

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL BAINISTÍOCHTA MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Aibreán / April



Kenny Lyons
Associates
Architects win the
ICE Award for
Esker Arts design.

Decontamination Technical
Services (DTS) to represent
Offaly at the 25th National
Enterprise Awards in the
Mansion House, Dublin, May
22nd



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **Biodiversity Week - Offaly Libraries** are hosting a series of events from May 19th to 24th, including "Gardening for Biodiversity." Offaly County Council's Biodiversity Officer will share expert tips on creating a biodiverse garden- Clara Library on May 22nd at 12 noon.
- **Offaly Job Fair** is returning Saturday, 14th June from 10:30am to 3:00pm at the Tullamore Court Hotel.
- **LEO Offaly** is hosting an innovative training event, "The 9 Wastes of Public Relations", 21st May 2025, at the Bridge House Hotel from 12.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

Climate Action Environment Water & Transportation

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Action

Decarbonising Zone

As part of Offaly County Council's 2024 – 2029 Climate Action Plan, Tullamore town has been designated a Decarbonising Zone, an ambitious initiative that means Tullamore will serve as a test bed for climate action, biodiversity, and community resilience.

In the coming months the branding for the Decarbonising Zone will be launched to the public and the branding will be widely used for awareness and to aid clear messaging that frames Tullamore's journey as a model of meaningful change. Offaly County Council sought a bold visual identity that brings this movement to life for all residents, businesses, policymakers, educators, and investors.

The core idea behind the branding is that *'Small sustainable actions in Tullamore have the power to create wider positive change, shaping the community and beyond. From the heart of Tullamore, a ripple effect can inspire people, spark ideas, and drive a collective journey toward a more sustainable future.'*



The Climate Team in collaboration with DECC have produced a video which outlines the successes and benefits of the Decarbonising Zone to date since 2021. It contains an update on

- Tullamore Living River Project and the Tullamore Wetland and the benefits for biodiversity and recreation.
- Tullamore Rugby Football Club and the use of the Community Climate Action Fund.
- The partnership with DECC and GSI in Geothermal investigation in Tullamore.

The video summarises the benefits and future potential of the Tullamore DZ for the people of Tullamore. This video will be added to the Offaly County Council website and YouTube channel.

[DECC - Decarbonising Zones - Offaly Co Co on Vimeo](#)

EU JTF Community & Enterprise Supports Event

Two members of the Climate Action Team were invited to speak at EU JTF Community & Enterprise Supports Event in Kilmac Development Association Community Centre on 8th April, 2025. John McNally gave a presentation on the Offaly Co. Co. Climate Action Plan & Sinéad McEvoy gave a presentation on the Community Climate Action Fund.



Community Climate Action Programme- Webinar

The Climate Action Team held a very successful webinar in conjunction with our colleagues in Westmeath, Roscommon, Longford, Laois and Tipperary.

The 56 attendees heard from successful groups showcasing their projects from Phase 1 of the Community Climate Action Programme.

Offaly's Community Climate Action officer gave a short presentation on how to apply for the funding once the application process is opened. A recording of the webinar will soon be available to the Public on Offaly.ie & a link will be pushed out through our social media platforms.



Community Climate Action Fund – Phase 1

A six-month progress report is currently being prepared for DECC and must be submitted by mid-May. 8 projects have been fully completed with others in the process. A county map is currently being compiled showing the location of each of the 19 projects that were awarded funding under Phase 1 of the programme. Indication are the Phase 2 of the programme may open at the end of May but this has yet to be confirmed by DECC.

NBS EduWorld Workshop

On Monday the 28th of April the climate team in partnership with Trinity College Dublin hosted a half day workshop dedicated to testing 'Learning Units' which are designed to educate internal OCC staff about Nature Based Solutions (NBS) within business.

The workshop was a great success with thirteen OCC staff members participating gaining insights into NBS and sharing their feedback on the delivery and development of the Learning Units. All learning Units are free and available on the NBS EduWORLD website with further communications to come as the Horizon Europe project comes to an end this August 2025.



In addition to engaging with OCC staff from various sections this workshop gave us the opportunity to connect with the LOETB and the Offaly Local Development staff and discuss the development of a new climate course. The climate course will range in levels from NFQ 1-3, and its target audience will be the Offaly community. Meetings have been arranged with staff from the LOETB to assist and offer support as they further develop these courses and step further into the climate action space.

Energy

Áras an Chontae is participating in the Optimising Power at Work (OP@W) scheme run by the OPW. On April 2nd, two OP@W representatives undertook an out of hours energy use survey. The resulting report detailed proposals relating to IT equipment, lighting, heating and plant. Separately, the OP@W team held an energy awareness day in Aras an Chontae on April 10th. The focus of this was on energy efficiency in the home and the event had an excellent level of engagement with staff.



The SEAI's Monitoring & Reporting (M&R) system reported gains were made in both the organisations energy efficiency but particularly in its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the 2024 provisional scorecard results. The replacement of diesel with HVO in the fleet is largely responsible for the reduction in GHG emissions.

Environment

CCTV for Waste & Litter

In line with the Codes of Practice for the Operation of CCTV for the purposes of prevention, detection & prosecution of Litter & Waste offences, proposal for pilot projects have advance through the approval phase into the implementation phase. Initial pilot projects are planned for Daingean Road Bring Bank (Tullamore), Mucklagh Bring Banks site, Portarlinton (old school carpark) and Clonbullogue Bring Banks (Cloncreen).

