

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL BAINISTÍOCHTA

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Márta / March



St. Patrick's Day

New York



Kilbride (Ballycowan)
church conservation
project visited as part of
the Annual Heritage
Seminar tour



Proposed Designs
Unveiled of St. Joseph's
Convent Ferbane

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **Birr Library Friday, 21st April at 7pm, talk on Scribes, Scripts and Manuscripts: Medieval Treasures from the Heart of Ireland and Thursday, 27th April from launch of Dr. Jim Houlihan's book The Great Law of Birr.**

Land Use, Planning and Economic Development Services

PLANNING

Development Management

	To end Mar 2024	To end Mar 2023	Total 2023
Planning Applications	135	136	695
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	1	3	20
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	6 (5)	73 (44)	181 (73)

Development Management

Forward Planning

Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

Offaly County Council published its Draft map RZLT 2024 on 1 February showing land to be considered in scope for the RZLT maps along with explanatory text to accompany same and inviting submissions from landowners in relation to removal of land from draft maps (by 1 April) and zoning requests (by 31 May). To date, 5 submissions have been received, all in March.

Just Transition

Local and Regional Economic Support Strategies Support Scheme

Offaly County Council awaits decisions on five applications submitted to date between **8 December 2023** and **23 January 2024**. They are in relation to projects which will support enterprise and employment both across the county and in the specific areas of Shannonbridge, Rhode and Tullamore. All projects are aligned with the objectives of the Offaly Local Economic and Community Plan.

Failte Ireland

Offaly County Council awaits decision on three applications submitted to Failte Ireland on 29 February 2024, under the Strategic Partnership Agreement which was signed in November 2023. The applications are in relation to tourism projects in Birr, Shannonbridge and

Portarlington. If successful, these projects will increase visitor numbers to the areas, thereby having a positive effect on local economies.

Heritage Team – January to March 2024

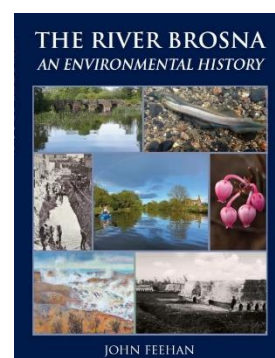
The Annual Offaly Heritage Seminar was held on Friday 22 March and Saturday 23 March with the launch of 'The River Brosna' book by John Feehan on the Friday evening, two tours on Saturday morning and a series of talks in the afternoon.

Biodiversity

The main focus for the first quarter of the year has been the preparation of the **Local Biodiversity Action plan** for Offaly with Ricky Whelan leading discussions with each Municipal District; public library clinics, online discussions, Midlands 103, presentation at the annual heritage seminar and to the March Council Meeting. The deadline is 24 April for submissions.



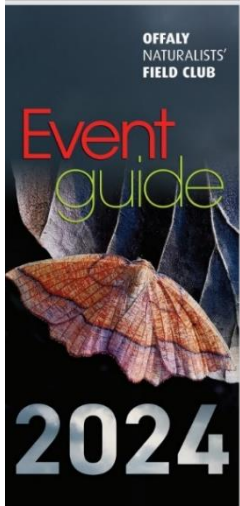
10 years of research culminated in the launch of 'The River Brosna' by John Feehan published by Offaly County Council with support of Westmeath County Council and Creative Ireland.



Wildflowers of Offaly YouTube Videos

The 2024 series has begun with two new videos bringing the total number of subscribers now to 2,530 with over 100 Wildflowers of Offaly videos.

Offaly Naturalists' Field Club programme



A full programme of events is published in the Offaly Naturalists' Field Club programme and started with the talk on *'The Secret Lives of Crows'* in Kinnitty hosted by the Tidy Towns and led by Ricky Whelan biodiversity officer.

Brian Caffrey of BirdWatch Ireland led a trip to the Little Brosna and Shannon Callows in January.

World Heritage Site

Attended two key meetings in Birr and UCD for briefing about the application process for Birr Demesne to partner with Armagh Observatory and Dunsink Observatory to apply for World Heritage Site with UNESCO. It is a 6-8 year process.

County Archive Service

Working with Offaly History and Offaly Library service to support the County Archive Service. €44,000 was received from the Heritage Council under the Heritage Organisation Support Fund for the archive service in 2024.

Tidy Towns Support Programme

'Planting for Biodiversity' workshop was led by Lynn O'Keeffe, wildlife gardener and Ricky Whelan and hosted by Tullamore Library on 2 March. Attended by 20 people.



Some of the Tidy Towns group representatives at the recent "Planting for Biodiversity" workshop in Tullamore Library

Funding Programmes

- 1. Heritage Council – Heritage Plan funding**
Application for 2024 funding has approval for €37,000 towards Heritage Plan projects including the Annual Heritage Seminar, Heritage Week, God in a Bottle video, a range of publication supports and Lidar scanning.
- 2. Heritage Council – Biodiversity Action Plan Funding**
Application for 2024 funding has approval for €20,000 towards the costs of creating the Offaly Biodiversity Action Plan 2025 – 2030, costs will include environmental screening of the plan, Irish translation services and publication.
- 3. Local Biodiversity Action Funding**
An application has been made to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for 15 projects and €100,000 funding. Decision pending.
- 4. Community Monuments Fund**
11 applications were received from across the county for this scheme which offers 100% support for the conservation of monuments. 9 projects have been submitted. However, on the level of funding available it is likely that 2-3 applications may receive funding.
- 5. Historic Towns Initiative – Birr Courthouse**
Offaly County Council is one of four councils that have received funding from the Heritage Council to develop a capital project - €80,000 has been offered towards the Part 8 planning process which a cross directorate working group in the Council is progressing, liaising with Birr 20:20 Vision Group.
- 6. Creative Ireland**
Co-ordination for the Offaly Creative Ireland programme which has a budget of c. €200,000. Following an open call for community projects, offers have been made for 19 community led creative projects exploring aspects of the county's heritage.

