

**JULY & AUGUST
2020**



Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Do: Baill Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí

To: Each Member of Offaly County Council

Tuairisc mhíosúil bainistíochta a bhreithniú i gcomhair tionóil mí Meán Fómhair

Monthly Management Report for consideration at the September 2020 Monthly Meeting.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS:

A schedule of Chief Executive Orders is included with the Council Agenda.

FINANCE:

Finance Report– Appendix 1

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DRAFT OFFALY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

Submissions or observations shall be made between Monday 27th July 2020 until 4pm Wednesday 7th October 2020.

BIKE WEEK 2020

Takes place from 19th to 27th September 2020

POSITIVE AGEING WEEK

This will be held from September 28th to 2nd October 2020

HULLABALOO!

The festival will take place from Wednesday 28th – Saturday 31st October 2020.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

National Broadband Ireland

The company undertaking the fibre network roll-out to enable high speed internet, have commenced survey work in Offaly. Details of the areas they are working on are contained in this report, along with a full update on broadband and digital projects.

Active Travel Measures

The July Jobs Stimulus Plan was announced by Government on 23rd July 2020. Offaly received an allocation of €827,500 to complete 28 projects in the County. The funding will support Offaly County Council's response to Covid-19 challenges with improved walking and cycling infrastructure and changes to traffic management arrangements to facilitate the reallocation of overall road space to improve facilities and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Big Ireland Clean UP

An Taisce have launched their Big Ireland Clean Up for the month of September which will give community groups the opportunity to avail of clean up kits and operate under An Taisce's public liability insurance for groups.

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PLANNING

	To end Aug 2020	To end Aug 2019	Total 2019
Planning Applications	401	432	628
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	2	9	12
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	6(2)	8(1)	14 (6)

Strategic Housing Development at Clonminch Road (R443), Clonminch and Gayfield, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

A Strategic Housing Development for Clonminch Tullamore has been lodged with An Bord Pleanála on Friday, 7th August 2020. The development comprises 358 dwelling in addition to other neighbourhood and service buildings.

Copy of the application is available for viewing (by appointment only) at the Planning counter. Application is also available online.

At the Tullamore Area Committee meeting (Tullamore MD 10th September) member's views on the proposed development will form part of the Chief Executive report to An Bord Pleanála.

Draft Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Draft Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 went on public display 27th July 2020. Submissions or observations shall be made between Monday 27th July 2020 until 4pm Wednesday 7th October 2020. Observations or submissions will be made public on the website. All submissions or observations received during the above time period will be taken

into consideration before the making of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027.

REGENERATION - Rural Regeneration Development Fund: (RRDF)

Offaly County Council were 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. This Category 2 supports the early preparatory work of projects with the potential to transform rural areas.

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 area, public realm works to Central Square and Main Street and a masterplan for the derelict Royal Shannon Hotel.

BANAGHER MARINA



Rural Regeneration Category 1

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for RRDF Cat 1 2020 funding in June 2020. Applications will be developed and prepared for submission by the Regeneration Team in conjunction with other relevant sections for closing date of 1st December, 2020.

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Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for TVR 2020 funding on 27th May, 2020. In August, Minister Heather Humphreys, T.D announced additional funding of €10 million for the Town and Village Renewal Scheme as part of the Government's July Stimulus Package which increased the amount of projects a Local Authority could apply for.

To date the Regeneration Team in conjunction with Municipals Districts and other sections have submitted 18 projects in Rounds 1-3 of the TVR accelerated measures in response to Covid 19.

DRCD announced successful project from Round 1 on 3rd August 2020 and Offaly County Council were successful in the following three projects

- Shop front scheme for all Towns and Villages with a population of <10,000 - €40,000
- Covid Capacity Scheme for businesses to increase outdoor seating facilities - €25,000
- Shannonbridge – public realm improvement and seating area at the Lock House - €25,000

Round 2 and 3 announcements are due in the coming weeks.

TVR scheme 2020

The standard Town and Village Renewal Scheme is open for applications and the number of applications has increased from 6 to 10 in total per Local Authority for 2020. The closing date is changed to the 30th September, 2020.

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme: (ORIS)

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for ORIS 2020 funding on 29th May 2020. Applications will be developed and prepared for Measure 2 and 3 by Regeneration Team in conjunction with other relevant sections for 30th November, 2020.

ROADS

Roads Programme 2020

Roads Programme 2020 is progressing throughout the County. All works are proceeding with Covid safety measures in place. The following road works are currently ongoing or due to commence in the County:

- N52 Eglish & N52 Ballindown & Ballynaguilsha TII Capital Maintenance Works commenced in July and are complete.
- Pavement overlay works for the Birr to Roscrea Road (N62) at Boveen, Glasderry Beg, Glasderry More commenced in August;
- N80 Tullamore to Killeigh road surface improvement scheme to commence in September;
- Works on the Collins Lane junction, Arden Way and Arden View Junction to commenced in September.

Climate Change Adaptation

Offaly received an allocation of €272,500 to complete 9 projects in the County in 2020 for measures related to addressing the impact of climate change on the road network.

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New Bus Stops and Pedestrian Crossings in Tullamore & Edenderry

Approval has been received from the National Transport Authority to progress the upgrade of bus stops in Tullamore, R420 Cloncollig and Edenderry, R402 Fr. Kearns Street including new pedestrian crossings.

Offaly Grand Canal Greenway

Digby Bridge to Ballycommon Bridge is complete. Cyclists and walkers can enjoy the Greenway from Tullamore to Ballycommon and Wood of O via the Kilbeggan Branch. Ballycommon Bridge to Molesworth Bridge, Daingean and Wood-of-O Bridge to County Boundary are tendered.

CLÁR 2020

Programme provides funding for small scale infrastructural projects in rural areas. Ten applications under Measure 1 and 2, in the designated areas were submitted to the Department on 28th August 2020 awaiting funding approval.

Birr Distributor Road

The Part 8 Planning public consultation closed on Friday 4th September. The CE report has been prepared and the Part 8 proposal will be presented at the September Council meeting for approval.

ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES

Water

Works on the upgrade of the Tullamore, Birr and Clonaslee Water Treatment plants are on-going. IW are currently preparing the design for replacement reservoir at Clonbullogue and considering a replacement reservoir at Walsh Island. Leak repair: Find and fix works are ongoing

in Croghan, Banagher and Clara. Approval has been given for Watermain upgrades at Clonin and Newtown.

Environment

Illegal Dumping:

An application was made to the DCCA for funding under the Anti-Dumping Initiative to clean up some very littered areas and to provide funding for CCTV at bottle banks, Offaly County Council received €64,534.

Community Clean ups

An Taisce National Spring Clean ran from 8th June to 8th July this year due to Covid-19 restrictions. Nationally the number of groups registered totaled approx. 5000, with a good representation from Offaly. These groups were supported by OCC staff by way of equipment and removal of litter collected and bagged.

Water Quality

Water Framework Directive sampling programme has recommenced again having been suspended during the local lock-down for Kildare, Laois and Offaly.

Detailed submission has been returned to the EPA regarding the 3rd Cycle Characterisation of local rivers under the EPA's River Basin Management Plan, covering both the Midlands & East region and the South East region. Workshops are scheduled to progress initial submissions to the Agency towards finalised plans.

Tullamore Low Smoke Zone

In late July the DCCA finalising the SI and Regulations wording to cover the 13 additional towns to be covered by a Low Smoke Zone. Tullamore town and its surrounds now come under the new Regulations and came into effect from 1st September 2020. The DCCA issued a

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press release together with digital and PDF maps showing the full extent of the Tullamore Low Smoke Zone which are all on the Councils website.

Rural Water Programme

The Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2019 – 2021 is ongoing, and the annual subsidies paid to the group water schemes have been received prior to the 30th June deadline. OCC are currently assessing these *and processing the payments of the subsidies*. Of the 19 projects 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.

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 has been announced by the Dept of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

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.

BROADBAND / DIGITAL

National Broadband Ireland

The company undertaking the fibre network roll-out to enable high speed internet, have commenced survey work in Offaly from Monday 31st August in the Coolderry and Shinrone areas. Work has also commenced in the following areas: Abbeyland, Clonmacnoise, Ballyhearth, Clonaderig, Curraghbee and Clonfanlough. Contractors on the ground will carry official ID cards and essential worker letters.

Broadband Community Points (BCP)

Ballycommon TTC is one of the national pilot sites for BCP rollout. It and several other BCP sites in Offaly have been connected at an initial level. Further service rollout is expected at some of those sites over the next few months to enable consumer access to broadband at these community venues. A national launch of the BCP element of the National Broadband Plan is hoped for in the near future, after which counties and local sites can launch any of their connected BCPs. Funding has been applied for with regard to fitting some of these venues out as remote working hubs.

WiFi4EU

The contract for rollout of public Wi-Fi was awarded earlier in the summer to service public and community spaces. Offaly

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County Council secured all 4 available vouchers for Offaly and the Tullamore MD voucher is fully installed. We have started service installation in Birr and Edenderry towns and municipal districts. We will be sending a full list of free Wi-Fi locations in Offaly to Elected Members in the next few weeks.

Funding Opportunities

We currently have funding application in under Town & Village Renewal Scheme for “Fit out of Broadband Connection Points” and under Just Transition Fund(JTF) for “Building Resilience & Adaptability in Primary School children through STEM in communities impacted by decarbonisation.

HOUSING

Covid 19 – Housing

During this period of Covid-19 the Housing Section has continued to provide critical essential services as outlined in the Government Roadmap. Housing services continue to be managed effectively on a remote basis with appointments being scheduled as required.

To assist us in streamlining service delivery we would encourage the use of the following email addresses:

Service	Email Address
HAP Enquiries	hap@offalycoco.ie
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans	homeloans@offalycoco.ie
Housing Inspections – HAP,	standards@offalycoco.ie

Leased, Private, etc.	
General Enquiries, Maintenance Issues, etc.	housing@offalycoco.ie
Anti-Social Behaviour	ASB@offalycoco.ie
RAS & Leasing Enquiries	RAS@offalycoco.ie

July/August Housing Update

- Housing have allocated 18 families to the new houses built at Chancery Lane, Tullamore and following the final completion by the contractor, scheduled for the coming days, the pre-tenancy meetings will be convened and the families will receive the keys to their new homes.
- Housing have nominated 10 families to the Peter McVerry Trust who have acquired the apartments in Downshire Place, Edenderry.
- The Housing Need Assessment 2020 is currently being processed. All approved applicants were written to and have been requested to return the relevant documentation by Friday, 18th September. Failure to return the documentation within the specified time period will result in the application for Social Housing being closed. Accordingly, it is very important that all forms are submitted.
- There are 679 on the Housing Waiting List awaiting housing support at the end of August 2020.
- A further 862 active tenancies currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments

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(HAP) Scheme, 39 signed up for HAP and 15 exited from HAP in July and August 2020.

- At the end of August 2020 there were 19 single people and 4 families in emergency accommodation.
- 14 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans applications were received in 2020 to date; 2 RIHL have been approved; 2 have been declined; 3 were invalid; 2 awaiting further information and 5 are under consideration.

Housing Stock – Number, Maintenance & Repair

- Total housing stock at end of June 2020 is 1,902.
- 2,115 maintenance call logged in 2020 to date; including 296 in July and 335 in August.

