

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council



www.offaly.ie

Joint address by the Cathaoirleach and the Chief Executive



Cllr. Frank Moran, Cathaoirleach



Anna Marie Delaney, Príomh Fheidhmeannach

We are very pleased to present Offaly County Council 2022 Annual Report. This report provides Offaly County Council and the Municipal Districts of Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore the opportunity to record the activities undertaken during 2022.

The closure of West Offaly Power station at Shannonbridge and the acceleration of the Decarbonisation Programme continue to place financial risks on Offaly County Council. Offaly County Council continues to engage with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Finance on this matter.

We have made significant progress on a number of initiatives in 2022:

- Tullamore Street Enhancement Project – URDF Phase 2 progressing with contract signings imminent.

- Esker Arts Centre – construction completed, fit out and staffing progressing. This new facility is expected to open to the public in April 2023.
- Training Centre at Tullamore Fire Station is proceeding with an allocation of €2,166,857 from Dept.
- Offaly STEM VEX Robotics Championships, hosting over 1,500 Offaly students held at O’Connor Park and a VEX, as Gaeilge event, held in Birr Castle.
- Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trails officially opened in Kinnitty in April.

- Greenway construction continues across the county – €8,500,000 in greenway related funding has been secured since 2018, including approximately €500,000 in match funding from Offaly Co. Co. It is anticipated that the Grand Canal Greenway will be completed in its entirety in 2023.
- A Town Centre First Officer appointed and Clara Town Centre First Plan underway. Clara also received funding under the Streetscape Enhancement Measure in 2022. 60 applications received under this initiative, 40 of which selected and pending with DRCD.
- Edenderry Inner Relief Road –Stage 1 and Blundell Avenue new link road officially opened.
- Contract signed for Design Team for new Community Library and Arts space in Edenderry.
- Local Area Plans for Birr and Edenderry process commenced and will be finalised in the first half of 2023.
- Banagher Regeneration Architectural and Tourism Master Planning ongoing.
- Offaly received €277,102 from DRCD under the Community Activities Fund in 2022 – a once-off fund – 136 groups received grants. €64,557 was awarded to community playgrounds.
- 59 Local authority homes have been retrofitted in 2022 to date.
- Birr Destination Town project has progressed further throughout 2022.
- Climate Action Plan – Climate Steering Group continuing to progress initiatives with the rollout of EV Charging points progressing. The Roads Department expect to deliver approximately 13 new fast charging EV points across the county in 2022/2023. . Moby Move Bike Hire was launched in Tullamore in November 2022.
- Contract has been signed for the provision of technical consultancy services for the Design and Construction of the Birr Distributor Road.
- The Peat Road Pilot Scheme is ongoing, with the R400 pilot project in Edenderry to commence in 2023.
- A significant amount of funding has been leveraged from a number of national schemes for Heritage, Conservation and Architectural projects. Details are in the attached Directorate report.
- New staff structure is now in place to tackle dereliction and vacant properties across Offaly.

The current economic climate presents the organisation with significant challenges and it is only through the continued commitment of the Elected Members, Members of the Strategic Policy Committees, Management Team and Staff, together with the many voluntary and community organisations, with whom the Council engages, that the organisation can work through these challenges with confidence.

Finally, we would like to thank the Elected Members and the Staff of Offaly County Council for their ongoing co-operation and support and their commitment to serve the people of County Offaly. We trust that this Report will do justice to the efforts of staff at all levels in Offaly County Council during these challenging times.

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HOUSING SPC

<i>SPC Chair</i>	Danny Owens MCC / Robert McDermott MCC	<i>Director Of Services</i>	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. Ken Smollen	Ms. Diane Serviss	<i>Administrative Officer</i>	Lourda Giles / Aisling Lambe (Acting)
Cllr. Declan Harvey	Mr. Stephen Keogh	<i>Administrative Officer</i>	Deirdre Hunt
	Ms. Ruth Keane		

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

Offaly County Council continued to progress and deliver on the objectives and targets set out in the adopted Housing Delivery Action Plan.

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH & SERVICE DELIVERY

Covid-19 Public Health restrictions continued at various levels throughout the initial months of 2022. While most Housing Services were deemed as essential services the

delivery of many of these services continued to be curtailed during this period.

SOCIAL HOUSING LIST AND ALLOCATIONS

Successful applicants on the Social Housing Support List are supported through a variety of Social Housing options, including:

- Tenancy of a Council Property
- RAS and other Social Housing Leasing Options
- Housing provided by Approved Housing Bodies
- HAP (Housing Assistance Payment).

At the end of 2021 there were 445 qualified applications on the Social Housing Waiting List, with a further 574 in receipt of Housing Support via Housing Assistance Payments (HAP). 246 were supported in various leasing arrangements and a further 76 had Mortgage to Rent applications concluded with the Local Authority.

Throughout the year, allocations to social housing continued and in all 193 families received keys to their new homes during 2022, i.e., 113 families received keys to their new Council owned properties; 65 were nominated and received keys to Approved Housing Bodies homes; and, a further 5 were allocated to leasing units. During 2022, 10 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

Council staff are overseeing the construction of 18 units at Kylebeg; Banagher, 7 at Beechgrove, Belmont; 4 in Moneygall; and, 4 in Sr. Senan, Edenderry – all of which will complete in 2023. At the end of 2022 the appointments of a contractor for the construction of 9 units in Daingean and 38 units at Raheen, Clara was pending.

Further housing units continue to progress through the stage approval process with the Department. These, when finished, will provide 40 new build housing units in 3 schemes in Tullamore, Ballycumber & Daingean.

TURNKEY DEVELOPMENTS

During 2022 the final homes in the 35 social housing scheme were delivered in a turnkey development in Birr. A further 8 homes were allocated in Mucklagh and 4 in Walsh Island.

APPROVED HOUSING BODIES (AHB)

Offaly County Council continued to effectively engage with a number of AHBs throughout 2022. Working in partnership, the Council assist and support the AHBs and facilitate their access of funding for schemes that receive departmental approval.

During the year the Council nominated households from the Social Housing Support List to 42 homes delivered by Cluid in Tullamore – 16 at the Hawthorns and 26 in Jackson’s Hill. Oaklee Housing continued to progress the delivery of a further 60 homes in Tullamore – 19 in Clonminch and 41 in Kearney’s Field.

Sophia Housing advanced their planning application for the delivery of 39 social housing units in Portarlington.

ACQUISITIONS

The Council acquired 26 housing units, including 8 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 2022 there were 15 families and 16 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. Prior to its closure the facility had provided private emergency accommodation. However, this collaborative approach will provide a much enhanced service as persons are assisted in transitioning to long term supported accommodation. The refurbishment of the facility proceeded to tender in 2022 and refurbishment works were well underway at year end.

Following a tendering process, in 2020, the Midlands Regional Joint Consultative Homeless Forum awarded The Peter McVerry Trust the Housing First Programme on a 3-year basis. 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 2022.

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 of applicants to secure HAP accommodation throughout the year.

MAINTENANCE AND REFURBISHMENT

The Council's housing stock had increased to 2,031 properties by 31st December 2022.

The number of maintenance calls rose to 3,745 which may in part be as a result of the lifting of the various Covid-19 regulations which had been in place for the early part of 2022 and for a large part of the two preceding years.

There will always be a constant turnover of housing stock and throughout 2022 an increased number of 60 housing units, i.e., 45 pre-lets and 15 acquisitions, were brought back into use and tenanted.

At the end of 2022 a further 13 units were under repair by contractors; 4 were at tender stage; and, a further 17 were being surveyed in preparation for tender.

ENERGY RETROFITTING

In 2022, 31 properties the majority of which are old person's dwellings in Birr and Crinkill were upgraded with Heat Pumps to achieve a minimum B2 energy rating. This project was part funded by the department through the Just Transition Fund. A further 12 vacant properties across the county were upgraded to B2 under the National Energy Efficiency Programme.

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The Housing Liaison Officers continued to work with tenants and Residents Associations during 2022. 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.

The Estate Management Interagency Committee, established under the aegis of the Joint Policing Committee met on a number of occasions to to advance a number of interagency initiatives.

LOCAL AUTHORITY HOME LOANS (LAHL)

19 LAHL applications were received in 2022, 7 of which were approved in principle. To the end of 2022 LAHL to the value of €2,059,000 has been paid on home loans.

TENANT PURCHASE SCHEME

A Revised Tenant Purchase Scheme was introduced towards the latter end of 2022. This Scheme was considered by the Housing SPC and applications will be progressed in line with the Scheme.

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 2022. The forum provides an opportunity to

engage with the relevant agencies, including the HSE, AHBs and representatives from the disability sectors operational in Offaly. The Steering Group progressed the goals and strategies provided for in 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 Housing and Disability Steering Group acknowledged the requirement to ensure that their objectives and implementation plan 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 33 persons with a disability received an allocation during 2022, including 3 to HAP supported units. The breakdown of these allocations was: physical 17; sensory 5; mental health

5; and, intellectual 1.

PRIVATE GRANT SCHEMES

€1,600,000 was awarded under the private grant schemes in 2022. Housing in administering the Scheme awarded 153 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 - 13
- Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme - 57
- Housing Aid for Older People Grant Scheme - 83

DISABLED PERSONS WORKS ON LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSES

Funding received under the Disabled Persons Programme provided for works on 24 Local Authority homes. Works were arranged to meet tenants needs via 4 extensions and 20 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 works 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 5 occasions during 2022. Work on implementing the

Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 continued.

As part of the Mid Term Review of the *Offaly Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024*, the LTACC considered the progress of programme to date and in concluding their deliberations agreed to continue with prioritizing the delivery of the programmes goals.

The Traveller Interagency Group, under the aegis of the LCDC, continued to meet in 2022. The areas considered by the group included:

- 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 funding and supports that may be available to implement the actions arising from the Strategy.
- Reporting at regular intervals to the LCDC.

PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

Offaly County Council is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019. For the early months of 2022 only emergency inspections were allowed under the Covid-19 restrictions. Following a competitive tendering process Inspex Ltd. were

appointed to conduct the inspections.

HOUSING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Housing SPC met, via zoom, on 4 occasions in 2022.

The SPC reviewed many housing policy areas and received Housing reports including:

- Report from Offaly's Housing and Disability Steering Group on the implementation of the *Offaly Strategic Plan for People with a Disability 2021 to 2026*;
- Progress Report on the *Offaly Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 – 2028*.
- Progress on the development of Safe House Programme with Offaly Domestic Violence Support Services.
- An update report on Offaly's Response to Ukraine Refugee Crisis.
- Review of the Council's Differential Rents Scheme and an overview of the amendments to the revised Scheme, implemented in 2022.
- An overview of the National Tenant Incremental Purchase Scheme and its application.
- An update of the LTACC position in relation to the Mid Term Review of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024.

COMMUNITY, CULTURAL AND EMERGENCY SPC

SPC Chair	Liam Quinn MCC / John Clendennen MCC	Director Of Services	Sharon Kennedy
<i>Members 6753</i> Cllr. Clare Claffey Cllr. Ken Smollen Cllr. Mark Hackett	<i>Sectoral</i> Mr. Kenneth Bracken Mr. Thomas Woulfe Mr. John O'Connor Ms. Bridie Costello Hynes	<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 / Lourda Giles Eoin O'Ceilleachair Brian Pey Paula Donovan Eimear McGinn Sally O'Leary

LIBRARY SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Offaly County Library Service continues to deliver on the objectives of the national five-year strategy for public libraries: *Our Public Libraries 2022- Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities* and Offaly Libraries Interim Development Plan: *Creating Collaborative Communities, Offaly Libraries Development Plan 2022-2023, which was adopted by Council in January 2022.*


Strategic programmes underway include:

- Reading and Literacy Development (Right to Read Festivals)
- Learning and Information Services (eResources and Work Matters)

- Community and Culture Provision (Healthy Ireland, Creative Ireland & Age Friendly)

2022 PERFORMANCE

Library staff promoted quality services and worked to embed libraries at the heart of our communities through social inclusion, partnerships and innovative events. The Library Service is pleased to report an increase in user engagement across a variety of formats and platforms, as detailed in our performance highlights below:




2022 Highlights

160,000+ Issues Online and In Branch

17,996 Attendees at 1,438 Events

149,538 Visitors



Performance	2022	2021	%
Library Visits	149,538	58,952	+150
Branch Issues	85,142	72,505	+17
BorrowBox Registered Users	3,821	3,149	+20
Newsletter Issues	16,595	14,381	+15
Social Media Followers	10,555	9,314	+13
Universal Class Lessons	12,138	8,543	+42

ICT & DIGITAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENTS IN OFFALY LIBRARIES

Offaly Libraries have progressed the development of our technologies and digital resources in 2022. The introduction of Eduroam, a service helping third level students stay connected, is now available in all libraries across the county.

We have also added to our online collections for children with the addition of **LOTE Online for Kids**, a database of children’s books in World Languages; **Busy Code** which introduces children to coding and programming in a fun and accessible way and lastly, **Britannica Library**, filled with digital learning content. Offaly Libraries acquired two online supports in 2022 to promote literacy and reading for pleasure. **‘Who Next...?’** is a service which suggests books for children, helping to embed the habit of reading and **‘Who Else Writes Like?’** helps readers find an author similar to their favourite authors.

NEW NATIONAL LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, MARCH 2022



On 29th **March 2022**, Offaly Libraries, along with libraries all over the country, introduced a new online library system with **improved functionality** to help us provide a better service to library members. Members can now manage their library accounts online, browse a catalogue of 12 million items, and reserve physical books, eBooks and eAudiobooks in one searchable, mobile responsive catalogue.

2022 DEPARTMENTAL GRANT AWARDS TO OFFALY LIBRARIES:

Securing grant funding has enabled Offaly Libraries to create new programmes and develop new relationships. Some highlights worthy of mention include:

Offaly Libraries secured €170,000 My Open Library funding from DRCD for the upgrade of My Open Library technologies in Banagher, Ferbane, Tullamore and Kilcormac libraries. This funding will allow huge improvements in our technology systems and improve the user experience of My Open Library services for years to come. This project is 10% match-funded by OCC.



A grant of €21,800 from the Dormant Accounts Fund for Library Supports for socially excluded and disadvantaged communities funded our STEAM programme and an Autumn Parenting Programme, delivered in partnership with Laois Libraries. This project is 10% match funded by Offaly County Council.



Offaly Libraries Sensory Offaly project was co-funded by key partners to the value of €4,370 from CYPSC and €5,625 in funding from Healthy Ireland.

LIBRARY BUILDINGS DEVELOPMENTS

Offaly Libraries have continued to establish valued spaces in our libraries through the continuation of upgrades across our library buildings. These works included the completion of a specialist Sensory Room in Tullamore Library and the installation of a Sensory Space in Edenderry Library. Works were completed on a Local Studies & Reading Room in Tullamore Library and refurbishments in Banagher and Daingean Libraries are due for completion in early 2023.

DESIGN TEAM CONTRACT SIGNING FOR NEW COMMUNITY LIBRARY IN EDENDERRY 2022



Offaly Library Service were pleased to announce the signing of Design Team contracts in 2022 with Seán Harrington Architects, to begin design of a new state-of-the-art, accessible and user centred community library for the town of Edenderry.

This is one of a number of key actions enabled by the award of €2.1 million from the Department of Rural and Community Development to Offaly County Council for Phase II of the Edenderry Regeneration Project

LAUNCHING OFFALY LIBRARIES SENSORY OFFALY INITIATIVE



The launch of Sensory Offaly was a key success for Offaly Library Service in April 2022, providing access to essential resources, toys, equipment and information to support children, young adults and adults with disabilities, additional needs and learning challenges.

Harnessing funding opportunities offered by CYPSC and the Department of Rural and Community Development, Offaly Libraries have established a purpose-built Sensory Room in Tullamore Library, equipped with a Magic Table and other sensory friendly technologies.



The Sensory Room has welcomed **519 bookings** since it was first launched in April, 2022. In addition, the library has developed a Sensory Book and Sensory Toy collection; these items can be borrowed by library members with a Sensory Offaly Card

PARENTING PROGRAMME AUTUMN 2022 SERIES



Supported by the **Dormant Accounts Fund** and co-delivered by Offaly Libraries and Laois Libraries, the Parenting Support Programme invited experts to discuss a broad range of parenting topics to span all age ranges, from babies to young adults. The programme enjoyed much success in its inaugural year and its return in autumn 2022 saw the delivery of **19 online events with 418 registrations** along with **10 in-branch events with 136 attendees.**

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS FROM OFFALY LIBRARIES

In 2022, Offaly Libraries acquired three fantastic new eResources in support of Primary School students in Offaly, kindly co-funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund.



31st 2023.

Times Tables Rock Stars: Every Primary School in Offaly were invited to avail of a 'whole school' license to Times Tables Rock Stars **until March**

Reading Eggs is an online reading program that helps children learn to read with hundreds of online reading lessons, phonics games and books for ages 2 – 13.





Mathletics is an online math program that builds confidence through personalized learning, exciting games and mastery challenges.

OFFALY SCHOOL STEAM PROGRAMME



Offaly Libraries innovative School Steam Programme 2022 involved the county-wide coordination of workshops and events, specifically aligned with four national Science Festivals: **Engineers Week, Tech Week, Space Week** and **Science Week**.

The aim of the programme is to engage children with the endless possibilities of STEAM-related subjects, inspiring the next generation to pursue careers in the fields of Science, Engineering and Technology. Supported by the Dormant Accounts Fund, over **1,619 students participated** in the programme in 2022.

OFFALY LIBRARY SERVICE – COMMUNITY RESPONSE IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINIANS

Offaly Libraries offer many services **in support to the people of Ukraine** as part of the wider Offaly County Council Community Response Forum.

In 2022, Offaly Libraries produced a **library service leaflet in Ukrainian**, containing pertinent information on how to join and use the library service. **New titles in**



Ukrainian are continuously added to our shelves and our digital services have multi-lingual offerings, including Ukrainian. Tullamore Library also facilitates English Language Classes for Ukrainians.

SEACHTAIN NA GAELIGE LE LEABHARLANNA UÍBH FHAILÍ

Offaly Libraries curated another successful Seachtain na Gaeilge in 2022. Library staff delivered storytimes in Irish to **208 Primary school students** and also facilitated Tráth na gCeisteanna online for **60 Secondary school students**. Libraries established Cuinní Gaeilge / Irish Corners highlighting Irish language resources available.



Offaly Libraries continue to support the Irish language with the establishment in 2022 of **Irish Conversation groups** who meet weekly in Birr, Clara and Tullamore Libraries.

CRUINNIU NA NÓG, SATURDAY 11TH JUNE

Offaly Libraries delivered a successful Cruinniu na nÓg programme on behalf of Offaly County Council in June! An array of activities including Art, Creative Writing, Drama

and Music Workshops were hosted around the county, with **24 bookable events** with over **300 participants**. In addition, Offaly Libraries organised **7 developmental projects** with local schools and communities. Launches of completed project pieces also occurred on Cruinniu and enjoyed an attendance of over **660 people**.

OFFALY LIBRARIES COMIC CON, SATURDAY 18TH JUNE 2022

Tullamore Library delivered its third instalment of **Offaly Libraries Comic Con**, held on Saturday 18th June. Library staff welcomed almost **900 visitors to Tullamore Library** throughout the day.

Free workshops and activities were fully booked and special guest judges chose 4 winners out of over **160 entries** to our **'Create a Comic Cover' competition** and awarded prizes to 6 winners of **our Cosplay competition** on the day.



NATIONAL PLAY DAY 2022



Offaly Libraries facilitated the delivery of over **1500 items** of play to children as part of National Play Day in July. The library service also collaborated with the Offaly Volunteer Centre in the delivery of

Play Packs directly to **Ukrainian children** based in Offaly. This initiative was funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

VEX ROBOTICS PROGRAMME AT OFFALY LIBRARIES

Offaly Libraries have capitalised on **key partnerships** with Offaly County Council's IT department, the Offaly VEX programme and Offaly County Council's STEM Education Officer in delivering a series of VEX events for children. In July, a VEX Freeplay event saw **23 attendees** which developed into a series of **Robotics workshops** in Tullamore Library throughout August. Due to the overwhelming popularity of these workshops, a **weekly VEX Robotics Club** was established in Tullamore Library.



LIBRARY IRELAND WEEK: LIBRARIES AS PLACES OF SANCTUARY



In collaboration with the **Library Association of Ireland**, the theme for Libraries Ireland Week 2022 was "**Libraries as Places of Sanctuary**", with a focus on how libraries provide a democratic, open and welcoming place for all. In this spirit, Offaly Libraries staff championed the library service through special **pop-up libraries** in Áras an Chontae and in the Bridge Shopping Centre, Tullamore, showcasing all that the library has to offer.

SUPPORTING NATIONAL RIGHT TO READ INITIATIVES

Right to Read is an annual national programme, supporting 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!



IRELAND READS DAY



Offaly Libraries embraced this national day of reading, encouraging people in Offaly to '**Squeeze in a Read**' for the month of February and especially on Thursday, 25th February, Ireland Reads Day. With the help of our staff, library members, local community groups and even local celebrities – **Offaly Libraries published an informative booklet of Offaly Recommended Reads**, which can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/34IQWLh>

Offaly Libraries own Readathon ended with over **71,000 minutes of reading in February**, amounting to over 1,100 hours or 49 days worth of non-stop reading.





SPRING INTO STORYTIME 2022

Our libraries embraced a blended approach to Spring into Storytime in 2022, delivering storytimes both in branch and online, with videos reaching **over 19,000** on Facebook. **288 Easter-themed Craft bags** were handed out throughout April.



SUMMERSTARS 2022

1,239 children signed up for the Summer Stars Reading Adventure in 2022 with Offaly Libraries. **442 participants** attended a series of events hosted across our library branches, including arts and crafts, story times, quizzes and more.



CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL 2022

Offaly Libraries curated **24 events with over 290 attendees** for Children's Book festival 2022. We also facilitated the distribution of **650 Crafty Take Away Bags** our various competition received **353 entries**.



FAMILY TIME AT YOUR LIBRARY 2022

Offaly Libraries delivered **54 events to 1,867 participants** as part of our Family Time at Your Library celebrations in the run up to the festive period, including Story Times, Arts and Craft sessions Christmas

Carolling Concerts and Family Movie screenings.