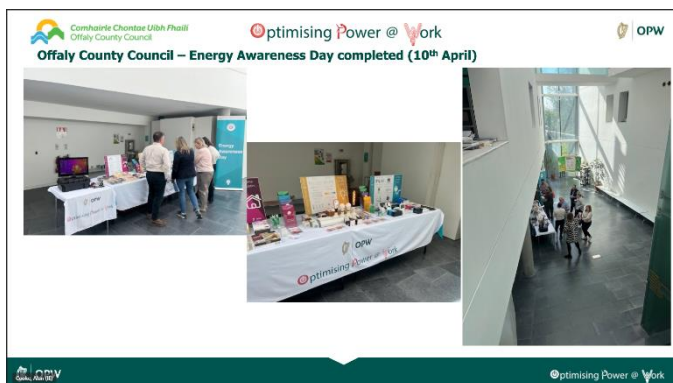
Burial Grounds

Cemetery Committees: We are looking forward to working with the cemetery committees on projects in 2025. We are also planning on the formation of other committees to improve the upkeep of our cemeteries.

There are grants and assistance available form the CA-ENV-RW section and we welcome engagement from groups that are currently maintaining their local cemetery or planning on forming a committee to do that.

St. Mary's Cemetery, Edenderry: The tender for landscaping works is being finalised, and we are finishing the project works.

Minor works: We are commencing a series of minor works in 2025, including the construction of additional plinths in St. Michaels Cemetery, Portarlinton, which is nearing capacity. A contractor



As part of our progress towards achieving ISO 50001 Energy Management System accreditation, our Energy Action Team meeting was held on April 24th where for the first time we reviewed a monthly Energy Use Report. Additionally, we have commenced the procurement process for an independent auditor. Staff engagement in the Easter switch off campaign resulted in a notable decrease in IT equipment switched on over the four-day weekend period within Aras an Chontae compared to the previous holiday weekend.

has been appointed for minor works in Killeigh cemetery.



of XL Bullies and have issued 20 exemption certificates and are awaiting further information on the remaining 11.

Control of Horses: We have dealt with 14 Control of Horses complaints so far in 2025 and have seized and rehomed 1 horse.

Veterinary

Control of Dogs: So far in 2025 we cared for over 50 dogs in the dog shelter. 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 in 2025, including dog licence issues, straying dogs, dealing with dangerous dogs, and sheep attacks.

In October 2024 new regulations were issued by the Dept. of Rural and Community Development regarding the keeping and registration of XL Bully dogs. The deadline for receipt of applications was 31/01/2025.



The Dog Warden and Kennel assistant have also received training, organised by the DRCD and CSPCA, regarding identifying XL Bullies and implementing the Regulations, they will also be attending further training in the use of advanced animal control equipment and tactical approaches to dealing with the implications of the regulations. We received 31 applications for registration

TRANSPORTATION

TII Pavement and Renewal program: Offaly County Council were awarded grant funding by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) under the Pavement and Renewal program for works to the N62 Works at Crancreagh and Doon. This scheme primarily involves a pavement overlay/inlay, along with accommodation works and line marking, covering a total length of 0.797 km.

A contractor has been appointed, and works are set to commence on this project which focuses on upgrading and maintaining the pavement infrastructure which will deliver significant improvements, enhancing road safety and driving conditions for all users.

Ballycommon Trailhead: Funded by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Greenway Grant, the construction of the Ballycommon Trailhead is nearing completion, marking a significant milestone for the area. This trailhead is the first significant amenity at Ballycommon, designed to cater to a wide range of demographics.

Key features include:

- 52 car parking spaces, ensuring ample parking for visitors.
- Infrastructure for electric vehicle charging, promoting sustainable transportation options.
- Enhanced public lighting which improves safety and accessibility for all users.
- New pedestrian pathways link directly to the Grand Canal Greenway providing connections to Kilbeggan Harbour in County Westmeath.

These developments aim to enhance the visitor experience and support the local community by providing modern and accessible amenities.

Birr North Distributor Road

Works are ongoing on the new Birr North Distributor Road; the works are currently on programme for completion in early Q3 2025. This scheme will link the N52 and R439, relieving congestion in Birr Town, improving air

quality, and enhancing access to the National Road Network.

CLÁR: Expressions of Interest are currently being considered for this targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects that have experienced significant levels of depopulation under the 2025 CLÁR Scheme which is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Under the 2025 Scheme, Offaly County Council can submit a maximum of:

- 13 applications seeking funding between 5,000 and €65,000
- 2 applications seeking funding between 5,000 and €100,000

Public Lighting: The following is a breakdown of the Public Lighting failures across the County. There are **116** faults on the system presently. **61** of these faults require third party intervention and as such cannot be repaired by the maintenance contractor. These anomalies are being addressed by the yearly public lighting capital program.

Therefore, the current actionable faults amount to **55 faults or 0.59%** of the lighting stock.

The breakdown of the **55** 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	12	2984	0.40	0.13
Tullamore MD	10	3934	0.25	0.11
Edenderry MD	33	2406	1.37	0.35

Housing & Integration

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

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

Housing Update:

- There are 557 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of April 2025.
- A further 436 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 6 signed up for HAP and 8 exited from HAP in April.
- At the end of April, 40 single people and 18 couples/families were supported in emergency accommodation.
- Number of maintenance requests received for month of April was 274.
- Total of housing stock at end of April is 2217.

- 2025 Annual Rent Review, for local authority tenants commenced on Thursday 23rd January with 2,173 rent assessment forms posted to tenants. As of 08/05/2025, 2039 (94%) signed rent assessment forms have been received from tenants. 19 tenants have been removed for various reasons. 43% of rent assessments forms have been assessed. New rents will be effective from the 12th of July 2025.

