

Meán Fómhair / September

Pride of Place Judging

**Ballyboy
Community
Development**



**Tullamore
Tidy
Towns**



**Bracknagh
Community
Association**

Culture Night 22 September



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY Púca Spooka

The event will take place over the weekend of 28th and 29th October. Further details and information on tickets will be on website and social media.

Land Use, Planning and Economic Development Services

PLANNING

Development Management

	To end Sept 2023	To end Sept 2022	Total 2022
Planning Applications	517	517	681
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	14	13	16
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	170 (69)	36 (9)	158 (15)

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

Endrim Construction Services Limited	Two warehouse / storage units, a single storey link building and car parking. Ferbane Business Park.
Lumcloon Energy Limited	Extension to the existing battery energy storage system (BESS) facility (consented under Planning Ref 19/55) Lumcloon, Cloghan.

Forward Planning

The Two-Year Progress Report on the Implementation of Development Plan objectives since it came into effect in October 2021 is being prepared.

Preparation is taking place for consultation on the making of the draft Joint Portarlington Local Area Plan 2024-2030.

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**. The aim of the workshop was to assemble all relevant stakeholders to discuss issues around the transition of the region away from peat harvesting and towards a sustainable and diverse regional economy. It was also to devise a mechanism which will support the development of a new partnership in vocational / tertiary education, training and research to promote a local just transition. A second workshop is planned for **7th November 2023**.

EU JTF Community Facilities EV Charging Scheme

The first of the funding schemes under the EU Just Transition Fund launched on **28th July 2023**. A new scheme through Zero Emission Vehicle Ireland (ZEVl) was made available in Ireland's EU JTF territory to install Electric Vehicle chargers in community facilities. The €15 million scheme provides grants, with the support of the EU Just Transitions Fund which is co-financed by the Irish Exchequer and the European Union, to cover 100% of costs associated with civil, electrical, and installation works necessary to install publicly accessible 50 kW electric vehicle chargers. The scheme closed on **Monday 2nd October 2023**. **119** applications in total

were received, including one from Offaly County Council which included 11 locations.

EU JTF Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiative Scheme

The second call for proposals under the EU Just Transition Fund (EU JTF) was launched on **16th August 2023** and remains open to **12.00pm noon on 13th October 2023**. The Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiative Scheme will support the development of bioeconomy piloting and demonstration projects in the wider midlands area.

Failte Ireland Investment Grand Aid Scheme for Private & Community SMEs

Failte 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 **30th June 2024** with a closing date for applications of **31st December 2024**.*

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

REGENERATION

Croi 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.

For information and application forms please see link below.

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

Streetscape – Clara

Streetscape for Clara is now complete. Clara was selected under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme Streetscape Enhancement Measure 2022. The aim of the Streetscape scheme was to improve the visual appearance of the town, making Clara a more attractive place to live in and to visit.

Expressions of Interest were sought from property owners in the project area of Main St., River St., & Bridge St. to apply for Streetscape Enhancement

works on their properties, commercial/residential also unoccupied/derelict buildings were considered for inclusion. 66 applications were received, with 40 properties successful.

Urban Regeneration and Development Fund 2020

TOBIN Consulting Engineers have been appointed for the design and construction management of the O'Connor Square to Church Street Link, Urban Garden and Remote working hub under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund 2020. TOBIN have commenced work on the surveys and design for Part 8 Planning documents.



LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

LEO Offaly Networking and Marketing Event

A fantastic interactive lunch, learn, networking and marketing event took place recently in the County Arms Hotel in Birr. Attendees had the opportunity to acquire valuable marketing insights to elevate their messaging, all while connecting with a diverse group of business professionals during the engaging networking sessions.

The featured speaker, Muireann Fitzmaurice from The Marketing Coach, shared her expertise with the audience. Notable guests included Offaly County Council's Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick, along with a cohort of dynamic entrepreneurs and business owners hailing from County Offaly.

The contributions and expertise shared by all made the event truly insightful and inspiring for all participants. The feedback we received from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the event's success in fostering connections and collaboration within our community.



