

JOINT ADDRESS BY THE CATHAOIRLEACH AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Cllr. John Carroll, Cathaoirleach



Anna Marie Delaney, Príomh Fheidhmeannach

We are very pleased to present Offaly County Council 2020 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 2020.

2020 presented significant challenges to the organisation and the citizens of Offaly. We commenced the new decade with the prospect of dealing with the fallout from Brexit, but the new decade was barely 2 months old when far more insidious challenge presented itself in the form of the Coronavirus, Covid-19. The world-wide pandemic tested the resilience of the citizens of the County throughout 2020 and continues to do so in the early months of 2021.

The closure of West Offaly Power station at Shannonbridge and the acceleration of the Decarbonisation Programme added significantly to the financial challenges facing Offaly County Council. The loss of rates income from the West Offaly Power station and the closure of the Bord na Móna facilities and operations in the county have placed a huge burden on the organisations finances.

Through our Local Enterprise Office, the Council gave support and mentoring to the small business enterprises in the county. The Council agreed to reduce or suspend charges for some of its services, where appropriate, in an effort to give a boost to the local economy. The Elected Members and the Executive are working closely with the Just Transition Commissioner, Mr. Kieran Mulvey and worked closely with the various community groups who applied for project funding under the Just Transition Programme.

Despite all the challenges presented the organisation continued to deliver on our core services. The Management and Staff of Offaly County Council continued their work through 2020 with a mix of office and remote working. These arrangements were only made possible by the tireless efforts of the staff in our IT Section who ensured that the organisation remained connected.

We trust that this Report will do justice to the efforts of staff at all levels in Offaly County Council during these challenging times

Ba bhreá liom mar Chathaoirleach thar ceann Chomhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí an deis seo a thapú chun muintir Uíbh Fhailí a mholadh as an misneach agus an teacht aniar a léirigh siad le linn na paidéime Covid-19. Bhí an-áthas orm togra a chur chun cinn chun crann cuimhneacháin a chur sna bailte agus sna sráidbhailte in Uíbh Fhailí chun an tréimhse dheacair seo a chomóradh. Bhí sé iontach ar fad tiomantas na ngrúpaí pobail agus na n-eagraíochtaí fud fad an chontae a fheiceáil agus iad ag tabhairt lámh chúnta agus ag cabhrú leis na daoine ba leochailí sa tsochaí.

(As Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council I would like to take this opportunity to commend the people of Offaly for the fortitude and resilience they have shown throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic. To mark this difficult period, I championed an initiative to plant a commemorative tree in the towns and villages of Offaly. It was heartening to witness the willingness of community groups and organisations across the county to reach out to protect and support the vulnerable members of our society.)

Among the other highlights in 2020 were:

- 90 families received keys to their new Council owned properties; 44 were nominated and received keys to Approved Housing Bodies homes; and, a further 12 were allocated to leasing units, 162 families in total.
- 14 social houses and a scheme of 4 Group Houses for members of the Traveller Community were finished in 2020 in Tullamore
- 130 applications for private Housing Grants, were approved across the three categories of grants that were available to applicants. The total grant funding awarded was €1,333,231

- The Library Services saw a 23% increase in library members, a 208% in the number of items borrowed and a 674% increase in the number of library blog visits.
- Offaly LCDC approved 112 LEADER projects in 2020 to the value of €2.9 million, with €1.1 million approved grant aid paid to promoters in 2020.
- The Local Enterprise Office reported the following outcomes:
 - 642 Approvals, to the value of €3,266,952
 - 75 Training Programmes, with 845 attendees
 - 169 Mentoring Sessions
 - 476 Student Entrepreneurship Participants
 - 3,638 Client Enquiries

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 face 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

CONTENTS

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

Housing SPC	4		
Housing Department	4	Municipal District of Tullamore	96
<u>Community, Culture and Emergency Services SPC</u>	9	Municipal District of Edenderry	101
Library Service	9	Municipal District of Birr	110
Community and Culture	19		
Arts Service	31		
Fire Services & Civil Defence	46		
Climate Action, Water, Environment and Transportation SPC	49		
Climate Action	49		
Environment	50		
Water Services	57		
Roads Department	61		
Land Use, Planning and Economic Development SPC	66		
Planning Department	66	Members of Offaly County Council	71
Architectural Services	69	Service Indicators 2020	116
Heritage	52		
Economic Development			
Local Enterprise Office	57		
Tourism	67		
Corporate and Support Services			
Corporate Services	70		
Finance	81		
Internal Audit	85		
Human Resources	87		
Information Systems	90		

HOUSING SPC

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

HOUSING DEPARTMENT

SERVICES

The Housing Section is committed to delivering the actions set out under the *Social Housing Strategy* and Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homeless.

From March 2020, Public Health Covid 19 Guidelines deemed most Housing Services as essential services. Housing staff, working a blend of office and remote working, ensured that service delivery continued during periods of national and local lockdowns. Many of the Housing processes were adapted to enable services to continue and ensure that essential repairs, emergency housing allocations, HAP, rent reviews, leasing etc. were addressed in a timely manner. Housing continued to work

with persons presenting as homeless and many Traveller welfare issues were also addressed.

SOCIAL HOUSING LIST AND ALLOCATIONS

The number of qualified applicants on the Council’s Approved Social Housing List remained high during 2020. The Housing Section assists those on the list by means of a variety of Social Housing options. The options available include:

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

At the end of 2020 there were 530 persons on the Social Housing Waiting List, with a further 862 in receipt of Housing Support via Housing Assistance Payments (HAP). In excess of 300 were supported in various leasing arrangements.

Throughout the year, allocations to social housing continued and in all 162 families received keys to their new homes during 2020, i.e., 90 families received keys to their new Council owned properties; 44 were nominated and received keys to Approved Housing Bodies homes; and, a further 12 were allocated to leasing units. During 2020 16 Mortgage to Rent arrangements were finalized.

SOCIAL HOUSING PROVISION

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

COUNCIL DIRECT BUILD PROGRAMME

The construction of 14 social houses and a scheme of 4 Group Houses for members of the Traveller Community were finished in 2020 at Chancery Lane, Tullamore. 18 families from the Social Housing list received keys to their new homes.

A further 100 housing units continue to progress through the stage process with the Department. These, when finished, will provide new build housing schemes in Tullamore, Clara, Banagher, Daingean, Belmont and

Moneygall.

TURNKEY DEVELOPMENTS

2 social houses were delivered in a turnkey development in Birr in 2020. Following a public advertisement and selection process Housing received departmental approval to secure a further 98 new build houses across the county. These turnkey developments in Birr, Mucklagh, Daingean, Portarlington, Tullamore, Walsh Island and Cloneygowan will deliver social housing units by 2022.

APPROVED HOUSING BODIES (AHB)

Offaly County Council continued to work with a number of AHBs in 2020. The Council will assist and support the Approved Housing Bodies and facilitate the accessing of funding for schemes that receive departmental approval.

The Housing Section work closely with various AHB and will see the delivery of 152 new build AHB social housing units in the coming years.

Tuath Housing commenced the build of 27-unit housing scheme at Killane, Edenderry.

Cluid commenced a 26-unit housing scheme in Tullamore and a further 60 new build housing units are in the pipeline for delivery in Tullamore with Oaklee Housing.

The Council are supporting Sophia Housing with an application to build 39 units in Portarlington and the

delivery of emergency accommodation for the Midlands Region in Tullamore.

SOCIAL LEASING

Working with Approved Housing Bodies and private landlords 26 long term leasing arrangements were finalized in 2020.

ACQUISITIONS

The Council and AHB acquired 17 housing units for allocation across the county. One Part V unit was completed and allocated in Moneygall.

These output figures across the various programmes represent the continued commitment of the Council to delivering for those on the Approved Housing 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 2020 there were 5 families and 18 single people in emergency accommodation.

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

Simon was supported by the Midlands Regional Joint Consultative Homeless Forum and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The facility had been used over recent years to provide emergency accommodation but this new collaborative approach will provide a much enhanced service as persons are assisted in transitioning to long term supported accommodation.

The Peter McVerry Trust was awarded the Housing First 3-year tender by the Midlands Regional Joint Consultative Homeless Forum at the start of 2020. 5 individuals, experiencing long term homelessness in Offaly, were supported by the Peter McVerry Trust during 2020.

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

MAINTENANCE AND REFURBISHMENT

The Council has a stock of 1,924 properties which vary greatly in age, standard and condition. There will always be a constant turnover of housing stock and in 2020 42 housing units were brought back into use and tenanted following pre-letting and void repair works.

The procedures relating to the carrying out of maintenance and repairs are constantly being reviewed in order to ensure that the best possible value for money is achieved. At the end of 2020 a further 20 units were under repair by contractors; 6 were at tender stage; and, a further 19 were being surveyed in

preparation for tender.

ENERGY RETROFITTING SCHEME/WINDOWS AND DOORS

€3.3m was awarded to Offaly for the Retrofit programme, which will result in 145 units undergoing retrofit works. The programme was delayed due to Covid 19 restrictions. However, the preparatory work to enable the conduct of detailed surveys of some properties was completed in 2020. It is hoped that the completion of the required upgrades to the properties that have been surveyed will be advanced in 2021.

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The Housing Liaison Officers continued to work with tenants and Residents Associations during 2020. Respecting social distancing a number of events were held with community groups in 2020, including Christmas events in new housing estates at Parkview, Edenderry and Chancery Lane, Tullamore. The Housing Liaison Officers held a Pre-Tenancy Meeting with all tenants in advance of them receiving the keys of the Council house.

An enhanced Anti-Social Behaviour Policy was adopted in September 2020 by the Elected Members. The comprehensive policy also provides for the establishment of an Estate Management Interagency Committee under the aegis of the Joint Policing Committee.

REBUILDING IRELAND HOME LOANS (RIHL)

22 RIHL applications were received in 2020 and 6 were approved in principle. **To the end of 2020 €1,650,815 has**

been paid on home loans.

TENANT PURCHASE SCHEME

9 tenants concluded the acquisition of their homes in 2020.

HOUSING AND DISABILITY STEERING GROUP

Offaly County Council continues to provide supports for Older Persons and Persons with a disability. The Housing and Disability Steering Group met via zoom in 2020. The forum provides an opportunity to engage with the relevant agencies, including the HSE, AHBs and representatives from each of the disability sectors operational in Offaly. The Steering Group commenced the development of the *Offaly Strategic Plan for People with a Disability, 2021 to 2026*.

PRIVATE GRANT SCHEMES

Housing administer the private grant schemes and in 2020, 130 applications for private Housing Grants, were approved across the three categories of grants that were available to applicants.

The total grant funding awarded was €1,333,231. The three grant categories that are available are:

- **Mobility Aids Grant Scheme (16 no. approved)**
- **Housing Adaptation Grant Scheme (56 no. approved)**
- **Housing Aid for Older People Grant Scheme (58 no. approved)**

DISABLED PERSONS WORKS ON LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSES

In addition to the works that were carried out on privately owned properties work of a similar nature were carried out on 13 Council owned properties in order to address the medical needs of those living in these homes. 2 adaptations and 11

extensions were completed at a cost of €201,160.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

The Local Traveller Consultative Committee (LTACC) met on 4 occasions during 2020. Work on implementing the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2020 continued and saw the delivery of a 4 Group Housing Scheme in Chancery Lane, Tullamore. Departmental funding was secured for the AHB, CENA, to provide on-going tenancy supports to these tenants.

Support and welfare facilities were enhanced at a number of halting sites in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. Working in collaboration with the HSE, local and national Traveller groups, AHBs and the Department of Housing awareness and welfare issues were prioritised.

PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

Offaly County Council is responsible for implementation and enforcement of standards in the private rental sector. For much of 2020 only emergency inspections were allowed under the Covid 19 restrictions.

HOUSING STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

The Housing SPC met on 4 occasions in 2020, meeting in person in February and all other meetings were held by zoom. The SPC reviewed many housing policy areas including the Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People & People with a Disability Scheme; Incremental Tenant Purchase Scheme; Differential Rent Scheme; and, the Retrofit Programme. Cognizant of the increase in presentations to Offaly Domestic Violence Support Services the SPC reviewed the Council's role and responsibilities in this area. The Housing Executive liaised with ODVSS and Tusla and provided updates to the Housing SPC.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Scheme was reviewed and the revised Scheme was recommended to the full Council, where it was adopted without change at the September 2020 Council Meeting.

COMMUNITY, CULTURAL AND EMERGENCY SPC

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

LIBRARY SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Offaly County Library Service continues to deliver on objectives of the national five-year strategy for public libraries: Our Public Libraries 2022- Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities. During these pandemic times, we are delivering on strategic objectives via innovative technological solutions to increase user engagement and particular efforts have been directed towards a blended delivery of our diverse community and cultural events programmes.

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROMOTING LIBRARIES: TAKE A CLOSER LOOK & LEAP INTO LIBRARIES

This national advertising campaign invited everyone to 'Take a Closer Look' at what their local authority library

has to offer as part of a wider national strategy to increase library membership and usage in Ireland. Offaly Library Service proudly embraced the campaign encouraging people of all ages to join and use the library.

The aforementioned campaign culminated with a national Leap into Libraries day on the 29th February. All eight branches hosted many diverse and fun events with over **1,000 visitors!!** Offaly



Libraries' social media engagement achieved a reach of over **7,000 views** on the day.

eCourses	405	290	+40%
Issues	710,414	230,849	+208%
Library Blog	10,308	1,332	+674%
Social Media Followers (F-B/Twitter/Instagram)	7,731	5,489	+41%
BorrowBox Loans	23,829	12,139	+96%

OFFALY LIBRARY SERVICE – COVID-19 RESPONSE:



Covid-19 circumstances saw an accelerated evolution and reimagining of Offaly's library services in 2020. Upon announcement of the first lockdown in March, the library team pivoted and repackaged core services, collections and space to provide responsive,

inclusive and safe methods of accessing library resources and programmes.

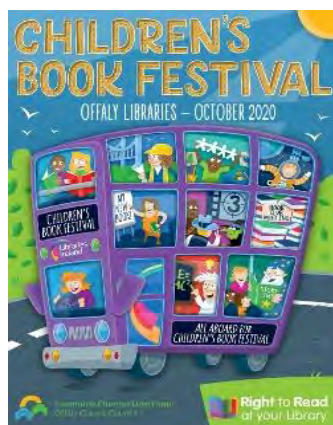
Through a national lockdown and two instances of Level 3 restrictions Offaly Libraries have contributed to Offaly's Community Response, six library staff worked on the community call helpline during the first lockdown, whilst successfully delivering **Contact & Collect Services, Browse & PC by Appointment Services**, an enhanced quality **Digital Library** and **curated online learning supports and events programmes**. Our efforts were recognised by the community with a 23% increase in membership on the previous year.

MEMBERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE

Performance	2020	2019	%
Members	15,018	12,202	+23%



1,804 appointments



ACTIONS

Online Events; 465 online events in 2020. 329 videos were shown across 12 national festivals including Spring into Storytime, Poetry Ireland Day, World Book Night, Bealtaine, Cruinniú na nÓg, SummerStars, Heritage Week, Positive Ageing Week, Children's Book Festival, Science Week, Libraries Ireland Week and Family Time at the Library.

Contact & Collect Services; Available in all 8 branches – 1,804 appointments Browse & PC by Appointment Services & pre-Covid visits; 72,708 visitors

Exhibitions (digital & traditional), animating street facing libraries

Ask the Librarian email service: Library staff answered over 70 queries in the first months of this new service. Queries ranged from digital access questions to local studies research queries.

Zoom into the Library – a new service devised for schools facilitating virtual visits to the library. **2,725 children participated in Zoom storytimes and class visits.**

Crafty Bags and Readers Gift Bags: Library staff issued 1,842 items in 2020 in the form of Craft bags, Gift bags, Summer Stars craft bags, Christmas Family Time at the Library gift bags and School Reading offerings.

NEW SERVICES, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL INCLUSION

DIGITAL RESOURCES IN OFFALY LIBRARIES

In addition to the national Digital Resources suite of eBooks, eAudiobooks, eNewspapers, eMagazines, Language and Learning eCourses, Offaly Libraries took the opportunity in 2020 to invest in and provide FREE



online access to **eComics, Music and Film streaming** and a **VisionNet business resource**. Offaly Libraries online newsletter, launched in May 2020 attracted over 1,100 subscribers. Library Social Media channels were scaled up and further developed achieving 7,731 followers. Our digital offering now includes: Public PCs, WiFi,



Contactless Printing, Scanning and Photocopying services and 6 Magic Tables.

Offaly Libraries invested in 2 new software packages which provided additional reassurance to our community in

2020. Booking software enabled scheduled Browse & PC by appointment at a time convenient to our members. New occupancy software gives an accurate record of the number of people in our libraries and assists in managing safe use of library buildings.

AGE FRIENDLY LIBRARIES, POSITIVE AGEING WEEK 2020 – A SUCCESS STORY!

Positive Ageing Week was officially 'virtually launched' in September by Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, Cllr. John Carroll. Building on collaborations with the Age Friendly Alliance and Community Response Forum, library staff in conjunction with partners gifted 300 Age Friendly Gift Bags to library users. The Library Service also curated a virtual programme of readings, poetry and music which reached 24,000 people with 6,920 views.



OFFALY LIBRARIES NEWSLETTER – SUCCESS STORY!

In response to user requests Offaly Libraries launched its first online newsletter via a virtual launch by then Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, Cllr. Peter Ormond. The newsletter is an important communications tool to keep our communities aware of upcoming events in Offaly Libraries. In seven months over 1,100 subscribed!

OFFALY VEX ROBOTICS

Vex Robotics is an interactive programme to encourage children to develop their interest in STEM, such as engineering, programming, teamwork, research, critical thinking, communication and hand-eye coordination. Offaly Libraries continued to support partners for the Vex Robotics project, led by Offaly County Council IT department and in association with Cork Institute of Technology (CIT). Library staff supported the project throughout and assisted on both primary and secondary school County Championship Events; and continue to develop STEM resources and programming facilities in libraries for the benefit of schools and the community. **Congratulations to Tullamore's own Sacred Heart School who placed second in the National VEX Championship Final in Cork.**



SEACHTAIN NA GAELIGE LE ENERGIA 2020

Offaly libraries hosted 24 well attended events for Seachtain na Gaeilge. Fun and engaging Trath na gCeist (table quiz as gaeilge) were hosted in Tullamore, Edenderry, Daingean and Clara libraries and bilingual author Anna Heusaff visited Ferbane, Kilcormac and Tullamore Libraries.



SUCCESSES OF "REACHING OUT" WHEN WE COULDN'T INVITE USERS IN - INNOVATIVE EVENTS & VIRTUAL PROGRAMMES:

Restrictions due to COVID-19 meant than traditional methods of event and programme delivery had to be completely rethought and required innovation and creativity to continue in a meaningful way.

The 4 national Right to Read programmes at your library - **Spring into Storytime, Summerstars, Children's Book Festival and Family Time** at your Library were a huge success.

SPRING INTO STORYTIME 2020

60 story time videos posted with a reach on Facebook with 80,055 views!



SUMMER STARS 2020

Offaly Libraries hosted a fantastic programme of Summer Stars Online Events, from quizzes, writing competitions and online stories. Baby bookbags, and Book in A Bag initiatives were delivered to encourage users back.



FAMILY TIME AT YOUR LIBRARY

This was a fun filled Christmas programme with 41 pre-recorded videos including an exclusive interview with Mrs. Claus





CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL

933 attendees

- 6 Author Visits
- 16 Live storytimes with schools
- Animal Crackers event in 3 schools
- 261 craft bags gifted to children

LIBRARY WEEK IRELAND

427 attendees

- 9 Live storytimes with schools



CHRISTMAS FAMILY TIME AT YOUR LIBRARY

1,868 attendees

- 82 Live storytimes with schools
- 626 Christmas Gift bags to our children members



MORE EVENTS

224 attendees

- 2 Dublin Zoo sessions with schools
- Hullabaloo Drama event
- 19 other events booked via Eventbrite

1,868; Offaly Libraries were indeed spreading our positive message worldwide.

Creative Ireland supports a number of programming events in the Library. For Cruinniú na nÓg 2020 Offaly Libraries hosted 66 amazing events covering art, science, singing, music and crafts. This series of events had a social media reach of 54,335 and engagement of 2,097.



The annual Harry Potter Book Night was a Right to Read Campaign highlight. This event was delivered on the 6th February in partnership with Vex Robotics and CIT. In **promotion of children's literacy and reading development**, the evening was a huge success with 871 in attendance to enjoy Quidditch Pong, Face Painting, a Costume Competition and a wonderful family-friendly Magic Show **which closed the evening's Harry Potter celebrations.**

herself and 82 zoom into your library storytime sessions. With 33,132 online views and a physical zoom audience of

Committee Storytime sessions- “Rufus wash your hands”. The programme went online for the remainder of the year with 11 pre-recorded webinars including the Eleanor Glennon series on creating your own Covid 19 toolkit and Leona McDonnell series on Mindfulness. The public reaction was really positive with 5,120 minutes viewed. Our social media team posted public health information each week throughout the year with the positive messages of the “In This Together” and the “Keep Well” campaigns.



WORK MATTERS AT THE LIBRARY

This initiative continues to be developed throughout the branch network. It has been designed to support people in work and business-related tasks and offers a key role for libraries in supporting users in their transition into jobs and careers, seeking work, and/or becoming entrepreneurs. 2020 Covid-19 restrictions saw a big uptake of online life-long learning and upskilling resources as well as increased demand for print collect services. Offaly Libraries responded to community demand by providing printed copies of the Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment payment application form outside all our libraries during the initial lockdown.



HEALTHY IRELAND AT YOUR LIBRARY

There were almost 100 physical events for HI at your library in the first quarter, of the year in our 8 libraries - the big success was the collaboration with Offaly County Childcare



HERITAGE WEEK 2020

ASK THE LIBRARIAN



DIGITAL EXHIBITIONS



OFFALY ARCHIVES

Offaly Archives service had an interesting first year of existence. It opened on a one-day-a-week basis in January and February until the appointment of a fulltime archivist in March, swiftly followed by the first national lockdown due to **Covid-19**.

Nevertheless, the archivist was able to make improvements to existing catalogues, complete and **publish new catalogues** (mainly from Offaly Library's collections), publish digitised archives, answer email queries, and **engage with users** via social media



platforms. During brief interludes when restrictions were lifted, eight researchers were registered and accessed documents in the new reading room with great success. Despite restrictions there was a **29% increase** in users of the online catalogue (**5,561 users and 45,000 page views**) and regular queries throughout the year. The archivist also engaged with the wider archival community by providing training seminars and lectures remotely to members of the Archives and Records Association (Ireland) and MA students of Archives and Records Management in UCD.



OFFALY LIBRARIES COVID-19 PHOTO ARCHIVE

Offaly Libraries invited photographic submissions from local communities to show how they have adapted their lives and businesses during this pandemic. We received great photos showing social distancing, quirky communications and other innovations. These photographic donations have created a valuable record for future generations.



OFFALY LIBRARIES NOW HAVE 6 MAGIC TABLES

Offaly Library Service have been successful in securing funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development for the installation of four more magic tables for the County. 25% matched funding was provided by Offaly County Council. These projectors are designed to support those living with dementia and for children with specific additional learning requirements. Prior to lockdown in March 2020, the magic tables were in high demand and very popular.



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

DRCD FUNDING SUCCESS FOR SENSORY PROVISION IN LIBRARIES

Offaly Libraries was successful in a €20,000 grant funding award for Library Sensory Provision from DRDC – delivering a new Sensory Room in Tullamore Library and Autism Friendly collections and equipment for the benefit of Offaly citizens countywide. This project was 25% matched funded by Offaly County Council.



DRCD FUNDING SUCCESS FOR SMALL SCALE CAPITAL WORKS IN LIBRARIES

Offaly Libraries secured a grant of €100,000 from DRCD for Small Scale Capital Works in Libraries. This funding was used for building refurbishments and improvements to allow further safe library access in Covid times. The project was 10% match funded by Offaly County Council, and is delivering building improvements across a number of libraries.



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

DRCD HEALTHY IRELAND AT YOUR LIBRARY 2020 FUNDING

Offaly Libraries was successful in achieving a grant of €6,083.58 for new exterior contactless Book Drop-boxes. This allowed for the safe provision of library services to our vulnerable members.

