely complete – please refer to Conservation & Architecture Report. Council staff have been liaising with Coillte regarding the delivery of the rediscovered trails.

OUTDOOR RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME 2021

On 29th November, 2021 The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys announced details of approved funding under the 2021 Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme for Offaly as follows:

- €200,000 grant for Clashawaun River Walk, Clara with match funding of €23,000 from Offaly County Council. (Measure 2 project) This project consists of creating a new 400m river walk amenity along the banks of the River Brosna at Clashawaun, Clara, to help restore connections to the river for the community and visitors.
- €50,000 grant for Derryounce development project with match funding of €20,000 from Offaly County Council (Project development measure) This grant will provide for a development plan for the expansion and new complimentary uses at the already successful Derryounce Lake and Trails.

All other ORIS 2019 & 2020 projects are progressing.

URBAN REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND

In March 2021, the Council received a provisional allocation of €2,245,407 in respect of the Council's successful 2020 Call 2 project - Tullamore Urban Regeneration. This was submitted by the Regeneration Team and will be delivered

by Tullamore Municipal District with support from the Regeneration and planning teams. Please refer to the Tullamore Municipal District report.

Tullamore URDF – 2020 successful application



RURAL REGENERATION FUND 2019

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund seeks to support ambitious and strategic projects which have the potential to transform rural economies and communities.

On 6th January, 2021 The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys announced details of approved funding under the 2021 Category 2 Rural Regeneration Development Fund for the following 2

landmark projects in Offaly:

- €2,149,408 grant for Edenderry Regeneration Phase II project and will require match funding from Council funds bringing the total to almost €2,686,760. This project will continue the regeneration of the Blundell Master Plan area including demolition works of the Old Tesco Site and enabling works to allow for further development of a new Community Library on the site. It will also fund the design team for the new library building and further appraisal of sites in the Blundell Master Plan area for leisure, community, cultural and services provision with a further Category 1 RRDF application in the future.

- €546,400 grant for Ferbane Regeneration which will require match funding from Council funds bringing the total to €683,000. This project is the first phase of regeneration for Ferbane through the redevelopment of key buildings in particular St Joseph’s Convent as a multi-purpose community/enterprise hub. This grant will form the foundations of a future Category 1 RRDF application in the future.

Offaly County Council is continuing to progress previous successful RRDF projects:

- 2018 Blundell Master Plan, complete.
- 2019 Edenderry Phase I, nearing completion of the

- Link Street in the Blundell Master Plan area.
- 2020 Banagher Regeneration, initial consultation phase for Architectural and Tourism Master Plan for Banagher Marina and Environs is complete.

TOWN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEME (TVR) 2021

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, announced details of the projects approved for funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2021 on Friday, the 25th February, 2022. A total of €450,000 was secured for County Offaly.

Offaly County Council’s successful 3 project details are as follows:

Town/Village	Project Approved	Grant approved	Match Funding required
Ballyboy	To develop a green space and recreational area in Ballyboy village centre, including landscaped area with seating, lighting and amenity car parking area.	€100,000	€15,000
Clonbullogue	To create a “People’s Park” at the river amenity in Clonbullogue village and complete a safe bridge link forming a looped River Walk accessible to all.	€100,000	€12,000
Killeigh	Refurbishment of vacant Macra Hall, Killeigh into a modern remote working hub as part of a multifunctional community space serving Killeigh village	€250,000	€35,000

and its' surrounding hinterlands.

TVR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT MEASURE

Also the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, announced on the 4th March 2022, details of the projects that have been approved for funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2021 – Project Development Measure.

This new Project Development Measure was introduced under the TVR Scheme 2021. It is to assist Local Authorities to contribute to a pipeline of significant, well developed projects which might be subsequently progressed to construction stage, subject to the availability of further funding.

Walsh Island's application secured a grant of €36,000 to appraise, design and plan a vacant building into a multi-use hub/space and design and plan for an outdoor amenity space.

Town/Village	Project Approved	Grant approved	Match Funding required
Walsh Island	To appraise, design and plan a vacant building into a multi-use hub/space and design and plan for an outdoor amenity space	€36,000	€4,000

All other 2019 and 2020 TVR projects are progressing

through the Municipal Districts.

TOWN CENTRE FIRST: A POLICY APPROACH TO IRISH TOWNS

The Government published Town Centre First – a major new policy that aims to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction and breathe new life into our town centres on the 4th February, 2022.

TOWN CENTRE FIRST PLANS 2021 CLARA

On 18th November, 2021 under Phase I of the Town Centre First Plan Initiative, Clara was selected by the Minister from Offaly County Council's nominated towns for the Town Centre First Plan.

It is envisaged that Clara's Town Centre First Plan can reimagine the potential of the town and focus in particular on its centre and immediate surroundings. The plan will identify specific interventions including tackling dereliction and vacancy, de-carbonisation, maintaining a strong local economy, creating high value job opportunities and promoting compact growth.

Replies to tenders for consultants to carry out the Town Centre First Plan are being evaluated in Q2 2022 and a Clara Town Team establishment is in progress.

SLIEVE BLOOM MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL

Phases 2 & 3 of the trails, funded under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund programme 2018, part of a €10 million allocation for 4 National Trail Centres across 7 counties, continued to be delivered by Coillte during 2021. The c.80km trail system on both sides of the mountain will be completed in 2022. The trails on both sides are attracting significant levels of uses.

The development will give a major tourism boost to the area and will see the village of Kinnitty as a hub for services such as bike hire, showers, bike wash, food and accommodation, in addition to its' existing prominence as a meeting / starting point for the many walks and road cycling routes in the Mountains.



OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS DEVELOPMENT LEVY ALLOCATIONS 2021

JOB DESCRIPTION	Funds Available €000's
Development contribution income - to be assigned	4,695
Currently assigned	
Edenderry Library	2,000
O'Connor Square Public Realm	1,500
Offaly Blue Way	218
Midland Cycle Trails	250
Special dev schemes	363
Edenderry Swimming Pool	300
TOTAL	9,326

Development Contributions - Receipts and Application of Development Funds for the period to December 2021

Description	'000
Balance Available –	7,784
Contributions Received- 2021	1,442
Transfers	0
Disbursements 2021	0
Balance Available - 2021	9,326

ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES 2021

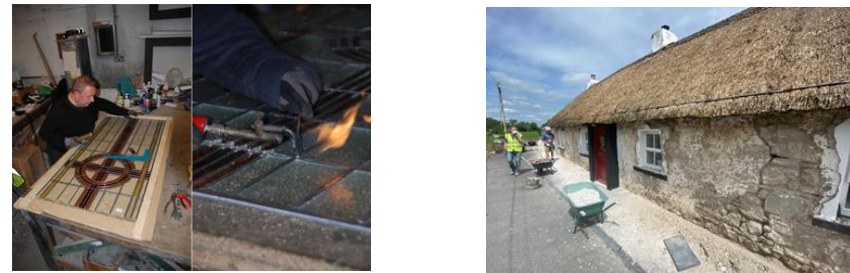
The Architects Department provides a cross departmental service throughout the County Council and Municipal Districts, particularly in areas of Planning and Conservation. The Architects Department continues to make a significant contribution to the County Development Plans in the running of the Record of Protected Structures and the upkeep of the multifaceted database. This also includes the considerable number of ongoing owner or prospective queries and Section 57 Declarations. Advice and assistance is also given to many community groups regarding proposals for the upkeep or re use of existing protected structures.

BUILT HERITAGE INVESTMENT SCHEME

The Architects Department seeks to promote the Built Heritage of Offaly outside of the county and highlight the importance of funding with the Department. In November 2020 Offaly County Council advertised the BHIS 2021 for conservation projects in the county. We received approval by the Department for 24 applicants with an increased allocation of €94,800. Works were carried out throughout the year and 15 projects successfully completed. Projects varied from roof repairs including thatched properties, window and stained glass repairs, lime rendering and general stabilisation works.



Thatch Repairs Cappincur Door Repairs Birr



Stained glass repair, St Mary's Church Cloghan, Lime repairs to Ballyegan

HISTORIC STRUCTURES FUND

Offaly County Council worked with 6 successful HSF applications in 2021. Emmel Castle-roof repairs, Former Gaol-railing repairs, Tullanisk Barn-roof reinstatement, Coilte-Kinnitty Suspension Bridge, Former Portarlington Convent deferred until 2022, Birr Courthouse-emergency

roof repairs.



Kinnitty suspension bridge before, during and after

PLANNING

The Architects Department continues to deal with all planning applications to Protected Structures, providing a report with historical research, mapping and site photographs for planning. Pre planning meetings and advice are provided as required and Enforcement assistance.

Advice is also provided where required on large pre-plan and planning applications in the county, housing, public or commercial properties. Note the number of Planning Reports increased from 67 in 2020 to 120 in 2021.

CDP Review –assisting planning with new CDP 2021. Working on the Record of Protected Structures and preparing reports and final combined RPS document.

Urban and Village Renewal – Sketch designs for proposed applications and assistance with cross-departmental team. Working with the area office when projects are approved to proceed.

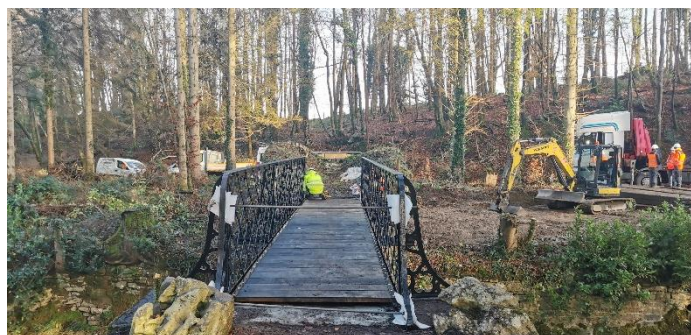
URDF and RRDF – Working with a cross departmental team on applications providing mapping, sketch proposals augmenting final applications. Part of Steering Group for successful projects (Banagher, Tullamore).

MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS

The Architects Department works closely with the Municipal Districts on specific projects as they arise.

Birr – Birr Destination Town and Failte Ireland Funding, working with core team to provide proposals for specific areas.

ORIS – working with Senior Planner on Kinnitty application and successful project. Metal Girder bridge repaired and installed December 2021. *Before, during and after photos*



HERITAGE OFFICE

Working with the Heritage Office on a number of projects (including being part of the Heritage Forum), along with HSF, **Birr Courthouse** was also successful with a Historic Towns Initiative - €350k funding project for roof and window repairs.

Birr courthouse roof, lead valley and slate repairs



Continue work on forthcoming publication on Vernacular Architecture in Offaly, Setting, Materials and Furniture.



Book and sample dresser, Belmont. Launch 2022



CREATIVE IRELAND

Part of the Creative Ireland Team in Offaly. Liaise with team on overall budget. Manage Follies project - additional funding towards Kinnitty Suspension Bridge of €10,000. Also Vernacular Architecture projects – Woodfield House, gate repairs, Killyon Forge, roof, Derrybeg, gate repairs. Site visits, working with applicants, preparing ongoing reports for CI.



Killyon Forge, Before and after works

SHOPFRONT ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

Working with LEO and Senior Planning to establish and guide the scheme through Birr, Tullamore and Edenderry.



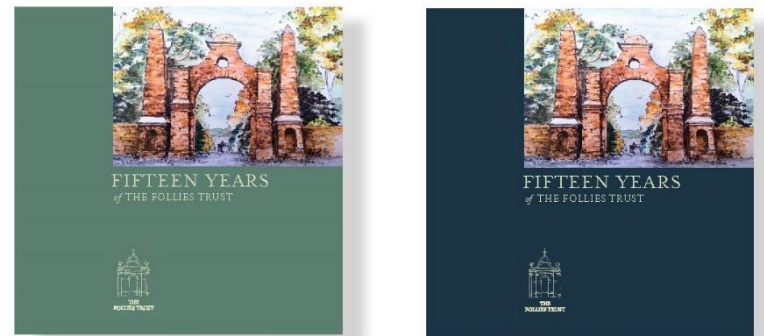
ACRES FOLLY

Working with URDF for Phase 2 new replacement internal staircase to provide managed rooftop access, Phase 3 landscaping works 2022.

Flights of stairs up interior of Acres Folly, giving access to the roof

FOLLIES TRUST

Liaise with Trust, 3.5-4k approved. Drafted application for Coillte. New Follies Trust 15-year publication; Write piece on four completed Offaly projects – promotional.

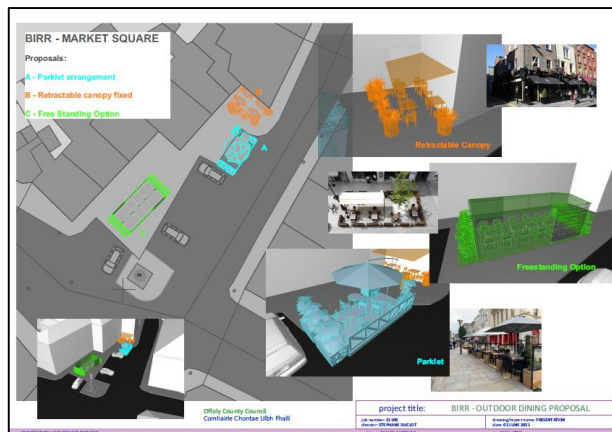


Gloster painting selected for book cover

OUTDOOR DINING FUNDING

Assist area engineers Birr and Tullamore for proposals for applications.

Tullamore sketch



Outdoor dining – Birr sketch

NIAH GARDEN SURVEY

Department commencing detailed survey of historic gardens of Offaly to augment existing desktop exercise. Go through 220 gardens compile list of timeframe involved



for future consultants. Project with consultants 2022.