7. Heritage Council Community Grants The funding level for this grant scheme run directly by the Heritage Council has increased to 100% resulting in 10 community applications being supported by the heritage office in 2024.

8. Commemorations Funding €15,000 has been made available in 2024 as a follow up to the Decade of Centenaries programme. A proposal with the local historical

societies and Offaly Library Service has been submitted.

9. Just Transition – Conservation and Pollination Programme 2021- 2023

This programme is drawing to a close. Final works include wrought iron repairs to the coffin stand at Kilmurryely and masonry works at Kilbride church.

REGENERATION

Town Centre First - Suite of Supports 2024

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, unveiled a national €4.5 million initiative on February 7, 2024, aimed at strengthening rural towns and villages.

First for Offaly to be announced under the new suite of measures, is a new Town Centre First Plan for Ferbane. This marks a significant milestone for the town of Ferbane to receive funding of €30,000 to support the development of a unique Town Centre First Plan for Ferbane.

Offaly County Council will soon set up a Town Team and work closely with local community and business groups as well as public private stakeholders in Ferbane to develop objectives and deliver their Town Centre First Plan.

The Town Centre First Plan will present a new vision for Ferbane by providing an understanding of the place, defining the place and identifying means of enabling the place.

The plan will integrate existing projects and introduce new ideas that could transform Ferbane and help create a vibrant town centre.

Announcements are pending on the remaining Town Centre First - Suite of Supports 2024 as follows:

Project Development Measure

This support will be delivered under the umbrella of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme to assist local authorities to contribute to a pipeline of significant, well-developed projects by providing funding of €50,000 to support up to two projects.

Town Team Support Fund

Funding of €10,000 for up to three towns to support research and data collection or establishment and/or development of town teams where they are not already well established.

Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF):

St. Joseph's Convent, Ferbane Public Information Event

Offaly County Council in partnership with An Síolán held a Public Information Event on Wednesday 6th of March 2024 in Gallen Community School, Ferbane, to allow the public to view the preliminary designs for the refurbishment of St Joseph's Convent Ferbane.



St. Joseph's Convent, Ferbane Public Information Event

Kenny Lyons Associates showcased the preliminary designs for the refurbishment/redesign of St. Joseph's

Convent and ancillary buildings for use as a multipurpose community, enterprise and learning hub and the potential for the overall site, such as an urban garden, a multifunctional sports ground and a riverbank walk along the River Brosna. Members of the public and community of Ferbane took this opportunity to engage directly with the design team and the preliminary design drawings were well received.



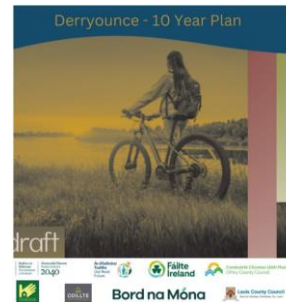
Concept image of preliminary design

The design team are currently preparing a cost plan for the current design option that was on display at the Public Information Event. Following a review of the cost plan the project will progress to a more detailed design and Part 8 application.

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS): Derryounce 10 Year Plan, Stakeholder Workshop

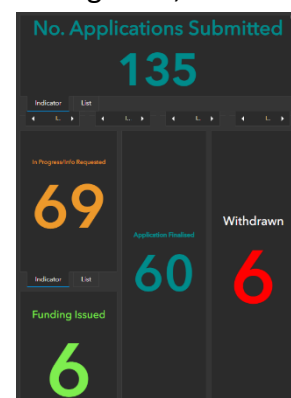
The final public consultation took the form of a newsletter and online questionnaire in addition to the final Stakeholder workshop which took place on Wednesday 6th of March 2024. The online questionnaire is

now closed however comments were well received with constructive feedback. Consultants will meet with representatives from the PCDA with regards to concerns raised at the Stakeholder Workshop. SLR intend to issue a final draft to the steering group in early April.



Vacancy & Dereliction Croi Cónaithe – Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

Offaly County Council continues online promotion of the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant. The grant continues to provide new options for people to refurbish an existing derelict/vacant property and provides the opportunity to live in towns, villages and rural parts of the country. To date, 6 No. grants have been processed totalling €318,631.17.



For information and application forms please see <https://www.offaly.ie/vacant-homes/>

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE



Local Enterprise Week 2024 in Offaly!

On Monday, March 4th, LEO Offaly commenced Local Enterprise Week with an event focused on “Greater Productivity, Morale, and Retention.” Throughout the week, a variety of other engaging activities unfolded, including the Student Enterprise Awards Final, a Digital Marketing Programme, Outreach Clinics with Business Advisors in Birr, Edenderry, and Tullamore Libraries, Mentoring Clinics, the Start Your Own Business Course, and a session on ChatGPT for Digital Marketing. Additionally, participants explored strategies for Optimizing Their Bottom Line with Blaise Brosnan and at another training course received a Health Check for Their Website. The week culminated in a delightful celebration of female entrepreneurs during an International Women’s Day Afternoon Tea and Learn/Share Event.

LEO Offaly expresses heartfelt gratitude to all speakers and attendees for contributing to the success of Local Enterprise Week 2024—a truly remarkable occasion..

Full details and photos from each event are available on the LEO website: localenterprise.ie/offaly

Rahan based IT Support Company is Overall Winner of Offaly County Enterprise Awards for 2024

Network and Infrastructure (NIS Ltd) is the Overall Winner of 2024 Offaly County Enterprise Awards. As winner of the top award, receiving a trophy and cash prize of €2,500, NIS Ltd will now represent Co. Offaly and Local Enterprise Office Offaly at the National Enterprise Awards in May.

NIS Ltd., established in 2001 by Gerry Buckley provides a complete IT support and IT services solution throughout Ireland. The company has grown from strength to strength and now employs eight full-time staff.

