

## TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL BAINISTÍOCHTA MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT Bealtaine/ May



Sacred Heart  
School  
Tullamore All-  
female robotics  
team win  
prestigious Judges  
Award at the VEX  
Robotics

Coláiste Choilm VEX  
Robotics Team representing  
Offaly on a global stage in  
Dallas, Texas



Tullamore-based  
Decontamination Technical  
Services Ltd wins at  
National Enterprise Awards  
final



### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Tullamore Show Ireland's premier agricultural event on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2025
- National Ploughing Championships Scraggan, Tullamore, Co. Offaly 16th-18th September 2025

# Climate Action Environment Water & Transportation

## ENVIRONMENT

### Climate Action

#### Launch of the Climate Action X account (formerly Twitter)

On May 19<sup>th</sup> the Climate Action team officially launched the starting of the Offaly County Council Climate Action X account. Director of Services for Climate Action and Environmental Services, Paul McLoughlin and Mark Mahon, Senior Engineer for Climate Action, Environment and Water Services joined us on the day.

The account will be managed by the team and provide followers with the various climate action initiatives taking place here in Offaly and nationally. The X account was advertised by the **Midlands Radio 103** station with our Climate Action Co-Ordinator John McNally appearing as a guest speaker on **Taking Care of Business with Ronan Berry** (21<sup>st</sup> May 2025) discussing how Offaly County Council is stepping up their local sustainability efforts.



#### Hares Corner Biodiversity Analysis

A successful application has been rewarded for 'The Hares Corner' initiative ran by the Burren Beo Trust. The initiative aids landowners to make more space for nature through a 'plan for nature'. A biodiversity expert will be visiting the 2.8 Ha of open green space

adjacent to the Church Hill Estate and analysing the best course of action to take to increase and enhance the biodiversity on the land.

The Climate Action Team hosted a lunch time webinar on 1<sup>st</sup> May around the topic of Diet and how it can contribute to Climate Change. The event was recorded and made available to anyone that was unable to attend on the day.

#### OLDC Rural Citizens

Following on from the NBS EduWORLD workshop, the Offaly Local Development Company have reached out to collaborate with the climate action team to design a practical Climate Literacy Course. The course will run for 8/9 weeks starting in September 2025 running through until October 2025. The Climate Action team will help facilitate two modules within the course that will focus on the climate basics, the main pillars of climate action and what we can do as citizens to improve the environment around us.

The course will be aimed at adults in the local community who have a passion for the environment, nature-based solutions and climate change and would like to enhance their personal knowledge on the topics through informal/field work-based learning.

### Community Climate Action Fund

Sinéad McEvoy, Community Climate Action Officer was invited to speak at the Clonbulloge Sustainable Energy Community Energy Master Plan Launch on the 8<sup>th</sup> May where she gave a presentation on the Community Climate Action Fund. Clonbulloge Hall was one of the successful CCAF applicants in Phase 1.



### No Mow May

The No Mow May Initiative was a collaboration between the Offaly County Council Heritage & Biodiversity Team, Climate Action Team and Environment, the Municipal District Teams and shows our commitment to protecting and enhancing local biodiversity while engaging with communities.

No Mow May is an initiative aimed at supporting pollinators by allowing wildflowers and grasses to bloom across

selected sites. This effort forms part of the council's commitments under the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and aligns with actions in the Offaly Biodiversity and Climate Action Plans.

### Energy

The organisation took an important step towards gaining ISO 50001 Energy Management System accreditation by procuring an independent external Auditor. Richard Spence from Amtivo carried out a remote Stage 1 Audit on 30<sup>th</sup> May. The purpose of this audit was to ascertain our progress towards a full certification Audit (Stage 2).





## Environment

### Environmental Complaints

Summary of Complaints Received by Environment Section for May 2025 and investigated - Total number of 129 complaints.

Category	Quantity
Abandoned Vehicles	1
Air Pollution	21
Building Control	0
Control of Dogs	11
Control of Horses	1
Derelict Sites	1
Litter Control	17
Noise Pollution	5
Waste Enforcement	11
Water Quality	9
Water Services	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>129</b>

## Litter

There have been 129 litter collections from local community volunteers across Offaly from January to the end of May. This has resulted over 12 tonnes of litter being collected.



## Green Schools

Offaly County Council plays an integral part in the national environmental programme – Green Schools. In May 2025, the Green Schools Awards Ceremony was held and 19 schools from Offaly were awarded their green flag. Below is the list of schools and their environmental theme for which they were awarded their green flag.

School	Green Schools Theme
<b>Offaly School of Special Education, Tullamore</b>	Litter & Waste
<b>Killina Presentation Secondary School</b>	Litter & Waste
<b>Cloneyhurke National School</b>	Water
<b>Dromakeenan National School</b>	Global Citizenship Travel
<b>St. Rynagh's National School, Banagher</b>	Global Citizenship Travel
<b>Rehab Care, Tanyard, Tullamore</b>	Global Citizenship Travel
<b>Scoil Mhuire Banrion, Edenderry</b>	Global Citizenship Travel
<b>Scoil Naomh Eoin, Rath</b>	Global Citizenship Travel
<b>St. Mary's NS, Cloghan</b>	Global Citizenship Travel
<b>St. Mary's Youth Reach, Edenderry</b>	Global Citizenship Travel
<b>St. Mary's Secondary School, Edenderry</b>	Global Citizenship Travel
<b>Kinnitty National School</b>	Global Citizenship Litter & Waste
<b>Scoil Bhride, Croghan</b>	Global Citizenship Litter & Waste
<b>Scoil Bhride, Ballyboy</b>	Global Citizenship Litter & Waste

<b>St. Brendan's Primary School, Birr</b>	Global Citizenship Litter & Waste
<b>Mercy Primary School, Birr</b>	Global Citizenship Energy
<b>Scoil Mhuire Naofa, Rhode</b>	Global Citizenship Energy
<b>Colaiste Iosogain, Portarlinton</b>	Global Citizenship Marine
<b>Scoil Mhuire, Cloneygowan</b>	Primary Climate Ambassador

Acknowledgement of Scoil Mhuire in Cloneygowan must be mentioned as they are the first Offaly school to receive the Primary Climate Ambassador Flag, having participated in the programme for 20 years.





## Waste Enforcement

### Waste Complaints:

To date Waste Enforcement has received and investigated 29 no. complaints relating to unauthorised waste disposal and sites.

### Inspections:

Waste Enforcement is on target to meet the EPA inspection rate for 2025 regarding the Producer Responsibility inspections – Tyres, Plastic Bags, batteries, WEEE etc.

### Brown Bin Collections:

1. **Householders** will be contacted shortly regarding their waste collection practises ensuring they are segregating organic food waste from the residual bin, by means of home composting, brown bin collection or using a civic amenity site on a regular basis.
2. **Commercial** were inspected to ensure that food waste from Kitchens, canteens, deli counters are segregated from the residual bin collection by means of brown bin collection only. Some follow inspections required but in general very good compliance rate.

## Deposit Return Scheme

A number of businesses were inspected this month, some businesses require follow up inspections, some uncertainty within the marketplace regarding the DRS for the smaller to medium enterprises.

WERLA have contacted Environment to ensure the DRS are contacted in advance of Tullamore Show and National Ploughing Championships for the scheme to be available at both events. Environment are actively working with the Ploughing Match and Tullamore Show teams to support compliance.

## Anti Dumping Initiative

DECC granted €80,000 to Offaly County Council for a mattress amnesty and CCTV scheme at dumping blackspots. Project planning is underway.

## Water Quality

### Farm Inspections

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

### Nutrient Management Plan

10 no. Nutrient Management Plans have been assessed and 9 no. have been approved in 2025 to date

### Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (DWWTS) inspections

Domestic Wastewater Treatment System (DWWTS) inspections are ongoing in accordance with the National Inspection Plan for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems.