FIRST 5 LITTLE LIBRARY INITIATIVE, PHASE 3 2022

Offaly Libraries were overjoyed to hand out **846 Little Library Book Bags to children** due to start school in September 2022, both in branch or through visits to Early Learning Centres.



As part of the 'My Little Library Book Bag' initiative, a collaboration between libraries and the **Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth** as part of the **First 5 Strategy**. the 'My Little Library Book Bag' included- Three books on starting school ; A story card on going to the library; A postcard the child can write or draw on; Their very own library card and special 'My Little Library' cardholder.

HEALTHY IRELAND AT YOUR LIBRARY



Offaly Libraries have continued our Healthy Ireland at Your Library initiative, working with the LGMA, the Department of Health and Local Healthy Ireland partners to deliver a diverse range of **Healthy Ireland talks online** throughout 2022. In 2022,

Offaly Libraries worked towards **rejuvenating our Healthy Ireland collections**, both in-branch and through our digital resources. Through Healthy Ireland

funding support, the library service organised a series of **Play Workshops for Ukrainian Children** in Tullamore Library during November and December 2022.

WORK MATTERS AT YOUR LIBRARY

In collaboration with Laois Libraries and Europe Direct Portlaoise, Offaly Libraries facilitated an information session in March 2022 with **Guy Flouch, head of EUNiCAS, to discuss study abroad options in Europe.**



Derval Chambers Petit returned to Offaly Libraries in April 2022 to deliver another series of bite-sized lunchtime webinars through Zoom. The webinars covered a variety of topics and are still available to view through our social media channels and on our website.

AGE FRIENDLY LIBRARIES



Offaly Libraries offered a diverse range of events in celebration of Bealtaine with Flower Demonstrations, Poetry Readings, a Gramophone Concert and an intro to digital photography using smart phones. Clara and Kilcormac libraries welcomed **18 attendees to their Bealtaine Book Clubs**, celebrating the Bealtaine book of 2022 titled *Freedom is a Land I Cannot See* by Peter Cunningham.

Kindly co-funded by Age Friendly Offaly and Offaly Adapts, Offaly Libraries coordinated a broad range of

socially inclusive events for 69 attendees during Positive Ageing Week including coffee mornings, art and crafts sessions, lunchtime concerts, computer classes and more. Butterfly and Bee Friendly bulbs and good quality, sustainable Chancery bags were gifted to **250 of our older patrons.**



As part of the government's Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme, Offaly Libraries facilitated the delivery of **Beginners Computer Classes** in Edenderry Library during May. Library branches across the county also facilitated a series of 6-week workshops covering **basic computer skills for older people**, delivered by Age Action at various stages throughout 2022.

PRIORITIES FOR 2023 INCLUDE:

- Progress development of a new state of the art community library and arts space in Edenderry
 - Review *Creating Collaborative Communities, Offaly Libraries Development Plan 2022-2023*; prepare for new library development plan 2023-2028
 - Embed strategic alignments and maximise funding opportunities
 - Showcase Offaly Libraries as the heart of reading and literacy development within our communities
 - Progress service and building improvements in library facilities
 - Contribute to local and national climate and environmental objectives by providing information and programmes for the community via libraries
 - Libraries at the heart of communities, creating a 'sense of place' ; promote social inclusion, develop innovative partnerships and in-person community and cultural event programmes
 - Increase accessibility and library engagement by developing traditional and digital collections, responsive services and new library technologies
 - Increase active membership by encouraging users back into library spaces
 - Strengthen partnership with Offaly Archives Service, and further promote Offaly Archives and Offaly Libraries Local Studies
 - Raise the library profile through in-person advocacy, and online promotions
- Review, monitor and evaluate library service activities in line with all local and national service indicator requirements

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

OFFALY LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Offaly Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was established under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 for the purposes of developing, co-ordinating 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

Offaly LCDC held 11 meetings during 2022 as follows – 20th January, 10th February, 10th March, 21st April, 12th May, 9th June, 14th July, 8th September, 13th October, 18th November and 15th December. Members participated in LCDC meetings via Zoom and in-house.



May 2022 LCDC meeting

MEMBERSHIP OF OFFALY LCDC IN 2022

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 2022:

STATUTORY INTERESTS SECTOR STATE AGENCIES

Ms. Celine Kirwan, replaced Mr. Ryan McKay as Dept. of Employment Affairs and Social Protection representative.

OTHER CIVIC SOCIETY OR LOCAL COMMUNITY INTERESTS

Mr. Mark Cronin, Construction Industry Federation, replaced Mr. Padraig Hannon CIF

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

At the June 2022 LCDC meeting, Cllr. J. Leahy was elected Chair of Offaly LCDC, and Ms. S. Sweeney was elected Vice Chair of Offaly LCDC.

Offaly LCDC acknowledges the contribution over the past 3 years of outgoing Chair, Cllr. D. Harvey and outgoing Vice-Chair, Ms. S. McDonagh.

Membership of Offaly LCDC during 2022 is as follows:

Statutory Interests (9)		
Sector	Members Name	Organisation
Local Authority Elected Members	Cllr. John Leahy	Offaly County Council (Chair)
	Cllr Declan Harvey	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	Ms. Celine Kirwan	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(Vice Chair)
	Ms. Sinead McDonagh	Community & Voluntary Sector
	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 Company
Other Civic Society or Local Community Interests	Mr. Mark Cronin	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 2022

The following key priorities were progressed and developed in 2022 by the LCDC:

- Implementation of the Offaly Local Development Strategy, LEADER Rural
- Development Programme 2014-2020 and the Transitional Programme 2021-2022 and approval of the LEADER Programme funding

- Implementation, monitoring and review of Social Inclusion and Community
- Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2023
- Implementation of the SICAP Ukrainian Support Budget 2022
- Preparation of Local Economic Community Plan 2022-27
- Implementation of the Community Activities Fund 2021 and launch of the Community Support Fund 2022-23 under the Offaly Community Enhancement Programme
- Operation of the Ukrainian Community Response Forum
- Provision of support to the Community Sector and affording a voice through the Offaly PPN Network;
- Implementation of the Offaly Healthy Ireland fund
- Progression and improvement of the health and physical activity status of the people of Offaly by Offaly Sports Partnership

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 idea is to enlist the energy and resources of people and bodies that could contribute to the rural development process by forming partnerships at a sub-regional level between the public, private and civil sectors. 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). The Offaly LEADER Programme provides support and funding for individuals and rural communities to become involved and take ownership for the development of their own areas.

Offaly Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is the designated Local Action Group (LAG) and has responsibility for the delivery of LEADER 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 2016-2022 in excess of €8.2m 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

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

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.

TRANSITIONAL LEADER PROGRAMME 2021-2022

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.

Minister Heather Humphreys speaking at the official opening of the Mountain Bike Trail Hub in Kinnity on April 22nd. This project was funded by the LEADER Programme and the Community Enhancement Programme through Offaly's Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). Also pictured is John Carroll Chairman of the voluntary group that managed the project.



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 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 addressing the climate agenda, digital transformation and projects utilising the Smart Village approach to local area development.

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

The Transitional LEADER Programme Project Allocation for Offaly LAG is €1,780,874 and includes €1,232,913 Transitional funds and €547,961 EURI funds. In 2022 Offaly LCDC approved 61 no. LEADER Programme Projects totalling €1,737,974.90. LEADER claim expenditure in the sum of €1,360,007.12 was paid to project promoters in 2022.

A breakdown of LEADER Project Approvals and Claim Expenditure for 2022 is outlined as follows:

		RDP Transitional LEADER programme			EURI Funding		
THEME	SUB-THEME	No. of projects approved Jan -Dec 2022	Project Approvals 2022	Claim Expenditure 2022	No. of projects approved Jan -Dec 2022	Project Approvals 2022	Claim Expenditure 2022
Economic Development	Rural Tourism	13	€383,404.05	€228,916.35	1	€22,877.63	€33,019.32
	Enterprise Development	3	€149,494.85	€293,818.63	11	€290,752.07	€103,633.62
	Rural Towns	4	€212,998.17	€153,670.55	2	€63,296.03	
	Broad band		€0.00	€3,555.00		€0.00	
Social Inclusion	Basic Services	14	€443,543.96	€288,887.59	1	€18,423.86	
	Rural Youth	1	€7,389.75	€115,919.00		€0.00	
Rural Environment	Water Resources	2	€41,420.45	€26,428.61		€0.00	
	Biodiversity	3	€16,364.76	€96,333.45	1	€18,000.00	
	Renewable Energy	4	€52,459.32	€15,825.00	1	€17,550.00	
TOTALS		44	€1,307,075.31	€1,223,354.18	17	€430,899.59	€136,652.94

The Transitional LEADER Programme project approval element has been extended by DRCD to 31st August 2023. All projects including those approved in 2023 must be completed by 31st December 2023 and final claims for these projects must be submitted to the Department no later than 30 June 2024.

The commitment and diligent work of all involved is greatly appreciated and acknowledged and sincere thanks is expressed in particular to the Chair and members of Offaly LCDC, Project Promoters, Evaluation Committee

members, the Implementing Partner Offaly Local Development Company and the staff of the Community Section in Offaly County Council.

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY ACTIVATION PROGRAMME 2018-2023 (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. 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. 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 SICAP Programme has two main goals:

Goal 1	Supporting Communities	Goal 2	Supporting Individuals
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All beneficiaries of the Programme supports must belong to one of 13 pre-defined target groups:

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 a budget of €900,768 for 2022. In 2022, the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme delivered a strong and

focused programme engaging with local community groups and individuals from disadvantaged communities with key performance indicator targets exceeded. A number of supports were provided to the Emerging Needs Target Group for 2022 'Older People who are Socially Isolated'.

An additional €63,526 Ukrainian Support budget was allocated to SICAP in June in recognition of the ongoing contribution being made by the Programme to the local community responses to people arriving from Ukraine.

Through the 2022 SICAP Annual Plan a significant number of supports and interventions were delivered to beneficiaries under the following thematic areas:

GOAL 1 COMMUNITY GROUPS	GOAL 2 INDIVIDUALS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building healthy communities • Building group capacity • Equality and inclusive decision making • Collaboration and innovation networks - inclusion and equality • Strengthening social Enterprises & Local Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Development and Well Being • Providing Life-Long Learning • Child, Youth & Family, Learning & Development • Employment Supports • Enterprise Development Supports • Collaboration & Innovation Networks Education & Employment

TABLE: SICAP 2022 LOT TARGETS



 Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme LOT TARGETS OFFALY COUNTY (12-1)	TARGET 2022	ACHIEVED 2022
Key Performance Indicator 1 Community Groups	65	85
Key Performance Indicator 2: Individuals	469	515
% KPI 2 Living in Disadvantaged Areas	32%	33.48%
Emerging Needs Group	Older People who are Socially Isolated	

TABLE: SICAP 2022 AND 2018-2022 KEY INDICATORS

 Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme KEY SICAP INDICATORS ACHIEVED	2022
Disadvantaged individuals worked with on a one to one basis	157
Community Groups assisted under SICAP	85
Children that received an educational or developmental support	301
Recipients of employment support	116
Progression into self-employment	42

During the course of the year, the LCDC completed the annual planning process and approved the 2022 SICAP Annual Plan. The LCDC completed and approved the End of Year Performance Review in respect of the 2021 programme, completed and approved a Mid-Year Performance Review of the 2022 programme and commenced the Annual Plan process for the proposed SICAP 2023 Annual Plan.

In 2022, the Empowering Communities Working Group held 5 meetings on 13th January, 3rd February, 30th June, 20th October, and 29th November.

OFFALY SICAP SUPPORTS TO DATE

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

The commitment and hard work of all involved is greatly appreciated and acknowledged and sincere thanks is expressed in particular to the Chair and members of Offaly LCDC, the Empowering Communities Working Group, the Programme Implementer, Offaly Local Development Company and the staff of the Community Department in Offaly County Council. Special thanks and recognition is extended to all the participants who engage with SICAP and participate in the programme. SICAP supports, programmes and activities in Offaly are delivered in conjunction with a number of agencies, partnerships,



community and voluntary groups and community leaders throughout the county and funding and other supports from these partners are widely acknowledged.

LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN LECP

A review of the LECP 2016-21 was completed in 2021. During 2022 the Department issued Guidelines and a number of online informational webinars were held to assist the completion of the next LECP. An Advisory Steering Group (ASG) was established in May 2022 whose role is to assist in preparing, drafting, adopting, implementing and monitoring of the LECP. The ASG prepared draft High Level Goals and arranged for an Offaly Socio Economic Profile to be prepared in 2023 prior to consultation commencing on the Plan in 2023.

The ASG membership comprises:

	Name	Representing
1	Brendan O'Loughlin	OLDC (Chair)
2	Cllr. John Clendennen	Chair of Community, Culture & Emergency Services SPC
3	Cllr. Eamon Dooley	Chair of Land Use, Planning and Economic Development SPC
4	Ann Dillon	DOS for Land Use, Planning and Economic Development
5	Sharon Kennedy	DOS for Housing & Community Services
6	Lourda Giles	LCDC Chief Officer
7	Anne Marie Keane	LOETB, Nominee from LCDC
8	Ann Sheerin	HSE, Nominee from LCDC
9	Rebekah Keaveney	Green Offaly
10	Orla Martin (temp)	Local Enterprise Office
11	Lorraine Mitchell	Senior Executive Planner -F / Planning

The Local Enterprise Office commissioned a 5 Year Economic Strategy and Action Plan for Offaly, which was completed by year end. This will form part of the new LECP. The Strategy and Action Plan was prepared by OCO Global who consulted widely including eighty business stakeholders, students and education providers. Baseline data was collected and a number of key recommendations were made. The new LECP will be finalised and adopted in 2023.

OFFALY COMMUNITY RESPONSE FORUM

Following the military invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022 the Government requested that each local authority establish a Community Response Forum (CRF), modelled largely on the previous Community Forum which worked very efficiently to coordinate the response to the COVID 19 pandemic. The Offaly CRF first met on 16th March 2022, and has met almost every fortnight since then.

The Community Forum consists of a range of key agencies working within Offaly who meet on a fortnightly basis to discuss updates in relation to Ukrainian refugees arriving into the County and ensuring appropriate responses with integrated supports to housing, transport, medical, social welfare, education, employment, training and social integration. The Forum worked very effectively, thanks to the commitment of the various agencies. Excellent networking took place outside of the group on a weekly or daily basis, as required.

Numbers arriving in the county increased steadily over the course of 2022. By the 8th December 852 PPS numbers were issued to Ukrainians in Offaly. The majority of the families were accommodated in Tullamore, Birr, Portarlinton, Moneygall and Shannonbridge. In Tullamore, the main centre of emergency accommodation is a hotel and there are 4 guesthouses providing accommodation on an on-going basis. In Portarlinton there are 16 duplex units dedicated to family accommodation. In Moneygall private accommodation is available with self-catering and full board arrangements.

Offaly County Council partnered with LOETB to provide a rest centre at Birr Outdoor Education Centre, providing accommodation for 50 persons in 3 dormitories. The rest centre operated on a continuous basis since March 2022. OCC is indebted to LOETB for their work and co-operation in this regard. The level of suitable pledged units in the county is quite low. A large percentage of units initially pledged were withdrawn once contact was made to inspect. OCC has partnered with Peter McVerry Trust to assist in allocations. In December 2022 there were 93 Ukrainian pupils in Offaly primary schools, and 35 in second level education. There was no availability of secondary school places in Tullamore and Portarlinton by the end of 2022, with availability of National School places in Tullamore reaching maximum capacity.

Laois Offaly Rural Link worked to align transport to rural hubs and link these with urban and work centres. The HSE

provided a range of responses in terms of medical card provision and access to GP services but there were capacity issues in some areas of the county. Offaly Volunteer Centre expanded the range of facilities available at its hub in Tullamore, and employed a Ukraine Support Worker funded by the Community Foundation of Ireland. On the 25th October 2022 the Department of Health approved funding of €9,525 for Offaly under the Ukrainian Refugee Health and Wellbeing Support Fund which was disbursed by the Community Forum. The fund was used by OLDC and the Offaly Volunteer Centre to provide activities focused on benefits to mental health, physical activity, integration/social connection, creativity, etc.

COMMUNITY CULTURE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES SPC

The 9 member SPC meets on a quarterly basis and has representation from local authority members, sectoral interests and PPN representatives. Membership of the SPC during 2022 was as follows:

	Name	Organisation Represented
1	Cllr. John Clendennen	Offaly County Council
2	Cllr. Liam Quinn	Offaly County Council
3	Cllr. Clare Claffey	Offaly County Council
4	Cllr. Ken Smollen	Offaly County Council
5	Cllr. Mark Hackett	Offaly County Council
6	Thomas Woulfe	Agriculture/Farming (IFA)
7	VACANT	Offaly PPN Social Inclusion
8	VACANT	Offaly PPN Community/Voluntary
9	VACANT	Offaly PPN Youth & Environment

The SPC met four times in 2022: 25th February; 8th June; 23 September and 25th November. Among the policies developed for adoption by the SPC in 2022 were (1) Event Management Guidelines; (2) Policy to support Women and Diversity in Local Government and Decision Making Structures and (3) Offaly Playground Strategy. There were 3 vacancies for PPN representatives at the end of 2022 following the resignation of members. These vacancies will be filled in 2023 following elections.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES FUND 2022

Offaly County Council was allocated €277,102 in funding from the Dept. of Rural & Community Development under the Community Activities Fund in 2022. This was a once-off fund allocated under the Department's Community Enhancement Programme and administered by Offaly LCDC and the Community & Culture Section of Offaly County Council. Not-for-profit community or voluntary groups were eligible to apply. Priority was given to non-pay operating costs e.g. utility bills, rental/lease costs, insurance bills during the period 1st July 2021 to 30th June 2022. Repairs and improvements to facilities and purchase of equipment were also eligible. The LCDC approved grants to 136 groups on 10th March 2022. Offaly LCDC also decided to support struggling community playgrounds by ring fencing €64,557 of the fund towards these groups.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND 2022 - 2023

On 24th November 2022, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced a fund called the

Community Support Fund (CSF) managed by Offaly LCDC. Offaly County Council was awarded €298,782 in funding to support groups such as Parish Halls, Community Centres, Local Development Associations, Social Clubs, Senior Citizen Groups, Men's and Women's Sheds.

The scheme supported groups with their energy costs who may not have been deemed eligible under previous Government schemes. These include groups that operate from parish halls and who need support with running costs such as energy or insurance bills. Groups can also use the funding to carry out small upgrade works and to purchase equipment to support their activities such as laptops and printers, lawnmowers, training equipment, etc. Closing date was 24th February 2023.

AGE FRIENDLY PROGRAMME

Offaly Age Friendly Alliance was established on 27th Sept 2017, following on from the signing of the Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly Communities in Europe 2013. The first Age Friendly Strategy was launched in June 2018.

The Age Friendly Programme has evolved to include:

- Alliance meets 4 – 6 times per year
- OCC Interdepartmental Team meets 6 times per year
- The Midlands Regional Age Friendly Manager, Eileen Hughes, oversees and supports the work of the AF's initiatives in Offaly, Laois, Longford, Westmeath & Roscommon

- Age Friendly Housing Technical Specialist: Noelle McGinley
- Age Friendly Programme Manager Offaly: Bridie Costello Hynes

In 2022 a review of the Age Friendly Strategy 2018 – 2021 was carried out which examined the actions progressed from 2018 – 2021. The majority of actions have been completed at this stage and work commenced on a new Strategy in 2022 with consultations with older people taking place in Tullamore, Kilclonfert and Shinrone. The main consultation took place in Tullamore and members of the Alliance and Interdepartmental team facilitated on the 8 WHO themes. Work also commenced on developing Clara as a Pilot Age Friendly town. This is an ongoing project in conjunction with the Town Centre Plan.

TRAVELLER INTERAGENCY GROUP

The Offaly Traveller Interagency Group was established in September 2021 and has met quarterly since then. The membership of the Group includes: Offaly County Council Community, Housing & Environmental Section staff; Offaly Traveller Movement; Birr Travellers & Settled Peoples Group; Department of Social Protection; Túsla; Health Service Executive; Offaly Community Childcare Committee; Laois Offaly ETB; An Garda Síochána and Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS). In 2022 meetings were held on 1st March, 10th June, 23 December and 2nd December.

OFFALY COMMUNITY WATCH NETWORK / CCTV

Offaly Community Watch is a network of Community Alert and Neighbourhood Watch groups that is in operation since 2011. It is facilitated by the PPN, Local Garda Sergeant and Muintir na Tire Regional Worker. The Network normally meets 3 times per year with a regular attendance, which includes the PPN reps from the JPC.

The Community CCTV Grant Aid Scheme run by the Department of Justice and Equality is designed to provide support to local communities wishing to install and maintain Community CCTV security systems in their area. Funding of 60% of the total capital cost up to a maximum of €40,000 is available for new community CCTV schemes.

In Offaly, the following schemes have held Project Team meetings to progress their applications:

- Belmont Community CCTV Scheme
- The Arthur Elliott CCTV Scheme formerly known as Coolderry/ Kilcolman/ Aghancon CCTV Scheme
- Rahan Community CCTV Scheme
- Portarlinton Business Association CCTV Scheme
- Edenderry Business CCTV scheme

Standard procedures for the Operation of the Scheme are being developed in Offaly, based on the model agreed in Laois where a CCTV scheme has been approved in Mountmellick.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK PPN

The Offaly Public Participation Network (PPN) was

established in 2015 following the Local Government Reform Act 2014. It is the main link through which the Local Authority connects with the community, voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors.

The PPN Secretariat meets monthly in person to guide and direct the work of the PPN on behalf of the Membership. The PPN distributes information from a local and national perspective and shares information broadly across the Community sector reflecting the needs of its members. Groups are supported in joining the PPN, accessing MD grants, Town & Village renewal projects, the Community Enhancement Programme and Clár funding.

A plenary is held in Spring, following on from the MD meetings and again in Autumn. Groups are also assisted with Revenue/Tax registration and Tax Clearance in order to draw down grants. In Spring & Autumn the PPN hosts Municipal District meetings. The PPN recently upgraded the website and it also has a presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

In person and online training events are undertaken during the year on a range of topics including funding, committee skills, online communications and budget projections. Informing and representing the PPN membership, and developing the capacity of members are key elements of the PPN remit. These priorities will continue to be provided for the membership which exceeds 650 in Offaly, although this may change once the

re-registration of groups is complete. There are a further 100 interested parties on the mailing list.