Garryhinch – sample gardens

HERITAGE

The Heritage Office works with the Offaly Heritage Forum to deliver the **Offaly Heritage Plan 2017-21**. The forum usually meets four times a year and is made up of people from state agencies, council staff and NGOs. All meetings in 2021 have been by zoom.

HERITAGE COUNCIL

The National Heritage Council provides funding towards the running of the Heritage office (25%) and also gives an allocation of €30,000 towards the delivery of the Offaly Heritage Plan. This year the Heritage Council funding went towards the county archives service, the Birr Courthouse Conservation Master Plan and Communications.

The heritage office has one full time officer and part time administration support from mid-2021. In 2021 the heritage office received additional funding from the Historic Towns Initiative, Decade of Commemorations, the Creative Ireland programme; the National Biodiversity Action Plan and the new Community Monuments Fund. This report is set out as an update on all 8 actions in the **Offaly Heritage Plan 2017-21**.

1. *Offaly County Council Heritage related projects such as 1916/2016 Centenary Commemorations and the follow on programme Creative Ireland; management of key county sites such as Durrow and Clonmacnoise, public realm plans and ongoing projects as they arise.*

BIRR COURTHOUSE CONSERVATION MASTER PLAN

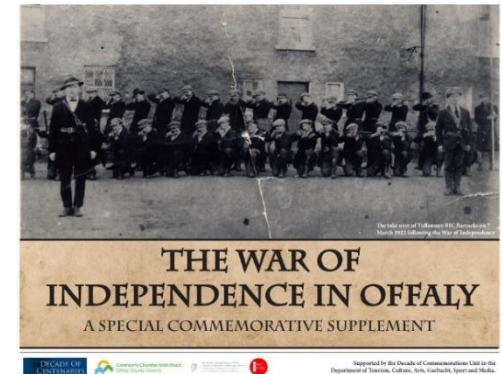
The Courthouse in Birr came into Offaly County Council's ownership in the summer of 2021. In order to plan for its future conservation and use, Howley Hayes Cooney conservation architects were commissioned to develop a detailed conservation master plan. This was funded by the Heritage Council, Creative Ireland and a contribution from Birr Municipal District.

HISTORIC TOWNS INITIATIVE

In 2021 under the Historic Towns Initiative €220,000 was allocated to the conservation of Birr Courthouse roof and façade windows and doors. This is the first time this funding has been secured in Offaly from this scheme. It was combined with Historic Structures Funding and a contribution from Offaly County Council and this made the water tight and repaired the windows to the façade.

DECADE OF CENTENARIES

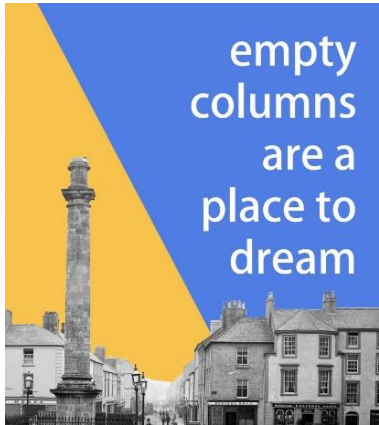
funding of €57,000 was received in 2021 and a comprehensive programme of publications, videos, blogs, and material hosted on the website has been developed in partnership with Offaly History.



Supplement in the Tribune Oct 2021

CREATIVE IRELAND

Creative Ireland 2017-22 places creativity at the centre of public policy focusing on projects that are collaborative involving the arts, heritage and libraries with strong community reach. The Heritage Officer is the county co-ordinator working with the team from the Arts Office, Architect, Library Service, Community and Local Development and the Local Enterprise Offaly. In 2021 €160,161 was allocated to the diverse range of programmes.



A very engaging collage event held during Vintage / Heritage Week in August and winner of the County Heritage Week award

LOUGH BOORA SCULPTURE PARK

The heritage officer is on the working group of 3 Council and 3 Bord na Mona representatives to manage the sculpture park and is involved in the reports currently being undertaken.

- Partnering with local communities and societies working on heritage projects, ranging from the Tidy Towns network to Historical Societies.*

HERITAGE COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANTS

A number of communities were successful in receiving Heritage Council Community Grants. Support was provided

in delivering these for the Kilcomin graveyard group management plan; St Brendan's Hall, Birr conservation report for the Church of Ireland Vestry in Birr; conservation of archival material for Offaly Archives and the replacement of Killaun walkway by St Brendan's Secondary School.

CAMCOR RIVER STUDY

Part of the team working with Birr 20:20 community group on this study on managing the Camcor and its banks between Springfield Bridge and Croghan Bridge.

TIDY TOWNS

Support was provided to Tidy Towns groups delivering projects. Work over many years was well rewarded with Geashill winning the National Tidiest Village Award in the Tidy Town's competition.

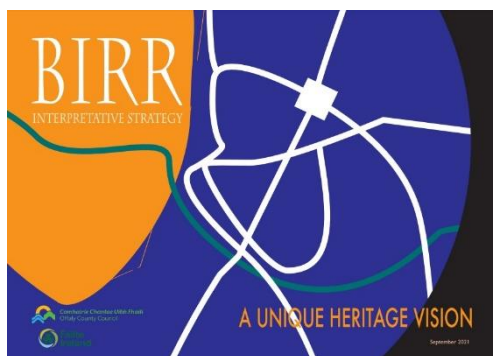


Geashill Tidy Towns collection their national award

- Heritage and Tourism– making sites accessible and improving signage and information including inputs to www.visitoffaly.ie*

BIRR DESTINATION TOWN WORKING GROUP

The heritage officer is part of the team working to deliver the Birr Destination Town project comprising of public realm works at the Green; a second entrance to Birr Demense at the Green; and delivering interpretation for Birr.



On this third element a community engagement project was carried out by consultant Alan Hill in 2021 - *Birr Interpretive Strategy*

4. Developing a County Archive Service in partnership with Offaly History, the Library Service and private owners

The County Archive Service has been developed by Offaly History and supported by Offaly County Council as a priority project of the Offaly Heritage Plan 2017-2021. The specially designed archives building in the Axis Business Park opened in the spring of 2020 is fully operational now albeit with Covid 19 restrictions. Work continues to develop the county archive service website www.offalyarchives.com which hosts catalogues and certain digitised material. Under a SLA the archives of Offaly County Council are managed by the Offaly County Archive Service. The service was formally launched by Minister Noonan in November 2021.



Launch of Archives Service 18 November 2021, Martina Malone, Chairperson of Heritage Council, Minister Malcolm Noonan, Virginia Teehan, CEO of Heritage Council and Lisa Shortall, archivist.

5. Medieval churches/Monastic Site conservation of the structures, management plans and access (these sites are predominantly in Offaly County Council ownership)

JUST TRANSITION MEDIEVAL CHURCHES CONSERVATION AND POLLINATION PROJECT €880,000

This is a joint project with Laois County Council from 2021 to 2023, conserving a medieval church in each MD and managing the area for pollinators. The three Offaly churches are Kilmurry-Ely in Birr MD, Kilbride in Tullamore MD and

Monasteroris in Edenderry MD.

COMMUNITY MONUMENTS FUND - €135,000

The Offaly Heritage Plan focused on medieval churches as they are owned by the Council however in 2020 a new funding stream opened for buildings in public and private ownership. Thus in 2021 work was able to be carried out at the Council owned Blundell Castle in Edenderry and at Castle Armstrong, Ballycumber (private).



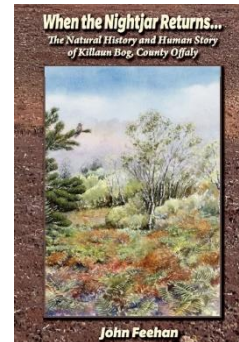
Blundell Castle, Edenderry, December 2021 post conservation works

The Council was also able to support the development of a conservation report for Seir Kieran graveyard wall which was commissioned by the Church of Ireland working with the Irish Heritage School) and support was also provided for signage at Lynally monastic site.

MAINTENANCE OF MEDIEVAL CHURCHES AND BURIAL GROUNDS

A maintenance programme has been put in place for medieval churches that have been conserved including Lynally, Lemanaghan, Drumcullen, Kilbride Clara, Croghan and Roscomroe.

6. *Publications –commissioning of and assisting with publications, specifically Offaly Castles and demesne landscapes which are currently in preparation.*



KILLAUN BOG, NR BIRR

A publication on the past, present and future development options for this bog researched and written by John Feehan was launched on 18 November– it was funded by National Biodiversity Action Plan.

CLARA AND RATHROBIN

100 Year's of Clara's History by Michael Goodbody and Rathrobin and the Two Irelands by Michael Byrne were supported through the Decade of Commemorations programme and launched in the autumn.

7. *Biodiversity -promotion of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, submitting records to the National Biodiversity Data Centre and control of invasive species with particular focus on Japanese and Himalayan knotweed and Himalayan Balsam*

Under the **National Biodiversity Action Plan** an allocation of €25,000 was allocated towards the following projects.

KILLAUN BOG NEAR BIRR

The boardwalk on this bog was installed by St Brendan's Community School 30 years ago and support from a number

of schemes has meant that it is fully replaced and reopened in 2021. Ongoing research at this site has included bird surveys by BirdWatch Ireland, mollusc survey by Roy Anderson, spider survey by Myles Nolan and bryophyte surveys by Blackthorn Ecology.

A **County Barn Owl survey** was undertaken by BirdWatch Ireland and 20 nest boxes were erected where good locations were found with thanks to landowners' goodwill. The number of barnowls has increased since the last survey and monitoring and additional boxes are planned for 2022. Link to Tom Kelly's farm and home to barnowls <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kr008--o3E>

INVASIVE SPECIES

An additional €16,000 was allocated for removal of invasive Himalayan balsam on Camcor and Little Brosna Catchment and Japanese knotweed county wide.

Offaly has two main invasive alien species which are being tackled by the County Council. Himalyan Balsam was noted spreading on the Camcor and Little Brosna Catchment and work continued to removal the plant. The second species is Japanese knotweed which has been tackled by Offaly County Council for the past decade. Work continues to combat this destructive plant and to try and contain it, involving annual treatment and a mapping programme along with contacting private landowners where the species is noted.

8. *Access to heritage -coordinating and management of events such as Heritage Week, Offaly Naturalists' Field Club, Annual Offaly Heritage Seminar and*

awareness of Offaly's heritage through all appropriate means

As physical events were limited the heritage office worked with John Feehan and continued the very successful series



of **Wildflowers of Offaly** and **Story of the Bogs** youtube videos bringing the total views to 39,405 views to date in 2021.

John Feehan in Story of the Bogs Part 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWtni9mbzzg>

A short film on Seir Kieran monastic site was also made with the support of Heritage Council funding.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQMv9glcg2g>

Heritage Week went ahead online had a mixed format of online and in person events in 2021. The **Annual Offaly Heritage Seminar** did not go ahead in its usual format but information on projects was disseminated.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Offaly is working to deliver Offaly County Council's Mission Statement which is "To lead sustainable economic, social and community development in Offaly".

LEO Offaly manages the Enterprise and Economic Development Functions within Offaly County Council. In April 2021, Tourism as an economic driver was added to the brief. In 2021, 7 members of staff (inclusive of temporary staff) in the Local Enterprise Office, 3 members of staff in Offaly Tourism and 2 Business Development Managers in Offaly Innovation & Design Centre CLG report to the Head of Enterprise. The Head of Enterprise reports to the Director of Services for Economic Development and Planning.

ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

The Local Enterprise Office produces a four-year Enterprise Development Plan. Earlier this year, the 2017-2020 Plan was reviewed and the new 2021 -2024 LEO Offaly Enterprise Development Plan was produced.

LEO OFFALY ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2024

This new plan has been prepared in line with the national, regional and local policies and initiatives identified in a number of other relevant plans, including the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031, Midlands

Regional Enterprise Plan, Project Ireland 2040, National Planning Framework, the National Development Plan 2018-2027, Enterprise 2025 Renewed, Offaly County Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024, County Development Plan 2021-2027, Offaly Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021, Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2024, Midlands Regional Food & Drink Strategy 2020 -2024 and Climate Action Plan 2019.

Key deliverables include supporting and promoting the green and circular economies, engineering and manufacturing sectors, the food and beverage sector, and increasing employment levels in grant aided businesses.

LEO OFFALY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2021

- Increased Client Engagement

During 2021 and in response to Covid-19, LEO Offaly continued to provide a wide range of new and existing supports to Offaly's business community. Client interactions continued to grow as LEO Offaly adapted services to provide online training programmes, online events and networking, mentoring via phone and Zoom/MS Teams and enhanced grant supports to a wider business audience. In addition to assisting with the Covid-19 challenge, LEO Offaly continued to work with Offaly

businesses to ensure they could be as well prepared as possible for Brexit and the transition to a low carbon, digital future. In 2021, LEO Staff re-introduced physical client meetings and site visits in compliance with Covid-19 restrictions.

- Client Feedback/Testimonials

"Offaly LEO are always extremely helpful and knowledgeable when dealing with any queries. Their online courses, especially during COVID, have been a timely and great resource for myself and my clients alike"

"There is so much to marketing a business now and thanks to the Local Enterprise Office. You are allowing the small businesses to have a chance at surviving in the new online world. The tutor explained how we can set up a marketing plan and be as good as the top companies. I am looking forward to putting it into operation"

"Again another invaluable workshop for business owners in the Offaly area - I have found all workshops I have attended through Offaly Local Enterprise a great help and support, thank you"

- National Enterprise Awards

The National Enterprise Awards final were broadcast online from the Mansion House in Dublin on the 11th February. The National Enterprise Awards are one of a number of initiatives that the Local Enterprise Offices run, to foster entrepreneurship across the country. Competing

for Offaly at the national final was Dr. Emma-Rose Conroy of Euro Stallions (Ireland) Ltd. Euro Stallions (Ireland) Ltd is the first EU approved embryo collection centre in Ireland. Westmeath company Bevcraft, a mobile canning company took the top prize at this year's National Enterprise Awards.