**IFI Barrier Mitigation Fund** – IFI have sought Expressions of Interest to identify barriers in the county that impede fish movements.

The Barrier Mitigation Fund is a key initiative under Inland Fisheries Ireland's (IFI) National Barrier Mitigation Programme, NBMP. Its goal is to enhance river connectivity and restore natural water flows by funding the removal or mitigation of man-made instream barriers that obstruct fish passage. The NBMP aims to increase the habitat available for migratory fish and restore natural sediment processes in rivers that

provide important habitats for a range of native species.

A number of barriers were submitted in the Birr and Edenderry Municipal District Areas for consideration, with input from the former Barrow Drainage District team.

## Animal Control

**Control of Dogs:** So far in 2025 we cared for over 65 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.



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## TRANSPORTATION

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### TII Pavement and Renewal program:

Works are now complete on the Pavement and Renewal program for works to the N62 Works at Crancreagh and Doon, this project was funded by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). This scheme primarily involves a pavement overlay/inlay, along with accommodation works and line marking as follows:

- Doon section length circa 0.822km.
- Crancreagh section length circa 0.973km.

The project has successfully upgraded the pavement infrastructure, delivering significant improvements in road safety and driving conditions for all users.



### Active Travel

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has allocated an additional €500,000 for the Cox's Bridge project, bringing the total funding to €750,000. This is part of the Active Travel scheme aimed at enhancing traffic flow and safety. The overall 2025 allocation for Active Travel Infrastructure is now €3,250,000.

This additional funding highlights the importance of the Cox's Bridge project within the Active Travel initiatives, supporting its construction and helping

contribute to safer, more sustainable travel infrastructure in Tullamore.

**Roads Program:** Works across all the program headings in the 2025 Roads program have now commenced across each Municipal District.

### Pilot Projects delivered by Offaly County Council:

As part of this year's National Roads Services Training Group Conference, Offaly County Council presented two individual presentations with regards to R400 Peat Pilot and the use of a Carbon Tool in the delivery of the annual Restoration Improvement and Maintenance Programs.

Ground investigation stage for phase II are currently underway on the R400 Peat Pilot Project.

**Public Lighting:** The following is a breakdown of the Public Lighting failures across the County. There are **91** faults on the system at present. **65** 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 **26 faults or 0.27%** of the lighting stock.



The breakdown of the **26** faults across each MD are as follows:

<b>Municipal District</b>	<b>No Of Faults</b>	<b>Total No of Lights in the MD</b>	<b>% fault of MD Lights Only</b>	<b>% fault per MD of the Countywide Public Lighting Stock</b>
Birr MD	18	2984	0.60	0.19
Tullamore MD	5	3934	0.12	0.05
Edenderry MD	3	2406	0.12	0.03

## 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 564 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of May 2025.
- A further 428 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 2 signed up for HAP and 6 exited from HAP in May.

- At the end of May, 40 single people and 19 couples/families were supported in emergency accommodation.
- Number of maintenance requests received for month of May was 285.
- Total of housing stock at end of May is 2220.
- 2025 Annual Rent Review, for local authority tenants commenced on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January with 2,173 rent assessment forms posted to tenants. As of 03/06/2025,

2066 (96%) signed rent assessment forms

have been received from tenants. 19 tenants have been removed for various reasons. 61% of rent assessments forms have been assessed. New rents will be effective from the 12<sup>th</sup> 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) – Contractor Appointed
- 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.

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 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
- Forest View, Birr (22 Turnkey Units) – Completion 2025/2026.
- Ard Garán, Ballyvora, Ferbane (1 Part V Unit) – Completion Q4/2025
- Tyrrells Brook, Edenderry (8 Part V Units) – 4 units to be delivered in 2025 and 4 in 2026.
- The Elms, Oakwood Lawns, Edenderry (2 Part V units) – Completion Q3/2025
- Ballinagar (1 Part V unit) - Completion Q3/2025

### **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
- 27 Units completed
- 5 Pre let units on site

### **Community Development Programme**

- Estate Management Funding allocated in Budget 2025 for Birr, Edenderry and



## Development Management

	To end May 2025	To end May 2024	Total 2024
<b>Planning Applications</b>	273	262	735
<b>Extensions of Duration Applications</b>	7	2	12
<b>Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued</b>	37 (12)	40 (17)	71 (36)

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

25/60189 Clonarrow Windfarm Limited	Dev includes the erection of 4 wind turbines and all associated site works. Clonarrow, Riverlyons and Kiloneen, Co. Offaly
25/60186 Fitzpatrick & Heavey Homes Ltd	Construction of a residential development of 39 no. units and demolition of an existing single storey shed... Woodlands Park, Townparks, Birr, Co. Offaly. R35 F893

25/60158 John Ryan	3 no. terraced houses at Castlecourt and 1 no. semi-detached house at Main St and all associated site works. Castlecourt & Main St, Daingean, Co. Offaly
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## Forward Planning

### Draft Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031

Elected Members in Offaly County Council and Laois County Council were issued with the Chief Executives Report on submissions received on Material Alterations to the Draft Portarlington JLAP on May 30<sup>th</sup>. The CE Report is to be considered by the elected members at the full Council meeting of Offaly County Council on June 16<sup>th</sup> and Laois County Council on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

### Architecture and Conservation – March to May 2025

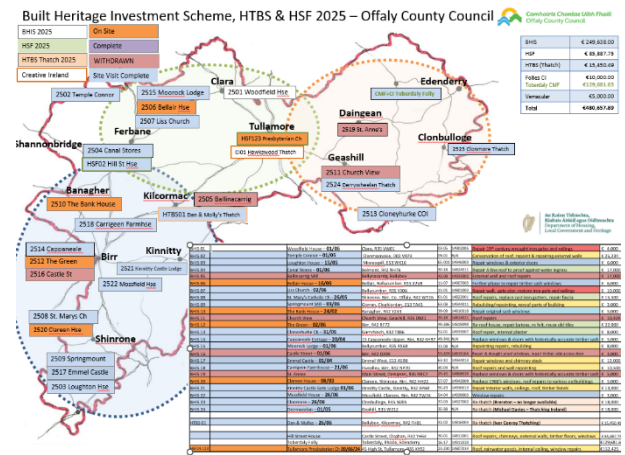
- Built Heritage Investment Scheme - 25 projects** (2024 13 projects).  
**Total funding for 2025 now €250,000** (2024 €118,400). 3 projects on site and 2 practically complete.



*The Green, Birr roof repairs*



*Bank House, Banagher window repairs*



*Distribution of projects for 2025*

2. **Thatch Fund:** thatching funding of **€15,450** approved for Dan and Molly's Ballyboy.



3. **Historic Structures Fund – Hill Street house Cloghan** grant of **€85,887.75** approved over a 2-year period. Works to commence in June.
4. **Community Monuments Fund (CMF) –** application submitted by HO for conservation repairs to **Toberdaly Folly**, **€129,681.65** approved.



5. **Creative Ireland –** two areas of funding  
 1. Folly project and 2. Traditional Architecture, looking at a thatched evening in Offaly History 09 June, with



talks, film and display. Launch of new film on Offaly Thatcher Ben Purcell.



6. **Follies Trust Offaly project** - TBC depending on folly project selected for 2025.
7. **Holy Wells** – Research into Holy Wells of Offaly (68 are on Department SMR list), site visits to assess current condition.



*Seven Blessed Wells of Killeigh*

8. **Step into Nature** – talks Birdwatch Ireland Westmeath, BSBI Botanic Gardens, Burrenbeo Trust, Swift Centre Trim Biodiversity Week, Presentation to TY students Geashill Tidy Towns + Bioblitz.



