

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL BAINISTÍOCHTA

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Aibreán / April



**Launch of Banagher
Marina & Environs
Masterplan**

**Offaly County Council
publishes its 5-year
Climate Action Plan**



‘Tracks and Trails’ programme on RTÉ 1, in which author Sinéad Moriarty explored trails across County Offaly

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- *Rás Taileann, one of Ireland's premier sporting events, kicking off in Tullamore on 21st May*
- *Cruinniú na nÓg at Offaly Libraries, Saturday 15th June 2024*
- *Offaly Libraries Comic Con is back – September 2024!*

Land Use, Planning and Economic Development Services

PLANNING

Development Management

	To end Apr 2024	To end Apr 2023	Total 2023
Planning Applications	196	188	695
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	1	4	20
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	10 (3)	77 (47)	181 (73)

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

24/60104 Clara Water Ltd	Partial "change of use" from existing Leisure Centre to a Water Bottling Plant at Clashawoun, Clara, Co. Offaly.
24/60118 Uisce Eireann	Construction of a new inlet works at Clonygowan Wastewater Treatment Plant, Clonygowan, Co. Offaly.
24/60120 Beech Avenue Properties Limited	the construction of 58 total no. residential units at Townparks & Seffin, Birr, Co. Offaly
24/60122 Eoin Garry	The construction of 66 total no. residential units at Railway Road, Townparks & Seffin Birr, Co. Offaly.
24/60125 Kilsaran Concrete Unlimited Co.	The provision of an 8,515 square metre defined recycling area in the pit floor at Bunaterin TD Scregggan, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
24/60137 Clara GAA Club	The development will consist of a 10 year permission for the refurbishment of the existing St. Brigids Convent Building at Kilbeggan Road, Clara, Co. Offaly.

Just Transition

Local and Regional Economic Support Strategies Support Scheme

Offaly County Council submitted five applications between **8th December 2023** and **23rd January 2024**. They were in relation to projects which would support enterprise and employment both across the county and included the specific areas of Shannonbridge, Rhode and Tullamore. All projects were aligned with the objectives of the Offaly Local Economic and Community Plan. Offaly County Council has been notified as follows:

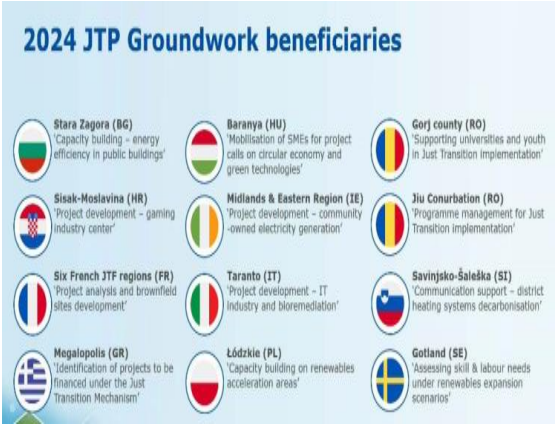
- Economic Development Unit to progress the Offaly Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027 – total application costs **€1m – Unsuccessful**
- Film Offaly Resource to act as a film development coordinator – total application costs **€252,985 – Successful**
- Tullamore Enterprise Hub – total application costs **€1m – Unsuccessful**
- Dalton Centre Re-purposing, Shannonbridge to create an employment / enterprise space – total application costs **€1m – Unsuccessful**
- Technical Consultancy Services to identify a services corridor to the Rhode Green Energy Park – total application costs **€537,634 – Unsuccessful**



Offaly County Council are supporting the SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities Programme who have been 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), will engage with a European Technical Assistance

team, from current date until early 2025. 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



REGENERATION

Town & Village Renewal Scheme - 2023

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, has announced on 29th April 2024, details of the projects that have been approved for funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2023. A total of €500,000 was secured for Offaly’s Towns and Villages.

The successful project details are as follows:

Town	Project Approved	Grants approved
Killeigh	To develop an outdoor area to facilitate a farmers/artisan market and programming space at Killeigh Community Centre. Works to include provision of lighting, footpaths & surfacing, kerbing, market stalls and equipment.	€250,000
Ferbane	Public realm enhancement works at Fairgreen and Old Fire Station, Ferbane	€250,000

The 2023 scheme had a renewed focus on town centre economic and social recovery and regeneration, through projects focusing on town centre regeneration, enhancing streetscapes and bringing vacant and derelict buildings back into use

as community multi-purpose spaces through refurbishment and renovation. This year the scheme also included a focus on Town or Village Centre Markets e.g. Farmers Markets, Open-Air Markets, Local Trader Markets, Artisan Markets or similar in alignment with the Programme for Government.

Concept designs of the Killeigh Community centre



Community Centre Investment Fund - 2023

On 24th April 2024 the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, announced a grant of €1.4 million to deliver a new community centre in Moneygall under The Community Centre Investment Fund.



This grant requires 10% match funding of €157,000k secured via Local Property Tax raised in Offaly of €117,000 with Moneygall Development Association providing the additional €40,000.

The Community Centre Investment Fund was launched in March 2023 to provide investment for 'shovel-ready' new build community centres.

Moneygall Community Centre is a 327m² multipurpose centre, which will be open to and used by a broad range of individuals and groups within the local community.

Outdoor recreation Fund –2023

Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development, announced on March 28, 2024, that Offaly County Council received a grant in the amount of €60,000 towards maintenance and repair work on the Slieve Bloom Way and ancillary loops at Cadamstown and Kinnitty, in addition to the Offaly Way and

ancillary loops at Kilcormac and Lough Boora.