DORMANT ACCOUNTS PROJECT FUNDING

Offaly Libraries was successful in achieving a grant of €17,412 from the Dormant Account Fund for Social Inclusion Projects in 2020. This is currently funding Brick Flicks events, Songwriting Workshops and TTRS licenses for family learning supports. The project is 10% match funded by Offaly County Council.

ciste na
gcuntas díomhaoin
the dormant
accounts fund



PRIORITIES FOR 2021 INCLUDE

- Progress a new interim Library Development plan for Offaly Library Service
- Progress plans for the development of a new library and arts base in Edenderry
- Update library building facilities across the county
- Increase promotion of library services especially through online channels
- Continue to develop innovative partnerships and curate responsive community events and cultural programmes
- Increase library engagement by developing traditional and digital collections, services and library technology
- Further promote Offaly Archives Service
- Review and evaluate library service activities to the benefit of the community

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

OFFALY LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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

THE FUNCTIONS OF OFFALY LCDC

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

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

publicly funded local and community development resources are used.

LCDC MEETINGS

The Offaly LCDC held 9 meetings during 2020 as follows – 16th January; 13th February, 12th March, 21st May, 16th July, 13th August, 15th October, 19th November and 17th December. Members participated in LCDC meetings via zoom and in-house in line with Government restrictions for COVID-19.



MEMBERSHIP OF OFFALY LCDC IN 2020

The 19 member LCDC has broad representation from public and private interests including business, local development, education, enterprise, agriculture, voluntary and local authority members.

During the year Mr. J. Todd was replaced as the PPN

Community & Voluntary Sector representative by Ms. S. Sweeney. Offaly LCDC acknowledges the contribution of Mr. J. Todd during his membership.

Membership of Offaly LCDC during 2020 is as follows:

Statutory Interests (9)		
Sector	Members Name	Organisation
Local Authority Elected Members	Cllr. Declan Harvey	Offaly County Council (Chair)
	Cllr. John Leahy	Offaly County Council
	Cllr. Noel Cribbin	Offaly County Council
Local Authority Officials	Ms. Anna Marie Delaney	Offaly County Council
	Ms. Orla Martin, Head of Enterprise	Offaly County Council
State Agencies	Mr. James Carney	Dept. of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
	Mr. Tony Dalton	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 ¹	Community & Voluntary Sector

	Ms. Sinead McDonagh	Community & Voluntary Sector (Vice Chair)
	Ms. Elizabeth Fleming	Social Inclusion Sector
	Ms. Margaret Murphy	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. Dominic Doheny	Construction Industry Federation
	Mr. Richard Scally	Irish Farmers Association
	Mr. Fechin Daly	Construction Industry
	Ms. Christina Byrne	Slieve Bloom Rural Development Co-operative

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF LCDC IN 2020

The following key priorities were progressed and developed in 2020 by the LCDC:

- Implementation of the Offaly Local Development Strategy and approval of the LEADER/Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 funding;
- Implementation, monitoring and review of Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022;

¹ Replaced Mr. Jimmy Todd from July 2020.

- Implementation of the Offaly Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021;
- Implementation of the Offaly Community Enhancement Programme;
- Implementation of the Offaly Healthy Ireland fund;
- Implementation of the Offaly Migrant Integration Strategy 2020-2024;
- Progression and improvement of the health and physical activity status of the people of Offaly by Offaly Sports Partnership;
- Provision of support to the Community sector and affording a voice through the Offaly PPN Network.
- Establishment of the Community Response Forum and the Community Call Helpline
- The delivery of the COVID 19 Emergency Fund

LEADER/RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2014-2020

Offaly Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is the designated Local Action Group (LAG) and has responsibility for the delivery of LEADER 2014-2020 in the County and for approval of LEADER Funding. The Implementing Partner is Offaly Local Development Company. During the period 2016-2020 in excess of €6m of LEADER funding has been invested in innovative community and private enterprise projects throughout County Offaly.

The aim of the LEADER Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 is to promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas. The

programme provides funding and other supports such as advice, training and mentoring.

Theme
Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
Social Inclusion
Rural Environment

In 2020 there were 60 Expressions of Interest for LEADER grant supports from local community and enterprise groups and 47 Expressions of Interest under a 'Targeted Call' for LEADER funding for Hospitality and Tourism re-opening Grants. Offaly LCDC approved 112 LEADER projects in 2020. There has been €2.9 million approved in 2020 alone and €1.1 million of the grant aid approved has been paid to promoters in 2020. A detailed breakdown of Project Approvals and Expenditure in respect of Claims for the period 2020 is outlined below:

Theme	Sub-Theme	No. of projects approved 01/01/2020-31/12/2020	Project Approval 01/01/2020-31/12/2020 €	Actual Claim Expenditure 01/01/2020-31/12/2020 €
Economic Development	Rural Tourism	51	758,041.69	225,674.54
	Enterprise Development	15	502,540.70	75,237.67
	Rural Towns	8	228,125.18	121,269.74
	Broadband	13	56,518.58	0
Social Inclusion	Basic Services	9	695,975.23	287,010.20
	Rural Youth	8	124,814.90	122,971.01
Rural Environment	Water Resources	4	183,057.22	86,077.39
	Biodiversity	2	179,604.56	77,499.31
	Renewable Energy	2	197,509.72	159,547.30
Totals		112	2,926,187.78	1,155,287.16


In total over the period of 2016-2020 of the LEADER Program there were 260 projects approved and approximately €6.5 million of grant aid awarded to promoters across Offaly. Many communities and community groups and social and private enterprises have

benefited from the LEADER Program in Offaly over the last 4 years. Approximately 55% of all grant aid approved has been awarded. The LEADER Programme in Offaly has been highly successful, with Offaly Local Action Group (LAG) being named one of the ten performers in Ireland in 2019 by the department of Rural and Community Development and receiving an additional €500,000 in 2019.

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

The aim of the SICAP Programme is to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality in Ireland through supporting communities and individuals using community development approaches, engagement and collaboration. SICAP aims to address high and persistent levels of deprivation through targeted and innovative locally led approaches. It targets and supports those who are disadvantaged and less likely to use mainstream services

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 (SICAP Programme Implementer) **across the County with an overall budget of €783,277 for 2020.** In 2020, the SICAP Programme Implementer worked with 81 local community groups and 504 individuals across the country, strengthening community development, providing education and training and preparing people for employment.

	2020
Some key SICAP indicators / targets achieved	
<i>Disadvantaged individuals worked with on a one to one basis</i>	<i>504</i>
<i>Community Groups assisted under SICAP</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>Children that received an educational or developmental support</i>	<i>1494</i>
<i>Recipients of employment support</i>	<i>96</i>
<i>Progression into self-employment</i>	<i>10</i>

individuals and communities in Offaly throughout 2020. The virus reached Ireland in late February 2020 and cases were reported in Offaly within three weeks. On March 6th 2020 the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) was appointed to take the lead role on organising supports for vulnerable people living in the community. The DRCD established a Covid-19 Advisory Group on Community Response, which published the Government Action Plan for the Community Response to Covid-19 on 20th March 2020.

During the course of the year, the LCDC carried out an End-of-Year Performance Review of the 2019 programme, a Mid-Year Performance Review of the 2020 programme and an appraisal of the proposed Annual Plan for 2021. A Pobal Engagement Meeting was held on 20th October, 2020.

All schools and educational establishments were shut and all large gatherings were cancelled including the St Patrick's Day parade. On 24 March 2020 most businesses and amenities were shut and on 27 March 2020 all non-essential travel and contact with other people was banned. The elderly and those with certain illnesses were told to cocoon.



On Friday 27th March 2020 Offaly County Council and all other local authorities were instructed to established a COVID-19 Community Call Forum. The Forum was set up over that weekend and held its first meeting on Monday 30th March 2020.

Offaly County Council also set up a Helpline the same weekend and a supporting database management system was created at this time. The database enabled daily reporting to the National Oversight Group. Michael Duignan, Chairman of Offaly GAA, was appointed as the Offaly Community Champion and he also sat on the Offaly Community Forum.

THE OFFALY COMMUNITY RESPONSE FORUM

The Covid-19 pandemic had an enormous impact on

The purpose of the Forum was to lead the co-ordination of COVID-19 community supports and resilience, including:

- Work with the HSE, An Post, local community groups and other statutory services to identify vulnerable groups and individuals in the county
- Ensure delivery of targeted social care supports and assistance to those vulnerable groups and individuals
- Identify issues arising through PPNs, community groups and helpline calls
- Provide assistance to vulnerable individuals in isolation
- Ensure the resilience of existing community services
- Collect and map information on services and voluntary groups to help direct requests for assistance and identify gaps in service

The members of the Forum were Offaly County Council, HSE, GAA, OLDC, An Garda Síochána, ALONE, SVP, An POST, Offaly PPN, Local Link, Citizens Information Service, Túsla, IFA, Offaly Traveller Movement, Kildare Volunteer Centre (covering Offaly), Civil Defence, Offaly Library Service, Family Resource Centres, and Offaly Community Services. The Community Response Forum in Offaly has proven to be of great benefit in co-ordinating communication and responses between a variety of organisations and developed a number of new interagency relationships which will be of benefit after the pandemic has passed.

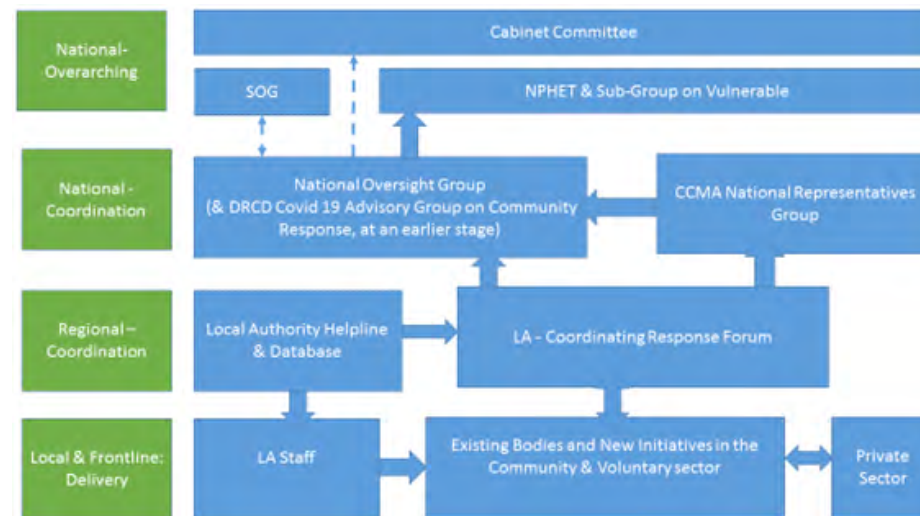


Fig. Community Response Forum and Community Call linkages to national response

In April 2020 Offaly was allocated €65,553 under the first tranche of the Covid-19 Emergency Fund by the Dept. of Rural & Community Development which targeted eligible community groups and organisations working directly with the public. This funding was allocated through the Community Response Forum to 37 groups and organisations to enable the provision of a range of emergency services such as Meals on Wheels, SVP, Online resources, newsletters, etc. A second round of Emergency funding of €48,694 was approved in December 2020 which was allocated to community groups through Offaly LCDC.

COMMUNITY CALL HELPLINE

On 19 March 2020, people over 70 years of age and those who were medically vulnerable to COVID-19 were asked to stay at home at all times, and minimise all interaction between them and other people. To assist people who were cocooning Offaly County Council established a Community Call Helpline which operated from 30th March 2020 and worked in conjunction with the Offaly Community Response Forum.

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

It operated in the initial months from 8am to 8pm 7 days per week, but this was later reduced to 9.00am to 5.00pm, 7 days per week as services became more responsive and people became more adept at establishing their own network of supports. As a result, the number of calls to the Helpline diminished significantly over the last quarter of 2020. The Helpline number for Offaly is FREEPHONE: 1800 81 81 81.

A spreadsheet of local information (e.g. which shops were open, whether they were delivering, etc.), and local contacts, was put together by the PPN and Community

staff, and updated daily. Mapping of supports available in the county was also carried out by the PPN.

An update on the number of calls and how they were responded to was provided to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government each evening at 8pm. Nationally, between the 31st March and 14 August, over 53,000 calls had been received by the county Helplines, with 440 of these calls in Offaly.

The Offaly Helpline also linked in with the Alone helpline at national level, in addition to other local social and befriending services which helped respond to isolation and mental health. In August 2020, Offaly Helpline staff phoned all those who had earlier requested help, to see how they were managing. All the service-users reported that they were using the arrangement set up in spring 2020, or had since made other arrangements, and did not need to contact the Community Call Helpline for further support.

The breakdown of monthly Helpline calls for 2020 is as follows:

SUMMARY OF MONTHLY CALLS AND EMAILS TO COVID HELPLINE 2020										
Mon.	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Tot
No.	312	93	19	8	8	7	9	3	8	467
%	66.8	19.9	4.1	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.9	0.6	1.7	100

SUMMARY OF TYPE OF CALLS AND EMAILS TO COVID HELPLINE 2020							
	Deliveries of Food, fuel, etc	Social Isolation	Meals	Garda Related	Medical/ Health	OTHER e.g. volunteers	Total
Tot.	81	30	8	5	105	238	467
%	17	6	2	1	23	51	100

The strengths of the Community Call Helpline in Offaly were:

- The speed with which the Community Call Helpline and the Community Response Forum were put into place
- The hard work of community and voluntary groups across Offaly who put supports in place as soon as possible, e.g. Meals on Wheels services were greatly expanded
- Offaly County Council, government agencies and community and voluntary groups worked together quickly to identify needs and put in place effective responses to them
- New relationships were made between organisations who were members of the Community Response Forum, and pre-existing relationships were strengthened
- The work allowed many vulnerable people who services were not aware of to be identified and supported

OFFALY PPN

Offaly PPN focuses on supporting the Community sector

and providing a voice through the Network for the Community, Social Inclusion and Environment pillars. Offaly PPN provides monthly updates on funding opportunities, upcoming consultations and other relevant workshops or training opportunities to Offaly LCDC. The PPN actively engaged in the Community Response Forum and the Community Call Helpline establishing the Master Sheet of Contacts for the Helpline.

The PPN provided funding to assist with Covid actions including Meals on Wheels and Migrant integration initiatives. Current membership has increased to 600 groups under the Community, Environment and Social Inclusion pillars. The PPN produces a Family Magazine of Fun activities, physical activities, recipes, exercises, **puzzle's and much more which was distributed** to 10,000 families across the county. The GAA and Offaly Development Company, Community Gardaí and Local Link were instrumental in the delivery of the Magazines. **The PPN contributed at Strategic Policy Committee's and Joint Policing Committees** and links with key stakeholders in Arts, Sports Partnership, Healthy Offaly, LEO, Town & Village Planning, Age Friendly Initiatives and a range of Community and Voluntary Support services across the county.

The PPN engaged in the Pride of Place Competition, Community CCTV actions and are working on a Community Wellbeing Statement for the county. 2020 necessitated communications to be carried out via Zoom which encouraged, upskilling and coordination on a much greater level among PPN representatives and Community

groups across the county.

Offaly PPN Plenary & Safety & Security workshop with **Conor O' Leary Muintir Na Tire & Sgt Graham Kavanagh** via Zoom, was one of a number of online actions in 2020.



Offaly PPN Meeting style/Events 2020

OFFALY AGE FRIENDLY PROGRAMME

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

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



A SELECTIONS OF AGE FRIENDLY ALLIANCE ACTIONS

- Connecting the Faithful Newsletter focusing on fun and entertaining articles delivered by An Post to 4,000 households across Offaly in 2020 at regular intervals during the year. The Newsletter is a collaboration amongst the Alliance membership.
- Chatter & Matters Radio Programme instigated by Offaly Older Persons Network broadcast every Sunday Morning 8- 9 am on Midlands 103. This is another communications tool that came to fruition in 2020 through the Age Friendly Alliance. It is a Tri County Initiative with Laois and Westmeath. The Tri county working group meet weekly to develop the content for the programme and review progress on regular basis.

Funding from the 3 Age Friendly Alliances was

agreed for the first 6 months as a Pilot project. The Radio show commenced in November 2020 with listenership growing from week to week.

- Bealtaine events took place throughout the county via the library Services
- Positive Ageing week. Libraries in conjunction with the PPN, Gardaí and the Library staff presented older people with a bag of goodies including, books, seeds to plant, tea bags and cookies, information leaflets and much more.
- Offaly Westmeath Music Generation provided an opportunity to learn how to play the Ukulele as an intergenerational project. It is gaining momentum across the County via online learning.
- As online opportunities gained traction, Offaly Sports Partnership created Age Friendly physical activity programmes including dancing which people could follow from their own homes
- OLDC in conjunction with the Community Gardaí **organized impromptu 'Coming Together while Staying Apart' activities to support the most isolated and socially excluded.** They also ramped up the Meals on Wheels services across the County
- Local Link continued to support older people by collecting and delivering groceries and prescriptions and checking in on their clients, primarily Older People while adhering to Covid Guidelines and managing transport needs as required



OFFALY MIGRANT INTEGRATION STRATEGY 2020-2024

The Offaly Migrant Integration Strategy 2020-2024 was developed by Offaly LCDC and virtually launched on 30th June 2020 by the Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, Councillor John Carroll. The aim of the strategy is to work towards creating an inclusive and intercultural society where all residents of the county are valued equally. Two of the key actions contained in the Offaly Migrant Integration Strategy are:



- Establish a Migrant Interagency Working Group to advise and monitor the Integration Strategy
- Establish a Migrant Integration Forum through existing Public Participation Network Structures

These actions will be progressed during 2021 when Covid restrictions permit.

LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN 2016-2021

The Offaly Local Community Development Committee has progressed the development of the Offaly Local Economic and Community Development Plan (LECP) in 2020. The purpose of the LECP, as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, is to



set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the County.

The LECP will be reviewed during 2021 and preparations for the next LECP will commence.

COMMUNITY CCTV

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

Project Team meetings were held with 3 proposed Community CCTV schemes in January and March 2020 to progress their applications. Further meetings were not

possible due to Covid. The three schemes are from Belmont; Coolderry/Kilcolman/Aghancon and Rahan. The Project Team meetings are attended by the applicant schemes, An Garda Síochána, and staff from Offaly County Council's Community, IT & Planning Sections.

PRIDE OF PLACE COMPETITION

Offaly County Council submitted two entries in the 2020 competition for online judging in July 2020. These were the Glendaniel Residents Association in Tullamore and Lusmagh Development Group. Both groups were highly commended for their work by the Pride of Place judging panel.

OFFALY COMHAIRLE NA NÓG

Comhairle na nÓg is an organisation that represents young people at County Council level and is funded through the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. In Offaly, Comhairle is run and facilitated by Offaly County Council. The Offaly Comhairle consists of 25 young people between the ages of 12 and 17, and members come from the schools and youth groups from all across the county.

Meetings

Offaly Comhairle na nÓg held 11 Executive meetings in 2020, 8 of these were online due to COVID 19 restrictions.

Consultations

Members of the Comhairle Executive took part in and contributed to many consultations during 2020 such as but

not limited to 'Parenting Support' run by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, a Youth Participation Sub-Group for CYPSC, Women and Diversity in Local Government Policy, the five year Comhairle Plan (DYCA), and finally the Environmental Protection Agency.

Short Film

Comhairle na nÓg created a short film in relation to 'Exam Stress and Anxiety' in February 2020. The Executive had a fun day shooting the film in Tullamore with all Comhairle members giving their best effort to creating and producing the film named 'Stress Points'. The film was launched online in April 2020 and its aim was to help students and young people with stress and anxiety caused by exams. It was launched online due to restrictions, and received a positive response due students being particularly stressed and unsure in relation to exams in 2020.

LGBTI+

On Tuesday the 17th of November two Executive members alongside the Chief Executive Anna-Marie Delaney, Cathaoirleach John Carroll, Ann Sheeran (Youth Work Midlands) and Nate Condrón from Tullamore Youth Project raised the flag for LGBTI+ at Offaly County Council.

AGM 2020

The Comhairle na nÓg first online AGM was held on the 4th of December 2020. The event was opened by Chief Executive of Offaly County Council Anna Marie Delaney and Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, Cllr. John

Carroll. The event was attended by 44 students from all 12 secondary schools in Offaly and representation from Tullamore Youth. The theme of the AGM was climate change and there was a guest appearance by Pádraic Fogarty on the topic of Climate Change and Biodiversity. This was followed by a lively Q&A session where many topics to do with climate change and Biodiversity were discussed. The Offaly Comhairle Na nÓg members prepared an online survey which was sent to all secondary schools in Offaly in October 2020 to find out what issues should be discussed at the AGM. It received a great response and had in total 1686 responses from secondary school students from all over Offaly. The results highlighted that issues like homelessness, mental health,



discrimination of Ethnic Minorities, climate change and COVID 19 are all important to the young people of Offaly. The AGM was closed with a talent competition. The AGM 2020 showcased the work completed by the Executive in 2020 and also showcased the wonderful young people of Offaly who have a very bright future ahead of them.

ARTS SERVICE

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

2020 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

LOUGH BOORA SCULPTURE PARK

In 2020, 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. As an outcome from the committee, artist Tim Collins and Reiko Goto published a deep mapping project of the Sculpture Park and its environment. The Arts Office were also allocated funding **from the Arts Council's 'Invitation to Collaboration'** scheme, to commission a research project that would recommend an operational framework for the Sculpture Park into the future.

YOUTH ARTS RESEARCH

A research report '*The Makings: Fostering Youth Creativity*', carried out by consultant Angela Ryan Whyte to examine both current and potential arts provision for young people in Offaly, with the purpose to recommend a framework for developing and implementing a new **strategic approach for young people's arts provision in the county over the coming five years**, was developed and will be published 2020.

FILMOFFALY

FilmOffaly continued to attract investment from national and international film-makers. Several films were postponed and reschedule due to Covid 19 restrictions, but there was continued interest in filming in Offaly.



Helen Flanagan was engaged and worked with 4 writers selected for the programme. Helen also undertook a number of workshops with the LOETB in October on writing for film and film professional Alan Fitzpatrick delivered a series of online workshops in September focusing on working in film. The aim of this programme is to establish a distinguished accredited educational course for film professional which will assist in the development of the industry in Offaly

The FilmOffaly 2019 bursary winner *Whale*, Ben Conway (Writer), Lorna Fitzsimons (Director), Martha O'Neill (Producer) and the FilmOffaly 2020 bursary winner *The Passion* Frank Blake (Writer), Mia Mullarkey (Director), Roisin Geraghty (Producer) were both set to shoot on location for December 2020



FilmOffaly Mentoring Programme was devised in collaboration with LOETB and Screen Skills Ireland to support film-makers from County Offaly in the development of script writing skills. FilmOffaly mentor



FilmOffaly worked in partnership with OFFline Film Festival to deliver a number of professional development workshops as part of the festival. This included delivering a needs analysis workshop for film professionals in the county.

CREATIVE EDENDERRY

Creative Edenderry is a new ground-up arts initiative working with the community of Edenderry to develop a community network with a focus on bringing the Arts to Edenderry. In 2020 The Arts Office continued to work with Voluntary Arts Ireland to develop a series of collaborative meetings, 'Creative Edenderry Open Conversation', acted as a stimulus to draw-in the different community groups, get the conversation going, with a view to work with the community to explore the potentials of an arts network. As a result of this dialogue the Creative Edenderry Network delivered a Culture Night event and are working towards an associate event with Galway2020 for 2021.

CULTURE NIGHT OFFALY

Culture Night Offaly went on line, our highlight was Energise | Envisage | Engage a 30-minute commissioned film that showcased the very best of Offaly artists and venues. Some of our online events included Vintage Luminaries, JJ Houghs Sparks of the Devine, Rahan Comhaltas at Charleville, Bronte Artists talks, Music Generation Offaly/Westmeath Mega Play Along, Deep Mapping Book Presentation and a Curators Talk on a new initiative for the community of Tullamore. There were several socially distanced events on the ground included the premiere of the film Spiral Nebula and Tina Claffey artists talk at Birr theatre and Arts Centre, a projection of postcards from Birr onto an old shop front in Birr and the Shoes of Edenderry Shop window exhibition in Edenderry. Approximately 13000 watched and engaged with the

events. Culture Night is co-funded by the Arts Council.



HULLABALOO! OFFALY'S CHILDREN'S ARTS FESTIVAL

Hullabaloo! celebrated its 14th annual festival completely online, delivering a 4-day high intensity and wide-ranging programme of creative zoom/pre-recorded workshops and shows. With music, art, dance, film, comedy, literature, painting, craft and much more. The festival is undertaken in partnership with Birr Theatre and Arts Centre working with Offaly libraries and Clara Family Resource Centre. With over 40 workshops to choose from kids aged 3 to 12 years were highly engaged and received quality experiences in the arts.