## Heritage & Biodiversity

### Heritage Team – March April & May update

Heritage, Biodiversity and Creative Communities programming.

The quarterly Heritage Forum meeting was held on 10 April in Killeigh with a visit to see the conservation works at the Abbey afterwards.

### Heritage Council – Heritage Plan Funding

–€37,500 has been allocated to delivering Heritage Plan actions from the Heritage Council. Key projects include Heritage Week, publications on the Silver River by John Feehan and O'Connor Square, Tullamore by Michael Byrne and a Lidar survey of Birr town.

### Local Biodiversity Action Fund

The maximum funding of €100,000 was secured from the Local Biodiversity Action Fund. Key projects include treatment of invasive species primarily Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam; Offaly Woodland Bat Monitoring Scheme; Biodiversity Week including supporting the Geashill Bioblitz; the Hares' Corner project in partnership with Burren Beo; desktop Wetlands survey and management of green spaces for biodiversity enhancement.

**Biodiversity Week** was marked in Offaly from Friday 16 May to Sunday 25 May. Events during the week were co-ordinated by the biodiversity officer and ranged from exploring the plant species at Tullamore Wetlands to partnering with Bord na Mona to see the changing landscape at Derrybrat Bog.



*Figure 1 Selection of photos from Wildflowers Walk at Tullamore Wetlands with Fiona Devery during Biodiversity Week*



### **Community Monuments Fund – 100% funding -€302,328**

Five projects have been allocated funding in 2025 for works on monuments in Offaly. Conservation works will commence at Toberdaly castle; works will continue on the large-scale conservation project at Monasteroris church near Edenderry and phase two works at Ballintemple church, Walsh Island; emergency works will take place at Lemanaghan where trees fell during Storm Eowyn and research will be carried out at Newtown Fortified House in the foothills of the Slieve Blooms to facilitate an application for works in 2026.

### **Heritage Council Community Grants – awards for Offaly totalling €61,941**

Support was provided to community groups applying for the Heritage Council Community Grant scheme. Three groups were successful. St Brendan's Catholic Church in Birr for the conservation of the St Brendan stained glass window €12,781; Lis Church near Boher for the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the conservation of the entrance gate railings, €25,000 and Clara Heritage Society for a feasibility channel study of the River Brosna study of the river through the town, €24,160. **Commemorations Funding** €15,000 has been confirmed to deliver a range of projects within Offaly. €10,000 is allocated to partnership projects with Offaly History and €5,000 to an open call for artist collaboration.

**Community Film night in Birr 25 April** An evening was held in Birr Theatre showing a number of community led films, the **Shinrone Gown** by Shinrone Heritage Group; The **Kilcormac Pieta** commissioned by the KDA and 'Down with that Sort of Thing' by Boher National School along with God in a Bottle commissioned by Offaly Heritage office.



*Figure 2 The Shinrone Gown  
short film funded by Creative  
Ireland 2024*

### **Observatories of Ireland**

On the 18 April World Heritage Day Minister James Browne announced that Birr Castle Demesne and Dunsink Observatory have officially been added to Ireland's Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage Properties. This marks a key step at the beginning of a journey toward full UNESCO recognition, alongside Armagh Observatory in Northern Ireland. If successful, these observatories would join the ranks of iconic heritage sites like Brú na Bóinne, Skellig Michael, and the Giant's Causeway.

Offaly County Council continues to work closely with the Astronomical Observatories of Ireland on this project.

### **Creative Ireland Community Heritage and Art projects**

An open call was made for applications to the Creative Ireland community engagement grants where an aspect of heritage is explored by a community with an artist. 20 projects have received funding offers ranging from €1,500 to €8,000. The Creative Communities Engagement Officer recently visited the following community projects which have commenced.

*Croneen Connections* facilitated by Emma Barone in collaboration with Avista Support Services Ashbrook & Riverview where participants are creating a large-scale mosaic inspired by the Croneen Trout and its river habitat.

*Stitching Heritage & Innovation* facilitated by Dolores Dempsey & Teresa Doyle in collaboration with Clara Heritage Society exploring and engaging with the life and legacy of Anne Jellicoe and the Goodbody family through embroidery and doll-making. *Threads of Connection* facilitated by Nasrin Golden in collaboration with Tullamore Family Resource Centre engaging with natural elements, blending traditional crafts with contemporary art. *Storytelling Homes* facilitated by Teresa Doyle in partnership with Chatters and Matters Women's Shed of Offaly Traveller Movement where participants are expressing their culture and personal experiences through the creation of miniature wagons.



Figure 3 Participants of **Story Telling Homes** project with artist, **Teresa Doyle** and **Offaly Traveller Movement** above and **Stitching Heritage and Innovation** with **Dolores Dempsey**, artist & **Clara Heritage Society** below



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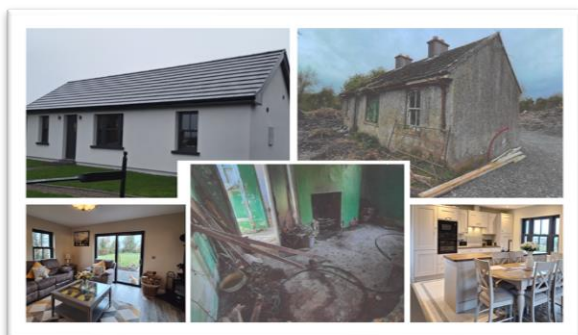
## REGENERATION

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### Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant.

The roll out of Croí Cónaithe in County Offaly continues.

- 218 applications have been received since the commencement of the scheme
- 161 have been approved to commence refurbishment works
- 45 of which have now completed the grant processed with approximately €2.5m in funding allocated



Under the scheme, applicants may receive up to €50,000 to refurbish a property that has been vacant for at least 2 years or more, with an additional top-up of €20,000 available for properties requiring structural repairs. Since the program's inception, the grant has facilitated the restoration of vacant properties in Offaly, making valuable contributions to both urban and rural communities across the County. Applications continue to be received, and staff are continuing to process applications in a timely manner. It is vital that all documentation required is submitted at the initial application stage or delays are inevitable.

Application forms, along with detailed information and answers to frequently asked questions, can be found at <https://www.offaly.ie/croi-conaithe/>

For queries, property owners can contact [vacanthomes@offalycoco.ie](mailto:vacanthomes@offalycoco.ie) or submit completed applications to the Vacant Homes Officer at Offaly County Council.

### Derelict Sites:

As of May 2025, there are 23 sites that make up the derelict sites register of Offaly County Council. With the continuous review and roll out of its derelict sites policy the derelict sites team envisage this number will grow into 2025 and beyond. The team is continuing to take a town-by-town approach in dealing with derelict sites throughout the county. In recent months, three properties listed on the register have been sold by owners on the private market. In addition, Offaly County Council have begun the CPO process on a number of properties listed on the register.

Derelict site levies for 2025 are being issued on each of these sites and served to the identified owners of each property.

All queries in relation to derelict sites in co Offaly should be directed to [derelictsites@offalycoco.ie](mailto:derelictsites@offalycoco.ie)

- 1 property identified for removal from the register (April 25).
- 8 Properties inspected and recommended for inclusion on the register (April 25).
- Town – by – Town Approach: Birr, Tullamore, Shinrone & Portarlinton progressed by the Property Activation Team to date.



### Months of April & May:

- No. of site visits = 55
- No. of Warning Notices = 25
- No. Section 8(2) - Notice of Intention to make Entry on Derelict Sites Register = 5

### Urban Regeneration Development Fund, Call 3:

Under Call 3 of URDF, Offaly County Council is now positioned to address dereliction and vacancy within the urban district of Tullamore Town. In 2023, the Department of Housing approved a list of 25 properties and allocated funding to activate these properties located in and near the town centre.

