



Launch of Offaly Age
Friendly Strategy 2024 -
2029

Annual Irish Hot Air
Ballooning
Championships over
Tullamore



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- *The Corporate Plan Survey will close for submissions on 13th October 2024 at 9 pm*
[Offaly County Council Corporate Plan 2024 - 2029 \(office.com\)](https://www.offaly.com/office.com)
- *Hullabaloo! Offaly Children's Arts Festival is back from 30th October – 2nd November 2024*
- *Púca Spooka is back in the Lloyd Town Park from 26th – 27th October*
- *Offaly Libraries are celebrating Space Week from 4th – 10th October, as a kickstart to the STEAM 2024-2025 programme*

Climate Action Environment Water & Transportation

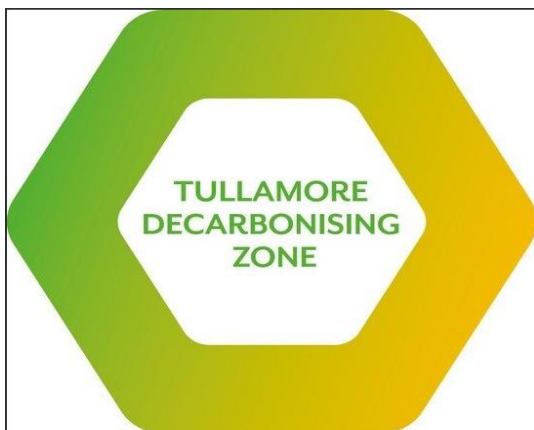
ENVIRONMENT

Climate Action

Tullamore Decarbonising Zone (TDZ):

In September CARO kicked off a series of nationwide workshops aimed at Decarbonising Zone Activation. These workshops sought to bring relevant stakeholders together (by theme) to explore both the opportunities and challenges in progressing implementation plans within designated DZs.

The four themes cover 'Built Environment', 'Community Activation', 'Natural Resources' and 'Bioeconomy'. The benefit of these workshops will allow those LA staff directly engaged in DZ implementation to collate experiences, challenges and opportunities which will then be communicated to the DECC/SEAI lead DZ Advisory Group. This cross departmental Advisory Group convened in September with a remit to support local authorities in their role as DZ leads.



SDG Week:

For Sustainable Development Goal Week (Sept 20-29th) Offaly County Council arranged several interesting and informative events across the county. In total, over 30 SDG Week events were successfully organized and delivered by our Library Staff and Climate Action Team right up to 8th October.

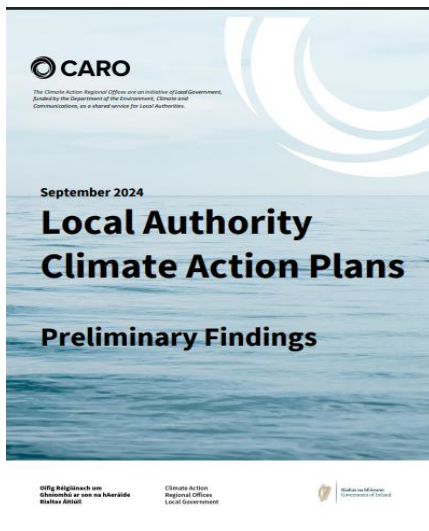
Events ranged from Halloween Costume swaps to talks on Nature Based Solutions, from Home Composting to SDG Crafts for Kids, and from Sustainable Workshops for Teens to Climate Conversations with the over 60's!



Publications:

September saw the publication of two climate related sectoral reports, LA Climate Action Plans: Preliminary Findings, which provides an analysis and broad high-level overview of all 31 LA CAPS. Offaly County Councils LACAP showed strongly in ambition, scale, focus and breath of actions.

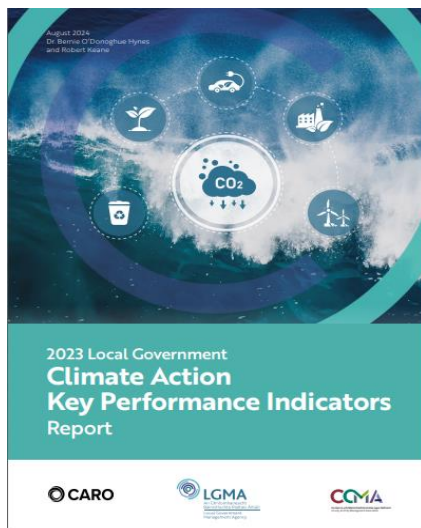
The second publication received during September was the 2023 LA Climate Action Key Performance Indicators report. Again, Offaly County Council performed strongly across the range of measures which included Climate Action staffing/teams, Active Travel projects, Social Housing retrofits, GHG emission reductions, CCAS adaptation actions, responses to severe weather, training and Green for Micro Business supports. Data collection for 2024 commences in Q1 2025.



Environment

Waste Management

Large clean up at Chancery Close was successfully completed in earlier September, where 300 tonnes of waste was removed, including 11 tonnes of tyres. This project was funded by the Anti-Dumping Grant.



Energy:

On the 19th of September our Climate Action Officer Aisling Lambe joined colleagues from Laois County Council, Cork County Council and the Department of Social Protection in presenting to over 80 attendees of the SEAI Engaging People Showcase event. Aisling presented our 'Energise Offaly' campaign and detailed the significant actions taken and subsequent progress made towards our 2030 energy and emission targets. Key issues such as senior management support, staff engagement and adoption of new technologies were delivered to a very impressed audience.