Offaly PPN are members of the Midland Regional PPN which meets quarterly to network and deliver on cross county projects. The PPN National Conference took place in Portlaoise in 21st – 22nd Oct 2022. This was the first National Conference since 2019.

COMHAIRLE NA NÓG

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. 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 20 meetings in 2022.

This year a number of members are representative of the Seldom Heard Voices - this refers to Young People who have fewer opportunities to participate and/or who encounter more obstacles when attempting to participate in decision making. The CNN Coordinator continues to reach out to organisations that work with young people in this category. The group have chosen Disability as their topic for a project in 2023 and continue to work on this

with the support of the Steering Committee.
The following are some highlights from 2022:

- In April, the group took part in a Spring Clean in Edenderry.
- In September Offaly CNN were Invited to speak to the Greek Delegation as part of an exchange EU programme which took place in the Council Chambers. Members presented their opinion on Just Transition in Offaly.

• Dr Gemma Donnelly-Cox from Trinity College saw them present to the Greek Delegate. She was impressed by their presentation and thought that they could make a valuable contribution to her students' learning and offer a relevant perspective on the Just Transition. She invited the members to present to her students in Trinity College and allowed time for a discussion with academics and PhD students on the topic of the Just Transition. The discussion proved invaluable as academics whose research is founded in social enterprise, innovation and climate justice were extremely interested in the views of the Offaly Comhairle na nÓg members.



to present to her students in Trinity College and allowed time for a discussion with academics and PhD students on the topic of the Just Transition. The discussion proved invaluable as academics whose research is founded in social enterprise, innovation and climate justice were extremely interested in the views of the Offaly Comhairle na nÓg members.

- In October, a CNN member participated in promotional video as part of a general awareness campaign aimed at promoting and encouraging increased participation of women and diversity in the 2024 local elections.
- In October, 101 young people from all across the county of Offaly attended Comhairle na nÓg's AGM at the Tullamore Court Hotel. The day was ran by Offaly Comhairle na nÓg members. Those carrying out registration, technical support, MC'ing and presenting, were all young people themselves. Councillor Tony McCormack, Leas Cathaoirleach; Councillor Clare Claffey and Sharon Kennedy, Director of Services addressed the young people on the day. Members of the Steering Committee also volunteered their time on the day to facilitate workshop and discussions. The AGM was packed with presentations, workshops and competitions so that everyone could share their opinion while having fun.



OFFALY VOLUNTEER GROUP AWARDS



An event was held in the Bridge House Hotel on the 19th May, to acknowledge the work carried out by Volunteers and Community Groups across Offaly throughout the pandemic. The event, held during

National Volunteering Week, featured a speech live streamed from Dublin Castle by Minister Joe O’Brien, T.D., and Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities. The high number of nominations under the five categories were an acknowledgement of the outstanding community efforts delivered in County Offaly during the pandemic. An independent panel evaluated the nominations and finalists were present on the evening to receive their awards.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Three Offaly community groups nominated by Offaly County Council took an unprecedented three prizes at the annual IPB Co-operation Ireland Pride of Place Awards 2022, which were held at a glittering gala event held in the Clayton Hotel, Dublin. More than 500 people from across Ireland filled the venue to hear the winners announced by Marty Whelan.

Community Group	Category	Municipal District	Result
Geashill Tidy Towns	Creative Place	Edenderry MD	Winner
Mucklagh Community Development CLG	Population 1,000 to 2,000	Tullamore MD	Runner Up
Pullough Village	Community Resilience	Birr MD	Runner Up

Geashill Tidy Towns were worthy winners in the Creative Place Initiative category. The group has an enviable track record of success in national competitions, winning Biodiversity and National Pollinator awards in 2017 and 2019, and the award for Ireland’s Tidiest Village in 2021. This award encapsulates the pride and care they have for their village and community.

Geashill Tidy Towns, National Winner of the Creative Place Category being presented with their award



Mucklagh Community Development CLG beat off stiff competition from across the island to emerge as Runners Up in the Population 1,000-2,000 category. Their state of the art community centre and can-do attitude won them firm admirers among the judges. Pullough Village was praised by the judges as an example of how to overcome economic decline through positive community action. They awarded the group the Runners Up prize for their commitment and dedication in making their village a lively, resilient community again.



Mucklagh Community Development CLG, Runners Up in the Population 1,000-2,000 category



Pullough Village, Runners up in the Community Resilience Category, with Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. Tony McCormack, Cllr. John Clendennen and Council staff.

SUPPORTING MORE WOMEN FOR LOCAL ELECTION IN OFFALY PROGRAMME

The Programme for Government "Our Shared Future", highlights the need for greater diversity and gender equality in local government. The "Supporting More Women for Local Election in Offaly" Programme aims to encourage the participation of women in the 2024 Local Elections and to improve the level of female representation on Offaly County Council and in political activity in Offaly in the years ahead. Offaly



County Council acknowledges the funding received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to encourage participation in this key area. Offaly County Council has partnered with Women for Election to deliver the Supporting More Women for Local Election in Offaly Programme. The Programme raises a greater awareness of the need for gender equality and provides supports and training programmes to engage and encourage women in all their diversity from across the county to consider getting involved in politics and run for the 2024 Local Elections. As part of a general awareness campaign aimed at promoting and encouraging increased participation of women and diversity in the 2024 local elections a video has been prepared and can be viewed on www.offaly.ie.



The program was launched in Tullamore on Tuesday the 18th of October by Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Peter Burke. Minister Burke and

Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Pippa Hackett, both took part in panel discussions at the event alongside Cllr. Clare Claffey, Cllr. Yemi Adenuga (Meath CoCo), Cllr. Angela Feeney (Kildare CoCo) and Marguerite O’Loughlin (FF National Women's and Equality officer).

A series of training events took place in October and November. An *Introduction to Politics* workshop was held online on the 19th of October, and in-person in Tullamore on the evening of 26th of October. The workshops offered a fantastic opportunity for women in Offaly to learn more about Irish politics including the local and national political structures. The programme will continue into 2023.

TIDY TOWNS NETWORK

This network is in place since 2011 and is a collaborative project of the Community and Heritage sections of OCC. The Tidy Towns competition was held virtually in 2021 but was back to its normal format in 2022, with a closing date

of 20th May 2022. Twenty one groups from Offaly registered in 2022. It is hoped that Tidy Towns Network meetings will resume again in 2023 to build on the great success achieved by Offaly groups in recent years.

DISABILITY PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS FUND

The Disability Participation and Awareness Fund was announced by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in October 2021 and it is due for completion in March 2023.

This is a new funding scheme which is available to Local Authorities. The purpose of the DPAF Fund is:

1. to provide funding for Local Authorities across Ireland to support the participation of people with disabilities in local activities,
2. to help remove barriers to community involvement and
3. to support the promotion and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in communities.

On 15 December 2021 Offaly County Council was allocated a grant of €75,000 for a number of measures. A Grant Agreement was signed with the Department setting out the terms and conditions. During 2022 a number of sections in Offaly County Council engaged with Offaly Disability & Equality Network (ODEN) to devise a number of projects which raised awareness of disability issues in Offaly. Following consultation and roll out of a

questionnaire ODEN also produced a report called 'Accessible Offaly' which asked disabled people to tell us about their experience of access and being part of the community in Offaly. The report will be publicly launched in 2023.

ARTS SERVICE

Offaly County Council's Arts Office is responsible 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 office 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.

2022 - KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

ARTS PROGRAMMING

YOUTH ARTS

2022 saw the start of the implementation of the research report '*The Makings: Fostering Youth Creativity*', which examined 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. Findings from '*The Makings: Fostering Youth Creativity*', will inform the next Arts Strategy, due to commence end 2022 and into 2023.

YOUTH ARTS COMMISSIONS

In direct response to the findings of *The Makings - Fostering Youth Creativity*, the Arts Office developed a Youth Arts Commission which ran from 2021-2022. The initiative - *Making it with Nature* was a youth led exploration of our understanding and relationship with nature and biodiversity, led by artist Caroline Conway, a presentation of which was held at Birr Theatre and Arts Centre. In 2022 a new call was made for artists to work with youth groups and communities to develop a number of projects that will enable engagement between professional artists and young people (13+) facilitated by youth organisations, youth leaders and schools. The goal being to build secure relationships with relevant partners for the development of Youth Arts in the county, the voice of the young people is priority. The projects will run into 2023.

HULLABALOO! OFFALY'S CHILDREN'S ARTS FESTIVAL

Hullabaloo! Children's Arts Festival came back into our venues with an extravaganza of creativity, art making and fun experiences. Now, in its 16th year, Hullabaloo! Offaly's dedicated arts festival for children under 12 ran in November in Birr, Clara, Edenderry and Tullamore. 'Hullabaloo!' is all about Creativity with workshops and family performances to stimulate curiosity and originality bringing the best artist facilitators from all across Ireland. Imaginations are ignited and talents shine at Hullabaloo! Whilst children have fun and experience a miscellany of high-quality creative enterprise.



With a monster 83 events in this jam-packed programme, there was something for everyone from screen printing, juggling, mosaics, writing, drama and paperfolding/origami to music, abstract art, drawing, hip-hop dance, finger puppets, and painting with wax. Seven family events across a breadth of art-forms from circus, film, music, theatre and puppetry were made available to audiences with a focus on inclusion in the programme,

with performances that would reach as many and wide an audience as possible, programmed for the four towns. A specially curated programme of events was put together for Tullamore audiences in advance of the much-anticipated opening of Esker Arts Centre.

MINI MOVIES

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

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 that took place between 2021 and 2022. This was 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 Esker Arts. The programme ran throughout the months of March – April, with a number of events taking place in Tullamore, Birr and Lough Boora. Events included *Behind these Walls*,

an incredible projected illumination at Tullamore Gaol, *Music in the Park*, drum circles with Music Generation, and a dance performances by Amy Dolan and her dance troupe. In Lough Boora Parkland the project *New Wilds, Spectacular Weekend* at Lough Boora saw a host of workshops for local schools and community groups and Birr Young Voices, *Soundscapes in Nature*.

The programme also hosted an exhibitions at Aras an Chontae and Tullamore Library, and an installation by artist Joe Caslin at Tullamore train station, working with Tullamore asylum seekers around identity and celebrating connectivity with new communities in the county.



FILMOFFALY

FilmOffaly continued to attract investment from national and international film-makers. The Arts Office **FilmOffaly Award** 2021 winner Mixed Bag Media's film **Personal Space** was premiered at the 2022 OFFline Film festival. The 2021 FilmOffaly award, which was produced in 2022 included a strong mentorship element to the programme, which enabled local film professionals to work under the

mentorship and experience of the production company Mixed Bag Media.



The Arts Office put out a call for a researcher to carry out a **Review of Film in Offaly**. The review which will be conducted 2022-23 will examine the development of film production and the film sector in Offaly to date and will offer recommendations for the potential growth of Film in Offaly going forward. The report will focus on the developments of the film commission FilmOffaly, the Offaly County Council Arts Office and Creative Ireland Film and animation programmes, and other key film activity that takes place in the county. The purpose being to demonstrate the value of Film to the county as a social, cultural and economic driver.

CULTURE NIGHT OFFALY

Culture Night 2022 consisted of 15 large scale events across Offaly at 13 venues with over 90 artists involved. The night attracted almost 800 people with huge engagement on social media with a dedicated campaign on the Culture Night Offaly Facebook reaching 26, 023 people. There were four specially commissioned art works for Culture Night, 'Follow The Leader' by Donlon Dance Company, Tullamore, 'Palimpsest' by Eileen Casey and Emma Barone in Birr, 'The Black River Of Herself' by Shiela and Patrick Hough in Banagher and 'Neart Fir|Strength Of Men' with Eugene O'Brien and guests in Edenderry. In its twelfth year, Culture Night Offaly had a focus on diversity, inclusion and community in the eclectic cultural programme that reflected the cultural exuberance within the county.

The first fully in-person programme delivered since 2019 attracted huge media interest and community participation from all sectors with culturally diverse events and an event with Offaly Travellers proving hugely popular. Two events 'The Black River of Herself' (Banagher) and 'Neart Fir' (Edenderry) made national news several times, being selected as top pick's in The Irish Times, Journal.ie and RTÉ out of 1,700 events nationwide. Culture Night featured prominently across all local media, making front of the Offaly Topic.

As well as fifteen events programmed across the County, the big reveal, was the announcement that Offaly's Lough

Boora would be the location for RTÉ's live National Culture Night broadcast. Tullamore's Tolü Makay opened the show, in an exciting collaboration between RTÉ, Offaly Arts Office and Music Generation Offaly Westmeath. A choir performing during this year's Culture Night celebration featured children from Music Generation Offaly's Tullamore-based partner primary schools in St. Joesph's N.S. and Scoil Eoin Phóil. Joined by members of the Singfest Regional Choirs, this unique intergenerational choir sang the stunning 'Aye' with Tolü Makay, Felispeaks and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.



ARAS EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

The exhibition programme for the Atrium continued to be suspended as a result of Covid 19 restrictions during 2022 and will be reviewed in 2023 with a new policy that will align with the opening of Esker Arts

MUSIC GENERATION OFFALY | WESTMEATH

MGOW has had a very busy 2022. Starting with year with a continuation of online workshops and classes with face-to-face activity where possible, as restrictions eased, there was a renewed focus on resuming groups and sessions in our school and community partners. From guitar classes, to band development, sessions sprang back into action and over summer 2022, there were camps and groups meeting in Edenderry, Tullamore, Clara and Birr. Young musicians took part in a range of festivals and events including the Edenderry Festival, The Old Fort Festival Port Laoise and of course the Fleadh in Mullingar. Singfest was back, our first gathering since 2020, and we were delighted to welcome over 350 young singers to our music tent in the grounds of Belvedere House. We were also delighted to show-case some of our young singer songwriters in a unique 'gig' when they had the chance to perform alongside their musician educators. One of the highlights of 2022 has to have been being part of the live broadcast from Lough Boora as part of this year's Culture Night activities. In order to take part, a new, intergenerational choir was pulled together and over the course of 4 rehearsals participants learnt, perfected and enjoyed spending time together before our first outing to

a rehearsal at RTÉ's studio 1 in Dublin and of course the broadcast itself from Lough Boora. It was a wonderful opportunity for families and friends to enjoy singing again, and a unique opportunity for generations to sing together. The icing on the cake was getting to sing such a lovely song with Tolu and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.



CREATIVE PLACES EDENDERRY

The Arts Office in collaboration with the national charitable agency, Creative Lives continued to develop the ambitious three-year funding stream led by Creative Lives in partnership with Offaly County Council



Arts Office and Edenderry Municipal Council. This ground up developmental project has the potential to galvanise

and transform the creative and cultural scene in Edenderry. The project includes 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.

In 2022 the programme continued to work with local artists and community groups with the project coordinator stating that one of the strong messages that had emerged from the conversations with the local community is how much they value their own local artists. One such initiative that supported local artists was the 'Dancing Shoes' project, which was able to support a number of dancers from Offaly and farther afield to offer dance workshops to all ages. The workshops offered free of charge. Following these workshops there have already been two new dance classes that have been set up in the town by local dancers. Creative Lives also continued to work with existing initiatives such as the Edenderry Festival and Hullabaloo Festival to collaborate on opportunities for artists and creative engagement.

ARTS OFFICE SUPPORTS

ARTS ACT GRANTS

Sixteen 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 2022, Offaly County Council provided financial assistance, advice and promotional assistance to; Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival, OFFline Film Festival, Traditude, Tullamore International Summer Organ Series, Scripts, Birr Festival of Music and Voice, Tullamore Trad Fest and That Beats Banagher. The Arts Office also lead-out with other festivals such as Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival in partnership with Birr Theatre and Arts Centre.

ARTS IN HEALTH

Offaly County Council Arts Office continued to support Anam Beo, Offaly's Arts and Health organization, which promotes arts inclusion through the delivery of comprehensive arts projects for older people in community and care settings. In 2022 *Conversations On Your Doorstep* projects continued to adapt and evolve to suit individuals and groups, to include, *This is Me*, *Music Conversations from Your Chair*, *Occasions* and more. While the ongoing HSE care setting lockdowns are challenging, the artists were able to collect audio recordings, drawings, collages, stories and written testimonials from residents with the help of key staff in Riada House, Tullamore, Birr Community and Nursing Unit and Ballycumber Active Age Group. Projects such as *The Dinner Club* and *7* have also been showcased at international film festivals and Birr Offline Film Festival.

Still Lives, Still Alive is an ongoing project with Photographic Artist Veronica Nicholson & five members of Tullamore Camera Club. This body of work collectively explored the participant's surroundings in the everyday. Their group work *Cornucopia* was donated to residents at Ofalia House in Edenderry with a presentation of their work. Their success was celebrated with a supporting



booklet, publication, exhibition at Edenderry library and a town centre billboard during Bealtaine and the summer. Another project A Town Reads Mitchell used poems from *The Living Chalice* by Susan Langstaff Mitchell (1866-1926). This was a celebratory cultural & community arts experience supported by Offaly County Council's Creative Ireland Programme. The subsequent poetry trail panels in the surrounding urban area of Birr are a legacy to the social engagements where local townspeople were recorded as they experienced Mitchell's poems.

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, Lough Boora Sculpture Park.

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 2022. 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 2022 the arts office continued to provide assistance to professional artists from and living in Offaly. Nineteen awards designed to support the development of artist's professional practice were awarded to artists.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING FOR ARTISTS

The Arts Office continue to provide a number of online supports through training opportunities for artists including opportunities provided by external professional agencies such as Visual Artist Ireland. Other supports include the Association of Local Authority Arts Officers collaborating with the Arts Council on, Platform 31 which is a national opportunity that supports an artist from each county to develop their practice in new ways, while be part of a collective of peer practitioners, advisors and mentors. Platform 31 2022 was awarded to Offaly's published writer Ian Maleney.

BIRR WRITERS RESIDENCY

The continuation of the successful annual partnership with the St Brendan's House (Tin Jug Studio) in Birr saw five writers awarded with the writers residency in 2022, that

included one extra award for a writer to work in schools through Irish as part of their residency.

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 explores 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.

BIRR THEATRE & 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. During the early part of 2022 Birr Theatre & Art Centre continued to face

challenges as a consequence of Covid-19, but rose to the challenge taking care to maintain their presence to their audience, while supporting local artists on the ground. Offaly County Council provided increased funding of €45,000.00 to Birr Theatre and Arts Centre in 2022.

ESKER ARTS CENTRE

The new art centre project for Tullamore continued to make great progress throughout 2022. The development of the new art centre 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. Esker Arts is now due to be completed and opened end 2022- early 2023.

The Arts Office continued to assess best practice operational and planning options for the Art Centre and will work closely in terms of strategic development with the new artistic director upon opening.

LOUGH BOORA SCULPTURE PARK

In 2022, 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 2022 an online seminar took place at the end of May, registering over 240 people for the event, that included national and international speakers across the arts, tourism and business, presenting a film of local participants who had engaged in artist workshops, expressing their own views on the future potential of Lough Boora Sculpture Park.

The seminar was the culmination of work being carried out by a partnership between Offaly County Council, Mayo County Council's Arts Office and Visual Artists Ireland, funded by the Arts Council under their Invitation to Collaboration funding stream. The purpose being to explore the intersection between art in the landscape, culture, environment, tourism and social engagement. The research debates the multi-dimensional opportunities across various sectors and shares knowledge from local, national, and international examples of potential and explores co-collaborative ways of working that can inform future initiatives in Ireland and beyond. The Arts Office will continue this exploration following receipt of continuation funding from the Arts Council for this project for 2023.

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 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.

2022 saw Offaly SP secure over half a million (€582,508) in funding to deliver a range of inclusive measures to increase and sustain participation in sport in Offaly. Covid19 did affect delivery of our activities in quarter 1 of the year; however following the lifting of restrictions in March 2022, the work of the Sports Partnership quickly returned to pre pandemic levels and more.

2022 also saw the staff team at Offaly SP increase from

five to six. Eamonn Henry, Olivia Murphy, Jean Brady and Denise Coghill continued in their respective roles of Coordinator, Administrator, Sports Inclusion Development Officer and Community Sports Development Officer. In June 2022, Liam O Reilly joined the staff team as the ACE Coordinator; while Dermot Egan, following his reappointment to the position continued in the role of Healthy Offaly Coordinator.



Cllr Robert Mc Dermott, Chair Offaly Sports Partnership pictured with the staff team of Offaly Sports Partnership

L-R: Olivia Murphy, Dermot Egan, Denise Coghill, Cllr Robert Mc Dermott, Jean Brady, Eamonn Henry, Liam O Reilly

Key activities delivered throughout 2022 include: -

- the re-establishment of our integration through sports programmes after a two year Covid19 induced hiatus. 10 programmes were delivered supporting the participation of people from an ethnic minority background in sport and physical activity. Two programmes were delivered to support the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the

sporting community in Offaly. 2022 also saw the delivery of an Africa Day athletics event in the Tullamore Harriers supported by Irish Aid; and the re-launch of the inter county Diversity Games events in the TUS Athlone indoor arena. 950 children and young people participated on these programmes with 50% of the participants across the two events being children of an ethnic minority background



- the re-establishment of our sports inclusion (Jean Brady) and community sports (Denise Coghill) development programmes after a two year Covid19 induced hiatus. On the sports inclusion side, 20 programmes designed to increase the participation of people with disabilities were delivered reaching 750 people. 15 programmes were delivered in the area of community sports development catering for 350 people





- the delivery of Offaly SP's inaugural women in sport week in March; and HER Outdoors week in August; alongside a variety of other women in sport programmes. 700 women and girls participated across the range of events delivered as part of the women in sport week; while a further 200 women and girls participated in the HER Outdoors week which had a focus on canoeing and kayaking along the Grand Canal in Offaly

- the ACE (Assisting Children Excel) programme, coordinated by Liam O Reilly, commenced delivery in September. 21 schools were supported to avail of a SPORTSHALL Athletics programme with 3,258 primary school pupils participating on the programme
- club development and Covid19 return to sport funding supports for 53 clubs and organisations totalling €71,278
- online and in person education and training opportunities including 12 safeguarding training (child protection) programmes for 150 volunteers; two sports first aid programmes for 20 volunteers; community coaching and sports leadership for 10 and 25 young people respectively

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

- deliver community coaching and sports leadership programmes for young people
- continue to support the work of the Daingean community sports hub, first established in 2021



- establish a new community sports hub in Mucklagh
- support the participation of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity through the provision

of all ability equipment for schools and clubs / organisations in the county

Funding secured through Healthy Ireland via the Laois / Offaly Childrens & Young Persons Services Committee saw Offaly SP secure €7,500 to coordinate delivery of 1:1 physical activity support programmes for 26 children and young people with disabilities.

