

TUARASCÁIL MHÍOSÚIL BAINISTÍOCHTA

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Deireadh Fómhair / October

**Offaly County
Council sign
contracts for a
new Regional
Fire Services
Training Centre**



**Offaly
County
Council
publishes
draft Climate
Action Plan
2024 – 2029**



**Part 8
Community
Library &
Arts Base
Edenderry**



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

An Ecumenical service will be held in Áras an Chontae on Thursday 23 November 2023 at 5.30pm, to remember deceased colleagues, family and friends of current and retired staff and members.

Land Use, Planning and Economic Development Services

PLANNING

Development Management

	To end Oct 2023	To end Oct 2022	Total 2022
Planning Applications	575	578	681
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	18	15	16
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	172 (70)	104 (9)	158 (15)

During the month of **October 2023**, the following large planning applications were received:

Carrig Renewable Energy Limited	The provision of underground electrical cabling (38kV) to facilitate the connection of the proposed Carrig Renew in the townlands of Townparks (Birr)
Killurin Community & Development Group	The erection of solar powered lighting standards on the community walkway adjacent to the perimeter of Killurin GAA pitch
Eircom Limited	The installation of a 21 metres lattice telecommunications support structure EIR ADH, Tullamore
SBLN Limited T/A Fairport	The construction of a social care residential building at Elm Grove, Birr
Eircom Ltd	The installation of an 18m monopole telecommunications structure, Tullamore Sports Link

Kilcormac Development Association	The change of use from storage yard to public carpark, and all associated site works, Kilcormac
Mooney's Organics Lough Boora Farm	The construction of two organic growing polytunnel units and all ancillary works, Leabeg, Tullamore
Laois & Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB)	The construction of phase 1 of the Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) Demonstration Park consisting of 5no. demonstration structures National Construction Training Centre Drumcraw or Mountlucas / Derrycricket Daingean,
PMACB Construction Ltd	Alterations to the façade of the old Cinema building. Edenderry,
Shannonbridge GAA	The construction of a new building to contain a multipurpose fitness centre and flood light walking track
Grant Engineering (Ireland) ULC	The change of use of an existing stores building to a stainless-steel products workshop, Birr

Forward Planning

The CE's two-year Progress Report on the Implementation of Development Plan objectives was circulated to the Elected Members in October. It is listed on the November Council Meeting agenda.

Just Transition

The Secretariat for Technical Assistance for Regions in Transition (START) and Offaly County Council agreed a Service Level Agreement and Workplan for the provision of 72 days of Technical Assistance to Offaly. Following on from a site visit by the START Team in March 2023 and a review meeting in June, the first of two planned one day workshops took place on 13th September 2023. A second workshop is planned for 27th November 2023 with a view to devising a mechanism which will support the development of a new partnership in vocational / tertiary education, training, and research to promote a local just transition.

Faite Ireland Investment Grand Aid Scheme for Private & Community SMEs

Faite Ireland announced that from **30th August 2023**, they would be accepting Expressions of Interest under this scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to deliver grant-aid to private and community-based micro enterprises and SMEs to help them improve the quality of the visitor experience with the ambition of attracting more visitors, increasing their dwell time, and securing overnight stays in the region because the visitor has confidence that there is lots to see and do. The rolling call will remain open until **30 June 2024** with a

closing date for applications of **31 December 2024**.*

*The closing date for rolling call / application in relation to the Digital Transformation category closes on **30 November 2023**.

Local and Regional Economic Support Strategies Support Scheme

The above-mentioned scheme was launched on **13th October 2023**, to be administered by Pobal. This scheme will see the disbursement of €24m for projects aligned to Local Economic and Community Plans and the disbursement of €5m for projects aligned to Regional Enterprise Plans. The key dates are as follows:

- LA led LECP aligned project applications – closing date **24th November 2023**.
- Local Authority REP aligned project applications – closing date **24th November 2023**.
- LECP aligned projects – concept papers due **17th November 2023**.
- LECP aligned projects – if successful at concept paper stage, closing date for applications **23rd January 2023**.

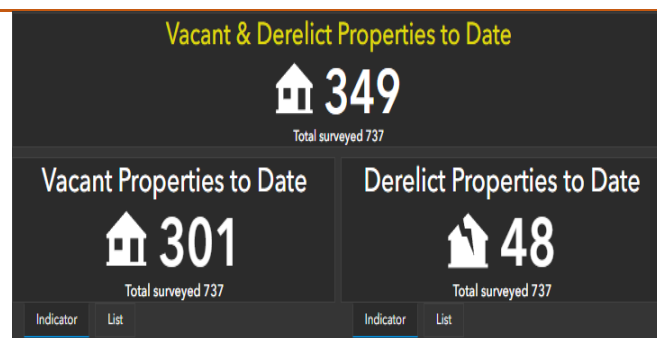
All information in relation to this scheme can be found as follows:

[EU Just Transition Fund: Local and Regional Economic Strategies Support Scheme - Pobal](#)