During Clean-up



After Clean-up

The Noise Action Plan on the OCC website for public access have been uploaded and of the Noise levels maps for Offaly Council use have been uploaded on the GIS. Landscaping work has commenced in Derryclure landfill to comply with EPA licence and to improve access to monitoring points. Three locations within Offaly for garda checkpoints have been agreed. A multiagency inspection initiative will be completed in Q4 of 2024, along the Gardai, Revenue, WERLA and Customs.

Environmental Awareness

Composting in Schools

Following the success of the Composting in Schools Programme last year, Offaly County Council continues to support and fund this programme and four schools have expressed an interest in participating. These are schools with a special interest biodiversity and are working towards their green flag. The schools are Scoil Bhríde, Clara, Banagher College, Lumcloon National School and St. Francis BNS, Clara. Each school will participate in online lectures and workshops and will develop a suitable composting system designed especially for their school.

Green Schools

The Environment Section will facilitate a teacher training seminar in October in conjunction with An Taisce for all schools involved in the Green Schools Programme. This will ensure that schools are aware of the supports offered by Offaly County Council through funding, visits and workshops.

Signage

The Environment Section continues to provide signage in relation to litter, specifically dog fouling, which is bilingual. Attached is an example of the signage.



Complaints September 2024 received and investigated - 67no. in total

Category	Number
Abandoned Vehicles	4
Air Pollution	2
Control of Dogs	16
Control of Horses	0
Litter Control	35
Noise Pollution	3
Waste Enforcement	3
Water Quality	4
Water Services	0

Burial Grounds

St. Mary's Cemetery, Edenderry: We are finalising the main works 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.



Cemetery Committees: We currently work with 17 cemetery committees, and we look forward to working with two new committees that have been formed in 2024. 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.



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. A total of 37 projects were submitted, seeking funding to the value of €3,000,213. We are currently waiting for the

announcement of funding from the Rural Water Unit.

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 158 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 71 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.

Veterinary Inspections: Offaly County Council continues to operate the Shared Service Agreement for Veterinary Services in the Westmeath County Council administrative area.

TRANSPORTATION

Roads Monthly Management Report September 2024

Grand Canal Greenway: The official opening of the Grand Canal Greenway has been confirmed for Thursday the 10th of October. The opening will be carried out by the Minister of State at the Department of Transport Mr. James Lawless.

Offaly County Council in collaboration with our funding partners have completed the construction of 70km of new safe, green, sustainable infrastructure at an average cost of €128,000 per KM which is well below the national average for such schemes. The now completed Greenway section accounts for 20% of the National Cycling Network targets up to 2025.

Birr North Distributor Road: We have identified the Most Economically Advantageous Tender or MEAT submission for the construction of the Birr North Distributor Road and will issue a request to award the contract to the Department of Transport in October 2024.

R400 Peat Roads Pilot Scheme: Works commenced in Mid-September on the reconstruction of approximately 1.75km of the R400 under the Department of Transport Peat Roads Pilot scheme funded under the 2024 Roads Grants with 50% of the funding coming from Offaly County Council own

resources. The R400 will be closed for the duration of all the works.

Public Lighting Maintenance Contract: The following is a breakdown of the Public Lighting failures across the County. There are **138** faults on the system at present. **30** 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.

Therefore, the current actionable faults amount to **108 faults or 1.15 %** of the lighting stock.

The breakdown of the **108** faults across each MD are as follows:

Municipal District	No Of Faults	Total No of Lights in the MD	% of fault of MD Lights Only	% fault per MD of the Countywide Public Lighting Stock
Birr MD	41	2962	1.38	0.44
Tullamore MD	47	3933	1.20	0.50
Edenderry MD	20	2405	0.83	0.21

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 1249 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of September 2024.
- A further 513 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 4 signed up for HAP and 15 exited from HAP in September.
- At the end of September, 38 single people and 16 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.

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

- [Social Housing Assessments \(SSHA\) 2024 has commenced](#). All relevant approved applicants on Offaly County Council's Social Housing Support List, using the current address provided by the applicant, [have been written to and completed forms were due for return by Friday, 30th August 2024](#). [The summary of needs to be completed on the 4th November 2024 and returned to the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage](#). If any applicant has changed accommodation or contact information since the last SSHA they must request an SSHA Update Form – forms are available on <http://www.offaly.ie/eng/Services/Housing> or from the Birr, Edenderry or Tullamore Municipal District Offices.

Housing Capital Programme Update

- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 no. Older Person's dwellings) – Due for completion in Q4 2024.
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) – Construction commenced. Completion Q4 2024.
- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – Project started on site in March 2023. Due for completion October 2024.
- 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. AHB is preparing tender documents (Stage 3/October 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, Portarlinton, 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

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

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.
- Housing Staff delivered a total of 10 sessions of games on the green in 7 LA estates during the month of July to encourage children to participate in their local communities. This initiative has been delivered in partnership with Offaly Sports Partnership and the housing section for a 4th year for children between the ages of 6 and 12. Over the 10 sessions a total of 80 children attended the games and there was a great mix of age ranges from 6 to 12 and a good balance of boys and girls attending the sessions.
- A Fun Day was held at Birchfields, Portarlinton on Saturday 28th September for the residents of the recently completed housing development at Birchfields, Portarlinton. Thanks to Offaly County Council Housing and Sports Partnership Staff; Offaly Local Development Company Staff; Portlaoise and Portarlinton Garda Reps and elected members for their attendance at a great event.

LAND USE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Development Management

	To end Sept 2024	To end Sept 2023	Total 2023
Planning Applications	527	517	695
Extensions of Duration Applications	7	14	20
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	63 (35)	170 (69)	181 (73)

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

24/60338 ENGIE Developments Ireland Limited	The development of a 14MW solar photovoltaic (PV) farm in the townland of Clara, near Clara, Co. Offaly.
24/60339 Highstreet Farms Limited	Construct (i) Two anaerobic digesters, feeder unit (ii) yard (iii) Access roadway (iv) Combined Heat and Power Building. Belmont Ferbane Co. Offaly.