One-to-One Mentoring to Improve Productivity

With energy costs increasing, inflation impacting on supply chains and consumers becoming more cost conscious, every business is seeking to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. LEO Offaly is offering businesses in Offaly the opportunity to speak to one of our expert mentors who can help identify ways to reduce costs and stay

competitive. One-to-One Mentor Booking Link: localenterprise.ie/ImproveProductivity



National Ploughing Championships 2023



Offaly business, Glass Innovations Ltd. got the chance to exhibit to over 200,000 people at the National Ploughing Championships recently as part of the Local Enterprise Village.

Glass Innovations Ltd. who are supported by Local Enterprise Office Offaly provides a decoration service for bottles and glasses for drink, candles, and diffuser customers such as Lidl, Aldi, Dunnes, Handmade Soap, Fragrances of Ireland and Max Benjamin.

The initiative of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) saw over 30 small businesses from across the country take a stand in the Local Enterprise Village in the heart of the Ploughing Championships, opening their businesses up to over 200,000 prospective customers across the 3 days of the event.

BUSSK
Business Users Support
Scheme for Kerosene



An Roinn Fiontar,
Trádála agus Fostaíochta
Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Employment

Business Users Support Scheme Kerosene

The Business Users Support Scheme for Kerosene (BUSSK) will compensate eligible businesses for 50% of the increased cost of Kerosene purchased for heating their business premises during the period from 1st March to 31st December 2022, compared to the average retail price for the same period in 2021. There will be a guaranteed minimum subsidy payment of €500. Full details are available here: Enterprise-ireland.com/Business-Users-Support-Scheme-Kerosene

Businesses that have commercially rate-able premises and purchased a minimum of 1,000 liters of Kerosene during the eligible period, can apply to the scheme.



A new campaign launched recently by Neale Richmond, T.D., Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail is encouraging small businesses across the country to avail of supports that will help them save time, money and energy.

The “**All In A Day’s Work**” campaign by the Local Enterprise Offices is focused on highlighting the supports that will enable small businesses to make significant changes to the way they work that will help them now and in the future. These supports include the Lean, Green and Digital programmes, all of whom enable small businesses to become

more competitive and productive in how they work. LEO Offaly work with companies across the county in a diverse range of sectors offering mentoring, training, expert advice and financial supports to small businesses. For more information on the campaign visit: www.AllInADaysWork.ie

Upcoming Events

National Women's Enterprise Day 2023!

It's happening this October 19th at the picturesque Castle Durrow Laois! This annual business networking gathering is dedicated to businesswomen from our Midlands Region, including Laois, Longford, Offaly, and Westmeath and is booked out.

These notable speakers will be there:

- Terry Prone from The Communications Clinic and renowned businesswoman and author
- Darina Allen of Ballymaloe Cookery School
- Anna Marie McHugh of the National Ploughing Association / Championships,

This event is a collaboration brought to you by our dedicated teams in Local Enterprise Offices Laois, Longford, Offaly, and Westmeath.

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 >
12/10/2023	Learn about the Productivity and Competitive Suppo...	Book online
17/10/2023	Small Business Accounts	Book online
23/10/2023	Practical Guide to Income Tax for Businesses	Book online
24/10/2023	How to submit your Income Tax Return on ROS	Book online
25/10/2023	Information Session - Introduction to the Lean and...	Book online
07/11/2023	Christmas Marketing	Book online
07/11/2023	Start Your Own Business Course Evenings	Book online

Housing

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

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

Housing Update

- Social Housing Assessments (SSHA) 2023 has commenced. All relevant approved applicants on Offaly County Council's Social Housing Support List, using the current address provided by the applicant, have been written to and completed forms should be returned to the Housing Section by **Friday, 15th September 2023**. If any applicant has changed accommodation or contact information since the last SSHA they must request an SSHA Update Form – forms are available on <http://www.offaly.ie/eng/Services/Housing> or from the Birr,

Edenderry or Tullamore Municipal District Offices. Completed forms must be returned before Friday, 15th September 2023.