The runner up award together with a cash prize of €1,000 was won by Jack Pilkington, T/a Clonearl Engineering. This steel fabrication firm is based in Clonearl, Daingean and provides a wide range of steel fabrication services from agri shed construction and maintenance to agri equipment manufacturing and machinery repair. One of their primary products is bespoke trailers for specialised testing equipment used by agri research bodies such as ICBF and Teagasc.

Speaking during Local Enterprise Week, Orla Martin, Head of Enterprise with Local Enterprise Office Offaly said: "NIS Ltd has already become a success story and the judges were particularly impressed by the development of this company. Offaly is proud to be represented by NIS Ltd at the National Enterprise Awards."

Increased Cost of Business Grant Scheme (ICOB)

As part of Budget 2024, the Government agreed a package of €257 million for the Increased Cost of Business (ICOB) Grant as a vital measure for small and medium businesses. Local Authorities funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE), will manage the rollout of the grant to qualifying businesses. The grant is available to qualifying businesses as a contribution towards the rising costs faced by businesses. This is not a rates waiver; rates must continue to be paid to your Local Authority. Full details include link to apply is available here: offaly.ie/occ_news

Offaly's Glenisk Named Business of The Year At Guaranteed Irish Awards

Congratulations to organic yoghurt maker Glenisk who has been named Business of the Year at the 2024 Guaranteed Irish Business Awards. The company, which employs over 80 people in Ireland, was selected from a shortlist of 174 finalists. Glenisk also won in the Family Run Business category at the awards, which were

celebrated at a dinner at the RDS attended by 400 people.

Sustainability Webinar Series with Enterprise Ireland

Explore the opportunities and benefits of implementing sustainability into your business when you participate in this upcoming Green Transition Webinar series. [Click here to register!](#)

The Student Enterprise Programme is an educational and fun-packed initiative that teaches second level students what it's really like to be an entrepreneur and set up and run their own business over the course of the academic year. Over 600 students from 12 schools from all over County Offaly participated. 106 students made it to the County Final held on 5 March 2024 in the Tullamore Court Hotel.

Teenage entrepreneurs from Sacred Heart School, Tullamore, Oaklands Community College, Edenderry and Gallen Community School, Ferbane will represent Offaly at this year's Student Enterprise Programme National Final on Thursday 9th May in the Mullingar Park Hotel. Full details on www.localenterprise.ie/Offaly/News



Senior Winner: D Fogarty Woodworks from the Sacred Heart School, Tullamore



Intermediate Winner: POM Peace of Mind Oaklands Community College, Edenderry



Junior Winner: Sweet Tooth Hampers from Gallen Community School, Ferbane



Best Business Plan: RKH Baking from Coláiste Íosagáin, Portarlington



Sustainability Award: Woodcrafts Men from Coláiste Choilm, Tullamore.



Most Innovative Product: ZipnScrunchies from Coláiste na Sionna, Banagher.



My Entrepreneurial Journey: Golf Girls Ltd from Tullamore College.



Marketing Award: Sweet Scents from St. Mary's Secondary School, Edenderry.



One to Watch : Business Game Changers from Tullamore College.



Best Stand : Rian's Bottled Crafts from Coláiste na Sionna, Banagher



Merit Award : Cistercian Dairy from Cistercian College, Roscrea



Trophies designed and made by Fiona Scott Resin

2024

Student
Enterprise
PROGRAMME



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.

EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism & Placemaking Scheme

The LEO Offaly team collaborated with the Offaly Tourism Activator Officer, Offaly Tourism and Fáilte Ireland in the provision of information evenings on the EU Just Transition Fund Regenerative Tourism & Placemaking Scheme. Further details available on the [website](#).

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>

Upcoming Events		See All Events >
03/04/2024	Part-Time Business Start Up (while holding down a ...	Book online
05/04/2024	Social Media Marketing Bootcamp - Five Sessions	Book online
10/04/2024	Free Digital and Social Media Mentoring with Keith...	Book online
11/04/2024	Trading Online Voucher Webinar	Book online
15/04/2024	Start Your Own Business Course Evenings	Book online
17/04/2024	Practical Guide to Income Tax for Businesses	Book online
18/04/2024	Public Procurement and Tendering Advisory Clinic -...	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 531 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of March 2024.
- A further 578 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 5 signed up for HAP and 6 exited from HAP in March.
- At the end of March, 28 single people and 15 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 to commence April 2024
- 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)
- Sofia Housing, 17 Units @ Clonamore, Tullamore – Works being finalised.

Turnkey Developments/Part V

- Bog Road, Portarlinton, 33 units – Snagging under way, handover April/May 2024.
- Silverbrook, Tullamore, 11 x Part V units – Complete, 9 remaining
- Redwood, Tullamore, 8 x Part V unit – Completed, 3 remaining
- MacGregor, 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.

- 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 14th March, 2024. Main agenda items included the Rural Development LEADER Programme 2014 – 2022, Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme SICAP 2024-2028, Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) Audit Report: SICAP 2022 and Community Activities Fund 2022 and Local Enhancement Programme 2024.



LEADER Offaly Annual Progress Report 2023 and Implementation Plan 2024

Members were briefed on the LEADER Annual Progress Report 2023 & Implementation Plan 2024. Key outcomes for 2023 were highlighted. The LEADER Annual Progress Report 2023 & the Implementation Plan 2024 were approved by the members.

SICAP 2024-2028

The SICAP Annual Plan 2024 was presented at the meeting and approved by the members. A comprehensive overview of SICAP 2018-2023 was presented to the members.

Community Response Forum

In March 2024, with the rollout of the new expanded integration remit in local authorities, the role of the Community Response Forum has been extended to include International Protection, Those with Status, Ukraine (BOTPs) and where applicable, the IRPP programme. Please note that in line with direction from the LGMA the name of the Community Response Forum has changed and is re-

named as the Community Integration Forum.

The remit of the original Community Response Forum has changed from a temporary response to the Ukraine crisis to a longer term, more sustainable structure. The new Forum will be Chaired by Jean Ryan, Acting Director of Services for Housing and Ukrainian Response and will be administered by staff from the Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) which is currently being established by Offaly County Council. Terms of Reference outlining the operation of the Forum will be agreed by the members.