The funding is part of the 2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, which supports both new outdoor recreational infrastructure development and the upkeep of existing facilities in rural Ireland providing support for the necessary repair, maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas across Ireland.

Project Name	Project Description	Grant approved
Slieve Bloom Way & ancillary loops at Cadamstown & Kinnitty	Small scale upkeep and repair work	€30,000
Offaly Way & ancillary loops at Kilcormac and Lough Boora	Small scale upkeep and repair work	€30,000

TOURISM

The early months of 2024 have been a busy period for tourism team as they now prepare for the upcoming holiday season.

Holiday World Show



Once again, The Visit Offaly brand exhibited at the very popular Holiday World Show in Dublin in January.

The event is held over 3 days, 26th – 28th January, and hosted in the RDS. It is the biggest of its kind in Ireland, attracting up to 70,000 visitors each year. It was a hugely successful



show with great interest from a captive audience including the Lord Major of Dublin!

Rás Taileann

Offaly County Council is delighted to welcome the Rás Taileann, one of Ireland's premier sporting events, to Tullamore on 21st May.

Sponsored by the Tourism team and supported by Tullamore MD, the first stage of this prestigious race will kick off in Tullamore town on the morning of 21st. It will bring teams from Ireland, England and as far as China to Tullamore for the start of the race; great exposure for our county town.

Just Transition

In January 2024 Mary Hensey was appointed as the EU Just Transition Fund Tourism Activator for County Offaly. Mary is playing a pivotal part in supporting and guiding private and community-based Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in developing high-quality project proposals and grant applications through Fáilte Ireland's EU Just Transition Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme. A number of information meetings were held throughout the county and Mary is liaising with potential applicants offering advice and support with their Expressions of Interest and Application forms.

Meitheal

Meitheal is a two-day face-to-face workshop that gives the Irish tourism industry and overseas tourism buyers from over 20 different countries the opportunity to meet and do business. Over 10,000 appointments were conducted over two days with many new and important contracts signed.

The 2024 show was held in the INEC in Killarney on 11th & 12th April. Four Offaly businesses attended in person with further businesses/attractions listed in the Buyers Guide which is distributed to all attendees. The Tourism Officer attended offering advice and support to the trade and establishing vital contacts in the industry.



LGMA Tourism Conference

The Local Government Tourism Conference 2024, entitled 'Tourism Leading the Change', was held in Kilashee House Hotel on 18th & 19th April.



Local Authorities throughout the country, key government and agency partners attended the 2-day event, sharing best practice experiences, with a varied, interesting and inspiring programme.

The event was attended by the Tourism Officer and Tourism Activator and Andrew Murray, A/Director of Services gave a presentation on 'EU Just Transition and Tourism'.

Tracks and Trails

The tourism team worked closely with the producers of the very popular prime time show 'Tracks and Trails' last Summer to produce a wonderful episode showcasing Offaly's wonderful outdoors.

The half hour show was broadcast on RTÉ One on Friday 12th April. It featured three very different trails; Croghan Hill, The Grand Canal Greenway and Kinnitty Forest. The celebrity



presenter Sinead Moriarty guided the viewers through Offaly's scenic countryside, meeting personalities and uncovering hidden gems along the way. The show will also be broadcast on a second run and is available to stream on RTÉ player and YouTube.

Most Enterprising Student Awards 2024 in Offaly!



The Most Enterprising Student Awards in Offaly recognised primary school students who demonstrated exceptional business skills. These young entrepreneurs participated in the annual **Most Enterprising Student Programme**, where they set up and ran their own businesses. Schools nominated standout students who designed, made, and sold products during an “Enterprise Day.” The awards ceremony took place at the Tullamore Court Hotel on April 23rd, with Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick, the Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, presenting the awards. Mary McIntyre from LEO Offaly commended the students’ creativity, confidence, collaboration, and communication skills. The event showcased various student-run businesses, including those selling free-range eggs, home-baked goods, crafts, bicycle repairs, and handmade jewelry.

These young entrepreneurs learned valuable skills that will serve them well in their future careers and perhaps even inspire some to pursue self-employment. It’s heartening to see such enthusiasm and innovation from Offaly’s next generation of business leaders!

April Business Breakfast with LEO Offaly

There was a large attendance at the recent Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Offaly Business Breakfast event: **Unlocking Success with LEAN, GREEN, and DIGITAL Impact Strategies** where we delved into important topics such as:

- **Lean for Business** – work with a consultant to help businesses improve performance, competitiveness, and operational efficiency through Lean tools and techniques. It’s about doing things quicker, and better, and saving costs.
- **Green for Business** – work with a consultant to help businesses on the journey to a low carbon, more resource-efficient economy of the future, with increased cost savings, improved resource efficiency (such as using less energy, water, and materials), reduced environmental footprint and greenhouse gas emissions and opportunities for higher and additional value on products and services.
- **Digital for Business** – work with a digital consultant to embrace digital

transformation, enhance efficiency, and stay competitive through assessing your digital business journey, receive a customised digital adaptation plan based on identified needs and implementation support for executing your digital plan.

- **Energy Efficiency Grant** – your Green for Business report will let you know what improvements are eligible for funding with this grant.
- **Increased Cost of Living Grant** – the deadline to register is May 1st.