- The 'Winter Emergency Period' under the *Residential Tenancies (Deferment of Termination Dates of Certain Tenancies) Act 2022* has ceased and accordingly, deferred tenancy terminations may take effect over a staggered period from 1st May. Further information on the various pathways available to Tenants on valid Notice of Termination are available at <https://www.offaly.ie/c/housing/> on the *Notice of Termination Information* link.
- There are 543 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of September 2023.
- A further 639 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 8 signed up for HAP and 11 exited from HAP in September.
- At the end of September, 29 single people and 17 couples and families were being supported in emergency accommodation.

Housing Stock – Number, Maintenance & Repair

- Total housing stock at end of September 2023 is 2077.
- 346 maintenance calls were logged in September.

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 end 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 exemption process; Section 179A of Planning and Development Act will be advertised on 10th October 2023.
- 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.
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (10 Units) – Stage 2 approval received 30th Nov 2022. Part 8 resolution was received on 17th April 2023. Stage 3 to be lodged with Department in October 2023.
- 4 Holly Park, Birr, 1 Unit: Consultants have been appointed; Combined Stage 2/3 application

submitted to Department in early May 2023. Still awaiting outcome.

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes

- Oaklee: Clonminch, Tullamore (19 units) – Construction complete and houses allocated.
- Oaklee: Kearney's Field, Tullamore (41 Units) – Completion in early Q4, 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 MacGregol, 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 received notification on 28th April 2023 that the combined capital allocation to Offaly County Council for the payment

of the Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability scheme for private homes in 2023 is €1,579,375 which is composed of €1,263,500 Exchequer funding (representing 80%), and €315,875 matching local authority funding (representing 20%) to be provided from the authority's own resources. The Council anticipating the budget have committed a significant portion of this funding to date and to allow for works to be completed and funding claimed during the financial year.

The Department has approved Housings request for additional funding in July 2023 bringing the combined revised allocation to €1,600,000 for 2023.

Disabled Persons Grants 2023

Housing received notification in May of the Council's 2023 DPG funding. Total funding received towards the programme of works is €732,000, i.e. 90% departmental grant of €658,800 and 10% Local Authority funding of €73,200.

Works on completing 26 adaptations and 4 extensions are taking place.

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

Local Community Development Committee



Offaly LCDC held their monthly meeting on Thursday, 14th of September 2023.

Main agenda items included the Rural Development LEADER Programme 2014–2020 & Transitional LEADER Programme 2021–2022, LEADER Programme 2023–2027, Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2023, Community Support Fund update and the Community Recognition Fund 2023.

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 183 groups have been paid their grants amounting to €272,983. The remaining 5 groups must submit outstanding paperwork prior to payment.

LECP 2024-2029

Development of the LECP 2024-2029 plan is continuing. The consultation stage is completed, and the feedback is being assessed. The next stage is to develop the structure of the plan and ensure the key priorities are included. Once a draft is prepared, a round of consultation will take place to include the Regional Authority, the

MDs and the SPCs with adoption by the full council planned for December 2023.

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 7 partly completed in 2023. Twelve of the successful projects have decided to wait until 2024 before commencing works.

Pride of Place 2023

Judging for the three Offaly entries took place on 6th and 7th September 2023. The judges for the two days were Mr. John Briggs, former Chief Executive of Armagh Council, and Mr. Declan Nelson, former Chief Executive, Monaghan County Council. The awards ceremony will be held on Friday 10th November 2023 in Armagh.

Community Group	POP Category	Municipal District	Judging Date
Ballyboy Community Development	Community Wellbeing Initiative	Birr MD	Wed 6 th Sept 2023 AM
Tullamore Tidy Towns	Climate Action and Biodiversity	Tullamore MD	Wed 6 th Sept 2023 PM
Bracknagh Community Assoc.	Population 0 to 500	Edenderry MD	Thur 7 th Sept 2023 AM

Ballyboy Community Development members outside Dan and Mollys pub. The judging was attended by Councillor John Leahy and Councillor Peter Ormond.



The Pride of Place judges meet two Ukrainian volunteers who are active members of the Tullamore Tidy Towns group.