Of the 25 properties on the approved list, OCC have identified owners and opened engagement with 23. To date, this engagement has yielded the following:

- 2 properties on the list are not vacant (removed from list)
- 6 properties have been placed on the private property market by private owners (includes 1 on DSR)
- 5 properties are presently on the derelict sites register
- 2 properties are being placed on the derelict sites register of Offaly County Council.
- 7 properties are being activated by owners, a process that is ongoing (includes 1 on DSR).
- 1 property in the process of being acquired by agreement
- 2 properties on DSR where CPOs launched - appealed to An Bord Pleanála
- 5 properties have ongoing engagement with owners.

### Town Centre First: Ferbane

The development of Ferbane Town

Centre First Plan is well underway. Offaly County Council are developing the plan in house in collaboration with Ferbane newly formed Town Team and Urban designers: Brady Shipman Martin.



Ferbane Town Team

Offaly County Council and Brady Shipman Martin have now completed the first half of the plan including extensive assessment in 'Understanding Ferbane'. The Regeneration Section and BSM presented the plan progress to Ferbane Town Team on 14<sup>th</sup> May. The team also presented a set of proposed themes and intervention projects to the town team and discussed favoured options.



Figure 4 Challenges & Opportunities for Ferbane Town

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## LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

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### Big Win for Offaly at the National Enterprise Awards 2025!

We're thrilled to announce that DTS (Decontamination Technical Services Ltd) has been crowned the Midlands Region Award Winner at this year's National Enterprise Awards!

Representing Offaly with pride, DTS has shown how innovation and excellence in specialist sterilisation services can stand out on a national stage. Backed by Local Enterprise Office Offaly, this achievement is a testament to their hard work and ambition. Now in its 25th year, the National Enterprise Awards celebrate the best of Ireland's small businesses, and the remarkable impact of Local Enterprise Office supports across the country.



commercial awareness and product development skills.

### Offaly Shines at National Student Enterprise Awards 2025



Offaly's young entrepreneurs showcased their talent and innovation at the National Student Enterprise Awards finals, held in Mullingar on 8 May 2025. Three student-led businesses from the county reached the national stage, representing Offaly with distinction across all competition categories.

#### Senior Category – Blackwood Bait & Tackle

Tullamore College students Jack Keenahan and Nikita Greidans developed a fishing accessories business, demonstrating strong

#### Intermediate Category – Nails by Libby

Also from Tullamore College, Libby Lynch impressed judges with her nail technician business, reflecting creativity and a clear understanding of customer service.

### Junior Category – Global Sports

Senan Dunne, Joey Butler, and Eanna Carroll from Gallen Community School in Ferbane presented their GAA sports gloves enterprise, showcasing professionalism and teamwork.

Also on the night **Anthony Gorman**, a native of Killeigh and founder of **Anthony's Wooden Crafts Limited**, has been honoured with the first-ever **Alumni Achievement Award** at the 2025 National Student Enterprise Awards. The ceremony took place on 8 May in Mullingar, celebrating Anthony's entrepreneurial journey from a student participant in 2020 to a successful business owner. His success story serves as an inspiration to aspiring entrepreneurs across the county.

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly extend heartfelt congratulations to all who participated for their well-deserved recognition.

### The Local Enterprise Office Offaly Participate in National Manufacturing & Supply Chain Conference 2025



The Local Enterprise Office Offaly attended the National Manufacturing & Supply Chain Conference & Exhibition held on 28–29 May 2025 at the RDS Simmonscourt in Dublin. This event brought together industry leaders, innovators, and professionals from across Ireland and beyond to explore the latest advancements in manufacturing and supply chain management.

DTS (Decontamination Technical Services Ltd) recent National Enterprise Awards winner showcased their cutting-edge solutions – continuing to make waves with their outstanding work.

The conference provided an invaluable platform for networking, knowledge sharing, and exploring collaborative opportunities.

### Dublin Tech Summit 2025



The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) was actively involved in the **Dublin Tech Summit 2025**, which took place on 28–29 May 2025 at the RDS in Dublin. A number of local businesses availed of free tickets to attend the summit. This initiative was part of LEO's broader mission to support local enterprises in accessing high-profile networking and innovation events, helping them connect with global tech leaders, investors, and potential partners.

### Offaly Businesses Gain Valuable Insights at 'The 9 Wastes of Public Relations' Workshop

On Wednesday, 21 May 2025, the Local Enterprise Office Offaly hosted a workshop titled **"The 9 Wastes of Public Relations"** at



the Bridge House Hotel in Tullamore. Led by IMRO Award-winning broadcaster and Lean communications expert **Ronan Berry**, the session attracted a diverse group of local business owners, marketers, and entrepreneurs eager to enhance their public relations strategies.

The interactive session provided practical templates, checklists, and AI prompts, equipping participants with actionable strategies to refine their PR approaches.



### Lunch and Learn – Edenderry Library

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly hosted a successful Lunch and Learn event at Edenderry Library, aimed at raising awareness of the broad range of supports available to local businesses. From funding opportunities to tailored mentorship, the session showcased how LEO can assist enterprises at every stage of their journey—from start-up to scaling.



The event provided a valuable platform to engage directly with local business owners, hear inspiring success stories, and strengthen connections within the business community. Feedback was

positive, with attendees expressing appreciation for the practical insights and accessible support offered by the LEO team.

### Launch of Offaly Job Fair 2025 Set to Connect Local Talent with Leading Employers



The fourth annual Offaly Job Fair organised by Tullamore Chamber of Commerce and co-hosted by Offaly Local Development, Offaly Local Enterprise Office, Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board, Offaly County Council and the Technical University of the Shannon is set to welcome hundreds of job seekers from across the Midlands on Saturday, 14 June 2025, at the Tullamore Court Hotel. With space for approximately 50 businesses, the fair offers employers a valuable platform to engage directly with prospective employees and showcase current vacancies.

The Offaly Job Fair will run from 10:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Employers interested in participating can find application forms and further details at [www.tullamorechamber.com](http://www.tullamorechamber.com) or by contacting 057 9323698 / [info@tullamorechamber.com](mailto:info@tullamorechamber.com)

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly is proud to support this initiative, which underscores our commitment to fostering local employment and economic growth.

### Mentoring and Consultancy Panels



LEO Offaly will shortly be advertising on eTenders for the establishment of new mentoring and consultancy panels. These panels will include experts across a range of disciplines—such as finance, marketing, digital transformation, sustainability, innovation, HR, and strategic planning—to ensure the delivery of high-quality, tailored supports that meet the evolving needs of businesses throughout the county.

### Upcoming Courses and Events

Upcoming Events		See All Events
06/06/2025	How to use Instagram for Marketing (Part 1)	<a href="#">Book online</a>
13/06/2025	How to use Instagram for Marketing (Part 2)	<a href="#">Book online</a>
16/06/2025	Practical Guide to Income Tax for Businesses	<a href="#">Book online</a>
17/06/2025	Start Your Own Business Day Course	<a href="#">Book online</a>
17/06/2025	How to make and use Reels on Instagram to market y...	<a href="#">Book online</a>
20/06/2025	Lean Management Practical Workshop	<a href="#">Book online</a>
23/06/2025	Discover how you can maximise efficiency and achie...	<a href="#">Book online</a>

## Community, Culture and Emergency Services

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### **Local Community Development Committee:**

Offaly Local

Community Development Committee held its monthly meeting on 08 May 2025.

Ms. A. Duffy, OLDC, briefed the members on the LEADER Programme 2023-2027, outlining the main themes and sub themes, and provided an update on the programme. A number of approved projects were highlighted, and members noted the significant importance of each project to local communities.

Mr. D. Lee, Film Resource Officer, was welcomed to the meeting and provided comprehensive presentation on FilmOffaly, outlining the history and context together with the development of film production and the film sector in Offaly, and its contribution to driving growth and community. The successes of FilmOffaly were highlighted and members discussed the long-term economic benefits for Offaly and opportunities for expansion.