- Local Enterprise Week

It was Local Enterprise Week from Monday March 1st to Friday March 5th. Over 200 budding entrepreneurs and business owners in Offaly took part in online events. An annual initiative from the 31 Local Enterprise Offices around the country, including Local Enterprise Office Offaly, more than 270 events took place online under the theme of 'Making It Happen' attracting over 10,700 bookings nationally.

- Student Enterprise Awards Offaly

The Student Enterprise Awards County Offaly Final took place on 9th March, which was held live online for the first time ever in the history of the competition. Almost 500 students from 10 schools took part in the annual programme locally. Damien Delaney and Alex Byrne of Hology Photography were the winning teenager entrepreneurs from Birr Community School. They run a photography business selling pictures framed, unframed and on canvas of the local area and more.

- National Student Enterprise Awards

Damien Delaney and Alex Byrne from St. Brendan's Community School in Birr won the Natasha Lynch Commemorative Award for Excellence in Social Media award at the National Final of this year's Student Enterprise Programme.

The Finals of the Local Enterprise Office initiative were broadcast virtually from Croke Park with An Tánaiste Leo Varadkar and Ambassador Derval O'Rourke speaking with host RTE's Rick O'Shea, as students and teachers watched on from across the country.

There were 72 student enterprises competing in this year's National Final in what is Ireland's largest entrepreneurship programme for second level students. The initiative, funded by the Government of Ireland through Enterprise Ireland and delivered by the 31 Local Enterprise Offices in local authorities throughout the country, saw 29,000 students from almost 500 secondary schools across the country take part.

LEO OFFALY OUTPUTS 2021

Jobs:	Output 2021
Total Employment in LEO Clients	1,047
Gross Jobs Created	173
Net Increase (after Job Losses)	29
Number of LEO Clients	212

Measure 1	Output 2021
Grant Applications Approved:	28
Feasibility	3
Priming	5
Business Expansion	20
Measure 2	Output 2021
Training:	
Total No. of Courses	51
Total No. of Participants	573
No. of SYOB Programmes	13
Mentoring:	
Number of Participants	171

Schools Entrepreneurship	Output 2021
Number of Secondary Schools Participating	13
Number of Students Participating	609

Trading On Line Vouchers:	Output 2021
No. of Trading Online Vouchers approved	40

Scheme:	Output 2021
Agile R&D Fund: Companies approved	1
Client Stimulus Fund Consultancy: participants	52
Microfinance Ireland	13
Lean for Micro: Offaly Participants	6
Green for Micro: Offaly participants	10
Midlands Exporters Programme: participants	5

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

LEO Offaly in association with the Midland LEOs of Laois, Westmeath and Longford continued to collaborate on a number of joint initiatives, including Export Programmes, the development and promotion of the Engenuity Engineering Cluster, the Going Green Programme, and the development of the Midlands Food and Drink Strategy.

- Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan

LEO Offaly participated in review of the closing plan and in the development of the new Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024. The 3 key objectives are: 1. Climate Action: Transition to a zero-carbon economy; 2. Build on achievements to date in sectors in which the region has a competitive advantage through Smart Specialisation and wider adoption of digitalization within business, leveraging the new Technological University of the Shannon; 3. Placemaking – position the Midlands as a community of choice in which to live, create, study, work, visit, and invest.

- Midlands Regional Transition Team

LEO Offaly continues to be an active member of this team, participating in meeting and contributing to the delivery of actions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LEO Offaly staff together with colleagues in Offaly County Council and stakeholders in the Midlands Region have been supporting businesses and communities in the transition towards a sustainable, low carbon, digital future. Through collaborations and competitive funding schemes, there have been significant advancements in the development of tourism projects such as Greenways and Mountain Bike Trails, Green Energy projects in North Offaly, Science and Big Data projects in South Offaly, an enhanced Wi-Fi and broadband projects throughout the County.

LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP) 2016-2021 REVIEW

In 2021, LEO Offaly conducted the review of the Economic element of the LECP 2016-2021 Review. The findings were presented to the SPC for Land Use, Planning and Economic Development, and the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). Under the Local Government Reform (Amendment) Act 2014, each Local Authority is required to develop a six year LECP, which is to be reviewed once in its lifetime. Within the plan, there were 49 Special Objectives and 261 Actions. For the Economic Plan element, there were 30

OBJECTIVES AND 104 ACTIONS - OBSERVATIONS FROM THE REVIEW

- At the time the LECP was written, there were no funding streams available to implement the Plan

- A range of competitive funding streams were introduced during the life of the Plan, and this enabled impressive progress over 6 years
- Most of the actions continue to be relevant, and variations may feature in the next LECP
- Over reliance on OCC and LEO Offaly to drive majority of actions
- Many actions have a status of “In Progress”. Often, this means that work is ongoing as opposed to a one off action e.g. Promote Tullamore for Inward Investment” Need to ensure that there are adequate resources to take on new actions
- The inclusion of Goals/Actions was useful to reference in Funding Applications

LESSONS FROM THE REVIEW

- LECP needs to be key part of linked national, regional and local plans
- Other Plans such as Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan, Local Enterprise Development Plan etc. need to be complementary to LECP
- LECP needs to identify and include key local priorities
- Establish mechanism for interagency implementation of actions
- Keep implementation simple – no meeting burnout!
- Develop goals which are directional rather than aspirational

- Ensure relevance of actions for implementing agency – agency must have capacity to implement it
- Reduce high number of actions – 261 in Offaly LECP
- Ensure goals are relevant for term of the LECP
- Need clear guidance on mid-term review process
- Greater integration of community and economic goals

The findings of the LECP Review will be used in the development of the new LECP Plan which is scheduled to be completed and published in 2022.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS 2021

- Co-Working Hubs

LEO Offaly staff continue to work closely with Offaly Innovation & Design Centre CLG, both with the running of the four hubs and the due diligence/secretariat requirements. In 2021, Offaly Innovation & Design Centre CLG successfully applied for the following funding: €75,000 under the Connected Hubs Scheme; €69,750 under the EI Enterprise Centre Grant, and €476,000 under the Just Transition Fund. A new Business Development Manager for The Junction and e-Hive has been recruited and design plans are completed and tendering underway for refurbishment of 19H The Junction Business Innovation Centre and expansion at 25J The Junction Office Suites. A series of training events and initiatives in streamBIRR to

promote data analytics has also taken place.

- Green Energy/Rhode Green Energy Park

Offaly County Council in association with North Offaly Development Fund (NODF) CLG continued to build on the work undertaken in 2020 with the launch of the Opportunity Assessment Report for Rhode in North Offaly.

In 2021, Offaly County Council in association with North Offaly Development Fund received a funding offer to complete Rhode Green Energy Park's infrastructure. The funding also allows for a Feasibility Study on integrating a Data Centre/large energy user with renewable energy and green hydrogen.

In 2021, North Offaly Development Fund CLG successfully applied for funding for a Feasibility Study. The €110,000 project will investigate the feasibility of creating a green hydrogen demonstration hub at Rhode Green Energy Park, integrating energy from renewable electricity with the gas network. Project partners are NODF, SSE and Bord na Mona. The study will be carried out by RPS, NUIG and UCD.

In addition, Offaly County Council in association with NODF arranged regular briefings with promoters and stakeholders in and around the Park to develop the business community and opportunities for collaboration.

Offaly County Council in association with RPS presented at the National Hydrogen Conference in June 2021. Furthermore, Offaly County Council made a detailed cross-departmental submission to Eirgrid's Shaping Our Electricity Future Consultation.



SPACE TO GROW

A potential c.1GW of renewable energy generation and storage, only 30 - 80 km from the Greater Dublin Area presents an unprecedented opportunity for large energy users and employers to establish in the Midlands. In addition, by locating in Offaly, large energy users will join a dynamic eco-system of green energy companies, and also can fulfil CSR obligations in investing in an area most affected by the accelerated cessation of peat harvesting and peat fired power generation.

- Shopfront Scheme

LEO Offaly managed the Pilot and supplementary scheme as funded under the Town & Village Renewal scheme. This is in conjunction with Planning and Architecture within OCC. There were 52 applications under this scheme.

- Streetscape Enhancement Scheme

LEO Offaly managed this scheme in 2021 which had 31 applications from businesses in Tullamore, Portarlinton, Birr and Edenderry.

- Site Sales

LEO Offaly is continuing to manage enquiries and deal with site sales in Ferbane Industrial Park, Lemonaghan and Portarlinton Industrial Park. There is increasing interest in the purchase of industrial serviced sites across the County. There are four units under construction in Ferbane Industrial Park.

- Expansion Announcement

Zoetis, a biopharma company [focused on animal healthcare](#), announced that it will expand its presence in Ireland with the creation of up to 100 new jobs at its facility in Tullamore. It currently employs about 90 highly

skilled scientists and technicians at its Tullamore site. The Co Offaly facility became part of Zoetis when it acquired Nexvet Biopharma for about \$85m in 2017. The US-headquartered company plans to break ground on the Tullamore expansion early next year and to be fully operational by 2025. The development will create 80 to 100 jobs over the next three years, with some roles being phased in later this year.

- Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategy Policy Committee (SPC)

LEO Offaly provides the Secretariat for this Committee. In 2021, 4 meetings were held and the SPC worked through its adopted work programme, covering topics such as:

1. Briefing and consideration of the draft County Development Plan and draft Development Contribution Scheme
2. Economic Development Updates and Initiatives
3. Offaly Tourism updates
4. Regeneration Schemes and Greenways updates.

- North Offaly Development Fund CLG

LEO Offaly provides the Secretariat, admin support and on-going assistance to develop opportunities at Rhode Green Energy Park

2022 ENTERPRISE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES include:

- Continue to support Offaly Enterprises as they deal with the challenges of Covid-19
 - Assist Offaly Enterprises respond to the challenges of BREXIT through preparation, adaptation and exploring alternative markets
 - Continue to engage with local, regional and national stakeholders to support the transition to a decarbonized economy
 - Promote, Support and Develop Offaly Enterprise at all levels including student enterprise, female entrepreneurship, senior entrepreneurship
 - Continue to develop and deliver timely and relevant training programmes and initiatives designed to: Increase exports, Build resilience, Increase productivity, Prepare for the low carbon economy, Embrace the digital economy, Innovate, Be managed by ambitious & capable individuals, Fuel regional growth
 - Promote Offaly as a great location for business expansion, and continue to manage to all enquiries and opportunities for inward investment
 - Promote Offaly's key sectoral strengths including: Green Energy & Technology, Food & Drink, Engineering and Manufacturing, Science and Big Data, Tourism and Creative Industries
 - Continue to engage with local, regional and national stakeholders to deliver the key objectives of the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan
 - Continue to work with other departments in Offaly County Council to progress projects benefiting economic development of the County
 - Continue to work with and support Offaly Innovation & Design Centre CLG and the development of co-working hubs in Offaly
- Subject to resources, LEO Offaly will*
- Co-Ordinate and develop the Economic Element of the Local Economic & Community Plan 2022-2028
 - Tender for an Economic Vision and Strategy for Co. Offaly
 - Explore opportunities for developing a new Industrial Park in Tullamore and/or acquiring new industrial lands elsewhere in the County
 - Assist in the development of Offaly Tourism to address new Product Development and capability development of Tourism Providers

TOURISM

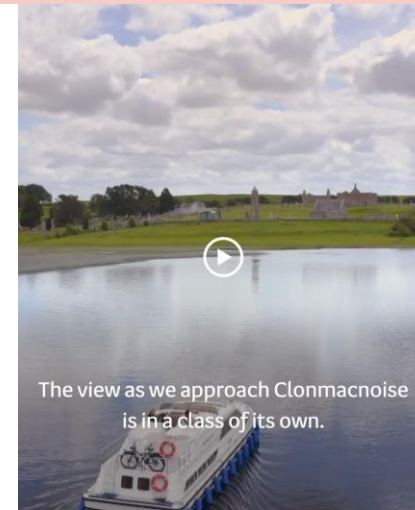
Once again, 2021 has been an extremely challenging year for the tourism and hospitality sector in Offaly with restrictions continuing into August. The tourism team continued to work closely with Fáilte Ireland to assist and support our stakeholders. Combined with the significant lifting of restrictions and an accumulation in savings, there is potential for a good recovery in both inbound and domestic tourism in 2022.

Offaly Tourism continued to promote Offaly to the domestic market, striving to increase visitor numbers and dwell time. Looking back at 2021 there was many noteworthy achievements;

TV PRESENCE

The magazine style American cable TV show, *'Ireland County by County'* filmed for two days in June. The crew visited a number of sites including Clonmacnoise, Lough Boora, Birr Castle Clara Bog. The show will be carried by 239 public TV stations across the USA, with an audience of 40+ million annual TV viewers and broadcast from Spring 2022.

Tourism sites in Offaly also featured in the TG4 *'Heartlands'* show and the music documentary *'Fleadh 21'*, broadcast in July & August.



SUMMER MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Offaly Tourism's national Summer marketing campaign launched in Mid May 2021.

For the second year, Offaly tourism was delighted to collaborate with its neighbours in the midland counties to jointly promote the area on local radio. The 'Magical Midlands' adverts began broadcasting in June for a period of eight weeks. The campaign consisted of three county specific adverts for Offaly, Laois and Westmeath.