REGENERATION

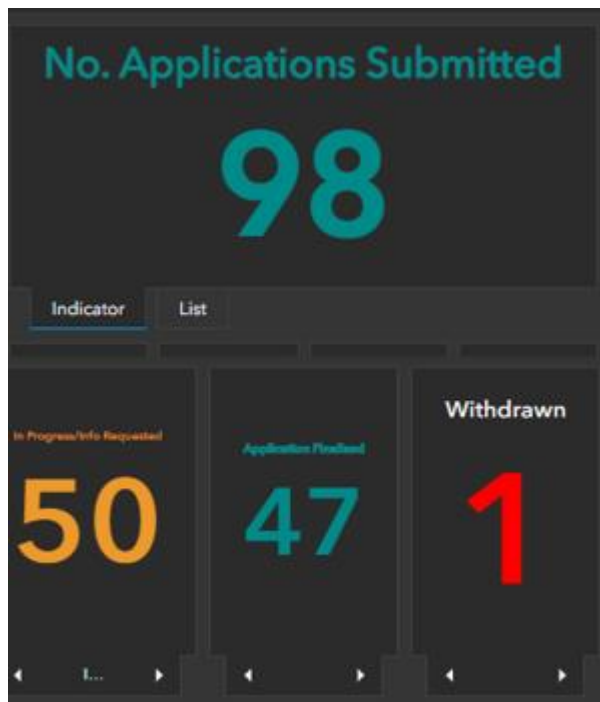
Vacant Homes Survey App

A total of 737 properties have been surveyed to date in the county with 301 confirmed vacant. Letters have recently issued to the owners on a town by town approach, and contact is ongoing with the owners in order to bring their property back into use.



Croí Cónaithe – Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant

The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant is progressing as supports continue to be available to turn vacant residential and commercial properties into private residences/rental properties. Breakdown of applications received to date:



For information and application forms please see link below.

<https://www.offaly.ie/vacant-homes/>

Derelict Sites & Urban Regeneration Development Fund (Call 3)

The aim of the Derelict Site Team is to address dereliction in Offaly in line with the approved Derelict Site Policy and Procedure. The Derelict Site Team will implement the policy on the ground and will place particular emphasis on the management of the Derelict Sites Register, advancing engagement with property owners listed on the Derelict Sites Register and those listed as high priority under URDF Call 3 (Tullamore town only).

All queries in relation to Derelicts Sites can be directed to derelictsites@offalycoco.ie

Below are examples of properties recently removed from the Derelict Site register, bringing properties back into use and improving town centres and villages.



The aim of URDF Call 3 is to support the Town Centre First policy by targeting vacant properties in Tullamore town only.

Engagement is ongoing with respect to the approved derelict and vacant properties listed under URDF Call 3, this engagement will continue until a such time as properties are brought back into use and occupied. At present, engagement is ongoing with 18 of the 20 properties approved by the Department. Engagement includes offering available grants such as Croí Cónaithe/Repair and Lease etc and enquiring with auctioneers on long term vacant properties already on the market, to which the market has not responded.

Enforcement under the Derelict Sites Act 1990 is used where ownership cannot be identified or there is a failure to engage on behalf of the owner with the Local Authority.

Additional properties have been identified and forwarded to the Department for inclusion on the approved URDF list.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

National Women's Enterprise Day Midlands Regional Event



National Women's Enterprise Day Midlands Region took place on Thursday, October 19, 2023, at the majestic Castle Durrow and gave women from Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath a chance to network, learn and be inspired by other women in business. Over 200 women attended the event at Castle Durrow.

Orla Martin, Head of Enterprise Offaly said, "As women in business, we can always learn from each other. Education and support are essential for female entrepreneurs, especially in a competitive environment. The Local Enterprise Offices in the Midlands have been providing valuable resources and guidance for the women of the region for many years."

Keynote speaker for the event was Terry Prone, a successful businesswoman and a founder of The Communications Clinic. Anna May McHugh, National Ploughing Association MD shared some of her experiences in a rapidly evolving world.



Attention all Exporters!

Further changes are coming on 31 January 2024 due to Brexit. The UK, excluding Northern Ireland, is due to introduce new



import declaration requirements and checks on certain goods, including food and other agricultural products. These are in addition to existing customs formalities and other requirements. If your business exports to the UK, you now should examine your supply chains to make sure they are ready for these changes. For more information visit gov.ie/brexit

For businesses seeking to export, there are many [initiatives available from LEO Offaly/Enterprise Ireland/Intertrade Ireland](#) including:

- Panel of export [mentors](#)
- [Technical Assistance for Micro-Exporters \(TAME\) Grant](#)
- [Trading Online Vouchers](#)
- [Grad Start](#)
- [Microfinance Ireland Business Loans](#)
- [Enter the Eurozone Programme](#)
- [Trade Export Pathway / Elevate](#)
- [Intertrade Ireland supports](#)
- [Acumen](#)
- [Enterprise Europe Network \(EEN\)](#)

Green Alley Awards



Suitable for businesses under five years old who have a business model related to the topic of the "circular economy" which deals specifically with digital circular economy, recycling and the prevention of waste. If you

know a business that fits this description, you should let them know about the competition to be in with a chance to network and win prize money of €25,000! Click here for full details and how to enter: Localenterprise.ie/Offaly/News/10th-Green-Alley-Award



New report finds Offaly renewable hydrogen hub could cut carbon emissions by 1,173 tonnes annually

Strategically located where an abundance of renewable energy generation, the national gas network and the electricity grid meet; Rhode Green Energy Park is earmarked to be one of the first hydrogen demonstration hubs in the country. This is the main finding from the Rhode Renewable Hydrogen Feasibility Study which was commissioned by North Offaly Development Fund Ltd. and Offaly County Council and funded by the Gas Networks Ireland Gas Innovation Fund, as well as funding contributions from SSE Renewables and Bord na Móna.

Aligned with the objectives of the National Hydrogen Strategy published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in July 2023, the feasibility study focused on the potential for using curtailed and constrained wind power – excess wind energy – to produce renewable hydrogen through electrolysis.