May Business Breakfast with LEO Offaly

Mark your calendars for the next Business Breakfast, scheduled for **Wednesday, May 29th**. Our guest speaker, Pádraic Ó Máille, is well-known in Offaly and renowned for his fresh perspectives on business and motivation. You won't want to miss it! [Book your free place here.](#)



LEO OFFALY BUSINESS

Breakfast

The 30-Day Year
How to achieve more in 30 days than many do in a year

Wednesday, May 29th
8 AM – 9:30 AM

FREE

Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore

Pádraic Ó Máille

Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office

Making It Happen

LEO Offaly in the Community

LEO Offaly are continuing our outreach clinics in May in Banagher Library, Clara Library and Daingean Library. One to one consultations with Business Advisors may be booked online:

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Offaly/News/Local-Enterprise-Office-in-YOUR-Locality.html>

LEO Grant Workshops



LEO Offaly have a number of in-person Grant Application Workshops planned for 2024. These new workshops provide valuable insights on navigating the application portal, avoiding common errors, and providing essential financial information for Feasibility, Priming, and Business Expansion Grants.

Participants will also learn about projections, cash flow vs. profit & loss, budgeting, and creating an impactful short video. A great resource for anyone applying for a grant.

Training Events

LEO Offaly will soon be launching a series of in-person events focusing on LEAN, Green and Digital for Business starting in April. Full details will be on www.localenterprise.ie/offaly.

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 links to book are here: <https://bit.ly/3B5LTku>

Local Enterprise Office in Your Locality



Upcoming Events		See All Events >
13/05/2024	Monitor, Manage and Optimise your Business Finance...	Book online
13/05/2024	How to make and use Reels on Instagram to market y...	Book online
15/05/2024	How to submit your Income Tax Return on ROS	Book online
15/05/2024	Start Your Own Business Course Evenings (In Person...	Book online
23/05/2024	Grant Application Workshop – How to Complete your ...	Book online
28/05/2024	Make Social Media Work for You - One to One Mentor...	Book online
29/05/2024	Business Breakfast - The 30 Day Year - How To Achi...	Book online

Housing

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 537 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of April 2024.
- A further 578 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 10 signed up for HAP and 8 exited from HAP in April.
- At the end of April, 32 single people and 22 couples and families were being supported in emergency accommodation.
- A rent review of Social Leasing Scheme Tenants (including Rental Accommodation, Short Term Leasing, Repair & Lease and Mortgage to Rent) and HAP Tenants has commenced. All

relevant Tenants have been written to and outstanding rent assessment forms and supporting documentation should be returned immediately. Tenant queries can be directed to our email at RentReview@offalycoco.ie

Housing Capital Programme Update

- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 no. Older Person's dwellings) – Due for completion in Q2 2024.
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) – Construction commenced. Completion Q2 2024.
- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – Project started on site in March 2023. Due for completion in Q4 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 2 approval was granted on 27th February 2023. New Part 8 planning process; Section 179A of Planning and Development Act completed. Stage 3 will be lodged with the DHLGH in Q2 2024.
- Group Housing, Croghan Road, Birr (4 Units): Stage 4 approval was granted on 21st November 2023. Contractor Appointed & construction has commenced.
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (10 Units) – Stage 2 approval received 30th Nov 2022. Stage 3 approval application to be lodged with DHLGH in 2024.

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes

- Respond Housing: 77 Units under construction @ Kingswood, Ardan Lane with completion in Q2 2025
- Sofia Housing: 37 Units with Stage 2 approval @ Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Planning Granted in November 2023. AHB is preparing tender documents (Stage 3/July 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.

Turnkey Developments/Part V

- Bog Road, Portarlinton, 33 units – Snagging under way, handover April/May 2024.
- Silverbrook, Tullamore, 15 Complete, 5 remaining
- Redwood, Tullamore, All 11 Units complete
- MacGregol, Birr, 8 Units – 2 Part V units Complete & 4 Turnkey Units Complete
- Carrick Hall, Edenderry - 22 Units (18 Turnkey & 4 Part V's) approval received in July 2023. Awaiting commencement

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.

- 99 Units complete to date
- DHLGH have advised target for 2024 of 28 Energy Efficiency Retrofit Program Units
- 9 Units complete in 2024
- 19 Units currently under construction

Community Development Programme

- Estate Management Funding for Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore Municipal Districts have been agreed at Municipal District meetings. Works will be scheduled to commence for all approved works.
- Housing Liaison Officers are continuing to support established resident committees and engaging with other groups and communities in an effort to establish them and thereby support the development of their community.
- Housing supported a number of *Easter Games on the Green* in a number of Local Authority Housing Estates across the Municipal Districts. A summer programme is also being developed.

Community Culture and Emergency Services

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Offaly LCDC held their monthly meeting on Thursday April 11th. Main agenda items included:



The Rural Development LEADER Programme 2014 – 2022 and an update on the new LEADER 2023-2027 Programme

Draft Offaly Age Friendly Strategy 2024-2029: A presentation was provided to members with key elements outlined and proposed goals and actions. Next steps in the process were noted.

Community Recognition Fund (CRF) 2024: Offaly was allocated €1,002,5542 with the scheme specifically targeted at capital projects that are located in communities, towns and villages that are hosting the Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and/or International Protection Applicants ('new arrivals') including town identified for the rapid build homes programme. The scheme aims to promote the development of facilities that will be used in the future by all members of the community. A comprehensive presentation was delivered outlining the scheme criteria.

EU Just Transition Fund: Regenerative Tourism & Placemaking Scheme 2023-2026 and Investment Grant-Aid Scheme for Private & Community SMEs: Ms. M. Hensey, EU Just Transition Fund Tourism Activator provided a detailed presentation to members and outlined supports available and keys dates for submissions.