On Saturday 16th March 2024 Her Excellency, Larysa Gerasko, the Ukrainian Ambassador to Ireland, attended a celebration of gratitude event held at the Charleville Community Centre, Tullamore. The event was organised by Sonyashnyk



Offaly (Sunflowers Offaly) on behalf of the Ukrainian community residing in County Offaly, who extended their heartfelt appreciation for the unwavering support and warm welcome of the people of Offaly, where the kindness and understanding of its residents have made their transition smoother. The event

was attended by a number of new arrivals residing in the county, local elected representatives and by members of the Community Integration Forum.

Community Recognition Fund 2024-25

The Community Recognition Fund was first introduced in 2023 to recognise the huge efforts made by communities in welcoming and supporting people coming to Ireland. Under the 2023 allocation, funding of €50 million was approved for over 900 projects in cities, towns and villages nationwide. Based on the continued impacts on communities throughout the country and the need to support these communities in welcoming new arrivals, a further €50 million is being provided under the Community Recognition Fund 2024. Of this fund, €1,055,308 was allocated to County Offaly on Friday 15th March 2024.

Funding is targeted at and specifically invested in those communities, villages and towns where the highest level of new arrivals are located and where there is a clear need for investment identified. Projects situated in areas that do not have high levels of new arrivals will not be deemed eligible.

Projects to be funded will be capital in nature, deliver medium-long term benefits for the communities in which they are located, and be capable of being delivered over the course of 2025 and 2026. A minimum spend of 50% of the allocation must be incurred in 2025. Eligible projects will receive funding for capital costs, but not for any ongoing operational or running costs.

The minimum level of funding for an individual project is €50,000 with a maximum of €500,000 applying. Smaller projects cannot be artificially combined to meet the minimum threshold of €50,000 –

while the 2023 scheme provided funding for small scale investment in clubs and communities (e.g. for small scale equipment), the focus of the 2024 scheme is on projects of greater scale and impact.

Local authorities have scope to invest the funding based on their own distinct local needs as identified through a “bottom-up” approach based on community engagement.

Funding proposals may be developed by OCC based on direct engagement with impacted communities and in consultation with elected representatives, the LCDC, the local Community Response Fora and Local Development Companies. Proposals will also be consistent with Local Economic and Community Plans. Details of the application process will be provided on www.offaly.ie

The type of projects eligible for funding are:

- development, enhancement or refurbishment of community or cultural facilities including play areas, walkways, parks, community/sensory gardens, allotments, and recreational areas
- development, enhancement or refurbishment of local club and sports
- enhancement to school/parish facilities which are open to use by all the community after school hours.
- purchase of equipment for local clubs, festivals, community events and organisations
- transport infrastructure such as the purchase of community vehicles, bus shelters and information boards; (any vehicle funded must be in good condition and not more than 5 years old)

- projects that help address dereliction and/or wider local economic and community development
- purchase and refurbishment of vacant or derelict buildings for community use
- Purchase of land and associated works for the development of community facilities such as play areas/ MUGAs or town parks/ community gardens, recreational areas etc. (purchases must only be administered by the local authority).

Public Participation Network

A warm welcome

to Carol Mahon,
the new PPN



Public Participation
Network Offaly

Support Worker. Carol is currently undertaking training in a range of areas relevant to the PPN. Consultations, Workshop information and any other relevant news can be forwarded to Carol for distribution to the PPN membership.

PPN membership is now close to 700 groups with emails currently reaching 910 contacts across the country on a weekly basis. The PPN is celebrating its 10th Anniversary in 2024

Sustainable Development Goals National Stakeholders Forum

This was a very informative interactive event with a range of speakers and opportunities for round table discussions. Green Offaly presented in conjunction with OLDC on their collaboration on the SDG's.

Offaly's Older Persons Network

A Rambling House evening took place on March 8th as part of Seactain Na Gaeilge. A very successful event organised by the Older Persons Network in conjunction with Offaly Age Friendly Alliance and the PPN with over 130 in attendance. An evening of ceol agus craic including a choir with members of the Ukrainian community.

Funds raised from the event were presented to Family Carers Offaly.



Community Energy Charter

Workshop 2 & 3

WE NEED YOUR VOICE!

OFFALY PPN COMMUNITY ENERGY CHARTER

SURVEY 2 <https://greenoffaly.ie/energyfuture>

Leasra Rannghairiúcháin Pobail Uilleann Public Participation Networks Offaly

Offaly Public Participation Network are currently working with Green Offaly on the creation of a Community Energy Charter. As the Energy transition accelerates, we want to ensure that our Communities have the opportunity and framework to influence Offaly's Energy Future. The Charter will serve as a set of guidelines that aim to strengthen the Community position in all aspects of the Energy landscape. We now ask for your input into the findings and recommendations of the working group via Survey 2:

[Link here: Survey 2](#)

To ensure that the Charter is a truly participatory process, please share the link far and wide with as many members of your groups and Community as possible. The final draft will be circulated at the end of the month. Thank you!

Two full day workshops were held during March facilitated by Rebekah Keaveny Green Offaly.

In conjunction with two County Wide Surveys, the workshops will assist in the formulation of a Community Energy Charter. The second Survey was distributed on Wednesday 20th March with a closing date for responses March 27th

It is expected that the charter will be completed by the end of March with a launch to follow.

Cloncreen Windfarm community information sessions took place at 7.00pm in Edenderry GAA. Speakers on the evening included OLDC and Clann Credo

Offaly PPN had a stand where they provided information to the Edenderry Community on the benefits and opportunities that are available through PPN Membership.

An opportunity to meet with the community, address queries and explain the role of the PPN in the Community.

Comhairle Na nÓg

The Member's held a meeting to progress their work topic

Mental Health. Much of the discussion was around stigma when seeking mental health support. Plans to liaise with Jigsaw and Library Services to progress their ideas.