The common message at the beginning and ending of the adverts is to enjoy the 'Magical Midlands'. The adverts encourage the midlanders to get out and explore the wonders and beauty within the region.

A national radio campaign ran for a period of two weeks in July on Today FM & Newstalk, boosting Offaly's profile nationwide. A further ad campaign was broadcast on iRadio for a two-week period in June targeting a younger demographic.

Social media influencers continue to carry great power over their audience. Offaly welcomed a number of high profile bloggers in 2021 including Roz Purcell, Greg O'Shea and Jedward, with posts receiving 70k likes!

DIGITAL MARKETING

Social media followers now over **15,000** – An increase of **42%** in the last 2 years. With over **156,807** impressions across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter in the last 3 months.



PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

2021 saw the filming and launch of the first ever Offaly Tourism Videos. The series of videos were launched throughout the Summer on our website and social media. Receiving a great response, they showcase all the great things to experience in Offaly and are a valuable promotional resource which will be utilised into the future.

PRINT ADVERTISING

Offaly specific adverts and editorial were organised for a number of publications in 2021; 'Your Ireland' Supplement, Celtic Media Group; 'Family Days Out', Iconic Media; 'Discover Ireland 2021', Western People Group.



FÁILTE IRELAND'S 'KEEP DISCOVERING' CAMPAIGN

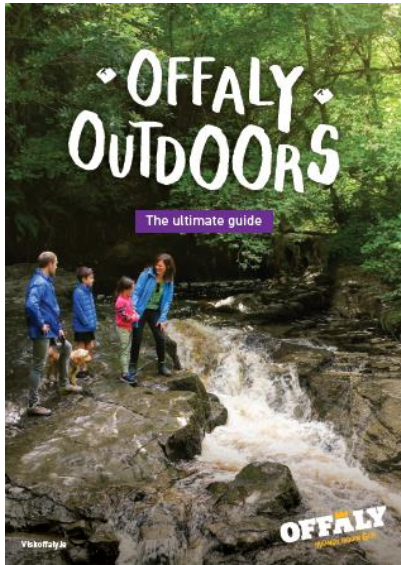
The very successful Fáilte Ireland 'Keep Discovering' Campaign continued throughout the Summer with TV, print and radio advertising. Birr Castle Demesne featured in the IAE TV advert and cruising on the River Shannon on the IHH advert. Offaly adverts featured in the national

newspapers; Irish Times, Irish Independent and Examiner, in July and October.



NEW PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

A number of new marketing material was completed in 2021 including; Offaly Outdoors brochure, A3 Map, Golf brochure and 'Top things to do in Offaly'.



TRAINING

Facilitated a number of tailored training programmes with partners Fáilte Ireland and Offaly Local Enterprise Office e.g. Visitor Experience Activation Programme, Demand Creation and Channel Distribution.



TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS

There are a number of ongoing development projects which the tourism team are collaborating on and assisting with:

- Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trails
- Grand Canal Greenway
- Birr Destination Towns Project
- Blundell Masterplan, Edenderry
- Banagher Marina Masterplan
- Shannonbridge Destination Development Plan
- Just Transition Projects

OFFALY
IRELAND'S HIDDEN GEM

OFFALY TOURISM MARKETING MEETINGS

Despite the situation with COVID-19, Offaly Tourism Marketing meetings continued virtually throughout 2021. Chaired by Grainne O'Malley there was five meetings held; 26th January, 29th April, 6th July, 7th Sept., 16th November. The AGM also took place on 16th November. The meetings are a great opportunity for the trade to engage directly with the tourism team, giving valuable feedback for marketing activities, campaign development etc.

CORPORATE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

(INCL. CORPORATE SERVICES, HUMAN RESOURCES, FINANCE & INFORMATION SYSTEMS)

CORPORATE SERVICES		FINANCE	
<i>Director of Services:</i>	Mark Connolly	<i>Head of Finance</i>	Mark Connolly
<i>Senior Executive Officer:</i>	Evan Fennell	<i>Financial Management Accountant:</i>	Thomas Mawe
<i>Administrative Officer:</i>	Gerry Bruton	<i>Administrative Officer:</i>	Mary Flynn Kenny
HUMAN RESOURCES		INFORMATION SYSTEMS	
<i>Director of Services:</i>	Mark Connolly	<i>Director of Services</i>	Mark Connolly
<i>Senior Executive Officer:</i>	Evan Fennell	<i>Head of I.S.:</i>	Ray Bell
<i>Administrative Officer:</i>	Caroline Dempsey	<i>I.S. Project Leader</i>	Eileen Jackson
		<i>I.S. Project Leader</i>	David Spain

CORPORATE SERVICES

The main functions of the Corporate Services section include:

- To provide an efficient and professional secretariat to the Council and their committees.
- To make information available to the members in a timely, convenient and flexible manner to allow for informed decision making.

- To maintain and update the register of electors.
- To develop initiatives to increase cross-departmental awareness and input to the development of corporate policies.
- To improve communications internally and externally on Local Authorities activities.

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS, ELECTED FOLLOWING LOCAL ELECTIONS HELD ON 24TH MAY 2019

Birr Electoral Area:

Carroll, John	The Ring, Birr	(087) 228 3772	clrjcarroll@gmail.com	Non-Party
Claffey, Clare	10 Cluain, Rynagh, Banaghe	(087) 678 7403	clare.claffey@socialdemocrats.ie	Social Democrats
Clendennen, John	Kinnitty, Birr	(087) 611 8883	john@johnclendennen.com	Fine Gael
Dooley, Eamon	Na Tullaig, Aughaboy, Ferbane	(086) 223 7058	eamondooley@hotmail.com	Fianna Fáil
Leahy, John	Glendine, Kilcormac	(087) 207 3226	info@johnleahy.net	Non Party
Ormond, Peter	Kyleogue, Shinrone, Birr	(086) 212 1449	peter.ormond@gmail.com	Fianna Fáil

Edenderry Electoral Area:

Cribbin, Noel	Francis Street, Edenderry	(087) 907 3804	noelcribb56@gmail.com	Fine Gael
Fitzpatrick, Eddie	Benfield, Cloneyhurke, Portarlington	(087) 258 0428	clr.eddie.fitzpatrick@gmail.com	Fianna Fáil
Foley, John	Springville, Killane, Edenderry	(087) 252 2882	clr.johnfoley@gmail.com	Non-Party
Hackett, Mark	Geashill	(087) 2422746	markhackettgreen@gmail.com	Green Party *
McDermott, Robert	Canal View, Killane, Edenderry	(087) 255 5251	robert@edenprint.ie	Fianna Fáil
Quinn, Liam	Ballyteigue Little, Ballycommon,	(087) 916 3066	liamjq@gmail.com	Fine Gael

Tullamore Electoral Area:

Feighery, Neil	Holmshill, Blueball, Tullamore	(087) 793 3118	neilfeighery@gmail.com	Fine Gael
Harvey, Declan	11 Park Avenue, Tullamore	(087) 410 6571	deckieharvey@gmail.com	Fianna Fáil
McCormack, Tony	Daingean Road, Tullamore	(086) 822 9399	tony.mccormack@yahoo.ie	Fianna Fáil
Moran, Frank	2 Oak View, Kilcoursey, Clara	(086) 887 9524	moranfrank1@hotmail.com	Fianna Fáil
O'Brien, Sean	83 Whitehall, Tullamore	(086) 389 2854	seanobrientullamore@gmail.com	Non-Party
Owens, Danny	Lugamarla, Mountbolus, Tullamore	(087) 127 1526	dannyowensoffaly@gmail.com	Fianna Fáil
Smollen, Ken	New Road, Clara	(085) 143 2898	kensmollen@gmail.com	Irish Democratic Party

*Co-opted on 18th November 2019

SUPPORT SERVICES

The Corporate Services section provides a secretariat service for meetings of the County Council. The Council normally meets on the third Monday of each month, excluding August. In addition, an Annual Budget Meeting and an Annual Meeting must be held. In all, 19 council meetings were held in 2021. A series of 4 Special Council meetings were held in May and September to consider the Draft County Development Plan.

At the Annual Meeting, held on 21st June 2021, Councillor Declan Harvey was elected Cathaoirleach and Councillor Robert McDermott was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.



June Annual Meeting held in Áras an Chontae on 21st June 2021

Members continued to receive the agenda and supporting documentation electronically on DecisionTime (MinutePad - introduced in June 2015) for all meetings of the Council.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC – BUSINESS CONTINUITY

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic continued to affect the country during 2021 and in line with the Public Health Measures introduced almost all Council meetings were held remotely during 2021.

CORPORATE POLICY GROUP (C.P.G.)

The Chairpersons of the Strategic Policy Committees are elected members of the County Council. They, along with the Cathaoirleach of the Council, form a committee called the Corporate Policy Group (C.P.G.), advised by the Chief Executive. Where a Municipal District is not represented on the C.P.G. that Municipal District may elect a member to the C.P.G. The C.P.G. is essentially the Council's 'Cabinet'. Its main roles are consultation in preparation of budgets, dealing with corporate issues, modernisation and customer service.

The Corporate Policy Group met on 16 occasions during 2021.

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES (S.P.C.s)

S.P.C.s have a key role in advising and informing the Council.

Their purpose is to provide a forum for debate on policy issues and for the development of policy recommendations for the Council.

They have a broad membership including sectoral and community interests working with elected members and council staff. There are four S.P.C.'s in Offaly dealing policy areas.

Chairpersons of Offaly S.P.C.'s are: -

- Housing - Cllr. D. Owens
- Land Use, Planning and Economic Development - Cllr. E. Dooley
- Climate Action, Environment, Water and Transportation - Cllr J. Leahy
- Community, Culture and Emergency Services - Cllr. L. Quinn

MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE OIREACHTAS

The Cathaoirleach and the members of the Management Team briefed the Oireachtas Members on progress to date and challenges to the Local Authority at a meeting held on 11th October 2021, with a mid-year review issuing in July 2021

CORPORATE PLAN REVIEW

The objectives and priorities of the Offaly Corporate Plan 2019 - 2025 continued to be reviewed by the relevant Strategic Policy Committees. Progress was reported, via the Budget Supplementary Directorate Reports, during the 2020 Budget process and via the

monthly Management Reports considered at the monthly Council meetings.

REGISTER OF ELECTORS

The Register of Electors was produced on the 1st February and came into force on 15th February 2022. The total electorate for County Offaly for the 2022/2023 Register of Electors was 59,686 broken down over the local electoral areas as follows:

Birr	21,082
Edenderry	16,751
Tullamore	21,853
Total on the Register	59,686

JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

The Joint Policing Committee met on three occasions in 2021. The Committee did not hold an annual Public Meeting in 2021 in line with Public Health guidelines to counteract the spread of Covid 19.

During the year the Committee reviewed the Department of Justice and Equality Community CCTV Scheme in an effort to assist communities with their applications.

SWIMMING POOLS

Corporate Services administer the Council's support grant.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

During 2021 Offaly County Council processed 11 applications under the Access to Information on the Environment.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

The Council responded to the Office of the Ombudsman in relation to Offaly County Council issues.

PROTECTED DISCLOSURES ACT, 2014

No protected disclosures were made to the Council in 2021.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Offaly County Council processed 72 Freedom of Information requests during 2021, an increase on the 67 applications received in 2020.

Applications received / processed in 2021	
Applications on hand at 31/12/2020	20
Applications received during 2021	72
Decisions taken during 2021	89
Applications withdrawn and dealt with outside FoI	12
Applications on hand 31/12/2021	3

Nature of the information requested	
Personal (to applicant)	9
Non-personal	63

Requests were received from the following	
Journalists	30
Business / Interest	0
Oireachtas	0
Staff	0
Clients	9
Others	33

COUNTY CORONERS

The total expenditure was €125,526.80 (including salaries) in respect of coroners' inquests in 2021.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each section, as appropriate, prepared their National Performance Indicators statistics. The statistics were collated by Corporate Services and submitted to the Local Management Services Board and the National Oversight and Audit Committee (NOAC). NOAC published the National Service Indicator Report for all Local Authorities for 2020 in September 2021.

NEW MEMBER OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Mr. Stephane Duclot, Director of Services, joined the organisation in March 2021. He was assigned responsibility for Planning, Economic and Rural Development, Heritage, Tourism and Birr MD.