Public Participation Network



Offaly PPN held their Spring 2024 Plenary on Wednesday 10th April in the Charleville Centre Tullamore.@ 7.00pm

- Guest Speaker Ann Dillon Offaly Co Co
- Edenderry Community First Responders Demonstration
- PPN Workplan & Budget
- Elections: PPN vacancies
- Round Table discussions
- Spot Prizes



Ann Dillon Director of Services, Offaly Co Co, was the Keynote speaker. Ann was well received by the membership. Ann's knowledge, experience and understanding of the Community & Voluntary sector was very evident.

Thank you to Ann Dillon and Brian Pey for their participation and assistance on the evening.

David O Malley Edenderry Community First responders provided a demonstration and some key information on the importance of this valuable service. This lifesaving service is something we should all be aware of and support in our communities. The PPN Workplan and Budget for 2024 were presented by Bridie Costello Hynes PPN Coordinator and then ratified by the membership.



While Local Elections are in the air, so too are the PPN Elections which were launched on the night with an overview of the vacancies and the opportunities to represent the specific remit of the PPN.

There are Vacancies in all three Pillars:

- Community & Voluntary
- Social Inclusion
- Environment.

Historical Commemorations: This area of work was raised at the November plenary as an important aspect of our culture and heritage.

Offaly Older Persons Network in conjunction with Offaly Age Friendly Alliance, LOETB and the PPN commenced a Creative project: Felting. The Theme. Childhood and Youthful Memories of Charleville Castle and grounds depicted through felting with written pieces depicting the scenes. The finished pieces

will be displayed during Bealtaine in Libraries.

PPN Coordinator participated in the Comhairle Na Nog Steering Committee meeting. The PPN are supporting the Pride of Place work underway in the Community section.

PPN staff undertook the Domestic Violence Training. It was very informative and highlighted the importance of awareness raising and understanding alongside the services and supports available.

Two PPN Rep meetings took place online. Attendance was very good, and this allowed members unable to attend the Plenary and opportunity to gain an insight into the agenda items and outcomes from the Plenary.

The PPN Staff Retreat took place on 25th & 26th April, hosted by Meath PPN. It was an excellent two days focusing on, Women in Politics, The Environment, Democracy and European initiatives/ways of working.

We are currently focusing on upcoming events including. Offaly PPN in conjunction with Laois PPN are organising a Dusk Chorus May 10th Derrycastle Bog under the direction of Ricky Whelan Bio Diversity Officer Offaly Co. Co.

Comhairle Na nÓg

The Comhairle Executive have begun work on their topic of Mental Health. 3 subtopics were discussed body image, mental health and school stress.



The steering committee met in April and a number of committee members attended the Comhairle members meeting to help the group advance work on their topic and to help put their ideas into action.

The group commenced fundraising for an upcoming hike to raise money and awareness for Young Peoples Mental Health Charity Jigsaw.



HEALTHY OFFALY

April began with the first quarterly Healthy Offaly Subcommittee meeting of 2024 taking place on Wednesday 3rd of that month. It was an important meeting as most of the new implementing partners who are rolling out actions on behalf of Healthy Offaly this year, were in attendance. It was a great networking opportunity for these new partners to meet their Subcommittee colleagues from 2023 and the various representatives of the other agencies who comprise the Subcommittee. Updates on action progress were given by all partners informing the meeting that 2023 actions are in progress and 2024 actions having also started or nearing commencement.

Also, in April the 2024 service level agreements for the coming year were signed and submitted by all implementing partners. The first 50% grant payment allocations were also processed for payment with all partners now having received the necessary funds to progress their actions. The remainder of the month was spent answering queries from Pobal regarding the 2023 Healthy Ireland Coordinator Salary return and the Programme Return. This was a cumbersome task with many multiple queries received and exacting levels of detail required. The Healthy Ireland Coordinator continues to attend meetings and training provided by the Healthy Ireland National Coordinators network with some good ideas to progress the Healthy Ireland agenda received.

SPORTS

April programme highlights include: - Ongoing delivery of programmes in each of our three sports hubs, Daingean, Mucklagh and Ballycumber



Ongoing delivery of our ACE spring athletics programme in 27 schools across the county

Ongoing delivery of our youth sports leadership programme for 100 TY students across in four schools – Ard Scoil Chiaráin Clara, Coláiste na Sionna Banagher, St Brendan's Birr and Tullamore College

Ongoing delivery of the Healthy Offaly drop & move programme in six locations; as well as the commencement of the Wellness unLAOISed programme, a 12 week online exercise, nutrition and health education programme delivered in association with Laois Sports Partnership and EduFit

Delivery of a community games support programme for over 200 children between the ages of 8 and 14 years in four locations – Banagher, Daingean, Ferbane and Rhode.

Delivery of inclusion sports days for adults with additional needs in Mucklagh Sports Hub



Delivery of a six week social walk leader training programme in association with Offaly Local Development Company in Kinnitty. It is anticipated that up to three social walking groups will be established as a result of this training.