Housing Capital Programme Update

- Chancery Lane, (18 units) – completion and allocations, September 2020
- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) Stage 2 approval on 21st August 2020, progressing to planning
- Church Street, Clara (3 OPD units). Stage 2 approval on 17th August 2020, progressing to planning
- Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane (20 Units) Stage 1 Approval March 2020, assessing consultant framework
- Moneygall (4 units); Stage 2 Approval July 2020, public consultation complete (Part 8)
- Beechgrove Belmont (7 units); Stage 2 Approval July 2020 @ public consultation (Part 8)

- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 Units). Stage 2 Approval August 2020, progressing to planning
- Banagher, Kylebeg 18 Units, a second stage 3 submission was made in April 2020. Stage 3 was approved by the DHPLG in May 2020 and the Tender documentation is being prepared and will issue in September/October.
- Circular Road, Daingean 9 units - Stage 2 approval was approved on the 4th December 2019 with a request to increase the number of units from 7 to 9. Part 8 planning to be sought at the September council meeting

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes

- Mid Offaly Housing Association: Mountbolus, (4 Units) – completion due in September
- Oaklee: Clonminch, Tullamore – (19 units), Tender Process is complete and AHB is to apply for Stage 4
- Oaklee: Kearney's Field – (41 Units), Tendering process is complete and project is to commence this year
- Cluid Housing Association social housing scheme on the Rahan Rd (Jacksons Hill) (26 units) to start in September 2020
- AHB - Killane Drive, Edenderry 27 units – Construction resumed on the 18th May with completion now due in Q1 2021.
- Sofia Housing: Stage 1 approved for 32 units at Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Stage 2 submission from AHB will issue in

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October/November with additional units.

Turnkey Developments

- Main Street Daingean (8 Units): Approved 13th August to start in October 2020
- MacGregol, Birr: 12 Units – 6 units complete and remaining 6 will be delivered in 2020.
- May Advertisement for expressions of interest for Turnkey schemes has concluded and a number of schemes are progressing to the department for funding application

Housing Grants

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government notified the Council that the funding for 2020 Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability Scheme is €1,333,231 of which €266,646 will be provided from Offaly County Council's own resources. A number of grants have been approved to date, in accordance with the scheme, and 25 have been completed and paid to applicants.

Disabled Person's Grants

The Council received notification from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government that funding for DPG's, i.e., works on Council owned properties for 2020 is €174,740.51, i.e., a reduction of €30,259.49 on 2019's allocation which was €205,000. The Council is currently progressing 7 units in line with this scheme.

Retrofit Programme

The Council received notification on 8th September that €3.3m was being awarded to Offaly for the 'Just Transition for the Midlands Region' programme. Following a procurement process the Council has

engaged the surveyor has been appointed and will commence in the coming weeks the surveying of the initial 40 units that have been identified for the retrofit programme. Letters have issued to the tenants whose properties are being considered for inclusion in the Retrofit Programme.

The consultants will be determining the works that will be required, works may include the following:

- Replacement of the heating system to a new technology heating system called a "Heat Pump"
- New radiators
- Attic insulation top up
- External or internal wall insulation
- Window Replacement
- New Doors
- Improved Ventilation

The Council has advised SEAI of the locations of these units for retrofitting and SEAI will now engage with private properties located near these dwellings to offer similar works under their existing home energy grant schemes.

LOCAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Offaly Covid-19 Community Response Helpline

The Helpline call centre has been operating from the 30th March 2020. It is operating from **9am to 5pm, 7 days per week**. A total of 440 calls have been received up to end of August 2020. Call numbers have reduced significantly with an average of 2 calls per week predominantly related to medical queries. During the lockdown period in Offaly from 7th to 22nd August there were 7 calls to the Helpline.

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SUMMARY OF CALLS AND EMAILS TO COVID HELPLINE						
Tot	Deliveries of Food, fuel, etc.	Social Isolation supports coordin.	Meals	Garda Related	Medical Health	Oth
440	75	30	7	5	97	221
100 %	16.89 %	6.75%	1.56 %	1.15 %	22.74 %	49.7 %

BREAKDOWN OF HELPLINE CALLS BY MONTH						
Month	April	May	June	July	August	Total
No.	312	93	19	8	8	440
%	71	21	4	2	2	100

Offaly Community Response Forum

There have been 12 meetings of the Offaly Community Response Forum to date. The members of the Forum are Offaly County Council, HSE, GAA, OLDC, An Garda Síochána, ALONE, SVP, An POST, Offaly PPN, Local Link, Citizens Information Service, Túsla, IFA, Offaly Traveller Movement, Kildare Volunteer Centre (covering Offaly), Civil Defence, Offaly Library Service, Family Resource Centres, and Offaly Community Services. The most recent meeting was held on August 12th 2020 when the Offaly lockdown was announced.

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Offaly LCDC held monthly meetings on Thursday 16th July and Thursday 13th August with some members in the Council Chamber and the remainder attending by video link. Agenda items included the Rural Development LEADER Programme 2014 – 2020; Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) 2020; Updates on the Community Response Forum, Community

Helpline and the Offaly Age Friendly Alliance and the SICAP Mid-Year Check 2020 which was approved by the members. Under the Rural Development LEADER Programme, 47 Projects were approved and the total amount of funding awarded was €505,024.29. 37 of these projects approved were for the Hospitality and Tourism Re-Opening Grant Scheme to assist local businesses and social enterprises in the tourism and hospitality sectors towards the costs of re-opening in light of the COVID 19 Pandemic. The remaining 10 projects were rolling call projects.

Age Friendly Strategy

The Age Friendly “Connecting the Faithful” Newsletter continues to be delivered to 4,000 households across the county, focusing on delivery primarily to people cocooning and those most isolated. The collaboration amongst the members of the Alliance is hugely beneficial in terms of ensuring Older People’s needs in the county continue to be addressed. The most recent meeting of the Age Friendly Alliance was held on July 1st via Zoom. Members provided updates and acknowledged that strategy actions were continuing while being influenced this year to a greater degree by Covid 19 and Government guidelines.



Offaly AF Alliance providing entertainment in an estate in Edenderry

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Comhairle na nÓg

Offaly Comhairle na nÓg have worked hard on a new Policy alongside TY students in Offaly. The Policy will aim to support more Gender Balance and Diversity in the Council. The document will be brought to the SPC in November.

Pride of Place

2 groups are going forward to the national Pride of Place 2020.

- Glendaniel Residents Tullamore MD
- Lusmagh Development Association Birr MD.

The process was very different to other years due to the Covid 19 restrictions.