NEW BRAND LAUNCH

Work continued in rolling out the new Council Brand during 2021

Councillor	Represent Pay & MD allowance	Monthly Expenditure allowance	Payments to Members in respect of 2021			Chairpersons allowance	Gratuity	Travel Abroad	Total €
			Conference/ Training incl. Fees and phones	SPC chairpersons allowance	MD Chairperson allowance				
John Carroll	22,390.86	5,724.51				8,969.22			37,084.59
Clare Claffey	22,390.86	5,490.40							27,881.26
John Clendennen	22,390.86	4,989.02	429.40						27,809.28
Noel Cribbin	22,390.86	5,523.80	1,500.67						29,415.33
Eamon Dooley	22,390.86	4,989.02		6,002.48		1,793.84			35,176.20
Neil Feighery	22,390.86	4,205.23	2,216.10						28,812.19
Eddie Fitzpatrick	22,390.86	4,654.94	443.73						27,489.53
John Foley	22,390.86	5,423.58			2,621.77				30,436.21
Mark Hackett	22,390.86	4,387.41							26,778.27
Declan Harvey	22,389.17	4,205.23	552.95			10,732.40			37,879.75
John Leahy	22,390.86	4,554.71		6,002.48	2,759.76				35,707.81
Tony McCormack	22,390.86	4,205.23			3,380.71				29,976.80
Robert McDermott	22,390.86	5,390.17				2,146.48			29,927.51
Frank Moran	22,390.86	4,205.23	749.79						27,345.88
Sean O'Brien	22,498.89	4,205.23							26,704.12
Peter Ormond	22,389.17	6,827.50	720.05		3,334.71				33,271.43
Danny Owens	22,390.86	4,205.23	571.92	6,002.48	2,644.77				35,815.26
Liam Quinn	22,390.86	5,189.72		6,002.48	3,403.70				36,986.76
Ken Smollen	22,390.86	4,205.23							26,596.09
Totals	425,530.99	92,581.39	7,184.61	24,009.92	18,145.42	23,641.94	0.00	0.00	591,094.27

Councillors attended the following training in 2021	Venue	Date of Conferences	No. Delegates
AILG Module 1	Sligo Park Hotel	02/10/2021	1
LAMA Autumn	Sligo Park Hotel	3-4 November 2021	8
AILG Module 2	Clayton Hotel, Galway	06/11/2021	3
IPI Annual	Clayton Whites, Wexford	17-19 November 2021	1
Councillors attended the following Conferences in 2021	Venue	Date of Conferences	No. Delegates
Celtic Conference	O'Donovans Hotel, Clonakilty, Cork	8-10 October 2021	2

Representatives to Various Bodies:

Association of Irish Local Government	Cllrs. N. Cribbin, D. Owens, E. Dooley
Board of Directors Oxmantown Hall Management Committee	Cllrs. J. Clendennen, C. Claffey
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly	Cllrs. E. Fitzpatrick, T. McCormack, D. Owens
Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd	Cllr. D. Owens
Joint Policing Committee	Cllrs. J. Carroll, J. Clendennen, N. Feighery, T. McCormack, E. Fitzpatrick, D. Harvey, J. Leahy, F. Moran, P. Ormond, M. Hackett, R. McDermott, S. O'Brien, K. Smollen
Local Authority Members Association:	Cllr. P. Ormond
Local Community Development Committee	Cllrs. D. Harvey, N. Cribbin, J. Leahy
Offaly Local Development Company	Cllrs. C. Claffey, E. Fitzpatrick, T. McCormack
Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee	Cllrs. N. Feighery, D. Harvey, J. Leahy, K. Smollen, T. McCormack
Laois and Offaly Education Training Board	Cllrs. J. Carroll, E. Fitzpatrick, C. Claffey, N. Feighery, R. McDermott, F. Moran
Sub Project Birr MD	Cllr. C. Claffey
Midland Regional Drugs Task Force	Cllr. F. Moran
North Offaly Development Fund Ltd	Cllrs. N. Cribbin, E. Fitzpatrick, J. Foley, L. Quinn, M. Hackett, R. McDermott
Offaly Film Commission	Cllrs. D. Harvey, S. O'Brien, D. Owens
Offaly Innovation & Design Centre	Cllr. T. McCormack
Offaly Sports Partnership	To November 2021 - Cllrs. N. Cribbin, D. Owens, J. Carroll From November 2021 – Cllrs. D. Owens, C. Claffey, N. Cribbin
Regional Health Forum, Dublin-Mid-Leinster	Cllrs. E. Fitzpatrick, T. McCormack, S. O'Brien
Rural Water Monitoring Committee	Cllrs. E. Fitzpatrick, J. Clendennen, M. Hackett

Swimming Pool Committees	<i>Birr</i> – Cllr. P. Ormond <i>Clara</i> –Cllr. K. Smollen <i>Edenderry</i> – Cllr. N. Cribbin
Tullamore Leisure Ltd.	Cllrs. T. McCormack, D. Harvey, D. Owens, K. Smollen
Tullamore Community Arts Centre:	Cllrs. T. McCormack, D. Harvey, S. O’Brien, D. Owens
Tullamore Sports Link Ltd.	Cllr. T. McCormack
Tullamore Chandler Sister Cities	Cllrs. T. McCormack, D. Owens

FINANCE

OUR GOALS

To plan the strategic financial management of Offaly County Council and deliver the services of the finance function in an efficient, effective and professional manner.

OUR STRATEGIES

- Develop and operate accounting and management information systems that deliver the best possible basis for future planning, budgeting and decision making in order to maximise financial resources available.
- Promote and direct Value for Money concepts and foster a culture of effective use of resources.
- Prepare an annual Statutory Financial budget that reflects our corporate objectives.
- Enhance the Financial Management System and in particular, the provision of more meaningful financial management information, to support effective business decision making.
- Ensure prompt payment to suppliers.

OUR SERVICES

- The Finance Department deals with both the short and long term financing of all the Council's operations, both of a Revenue and Capital nature. This involves:

- Monitoring and controlling income and expenditure.
- Arranging Financing requirements.
- Treasury and Investment Management
- Compliance with all Statutory and DHLGH financial accounting principles, and regulations.

The Council's revenue and day-to-day expenditure is funded from sources such as:

- Commercial Rates;
- Local Property Tax;
- Government Grants;
- Agency Water Services
- Housing Rents, Planning Fees and Charges, NPPR, and other sundry Fees

MAIN SECTIONS WITHIN FINANCE

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING

Financial reporting involves the preparation of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS), other statutory returns, reporting to the Department of the Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and external agencies and dealing with the Local Government Audit process.

Management Accounting is the preparation of quarterly management reports to assist with budgetary control and the decision-making process within each directorate. The Annual Budget process is a statutory requirement and is managed in this section, in

consultation with all the service divisions. This section also provides variance analysis, costing information and other financial information required by internal and external customers.

REVENUE COLLECTION

This section mainly deals with the collection and receipt of almost all monies due to the Council. This extends to Commercial Rates, Housing Rents, Housing Loans, Agency Water billing and other local charges. The processing of Covid 19 Restart Grants has been completed by Central Revenue Collection.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

The processing and payment of suppliers invoices, ensuring compliance with all procurement regulations and appropriate statutory deductions. This section ensures compliance with all statutory taxation returns and application of enforcement procedures on behalf of the Revenue Commissioners.

MOTOR TAXATION OFFICE / CASH OFFICE

The Council collects vehicle licence duties within its functional area on behalf of the Department of the Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHCLH). This unit also manages general Cash collection and NPPR certificates. The Section also produces information for Gardai and other Local Authorities, regarding penalty points, traffic fines, parking fines, etc. Payments are made at the counter, electronically

and through postal application.

GENERAL LEDGER / AGRESSO SUPPORT

This unit manages the Financial Management System (FMS) and ensures proper control over all the organisations assets and liabilities. Compliance with the national accounting code of practice and enforcement of DHPCLG circulars also falls within its remit.

NPPR

The section issues Non Principal Private Residence certificates.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Coordination of the Risk Management function within Offaly County Council.

MAIN REPORTS PRODUCED BY FINANCE

THE ANNUAL BUDGET

The Finance Department prepares the overall Revenue Budget in consultation with the Council Members, Chief Executive and the Management Team. The Local Government (Reform) Act 2014 specifies an extensive statutory budget process, timetable and disclosures, including determination of LPT, to be completed in advance of the adoption at the Annual Budget Meeting.

THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT (AFS)

The AFS is produced annually and details the income and expenditure for the financial year for both revenue and capital expenditure. The Balance Sheet shows the assets and liabilities of the County Council at the end of the year. The AFS is presented to members at Council Meeting and audited by the Local Government Auditor.

QUARTERLY MANAGEMENT REPORTS

The quarterly management report provides details of the income and expenditure for the various services provided by the council. The actual results are compared to Budget and all variances are investigated.

DHPCLG / IMF QUARTERLY REPORTING

Offaly County Council reports financial performance Quarterly to the DHLGH. These reports consist of a quarterly Income and Expenditure Report, Capital Account report and Debtors report, and are presented to the council in the CE reports. In addition, various reports are produced for budget holders in Offaly County Council relating to all aspects of the council's activities. Council Members get a financial update in the CE's monthly report.

2021 FINANCE STATISTICS

MOTOR TAX

In 2021, the Motor Taxation Office generated approximately €2.73 in revenue via the Motor Tax office directly. In total Offaly Motor Tax processed 86,309 transactions (14.6% issued via Motor Tax Office and 85.4% was processed online).

REVENUE COLLECTION SERVICE INDICATORS

Amount collected as a percentage of the amount due at 2021

year end: (Draft AFS App 7 percentages)

Rents 93%

Commercial Rates 86%

Housing Loans 82%

**DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
(INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2021**

Expenditure by Division	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure	Net Expenditure
	2021	2021	2021	2020
	€	€	€	€
Housing & Building	15,653,337	15,490,308	163,029	590,193
Roads Transportation & Safety	24,417,752	17,890,523	6,527,229	6,715,366
Water Services	5,230,052	4,677,838	552,214	472,383
Development Management	10,257,452	6,732,872	3,524,580	5,497,868
Environmental Services	7,807,700	2,196,683	5,611,017	5,759,443
Recreation & Amenity	4,534,594	1,016,279	3,518,314	3,517,423
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	729,893	473,004	256,890	328,105
Miscellaneous Services	10,925,133	9,714,320	1,210,813	1,050,519
Total Expenditure/Income	79,555,913	58,191,827		
Net cost of Divisions to be funded from Rates & Local Property Tax			21,364,086	23,931,299
Rates			18,161,728	17,903,391
Local Property Tax			8,399,174	8,398,668
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers			5,196,816	2,370,760
Transfers from/(to) Reserves			(5,172,550)	(2,158,526)
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year			24,266	212,234
General Reserve @ 1st January 2021			(1,661,523)	(1,873,757)
General Reserve @ 31st December 2021			(1,637,257)	(1,661,523)

Capital Account Summary		
Extract from the Draft Annual Financial Statement for the Year ended December 31, 2021		
	2021	2020
Balance (Debit)\Credit @ 1 January	10,683,436	10,871,035
Total Expenditure (Incl Transfers)	- 32,441,624	- 22,762,766
Total Income (Incl Transfers)	36,513,350	22,575,167
Balance (Debit)\Credit @ 31 December	14,755,162	10,683,436

INTERNAL AUDIT UNIT

INTERNAL AUDITS UNDERTAKEN

During 2021, the Internal Audit Unit completed Audits on the following areas:

- Travel Expense Review
- Review of cash procedures
- Machinery Yard Review
- Motor Tax Stock Review
- Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme 2020 Audit
- Follow up audits (Local Enterprise Office Measure 1 Grants, SICAP 2018 & 2019, Housing Voids Pre Lets)

from the agreed Internal Audit Plan for 2021. Audit Reports were circulated to the Management Team and the Audit Committee. Follow-up checks on the implementation of recommendations of previous Audits were also undertaken.

A significant task undertaken by Internal Audit within 2021 was the development of OCC's first Internal Audit Strategic Plan. This has allowed for the identification of all auditable areas throughout Directorates (as agreed with Management Team members) and has highlighted all areas deemed high risk. This plan was used in the development of the 2022 Audit plan as it allowed for a risk based approach in setting the 2022 Audit Plan.

Keeping the Internal Audit Unit in line with best practice procedure.

PUBLIC SPENDING CODE QA PROCESS

Internal Audit was responsible for compilation of the Council's Public Spending Code Quality Assurance Report 2020.

This report was certified by the Chief Executive and submitted to the National Oversight and Audit Commission at the end of May 2021, and is published on Offaly County Council's website. A full inventory of the Council's revenue and capital expenditure programmes over €0.5M, two in-depth project reviews and a final report were completed and submitted to NOAC by Internal Audit as part of the process.

COLLABORATION

The Internal Auditor attended National and Regional Audit Network collaboration meetings during 2021. Meetings for the Regional Internal Auditors Network took place online via ZOOM platform due to COVID restrictions, and staff participated in training and continued professional development activities.

SUPPORT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Internal Audit Unit provided administrative support to the Audit Committee in the fulfilling of its duties in 2021. This included preparing the agendas and relevant reporting documentation for the hosting of 4 Audit Committee meetings online, and the Chairs annual reports to the Council.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Committee met on 4 occasions in 2021 as per legislative requirements. Audit Committee Meetings in 2021 were attended by the following: The Chief Executive, Head of Finance, Directors of Service, Local Government Auditor, Procurement Officer and SEO Corporate Services.

At their meetings the Committee considered and received briefings on: Offaly County Council's Annual Financial Statement 2020, Offaly County Council's Annual Report 2020, Updates on Local Government Audit Service Statutory Auditor's Reports, Quarterly finance report and Quarterly updates on Internal Audit Plan progression.

The committee were further briefed on follow up reports from the Audit Recommendation Tracking System.

Internal Audit staff prepared the following documents: Internal Audit Charter 2021, Internal Audit Risk

register, Internal Audit Draft Strategic Plan, Internal audit Plan for 2021/2022 and Audit Committee Work Plan 2021/22 which were approved by the audit committee as part of their duties throughout the year.

The Committee Chair presented the following to the Council at its meeting on April 19th 2021:

Audit Committee Annual Report 2020

Audit Committee Report to Council on 2019 Annual Financial Statement and Local Government Auditor's Report

Audit Committee Charter 2021

Audit Committee Work Plan 2021

Internal Audit Plan 2021

All meetings in 2021 were held virtually in adherence with public safety guidelines. The current Audit Committee members are: Mr. Peter Scully (Chair); Mr. Brian Gunning; Ms. Constance Hanniffy; Mr. Michael Loughnane and Mr. Eugene Mulligan.

HUMAN RESOURCES

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The role of the HR Department is to recruit, retain and support a competent workforce, to deliver organisational priorities and act as the key driver for organisational change and development.