Delivery of sport and physical activity programmes for older adults

Offaly Sports Partnership Older Adult programme for April / May 2024		
 OFFALY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP <small>Official Sponsor of the Offaly Sports Partnership</small> All Activities in Mucklagh Hall	Programmes Taster Morning Monday 8th April 10.00 - 1.00 Boccia Pickleball Walking Football Darts Scooch Chair Volleyball Flisk Activator Poles Go for life games Come down and see what programmes we offer	
	Chair Volleyball Tournament Monday 15th April 10.30 - 1.00 Registration at 10.00 Teams of 6 Individuals welcome	Pickleball Monday 22nd April 10.30 - 1.00 Learn the rules Quick Games All abilities and beginners welcome
	Contact Denise 086 7912513	Social Darts Monday 29th April 10.30 - 1.00 All abilities and beginners welcome.
	Boccia Tournament Monday 13th May 10.30 - 1.00 All abilities and beginners welcome	Badminton Tournament Monday 20th May 10.30 - 1.00 All abilities and beginners welcome

Our taster morning was very successful, full of fun and great enjoyment for all participants. We had up to 60 participants on the morning who took part in 10 different activities including pickleball, chair volleyball, walking football, scooch, darts, boccia, activators, flisk, and strength and conditioning. The introduction of darts into the programme was a great success, while Pickleball was another very popular activity.

Delivery of women in sport activities with Belmont Women's Group.



Delivery of the first three schools' splash and dash days as part of the Urban Outdoor Adventure Project, Tullamore. Sessions were delivered with Coláiste Choilm, Sacred Heart Tullamore and Tullamore College.



Canoe Polo evenings have also been delivered throughout April as part of this Project.

Staff members also attended various Sport Ireland network days, and other local meetings during the month of April

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

ARTS

Arts Strategy 2024-2028

The new draft Arts Strategy 2024-2028 is currently being translated and once designed will be available online on the Arts Office Website.

ARTS OFFICE PROGRAMMES

Lough Boora - Art in Landscape Festival of Change



The Festival of Change took place in early April this was a joint project between Offaly County Council, Mayo County Council, and Visual Artists Ireland and supported by the Arts Council's Invitation to Collaboration Scheme.

The festival presented a diverse and stimulating agenda of activities and gatherings, delving into the influence that art, both tangible and intangible, could exert on communities and locations, encompassing social, economic, and cultural dimensions.

The festival was connected to two distinct sites across the counties: the Tir Saile Sculpture Trail in Mayo and the Lough Boora Sculpture Park in Offaly. In Offaly, the festival commenced at Tullamore's Esker Arts on the morning of Friday, 5th April, with 'Tionól', a gathering of selected individuals, groups, and artists who presented their ideas regarding the potential held by 'art in the landscape' to an intrigued audience.

Artists and community groups were invited to be part of the audience and witness the blue-sky thinking with regards to running art projects. This led into an informal networking session called the 'Conversation Café,' providing a platform to further develop ideas from the 'Tionól'.

Throughout the day, a variety of discussions and activities took place, including an illustrated discourse by photographer and filmmaker Tim Smith, accompanied by Hardeep Singh Sahota and a soulful performance by folk artist Ruairí O' Shea. The evening witnessed the unveiling of 'Midland: Mother Myth Memory,' an exhibition by the esteemed artist Rita Duffy, by Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick.

The official opening was followed by a Bhangra Ceili. Comhaltas groups, set dancers, belly dancers – all types of dancers either novices or more established were invited to this fun event – the first of its kind in the Midlands, which produced an evening of colour and cultural exchange.

On Saturday, 6th April, Storm Kathleen led to the postponement of some events. Details will be announced via Offaly Arts and Esker Arts in due course of the date for rescheduled events. Hardeep Singh Sahota hosted a Bhangra Dance workshop in Esker Arts before the festival culminated with 'Rhythm of Light,' an exhibition premiere and commission showcase by Hardeep Singh Sahota. The exhibitions continue at Esker Arts up to May 25th, 2024, and are open to the public free of charge during opening hours.

FilmOffaly Award 2023

The winning script A *Simple Killing* by Mark Conway,



with the production team, Jason Branagan, (Director) Mark de Carreau, (Actor, Producer) Emer Durcan (Producer) and Brian Durcan (Cinematographer) of Western Front Studios is currently in post-production and will be hoping to have its national premiere in the coming months.

Film Offaly Award 2024

The call for the FilmOffaly 2024 Award closed on **Monday 11th March 2024**. The award saw a great response from filmmakers across Ireland with 46 scripts submitted, which are currently going through the assessment process.

Funding Opportunities

The 2024 Youth Arts Commissions

Two projects are currently in progress having received arts office funding - Emma Barone's visual art project, '*Creative Spaces Art Programme – Empowering Youth Through Creativity*' with at-risk young people in the Birr area.

A transformative six-week programme designed to foster creativity through self-expression, the project will run in collaboration with Birr Subgroup, and Music Generation Offaly's *Songwriting Project* in collaboration with Tolü Makay centred around vocal health, songwriting, and recording. This ambitious project will see students from Tullamore working with renowned recording-artist Tolü Makay, in the creation and recording of original work.

Culture Night 20th September 2024

There are currently two opportunities in being developed.



CULTURE NIGHT

Professional Artists from or based in Offaly will be invited to submit proposals for an artist commission – a project and presentation as part of the 2024 Culture Night Offaly programme.

For Communities and Venues

Offaly County Council's Culture Night Event Fund which supports the cost of events programmed for Culture Night 2024

Both awards will be advertised shortly

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, continues to host 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.

Creative Places Edenderry ran an open call for their seed funding scheme, which saw 7 projects receiving funding of up to €1,000 for creative projects in the Edenderry Community. Grants were awarded based on the strength of the project idea; how well it engaged with the local community in Edenderry; and the artist or group's

connection to and interest in Edenderry and the surrounding area.

Creative Places Edenderry is currently seeking proposals from local, national / international professional artists / creatives or arts organizations / collectives that wish to collaborate artistically with individuals or groups in Edenderry on creative projects that will create an artistic impact for the people and place of the area. The awards are open to any artform, and the proposal must be artist/creative led.