Housing Capital Programme Update:

- Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane (20 Units) – Part 8 approved in May 2022. Japanese Knotweed removed. Stage 3 to be submitted to the Department once ESB lines on the site are undergrounded.
- Circular Road, Daingean, Site 2 (10 Units) –Stage 4 Approved. Contractor Appointment
- Group Housing, Croghan Road, Birr (4 Units): Completion Q3 2025
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (10 Units) – Department of Housing is evaluating Stage 3 submission.

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes:

- Respond Housing: 77 Units under construction @ Kingswood, Ardan Lane with full completion in 2025. Phase 1 tenancy agreement sign-ups for 31 units occurred 20-02-2025. Phase 2 is due to be completed by May 2025.
- Sofia Housing: 37 Units with Stage 2 approval @ Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Planning Granted in November 2023. Stage 3 (permission to go to tender) being prepared and to be submitted in 2025.

- Silverbrook, Tullamore: 15 Units – Complete Q1 2025. Nominations submitted by Housing Officer to the AHB. All tenancies have been allocated by the AHB.

on the Green alongside Offaly Sports Partnership

Turnkey Developments/Part V:

- MacRegol III, Birr (12 Turnkey Units) – 8 Completed, with the remaining 4 units to be delivered by the end 2025
- Cois na hAbhainn, Ferbane (2 Turnkey Units) – Completion Q3/2025.
- Forest View, Birr (8 Part V Units) – Completion Q1/2026.

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.

- 40 Units allocation for 2025
- 12 Units being completed and on site
- 19 units Complete. *These are Ex MRP properties and do not count to the 2025 allocation*
- 21 units to commence at the end of May.
- 7 units ready to tender
- 20 plus Units being prepared for surveys for 2025 works

Community Development Programme

- Estate Management Funding allocated in Budget 2025 for Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore Municipal Districts for projects. Projects for all three areas have been agreed.
- Community Liaison Officers are continuing to support established resident committees and the development of their communities, with particular emphasis on LA new estates including the exploration of community facilities and scheduling of the Games

LAND USE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Development Management

	To end April 2025	To end April 2024	Total 2024
Planning Applications	194	196	735
Extensions of Duration Applications	4	1	12
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	22 (5)	37 (13)	71 (36)

During the month of **April 2025**, the following large planning applications were received:

25/60108 Clara Town Football Club	Installation of a 66 x 96 meter astro turf pitch and ca 750 meter long walking track, a 1.2 meter high galvanised fence, LED Flood light system and all associated site works and drainage. Lissanisky, Clara, Co. Offaly
25/60112 Health Service Executive	The development consisting of a new Midlands Specialist Palliative Care Unit on a greenfield site accessible from Arden Lane, Tullamore. The development will consist of the construction of a new hospice (3,805m ²), with all associated site development works including road upgrades to a portion of Arden Lane, a site entrance, 80no. car parking spaces for staff and visitors, including 7no. accessible parking bays, and 30no. covered bicycle parking spaces. Arden Lane, Ardan, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
25/60131	Demolition of an existing single storey shed and the

Fitzpatrick & Heavy Homes Ltd	construction of a residential development comprising of 39 no. units. Townparks, Birr, Co. Offaly, R35 F893.
25/60147 Department of Education	Construction of a two-storey special school with a floor area of approx. 3367m ² . The new school will comprise of 12 no. classrooms, general purpose hall, music room, home economics room, multi-sensory rooms, library, administration areas, sanitary facilities, associated ancillary accommodation and a new vehicular and pedestrian site entrance from Norbury Woods Avenue. Norbury Woods Avenue, Ardan, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, R35 AX22.

Forward Planning

Draft Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031

The proposed material alterations to the Draft Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan along with SEA and AA Screening Determination Documents went on public display on April 10th and will be on display until 4pm May 9th.

In accordance with Section 20 (3)(f) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the proposed material alterations have been screened for the need to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) and it has been determined that a SEA is required for one proposed material alteration and that Stage 2 AA is not required for any proposed material alteration.

Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

April 1st was the final date for submissions to the Draft RZLT Map for 2026 and the Final RZLT Map for 2025. 9 no. submissions have received on the Draft RZLT Map, 7 no. submissions in relation to the Final RZLT Map, requesting rezoning of their lands while 2 no. submissions received relate to neither.

Just Transition

Strategic Partnership Scheme with Fáilte Ireland



The tender closed on **7th February 2025** for the appointment of an architecturally led team to design and plan a 'plaza' / public amenity area off the Main Street in Shannonbridge which will lead down to the Shannon Callows, and the planned Dublin – Galway Greenway, together with the feasibility planning and design of a floating walkway over the Callows. Seven submissions were received which were evaluated. All submitters have now been advised of the outcome. It is expected that the successful tenderer will be appointed to commence work on the project in the coming weeks, with completion expected in twelve months. This project will also seek to locate the plaza area and any potential for parking thereon, within the wider context of parking requirements within the village itself.

Also funded under this strand, the provision of high-quality granite pedestrian paving to improve access to Birr Castle Demesne

along its boundary at William Street is nearing completion with an expected finish date of **late May 2025**.

Local Economic and Community Plan Scheme.

€1m has been secured for the upgrading of the Dalton centre in Shannonbridge from the EU Just Transition Fund. Following an Expression of Interest, Offaly County Council are currently evaluating all submissions with a view to signing a long-term lease with an operator who will be committed to economic diversification or training which supports the development of skills that are now required for the new and emerging businesses. The project will be managed by the staff of Birr Municipal District with a completion date of **31st March 2026**.

Bioeconomy Pre-call Announcement

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) are preparing to open a second call for applications to the **EU JTF Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiative Scheme**. The call will follow the format of the [2023 EUJTF Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiative](#).

