



€1.5 million in
Vacant
Property
Refurbishment
Grants in
Offaly

Offaly County Council Arts
Office announced a call to
professional artists for
proposals for a public art
commission for Esker Arts,
in conjunction with Lough
Boora Sculpture Park.

Deadline for the first stage
submission is 3 January
2025



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **Expressions of Interest Sought: Short Term Land Letting 2025**- CLOSING DATE Monday 16 December 2024 at 12 Noon <https://www.offaly.ie/expressions-of-interest-sought-short-term-land-letting-2025-various-locations/>
- **Youth Arts Commissions 2025** - CLOSING DATE Friday 14 February 2025 4pm

Climate Action Environment Water & Transportation

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Action

Community Climate Action Fund

Community Climate Action Fund (CCAF) programme progresses towards interim drawdown stage for some of the 19 successful community groups who are receiving 100% funding towards their climate projects. Offaly received €444,000 in Phase 1 and it is anticipated that a similar amount will be allocated in Phase 2.

Climate Action Plan



November saw the signing of a multi annual Service Level Agreement between the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communication and OCC for Phase 3

(implementation) of the LA Climate Action Plans. This is a very positive step forward as the first multi-year SLA in relation to the Climate Action plan programme. This secures funding, to the amount of circa €29m nationally, towards Climate Action staff costs up to and including December 2028.

Bioeconomy

November saw an introductory event to the €5m Mount Lucas Circular Bioeconomy Aquaculture Initiative funded by the EU Just Transition Fund and DAFM. The Integrated Bioeconomy demonstration site at Mount Lucas IMTA (integrated multi-trophic aquaculture/aquatech) site is a unique resource nationally for testing, developing and scaling new products.

Following the recent €5 million investment under the EU Just Transition Fund and

rooted in sustainability, the Co. Offaly site will function as both an in-action and visual representation of 'bio-economy', demonstrating how renewable living organisms such as rainbow trout can be utilized to produce food, energy and industrial based goods.

It is the first food/bioeconomy site that operates to zero waste, zero pollution and climate action principles where all activities can avail of digital technologies to improve efficiencies and opportunities.

Offaly County Council is a linked partner to project partners TUS, University of Galway, University College Cork, Teagasc, Indigo Rock, Bantry Rearach Institute and Derilinx.



Energy

November saw the closing date for receipt of tenders for 'Multi Disciplinary Design Team' Architects/Engineers/M&E Service Engineers led consultancy services to design and cost deep retrofit measures for the organisation's two most significant energy using buildings i.e. Áras an Chontae and Aura Tullamore Leisure Centre, as part of the SEAI 50% match funding 'Pathfinder' programme. The four tenders received will

be evaluated and the appointment of the successful design team will follow.

The 3rd Annual Geothermal Summit, held at Dublin Castle during November, featured the recently drilled 1 km deep exploratory borehole in Tullamore was featured with a focus on geothermal feasibility in the public sector and economics across heat networks. Offaly County Council are actively working with GSI to explore the geothermal opportunities arising from this valuable sub-surface data, including the potential for district heating in Tullamore.



Riailtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Geological Survey
Suirbhíreacht Gheolaíochta
Ireland | Éireann

3rd National Geothermal Energy Summit

Environment

Edenderry Clean Air Initiative - Targeted Air Quality Monitoring & Awareness Project

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have been monitoring air quality in Edenderry and has raised concerns about the levels of sulphur and particulate matter in the area. To address these concerns, Offaly County Council, in collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), developed a multifaceted initiative. The initiative strategy includes targeted measures such as:

- An air quality monitoring program in specific areas.
- A household survey and awareness program focusing on the burning of solid fuels to understand local practices.
- A community engagement initiative to raise awareness and encourage behavioural change.

Offaly County Council's Environment Department has successfully secured €80,000 in funding to implement these measures.

Air Quality Monitoring & Analysis Programme

16No. air sensors have been deployed in a variety of locations in Edenderry town. Notification of sensors going up has been publicised on our website and social media channels such as Facebook.

Our appointed Consultant, an expert on air quality, will also provide a report outlining the technical analysis of the monitoring programme. The data analysis on PM (particulate matter) levels will assist in gaining insights into the positive impacts of household energy retrofit measures along with identifying priority areas for intervention.

Awareness & Education Campaign centered around Household Surveys

Waste to Zero have been appointed to complete surveys of household, commencing on Friday the 15th of November with the intention of completing 200 Household surveys. This work is ongoing and Waste to Zero will complete report based on the outcomes of survey work carried out. The household surveys will provide details on fuel usage types, gauge householders' awareness of the impact of smoky fuel on health and the environment and use respondents replies to estimate potential increased uptake on low smoke fuels.

A leaflet will be given to all households visited in Edenderry. The leaflet contains detail on what a householder can do to improve air quality in relation to heating their home. Approx 650 leaflets will be issued. Also, letters to 'missed' households and associated posters for public spaces and shop premises have all been designed, printed and issued.

Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council



Communications with Community

Offaly County Council has developed a strategy for the communications and awareness piece. The programme of events will run through the burning season up to March 2025.

The strategy centres around engagement with local schools. Offaly County Council has appointed the Rediscovery Centre from Ballymun to carry out workshops within schools in Edenderry town and surrounds. Token mementos will be issued with appropriate messaging from Ecoland/Klee Paper. The objective of this Air Pollution Education Workshops project is to link in with the pilot study on Clean Air in Edenderry being run by Offaly County Council. The proposed workshops, each spanning 90 minutes, will employ innovative and interactive methods to impart knowledge, skills, and values essential for improving air quality. Through engaging activities, discussions, and collaborative learning, students will gain an understanding of the impacts of lifestyle choices and air pollution issues, both locally and globally. It is intended that this will improve the awareness air quality within the community.

Signage has been ordered for installation at schools to inform and increase awareness of the issue of poor air quality and encourage parents not to idle. Final image to be agreed and sign off.



A local radio campaign will run from November through to March and the messaging for this piece is currently being finalised. Midlands Radio 3 will produce 3 different voice advertisements, which will

run for 450 spots from Mid-November to end March.

Offaly County Council has completed a print media campaign to provide awareness and sharing of information with the public around the overall project. Advertisements were taken out in the Topic and Offaly Independent newspapers during November.



The targeted measures outlined in this strategy aim to bring about meaningful improvements in Edenderry's air quality. This approach addresses the immediate air pollution issues and lays the foundation for long-term environmental stewardship. Through community engagement, education, and data-driven interventions, the initiative seeks to foster a healthier environment for all residents of Edenderry.

Environment Complaints

Summary of Complaints Received by Environment Section for November 2024 and investigated - Total number of 74 complaints.

Category	Number
Abandoned Vehicles	3
Air Pollution	3
Control of Dogs	7
Control of Horses	0
Litter Control	47
Noise Pollution	7
Waste Enforcement	5
Water Quality	1
Building Control	1
Total	74

Burial Grounds



Cemetery Committees

We currently work with 19 cemetery committees, two new committees were formed in 2024, and we look forward to working with them too. We are currently processing our cemetery committee grants, which should be dispersed by the end of the year. There are grants and assistance available from the CA-ENV-RW section and we welcome engagement from groups that are currently maintaining their local cemetery or planning on forming a committee to do that.

St. Mary's Cemetery, Edenderry

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

RURAL WATER SERVICES - Capital



Applications for capital funding for from the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2024 to 2026 were submitted

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

Subsidy

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

Grants

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

Veterinary - Control of Dogs

So far this year we have cared for over 200 dogs in the dog shelter and on average 15% of the dogs are reclaimed by their owners, 15% are rehomed by the Care of Dogs Team and the other 70% are rehomed through animal rescue charities. The Control of Dogs team has also dealt with 82 complaints so far this year and has assisted AGS on a number of raids and have carried out inspections of premises under DBE and Animal Health and Welfare legislation. The team has also had a successful prosecution for a breach of DBE regulations.

Control of Horses

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

TRANSPORTATION

R400 Peat Pilot

Works are now well advanced on the 2024 Peat Road Pilot on the R400 linking the M6 to Rhode village. Works are programmed to be completed by the 20th of December and have been funded by the Department of Transport and our Own Resources.