Available funding is as follows:

- 2 x up to €3,000 Artist Commissions
- 1 x up to €6,000 Artist Commission
- 1 x up to €12,000 Artist Commission

Applications are open from 1st April to 15th May 2024.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Esker Arts

Esker Arts chairman Conor Brady and Director Sean Walsh made a presentation to the members of the county council at the April council meeting, in celebration of 12 months opening. Sean Walsh highlighted the rich and varied programme of activities that have taken place in the centre over the past year, alongside the range of collaborations and partnerships that have already been established across the county and with local arts groups and the community.



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, starting with a review and report on the sculptures and a maintenance schedule to commence in 2024. Artist Michael Burke, Sculpture Works, will be carrying out the review and report and overseeing works. This project is currently ongoing, with some initial minor works being carried out in April.

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 Studio's 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.

LIBRARY SERVICE

Bealtaine Festival at Offaly Libraries



Join us at Offaly Libraries for a wide variety of events and activities to celebrate Bealtaine Festival, this May 2024! Bealtaine is Ireland's national festival, celebrating the arts and creativity as we age.

The festival is run by Age & Opportunity, the leading national development organisation working to enable the best possible quality of life for us all as we age.

At Offaly Libraries, we will be celebrating Bealtaine with a diverse range of events spanning Cookery Demonstrations and Glass Painting led by LOETB, along with Resin workshops, Gramophone Recitals, Music sessions and our ever-popular coffee mornings.

[Please visit our website for more details on all events for Bealtaine here.](#)

All events are free to attend although booking is required where specified.

Spring Into Storytime



Offaly Libraries celebrated another Spring into Storytime this April, a core pillar of our national Right to Read initiative.



1,114 children participated in 233 events organised across our library branches for the month of April! Events included storytimes, craft sessions and school visits.



We now look forward to celebrating the Summer Stars Reading Adventure, which kicks off in June. Keep an eye on our website and social media channels for more updates.

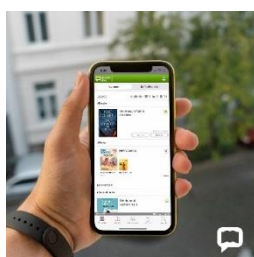
 **Right to Read**
at your Library

Exciting News for eResource Users!



If you're a fan of online newspapers and magazines available through your library, we have some great news – they will soon be available on BorrowBox!

From May 1st 2024, digital editions of newspapers and magazines will be available on BorrowBox! This means that you'll be able to get eBooks, eAudiobooks, eAudiobooks, eNewspaper and eMagazines all in one place.



If you're already a BorrowBox user, you'll see a new ePress section in the app, where you will find magazines and newspapers.

If you need help getting started with BorrowBox or would like more information please contact your [local library](#).

From May 1st 2024, Libby and PressReader apps will no longer be available through the library.

Poetry Day Ireland Events

Offaly Libraries supported Poetry Day Ireland on April 25th with an exciting array of events and online offerings in line with this year's theme: 'Good Sports'.



Edenderry Library welcomed **26 attendees** to an **Open Mic Poetry Evening** on April 24th and a **Children's Poetry Event** on April 25th.

Birr Library welcomed **21 students** from Gaelscoil na Laochra for bilingual readings of poems and tongue twisters.

Library staff also shared poetry readings across our social media channels during the week. Take a look back on these readings on our Facebook and Instagram: offaly.ie/follow-us

Offaly Libraries STEAM Programme



This April, Offaly Libraries embraced the wonderful world of technology during **Creative Tech Week**, with school workshops, Zoom story times and Virtual Reality sessions delivered to **600 students** across the county.

In partnership with Offaly County Council's STEM Education Officer, MicroBits workshops were delivered to primary and secondary school students across the county.



Staff in Tullamore Library led Media Literacy workshops with local Transition Year students.

Offaly Libraries also ran a successful awareness campaign which highlighted online and physical resources available at the library.

Midlands Astronomy Club Event at Tullamore Library



We are delighted to welcome Midlands Astronomy Club to Tullamore Library for family-friendly lecture nights over the coming months.

Their first event will take place on Thursday, May 2nd at 18.30 and will delve into the mysteries of Meteors and Meteorites. This event is free to all, but all minors must attend with a parent or guardian.

Healthy Ireland Programme: Student Mindfulness Workshops

Offaly Libraries were pleased to offer Mindfulness Workshops with Leona McDonnell for **68 students** across Birr, Clara and Tullamore Libraries this April.



These events were delivered as part of our Healthy Ireland at Your Library programme of events.

Creative Places Events at Edenderry Library

Creative Places hosted two successful events in Edenderry Library this April.



Thursday, 25th April saw a Live Acoustic session played by local youth band, RADAR, which was enjoyed by 48 attendees. This was followed with an Open Mic Music session on Friday, 26th April with 16 participants.



Art Exhibition at Tullamore Library

Artist Tom Joyce displayed stunning pieces of his work in Tullamore Library over the month of April. Tom's landscapes, portraits and still life pieces were all greatly admired by visitors to the library.



Art Exhibition in Edenderry Library

Local artist, Jenny Bergin, showcased her new collection of work at Edenderry Library for the month of April. The collection enjoyed a launch on Wednesday 3rd April.



For more information, please contact Edenderry Library at offaly.ie/Edenderry-library

‘From Monochrome to Colour’ Art Exhibition at Birr Library

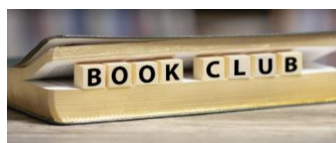
Birr Library are currently showcasing a unique collection of works from local artist, Seamus Corcoran.