Many thanks to our new management committee, the various funders and our numerous tutors for their work in ensuring sport and physical activity came back with a bang to Offaly in 2022.

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 2022 Offaly County Fire and Rescue Service were alerted to 547 incidents, this consisted of 299 fire incidents and 248 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 in the early part of the year. The Section 26 Fire and Emergency plan formed the basis for the Fire Service work program 2022. The 2022 budget of €3.2 million maintained the Fire Service.

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 2020 and 2021 and in limited use of Tullamore BA Training Centre to facilitate Breathing Apparatus Training during that period. 2022 saw the full resumption of the Fire Service Training Program

EQUIPMENT & 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 was obtained in 2022 from the National Directorate for the provision of a new thermal imaging cameras and in addition, €30,000 was received in 2022 from the National Directorate for the provision of replacement breathing apparatus sets and cylinders.

The site which has been identified for a new Fire Station in Clara is located in Raheen. In 2022 the Fire Services engaged with our Housing section who are developing the lands adjoining the proposed fire station.

Offaly Fire Service has finalised the preliminary design and cost plan for a new station at this site and continues to

engage with the National Directorate of Fire and Emergency Management for funding.

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. Our new Training and Development Centre in Tullamore advanced to the Public Consultation phase and a successful Part 8 planning application was submitted to the Council. A detailed design and cost plan was submitted to the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management during the year.

FIRE PREVENTION AND BUILDING CONTROL

Offaly County Council Fire Service assessed 44 Fire Safety Certificate applications. The Fire Service also dealt with license applications. In total 78 fire safety inspections of premises took place.

Offaly Fire service has have 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 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 2022 there were 315 new buildings notified on commencement notices with 45 building inspected, which represents 14% of new buildings notified to the local authority

During 2022 Offaly County Council Fire and Rescue Service was awarded the 'ISO 9001 Quality Management System' accreditation by NSAI. ISO 9001 is the world's foremost quality management standard, used by hundreds of thousands of organisations in over 170 countries around the globe. It sets out the essential requirements for a practical and effective quality management system which is, in essence, a system for minimising risk. ISO 9001 certification helps us to continually monitor and manage quality, identify areas for improvement, and provides a framework for improving our processes and procedures

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 participated in 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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

During 2022 Offaly County Council Fire and Rescue Service was awarded the 'ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Management System' accreditation, which is the world's first international standard for OH&S. ISO45001 aims to provide a safe and healthy workplace for our staff, visitors to our fire stations, contractors, and other parties with whom we interact. It provides a framework which allows us to continually improve our OH&S performance.

In achieving ISO 45001 certification, Offaly County Fire and Rescue Service is being officially recognised by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) for demonstrating a high-quality OH&S management system.

OFFALY CIVIL DEFENCE REPORT 2022

Following the Covid 19 pandemic 2022 the emphasis was placed on retention and certification of current Volunteers to meet the Civil Defence Minimum Training Standards (MTS) for operational deployment. A volunteer recruitment day was held in October 2022 which resulted in a good response with six new volunteers being recruited and becoming involved in a number of training sessions over the winter months. These new recruits have now progressed to join the team here in Offaly.

During 2022 Offaly Civil Defence provided medical support at over twenty community events across the County such

as athletic events, walks and trials in the Slieve blooms, Halloween activities in Edenderry and Christmas markets in Tullamore, to name a few. Offaly Civil Defence also received funding from the dormant accounts fund for a new support vehicle.

Regional support was also provided at the Electric Picnic Festival and at the National Ploughing Championships in Laois along with attending two training days in the Slieve Blooms with the National Ambulance Service. Offaly Civil Defence and Offaly Fire Service also held an open day and demonstrations for transition year students.



In November, the national Civil Defence organisation was recognised for its contribution during the Covid 19

pandemic with a specially commissioned medal presented to Civil Defence Volunteers by the Former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence Simon Coveney T.D.

Due to the numbers involved in the Covid Response nationally, each County held a local ceremony also. Offaly hosted an event where a number of Covid recognition medals were presented along with certificates and Long Service Medals for ten, twenty ,thirty, and forty years of service to the Organisation.

2022 has brought a new change and direction to Offaly Civil Defence and with the continued support of all involved and the implementation of the 'Towards 2030 Civil Defence Policy' Offaly County Council will play its part in the future development of the organisation and continue to support the Principal Response Agencies in the years ahead.



CLIMATE ACTION, ENVIRONMENT, WATER & TRANSPORTATION SPC

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

CLIMATE ACTION

CLIMATE CHANGE

Offaly County Council have commenced preparatory work associated with the statutory Local Authority Climate Action Plan as set out in legislation by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. This will be a 5 year plan which will set a roadmap for the

organization taking decisive action to reduce our emissions by 51% while and increasing increasing energy efficiency to 50% by 2030 from a 2018 baseline level, and reaching net zero by 2050. The Climate Action Plan will follow statutory plan making processes involving Stage 1 Initiation i.e. stakeholder engagement and building the

evidence base, Stage 2 Draft Plan i.e. publication, public consultation and collating submissions and finally Stage 3 Completion i.e. addressing submissions, adoption of the draft plan and final publication. It is envisaged that the draft plan will go before the elected members for adoption in late 2023.

Offaly County Council continue to implement our Climate Change Adaptation Strategy adopted in 2019. The purpose of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy is to ensure a proper comprehension of the key risks and vulnerabilities of climate change, ensuring that climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed into all plans and policies and integrated into all operations and functions of Offaly County Council. Significant progress is being made across a range of our 88 actions contained within the CCAS and reported upon annually.

In accordance with the strategy, a Climate Change Adaptation Steering Group with representatives from across key functions of Offaly County Council was set up in 2020 to ensure the successful implementation of the actions of the Offaly Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and to report on progress. The Group continues to meet monthly to manage and oversee the effective mainstreaming of adaptation measures into all plans, programmes, strategies and policies of Offaly County Council.

Specific training was made available for members of the Climate Action Team in 2022 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, EV infrastructure, PV panels, building retrofits to biodiversity and paperless offices. These projects are being carried out by a number of different sections throughout the organisation.

ENVIRONMENT

WASTE MANAGEMENT

DERRYCLURE LANDFILL

The aftercare costs of the landfill continue to be a financial burden on the Council. To reduce costs, Environment carried out feasibility studies of alternative on site technologies for the treatment of leachate and gas, this study determined the current system of treating the leachate off site and flaring of the landfill gas were the most cost effective treatment methods. However, looking to the future a full review of the activities at the landfill needs to take place in order to consider costs and opportunities associated with changes overtime, treatment methodologies available, degrading gas quality and quantity, wear and tear on installed systems etc.

RECYCLING FACILITIES

There are currently 38 bring banks in the County for glass, aluminium & steel cans recycling on both private and public sites and we continue to pay for the recycling of the glass by the service provider, Glassco Ltd., as per the tender agreement of €17.90 per tonne. Offaly receives an income from Glassco of €130 per tonne for the aluminium cans and €55 per tonne for the steel cans. For 2022, OCC received an income of €5,521 and paid Glassco €30,163 for the same period. Offaly CoCo receives an income for textiles from Coppertale at €305/tonne and for 2022, an income of €5,358 was received.

CIVIC AMENITY SITES

The contract to operate and manage 3 Civic Amenity Sites at Birr, Derryclure and Edenderry was awarded to Oxigen in May 2022 for an initial period of 2 years. These sites 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. The gate fees of these facilities are retained by the contractor under the terms of the current service agreement

EASTERN MIDLANDS REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015-2022

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. The current Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2022 was launched on the 14th May 2015. Offaly County Council staff work with our Regional colleagues to implement the policies of the plan. A new Waste Management Plan is being drafted for the entire Country, called the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy – NWMP, consultation will begin once the final draft of the plan is available.

WASTE ENFORCEMENT

OCC Environment Section continue to investigate all illegal waste activities and instigate legal proceedings appropriate. Inspections and audits of the operations of the 57 Waste Collection Permit holders and the 18 Waste Facility Permit Holders in the functional area are ongoing.

In 2022, Environment initiated 10 prosecutions against individuals under the Waste Management Act, 1996 for illegal dumping and/or storage of waste. All those taken to court were successful.

From January to December 2022 inclusive, Environment Section received 903 environmental complaints. All were investigated in a timely manner and resolved where possible.

Complaint Category	Number
Air Pollution (Dust/odour/emissions)	20
Litter pollution (fly tipping/casual litter/litter on property)	600
Waste (dumping/burning/unauthorised sites)	89
Noise (community/commercial/industrial)	28
Control of Horses	15
Control of Dogs	124
Water Quality	27

LITTER PICKS

In 2022, Offaly County Council has supported the collection and disposal of 281no. Litter picks by members

of the public. These collections in total weighed 27 tonnes.

ANTI-DUMPING INITIATIVE

An application was made to the DECC for funding under the Anti-Dumping and OCC received €79,000. Projects which received grant funding included clean ups on the Edenderry- Rathangan Road (joint project with Kildare County Council/Ard in Geashill/Monasteroris in Edenderry. Under this funding, solar compaction litter bins were also purchased which were distributed to the areas. In total, 10 bins have been distributed which have been very successful. The bins were installed at the following locations:

- Ferbane, Heritage Centre
- Crinkle Village
- Birr, Emmet Square
- Mountbolus Park
- Clara, Centra
- Tullamore – Millenium Plaza and O’Connor Square
- Edenderry, JKL Street x 2 and Main Street

An extensive environmental awareness campaign was also undertaken to address issues such as littering, dog fouling, dashboard dining and bonfires.

ANTI-LITTER ANTI-GRAFFITI GRANT

Offaly County Council received an allocation of €16,000 for 2022 from DECC. Projects were co funded by OCC at a ratio DECC 70: OCC 30. Therefore, OCC contributed in the region of €7000 towards the projects. The claim and projects for this grant were submitted by 4th November.

GREEN SCHOOLS AWARENESS PROGRAMME

Offaly County Council continues to support the Green Schools Programme by frequent visits to the schools, facilitating free workshops to the schools, arranging the annual teacher training seminar as well as making a financial contribution to the schools for their environmental projects. The annual Green Schools Seminar for 2022 was held on 10 October jointly with Westmeath, Laois and Kildare CoCo.

Offaly funded a fast fashion initiative in 2022 with the Rediscovery Centre in Dublin. Secondary schools all over Ireland were invited to enter a competition to design and produce a sustainable fashion item. An Offaly school, Gallen Community School, Ferbane was shortlisted as a finalist in March 2023; however were unfortunately unsuccessful.

PROTECTION OF NATURAL WATERS WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE WATER QUALITY

Environment have commenced implementing the objectives of Water Framework Directive as set out in the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027. Roles undertaken in this work area include the co-ordination of sampling for the EPA's national monitoring program in Co. Offaly, the enforcement of Section 4 licences for discharges to surface waters and the investigation of complaints relating to a range of water linked issues. Inspections are also undertaken across various sectors including domestic septic tank inspections,

agricultural inspection and catchment assessments where waterbodies are not achieving Good Status.

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.

The requirements of the 3rd cycle, River Basin Management Plan that was adopted this year places a greater onus on OCC to meet regulatory requirements as set out in the Plan. This will require a greater input from Environment staff to meet our commitments under the Water Framework Directive and River Basin management Plan 2022-2027.

CATCHMENT FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES (CFRAM)

On 3 May 2018, Minister of State with special responsibility for the Office of Public Works (OPW) and Flood Relief, Kevin Moran T.D. published 29 Flood Risk Management Plans to address flood risk in Ireland. The CFRAM Programme studied the flood risk for 300 areas or communities in Ireland and concluded that it is possible to provide protection through flood relief schemes to approximately 95% of properties at risk within the assessed areas. Offaly County Council are also discussing a number of schemes under the Minor Flood Mitigation

Works with the Area Engineers.

BURIAL GROUNDS

Cemetery extension works at Kilreaghan and Kilcoursey were completed in 2022. Preliminary investigations for extensions of Cappincur, Cloncrane and Clonmacnoise burial grounds was investigated in 2022. Resources will need to be allocated annually in the coming years to fund the necessary works.

COUNTY VETERINARY SERVICE

FOOD SAFETY SERVICES

Our Veterinary Department is responsible for carrying out official controls functions in all local authority approved and registered food establishments relating to Food Safety Protection, Welfare at slaughter and Disease Control in County Offaly and also via a shared service agreement in County Westmeath. 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 has been extended to 31st December 2023. We continue with a shared service agreement with Westmeath County Council to provide the County Veterinary Service in Westmeath, including Temporary Veterinary Inspectors in abattoirs and support with Control of Dogs and Control of Horses functions.

CONTROL OF DOGS - OFFALY

Number of Dog Licences sold in 2021:	3297
Number of Dog Licences sold in 2022 :	2748

In 2022 we cared for 291 dogs admitted as either 'strays', 'surrenders', or 'seizures' to our Dog Shelter in Cappincur, Tullamore. We successfully rehomed 48 directly from the Dog Shelter, 47 were reclaimed by their owners and 174 were rehomed by our dog welfare charity partners and the remainder spent Christmas in the Dog Shelter.

We experienced a 16 percent increase in dogs entering the Dog Shelter for 2022 over 2021 and this trend is being repeated across the sector in aftermath of the Covid 19 Pandemic. These increases are putting extra pressure on our dog shelter both for space and cost as dogs have to remain with us for longer than previously, and require more care and attention, while we wait for them to be rehomed.

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 enforcement of associated Bye Laws for the Control of Horses the collection of stray horses on public land. Outside regular hours complaints related to control of horses are made to the Garda. In 2022 there were 13 complaints to Offaly Council related to concerns around horses causing nuisance and risk to public, welfare concerns, trespass on private property, investigated by an authorised officer. Fines are issued for offences related to breach of Bye Laws associated with Control of Horses in Offaly when appropriate. The numbers of seized horses either by Local Authority or at Garda request have

remained consistently lower than peak numbers almost a decade ago. Where seized horses cannot be reunited with owner the Local Authority policy is to seek rehoming of these horses.

YEAR NO. OF HORSES SEIZED

Year	No of horses seized
2014	164
2015	101
2016	67
2017	60
2018	16
2019	5
2020	2
2021	4
2022	3

NATIONAL WASTE COLLECTION PERMIT OFFICE (NWCPO)

There are 2,039 waste collection permits on the NWCPO register and 227 applications pending. 328 permits were due for renewal in 2022 and of these 253 review applications were received. There were 168 new applications received in 2022.

HOUSEHOLD KERBSIDE WASTE COLLECTIONS

There are currently 54 (46 active) waste collectors. The NWCPO continues the assessment of applications for household kerbside waste collections, including on-line 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 successfully retained the certification this year.

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.

WASTE ACTION PLAN FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

“A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy” was launched on the 4th of September 2020. 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. Any enhancement of the office will be subject to the approval of the PSROG and appropriate governance mechanisms.

WATER SERVICES

IRISH WATER SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA)

The Framework for the Future Delivery of Water Services, published in June 2022, was developed through a process of engagement between the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Irish Water, the County and City Management Association (CCMA), Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and Unions.

The subsequent Water Services (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2022 provided for the separation of Irish Water from Ervia. It set out that, as part of the change, Irish Water will be known by its Irish name, Uisce Éireann, from January 2023. Uisce Éireann will assume the necessary control of water services operations and staff, with full accountability for same, on a phased basis during 2023. Discussions are ongoing in relation to a Master Co-operation Agreement and a Service Support Agreement Uisce Éireann which will replace the Service Level Agreement (SLA).

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 most recent EPA Drinking Water Report is awaited but it can be confirmed that the compliance rate in Offaly calculated for 2022 (based on compliance data sent to IW and the EPA) is:

Microbiological = 100%

Chemical = 100%

Indicator = 100%

Overall Compliance = 100%%

Watermain Rehabilitation Works completed in Newtown and on the Clara Road, Tullamore and currently in Portarlinton, Clara, Ferbane, Pollagh and Fahy, Rhode.

Works due to start in 2023 in Clonbullogue and the Green in Clara.

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), Clonbullogue and Shinrone.

There has been a saving of approx. 5,000m³/day since January 2018 in Offaly where average consumption in

January 2018 was 24,839 m³/day compared to 19,500m³/day in 2022.

IW are currently preparing the design for a replacement reservoir at Clonbullogue and considering a replacement reservoir at Walsh Island.

WASTEWATER

There are 14 Wastewater Treatment Plants in Offaly with Discharge Licences serving agglomerations with populations greater than 500. Meeting the stringent limit values on these licences is challenging. 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.

Consulting Engineers have been engaged for Birr, Shinrone, Cloghan & Daingean. They will examine the existing plants and come up with proposals to treat storm water via holding tanks or reed beds. Also, a Design Team has been engaged to upgrade the design of the Banagher WWTP.

Significant improvement works have been carried out at the various Plants throughout the County, especially with regard to Health and Safety. Also, Aeration Tanks & Clarifiers were cleaned leading to a better final effluent quality and also a reduction in the running costs of the Plants.

Tullamore Drainage Area Plan has been completed and the first project to be delivered from the Plan, is the upgrade of the twin siphons at the Grand Canal combined with the upgrading of 1.2km of sewers in the centre of the town.

Phase 1 of the Tullamore southern interceptor has been designed and now we await a start date from IW.

Edenderry WWTP: IW have appointed Aecom consultant engineers to design an upgrade of the plant to ensure capacity into the future.

Rhode WWTP is included for funding under the Small Town & Villages Programme, this work should commence 2023.

WATER SERVICES CAPITAL SCHEMES

A major upgrade of the Tullamore and Birr Water Supplies approaching completion. Aecom/Jennings O'Donovan appointed Murphy Processing Engineering to Design and Build the project. The contract which involves the major upgrade of the Ardan, Clonaslee and Birr Water Treatment Processes, commenced in November 2018 and is currently virtually complete.

Under Irish Water's Disinfection programme, works are virtually complete at Toberdaly WTP, Edenderry WTP, Clonbullogue WTP, Walsh Island WTP and Coolderry WTP. Construction works have been completed on Geashill WTP and is ongoing in Holmshill WTPs.

Initial surveys have been carried out at Daingean WTP and Kilcormac WTP and Glasshouse WTP.

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 2023, we will continue 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.

RURAL WATER PROGRAMME SUBSIDIES

Annual Group Water Scheme Subsidy payments totalling €1,018,504 have been made to 16 no. Group Water Schemes which supply a combined total of 4,436 no.

domestic customers. Annual subsidies amounted to €411,105.00 and advance subsidies totalled €607,369. The GWS Subsidies help to support group water scheme to operate to their full potential and deliver potable water to their customers.

RURAL WATER PROGRAMME (RWP) 2019 - 2022 CAPITAL WORKS

Circular L1/19 was received from the Department on 8th February, 2019 inviting Local Authorities to bid on a priority scheme & project basis, for grant assistance under the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2019- 2022.

The objective for this funding is to provide enhanced funding certainty for priority investment needs to support the implementation of proper planning and sustainable development in rural areas. It is to assist in meeting the requirements of the Drinking Water Directive in relation to rural water supplies and to support the delivery of measures identified in the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 – 2022 to meet the needs of the Water Framework Directive.

The total allocation to the successful projects under the programme is €1,839,625.00 for 19 projects. Two extra projects have been added to the programme during its lifetime. Fifteen of these projects are completed and the other six are at various stages of progress with all projects expected to be completed in 2022. The circular to roll out

the MARWP 2022-24 is due in quarter 4 of 2022.

DOMESTIC WATER AND DOMESTIC WASTE WATER GRANT SCHEMES

Under Measure 8 of the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2019-2022 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. Applicants that have been approved under the terms of the previous scheme are entitled to re-apply under the terms of the new scheme, if they wish, and their existing approval will still apply.

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 and that 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 of 85% of costs up to €3,000.00 and Water Treatment Systems grant of 100% up to €1,000.00.

DOMESTIC WASTE WATER TREATMENT GRANTS

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

- So far, in 2022, under the Domestic Water Grant scheme we have paid 27 grants to a total of €71,296.00 and under the DWWTS Grant Scheme we have paid one grant of €2,797.78.

ROADS SERVICES

In 2022 the Roads and Transport Department of Offaly County Council continued to build on delivering new sustainable infrastructure to promote modal shift across our entire County to Walking, Cycling and Zero Emission Vehicle. There has been and will continue to be targeted investment towards our existing infrastructure in order to maintain, upgrade and expand our existing road networks in order to facilitate growth across our entire County.

Our 2022 Roads program included for the following works;

- Annual 2022 Roads Program
- Active Travel Schemes
- NTA Pathfinder proposal
- Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure
- Grand Canal Greenway Construction
- Edenderry Inner Relief Road Stage 1
- Edenderry Inner Relief Road Stage 2
- Birr Distributor Roads (North)
- Peat Road Pilot Studies/Emergency Peat Road interventions
- PLEEP-Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project

The 2022 grant allocations received from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the Department of Transport (DOT), National Transport Authority (NTA) and The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) are set out below, the figures for 2021 are shown alongside for comparison purposes.