ARTS ACT GRANTS

18 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 2020, Offaly county council provided financial assistance, advice and promotional assistance to, Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival, OFFline Film Festival, Tullamore International Summer Organ Series, Tullamore Club Sessions, Shakefest, Scripts and Birr Festival of Music and Voice, as well as leading out with other festivals such as **Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival in partnership with Birr Theatre and Arts Centre**. Many of the festivals were able to adapt to an online offering for their audiences, while some festivals were unable to go-ahead due to Covid-19 restrictions.

ARTS IN HEALTH

ANAM BEO

Anam Beo, Offaly's Arts and Health organisation promotes arts inclusion through the delivery of comprehensive arts projects in care settings. The programme which has run since 2005 has facilitated over 13,472 workshop attendees in the growing demographic of the over 55's. In 2020, Anam Beo was one of the organisations badly affected by the Covid-19 restrictions, with minimal access to their primary target audience. However, through careful planning they were able to work with active age groups, older people and staff in care settings in a response to the

pandemic in a distanced way. Anam Beo, created projects such as the 350 envelope art projects working in conjunction with HSE care settings in Edenderry, Riada House, Tullamore, Birr Community and Nursing Unit, The Irish Wheelchair Association, Ballinagar and Ballycumber Active Age Group.

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

ARTS AND HEALTH RESIDENCY

Offaly County Council Arts Service in partnership with Anam Beo, HSE and Music Generation commissioned an Arts & Health intergenerational music project.

Engagement with older people and young people (between 16 – 24 years) was the prerequisite, with a focus on the mental health and well-being of each demographic. Musician Andy Spearpoint was commissioned and began working with older and younger groups in the community. Due to Covid-19 restrictions however this programme is currently being re-designed.

ARTS AND HEALTH RESEARCH

The Arts Office are one of the partners for an Arts Council funded award through **their 'Invitation to Collaborate '**. The lead partner in this project is Laois County Council Arts Office. The project is a regional project titled Mapping Arts Provision in Health Settings. Partner organizations are

Laois County, County, Westmeath County Council, Offaly County Council, Music Generation OW, Anam Beo, Helium Arts, Waterford Healing Arts Trust (WHAT).

CREATIVE IRELAND PROJECTS

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

ANIMATION RESIDENCY

Offaly County Council arts service, through the Creative Ireland programme, continued to support a new 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.

PUBLIC ART

BANAGHER PUBLIC ART

A public art project for Banagher, funded from the Kylebeg Banagher Capital Scheme, scheme from funds made available from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government under the Percent for Art Scheme, was facilitated by the Arts Office. Writer Jessica Traynor was selected to work on a writing project working with the community to create a poetic history of Banagher, through a series of workshops with **Banagher's**

writing community plus workshops with local schools. Prior to the lockdown Jessica conducted a number of workshops with TY students, and local writers. Following lockdown Jessica arranged a 4week series of online workshops with local writers plus arranging a summer mentorship programme for 6th year students and adults. Jessica has also been working with Banagher College with musician Elaine Agnew to deliver online workshops and recording with students. Elaine will set the poetry that Jessica and the TY students worked on to music. This will be recorded remotely and the song will be released around Christmas over social media as a celebration of Banagher - and to celebrate getting through a difficult year!

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. Birr Theatre & Art Centre** faced many challenges throughout the year as a consequence of Covid-19, but rose to the challenge producing much of their festival work as online events and taking care to maintain their presence to their audience, while supporting local artists on the ground. Offaly County Council provided funding of €38,000.00 to Birr Theatre and Arts Centre in 2020.

**MUSIC GENERATION OFFALY | WESTMEATH
MGOW TUITION MOVES ON-LINE**

MGOW had to stop all person to person tuition early in the year and throughout the summer, as a result of the covid-19 restrictions and so set about exploring new ways to maintain their connection with their musician team, partners and of the course the many children and young people they work with. As a result, MGOW moved on-line. The online programme included; a 6-week music technology and composition course, the delivery of sessions as part of the Cruinniú programme in both Offaly & Westmeath, an online singing camp in partnership with Music Generation Louth, Sing Ireland and IMRO, a Mega

Play Along for Culture Night 2020, and preparation for Singfest going virtual. After the summer break MGOW began



working back in some of our partner schools, with more schools expected back after mid-term break.



SUPPORT AND INFORMATION TO 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 has been even busier in 2020, with many enquiries from artists and community alike on how to address the challenges faced by the Covid 19 restrictions. This element of the service is based on best practice principles in all forms of arts development and is intended to give rise to increased confidence in quality methods and professional approaches.

PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS SUPPORT GRANT

In 2020 the county arts service continued to provide assistance to professional artists from and living in Offaly. The awards are designed to support the development of **artist's professional practice**. Thirteen grants were awarded to artists.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING FOR ARTISTS

The Arts Office organized a number of online supports through training opportunities for artists including online workshops for offaly artists with regard to continued delivering of their business and working on line.

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.

BIRR WRITERS RESIDENCY

The continuation of the successful annual partnership with **the St Brendan's House (Tin Jug Studio) in Birr saw four** writers awarded with the writers residency.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

ARTS INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

The Arts Office has within its remit, the role of supporting the development of a number of Arts Infrastructure organisations within the County. In 2020, with the construction phase for the Tullamore Community Arts Centre underway, it was considered timely to develop a Strategic Plan for Arts Infrastructure within the County, in order to ensure that all the Arts Infrastructure develop in a collaborative and harmonic manner, resulting in a cohesive, complimentary and self-sustaining network, beneficial to the whole county. With this in mind and in agreement with the Arts Council, the Arts Office developed a tender for the research and development of this strategy. This project will commence in 2020 and be delivered in 2021.

TULLAMORE COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE

The Tullamore Community Arts Centre project continued to be developed through 2020, this was based upon the agreement from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht confirming the support through Access Funds of €2 million. **In addition to this funding €2.5 million was pledged by Offaly County Council as well as €200,000 from the Street Enhancement Scheme.** The Board of the

Centre has pledged to raise a further €500,000 by way of fundraising.

The Arts Office continued to assess best practice operational and planning options. An initial Arts Office programme proposal was developed for the Arts Centre, as a stand-alone curated project, based on a re-ignited Foundation Festival – to run from September 2020 into 2021. The aim of this project is to re-engage an audience / local community participation in advance of the Art Centre opening with a view to Foundation Festival becoming an annual / bi-annual festival with invited curators

ARAS EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

The exhibition programme for the Atrium had to be suspended as a result of Covid 19 restrictions, the Arts Office is exploring potential funding opportunities to develop a virtual gallery space.

HEALTHY IRELAND OFFALY

The Healthy Offaly team continued to oversee delivery of the Healthy Offaly plan. Key actions delivered during 2020 included:

- **Fit class** – a targeted physical activity intervention in up to 10 primary schools in the mid, north and west Offaly area; the programme is supported by a Fit Class coordinator, resources and an end of year (June) testing programme. Coordinated by Offaly Sports Partnership, 65% (45) of the 70 primary

schools in Offaly expressed interest in the Fit Class programme across the two-year academic period from September 2019 to June 2021. Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020 affected the in school delivery of the programme but the Healthy Ireland Fit Class coordinator, along with staff of Offaly Sports Partnership and Offaly sporting stars developed a range of online physical activity challenges (15 challenges in total) for children, young people, adults and families. Over 19,000 people viewed the challenges on Facebook and Twitter; while over 1,700 people viewed the challenges on Instagram. The South Offaly Sports Hub also supported 10 schools to avail of a blended learning approach to a winter fitness programme in quarter 4 2020.

- **Building Healthier Communities with a focus on rural Offaly** – much of the year 1 programme activities had to be deferred due to Covid-19; with funding reallocated to support the delivery of meals on wheels supports across 15 communities coordinated from two community kitchens (Kilcormac and Shinrone) **under the “Grow your own and Healthy eating” action**



Meals on wheels



Moneygall Community Garden produce

- **Grow your own & Healthy eating** – three community gardens (Bracknagh, Edenderry and Moneygall) were supported to purchase equipment and materials to maintain their community gardens, a welcome distraction which proved to be particularly important following the imposition of Covid19 restrictions in quarters 2 and 3 of 2020. Additionally, each community garden supported the development and dissemination of grow it yourself salad boxes for older adults in their communities
- **Eco spaces as places of health and wellbeing** – year 1 activities were originally designed to support canal and greenway communities to develop and deliver



outdoor recreational activities around their canal and/or greenway; however, Covid19 restrictions resulted in the lead partner (Offaly Local Development Company) developing and piloting a “**communities together yet apart**” programme, which was then delivered in 38 housing estates across Offaly. The programme focused on hosting weekly social get togethers while maintaining social distance in the identified housing estates. 2



Communities together yet apart

- **Community mental health supports** – four activities were due to be delivered as part of the community mental health supports programme; however only two activities were delivered given the ongoing health crisis: -
 - two Family Resource Centres (Arden View, Tullamore; and Clara) were supported to roll out mental health wellness programmes and crisis

- intervention counselling for disadvantaged families
 - ii. Offaly Sports Partnership was supported to deliver one to one physical activity supports for 50 people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities including those experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Community Mental Health Fund Small Grants Scheme – Healthy Ireland Offaly ran a community mental health fund small grants scheme in quarters 3 and 4 of 2020. 15 applications were received and 13 projects were supported. The total spend on the **scheme was €30,000. Projects supported among** others included delivery of subsidised counselling sessions, family resource centre play programmes, and Christmas care pack deliveries.

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



- Community engagement – five activities were due to be delivered as part of the community engagement action. Covid19 restrictions necessitated amendments to the proposed activities and the following were delivered: -
 - i. Healthy Ireland Offaly web pages were established on various partner websites including Offaly County Council, Offaly Sports Partnership, etc. For all things Healthy Offaly, check out <https://www.offaly.ie/eng/Services/Community-Culture/Healthy-Ireland/>



- ii. Offaly Sports Partnership delivered Offaly's Longest Day project, a 21-day physical activity challenge, in June. Over 800 people signed up for the challenge



- iii. Offaly Local Development Company (as a precursor to the establishment of the Offaly Healthy Homes project) delivered care packs to older and vulnerable members of communities in Offaly.



Healthy Offaly care packs (Lockdown 1)

- iv. Offaly Age Friendly and the Offaly Public Participation Network published and disseminated Healthy Ireland branded magazines, "connecting the faithful" to over 400 older adults living in Offaly fortnightly; and a community support magazine to families from disadvantaged backgrounds in the County. Delivery of the Healthy Ireland Offaly plan has been facilitated via funding from the Healthy Ireland Fund in 2020 to the value of €169,050. The funding is administered nationally by Pobal.



In Quarter 4 of 2020, Healthy Ireland Offaly also secured €67,225 in funding on behalf of Offaly County Council under the Healthy Ireland/Sláinte Care Community Resilience Fund. A programme of work has been submitted to Pobal for approval. It is anticipated that the actions under this fund in addition to the outstanding year 2 actions under the Healthy Ireland Fund strand 1, round 3 will be delivered throughout 2021 taking cognizance of all necessary Covid19 guidelines.

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. In addition to the Coordinator, Eamonn Henry and Administrator, Olivia Murphy; Offaly Sports Partnership employs two sports development officers, Jean Brady (Sports Inclusion Development Officer) who supports the participation of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity; and Denise Coghill (Community Sports Development Officer) who coordinates the delivery of community based sport and physical activity programmes in the county.

Covid19 had a significant impact on the delivery of the **Sports Partnership's sport and physical activity** programmes but the following activities were successfully delivered in advance of and throughout the pandemic crisis.

Quarter 1 saw a large number of sport and physical activity programmes being delivered including: -

- a comprehensive sports inclusion development programme - 14 programmes (which included disability awareness training; boccia leagues for older adults and people with disabilities; healthy choices / healthy community programmes; multi sports programmes in schools with special education needs units; multi sports programmes for older

adults and people with disabilities including those experiencing mental health difficulties) catered for almost 700 older adults and people with disabilities.

- a comprehensive community sports development programme in west Offaly - 12 programmes catered for 125 people from various target groups (adults, older adults and women) of the sports partnership
- diversity games days for primary and post primary schools in January



Action from the primary schools diversity games day – 23rd January



- Operation Transformation, broadcast live from Offaly throughout the months of January and February saw upwards of 1,000 people take part in Operation Transformation's ad break challenges and national walk day



Operatiuon Transfoirmation 2020

Quarter 2 and lockdown saw the sports partnership adapt their methods of programme delivery supporting people to participate in sport and physical activities remotely. The sports development officers and other staff members supported migrants, older adults, people with disabilities, school children and other target groups by phone; and through the online and hard copy publication of physical activity programmes, fit class challenges and the longest day challenge.

SPORT IRELAND
LOCAL SPORTS PARTNERSHIPS

OFFALY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

Activities For All
A 4-week physical activity plan for people with a disability

National BeActive Day
Sunday 28th June 2020

Sport Ireland and our network of Local Sports Partnerships are passionate about helping people get active, participating in sport or physical activity and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to do so in their own community.

Our national network of Sports Inclusion Disability Officers work to support people with a disability and local communities to get more active. This resource aims to improve peoples fitness, skills and balance in a fun way.

Making it Happen

- 1 Every evening decide which activities you are going to do tomorrow.
- 2 Decide when and where you will do your activities.
- 3 Prepare and layout any equipment you will need the night before.
- 4 Be active and enjoy the sense of wellbeing afterwards.

To help you, we have included a simple activity planner at the end of this booklet.

Why use this resource?

- ➔ Improve your fitness, skills and balance in a fun way
- ➔ Build your confidence to regularly participate in sport and physical activity.
- ➔ Develop transferable skills for everyday life.

Meet your daily activity requirement of 60 minutes for children and 30 minutes for adult by using this resource.

All activities in this pack

- Can be modified to suit all abilities and ages
- Can be designed using household items
- Can be done indoors or outdoors
- Can be done individually or with a family member or friend.

It's easy to take part, just follow these 4 simple steps:

- 1 Decide when you are going to do the activities and where
- 2 Get the household together and choose what activities you are going to do
- 3 Set up the activities and have fun taking part
- 4 Share your photos/videos on social media and tag @SportIreland, your Local Sports Partnership and use #NationalBeActiveDay

Meet your daily activity requirement of 60 minutes for children and 30 minutes for adults by completing the National BeActive Day challenge.

All activities in this pack

- Can be modified to suit all ages and abilities
- Can be designed using household items
- Can be done indoors or outdoors
- Can be done individually or in teams

Offaly Sports Partnership
Emails: sports@offalyco.ie
Tel: 057 934 6845
www.offalysports.ie

@Offaly Sports Partnership
@Offaly Sports Partnership
@offalysports

Contact your Local Sports Partnership for activity adaptations, variations or more ideas. Local Sports Partnerships will be running a competition for those who take part in National BeActive Day. To find out more, visit your Local Sports Partnership's social media pages.



organisations; and supported the delivery of Covid19 compliant sport and physical activity programmes in 10 primary schools across south Offaly, and a youth / sports leader training programme for 275 transition year students across four post primary schools



Grand Canal Wheelers Daingean Bike Week Peatlands tour

The majority of the sports partnership staff were also redeployed to support Offaly's Covid19 community helpline during this period.

Quarters 3 and 4 saw the resumption of limited Covid19 compliant sport and physical activity programmes for disadvantaged communities, migrants, older adults, women and girls, and youth at risk. Activities delivered included summer fit camps for 150 children across three locations - Crinkle, Edenderry and Tullamore; 1:1 physical activity supports for 50 people with disabilities including those experiencing mental health difficulties; recreational sport, physical activity and fitness programmes for 70 older adults and 32 women.

The sports partnership also coordinated a limited Bike Week programme in local schools, clubs and community

Offaly Sports Partnership also administered a local Sport Ireland Covid19 return to sport grant for clubs in Offaly in quarters 3 and 4. 51 applications for funding were submitted; and 44 clubs were supported to the value of **€47,995**. **Four clubs have drawn down their funding to date**

Funding through the Dormant Accounts Disbursement Fund was secured to

- i. deliver community coaching training for volunteers supporting people with disabilities to participate in sport and physical activity;
- ii. deliver sports leadership training for young

people in a number of locations throughout the county;

- iii. continue to support the work of the South Offaly Sports Hub established in 2017;
- iv. establish a new community sports hub in Daingean; and
- v. support the participation of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity through the provision of all ability equipment for clubs and primary schools; however much of this work had to be deferred due to Covid19.

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

- **Fit class** – a targeted physical activity intervention in up to 10 primary schools in the mid, north and west Offaly area; the programme is supported by a Fit Class coordinator, resources and an end of year (June) testing programme. 65% (45) of the 70 primary schools in Offaly expressed interest in the Fit Class programme across the two-year academic period from September 2019 to June 2021. Covid19 lockdowns in 2020 affected the in school delivery of the programme but the Healthy Ireland Fit Class Coordinator, along with staff of Offaly Sports Partnership and Offaly sporting stars developed a range of online physical activity challenges (15

challenges in total) for children, young people, adults and families. Over 19,000 people viewed the challenges on Facebook and Twitter; while over 1,700 people viewed the challenges on Instagram. The south Offaly sports hub also supported 10 schools to avail of a blended learning approach to a winter fitness programme in quarter 4 2020.

- **Offaly's Longest Day** - a 21-day physical activity challenge in the run up to the longest day in June. Over 800 people signed up for the challenge



For more information on the work of Offaly Sports Partnership, visit www.offalysports.ie, follow us on Facebook/OffalySportsPartnership and Twitter/@OffalySP or contact the office on 057 93 57462 or by email to sports@offalycoco.ie

EMERGENCY SERVICES

FIRE SERVICE REPORT 2020

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 2020 Offaly County Fire and Rescue Service were alerted to 530 incidents, this consisted of 382 fire incidents and 148 other emergency incidents. The response to these calls came from 5 stations located throughout the county. He Fire Service continued to operate with strict protocols during the Covid Pandemic. The Section 26 Fire and Emergency plan formed the basis for the Fire Service work program 2020.

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 2019 and in limited use of Tullamore BA Training Centre to facilitate Breathing Apparatus Training. The Covid pandemic also has an effect in recruitment and a number of recently retired firefighters were re-engaged to ensure that the minimum manning levels in stations were maintained.

EQUIPMENT & 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 2020 from the National Directorate for the provision of a new chassis for a water tanker, and the total cost of re-chasseing **€60,000**. **In addition, €50,000 was received in 2020** from the National Directorate for the provision of replacement breathing apparatus cylinders.

The site which has been identified for a new Fire Station in Clara is located in Raheen. In 2020 the Fire Services engaged with our Housing section who are developing the lands adjoining the proposed fire station.

Offaly Fire Service finalising the preliminary design and cost plan for a new station at this site and made a

submission for funding to the National Directorate of Fire and Emergency Management.

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

FIRE PREVENTION & BUILDING CONTROL

Offaly County Council Fire Service assessed 31 Fire Safety Certificate applications. The Fire Service also dealt with license applications. In total 122 fire safety inspections of premises took place.

Offaly Fire service has developed a Community Fire Safety Strategy which focuses on Home fire safety. This Strategy aims to complement the existing services provided by the Fire Service and aims to develop programmes which shift the current focus of responding to fires towards involving the community in preventing the **outbreak of Fire's. The Covid pandemic severely limited** our activities in this area during 2020.

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 2020 there were 219 commencement notices with 40 building inspected, which represents 18.3% of new buildings notified to the local authority.

MAJOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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

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

OFFALY CIVIL DEFENCE REPORT 2020

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

This work has included the delivery of samples from the Tullamore Covid19 test centre to various laboratories

nationwide, the erection of a temporary morgue in Tullamore General Hospital, and the delivery of food and medication to vulnerable members of our local community who are cocooning.

Civil Defence was also involved in the collection of PPE and the delivery of same to the Tullamore Covid19 test centre.

However ongoing Covid19 restrictions during 2020 have prevented Civil Defence carrying out some necessary training, and this will require an additional focus on training post pandemic.

CLIMATE ACTION, ENVIRONMENT, WATER AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES SPC

<i>SPC Chair</i>	John Leahy MCC	<i>Director Of Services</i>	Tom Shanahan
<i>Members</i> Cllr. John Foley Cllr. Mark Hackett Cllr. Peter Ormond Cllr. Neil Feighery	<i>Sectoral</i> Mr. Enda Bracken Ms. Doloreen Brereton Mr. Padraig Hannon Mr. Roger Guiney Mr. Shane Lambert	<i>Senior Engineer</i> <i>Administrative Officer</i> <i>Senior Executive Engineer</i> <i>Senior Executive Engineer</i> <i>A/Senior Executive Engineer</i>	Mary Hussey Mark Maken-Finlay Joe Coleman Martin Quinn John Mc Nally

CLIMATE ACTION

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY AWARENESS

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

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

resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050.

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

BURIAL GROUNDS

A capacity survey of all Council owned burial grounds in Offaly was completed in 2016 which identified 4 burial grounds with capacity issues which will require development works of varying degrees. The burial grounds involved are Clara, Clonmacnoise, Cloncrane and Kilreaghan. Kilreaghan cemetery extension went before the elected members in late 2019 and the proposed plans were approved and the tender to carry out this work was prepared during 2020 and will go to tender in early 2021. Part 8 Planning Approval for Kilcoursey Graveyard in Clara was approved in 2020 and preparations were made to go to tender in 2021 also.

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

VETERINARY SERVICE

FOOD SAFETY

Our Veterinary Department is responsible for carrying out functions in relation to Food Protection and Disease Control. It implements the terms and conditions of a service contract which has been agreed between the Council and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and which runs to 31st December 2021. The contract covers the official controls on food safety carried out by the Council.

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

CONTROL OF DOGS

Our Veterinary Section manages the Dog Service in accordance with the Control of Dogs Act, 1986. Since January 2019 we have been providing the Control of Dogs service directly. During 2020 our Control of Dogs staff dealt with 172 complaints including control of dogs issues, surrender of dogs and dog breeding establishment complaints. We also assisted An Garda Siochana in five raids and one checkpoint.

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

CONTROL OF HORSES

Under the Control of Horses Act 1996, all local authorities are responsible for the control of horses in their area including the collection of stray horses on public land. A total of 164 horses were seized by the Local Authority in 2014 and this reduced to a total of 8 in 2020 indicating that the downward trend in horse seizures is continuing.

Control of Horses	
Year	No. Seized
2011	59
2012	50
2013	60
2014	164
2015	101
2017	60
2018	16
2019	13
2020	8

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Council continues to operate three Civic Amenity Sites (CAS) in Birr, Derryclure and Edenderry. These accept a wide range of materials for recycling and complement our existing Bring Bank facilities. Charges apply for all waste

brought to these facilities, with the exception of electrical items, glass packaging and batteries.

DERRYCLURE LANDFILL

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

RECYCLING FACILITIES

There are currently 45 bring banks in the County for glass, aluminum & steel cans recycling on both private and public sites. The Council is continuing to expand our textile bank infrastructure in order to provide additional services to the people of our county.

The Council continues to promote home composting through the sale of composting units as well as supporting local Tidy Towns and community initiatives through local grant aid.

EASTERN MIDLANDS REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015 - 2021

The Waste Management Planning regional structure was changed to three regions in line with the 2012 Government Policy document *"A Resource Opportunity- Waste Management Policy in Ireland"*. Offaly is in the

Eastern/Midlands Region, as defined under “Putting People First”. The new *Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021* was launched on the 14th May 2015. The Council staff work with our Regional colleagues to implement the policies of the plan.

WASTE ENFORCEMENT

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

Inspection Type	No. of Planned Inspections set out at the start of 2020	No. of Completed Inspections at the end of 2020
Routine Waste Inspections	189	176
Non-Routine Waste Inspections	124	669
Routine Litter Patrols/Investigations	1100	1008
Routine Water/Wastewater Inspections	737	412
Non-Routine Water/Wastewater e Inspections	45	45
Routine Air/Noise	37	27

Inspections		
Non-Routine Air/Noise Inspections	50	50
Routine producer Responsibility Inspections	48	12
Planning inspections	131	229

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

The Council continued its extensive programme of Environmental Awareness in 2020. Campaigns around recycling, food waste, dog fouling, schools calendar competitions saw huge engagement with the public and gained a strong foothold in the area of environmental awareness. The Council continues to support community groups through funding streams such as Community Environmental Action Fund (previously Local Agenda 21 Fund), Anti-Litter and Anti-Graffiti Awareness Community Grants.