Members were informed of the nominees for the 2025 Pride of Place Competition. It was noted that judging in the three Municipal Districts will take place in July 2025, and winners in each category will be announced at an Awards Ceremony in Limerick in November 2025.

Ms. E. McGinn, County Librarian, provided members with a comprehensive update and presentation in relation Offaly Libraires' services and supports. She briefed members on the Offaly Libraries' Development Plan 2024-2028 "Creating Space".

Funding opportunities available to communities and individuals and upcoming community events were detailed to members.



### **Public Participation Network:**

The Midland Regional PPN Meeting was held in Lawlor's Hotel Naas on the 14 May, and the Offaly PPN was represented by the Support Worker and two members of the PPN Secretariat.

The first PPN Plenary meeting of 2025 was held in the Tullamore Court Hotel on Wednesday the 21 May. There were a variety of groups from around the county in attendance on the night, i.e. Active Retirement, Drama and Community Development groups, to name but a few.

On the night, those in attendance were enlightened by the exciting work of the Volunteer Centre presented by guest speaker, Cormac Nolan and also the workings of the Rural Social Scheme presented by guest speakers, George Dignan and Catherine Dunne from Offaly Local Development Company



*Secretariat Members at the Plenary*

PPN



*'Building Together Expo'*



*Guest Speakers, George Duignan, Catherine Dunne, Offaly Local Development Company*



*Guest Speaker, Cormac Nolan, from Offaly Volunteer Centre*



**Comhairle Na nÓg:**

Offaly Comhairle Executive

members met in mid-May. The group worked on plans for the Annual Youth Conference deciding on a date and venue for same. This will be held in October. They prepared for the Walk for Jigsaw – to promote awareness of mental health issues for young people and to raise funds.

On May 30th, members of Offaly Comhairle na nÓg joined with their counterparts from Laois Comhairle na nÓg to participate in the “Walk for Jigsaw” event, aimed at raising both awareness and funds for Jigsaw, an organisation that provides mental health support services to young people.

Prior to the Plenary on the 21 May, the PPN secretariat in conjunction with the support worker held a meeting in the Tullamore Court Hotel.



*Carol Mahon Offaly PPN Support Worker*

The event took the form of a looped walk through the scenic Slieve Bloom Mountains. The walk promoted mindfulness, connection with nature, team bonding, and personal reflection,

while also offering participants an enjoyable and meaningful experience.

Importantly, the event supported a cause directly aligned with the group's chosen topic of Mental Health, reinforcing their ongoing commitment to youth wellbeing in the community.



**ARTS OFFICE  
ARTS  
PROGRAMMING  
Hullabaloo!**

**Offaly's Children's Arts Festival CALL-OUT**



Hullabaloo! Offaly's Children's Arts Festival is an important annual fixture in the county's calendar of culture and arts festival events. Now in its 19th year, the Hullabaloo! focus is on programming engaging and stimulating arts events for 3 – 12-year-olds and their families. The festival runs over four days during the

October mid-term break Wednesday 29 October – Saturday 1 November 2025 in Birr, Tullamore, Edenderry, Clara and Kilcormac.

Birr Theatre and Arts Centre and Esker Arts are the principal delivery partners for Hullabaloo! Offaly's Children's Arts Festival and will manage the delivery of the programme for 2025, with support from Offaly County Council Arts Office and in partnership with Offaly Libraries, Clara Family Resource Centre, Kilcormac Development Association and Creative Places Edenderry.

Hullabaloo! partners are now seeking proposals from artists, musicians, filmmakers, drama practitioners, dancers, writers (and more!) for workshops/performances and 'mini camps' during Hullabaloo! Offaly's Children's Arts Festival in Birr, Tullamore Clara, Edenderry, Kilcormac, and libraries across Offaly.

**Birr Festival of Music and Voice**

Birr Festival of Music 2025 brought you one of our most exciting programmes to date from Thursday 1 - Monday 5 May.

The recent appointment of Niall Kinsella as Artistic Director marked a significant development for the Festival, which was illustrated by the outstanding calibre of events and artists he brought to Birr this year. The renowned RTÉ Concert Orchestra opened the 2025 Festival with a spectacular evening of orchestral and operatic favourites. Conducted by Niall and featuring internationally acclaimed Irish soprano Ava Dodd and presenter Liz Nolan of RTÉ lyric fm. Acclaimed singer Liza Pulman and award-winning jazz pianist Gareth Williams explored the Great American Songbook while male



vocal quartet4 in a Bar performed at Craughwell's Courtyard.

Birr Festival of Music and Voice is supported by the OCC Arts Office Festival Grant Funding.

## FILMOFFALY

### Film Awards Update

2024's award winner For The Cure has now been completed and delivered. It has also been confirmed that this film has been accepted for the 2025 Galway Film Fleadh, which is where the premiere is likely to take place.

Judging for the 2025 award continues. The remaining shortlist of four went through two rounds of script workshops with Eugene O'Brien. Final script and production packs are being delivered in time for the judging panel on 10<sup>th</sup> June. We will publicly announce the winner shortly afterwards.



### Podcast Workshop

We are working with the Kilcormac Development Association to run some podcasting workshops aimed at members of the local community who wish to launch their own podcast or use it to enhance their businesses. This is intended to encourage sustainable use of the KDA's new purpose-built podcasting studio and will include a significant element on using video as part of the podcasting process. Applications for places were open during May with the course starting in mid-June.



**Sunday Independent**  
The Sunday Independent featured FilmOffaly as

part of a supplement to celebrate Europe Day and the diverse range of project the EU funds in Ireland.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### Culture Night 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025

The Arts Office received 4 applications for Culture Night Commissions Fund (up to €1000) and 9 applications for Culture Night Event Fund (up to €600). The applications will be assessed at the beginning of June.

[https://www.offaly.ie/occ\\_news/culture\\_night/](https://www.offaly.ie/occ_news/culture_night/)

### Offaly Festivals Schedule 2025

This year 7 Offaly Festivals have been offered grant funding and 6 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 <sup>th</sup> Oct – 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov 2025	Multidiscipline

### Birr Writers Residency Award 2025

The Birr Writers Residency award call-out closed on May 19<sup>th</sup>. The call-out has received an unprecedented high number of applications - 43 applications have been submitted by writers and poets from Ireland and abroad. The Arts Office team are analysing the submissions and

shortlisting will be taking place at the beginning of June. 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/>

## INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

### Esler Arts and Lough Boora Percent for Art Commission

Following a call-out and a 3-stage assessment and selection process, Offaly-based glass artist Michelle O'Donnell has been awarded €20k Esler Arts and LBSP Percent for Art Commission. The contract for the commission is currently being prepared by the AAO and the artist will be meeting the commission partners in June to confirm the schedule of works and other details. O'Donnell is internationally acclaimed for her evocative fuse glass works, her pieces are featured in esteemed collections including those of the White House, Queen Elizabeth II and AIB.

## REPRESENTATIONS AND EVENTS

Assistant Arts Officer Alex Rosiak recently represented the OCC Arts Office at two significant national arts conferences: the Creative Careers Summit in Dublin and the Performing Arts Forum Gathering in Limerick. Minding Creative Minds – the organisation established to offer a free wellbeing & for the Irish Creative Sector hosts an annual one day summit anchored by five panel discussions, with focus talks on AI and the new pilot Creative Arts Therapy service,

recognising the substantial impact made by various creative groups from the entire sector.

Held on 27 and 28 May 2025, the Performing Arts Forum Gathering brought together hundreds of artists, arts workers, and organisations for two days of conversation, provocation, and inspiration, with sessions taking place at The Lime Tree Theatre.