The Pride of Place judges listen to the presentation from Bracknagh Community Association in the Community Hall and meet local community groups and volunteers.



Public Participation Network

Lots of PPN activity during September



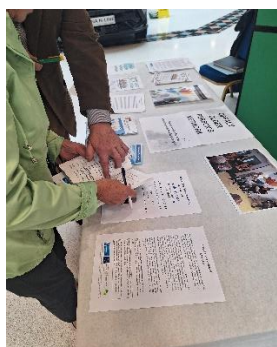
Offaly PPN supported the Pride of Place nominees in the run up to the adjudication and on the day too. Great work and collaboration among the sections of Offaly County Council to ensure the areas were ready for the Judges arrival. Tullamore Tidy Towns, Ballyboy Community Development and Bracknagh Community Association.

Offaly PPN coordinated Social Inclusion Week from 11th – 16th Sept with a range of activities taking place across Offaly:

1. LOETB Adult Literacy Awareness event in Birr Library.
2. Midlands Conversation Group Darmagh Centre.



3. Mucklagh Lunch Club.
4. Offaly Older Persons Network.
5. LOETB & MABS awareness Morning in Edenderry Library.
6. Offaly Health Homes Lunch Club project Coolderry.



National Ploughing Championships



Make Way Day was based in Tullamore and Clara this year.



Environmental Weekend in conjunction with Heritage, the Bio Diversity Officer and the Climate Action Team. It proved very successful with a full day of activities in Geashill.

Offaly PPN promoted and supported **Culture Night** across the county including events at the Tullamore Library:



The Wordsmiths Staff are also currently preparing for the PPN MD meetings and the Plenary meeting:

- October 19th in Mucklagh @7.30pm
- Ferbane Heritage Centre @7.00pm on 25th Oct
- Edenderry Parish Centre on 26th @ 7.00pm

The Plenary will take place on November 8th in the Charleville Centre Tullamore.

Comhairle Na nÓg



Work continued in September on the groups chosen Topic. CNN

members interviewed ODEN Members for the podcast on Disability and set to work on editing the recordings.

Members met to make key decisions for the upcoming Youth Consultation event in October. Members assigned roles and trained as facilitators.

A Steering Committee Meeting was held and Feidhlim Moran, CNN Member gave an update on Offaly CNN. Committee members volunteered to help out at the Youth consultation Event and roles were assigned.

Throughout September, ODEN and Comhairle na nÓg Members have been working together to design and roll out the School's Disability Awareness Raising Workshops. The first workshop is on the 3rd of October in Birr.



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 is now beginning the consultation phase, and a number of public meetings have been organised for Oct.

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 Art Council's Invitation for



Collaboration Scheme. OCC Art's 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. The artists commissioned to work in Offaly and Mayo are international artists Hardeep Sahota, collaborating with the photographer Tim Smith. As part of their

research and community engagement the artists met with a number of artists, individuals and groups in September and more have been planned to take place in October 2023.

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 2022 entitled, *Missing*, shot was on location in Offaly in March 2023, is now completed. *Missing* was produced by Maggie Ryan, Escape Pod Media and written and directed by Maura Foley. The film will have a local premiere in Birr during the OFFline Film Festival in October 2023 followed by a national premiere at Cork Film Festival. The film will then enter the film festival circuit. **FilmOffaly Review** – The FilmOffaly Review undertaken by researchers; *Culture Works* across the Summer months is now in the final stages of the draft.

Annual Programme

Culture Night took place on Friday 22nd September and was a great success. Planning for Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival and Mini Movies is nearing completion, with these projects coming to fruition across the last quarter of the year.

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 September and will see artists from all over Ireland delivering workshops and performances in across a number of art forms for children up to 12 years of age.

Culture Night

As promised Culture Night on Friday 22nd September was indeed 'one night for all' as venues and public spaces across Offaly opened their doors to host a programme of



FREE entertainment for Culture Night 2023
– an island-wide celebration of arts,

heritage and culture. Celebrating its thirteenth year, Offaly Culture Night brought a packed programme of events that reflects the eclectic cultural exuberance within the county - a great night for all family and friends. This year there was a thirty per cent increase in number of events from 2022, with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion with all communities encouraged to come and be part of a range of multi-disciplinary events. There was a rich range of cultural treats to choose from, across the perimeters of the County from Edenderry to Birr.