Full details and a link to the report is available on our website:

Localenterprise.ie/Offaly/News/Press-Releases

Pilot to Support Businesses with International Ambition

In 2023, Enterprise Ireland launched a new Pilot Initiative for Manufacturing and Internationally Traded Service Businesses employing up to 50 people. Qualifying businesses, with an ambition to export, can apply and subject to criteria, be supported by either LEO Offaly or Enterprise Ireland. The initial support is towards the creation

of an Internationalisation Plan. Following on from that, the business may be assigned to either LEO Offaly or Enterprise Ireland where they can apply for financial supports.

New €145 million scheme to promote economic growth across all regions

A new €145 million scheme was recently announced by Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Simon Coveney and Ministers Dara Calleary and Neale Richmond. The **Smart Regions Enterprise Innovation Scheme** is aimed at accelerating economic growth and sustainable job creation across all regions of the country. The scheme will be administered by Enterprise Ireland and is already open for applications. Co-funded by the Government and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the funding will capitalise on existing regional enterprise partnerships and complement priorities set out in the nine Regional Enterprise Plans including the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan. The first call for the Smart Regions Enterprise Innovation Scheme is open for applications and closes on 31 March 2024.

Under a competitive process, applications are now sought for funding under four streams, with varying investment levels, up to €10m in:

1. Local infrastructure projects
2. Innovation clusters and consortia
3. Services to SMEs to drive Innovative Solutions
4. Feasibility & Priming Grants.

For further information and to apply visit [Smart Regions Enterprise Innovation Scheme](https://SmartRegionsEnterpriseInnovationScheme.ie)

Upcoming Events

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Marketing Event



LEO Offaly are hosting an Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Marketing Event suitable for small business owners or marketing executives who are new to AI tools. This course is in-person in The Bridge House Hotel on Wednesday, 29th November from 10am – 1pm and may be booked here: [Localenterprise.ie/Offaly/AI-and-Marketing](https://www.localenterprise.ie/Offaly/AI-and-Marketing)

Most of our courses are **FREE OF CHARGE!** Whether it is starting a business or growing a business there is something suitable for everyone. Full details and link to book is here: <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Offaly/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/>



Upcoming Events		See All Events >
07/11/2023	Christmas Marketing: How to promote your products/...	Book online
07/11/2023	Start Your Own Business Course Evenings	Book online
08/11/2023	Digital Marketing Programme - Six Sessions	Book online
09/11/2023	E-commerce Essentials - Options for Selling Online	Book online
20/11/2023	Trading Online Voucher Webinar	Book online
27/11/2023	How to use Canva to design eye-catching graphics f...	Book online
27/11/2023	Start Your Own Business Day Course	Book online

TOURISM

Familiarisation Trip

The Tourism Team hosted its second Familiarisation Trip for members of the trade on 16th October. Various sectors of the tourism and hospitality trade enjoyed a fun filled day where they visited seven locations and gained invaluable knowledge. It was a wonderful opportunity for the participants to network and build important relationships with fellow businesses.





Fáilte Ireland EU Just Transition Fund

Expressions of interest have opened for the Investment Grant Aid Scheme for Private and Community SMEs. The tourism team are committed to assisting the trade with application queries and submissions.

The new role of Tourism Activator, who will join the team shortly, will strengthen our capacity to animate, guide and assist in order to fully utilise the fund within the county.

Offaly on TV

The Ireland AM crew visited Birr again in September for a special tourism feature on Offaly. Birr Castle Demesne GM Grainne O'Malley and Offaly Tourism Marketing Chairperson Philip O'Brien gave informative interviews explaining the appeal of Offaly to visitors, providing great exposure to a national audience.

Hot Air Ballooning Championships

The Irish Hot Air Ballooning Championships returned to Offaly with much fanfare in September. Offaly County Council tourism team co-sponsored the event, bringing worldwide visitors to Tullamore for the weeklong festivities.



The weather may not have been as hoped but the last day stole the show with a magnificent turnout in Lloyd Town Park as the balloons scattered the sky above Tullamore to the delight of onlookers.

Social Media

The tourism team continue to increase social media presence including a Halloween Competition, which gained great traction, 'Foody Tuesday' featured posts and monthly blogs.



Housing

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

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

Housing Update:

- Social Housing Assessments (SSHA) 2023 is being finalised having regard to all returns submitted to the Housing Section.
- Information on the various pathways available to Tenants on valid Notice of Termination is available at <https://www.offaly.ie/c/housing/> on the *Notice of Termination Information* link.
- There are 556 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of October 2023.
- A further 632 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments

(HAP) Scheme, 8 signed up for HAP and 12 exited from HAP in October.

- At the end of October, 27 single people and 16 couples and families were being supported in emergency accommodation.

Housing Stock – Number, Maintenance & Repair:

- Total housing stock at end of October 2023 is 2082.
- 360 maintenance calls were logged in October.

Housing Capital Programme Update:

- Banagher, Kylebeg (18 Units) – Project is complete and is the process of being handed over.
- Beechgrove, Belmont (7 units) – Due for completion in Q4, 2023.
- Elderberry Drive Moneygall (4 Units) – Complete.
- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 no. Older Person's dwellings) – Due for completion in Q1 2024.
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) – Construction commenced. Completion Q2 2024
- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – Project started on site in March 2023. Due for completion in Q4 2024.
- Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane (20 Units) – Part 8 approved in May 2022. Stage 3 to be submitted to the Department once ESB lines on the site are undergrounded.
- Circular Road, Daingean, Site 2 (10 Units) – Stage 2 approval was granted on 27th February 2023. New Part 8 planning process; Section 179A of Planning and Development Act was advertised

on 10th October 2023. Stage 3 will be lodged with the DHLGH in Q1 2024.