Just Transition Local Economic and Community Plans Scheme

On **19 August 2024**, a new call was announced under this scheme with €3.7m available for projects from €200,000 - €1m, with a closing date of 30 September 2024.

One application has been submitted by the Council in relation to funding for the upgrade

of the Dalton Centre in Shannonbridge, West Offaly. The result will be announced in December 2024. This large vacant industrial building which has been presented to Offaly County Council by the ESB, has the potential to create an enterprise and / or training space for the local community. An Expression of Interest was advertised by the Council in relation to the Dalton Centre, which closed on **25th September 2024**. A number of applications were received which will be assessed in the near future. The EOI sought applications which would be compatible with the objectives of the EU Just Transition Fund, in relation to the diversification of the economy in the green, low carbon or circular economy.



REGENERATION



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Town & Village Renewal Scheme

Killeigh Community Centre

Heather Humphreys, TD and Minister at the Department of Rural and Community Development officially opened the newly refurbished Community Centre in Killeigh on Wednesday 11th September.

The project was funded through the Department of Rural and Community

Development under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, LEADER, Community Centre Investment Fund, Sports Capital Grant and SEAI Grant. Offaly County Council provided match funding and Tullamore Municipal District members also allocated General Municipal Allocation funding to this project. Killeigh Community Centre Development Association also carried out significant fundraising to contribute to this centre. This project is a prime example of how local communities and government agencies working partnership can deliver outstanding results.



Heather Humphreys TD, Minister at the Department of Rural and Community Development, Anna-Marie Delaney, Chief Executive of Offaly County Council and Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, Tony McCormack with members of Killeigh Community Centre Development Association at the official opening of Killeigh Community Centre on 11th September 2024.

L-R: Anna-Marie Delaney, Martina Gorman, Una McCafferkey, Annette Kloeckner, Gerard Cleary, Maria Bannon, John Hinch, Minister Heather Humphreys, Ciaran Dunne, Noelle Spollen, Marianne Curling, Patricia Nunan, Deirdre McCabe, Rita Kelly, Teresa Kelly, Tony McCormack.

Clara Vacant Property Information Evening – October 2nd, 2024

On Wednesday, 2nd October, Offaly County Council, in partnership with the Clara Town Team, held an informative drop-in session

to address the various supports available for bringing vacant properties back into residential use. The event took place from 6pm to 8pm in the Old Bank of Ireland Building, Clara.

Representatives from Offaly County Council's Regeneration, Housing, and Heritage departments were present, alongside experts from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). Attendees were provided with comprehensive information on a range of supports, including:

- Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant
- Repair & Lease Scheme
- Local Authority Home Loan
- Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan
- Built Heritage Investment Scheme (for protected structures)
- Historic Structures Fund
- SEAI Grants

The evening was well-attended, with strong community engagement. 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 Clara.

Given the success of the event, Offaly County Council intends to replicate this initiative on a phased basis throughout the county. These future events will provide other towns and communities with the same opportunity to access the resources and support necessary to address vacancy and promote sustainable housing solutions. This initiative forms part of Offaly County Council's ongoing commitment to addressing vacancy and dereliction while preserving the heritage and vitality of our local communities.



TOURISM

Festivals and Events

Festivals and Events continued throughout 2024, with the much-loved annual Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival, Scripts Playwriting Festival etc. along with welcoming novel events like Cannonball to Edenderry.

The tourism team were involved in promoting a number of events over the Summer months.

The Tullamore Show & FBD National Livestock Show, welcomed over 60k visitors. The Offaly Experience Pavilion at the Tullamore Show, organised by the Tourism team in conjunction with LEO Offaly, showcased all that is good in tourism, artisan food and craft in Offaly. The 52nd Irish Hot Air Ballooning Championships returned to Tullamore in September to much excitement.

Marketing

The Tourism team continue to work on on-going social media, PR, advertising, website management & brochure distribution.

Using Influencers is an important part of building awareness and growing our social media following. In September we welcomed Jane Casey, influencer and history enthusiast, to Birr.

Jane explored the beautiful heritage town of Birr, Birr Castle Demesne and popped in to see Kinnitty Pyramid on the way!

This powerful collaborative campaign was extremely successful. The Instagram posts were viewed over 11k times with Tik Tok reaching over 45k views!



Just Transition

Our Tourism Activator is working closely with SMEs and community groups to successfully secure funding, as they enter into the application phase of the Investment Grant Aid Scheme for Private & Community SMEs.

The EU Just Transition Tourism Learning Network Programme, opened once again for new applicants. The tourism team encouraged eligible tourism businesses to apply for this fully-funded programme.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

LEO Offaly – Here to help!

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Offaly offers comprehensive support for businesses with up to 50 employees at every stage, from starting and growing to innovating and exporting. We assist businesses in becoming more sustainable, reducing waste, and saving money.

Additionally, we help businesses to develop their brands, facilitate networking, explore new

markets, increase employment, and promote continuous learning and development to ensure business resilience and success.

We encourage you to share this information widely to inspire all existing and potential business owners to contact LEO Offaly today. Our supports include LEAN, Green, Digital, Trading Online, Exporting, Marketing, Innovation, and much more.



Rhode Green Energy Park – Expressions of Interest

North Offaly Development Fund CLG is looking for Expressions of Interest for Industrial Sites from suitable companies, investors or businesses involved in the sustainable generation, storage and/or distribution of renewable energy, who are interested in locating and developing their business at Rhode Green Energy Park.