A number of Offaly Comhairle na nÓg Members and Hazel, co-ordinator, attended Dail na nÓg in Leinster House. This is a youth parliament that meets once each year and is comprised of Comhairlí representatives from all over Ireland. A representative from each Comhairle is nominated to join the Dáil na nÓg Council.



The Dáil na nÓg Council meets regularly over the course of the year and follows up on the recommendations of the Dáil na nÓg.

HEALTHY OFFALY

With the Healthy Ireland Round 4 Year 1 financial and progress reports submitted last month, the early weeks of March were taken up with answering the follow-on queries from Pobal. Work commenced on animating new actions for 2024, meeting prospective partners, completing service level agreements with current and new partners, and processing the initial 50% grant instalments to partners.



One event of note to take place in March was the first race in the Healthy Offaly 5K Road Race Series 2024. This is a new departure for Healthy Offaly to partner with Offaly Athletics to offer financial support to their marquee race series event which will take place in 8 athletic clubs in the County. The Healthy Offaly logo will feature prominently on all publications and literature relating to the series and will provide a great opportunity to highlight the work of Healthy Offaly in increasing physical activity levels in the County. Healthy Offaly is a keen supporter of 'Couch to 5K' programmes run in athletic clubs and the road race series is a culmination of the hard work that takes place at club level in the winter and spring months.



SPORTS

Highlights for March include: -

- Ongoing delivery of programmes in each of our three sports hubs, Daingean, Mucklagh and Ballycumber
- Over 30 schools have signed up for the spring fitness programmes of the Sports Partnership
- Two Safeguarding 1 (child protection basic awareness) training programmes delivered for 40 volunteers
- Two first aid courses delivered
- The delivery of Offaly SP's annual Women in Sport Week from 4th to 10th March 2024. Among the programmes delivered were: -



3 v 3 basketball



Camogie events (club led)



Golf (club led)

Launch of SHE TUS Research



Pauline Curley Relay Marathon



Rugby blitz (Leinster Rugby led)



Soccer blitz (FAI led)



Social Basketball (club led); and much more



The management committee also approved eight funding proposals for submission to the Dormant Accounts Disbursement Fund totaling €238,560

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 OFFICE

Arts Strategy 2024-2028

The new draft Arts Strategy 2024-2028 was presented for approval at the March council meeting by Dr. Sally O'Leary, Arts Officer and arts consultant John O'Brien. The strategy was approved and adopted by the council.

ARTS OFFICE PROGRAMMES

Lough Boora - Art in Landscape Festival of Change

Art in the Landscape Festival of Change is fast approaching - taking place in **Offaly on 5th and 6th April** at Esker Arts and Lough Boora Sculpture Park. An exciting programme is available which includes an event at Esker Arts called *Tionól – a gathering of ideas*; a creative space to share ideas and an opportunity for participants to share their 'big' or 'small' ideas around Art in the Landscape. Selected presenters will have presentation slots of 10 minutes each, this will be followed by a networking opportunity for communities called The Conversation Café. Save the Date of 5th and 6th April for a full programme of events, workshops, exhibitions for artists and communities. The festival also includes the opening of two impressive exhibitions of internationally acclaimed artists, as well as a number of workshops, talks and performances.



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 production in Offaly. The film is currently in post-production.

Film Offaly Award 2024 The call for the FilmOffaly 2024 Award closed on **Monday 11th March 2024**. This funding initiative aims to foster creative, resourceful filmmaking in the county. The Award is for unique, original stories by talented new filmmakers, professional and novice alike. The only stipulation is that the filming must take place in Offaly! The Offaly Film Commission also encourage the utilisation of local crew and a mentoring element of the production for local film makers. The award saw a great response from filmmakers across Ireland with 46 scripts submitted, which are currently going through the assessment process.

FilmOffaly Review The FilmOffaly Review undertaken by researchers; *Culture Works* is now completed. Following presentations to FilmOffaly Commission Board and Community and Culture SPC, recommendations and actions form part of the new Arts Strategy 2024-2028.

Annual Programme Funding Opportunities

The 2024 **Youth Arts Commissions** caters for the delivery of Youth Arts Projects for the cohort of 13- to 25-year-olds within

Offaly. The Arts Office invited professional artists, individuals or groups, to work with youth organisations to submit a proposal outlining the proposed idea. The commission was open to submissions from all art disciplines including visual arts, film, animation, digital arts, performing arts, literature or sound art. A panel met recently and two projects were awarded funding to a total of €8,894 for two projects. Emma Barone of Birr will undertake a 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 Sub group.

Music Generation Offaly were also awarded a grant to run a Songwriting Project in collaboration with Tolü Makay centered 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.

Mini Movies – this annual project took place in three schools in Birr, Co. Offaly. Mini Movies gives children in Offaly the opportunity to work with professional film makers who work with a class of children in their school towards the making of either a live action or animated short film. Following a consultation process in 2023, the project underwent a revival with the extent of the workshops moving into three full days of workshops for each school. This allowed the participants to be active in all elements of the project from concept to shooting to editing. The project was delivered in two Primary Schools and one secondary school in Birr across February and March 2024 to a total of 65 children

and young people. The workshops were delivered by the national organisation *Young Irish Filmmakers* and the films created by the groups will premiere at the 2024 OFFline Film Festival in October 2024.

Festival Arts Scheme 2024 is designed for festivals taking place in Offaly in 2024 that are either dedicated arts festivals or have a strong professional arts element to the festival. The application process closed on the 19th of February 2024 and was assessed by an external panel. The Arts Office received 9 applications, six were funded totaling €13,000.00, one application was referred to the Arts Acts fund and two were not funded within the criteria of the scheme.