Birr North Distributor Road

A request to award the Contract for the Birr North Distributor Road has been approved by the Department of Transport. Works are due to commence onsite in early January 2025 with an estimated 7-month construction timeline.

New Default Speed Limit

The introduction of the new 60km/hr speed limit across all our County Roads will commence on the 7th of February 2025. As part of the preparatory works for this change a total of 692 new poles are being erected across our County by our Municipal District Staff. 1793 new signs will be erected prior to the 7th of February. The current timeline for the implementation of the proposed new 30km/hr Urban Speed limit is the end of June 2025.

Public Lighting Maintenance

The following is a breakdown of the Public Lighting failures across the County. There are **193** faults on the system presently. **38** of these faults require third party intervention and as such cannot be repaired by the maintenance contractor. These anomalies are being addressed by the yearly public lighting capital program.

The current actionable faults amount to **155 faults** or **1.66 %** of the lighting stock. The breakdown of the **155** faults across each MD are as follows:

Municipal District	No Of Faults	Total No of Lights in the MD	% of MD Lights Only	% fault per MD of the Countywide Public Lighting Stock
Birr MD	63	2962	2.12	0.68
Tullamore MD	55	3933	1.40	0.59
Edenderry MD	37	2405	1.54	0.39

Housing & Integration

To assist us in streamlining the delivery of Housing Services we encourage the use of the following email addresses:

Service	Email Address
HAP Enquiries	hap@offalycoco.ie
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans	homeloans@offalycoco.ie
Housing Inspections – HAP, Leased, Private, etc.	standards@offalycoco.ie
General Enquiries, Maintenance Issues, etc.	housing@offalycoco.ie
RAS & Leasing Enquiries	RAS@offalycoco.ie
Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability Scheme	HousingAidGrants@offalycoco.ie
Anti-Social Behaviour	ASB@offalycoco.ie

Housing Update

- There are 546 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of November 2024.
- A further 477 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 7 signed up for HAP and 21 exited from HAP in November.
- At the end of November 42 single people and 17 couples/families were being supported in emergency accommodation.
- The 2024 Rent Review of Social Leasing Scheme Tenants (Rental Accommodation, Short Term Leasing, Repair & Lease and Mortgage to Rent) and HAP Tenants is complete. Approx 662 rent letters were issued to Social Leasing Scheme and HAP tenants on Friday 28th June 2024, these rents became effective from the 13th July 2024. Leasing tenant queries can be directed to RentReview@offalycoco.ie.

and HAP queries can be directed to hap@offalycoco.ie

- Social Housing Assessments (SSHA) 2024 is complete. All relevant approved applicants on Offaly County Council's Social Housing Support List, using the current address provided by the applicant were written to and completed forms were due for return by **Friday, 30th August 2024**. The summary of needs has been completed and returned to the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Housing Capital Programme Update

- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 no. Older Person's dwellings) – Complete
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) – Complete.
- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – Complete.
- Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane (20 Units) – Part 8 approved in May 2022. Stage 3 to be submitted to the Department once ESB lines on the site are undergrounded.
- Circular Road, Daingean, Site 2 (10 Units) – Stage 3 approval was granted on 31st July 2024. Tender will be issued in Q4 2024.
- Group Housing, Croghan Road, Birr (4 Units): Stage 4 approval was granted on 21st November 2023. Contractor Appointed & construction has commenced. Completion Q1 2025
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (10 Units) – Stage 3 application lodged with DHLGH in Q3 2024.

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes

- Respond Housing: 77 Units under construction @ Kingswood, Ardan Lane with completion in Q4 2024 & Q1 2025
- Sofia Housing: 37 Units with Stage 2 approval @ Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Planning Granted in

November 2023. Stage 3 (permission to go to tender) to be submitted in Q4 2024

- Sofia Housing, 17 Units @ Clonamore, Tullamore – Midlands Region Statutory Management Group continue to work with Sophia Housing, the Dept and HSE, to ensure adequate staff and resources to open Clonamore safely and fully supported in 2024.

Turnkey Developments/Part V

- Turnkey & Part V: Bog Road, Portarlington, 33 units – Complete
- Part V: Silverbrook, Tullamore, 15 Complete, 5 remaining
- Part V: Redwood, Tullamore, All 11 Units complete
- MacGregol, Birr, 6 Units – 2 Part V units Complete & 4 Turnkey Units Complete
- MacGregol, Birr 12 Units – 5 Complete

Retrofit Programme

In deciding on a works programme, local authorities are urged to choose a mix of properties across a range of BERs to allow for homes which need significant expenditure to be balanced out by those needing lesser spend so as to achieve the overall average cost of €34,000 per property. A BER rating of B2 must be achieved.

- DHLGH have advised target for 2024 of 28 Energy Efficiency Retrofit Program Units
- 28 Units complete in 2024
- Target of 28 increased to 37 following request by Offaly County Council

Community Development Programme

- Estate Management Funding for Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore Municipal Districts have been agreed at Municipal District meetings.
- Housing Liaison Officers are continuing to support established resident committees and engaging with new groups and communities in an effort to support them to establish committees and thereby support the development of their community.

LAND USE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Development Management

	To end Nov 2024	To end Nov 2023	Total 2023
Planning Applications	660	655	695
Extensions of Duration Applications	12	20	20
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	72 (53)	181 (73)	181 (73)

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

24/60463 Ardnaranla Hospitality Ltd	Change of the use of the existing stables to accommodate 8 no. tourism self-catering short term let apartments Edenderry, Co. Offaly, R45 Y978
24/60472 Lumcloon Energy Limited	Two new capacitor containers and one new inverter container placed on existing concrete slab Coolcor, Rhode, County Offaly

Just Transition

EU JTF Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiative Scheme (Total Support €10m)



This scheme was launched in 2023 and was devised to support the development of bioeconomy piloting and demonstration projects in the wider midlands area. The successful proposal would support the bio-based sector to become climate neutral and

sustainable with enhanced circularity, while remaining competitive on the global market. This can be achieved by replacing non-renewable and fossil based raw materials and mineral resources with sustainably sourced biomass and biological waste to produce industrial and consumer goods.

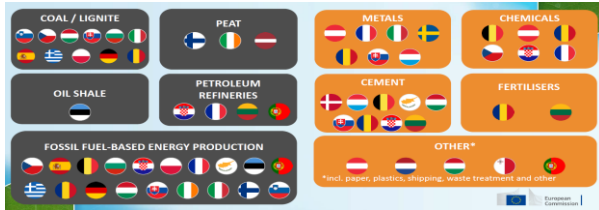
Of the €10m awarded in 2024, Offaly was involved in a successful application led by the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) entitled the **Mount Lucas Circular Bioeconomy Aquaculture Initiative Project**, which received €5m. The project has multiple partners – both academic and industrial – and was officially launched on 20th November 2024. It is the global first bioeconomy site for demonstrating and scaling new technologies, products and services for industry at the Mount Lucas peatland-based aquaculture site.



Offaly County Council supported the SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities Programme who were successful under the **Just Transition Platform Groundworks Technical Assistance** scheme. This partnership which is supported in the region by Roscommon and Longford County Councils and by the Eastern and Midland Regional Authority (EMRA), has been engaging with a European Technical Assistance team, from April 2024. The objectives are based on:

- Capacity building in the community-owned energy sector
- Accessing EU funding sources
- How to influence Irish government policy to be more supportive of community-owned energy
- Technical information and advice

The engagement recently culminated in a very successful 2-day capacity building workshop on 19th and 20th November 2024 in Tullamore which focussed on good practices for managing community projects, including funding options.