The Call is scheduled to open soon, with detailed information on call topic areas, eligibility criteria, application procedures, and evaluation criteria to be provided in the Call Specification and Guidelines for Applicants documents. It is intended that there will be a 12-week application window. This call will support the development of bioeconomy piloting and demonstration projects in the wider midlands area. Funding will support close collaboration between stakeholders along the entire bio-based value chain.

There are **four indicative topic areas** envisaged in the call:

- Developing biochar products to promote its use in agriculture and industry
- Innovative bio-based food and feed ingredients
- Biobased materials for the construction sector
- Bio-based value chains for valorisation of sustainable crops

The Junction rebrand – Axis Park

The Junction is currently undergoing a rebrand to better reflect its role as a modern innovation and remote working hub in Offaly.

Since opening, The Junction has supported entrepreneurs, remote workers, and businesses with high-quality facilities and services. The rebrand will update its identity to match its growth and expanded offering, while continuing to provide a professional, welcoming environment for users.

The new brand will include a refreshed logo, updated materials, and a stronger focus on promoting The Junction as a key location for business, collaboration, and community development.



DTS at National Enterprise Awards



Decontamination Technical Services (DTS) has been selected to represent Offaly at the

25th *National Enterprise Awards*, which will take place in the Round Room at the Mansion House, Dublin, on May 22nd.

Founded in 2010 and led by Dermot Smyth, DTS is an award-winning independent company providing impartial validation, engineering, and scientific support to leading sterilisation and decontamination facilities, with expertise in autoclave validation and steam quality control. DTS exemplifies how businesses can leverage support from LEO Offaly to grow, innovate, and scale their operations, as celebrated by the National Enterprise Awards.

We wish DTS the very best of luck at the upcoming awards!

LEO Network at Dublin Tech Summit 2025



The LEO Network is proud to partner with *Dublin Tech Summit 2025*, Ireland's leading tech conference, taking place this May at the RDS. The event brings together global tech leaders, innovators, and startups for two days of insight, networking, and inspiration.

As part of a coordinated effort led by Dublin City, the LEO Network will host a branded stand featuring:

Two dedicated mentoring pods offering expert business advice in 30-minute sessions

A **LEO information desk** staffed by volunteers to support and advise attendees on LEO services

A **20–30 minute talk** from LEO mentor Dr. Alp Turkmen (stage and time to be confirmed)

Promotion of LEO supports across DTS digital channels and social media

This initiative highlights the LEO Network's commitment to supporting Ireland's tech ecosystem and helping early-stage businesses grow and connect.

Save the date! Offaly Job Fair is back for 2025!



Offaly Job Fair is returning for 2025 and is taking place on **Saturday, 14th June from 10:30am to 3:00pm** at the **Tullamore Court Hotel**.

The Job Fair will bring together employers and job seekers from across Offaly and surrounding areas.

For Job Seekers:

- Meet local employers actively hiring across Offaly
- Explore a variety of job types, skill levels, and industries
- Learn about Offaly's network of Co-Working Hubs and local relocation support services
- Gain insights into training, upskilling, and career support options

For Employers:

- Showcase your company and connect directly with skilled candidates
- Promote your vacancies and company culture
- Network with other local businesses and support services

Attendees can register now at www.TullamoreChamber.com/Offaly-Job-Fair

Employers wishing to take part and showcase their vacancies are invited to email: info@tullamorechamber.com

The 9 Wastes of Public Relations

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly is pleased to host an innovative training event, "The 9 Wastes of Public Relations", on Wednesday, 21st May 2025, at the Bridge House Hotel from 12.00 pm to 2.00 pm.



This working lunch will be delivered by Ronan Berry, IMRO Award-winning radio presenter and Founder of Obeara Ltd, who brings extensive experience in public relations, media, and lean management. The workshop, "Say More with Less", will combine real-world PR expertise, lean thinking principles, and the use of Artificial Intelligence tools to help businesses communicate more effectively and efficiently.

Key objectives of the session include:

- Understanding the difference between marketing and public relations.
- Identifying and eliminating the 9 most common wastes in PR activities.
- Developing a clear brand narrative using practical AI tools such as ChatGPT.
- Streamlining media preparation and content creation through lean strategies.

- Building a simple, powerful PR system to support long-term success.

Participants will receive a practical Lean PR toolkit, including templates, checklists, and AI prompts, designed to strengthen their communications strategy. An optional follow-up one-to-one mentoring session is also available.

The workshop is free of charge, and a light lunch will be provided.

It is open to business owners, marketers, spokespeople, and PR managers who are eager to maximise their media opportunities, improve efficiency, and communicate with greater impact.

Bookings can be made through the Local Enterprise Office Offaly website.

Community, Culture and Emergency Services

Tidy Towns Network

The 2024 SuperValu TidyTowns competition was launched on 24 March 2025 with the closing date for receipt of entries on Monday 12th May 2024. A list of all registered entries will be updated regularly on the TidyTowns website at www.tidytowns.ie. The competition is now in its 67th consecutive year.

The Offaly Tidy Towns Network is in place since 2011 and is a collaboration project between the Community and Heritage sections of Offaly County Council. Tidy Towns Network meetings are held two to three times a year when advice, information and invaluable networking between members takes place. Tidy Towns Network meetings were held in Edenderry, Birr and Tullamore MD's on 14th/15th/16th April 2025. Debbie Bailey, a Tidy Towns Adjudicator attended all meetings and gave a very helpful presentation to all present. The meetings were well attended by Tidy Town Groups representatives and provided an opportunity for information sharing and networking between the Groups, in advance of the closing date for receipt of SuperValu Tidy Towns competition.