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, has been hosting an array of different arts-based activities, workshops and events. March continues to see activities 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.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Esker Arts

There has been a rich and varied programme of activity across March at Esker Arts. The second exhibition opening of the year proved to be a great success. Esker Arts hosted a fantastic crowd for the official opening of *Hidden in Plain Sight*, an exhibition by artist Marie - Louise Martin. The exhibition invites the viewer to look, as she did during the lockdown period, just a little closer at their environment and perhaps to also see the unexpected beauty in the everyday. The programme for March has included great variety with music, film, workshops and engagement with schools as well as an Open Mic event to mark World Poetry Day.



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.

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

Seachtain na Gaeilge



Offaly Libraries enjoyed a fantastic programme for Seachtain na Gaeilge this year, with a variety of events promoting the use of Irish organised between March 1-17.

Coinciding with the celebrations, Offaly Libraries have produced an [Irish Language Resource brochure](#) with instructions on how to access all supports available at the library for those wishing to learn or improve their Irish.



On Saturday, 9th of March, Tullamore Library became a 'Pop-Up Gaeltacht' with LEGO agus VEX i nGaeilge, Am Scéalaíochta for pháistí, agus Comhrá agus Caife do dhaoine fásta – i bpáirt le Conradh na Gaeilge.



Tráth na gCeisteanna were on offer to 62 primary and secondary school students around the county, and the winning teams received some lovely prizes.

Birr Library hosted an Irish Language Circle on March 13th to celebrate Lá na gCiorcal. The group continue to meet in Birr Library every Saturday at 11:00 and all are welcome to join.



In Daingean Library, 19 students from Walsh Island NS took part in a Seachtain na Gaeilge Zoom story time with staff and using LOTE: Languages Other Than English, as an opportunity to introduce them to some of the e-resources available for children.



Our Seachtain na Gaeilge celebrations were kindly co-funded by Creative Ireland.

Offaly Libraries STEAM Programme

Offaly Libraries 0 s STEAM programme continues to support and promote STEAM subjects to the young minds of Offaly.

In March, we enjoyed a busy calendar of events celebrating two national weeks: Engineers Week and Irish Astronomy Week.

Engineers Week, March 2nd – 8th

Offaly Libraries delivered a dynamic [programme of Engineers Week events](#) to inspire the budding engineers of tomorrow.

A series of staff-led workshops explored engineering topics with local students and youths, including Building Bridges with LEGO and the aerodynamics of Paper Planes.



Irish Astronomy Week , March 9th – 16th

Offaly Libraries are proud to include Irish Astronomy Week under the ever-expanding umbrella of our STEAM programme.

Using our Virtual Reality headsets, over 100 students embarked on exhilarating journeys into space during four events held in Birr, Clara and Daingean libraries.



Tullamore Library welcomed local photographer, Tom O'Hanlon for a talk entitled 'Astro Landscapes to Deep Sky', on

14th March which was very well received by all attendees.

As always, our libraries provided a wealth of supporting resources for both weeks with book displays, story times and crafts to help all visitors discover and enjoy the wonders of STEAM.



Our STEAM coordinator was invited to be a guest judge at the SciFest@School event in Coláiste Íosagáin, Portarlinton on 20th March. There was a fantastic variety of science projects on display, and we thoroughly enjoyed chatting to all the students about their work.



World Book Day Celebrations

Our libraries celebrated World Book Day on Thursday, 7th March with plenty of story times, crafts, and activities on offer during the week.



Tullamore Library hosted a World Book Day table quiz for 30 students from

Tullamore College while 60 students from Killina Presentation School were invited for a tour of the library. 63 students from three local Primary schools were treated to story times and crafts on the day also.

Easter Crafts to Kick Off Spring Into Storytime



Offaly Libraries will celebrate another Spring into Storytime this April, a core pillar of our national Right to Read initiative. In the run up to Easter and Spring into Storytime, our libraries were busy delivering themed activities for children including storytimes, crafts and activity sheets,



We look forward to welcoming schools back after the Easter break for a series of class visits and storytimes under the Spring into Storytime umbrella.+

Fighting Words at Offaly Libraries



FIGHTING WORDS

38 students from 5th and 6th Class Charleville NS joined us in Tullamore Library on 4th March for a Fighting Words Creative Writing Workshop. They wrote an exciting football themed story, beautifully illustrated by students from Tullamore College. Edenderry Library will host the

next Fighting Words workshop on Thursday, 13th April from 10:30.

Exhibition Launch in Tullamore Library



Local visual artist, Phil Gannon, enjoyed a successful launch of her collection titled 'Different Strokes for Different Folks' on Tuesday, March 5th at Tullamore Library. Her collection remained on display for the month of March.

School Exhibition Launch at Birr Library



Birr Library staff were delighted to welcome management, staff and 2nd year students from St. Brendan's Community School, Birr to launch their exhibition entitled 'The Past in my Place' on March 5th. Students were invited to research their local areas or areas within Ireland, Europe and the wider world where they have a personal connection. The exhibition was on display during the month of March.

April Local History Events at Birr Library

Birr Library will host two events of local interest this coming month. On Friday, 21st April at 7pm, we will invite guest speakers Donncha MacGabhann MA PhD and Joseph Flahive

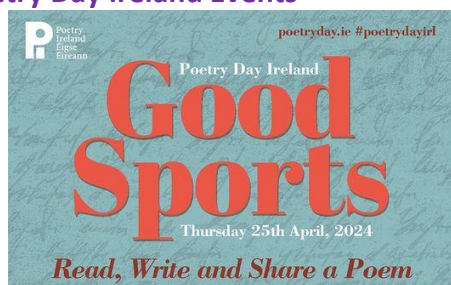


MA Phd to deliver a talk titled. *Scribes, Scripts and Manuscripts: Medieval Treasures from the Heart of Ireland*.

On Thursday, 27th April from 6.30pm, we welcome Dr. Jim Houlihan and guests for the launch of his book *The Great Law of Birr*.

All are welcome to attend. For more information on either event, please contact Birr Library directly at birrlibrary@offalycoco.ie or by phone 057 9124950

Poetry Day Ireland Events



Offaly Libraries will support 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 will host an **Open Mic Poetry Evening** on April 24th and a **Children's Poetry Event** on April 25th with many more events yet to be announced around the county.