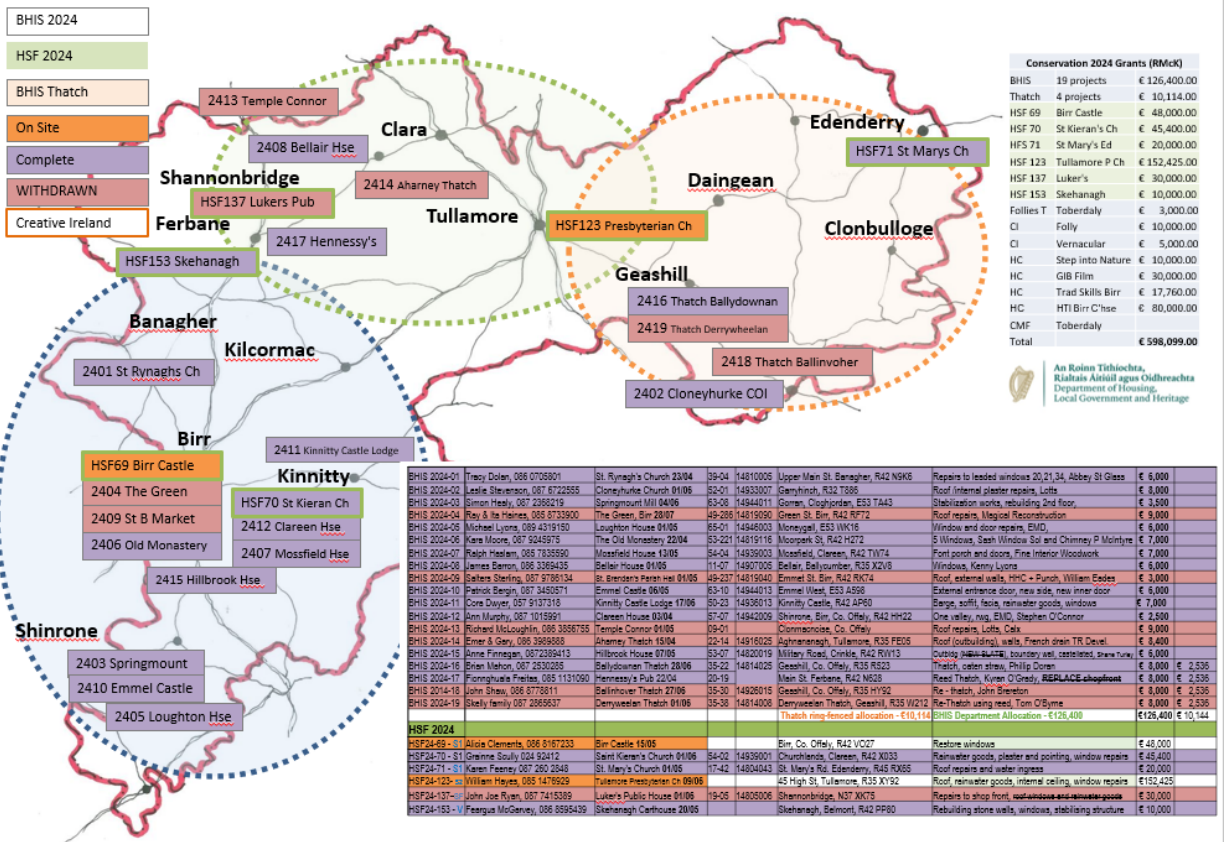
Architecture and Conservation

- Record of Protected Structures** - continue to assist with advice to owners and potential new owners.
- Conservation Reports** - for all planning applications related to Protected

Structures and ACA. Site visit where required, photos, research, produce a planning report within the 4-week period.

- Planning Reports** - large proposals and Housing applications and certain pre-planning meetings e.g. Largescale Residential Developments/ urban applications.
- Section 57 Declarations** - Mapping, site visits, reporting, 12-week timeframe.
- Masterplan Steering Groups** - as required, subject to availability
- Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2024:** 19 projects sent to the Department for approval, total funding of €126,400 and ring-fenced thatching funding of €10,144. 13 projects were completed (the remainder withdrew), including 2 out of the 4 thatch projects. 9 BHIS grant recipients were eligible for top up grants. **Final 2024 BHIS grant spend: €118,406.14**

Built Heritage Investment Scheme + HSF 2024 – Offaly County Council



An Roinn Tithchocta, Rialtais Ainmíl agus Oidhreacht Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Sample project – Mossfield House, before, during and after



7. Historic Structures Fund 2024: 5 projects were completed within the required timeframe, one project did not proceed. Projects include repairs to historic windows at Birr Castle, repairs to St Kieran’s Church Clareen and St Mary’s Church Edenderry and a vernacular repair project at Skehanagh, Belmont. A larger project, Tullamore Presbyterian Church is a two year project, which commenced 2024 and will be completed in 2025.

Final 2024 HSF grant spend: €212,614.69



8. **Heritage Forum** attend and update quarterly meetings, as required.
9. **Traditional Architecture in Offaly Heritage Council grant**, by Rachel Mc Kenna, reprinted with a further 500 copies.
10. **Step into Nature** book by Rachel Mc Kenna, Offaly Launch at Gloster House 02/10/24 by Cllr Tony McCormack and John Feehan, and Dublin Launch at Botanic Gardens 17/10/24 by Ella McSweeney. The book sold over 1,000 copies in the first three weeks, as with all RMCK OCC books, any proceeds go back into heritage projects in the county.



11. **Creative Ireland** – A new film on Thatching in Offaly has been commissioned, minor edits required. It will focus on Ben Purcell in Derrybeg and his son Tony Purcell, thatching their house outside Tullamore. **God-in-a-Bottle** film by Mixed Bag Media, official launch 21 August 2024, Esker Arts



Centre. **3.8k views** of the film on YouTube between Offaly Heritage and the Heritage Council.

12. **Birr Courthouse €80,000** – Historic Towns Initiative Funding for Part VIII with HHC and Amanda Pedlow
13. **Follies Trust three-day visit to Offaly.** A group of 28 booked into Kinnitty Castle in September. Access arranged to suitable sites for the group over three days, Sunday (Rachel McKenna), Monday (Brian McDonald + Matilda Falkhede) and Tuesday (Gloster House). This is their second visit as a group to the county (2019) and they have also agreed to assist with funding towards a 2025 folly project.
14. **Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2025** advertised early, 29 applications received for 2025, 3 of these are thatch projects. Site visits carried out to properties which have not previously taken part. Assessment of the applications and provisional list to Department by 06 December 2024. Total BHIS allocation increased to **€196,234.00** for 2025.
15. **Historic Thatched Building Stream** – advertised November with allocation for Offaly **€15,450.49**
16. **Historic Structures Fund 2025** – advertised November, applications due back 17 January 2025
17. **Kinnitty Village Enhancements** – continue with suite of projects designed for Kinnitty, many completed. Working with Birr MD to produce sketch proposals for western end of green.



Heritage Team – September to November 2024

Heritage Week Awards

The annual Heritage Week awards were held on 15 November 2024 with Offaly winning awards in 4 of the 8 categories. James Scully was named the national Heritage Hero for his work over the last 50 years across a wide range of heritage interests including the Grand Canal, memorial recording, military fortifications and the Banagher Bronte connection.

- Ballycumber Tidy Towns won the **Water Heritage Day** award with their 'Folly Tales and Treasure Trails' event.
- The **Heritage Boat Association** and **Inland Waterways Association** with **Waterways Ireland** were runners up in this category with their 'A Boatman's Journey: Navigating the heritage of the Grand Canal' held in Tullamore.
- **Lemanaghan Bog** Heritage and Conservation Group were runners up in the Intangible Cultural Heritage Award (The Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh Award) for their project recording traditions and folklore of Lemanaghan.
- **Shinrone Heritage Group** won the County Award for their Shinrone Gown project.

James Scully being presented with the national Heritage Hero award at IMMA Kilmainham



Community Monuments Fund

This fund has had considerable impact providing 100% support for owners of monuments. Works at 5 Offaly sites are completed for 2024. Note – the 2025 scheme is currently advertised.

- *Monasteroris medieval church, Edenderry, €120,000.*
- *Killeigh Chapter House – phase 2 - €90,393 –*
- *Ballintemple Church medieval church near Walsh Island - €100,000* This is phase 1 of works at this medieval church.
- *Lemanaghan Castle - €30,000*
- *Seir Kieran graveyard wall Clareen – €30,00*

Historic Towns Initiative funding of €80,000 - Heritage Council - Birr Courthouse

The Part 8 planning process with consultants Howley Hayes Cooney is completed and the project is now ready to go to tender for conservation works as soon as an appropriate funding scheme is announced.