Paula Nolan Photography produced a video for both groups including Drone footage and recorded interviews with members of both groups. Each group was also assisted with the creation of a presentation. The presentations and video recordings were submitted as the initial element of the

Public Participation Network

Offaly Public Participation network in conjunction with the Community & Culture section have continued to provide a range of updates to communities. These include information on Covid 19, alongside the promotion of Grant opportunities and other funding sources. These include CEP 1 & 2 and Sports Covid grants. The PPN supports groups in making applications and ensuring that they have the necessary paperwork in place including Tax Clearance in a timely manner to expedite grant payments. We are currently compiling a Survey which we expect will provide information to assist us in supporting Communities in these times of uncertainty. This will inform our action for the autumn winter period.



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adjudication with the adjudication taking place via Zoom.

Both groups presented on their areas, each highlighting the key attributes of their locality illustrating same with great pride. Cathaoirleach John Carroll attended both adjudications and summed up both groups capabilities and qualities very effectively. Social Distancing was adhered to at all times during the development of the presentation, video interviews and the adjudication. Staff involved in supporting the groups included Brian Pey, Bridie Costello Hynes, Roisin Dillon and Caillene Loughnane.

ARTS

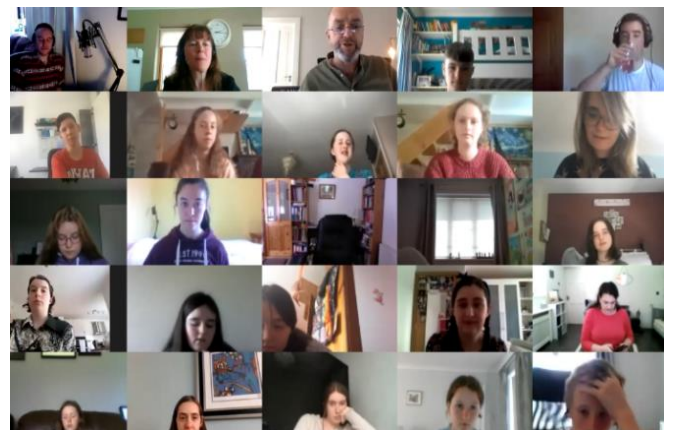
Music Generation Offaly Westmeath Summer Voices Online Singing Camp

MGOW joined forces with Music Generation Louth, Sing Ireland and IMRO to create an on-line singing camp for teens. The camp involved workshops in everything from singing and song-writing to rap.

The 3-day course took place from 21st-23rd July and was led by Irish Youth Choir tutor and Chamber Choir Ireland member Alan Leech alongside workshop leaders and musicians from Music Generations Offaly Westmeath and Louth including extra sessions on Rap with Rapper Garry McCarthy (GMCBeats), Song writing with Singer Songwriter Luan Parle, Vocal Sound with Irish Youth Training Choir Conductor Patrick Barrett and Warm Ups with Midlands based professional singer Helen Hassett.

It was a huge success with over 50 participants joining in for the three-day course. Feedback received from the participants was overwhelmingly positive

and we are already planning for a 2nd meet up in October.



Music Production Summer Course

We were delighted to partner with Fallen Lights band member Graham Dowling on a new online music production course. Over the course of 6 weeks, young music makers were introduced to the world of making music using Soundtrap as Graham taught them all about the technology and guided them towards creating their own music.

Preparations for Culture Night 2020

MGOW are having a Mega Play Along for Culture Night 2020. Our aim is to get as many people as we can, playing and singing together online. Our Music Educators will provide participants with tips and tools on how to play/sing their part as part of Culture

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Night Offaly & Westmeath programmes, and then on Sunday 27th September we will all meet on zoom for the biggest play and sing along event. Participants can play any instruments and all ages are welcome.



Online Courses, Singfest, Sinfonia, Music Production, Percussion and Guitar Ensembles

Preparations are well under way for our new online courses. Our Singfest choirs and Sinfonia ensemble are back and both ensembles are open to new members. We're looking forward to seeing many of our young people back for their 4th or 5th year of involvement and advertising is under way for new members. Both of these ensembles will be moving online until December and we will decide how we progress after Christmas once we can review revised government guidelines. Online Music Production is back and new for this year is the percussion and guitar ensembles.

Schools/ Community Group participation

During the month of August, we made contact with our partner schools and groups regarding returning to schools and began the process of assessing how we might safely bring our activities back from September 2020. Collaboratively we have been examining risk and safe practices and together have developed protocols and safe practises for our musician educators to begin the process of re-entering school/community settings.

We have also been reimagining our music programmes in order to make them achievable in the new normal.

We are looking forward to piloting our changes with a smaller number of schools over the next few months.

Music Educator training

All of our music educators have now received return to work Covid training and are being supplied PPE gear and supplies as necessary. We have continued to upskill our musicians in the use of technology as we move much of our activity online.

Arts Grants

We are continually assessing the arts act grants, professional artist support grants and festival grants, with a view to aid community groups and artists find alternative means of engagement if their original proposal could not take place. In most cases the response is that the group will be rescheduling from Sept. The latest update is that several Arts Act Grants and Festivals are now on course for delivery.

Culture Night

The Culture Night programme has been launched. The Arts Office commissioned the production of a short film with the Film Company One Productions to showcase our artists, venues and locations. The programme for Culture Night is a mix of Online and Offline activities.

FilmOffaly Programme

Culture Night Offaly film was filmed on location across Offaly. An American funded film was at Birr Castle in late August. We are working with several other independent films on locations in Offaly. We are currently organising a series of film industry events at OFFline Film Festival

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together with a needs analysis for the industry.

FilmOffaly Award 2020

Contract awaiting new filming schedule.

FilmOffaly Mentoring Programme

FilmOffaly mentor Helen Flanagan has been engaged, selection of mentees has taken place, with 4 writers selected for the programme. Film Professionals Helen Flanagan and Alan Fitzpatrick will be delivering a series of online workshops in September for film professionals in Offaly. This programme is in collaboration with LOETB, LEO and Screen Skills Ireland.



Youth Arts

The Youth Arts report *The Makings Fostering Youth Creativity* – is currently with the designer for delivery of an online document to be launched in Oct/Nov.

Arts Council

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). Selection for the researcher has taken place and research has now commenced.