- Group Housing, Croghan Road, Birr (4 Units): Stage 3 approval granted on 27th July 2023. Works Tender was advertised on www.etenders.ie on 5th September 2023 with a return date of 6th October 2023. Four tenders were received. Stage 4 approval application was lodged on 27th October 2023. Works on site will begin on Q1 2024.
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (10 Units) – Stage 2 approval received 30th Nov 2022. Part 8 resolution was received on 17th April 2023.

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes:

- Oaklee: Clonminch, Tullamore (19 units) – Construction complete and houses allocated.
- Oaklee: Kearney's Field, Tullamore (41 Units) – Completion 1st November 2023.
- Sofia Housing: Stage 2 approved (39 units) at Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Planning Application lodged awaiting decision.
- Sofia Housing, Clonamore, Tullamore – Works completed

Turnkey Developments/Part V:

- 2 x Part V units under construction at Ard na Carriage, Edenderry. Completed and allocated.
- Bog Road, Portarlinton, 28 units - Under Construction and anticipated completion Q4, 2023/Q1 2024
- 8 Units (6 Turnkey & 2 Part V) Approved May 2023 at Bell Lane, Daingean. Construction & allocations complete

- 7 x Part V units @ Redwood, Tullamore - Complete
- Further Part V units in Redwood & Silverbrook, Tullamore under construction
- 8 Units (6 Turnkey & 2 Part V) Approved June 2023 at MacGregor, Birr. Construction commenced. Completion 2024
- 22 Units (18 Turnkey & 4 Part V's) Approval July 2023 at Carrick Hall, Edenderry

Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People

Housing are finalising Housing Adaption 2023 Grant claims to the Department. Any person approved grant funding in 2023 should submit the required documentation by the end of November in order that claims can be processed and claimed in the financial year and to ensure that the drawdown of approved funding is maximised.

Disabled Persons Grants 2023

Housing are working with Contractors appointed to ensure that works are progressed and that the claim for 2023 works on the programme is maximised.

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.

- 78 Units Complete
- 19 Units On-site
- Tender for further 19 Under-way

Community Culture and Emergency Services

Community Culture and Emergency Services

COMMUNITY

Community Support Fund 2022/23

Ministerial approval was received on the 21st June 2023 for funding totalling €283,843 to be awarded to 188 successful community groups. The Community Support Fund supports community groups with either their Operating/Running Costs such as utility bills, insurance, etc., or capital costs which aim to enhance facilities or purchase equipment. To date 184 groups have been paid their grants amounting to €279,743. The remaining 4 groups must submit outstanding paperwork prior to payment.

Community Recognition Fund 2023

Final approval for the 26 successful projects amounting to €636,206 was received from DRCD on 22nd May 2023. Funding Agreements have been agreed between OCC and the successful applicants. All projects must be completed by 18 October 2024. Seven of the projects are completed, and 9 partly completed in 2023. Funding totaling €255,788 has been drawn down to date, with a further claim to follow. Ten of the successful projects have decided to wait until 2024 before commencing works.

Public Participation Network



The PPN National Conference took place in Arklow where Minister Joe O'Brien addressed the Conference.



The Conference was held over two days with over 200 in attendance. It was an excellent opportunity for networking, new learning, and opportunities to attend a range of site visits: Including Environment, Heritage, and Community & Voluntary Expose.

Offaly PPN staff assisted at the Comhairle Na nÓg Youth Consultation Day.



HSE Mental Health Networking Event in Birr

This event provided an opportunity for a range of organisations and support services to give brief presentations on their service/supports. The PPN presented in terms of our: Information Sharing membership remit of over 600 groups in

Offaly. World Mental Health Day was held on 10th October 2023.



The National PPN Workers meeting took place in Trinity Point Dublin with the Offaly staff in attendance. Preparation meetings are taking place to organise the Tullamore Older Persons Christmas Party with Offaly Age Friendly, the Gardaí, OLDC and Tullamore Credit Union.

PPN MD Meetings

- Tullamore MD PPN meeting in Mucklagh Community Centre on 19th October.
- Birr MD PPN meeting in Ferbane Heritage Centre on 25th October.
- Edenderry PPN MD meeting in Edenderry Parish Centre on 26th October.

Shirley Gleeson presented on the Healthy Homes Meals on Wheels Service and the Lunch Clubs.

Tamara Latham LOETB regional Literacy Coordinator spoke about opportunities to support people in the Community with literacy & numeracy issues. Ciaran Reilly presented in Edenderry on Historical matters and the importance of commemorating historical events in each community.



Work is underway promoting the Property Marking machine, with training taking place with Edenderry MD in Clonbullogue on November 11th 9am-1pm & Birr MD and in Ferbane Heritage Centre on November 25th 9am – 1pm.

Comhairle Na nÓg



Offaly Comhairle na nÓg Youth Consultation event was held on 17 October. Approximately 100 young people from across Offaly, aged 12-17 took part. Among the attendees were representatives from 11 of the 12 secondary schools in Offaly.

The key aim of the day was to gain an insight and understanding of the issues that are of concern to young people in Offaly. An important element of the day were workshops that provided a space for participants to share their ideas and solutions to local issues as identified by the young people themselves. The day was a great success and the feedback received from the young people was positive.

The first workshop was designed to allow for open space thinking. Participants were

asked “What are the main issues for young people in Offaly?”. Discussion was encouraged by facilitators for the second workshop. Sitting at round tables of 10 people plus a facilitator, young people were invited to share their opinion on a topic/issue as raised in a workshop from earlier in the day. The young people voted on the most important topics to them. Mental Health was voted as the topic to prioritise for 2024.