In 2020 the Council also supported 255 clean-ups carried out by various individuals and community groups, by providing bags, pickers, gloves and removing filled bags to an authorised site.

GREEN SCHOOLS AWARENESS PROGRAMME

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

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

WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

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

In 2020 a large body of work was completed in relation to the 3rd Cycle Characterisation of waterbodies which will feed into the 2021-2027 RBMP. This work was done in conjunction with the EPA and LAWPro.

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

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

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

In 2020, each of these roles were advanced by Water Quality staff. The Council achieved the operational monitoring programme of the rivers within the County and also investigated activities and facilities impacting on **groundwater's and surface waters.** 12 Domestic Wastewater Treatment systems were inspected in 2020 in accordance with EPA National Inspection Plan requirements.

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

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

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

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

AIR QUALITY & ENVIRONMENT

The Council continues to comply with EU Directives and National Legislation on Air Quality and Pollution and implement direction from the Department in this area and work with customers and communities to resolve issues in relation to air, noise and odour.

NOISE ACTION PLAN

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

Under the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 140 of 2006) Offaly County Council prepared a Draft Noise Action Plan 2018 – 2023 relating to environmental noise to which humans are exposed in the county. The environmental noise relevant to Offaly is transportation

noise (road traffic noise) but does not apply to nuisance noise (domestic and neighbourhood noise). This Noise Action Plan was adopted in late 2019.

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

CATCHMENT FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES (CFRAM)

Offaly is affiliated to three CFRAMs the Shannon, Eastern and South Eastern. There are 8 Areas of Further Assessment within Offaly with varying proposals from flood forecasting and public awareness to individual property resilience and construction of new flood defense walls. The Plans have been finalised and approved by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. They were adopted by Offaly County Council in July 2018.

The Government has agreed an increased allocation of **funding for flood relief activities totaling €430m in its Capital Investment Plan for the period 2016-2021 with the annual budget allocation rising from €45m to €100m by 2021. The capital allocation included in the Plan for flood risk management in 2018 is €70m and in 2019 is €80m.** The enhanced investment programme will enable the OPW in collaboration with the relevant Local Authorities, to

begin the process of preparation and planning for the structural works and schemes that are recommended under the CFRAM Plans.

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

In collaboration with the OPW, with funding from the minor works programme the flood defense scheme in Portarlinton was completed in 2020. The Council have made a number of further applications to the OPW for other areas requiring flood relief in the county. These locations include Rahan where funding approval is ongoing and Geashill where the application process is progressing.

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

TULLAMORE LIVING RIVER PROJECT

In 2019, the Tullamore Living River Project was launched in collaboration with LAWPro and several other Irish and

UK based environmental stakeholders. Funding for the first phase of the Project, was secured from LEADER in 2020 and it is hoped that construction will begin in 2021.

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

NATIONAL WASTE COLLECTION PERMIT OFFICE (NWCPO)

The NWCPO continues to process waste collection permit applications and currently holds a register of 2,012 waste collectors for the state. The NWCPO also maintains a national register of waste facility permits and certificates of registration on behalf of all local authorities. The NWCPO manages the online portal for gathering waste collection permit and waste facility annual return data which is used for local, regional and national waste reporting requirements.

The NWCPO continues to develop its role as a key stakeholder in the regulation of the waste sector. The operation of the office through the ISO9001 standard and enhanced IT systems, ensures a high quality and robust service for stakeholders. A review of national waste policy

by the DCCAE commenced in 2018 which the NWCPO expects will provide both opportunities and challenges for the office.

WATER SERVICES

Offaly County Council delivered Water Services in accordance with the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Irish Water (IW) and the Annual Service Plan for 2020. Water Services are 100% funded by Irish Water who are now the Statutory Authority for water services and all major decisions around funding of services will be approved by Irish Water.

Work is currently underway to design a Water Industry Operating Framework for Local Authorities and Irish Water working in collaboration. The Water Industry Operating Framework (WIOF) will put in place an industry structure to operate efficiently, effectively, responsively and cohesively under the SLA agreement.

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

DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

The EPA Drinking Water Report 2018 shows that Offaly had 21 public supplies. Offaly had a 100% microbiological compliance rate and a 100% Chemical Parameter Compliance rate in 2018. Working with IW the Council continues to improve and upgrade the Water Supply Schemes throughout the County.

The completion of the Edenderry and Kilcormac watermain rehabilitation projects in 2017, together with the completion of the Screggan and Mucklagh projects in 2018 and the Crinkle, Brosna South and Mountbolus projects completed in 2019, together with projects at Clonin, Newtown, Birr East, Clonmullen Drive Ed, Blundelwood High Ed, Groves End Rhode and Crinkle completed in 2020 has further assisted in reducing unaccounted for water (UFW) in the County. The average UFW figure in Offaly in 2020 was 7511.6m³/d.

WASTEWATER

Full secondary treatment is now provided in all public sewerage schemes in Offaly with a significant improvement in quality standards compliance being achieved as a result. There are 14 Wastewater Treatment Plants in Offaly with Discharge Licenses serving agglomerations with populations greater than 500. Meeting the stringent limit values on these licenses is challenging but considerable progress has been made.

WATER SERVICES CAPITAL SCHEMES

The *Irish Water Capital Investment Plan* identified new Capital project priorities in Offaly. A number of projects have progressed through the Capital Programmes, Disinfection Programme and Capital Maintenance funding

mechanisms. The major upgrade of the Tullamore, Birr and Clonaslee Water supply is ongoing.

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

The following Projects were ongoing or completed in Offaly in 2020:

Scheme Name	Contract Name	Current Status
Offaly Water Conservation Stage 3 Watermain Rehabilitation Project	Tullamore North & South	Complete
	Birr Town	Complete
	Edenderry & Kilcormac	Complete May 2017
	Rhode, Screggan & Geashill	Complete 2018
	Mucklagh, Crinkill, Brosna South, Mountbolus	Complete in 2019
Clonmullen Drive and Blundelwood High Ed, Birr East, Clonin, Newtown, Groves End Rhode, Crinkle	Complete in 2020	

Tullamore Water Supply Scheme	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade in Clonaslee & New Water Treatment Plant and Supplementary Reservoir in Arden Development of Sources	A new source has been developed at Arden. Land purchase has completed and the contract to build a new WTP and a supplementary reservoir is underway. A new source has been developed at Clonaslee. The contract to build a new WTP is ongoing. . IW have decided to upgrade existing boreholes at Clonaslee
Birr Water Supply Scheme	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Design and Build Contractor appointed, Project ongoing.
Source Development	Jones Well and Mountbolus	Drilling at Jones well is high on IW priority list. Test wells show good yields. A test well was also drilled in Mountbolus in 2019
Disinfection Programme	Water Treatment Plant Upgrades at Clonbullogue, Coolderry, Walsh Island, Edenderry and Toberdaly	Ongoing.
Tullamore Sewerage Scheme (Network)	Drainage Area Plan	The modelling is complete and now awaiting for IW to advise where they are going to upgrade the Network.

Tullamore Sewer Network	Upgrading Pumping Stations	All pumping stations in Tullamore to be upgraded.
Cloghan WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade	Consultants have been appointed to prepare a design for Storm Water Storage. Project will be tendered in 2019 and work completed when finance is secured.
Banagher WWTP	Waste Water Treatment Plant	Consultants have been appointed to examine the existing plant and to come up with proposals to upgrade it.
Edenderry WWTP	Upgrade of Plant	IW have agreed to upgrade the plant. In process of engaging a consultant engineer to design the project.
Shinrone WWTP	Waste Water Treatment Plant	Consultants have been appointed to prepare a design for Storm Water Storage. Project will be tendered in 2019 and works will be completed when finance is secured.
Shannon Harbour WWTP		Aeration system has been upgraded and new Frame & Stairway had been installed under HSQE.

Bracknagh	Wastewater Treatment Plant	Completed the design & construction upgrade of the Plant
Rahan	Wastewater Treatment Plant	Commenced the design & construction of plant upgrade.
Small Town & Villages	Plant Upgrades	Under the Small Towns & Village programme we have sought funding for the following upgrades: Rhode WWTP Daingean WWTP Walsh Island WWTP

HEALTH & SAFETY

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

MULTI-ANNUAL RURAL WATER PROGRAMME 2019-2021

The Council remains the Water Services Authority in connection with Group Schemes, Small Private Supplies (SPS) and domestic wastewater treatment systems (septic tanks). The Council will continue to support the Group Water Scheme Sector in conjunction with the National Federation of Group Water Schemes financially,

administratively and technically. The Council will support the Rural Water Programme and ensure submissions are made to the Department and funding secured for Offaly.

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

The total RWP Allocation for 2019 amounted to €868,950.

Name of GWS	Total Allocation €
Eglish/Rath/Drumcullen GWS	12,000
Ballykilleen	19,440
Boher/Leamonaghan	86,080
Cadamstown	117,850
Mountlucas	32,000
Ballinagar	54,520
Killeigh	277,500
Tubber	104,900
Clareen/Aghancon	51,000

Bracknagh	17,000
Ballyboy	17,000
Mountlucas	28,660
Derries, Rahan	51,000

GROUP WATER SCHEMES SUBSIDIES

A total of €978,426.00 was paid to Group Water Schemes schemes across the county in annual and advance subsidy payments.

Subsidy Payments	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	€	€	€	€	€
Total	410,593	581,012	654,509	1,167,513	978,426

Water quality sampling of Group Water Schemes has continued during the year with the Groups Schemes helpfully providing sampling kiosks and access to outside taps to assist with sampling during Covid-19 related restrictions.

DOMESTIC WATER AND DOMESTIC WASTE WATER GRANT SCHEMES

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

WELL GRANTS

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

DOMESTIC WASTE WATER TREATMENT GRANTS

This grant may be available to householders where they have been identified by the Local Authority under various river basin and catchment area plans and they must meet specific criteria (an applicant cannot self declare for these grants). The percentage of the approved cost of works that can be claimed by the applicant has been increased from 75% to 85% or **€5,000.00**, whichever is the lesser.

REVIEW OF THE RURAL WATER SECTOR

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

Rural Water sector is due to be reported on in the near future.

ROADS SERVICES

The 2020 Initial Roads Budget was as follows:

Roads Allocations 2020	
Transport Infrastructure Ireland	€3,169,755
Department of Transport Tourism & Sport	€11,027,499
Offaly County Council (Own Resources)	€1,867,130
Total	€16,064,384

Offaly County Council allocated an additional €949,500 for Public Lighting and a Central Management Charge (support services) of €3,022,144. The 2019 Initial Roads Budget was €14,628,356. In 2020 Offaly County Council received €2,664,262 additional funding

Roads Additional Funding 2020	
TII Pavement Scheme N62	€245,000
TII HD15 & HD17 Minor Works Fencing Retrofit	€39,712
TII Capital Maintenance Works > €50,000	€423,292
TII Capital Maintenance Works < €50,000	€94,483
TII Winter Maintenance	€32,455
DCRD Local Improvement Scheme	€278,871
DCRD CLÁR	€99,000
DCRD Greenway ORIS	€500,000
DOT Active Travel Measures	€734,500
DOT Climate Change Adaptation	€176,500
NTA Bus Stops Tullamore & Edenderry	€42,450
Total	€2,666,263

Offaly County Council received an initial roads allocation of €3.17m from Transport Infrastructure Ireland TII for maintenance and improvement of the National Road Network in 2020. The allocation included €700k for pavement renewals and €800k pavement scheme for the N62 Boveen to Drumakeenan completed in 2020.



Photo: N80 Tullamore to Derryclure Pavement Renewal

Offaly County Council received a capital allocation of €500,000 from TII for the N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link in 2020. Westmeath National Roads Office perform the role of Project Manager on behalf of Offaly County Council as the Lead Authority.



Photo: Virtual Room for Public Consultation

Consulting Engineers were appointed in 2019 and the Planning and Design Stages commenced. In 2020 two public consultations were held with a third planned in 2021 for the preferred route.

Offaly County Council received the 2020 Regional and Local Road Grant Allocation of €11,027,499 from the Department of Transport. The allocation included a specific improvement Grant of €300,000 for Edenderry Inner Relief Road and €100,000 for the Birr Distributor Road.

The July Jobs Stimulus Plan was announced by Government on 23rd July 2020. Offaly received an allocation of €911,000 to complete active travel and climate change adaptation projects in the County.



Photo: Pedestrian Crossing in Clara

Offaly County Council received €735,500 in 2020 for Community Involvement Schemes to progress schemes across the three Municipal Districts. The Department advised in Circular RW1/2020 that local authority will receive the same allocation in 2021 to deliver the Community Involvement Scheme over a 2-year programme.

The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) announced funding for Local Improvement Schemes in 2020. Offaly County Council received an allocation of €278,871. The Roads section and three Municipal Districts progressed the list of schemes as advertised in 2020.

Offaly County Council received an allocation of €99,000 under CLÁR 2020. The Roads section with work with the community groups to progress these schemes in 2021.

The Department of transport approved €3.5m in 2020 under the Offaly Grand Canal Greenway Fund for the extension to the Offaly Greenway. In 2020 Digby Bridge to Ballycommon Bridge (6km) and Campbells Bridge Odlums Bridge/Wood of O(4km) were complete with works ongoing in 2021.



Photo: Greenway in Rahan

Offaly County Council was successful in obtaining €700,000 in approved funding for 5 no. applications, Birr, Crinkill, Edenderry, Mount Bolus, Shinrone, submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development under the 2019 Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The three municipal districts are working with Road Design and

Planning to plan and design the schemes for implementation in 2020.

Offaly County Council at present maintain/repair and upgrade 8,778 public lights in the County. To date 35% are LED lighting units. OCC with 8 other counties in the Eastern Region have embarked on a project to retrofit all public lights by 2022/2023 as part of a national project. OCC signed a section 85 agreement with Kilkenny County Council in 2020 to act as the lead authority on behalf of the region. The total cost to complete this retrofit is approx. **€2.5million however the annual savings to Offaly County Council on maintenance and electrical costs will be reduced by approximately €325,000 per annum resulting in a payback term of 7/8 years.** The project will achieve a significant measure in energy efficiency and assist OCC with our climate action targets.



Projects undertaken and completed during 2020 including initial and additional funding are detailed below.

NATIONAL ROAD GRANTS

2020 National Roads (N52, N62 & N80 = 101km)

2020 National Roads Projects	
Ordinary Maintenance	€129,194
Winter Maintenance	€190,000
National Route Energy Reducing Public Lighting Schemes	€95,861
Pavement Schemes N62 to Baveen to Drumakeenan	€1,100,000
HD28 NS Pavement Renewals N80 Tullamore to Derryclure	€645,000
Road Safety Schemes	€225,905
HD15 & HD17 Minor Works Fencing Retrofit	€64,712
Capital Maintenance Works	€423,292
Capital Maintenance Works <€50,000	€94,483
N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link (Stage 0)	€331,541

NON NATIONAL ROAD GRANTS

2020 Non National Roads (Regional 392km & Local 1656km)

2020 Regional & County Roads Projects	
Restoration Improvement Grant	€5,378,500
Restoration Maintenance Grant	€1,546,000
Discretionary Improvement Grant	€1,802,000
Bridge Rehabilitation	€331,500
Safety Improvement Works	€300,000
Speed Limits, Signs, PSCI	€33,841
Roads Training Grant	€47,500
Drainage Works	€443,271
Community Involvement Scheme	€705,023
Pilot Scheme Testing on Roads over Peat	€10,000
Specific Improvement Grant Edenderry Inner Relief Road	€300,000

Specific Improvement Birr Distributor Road	€19,598
Local Improvement Schemes	€278,871
CLAR Schemes	€99,000
Offaly Greenway Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme	€500,000
Active Travel & Climate Adaptation	€911,000

ROAD SAFETY 2020 INITIATIVES

The Roads section carried out a number of Road Safety Initiatives in 2019 working with the Municipal Districts, TII, RSA and an Garda Síochána to improve road safety in the County.

Information and awareness of Road Safety is key including weather alerts, informing staff, Councillors and the **general public through emails, the Council's website, Facebook and Twitter** including a week long Awareness Campaign on Radio 3 in relation to safety at roadworks sites.

The Drive for Life day long Programme continued in 2019 in a number of Secondary Schools in the County and in collaboration with Aviva we supplied virtual reality headsets so that students can experience the awful effects of a car crash themselves.

Collaboration with the Road Safety Authority continued in relation to their **Check It Fits Service** with experts advising on how to correctly fit child car seats and Road Safety presentations delivered to a number of national schools in the County.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

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

Offaly County Council is currently on target to meet the energy efficiency saving of 33% by 2020 and 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.

LAND USE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPC

SPC Chair	John Carroll MCC	Director Of Services	Ann Dillon
Members	Sectoral	PLANNING: Senior Planner Senior Executive Planner Administrative Officer	Andrew Murray Lorraine Mitchell, Carroll Melia Gabriel Conlon
Cllr. Eamon Dooley Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick Cllr. Frank Moran Cllr. Tony McCormack Cllr. J. Clendennen Cllr. S. O'Brien	Mr. Dominic Doheny Mr. E. Shortt Mr. John O'Connor Pat Walsh Don Gibney	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 (incl. Town Development Plans), Local Area Plans, Village and Sráid Plans. Planning Control

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

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

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

The continued recovery in the **country's** economic activity, has been reflected in a continued increase in the number of planning applications received in 2020, despite the covid 19 pandemic.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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

(*This figure includes applications which were invalid)

The Council participated in one Strategic Housing Development (SHD) application in 2020 (Clonminch, Tullamore) for 358 no. residential units (172 no. houses, 186 no. apartments), childcare facility and associated site works. In addition, a number of pre-planning meetings were conducted with respect to the lodgement of future SHD applications for Tullamore.

Aside from the SHD application, a number of larger housing applications (greater than 25 dwellings) were submitted for the towns of Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry. A notable trend experienced was also the submission of multiple residential planning applications for the towns and villages of Clara, Ferbane, Daingean, Banagher, Kilcormac, Bracknagh, Cloghan and Clonbullogue.

During 2020, a number of large commercial developments (predominantly within the towns of Tullamore, Birr and Edenderry) were also submitted. These included large retail proposals, mixed use developments, substantial nursing home developments and large-scale industrial / commercial applications. There was also has a noticeable increase in the number of telecommunications proposals lodged throughout the County during the year.

In 2020, the Planning Department participated a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) application for the Derrinlough Wind Farm. This proposal included the development of 21 no. wind turbines with a tip height of 185 metres and all associated works. A decision from An Bord Pleanala is pending with respect to this application. In addition, a number pre-planning meetings were undertaken with respect to future SID applications that are likely to be lodged in the near future.

One the key trends experienced by the Planning

Department in 2020 was the sizeable increase in green energy related planning applications lodged. These included a range of diverse projects such as large solar farms, wind farm developments, battery and other new technology energy storage facilities, grid connection applications, biomass log storage facilities, biomass gasification plant and Anaerobic Digestion plant. This trend has continued into 2021 with the lodgement of a number of large-scale green energy planning applications.

Single houses and minor domestic extensions/additions planning applications etc. also increased substantially during 2020. This trend was noticeable at the lifting of the initial COVID 19 restrictions back in June and this pattern continued throughout 2020 and into 2021.

EXTENSIONS OF APPROPRIATE PERIOD

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

PREPARATION OF OFFALY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

From 27th July 2020 until 7th October 2020 the draft Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 was

available for public inspection and for the making of submissions. 196 no. submissions were received during this consultation period.

DERELICT SITES

There are 19 sites on the Derelict Sites Register at the end of 2020, 12 within the Tullamore Municipal District Area and a further 7 at various sites around the county. Works continued throughout 2020 to advise owners to improve the appearance of their site / property with further works ongoing into 2021. Identification of any properties which may be suitable for the provision of social housing is a continued focus of the Council.

UNFINISHED HOUSING ESTATES

There are currently 4 estates in County Offaly named on the Unfinished Housing Development list. This figure highlights the significant amount of work completed in this area. As a result, the county 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 2021.

Taking in Charge of private housing estates is a continuing scope of works. A total of five estates were taken in charge in 2020 with five more estates at the final stages and intended for presentation to elected members, for their approval in 2021. Two application forms requesting a private housing estate is taken in charge were received by Offaly County Council in 2020.

VACANT SITES REGISTER

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

The next steps involved are to identify vacant sites, engage with landowners, register vacant sites, and apply a vacant sites levy. It is anticipated that the Planning Department will undertake a comprehensive survey of potential vacant sites throughout the county, in the Summer of 2021 with a view to entering identified vacant sites onto the Register at the end of 2021.

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 in late 2020. Work is ongoing to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and take appropriate action where deemed necessary.

COMPLIANCE / ENFORCEMENT

- Warning Letters 13
- Enforcement Notices 2

During 2020, 13 new enforcement files were opened. Warning letters and enforcement notices were issued in new cases.

LIAISON WITH 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.

OFFALY GREENWAYS

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

Link from the Grand Canal Greenway to Turraun Lakes (Lough Boora)



PLANNING APPROVAL - GREENWAYS

A Part 8 Application relating to the Grand Canal Greenway, from Turraun (Lough Boora Discovery Park) to Shannon Harbour extension was passed by the Council in 2020.

FUNDING APPLICATIONS & CONSTRUCTION -GREENWAYS

National Greenway Strategy Fund approval of €2.35 million was received in 2019, to complete a 20km stretch from Daingean to Lough Boora Discovery Park. A significant tranche of this allocation was expended in 2020, despite the Covid-19 pandemic i.e. from Digby Bridge to Ballycommon section and from Pollagh to Turraun.

2021 will see the completion of a high quality greenway link from Daingean through Tullamore to Lough Boora Discovery Park, a distance of approx. 34kms.

Offaly County Council received an allocation of €3.1 million in Budget 2021 to complete the greenway from Daingean to the county boundary at Edenderry and will continue to seek funding to complete the greenway to Shannon Harbour. Council staff sit on a 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.

KILBEGGAN BRANCH' GRAND CANAL GREENWAY

The first 4km of the 13km 'Kilbeggan Branch' Grand Canal Greenway was constructed from Ballycommon to Wood of

O Bridge in 2019, funded by the 2018 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS). Work on the remainder of the link to the boundary with Co. Westmeath is ongoing and due for completion in 2021. This is made possible by an allocation of a further €313,000 under ORIS 2019. 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 will be managed by Offaly County Council and an agreement with Westmeath County Council under section 149A of the Local Government Act is in place.

Part of the Kilbeggan link of the Grand Canal Greenway constructed in 2020



GRAND CANAL GREENWAY – URBAN STRETCH

It is expected that The Tullamore Urban Stretch of the Grand Canal Greenway, which has been allocated funding under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund 2018, will

be constructed in 2021.

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

OUTDOOR RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME 2020

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme provides funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure. The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for ORIS 2020 funding on 29th May 2020. On 22nd March, 2021 Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys T.D., announced a €500,000 grant for Kinnitty, with significant match funding of €275,300 from Offaly County Council. This project consists of:

- **'Route to the Trails'** - 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 forest behind Kinnitty Castle.
- **The 'Kinnitty Woods Loop'** - a novice trail (2km). Thus will be a new component to the Slieve Bloom MTB trails (National Scale Centre) allowing younger and novice cyclists to develop cycling skills and confidence to promote use of the mountain bike trails. It will therefore increase the scope of the MTB offer to a wider audience.

- **"Rediscovering Castle Bernard's Historic Bridges"**. This 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 Kinnitty Castle Demesne's fine outdoor heritage e.g. its historic bridges and associated demesne walks.

Tullamore URDF – 2020 successful application



URBAN REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND 2019

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage announced a call for URDF funding in 2020. On March 8th, 2021, Minister Darragh O'Brien TD announced

€2.25m funding for regeneration projects in Tullamore.

The successful application for Tullamore town consists of a suite of integrated urban regeneration projects to rejuvenate Tullamore Town and complement previous URDF and ERDF successful projects. The following is a list of projects which were included in the successful application:

a

This application includes the engagement of consultants to design the redevelopment of an existing vacant building into a library, digital hub and other enterprise uses, to refurbish the existing Marina and surrounding environs, public realm works to central square and Main Street and a conservation masterplan for area around the derelict Royal Shannon Hotel.

Banagher – RRDF funding 2020

RURAL REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT FUND (URDF) 2019

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

Offaly County Council was successful in **securing €395,250** for the Banagher Regeneration Project under Category 2 of the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund as announced on 25th June, 2020. Category 2 funding supports the early preparatory work of projects with the potential to transform rural areas.