ROAD AND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS RECEIVED IN 2022

Initial Grant Allocations	2021 (€)	2022 (€)
Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)		
National Primary		
Motorway MMaRC Lighting	9,117	9,117
National Secondary Improvement		
Major Scheme N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link	1,000,000	0
Minor Works N62 Crancreagh (Cloghan to Derrinlough)	250,000	150,000
Pavement Scheme N62 Corr Hill	n/a	460,000
Pavement Scheme N52 Ballynacard East & West	450,000	n/a
Pavement Scheme HD28 Pavement Renewals	0	TBC (Q2/Q3)*
HD15 & HD17 Minor Works N52, N62 & N80	0	125,000 **
HD15 & HD17 Minor Works Fencing Retrofit (N52/N62/N80)	0	100,000
Local Authority Support (Improvement)	164,000	160,000
National Secondary Maintenance		

Ordinary Maintenance	129,194	129,194
Route Lighting	86,744	75,900
Winter Maintenance	190,000	190,000
Local Authority Support (Maintenance)	30,700	30,700
Local Authority Support (Winter Maintenance)	10,000	10,000
Greenways	0*** (DOT 2021)	€1,323,000** *
TII Total	€2,319,755	€2,762,911
Department of Transport		
Regional & Local Roads Grants		
Restoration Improvement	5,707,500	6,190,500
Restoration Maintenance	955,000	955,000
Supplementary Restoration Maintenance	682,000	750,500
Discretionary Grant	1,813,500	1,776,500
Bridge Rehabilitation	344,950	366,975
Safety Improvement Works	300,000	297,700
Specific Improvement Grants	900,000	2,275,000.00
Speed Limits	12,000	16500
Former National Roads	300,000	250000
Active Travel	50,893	-

Climate Adaptation	95,404	320763
Training Grant	47,500	47500
Community Involvement Scheme	735,500	368500
Pilot Scheme testing on roads over peat	40,000	800000
PSCI Survey Support	16,000	16000
Drainage Works	446,993	446993
DOT Total	€12,447,240	€14,878,431
National Transport Authority		
Active Travel		
Transport / Mobility Plans: Tullamore	250,000	146,000****
Tullamore Cycle Network Phase 1	500,000	116,000****
Footpath Improvements Package A: Birr & Crinkill	289,000	377,894****
Footpath Improvements Package B: Clara	470,000	192,525****
Edenderry - Hare's Lane	175,000	75,000****
Footpath Improvements Design Package: Banagher & Cloghan	40,000	38,000****
Tullamore - Spollenstown Road	420,000	116,000****
Countywide Pedestrian Crossings	250,000	246,000****
Portarlinton Active Travel Scheme	180,000	173,455****
Safe to Schools Programme - Support	70,000	-

Infrastructure: Frederick Street, Clara		
Low Cost Urban Junction (tightening) Schemes: Edenderry & Birr	145,000	115,000****
Light Segregation Cycling Scheme: Edenderry	75,000	69,034****
Tullamore Urban Greenway Project	575,000	371,000****
EDENDERRY - R402-1 Junction Upgrade	n/a	240,000
TULLAMORE - Collins Lane Junction - Advance Scheme	n/a	200,000
BIRR - Riverside Walk Upgrade/Link	n/a	285,000
RHODE - Pedestrian Crossings & Footpath	n/a	185,000
MUCKLAGH - Brocca Rd - Junction/Path	n/a	200,000
SHINRONE - Cloughjordan Road	n/a	140,000
BALLYCUMBER - Upgrade Footpath Links	n/a	125,000
Offaly County Council Active Travel Office - Staff Costs	n/a	271,000
NTA Active Travel Total	€3,439,000	€3,681,908
Bus Stops in Tullamore & Edenderry	€140,655	€63,374****
NTA Total	€3,579,655	€3,745,282

Roads Budget is as follows:

2022 Initial Roads Budget	
Transport Infrastructure Ireland - National Roads allocation together with Greenways allocation	€2,762,911
Department of Transport	€14,878,431
National Transport Authority	€3,745,282
Offaly County Council (Own Resources)	€2,077,130
Total	€23,463,754

Offaly County Council also allocates €949,500 for Public Lighting and a central management charge (support services) of €3,161,858.

GRAND CANAL GREENWAY

In collaboration with our partner stakeholders in the TII and Waterways Ireland work on delivering the remaining sections of the Grand Canal Greenway are ongoing. It is envisaged that this critical infrastructural corridor will be completed in its entirety in 2023. The following schemes were commenced or delivered in 2022;

- Pollagh to Henseys Bridge section of the Greenway and is due for completion in November (4Km in Length).

Offaly County Council (OCC) has allocated €2,077,130 from own resources. In summary therefore, the 2022 initial

- Link from the Grand Canal Greenway to Killina Presentation Secondary School (380m in length).
- Gorteen to Rathcobican section of Greenway completed in 2022 (4.2Km in Length)



Grand Canal Greenway Pollagh, County Offaly



Link from the Grand Canal Greenway to Killina Presentation Secondary School



The Roads Department of Offaly County Council have been working in partnership with Eir/Easy Go in order to delivery 11 new DC charging points across our County. The proposed scheme is classified as a public private collaboration designed to provide DC charging points across critical nodes on our Roads Infrastructure while also serving our rural communities in order to promote our migration as a County towards Zero Emission transport options.

Offaly County Council secured funding from our partners in the Department of Transports Zero Emission Vehicle Ireland (ZEVI) for the installation of two fast charging points at Aras an Chontae and the Machinery Yard in Tullamore as part of a pilot scheme in 2022. An overall investment facilitated by and in some cases delivered by Offaly County Council of approximately €650,000 has provided a foundation for our County to commence the migration towards Zero Emission vehicles in 2022.



Electrical Vehicle Charging Point at Aras an Chontae

BIRR DISTRIBUTOR ROAD

Contracts have been signed between Offaly County Council and Tobin Consulting Engineers for the provision of Technical Consultancy services for the Design and Construction of the Birr Distributor Road. Design works have now commenced with a view to construction commencing in Q1 of 2024 subject to approvals and funding.

The objective of the proposed Road Scheme is to create a road link between the Tullamore Road (N52) at Woodlands and the Birr to Banagher Road at Cappaneale (R439). This critical link will:

- relieve congestion in Birr Town by providing an alternative to the existing routes through the town.
- provide better access to the national road network for major local industry,
- open up zoned development lands,
- provide improved access to St Brendan's Secondary School,
- allow the tourism potential offered by Birr Castle and the town's historic and unique Georgian town centre to be realized.

EDENDERRY INNER RELIEF ROAD

Stage 1 of the Edenderry Inner Relief Road was delivered by the Edenderry Municipal District Office in 2022. Stage 2 is currently scheduled to commence construction in early 2023.



Aerial View of the Edenderry Inner Relief Road

BIRR SOUTH EASTERN DISTRIBUTOR ROAD

An application for funding to commence Design works on the Birr South Eastern Distributor Road in 2023 was submitted to the Department of Transport for their consideration in Q4 of 2022.

PEAT ROAD PILOT SCHEME

Tender documentation were submitted and approved by the Department of Transport for a full reconstruction of 600m of the R400 in Edenderry in 2022 with a construction start date of Q2 2023.

Due to significant Road Failures on our Roads constructed over Peat subgrades due to the elongated dry spell over the summer of 2022 our colleagues in the Department of Transport approved reassignment of the €800k allocation for Peat Roads to address immediate Health and Safety risks across the County. Due to the scope and severity of the failures the Department also allocated additional funding to be targeted to the worst areas to a maximum additional spend of €1.2million.



Examples of Peat Road Failures that occurred in Q3 2022

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Climate Change & Energy awareness continue to be key areas where we show leadership in both promoting public awareness and in changing mind sets towards energy management. Offaly County Council continues 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. The Roads section continues to implement the goals and actions identified in the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in 2022.

AREAS OF ACTIVITY IN 2022

Areas of Activity	Objectives Delivered in 2022
Road Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 Roads Programme ensuring all TII and DOT grant allocations were used efficiently and economically; • Applied for additional funding where available such as Climate Adaptation and Resilience Works, Active Travel, Outdoor Infrastructure; • Maintained and improved the Road Network making the optimal use of available resources; • Ensured best practice techniques and methodologies are used in road maintenance operations and upgrades; • Continued our programme of upgrading Public Lighting to LED in the interest of energy efficiency; • Continued our bridge rehabilitation programme, develop plans and seek funding for further schemes; • Progressed the Community Involvement Scheme, Local Improvement Scheme and CLAR funded by DOT and DRCD.

Road Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Safety awareness in association with the RSA and Gardai; • Road Safety Initiatives in Offaly; • Road Safety Improvement programme, developed plans and sought funding for further schemes; • Winter Service duties in accordance with Offaly County Councils Winter Service Plan; • Responded to extreme weather events in accordance with Offaly County Councils Severe Weather Plan;
Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Roads Department commenced the delivery of approximately 13 new DC fast Charging EV points across the entire County in 2022. The delivery of this strategically important infrastructure has been realised by direct delivery by Offaly County Council and a public private participation in collaboration with EIR/Easy Go.
Roads Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offaly as an important transport link in the midlands progressing the following projects by engagement with TII, DOT and relevant stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link route selection, Public consultation; - N62 Crancreagh peat replacement Minor Works - Edenderry Town Inner Relief Road stage 1 is now open to traffic. Edenderry Town Inner Relief Road Stage 2 tender documentation completed in 2022 with a view towards construction in 2023; - Birr Distributor Road R439 Banagher Road to N52 Tullamore Road specific road improvement scheme; - Birr South Eastern Distributor Road;
Roads Sustainable Transport Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NTA Active Travel Measures to improve walking and cycling infrastructure in the County; • NTA Safer Route to school Programme;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian & cyclist accommodation on our road network; • Development of the Offaly Greenway off road pedestrian & cyclist routes; • Climate Change Adaptation measures to address the impact of climate change on the road network; • New Wheelchair Accessible Bus Stops Tullamore & Edenderry on behalf of the NTA.
Machinery Yard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operated and maintained the fleet in a safe and efficient manner; • Implemented the fleet replacement plan and review fleet energy efficiency; • Produced a Decarbonisation Strategy for the Machinery Yard which include a Draft plan towards the introduction of Zero Emission Vehicles into our Corporate Fleet

All works in 2022 were delivered in 2022 with a view to assisting in reducing our Carbon Emission footprint where possible. This reduction is sometimes be achieved by changing the way in which we do our works or the materials which we use to deliver our schemes. The following is a list of changes implemented in 2022 which will be strengthened and built upon in 2023 and onwards;

- Construction of Sustainable, Safe, Green Infrastructure to promote Modal Shift towards Walking and Cycling via our Greenway funding/Active Travel Funding.
- Roll out of Zero Emission Vehicle Fast Charging points across the County.
- Decarbonisation of the Corporate Fleet

- Trial use of Zero Emission Road Marking Materials
- Utilisation of new Technologies such as the 2 new Velocity Patching Units to decrease our Carbon Footprint when repairing Road Failures.
- PLEEP-Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project

ROAD SAFETY 2022

As part of the 2022 Roads program Offaly County Council in collaboration with all our stakeholder partners commenced the review and updating of our counties Road Safety Plan. A darft report was completed in 2022 and is to be approved in Q2 of 2023.

KEY ACTIONS 2023

The Roads and Transportation Department of Offaly County Council aim to build upon the many positive outcomes from 2022. It is anticipated that the roads budget for 2023 will be similar to 2022 for both National and Non National Roads. Offaly County Council will continue to engage with the TII, DOT and NTA to secure significant investment for our National, Regional and Local Roads including urban walking and cycling improvements and rural linkages. A number of schemes that the Road Section wish to progress in 2023 to various stages of approval and funding include:

- Edenderry Inner Relief Road Phase 2;
- R400 Peat Roads Pilot Project;
- N62 Cloghan to Kennedys Cross peat replacement and

- road improvement TII Minor Works Scheme;
- Birr Distributor Road – R439 Banagher Road to N52 Tullamore Road specific road improvement Scheme, complete the scheme design and formulate Tender Documentation.
- Birr South Eastern Distributor Road – submission to the Department for funding has been completed and it is hoped to appoint Technical Consultancy Services for this scheme in 2023.
- Progress the Grand Canal Greenway to completion;
- Continue to work with the NTA to deliver Active Travel and Safer Route to Schools schemes in Offaly;
- Safety schemes on National and Non National Road Network;
- Public Lighting upgrades to LEDs through the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project;
- Pedestrian Crossings upgrade works including lights to LEDs;
- Engage with DOT following the pilot scheme for peat on bog roads to inform applications for strategic grants and identify additional funding sources for county road maintenance;
- Winter service and severe weather response in accordance with the 2022 - 2023 plans;
- Continue to promote investment and to deliver targeted Electric Vehicle Infrastructure delivery across our Local Authority owned sites;
- Change the methodologies, materials and approaches used to deliver the roads program with a view to Carbon reduction;
- Progress the community involvement scheme, local improvement scheme and Clár funded by DOT and DRCD;

LAND USE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPC

SPC Chair	Eamon Dooley MCC	Director Of Services	Stephane Duclot / Ann Dillon
Members	Sectoral	PLANNING:	
Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick Cllr. Frank Moran Cllr. Tony McCormack Cllr. John Clendennen Cllr. Sean O'Brien Cllr. John Carroll Cllr. John Leahy	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 / Caroline Dempsey
		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. Following on from 2022, the Planning Department has experienced another demanding year with the knock-on effects of Covid 19 remaining a key issue in terms of the delivery of the various planning functions. While the numbers of planning applications across the various development types has decreased slightly, the overall demand on planning services remains significantly high.

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 *(*This figure includes applications which were invalid)*

Year	Applications	Granted	Refused	Decided
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
2022	682*	481	48	529

EXTENSIONS OF APPROPRIATE PERIOD

Year	Applications	Granted	Refused	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
2022	15	8	6	14

In 2022, the number of planning applications submitted to the Planning Department decreased by approximately 18% - from that of the substantial growth experienced in 2021, following the phasing out of COVID-19 restrictions. Setting aside the 2021 figure, the volume planning applications has continued in an upward since 2015.

In addition, while the number of planning applications was reduced from that of received by the Planning Department 2021, the volume of complex development applications, including large residential, commercial, industrial, and in particular, large scale green renewable energy projects has continued at pace. As in recent years, this trend is likely to be sustained into 2023.

LARGE-SCALE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS (LRD)

In December 2021, the Planning and Development (Amendment) (Large-scale Residential Development) Act 2021 was enacted, replacing the Strategic Housing Development (SHD) process. Under the LRD legislation, planning applications for residential developments for 100 or more housing units or student accommodation including 200 or more bed spaces are required to be submitted to Local Authority. In addition, as part of this LRD process, there is a requirement for a formal LRD meeting to be held with the Applicant and the Planning Department, and for the Planning Authority to issue a LRD Opinion, to the Applicant, stating whether the proposal constitutes a reasonable basis to make an LRD planning application.

In 2022, the Planning Department undertook 3 no. formal LRD meetings with respect to large-scale residential developments in Tullamore Town and consequently issued the required written opinions. It is anticipated that these LRD applications will be submitted to the Planning Department early in 2023.

It is likely that a number of additional LRD meeting requests and applications will be submitted to the Planning Department in 2023.

LEAVE TO APPLY FOR SUBSTITUTE CONSENT & SUBSTITUTE CONSENT

The Planning Department received 3 no. referral requests from An Bord Pleanála (ABP) with respect to Leave to Apply for Substitute Consent (LTAFC) applications in 2022.

These LTAFC applications are for historical industrial-scale peat extraction and associated bog development works throughout the County. As per the legislative requirements, the Planning Authority submitted a formal response to the ABP with respect to these applications.

If the Board grants these LTAFC applications, the Planning Department will then be required to provide a detailed referral response to these Substitute Consent (SC) applications.

VACANT SITES REGISTER

A Vacant Site Register has been established which currently does not include any vacant sites.

The vacant sites register is to be replaced by a vacant land tax, to be collected by revenue. This process commenced in 2022 with the preparation of a Residential Zoned Land Tax map for public consultation in November.

COMPLIANCE / ENFORCEMENT

UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS

- Warning Letters 43
- Enforcement Notices 14

UNPAID DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

- Warning Letters 115
- Enforcement Notices 1

During 2022, 164 new enforcement files were opened in relation to unauthorised developments (63) and unpaid development contributions. (105)

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 and continued through 2022. Work had been ongoing to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and take appropriate action where deemed necessary. Initial examinations in 2021 indicated that short term letting taking up housing stock was not a particularly acute issue for Tullamore.

UNFINISHED HOUSING ESTATES & 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 2023.

Department funding for taking in charge private housing estates was made available in 2016 under the National Taking in Charge Initiative (NTICI) this has been exhausted and no new funding streams are available at present.

LIAISON WITH THE LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

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

PREPARATION OF LOCAL AREA PLANS

During Q3 2022, the draft Birr Local Area Plan was placed on public display, and in Q4 2022 the draft Edenderry Local Area Plan was placed on public display. Both LAPs will be adopted during 2023.

RESIDENTIAL ZONED LAND TAX (RZLT)

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was announced in Central Government's Budget 2022 and was introduced into Part 22A of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 by the Finance Act 2021. The principal purpose of the RZLT is to encourage the timely activation of zoned and serviced

residential development land for housing. In order to implement this tax measure, local authorities were required to undertake mapping to identify lands in-scope for the tax, with provisions allowing those landowners identified as being within the scope to make submissions and appeal. The draft map of these lands was placed on public display 1st November 2022 until 1st January 2023.

OFFALY GREENWAYS

The Grand Canal Greenway from the county boundary at Edenderry to Shannon Harbour moved closer to completion during 2022. The section from Daingean to Edenderry town was completed. Works commenced on a project to move a section of the greenway from the south bank to the less heavily trafficked north bank between Henesey's Bridge and Pullough. The council has sought funding from TII to complete the greenway to Shannon Harbour during 2023 – part 8 planning is in place. Staff from the roads and planning sections are working with Waterways Ireland to get the section from Edenderry town to the county boundary with Kildare and on to Ticknevin, Co. Kildare completed as soon as possible.



Grand Canal Greenway

Council staff (Director of Services Roads & Infrastructure, Senior Planner and an Executive Engineer from the roads section) sit on the overall Grand Canal Greenway steering group with Waterways Ireland, South Dublin Co. Co. and Kildare Co. Co., with the aim of delivering the greenway from the centre of Dublin to Shannon Harbour, a distance of c.130km. Council staff also sit on the sub-groups on (i) Marketing & Interpretation and (ii) Maintenance.

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

Funding for a high quality link from Leabeg to Lough Boora Discovery Park was approved by TII in December 2021, however it was re-allocated on the councils request during 2022. Part 8 planning for this link was approved in November 2022. New funding has since been allocated (Q1 2023) and works will commence in 2023.

Just Transition Funding of €782,500 (exclusive of an additional 15% OCC match funding) was secured in November 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 Lough Boora Discovery Park visitor centre. These upgrades, to a very high standard of sealed surface, were largely completed during 2022 and the final contracts will be completed during 2023. During 2022 the Council applied to the Department of Environment Change & Communications to reassign €241,800 from another aspect of the application (*Midlands Cycling Destination - Offaly*) to carry out further trail upgrades and to cover price inflation and this was agreed by the Department.



Upgraded cycling & walking paths as part of the 'Lough Boora Connections' National Just Transition project carried out in 2022.



Upgraded cycling & walking paths as part of the 'Lough Boora Connections' National Just Transition project carried out in 2022.

2022 than in previous years, due to the council concentrating on delivery and also due to resource constraints. However, the council contributed to Failte Ireland's proposed '*Strategic Trails Network for the Midlands*' as part of its Just Transition Territorial Plan submission. Failte Ireland partnered with Bord na Mona for this aspect and as such envisages that most of the routes would be built on former Bord na Mona industrial peatlands. Key routes put forward by the council in its submission to this scheme are parts of the overall *Midland Cycling Destination – Offaly* network. Funding of €30m was recently announced for this element and the council will work with Failte Ireland and delivery partners to ensure that routes in Offaly form a large part of this project. The overall Failte Ireland package is €68 million and also includes: €25m Amenity Support to Tourism Businesses; €3m for Alternative Low Carbon Accommodation & €10m for Smart Solution Development, all of which can enhance the offer for walking and cycling in Offaly and neighboring counties.

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 with the aim to complete the Grand Canal greenway to Shannon Harbour in particular. This will result in a 71km continuous greenway across the county with a 7km link to the county boundary – Kilbeggan Branch.

MIDLANDS CYCLING DESTINATION - OFFALY

There was less progress on this overarching strategy in



Grand Canal Greenway

scoping document stage with next steps to be a “Phase 0 Strategic Assessment Report” per the TII guidelines.

KILBEGGAN TO MULLINGAR GREENWAY LINK – FEASIBILITY STUDY

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.

During 2022, the progression of this study was taken over by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). The delivery of a route from Ballycommon (Tullamore) to Mullingar, if feasible, would represent a key regional greenway link, potentially linking the Barrow Blueway (Moasterevin / Portarlinton) to the Grand Canal Greenway and the Royal Canal Greenway / Old Rail Trail, both of which form part of the proposed Dublin to Galway Greenway. (Eurovelo Route 2).

REGENERATION

The Council’s Regeneration function moved to a dedicated stand-alone unit, separate to the planning section in August 2022. The planning team assisted with the following key

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 2023, 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 is currently at

regeneration projects in 2022 and these projects will continue in 2023.

- Tullamore Town Centre Regeneration Framework (Tullamore Municipal District lead)
- Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan (Local Enterprise Office lead)
- Banagher Marina Area Masterplan (Regeneration Team lead)
- Ferbane Town Centre Regeneration Project (Regeneration Team lead)
- Shannonbridge, various projects.

TOURISM & AMENITY PROJECTS

KINNITTY & SLIEVE BLOOM MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

On 22nd March, 2021 Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys T.D., announced a €500,000 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) grant for the Kinnitty area. This requires significant match funding of €275,300 from Offaly County Council.

- 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.

This project went out to tender in Q4 2022 and will be progressed in 2023.

- The **'Kinnitty Woods Loop'**, a novice trail (2km) was completed by Coillte in 2022. It represents 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.
- 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. These elements were progressed in 2021/2 and are largely complete.

SLIEVE BLOOM MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

These mountain bike trails, funded under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund programme 2018, part of a €10 million allocation for 4 National Trail Centres across 7 counties, are largely complete as at the end of 2022. The trails system was officially launched by Minister Heather Humphreys in April 2022. The c.80km trail system with loops on both sides of the mountain is attracting significant levels of use.

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.



Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trails

OFFICE OF THE PLANNING REGULATOR REVIEW

The council was selected for the OPR's review programme in March / April 2022. The regulator had completed a pilot review scheme of four local authorities previously. This review took considerable resources during the periods of May-August 2022 and a draft report is likely in Q1 2023.

PLANNING BILL 2023

A draft outline of a Planning and Development Bill was published in December 2022. A bill is to be progressed to

become a complete new Planning and Development Act during 2023. This will present a very major challenge in terms of its implementation over the coming years

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS DEVELOPMENT LEVY ALLOCATIONS 2022

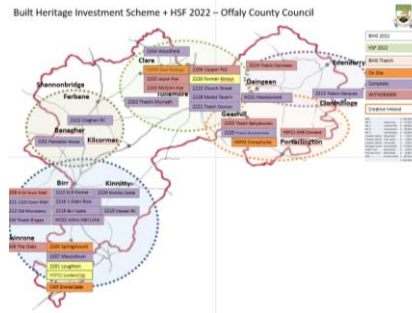
JOB DESCRIPTION	Funds Available €000's
Development contribution income - to be assigned	8,774
Currently assigned:	
Infrastructure	4,943
Amenity	2,265
Quarrying	625
Windfarms	342
Special development contributions	557
Other misc. balances	42
TOTAL	8,774

Development Contributions Receipts and Application of Development Funds for the period of October 2021 to September 2022	
Balance Available October 2021	9,326
Contributions Received Oct. 2021 to Sep. 2022	3,065
Current provisions for levies billed not collected	-3,617
Disbursements Oct. 2021 to Sept. 2022	0
Balance Available September 2022	8,774

ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES 2022

ARCHITECTURE & CONSERVATION

The Architect's Department provides a cross departmental service throughout the County Council, particularly in areas of **Planning, Conservation and Public Realm**. The Architect's Department continues to make a significant contribution to the County Development Plan in the running of the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). This includes the upkeep of the multifaceted database, Section 57 Declarations and all planning permission files related to protected structures. Advice and assistance is also given on a regular basis to owners and community groups regarding proposals for the upkeep or reuse of existing protected structures. Additional projects for planning consist of providing technical advice on large scale planning applications; the production of site specific documents relating to possible future developments.



BUILT HERITAGE INVESTMENT SCHEME €126,400

More applications were received in 2022 for this scheme than any other year and almost 50% more received funding. 20 projects were completed varying from

roof, window and lime render repairs across the county involving significant total spend of €361,702.95 with total grant of **€126,400**.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES FUND

Three projects received funding from the Department and grant allocations involved out, Lowland House (€38k) – window repairs, Tullamore Gaol (€25) - railings and wall repair and Cloneyhurke House (€38k) – arch, steps and render repair. Each project received additional funding towards the end of the year bringing funding to the maximum of €50,000 each, Total HSF 2022 **€150,000**.



CREATIVE IRELAND €15,000

As well as being part of the 5-person team managing the Creative Ireland annual programme, the Architect's Department oversees conservation works to a Folly project with a Creative Ireland allocation of **€10,000** since the publication of the book *Flights of Fancy, Follies Families and Demesnes in County Offaly* in 2017. The project this year consisted of the structural repairs to Bloomfield Mausoleum. The Vernacular Architecture projects **€3,600**, involved historically accurate windows to a former thatched house in Banagher.

Banagher – historically accurate windows



FOLLIES TRUST €3,500



Boomfield Mausoleum structural repairs HSF and Follies Trust

BIRR DESTINATION TOWN €650,000

Working with Birr MD and Heritage Office and Failte Ireland funding. Working with the team on the design and Planning Application by Howley Hayes Cooney for the new entrance to Birr Demesne/The Green link – project to commence on site early 2023.



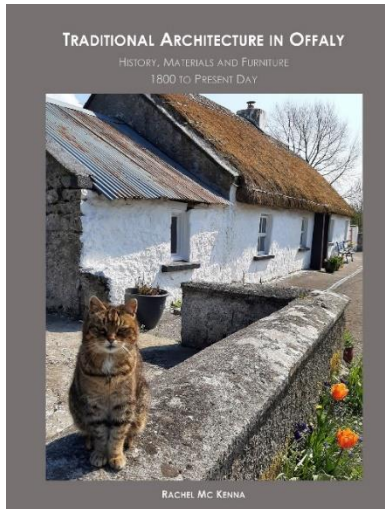
Birr Demesne proposal for new entrance at The Green

BIRR COURTHOUSE

Working with Heritage Office and Birr 2020 regarding uses and plans for future RRDF application.

HERITAGE COUNCIL STEWARDSHIP FUNDING NEW

€15,000 approved for OCC, 4 Offaly projects. Funding includes edits and printing costs for new publication - Traditional Architecture in Offaly by Rachel Mc Kenna, to



Dowry Chest – conserved

printer October 2022, c.286 s. Hawkswood Dowry Chest – repairs €1,300. Lime Workshop Birr Heritage School.



COMMUNITY MONUMENTS FUND €100,000

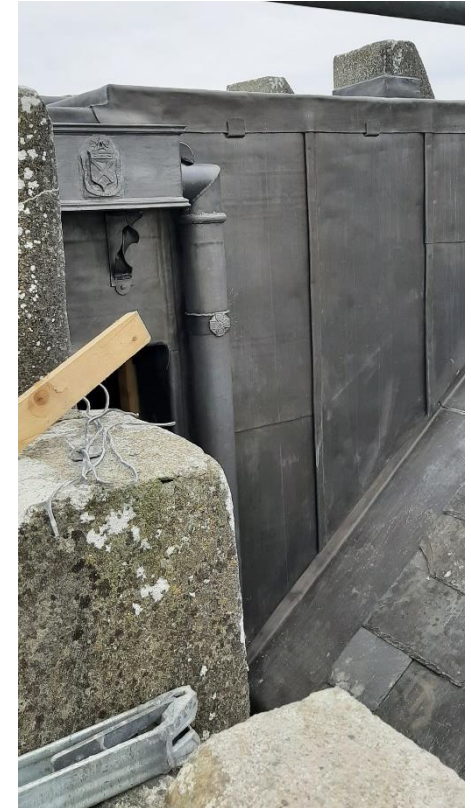
Emmel Castle roof repairs underway to be monitored by Architect, €85,000 funding. Department meeting on site – secured additional €15,000 funding for this project bringing it to the maximum grant of €100,000.

Emmel Castle repairs underway

Emmel Castle roof repairs – on site with Department and Howley Hayes



C



HERITAGE

The **Offaly Heritage Forum** is key to heritage programme delivery in the county and it met four times in 2022.

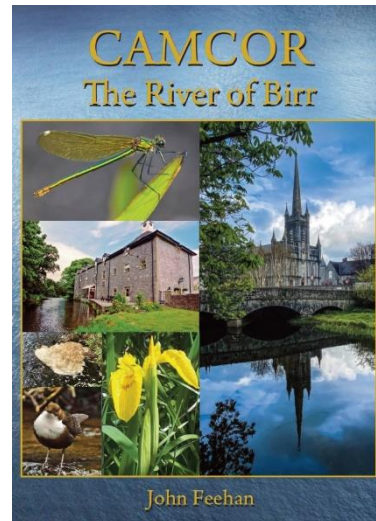
The **Offaly Heritage Plan 2023-27** was prepared during the first half of the year, adopted at the September County Council meeting and launched in November. It will align with the new Heritage Council strategic plan for 2023-27.

HERITAGE COUNCIL HERITAGE PLAN FUNDING OF €37,000

Streetscape projects for O'Connor Square and High Street in Tullamore and Market Square and Castle Street in Birr examining the condition of the facades and usage. This was carried out by Lotts Architecture and Offaly History has done the historical analysis.

Arctron **3D scanning** project - the 3d scans of carved stone, Ardara Bridge and the Glass Furnace near Shinrone have been hosted on Sketchfab online.

A comprehensive and engaging book on the Camcor River has been researched and written by John Feehan and published by Offaly County Council.



OFFALY BIODIVERSITY

LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION FUNDING - €50,000

Planting of a shelter belt, hedge and key demesne trees took place at **Syngefield Demesne** in the autumn to proactively manage the 8ha for biodiversity within the context of the demesne landscape. The woodland has been fenced to allow for regeneration. An event was held for Heritage Week with a walk over of the site led by the heritage officer and John Feehan.

Invasive Species Funding continues to tackle himalyan balsam on the Camcor catchment and Japanese knotweed in the public realm throughout the county. Cross county research was carried out on the Quagga mussel.

The series **Wildflowers of Offaly YouTube** videos by John Feehan continues to develop and is hosted on the Offaly Heritage YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/offalyheritage>

Working with Laois County Council we have continued with the commissioning of **In Your Nature Podcasts** by BirdWatch Ireland.

The **Biodiversity Summer School** led by John Feehan was hosted in July 2022 and focused on the Camcor River for the five days.

Application was made to the Heritage Council for a **Biodiversity Officer post** in August and interviews were held by year end. It is hoped to have the officer in place in Q1 2023.

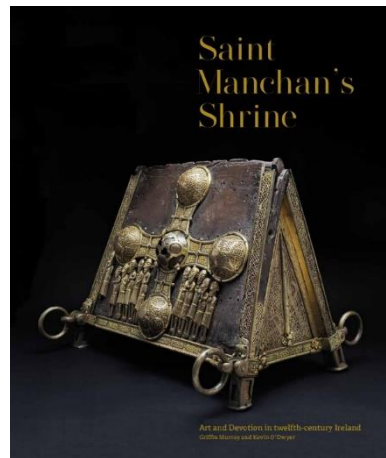
CREATIVE IRELAND

In 2022 a budget of €145,000 was allocated to the Offaly Creative Ireland core programming, with additional funding for Older Persons project and Cruinniu Children's Day in June.

In Offaly the team involves the libraries, arts, architecture, heritage, enterprise and community all working together with the heritage officer as county co-ordinator. A wide range of predominantly community led projects are facilitated and supported and can be viewed on <https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/offaly/>

A new five-year Creative Ireland plan for Offaly was prepared and will be launched early in 2023.

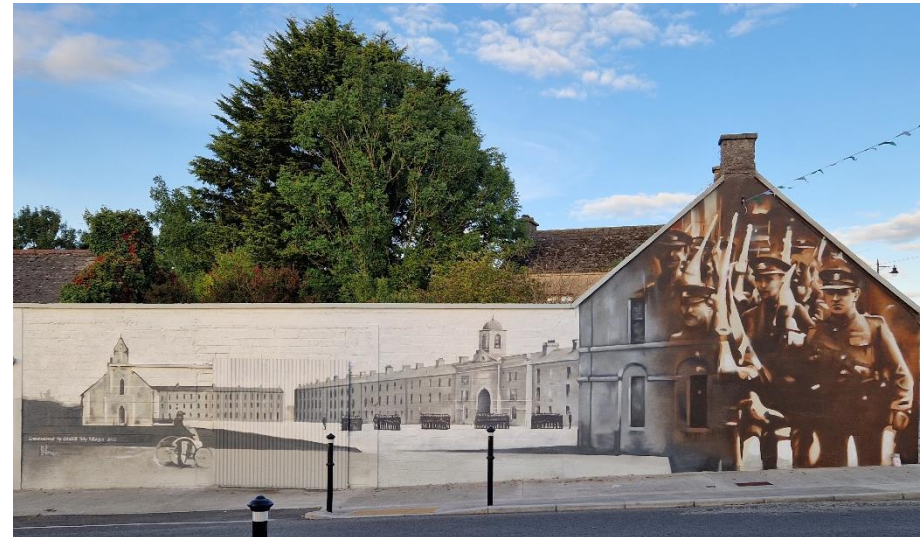
Support for 'Saint Manchan's Shrine' by Kevin O'Dwyer and Griffin Murray was provided by Creative Ireland



DECADE OF CENTENARIES

A grant of €57,000 was received following a joint proposal from the Council with Offaly History. A comprehensive body of work was delivered with blogs, podcasts and a website. See <https://www.offalyhistory.com/offaly-and-the-decade-of-centenaries>

We worked with the community in Crinkill where a series of events were delivered to mark the events at Birr Barracks in Crinkill in 1922.



Crinkill Development Group commissioned the mural in September to mark the ending of Birr Barracks

COMMUNITY MONUMENTS FUND

Four projects received funding in 2022 of c €85,000 - €100,000 each.

- Conservation of part of the medieval sections of the boundary walls of Seir Kieran graveyard in Clareen. In addition to conservation works, the heritage office supported a geophysical survey of the wider monastic site and a community event to provide an update on works during Heritage Week.
- Emmel Castle - roofing and repairs
- Castlearmstrong near Ballycumber (phase two) – conservation of castle masonry walls
- Kilcomin Church near Shinrone – conservation of masonry walls and collapsed boundary wall following the community led report commissioned with Heritage Council funding in 2021.

MEDIEVAL CHURCHES AND MONASTIC SITES

- 2022 was Year 2 of the 3 year Just Transition Project in partnership with Laois Heritage Office. The churches being conserved in Offaly are Monasteroris in Edenderry, Kilbride (near canal) in Tullamore and Kilmurryely near Shinrone. The 3 conservation plans are all drafted. Initial vegetation control has taken place. Revamp Contractors have been appointed and worked at Monasteroris from September to December.
- The **maintenance programme** at the medieval church sites that have been conserved in recent years continues.

- The OPW is setting up a steering group for the **Clonmacnoise Master Plan** and the heritage officer will be on the working group.

OFFALY ARCHIVES SERVICE

Continued liaison with Offaly History to deliver the County Archive Service. Offaly History was able to avail of the new **Heritage Council Capacity Support** Fund in 2022.

HERITAGE WEEK


August saw a welcome return to communities and groups hosting events in person with over 30 well attended events throughout the county.



Shinrone Heritage Group hosting archaeologist Caimin O'Brien discussing the 17th century glass furnace.

ANNUAL HERITAGE SEMINAR 16 & 17 NOVEMBER 2022

There was a welcome return to the annual Heritage Seminar on November with over 100 people attending part or all of the site visits and talks.



ANNUAL OFFALY HERITAGE SEMINAR 2022

Friday 18 November, 5pm
Birr Library | Wilmer Road, Birr

Saturday 19 November
Birr Theatre | Oxmantown Hall, Birr

The aim of the seminar is to:

- Report on progress delivering the 4th Offaly Heritage Plan, 2017-22
- To provide an opportunity for people interested in heritage to meet

Heritage Office,
Offaly County Council,
Ara an Chontae, Charleville
Rd, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
Ph: 057 9346839
E: heritage@offalycoco.ie
www.offaly.ie/heritage

Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

Seirbhís Chultúir
The Heritage Council

FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER

5.00pm Launch of *The Complete Poems of Jean De Jean Frazer*,
The workman poet from Birr edited by Pádraig Turley,
Terry Moylan and Laurel Grube, published by Offaly
History, in Birr Library.

SATURDAY 19 NOVEMBER

All tours must be booked with heritage@offalycoco.ie or by phoning
leaving your phone number for your place to be confirmed to
057 9346839. Your place is not booked until you have received
confirmation.

Meet at 9.45am for 10am departure (from Wilmer Road car park)
BUS TOUR to Kilcomin medieval church & Emmet Castle,
both beneficiaries of the Community Monuments Fund 2022.
Returning via the **Birr Barracks Mural** in Crinkill. Led by Rachel
McKenna, County Architect.

OR

Meet at 10.15am for 10.30am departure (from Wilmer Road car park)
BIRR TOWN WALK – visiting John's Hall, Birr Courthouse,
Castle Street, The Green with guest speakers on route.

1 to 2pm Light lunch of soup and sandwiches
in Kelly's on the Green.

BIRR THEATRE AND ARTS CENTRE

2.00pm Welcome from Cathaoirleach
and launch of 5th Offaly Heritage Plan, 2023-27

2.10pm Publications Profile
Derrinlough Briquette Factory by Jimmy Shortt &
St Manchan's Shrine by Kevin O'Dwyer

2.40pm *The People and Buildings of Castle Street*,
a Heritage Council project by Michael Byrne

3.20pm Tea and coffee

Heritage and Art Projects supported by Creative Ireland

3.50pm Maebh O'Regan and the *Bronte project*

4.15pm *Birr Workhouse and The Meadow*
by the Offaly Drama Project

4.30pm *The Mary Lowndes Window*
by St Mary's Church of Ireland, Shinnone

5.00pm Close

There is no charge for the seminar. Please email the Heritage Office
on heritage@offalycoco.ie or call **057 9346839** to say which sessions
you would like to attend for bus hire, seating and catering. If you are
telephoning it is essential to **leave your phone number** so we can
confirm which field trip you are going on.

COUNTY COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

The heritage officer took part in the following working groups

- OCC Climate Action Group
- Lough Boora Parklands Sculpture Park working group
-
- Birr 2020 led - Camcor River walk– looking at options to develop a looped walk along the Camcor River

TIDY TOWNS' NETWORK

Working with the Community Section, we continue to support Tidy Towns groups. Birr Tidy Towns travelled to Belfast to take part in the Best Kept competition and Geashill was judged for the Pride of Place Creative Communities competition.

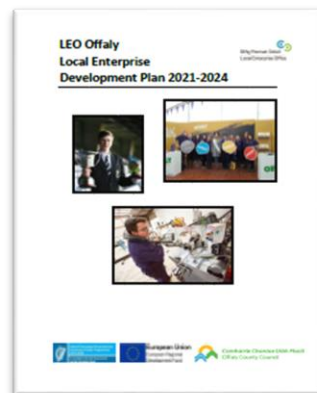
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

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, Economic Development and Tourism Functions within Offaly County Council. In 2022, the Section experienced a number of staff changes. There are 6 members of staff in the Local Enterprise Office, 2 members of staff in Offaly Tourism and 2 Business Development Managers in Offaly Innovation & Design Centre CLG reporting 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. The 2021 -2024 LEO Offaly Enterprise Development Plan is now in place. The implementation of the plan requires LEO Offaly to deliver a wide range of initiatives.



SOME LEO OFFALY ENTERPRISES MAKING HEADLINES IN 2022

- **Interior Acoustics Ltd.**, Winner of Offaly County Enterprise Awards and Best Start-Up at National Enterprise Awards
- **The Factory**, Winner of Offaly County Enterprise Awards Sustainability Award; Winner of Small Green Organisation of the Year Award (Green Awards); Winner of the Small & Medium Business SEAI Energy Awards
- **Biosol**, Winner of Irish Times Innovation Awards – Manufacturing & Design Category, and Winner of Best New Start-Up Offaly County Enterprise Awards
- **Wild Irish Foragers**, RDS Spring Awards – Innovation & Sustainability, Blas na hEireann Chef’s Larder Award
- **Garryhinch Wood Exotic Mushrooms**, Blas na hEireann Chef’s Larder Award



LEO OFFALY ENTERPRISE HIGHLIGHTS IN 2022

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH OFFALY ENTERPRISES TO SUPPORT THEM THROUGH PANDEMIC, BREXIT AND ENERGY CRISIS

LEO Offaly staff proactively reached out to clients and Offaly enterprises to hear about business issues, and to advise the business owners of relevant supports. Business owners received support through targeted mentoring, enterprise and management training, funding, and networking. LEO Offaly also provided consultancy days to assist with business strategy and development. LEO Offaly actively encouraged business owners to engage with their LEO office when times were going well, and when there were difficulties.

IMPROVED BUSINESS EFFICIENCIES, INNOVATION, EXPORT AND SUSTAINABILITY

In 2022, LEO Offaly worked closely with Enterprise Ireland, TUS and Intertrade Ireland on a range of initiatives to help businesses

- *Increased Efficiencies* – Green for Micro, LEAN for Micro
- *Innovation* – Feasibility Study Grants, Agile R&D, IP Start, New Frontier, Innovation Boost, Innovation Vouchers, Business Innovation Partnerships
- *Export* - Enter the Eurozone, Technical Assistance for Micro-Exporters (TAME), Trade Accelerator Programme, Elevate, Acumen
- *Digitalisation* – Digital Start, Trading Online Vouchers, You're the Business,
- In addition, LEO Offaly worked in collaboration with

stakeholders on a number of initiatives arising from the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan, and Midlands Regional Transition Team. These included development of the ICT Cluster and Engenuity Engineering Cluster.

- Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2022-2024 strengthens alignment of LEOs with Enterprise Ireland. There will be an increased focus on LEOs developing export-led enterprises.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROMOTION

STUDENT ENTERPRISE

LEO Offaly is one of a few Local Enterprise Offices nationally that runs Student Enterprise Programmes at both Primary and Secondary levels. In 2022, for the Primary Level, there were 12 participating schools and 40 participating pupils. At Secondary Level, there were 10 participating schools and 438 participants. Cian Conway of Tullamore College achieved 3rd place in *My Entrepreneurial Journey Competition Junior Category National Student Enterprise Awards*.

SECOND CAREER/SENIOR ENTERPRISE

LEO Offaly provided a range of training programmes specifically targeted at the over 50s considering self-employment. In 2022, these included an Age Friendly Business Workshop, and courses on VAT Returns & Submissions, Income Tax and Accounting and VAT issues.

FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In 2022, for the first time in 3 years, National Women's Enterprise Day featured in person events. LEO Offaly in partnership with the Midland LEOs had a Regional event to promote, develop and support female entrepreneurship.



DELIVER LOCAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2024

The implementation of the above plan requires LEO Offaly to deliver a wide range of initiatives. The following are in addition to information and advisory services, training and mentoring, financial and other supports:



Most Enterprising Student Competition (Primary Level)

- Local Enterprise Week – March
- Offaly County Enterprise Awards – March
- Student Enterprise Programme (Secondary Level) - March
- National Student Enterprise Awards - May
- Most Enterprising Student Competition (Primary Level) - May
- National Enterprise Awards - June
- Tullamore Show - August
- National Ploughing Championships – September

- National Women's Enterprise Day – Regional October
- Look for Local – November

OFFALY JOB FAIR – COLLABORATIVE ACTION

Over 650 job seekers from all over the Midlands and further afield flocked to the first ever Offaly Job Fair held in the Tullamore Court Hotel on Saturday 2nd July. There were 36 employer stands and over 500 hundred jobs on offer.



The Tullamore and District Chamber of Commerce together with support from the Local Enterprise Office Offaly, Offaly Local Development Company, LOETB, the Technical University of the Shannon and Tullamore and District Rotary Club organised the event.