ARTS

Arts Strategy 2024-2029

Following an open call and selection process the Arts Office commissioned arts consultant John O’Brien to assist with the planning, consultation and writing of the new Arts Strategy 2024-2029. The new strategy will align with the newly adopted **Arts Infrastructure Strategy 2023-2028**.

The development of the new strategy will be through a phased approach of research, consultation and writing throughout 2023. The consultant phase is near completion with a great take-up from people attending the four public meetings and a very positive response to a questionnaire sent out from the Arts Office in October.

ARTS OFFICE PROGRAMMES

Lough Boora - Art in Landscape Project Funding

Offaly County Council Arts Office in collaboration with Mayo County Council Arts Office and Visual Artists Ireland were successful in securing project funding under the Arts Council’s Invitation for Collaboration Scheme. OCC Arts Office is the lead partner on the project. The project includes an artist commission in Offaly and Mayo, and a planned series of events



taking place at Lough Boora Sculpture Park, Esker Arts and Tír Sáile (County Mayo) in April 2024. Curator Helen Pheby, who works as an associate director of programming for Yorkshire Sculpture Park, was appointed as Curator for the project.

October saw the return to Offaly of the commissioned artists Hardeep Sahota and photographer Tim Smith, who continued their research with film-making, video recording and light dancing. They worked with communities and local artists in the delivery of their project. The finished work will form part of a planned ‘Art in the Landscape Festival of Change’, taking place in Offaly and Mayo in April 2024.

FilmOffaly offers an annual bursary award of 10,000 euro towards the production of a short film. The funding aims to foster creative, resourceful filmmaking in the

county, creating opportunities for talented new filmmakers and professionals to develop unique, original stories in film. The FilmOffaly Award 2023 has been awarded and a press release will follow shortly.

FilmOffaly Review – The FilmOffaly Review undertaken by researchers, *Culture Works* across the Summer months is now in the final stages of the draft and presentation.

Annual Programme

Hullabaloo! Offaly Children's Arts Festival, will be a broader offering this year also, with the inclusion of Esker Arts as a partner in the festival this year. The programme was launched in September and will see artists from all over Ireland delivering workshops and performances across a number of art forms for children up to 12 years of age. A full report of the programme will be issued in the November report, following completion of the festival.

The **Mini Movies** Programme recently went through a review process in association with Young Irish Filmmakers. As part of OFFLine Film Festival, a consultation entitled 'Meeting Of Young Minds' was held at Birr Theatre & Arts Centre. Young people were centrally

involved in sharing feedback on the programme and a full report will soon be available. Findings of the report will support the planning for this programme going forward.

Creative Places Edenderry

The Creative Places programme continues to be very active, with a steady stream of activity from workshops to events. The Creative Places programme is divided into three phases, **'Connect, Cultivate, Celebrate'** Now in the Cultivate phase of the project, over the last few months and following the gathering of ideas, thoughts and input from the local community a number of workshops, events and projects have been taking place. A celebration event was recently hosted to highlight the work of artists in the community with 'Festival In A Van' engaged for another celebration event to mark Halloween in Edenderry.

HEALTHY OFFALY



The rollout of Healthy Offaly funded actions continued in October. In addition to our well progressed 5 x original actions, a new eight-week activator poles class commenced in Kilcormac Development Association on 26th October. Another new project that has been approved funding is an online booking system for a rickshaw bicycle to be operated by volunteers, which will be used in Lough Boora Discovery Park. The bike will cater for older adults and those with

special needs. The '*Cycling without Age*' initiative in Lough Boora is a tripartite arrangement between Bord Na Mona, Kilcormac Development Association and Healthy Offaly.

A third project coming on stream in early 2023 is the '*Minding Me*' joint Healthy Offaly/Healthy Libraries initiative. This action will be a 6-week nutrition, exercise and health education programme for retired individuals in Offaly. Programme content will be line with Healthy Offaly's

reducing obesity in adult's outcome indicator and will be delivered on site in Tullamore Library.

The work of the Healthy Offaly Coordinator this month concentrated on meeting prospective partners to add value to the current round of actions taking place. One such meeting with Laois Offaly Education & Training Board (LOETB) has resulted in an agreement by LOETB to deliver a health, financial and general literacy skills workshop to Healthy Offaly programme participants and coordinators. The Healthy Ireland Coordinator will arrange to provide course participants for the workshop which will take place in the coming weeks.

Full costs of providing same will be covered by LOETB.

As year-end fast approaches thoughts have turned to the evaluation of Healthy Offaly funded projects due to be completed by 31st December 2023. With this in mind and on approval from Pobal; Dr. Diane Cooper from Edufit has been engaged to assist in the analysis of post-programme questionnaires/surveys. A full report detailing the progress of each action will be made available to the LCDC and Healthy Offaly Subcommittee.

SPORTS

Funding



Offaly Sports Partnership submitted the following funding / resource applications to Sport Ireland:

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- Outdoor Recreation Officer pilot programme – four Sports Partnership will be selected to host this pilot programme.
- Energy Support Scheme phase 3 – five clubs / organisations are seeking support under this scheme.

Human resources

October saw Offaly Sports Partnership welcome Denise Coghill, Community Sports Development Officer back to the office after her maternity leave

Sport Ireland events and meetings

The Coordinator and Sport Development Officers of Offaly Sports Partnership attended the regional development workshops in October.

The Coordinator also attended the national network of Local Sports Partnerships

Coordinators two-day development conference in Kerry.

Education & Training

Offaly Sports Partnership's new sports coaching programme for transition years continued in St Mary's Secondary School in October, while Colaiste Naomh Cormac commenced their programme in October. 50 students across the two schools are currently participating on the programme.