Library staff will share poetry readings across our social media channels during the week. Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram: [offaly.ie/follow-us](https://www.offaly.ie/follow-us)

LOETB: Staying Connected in Birr Library this April



Staying Connected computer classes, delivered through the LOETB, will take place in Birr Library from Wednesday, April 24th.

The classes will be held between 2pm – 4pm every Wednesday for six weeks and all are welcome to register their interest with Birr Library by email birrlibrary@offalycoco.ie or by phone 057 9124950

Art Exhibition in Edenderry Library

Local artist, Jenny Bergin, will showcase her new collection of work at Edenderry Library for the month of April.



The collection was launched on Wednesday 3rd April.

For more information, please contact Edenderry Library at [offaly.ie/Edenderry-library](https://www.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.

FROM MONOCHROME TO COLOUR

BY SEAMUS CORCORAN

APRIL 2024

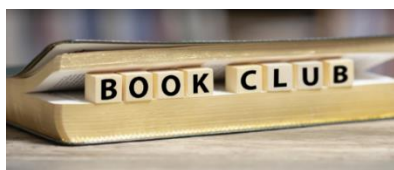


The collection, entitled 'From Monochrome to Colour', is mostly contains monochromatic but Seamus also incorporates bold and vibrant colours in his semi-abstract pieces.

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 will soon add a third adult book club

to their literacy programme!

This new book club will 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

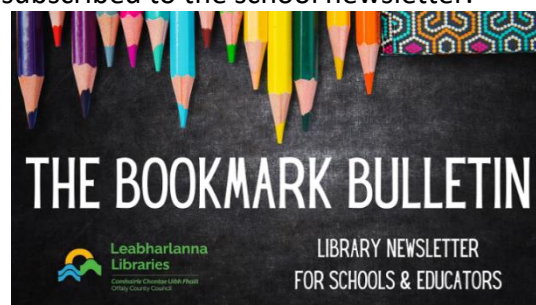
askthelibrarian@offalycoco.ie and we will be happy to help!

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

Local Authority Climate Action Plan

March 2024 saw official publication of the inaugural Offaly County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 in Irish and English. Both versions of the finalized Plan, together with all associated environmental reports, statements and notices of adoption went live on the Council's website on Wednesday 20th March. In line with environmental legislation, hard copies of environmental reports and statements remain on public display in Aras an Chontae until 24th April 2024.



Community Climate Action Fund

March 6th was the closing date for receipt of completed applications from community groups for 100% funding through the Community Climate Action Fund. Offaly County Council will administer the grant funding of €444,000 allocated for community climate action projects. Projects under the following themes are eligible for funding:

- Home/Energy
- Travel
- Food & Waste
- Shopping & recycling
- Local Climate Action

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 currently being reviewed, and as the scheme is over-subscribed by almost 100%, an evaluation committee will be convened to score each application before being sent to DECC for final approval.

Any unsuccessful applications will have a chance to apply for funding under Phase 2 of the Community Climate Action Fund once released by DECC.

The following is a breakdown of applications received by MD area:

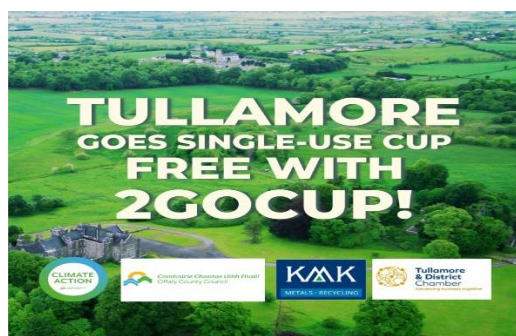
Tullamore MD:	9 applications
Birr MD:	11 applications
Edenderry MD:	4 applications



Climate Action Initiatives

On March 22nd Offaly County Council's Climate Action Team got to hear from Minister Ossian Smyth TD in relation to legislative updates and from founders of the multi award winning "The Killarney Coffee Cup" initiative on the origins, obstacles and opportunities experienced while introducing their deposit return

scheme. The audience also heard from Professor Peter Lunn, founder and head of the ESRI Behavioural Research Unit, on the steps required for successful “collective actions”. Professor Lunn stressed the need for strong leadership amongst the business community as most of the population will happily cooperate if they see others engaged. Work continues on a similar scheme aimed at coffee retailers in the Tullamore DZ area.



Energy

On the 12th and 13th March a group representing the Council’s Energy Action Team attended Day 1 & 2 of the SEAI’s ISO 50,001 Accelerator Programme designed for public sector organisations to enhance their energy management structures.

ISO 50001 is based on the management system model of continual improvement also used for other well-known standards such as ISO 9001 or ISO 14001. This makes it easier for organizations to integrate energy management into their overall efforts to improve quality and environmental management.

ISO 50001 illustrates Offaly County Council’s leadership in Climate Action and accelerates our journey towards an exemplary organisation in energy management. This will be a 10 month programme with accreditation achieved by early 2025.



March also saw the signing of contracts between the Midlands Energy Agency (MEA consisting of Offaly, Laois, Longford, Westmeath and Roscommon local authorities) and Rogerson Reddan & Associates for project management services to the SEAI part funded Pathfinder programme. The programme aims to deep retrofit public buildings and assist local authorities in achieving their 2030 and 2050 energy targets.



Environment

Submissions to EPA

Environment Team made a submission to the EPA detailing the numbers of environment inspections completed in 2023. This was submitted through NEMSIS software system, supported by LGMA. The submission cover waste management, air and noise management and water quality. A 48-page supporting report detailing all the environment inspection work was also submitted summarising work completed, approach taken and environmental outcomes. This report is available for review.

A submission on agricultural inspections in accordance with EPAs requirements was submitted. The EPA will review documentation and report on Offaly’s

progress in meeting agreed environmental indicators later in the year.