Full details are included on the website: Offaly.ie/rhode-green-energy-park



LEO Offaly Business Breakfast Series

LEO Offaly has been successfully running a series of Business Breakfasts, which not only provide vital learning and skills but also offer a valuable opportunity for business owners in Offaly to network and share experiences. On Wednesday morning, 4th

September, the event titled “Build for the Future: Essential Skills for Long-Term Business Success” guided attendees in optimising their business value through due diligence, financial modelling, maximising working capital, updating legal contracts, ensuring optimal ownership structures, and fully utilising available reliefs.



Following this, on Wednesday, 25th September, the “Ready to Export (MORE!)” business breakfast event offered business owners the chance to transform their export strategies and boost their businesses. Susan Hayes Culleton, also known as “The Positive

Economist,” shared valuable insights and her expertise on leveraging the EEN to expand business across Europe and beyond.



The next business breakfast event is scheduled for 14th November, where a successful Offaly businessperson will share their Entrepreneurial Story, Lessons Learned, Advice, and Tips for

Business Owners. Full details are available on the website.



National Ploughing Championships 2024



Offaly business, NIS Ltd. got the chance to exhibit to over 244,000 people at the National Ploughing Championships recently as part of the Local Enterprise Village.

Network & Infrastructure Support (NIS) Ltd. who are supported by Local Enterprise Office Offaly and are winners of the 2024 Offaly Enterprise Awards, specialise in a comprehensive range of IT services for businesses, organisations, schools, and homes throughout Ireland.

The initiative of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) saw over 30 small businesses from across

the country take a stand in the Local Enterprise Village in the heart of the Ploughing Championships, opening their businesses up to over 244,000 prospective customers across the 3 days of the event.

It was a pleasure to engage with other businesses from Offaly who were exhibiting at the event. By all accounts, the sunshine significantly enhanced the business environment, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere for attracting new customers, networking and collaboration.

The new Going Green, It's All In a Day's Work for your Local Enterprise Office, campaign is running nationally and locally across radio, newspapers, social media, and digital.

The campaign is highlighting to small businesses how making some more sustainable decisions in their business can help save them time, money and energy!

It's takes less than a minute for a business to get involved and get a FREE Green for Business audit of their business. Go to Allinadaysofwork.ie/green to get involved!



Upcoming Events

National Women's Enterprise Day 2024!

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) has announced the lineup for this year's National Women's Enterprise Day, encouraging female entrepreneurs from Laois, Offaly, Longford, and Westmeath to "Make it happen." Scheduled for Thursday, 17th October, the event will feature successful businesswomen and speakers in sustainability, innovation, networking, and marketing.

The Midlands event will be held in The Crypt beneath St. Mel's Cathedral, Longford, with keynote speaker Anne Heraty and local ambassador Louise Brennan. The theme, "Making it happen," aims to inspire businesswomen to act on their ideas, grow their businesses, and innovate, with support available from financial, consultancy, training, and mentoring services.!

This annual business networking gathering is a collaboration brought to you by our dedicated teams in Local Enterprise Offices Laois, Longford, Offaly, and Westmeath and is dedicated to businesswomen from our Midlands Region.

These notable speakers will be there:

- Anne Heraty founder and former Chief Executive of CPL Resources plc. Anne was also honoured with the IMAGE PwC Businesswoman of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024.
- Local ambassador, Louise Brennan, the driving force behind the hugely successful Fabiani and Mudshot in Longford.
- MC on the day is Sinéad Hussey, Midlands Correspondent for RTÉ news, who will also facilitate a Q&A session.
- Internationally recognised soprano, Emer Barry will share her music industry experiences, highlighting a new business sector for our NWED event.
- Director of Services for Longford County Council, Barbara Heslin will open the event as well as participating in the Q&A session.



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/>

Training Courses 2024

Local Enterprise Office Offaly



BOOK ONLINE

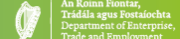
TODAY!

www.localenterprise.ie/offaly/training-events/online-bookings

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly provide a range of training courses and workshops designed to assist with the establishment and/or growth of local businesses. Whether it is starting a business or growing a business there is something suitable for everyone. Your first point of contact to discuss what supports your business needs and can avail of is the Local Enterprise Office Offaly.

How to use Instagram for Marketing - Level 2	Practical Guide to Income Tax for Businesses	One to One Mentoring Session to discover how you can maximise efficiency
Trading Online Voucher Webinar	Mastering Your Brand Story – Networking Lunchtime Event	Start Your Own Business Evening Course
Start Your Own Business Day Course	Christmas Marketing	How to use TikTok for marketing (Beginners)
Digital Marketing Programme	Website Review & Analysis Mentoring Clinic	How to use Chat GPT to improve your digital marketing
Grow Your Business Introductory Webinar	Small Business Accounts	How to use the latest AI tools for video, voice and image creation
One to One Marketing Mentoring Session	Grow Your Business Programme	How to create and use reels for marketing on Instagram
Offaly Business Breakfast: Ready to Export [MORE!]	Digital Marketing and Website Mentoring Clinic	
	How to submit your Income Tax Return on ROS	

For further details on all our courses visit localenterprise.ie/Offaly



Community, Culture and Emergency Services

Local Community Development Committee:

Offaly LCDC held their monthly meeting on Thursday, 12th of September 2024.

Main agenda items

included a review of the Rural Development

LEADER Programme 2014–

2022, Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2014-2028, and

Community Recognition Fund 2024 update. A detailed presentation in relation to Regeneration in Offaly was provided to members, outlining what supports are available. An update in relation to the Pride of Place 2024 competition was also provided.