Programmes

ACE programme – Liam O Reilly

October saw the continuing delivery of the "Fast Feet" programme in 26 schools across the county.

Community Sports Development Programme – Denise Coghill

Following Denise's return to work after maternity leave in October, much of her work has been focused on planning programmes for delivery across q4.

The o50s boccia programme also recommenced with 24 teams participating across three leagues – mens, womens and mixed.

Community sports hubs – Jean Brady, Denise Coghill & Liam O Reilly

October saw the official opening of the Mucklagh Sports Hub with over 130 people in attendance on the day.

October also saw the ongoing delivery of various sport and physical activity programmes across our sports hubs in Daingean (managed by Liam O Reilly) and Mucklagh (managed by Jean Brady) Furthermore, Denise commenced work on the establishment of our newest sports hub in Ballycumber



Healthy Offaly funded “Drop & Move” – Liam O Reilly

The Healthy Offaly funded “Drop & Move” programme is continuing for over 100 adults in nine locations.

Sports Inclusion Development Programme – Jean Brady

Among the sport inclusion development programmes delivered in October were: -

- Adapted physical activity – three schools (one primary – Rahan; and two secondary – Colaiste Choilm and Birr Community School); and over 30 children and young people with additional needs are participating on this programme.
- Learn to cycle – a new three week learn to cycle programme commenced for 10 children with additional needs.
- Learn to swim – a new six week learn to swim programme commenced in Birr Leisure Centre

for eight children with additional needs.

- Woodlands for Health – over 45 people with mental health difficulties are participating on the 12 week “woodlands for health” programme.
- The 1:1 physical activity support programme is also continuing throughout October. There are currently 35 children and young people with additional needs on the programme; and each participant is being supported over six sessions to increase their physical activity.

Sport Inclusion Development Programme Learn to cycle



Mucklagh sports hub - u8s programme



Women in Sport

The eight week “Her Moves” boxing programme commenced in October for 16 teenage girls. For more information on the work of Offaly Sports Partnership, check out www.offalysports.ie or our social media feeds on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



LIBRARY SERVICE

ICT Grant Funding Success for Offaly Libraries



Offaly Library Service has been awarded approximately **€58,000** in grant funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development as part of the Libraries Capital Programme.

This initiative will allow our libraries to become more digitally inclusive by providing our patrons access to new computers, portable devices, and other ICT equipment.

Our goal is to remove barriers facing young people, older people, and disadvantaged communities in Offaly by providing free and open access to digital literacy supports for all.

Part 8 Consultation: proposed new Library & Arts Space, Edenderry, Co. Offaly



Offaly County Council propose a new Library and Arts Space at 33-34 JKL Street, Edenderry. This project is supported by the Department of Rural and Community

Development in partnership with Offaly County Council through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.

It will consist of the construction of a new two storey library and arts space to include adult, teen and children's libraries, multipurpose space and Artists' studios as well as ancillary support spaces such as library meeting rooms and a wet workshop.

Further details, drawings and particulars of the proposed development are available to view online at: www.offaly.ie/c/public-consultation/



Children's Book Festival



Offaly Libraries is pleased to report **844 children** across the county participated in Children's Book Festival this past

October!



A wide and varied range of events was on offer in all library branches, including visits by celebrated authors such as Éanna Ní Lamhna, Shane Hegarty and Gerry Daly.

Leona McDonnell led Mindfulness workshops in Clara and Daingean libraries, while local illustrator, Shannon Bergin, guided students through character design

workshops in Birr, Banagher and Kilcormac libraries.



Simone Schuemmelfeder of StoryGate visited our libraries with puppetry and storytelling sessions which proved very popular in Ferbane with **56 attendees** enjoying the show.

As always, there were plenty of story times and craft sessions on offer in all libraries. The Children's Book Festival is one of four central tenets of the national Right to Read initiative. Offaly Libraries look forward to celebrating the next festival, **Family Time at your Library**, this coming December.



Outreach to Clara School

Clara Library staff enjoyed a visit with all **193 students** of St Francis Boys National School in Clara before their midterm break.



The students enjoyed some spooky stories and brought home some fun word puzzles and colouring sheets.

Positive Ageing Week 2023

Positive Ageing Week (PAW) emphasises the positive aspects of ageing and celebrates the invaluable contributions of older individuals.



In this spirit, Offaly Libraries curated a socially inclusive programme of events in celebration of our older patrons. **138 attendees** enjoyed Social Mornings, Mindfulness and Chair Yoga sessions held across our library branches.



Clara and Tullamore also welcomed **25 attendees** to enjoy Mini Music Concerts in their libraries.

Offaly & Laois Parenting Support Programme: Autumn 2023

The autumnal series of the Parent Support Programme, delivered in partnership with Laois Libraries, has delivered a broad spectrum of talks and workshops to **74 participants** so far, both online and in library branches.



Topics covered included Nutrition Advice, First Aid for Parents, Rainbow Reflexology, Prenatal Yoga, and an informational talk on Autism in Girls, delivered by Fiona Farris of AsIAM.ie.



Fun, family-friendly sessions were also on offer in Birr with Music, Games and Activities, and Hey Pesto's 'Family Fake-Away' Cookery demonstration.



Weekly Ukelele Workshops, delivered by **Music Generation**, will run in Tullamore Library from November 11th – December 2nd, offering an intergenerational learning opportunity for the whole family to enjoy.



The Parenting Programme is supported by Laois Offaly Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC).

[Details of future events available here.](#)

My Bedtime Story Bags

All children aged 4 and under are invited to pick up a free bedtime story book and library card wallet at their local library. Parents can choose a bedtime story book in either English or Irish.

This exciting initiative aims to engage all parents of young children to read stories with them at bedtime.