## HEALTHY OFFALY



May has been one of the busiest months to date this year. Planning for the 'Offaly Healthy' Event in Mucklagh on 10 June has been progressed. Invitations have been extended to all Healthy Offaly partners and the many community groups who have worked with us over the past few years. Reminders will be issued to all invitees in early June. The event promises to be an informal review of our work during Round 4 of the Healthy Ireland Fund with some interesting workshops, demonstrations

and musical interludes.

The 'Not around Us' campaign in Offaly has been progressed this month. Support for the initiative has

been forthcoming from the HSE, Offaly County Council, Offaly LCDC and Offaly Sports Partnership. The awareness campaign is currently funded by Healthy



Offaly, with additional and continuing support from Offaly County Council.

***This Campaign is an Ask, it's not an order***

As the primary focus of the campaign is awareness the installation of 'Not Around Us' signage in key targeted areas where adult and children congregate would be a critical component of the project. Branded 'No Smoking/Vaping' signage with relevant QR codes will be installed in playgrounds as part of a wider Offaly County Council new playground signage project. The signs will be bilingual and will have signposting to the relevant quit services. Healthy Offaly are grateful to our County Council colleagues to allow our logos and messaging to be included on the new playground signs.



*At the launch of the 'Not Around Us' Offaly logo were L-R: Lourda Giles Edenderry Municipal District, Cllr Noel Cribbin Edenderry Tidy Towns, Dermot Egan Healthy Offaly, Aisling Warburton HSE, Gillian Cribbin-Forde Edenderry Tidy Towns and Cllr Claire Murray-Smale.*

The new logo designed for the 'Not Around Us' Offaly campaign was officially launched at Edenderry Playground on Friday 30 May to coincide with *World No Tobacco Day* on 31 May. Healthy Offaly would like to thank the Staff and Councillors of Edenderry Municipal District, Edenderry Tidy Towns and the HSE for all their support in launching the logo in Edenderry.

With the confirmation of budget allocations by Pobal in the coming weeks work can commence on what

actions can be animated for the remaining months of the year. Currently the Traveller Mens Football Team, the Cycling without Age project and Active Ageing for Kilcormac are progressing well. Training will be provided for community volunteers for the 'Cycling without Age' rickshaw tricycle on 9 June. Once this training has been successfully completed the project can then be officially launched.

## SPORTS



### Funding

- €750 secured under the Age & Opportunity active grant for older adults
- €9,300 secured from Laois / Offaly Child & Young Persons Services Committee (Laois / Offaly CYPSC) to support the delivery of 1:1 physical activity supports for young people with additional needs / disabilities
- A further application to the value of €10,000 was submitted to Laois / Offaly CYPSC under the international protection centre strand



**Programme highlights** from May include: -

### 1. **Bike Week 2025**

May saw Offaly Sports Partnership deliver its third annual Grand Canal Greenway Cycle Relay from Edenderry to



Shannon Harbour as the flagship event for Bike Week 2025. 75 participants took part in the event with some hardy cyclists completing the full 65km, while others opted for a shorter ride between stages. The Sports Partnership also supported two cycling clubs to deliver activities as part of the week



## 2. **Community Sports**

### **Development Programmes -**

Community Games programmes in Banagher, Clara, Daingean, Edenderry, Ferbane and Rhode for 250 children 3.

### 3. **Sport and physical activity programmes** in the

**Ballycumber, Daingean and Mucklagh Sports Hub.** Among the programmes being delivered are: -

#### *Daingean Sports Hub*



- 30 older adults are participating in a *chair yoga programme* with Tina. The programme sees yoga postures performed while seated and / or with the aid of a chair. The class takes place weekly and is specifically designed to suit the needs of the participants in attendance.
- nine people are participating on a *Pilates programme* with Sean. The programme focuses on precise movements, controlled breathing, and muscle engagement, enhancing muscle tone and stability. The class takes place weekly and is specifically designed to suit the

needs of the participants in attendance.

- 28 older adults are participating in a *strength and conditioning programme* with Alana. The class takes place twice weekly and is specifically designed to suit the needs of the participants in attendance.

4. Physical activity programmes in a limited number of primary and post primary schools with a focus on supporting schools to deliver sporting activities

#### 5. **Sport Inclusion Development Programmes –**

- students from the Nagle Centre, Killina Secondary School travelled to Athlone Equestrian Centre weekly to participate in a *therapeutic horse riding programme*. For some participants, this was their first time on a horse
- 15<sup>th</sup> May saw the hosting of our inaugural *Athletics for All* event for post primary school students. Five schools were in attendance with participants taking part in a 60m sprint, long jump, ball throw and javelin throw events. A fantastic day was had by all with great feedback received from students and teachers. This event will hopefully become an annual event in the Sports Inclusion Calendar.
- St Mary's primary school in Edenderry were supported to deliver an *inclusive sports day* for their pupils on 27<sup>th</sup> May.



Therapeutic horse riding



Athletics for All day



Inclusive sports day

#### 6. **Sport4Empowerment Programme –**

In association with West Offaly Training, a pilot table tennis community project has commenced in Crank House in Banagher. 18 adults from the IPAS (international protection accommodation services) and BOTP (beneficiaries of temporary protection) centres are participating on the

programme which is being led out by a Ukrainian national with significant experience in the sport



## **7. *Women in Sport***

- the boxing programme in Killeigh Community Centre is continuing with over 30 women and girls participating regularly



## Tourism Ireland's Homes and Interiors Magazine

A wonderful article on Offaly was featured in April's Edition of 'Ireland's Homes and Interiors Magazine'. Ireland's largest monthly Interiors and lifestyle magazine, the article highlighted the 'best of' in the county, featuring well known attractions like Birr Castle Demesne and Clonmacnoise and lesser known hidden gems like Ardmore County House and JJ Killeens in Shannonbridge.



## Exploring Co. Offaly

From the best views to the best pints, here are our top picks of places to visit in Co. Offaly.

### BEST PINT - JJ Killeens Bar

Found in the heart of Shannonbridge, this local gem is a haven for those seeking an authentic Irish experience, and most importantly, a good old pint. Their extensive menu includes a curated selection of whiskies, showcasing the pride of the region. Use their Seven Churches Whiskey, a tribute to the ancient monastic site of Clonmacnoise. Visit @jkillreens and follow @jkillreens\_shannonbridge



## Celtic Media group – Your Ireland Supplement

A tourism supplement for the Celtic Media group, which includes the Offaly Independent newspaper, was published in May. The supplement is distributed with numerous newspaper titles and reaches counties Offaly, Westmeath, Meath, Cavan & Mayo. Offaly tourism advertised in the supplement and secured advertorial

space, promoting fun activities, sights and experiences for visitors this Summer.

## Faithful fun....

From creating down the Shannon using the beautiful scenery, to enjoying your first evening cruise for a jam-packed evening programme, Birr Vintage Week, Offaly has something different for everyone. Here are our top 10 recommendations for all seasons and ages.

### For the history buff

If you're already tired of the well-known Birr Castle Demesne and Clonmacnoise, there are plenty more hidden gems to discover in Offaly. Visit the Loughlinagh Monastery, which is the ruins of a 12th-century monastery. The site contains the ruins of St. Blaise's church, as well as a holy well and a collection of early genealogical and historical records. Close by is also St.

### Shop 'til you drop

Offaly is a hot spot of shops to stroll and for a bit of fashion shopping, design and gourmet food.

### For the family

Let the kids explore the wonders of the Shannon as they explore their own imagination on the banks of the river.



There are over 100 shops across the county, including a miniature railway, a museum, a supermarket, a distillery and more.

### For the family

Let the kids explore the wonders of the Shannon as they explore their own imagination on the banks of the river.

With so many unique experiences to enjoy, Offaly has something different for everyone to enjoy this summer.