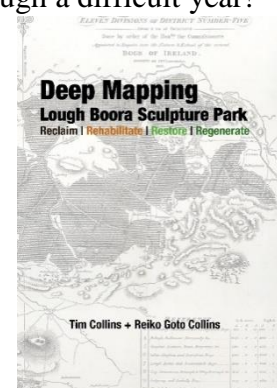
Public Art

Jessica Traynor who was awarded the Banagher Public Art Literature Commission continues to develop links within the community to develop her oral history recording project, schools' writing and choral workshops, mentorship opportunities for local writers and events in conjunction with the That Beats Banagher Festival. Jessica has recently been in contact with Banagher College. Musician Elaine Agnew will be arranging some online workshops and recording between herself and the students. The plan is for Elaine to set the poetry that Jessica worked on with her TY workshops, earlier this year to music, and that the students will record the piece remotely with Elaine guidance and facilitation. The resulting song will be released around Christmas over social media as a celebration of Banagher - and to celebrate getting through a difficult year!



Lough Boora

The Deep Mapping project has been printed and will be launched on Culture Night ITC Art in Landscape Research Project – Collaboration with Mayo County



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Council and Visual Arts Ireland. The tender for the researcher for this project was conducted and Terre Duffy was selected. Terre will begin talking to all stakeholders for the project shortly.

Creative Edenderry

An application from the IPB / Galway 2020 was made in conjunction with the group with a planned series of events to take place in March 2021 was successful. The artist Michael Fortune has been engaged to work with the group towards the delivery of an activity in March. Further programming development will take place in conjunction with the group after Culture Night.

Birr Writer's Retreat

Four candidates were awarded the residency and these will take place before end 2020.

Capital Projects

Arts Infrastructure Strategy

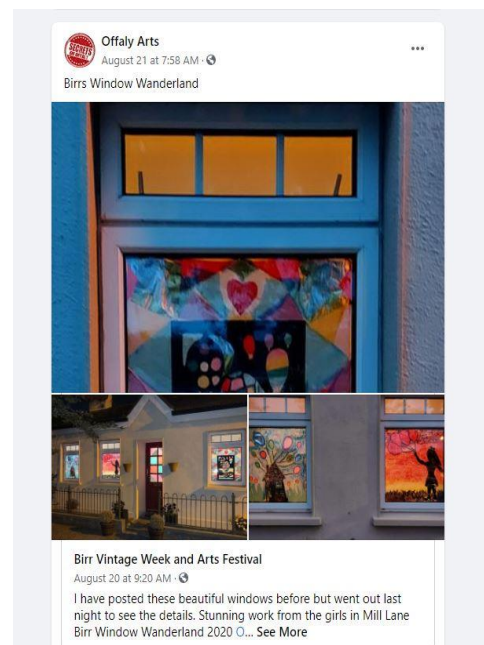
The Arts Office of Offaly County Council has, within its remit, the role of supporting and developing a number of Arts Infrastructure organisations within the County. It is now timely to develop a Strategic Plan for Arts infrastructure within the County, in order to ensure that all the Arts Infrastructure 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 will be developing a tender for the research and development of this strategy.

Online Communication Strategy

We continue to engage the public and artists through our online and social platforms, Facebook, twitter and our extensive email

distribution databases, some topics covered in May include:

- Offaly Artists encouraged to share their work to Offaly Arts – Visual & Music
- Promotion of online festivals i.e. Tullamore International Summer Organ Series, Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival.
- Awareness building of Covid 19 grants currently available.
- Public Interest – i.e. Sharing of online virtual tours, films, drama shows, dance shows, creative writing forums, arts activities for children.



Support to Artists

Provision of online workshops in August. The Arts Office held a series of online workshops for Offaly artists with regard to delivering their business and working on line.

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SPORTS

Staff of Offaly Sports Partnership continue to support the community helpline as required.

Funding

Age & Opportunity Active – national grant scheme called. The scheme supports groups catering for older adults to purchase sport and physical activity equipment or host sport and physical activity sessions for their members. Closing date for receipt of applications is 2nd October 2020

Dept. of Transport, Tourism & Sport Bike Week (now taking place from 19th to 27th September) - €5,800 allocated for bike week activities and events

Dept. of Justice & Equality – national integration fund launched. Offaly Sports Partnership is working with Athletics Ireland to draft a funding application to further develop the concept of integrated athletics activities for children and young people from an ethnic minority background

Healthy Ireland year one returns submitted

Sport Ireland

- Mid-year returns for 2020 due 11th September
- Covid19 small grant scheme launched. 50 applications received by Offaly Sports Partnership to support the reopening of sports facilities and clubs. Applications currently under review in advance of submission to Sport Ireland due 14th September

- Core & Dormant Accounts funding applications for 2021 due 16th October

Programmes

Offaly's Longest Day results:

Female Over 65: Maureen Conroy
Female 50-64: Ann Scally
Female 35 – 49: Rosemarie Jenkinson
Female 18 – 34: Niamh Delaney
Female Junior Cycle (Secondary): Moira Scott
Female Senior Cycle (Secondary): Maria Horan
Female 4 th – 6 th Class: Laura Foley
Female 1 st – 3 rd Class: Alice Murray
Female Preschool: Emma Bracken
Male Over 65: Eddie Franks
Male 50 – 64: Leonard Owens
Male 35 – 49: Jonathan Geraghty
Male 18 – 34: Alexandre Cunha Felicio
Male Junior Cycle (Secondary): Páidí Gorman
Male Senior Cycle (Secondary): David Owens
Male 4 th – 6 th Class: Daniel Flaherty
Male 1 st – 3 rd Class: Piotr Bulak
Male Preschool: Robert Bracken
Household: Waldron Family

Our longest day photography winners are the Clements family for “Water Babies”, the Malone family for “On Yer Bike”, and Croghan GAA for “Sunrise On the Hill”. Congratulations to all the winners and all those that took part in the challenge.

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INDIVIDUALISED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMME
For people with a disability

- You will meet with a Sports Tutor to create a physical activity plan in line with your interests to promote your personal fitness.
- The Tutor will then design an 8 week physical activity programme which will then be implemented by the individual independently.
- Open to people with a disability in Offaly from Primary School age to Adult.
- Limited availability of places
- All covid 19 government guidelines including social distancing will be adhered to at all times.