Heritage Council Community Grants

The funding level for this grant scheme run directly by the Heritage Council has increased to 100% in 2024. All four projects offered funding are completed.

- ***Lis Church** - conservation of the entrance railings.*
- ***Birr 2020 Vision – conservation of the transept mausoleum** at the medieval church of St Brendan’s Church, Birr*
- ***Birr Scientific and Heritage Foundation – conservation of archive material** for the Van Gogh exhibition. Completed and the works have been on exhibition in Arles, France and will move to the Armagh Observatory in 2025.*
- ***Shinrone Church of Ireland burial ground** survey with Shinrone Heritage and researcher Stephen Callaghan.*

Creative Ireland

A wide range of projects are supported through this cross-directorate programme. A sample of autumn projects are included below

Explore Your Monument

The Irish Heritage School provided archaeological expertise to the community archaeology projects at St Brochan’s Monastery, Killaderry and Father Mullen’s Grave, Clonohill Castle at Syngefield, The Island Rahan.



Tour of recent works at Clonohill Castle with the Irish Heritage School and Birr Historical Society

Films Focus in Offaly

The ‘**Wildflowers of Offaly**’ series led by John Feehan and filmed by Tina Claffey has added additional episodes this autumn with a huge total of 30 episodes in 2024. The final is a special episode on ‘Herbal Remedies in Laois and Offaly’.

Creative Ireland supported the **Kilcormac Development Association** who commissioned Bailey and Blake film company to make a film featuring the unique medieval pieta in Kilcormac Church. This will be released early in 2025.

Following their very successful Heritage Week project on the Shinrone Gown – we have supported **Shinrone Heritage** in their commissioning of a video on the subject which will also include interviews with the Keeper of Antiquities in the National Museum of Ireland who care for the original Shinrone Gown which is on exhibition there.

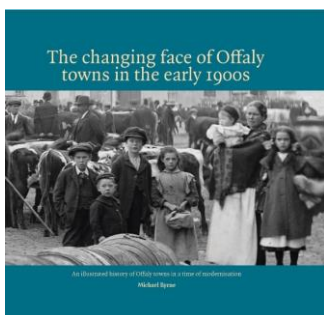
Heritage Council – Heritage Plan Projects - Publications



'Step into Nature' by Rachel McKenna was launched in Offaly in September and in Dublin in October. Due to its relevance nationally, Mercier Press have taken on the national distribution, and it is available in shops nationwide.

The memorial recording book about Bully's Acre in Birr town by Stephen Callaghan is printed and will be launched in partnership with Birr Historical Society on Monday 9 December.

Commemorations Programme (previously Decade of Centenaries)



Support was provided to Offaly History for their new publication '**The Changing Face of Offaly towns in the early 1900s**'. This was in addition to a suite of blogs published on www.offalyhistory.com discussing the early 1900s.



Offaly Archive Service

Collaboration under the Service Level Agreement with Offaly History continues running the County Archive Service at Axis Business Park. The Heritage Council provided support to the delivery of this service with a

grant of €45,000 under the Heritage Organisation Support Fund in 2024.

Biodiversity

Offaly Biodiversity Action Plan 2025 - 2030

The Biodiversity Action Plan is prepared and will be presented to two SPCs before presentation to the County Council meeting for adoption early in 2025.

Draft Offaly Biodiversity Action Plan 2025 – 2030.



Heritage Council Biodiversity Action Plan Fund

The Draft Offaly BAP 2025- 2030 was prepared with funding from the Heritage Council BAP Fund during 2024 to the value of €10,000.

Local Biodiversity Action Fund (LBAF)

OCC led projects benefitted from €100k of LBAF funding during 2024 with 11 projects fully completed by the mid-November deadline for grant drawdown. Projects included:

- A further phase of the **Tullamore Living River Project** completed in collaboration with the OCC Climate Action Team.
- A full county **Hedgerow resurvey** (first completed in 2005).
- Alien Invasive Species Management of **Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed**.
- Development of eDNA surveys for the invasive **Alpine Newt**.
- **Community Biodiversity Action Support** and Training.
- Contribution to the National **Mayfly Survey**.



Tullamore Living River Project - Bank reprofiling, spawning beds and feature installation as part of OCC 2024 LBAF projects.

In Your Nature Podcast

The winter series has commenced on the 25 November with an interview with Rachel McKenna on her 'Step into Nature' book. This partnership podcast between Ricky Whelan and Niall Hatch of BirdWatch Ireland remains one of the top nature podcasts in Ireland.

Gardening for Biodiversity with Aoife Munn

In mid- September environmental educator Aoife Munn delivered a 1-day community workshop in Tullamore on Biodiversity and Climate measures and adaptation. The event was booked out and fully attended and hosted with help from the library section, Tullamore MD outdoor staff and Climate Teams.

Hedgerow Week in September

Three events were hosted for Hedgerow Week in September including Hedge laying at Mount Briscoe, bat walk in Tullamore town park and Mary Bulfin hosting a foraging walk in Edenderry. Hedgerow Week is a collaboration between Teagasc, The Heritage Council and the Local Authority Biodiversity Officers.

Offaly Naturalists Field Club

Fieldclub events finished for 2024 with a well-attended event at Lough Boora in search of wintering bird species. Preparations are already underway for the 2025 field programme.

Wintering Waterbirds at Lough Boora on Sunday 10 November 2024.



REGENERATION

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Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

Offaly County Council announced significant progress in the delivery of the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, a critical initiative aimed at turning vacant or derelict properties into permanent homes or rental properties.

To date;

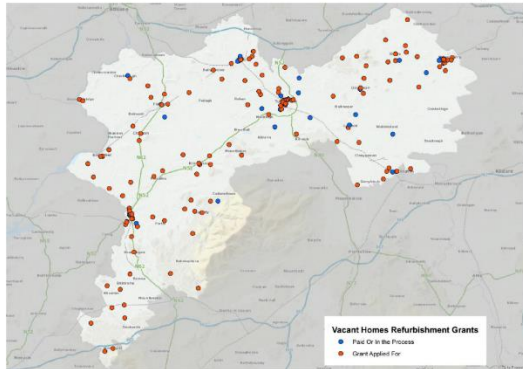
- 190 applications have been received since the commencement of the scheme
- 129 have been approved to commence refurbishment works
- 28 of which have now completed the grant process with approximately €1.5m in funding allocated

Under the scheme, applicants may receive up to €50,000 to refurbish a vacant property, with an additional top-up of €20,000 available for properties requiring structural repairs. Since the program's inception, the grant has facilitated the restoration of vacant properties in Offaly, making valuable contributions to both urban and rural communities across the County. Applications continue to be received, and staff are continuing to process applications in a timely manner. It is vital that all documentation required is submitted at the initial application stage or delays are inevitable.

Application forms, along with detailed information and answers to frequently asked questions, can be found at <https://www.offaly.ie/croi-conaithe/> For queries, property owners can contact vacanthomes@offalycoco.ie or submit

completed applications to the Vacant Homes Officer at Offaly County Council. The image below illustrates the widespread interest in the scheme and the equitable distribution of funds across the county.

Vacant Homes Refurbishment Grant Offaly



Birr Vacant Property Information Evening

On Tuesday, 19th November, Offaly County Council, held an additional informative drop-in session to discuss the various supports available for bringing vacant properties back into residential use. The event took place from 6pm to 8pm in the offices of Birr Municipal District.



Representatives from Offaly County Council's Regeneration and Heritage departments were present, attendees were provided with comprehensive information on a range of supports, including:

- Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant
- Built Heritage Investment Scheme (for protected structures)
- Historic Structures Fund

Attendees had the opportunity to discuss their individual cases and queries with the relevant officials and experts, leading to valuable conversations around the revitalisation of vacant properties in Birr and the surrounding area.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, announced on the 17th October the 2024/25 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS).