A new IPB Tidy Towns Insurance Scheme came into effect on 01st April 2025 whereby Offaly County Council provides insurance cover for Offaly Tidy Towns Groups registered with PPN and whose primary activity and purpose is to improve and enhance the appearance and sustainability of the public realm of a community.

IPB Pride of Place Awards 2025

Co-operation Ireland, it's local authority partners and its headline sponsor, IPB Insurance, are hosting the prestigious Pride of Place Competition for the 23rd consecutive year in 2025. The purpose of the competition is to acknowledge the work being done every day by communities all over the island of Ireland.

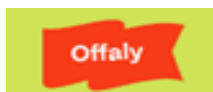
See below Offaly County Council's entries to the 2025 Competition. Community Section and Offaly PPN considered a range of community organisations in each MD. Three community groups have been selected by Community staff based on their impact in their area over recent years, one from each MD, as in previous years. Community Section will be working closely with the Groups as they prepare for the judging (scheduled to take place in July).

Community Group	POP Category	MD
Accessible Counselling Tullamore	Community Wellbeing Initiative	Tullamore
Clonfanlough Hall Committee	Population 0-300	Birr
Ballycommon Telework & Training Centre CLG	Inclusive Communities	Edenderry

Public Participation Network:



- ❖ PPN Wellness retreat was held on the 27th and 28th March 2025 in the Galmont Hotel, Galway.
- ❖ PPN support worker and secretariat had a secretariat meeting in Mucklagh.
- ❖ Grant writing workshops were run throughout April for PPN groups to avail of in each of the municipal districts Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore.
- ❖ Meetings took place alongside ODEN to work on the organising of Disability Awareness Week which will be happening in June.



Comhairle na nÓg Showcase 2025

9 Offaly Comhairle na nÓg members were among 400 young people who attended the Comhairle na nÓg National showcase on April 15th in Dublin Castle. The Biannual Showcase provides a platform for Comhairle na nÓgs to present their work and connect with decision and policy makers.



Steering Committee

A meeting was held at the

beginning of April. The young people continue work on the Topic of Mental Health and updates were given by the Comhairle Coordinator Marye Meehan and Comhairle executive member, Frank Oabdasan. Plans are underway for the upcoming Colour Climb in conjunction with Jigsaw.

ARTS OFFICE

ARTS PROGRAMMING

Arts + Health: Check Up Check In 2025 in Esker Arts Centre

Arts + Health: Check Up Check In symposium took place on

Wednesday 30 April in Esker Arts, Tullamore. The 'go to' event for the arts and health sector, Check Up Check In was organised by Réalta, and featured presentations by some of the most exciting and inspiring creative practitioners working in arts and health today.

Arts + Health: Check Up Check In was organized with the support of Offaly Arts Office, Anam Beo and Esker Arts locally and funded by the Arts Council and HSE.



Mini Movies Programme 2025

The Mini Movies programme was delivered throughout the months of April in the following schools: SN Seosamh, Blueball, Tullamore, Coláiste Naomh

Cormac, Kilcormac, Geashill NS, Geashill in selected Offaly schools. The facilitators are Offaly based filmmakers: Dillon Cleary and Stephen Kavanagh. The final versions of the short movies will be screened during the OFFline Festival in October.



Arts Newsletter

The Arts Office will disseminate May - June newsletter *Offaly Arts Alert 13* at the beginning of May, offering updates and information on Arts Office event sand opportunities etc. as well as promoting and sharing funding and bursary opportunities that might be of interest to artists and communities that have a shared interest in the Arts.



FILMOFFALY

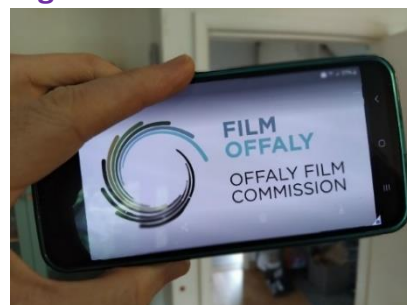
Midlands Network Event with National Talent Academies

On April the 12th we held a networking event at Esker Arts in Tullamore in conjunction with the National Talent Academies Film and TV and Crew East. There was a panel discussion including Screen Guilds Ireland, together with local filmmakers Gary Hctor and Maura Foley. The panel explored different career pathways in the screen industry as well as options available for training and gaining vital experience. The networking afterwards was a great success in bringing together screen professionals based across the Midlands- We're already expecting some interesting collaborations because of those chats.



Smartphone Filmmaking Course

We've announced that we are working with the National Talent Academies Film & TV to hold a Smartphone Filmmaking Course in June. This is being



run by Póca Productions, who have a wealth of experience in training people to make engaging films using their smartphones. Ideas will be developed, and teams will shoot a variety of different films in Birr and its surroundings. This is a practical hands-on course which will

give participants an insight into how they can harness the power of their smartphones and unleash the mini-film studio that is lying in their pockets. Applications for this course are open until the 9th of May.

Documentary Mentors

We are pleased to announce that we will soon be launching a Documentary Mentorship program. This will see local aspiring documentarians working together to produce a short film based on an aspect of life in Offaly under the guidance of a professional mentor. We will be announcing details of how to apply soon, but at this stage we are looking for mentors only to run the program.

Deadline for mentor applications is 8th May.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Culture Night 19th September 2025

There are currently two opportunities open for applications for Culture Night 2025.



Professional Artists from or based in Offaly are invited to submit proposals for an artist commission – a project and presentation as part of the 2025 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 2025

https://www.offaly.ie/occ_news/culture_night/

Offaly Festivals Schedule 2025

This year seven Offaly Festivals have been offered grant funding and six have accepted their grant offers. The processing of grants is now in progress.