Continuation of the 2018 & 2019 RRDF Edenderry

Regeneration projects are ongoing. The 2019 project will deliver the Edenderry Regeneration Strategy – Phase 1, which will help unlock a large opportunity site (Old Tesco Site, JKL Street) in the centre of the town and provide improved access through a new Link Street. The project will form the basis for further regeneration initiatives that will facilitate the future growth and development of the town. The Blundell Master Plan for the area funded in 2018 is now complete and was launched in December 2020 and will form the framework for future development of this area.

TOWN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEME (TVR) 2020

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for TVR 2020 funding on 27th May, 2020 for the general TVR scheme and a new strand, TVR 2020 - Accelerated Measures in Response to Covid-19.

This new strand focused on immediate interventions that could be delivered in the short-term to assist towns and villages adapt to Covid-19. The 2 main objectives were assisting with measures to deal with social distancing and measures to help increase footfall in rural towns and villages

DRCD announced successful projects from Round 1 on 3rd August 2020

- **Shop Front Scheme** for all towns and villages in Offaly with a population of <10,000 - **€40,000.**

- **Covid-19 Capacity Scheme for Businesses** to increase outdoor seating facilities - **€25,000.**
- **Shannonbridge** – public realm improvement and seating area at the Lock House - **€25,000.**

DRCD announced successful projects from **Round 2** on 17th September 2020.

- **Broadband Connection Points** in Ballycommon, Shannon Harbour, Kilconfert, Croghan, Clareen and Coolderry - **€40,000.**
- **Edenderry** Covered outdoor gathering space at **O’Connell Square** - **€40,000.**
- **Birr** 4 No. Geodesic Dome Tents to be used for festivals and events - **€25,000.**
- **Killeigh** enhancements to village Green **€25,000.**
- **Clareen** public realm enhancements - **€25,000.**
- **Lusmagh** public realm enhancements - **€25,000.**

DRCD announced successful projects from **Round 3** on 12th October, 2020.

- **Tullamore** - to refurbish Millennium Square. Deep clean of the area, replace some paving and create an attractive urban seated/garden area providing an **additional outdoor gathering space. €40,000.**
- **Daingean** - to rejuvenate Daingean Square. Deep clean, footpath resurfacing, urban seating, planters and the provision of additional seating in adjacent green space creating a safe, public gathering area.

€40,000.

- **Clara** – to enhance a river amenity. Provide additional seating, resurface of stony pathways, improve entrance accessibility, landscaping and refurbishment of pedestrian bridge over the River Brosna. €25,000.
- **Ferbane** - to provide a “Chill & Chat” pop up urban garden in the town centre where people can enjoy social interaction in a safe outdoor space while observing social distancing protocols. €25,000.
- **Ballycumber** - to enhance a river amenity area. Provide additional seating, upgrade of canopied seating area, improved entrance accessibility and repair of pathway to facilitate safe outdoor gatherings. €25,000.
- **Geashill** - to enhance 2 outdoor amenities. Provide additional seating and picnic tables at the picnic area and the Glebe Walking Trail and promote their use by providing heritage signage. €25,000.

The central aim of the general scheme is to support the revitalisation of towns and villages in order to improve the living and working environment of their communities and also to increase their potential to support economic recovery during post the covid 19 pandemic.

On 8th January 2021 the Minister for Rural and Community Development announced details of €800,000 of funding under the Town and Village Renewal **Main Scheme** 2020 for the following projects in Offaly:

- **Pollagh** - €100,000 to enhance the public realm

including upgrading footpaths and provision of lighting and signage to improve accessibility to the Cycle Café from the Grand Canal Greenway.

- **Ferbane** - €200,000 for regeneration of public realm including the development of the town's Old Fire Station site, Heritage Centre Area and improvements to the Mass Path looped walk.
- **Mucklagh** - €100,000 for public realm improvements including a pedestrian crossing, footpaths, landscaping and public lighting.
- **Cloneygowan** - €100,000 to enhance the Fair Green and regularize car parking around it providing a safe outdoor gathering space for residents.
- **Daingean** - €100,000 for further public realm enhancement works including footpath improvements, landscaping, street furniture and public lighting.
- **Kilmalogue** - €100,000 for public realm enhancement including upgrading of footpaths, landscaping, seating, improved parking and upgrading of a pedestrian crossing.
- **Mount Bolus** - €100,000 for Phase 2 of public realm enhancements including undergrounding of overhead wires, provision of pedestrian crossing, footpaths and public lighting.

Progress on 2019 TVR Schemes has been hindered by Covid-19 restrictions. It is hoped that they can recommence soon.

SLIEVE BLOOM MOUNTAIN BIKE (MTB) TRAIL

Phases 2 & 3 of the trails continue to be delivered by Coillte while the initial phases are attracting significant levels of uses. The final phases are funded under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund programme 2018, part of a **€10 million allocation for 4 National Trail Centres across 7 counties.**

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.**



DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION SCHEME

Details of amounts received and disbursed as circulated to members, with the Budget as follows:

Offaly County Council Development Contributions
Development Levy Allocations 2020

JOB DESCRIPTION	Funds Available €000's
Development contribution income - to be assigned	1,807
Currently assigned	
Edenderry Library	2,000
O'Connor Square Public Realm	1,500
Offaly Blue Way	218
Midland Cycle Trails	250
Special dev schemes	61
Edenderry Swimming Pool	300
TOTAL	6,136

Development Contributions - Receipts and Application of Development Funds for the period to December 2020.	
Description	'000
Balance Available – 2019	5,128,
Contributions Received- 2020	1,996
Transfers	100
Disbursements 2020	963
Balance Available - 2020	6,261

ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES 2020

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

BUILT HERITAGE INVESTMENT SCHEME



Steel window repair, Derrybeg



The Architects Department seeks to promote the Built Heritage of Offaly outside of the county and highlight the importance of funding with the Department. In December 2019 Offaly County Council advertised the BHIS 2020 for conservation projects in the county. We received approval by the Department for 20 applicants with a total allocation of €79,000. 5 applicants withdrew from the scheme.



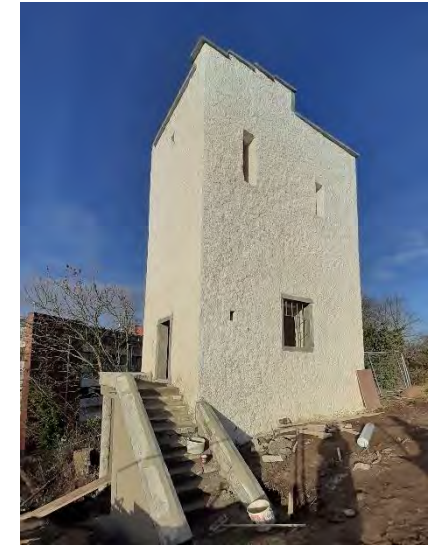
Thatch repairs to second Derrybeg site

Works were carried out throughout the year and 15 projects successfully completed. Projects varied from roof repairs including 4 thatched properties, window repairs and general stabilisation works. Payments were issued to the applicants with administration assistance from Planning.



HISTORIC STRUCTURES FUND

Offaly County Council submitted 2 applications to the Department in 2020 for possible approval. Cangort Park House, Shinrone received a grant of €35,000 for repairs to the windows and Acres Folly received €15,000 for repairs and lime rendering.



Cangort Park – window repairs underway



Detail of some of the metal windows set in a timber frame

Acres Folly – structural. lime repairs, reinstatement of steps

July Job Stimulus funding was made available and the Department provided a further €15,000 to Cangort Park for internal plaster repairs and approved €44,500 towards

emergency roof repairs to Emmell Castle.

PLANNING

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

Advice is also provided where required on large pre-plan and planning applications in the county, housing, public or commercial properties.

CDP Review –assisting planning with CDP 2020 Review. Working on the Record of Protected Structures and preparing reports for proposed additions and deletions, CE draft report prepared.

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

URDF and RRDF – Working with a cross departmental team on applications for

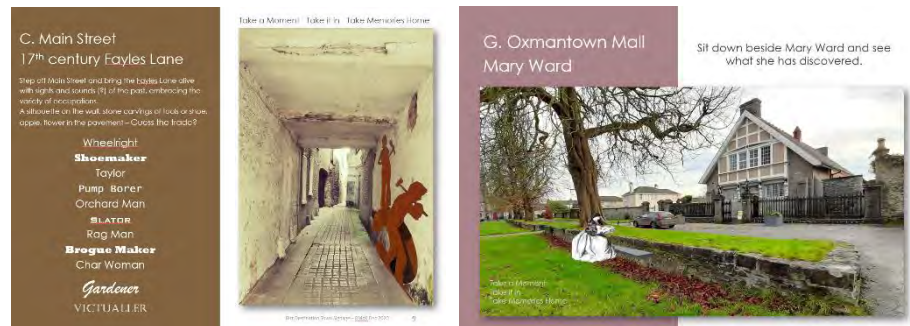


Edenderry, Birr and Tullamore. Providing mapping, sketch proposals augmenting final applications.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS

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

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



areas.

Kinnitty – work with area engineer and team to produce suite of projects and detailed community consultation.



Banagher – assist with Pilot Project for the town including painting scheme, showing possible options.



Banagher, sample before and after photomontage

Edenderry - Liaise with consultants regarding masterplan for Edenderry.

HERITAGE OFFICE

Working with the Heritage Office on a number of projects including being part of the Heritage Forum. Carrigeen Thatch – assist Heritage office with project and documentation.

CREATIVE IRELAND

Part of the Creative Ireland Team in Offaly, assist with the creation of the 2020 Plan and implementation, attend meetings and project launch. Liaise with team on consultation days and in the draft five-year plan. Additional funding towards Acres Folly for conservation repairs, continuing on with CI funding based on the follies book Flights of Fancy.

SHOPFRONT ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

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

ACRES FOLLY

In addition to HSF and Creative Ireland funding., preparation and completion of a Part VIII for Phase 1 (repairs), Phase 2 new replacement internal staircase to provide managed rooftop access, Phase 3 landscaping works.

ACRES' FOLLY – CONSERVATION WORKS

PART VIII – PROPOSALS

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL

RAE AN OCHOIRI, TD KNOXVILLE, TULLAMORE
 T91 82702 4600, www.offaly.ie



The reinstatement of these steps and the provision of a new internal stair would provide access back near to the upper viewing area. This would allow for the former engineering walk across Lloyd Park and the roof of Tullamore, offering a unique view over the county town for both residents and visitors alike.
 A detailed study of the options for Acres' Folly is being prepared by Conservation Engineers Ours Bourillette.

As part of the Offaly Follies study commissioned by Offaly County Council and funded by the Heritage Council, a survey of Acres' Folly was carried out in 2017 by conservation architect Ours Bourillette and key recommendations include:

- i) Carry out a high level inspection, using a cherry picker, of all roof levels and interior of the structure with an emphasis on stone masonry in attendance;
- ii) Take down or dismantle any loose masonry, scaffolds or other fixtures;
- iii) Clear out all debris from ground floor and basement;
- iv) Upgrade second window in southwest corner in self raise good timber;
- v) Install screen grille in three opening in ground floor and undercroft;
- vi) Consider installing gravel areas, drainage, guard rails and decking in first floor and roof level to restore rooftop viewing gains;

Three Phases Proposed:

1. Conservation works to acres' folly including reinstatement of the original access by way of the former external flight of stairs. These stone steps were removed and are stored off site in Tullamore.
2. Provide internal steel staircase (in lieu of former stair) to provide managed access to rooftop viewing terrace, allowing views over park and Tullamore.
3. Landscaping proposals:
 - a) Reinstale the raised bank in front of folly and former gravel path along the lines of the 1836 and 1860 map to allow access to the folly. Plant trees to front and rear of folly (semi mature copper beech to the rear and oak to the east along the proposed path).
 - b) Temporary portable toilet moved towards rear of the site, provide a line of parking to west of the site with grassed hedgerow of native species similar to the southern hedgerow, to stone wall into Lloyd Park. This parking is reversible and will help re-order the setting of this important folly.
 - c) Retain parking along southern hedgerow.

Applied for Funding in February to Historic Structures Fund and to Tullamore URDF 2020



August 2020

HERITAGE

The Heritage Office works with the Offaly Heritage Forum to deliver the Offaly Heritage Plan 2017-22. The forum meets four times a year and is made up of people from state agencies, council staff and NGOs.



The forum met once before lockdown and all contact has been online since.

The national Heritage Council provides funding towards the running of the Heritage office (25%) and also gives an allocation towards the delivery of the Offaly Heritage Plan. The heritage office has one full time officer.

In 2020 the heritage office received additional funding from the Creative Ireland programme; the National Biodiversity Action Plan and the new Community Monuments Fund.

HERITAGE COUNCIL- HERITAGE PLAN FUNDED PROJECTS

Funding from the Heritage Council of **€23,000** was received in 2020 towards two projects in the Offaly Heritage Plan: the county archives service and the removal of Himalayan balsam invasive species from the Camcor and Little Brosna catchment.

ARCHIVES

The County Archive Service has been developed by Offaly History and supported by Offaly County Council as a priority

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

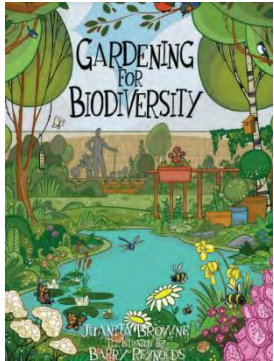
INVASIVE SPECIES

Offaly has two main invasive alien species which are being tackled by the County Council. Himalayan Balsam seeds are waterborne and the plant thrives on river banks. The species was noted spreading on the Camcor and Little Brosna Catchment and 2020 was the third year of removal by hand of the plant. This was funded by the Heritage Plan funding from the Heritage Council. The second species is Japanese knotweed which has been tackled by Offaly County Council for the past decade. Work continues to combat this destructive plant and to try and contain it, involving annual treatment and a mapping programme along with contacting private landowners where the species is noted.

NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY PLAN

Funding of **€16,000** was received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with a second allocation of **€6,000** in late summer. This was allocated towards the delivery of the *All Ireland Pollinator Plan* which was adopted by Offaly County Council in April 2020; a series

of info-mercials were broadcast throughout the year on Midlands 103 encouraging pollinator friendly actions; supporting citizen science and biodiversity recording which feeds into monitoring of climate change and additional works to remove invasive Himalayan balsam.



*This **Gardening for Biodiversity** booklet was a national initiative for heritage officers led by Laois County Council which proved immensely popular during the spring lockdown.*

KILLAUN BOG NEAR BIRR

The boardwalk on this bog was installed by St Brendan's Community School 29 years ago and is a much used facility. However, by 2020 the wooden walkway of 440m was in very poor condition and needed to be replaced. The heritage office worked with the school to **secure €20,000** from the Peatlands Community Engagement Fund and **€10,000 from Creative Ireland** and works have begun on phase one of replacing the boardwalk with Irish Recycled Plastic.

DECADE OF CENTENARIES

Funding of €10,000 was received in 2020 and was allocated

to producing a book profiling the **social history on the Rathrobin Estate in Offaly**. The Biddulph family lived there at the turn of the century and they took photographs of their tenants and their house providing a unique insight into the social and farming history of the Mount Bolus area of Offaly, some of the big houses and the pursuits of their owners. The house was subsequently burnt in 1923. The collection provides a unique insight into farming and estate life over a period of significant change from 1902 to 1920. This collection of photographs has been preserved by their descendants, the Magans. They in turn have made the collection available to Offaly Historical Society.



The Mahon Family, one of the images available from the Magan Collection (Offaly History)

MAINTENANCE OF MEDIEVAL CHURCHES AND BURIAL GROUNDS

A maintenance programme has been put in place for medieval churches that have been conserved including Lynally, Lemanaghan, Drumcullen, Kilbride Clara, Croghan and Roscomroe to monitor and keep them in good repair. **Bully's Acre in Birr was cleared of vegetation to facilitate memorial recording and will hopefully be maintained regularly.**

In 2020 works were undertaken to stabilise the gable end of Roscomroe church.

COMMUNITY MONUMENTS FUND

In late 2020 we received funding of €52,000 under the new **Community Monuments Fund** to finish conservation works at Drumcullen (phase 1 was in 2018); to carry out a **report on the works needed at St Brendan's medieval church in Birr and Blundell Castle in Edenderry.**



Roscomroe medieval church gable end after stabilisation works carried out with National Monuments Service consents.

JUST TRANSITION

A submission was made to Just Transition in partnership with Laois County Council for conservation of medieval churches with appropriate pollinator actions for burial grounds. A **provisional offer of €748,000 has been made subject to governance checks.**

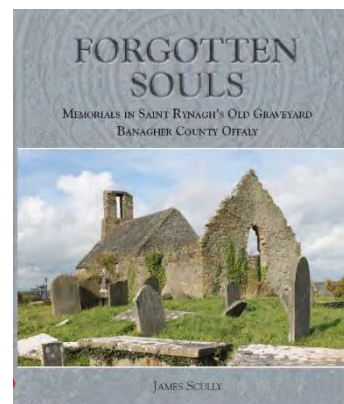
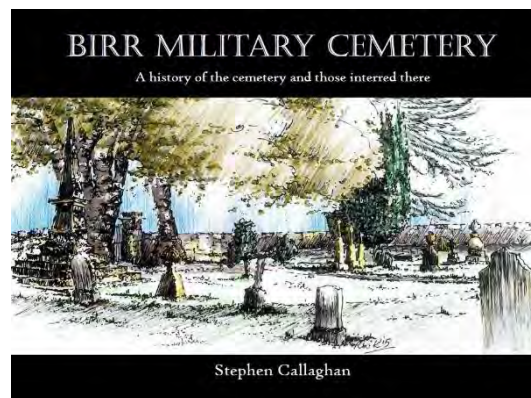
OFFALY TIDY TOWNS NETWORK

The Network is run jointly with the Community Section. Just one information evening was held for groups before lockdown. After that groups received email support and advice.

PUBLIC REALM AND TOWN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL

The Heritage Officer is part of the Council in-house working group for Town and Village Renewal projects and is particular involved in the delivery of the Croghan Hill project and advising on applications with heritage aspects such as the Crinkill Military Trail.

Croghan Hill - The newly placed carved stone by Ciaran Byrne with Haikus by Pauline McNamee erected in March 2020 to replace the old damaged trig station



CREATIVE IRELAND

Creative Ireland 2017-22, places creativity at the centre of public policy focusing on projects that are collaborative involving the arts, heritage and libraries with strong community reach. The Heritage Officer is involved in the Creative Ireland OCC working group along with the Arts Office, Library Service, Corporate Services, Community and Local Development and the **Architect's office**. In 2020 €96,775 was allocated to Offaly with a further €70,000 allocated after the July Stimulus Package. This programme has grown considerably since 2017 and supports a wide range of community projects.

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS

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

PUBLICATIONS

A photographic book documenting the **Derrinlough Briquette Factory** by James Fraher with Jimmy Shortt was launched on line by Cathaoirleach Peter Ormond during lockdown. The exhibition is currently in Aras an Chontae and will travel to the Irish Architectural Archive when C19 permits.

We worked with Offaly History to publish the book on **Poet Egan of the Meelaghans** which was launched on line in April.

Two memorial recording books were supported and published, **Forgotten Souls** by James Scully published by Offaly History and **Birr Military Cemetery** by Stephen Callaghan, published by Offaly County Council.

Birr Destination Town – part of the team working to review the public realm plan (2008) and to develop proposals for the Failte Ireland funding allocated under this programme.

Camcor River Study - part of the team working with Birr 2020 on this study on managing the Camcor and its banks between Springfield Bridge and Croghan Bridge.

Birr Courthouse Conservation Master Plan – working with architect Rachel McKenna to procure a conservation master plan for this site in partnership with Birr 2020.

Offaly County Development Plan – contributed to the heritage sections of the draft plan.

HERITAGE AWARENESS

The **Offaly Naturalists' Field Club** programme was planned and then postponed in March. However in lieu of physical events the heritage office worked with John Feehan and a series of **Wildflowers of Offaly** youtube videos was made with far reaching appeal. The series for 2020 has 50 videos and to date has over 25,000 views.



John Feehan discussing Bog Rosemary, the county flower - one of the 50 species profiled in 2020.

HERITAGE WEEK

Heritage Week went ahead online in 2020 with a number of groups embracing presenting their projects in this new format.



In early 2020 the Egan family from Carrigeen won the **National Heritage Hero award** which was presented at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin. Subsequently Anne Cassin of RTE filmed the Egan

farmhouse and it was broadcast on Nationwide during Heritage Week 2020.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

The role of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) encompasses Enterprise and Economic Development.

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) provides a one stop shop for anyone looking to set up or grow a business. The services can be broken down into the following areas:

- Business Information & Advisory Services
- Enterprise Support Services
- Entrepreneurship Support Services
- Local Enterprise Development Services

The team comprises Orla Martin, Head of Enterprise, James Hogan, Senior Enterprise Development Officer; Geraldine Beirne, Business Advisor; Edel Boyd, Assistant Business Advisor; Martin Feury, Enterprise Executive and Sinead Shaw, Administrator.

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the Local Enterprise Office Offaly Team worked remotely with the help of Offaly County Council IT and Finance Departments. The LEO Offaly team successfully transitioned to remote working. All the LEO training courses moved online. Mentoring was conducted by phone or zoom calls and clients were contacted by phone, email and video conferencing. All other services where possible, have taken place remotely

including Evaluation & Approvals Committee Meetings, enabling grant approvals and Food and Export programmes. Virtual grant visits were introduced, and a range of new products and supports were launched for Offaly Businesses.

VISION

To drive an entrepreneurial culture across the county, at all levels and to support the start-up and growth of innovative, competitive and profitable small business enterprises that create sustainable jobs and contribute to developing a robust and diversified local economy.

LEO Offaly's remit is wide and includes both the Local Enterprise functions and the Economic Development function of Offaly County Council.

ENTERPRISE & ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) provides a wide range of services to the enterprise sector in Offaly. These include direct grant assistance to eligible micro-enterprises, subsidised business training, mentoring, free events and seminars, and a range of online supports. The LEO assists clusters of business, e.g. food, craft, manufacturing and works with groups to promote enterprise and industrial parks. The Local Enterprise Office also has a strong remit

to promote an Enterprise Culture, and it does this with a number of programmes delivered in primary and secondary schools in Offaly.

Existing businesses can also benefit from the Local Enterprise Office. We can assist with site visits, business health checks, mentoring, and in some cases, selective financial intervention (i.e. grants).

The Local Enterprise Office has a calendar of events taking place throughout the year, all designed to assist business owner sustain and grow.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE ACTIVITIES IN 2020

2020 has been an extraordinary year for business, and for the Local Enterprise Office. The LEO Office carried out functions as normal until mid-March. Since Covid-19 restrictions began, the service delivery model changed considerably and these changes are likely to remain in place for much of 2021.

2020 LEO OUTCOMES

642 Approvals, to the value of €3,266,952
75 Training Programmes, with 845 attendees
169 Mentoring Sessions
476 Student Entrepreneurship Participants
3,638 Client Enquiries

LEO ACTIVITIES: JANUARY TO MID-MARCH

In Quarter 1, LEO Offaly launched a comprehensive range of training programmes for new and existing businesses. A number of Brexit related initiatives were introduced. Offaly Clients participated in the RDS Showcase event in RDS.

The 2019 figures for the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), operating in partnership with Enterprise Ireland and the local authorities, were announced in February. The figures show that 3,149 net jobs were created in the previous year across the country. The 31 Local Enterprise Offices, funded by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, are supporting 38,535 jobs across 7,400 client companies.

Local Enterprise Office Offaly 2019 jobs figures, announced during Local Enterprise Week, show that 62 net new jobs were created by Local Enterprise Office Offaly supported companies in that year. This figure relates to client companies that have received Feasibility, Priming and/or Business Expansion Grants. It does not include job creation in all the businesses that interact with the Local Enterprise Office and receive Enterprise Training, Mentoring and Business Advice.

The Ambassador of the Netherlands to Ireland, Adriaan Palm visited the I-LOFAR Project in Birr Castle on the 28th February. The meeting was organized by Professor Peter Gallagher and discussions included collaborative research, economic and tourism opportunities between Birr and ASTRON in the Netherlands. On the day, Ambassador Palm met with Orla Martin and Cllr. John Clendennen, both of whom had visited ASTRON – the Netherlands Institute for Radio Astronomy.