The collection, entitled ‘From Monochrome to Colour’, mostly contains monochromatic pieces but Seamus also incorporates bold and vibrant colours in his semi-abstract pieces.

The collection is available to view at Birr Library during the month of April. More information available at offaly.ie/Birr-Library

Books Clubs at Offaly Libraries



Tullamore Library have added a third adult book club to their literacy programme! This new book club meet one morning each month and those interested in joining are asked to contact the library by email tullamorelibrary@offalycoco.ie or by phone 057 93 46832.

Offaly Libraries currently host 13 book clubs for adults, teens, and children throughout the county. Our library staff

are always happy to help source and select books to suit all ages and tastes.

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

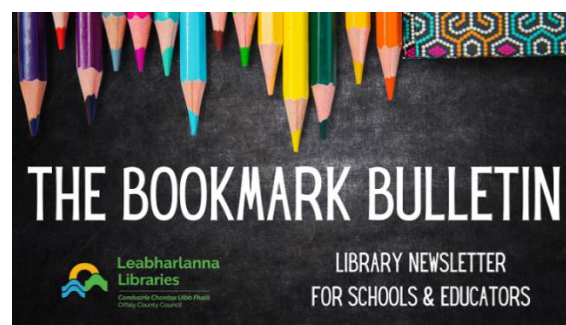
Alternatively, should you wish to **establish your own book club** in one of our libraries please get in touch by emailing askthelibrarian@offalycoco.ie and we will be happy to help!

Sign up for our Library Newsletters



A quick reminder that the best way to keep up to date with all library programmes, developments and new services is via [Offaly Libraries Newsletter](#) and by [following our social media channels.](#)

Currently we have **3,104 subscribers** to the general newsletter and **131 teachers** subscribed to the school newsletter.



Climate Action Environment Water & Transportation

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Action

Climate Action Plan 2024-2029:

April saw the official launch of Offaly County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 with the ceremonial planting of a native oak tree in Lloyd Park Tullamore by Minister of State Pippa Hackett, Cathaoirleach Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick, and CE Anna Marie Delaney. To mark the occasion all local representatives were invited, and the official party were joined on the morning by a number of sitting councilors, candidates, and members of the Climate Action Team. The CAP is available to view in both Irish and English at www.offaly.ie. Hard copies of the plan can be viewed at Aras an Chontae, each of the 3 MD offices and at our 8 libraries throughout the county.



Pictured at the launch of Offaly County Council's Climate Action Plan in Lloyd Park, Tullamore were Cathaoirleach Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick, Minister Pippa Hackett, Cllr Declan Hervey, Cllr Tony McCormack and Cllr Mark Hackett with Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive and Torm Shanahan, Director of Services and Offaly County Council's Climate Action Team.

To mark the successful development, adoption, publication and launch of all 31 local authority Climate Action Plan's, Minister Eamon Ryan TD, and officials from DECC and CARO offices organized an event in Ennis County Clare to mark the occasion. Climate Directors, Coordinators and Officers from around the county came together to discuss common actions and approaches on transitioning from plan development and adoption into the next

phase of plan implementation. (OCC plan directly under Minister Ryan)



Community Climate Action Fund

At the expiry date for submissions, Offaly County Council received 24 applications through our on-line application portal, Submit.com. Those applications totaled approximately €850,000 which indicates the huge community interest in the scheme. All completed applications are being reviewed, and as the scheme is over-subscribed by almost 100%, an evaluation committee convened to score each application before being sent to DECC for final approval.



Climate Action Initiatives

The Climate Action Team were delighted to be invited to attend and speak on the topics such as the recently adopted LACAP and Bring Your Own Cup initiatives at the recent business breakfast in the Bridge House Hotel expertly organized by colleagues from LEO on Lean, Green & Digital. The main speaker on the day, Mr. John O'Shanahan gave an inspiring talk to more than 50 attendees from the business community on how their businesses can increase profitability by embracing a green sustainable pathway and availing of various supports offered by Offaly LEO.

Offaly County Council are supporting Tullamore businesses take climate action with the deposit return scheme aimed at eliminating single use coffee cups in the town. With sponsorship from Tullamore Chamber, KMK Metals Recycling and backed by Tullamore Credit Union, Tullamore Tidy Towns and Team Tullamore local businesses are encouraged to sign up to the initiative in order to provide customers with a sustainable alternative to single use cups.



Energy

As part of the Council's journey towards ISO 50,001 Energy Management certification, a number of the council's Energy Action Team attended an SEAI/AIEA event aimed at showcasing the key drivers and benefits experienced by other LA's at differing stages of the ISO process.

Environment

Waste

Historical landfill - €173,162 funding approved – draft tender ready for tender of framework to commence Tier 2 & 3 works at 3 historical sites in nQ3/Q4.

Waste facility permits since 2024.

2 – new permits

2 – revised applications

Civic amenity contract to be extended for another 2 years –

Promotion of mattress amnesty at Birr civic amenity site in advanced stages, funding also sought under ADI for this initiative.

Noise

A Noise Action Progress Report will proceed to public consultation and be advertised in local newspapers and Offaly County Council website in the middle of May. A presentation will also be made to Councillors at the next SPC meeting in May to inform them of the contents and results of the noise mapping process. Copies of the noise action Plan will also be available at the Aras building along with the MD offices in Tullamore, Birr, and Edenderry.