The Little Library Book at Bedtime initiative, part of the First 5 strategy, runs from October to the end of December 2023.



Offaly Libraries STEAM Programme



Space Week, October 4th – 10th

In celebration of Space Week, STEM communicator, Seanie Morris delivered fun-filled science workshops for class groups and the general public, exploring a chemical reaction to launch their own space rockets!

Over just 4 days, **332 children** attended **12 workshops** held in Birr, Clara, Edenderry and Tullamore libraries. In addition, Birr library welcomed **25 attendees** to their own Straw Rocket and Satellite Communication workshops.

Maths Week at Birr Library, October 2023



Birr Library celebrated a great Maths Week with innovative events

such as a Micro:bits Race, delivered by our STEM Education Officer, Monster Maths Workshops and a Maths Week Storytime. A total of **57 children** discovered how fun maths can be during the events.

Science Week, November 13th – 20th



Offaly Libraries will continue to deliver **Micro:Bits workshops** in Birr, Clara, Edenderry and

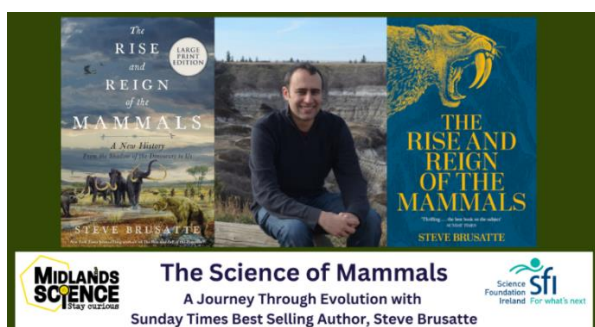
Tullamore libraries for Science Week.

Engaging book displays, story times and craft events will also be on offer across the county.

Offaly Libraries are working in collaboration with **Midlands Science** to offer an exciting programme of **Science Week** events. A lovely evening was had by all at the **Science of Music** event on Thursday, 9th November.



Friday, 17th November will see a special late opening of Tullamore Library for a thrilling evening exploring **Pre-Historic Evolution** with Steve Brusatte and Ricky Whelan!



Check out offaly.ie/libraries for more information.

Book Launch at Clara Library

Clara Library welcomed **75 attendees** to the launch of a newly published collection

of poetry by Kilcoursey native, Raphael Fallon.

There are 18 poems in total in the new poetry book, 'A Journey Through Poetry', which will soon be available to borrow from Offaly Libraries. Meanwhile, all proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to Irish Motor Neuron Association of Ireland



Informative Talk at Ferbane Library

On Thursday, 26th October, Ferbane Library welcomed **23 attendees** to a free health talk delivered by Clare Keegan of The Good Gut Clinic on how to 'Boost your Immune System Naturally'.

New! Creative Writing Group at Daingean Library

Daingean's new Creative Writing group, '*Daingean Scribblers*', was launched on the 10th October and has welcomed **7 participants** so far.

This groups takes place on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of every month and is led by Daingean resident Sophie Clarke. New members are welcome to get in touch with Daingean Library.

'Plumage and Petals' Art Exhibition in Tullamore Library this November



Tullamore Library is delighted to display a collection of artworks this November, by local artist, Kate Furlong. Known for her yoga and chakra art, Kate's latest work features peacocks and florals.

'Vincent Van Gone' Art Exhibition in Birr Library

Birr Library will host The Vincent Van Gone Art Exhibition for the month of November. The exhibition enjoyed its launch in Birr Library on Wednesday, November 1st.



The Vincent Van Gone Art Group comprises an array of creative individuals from Co. Offaly. Each member expresses their own style, from landscapes to art deco,

Book Clubs at Offaly Libraries



Did you know that Offaly Libraries have **book clubs** spread across our library branches *and* online?

[Daingean Library](#) have just established a new Children's Book Club and would like to invite any child aged 8+ to join.

[Check out all our Book Clubs here.](#)

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 Newsletters](#) and by following [our social media channels](#).

Currently we have **2,726 email subscribers** to the general newsletter and **76 teachers subscribed** to our school newsletter.



General Newsletter



School Newsletter

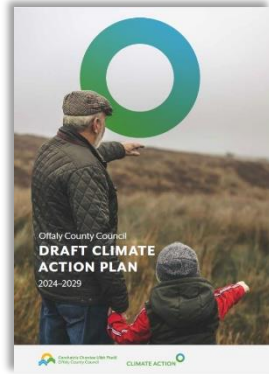
Climate Action Environment Water & Transportation

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Action

Local Authority Climate Action Plan

Offaly County Council have developed our draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 for adoption by Reserve Function before 23rd February 2024.



As part of this process and in line with Section 16 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, this draft plan is currently on public display for consultation purposes. The public consultation period runs from **24th October until 4.00pm, Wednesday 6th December 2023**, and submissions or observations are welcomed in writing or by using our dedicated on-line portal available through the council website.

<https://www.offaly.ie/climate-change-action-plan-consultation/>

Copies of the draft Plan, in Irish and English, together with the associated SEA Environmental Report and AA Natura Impact Report are available to view at the following locations:

- Áras an Chontae
- Tullamore MD, Acres Hall
- Tullamore Library
- Edenderry Town Hall
- Edenderry Library
- Birr Civic Offices
- Birr Library

Offaly County Council Climate Action Team are running public information drop-in

events to provide guidance on the draft LACAP, at which the public are encouraged to attend:

Date	Location	Time
1 Nov	Edenderry Library	18.00-19.30
9 Nov	Edenderry Library	12.00-13.30
8 Nov	Birr Library	18.00-19.30
16 Nov	Acres Hall TMD	10.00-14.00
23 Nov	Tullamore Library	18.00-19.30

All submissions and observations on the LACAP are welcome.