In early March, Euro Stallions Ltd. C/o Dr. Emma-Rose Conroy announced Overall Winner of 2020 Offaly County Enterprise Award. A range of events took place to mark Local Enterprise Week.

COVID-19 AND BUSINESS RESPONSE

Mid-March and response to Covid19, LEO was deemed an essential service and LEO Staff began working remotely.

Since mid-March, LEO Offaly dealt with unprecedented numbers of enquiries from the wider business community. Levels of enquiries have increased by 380% and applications for Feasibility, Priming and Business Expansion Grants were ahead of the previous year. In addition, LEO Offaly staff assisted clients with applications for EI schemes such as Gradstart and Agile Innovation Fund. Throughout the year, the government introduced a range of new business supports and LEO

Offaly assisted with the promotion and in some cases delivery of the new supports. LEO Offaly worked closely with colleagues in Offaly County Council Finance Department on the promotion of the Restart Schemes. The LEO Team also worked with protocol partners in Dept. Business, Enterprise & Innovation; Dept. Social Welfare; Revenue; Dept. Communications, Climate Action and Environment; Fáilte Ireland and Bord Bia to advise businesses of supports available from different departments and agencies.

The increased profile of the Local Enterprise Office – both through government messaging and new funding mechanisms resulted in increased demand and a widening of the client base. This new base includes previously excluded services such as locally traded services, retail, pubs and restaurants.

The LEO Team continued to actively support the Core client portfolio as they faced the challenges of Covid-19 and BREXIT. These are the enterprises employing between 1 and 10 people in manufacturing, specialised services and internationally traded services. LEO Offaly worked with these clients on: specialist mentoring, Brexit related training programmes, management development programmes, relevant EI initiatives such as Agile Innovation Funding, Grad Start Programme etc. In addition, the Midland LEOs rolled out 3 new programmes funded by the Enterprise Ireland Competitive Fund

Scheme. These programmes are: Going Green, Midlands Food & Drink Programme and Exporting for Growth.

In addition to the standard suite of supports, the Government launched a number of tailored initiatives to support businesses through Covid-19. Key Business Supports in 2020 were as follows:

BUSINESS CONTINUITY VOUCHER

The new Business Continuity Voucher (BCV) was available through Local Enterprise Office Offaly from March to May 2020 to assist sole traders and companies across every business sector locally that employs up to 50 people. The voucher was **worth up to €2,500 in third party consultancy costs** and was used by companies and sole traders in Offaly to develop short-term and long-term strategies to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. The goal was to help business owners make informed decisions about what immediate measures and actions should be taken to protect staff and sales. LEO Offaly approved BCVs to **377 Offaly businesses, to the value of €852,964.**

TRADING ONLINE VOUCHER (ECOMMERCE) GRANTS

The voucher is a financial incentive to small businesses to develop or enhance their ability to trade online. Prior to the Covid-19 crisis the TOV grant covered 50% of eligible expenditure to a maximum **of €2,500**. Due to the Covid crisis, the grant changed to cover funding to 90% of eligible expenditure to a maximum value **of €2,500** (exclusive of VAT). In 2020, 142 TOV grants were awarded

to Offaly businesses, to the value of €336,460.

CLIENT STIMULUS SCHEME

The Client Stimulus Scheme enabled eligible LEO Offaly clients receive back the refundable aid element of their **grant, up to a max of €20,000. As part of the scheme,** clients agreed to undertake 3 days of consultancy to support business recovery. 56 clients availed of the **scheme, to the value of €355,958.**

MICROFINANCE IRELAND

Under a partnership between Microfinance Ireland (MFI) and the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), **Business Loans of up to €25,000 are available through the LEOs.** Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the maximum **Microfinance loan amount increased to €50,000 to assist business.** The Microfinance Covid Loan Scheme was **approved to 23 Offaly clients, to the value of €702,000.**

ENTERPRISE IRELAND AGILE INNOVATION FUND/GRADSTART SCHEME

In 2020, LEO Offaly approved two businesses for the Agile Innovation Fund and one client for the GradStart Scheme, with a total grant value of €303,060.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS 2020

STUDENT ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

Local Enterprise Office Offaly announced that winning teenager entrepreneurs from Banagher College, Tullamore College and Gallen Community School would represent Offaly at the 2020 Student Enterprise Programme National Finals. The students all took part in the Offaly Final on 5th March, which was held at the Tullamore Court Hotel. Co-ordinated by the Local Enterprise Offices in every Local Authority area, the competition is the most successful student enterprise programme of its kind in the country. An estimated 450 students from 10 schools took part in the annual programme locally.

In the Senior Category of the competition, Offaly was represented in the National Final by Cathal Flannery from Clononey Crafts, Banagher College. Cathal produces a range of crafted wooden items including lamps, pens and **bowls. In the Intermediate Category, Santa's Reindeers** from Tullamore College represented the county. The business is run by 3rd year student Anthony Gorman who makes handcrafted wooden reindeers. In the Junior Category, students represented Offaly are: Oisín Kennedy, Ryan Keenaghan, Iris Samonte and Rachel Doorley from Cluny Sustainable Crafts in Gallen Community School. They produce flower arrangements using upcycled jars.



2020 COUNTY ENTERPRISE AWARD WINNER

Euro Stallions Ltd. C/o Dr. Emma-Rose Conroy was announced Overall Winner of 2020 Offaly County Enterprise Award. Euro Stallions is a stallion semen agency offering a service whereby breeders can access semen from top class stallions worldwide. Euro Stallions Ltd represented Co. Offaly and Local Enterprise Office Offaly at the National Enterprise Awards

Other winners at the awards ceremony were four category prize winners: Portarlinton based Equipeople Ltd (Business Growth Award); Rahan based NIS Ltd (Business Service Award); Portarlinton based Carla Mooney (Best Female Entrepreneur Award) and Edenderry based Derek McCreanor, T/a Enhance Acoustics (Innovation Award).



GET YOUR BUSINESS BREXIT READY

Offaly Local Enterprise Office provided a range of business supports to help address issues and maximise potential opportunities;

- Brexit Loan Scheme Information Pack - Eligible businesses can apply for the **€300 million Brexit Loan Scheme**. The Scheme delivered by the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) through commercial lenders is available to eligible businesses with up to 499 employees at an interest rate of 4% or less.
- Brexit Seminars & Events
- Brexit Mentor Programme
- Lean for Micro
- Enterprise Europe Network
- Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters
- Trading Online Voucher Scheme

- MFI – Micro Finance Ireland loan
- Training and Management Development

LOCAL ENTERPRISE WEEK

Local Enterprise Week was held on Monday March 2nd to Friday March 6th before the Covid-19 restrictions. The Local Enterprise Office Offaly organised numerous events for start-ups and small businesses all over Offaly.

Events were held in a number of locations – Tullamore, Edenderry, Birr and Ferbane. Highlights included the Offaly Enterprise Awards, Student Enterprise Awards, LEAN Lunchtime Seminar, Keep Your Eye on the Prize with Blaise Brosnan, Ferbane Food Mentoring Clinic, and Mentoring Clinic in Edenderry.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE DAY

Record numbers of attendees for first full day virtual conference.

OFFALY NETWORK OF ENTREPRENEURS (O.N.E.)

The ONE network is co-ordinated by the LEO and designed to help business people promote their company, meet other businesspeople in the same situation and learn from shared experiences through the power of networking. The Network is free to join and attend and members also benefit from the wide range of speakers who give a one-hour presentation at each meeting. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, meetings were held online.

CO-WORKING HUBS

STREAMBIRR IN BIRR TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

streamBIRR provides a central location and space, where research and education meets business. I-LOFAR provides a unique opportunity to access big data in real time. This data can be utilised for training purposes and for proving algorithms for many sectors. In 2020, a Business Manager was recruited and offices were rented, refurbished and open for business in February 2020.

Services include: hot desk facilities and office space, IT training facilities and training, industry focused events, and industry-led research projects.

THE JUNCTION BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTRE

In 2020, LEO Offaly continued its work in developing The Junction Business Innovation Centre. The Junction is promoted through Social Media Channels, Founders Friday events and the LEO run Offaly Network of Entrepreneurs (ONE Network). The Junction Office Suites in 25J provides additional workspace to that available in 19H.

E-HIVE IN EDENDERRY

E-Hive, situated in Edenderry MD Town Hall is Edenderry's first digital hub. E-Hive has over 20 desks in a co-working environment, meeting rooms, and event space for workshops. The project was funded under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme and Offaly County Council. It is supported by LEO Offaly and Offaly Innovation & Design

Centre CLG.

BUSINESS PARKS

LEO Offaly actively promotes business and industrial parks in the County. In 2020, the LEO office advertised and sold industrial sites in Ferbane Business Park, Lemonaghan and Portarlinton Industrial Park. LEO Offaly produces a free quarterly online property database, showcasing commercial properties and industrial sites for sale and rent.

RHODE GREEN ENERGY PARK

Offaly County Council, through LEO Offaly, provides secretariat support to the North Offaly Development Fund Ltd and contributes to the marketing of Rhode Green Energy Park. Following completion of the RPS Opportunity Assessment Report, LEO Offaly arranged a number of high-level stakeholder engagement briefings to communicate the findings of the report and to seek opportunities for collaborations.

SHOPFRONT SCHEME

LEO Offaly is managing the Pilot and supplementary scheme as funded under the Town & Village Renewal scheme. This is in conjunction with Planning and Architecture within OCC. 17 Applications were approved under the 2020 scheme.

INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT

LEO Offaly in conjunction with IT Dept. of Offaly County

Council commissioned a report to assess the suitability of Birr and Rhode as potential locations for Data Centres. The report focused on the current fibre connectivity and the means to increase to levels required for Data Centres. The completed report will enable Offaly plan for future development and opportunities.

DATA SETS

LEO Offaly funded comprehensive data sets for Tullamore, and co-funded Midlands Regional Data Sets under the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan. The comprehensive data will assist in the promotion of the county and region.

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

LEO Committee is represented on the Offaly County Council Steering Committee for the new Offaly.ie website. **LEO Offaly through OCC's Economic Budget has provided** funding for the development of the new website.

FUNDING APPLICATIONS

Head of Enterprise (as Director of Offaly Innovation & Design Centre CLG) wrote up and submitted a number of funding applications. These include 2 to the Just Transition Fund (a) To renovate the warehouse portion of The Junction Office Suites and secure planning for an industrial site in IDA Srah Industrial Park, (b) To fund 4 sectoral leads to drive economic and enterprise development in Green Energies, Manufacturing & Engineering, Food & Drink Industries, Science and Big Data.

An application was also prepared and submitted to Enterprise Ireland under the Enterprise Centre Fund. This was for financial assistance towards the cost of recruiting a Business Development Manager in The Junction, enhancing broadband and AV equipment in the hubs

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS:

In 2020, Local Enterprise Office Offaly continued to keep clients up to date with relevant information and events via their website - www.localenterprise.ie/offaly, monthly email newsletter and through social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. There was a continued rise in followers throughout 2020 with 3,071 Facebook page followers and 2,291 Twitter followers at year end.

LEO Offaly has increased its online activities on all its social media platforms to increase awareness of LEO Supports. LEO Offaly worked on the new branding strategy with colleagues in Offaly County Council which culminated in the launch of the new brand identity for Offaly County Council.

Head of Enterprise in LEO Offaly participates in 3 National LEO Network Committees, and this participation raises **Offaly's profile, affords opportunities to promote Offaly businesses**, and ensures the needs of Offaly enterprise are heard and represented at a national level.

- **Chairs the LEO Network for Communications**

and assists with the messaging for national PR campaigns such as Look for Local, participates in national radio interviews and Facebook Lunch and Learn Live Events.

- **Chairs the National Women's Enterprise Day Committee.** National Women's Enterprise Day 2020 was delivered as a one-day online event.

- **Regional Representative on the LEO Network** and contributes to regular calls with the DBEI, Enterprise Ireland and other Regional Reps within the LEO Network. This ensures that the issues affecting Offaly and Midland businesses are heard.

IMPROVING EFFICIENCIES

With the assistance of OCC IT Dept., LEO Offaly is using Microsoft Teams to improve communications and collaboration between staff and other sections within Offaly County Council. LEO Offaly has also started using Submit.Com an online platform where all LEO Offaly Applications can be completed and submitted via a secure portal by Offaly businesses. This allows LEO staff monitor demand for products and services and standardize the manner in which business owners submit applications and supplementary information such as quotations, cashflows etc.

2021 ENTERPRISE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

- Continue to support Offaly Enterprises as they deal with the challenges of Covid-19
- Assist Offaly Enterprises respond to the challenges

of BREXIT through preparation, adaptation and exploring alternative markets

- Promote, Support and Develop Offaly Enterprise at all levels including student enterprise, female entrepreneurship, senior entrepreneurship
- Continue to develop and deliver timely and relevant training programmes and initiatives
- Promote Offaly as a great location for business expansion, and continue to manage to all enquiries and opportunities for inward investment
- **Promote Offaly's key sectoral strengths** including: Green Energy & Technology, Food & Drink, Engineering and Manufacturing, Science and Big Data, Tourism and Creative Industries
- Continue to engage with local, regional and national stakeholders to deliver the key objectives of the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan
- Continue to engage with local, regional and national stakeholders to support the transition to a decarbonized economy
- Continue to work with other departments in Offaly County Council to progress projects benefiting economic development of the County
- Continue to work with & support Offaly Innovation & Design Centre CLG & the development of co-working hubs.

LEO OFFALY PERFORMANCE METRICS

Measure 1	Output 2020	Target 2021
Number of Applications Received:	52	
Feasibility/Priming/Business Expansion/TAME/GradStart/R & D	52	42
Grant Applications Approved: Number	47	45
Feasibility: Number:	3	3
Priming: Number:	8	11
Business Expansion: Number:	28	23
TAME: Number	6	5
GradStart	1	2
R & D	1	1
No. of projected potential new jobs associated with Approvals(Priming & Business Expansion)	51	50
Costs per job calculation associated with approvals (Average Cost calculated on new jobs over three years)	€10,000	€10,000

Trading On Line Vouchers:	Output 2020	Target 2021
No. of Trading Online Vouchers approved	142	25
Value (€) of Trading Online Vouchers Paid	€318738.43	€50,000
MFI:	Output 2020	Target 2021
Number of Applications submitted	21	12

Lean for Micro Project:	Output 2020	Target 2021
No. of Companies who undertaken a Lean for Micro Assessment	13	10

Measure 2	Output 2020	Target 2021
Training/Development Programmes (All Training and Networking events)		
Total No. of All Programmes (Training/Networking/Events/Seminars)	75	45
Total No. of Participants in all Programmes	845	600
No. of Females	607	350
No. of Males	238	250
No. of SYOB Programmes	13	11
No. of SYOB Participants	139	105
No. of Brexit Seminars / Brexit Information Events	2	2
No. of Participants attending Brexit Events	28	30
No. of Completed Brexit Scorecards	12	12
No. of LEO clients receiving Brexit related Mentoring	22	20
Mentoring:		
Total Number of individual mentoring – (participants availing of one to one mentoring – one to one engagement by a Mentor)	168	170
Total Number of group mentoring participants – (are all group mentoring engagements or clinics where a mentor engages with a group of clients.	1	10
Total Number of Mentoring Participants (both one to one and group)	169	180

Schools Entrepreneurship:	Output 2020	Target 2021
Number of Schools Participating (Secondary schools only)	10	9
Number of Students Participating	476	350

Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur:	Output 2020	Target 2021
Number of Applications	N/A	35

TOURISM

Undeniably the tourism sector has been hit the hardest in 2020 with the emergence of COVID-19 and its ramifications. The tourism team have been working closely with Fáilte Ireland to assist and support our stakeholders through this difficult year.

There was a number of noteworthy highlights in 2020 and Offaly Tourism continued to strive to promote and gain exposure for our wonderful sites, attractions and activities through different channels.

OPERATION TRANSFORMATION

The film crew of the very popular RTÉ show Operation Transformation visited Offaly for a six-week period in January – February 2020. Filming in six locations, with a

weekly national



audience of approx. 440,000 viewers

RTÉ NATIONWIDE

Anne Cassin and a Nationwide crew visited for two days in July for a programme focussing solely on tourism in Offaly and the attractions the county has to offer including Clonmacnoise, Lough Boora Discovery Park, the Slieve Blooms and the River Shannon. The programme aired on 27th July on RTÉ One and was broadcast to a national audience of up to 250,000 viewers. The programme was very well received and wonderfully showcased Offaly's sites and attractions as the sun shone!





encourage the midlanders to get out and explore the wonders and beauty within the region.

FAILTE IRELAND'S THE 'MAKE A BREAK FOR IT' CAMPAIGN

The €1m promotion campaign announced by the government in the package of measures to support businesses impacted by the regional restrictions was most welcome. Offaly, along with Laois and Kildare received an equal share.

This campaign focussed on increasing the appeal of Offaly to visitors and drive bookings under the banner of 'Make A Break for It'.

SUMMER MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Offaly Tourism's national Summer marketing campaign launched on 15th June. The national radio campaign ran for a period of 4 weeks on Today FM & Newstalk. It included a week long promotion on Today FM's Fergal Darcy afternoon show. Both the adverts and the promotion definitely boosted Offaly's profile nationwide.

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

The common message at the beginning and ending of the adverts is to enjoy the 'Magical Midlands'. The adverts



The 'Make A Break for It' campaign encouraged the domestic audience to pack their bags and get out to

explore all that Ireland has to offer by communicating the anticipation, excitement and joy of a home holiday by leveraging our regional experience brands.

The campaign reached 97% of Irish adults and Fáilte Ireland published the first adverts in this campaign at the end of August. This campaign was to run for 16 weeks in press, radio, online audio and social media. The content in these adverts changing on a weekly basis focusing on different sites and attractions each week. These Offaly specific ads were in addition to the adverts running for the regional brands **Ireland's Ancient East** and **Ireland's Hidden Heartlands** in which Offaly continues to feature.

DIGITAL MARKETING

Offaly Tourism continued to grow its social media presence in 2020, with Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts using the #visitoffaly. The total number of followers over the social media platforms is 13,116; an increase of 17% year on year.

OUTDOOR RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME

Work commenced on the projects that were funding under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2019. The tourism team commissioned a number of days photography and videography for outdoor recreation. The photography is completed and the photographs greatly complement their existing portfolio. The photographs will

be utilised in the new outdoor recreation brochure which will be completed in Q1 2021.

TRAINING & SUPPORTS

Throughout 2020 Offaly Tourism assisted and supported the trade in a number of training days and workshops. Hosted by Fáilte Ireland and Offaly Local Enterprise Office, the supports were most welcome and greatly received by the trade;

- *Demand Creation and Channel Distribution Support Programme*, July 2020
- *Athlone & Mid Shannon Destination Recovery Task Force* – Established in Q2, 2020
- *Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Tourism Networks Programme - Winter 2020-21*
- *Offaly / Laois Visitor Experience Activation Programme* – Nov 2020 – Q3 2021



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

CORPORATE SERVICES		FINANCE	
<i>Director of Services:</i>	Frank Heslin / Ann Dillon	<i>Head of Finance</i>	Thomas Mawe / Mark Connolly
<i>Senior Executive Officer:</i>	Gerard Bruton (Acting)	<i>Financial Management Accountant:</i>	Loretta Moran (Acting)
<i>Administrative Officer:</i>	Colm Kelly (Acting)	<i>Administrative Officer:</i>	Mary Flynn Kenny
HUMAN RESOURCES		INFORMATION SYSTEMS	
<i>Director of Services:</i>	Frank Heslin / Ann Dillon	<i>Director of Services</i>	Thomas Mawe / Mark Connolly
<i>Senior Executive Officer:</i>	Evan Fennell	<i>Head of I.S.:</i>	Ray Bell
<i>Administrative Officer:</i>	Caroline Dempsey	<i>I.S. Project Leader</i>	Eileen Jackson
		<i>I.S. Project Leader</i>	David Spain

CORPORATE SERVICES

The main functions of the Corporate Services section include:

- To provide an efficient and professional secretariat to the Council and their committees.
- To make information available to the members in a timely, convenient and flexible manner to allow for informed decision making.
- To maintain and update the register of electors.
- To develop initiatives to increase cross-departmental awareness and input to the development of corporate policies.
- To improve communications internally and externally on Local Authorities activities.

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

BIRR ELECTORAL AREA:

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

EDENDERRY ELECTORAL AREA:

Cribbin, Noel	Francis Street, Edenderry	(087) 907 3804	noelcribb56@gmail.com	Fine Gael
Fitzpatrick, Eddie	Benfield, Cloneyhurke, Portarlinton	(087) 258 0428	eddiefitzp@eircom.net	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	dmharvey@eircom.net	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, 20 council meetings were held in 2020. A series of 3 full-day Special Council meetings were held in June and July to consider the Draft County Development Plan.

At the Annual Meeting, held on 15th June 2020, Councillor John Carroll was elected Cathaoirleach and Councillor Eamon Dooley was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.



June Annual Meeting held in Áras an Chontae on 15th June 2020

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

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC – BUSINESS CONTINUITY

With the outbreak of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic in March 2020 and the Public Health Measures introduced by the Government, the Cathaoirleach decided to defer the March Monthly Meeting. A special briefing meeting for the members was held on 8th April 2020 with all the members attending remotely. The April Monthly Council meeting was held as scheduled on 20th April, with all the members attending remotely.

The Department issued guidelines that indicated that no statutory business could be considered by the members while they were meeting remotely. The Council Chamber in Áras an Chontae was rearranged to allow the members to meet while observing the correct social distancing measures, and the May Monthly Council meeting was held as scheduled, with all members present in the Chamber and two members attending remotely.

In September, following further Public Health advice it was agreed to reduce the number of members attending the monthly meeting. On the proposal of the Cathaoirleach, it was agreed to organise the members

into 6 pods of 3 members each, with one member in each pod attending monthly meetings remotely and the others attending the meeting in the Chamber, on a rotating basis. It was also agreed to limit the meetings to 1 hour and 55 minutes.

Following the imposition of further restrictions on counties Offaly, Laois and Kildare in August 2020, the members held a Special meeting to consider the impact of these measures on the county. A representative group met remotely with the Minister of Health, Mr. Stephen Donnelly, T.D. to express their concerns.

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 2020.

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE OIREACHTAS

The Cathaoirleach and the members of the Management Team briefed the Oireachtas Members on progress to date and challenges to the Local Authority at a meeting held on 12th October 2020, with a mid-year review issuing in July 2020

CORPORATE PLAN REVIEW

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

REGISTER OF ELECTORS

The Register of Electors was produced on the 1st February and came into force on 15th February 2020. The total electorate for County Offaly for the 2020/2021 Register of Electors was 59,966 broken down over the local electoral areas as follows:

Birr	21,197
Edenderry	16,843
Tullamore	21,926
Total on the Register	59,966

JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

The Joint Policing Committee met on two occasions in 2020. The Committee did not hold an annual Public Meeting in 2020 in line with Public Health guidelines.

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

SWIMMING POOLS

Corporate Services administer the Council's support grant.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

During 2020 Offaly County Council processed 7 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 2020.

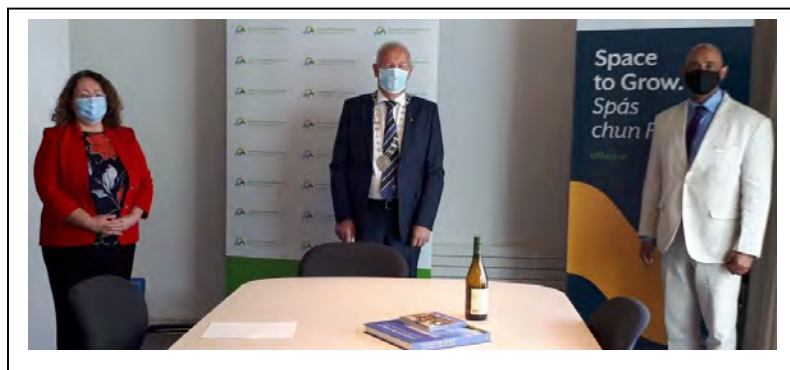
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Offaly County Council processed 67 Freedom of Information requests during 2020, a decrease on the 98 applications received in 2019.

Applications received / processed in 2020	
Applications on hand at 31/12/2019	8
Applications received during 2020	67
Decisions taken during 2020	55
Applications withdrawn and dealt with outside FoI	2
Applications on hand 31/12/2020	12

Nature of the information requested	
Personal (to applicant)	12
Non-personal	55

Requests were received from the following	
Journalists	13
Business / Interest	0
Oireachtas	0
Staff	1
Clients	9
Others	44



The Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive met with the Indian Ambassador Mr. Sandeep Kumar in September 2020

COUNTY CORONERS

The total expenditure was **€127,166.00** (including salaries) in respect of coroners' inquests in 2020.