The 2024/25 ORIS funding provides for the development of new and existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas. This funding stream is targeted towards the development of our natural amenities such as our mountains, lakes, rivers, beaches, blue-ways, bogs, forest walks and upland areas. All projects must be shovel ready in order to be considered for the larger Measure 2 and 3 grants.

Expressions of Interest were sought from members of the public and community groups to come forward with any projects that might be applicable under ORIS. The closing date for submissions has now passed, Offaly County Council is pleased with the level of interest in the scheme. All Expressions of Interest are currently being evaluated.

As a brief outline, ORIS 2024/25 provides funding for Outdoor Recreational projects as follows:

Measure 1

- Small scale repair / development / promotion and marketing.
- Funding of up to €40,000 at a 90% rate of aid.

Measure 2

- Medium scale repair/upgrade and new trail/amenity development.
- Funding of up to €200,000 at a 90% rate of aid.

Measure 3

- Large scale repair/upgrade and new strategic trail/amenity development
- Funding of up to €500,000 at a 90% rate of aid

Project Development Measure

- Detailed development of projects which would enable them to reach a standard for application under Measure 2 or Measure 3 of ORIS.
- Funding of up to €50,000 at a 90% rate of aid.

Rural Regeneration Development Fund – Category 2

On the 29th November, Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, launched the fourth Call for Category 2 applications under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF). This fund supports the goals of Our Rural Future, Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 and the Town Centre First policy by enabling transformative regeneration projects in rural towns with populations under 10,000.

RRDF provides funding for initiatives that drive economic activity, tackle vacancy and dereliction and improve infrastructure to create sustainable and vibrant rural communities. Category 2 funding focuses on the development phase of projects, helping them become "Category 1 ready" for large-scale capital investment.

Eligible projects may include addressing building vacancy, clustering community facilities, and enhancing public spaces to boost town centre development. Projects must align with the fund's objectives of promoting sustainable economic and social development through collaboration between government bodies, local authorities, communities, and private sector partners.

Offaly County Council is permitted to submit a maximum of two applications under this call and the regeneration section is currently assessing possible projects for submission.

From Clara to Sydney and Back: An Entrepreneurial Story – Business Breakfast



LEO Offaly hosted an inspiring business breakfast featuring Declan Lenahan, a local entrepreneur with a business based in Clara and over 30 years of experience in building successful companies.

Attendees heard about Declan’s journey from an idea to creating a multimillion-euro business right here in our community. Declan’s story showcased the incredible potential for success in a small town. His hands-on experience equipped him with invaluable insights and lessons that helped attendees navigate their own entrepreneurial paths. Declan, founder of Europharma Concepts, is a seasoned business leader, and is a Mentor on the LEO Offaly Mentor Panel. His extensive expertise spans various critical skills areas including:

- Quality Systems
- Startup Finance
- Product Development
- Business Structure
- Innovation
- Creative Idea Generation
- Sales and Marketing
- Brand Development
- Research and Development

Offaly Co-Working Hubs – The Junction, Tullamore

Offaly Innovation and Design Centre CLG recently completed significant renovations at 25J Axis Business Park, funded by the Just Transition Fund and Offaly County Council. The revamped space now includes nine new offices and a warehouse, with seven offices and the warehouse already rented out following a successful EOI.

This project has significantly boosted Tullamore and County Offaly's economic landscape by providing essential space for business startups, facilitating job creation, and fostering a vibrant business economy. The focus on low-carbon, digital economy enterprises supports regional development and reduces commuting times for employees.

OIDC continues to expand, offering hot desks, office space, training facilities, and meeting rooms. Its close connection to LEO Offaly attracts a diverse range of startups and remote workers, supporting jobs and communities throughout the county.

Tullamore Grand Canal Harbour Project update

The October Tullamore Municipal District meeting approved the final Tullamore Regeneration Framework and Grand Canal Harbour Master Plan, reviewed public consultation responses, and approved the SEA/AA reports presented by Orla Martin, Head of Enterprise in Offaly County Council. The first Grand Canal Harbour Steering Group meeting was held on 29th November.

Dream Big Programme

Offaly County Council and Offaly Local Enterprise Office supported the DREAM Big Programme from 11th to 15th November. This initiative, in collaboration with regional local authorities, TUS Athlone, and local industries, aimed to inspire and support young people in the Midlands to pursue careers in advanced manufacturing.

The programme, open to senior cycle students, offered visits to local manufacturing companies and hands-on activities aligned with DREAM (Digitalisation, Robotics, Engineering, Advanced Manufacturing, and Materials). The initiative provided students with insights into globally recognised products and the stories behind them. Sincere thanks to Grant Engineering and Applied Concepts who facilitated site visits to their premises during the week.

Rhode Green Energy Park

The Rhode Green Energy Park Implementation Framework Report, including a Tenant Charter, was completed in April 2024, followed by an updated site evaluation in June, leading to three applications for industrial sites by the October deadline. The applications were scored by an Evaluation Board, resulting in a provisional agreement to sell four sites, Applicants will now carry out initial due diligence site surveys, after which it is planned to finalise terms and conditions and before a public announcement with the new partnerships will be made. The park's logo and signage to be erected shortly.

Most of our courses are **FREE OF CHARGE!** Whether it is starting a business or growing a business there is something suitable for everyone. Full details and link to book is here:

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Offaly/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/>

Upcoming Events		See All Events >
03/12/2024	Lunch and Learn about LEO Offaly Supports	Book online
03/12/2024	FREE Startup Mentoring Clinic in Ferbane Business ...	Book online
04/12/2024	How to create and use reels for marketing on Insta...	Book online
05/12/2024	Microfinance Ireland Information Webinar	Book online
12/12/2024	Trading Online Voucher Webinar	Book online
13/01/2025	Start Your Own Business Course Evenings	Book online
16/01/2025	Grant Application Workshop – How to Complete your ...	Book online

Community, Culture and Emergency Services

Local Community Development Committee



Offaly LCDC held its monthly meeting on 14th November 2024. Agenda items included the Review of Membership of Offaly LCDC, SICAP Annual Plan 2025, SICAP Case Study 2024 and OCC Corporate Plan 2024-2029.

A presentation was delivered from the Community Integration Forum and the SICAP Case Study 2024 short video was presented to members. An update was provided on the Community Recognition Fund and details of the Local Enhancement Programme 2025 were outlined. Funding opportunities available to communities and individuals were detailed to members.

LCDC	Capital works allocation	Current Expenditure Allocation	Local Authority Admin Fee 5%	Total allocation
Offaly	€150,575	€26,650	€9,328	€186,553



Offaly PPN celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of the PPN in Offaly.

This was an integral part of the Plenary which took place on November 14th 2024. 3 of the original members Maura Allen, Linda Dowling and Seamus Rourke



were commended for their work in setting up such a sound foundation and Network that has grown to over 700 Members today. The reps over the years were also thanked. New



Reps on the SPC's and other boards and committees were ratified, and each gave a short synopsis of their roles to date and interest in supporting the work of the PPN. A lively event with Ger Deering Ombudsman as the Key note speaker and Rebekah Keaveny who provided an update on the Community Energy Charter and the way forward.

The PPN will continue its work in 2025 and wish to thank OCC staff and elected members for their support and assistance throughout the year.



LECP Implementation Plan 2024-2025

The Framework Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029 was adopted by Offaly County Council on 20th May 2024 and the initial two-year Implementation Plan 2024-2025 was adopted by Offaly County Council on the 18th November 2024.

The Implementation Plan was developed following workshops held with key local agencies. It includes prioritised objectives, actions and outcomes which will be delivered over the coming years. A flexible approach will be taken, where actions and objectives will be reviewed regularly and updated where necessary.

Agencies and stakeholders will regularly report back on progress, but the most critical aspect of entire process is the effectiveness of the execution of the specific actions. Each action will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the LCDC and the Community, Economic and Climate Action SPC's.

Progress reports will be made by the LECP Advisory Steering Group twice yearly to the LCDC and to the relevant SPC's, in June and December. Issues arising will be actioned at the LCDC and SPC meetings and a summary report will be provided to the full Council once a year.