Offaly County Council Festivals funded by the Arts Office 2025:

Name of Festival	Festival Dates	Discipline
Birr Vintage Week & Arts Festival	1st - 9th Aug 2025	Multidiscipline
OFFline Film Festival	8th - 12th Oct 2025	Film
Tullamore International Summer Organ Series	1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th July 2025	Music
Birr Festival of Music & Voice	1st - 5th May 2025	Music
Scripts Irelands Playwriting Festival	10th - 13th July 2025	Theatre
Tullamore Tradfest 2025	11th-13th April 2025	Music
Hullabaloo Children's Art Festival – direct funding	29 th Oct – 1 st Nov 2025	Multidiscipline

Birr Writers Residency Award 2025

The Birr Writers Residency award call-out is currently open for application, with a deadline of May 19th. Birr Writers' Residency offers professional writers' accommodation and workspaces for five nights, at Brendan House in the centre of Birr, County Offaly. This Georgian Heritage Town in the midlands of Ireland has a remarkable history and is

embedded in a community with a thriving arts culture.

<https://www.offaly.ie/birr-writers-residency-award/>

COLLABORATIONS

Birr Writers Residency Review

Birr Writer's Residency Review is nearing completion and a final report is expected to be delivered by end of April. Culture Works are conducting final surveys and interviews with stakeholders and cultural partners in Birr. The review considers the potential growth of the residency going forward and has included a consultation process with key stakeholders. Consultants Culture Works were awarded the commission following an open call and evaluation process. The review started in September and is currently ongoing and due to be completed in 2025.

Business Development Report – OFFline Animation Residency

Following an open competition and an assessment process with an independent panel, the arts and culture consultancy, Culture Works has been selected to conduct the OFFline Animation Residency Report in Birr. The first meeting with the stakeholders took place in early March in Birr.

Creative Places Edenderry

CP Edenderry team have submitted their application for the final 2-year funding from the Arts Council of Ireland with the support of Offaly Arts Office and are awaiting the decision. Creative Places, Edenderry, a project funded by the Arts Council, led by Creative Lives in partnership with Offaly County Council Arts Office and Edenderry Municipal District was awarded a 4th year of funding by the Arts Council and goes

from strength the strength hosting an array of different arts-based activities, workshops and events in a wide range of art forms including Visual Arts, Music, Poetry, Playwriting, Creative Movement; Dance; Ceramics; Drama; Radio, Photography.

www.creativeplacesedenderry.ie



INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Kenny Lyons Associates Architects win the ICE Award for Esker Arts design. Kenny Lyons Associates Architects won the ICE

award for Architectural Design Excellence Project €5m to €15m for their design of Esker Arts. The design transformed a derelict, vacant building into a community focused public amenity. The project has acted as a catalyst for the rejuvenation of community and arts in Tullamore and encouraged redevelopment of



neighbouring plots. “This project acts as an exemplar and depicts the potential of back- land infill sites in Irish towns to provide fantastic community facilities in very central locations. The concept of re-use and lean construction were integral components within this scheme. A significant portion of the existing building was retained from a sustainability perspective but this in turn has helped contextualise the Arts Centre within the existing urban morphology.” Esker Arts Centre achieves ‘design excellence’ by harmonising the challenges presented by the site with the client’s brief and surpassing their expectations. The architectural design harnesses the inherent beauty of the site, draws inspiration from its’ previous life and provides a new public space for the future.’

Lough Boora Sculpture Park

The Arts Office funded by Creative Ireland and supported by Bord na Móna continue to work on the maintenance programme for Lough Boora Sculpture Park to take place through 2024-2025. Artist Michael Burke, Sculpture Works, carried out a review and report in 2024 and works have been taking place throughout 2024 and will continue into 2025.

Edenderry Library and Arts Base

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

HEALTHY OFFALY

Healthy Offaly received some good news in April with the confirmation that the Healthy Ireland Round 4 Year 2 financial reporting return submitted in late February was approved by Pobal thus releasing the final 10% of funding for 2024 and the 90% allocation of funding for 2025 for our programme budget. In total €75,000 was received. Our 2025 actions continue to be rolled out with the ‘*Couch to 5K*’ action delivered by Offaly Athletics concluding in March. In total 7 clubs (Ballyskenagh, Birr, Edenderry, Ferbane, Kilcormac-Killoughey, Kinnitty and Naomh Mhuire Athletic Clubs) took part in the programme this year with a total of 96 participants completing the programme.



The Cycling without Age action in Lough Boora Discovery Park is progressing with the recent purchase and installation of the storage shed for the rickshaw tricycle. Healthy Offaly provided the funding for the shed and the ancillary works required to put it in place. Training in the operation of the tricycle will commence shortly with rollout expected in the summer months. Several community groups from the Kilcormac/Pullough area have been invited to attend training. Offaly Sports Partnership personnel will undertake the training also.



The next project to provide an update on is the 'Not Around Us' no smoking/no vaping initiative being rolled out in all Council and Community playgrounds in the County. Healthy Offaly are working with Roads Section to have the 'Not Around Us' message and details of quit services displayed on new playground signage which was due to be installed by Roads section this year. The collaboration with roads has meant there have been significant cost savings with the project. The logos and details on quit services have been agreed with the health improvement team of the HSE. Healthy Offaly with their print suppliers are currently formulating a new 'Not Around Us' logo for Offaly to display in the new signage. Once drafted and the Irish language version of all text has been checked the signage will go for printing.