MINISTER DAMIEN ENGLISH, T.D. VISIT TO LEO OFFALY

Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, Damien English, T.D., made a visit to Offaly in July where he met with council officials and members of the Local Enterprise Office Offaly team as well as some of our client companies. Minister English said: "The importance of the



LEO network to local businesses cannot be overstated. They provide a vital service in supporting companies whether it is through training, mentoring or with other important supports. Our new Regional Enterprise Plans are very much region specific, building on local strengths, and in this regard, the LEOs have a hugely important role to play in their success and in helping to drive economic activity here in Offaly.”

LEO OFFALY OUTPUTS 2022

Jobs	Output 2022
Total Employment in LEO Clients	1196
Gross Jobs Created	279
Net Increase (after Job Losses)	154
Number of LEO Clients	204

Measure 1	Output 2022
Grant Applications Approved:	18
Feasibility	1
Priming	2
Business Expansion	13
TAME	2
Measure 2	Output 2022
Training:	
Total Number of Courses	50
Total Number of Participants	535
Number of SYOB Programmes	10
Mentoring:	
Number of Participants	149

Schools Entrepreneurship	Output 2022
Number of Secondary Schools Participating	9
Number of Students Participating	498
Trading Online Vouchers	Output 2022
Number of Trading Online Vouchers approved	15

Scheme	Output 2022
Microfinance Ireland	7
Lean for Micro: Offaly Participants	6
Green for Micro: Offaly Participants	4

ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS 2022

OFFALY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN 2022-2027

Following procurement process, OCO Global Ltd. was awarded the contract to carry out the work. As part of the process, the company engaged and consulted with 70+ enterprises and stakeholders.

GRAND CANAL DOCK TULLAMORE

Following procurement process and confirmation from Dept., the winning tenderer was selected to deliver the Development Options and Masterplan for Grand Canal Dock Tullamore.

INDUSTRIAL SITES

Further sites sold in Ferbane Industrial Park. Options explored to purchase more land in Ferbane, and for new

Business Park in Tullamore.

RHODE GREEN ENERGY PARK

Two Feasibility Studies. New funding award of €49,000 towards developing a framework for an Industrial Eco-Park. LEO Offaly continues to provide Secretariat duties for North Offaly Development Fund CLG, and Head of Enterprise is a Director in the company.



Rhode Green Energy Park

Co-Working HUBS

In 2022, there was further refurbishment of The Junction Business Innovation Centre through the drawdown of Connected Hubs Grants. Following a procurement process, a Project Manager to drive the Just Transition Fund expansion in the Junction Business Office Suites was appointed.

Stream BIRR was expanded to include additional co-working space with 9 desks and a meeting room. There are 5 tenant offices occupied.



Congratulations to Offaly Innovation and Design Centre CLG who won the Professional Services category at the Tullamore & District Chamber Awards.

Stream BIRR was awarded SIRO Vodafone 1 GB broadband. There have been a number of collaborations between Stream BIR, I-LOFAR, DIAS and TUS. These collaborations have provided funding for research graduates based in BIRR, working on I-LOFAR data.

E-hive, stream BIRR and The Junction are now TUS Learning Gate Hubs. This will enable TUS students access the co-working hubs for online courses, networking and study. LEO Offaly continues to provide Secretariat duties for North Offaly Development Fund CLG, and Head of Enterprise is a Director in the company.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENTERPRISE AND PLANNING STRATEGY POLICY COMMITTEE (SPC)

LEO Offaly provides the Secretariat for this Committee. In 2022, 4 meetings were held and the SPC worked through its adopted work programme, covering topics such as:

1. Stakeholder engagement for Offaly Economic Strategy & Action Plan
2. Offaly Heritage Plan
3. Offaly Tourism updates
4. Regeneration Schemes and Greenways updates.

LOCAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP)

LEO Offaly is responsible for the development and delivery of the Economic goals and actions for the above plan. The Head of Enterprise is a member of the LECP Advisory Steering Group Committee attending regular meetings to progress the writing of the Plan. The Plan will be launched in 2023.

Subject to resources, LEO Offaly will in 2023

- Provide timely and relevant supports to new and existing clients
- Focus on improved business efficiencies, innovation, export and sustainability
- Promote Entrepreneurship across all ages– Student Enterprise, Female Entrepreneurship, Second Career/Senior Enterprise
- Deliver Local Enterprise Development Plan 2021-2024

- Collaborate with stakeholders and industry to deliver the Offaly Economic Strategy & Action Plan 2022-2027
- Co-Ordinate and collaborate with stakeholders to deliver the Economic Element of the Local Economic & Community Plan 2022-2028
- 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

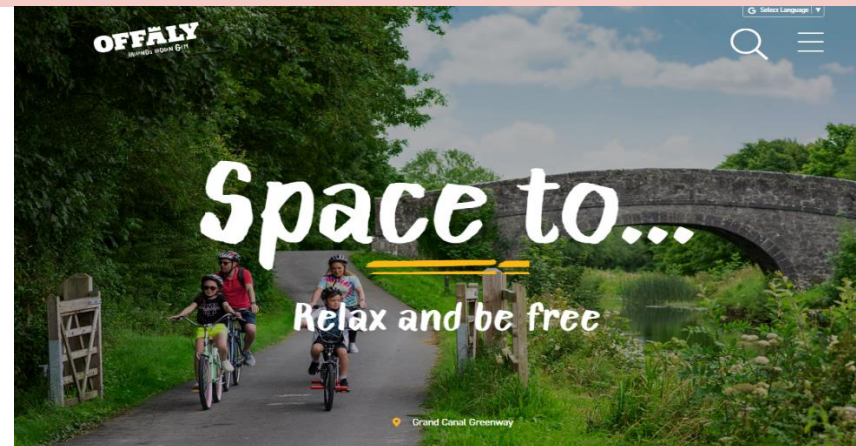
TOURISM

The Tourism team work in partnership with Offaly Tourism Marketing (CLG), to continue to promote and develop Offaly's unique brand 'Ireland's Hidden Gem', to both domestic and international tourism markets.

2022 was a very busy and productive year for Offaly Tourism as the tourism and hospitality sector began to recover post-Covid. The team continued to support the trade in its recovery and marketing played a key role in increasing visitor numbers. There were a number of highlights:

NEW VISIT OFFALY WEBSITE

A fresh new look website, www.visitoffaly.ie went live in September 2022. The modern, crisp design highlights the best of Offaly in a simple yet effective way. New imagery showcases locations, businesses and attractions throughout the county, whilst the events listing informs visitors and locals alike informs the user on upcoming events around Offaly. The website also includes blogs, itinerary ideas and a Trade Members section.



Welcome to Offaly

NEW OFFALY TOURISM STRATEGY 2023 – 2027

In 2022, the tourism team began the process of preparing a new Tourism Strategy for the County. CHL Consultants were appointed to work on the strategy document, which will be in place for five-years, from 2023 to 2027. The new Strategy will guide the recovery, growth and development of the tourism sector in Offaly. We aim to have a clearly articulated, measurable and actionable strategy to enable recovery and sustained growth within the tourism sector in Offaly.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The tourism team strongly focused on public relations in 2022, earning great exposure in print media, on social media, Radio and on TV.

The Ireland AM crew descended on Birr for the Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival in July.



Great fun in Birr; Offaly with all the crew. Be sure to check out their fantastic festival this weekend [Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival](#)



Other noteworthy mentions were articles in the Northern Ireland publication; 'Newsletter' the largest Irish-interest magazine in the world; 'Ireland of the Welcomes', Irish Independent and The Sunday Times.



Left: hot-air balloons float over Birr Castle. Right: Jonathan Haslam and Jessica Roeske with their organic produce. Below left: jeweller Cathal Barber in his workshop

Going places



I love the Vintage Week festival, it's a real draw for the diaspora, with more coming home than even at Christmas

RADIO CAMPAIGN

Once again, a national radio campaign ran for a period of two weeks on Today FM & Newstalk, in May & June, boosting Offaly's profile nationwide. This included a competition giveaway over a weekend on the very popular Alison Curtis Show. A further ad campaign was broadcast on iRadio for a two-week period in June, targeting a younger demographic.

DIGITAL MARKETING

Offaly Tourism continued to grow its social media presence in 2022, with Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts using the #visitoffaly. Working with a social media consultancy firm, our following and reach has grown significantly year on year. The total number of followers over the social media platforms is in excess of 16,000; an increase of 59% in the last three years.

Offaly Tourism continued numerous marketing activities throughout the year with **on-going brochure distribution, print advertising and sponsorships.**

Festivals and events continue to play an important role in attracting visitors to the county. Offaly Tourism were proud to assist in the promotion of numerous festivals and events in 2022.

TULLAMORE SHOW

Offaly Tourism in partnership with the Local Enterprise Office hosted the 'Offaly- Ireland's Hidden Gem' pavilion at the Tullamore Show in August 2022. The event is an important opportunity to showcase the very best of Offaly. Being Ireland's largest one-day agricultural show, with over 60,000 attendees, it is an excellent platform to promote and market Offaly to a large audience. Visitor numbers to the pavilion were very positive, after a two-year hiatus the Tullamore Show bounced back to be bigger and better!



NATIONAL BALLOONING CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 50th National Ballooning Championships returned to Birr in September. Sponsored by Offaly Tourism and Offaly County Council, the championships once again created a stir with visitors travelling from far afield to look at this air borne spectacle. 2022 saw RTÉ news visit and report directly from the Championships gaining coverage on national TV throughout the day.



OFFALY TOURISM MARKETING CLG

The tourism team supported Offaly Tourism Marketing (CLG) throughout 2022. Offaly Tourism Marketing (CLG) meetings continued both virtually and hybrid throughout 2022. Chaired by Grainne O'Malley four meetings were held, along with the AGM and two Directors Meetings. These meetings provided a great opportunity for the trade

to engage directly with the tourism team, giving valuable feedback for marketing activities, campaign development etc.

In February 2022, the tourism team successfully hosted a Tourism Webinar titled 'Rebuilding together for the Future'. The event was well attended by various stakeholders from the tourism and hospitality trade with high calibre guest speakers such as Pól Ó Conghaile, Irish Independent Travel Editor and Jarlath O'Dwyer of Burren Ecotourism.

Following on from the Webinar, Offaly Tourism Marketing (CLG) members were provided with a free five-week training programme. Organised by the tourism team and hosted by Tina O'Dwyer from The Tourism Space, training topics included: 'Networking & Generating Referrals' and 'Winning through Customer Service'.

PRIORITIES FOR 2023....

New Offaly Tourism Strategy due to be adopted.
Completion of the Fáilte Ireland's 'Destination Towns' project in Birr.

Works continuing on the Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trails and sections will open throughout 2023 once completed.
Clonmacnoise Masterplan in progress, expected to be delivered in 2023.

Banagher Marina Master Plan launching in 2023, framing tourism development for Banagher into the future.

Fáilte Ireland to commence work on the Visitor Experience Development Plan for Ireland's Hidden Heartland's Mid Shannon Region, of which Offaly plays an important role.
Host the Rose of Tralee tour in August.

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 / Maurice Headd	<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, 14 council meetings were held in 2022.

At the Annual Meeting, held on 20th June 2022, Councillor Frank Moran was elected Cathaoirleach and Councillor Tony McCormack was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.



At the Annual Meeting, held on 20th June 2022, Cllr. Frank Moran was elected Cathaoirleach and Cllr. Tony McCormack was elected Leas Cathaoirleach

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

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 13 occasions during 2022.

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 / R. McDermott
- Land Use, Planning and Economic Development - Cllr. E. Dooley
- Climate Action, Environment, Water and Transportation - Cllr J. Leahy / T. McCormack
- Community, Culture and Emergency Services - Cllr. L. Quinn / J. Clendennen

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 24th October 2022, with a mid-year review issuing in July 2022.

REGISTER OF ELECTORS

Several improvements have been made to the process of registering to vote and updating registration details, arising from provisions in Part 3 of the Electoral Reform Act 2022, which were commenced on 13 October.

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/act/30/enacted/en/pdf>

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 four occasions in 2022. The Committee did not hold an annual Public Meeting in 2022 in line with Public Health guidelines to counteract the spread of Covid 19.

In a random attack in the afternoon of 12th January

2022, Ashling Murphy lost her life as she jogged along the Grand Canal Greenway, near Tullamore. The local communities in Tullamore, County Offaly and across Ireland were shocked and dismayed to hear of the murder. In responding to these events the Members adopted a Motion at the February meeting of the County Council which called on the Council to “*undertake a study of women and girl’s safety in the public realm in order to identify the factors that make women and girls and other genders at risk of gender based violence, feel safe and unsafe in public spaces in County Offaly*”. It was agreed that this study would be undertaken by JPC.

At its February meeting the JPC established a sub-Group to conduct this study. The sub-Group comprised of 2 members of the PPN, 2 representatives of an Garda Síochána, 2 elected Members and a senior official of Offaly County Council. The sub-Group ensured it was gender balanced. Following a number of meetings, the sub-Group agreed to conduct an online survey to gauge public opinion in relation to Safety in public spaces in Offaly, to run during July 2022. In June 2022, the Group arranged an **Offaly Safety Day** with further survey’s being conducted with members of the public. The sub-Group held further stakeholder consultation with representatives of the Offaly Domestic Violence Support Service (ODVSS), the Midlands LGBTQ+, Childrens and Young Peoples Service Committee (CYPSC), Offaly Traveller Movement (OTM) and Tullamore Rape Crisis Centre (TRCC) in October. A

Report and Recommendations based on the sub-Groups findings was prepared and presented to the JPC at its meeting held in December.

SWIMMING POOLS

Corporate Services administer the Council's support grant.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

During 2022 Offaly County Council processed 12 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 2022.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Offaly County Council processed 67 Freedom of Information requests during 2022, a decrease on the 72 applications received in 2021.

Applications received / processed in 2021	
Applications on hand at 31/12/2021	3
Applications received during 2022	67
Decisions taken during 2021	62
Applications withdrawn and dealt with outside FoI	4
Applications on hand 31/12/2022	1

Nature of the information requested	
Personal (to applicant)	18
Non-personal	49

Requests were received from the following	
Journalists	27
Business / Interest	0
Oireachtas	1
Staff	0
Clients	14
Others	25

COMMUNICATIONS

Offaly County Council engages with and listens to our citizens, building strong relationships as we progress on the delivery of our strategic framework goals. During 2022, we continued to communicate our message via radio, print and social media platforms as

well as engaging with local and national news outlets. We are committed to providing all information in user friendly language to ensure it is accessible to all.

Following Covid 19, we have pivoted to the positive when it comes to digital communications and continue to build and grow on relevant platforms. We experienced an increase in the number of social media followers across all social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Up to date details are provided in NOAC Service Indicators appendix of this report.

COUNTY CORONERS

The total expenditure was €135,778.73 (including salaries) in respect of coroners' inquests in 2022.

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 2021 in November 2022.

NEW MEMBER OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Ms Ann Dillon, Director of Services, joined the Management Team in December 2022. She replaced Mr. Stephane Duclot, who left the organisation to take up a post with Tipperary County Council.

Ms. Dillon has been assigned responsibility for Planning, Economic and Rural Development, Heritage, Tourism and Birr MD.

Payments to Members in respect of 2022									
Councillor	Represent Pay & MD allowance	Monthly Expenditure allowance incl. LRA	Conference/ Training incl. Fees and phones	SPC chairpersons allowance	MD Chairperson allowance	Chairpersons allowance	Gratuity	Travel Abroad	Total
John Carroll	27,025.97	5,883.27			3,334.71				36,243.95
Clare Claffey	27,025.97	5,178.17							32,204.14
John Clendennen	27,025.97	7,771.40	854.82	3,219.72					38,871.91
Noel Cribbin	27,025.97	7,470.78	3,227.08						37,723.83
Eamon Dooley	27,025.97	5,572.74	1,807.39	5,979.48					40,385.58
Neil Feighery	27,025.97	7,007.75	3,235.18		3,380.71				40,649.61
Eddie Fitzpatrick	27,025.97	4,118.34	3,026.57						34,170.88
John Foley	27,025.97	4,503.34							31,529.31
Mark Hackett	27,025.97	7,251.04							34,277.01
Declan Harvey	27,025.97	5,939.70	1,905.36			9,275.86		4,259.56	48,406.45
John Leahy	27,025.97	7,417.70		2,782.76					37,226.43
Tony McCormack	27,025.97	4,669.78		3,219.72	2,621.76	2,146.48		2,952.99	42,636.70
Robert McDermott	27,025.97	8,250.21	1,030.11	3,219.72	3,403.70	1,855.17			44,784.88
Frank Moran	27,025.97	5,869.75	1,709.13			10,732.40		633.10	45,970.35
Sean O'Brien	27,025.97	7,069.57	2,860.19						36,955.73
Peter Ormond	27,025.97	6,442.00	2,502.59		2,667.77				38,638.33
Danny Owens	27,025.97	3,488.78	2,968.90	2,782.76					36,266.41
Liam Quinn	27,025.97	4,197.36	1,500.00	2,782.76	2,598.77				38,104.86
Ken Smollen	27,025.97	2,869.78							29,895.75
Totals	513,493.43	110,971.46	26,627.32	23,986.92	18,007.42	24,009.91	0.00	7,845.65	724,942.11

Councillors attended the following training in 2022	Venue	Date of Conferences	No. Delegates
AILG Module 1	Cork / Mullingar	17 and 19/02/2022	7
AILG Annual	Donegal	23-25/03/2022	8
LAMA Spring	Kilkenny	11-13/04/2022	8
AILG Module 2	Monaghan	14/05/2022	2
AILG Module 3	Athlone	16/06/2022	1
AILG Module 4	Bundoran	23/07/2022	6
AILG Autumn	Trim	14-16/09/2022	6
AILG Module 5	Sligo / Killarney	22 and 26/10/2022	4
LAMA Autumn	Monaghan	9-10 Monaghan 2022	7
AILG Module 6	Waterford / Navan	17 and 26/11/2022	3

Councillors attended the following Conferences in 2022	Venue	Date of Conferences	No. Delegates
Suck Valley	Roscommon	28-29/04/2022	3
Armagh Observatory	Armagh	20/06/2022	1
Dereliction	Donegal	21-22/07/2022	3
Celtic Conference	Cork	28-30/10/2022	1

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	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, regular 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 for internal and external requests.

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 Rates waivers has been completed in 2022.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

This unit is responsible for the processing and payment of supplier's invoices, ensuring compliance with all procurement regulations and appropriate statutory deductions. It also 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 (DHLGH). This unit also manages general Cash collection and NPPR certificates. The Section responds to requests for

information from the Gardai and other Local Authorities, regarding penalty points, traffic fines, parking fines, etc. Payments are receipted at the counter, electronically and through postal application.

GENERAL LEDGER / AGRASSO 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 DHLGH circulars also falls within its remit.

NPPR

This section, accommodated in the Motor tax office, 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.

In 2022, the council members varied the Local Adjustment Factor 2023 and 2024, as provided for by legislation.

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.

DHLGH / 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's monthly report to council. 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.

2022 FINANCE STATISTICS

MOTOR TAX

In 2022, the Motor Taxation Office generated approximately €3.5m in revenue via the Motor Tax office directly. In total Offaly Motor Tax processed 87,336 transactions (18.9% issued via Motor Tax Office and 81.1% was processed online).

REVENUE COLLECTION SERVICE INDICATORS

Amount collected as a percentage of the amount due at 2022 year end: (Draft AFS App 7 percentages)

Rents	93%
Commercial Rates	85%
Housing Loans	85%

**DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
(INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022**

The Income and Expenditure Account Statement brings together all the revenue related income and expenditure.

It shows the surplus/(deficit) for the year. Transfers to/from reserves are shown separately and not allocated by service division.

Note 16 allocates transfers by service division in the same format as Table A of the adopted Local Authority budget.

Expenditure by Division					
		Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure	Net Expenditure
		2022	2022	2022	2021
	Notes	€	€	€	€
Housing & Building		16,380,026	17,581,037	(1,201,010)	163,029
Roads Transportation & Safety		27,586,997	21,535,645	6,051,352	6,527,229
Water Services		5,627,819	5,074,393	553,426	552,214
Development Management		10,935,594	6,550,233	4,385,361	3,536,792
Environmental Services		8,978,435	2,298,104	6,680,332	5,599,797
Recreation & Amenity		4,819,494	960,139	3,859,355	3,518,314
Agriculture, Food and the Marine		645,068	355,294	289,774	256,890
Miscellaneous Services		6,567,222	8,061,133	(1,493,911)	1,210,813
Total Expenditure/Income	15	81,540,654	62,415,976		
Net cost of Divisions to be funded from Rates & Local Property Tax				19,124,678	21,365,078
Rates				16,856,641	18,161,728
Local Property Tax				8,401,722	8,399,174
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers	16			6,133,685	5,195,824
Transfers from/(to) Reserves	14			(5,708,627)	(5,172,550)
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year				425,059	23,274
General Reserve @ 1st January 2022				(1,638,249)	(1,661,523)
General Reserve @ 31st December 2022				(1,213,190)	(1,638,249)
Capital Account Summary - Extract from the Draft Annual Financial Statement					
				2022	2021
Balance (Debit)\Credit @ 1 January				14,755,162	10,683,436
Total Expenditure (Incl Transfers)				(45,731,832)	(32,441,624)
Total Income (Incl Transfers)				51,325,808	36,513,350
Balance (Debit)\Credit @ 31 December				20,349,138	14,755,162

INTERNAL AUDIT UNIT

INTERNAL AUDITS UNDERTAKEN

During 2022, the Internal Audit Unit completed Audits on the following areas:

- Town and Village Renewal Scheme
 - Review of cash procedures
 - GDPR Review
 - Motor Tax Stock Review
 - Housing Capital Programme
 - Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme 2021 Audit
 - Interim Review of Development Levy Contributions
 - Follow up audits (Machinery Yard Fuel Audit, Burial Grounds & Travel Expenses)
- (from the agreed Internal Audit Plan for 2022)

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. The Internal Audit Strategic 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 2021.