A Red, Amber Green assessment of progress will be made for each action and explanations and remedies will be provided where actions have not progressed sufficiently. Further Implementation Plans will be developed for 2026-2027 and 2028-2029 following review of initial Plan.

Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) 2025

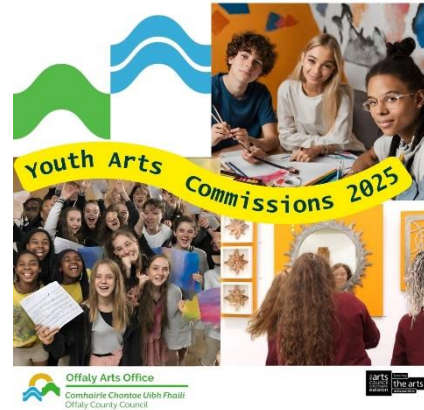
LEP 2025 was launched on 7th November 2024. It is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and will be administered by Offaly Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). The national allocation is €7m and the allocation for Offaly amounts to €186,553 in total.

The LEP 2025 will open for applications from 15th January 2025, and the Closing date will be Wednesday 12th February 2025. Full details of how to apply will be published on the website www.offaly.ie and will be circulated to all Offaly PPN registered groups. Grants will be between €500 and €3,000 in size, with most grants being from €1,000 to €2,000. The total fund for Offaly is €186,553, which is split as follows:

Capital Expenditure €150,575 for small scale capital works/ repair and improvements to facilities, energy efficiency projects, purchase of equipment, etc. The Department requests that LCDCs ring-fence 30% of its funding for grants of €1,000 or less.

Current Expenditure €26,650 for support with energy or running costs, e.g. rental/lease costs, utility bills, insurance costs. Energy/operating/costs must be incurred in the period 1st June 2024 to 30th May 2025 to be eligible.

Local Authority Admin fee of 5% of allocation



Offaly Comhairle Executive meeting was held on November 20th. New members who signed up after the Youth Conference in October were welcomed. Certificates were awarded to members who were existing Offaly CNN as they have turned 18. The Youth Conference was reviewed.

HSE held a Consultation on the rise of self-harm behaviour on 28th November. HSE are willing to fund a project with the input of Offaly Comhairle na nÓg as the focus for 2025 will continue to be Mental Health.

ARTS OFFICE

The 2025 Youth Arts Commissions

The 2025 Youth Arts Commission call-out is currently advertised with a deadline in February 2025. The Youth Arts Commissions enables artists to work with youth groups and communities to develop projects that will enable engagement between professional artists and young people (13+), facilitated by youth organisations, youth leaders and schools. The goal being to build secure relationships with relevant partners for the development of Youth Arts in the county. The voice of the young people is a priority for this programme.

Hullabaloo! Offaly's Children's Arts Festival

Offaly's Children's Arts Festival **Hullabaloo!** took place during the mid-term break, from 30th Oct to 2nd Nov in various location and venues in Birr, Tullamore, Clara, Edenderry and Kilcormac and featured a busy, diverse and accessible programme of events for young and family audiences, which included workshops, performances, outdoor events and local talent showcases. Supported by Offaly County Council Arts Office, Hullabaloo! is coordinated by Birr Theatre & Arts Centre and Esker Arts with Creative Places Edenderry, Offaly Library Services, Clara Family Resource Centre and Kilcormac Development Association.



Mini Movies Programme 2025 – Call Out for Proposals



Offaly County Council Arts Office is currently seeking proposals/quotations from Professional Film Facilitators for the delivery of a six-day programme of film workshops to schools in Offaly. The programme will consider either animated or live action. Mini Movies are both action and stop motion short movies created by children and young people. Since 2012 Offaly County Council Arts Office has funded a professional film artist to work with three schools in Offaly over several days. The result are mini movies which are then screened at the OFFline Film Festival in Birr. The Mini Movies are can also be viewed on [Offaly Arts Youtube](#). This year we have selected 3 rural schools: Rhode (NS) Daingean, (secondary) and Geashill (NS) as potential project participants.

Birr Writer's Residency Review

Birr Writer's Residency Review is progressing smoothly.

Consultants from Culture Works are conducting surveys and interviews with past resident writers, and scheduling site visits in various places of interest in Birr. The review will consider the potential growth of the residency going forward and

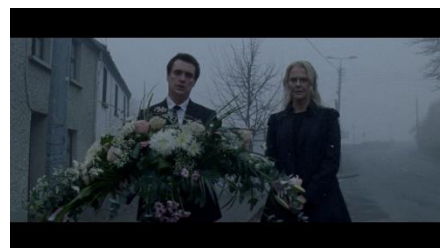


will include a consultation process with key stakeholders. Consultants Culture Works were awarded the commission following on open call and evaluation process. The review started in September and is currently ongoing due to be completed in 2025.

FilmOffaly

Darren Lee has continued to settle into the new role of Film Resource Officer. This month saw several meetings with training bodies with the aim of drafting plans for 2025/26. We have also begun to reach out to production companies to ask them to consider choosing Offaly as a location for their projects. Preparations have also been taking place for the FOCUS Film Festival taking place in London in early December- the festival is a major convention for film commissions, production services, location managers and much more. We will be attending as part of Screen Ireland's delegation.

Filming in Offaly



Principal photography took place in Banagher on **For The Cure** (pictured), the winner of this year's FilmOffaly award. The film used local extras, production assistants, catering and props.

Upon wrapping Director Conor McCormick said *"Offaly's been a lovely place to shoot in. We found everyone really helpful, and such a kindness and openness with having our whole crew here. Getting to work with the local people has been dream."*

Maura Foley, who won the 2022 FilmOffaly award for **Missing**, was back in Offaly in

Early November shooting **Reunion** as part of Screen Ireland's Actor as Creator scheme. The production was based around Birr.

A Simple Killing

Previous FilmOffaly award winner **A Simple Killing** continues to appear on the festival circuit. It won best film at Waterford International Film Festival, and it is due to be screened at Derry's Foyle Film Festival, which could potentially qualify it for award nominations.

TUS Delegates and Charleville Castle

In early November we were visited by an international delegation based at TUS in Athlone. The team were studying Film Tourism, and in particular how technology like augmented reality can be employed to enhance experiences. We arranged for a tour of Charleville Castle, a popular filming location that recently hosted a major Netflix series.

Website

A mini-project has been taking place to fully update the content on the FilmOffaly website in advance of the FOCUS festival.

Social Media / Website

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

Funding Opportunities

Offaly County Council Arts Office has opened its application process for a variety of grants offered to professional artists, communities, and festivals for 2025. Offaly County Council Arts Office offers a number of grant schemes to assist in the development and promotion of the Arts across the county. The grants include the Arts Acts Grants 2025, the Festival Arts Scheme 2025 and the Professional Artists Support Award 2025.

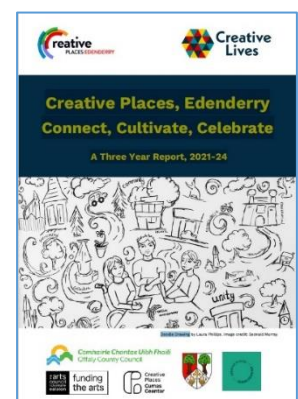


The Arts Acts Grants are community based and designed to support Offaly voluntary arts organisations, schools, drama & musical groups, town bands, voluntary community groups intending to host arts events, performances, or projects taking place in Offaly in 2025. The Festival Arts Scheme is designed for festivals taking place in Offaly in 2025 that are either dedicated arts festivals or have a strong professional arts element to the festival. The Professional Artist Support Award offers a support scheme for professional artists in developing their arts practice over a number of categories.

Collaborations

Creative Places Edenderry

In November 2024 [Creative Places Edenderry](#) published its Three Year Report which reflects on the first three years of the Creative Places, Edenderry Project, the theme of which was Connect, Cultivate, Celebrate. Creative



Places, Edenderry works with people of all ages and backgrounds to create a richer, more inclusive, and more cohesive creative community in the town and surrounding

areas. Over the course of the first three years of the project (2021-2024) there have been creative opportunities for professional artists, non-professional artists, community groups, and individuals.