Parental/Carer consent required for under 18s

Expression of Interest to:
Denise in Offaly Sports Partnership (From Wednesday July 28th 2020)
086 7912513 (Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm only)

Initial Assessment

Once off individualised 8 week programme

Follow up, Review & Further Assessment (if required)

Logos: CYPSC, HI, Offaly Sports Partnership

Offaly Sports Partnership Presents Morning Fitness for Women 6 week programme

EDENDERRY

Venue: Derry Rovers FC, Edenderry
Days: Mondays & Wednesdays
Time: 9.45 - 11.00
Starting Date: Monday 7th September 2020

TULLAMORE

Venue: Tullamore Town Park
Days: Tuesdays & Thursdays
Time: 9.45 - 11.00
Starting Date: Tuesday 8th September 2020

Contact: Denise
086 7912513

Places limited. Advanced booking only

Please bring your own fitness mat to every session

Logos: SPORT IRELAND, LCDC, Offaly Sports Partnership

OFFALY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

OUTDOOR ACTIVATOR POLES

OVER 55'S 6 WEEK FITNESS SESSIONS

Edenderry

Starting Sept 14th
Derry Rovers FC, EDENDERRY
Mondays & Wednesdays
11.30 - 12.30 am
2020

Tullamore

Starting Sept 15th
Town Park Tullamore
Tuesdays & Thursdays
11.30 - 12.30 am
2020

Contact Denise
086 7912513

Places limited
Advanced booking only

All activities in line with government guidelines & fully socially distant

Logos: SPORT IRELAND, LCDC, Offaly Sports Partnership

Three day (Covid 19 risk assessed) summer fit camps (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) hosted by Offaly Sports Partnership in Crinkle, Edenderry and Tullamore took place in July. Approximately 150 children and young people per camp reached.

Sports Inclusion Development Programme - one to one physical activity programmes for people with disabilities now available. Contact Denise (dcoghill@offalycoco.ie or 086 7912513), Community Sports Development Officer to book a consultation.

Community Sports Development Officer programme – outdoor physical activity sessions commence week of 14th September in Tullamore and Edenderry. Contact Denise (dcoghill@offalycoco.ie or 086 7912513), Community Sports Development Officer to book a place.

Youth / Sports leadership training recommencing with TYs in two secondary schools from September

TOURISM

Offaly Tourism's national Radio Campaign ran from W/C 22nd June to July 12th. This saw Offaly being advertised to a national audience on Today FM & Newstalk. In conjunction with this national campaign, the local radio campaign aired on Midlands 103 ran for a period of 4 weeks from 18th June to 16th July. The two campaigns complemented each other, with the local radio adverts focusing on the 'Magical Midlands' and encouraging the locals of the area to explore their own region.

The tourism team attended the virtual 'Meitheal' event from 21st July to 27th July. Fáilte Ireland's largest in-Ireland event was cancelled in March due to COVID 19 and for the first time ever was held on a virtual platform. We attended 23 meetings with suppliers and gained valuable contacts in the tourist trade both

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nationally and internationally. The follow up contact includes a presentation showcasing Offaly as a destination to specific markets.

The Tourism Officer organised for the RTÉ Nationwide team to visit the county in early July to film a programme focusing solely on tourism in Offaly. The programme aired on 27th July on RTÉ One and was broadcast to a national audience of up to 250,000 viewers. It featured many of our star attractions including Clonmacnoise, Lough Boora Discovery Park, The Slieve Blooms and the River Shannon. The programme was very well received and wonderfully showcased Offaly's sites and attractions as the sun shone!



Tourism in the county had gained great traction from the exposure gained nationally from our marketing activities, with local tourism providers reporting significant increase in bookings. Unfortunately, Offaly went into a 2-week lockdown from 7th August, which has impacted the sector significantly.

The €1m promotion campaign announced by the government in the package of measures to support businesses impacted by the regional restrictions was most welcome. The counties of Offaly, Laois & Kildare are to get an equal share of this

€1m. This will focus on increasing the appeal of Offaly to visitors and drive bookings under the banner of 'Make A Break For It'.

The 'Make a break for it' campaign encourages 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 existing campaign has reached 97% of Irish Adults and in elevating Laois, Offaly and Kildare within this existing campaign we are able to capitalise on the salience that has been established with our audience to best benefit these three counties in recovery.

Fáilte Ireland published the first adverts in this campaign on 25th August. This campaign will run for 16 weeks in press, radio, online audio and social media. The content in these adverts will be changing on

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a weekly basis focusing on different sites and attractions each week. These Offaly specific ads will be in addition to the adverts running for the regional brands IAE & IHH in which Offaly will continue to feature in.

The tourism team have been working closely with their representatives from IAE & IHH to assist and support the trade where possible. Many supports are available for the industry through Fáilte Ireland and the tourism and hospitality sector locally are working through the challenges COVID 19 poses and determined to overcome these difficult trading times.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly team continues to work remotely and provides a full service to new and existing enterprises in Offaly. The LEO team are providing much needed assistance to deal with the unprecedented numbers of business owners contacting the Local Enterprise Office.

Additional Supports in Offaly, Laois and Kildare

New financial supports allocated to businesses impacted in Offaly, Laois and Kildare under local lockdown were unveiled by the Government in August. Businesses owners in the three counties were allocated a 20pc top up to the Restart Grant for firms reopening once Covid-19 restrictions are eased. The grants increased from €4,000 and €25,000 to €4,800 and €30,000. The Local Enterprise Offices in Offaly, Laois and Kildare received an additional €1m to support businesses through and following the restrictions and an additional €18,000 to the three LEOs to promote business sectors and locations.

Fáilte Ireland were given an additional €1m to specifically promote the three counties and encourage people to spend money in the midlands regions post lockdown.

Training and Mentoring July & August 2020

A wide range of online training courses took place over the summer. These courses were aimed at those interested in starting their own business or growing their business. Most of the courses have been fully booked and have received excellent feedback.