Rural Development LEADER Programme 2014-2023:

A comprehensive overview of the LEADER 2014-2023 programme was provided to members, outlining the substantial work of the Programme detailing challenges and achievements. The duration of the programme was marked by significant changes in the county. In dealing with these changes, it was critical to facilitate local community participation, ensuring that communities were at the forefront of planning and implementing projects as well as initiatives that meet the needs of individuals and communities. The COVID-19 pandemic generated unprecedented challenges. Services and supports continued to be delivered throughout.

Members were reminded that Offaly was recognised as one of the top ten performing Local Action Groups for the LEADER programme and as a result were awarded an additional funding of €500,000. Offaly had, within the initial timeframe of the programme (December 2020) allocated the full project funding for the programme period. It was also noted that when the programme was

extended into the transition period, Offaly once again had allocated the full project budget by the deadline.

A summary of the 3 LEADER Themes and funding allocated was provided to the members.

Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024 – 2028

Members were briefed in relation to details of additional New Arrivals funding received for 2024.

As part of SICAP 2024 budget, funding of €110,963 was allocated to Offaly in respect of New Arrivals Funding. Additional funding of €16,233 has now been allocated to Offaly. This funding must be expended by year end in line with SICAP Programme Requirements. The SICAP Annual Plan for 2024 has been updated by the Local Development Company to reflect the additional funding received and the proposed associated actions listed and circulated to members

Following consideration of members, the distribution of the additional funding and the final updated Annual Plan as presented was approved by the LCDC.

Age Friendly Programme:

National Age Friendly Recognition & Achievement Awards

Offaly has been shortlisted in 2 different categories for a National Age Friendly Recognition & Achievement Awards which will be announced on 7th November 2024: (i) Offaly Older Persons Council was

shortlisted for a Community Felting Project in the Community Development category, (ii) Oaklee Housing Association was shortlisted for its age friendly housing development at Ashfield, Clonminch. Judging for the two entries was held on 19th September 2024. The judges were Madeleine Quirke, former CEO of Wexford Chambers and Mark Harrington, National Manager, Ireland Healthy Homes.



The judges hear about the felting project.

The Felting Project resulted from a collaboration between Offaly Age Friendly Older Persons Council (OPC) and the LOETB as part of the Bealtaine programme in May 2024, with assistance from Offaly PPN and OLDC. The Felting project was one of the highlights of the Bealtaine programme and the OPC decided to put it forward for the National Awards.



An overview of the Ashfield development.

Ashfield in Clonminch was developed by Oaklee Housing. It is a purpose built, well proportioned, modern development of 19 single storey homes which seeks to re-imagine the traditional concept of age friendly (over 55) living.



The judges with members of Offaly OPC, supporting agencies and Council staff.



The judges meeting residents in Ashfield, Clonminch.

Launch of Offaly Age Friendly Strategy

At a meeting of the Offaly Age Friendly Alliance on Friday 27th September 2024 the Chief Executive of Offaly County Council and Chair of Offaly Age Friendly Alliance, Anna Marie Delaney, launched the second Offaly Age Friendly Strategy 2024 -2029. The strategy was produced

under the guidance of the members of the Age Friendly Alliance (AFA), whose members include key community/voluntary, public and private sector service providers in the county.

Life expectancy has increased significantly in Offaly, so there is a responsibility on society to adapt in a manner that provides older people with the physical, social, economic and cultural opportunities to ensure they enjoy the best quality of life. The key actions included in the Strategy are designed to meet these challenges.

The strategy is available to download from the www.offaly.ie website and can be viewed in Offaly's branch libraries.



Members of Offaly Age Friendly Alliance at the launch of Offaly Age Friendly Strategy 2024-2029 on 27 Sept 2024.



Public Participation Network:

Social Awareness Events

Offaly PPN coordinated the Social Awareness events taking place across Offaly during the first two week in September.

Agencies, Supports and Service Providers opened their doors to the public with a number of events from Coffee Mornings, lunch time treats to the show casing of crafts. A number of Social walks also took place .

This was a great opportunity to meet with others in an informal manner and learn about the supports and services available throughout the County.



Lunch Club MountBolus



Social Walk at Bloomville House



Tullamore Park Walk



The Cabin Edenderry



Offaly Older Persons Network with Offaly Sports Partnership and Offaly PPN Bridgecentre Tullamore



Out and about in Birr

PPN Secretariat members Linda Dowling and Seamus Rourke represented Offaly at the PPN Stand in the Government tent at

National Ploughing Championships Offaly PPN supporting the Green Ribbon Mental Health Awareness campaign.



Offaly PPN promoted activities for Culture Night and Make Way Day 2024. Intercultural events that took place during September included Tullamore Indian Association Amanda Nyoni PPN Secretariat attended this event on behalf of Offaly PPN. Offaly Africa Group participated in the Social Inclusion Awareness event at the Tullamore library along with Offaly Domestic Violence Services, Offaly Sports Partnership and Offaly PPN.



(Director) Mark de Carreau, (Actor, Producer) Emer Durcan (Producer) and Brian Durcan (Cinematographer) of Western Front Studios will be shown as part of the OFFline Festival in Birr in October, in the *Made in Midlands* screenings. Also of note in the Festival, is the presentation of the Arts Office commissioned Mini Movies. A series of live-action short films by students of St Brendan's Boys School, Mercy Primary School and St Brendan's Community School, these will be shown at Birr Theatre and Arts Centre.



Work is now underway for the PPN MD meetings taking place in October



Photo: A Simple Killing crew on location.



Comhairle Na nÓg:

During September, several Comhairle na nÓg meetings were held. Preparations for the upcoming Annual Youth Conference are ongoing. The group prepared and assigned roles and decided on the schedule for the conference. This annual event is eagerly awaited by Comhairle members and young people throughout the County. The conference will be held on October 8th. Next month's update will include a report on the event.