The work of the Department is broadly divided into seven key areas:

- ✓ Performance Management
- ✓ Recruitment
- ✓ Staff Training and Development
- ✓ Employee Welfare
- ✓ Industrial Relations
- ✓ Workforce Planning
- ✓ Workplace Policies

COVID 19 PANDEMIC

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the work of the Human Resources Department has been substantial. This necessitated the following:

- **Health & Safety Updates** - During the year regular updates were provided to all staff in relation to Covid 19 Health & Safety Requirements, remote working updates, and annual leave requirements.
- **Covid 19 Induction Training** – Covid 19 Induction

Training and the administration and recording of Return to Work Forms was carried out.

- **Employee Assistance Programme** - Regular staff communiques were issued in relation to same over the year.
- **Online Interviews and Staff Training** - The introduction of Online Interviews was necessary to complete recruitment competitions and also the requirement to carry out online staff training where possible. In-person interviews and Staff training were facilitated where possible depending on the Public Health advice and level of restrictions that prevailed at particular periods over the year. This resulted in the focus being placed on the carrying out of Mandatory Health & Safety Training in the main over the period.
- **Flexi-time** - The suspension of the Flexi time Scheme required the manual recording of hours on the CORE system.
- **Industrial Relations** - Increased engagement with the Unions and other Industrial Relations issues also added to the workload of the Department over the year.

STAFFING

The total staff complement has reduced by approximately 17% since 2008 when the public service moratorium on

employment was introduced. Details of numbers employed at 31st December 2008 and 2021 respectively are set out below for comparison purposes: -

Year	Total Staff Headcount	Non-DHPLG Posts	Retained Fire Fighters
2008	516	12	63
2021	430	21	51

RECRUITMENT

Despite the impact of Covid-19 in March 2020 and the introduction of Online Interviews, significant recruitment took place during the year including a number of major competitions in entry grades across administrative, technical, professional and specialist posts. 25 different competitions were held involving the processing of 470 applications and resulted in 33 new staff joining the organisation.

TRAINING & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Covid 19 had an impact on the provision of training throughout 2021, and a hybrid of in-person and online training was facilitated where possible.

Staff training was delivered based on the following priorities: -

1. Mandatory Health & Safety Training
2. Identified corporate needs and priorities

3. Training needs identified by staff in their Personal Development Plans

Additional funding was again provided by the Members in the training budget for 2021 specifically for the purposes of funding a scheme of financial assistance for staff undertaking further studies as part of their career/personal development. This funding was used to support staff wishing to undertake the Local Government Certificate and Diploma course in the Institute of Public Administration as well as Master's Degree and Post Graduate Courses. This positive move continues to be welcomed by staff and is particularly important for new staff working in the local authority sector for the first time.

The following is a summary of the range of training delivered across the organisation throughout the year: -

Public Spending Code	Head of Internal Audit Training
Conducting Remote Investigations	CSCS Signing Lighting & Guarding 2 day info update online
Breast Cancer Awareness Sessions	IAT Road Engineering
Online Introduction to Excel	Online Intermediate Excel
Online Advanced Excel	Introduction to GDPR Online

Temporary Traffic Management & Design	Whistle-blower Training
Sectorial Recruitment Workshops	Online Manual Handling
Chainsaw Refresher	Telescopic Handler 1 day assessment
CSCS Signing Lighting & Guarding 3 day	Disability Awareness Training
Abrasive Wheels Refresher	CSCS Signing Lighting & Guarding 2 day info update
Safe Pass	Driver CPC Module 2
Competency Based Interview Training – grade 3 - 5	Grade 5 Management Development Training
Strimmer & Bush-cutter Training	Ride on Mower Training
Ride on Roller Training	Safe use of Pesticides & Herbicides
CSCS 360 Excavator	First Aid Beginner
First Aid Refresher	Capital Works Framework Training
Resilience Training	Pavement Survey Condition Index Training
CSCS Telescopic Handler Training new entrant	

INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

The Human Resources Department manages the Council's relationship with trade unions and staff representatives dealing with both local and national issues as they arise. Covid 19 issues necessitated regular engagement with the Unions over the year to deal with such issues as engagement with Lead Worker Representatives, Health & Safety Updates, Flexi time issues, Remote Working arrangements, and normal Industrial Relations issues. In addition, the on-going implementation of the requirements of the Public Service Agreements continued during 2021.

RETIREMENTS

The following staff retired during 2021:

Veronica Francis	Catherine Feighery	Damien Bryant
Joe Mannion	Frank Spain	Charlie Brophy
Martin Egan	Leo Dunne	Ann Marie Conneely
Seamus Owens		

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The Information Systems department manages the Council's entire ICT hardware and software infrastructure. The infrastructure is spread across approximately fifty locations in the County and is utilised by close to 420 users.

In 2021 the Information Systems department completed a number of technology-based initiatives and maintained a modern, reliable and secure ICT infrastructure for the organisation.

THE MAIN PROJECTS WERE:

- Response to Covid-19 - Restart Grant system, Community Call Helpline and response forum, SBASC, Rates Waivers and numerous other smaller initiatives were all made possible by the work undertaken by IS staff to put systems in place quickly and securely
- Cyber Security – Upgraded our firewall which this will significantly reduce cyber risk to the organisation. We continued work on cyber-security in line with the CIS security control standards and guidance from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), to ensure our infrastructure is as secure as possible within our current budget and staffing constraints

- ICT Infrastructure 2022-2026 – Work was started on preparing our ICT Infrastructure to support the organisation for the next 5 years.
- Continued support for NWCPO, Libraries, Water & Waste Water sites, Fire stations & Digital Hubs.(RB)
- Continue to work with Government in relation to the National Broadband Plan and implementation of Offaly's Digital Strategy(RB)
- Digital Transformation – Digital transformation is the integration of digital technology into all areas of our business, fundamentally changing how we operate and deliver value to customers. We worked on a number of initiatives in this area including the ongoing rollout of the M365 suite of applications to aid in organisation collaboration and cooperation
- Upgrade of Core HR Management Software.
- Upgrade of Audio Visual equipment throughout the organisation including major upgrade to AV system in the council chamber.
- Offaly.ie – Ongoing upgrade of Offaly.ie and VisitOffaly.ie which will be live in the next few months. New offaly.ie will be the main portal for council services working in conjunction with our partners in Business and Tourism to develop a consistent online presence for Offaly

- Promotion of Social Media and our presence now has over 80,000 followers across our social media channels.

BROADBAND / DIGITAL – ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Offaly County Council has a broadband/Digital Officer that acts as a dedicated point of contact within County Offaly for engagement with telecommunications providers and will assist with the preparation of the roll out of the National Broadband Plan. The Broadband Officer plays a vital role in the development of telecommunications and broadband services throughout Offaly. This is achieved by working closely with industry and participation with Regional and National Action Groups.

Offaly County Council Digital Strategy 2020-2022 ensure that the benefits of infrastructure development under the National Broadband Plan is fully realised from an economic and social perspective. This strategy aims to enable Offaly to leverage broadband and digital technologies for rural regeneration. The Broadband Office will also liaise with council departments, colleagues, councillors, local communities and funding channels to link and coordinate activities and projects in support of the Digital Strategy.

In 2021 the main projects were:

- Implementation of Offaly Digital Strategy 2020-2022 - Infrastructure, Citizen, Enterprise & Digital Council;

- Activating Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) - public locations which have been selected to receive high-speed connectivity in the first year of the National Broadband Plan under the 'Connected Communities' initiative. Rollout to locations throughout the county;
 - Town and Village Renewal (TVR) Scheme – "Fit out of Broadband Connection Points"
 - 8 BCPs fully connected for public use and funding received under Connected Hubs to further fit-out.
 - €10K Thematic Training funding successfully applied for Oct 21.
- Free Public WiFi in over 100 locations in Offaly.
 - Offaly County Council currently supports high speed broadband in over 40 community halls in Offaly and in towns/villages throughout Offaly.
 - Completed rollout of the WiFi4EU initiative.
- Engagement with National Broadband Ireland for planning surveys that have started in Offaly - NBI working in the Roscrea Deployment (DA) area in Birr MD and Moate Deployment DA in Tullamore MD
- Delivering our STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics programme in primary and post primary schools throughout Offaly.

- o Just Transition: Successful funding application for “Building Resilience & Adaptability in Primary School children through STEM in communities impacted by decarbonisation” - €119,000.
- o DojoMór - Coding Event for Children 7-17 – OCC involved with eight 3rd Level Colleges – Nov 2021.
- Commenced the e-denderry Digital Town Works (Smart Town) pilot project with a range of technical partners.
 - o Smart services Internet of Things pilot for Edenderry launched March 2021 with Cellnex and ongoing.
 - o Shortlisted for DigitalTowns.ie awards in the Digital Rising Star Award. Additional funding of €49k secured

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TULLAMORE

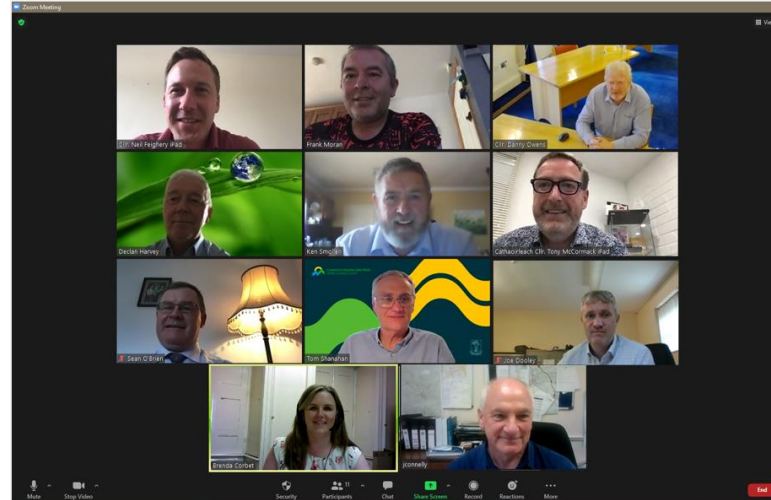
Director of Services / Area Manager: Tom Shanahan
Senior Executive Engineer: John Connelly
Meetings Administrator: Brenda Corbet

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings of the Municipal District are held on the second Thursday of the month at 4.00pm, generally in the Municipal District Chamber, Town Hall, Tullamore.

ELECTED MEMBERS OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TULLAMORE (from June 2021)

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Tony McCormack
Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. Frank Moran
Cllr. Danny Owens
Cllr. Declan Harvey
Cllr. Neil Feighery
Cllr. Ken Smollen
Cllr. Sean O'Brien



Annual Meeting of the Municipal District of Tullamore held on Thursday 10th June 2021.

Cllr. Tony McCormack elected Cathaoirleach and Cllr. Frank Moran elected Leas Cathaoirleach.

REPRESENTATIVES TO VARIOUS BODIES

Tullamore Leisure Ltd.:	Cllr. Declan Harvey Cllr. Tony McCormack Cllr. Danny Owens Cllr. Ken Smollen
Tullamore Community Arts Centre. Ltd.:	Cllr. Declan Harvey Cllr. Tony McCormack Cllr. Danny Owens Cllr. Sean O'Brien
Tullamore Sports Link Ltd.:	Cllr. Tony McCormack
Tullamore Chandler Sister Cities:	Cllr. Tony McCormack Cllr. Danny Owens
Clara Swimming Pool Committee:	Cllr. Ken Smollen

ACTIVITIES OF 2021

- The Municipal District continued it's work in partnership with Tullamore Tidy Towns, Waterways Ireland and Tullamore Chamber of Commerce as **Team Tullamore**.
- Another strong showing by Tullamore in the IBAL Anti-Litter League, Round 1 & 2 achieving 'Clean to European Norms' status in the An Taisce Report in both rounds.
- Worked with, and supported, **Tidy Towns/Villages** Committees and other organisations throughout the Municipal District. Tullamore collected it's 7th Gold medal in a row at the 2021 Tidy Towns award.
- Maintained **street cleaning services** throughout the Municipal District area.
- Worked with the **Estate Management Interagency Committee** which was established under the aegis of

the Offaly Joint Policing Committee to address issues in specific Local Authority Housing Estates.

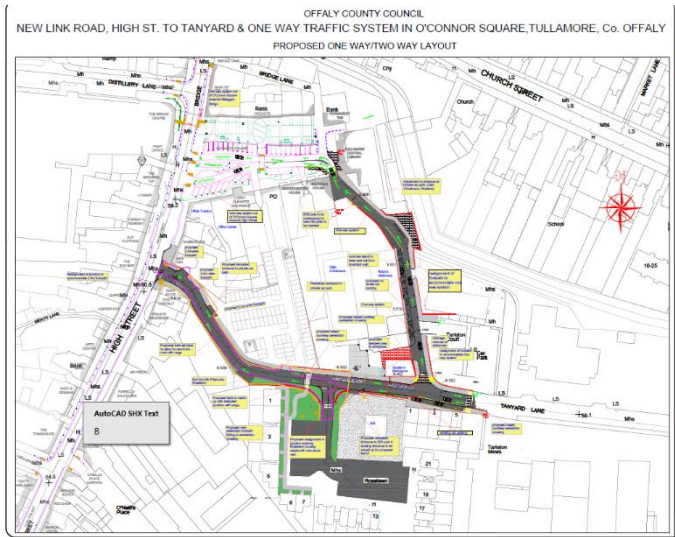
- Offaly County Council Supported the development of **Tullamore Community Arts Centre**.
- **Tullamore Street Enhancement Project** - Offaly County Council continues to pursue projects to enhance the public realm of the retail core of Tullamore town.