## Tracks and Trails TV Show

Following on from our successful TV exposure in 2024, the tourism team worked to secure an episode on Season 12 of the ever-popular RTÉ Tracks and Trails show, in collaboration with Laois County Council.

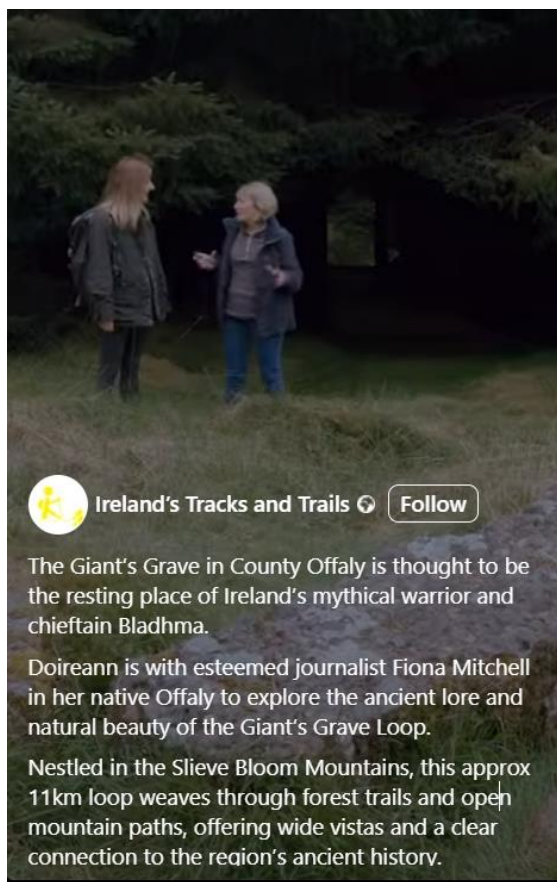
The half hour show was broadcast on RTÉ One on Friday 30th May @ 8pm.

The first half featured the wonderful Glenbarrow Waterfall Loop where the new presenter Doireann Ní Ghlacáin met with Laois native Claire Byrne and discusses the history of the Slieve Bloom mountains and surrounds.

Offaly took centre stage in part 2, where our very own Fiona Mitchell, walked and talked with Doireann.

They travelled the Giant's Grave Loop which starts/ends in Cadamstown. This 11km route is full of history and folklore with marvellous vistas and quite scenic spots along the way.

The show will also be broadcast on a second run and is available to stream on RTÉ player and YouTube.



### **Tullamore Show and National Ploughing Championship 2025**

Offaly is hosting two major outdoor events in 2025, The Tullamore Show, Ireland's largest one day outdoor event in August and the 3-day National Ploughing Championships, in September. It is anticipated that numbers in excess of 250,000 will visit the county for these events. The tourism team along with LEO Offaly have appointed a highly experienced Event Management Company to assist with the organisation and management of the Experience Offaly pavilion at both events.

Work is progressing on organising both of these major events. Expressions of Interest have opened for exhibitors for the pavilion at the Tullamore Show, with EOI soon to open for the pavilion at the National Ploughing Championships.

### **LEADER Programme**

Offaly Tourism Marketing (CLG) had made a successful application to OLDC in March 2025 for funding for marketing



activities under the LEADER programme 2023-2027.

The funding will go towards a national Radio Campaign to help promote Offaly as a destination to the national target market. The successful application also provides essential funding required for a new suite of tourism photography. The photography project will run for a number of days during the Summer 2025 and ensure the tourism team have a strong portfolio of photographs that capture the essence of a place, showing its natural beauty, cultural richness, and the experiences it offers. The new photography will be utilised in advertising, social media and the new tourism website.

### Public Relations

The tourism team are continuing to work on Public Relations with audiences and stakeholders, building awareness through different marketing channels. Offaly hosted the very popular influencer Jane Casey in April, having successfully worked with her in 2024. Jane who has a special interest in history and heritage has a strong following with 82,000 combined followers on TikTok and Instagram. On this return visit she visited Birr Castle Demesne and completed a section of the Grand Canal Greenway on bicycle highlighting the interesting places to visit and eat along the way! Her stories on social media had over 22k views, inspiring her followers to visit!



### Grand Canal Greenway FAM Trip

Faite Ireland along with the tourism team organised a Familiarisation trip for the trade along the Grand Canal Greenway on 30<sup>th</sup> April.

The event was well attending, and the group were treated to a visit to the workshop at Glasshammer Studios, breakfast at Ballycommon Bakehouse and a tour of Tullamore DEW including other interesting stops.



### **Fáilte Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Champions Programme**

Fáilte Ireland has developed an Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Champions Programme for the Mid Shannon and Midlands area.

The tourism team along with member of the trade and tourist office volunteers attended a one-day workshop in Athlone on 7<sup>th</sup> May. The programme aims to help enhance customer service skills and build local product knowledge.

### **EU Just Transition Fund – Investment Grant-Aid Scheme for Private & Community SMEs**

The tourism team are continuing work on the EU JT Digital Transformation Programme. The main focus is on developing the new website which is still in the design phase. Work will continue through the Summer months in order to have the website launched as soon as possible.

Significant progress has been made in advancing regenerative tourism in Offaly, through the (oversubscribed) Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme (Scheme B). With strong engagement from local enterprises and communities, the next two years will focus on project delivery, strengthening tourism networks, and positioning Offaly destination. April and May were important months in building momentum and the focus for the Tourism Activator for the coming months will be on deepening this impact, supporting funded projects to implementation, and strengthening Offaly's tourism network.

### **Tourism NI 'The Epic Journey to the 153rd Open'**

Tourism Ireland brought the launch of the 153<sup>rd</sup> Irish Open to Tullamore in May,

The event, held in O'Connor Square was attended by a large crowd and there was a great 'buzz' around the town as our very own Shane Lowry competes once again in this prestigious tournament.

The world-famous Claret Jug, the iconic trophy of The Open, was on display at the Tullamore Epic Journey event, along with the giant #TheOpen letter installation, allowing for photo opportunities for invited guests and members of the public.

The tourism team met with Tourism NI on the day with a joint vision for promoting Golf throughout the country.





## LIBRARY SERVICE

### Magic Table & Sensory Space Launched in Birr Library

Offaly Libraries was proud to host the official launch of our dedicated Sensory Space and new Magic Table at Birr Library by Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, Cllr. Audrey Hennessey Kennedy.



The sensory space offers a range of sensory experiences including glow cubes, lava tiles and a floating ceiling of stars.

Central to the new offering is the Magic Table, an interactive projector that features a range of games and sensory experiences to promote physical activity, engagement and quality of life for people with sensory needs, dementia and cognitive disabilities.



The new Magic Table is fully portable with 360° projection, allowing users to pick flowers on a table, score goals on the

floor, play videos on the wall and watch hot air balloons float in the ceiling.

This new addition to Birr Library brings to 7 the number of magic tables available in libraries across the county, complementing our Sensory Book and Toy collections, which can be accessed from any branch of Offaly Libraries.

## Sensory Offaly

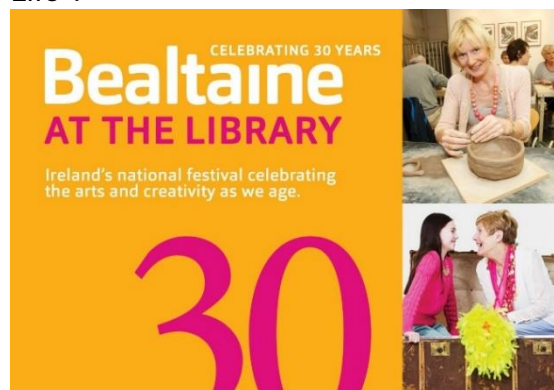


**A Space to Grow  
A Space for All**

Sensory Offaly collections and programmes are available to support users of all ages with disabilities, additional needs, and learning challenges. Families, educators and caregivers are also welcome to attend. All resources may be accessed free of charge by anyone who lives, works or is in education in Offaly. For further information please visit our website [here](#) or contact any Offaly Library.