Creative Places, Edenderry, a project funded by the Arts Council, led by Creative Lives in partnership with Offaly County Council Arts Office and Edenderry Municipal District was awarded a 4th year of funding by the Arts Council and goes from strength the strength hosting an array of different arts-based activities, workshops and events in a wide range of art forms including Visual Arts, Music, Poetry, Playwriting, Creative Movement; Dance; Ceramics; Drama; Radio, Photography.

www.creativeplacesedenderry.ie

Saibhreas - OCC Municipal Collection Exhibition in Esker Arts

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



This is the first time the Collection has been displayed in a purpose-build visual arts gallery and Esker Arts' Croghan Gallery is a perfect setting for showing works, many of

which have strong connections to County Offaly. The exhibition runs until 20th December.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Public Art Commission: Esker Arts in collaboration with Lough Boora

Offaly County Council Arts Office announced a call to professional artists for proposals for a public art commission for Esker Arts, in conjunction with Lough Boora Sculpture Park. Deadline for the first stage submission is 3 January 2025 Offaly's Arts Office are seeking proposals that will demonstrate how artist(s) will work collaboratively with communities of both Esker Arts and Lough Boora Sculpture Park. Offaly County Council is looking for an imaginative project that demonstrates an innovative approach, enabling creative dialogue between stakeholders and communities, while representing best practice within the realm of public art practice.

Esker Arts

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

Birr Theatre and Arts Centre

BTAC team has been busy delivering innovative, distinctive and inspiring artistic programme in collaboration with all the Birr Festivals and Birr Festivals Collective.



The annual group exhibition *Common Ground* will be held for the 17th time in December and January in BTAC foyer gallery, presenting works by artists living in the Midlands.

Lough Boora Sculpture Park

The Arts Office funded by Creative Ireland and supported by Bord na Móna have commissioned a new maintenance programme for Lough Boora Sculpture Park to take place through 2024-2025. Artist Michael Burke, Sculpture Works, has carried out a review and report and works having been taking place throughout the summer.

Edenderry Library and Arts Base

The Arts Office continues to work in close collaboration with the county librarian in the development of plans for a multi-purpose Arts space and Artist's Studios to be incorporated into the planning of the new library for Edenderry including the audience and participant development as part of the Creative Places Edenderry project.

HEALTHY OFFALY



As work begins on entering the Healthy Offaly financial and progress action information on the Pobal Portal with receipt of all information from our ten implementing partners, it is a time to reflect on some of the year's highlights:

- A division two cup win for St. Michael's AFC (the only traveller mens football team in the county) was particularly newsworthy. This is no better example of showing how the action is succeeding and providing an outlet from a previously sometimes disadvantaged group.
- In Clara Community & Family Resource Centre, the 'Invest in Yourself' supervised exercise action demonstrated the positive impact this program is having. Building confidence to the point where members feel comfortable organising their own activities is a testament to the supportive environment fostered.
- Over 100 persons participating in Offaly Sports Partnership's 'Drop & Move' action shows this action really managed to engage local communities.

SPORTS

Programme highlights from November include:



The culmination of the ACE schools programme with five days of regional competition throughout the county. Over 550 pupils from 2nd to 4th class participated in regional events in Ballycumber, Drumcullen, Mucklagh and Portarlinton



Fast Feet action from Ballycumber



Fast Feet action from Portarlinton

Launch of Offaly Sports Partnership's "HER Moves" programme 2024 / 2025 in secondary schools. The HER Moves programme is designed to inspire and support more teenage girls to be active.



150 female students and eight students with additional needs from two schools are participating on an introductory pickleball programme

Ongoing delivery of the Sport 4 Empowerment programme funded by the European Social Fund+ including social volleyball and FITtS (Friendship, Integration and Teamwork through Sport) for 60+ participants.

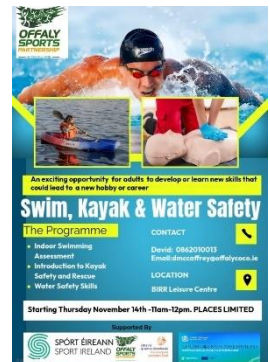


Social Volleyball, Tullamore



FITtS, Banagher

A new water-based programme supporting the development of swim, kayak and lifesaving skills for 10 adults also commenced in Birr Leisure Centre in November.



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

Among the programmes delivered as part of the community sports development programme were physical activity programmes for 130 adults and older adults including pickleball and the 2024 / 2025 older adults bocchia league. This year there are six ladies' teams, eight mens' teams and 10 mixed teams taking part in the league with new teams from Kinnitty joining the league.

Among the programmes delivered as part of the sports inclusion development programme was a "Learn to Cycle" programme for children with additional

needs across junior infants to 3rd class in Edenderry

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

The key programme delivered in the Daingean sports hub in November was a mens' fitness classes for 35 – 55 year olds



Among the programmes delivered in the Mucklagh sports hub were physical activity programmes for adults and older adults, adapted physical activity programmes, and after schools' programmes for children.

Among the programmes delivered in the Ballycumber sports hub were: -

Over 140 participants have availed of various programmes in the Ballycumber Sports Hub in November

Activity Programme Oct / Nov/ Dec 2024	Adult Pickleball Tuesdays eve 8.00 - 9.00pm Thursdays morns 10.00 - 12.00am	Older Adult Gentle Fitness Classes Wednesdays morns 10.00 - 11.00am
Pilates Ballycumber - Mondays 7.30 - 8.30pm Doon Gaa Hall - Tuesdays - 7.00- 7.30 Gentle chair pilates (program & Older Adult) 7.30 - 8.30 Adult Pilates	OFFALY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP Ballycumber Activity Centre and Community Sports Hub	Female Boxercise Wednesdays 6.30 - 7.30 Walking Football Wednesdays 7.30 - 8.30
Mens Strength & Conditioning Mondays 8.30 - 9.30pm Starting 7th Oct All fitness levels and abilities	Social Darts Club Wednesdays 12.00am - 1.00pm All levels and abilities welcome	Adult Badminton Club Wednesdays 8.30 - 9.30 Starting 9th of Oct All levels and abilities welcome

For more information on the work of Offaly Sports Partnership, check out www.offalysports.ie or our social media feeds on Facebook, X and Instagram

LIBRARY SERVICE

Family Time at Your Library



Family Time at Your Library returns to Offaly Libraries for another fun year this Christmas!

In partnership with Creative Ireland, this seasonal Right to Read initiative aims to bring families together in libraries across the county whilst increasing the awareness of the benefits of reading.

We will offer a wide variety of Christmas story time events in all libraries this December, as well as festive crafts, board game activities, live performances from local choir groups, movie nights and much more.



Tullamore Library kickstarted their celebrations with a successful Santa Letter Writing session for **15 children** in late November.

For more details on all events, [see here](#).

GAA Offaly Hurling Centenary Celebrations

In the aftermath of the Irish revolutionary period, the 1923 All-Ireland Junior Hurling Championship took place in Croke Park on the 12th October 1924.



On this day, Offaly claimed their first ever championship title with victory over Cork by a narrow margin of 2 points.

To commemorate Offaly's historic victory, Offaly Library Service produced an anthology of poetry and art created by 5th & 6th class students of Mercy Primary School, Birr, Scoil Phroinsiais Naofa, Clara, Monasterosis National School, Edenderry, and St. Colman's National School, Mucklagh



Special thanks to Brendan Minnock and Eileen Casey, who encouraged the students in their re-imaginings of the historic win.

This project, titled '*Uniting Generations: The Centenary Celebrations of Offaly' Hurling Champions*', was kindly funded by the Commemorations Unit of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

TY Battle of Wits Returns

Offaly Libraries, in partnership with Laois, Longford and Westmeath Libraries, welcomed the return of Battle of Wits, a competitive quiz designed for Transition Year Students.



Last held in 2019, Battle of Wits comprises of three rounds: an internal school round, a county final and then on to the regional final to compete for the coveted trophy.