A Noise Action Progress Report was submitted to the EPA outlining the noise reducing actions taken during 2023. The report focuses on progress made in urban areas and required collaboration with other sections e.g. Roads, Climate Action

Environmental Management

In March, 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)	65
Waste (dumping/burning/unauthorised sites)	9
Noise (community/commercial/industrial)	2
Control of Horses	2
Control of Dogs	3
Water Quality	2
Abandoned vehicles	4
Air	4

The Environment section was successful in two waste enforcement cases in the District and Circuit Court against two individuals under Section 32 of the Waste Management Act, 1996 relating to the storage of waste at their property. Each property was cleaned up to the satisfaction of the Council and the Judge. Prison sentences (6 months and 12 months) issued to the individuals were suspended and each individual must work with OCC in maintaining proper waste management practices.

Bring Centres

The Environment Section has completed the installation of the new bi-lingual signage at the bring sites. Attached is an example of the sign in situ.



Green Schools

Offaly County Council continues to support schools in their efforts to promote environmental awareness. There were 12 schools assessed for their Green Flag and the closing date was 15 March 2024. Schools that were successful in achieving their Flags were:

1. Scoil Bhride, Clara
2. St. Broghans, Bracknagh
3. Lumcloon NS
4. Ard Scoil Ciaran Naofa, Clara
5. SS Peter & Pauls, Horseleap
6. Geashill NS
7. St. Cronans NS, Lusmagh
8. Scoil Bhride BNS, Tullamore
9. Oxmantown NS, Birr
10. St. Josephs, Tullamore
11. Colaiste Naomh Cormac, Kilcormac
12. St. Francis BNS, Clara

The Composting for Schools Programme was a pilot programme for 3 primary schools and Pullough Tidy Towns which was completed in March. The feedback from all involved was very successful.



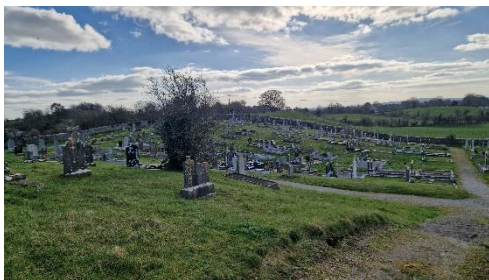
Dangerous Structures

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

Tenders have been received for the extension works and the successful contractor will be appointed shortly. Interim works were carried out to provide additional capacity, to enable the design of enhanced drainage within the forthcoming larger project.



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 on forming a committee to do that.

RURAL WATER SERVICES – Capital

Submissions for capital funding from the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2024



to 2026 are currently being processed. Applications are due to be submitted by OCC, on behalf of the GWSs, to the Rural

Water Unit, Dept of Housing, by 12/04/2024.

Grants

Information and grant application forms for Well Grants, Domestic Waste Water 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 63 dogs in the Dog Shelter of which we have managed to re-home 51 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 18 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 9 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

Decarbonisation of the Corporate Fleet

Offaly County Councils Corporate Fleet is now a Zero emission fleet. In March we completed the migration of our entire corporate fleet to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil following on from a successful trial in 2023. This change combined with our 5 Electric Vehicles has allowed the Roads Department to meet one of our primary targets under our recently adopted Climate Action Plan.

The Roads Decarbonisation Strategy has further progressed via the issuing of tender documentation for our Regional Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy which is a collaborative program being managed on behalf of Longford, Laois, Roscommon, Westmeath and Offaly by Offaly County Council's Roads Department.

Roads Programme 2024

The Elected Members approved the 2024 Roads programme on the 25th of March 2024. Preparatory Works have now commenced across all Municipal Districts with a view to commencing the delivery of the area specific works programs. The ongoing poor weather conditions has in some cases delayed the commencement of works compared to other years and the ongoing deployment of resources addressing potholes continues.

Ballycommon Trailhead

The Roads Department have received tenders for the Ballycommon Trailhead scheme and the tender assessment process is now nearing completion. It is intended to have a contractor appointed to these works in April 2024.

Grand Canal Greenway connections

Works are now substantially complete on the mainline of the Grand Canal Greenway. A proposed opening date is now being

discussed between all stakeholders for the mainline section. The program of connecting the mainline with our towns and villages will see the delivery of the Edenderry Harbour to the Greenway link commencing in Q2 of 2024 and the second project which is the link between Ferbane and the Greenway is currently at Part 8 with a view to construction commencing in Q4 2024/Q1 2025.

Part 8

In March 2024 the Roads Department completed Part 8 processes for Monasteroris Road Widening in Edenderry and Cloghan Active Travel Schemes. Works commenced on a Part 8 proposal for Ferbane to the Grand Canal Greenway.

Public Lighting

The following is a breakdown of the Public Lighting failures across the County. There are **229** faults on the system presently. **30** of these faults require third party intervention and as such cannot be repaired by the maintenance contractor.

Therefore, the current actionable faults amount to **199 faults or 2.13 %** of the lighting stock.

The breakdown of the **199** faults across each MD are as follows:

MD	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	65	2962	1.99	0.70
Tullamore	75	3933	1.90	0.80
Edenderry	59	2405	2.45	0.63

Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Finance

Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 31 March 2024			
	Full Yr Budget 2024 €m	Preliminary Value to Mar 2024 €m	% Year To Date
OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL			
Payroll costs	35.68	8.10	22.7%
Grants and Subsidies Income	50.31	5.45	10.8%
OCC to 31st Mar 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	16.59	2.18	0.12
2024 Cash Collected to end of Mar	6.06	2.17	0.10
Closing Balance Mar 31st, 2024	13.11	0.65	0.06
<u>2023 Cash collected to Mar 31st</u>	4.30	1.92	0.15
% Collection at this point in 2023	141%	113%	70%
<u>Bank Overdraft to 31st Mar 2024</u>			% YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date		24	26%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to Mar 31st 2024 YTD (Estimate)			€1,550
Bank Administration and transactional charges to Mar 31st 2024 YTD (Estimate)			€8,620