LEO Offaly has started using Submit.com for accepting applications

LEO Offaly has started using Submit.com for accepting grant applications. Submit.com is an online grant management system that allows grant applicants to fill out applications online. The management system will improve customer service and reduce administration burden on staff. It is currently being used for Measure 1, TOV and TAME Grants and mentoring. LEO Offaly is the first section within Offaly County Council to use this system, and it is expected to be deployed to other sections in the coming months.

COVID 19 Supports

Trading Online Voucher (eCommerce) Grants Available

LEO Offaly continues to experience high demand for the Trading Online Voucher scheme. The voucher is a financial incentive to small businesses to develop or enhance their ability to trade online. Under the scheme a qualifying business may apply for funding to a maximum value of €2,500 or 90% of eligible expenditure (exclusive of VAT), whichever is the lesser. Following approval of their application, a successful applicant can engage suppliers and upon

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completion of the work, submit a request for payment to the LEO in line with the terms and conditions of their voucher. One to one mentoring and information seminars are available online or by conference call to prospective applicants to support them in their application process and it will be a condition of applying for the vouchers that applicants participate in one of these mentoring sessions or seminars. The mentoring attendees will be informed of the purpose of the scheme and how best to use and get value from the application of the voucher. The application process for the vouchers will be a competitive process.

The vouchers are targeted at businesses with the following profile:

- Limited or no e-commerce presence;
- 10 or less employees;
- Turnover less than €2m;
- Applicant business must be trading for at least 6 months;
- Business are located in County Offaly.

Online Autumn Business Training Courses

Booking is now available for a number of Online courses such as Start your Own Business Course, Digital marketing for Business, Forecasting and risk management in an uncertain world, Vat Returns and Submissions, A Beginner's Guide to Using Instagram To Market Your Business, How to plan a new website for your business, How to create marketing videos on a budget, How to create marketing videos on a budget and Marketing Strategy ReBoot Camp. There has been a good uptake and the feedback is very positive.

Phone and Online Mentoring Sessions

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly continues to provide a number of free mentoring sessions to assist businesses through the Covid 19 crisis. Please book online to arrange a mentoring session. The types of mentoring available are Covid 19 - Remote Mentoring - Business, Finance, Banking Supports & Advice, Covid-19 Remote Mentoring on Human Resources, Covid 19 - Remote Mentoring - Business Planning, Covid 19 - Remote Mentoring - Social Media Strategy, Covid-19 Remote Mentoring on Microfinance Loans and Trading Online Voucher One to One Mentoring - Phone or Video Call,

Microfinance Ireland loans

The COVID-19 Business Loan from Microfinance Ireland is a government initiative to support small businesses with less than 10 employees through the current period of uncertainty and protect job creation or sustainment in Ireland. The loan scheme has been revised and relaunched. Loans are from €5,000 – €25,000 up to 3 years. First 6 months – 0% Interest & Zero repayments. Reduced interest rate 4.5% APR for LEO applications.

Upcoming Events

First Time Exporters Initiative

The First Time Exporters Initiative has been carefully designed to help high potential micro enterprise companies or LEO clients of Longford, Laois, Westmeath & Offaly expand into international markets for the first time. The programme is designed to equip business owners and managers with the relevant in-depth knowledge, know-how and confidence to take the first steps to export success.

As the current business climate is extremely challenging and winning new business is

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more important than ever. Therefore, the programme will be delivered by experienced sales professionals and will include practical topics such as “lead generation”, “best practice in virtual selling” and “negotiating export contracts”. The programme will commence in September 2020, and will run over the next 6 months will deliver the following key outcomes:

Midlands Food Programme

“Food & Drink– A Post COVID-19 Vision” aims to strengthen the capacity of small food and drinks producers within four counties in the Midlands region, Laois, Longford, Offaly, and Westmeath develop new products, increase efficiencies and explore new customer bases at home and abroad. The programme will be offered to businesses from each of the four participating counties. It is expected that the businesses taking part will be amongst the strongest and most innovative artisan producers in their counties.

Participants will receive group training and individual one-to-one mentoring in each of these topics from the experts who have been assembled to deliver this programme. Each business will take part in the equivalent of 10 training sessions and 13 individual mentoring sessions over a 10-month period. The programme will be a blend of classroom and online based training throughout the year. The programme will help grow your business in a sustainable manner over the coming years by focusing on new issues that offer real opportunities to food and drinks producers.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Offaly Libraries Right to Read Award



Offaly Library Service is delighted to announce that it has received the Right to Read Award from the Department of Rural and Community

Development, in recognition of its implementation of a core programme of Right to Read literacy support services throughout the local authority for 2019. This programme co-ordinated by the public library service is delivered with the support of the Right to Read Network of local partners.

Offaly Libraries Summer Stars 2020



Summer Stars is one of four national initiatives for the Right to Read programme. This is an important project with research showing that children lose significant competency in reading and maths over the summer break. Offaly Libraries constantly research and programme to encourage children to read what they like, partake in smart play, use their imagination and explore their local cultural and leisure opportunities in Offaly.

Our Summer Stars 2020 programme was a combination of virtual and traditional elements this year and was a great success. Some highlights included:



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- a story writing competition open to all children under the age of 12
- a Summer Stars eCollection created on BorrowBox for all to access
- library staff of Laois and Offaly worked together to deliver a **chapter by chapter reading of the “The Storm Keepers Island” by Catherine Doyle**. A high standard of story-telling was required to keep audiences tuning in every evening for this 26 chapter book! This was a hugely successful collaboration by both library services and is still available on Offaly Libraries Facebook page with **2,151 views** of the story to date.
- Offaly Libraries Summer Stars storytimes including the “Little People, Big Dream” series are available on the Libraries Ireland video gallery and on Facebook
- **Baby Book bags** were distributed
- **Summer Stars Surprise bags** for all ages were provided via our libraries
- All Deis July Provision Camps in Offaly were invited to visit their local libraries for a socially distanced, fun library visit
- Children continue to collect their **certificates and medals** in libraries around the county, in recognition of their reading achievements this Summer

On Wed, August 19th, Birr Library staff welcomed specially organised visits from 41 participants attending Deis July Camps in St. Brendan’s P.S., Birr.