FilmOffaly Award 2024 – The Arts Office are delighted to announce the winner of the 2024 award entitled *The Cure*, written by Conor Mc Cormick, the film will be produced by Lorcan O'Hanlon for Carousel Pictures Ltd and directed by Conor Mc Cormick. Production will commence shortly and the production team are planning a location visit in the coming days.

ARTS OFFICE FilmOffaly

FilmOffaly Award 2023 - Our FilmOffaly Short Film Award winner 2023 *A Simple Killing* by Mark Conway, with the production team, Jason Branagan,

FilmOffaly Resource Development Project - Film Offaly was successful in a recent application to the **Just Transition** fund receiving funding of €252,985 for a two-year programme. The new initiative which will be a huge boost for film in Offaly over the coming years. As part of the approved funding the two-year fixed term post of Film Officer has been advertised by Offaly County Council in June and the successful applicant will be starting early October.

Culture Night 20th September 2024

Venues and public spaces across Offaly opened their doors to host a programme of free entertainment for Culture Night 2024. This year there was an emphasis on diversity and inclusion with all communities encouraged to come and be part of a range of multi-disciplinary events.



Birr Theatre & Arts Centre hosted *Journeying Together: Celebrating Irish Traveller Traditions and Culture* with celebrated artist Thomas Mc Carthy showcasing stories and songs. Eileen Casey gave an early reading of a play in progress based on the life of Lettice FitzGerald Digby in Birr Library. In Banagher at JJ Hough's Singing Pub, commissioned artists Patrick Hough screened his film *Whale Fall*, where visitors were also able to enjoy a display of new paintings by Sheila Hough. In Clonmacnoise the evening was celebrated at Granny's Cottage with the event *Cupán Tae sa Chistin*. Clara Musical Society once again delivered an exciting programme *Musical All Sorts* to a delighted audience at the Friends Meeting House in Clare.



Creative Edenderry hosted '**Cultures of Edenderry**', a special evening celebrating the diverse cultures and nationalities of Edenderry and surrounding areas through showcasing a variety of food, fashion music. In **Edenderry Library** audiences attended Eden Chorale's Autumn Airs.



Dan & Molly's Parlour in Ballyboy hosted an evening of art, music and culture in collaboration with Esther Lambe. In Shinrone, Cloughmoyle Hall was decorated in the style of an old rambling house with music performed by Ruairí O'Shea and Laura Beth.

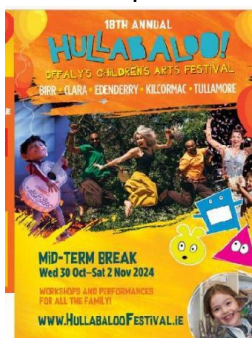
Esker Arts in Tullamore, celebrated their second Culture Night since opening. Events for included a children's dance workshop, an Open Youth Busk event hosted by Music Generation Offaly, an exhibition titled *In Dreams* by Arno

Kramer and Cecilia Bullo, Sonic Kaleidoscope - a music and visual arts improvisation event, a performance by Alma Duo, silent film screenings and book launches. Also in Tullamore events at John Lee's brought two DJs together for fans of 80s classics followed by a set fusing jungle and garage. The library hosted an evening with bestselling author Patricia Gibney.



Hullabaloo! Offaly's Children's Arts Festival

The 2024 programme has been finalized by artistic delivery partners Birr Theatre & Arts Centre and Esker Arts, along with Offaly Libraries and Clara Family Resource Centre and Creative Places Edenderry, coordinated by programme coordinator Emma Hanley and overseen by the Arts Office. Final draft of the printed programme brochure is being proofed by all the partners and the full programme will be announced in the coming days online and in local press and social media.



Creative Places Edenderry



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.

Esker Arts

Esker Arts continued to be a hive of activity across the months of August and September with a range of workshops in a wide variety of artforms, as well as excellent local theatre. A highlight for September was Culture Night with an extensive range of activities celebrating this national festival mentioned above.

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

On 2 September the annual 'Offaly goes Green' campaign to reduce stigma associated with mental health problems and challenge discrimination was launched in Millennium House, Main Street, Tullamore. The launch was organised by Josephine Rigney, Suicide Prevention Officer, HSE but was strongly supported by a myriad of local groups incl. Offaly County Council, Accessible Counselling Tullamore, Healthy Offaly, Offaly Local Development Company, LOETB, An Garda Síochána, etc. The green ribbon campaign ran for the entire month and Healthy Offaly were delighted with the publicity generated by the attendance of the Offaly County Council Cathaoirleach & County Councillors at the launch and separately a staff photo opportunity that took place on the same day as the launch.



Local councillors and representatives of ACT at the launch



OCC Management & Staff supporting Green Ribbon campaign

September was also the month when Healthy Offaly's quarterly subcommittee meeting took place. Representatives of our implementing partners and other agencies gave updates on the progress of their project rollout and items of note taking place. See link for further details: <G:\Healthy Offaly\Healthy Offaly Actions Progress Report -September 2024.pdf>

Another event of note was the biannual Healthy Ireland Local Government planning and review conference that took place in Limerick on 10 -11 September for all Healthy Cities & Counties Coordinators and Sláintecare Healthy Communities Development Workers. Day 1 focused on the strategies and supports provided by Healthy Limerick to new migrant communities. After a series of addresses by Minister of State at the Department of Health, Colm Burke TD and recently elected Limerick Mayor, John Moran. Various presentations were made by the World Health Organisation, Healthy Limerick and Limerick Sports Partnership personnel in the morning. In the afternoon, trips to various community garden

projects took place. Day 2 of the conference concentrated on planning of the final 15 months of the Healthy Ireland Fund Round 4 programme.