Fund Round 4 programme it is important to acknowledge and reflect on the huge body of work undertaken these past three years. With that in mind Healthy Offaly are extending an invitation to the Senior Management Team 'Offaly Healthy' wellbeing networking event on Tuesday 10 June at 9:30am in Mucklagh Community Centre.

In addition to reviewing our Healthy Offaly actions there will be opportunities to hear health and wellbeing talks, view the stands of our implementing partners, take part in demonstrations, and bring home lots of freebie merchandise. The day will include interacting and networking with partner agencies and groups followed by a series of talks from health and wellbeing experts in their fields. Our keynote speaker is Dr. Diane Cooper from Edufit who will deliver a very informative **S.E.L.F.** Care workshop. Healthy

Offaly have asked all implementing partners to bring along a few of their action participants who will provide a few 'in person' testimonials as to how the action positively impacted their health and wellbeing. Various statutory agencies and other partners will also be in attendance and will have their banners and literature to showcase their services on what is sure to be a very interesting morning.

SPORTS

April was another busy month for our Offaly Sports Partnership staff below are some of the events/programmes which took place.

SEN Multi Activity Programme:

Through our sports inclusion programme up to six Primary schools



OFFALY HEALTHY

Wellbeing Networking Event

- **Health Talks**
- **Healthy Ireland Fund Round 4 Review**
- **Wellbeing Workshops**
- **Demonstrations**
- **Freebies**

Keynote speaker: Dr. Diane Cooper from Edufit

Date/Time:
Tuesday, 10 June 2025

09:30am to 12:30pm

Location:
Mucklagh Community Centre,
Mucklagh, Co. Offaly, R35 DN02

R.S.V.P. to
degan@offalycoco.ie by 19 May 2025




Finally, as Healthy Offaly approach the final few months of the Healthy Ireland

from across the county have completed their 6-week multi activity programme. The children are enjoying running, throwing and adapted games which are inclusive.



Women in Sport Boxercise:

Over 40 women are signed up and taking part in our Women In Sport Boxercise programme in Killeigh Community Centre.



Cluny Soccer Blitz:

OSP linked with and supported Gallen School with their inaugural Cluny Soccer Blitz.

The Blitz took place on the 2nd of April to mark Autism Awareness Day. It was a wonderful day which saw 50 students from centres in 4 other schools compete for the trophy. The idea stemmed from a pupil in Gallen Community School who said he would love the opportunity to compete in a soccer tournament. That student spoke before the event kicked off welcoming all teams on the day, he thanked his wonderful SNA's and myself



from OSP for making his suggestion/dream a reality. He concluded with 'May the best team win'. The day was a great success which will hopefully be made an annual event in the sports inclusion programme and Gallen school.

Social Walking:

Using Activators Durrow – New programme



Older Adult Gentle Fitness:

Gentle Fitness programme for Older Adults continues in 3 venues Mondays is St Marys Youth Centre Tullamore, Killeigh and High Street. The groups are catering for all levels of ability and age range.



Several other sports and physical activity programmes are continuing including: -

1. **Community Sports Development Programmes -**
2. **Dormant Account** funded programmes –
 - sport and physical activity programmes in the **Ballycumber, Daingean** and **Mucklagh Sports Hubs;**

CORPORATE SERVICES

National Voter Registration Day:

Offaly County Council's Corporate Services Team successfully participated in National Voter Registration Day on April 30, 2025, to boost voter registration and raise political awareness, particularly among young people. The core message was to Register, Engage, and Vote to ensure every voice is heard in shaping Ireland's future.

The outreach Registration clinics were held in Edenderry Library and Birr Library in preparation for the upcoming presidential election. The initiative encouraged active voter participation and facilitated updates to existing voter details. Third-party request forms were available for correcting inaccurate register entries. The day was a success, and further awareness raising activities will be held during Q2, Q3 and Q4 2025



LIBRARY SERVICE

Spring Into Storytime



Offaly Libraries welcomed another Spring into Storytime programme, a central pillar of our national Right to Read campaign.



Our library staff celebrated and promoted a love of reading with plenty of story times, craft sessions and visits from schools.

Libraries facilitated over **158 free events** to more than **3,000 attendees** over the course of April, with more events yet to be added to our final tally!

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.



'Little Library Bags' Returns this May

Offaly Libraries are pleased to facilitate the return of 'Little Library Bags', a First Five initiative.



The initiative will ensure every child due to start Primary School in September 2025 will receive their own little library bag, complete with story books and a wallet holder for their first library card. More information will be posted on our website on the official launch date, Friday May 9th.



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Creative Tech Week, April 7th – 12th



Delivered under the umbrella of Offaly Libraries STEAM programme, Creative

Tech Week celebrated the wonders and creativity of modern technology with **16 events** delivered to over **300 attendees**.

Students from around the county were invited to our libraries for some fun coding sessions using Micro:Bits and for VEX Robotics sessions.



We supported the programme with various themed story times, crafts and Magic Table demonstrations.

Birr Library also got creative and showcased their Robotic Hoover to **42 students** who got to create their own during a fun craft session.

Our STEAM programme continues each week with LEGO Freeplay sessions in many branches. We have welcomed **662 children** to Lego Freeplay so far this year.

[Contact your library for more information.](#)

Tovertafel's 'Magic Table' at Offaly Libraries

The Magic Table (or 'Tovertafel' in Dutch) is an award-winning innovation designed to help people with **dementia**, adults with **learning disabilities** and children with **additional needs**.



It consists of a series of colourful and fun interactive light games, which respond to hand and arm movements, stimulating physical and cognitive activity as well as encouraging social interaction.

Magic Tables are currently available at five locations in Offaly Libraries: Banagher, Clara, Edenderry, Ferbane and Tullamore.