Tullamore Library hosted the county final in November. **Six Secondary Schools** put forward two teams each to participate, with a total of **48 students** competing on the day.



The top two teams from the county final, Tullamore College and Banagher College, will represent Offaly in the regional final at Athlone Library on Thursday, 5th December.

Science Week, STEAM Programme

Under the umbrella of our STEAM programme, Offaly Libraries celebrated

Science Week, November 11th – 15th, with a variety of events to inspire Offaly's young minds.



STEM entertainer, Tony Baloney, combined magic, science and comedy during four amazing Science workshops in Birr, Clara, Edenderry and Tullamore Libraries.

150 primary students were thrilled to recreate fantastic experiments using common household items.

Science-themed craft sessions were on offer in Birr and Edenderry, with some 20 children making and experimenting with Slime.



As always, our library branches supported Science Week with book displays, story times and crafts. Kindly co-funded by Creative Ireland.

Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



Regular STEAM Events



Midlands Astronomy Club continue their fortnightly public lectures in Tullamore Library, with 45 people in attendance during November.

Attendance remains strong at Lego Free Play sessions, on offer throughout the county most Saturdays. Over **2,400 children** have enjoyed the sessions so far in 2024.



STEM Saturday offerings at Edenderry Library has attracted 80 attendees this November.

The **Intergenerational VEX Robotics** initiative was a huge success at Tullamore Library this Autumn. The programme ran for 6 weeks and saw an average attendance of **35 individuals** at each session.

Parenting Support Programme



The Offaly Libraries Parenting Programme concluded on 3rd December, with a total of **50 free events** delivered to **711 attendees**. Delivered in partnership with Laois Library Service, our November offerings included two fantastic workshops in Birr and



Tullamore Libraries with Music Generation.



Some 45 attendees shook, wiggled, and rolled in these fantastic music workshops for families.

On 3rd December, Tullamore Library hosted an engaging and informative talk led by advanced nurse practitioner, Patricia Mc Loughlin.

This talk provided practical tips and strategies to help parents manage big emotions, set boundaries and create a positive connection with your child- no matter what age.

Kindly co-funded by Laois Offaly Children and Young people's Services Committees.



Local History Book Launch & Lecture held at Edenderry Library

On 21st November, Edenderry Library hosted the launch of local history book *Farming and Society since 1700 in the Barony of Carbury Co. Kildare* by author Lesley Whiteside.

Professor Terence Dooley, Head of the History Department at National University

of Ireland, Maynooth spoke at the launch, which was attended by **57 people**. Copies of the book are available to borrow from Offaly Libraries. [Browse the online catalogue here.](#)

Fáilte Isteach Conversational English Classes

Fáilte Isteach conversational English classes take place weekly in Tullamore and Edenderry Libraries. Delivered in partnership with the Offaly Local Development Company, new learners and volunteers are always welcome. Please ask in branch for more details.

Visit offaly.ie/find-your-local-library

Le Cheile i nGaeilge ag an Leabharlann

Offaly Libraries offer a collection of stock in the Irish language for all ages in branch, with a greater variety also available through the [national catalogue](#).



Irish Language titles in eBook and eAudiobook formats are also available through the [BorrowBox](#) service.

Borrowers can use [Transparent Languages](#) to assist them in Irish language learning and [LOTE for Kids](#) offers stories through Irish and through Irish Sign Language.

[Check out our bilingual Irish Language Supports brochure here.](#)

Offaly Libraries & the LOETB

On Friday, 15th November, Birr hosted **Glass Painting** and **Needle Felt** classes, delivered through LOETB, attracting 18 participants.

In Tullamore Library, **LOETB's Form Filling Clinic & Digital Hub** ran each Monday in November and has now come to an end for 2024.



Book Clubs at Offaly Libraries



In line with the aspirations of the National Public Library Strategy Offaly Libraries facilitate **14 book clubs** across the county catering to all age groups. See below for a taste of what our book clubs are reading this month!

If you would like to join any of our existing clubs, [please check out the details for each here.](#)



Alternatively, should you wish to establish your own book club in one of our libraries please get in touch by emailing askthelibrarian@offalycoco.ie and staff will be happy to help!

Local Newspapers Now Available on Borrowbox!

Local newspapers are now available on BorrowBox anytime, anywhere!



Titles include the **Irish Independent** and **Sunday Independent**, the **Herald**, **Sunday World**, **Ireland's Own** as well as a range of regional and local titles. More details on Borrowbox here: offaly.ie/borrowbox

Jenny Bergin Exhibition Launched at Edenderry Library



Local artist, Jenny Bergin, enjoyed a launch of her art exhibition on Wednesday, 6th November at Edenderry Library. 25 attendees witnessed the unveiling of the collection, consisting of various mixed media pieces with strong Celtic influences.

December Art Exhibition at Edenderry Library

Edenderry Library will showcase an exhibition by local artist Nesrin Elazaly for the month of December. The official launch will be Wednesday 4th December at 18:30 and all are welcome to attend.

[Contact details for Edenderry Library can be found here.](#)



Offaly Age Friendly Felting Project Exhibition at Ferbane Library

Ferbane Library are proud to host an exhibition of works on behalf of Offaly Age Friendly.



The series of Felt Art pieces will be showcased up until January 2025.

Join the Library and sign up for our Library Newsletter

Join the library and get access to over 12 million items nationwide.

It couldn't be easier – simply [join online](#) or drop into your local branch to join.



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

Christmas Arrangements at Offaly Libraries

Branch	Last Day of Business	Re-opening Dates
Banagher Library	Saturday 21st December	Friday 3rd January
Birr Library	Saturday 21st December	Tuesday 31st December
Clara Library	Saturday 21st December	Tuesday 31st December
Daingean Library	Saturday 21st December	Thursday 2nd January
Edenderry Library	Saturday 21st December	Tuesday 31st December
Ferbane Library	Saturday 21st December	Thursday 2nd January
Kilcormac Library	Saturday 21st December	Thursday 2nd January
Tullamore Library	Monday 23rd December	Monday 30th December



Don't forget, your library is always available online through [your online account](#) and via our free [eResources](#).

- Find great eBooks, eAudiobooks, eNewspapers and eMagazines on [Borrowbox](#)
- Learn a Language with [Transparent Languages](#)
- Learn a new skill with [Universal Class](#)
- Read Graphic Novels and Comics online with [Comics Plus](#)
- We also have a great variety of [eResources for Children](#) to keep them entertained over the holidays!

Our libraries will close for the holidays from Saturday, 21st December while Tullamore Central Library will remain open until 16:00 on Monday, 23rd December. Libraries will return to [normal opening hours](#) from 10am on Monday, 30th January 2024.



Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Finance

Draft Consolidated Revenue Account Income & Expenditure Summary by Service Division to 30 September 2024

	Expenditure €	Income €
Housing & Building	15,334,353	14,749,453
Road Transport & Safety	22,707,730	17,061,158
Water Services	4,164,158	3,262,907
Development Management	13,930,190	8,190,871
Environmental Services	8,488,846	2,513,463
Recreation & Amenity	4,284,699	213,237
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	588,608	254,980
Miscellaneous Services	6,520,409	6,648,902
Local Government Fund / GPG		8,980,942
Gross Rates Income		14,469,513
	76,018,995	76,345,426

Surplus to 30th September 2024

326,431

OCC to 30th November 2024

	<u>Rates</u> €m	<u>Rents</u> €m	<u>Loans</u> €m
Opening Balance Jan 1, 2024	2.58	0.64	0.04
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers	16.64	8.09	0.42
2024 Cash Collected to end of November	15.66	8.07	0.46
Closing Balance November 30th 2024	3.56	0.66	0.00

2023 Cash collected to November 30th

14.41

7.34

0.54

% Collection at this point in 2023

109%

110%

85%

Bank Overdraft to 30th November 2024

%
YTD

Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date

27

8%

Bank Interest and non conforming charges to November 30th 2024
YTD

€21,069

Bank Administration and transactional charges to November 30th
2024 YTD

€59,754