On the evening of November 23rd in Tullamore Library we will be joined by Laurence O'Reilly on behalf of SEAI who will running a workshop in conjunction with Offaly Library Services on simple home energy saving tips and demonstrating the New Home Energy Saving Kits sponsored by the OCC Climate Team and available for hire at all 8 libraries in Offaly. Tea/coffee and light refreshments available on the night. (similar workshops ran in both Edenderry and Clara libraries prior to today.)

Environmental Management

From January to end of October, the Environment Section received 812 environmental complaints. All were investigated in a timely manner and resolved where possible.

Complaint Category	Number
Litter pollution - fly tipping/casual litter/litter on property	579
Waste (dumping/burning/unauthorised sites)	92
Noise (community/commercial/industrial)	15
Control of Horses	21
Control of Dogs	70
Water Quality/Services	35

There were 240 community clean ups since the beginning of the year and the amount of litter collection by local volunteers and disposed of by Offaly County Council was almost 22 tonnes. The Environment Section continues to support all groups who clean up their local towns and villages.

The Environment Section has successfully taken legal action against 9 individuals for illegal dumping and environmental pollution and these cases were heard in Court since Jan 2023. All cases were investigated by the Litter team and taken to court for breach of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 and/or Waste Management Act, 1996. Convictions in Court ranged from the imposition of fines to prison sentences. The Environment Dept maintains a Convictions Register which is updated regularly. On Friday 10th November, a further 4 cases will be heard in Tullamore District Court.

Offaly County Council were allocated €16,600 from DECC for initiatives such as the provision of litter supplies for communities, a Composting for Schools Project, awareness campaign and designed of litter materials. All individual projects much be match funded by Offaly County Council by 30% with the balance being met by the Grant. The Certification Form and Claim Form were sent to the DECC on 25 October.

Environmental Awareness

Offaly County Council continues its support to all primary and secondary schools in this programme. A teacher training seminar was held on 17th October with An Taisce to advise schools on their journey towards applying for their Green Flag. The Environment Section also supports schools financially by funding specific

environmental projects. In the last school term, Offaly County Council participated in a ReLove Fashion programme with the Rediscovery Centre, aimed at second level schools to address sustainable fashion initiatives. This proved very successful with two schools participating and recaching the national finals.

In 2023, Offaly County Council commenced a pilot “Composting for Schools Programme” with Munster Technological University and Clean Technology Cork. Four local schools are participating in this programme, paid for by the Environment Section €3,200. To date, the programme is very successful with positive feedback from the schools.

Waste Management Anti-Dumping Initiative for 2023

Grant submitted to DECC for €72,500. Offaly County Council was approved by the DECC for a grant of €72,500, to tackle the issues surrounding illegal dumping which remains high on national and local agendas. The E&WS department submitted projects and the following met the selection criteria for the grant:

1. Cleaning up of illegal dumping and litter blackspots in Offaly.
2. Public awareness Campaign – promoting environmental issues such as Dashboard Dining, unauthorized waste collectors, dog fouling
3. Provision of 15 No. across the County, 5 No. in each MD.

TRANSPORTATION

Annual Roads Program

The Annual Roads program is now substantially completed with the majority of works completed by the end of October 2023. Some works will proceed into 2024 for example Edenderry Inner Relief Road Phase 2 and Birr South Eastern and Birr North Distributor roads.

Active Travel Works

Works are now substantially completed on the Ballycumber Active Travel scheme while works are ongoing on the Rhode Active Travel Scheme. It is envisaged that works will be completed in Rhode in the coming weeks.

EV –Charging

Works on delivering additional 50kw/hr fast charging at Ballydrohid Machinery Yard were completed in Oct and this facility will be opened for public use later in Q4 2023.

Public Lighting Maintenance

Our maintenance contractor has assigned additional resources assigned to Offaly County Council in order to address public

lighting faults as they arise. As of the 12th of November there were a total of 201 failures from a network of 9297 lighting units. This equates to 2.16% of the total network at fault status. 54 of these faults were power supply issues and some of which require third party utility intervention.

Of the 201 faults recorded the following is a breakdown per Municipal District.

Municipal District	No Of Faults	Faults associated with power issues.	% fault per MD of the Countywide Public Lighting Stock
Birr MD	57	15	0.61%
Tullamore MD	63	8	0.68%
Edenderry MD	80	31	0.87%

Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Finance

Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 31 October 2023			
OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr Budget 2023 €m	Preliminary Value to Oct 2023 €m	% Year To Date
Payroll costs	32.97	24.55	74.5%
Grants and Subsidies Income	40.80	33.32	81.7%
OCC to 31st Oct 2023	<u>Rates</u>	<u>Rents</u>	<u>Loans</u>
	<u>€m</u>	<u>€m</u>	<u>€m</u>
Opening Balance Jan 1st, 2023	3.00	0.56	0.10
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers	15.58	5.97	0.40
2023 Cash Collected to end of Oct	13.39	5.90	0.45
Closing Balance Oct 31st, 2023	5.20	0.62	0.04
<u>2022 Cash collected to Oct 31st</u>	12.69	6.13	0.46
% Collection at this point in 2022	106%	96%	98%
*** Collections impacted in 2022 by waiver uncertainty and effect of lockdowns			
<u>Bank Overdraft to 31st Oct 2023</u>			% YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date		57	19%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to Oct 31st 2023 YTD		€10,046	
Bank Administration and transactional charges to Oct 31st 2023 YTD		€27,753	