Anti-Dumping Initiative

ADI funding – Proposed projects value of €90,000 for 2024. Projects are in Tullamore (2No) and Clara.

Environmental Management

In April, the Environment Section received **91** environmental complaints. All were investigated in a timely manner and resolved where possible.

Complaint Category	Number
Litter pollution (fly tipping/casual litter/litter on property)	67
Waste (dumping/burning/unauthorised sites)	10
Noise (community/commercial/industrial)	3
Control of Horses	6
Control of Dogs	4
Water Quality	1
Abandoned vehicles	0
Air	4

The Environment Section was successful in a waste enforcement case in Tullamore District on 12 April against an individual under Section 32 of the Waste Management Act, 1996 relating to the illegal collection of waste from a property in Dublin and the dumping of same at Finnermore Lakes, Boora. After a detailed investigative process, the defendant pleaded guilty in Court and the Judge convicted him and issued a penalty of €2,500 plus €700 costs to the Council.

Dangerous Structures

Environment Team issued 2 no. Section 3 Statutory Notices on properties situated in Offaly and has updated the Dangerous Structures Register accordingly. Environment Team will proceed in accordance with the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1964

Burial Grounds

St. Mary's Cemetery, Edenderry

A contractor is being appointed to carry out the works to the extension of the cemetery and works are due to commence by mid-May.



Cemetery Committees

We currently work with 17 cemetery committees, and we look forward to working with new committees 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 to form a committee to do that.

RURAL WATER SERVICES:

Capital

Applications for capital funding from the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2024 to 2026 were submitted to the Rural Water Unit, Dept of Housing, by 12/04/2024. Applications for a total of 36 projects were submitted, seeking funding to the value of €2,513,838.00.



Grants

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

Veterinary

Control of Dogs

So far in 2024 we have cared for 77 dogs in the Dog Shelter of which we have managed to re-home 70 so far.

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 25 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.

Control of Horses

To date in 2024, we have dealt with 11 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.

Water Quality Farm Inspections

Targeted farm inspections have commenced in accordance with the Good Agricultural Practice Regulations, SI 113 and 393 (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022 as amended. i.e. The Nitrates Regulations,

Nutrient Management Plan

9 no. Nutrient Management Plans have been assessed and approved in 2024 to date.

Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (DWWTS) inspections

Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (DWWTS) inspections have commenced in accordance with the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems.

Discharge Licences

Discharge Licence sampling has commenced in accordance with the 2024 sampling programme which was prepared following a review of chemical analysis data, non-compliance rate and process performance for each licensed site during 2023. There are currently 11 Licenced sites in Offaly.

Water Framework Directive Sampling

The WFD sampling programme has commenced under the WFD River & Lake Sampling Programme 2024. The sampling programme is designed to provide a representative geographical spread of surveillance and operational monitoring sites across all hydrometric areas.

TRANSPORTATION

Edenderry Town Inner Relief Road Phase 2

Construction works on Phase 2 of the Edenderry Inner Relief Road were substantially completed in April 2024 with the scheme scheduled to open for use in May 2024.



Photo 1: Aerial View of Edenderry Town Inner Relief Road Phase 2



Photo 2: Aerial View of Edenderry Town Inner Relief Road Phase 2

Expansion of our Velocity Patcher Fleet

We have placed an order for our 3rd Velocity Patcher Unit to complement the 2 new units deployed across our Road Network in 2023. Each Municipal District

will now have a permanent machine assigned within their fleet on receipt of the new vehicle.

Roads Program 2024

Preparatory works across all the program headings in the 2024 Roads program have now commenced across each Municipal District. While weather conditions are restricting some works from commencing we are now scheduled to commence some of our Macadam works and Surface Dressing program works in May 2024.

Public Lighting

The following is a breakdown of the Public Lighting failures across the County on the 29th of April. There are **169** faults on the system presently. **32** of these faults require third party intervention and as such cannot be repaired by the maintenance contractor. There are also 23 of the **32** third party faults that are historical records that include private housing estates whereby a survey was uploaded regarding a public lighting asset that was never commissioned in the first instance hence cannot be a fault. These anomalies are

being addressed by the yearly public lighting capital program.

Therefore, the current actionable faults amount to **137 faults or 1.47 %** of the lighting stock.

The breakdown of the **137** faults across each MD are as follows:

Municipal District	No Of Faults	Total No of Lights in the MD	% fault of MD Lights Only	% fault per MD of the Countywide Public Lighting Stock
Birr MD	81	2962	2.73	0.87
Tullamore MD	30	3933	0.76	0.32
Edenderry MD	26	2405	1.08	0.28

Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Finance

Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 30 April 2024

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr Budget 2024 €m	Preliminary Value to Apr 2024 €m	% Year To Date
Payroll costs	35.68	10.82	30.3%
Grants and Subsidies Income	50.31	11.27	22.4%

OCC to 30th April 2024

	<u>Rates</u> €m	<u>Rents</u> €m	<u>Loans</u> €m
Opening Balance Jan 1st, 2024	2.58	0.64	0.04
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers	17.26	2.84	0.13
2024 Cash Collected to end of April	9.94	2.90	0.14
Closing Balance April 30th, 2024	9.91	0.58	0.02

2023 Cash collected to April 30th

	6.05	2.48	0.20
% Collection at this point in 2023	164%	117%	71%

Bank Overdraft to 30th April 2024

	-	-	% YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date		24	20%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to April 30th 2024 YTD		(Estimate)	€1,706
Bank Administration and transactional charges to April 30th 2024 YTD		(Estimate)	€11,817