Finally, as we approach year end work has commenced on gathering all pre and post project participant surveys from implementing partners. Results will then be collated by Edufit and Healthy Offaly for reporting to Offaly LCDC and Pobal in early 2025. Further details on these results will issue in the coming months.

Congratulatory notes

Congratulations to the eight Olympians / Paralympians from the county. The Sports Partnership has contacted all athletes via their families to check their availability for civic reception due to be hosted by Offaly County Council



Megan Armitage



Megan Burns



Jordan Conroy



Grainne Walsh



Josephine Healion



Darragh Kenny



Shane Lowry



Nicole Turner

Acknowledgement of Long Serving Members

At its recent AGM, Sports Partnership paid tribute to four former long serving members to acknowledgement their commitment to sport, the Sports Partnership and public life in the County.



Jude Feehan & John Carroll



Lourda Giles & Robert Mc Dermott



Miriam O Callaghan



Cllr Ollie Bryant & Danny Owens

Offaly Sports Partnership Management Committee

At the most recent AGM of Offaly Sports Partnership, a new executive committee was elected



*Pictured l to r
Joe Meegan (Financial Monitor)
Lourda Giles (Chief Officer, Offaly LCDC),
Jude Feehan (Chair), Ciara Ní Chéilleachair
(Sports representative) & Cllr Ollie Bryant
(Vice Chair)*

Sports Capital Announcements

The 2023 Sports Capital Allocations were recently announced. Nationally, over €260 million was provisionally allocated.

48 clubs and groups in Co. Offaly shared in allocations of over €5.7 million (excluding two clubs in Edenderry that secured close to a further €275 million).

Based on population size, Offaly ranked among the top ten counties. The table below indicates the county's allocation of funding per head of population.

Fund	County Allocation	Allocation per Head of Population	Position of 26 Counties
Equipment Only	€ 258,095	€3.12	1 st
Local Capital Projects	€4,424,712	€ 53.52	9 th

Programme highlights from September include:

- The hosting of the “I Coach Kids” midlands conference for 2024.

Delivered in association with Sport Ireland Coaching and Laois Sports Partnership, 50 volunteers attended this conference



- Ongoing delivery of the Sport 4 Empowerment programme funded by the European Social Fund+. Among the programmes delivered was a volleyball programme in both Edenderry and Tullamore for refugees, asylum seekers and those living in “International Protection Accommodation Services”
- Ongoing delivery of programmes as part of the sports inclusion and community sports development programmes
- Among the programmes delivered as part of the sports inclusion programme were strength and conditioning for wheelchair users, and 1:1 physical activity supports for people with additional needs.
- Among the programmes delivered as part of the community sports development programme were physical activity programmes for adults and older adults including activator poles, Pilates, pickleball

and social walk leadership training;
and games on the green for
children.

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

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

LIBRARY SERVICE

Largest Turnout Yet for Offaly Libraries Comic Con!

Tullamore Library welcomed 1,400 visitors to the much-anticipated Offaly Libraries Comic Con on Saturday, 14th September.



This year saw our largest ever number of vendors and artists displaying works of phenomenal artistry as well as comic books, pop culture merchandise and vintage games.

Activities on the day included a Tabletop Games Area, VEX Robotics, VR headsets, a Craft Table and Lego Zone. Gaming vans proved very popular this year as were art workshops including one by Childrens Books Ireland award winning author Alan Nolan.

Professional cosplayers including Storm Troopers and Vikings entertained and delighted attendees and passers-by alike.



Competitions included a Lego Master Builder competition, and our Cosplay Competition was popular with the young and young at heart alike



Clár Éire Ildánach
*Creative Ireland
Programme*

Kindly co-funded by Creative Ireland, Offaly Libraries Comic Con is a shining light of innovation, creativity and fun within Offaly Libraries' calendar.

Summer Stars Medal Presentations

Summer Stars is the free national reading programme for children that takes place in all public libraries and online each summer. It runs from 4th June – 31st August 2024. This **year 1,688 children** signed up for the Summer Stars reading challenge and in September we celebrated their efforts.



The red carpet was rolled out for 100 children and their parents in Tullamore Library, while 78 people attended Edenderry library's medal presentation and Birr Fire Service entertained attendees at Birr Library's celebration.



Culture Night at Offaly Libraries



Visitors to Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore Libraries enjoyed a wonderful array of events in celebration of Culture Night on Friday, 20th September.

Audiences in Birr were treated to a Play in Process, an early reading of a play prior to performance on stage. Introduced by author Eileen Casey, the play was based on the life of Lettice FitzGerald Digby, 1st Baroness of Offaly, 68 attendees at Edenderry Library enjoyed an Autumn Airs Recital by Eden Chorale.



Culture Night was celebrated in Tullamore Library with a visit from local bestselling author Patricia Gibney. Patricia had a captivating conversation with Midlands 103's Claire O'Brien.



Sustainable Development Goals Week 2024



Offaly Libraries marked Sustainable Development Goals week with a programme of **24 separate events across our 8 libraries.**

Events included sustainable crafts using recyclables, SDG themed storytimes, bookclubs and movie nights. Schools took part in SDG zoom sessions, outreach sessions and class visits to complete Giants SDG Doodles.



Two sustainability workshops for teens on *Fast Fashion* took place in Edenderry & Tullamore Libraries. The sessions were funded by Offaly Co. Council's Climate Action Team and led by Education for Sustainability.



Clara, Edenderry & Tullamore libraries launched a Halloween Costume Swap during SDG Week. Costumes can be donated at any of the 3 libraries and taken free of charge throughout the month of October.