They explored the collection in the Children’s Library with thousands of children’s books available for lending. The children were told about the services available to younger members both within the branch and as part of the national network.



Offaly Libraries Heritage Week 2020

Offaly Libraries Heritage Week programme was hosted entirely online this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. There was a wide selection of collaborations, appealing to all ages and covering a wide geographical area in Offaly. Examples of the 11 online projects included video presentations from Maynooth University lecturer and author Dr. Ciaran Reilly, award winning photographer Tina Claffey and National Heritage Hero Award winners, the Egan family of Carrigeen Farmhouse; all available to view on our facebook page. Social media statistics for the Heritage Week Programme this year were impressive.



Facebook in particular saw **16,034 viewing minutes** with an overall reach of 47,686 and an engagement of 1,000.



10 posts featured on **Twitter with a reach of 7,838** and engagement of 51.



There were 2 posts on Instagram with 11 engagements and reach of 303.

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There was an overall reach of 55,827 for Offaly Libraries Heritage Week 2020 with an engagement of 1,062.

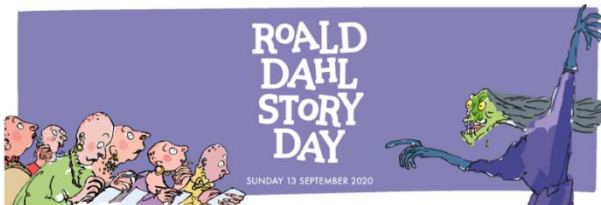
Offaly Digital Libraries

We continue to build on our full digital suite of online resources and services which have been widely used over the past few months. There have been **15,851 eAudiobooks and eBooks borrowed in Offaly in 2020 already!** Users have access to eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, eNewspapers, educational courses, language learning, free music and film streaming. You'll find these services in the Digital Library section of our website.



Upcoming Library Events & Programmes **Roald Dahl Story Day 2020**

To celebrate Roald Dahl Story Day on 13th September, Offaly Libraries are running two very exciting competitions. We have hidden eight golden tickets in books in each of our libraries, finders will win a



prize. We also have a creative competition in which we invite children to create their own vile villain in our 'Craftiest Character' competition! For more information contact any of our branches or check out Offaly.ie/libraries

Culture Night – Friday 18th September

Preparations for Culture Night 2020 are underway, with Offaly Libraries planning a Facebook 'Watch Party' where viewers will be given the opportunity to experience a selection of highlights from the 'Vintage Luminaries' projections, which have been screened in Birr town over the past two years. Vintage Luminaries WatchParty on Facebook will start at 6:30pm on the 18th September 2020, no bookings required.



Positive Ageing Week

This will be held from September 28th to 2nd October 2020. Positive Ageing week (PAW) is an Age Action Ireland initiative. The main focus centres on community based events. This year Offaly Libraries have decided to organise a "virtual" Positive Ageing Week due to Covid 19 restrictions. We will be presenting our borrowers with a **Positive Ageing Week gift bag** as a thank you from Offaly Libraries and our Age Friendly Alliance partners. We have planned a week of online readings, poetry and music kindly contributed by staff and local communities for people to enjoy from the comfort of their own homes.



Clara Library having received the first Age Friendly Charter in Offaly fully embraces Age Friendly Ireland's vision to make Ireland a great country in which to grow old. Clara Library will lead out on Offaly Libraries countywide 2020 PAW

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programme. Full details will be available via our website and social media channels.

Children's Book Festival – October 2020

Preparations for Offaly Libraries Children's Book Festival are underway. This annual festival takes place during the month of October and our library staff will curate a programme of Author Readings, Storytimes, arts and crafts and more! Don't forget to subscribe to our newsletter for full details: www.offaly.ie/libraries

Hullabaloo!

We are hard at work, finalising Offaly libraries contribution to the programme for the first 'virtual' Hullabaloo! Children's Arts Festival. Offaly Libraries will host a number of virtual workshops for children in dance, music, arts, crafts, and singing. There will also be some 'magical' story times. The festival will take place from Wednesday 28th – Saturday 31st October 2020.



A success story - Library Blog

The Offaly Libraries Blog has gone from strength to strength, with readership of 7,001 in 2020. Blog topics are diverse and have ranged from a new member of staff's reflection on her 'First 100 Days', to local history pieces on Birr Vintage Week & Arts Festival. A particular highlight is the 'Carrigeen Farm House' blog post, first published in 2018, which had over 1,500 views in August 2020, due to a recent Nationwide feature. The blog is read in **38 countries**; with Ireland, U.K, U.S.A, Germany and Australia in the top 5.

Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

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Appendix 1

Draft Consolidated Revenue Account Income & Expenditure Summary by Service Division To 30th June 2020

	Expenditure €	Income €	
Housing & Building	6,800,699	6,652,777	
Road Transport & Safety	8,013,622	4,773,845	
Water Services	2,146,610	2,035,364	
Development Management	6,466,681	3,728,297	
Environmental Services	4,186,694	820,376	
Recreation & Amenity	2,135,503	260,833	
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	257,902	176,803	
Miscellaneous Services	6,504,642	1,368,269	
Local Government Fund / GPG		4,199,333	
Gross Rates Income	0	8,958,619	
	36,512,353	32,974,515	
Deficit increase to 30th June 2020		(3,537,838)	
Budget deficit reduction to 31st December 2020		400,000	
OCC to 31st August 2020	Rates	Rents	Loans
	€m	€m	€m
Opening Balance Jan 1, 2020	2.29	0.73	0.32
Invoices/Adjustments	14.60	4.16	0.28
2020 Cash Collected to end of August	7.37	4.22	0.37
Closing Balance August 31st, 2020	9.53	0.66	0.23
2019 Cash collected to August	12.29	4.07	0.35
% Collection at this point in 2019	60%	104%	107%
Bank Overdraft to 31st August 2020			
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date		23	9%
Overdraft Interest and non conforming charges to August 31st 2020 YTD			€21,151
Bank Administration and transactional charges to August 31st 2020 YTD			€22,230

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