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 2019 in November 2020

NEW MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Ms. Sharon Kennedy, Director of Services, joined the organisation in January 2020. She was assigned responsibility for Housing, Community and Culture, Fire and Emergency Service, Arts and the Library Service.

Mr. Mark Connolly, joined the organisation in June 2020 and took up the role of Head of Finance, with responsibility for the ICT Section.

NEW BRAND LAUNCH

Offaly County Council established a Branding Strategy Committee, in 2019, to consider refreshing the Council Brand. Following a tender process, Design Works were engaged to work with the group to develop a new brand to sell Offaly's unique identity. This company had previously worked on the

project to develop Offaly Tourism branding. The company worked through a series of workshops and meetings with the relevant stakeholders to develop the brand.

The new brand encompasses air, water, land and the selling point **“Space to Grow”**– translating to **“Spás le fás”**.

The Brand was presented to the Elected Members at the February Monthly meeting and the members agreed to adopt the new Brand.



The Chief Executive, members of the Management Team and Cathaoirleach Peter Ormond at the launch of the new Offaly County Council Brand in June 2020

Name	Payments made to Members in 2020							Total
	Represent Pay & MD allowance	Monthly Expenditure allowance	Conference/ Training incl. Fees and phones	SPC chairpersons allowance	MD Chairperson allowance	Chairpersons allowance	Gratuity	
John Carroll	18,528.12	5,746.45				11,039.04		35,313.61
Clare Claffey	18,528.12	5,511.43						24,039.55
John Clendennen	18,528.12	5,048.28	1,126.74					24,703.14
Noel Cribbin	18,528.12	5,544.97	533.96					24,607.05
Eamon Dooley	18,528.12	5,008.12	140.00	6025.47	2621.77	2207.81		34,531.29
Neil Feighery	18,528.12	4221.35	657.20					23,406.67
Eddie Fitzpatrick	18,528.12	4672.76	652.12		2667.76			26,520.76
John Foley	18,528.12	5444.36			3380.70			27,353.18
Mark Hackett	18,528.12	4404.22	326.17					23,258.51
Declan Harvey	18,524.72	4,221.35	537.74					23,283.81
John Leahy	18,528.12	4572.16	1,500.00	6025.47	3242.72	1824.51		35,692.98
Tony McCormack	18,528.12	4221.35	55.00					22,804.47
Robert McDermott	18,528.12	5410.83	388.34					24,327.29
Frank Moran	18,528.12	4225.18	290.61		2713.76			25,757.67
Sean O'Brien	18,528.12	4221.35	1,134.33					23,883.80
Peter Ormond	18,524.72	6853.66	140.00			9122.54		34,640.92
Danny Owens	18,528.12	4221.35	471.20	6025.47	3357.71			32,603.85
Liam Quinn	18,528.12	5209.61		6025.47				29,763.20
Ken Smollen	18,528.12	4221.35						22,749.47
Totals	€352,027.48	€92,980.13	€7,953.41	€24,101.88	€17,984.42	€24,193.90		€519,241.22

Councillors attended the following training in 2020	Venue	Date of Conferences	No. Delegates
AILG Module 2	Dooleys Hotel, Waterford	15/02/2020	2
AILG Module 2	Hotel Kilmore, Cavan	13/02/2020	1
AILG Annual	Longford Arms Hotel	4-5/03/2020	12
AILG Module 3	Clayton Whites, Wexford	24-25/07/2020	4
AILG Module 3	Sligo Park Hotel	08/08/2020	1
Councillors attended the following Conferences in 2020			
Councillors attended the following Conferences in 2020	Venue	Date of Conferences	No. Delegates
No Conferences were attended by Members in 2020			

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 Cllr. J. Leahy Cllr. P. Ormond, Cllr. N. Feighery Cllr. D. Harvey, Cllr. K. Smollen Cllr. 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. N. Cribbin, D. Owens J. Carroll
Regional Health Forum, Dublin-Mid-Leinster:	Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. T. McCormack, Cllr. S. O'Brien
Rural Water Monitoring Committee:	Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick, Cllr. J. Clendennen, Cllr. 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.	Cllr. T. McCormack, Cllr. D. Harvey Cllr. D. Owens, Cllr. K. Smollen
Tullamore Community Arts Centre:	Cllr. T. McCormack, Cllr. D. Harvey Cllr. S. O'Brien, Cllr. D. Owens
Tullamore Sports Link Ltd.:	Cllr. T. McCormack
Tullamore Chandler Sister Cities	Cllr. T. McCormack Cllr. D. Owens

FINANCE

OUR GOALS

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

OUR STRATEGIES

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

OUR SERVICES

- The Finance Department deals with both the **short and long term financing of all the Council's** operations, both of a Revenue and Capital

nature. This involves:

- Monitoring and controlling income and expenditure.
- Arranging Financing requirements.
- Treasury and Investment Management
- Compliance with all Statutory and DHLGH financial accounting principles, and regulations.
- **The Council's revenue and day-to-day** expenditure is funded from sources such as:
 - Commercial Rates;
 - Local Property Tax;
 - Government Grants;
 - Agency Water Services
 - Housing Rents, Planning Fees and Charges, NPPR, and other sundry Fees

MAIN SECTIONS WITHIN FINANCE

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING

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

Management Accounting is the preparation of quarterly

management reports to assist with budgetary control and the decision-making process within each directorate. The Annual Budget process is a statutory requirement and is managed in this section, in consultation with all the service divisions. This section also provides variance analysis, costing information and other financial information required by internal and external customers.

REVENUE COLLECTION

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

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

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

MOTOR TAXATION OFFICE / CASH OFFICE

The Council collects vehicle licence duties within its functional area on behalf of the Department of the Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHCLH).

This unit also manages general Cash collection and NPPR certificates. The Section also produces information for Gardai and other Local Authorities, regarding penalty points, traffic fines, parking fines, etc. Payments are made at the counter, electronically and through postal application.

GENERAL LEDGER / 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 DHPCLG circulars also falls within its remit.

NPPR

The section issues Non Principal Private Residence certificates.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Coordination of the Risk Management function within Offaly County Council.

MAIN REPORTS PRODUCED BY FINANCE

THE ANNUAL BUDGET

The Finance Department prepares the overall Revenue Budget in consultation with the Council Members, Chief Executive and the Management Team. The Local Government (Reform) Act 2014 specifies an extensive statutory budget process, timetable and disclosures,

including determination of LPT, to be completed in advance of the adoption at the Annual Budget Meeting.

THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT (AFS)

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

QUARTERLY MANAGEMENT REPORTS

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

DHPCLG / IMF QUARTERLY REPORTING

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

2020 FINANCE STATISTICS

MOTOR TAX

In 2020, the Motor Taxation Office generated **approximately €3.34 in revenue via the Motor Tax** office directly. In total Offaly Motor Tax processed 88,710 transactions (19% issued via Motor Tax Office and 81% was processed online).

REVENUE COLLECTION SERVICE INDICATORS

Amount collected as a percentage of the amount due at 2020 year end: (Draft AFS App 7 percentages)

Rents	92%
Commercial Rates	79%
Housing Loans	70%

**DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
(INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT STATEMENT)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020**

Expenditure by Division	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure	Net Expenditure
	2020	2020	2020	2019
	€	€	€	€
Housing & Building	14,644,143	14,053,950	590,193	(288,999)
Roads Transportation & Safety	23,860,499	17,145,133	6,715,366	6,082,585
Water Services	5,474,530	5,002,147	472,383	363,469
Development Management	20,833,165	15,335,297	5,497,868	3,566,332
Environmental Services	8,074,860	2,315,418	5,759,443	5,185,916
Recreation & Amenity	4,153,199	635,776	3,517,423	3,244,119
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	672,752	344,647	328,105	179,866
Miscellaneous Services	10,614,975	9,564,456	1,050,519	2,609,388
Total Expenditure/Income	88,328,124	64,396,824		
Net cost of Divisions to be funded from Rates & Local Property Tax			23,931,299	20,942,675
Rates			17,903,391	16,928,121
Local Property Tax			8,398,668	7,656,288
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Transfers			2,370,760	3,641,734
Transfers from/(to) Reserves			(2,158,526)	(3,009,638)
Overall Surplus/(Deficit) for Year			212,234	632,096
General Reserve @ 1st January 2020			(1,873,757)	(2,505,853)
General Reserve @ 31st December 2020			(1,661,523)	(1,873,757)

Capital Account Summary

**Extract from The Draft Annual Financial Statement
for the Year ended December 31, 2020**

	2020	2019
Balance (Debit)\Credit @ 1 January	10,871,035	12,189,766
Total Expenditure (Incl Transfers)	- 22,762,766	-32,303,855
Total Income (Incl Transfers)	22,575,167	30,985,124
Balance (Debit)\Credit @ 31 December	10,683,436	10,871,035

INTERNAL AUDIT UNIT

INTERNAL AUDITS UNDERTAKEN

During 2020, the Internal Audit Unit completed 3 Audits from the agreed Internal Audit Plan 2020. 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. During 2020 Internal Audit staff were required to assist with duties within Corporate Services section, to assist with continuity of service delivery in light of challenges encountered during the COVID 19 pandemic.

PUBLIC SPENDING CODE QA PROCESS

Internal Audit was responsible for compilation of the **Council's Public Spending Code Quality Assurance Report 2019**.

This report was certified by the Chief Executive and submitted to the National Oversight and Audit Commission in August 2020 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. Due to COVID 19 constraints the deadline for submission to NOAC was extended to the end of August from its original end of May date.

COLLABORATION

The Internal Auditor attended National and Regional collaboration meetings during 2020. Meetings for the Regional Internal Auditors Network took place online via ZOOM platform due to COVID restrictions.

SUPPORT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Internal Audit Unit provided administrative support to the Audit Committee in the fulfilling of its duties in 2020, including preparing the agendas and relevant documentation for the hosting of 3 Audit Committee meetings.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Audit Committee despite disruptions due to COVID pandemic succeeded to hold 3 committee meetings during 2020. The committees first meeting of 2020 was hosted on the 3rd of March at which the Audit Committee Charter 2020, Annual work plan, Internal Audit Plan and Annual report (with response to Local Government Auditors Statutory Audit for 2019) were approved. The Chair of the Audit committee presented these documents for approval to the Elected Members of Offaly County Council on the 15th of June. The Chairs annual appearance before the Elected Members was delayed due to the COVID 19 emergency response dominating, the Council meeting agenda. The committee held two further meetings on the 24th of September and their final meeting of 2020 on the 3rd

of December. These meetings were held online in order to facilitate participation from all members, whilst ensuring also that COVID meeting regulations were not breached. At the September meeting the Audit Committee Members agreed to limit their number of meetings in 2020 to 3 in order to minimise risk to committee members and staff from COVID 19.

During 2020 the Audit Committee met with the Chief Executive, Head of Finance, Directors of Services, Local Government Auditor, Director of Housing and Emergency Services, Data protection Officer and Internal Auditor.

The Audit Committee considered the following in 2020:

- Final Internal Audit Reports
- Follow-Up Internal Audit Reports
- Quarterly updates on Internal Audit progress
- Quarterly updates on Council Finances
- **Local Government Auditor's** Statutory Audit

- Report for 2019 & Management Letter
- Annual Financial Statement 2019
- Offaly County Council Budget 2020
- LGMA Local Authorities Performance Indicators Report 2019
- Audit Committee Charter 2020
- Offaly County Council Annual Report 2019

The Committee were also briefed in relation to a number of issues including:

- **Offaly County Council's Public Spending Code** Quality Assurance Report 2019
- Monthly Management Report to Council
- DHPLG Value for Money Reports.
- NOAC Local Authority Customer Satisfaction Survey
- NOAC Performance Indicator Reports

The Audit Committee members are Mr. Peter Scully (Chair); Mr. Brian Gunning; Ms. Constance Hanniffy; Mr. Michael Loughnane and Mr. Eugene Mulligan

HUMAN RESOURCES

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

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

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

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

During 2020, the Human Resources Department embarked on an internal restructuring. This resulted in an expanded training section and the transfer of the Payroll / Superannuation function from the Finance Section to Human Resources. This transition was finalised during the course of 2020.

COVID 19 PANDEMIC

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the work of the Human Resources Department since March 2020 has been substantial. This necessitated the following:

- **HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATES** - During the year regular updates were provided to all staff in relation to Covid 19 Health & Safety Requirements, remote working updates, and annual leave requirements.
- **COVID 19 INDUCTION TRAINING** - Covid 19 Induction Training and the administration and recording of Return to Work Forms was carried out.
- **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME** - Regular staff communiques were issued in relation to same over the year.
- **ONLINE INTERVIEWS AND STAFF TRAINING** - The introduction of Online Interviews was necessary to complete recruitment competitions and also the requirement to carry out online staff training where possible. In-person interviews and Staff training were facilitated where possible depending on the Public Health advice and level of restrictions that prevailed at particular periods over the year. This resulted in the focus being placed on the carrying out of Mandatory Health & Safety Training in the main over the period.
- **FLEXI-TIME** - The suspension of the Flexi time Scheme required the manual recording of hours on the CORE system.

- **INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS** - Increased engagement with the Unions and other Industrial Relations issues also added to the workload of the Department over the year.

STAFFING

The total staff complement has reduced by approximately 15% since 2008 when the public service moratorium on employment was introduced. Details of numbers employed at 31st December 2008 and 2020 respectively are set out below for comparison purposes: -

Year	Total Headcount	Staff	Non-DHPLG Posts	Retained Fire Fighters
2008	516	12		63
2020	433	21		50

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. There was also substantial completion of the Library Workforce Plan over the year. 21 different competitions were held involving the processing of over 421 applications and resulted in 28 new staff joining the organisation.

TRAINING & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Covid 19 had a serious impact on the provision of training during 2020, 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 Plan

Additional funding was again provided by the Members in the training budget for 2020 specifically for the purposes of funding a scheme of financial assistance for staff undertaking further studies as part of their career/personal development. This funding was used to support staff wishing to undertake the Local Government Certificate and Diploma course in the Institute of Public Administration as well as Master's Degree and Post Graduate Courses. This positive move continues to be welcomed by staff and is particularly important for new staff working in the local authority sector for the first time.

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

E Tender Training	SLG 2 Day Info Update
Cardiac First Responder	Trauma Informed Care Conference
Inclusion Ireland Accessibility Project	CSCS Telescopic Handler Assessment
Road Opening & Reinstatement Basic	Inclusion Ireland Review
Cert in GDPR	Pavement Condition Index Survey
Road Services Supervisor	Road Opening & Reinstatement (Advanced)
Designated Child Protection Training	Phoenix Surface Dressing
Safety Rep Training	Manual Handling
Temporary Traffic Management & Design	Employee Assistance Briefings
Safe Pass Training	Binder Sprayer Training
Corporate Governance for State and Public Sector Bodies	CPC Module 1
BER Assessor Training	First aid Refresher
Promoting excellence through Procurement	Cert in Roads Management
Chlorine Handling	Water Treatment Operations

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 the appointment of Lead Worker Representatives, Health & Safety Updates, Flexi time issues, Remote Working arrangements, and normal Industrial Relations issues. In addition, the on-going implementation of the requirements of the Public Service Agreements continued during 2020.

RETIREMENTS

The following staff retired during 2020:

Eileen O'Reilly	Mary Gaughran	Frank Heslin
Catherine Slevin	Maureen Whelan	Noirin Owens
Liam Dunne	Claire Walsh	Martin Daly
Raphael Fallon		

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The Information Systems department manages all of the **Council's ICT hardware and software** infrastructure. This infrastructure is spread across approximately fifty locations in the County and is utilised by close to 400 users. In 2020 the Information Systems department completed the following in a variety of areas across the entire organisation.

The main projects were:

- Maintained a modern, reliable and secure ICT infrastructure
- Digital Transformation / Cloud
 - Migration to Office 365 for Email and Sharepoint.
 - Development of new Corporate Intranet - Building on our investment in Sharepoint Online and rollout of new Intranet portal which allows staff to engage, inform and collaborate with colleagues seamlessly.
 - Rollout of Microsoft Teams that increases the ability to collaborate across projects, business systems and departments.
 - Rollout of Submit.com to simplify application form management online and to enable our customers to engage with us online
- Covid 19 / Remote Working
 - Increased capacity to allow all staff to work remotely securely - within 2 weeks of the

- directive to work from home where possible, all staff had been set up with secure remote access.
- Call Centre and CRM set up to manage Covid Support / Community Call & Restart Grant - this was setup at short notice over a weekend and enabled our Community Call to be active to assist the public.
- Coordinated user setup to work remotely including rollout of corporate devices.
- Upgrade and configuration of Phone System.
- IT Configuration of Restart Grant online form **for businesses'** - back end configuration and support of system which ensured businesses were paid promptly – this was another project completed at short notice.
- Council and other statutory meetings were set up remotely via Zoom/Teams enabling Offaly County Council Elected Members attend meetings virtually
- Cyber Security: Continued to enhance cyber security to ensure organization data remains protected
 - Migration to new cloud based Unified Endpoint Management(UEM) for all organisational devices including mobile device management (MDM) and mobile application management (MAM).

- Firewall Security Review
- Security awareness / training in the organisation.
- Multi-factor Authentication (MFA) rolled out to all employees as part of Covid 19/Facility to work remotely.
- Benchmarking Cyber Security Controls against CIS – (Center for Internet Security) – this will allow us to defend against known attacks by distilling key security concepts into actionable controls to improve our cyber defence capabilities.
- Website and Social Media
 - Website tender completed and work started on new Offaly.ie and Visit Offaly.ie to incorporate Tourism, Enterprise and Council Services
 - Ongoing Promotion of Social Media as another information channel for engagement with staff, elected members and the public to maximise content delivery including new branding across all Council Services.
- Library Upgrade and Support – rollout of new equipment and Windows 10 deployed across all Library Branches. Continued support of Open Libraries.
- Digital Hubs – ongoing IT support for The Junction, eHive and STREAM Creative Suite.
- Continued support for NWCPO including additional pilot of Microsoft Teams to be used as a business communication platform
- Applications Support for all our business IT systems across the organisation.
- Desktop Infrastructure
 - All corporate devices running Windows 10, which is the latest, most secure version of Windows and will mitigate organisational risk against cyber-attacks.
 - Helpdesk System Upgrade that provides great visibility and central control when dealing with IT issues
 - Business Systems Maintenance and Support
- Server Infrastructure:
 - Cloud Technologies – Review of Existing ICT Server Infrastructure and recommendations on Cloud, Hyperconverged and On-Premises options.
 - Upgrade Vmware / SAN / +SRM/ VEEAM to latest software
 - Upgrade of all Servers to Windows Server 2016; where possible
- Upgrade of Audio Visual equipment throughout the organisation including major upgrade to AV system in the council chamber.
- Rollout of Office of Government Procurement (OGP) Framework Agreements which will deliver cost savings for the organisation for the provision of:

- PC and Notebook Framework - Completed frameworks for ICT services.
- Virtualisation and Server Support
- Ongoing development of GIS and Open Data - opendata.gov.ie
- Ongoing Health and Safety Audits on site promoting the importance of safety in all our workspaces
- Continued audit of Council digital data in line with best practice around GDPR and will look to build on this in 2021.
- Ongoing work with Government in relation to the National Broadband Plan.
-

BROADBAND / DIGITAL

Offaly County Council Broadband Officer acts as a dedicated point of contact within County Offaly for engagement with telecommunications providers and assists with the preparation of the roll out of the National Broadband Plan. The Broadband Officer plays a vital role in the development of telecommunications and broadband services throughout Offaly. This is achieved by working closely with industry and participation with Regional and National Action Groups. Offaly County Council has completed the first Digital Strategy for Offaly which was adopted by Councillors in July 2020.

The role includes:

- **Implementation of Offaly's Digital Strategy Action Plan.**

- Facilitating the rollout of the National Broadband Plan.
- Acts as a single point of contact for telecommunications companies.
- Responds to community / business needs regarding broadband queries.
- Co-ordinates with all internal department in relation to broadband / mobile phone telecommunications.
- Application for funding opportunities for Offaly.

The main areas of work include:

- Ongoing work with Government in relation to the National Broadband Plan.
- Broadband Connection Points -
 - Community venues with high speed broadband provided under the National Broadband Plan to 7 such venues in 2020
 - (Kilclonfert Community Centre, Croghan Community Centre, Ballycommon TTC in the Edenderry Municipal District
 - McIntryres in Shannon Harbour, Community Halls at Coolderry and Clareen as well as the Enterprise Park at Rosfaraghan, Ferbane in the Birr Municipal District
 - Supporting the elevation of Ballycommon TTC BCP to national pilot status for piloting technical connectivity;

- Sourcing of €42k Town and Village Renewal (TVR) funding for interior fit out of Broadband Connection Points;
- Ascertaining mobile voice/data coverage at BCPs and an initial allocation of repeaters / boosters from DRCD to improve same.



The Cathaoirleach, Chief Executive, Mr. Ray Bell, Head of IT and Ms. Catriona Hilliard, Broadband and Digital Officer at the launch of Digital Strategy for Offaly

■ WiFi4EU

- With €60k from the EU WiFi4EU programme, matched by €60k from the Department of Rural and Community Development along with funding from Offaly County Council we provide WiFi throughout the county to over 50 locations. These are in addition to existing Free Public WiFi that are already in place. These locations have

been established in partnership with business and community locations.

- The Tullamore WiFi4EU project was launched on 8th October as a lead in to the Tullamore Municipal District meeting that day;
- Offaly was featured at EU level as being the first county in Ireland to have the WiFi4EU fully rolled out and featured in [WiFi4EU stories: an interview with Offaly County Council, Ireland | Shaping Europe's digital future \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/digital-affairs/en/stories/wifi4eu-stories-interview-offaly-county-council-ireland-shaping-europes-digital-future)
- STEM/STEAM/STREAM (Science, Technology, Research, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics Educational Programme with primary and post primary schools in Offaly using VEX Robotics
 - 30 Primary schools and all 12 post primary schools currently involved in programme.
 - Offaly VEX Championships took place in January 2020 with over 1000 students involved
 - Funding received via Just Transition to include an additional 15 primary schools and also support for schools via STEM Education Officer (3 Year Contract) – Programme called - Building Resilience & Adaptability in Primary School Children through STEM in Imparted **Communities**”
 - DojoMór is a CoderDojo Community Event that is a fun day for young people aged 7 to 17 where they learn to: create a simple game, build a website, and program some

electronics across Ireland in one day. Offaly was involved with third level colleges in Ireland for DojoMór in October where we had 10,000 young people from around Ireland coding on the day.

- We assisted a range of Churches with their online service provision for social support and community contact during Covid
 - Funding was secured through our Community Sections to support the cost of streaming the religious services.
 - Launch of our LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/1273449/> presence on Christmas Day to promote access to those services;
- Infrastructure
 - We worked with several broadband providers to address fibre services gaps including:
 - Eir for Shannonbridge and Virgin Media for Portarlinton; and Vodafone for some service options;
 - Ascertaining service possibilities from SIRO re Tullamore & Birr;
 - Establishing the start of a relationship with Imagine with regard to encouraging a focus of their mast and fixed wireless access forthcoming new service in Offaly;
 - We commenced work on a process to map ducting across the county, for possible further interconnecting and income;

- We worked with Cellnex who are a mast and tower telecommunication provider to address mobile phone blackspots and broadband provision in the county.

- Smart Services

- We commenced work on the e-denderry Internet of Things project with Cellnex;
- We submitted provision suggestions for broadband, digital and smart systems into the preparation of the County Development Plan.



- Other
 - We started work with eduroam /the HEAnet for connections for students to their third level IT network;
 - We dealt with a range of queries from Councillors regarding broadband;
 - We made a number of submissions to relevant public consultation documents or peer network papers on broadband development;
 - Offaly is a prominent member of the national Telecommunications Action Group (TAG) convened monthly by DRCD;
 - Offaly has attended monthly EU Broadband Competence Offices Network meetings;
 - We evaluated a number of community ideas and contributions for broadband and digital projects, to see would they assist our Strategy;
 - Offaly has started holding regular reviews with potential industry interested partners in specialist support areas; as to their own developing interest in how Offaly is approaching its digital activities and how they can consider contributing to our work programme.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TULLAMORE

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

MONTHLY MEETINGS

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

ELECTED MEMBERS OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TULLAMORE (from June 2020)

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

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

Elected Members of Tullamore Municipal District - 2020



ACTIVITIES OF 2020

- **Team Tullamore** - The Municipal District continued its work in partnership with Tullamore Tidy Towns Committee, Waterways Ireland and Tullamore Chamber of Commerce as Team Tullamore securing a superb result, placing Tullamore in only 4 towns in the **Country to achieve 'Cleaner than European Norms'** status in the An Taisce Report – IBAL Anti-Litter League, Round 2, 2020.
- Worked with, and supported, **Tidy Towns/Villages** Committees and other organisations throughout the Municipal District.
- Maintained **street cleaning services** throughout the Municipal District area.