Groups or individuals interested in using the Magic Table are advised to [contact their respective library directly](#).

Healthy Ireland at Offaly Libraries



Our Healthy Ireland programme is well under way this year, with plenty of events to help spread health information to our communities.



Aligning with Creative Tech Week, Birr and Tullamore Libraries hosted **Cyber Safe Kids** who delivered excellent online safety awareness workshops to some **60 students**.

Mindful Breathwork sessions are also on offer with Leona McDonnell, the first of which was held on Friday, 2nd May.



Tullamore Library
on the last Friday of every month
11.30am - 12.30pm

Information on Offaly Social Prescribing and activities
/groups /supports in your community

Contact Michelle
at 087 7470562 or mquinn@offalyldc.ie



Social Prescribing is a free HSE-supported service that helps people connect with their community to improve well-being.

OLDC's Social Prescribing coordinator will be in Tullamore Library on the last Friday of every month, from 11.30 - 12.30 for anyone who would like to hear more about the service and connect with groups and activities in the community. All are welcome to drop in for a chat or contact mquinn@offalyldc.ie.

World Autism Day

Clara Library welcomed **140 students** from Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa to celebrate World Autism Day.



The students experienced various sensory activities to give them an insight into what autism is like and how the five senses can be affected. Edenderry Library also hosted a Messy Play session in celebration of World Autism Day, which attracted 12 attendees.



Edenderry Library Earth Day Movie Screening



Edenderry Library celebrated Earth day on April 23rd with a documentary screening of *The Oil Machine* (2022).



We welcomed 15 attendees to the screening, which was followed by an open discussion around Climate Change and our impact on the environment.

'Ubiquitous' Exhibition Launch in Tullamore Library

Tullamore Library enjoyed a sun-soaked evening on April 3rd as we hosted the launch of 'Ubiquitous', a collection of works presented by local artist, Genevieve Murphy.



Speaking at the event was Rory O'Connor of [Rory's Stories](#) fame, who is pictured with a portrait presented to him by Genevieve during the launch.



The 'Ubiquitous' exhibition attracted visitors from all over the country during the months of March and April, with over 50 attendees at the launch itself.

Upcoming Events this May Bealtaine Festival at Offaly Libraries

Bealtaine, Ireland's beloved national festival celebrating arts and creativity as we age, is marking its 30th anniversary this year with the exciting theme "Lust for Life".

Organized by Age & Opportunity, this festival is all about boosting older people's involvement in cultural and creative activities.



In collaboration with LOETB's Community Education, Offaly Libraries will host fun events like **Air Fryer Cookery demonstrations, Card Making, Chair Yoga, and Mindfulness Workshops** throughout May.

Intergenerational VEX Robotics, Resin workshops, an evening of style in Clara Library and lunchtime concerts will also be on offer in various libraries around the county.

All events are free, and you can view the full spread of events through [our online brochure here](#).

Biodiversity Week, May 19th – 24th



We are thrilled to present a series of events celebrating Biodiversity Week

this May, 19th – 24th.

Students in Birr, Edenderry, and Tullamore will learn all about Ireland's native birds during exciting events with local bird sanctuary, Raven Haven Aviaries.

On 22nd May, our Biodiversity Officer will be on hand in Clara Library to offer tips and advice on how to make your garden more biodiverse.

Plus, our libraries have loads of exciting activities planned to celebrate Biodiversity, including themed crafts, story times, and a cool native species scavenger hunt in our branches. Drop into your [local branch for](#)

[more information](#) on any of the above events!



'Portraits and Places' Exhibition in Edenderry Library

Drop into Edenderry Library this May to view the stunning collection of works presented by local artist, Becca Thorne.

Entitled 'Portraits and Places', the collection comprises of abstract pieces of landscapes, still life and portraits.



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

'Insights' Launch at Birr Library

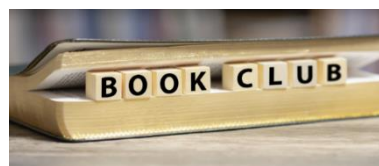
Jacinta Glasgow will be launching her beautiful "Insights" art collection in Birr Library on Wednesday 7th May at 18:00.

All welcome to come and view the collection which will be on display through May. More information available at offaly.ie/Birr-Library

Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive



Books Clubs at Offaly Libraries



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.

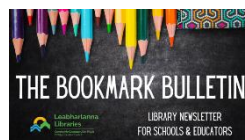
If you would like to join any of our existing clubs, [please check out the details for each here.](#)

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 **over 10,500 subscribers** of our general newsletter and **131 teachers** subscribed to the school newsletter.



Finance

Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 30 April 2025

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr Budget 2025 €m	Preliminary Value to April 2025 €m	% Year To Date
Payroll costs	40.01	11.79	29.5%
Grants and Subsidies Income	56.55	6.98	12.3%

OCC to 30th April 2025

	<u>Rates</u> <u>€m</u>	<u>Rents</u> <u>€m</u>	<u>Loans</u> <u>€m</u>
Opening Balance Jan 1st, 2025	1.92	0.49	0.04
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers	6.80	2.97	0.17
2025 Cash Collected to 30th Apr	7.23	3.04	0.19
Closing Balance Apr 30th, 2025	1.50	0.43	0.03

2024 Cash collected to April 30th

	9.94	2.90	0.14
% Collection at this point in 2024	73%	105%	134%

Bank Overdraft to 30th Apr 2025

		% YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date	23	19%
Bank Interest and non-conforming charges to Apr 30th 2025 YTD	(Estimate)	€3,641
Bank Administration and transactional charges to Apr 30th 2025 YTD	(Estimate)	€12,438