### Bealtaine Festival at Offaly Libraries

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



In partnership with LOETB's Community Education service, Offaly Libraries delivered a rich programme of some 41 events including Coffee Mornings, Art workshops, Air Fryer Cookery demonstrations, Card Making, Chair Yoga and Mindfulness Workshops.



Visitors to Kilcormac Library are pictured here enjoying a peaceful Mindfulness session.



Edenderry Library welcomed 10 attendees for Resin Workshops, where they created these wonderfully decorative bookmarks and coasters.



Clara Library was joined by local stylist, Liz Fleming, who shared her fashion tips and tricks with 26 attendees.



Drop-in workshops, provided by West Offaly Training, were held in Banagher library every Wednesday in May for patrons who wished to use our newly launched Acorn Tablets.

Altogether, the Bealtaine Festival was well attended across the county, with 387 participants availing of these free events and workshops.

Kindly supported by Creative Ireland

Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme



## Biodiversity Week, May 19<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>

In partnership with Offaly County Council, Offaly Libraries were thrilled to present a series of events supporting Biodiversity Week this May, 19<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>.





OCC Biodiversity Officer, Ricky Whelan, visited Clara Library on Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May to chat to locals about Gardening for Biodiversity.

Throughout the week, libraries distributed Puffin Rock activity books and spot prizes for those who excelled at our Biodiversity themed Scavenger Hunts.



Birr, Edenderry, and Tullamore libraries hosted numerous school visits, allowing 120 students to learn about and get close to native Irish birds of prey with Raven Haven Aviaries.



Families were welcomed to enjoy biodiversity-themed story times and craft sessions, such as the Intergenerational Storytime and Seed planting event in Edenderry Library which attracted 15 attendees.



Kindly supported by Creative Ireland, The Heritage Council, and The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, this programme delivered 18 countywide events for 375 participants.

Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage



## Poetry Ireland Day, May 1<sup>st</sup>



Offaly Libraries coordinated a vibrant programme of events celebrating Poetry Ireland Day on Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Tullamore and Edenderry Libraries hosted Open Mic Evenings while Birr Library hosted a 'Black Out' Poetry Day, where patrons came and created their own poetry through pages from books.



Some 92 participants discovered the joys of reading, writing and creating poetry during this series of free events at Offaly Libraries.

## Cruinniú na nÓg: Saturday 7th June

Offaly Libraries welcome the return of Cruinniú na nÓg, Ireland's national day of free creative activity for children and young people up to 18 years of age.



It is a key date in Ireland's cultural calendar, providing opportunities for Ireland's 1.2 million children and young people to be inquisitive and curious, inventive and innovative, to fulfil a creative ambition or showcase an inner creative talent.

In the run up to Cruinniú na nÓg, our libraries offered weekly development workshops throughout the month of May, including Drum Circles, Glee Clubs and Theatre Clubs.

Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore Libraries look forward to seeing the 40 children who participated showcase their new talents in special performances on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> June from 7pm.



For more information on the diverse range of workshops available across 8 library locations: Banagher, Birr, Clara, Daingean, Edenderry, Ferbane, Kilcormac and Tullamore, please check out the [Cruinniú na nÓg brochure on our website here](#).

## 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.

Birr Library was joined by Leona McDonnell for a Mindfulness session with 25 Junior Certificate students from St. Brendan's Community School on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May.

The workshop worked on breathing techniques with the students and how to handle studying and exam pressures.



Birr and Clara Libraries hosted Dochas and LARRC representatives who provided information to the public on their wide range of supports for those with cancer, from counselling to massage therapy.

Dochas will visit Edenderry Library next on Jun 10<sup>th</sup> at 10m to deliver a Cancer Support Talk. For more information, [please contact Edenderry Library](#) directly.

## My Open Library: Now Available in Four Locations!

After essential upgrades, we warmly welcomed the return of My Open Library to Tullamore Library earlier this year.



Originally piloted in 2015, Offaly Libraries was the first in the country to offer this service. Since then, we have expanded our offerings to four branches: Banagher, Ferbane, Kilcormac, and Tullamore.

My Open Library provides access from 08:00 to 22:00 daily, outside staffed hours. During this time, patrons can borrow and return items, print, photocopy, use PCs, access free Wi-Fi, and use our study spaces.



Those who wish to avail of the My Open Library service at Banagher, Ferbane or Kilcormac are asked to contact their local library directly.

Tullamore Library are offering multiple inductions each week which can be [booked online here](#).

## 'Insights' Launch at Birr Library

Jacinta Glasgow launched her beautiful "Insights" art collection to over 110 attendees in Birr Library on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May!

Jacinta's paintings are inspired by nature, fauna, flora, angels and images

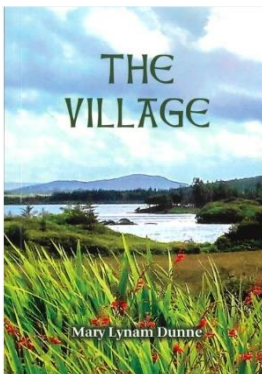
that evoke memories of childhood, healing and spiritual journeys.



Trained in Jungian Psychology and Art therapy, Jacinta enjoys using her work to explore the subconscious mind, spiritual dimensions and in her healing therapy practice.

More information available at [offaly.ie/Birr-Library](http://offaly.ie/Birr-Library)

### Book Launch in Tullamore Library



Tullamore Library, in collaboration with the Wordsmiths writing group, were proud to host the launch of local author, Mary Lynam Dunne's newly published book: 'The Village' on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> May. 'The Village' takes its readers on an evocative journey with the lives, loves, struggles of its communities; stories we will all identify with.

Copies of this book are [available to borrow](#) from Offaly Libraries.

### Offaly Libraries Blog : Read All About It!

Did you know that Offaly Libraries have a blog?



**Libraries**

Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí  
Offaly County Council

Offaly Libraries Blog

- Read all about it! -

Our latest post is all about our upcoming Summer Stars Reading Adventure and how children can get involved over the school holidays to receive their medals and certificates, just like last year's participants!



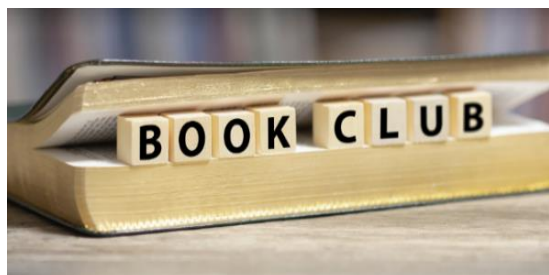
Read this blog post and explore our other featured articles here:

<https://offalylibrariesblog.wordpress.com/>



## 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.](#)

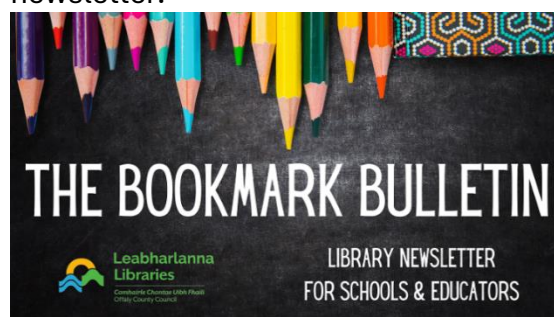
Alternatively, should you wish to **establish your own book club** in one of our libraries please get in touch by emailing **[askthelibrarian@offalycoco.ie](mailto:askthelibrarian@offalycoco.ie)** and we will be happy to help!

## 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** our general newsletter and **131 teachers** subscribed to the school newsletter.



# Finance

[illegible]