Phase 2 of the Tullamore Street Enhancement Project consists of a street enhancement of Harbour St. and Store St. Tullamore and the construction of the Grand Canal Greenway, Urban Section from Convent View to Srah Bridge, Ballydrohid, Tullamore.

A total of **€2,245,407** has been allocated for Offaly County Council's successful Call 2 project – Tullamore Urban Regeneration and Development as follows:

- 1) Pedestrian Link from O'Connor Square to Church St.
- 2) Church St Remote Working Hub
- 3) High St to Tanyard Link, Part 8 approved
- 4) Meath Lane and Civic space
- 5) Tullamore Regeneration Framework
- 6) Tullamore Harbour Development Master Plan
- 7) Acre's Folly enhancements



- **Estate enhancement** works were carried out in conjunction with the Housing section on Local Authority housing estates within the district.
- The Mountbolus **Town and Village Renewal Scheme Phase 1 & 2** is underway.
- The Mucklagh **Town and Village Renewal Scheme Phase 1** will commence in 2022
- The Tullamore MD successfully delivered **19km** of surface reconstruction and **18km** of surface dressing under the Annual Roads Programme for 2021.



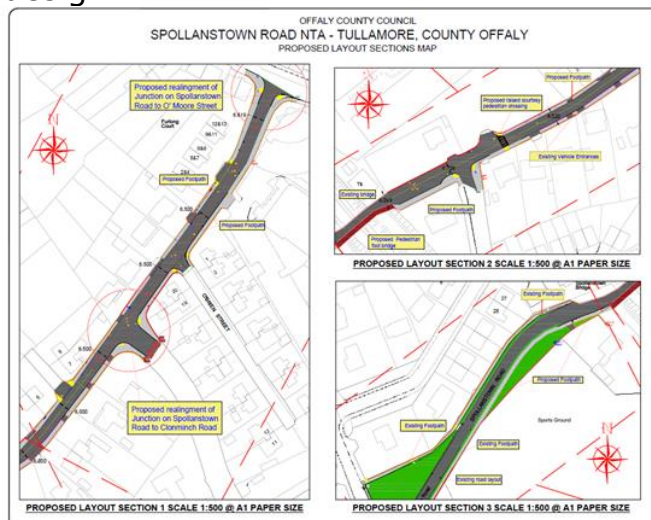
- Extensive Bridge works were completed and a Bridge replacement at the Derries. Funding was provided through the Department of Transport.



- Under the Active Travel Scheme, works were completed at Fredrick St, Clara, Heather Grove, Clara and the Pedestrian Bridge, Clara.



- The Active Travel Scheme at Spollenstown Road is in design.



- Tullamore MD converted on-street parking spaces into public Outdoor Dining spaces to accommodate dining and additional seating in accordance with public health guidance as part of economic stimulus measures to assist businesses as they reopened.
- TVR-accelerated Measures** design completed for Millenium Square with works to commence in 2022.
- Lloyd Town Park** achieves its **Green Flag** for the 6th year running, an International accreditation for public park excellence, announced on 17th of November 2021, by An Taisce acknowledging Ireland's best public parks and gardens. **The outdoor basketball** court in Lloyd Town Park was officially opened by Tullamore Municipal District Cathaoirleach Cllr Tony McCormack

with the support of Tullamore Lions Club and Tullamore Basketball Club.



- **Reports from Offaly County Council** were given to members at Municipal District Meetings as follows: Environment & Water Services; Roads & Infrastructure; Housing.
- **Schedule of Works 2021** – Consideration and adoption of the Schedule of Works for the Municipal District.
- **Budget 2021** - Consideration of General Municipal Allocation.
- **Supporting** in excess of 70 **community and voluntary groups** in the Municipal District by way of providing funding towards various community and estate enhancement initiatives.
- Tullamore MD continued to support Tullamore Chamber of Commerce in relation to **Christmas Lights**.

- The **Local Live Performance** Scheme supported events held in O'Connor Sq., Lloyd Town Park and Clara throughout 2021 these event provided vital support the Entertainment industry while increasing footfall in the Town Centre and boosting the local economy, creating atmosphere and ambience in the Town.



- **Púca Spooka** an inaugural Halloween event held on 29th and 30th October 2021. Lloyd Town Park came to life when over four thousand Halloween enthusiasts were brave enough to venture into a frightening tour through the haunted park.



- Tullamore MD in conjunction with Tullamore Christmas Lights featured 'Tullamore This Christmas' on various dates throughout November and December in O'Connor Square with outdoor markets, street theatre, live music, local choirs, Midlands Radio 103, large screen entertainment and special guest Dustin the Turkey, in addition Santa's Monster Tractor Truck



- Clara Christmas Cracker' on Saturday 4th December hosted entertainment in the Square with MC Barry Flynn and live music from local talent Katie Healy and the Clara Youth Band followed by the River Street Band.



MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF EDENDERRY

Director of Services / Area Manager:

Sharon Kennedy

Meetings Administrator:

Josephine Lee / Louise Direen

Senior Executive Engineer:

Mark Mahon

Assistant Engineer:

Rory Moore

ELECTED MEMBERS OF EDENDERRY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Cllr John Foley, Non Party

Cllr Liam Quinn, Fine Gael

Cllr Robert McDermott, Fianna Fáil

Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick, Fianna Fáil

Cllr Noel Cribbin, Fine Gael

Cllr Mark Hackett, Green Party

REPRESENTATIVES TO VARIOUS BODIES/BOARDS

Cllr. Noel Cribbin	North Offaly Development Fund Ltd Edenderry Swimming Pool
Cllr. John Foley	North Offaly Development Fund Ltd
Cllr. Mark Hackett	North Offaly Development Fund Ltd
Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick	North Offaly Development Fund Ltd
Cllr. Liam Quinn	North Offaly Development Fund Ltd
Cllr. Robert McDermott	North Offaly Development Fund

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly Meetings were held on the second Wednesday of each month, remotely via Zoom at 3.30pm.

AGENDA ITEMS

The Elected Members of Edenderry Municipal District agreed that the following be included on their agenda for their monthly meetings as set items:

Swimming Pool Development

Library Development

Inward Investment & Local Enterprise Development

Public Utility Capacity Issues

Area Issues/Updates

Roads Update

Other Areas/Issues

SCHEDULE OF REPORTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS

On a rolling monthly basis, the Elected Members met with staff from other departments providing updates on activities within these sections such as Roads, Heritage, Environment & Water Services and Housing.

TOWN & VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEME

The Town & Village Renewal Scheme is a key part of the Action Plan for Rural Development and the Government's Project Ireland 2040 Programme for Rural Regeneration. Projects approved through the scheme are aimed at making small rural towns and villages more attractive and sustainable places in which to live and work. Under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme funding was approved for Edenderry to support various activities and has continued over a number of years. In 2021 the Town & Village Renewal Scheme continued in Edenderry Municipal District. Daingean Green received high quality enhancement through a combination of Town & Village Renewal (Covid Accelerated Measures) and Community Involvement Scheme funds. Works created an attractive community space, new seating, new footways, enhanced safety for pedestrians and framing the former Methodist Church as a feature.



GMA FUND/COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

Through the General Municipal Allocation/Community Grants Scheme the Elected Members of Edenderry Municipal District provided funding towards a total of 22 projects/groups in 2021, for example:

- Christmas Lights
- Playgrounds
- Village Enhancement
- Community Groups
- Sports Clubs

Below is an example of how this funding helps local communities – the provision of fencing to prevent access to a river for child safety measures



LIVE PERFORMANCE SUPPORT SCHEME 2021

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media announced a funding allocation for the “Live Performance Support Scheme 2021”. This new scheme was developed to assist the live performance sector to create employment opportunities for artists, performers, technicians and support staff due to the unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 crisis on those in the arts and culture section. As a result of this funding, Edenderry Municipal District

held two events, ‘The Spirit of Eden’ on August 15th and ‘Eden’s Christmas Spirit’ on November 28th.

Local Live Performance Support Scheme – funded by Dept. of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media.

August 15th 2021 – Spirit of Eden



November 28th 2021 – Eden’s Christmas Spirit



RURAL REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND (RRDF)

The RRDF is a key part of Our Rural Future, the Government’s five-year policy designed to reinvigorate Rural Ireland. The Fund is designed to combat dereliction, increase the vibrancy of town centres and regenerate old buildings so that they have a new purpose.

NEW LINK STREET – BLUNDELL AVENUE

Following the adoption of Blundell Masterplan, funding of €522k was secured from the Rural Regeneration and

Development Fund (RRDF), for new link street from Granary Court to Fairgreen. Blundell Avenue was completed and opened in November 2021, opening up key back-lands to enable regeneration of the core of Edenderry, and setting the scene for the planned library development.



MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BIRR

Director of Services / Area Manager:

Stephane Duclot

Meetings Administrator:

Deirdre Molloy

Senior Executive Engineer:

John Mitchell

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month in the Birr Civic Offices at 4.00pm.

ELECTED MEMBERS OF BIRR MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Cllr John Leahy, Independent (Cathaoirleach Jan - June)

Cllr Peter Ormond, Fianna Fáil (Cathaoirleach June-Dec) (Leas-Cathaoirleach Jan - May)

Cllr John Carroll, Non Party (Leas-Cathaoirleach June-Dec)

Cllr Eamon Dooley, Fianna Fail

Cllr John Clendennen, Fine Gael

Cllr Clare Claffey, Social Democrats

REPRESENTATIVES TO VARIOUS BODIES/BOARDS

Birr Swimming Pool

Cllr Peter Ormond,

SUB Project Committee

Cllr Clare Claffey

Birr Theatre and Arts Centre

Cllr John Clendennen, Cllr Clare Claffey.

Birr 20:20

Cllr Peter Ormond, Cllr John Clendennen

SCHEDULE OF REPORTS

Reports were presented to the members from various Council departments on a rolling monthly basis. During this period reports were received from the following:

January	District Engineers Report
February	Water and Environment Services & Reps of HSE
March	Housing Report & Roads Programme 2021
April	Water and Environment Services & Healthy Ireland Presentation
June	District Engineers Report
July	Water and Environment Services & Housing Progress Report
Sept	District Engineers Report
October	Roads Progress Report
November	District Engineers Report

A €7 million work programme was delivered in Birr Municipal District in 2021 improving approximately

60km of the road network in the district

Drainage and road surfacing works carried out on the L-4026 at Roscomroe in 2021



Drainage and road surfacing works carried out on the R440 at Killyon in 2021

Ferbane 'Chill & Chat' area provided under the Town & Village Renewal funding in 2021



Clareen Town & Village Renewal schemes were completed in Cloghan and Shinrone in Birr Municipal District in 2021

The toilet and shower block at the Shannonbridge Marina was refurbished by Birr Municipal District in 2021



The Camcor river walk in Birr was improved using Active Travel Funding in 2021



New footpaths at Ballincur in Kinnitty were constructed using Active Travel Funding in 2021



SERVICE INDICATORS 2021

A function of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) established in July 2014 under Section 61 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 is to scrutinise the performance of any local government body against or in comparison with relevant indicators that the Commission considers it appropriate to refer to, and which includes relevant indicators relating to customer service.

NOAC's role in relation to the scrutiny of local government performance against relevant performance indicators replaces, in respect of performance in 2014 and subsequent years, the service indicators in local authorities that were introduced by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government in 2004. The LGMA role in the collection of the data and the compilation of the report will continue in respect of the replacement report to NOAC.

For 2021, there are 44 local authority performance indicators, as follows:

- HOUSING (H1 TO H6)
- ROADS (R1 TO R3)
- WATER (W1 AND W2)
- WASTE/ENVIRONMENT (E1 TO E7)
- PLANNING (P1 TO P5)
- FIRE SERVICE (F1 TO F3)
- LIBRARY/RECREATION (L1 AND L2)
- YOUTH/COMMUNITY (Y1 AND Y2)
- CORPORATE (C1 TO C5)
- FINANCE (M1 TO M4)
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (J1 TO J5)

A number of Indicators have been amended and additional Indicators are reported on in 2021.

The amended indicators are

- **H1F:** *Number of local authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under a D/HLGH approved scheme;*
- **H5:** *Rental Inspections;*
- **M1H:** *Revenue expenditure per capita in 2021 excluding significant out of county / shared service expenditure;*
- **M3:** *Public Liability Claims;*

NOAC have advised that two New Indicators which will be test indicators for 2021. The data for these two indicators will be collected and reviewed but not published as part of the NOAC Local Authority Performance Indicators Report 2021. This will be carried out to ensure accuracy of the data and to identify any issues with the indicator prior to including it in the report. The indicators are;

E7: Climate Change and **J5: Economic Development Spend**, the spend on local economic development (per head of population) made annually by each local authority.