A Climate Action for the over 60's course has commenced in Tullamore Library facilitated by the Climate Action Team and Offaly Age Friendly, the course aims to explain climate action and the power of the individual to make impactful changes.

Offaly & Laois Libraries Parenting Support Programme: Autumn 2024



Offaly Libraries together with Laois Libraries are delighted to co-deliver a free series of talks and workshops for parents.

Supported by Laois Offaly Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC), the Parenting Support Programme invites experts to discuss a broad range of parenting topics currently impacting our children.

The programme, beginning in September 2024, is open to everyone including parents, caregivers, healthcare professionals, teachers, special needs assistants and those working with children and young people.



To date, we have had talks by Dr. Helen Vaughan, Messy Play Sessions and National Parents Council talks on Transitioning from Pre-school to Primary School.



Parent and Child Wellbeing Workshops were enjoyed by all age groups in the Birr IPAS centres.

The programme runs until December with talks by Dr. Mary O'Kane, art therapy and parent and child yoga to look forward to. The full programme of events can be found [here](#)

Offaly Libraries STEAM Programme:

Some exciting STEAM events were held in Birr Library this past month!



Midlands' Astronomy

began their Autumn lecture series in Tullamore Library with speaker Jason Fallon's talk "It all Started with a Big Bang". Sean McKenna gave a lecture on "Myths of the Constellations". The next lecture on 3rd October will be 'The Aurora & The End of the World'.

Lego Freeplay sessions and STEM Saturdays delivered as part of our STEAM offerings, continue to be well attended in libraries around the county.

We look forward to celebrating **Space Week and Maths Week** during the month of October when there will be plenty on offer in our libraries. Events include VEX Robotics, rocket workshops with Seanie Morris and space themed crafts and storytimes as well as schools events.



Birr Library will also host Dr. Niamh Shaw for a family event where she will talk about what it is like to live as an astronaut, with a focus on climate action.

Check out our [website](#) for information on upcoming STEAM events including our [STEAM Programme](#).



Sensory Offaly

On the 5th of September, 28 children from St. Patrick’s NS enjoyed a puppet show with music and a sensory storytime session with Simone Schümmelfeder in Edenderry Library.



Sensory Rooms sessions can be booked in 3 of our libraries and full details of our Sensory Offaly Programme and collections can be found on our [website](#).



Offaly Libraries & the LOETB



20 new students participating in a variety of courses provided by the LOETB in Birr visited Birr library on 11th September. Students signed up for and renewed their library registrations. A tour of the building was given by library staff and the vast range of library resources for study were showcased on the day.

English classes for our new communities started back in Daingean library in September. 2 classes are held every Tuesday and Thursday.



Healthy Ireland at the Library

New! Digital Detox Sessions at Edenderry Library

To mark World Suicide Day and the annual Green Ribbon Campaign, Edenderry Library launched **Digital Detox Sessions** for adults to enjoy a quiet space, low lighting, meditation music and mindful colouring sheets. Sessions can be booked as required by contacting the library.



Positive Ageing Week

Positive Ageing Week will be celebrated in all of our libraries this October with a range of age friendly events including intergenerational events such as quizzes

and Grandparent and Grandchild Robotics.

Positive Ageing Week 2024 30th September - 6th October



Other events include Music Sessions by the Gramophone Society and Silver Strings, Garda Information Sessions, Coffee Mornings, Needle Felting and Glass Painting workshops and an Age-Friendly digital skills programme in Banagher Library.

Full details of Positive Ageing Week events can be found on our [website](#).

Children's Book Festival – October



Children's Book Festival is one of the four central pillars of the national **Right to Read** initiative.

We have an exciting [programme of events](#) organised to celebrate the Children's Book Festival this October!

Celebrated children's authors, Emer Conlon Leona Forde, Niamh Donnellan

and Eve McDonnell will visit our libraries to deliver some fascinating workshops for primary school aged children.

Schools will have the opportunity to partake in workshops with poet and illustrator Paul Tubb as well as the Cool Food School.



Midterm events available to the public include a Hogwarts experience while the BFG (all 7ft of him) to Clara and Edenderry libraries. Check with your local branch for upcoming events.





HULLABALOO!

OFFALY'S CHILDREN'S ARTS FESTIVAL

Hullabaloo! Festival – October

Hullabaloo is Offaly's Children's Arts Festival, bring lots of exciting workshops and shows for during the October mid-term break. Offaly Libraries will have events such as the Tallest Smallest Circus, a Halloween themed Creative Writing workshop with Maeve Devoy and plenty of Halloween themed storytimes and crafts.



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 programmes, developments and new services by [subscribing](#) to the **Offaly Libraries Newsletter** and by following our social media channels.

Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Finance

Offaly County Council				
Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary				
To 30th September 2024				
OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr Budget 2024 €m	Preliminary Value to September 2024 €m	% Year To Date	
Payroll costs	35.68	26.23	73.5%	
Grants and Subsidies Income	50.31	38.56	76.6%	
OCC to 30th September 2024				
		<u>Rates</u>	<u>Rents</u>	<u>Loans</u>
		<u>€m</u>	<u>€m</u>	<u>€m</u>
Opening Balance Jan 1st, 2024		2.58	0.64	0.04
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers		16.93	6.53	0.38
2024 Cash Collected to end of September		14.61	6.67	0.38
Closing Balance September 30th, 2024		4.90	0.50	0.04
2023 Cash collected to September 30th		13.39	5.90	0.45
% Collection at this point in 2023		109%	113%	84%
Bank Overdraft to 30th September 2024				% YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date				24 9%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to September 30th 2024 YTD			(Estimate)	€15,801
Bank Administration and transactional charges to September 30th 2024 YTD			(Estimate)	€44,816