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



The Tullamore Enhancement Project phase 1 is complete. Design procurement for Phase 2 of the Tullamore Street Enhancement Project has advanced. This project consists of a street enhancement of Harbour St. and Store St. Tullamore and the construction of the Grand Canal Greenway, Urban Section from Convent View to Srah Bridge, Ballydrohid, Tullamore which has been permitted under Part 8 planning process.

The Greenway construction works include improvements to existing towpath and footpaths along Grand Canal Greenway through provision of suitable surfaces, traffic safety measures and signage to facilitate safe pedestrian and cycling crossings at Kilbeggan Bridge and Cox's Bridge. Other improvements include lighting upgrades and the provision of signage. Funding for this project has been secured through the Urban Regeneration Development Fund from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

Greenway



Application was made for funding under URDF (call 2) for projects to support the Tullamore Urban Regeneration and Development programme, viz., 1) Pedestrian Link from O'Connor Square to Church St., 2) Church St Remote

Working Hub, 3) High St to Tanyard Link, 4) Meath Lane and Civic space 5) Tullamore Regeneration Framework, 6) **Tullamore Harbour Development Master Plan**, 7) **Acre's Folly** enhancements.

- **Estate enhancement** works were carried out in conjunction with the Housing section on Local Authority housing estates within the district.
- The Mountbolus **Town and Village Renewal Scheme Phase 1 & 2** will commence in 2021.
- The Mucklagh **Town and Village Renewal Scheme Phase 1** will commence in 2021
- **TVR-accelerated Measures** complete in Killeigh Green area and Ballycumbver Riverside Park and Clara Riverside Park. Design completed for Millenium Square with works to commence in 2021.

Clara TVR



Ballycumber TVR



Ballycumbver Riverside Park TVR Accelerated Measures



Clara Riverside Park TVR Accelerated Measures



Killeigh Green area TVR-accelerated Measures



- **Lloyd Town Park**, Tullamore retained its' Green Flag in 2020, the benchmark national standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces.

Lloyd Town Park - Green Flag 2020



Christmas Lights - 2020



- **Reports from Offaly County Council** were given to members at Municipal District Meetings as follows:
Environment & Water Services; Roads & Infrastructure; Housing.

- **Schedule of Works 2020** – Consideration and adoption of the Schedule of Works for the Municipal District.
- **Budget 2020** - Consideration of General Municipal Allocation.
- **Supporting community and voluntary groups** in the Municipal District by way of payment of community grants, and estate enhancement grants.
- Support Tullamore Chamber of Commerce in relation to the **Christmas Lights** in Tullamore.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF EDENDERRY

Director of Services / Area Manager: Sharon Kennedy
Meetings Administrator: Josephine Lee
Senior Executive Engineer: Mark Mahon
Assistant Engineer: Rory Moore

ELECTED MEMBERS OF EDENDERRY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Cllr John Foley, Non Party
 Cllr Liam Quinn, Fine Gael
 Cllr Robert McDermott, Fianna Fáil
 Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick, Fianna Fáil
 Cllr Noel Cribbin, Non Party
 Cllr Mark Hackett, Green Party

REPRESENTATIVES TO VARIOUS BODIES/BOARDS

Cllr. Noel Cribbin	AILG LCDA Offaly Sports Partnership North Offaly Development Fund Ltd Edenderry Swimming Pool
Cllr. John Foley	North Offaly Development Fund Ltd
Cllr. Mark Hackett	Rural Water Monitoring Committee JPC North Offaly Development Fund Ltd
Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick	EMRA, JPC, OLDC, LOETB Regional Health Forum Rural Water Monitoring Committee North Offaly Development Fund Ltd
Cllr. Liam Quinn	North Offaly Development Fund Ltd
Cllr. Robert McDermott	LOETB, JPC North Offaly Development Fund

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly Meetings were held on the second Wednesday of each month in the Chamber of the Town Hall, Edenderry at 3.00pm.

AGENDA ITEMS

The members of Edenderry Municipal District agreed that the following be included on their agenda for their monthly meeting as set items;

- Swimming Pool Development
- Library Development
- Inward Investment and Local Enterprise Development
- Public Utility Capacity Issues
- Area Issues/Updates
- Roads Update
- Town and Village Renewal Update
- Other Areas / Issues

SCHEDULE OF REPORTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS

On a rolling monthly basis the Elected Members met with staff from the Council Housing, Water and Environment and Roads Departments in order to be kept up to date on activities within these sections.

EDENDERRY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT DECEMBER MEETING 2020



The Elected Members and Staff of Edenderry Municipal District the December 2020 Meetings standing for a socially distanced photo to mark the end of 2020

TOWN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEME

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme is a key part of the Action Plan for Rural Development and the **Government's Project Ireland 2040 Programme for Rural Regeneration**. Projects approved through the Scheme are aimed at making small rural towns and villages more attractive and sustainable places in which to live and work. Under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, funding was approved for Edenderry, Co Offaly to support a number of activities and has continued over a number of years. In 2020, the Town and Village Renewal Schemes continued in

The Edenderry Municipal District with works in Geashill, Daingean and Edenderry and Prelim works commenced in Blundell Park. Below is an example of the works in Daingean.

Before



After



TOWN AND VILLAGE ACCELERATED MEASURES RENEWAL SCHEME

In 2020, Department of Rural and Community Development tailored the Town and Village Renewal Scheme to address the emerging challenges associated with COVID-19. For the Town & Village Renewal Scheme which focused on immediate interventions that could be delivered in the short-term to assist towns and villages to adapt to COVID-19. Edenderry Municipal District was successful in three applications, as follows;

- Edenderry Public Realm Canopy
- Daingean Town Sq. Enhancement
- Geashill Picnic Area



Canopy installed on Edenderry O'Connor Sq.



PORTARLINGTON – DRAINAGE

Extensive drainage works were done on the Bog Road in Portarlinton, Funding was provided through the OPW.

Before



After



ANNUAL ROADS PROGRAMME – ROADS, FOOTPATHS AND BRIDGES

The Annual Roads Programme was carried out and works were completed on Roads, Bridges and Footpaths through the District. Road Schemes such as IR and LIS were also carried out through the District.



Below is an examples of the road repairs work completed in Fairgreen, Edenderry.



After

EDENDERRY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT GMA FUND 2020

Through the GMA Fund the Elected Members of Edenderry provided funding towards 36 projects / groups; examples are

- Playgrounds
- Christmas Lights
- Residents Associations
- Community Groups

Below is an example of how this funding has help local communities;



RRDF - GRANARY COURT TO FAIRGREEN LINK

The proposed development to create a road link between Granary Court and Fairgreen (L-10016-8) was adopted by the Councillors at the January 2019 Council Meeting. Funding of €522k (RRDF) + €176k (OCC) was awarded to this project in 2020. During 2020 the contract was awarded and works commenced. The below pictures depicts where the link road will be situated.



RRDF – EDENDERRY INNER RELIEF ROAD

The Edenderry Inner Relief Project progressed in 2020 with completion of

- Topographical Surveys and Site Investigations
- Detailed Design
- Land Acquisition

The Below map depicts where the proposed sections will be situation.



BLUNDELL MASTERPLAN

The Blundell Masterplan was launched in December 2020. The Blundell Masterplan sets in place a positive road map for unlocking the potential of the heart of Edenderry and helping the area be transformed into a thriving part of the historic town centre. The town has enormous potential and is at a

pivotal moment in grasping and realising that opportunity.



JUST TRANSITION FUND

The Just Transition Fund made a provisional offer for the development of Rhode Green Energy Park



MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BIRR

Director of Services / Area Manager: Frank Heslin/Ann Dillon

Senior Executive Engineer: John Mitchell

Meetings Administrator: Deirdre Molloy

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month in the Birr Civic Offices at 4.30pm.

ELECTED MEMBERS OF BIRR MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Cllr Eamonn Dooley, Fianna Fáil (Cathaoirleach Jan - June)

Cllr John Leahy, Independent, (Cathaoirleach June-Dec)

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

Cllr John Carroll, Non Party

Cllr John Clendennen, Fine Gael

Cllr Clare Claffey, Social Democrats

REPRESENTATIVES TO VARIOUS BODIES/BOARDS

Birr Swimming Pool

Cllr Peter Ormond,

SUB Project Committee

Cllr Clare Claffey

Birr Theatre and Arts Centre

Cllr John Clendennen, Cllr Clare Claffey.

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 - Housing Services

February - Roads Report

March - Roads Programme 2020

April - District Engineers Report

May - Water and Environment Services

June - Roads Report

July - Housing Report, Killaun Bog Walkway Project

September – Camcor River Project,

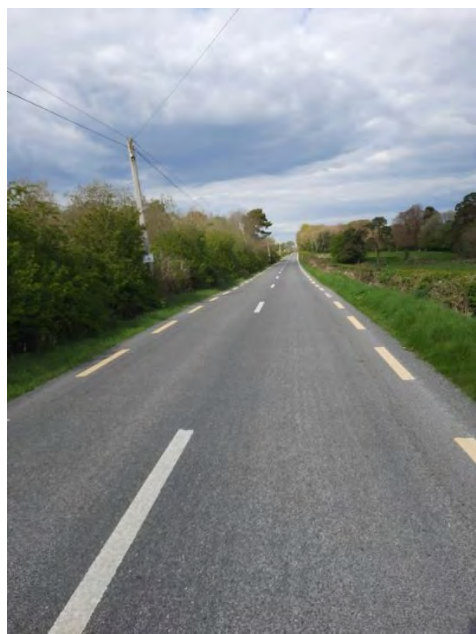
October Roads Progress Report

November – Housing Progress Report

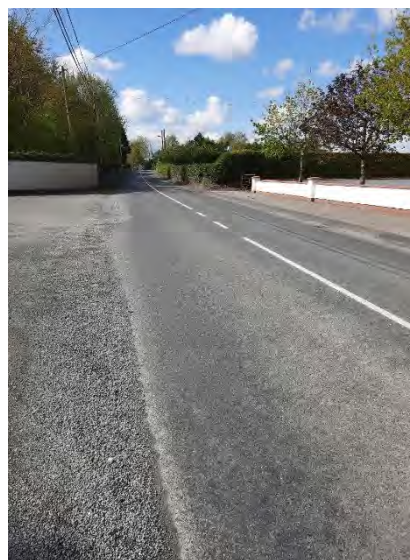
BIRR DESTINATION TOWN PROJECT

Birr town was awarded €412,500 funding in March 2020 as part of Fáilte Ireland's Destination Town Programme to develop Birr's potential as a Tourism Destination Town.

A €7.3 million work programme was delivered in Birr Municipal District in 2020. €5.8 million was invested in the improvement of 53km of the road network in the district. An important milestone was the Part VIII planning approval for the Birr Northern Distributor road in September. €1.5 million was also spent on other programmes including Town and Village Renewal and Active Travel.



Road Improvement scheme at R491 Knockearl



RIG scheme at R421 Kinnitty



RIG Scheme at R440 Syngfield, Birr

Birr Municipal District were succesful in delivering a Local Improvement Scheme programme on privately owned roads



LIS scheme at Clashagad, Dunkerrin



LIS scheme at Maugherbawn, Cadamstown

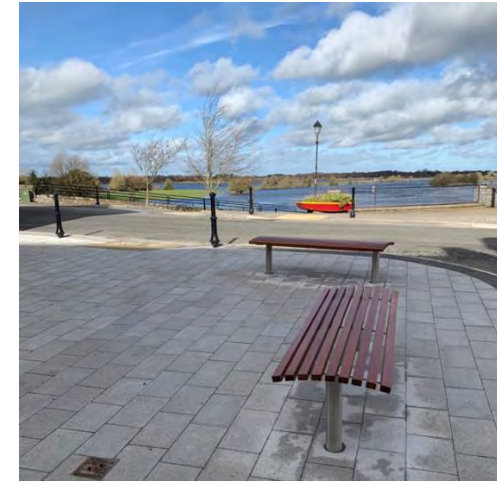
Town & Village Renewal schemes were completed in Crinkill, Leabeg and Shannonbridge in Birr Municipal District in 2020



Barrck St, Crinkill Town & Village Renewal scheme and RIG scheme



Shannonbridge Town & Village Renewal Scheme



Birr Municipal District were successful in delivering a 31km Surface Dressing programme



1km Surface Dressing scheme at Breaghmore, Clareen



1km Surface Dressing scheme at Moystown



1km Surface Dressing scheme at Barnagrotty, Moneygall



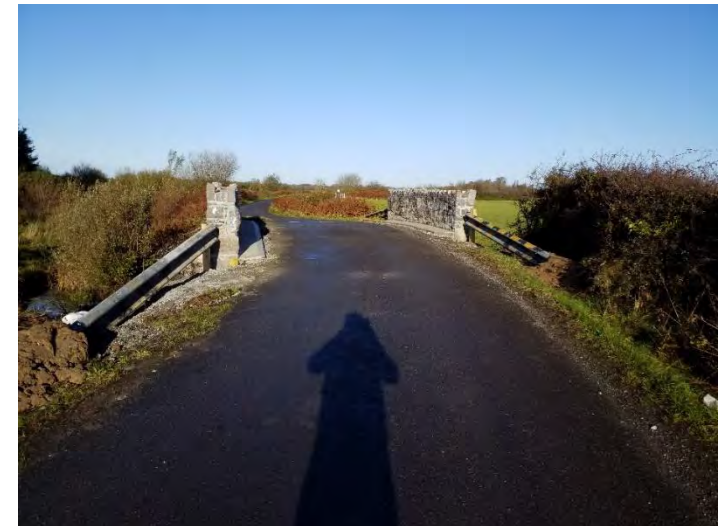
Bridge at Kyle, Kinnitty



Clonlyon, Belmont



Bridge at Keeloge, Shinrone



Derryharney, Belmont

SERVICE INDICATORS 2020

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 2020, there are 42 local authority performance indicators, as follows:

- HOUSING (H1 TO H6)
- ROADS (R1 TO R3)
- WATER (W1 AND W2)
- WASTE/ENVIRONMENT (E1 TO E6)
- 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 J4)

A number of Indicators have been amended and additional Indicators are reported on in 2020. NOAC have advised that guidance under **H1** had been amended and also **H5** B to D, with the data for this indicator being obtained directly from the DHLGH. Indicator **E1** has been amended to measure the % households based on those in agglomerations of >500 instead of the 2016 census household figure. The name of indicator **E4** has been amended to "**E4: %of schools that currently hold and have renewed their green flag status**". The guidance for Libraries has been amended to include further clarifications. Under indicator **C3**, local authorities are asked to confirm if there was a change to their cookie policies and when it came into effect. A new indicator has been added to the finance section, **M3 – Public Liability Claims**. A second new indicator has been added to the Finance section, **M4 - Overheads**. A new indicator has been added to the environmental section, **E6 – Public lighting**.

H: HOUSING (H1 TO H6)	2020	2019
H1: SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK		
A. The number of dwellings in the ownership of the Local Authority at 1/1/2020	1891	1807
B. The number of dwellings added to the Local Authority owned stock during in 2020 (whether constructed or acquired)	42	89
C. The number of Local Authority owned dwellings sold in 2020	9	5
D. The number of Local Authority owned dwellings demolished in 2020	0	0
E. The number of dwellings in the ownership of the Local Authority at 31/12/2020	1924	1891
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 31/12/2020	2.49%	2.43%
H3: AVERAGE RE-LETTING TIME AND COST		
A. The time taken from the date of vacation of dwelling to the date in 2020 when a new tenancy had commenced in the dwelling, averaged across all units re-let in 2020	26 wks	30 wks
B. The cost expended on getting the dwellings re-tenanted units in 2020 ready for re-letting, averaged across all units re-let in 2018	€ 16,168.55	€ 19,475.69
H4: HOUSING MAINTENANCE COST		
A. Expenditure during 2020 on the maintenance of LA housing compiled from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020, divided by the no. of dwellings in the LA stock at 31/12/2020	€ 563.69	€ 596.63

H5: PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR INSPECTIONS		
A. Total number of registered tenancies in the LA area at the end of June 2020	3,630	<i>3,492</i>
B. Number of rented dwellings inspected in 2020	250	<i>75</i>
C. Percentage of inspected dwellings in 2020 that were found not to be compliant with the Standards Regulations	99.07%	<i>100.00%</i>
D. Number of non-compliant dwellings that became compliant during 2020	9	<i>17</i>
H6: LONG-TERM HOMELESS ADULTS		
A. Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long-term homeless as a % of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at the end of 2020.	64.00%	<i>64.71%</i>

R: ROADS (R1 AND R2)		2020	2019
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>99.89%</i>
	<i>Local Primary</i>	96.30%	<i>73.05%</i>
	<i>Local Secondary</i>	80.60%	<i>78.62%</i>
	<i>Local Tertiary</i>	56.50%	<i>59.16%</i>
<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>10.96%</i>
	<i>Category 5 - 6</i>	14.90%	<i>26.36%</i>
	<i>Category 7 - 8</i>	39.50%	<i>38.63%</i>
	<i>Category 9 - 10</i>	32.20%	<i>24.05%</i>
<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>7.73%</i>
	<i>Category 5 - 6</i>	21.80%	<i>38.80%</i>
	<i>Category 7 - 8</i>	33.90%	<i>33.86%</i>
	<i>Category 9 - 10</i>	21.60%	<i>18.82%</i>
<p>C. The % of total (c) 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>13.93%</i>
	<i>Category 5 - 6</i>	22.00%	<i>28.41%</i>
	<i>Category 7 - 8</i>	33.80%	<i>33.29%</i>
	<i>Category 9 - 10</i>	23.80%	<i>22.67%</i>

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%	23.25%
	Category 5 - 6	9.30%	11.74%
	Category 7 - 8	22.90%	14.95%
	Category 9 - 10	31.00%	24.62%
R2: REGIONAL ROAD GRANTS WORKS			
A. Kilometres of Regional Road strengthened during 2020.	Km of Road		15.7 km
	Amount Spent		€ 2,391,318
B. Kilometres of Regional Road resealed during 2020.	Km of Road		6.9 km
	Amount Spent		€ 195,551
C. Kilometres of Local Road strengthened during 2020.	Km of Road		24.3 km
	Amount Spent		€ 1,828,659
D. Kilometres of Local Road resealed during 2020.	Km of Road		39.6 km
	Grant Amount		€ 675,950
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		67.45%	63.79%

R3: This data will be obtained directly from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's Vehicle Registration Unit for upload to eReturns of the total number of all motor tax type transactions (however conducted) involving a payment in the period 1/1/2020 to 31/12/2020 and the number of such transactions conducted online.

W: WATER (W1)		2020	2019
W2: % 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>	98.93%
Note: This data will be obtained directly from the EPA and was not available at time of publication.			
E: WASTE / ENVIRONMENT (E1 TO E3)		2020	2019
E1: No. / % OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ACCESS TO A 3 BIN SERVICE			
A. The number of households, based on the 2016 Census, who are situated in an area covered by a licensed operator providing a 3 bin service at 31/12/2020		4,223	3,726
B. The % of households within the LA area (also as per the 2016 Census) that the number at (A) represents.		15.53%	13.71%
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>	1,009	933
	<i>No. Closed</i>	1,005	848
	<i>No. on Hand</i>	127	85
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>		13%
			60%
			27%
			0%
			0%
E4: % OF SCHOOLS THAT HAVE BEEN AWARDED GREEN FLAG STATUS			
A. The % of schools that have been awarded Green Flag Status		65.38%	<i>New in 2018</i>

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.

P: PLANNING (P1 TO P5)	2020	2019
P1: NEW BUILDINGS INSPECTED		
A. Buildings Inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority	11.32%	21.18%
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	18	17
B. % of the determinations at A which confirmed (either with or without variation) the decision made by the LA	88.89%	82.35%
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	61	60
B. Total number of cases that were closed during 2020	21	39
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.	19.05%	25.64%
D. % of the cases at B that were resolved to the LA's satisfaction through negotiations	0.00%	5.13%
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)	80.95%	69.23%
F. Total number of planning cases being investigated as at 31/12/2020.	114	79
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.	€28.13	€ 29.13

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.	94.74%	95.16%
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.	5.26%	4.84%

F: FIRE SERVICE (F1 TO F3)	2020	2019
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.	€45.78	€ 43.04
F2: SERVICE MOBILISATION		
A. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of fire	N/A	N/A
B. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire	5.57	5.39
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	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	5.65	5.16
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	40.87%	47.21%
B. % of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	44.98%	40.22%
C. % of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	14.16%	12.57%

D. % of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	35.29%	35.92%
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	47.79%	50.49%
F. % of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	16.91%	13.59%

L: LIBRARY / RECREATION SERVICES (L1 AND L2)	2020	2019
L1: LIBRARY VISITS AND ISSUES		
A. Number of visits to libraries per head of population for the LA area per the 2016 Census.	3.15	3.15
B. Number of items issued to library borrowers in the year.	153,384	222,186
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.	€ 30.26	€ 29.95

Y: YOUTH / COMMUNITY (Y1 AND Y2)	2020	2019
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%	<i>100.00%</i>
Y2: GROUPS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK (PPN)		
The number of organisations included in the County Register at 31/12/2020 and the proportion of those organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College (SIC) within the PPN	8.60	<i>3.92</i>
C: CORPORATE SERVICES (C1 TO C5)	2020	2019
C1: TOTAL NUMBER OF WTEs		
A. The whole-time equivalent staffing number as at 31 December 2020	392.70	<i>369.70</i>
C2: WORKING DAYS LOST TO SICKNESS		
A. Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave	2.82%	<i>2.61%</i>
B. Percentage of working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave	0.26%	<i>0.26%</i>
C3: NO. OF PAGE VISITS TO LA WEBSITE		
A. Total page views of the local authority's website in 2018.	1,319,285	<i>869,358</i>
B. Total number of followers at end 2020 of the LA's social media accounts (if any).	53,777	<i>41,084</i>
C4: OVERALL COST OF ICT PROVISION PER WTE		
A. All ICT expenditure in the period from 1/1/2020 to 31/12/2020, divided by the WTE number	€ 3,162.35	<i>€ 3,446.12</i>
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.	1.79%	<i>New in 2018</i>

M: FINANCE (M1 AND M2)		2020		
M1:5 YEAR SUMMARY OF REVENUE ACCOUNT BALANCE				
A. The cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2014				-€ 4,734,969
B. The cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2015				-€ 4,154,223
C. The cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2016				- € 3,611,785
D. The cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2017				-€ 3,058,002
E. The cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2018				- € 2,505,853
F. The cumulative surplus or deficit at 31/12/2018 as a percentage of Total Income in 2017 from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS**				- 5.62%
G. Revenue Expenditure per capita for the year				€ 834.90
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. <i>Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2014</i>		82.12	85.34	61.63
B. <i>Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2015</i>		84.80	86.00	61.13
C. <i>Appendix 7 of the AFS* for 2016</i>		88.00	86.00	59.00
D. <i>Appendix 7 of the AFS* for 2017</i>		85.80	83.30	55.30
E. <i>Appendix 7 of the AFS* for 2018</i>		89.00	86.00	56.00

* 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)	2020	2019
J1: NO. OF JOBS CREATED		
The no. of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office during the period 1/1/2020 to 31/12/2020	68.00	<i>62.00</i>
J2: TRADING ONLINE VOUCHERS		
The no. of trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office in 2020.	21	<i>15</i>
The no. of those trading online vouchers applications that were drawn down in 2020.	11	<i>10</i>
J3: NO. OF MENTORING RECIPIENTS		
The no. of participants who received mentoring during the period 1/1/2020 to 31/12/2020	171	<i>124</i>
J4: TOURISM		
Does the Local Authority have a current Tourism Strategy?	Yes	<i>Yes</i>
Does the Local Authority have a designated Tourism Officer?	Yes	<i>Yes</i>

This figure will be obtained directly from Enterprise Ireland based on the information provided to them by the Local Enterprise Offices.