The Service Indicators for 2021 were not available at the time of publication of the Draft Annual Report 2021

H: HOUSING (H1 TO H6)	2021	2020
H1: SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK		
A. The number of dwellings in the ownership of the Local Authority at 1/1/2020		1891
B. The number of dwellings added to the Local Authority owned stock during in 2020 (whether constructed or acquired)		42
C. The number of Local Authority owned dwellings sold in 2020		9
D. The number of Local Authority owned dwellings demolished in 2020		0
E. The number of dwellings in the ownership of the Local Authority at 31/12/2020		1924
F. The number of Local Authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under a DHPLG approved scheme		0
H2: HOUSING VACANCIES		
A. The percentage of the total number of Local Authority owned dwellings that were vacant on 31/12/2020		2.49%
H3: AVERAGE RE-LETTING TIME AND COST		
A. The time taken from the date of vacation of dwelling to the date in 2020 when a new tenancy had commenced in the dwelling, averaged across all units re-let in 2020		26 wks
B. The cost expended on getting the dwellings re-tenanted units in 2020 ready for re-letting, averaged across all units re-let in 2018		€ 16,168.55
H4: HOUSING MAINTENANCE COST		
A. Expenditure during 2020 on the maintenance of LA housing compiled from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020, divided by the no. of dwellings in the LA stock at 31/12/2020		€ 563.69

H5: PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR INSPECTIONS		
A. Total number of registered tenancies in the LA area at the end of June 2020		3,630
B. Number of rented dwellings inspected in 2020		250
C. Percentage of inspected dwellings in 2020 that were found not to be compliant with the Standards Regulations		99.07%
D. Number of non-compliant dwellings that became compliant during 2020		9
H6: LONG-TERM HOMELESS ADULTS		
A. Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long-term homeless as a % of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at the end of 2020.		64.00%

R: ROADS (R1 AND R2)		2021	2020
R1: RATINGS IN PAVEMENT SURFACE CONDITION INDEX (PSCI)			
<p>A. The % of (a) Regional, (b) Local Primary and (c) Local Secondary, road kilometres that have received a PSCI condition rating in the 24-month period prior to 31/12/2020</p> <p>The % of (d) Local Tertiary road kilometres that have received a PSCI condition rating in the 60-month period prior to 31/12/2020</p>	<i>Regional</i>		96.80%
	<i>Local Primary</i>		96.30%
	<i>Local Secondary</i>		80.60%
	<i>Local Tertiary</i>		56.50%
<p>B. The % of total (a) Regional road kilometres at 31/12/2020 rated in each of the following 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories; 1-4, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10</p>	<i>Category 1 - 4</i>		13.40%
	<i>Category 5 - 6</i>		14.90%
	<i>Category 7 - 8</i>		39.50%
	<i>Category 9 - 10</i>		32.20%
<p>C. The % of total (b) Local Primary, road kilometres at 31/12/2020 rated in each of the following 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories; 1-4, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10.</p>	<i>Category 1 - 4</i>		19.10%
	<i>Category 5 - 6</i>		21.80%
	<i>Category 7 - 8</i>		33.90%
	<i>Category 9 - 10</i>		21.60%
<p>C. The % of total © Local Secondary, road kilometres at 31/12/2020 rated in each of the following 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories; 1-4, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10.</p>	<i>Category 1 - 4</i>		19.80%
	<i>Category 5 - 6</i>		22.00%
	<i>Category 7 - 8</i>		33.80%
	<i>Category 9 - 10</i>		23.80%

C. The % of total (d) Local Tertiary , road kilometres at 31/12/2020 rated in each of the following 4 groupings of the 10 PSCI rating categories; 1-4, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10.	Category 1 - 4	19.10%
	Category 5 - 6	9.30%
	Category 7 - 8	22.90%
	Category 9 - 10	31.00%
R2: REGIONAL ROAD GRANTS WORKS		
A. Kilometres of Regional Road strengthened during 2020.	Km of Road	23.6 km
	Amount Spent	€ 3,013,071
	Average unit cost	€ 21.46
B. Kilometres of Regional Road resealed during 2020.	Km of Road	13.9 km
	Amount Spent	€ 515,755
	Average unit cost	€ 5.94
C. Kilometres of Local Road strengthened during 2020.	Km of Road	48.5 km
	Amount Spent	€ 2,697,149
	Average unit cost	€ 12.90
D. Kilometres of Local Road resealed during 2020.	Km of Road	54.1 km
	Grant Amount	€ 1,029,144
	Average unit cost	€ 4.20
R3: % OF MOTOR TAX TRANSACTIONS CONDUCTED ONLINE		
The percentage of motor tax transactions which are dealt with online (i.e. transaction is processed and the tax disc is issued) in 2020		81.18%

W: WATER (W1 AND W2)	2021	2020
W1: % DRINKING WATER (PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHEMES) IN COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS		
The indicator that will be presented in the performance indicators report is the data supplied to the EPA in respect of the monitoring of the quality of private drinking water supplies during 2020.	<i>Provided by EPA</i>	<i>Data not available for 2020</i>
W2: % OF REGISTERED SCHEMES MONITORED		
The number of registered schemes monitored by each local authority as a percentage of total schemes registered.		80.36%
The number of registered schemes monitored in 2020		45
Total number of registered schemes in 2020		56

Note: This data will be obtained directly from the EPA and was not available at time of publication.

E: WASTE / ENVIRONMENT (E1 TO E6)		2021	2020
E1: No. / % OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ACCESS TO A 3 BIN SERVICE			
A.	The number of households, based on the 2016 Census, who are situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3 bin service at 31/12/2020		6,400
B.	The % of households within the local authority that the number at A represents (based on agglomerations > 500).		** 67.09%
E2: % OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION COMPLAINTS CLOSED			
A.	The total no. of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made during 2020, the number of pollution cases closed from 1/1/2020 to 31/12/2020 and the total no. of cases on hands at 31/12/2020.	<i>Complaints Made</i>	1,478
		<i>No. Closed</i>	1,388
		<i>No. on Hand</i>	222
E3: % OF LA AREA WITHIN THE 5 LEVELS OF LITTER POLLUTION			
A.	The % of the area within the LA that when surveyed in 2020 was 1) unpolluted or litter free , 2) slightly polluted , 3) moderately polluted , 4) significantly polluted , or 5) grossly polluted .	<i>Provided by Tobin Consulting Engineers</i>	--%
			--%
			--%
			--%
			--%
E4: % OF SCHOOLS THAT CURRENTLY HOLD AND HAVE RENEWED THEIR GREEN FLAG STATUS.			
A.	The % of schools that have been awarded/ renewed Green Flag Status in the two years to 31/12/2020		41.56%
	Schools that have attained a Green Flag for the first time in 2020		1
	Schools that have renewed their Green Flag in 2020		13
	Schools which held a Green Flag from 2019 and therefore do not require renewal until 2021		18

**Indicator E1 has been amended to measure the % households based on those in agglomerations of >500 instead of the 2016 census household figure

Indicator E3: The data will be submitted by Tobin Consulting Engineers directly to the LGMA from the data for the 2020 National Litter Pollution Monitoring System Report and was not available at time of publication.

E5: ENERGY EFFICIENCY PERFORMANCE		
The cumulative % of energy savings achieved by 31/12/2020 relative to baseline year (2009)		1.00 %
E6: PUBLIC LIGHTING (NEW IN 2020)		
A. Total billable wattage of the public lighting system		3354.87 MWh
B. Average billable wattage of the Public Lighting system		90.91 W
C. Percentage of the total system that LED lights represent		35.65 %
Number of LED lights in the public lighting system;		3157
Number of SOX-SON lights in the public lighting system.		5699

Indicator E5: This data will be obtained directly from the SEAI as part of local authority's annual M&R return to SEAI and was not available at time of publication.

P: PLANNING (P1 TO P5)	2021	2020
P1: NEW BUILDINGS INSPECTED		
A. Buildings Inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority		18.26%
P2: No. / % OF PLANNING DECISIONS CONFIRMED BY AN BORD PLEANÁLA		
A. Number of LA planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board on any date in 2020		24
B. % of the determinations at A which confirmed (either with or without variation) the decision made by the LA		79.17%

P3: % OF PLANNING ENFORCEMENT CASES CLOSED AS RESOLVED		
A. Total number of planning cases referred to or initiated by the local authority in the period 1/1/2020 to 31/12/2020 that were investigated		29
B. Total number of cases that were closed during 2020		8
C. % of the cases at B that were dismissed, as trivial, minor, or without foundation, under Section 152(2), Planning and Development Act 2000 or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development.		37.50%
D. % of the cases at B that were resolved to the LA's satisfaction through negotiations		62.50%
E. % of the cases at B that were closed due to enforcement proceedings (i.e. in remedied in response to a warning letter issued under Section 152 of the Act or to an enforcement notice issued under Section 154 of the Act or where a prosecution was brought under Section 157 or an injunction was sought under Section 160 of the Act)		0.00%
F. Total number of planning cases being investigated as at 31/12/2020.		126
P4: COST PER CAPITA OF THE PLANNING SERVICE		
A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme D data divided by the population of the LA area per the 2016 Census.		€ 28.08
P5: APPLICATIONS FOR FIRE SAFETY CERTIFICATES		
A. The % of applications for Fire Safety Certificates received in 2020 that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt.		93.55%
B. The % of applications for Fire Safety Certificates received in 2020 that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant.		6.45%

F: FIRE SERVICE (F1 TO F3)	2021	2020
F1: COST PER CAPITA OF THE FIRE SERVICE		
A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E expenditure data divided by the population of the LA area per the 2016 Census for the population served by the fire authority as per the Risk Based Approach Phase One reports.		€ 41.85
F2: SERVICE MOBILISATION		
A. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of fire		N/A
B. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire		5.53
C. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents		N/A
D. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents		5.32
F3: PERCENTAGE OF ATTENDANCE TIMES AT SCENES		
A. % of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes		45.29%
B. % of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes		41.62%
C. % of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes		13.09%
D. % of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes		28.38%
E. % of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes		37.84%
F. % of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes		33.78%

L: LIBRARY / RECREATION SERVICES (L1 AND L2)	2021	2020
L1: LIBRARY VISITS AND ISSUES		
A. Number of visits to libraries per head of population for the LA area per the 2016 Census.		0.93
B. Number of items issued to library borrowers in the year.		162,043
C. Library Registered members per head of population		0.11
D. Number of registered library members in the year		15,018
L2: COST OF OPERATING A LIBRARY SERVICE		
A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme F data divided by the population of the LA area per the 2016 Census.		€ 34.19
B. The annual per capita expenditure on collections over the period 1/01/2021 to 31/12/2021.		€ 1.80

Y: YOUTH / COMMUNITY (Y1 AND Y2)	2021	2020
Y1: PARTICIPATION IN COMHAIRLE NA NÓG SCHEME		
A. Percentage of local schools involved in the local Youth Council / <i>Comhairle na nÓg</i> scheme.		100.00%
Y2: GROUPS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK (PPN)		
The number of organisations included in the County Register at 31/12/2021 and the proportion of those organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College (SIC) within the PPN		10.02

C: CORPORATE SERVICES (C1 TO C5)	2021	2020
C1: TOTAL NUMBER OF WTES		
A. The whole-time equivalent staffing number as at 31 December 2021		417.80
C2: WORKING DAYS LOST TO SICKNESS		
A. Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave		3.22%
B. Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave		0.10%
C3: NO. OF PAGE VISITS TO LA WEBSITE		
A. The per capita total page views of the local authority's website in 2021. [Amended in 2020]		19.92
B. The per capita total number of followers at end 2021 of the LA's social media accounts (if any). [Amended in 2020]		1.04
C4: OVERALL COST OF ICT PROVISION PER WTE		
A. All ICT expenditure in the period from 1/1/2021 to 31/12/2021, divided by the WTE number		€ 3,088.34
C5: OVERALL COST OF ICT PROVISION PER AS A PROPORTION OF REVENUE EXPENDITURE		
A. All ICT expenditure calculated in C4 as a proportion of Revenue expenditure.		1.42

M: FINANCE (M1 TO M4)	2021
M1:5 YEAR SUMMARY OF REVENUE ACCOUNT BALANCE	
A. The cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2017	-€ 3,067,265
B. The cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2018	- € 2,505,853
C. The cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2019	-€ 1,873,757
D. The cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2020	- € 1,661,523
E. The cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2021	
F. The cumulative surplus or deficit at 31/12/2021 as a percentage of Total Income in 2021 from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS**	%
G. Revenue Expenditure per capita for the year	€ -.--
H. Revenue expenditure per capita in 2021 excluding significant out of county / shared service expenditure.	€ -.--

M2:5 YEAR SUMMARY OF % COLLECTION LEVELS FOR MAJOR REVENUE SOURCES

The individual % figures for each of (a) Rates, (b) Rent & Annuities and (c) Housing Loans in the final column of Appendix 7 of the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) for	% Rates	% Rents and Annuities	% Housing Loans
A. Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2017	87.10	84.60	55.30
B. Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2018	88.70	86.80	59.90
C. Appendix 7 of the AFS* for 2019	88.00	89.00	62.00
D. Appendix 7 of the AFS* for 2020	77.10	92.00	75.00
E. Appendix 7 of the AFS* for 2021			

M3: PUBLIC LIABILITY CLAIMS (NEW IN 2020)

	2019	2020	2021
A. Per capita total cost of settled claims for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021.	€ 15.25	€ 9.50	
Total number of settled claims (IPB and settled under excess)	22	32	
Total cost of settled claims (IPB and settled under excess)	€ 594,587.85	€ 370,425.42	

M4: OVERHEADS (NEW IN 2020)

	2021
A. Overall central management charge as a percentage (%) of total expenditure on revenue account.	%
B. Total payroll costs as a percentage (%) of revenue expenditure.	%

* The figures in the unaudited AFS are to be used where the audit by the Local Government Audit Service has not taken place by the 17th April.

J: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (J1 TO J4)	2021	2020
J1: No. of JOBS CREATED		
The per capita number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office during the period 1/1/2021 to 31/12/2021.		68.00
J2: TRADING ONLINE VOUCHERS		
A. The per capita number of trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office in 2021.		21
B. The per capita number of those trading online vouchers that were drawn down in 2021.		11
J3: No. of MENTORING RECIPIENTS		
The per capita number of participants who received mentoring during the period 1/1/2021 to 31/12/2021		171
J4: TOURISM		
Does the Local Authority have a current Tourism Strategy?	Yes	Yes
Does the Local Authority have a designated Tourism Officer?	Yes	Yes