This report was certified by the Chief Executive and submitted to the National Oversight and Audit Commission at the end of May 2022, 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 2022. Meetings for the Regional Internal Auditors Network were hosted by Laois County Council, and staff participated in training and continued professional development activities. The Bi-annual National meeting was held in City Hall and hosted by Dublin City County Council. The National meeting included synergy sessions, discussed training needs and the Public Spending Code. The meeting was also attended by Kathy Quinn (Head of Finance) Dublin City Council who gave a talk on the importance and value added role of

the office of Internal Audit.

SUPPORT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Internal Audit Unit provided administrative support to the Audit Committee in the fulfilling of its duties in 2022. 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 2022 as per legislative requirements. Audit Committee Meetings in on follow up reports from the Audit Recommendation Tracking System.

Internal Audit staff prepared the following documents: Internal Audit Charter 2022, Internal Audit Risk register, Internal Audit Draft Strategic Plan, Internal audit Plan for 2022/2023 and Audit Committee Work Plan 2022/2023 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 February 20th 2023:

- Audit Committee Annual Report 2022
- Audit Committee Report to Council on 2021 Annual Financial Statement and Local

2022 were attended by the Chief Executive, Head of Finance, Directors of Service and the Local Government Auditor.

At their meetings the Committee considered and received briefings on: Offaly County Council's Annual Financial Statement 2021, Offaly County Council's Annual Report 2021, 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

Government Auditor's Report

- Audit Committee Charter 2023
- Audit Committee Work Plan 2023
- Internal Audit Plan 2023

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:

- ✓ Recruitment & Retention of staff
- ✓ Staff Training and Development
- ✓ Payroll & Superannuation
- ✓ Employee Welfare
- ✓ Performance Management
- ✓ 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 implementation 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 15% since 2008 when the public service moratorium on employment was introduced. Details of numbers employed at 31st December 2008 and 2022 respectively are set out below for comparison purposes: -

Year	Total Staff Headcount	Non-DHPLG Posts	Retained Fire Fighters
2008	516	12	63
2022	439	20	52

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. 37 different competitions were held involving the processing of 649 applications and resulted in 79 new staff joining the organisation.

TRAINING & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Covid 19 continued to have an impact on the provision of training throughout 2022, 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 2022 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. 19 staff members availed of this funding in 2022. 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: -

Health & safety Training Courses – 47 courses were held over 78 training days in 2022

Other Training courses - 10 courses were held over 11 training days in 2022

HR PAYROLL / SUPERANNUATION

The HR Payroll / Superannuation section continued to provide administration and monitoring of the Council Payroll and Superannuation requirements over the year. This included administering pay increases agreed under the National Pay Agreements on the 1st February 2022 and 1st October 2022, with back dated payments from the 2nd February 2022.

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, Blended Working arrangements, and normal Industrial Relations issues.

In addition, the on-going implementation of the requirements of the Public Service Agreements continued during 2022.

GENDER PAY GAP REPORT

Offaly County Council published its first Gender Pay Gap report on the 20th December 2022. The report highlighted a positive gender pay gap and work is ongoing in this regard.

BLENDED WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Human Resource Department continued preparations for the roll-out and implementation of Blended Working arrangements in line with Government policy.

RETIREMENTS

The following staff retired during 2022:

John Dooley	Des Finnerty	Seamus Griffin
Seamus Walshe	Patricia Murphy	Edward Thomas
Declan Dunican	William Delaney	Noel Flynn
Marguerite Madden	Aidan Hynes	
James Hogan	Kevin Donovan	
Una Harvey (RIP)	Liam Dunne	

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 500 users, an increased figure on 2021. In 2022 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

- Upgrade of ICT Infrastructure server platform to include Cloud Disaster Recovery and Managed Backup solution which will give Offaly a secure and trusted platform for server operations for the next 5 years. This project necessitated the replacement of the entire server hardware with a more cyber resilient and energy efficient system. All critical systems are available immediately in a Cloud disaster recovery site and backups are protected from unintended or malicious modification.
- Upgrade of Financial Management System to the latest major revision. This entailed working with the Finance Department and contractors to build a new FMS server environment, facilitate database migration and testing of integration with all related systems.
- Cyber Security. We continued work on cyber-security in line with the CIS security control standards and guidance from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and procured a managed service for the Firewalls; to ensure our infrastructure is as secure as possible within our current budget and staffing constraint.
- Continued support for NWCPO, Libraries, Water & Waste Water sites, Fire stations & Digital Hubs.
- Continue to consolidate our Server and Endpoint Infrastructure to facilitate Blended Working arrangements through secure VPN access; while also reducing power consumption of user workstations.
- 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

- Completed the 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 to include content migration and service catalogue referencing. 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

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TULLAMORE

Director of Services / Area Manager: Tom Shanahan
Senior Executive Engineer: John Connelly
Senior Executive Officer: Jean Ryan
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 2022)

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

Annual Meeting of the Municipal District of Tullamore held on Thursday 9th June 2022. Cllr. Neil Feighery elected Cathaoirleach and Cllr. Declan 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 IN 2022

- **Team Tullamore:** continued in 2022 with the partnership of Tullamore MD, Tullamore Tidy Towns, Waterways Ireland and the Tullamore Chamber of Commerce;
- **IBAL Anti-Litter League:** another strong showing by Tullamore in the, Round 1 & 2 achieving 'Clean to European Norms' status in the An Taisce Report in both rounds; **TBC**
- Tullamore MD worked with and supported, **Tidy Towns/Villages** Committees and other organisations throughout the Municipal District.

- Tullamore collected the 8th Gold medal in a row at the 2022 Tidy Towns award;
- Tullamore MD maintained **street cleaning services** throughout the Municipal District area;
- 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 and TMD participated on this committee and interagency approach to tackling issues;
- **Estate Enhancement** works were carried out in conjunction with the Housing section on Local Authority housing estates within the district;
- Offaly County Council supported the development of **Tullamore Community Arts Centre** completed in 2022 and due to open in April 2023;
- **Tullamore Urban Regeneration Development URDF 1 Urban Greenway**
The construction of the Urban Greenway through Tullamore will connect the Grand Canal Greenway at Convent View on the east to join the urban Greenway at Bury Quay to and Srah Road and Srah Bridge, on the west of Tullamore. The design of the cycleway was amended in 2022 in line with the overall plan for Tullamore as a cycle friendly town and a revised Part 8 planning was approved. The design and tender documents progressed in 2022 for tender in Q1 2023. A URDF grant of €1.76m with NTA active funding of €0.58m is approved.
URDF1 Tullamore Street Enhancement Project Phase

2 consists of a street enhancement of Harbour Street and Store Street in Tullamore. This project is approved in principal with further funding to be agreed.

URDF CALL 2 (FUNDING €2.4M)

The Tullamore Urban Regeneration and Development Fund 2020 (URDF 2) Project incorporates six individual projects building on the successful completion of the Tullamore Street Enhancement project funded under URDF 1. Each of the six projects, as listed below, are straightforward and deliverable in the short to medium term. A URDF grant of €2.25m is approved.

- A: O'Connor Square to Church Street, Urban Garden, Civil Building / RW Hub
- B: High Street to Tanyard New Street Link
- C: Meath Lane Civic Space
- D: Tullamore Regeneration Framework
- E: Tullamore Harbour Development Options and Viability Appraisal
- F: Acres' Folly Enhancements

Each of the projects are advanced in scope, design and planning. Projects B and C are short term projects with completion dates in 2023. Project B has been designed in house, part 8 planning is approval and once approved by the Department Offaly County Council will advertise for a Contractor on eTenders and the works can commence. Projects D & E were tendered on eTenders in 2022, the tender assessment reports approved by the Department

and Consultants appointed in Q4 2022.

Project A is a medium term project requiring the appointment of Consultants for detailed design and procurement of a Contractor. This project is advanced in scope and preliminary design and will stay on programme for completion in 2025.

TOWN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEME

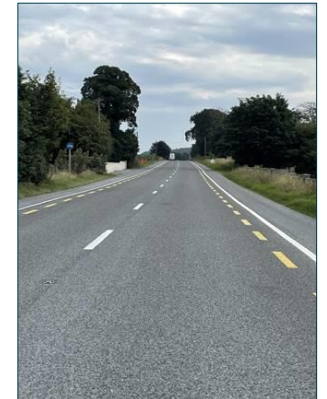
The Mountbolus Town and Village Renewal Scheme Phase 1 & 2 was completed in 2022. The Mucklagh Town and Village Renewal Scheme Phase 1 commenced in 2022.

ANNUAL ROADS PROGRAMME

Tullamore MD successfully delivered 18km of surface reconstruction over 24 schemes and 17km of surface dressing over 14 schemes in 2022.

Low Cost Safety Schemes Completed:

Blacklion Junction re-alignment





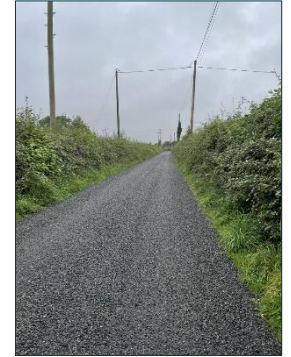
Whiteforge Cross sightlines



Bridges: Derries, Ballycumber, Gorteen, Killurin

CIR: two Community Involvement Schemes were carried out in Annaghmore & Cooldorrah in 2022

LIS: six Local Improvement Schemes were carried out at Cormeen, Kileenmore, Glaskill, Ballybruncullen, Ballynacanty & Holmshill.



CLIMATE ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE

Schemes were completed in Killurin (Mullagh), Chancery Lane, Durrow, Boher and Raheen.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

The following Active Travel schemes advances in 2022

- Heather Grove, Secondary School, Badgers Lane and Westwood Grove in Clara footpath updates and pedestrian crossing were completed in 2022;
- The Tullamore Area Based Transport Assessment and Cycle Network Phase 1 are in progress.
- The Collins Lane cyclists priority junction was completed;
- A number of pedestrian crossings in the District were upgraded;
- The contract for Spollenstown Road, Tullamore footpaths upgrade was awarded and the design for the pedestrian bridge is ongoing;
- Ballycumber footpath improvements has been tendered;

MILLENNIUM SQUARE

Under Town & Village Renewal, TVR Accelerated Measures and Fáilte Ireland funding Millennium Square was completed to a high standard in 2022 and provides a public realm link in Main Street to the Bridge Centre to High Street in Tullamore.



LLOYD TOWN PARK

Achieved the Green Flag for the 7th year running in 2023, an International accreditation for public park excellence from An Taisce acknowledging Ireland's best public parks and gardens.



The Department of Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media approved funding for the supply of a modular building for a new caretakers office, storage unit and public toilets in Lloyd Town Park, Tullamore and a Bandstand under the Outdoor Public Space Scheme

with TMD General Municipal Allocation. The suppliers for the building and toilets were appointed in 2022 and the works will be complete in Q3 2023.

REPORTS

Offaly County Council reports were given to members at Municipal District Meetings as follows:

- Environment & Water Services: 10/04/22, 14/07/22
- Roads & Infrastructure: 10/03/2022, 13/10/22, 17/11/22
- Housing: 12/05/22, 08/09/2022
- Heritage: 10/02/2022
- Community & Culture: 09/06/22
- Economic/Enterprise: 13/10/22

SCHEDULE OF WORKS 2022

Consideration and adoption of the Schedule of Works for the Municipal District was approved at the District meeting of 14/04/2022.

BUDGET 2022

Consideration of General Municipal Allocation approved at the district meeting of 10/02/2022.

COMMUNITY GRANTS

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.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Tullamore MD continued to support Tullamore Chamber of Commerce in 2022.

EVENTS

The **Local Live Performance Scheme** continued in 2022 supporting events held in O'Connor Square, Lloyd Town Park and Millennium Square. These events 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. Family event in O'Connor Square Tullamore on St Patrick's Day, 17th March 2022;

Carnival of Colour: family event in O'Connor Square, Tullamore a one day event of multidisciplinary, inclusive arts activities in community outdoor spaces across Offaly, 4th & 5th June 2022;

Tullamore 400: celebration of 400 year of Tullamore in newly refurbished Millennium Square – historic exhibition, music, Poetry, entertainment & outdoor dining 30rd September 2022;

Púca Spooka 2022 returned to Lloyd Town Park from the 22nd to the 23rd October 2022 with ten thousand visitors to the Park over the two days;

Tullamore MD in conjunction with Tullamore Christmas Lights featured 'Tullamore This Christmas 2022' from 25th to 27th December in O'Connor Square with outdoor markets, street theatre, live music, local choirs, Santa's Bus and the switching on the lights.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF EDENDERRY

Director of Services / Area Manager:

Sharon Kennedy

Meetings Administrator:

Louise Direen

Senior Executive Engineer:

Mark Mahon

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

Annual Meeting of Edenderry Municipal District was held on Wednesday, 08th June 2022. Cllr. Robert McDermott elected Cathaoirleach and Cllr. Noel Cribbin elected Leas-Cathaoirleach.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly Meetings were held on the second Wednesday of each month at 3.30pm, in-person meetings resumed in June 2022 with a remote option also available.

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:

- Regeneration/Project Updates
- District Issues/Updates
- Roads Update

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 Housing, Community & Culture and Economic & Enterprise.

REPRESENTATIVES TO VARIOUS BODIES/BOARDS

North Offaly Development Fund Ltd	<p>Cllr. Noel Cribbin , Board Director</p> <p>Cllr. John Foley</p> <p>Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick</p> <p>Cllr. Mark Hackett</p> <p>Cllr. Robert McDermott</p> <p>Cllr. Liam Quinn</p>
Edenderry Tidy Towns	Cllr. Noel Cribbin
Edenderry Swimming Pool	Cllr. Noel Cribbin
Cloncreen Community Fund	Cllr. Noel Cribbin
Edenderry School Completion Prog.	Cllr. Robert McDermott

ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Active Travel Initiatives

- ✓ Edenderry Segregated Cycleway (€100k)
- ✓ Hare's Lane Cycleway (€250k)
- ✓ Portarlington Cemetery Link (€180k)
- ✓ Canal Footbridge Optioneering (€50k)
- ✓ Various Pedestrian Measures & Junction works



Photo: Edenderry - New Footway & Cycle-way along Hare's Lane



Photo: Edenderry - Segregated Cycle-way along R402 linking Grand Canal Greenway



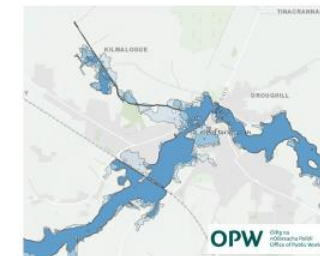
Photo: Portarlington - New footway to Cemetery

PORTARLINGTON FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME

Portarlington Flood Relief Scheme

- Advancing €15m project with OPW/LCC

1. Scheme Development & Design (Sept. 2020 – Jan 2023)
 - Public Consultation, Surveys/Design, EIA
 - ✓ 25th Nov: Public Consultation – Emerging Options
2. Planning (Q3 2022 – Q4 2023)
3. Detailed Design (Q3 2024 – Q2 2025)
4. Construction (Q1 2025 – Q4 2026)



TIMELINE OF SCHEME PROGRAMME	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Stage I - Scheme Development and Design	█	█	█	█					
Stage II - Planning Process				█	█				
Stage III - Detailed Construction Design and Tender					█	█			
Stage IV - Construction						█	█	█	█
Stage V - Handover									

EDENDERRY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT ROADS PROGRAMME 2022 WORKS

Roads Programme 2022

- ✓ €5.95m initially secured (Feb), increased to €7.5m
- ✓ 120 projects successfully delivered
 - Restoration Improvement - €1.6m (↑8.5%)
 - Restoration Maintenance - €460k (↑4.2%)



Photo 1: RECYCLING on R401 at Shean



Photo 2: Macadam Works Complete on R441 at Rhode

Community Involvement Scheme (DoT)

- DoT Grant (90%) - €102,276
- Cllr. GMA Match-funding (10%) - €10,228
- ✓ Garryhinch - Footway towards Coillte Woods
- ✓ Rhode Bridge - Footway towards village
- ✓ Cloneygowan - Parking area at School
- ✓ Bracknagh - Renew footway to School



Photo 1: R423 Garryhinch - BEFORE



Photo 2: R423 Garryhinch - AFTER

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 Cloneygowan Green Enhancement and Daingean Streetscape.



Cloneygowan Green TVR

Public Green Enhancement

- New Bow-top fencing along R420
- New Footways/cycleways
- Playground Equipment & Goals
- Planting / Landscaping



Daingean Streetscape TVR

Public Green Enhancement

- New Footways & drainage
- Revised traffic layout & line-marking
- Defined Parking; Build-outs for planting



Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

Ar dtuairim
Tualtha
Our Rural
Future



Examples of how this funding helps local communities



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 37 projects/groups in 2022, for example:

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

*Geashill / Ballinagar
Active Retirement Group*

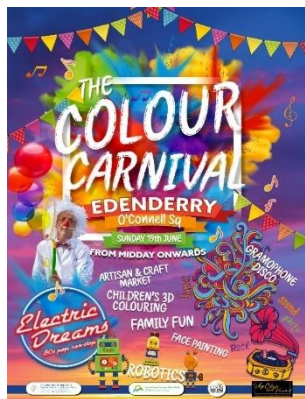


Edenderry Community First Responders

LIVE PERFORMANCE SUPPORT SCHEME

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. Having held two events in 2021 under this scheme, Edenderry Municipal District held another two events in 2022.

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



19 June Colour Carnival and 30 October Eerie Edenderry

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 in November 2021 but was officially officially opened in April 2022 by Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys.

New Link Street – Blundell Avenue

- Initial Funding €522k (RRDF) + €176k (OY)
- Officially Opened 22nd April 2022
- Opens up Library site & Backlands
- Potential for Primary Care Centre, OPDs, etc.



Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

A Proposed new Library/Arts Space on JKL Street which will become an important community destination on JKL Street, providing life, activity and a new link to the park beyond. It will provide a welcoming space for all, enable the opportunity to develop community programmes, while adding life and vitality to the town centre and park.

Edenderry Library Site

Jan - €2.15m Regeneration Funding secured
Feb - €500k Demolition contract commenced
May - Site cleared
Sept - Design Team contract announced

SEAN HARRINGTON ARCHITECTS



Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

SEAN HARRINGTON ARCHITECTS

EDENDERRY LIBRARY

Ar dToibhéal Tuaithe
Our Rural Future



MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BIRR

Director of Services / Area Manager:

Stephane Duclot / Ann Dillon

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 Carroll, Independent (Cathaoirleach Jun-Dec)

Cllr Clare Claffey, Social Democrats

Cllr John Clendennen, Fine Gael

Cllr Eamon Dooley, Fianna Fail

Cllr John Leahy, Independent

Cllr Peter Ormond, Fianna Fail (Cathaoirleach Jan-May)

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 - Heritage Plan Report & Reps of HSE

March - Housing Estate Management & Roads Programme 2022

April - Water and Environment Services

May - Housing Services Update

Schedule of Municipal District Works 2022

June - District Engineers Roads Report and Community & Culture Report

July - Water and Environment Services Report

September - Housing Services Report

October - LEO Presentation

Roads Progress Report Update on Greenways

November - Water and Environment Services Report

65km of roads strengthened and maintained in Birr MD in 2022



Street enhancement of the Green in Birr



Eight new street trees planted on the Green in Birr



St Kieran's National School, Broughal – New Set down and parking areas provided under the CLÁR programme



Active Travel Schemes delivered in Shinrone (photo below), Crinkill Ferbane in 2022



€104,000 invested in bridge improvements in Birr MD in 2022



TVR, road improvement and street enhancement schemes completed in Kinnitty in 2022



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



SERVICE INDICATORS 2022

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 2022, 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 202. The amended indicators are

- **E1 A:** *No. / % of households which availed of a 3 bin service;*
- **E6:** *Public Lighting;*
- **E7:** *Climate Change;*

NOAC have advised that the test indicator, **J5: Economic Development Spend**, introduced in 2021 is subject to further review. the report.

THE SERVICE INDICATORS FOR 2022 WERE NOT AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2022

H: HOUSING (H1 TO H6)	2022	2021
H1: SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK		
A. The number of dwellings in the ownership of the Local Authority at 1/1/2021	1910	1891
B. The number of dwellings added to the Local Authority owned stock during in 2021 (whether constructed or acquired)	49	42
C. The number of Local Authority owned dwellings sold in 2021	6	9
D. The number of Local Authority owned dwellings demolished in 2021	0	0
E. The number of dwellings in the ownership of the Local Authority at 31/12/2021	1953	1924
F. The number of Local Authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under a DHPLG approved scheme	0	0
H2: HOUSING VACANCIES		
A. The percentage of the total number of Local Authority owned dwellings that were vacant on 31/12/2021	2.66%	2.49%
H3: AVERAGE RE-LETTING TIME AND COST		
A. The time taken from the date of vacation of dwelling to the date in 2021 when a new tenancy had commenced in the dwelling, averaged across all units re-let in 2021	52 wks	26 wks
B. The cost expended on getting the dwellings re-tenanted units in 2021 ready for re-letting, averaged across all units re-let in 2021	€49,842.24	€ 16,168.55
H4: HOUSING MAINTENANCE COST		
A. Expenditure during 2021 on the maintenance of LA housing compiled from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021, divided by the no. of dwellings in the LA stock at 31/12/2021	€581.00	€ 563.69

H5: PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR INSPECTIONS		
A. Total number of registered tenancies in the LA area at the end of June 2021		3,630
B. Number of rented dwellings inspected in 2021		250
C. Percentage of inspected dwellings in 2021 that were found not to be compliant with the Standards Regulations		99.07%
D. Number of non-compliant dwellings that became compliant during 2021		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 2021.	26.32%	64.00%

R: ROADS (R1 AND R2)		2022	2021
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)	2022	2021
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)		2022	2021
E1: No. / % OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ACCESS TO-AVAILED OF 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)	2022	2021
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)	2022	2021
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)	2022	2021
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)	2022	2021
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)	2022	2021
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 VISITS TO LA WEBSITE		
A. The per capita total 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)	2022
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)

	2020	2021	2022
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)	2022	2021
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
Does the Local Authority have a designated Tourism Officer?		Yes
J5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPEND (TEST INDICATOR IN 2022)		
The data for this indicator will be collected and reviewed but not published as part of the NOAC Local Authority Performance Indicator Report 2021		