Some of the highlights included:

Birr was a buzz with Birr Theatre & Arts Centre hosting the commissioned work by poet Eileen Casey and photographer Jackie Lynch, and later in the evening a concert, with flautist Karin Leitner.

Also in the town, **a pop-up portrait studio** was hosted by commissioned artist Tim Quinlan at Birr Technology Centre, and a medley of music, dance, recitals and spectacle took place at The Growery. The Creative Ireland funded, Mosaic Mural project was launched in the town and Brendan House held a charming event called **Granny Thompson's Costumed Ragdolls**.

In **Banagher** at **JJ Hough's Singing Pub**, commissioned artists Patrick Hough and Sheila Hough held a one-night film screening and exhibition titled 'The Two Faces of Tomorrow'.

Clara Musical Society hosted '**Musical All Sorts**' at Friends Meeting House. And in **Edenderry** there were choral delights with **Eden Chorale's** at Edenderry Library, as well a cultural community social event hosted by **Creative Places Edenderry** and the Voices of Edenderry Open Mic Night. Commissioned artist Veronica Nicholson

held an exhibition at Edenderry Library showcasing the work of a collaborative project with students of Oakland College.

In **Kilcormac**, the Kilcormac Development Association launched their project *Capturing Our Story*, with recordings that capture memories of life as it was lived in earlier days in the home, the workplace, the farm and the bog. This project was funded by Creative Ireland.

In **Moneygall at the Community Café** an inclusive international event was hosted, inviting local and international residents to unite for an evening where we can all flavour the cultures, national dishes, music and song.

It was a special night for Esker Arts in Tullamore, as this was their first Culture Night since opening earlier this year. The place was buzzing, and events for all included workshops, an Open Youth Busk hosted by **Music Generation Offaly**. A magnificent array of dance including a commissioned work by dancer Amy Donlan and a showcase of youth ballet at the start of the evening. Youth events featured strongly with the young people from **The Acorn Project in Edenderry** taking centre stage with the premiere of their short film 'Stand Up' a short film set in Edenderry about boxing and making a choice. And an exhibition of photographs *Through My Eyes*, a result of a year-long project with Offaly Down Syndrome Association and photographer James Crombie. The evening ending with a lively conversation between Paddy Slattery and John Connors on the event of the launch of Slattery's new book *Quiet Thoughts, But Out Loud*.

Also, in Tullamore **Rahan Comhaltas** hosted '**Faces Of Creativity & Culture**' in **Charleville Castle**. Rahan Comhaltas with

Shakefest hosted an exciting and eclectic evening of cultural talent and variety. Culture Night is supported the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Creative Ireland Programme in partnership with Offaly County Council.

Creative Places Edenderry



The Creative Places programme continues to be very active across the Summer months, 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 including a recent celebration event marking the engagement to date. **'Muin Ogham'** took place in September in the town square with live music and crafts across the afternoon, showcasing many of the artists engaged in projects across the

year. Creative Places Edenderry ran two events in Edenderry for Culture Night with great success and are currently supporting the Arts Office for the forthcoming Hullabaloo festival in Edenderry, by way of engagement of their volunteers with the children's arts festival.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Esker Arts

Esker Arts has continued with annual programming, hosting a number of very popular events including music and theatre. The exhibition *Imposed Geometries* takes the concept of the house/structure and offers a series of dynamic meditations in painting and sculpture by artists Tom Brawn, Betty Gannon and Cormac O'Leary, curated by Ian Wieczorek, it runs until the end of September.

Esker Arts was host to the national event *Get Together* – organised by Visual Artists Ireland to great success in the new art centre.

Edenderry Library and Arts Space

The Arts Office continues to work in close collaboration with the county librarian in the development of plans for a multi-purpose arts space to be incorporated into the planning of the new library for Edenderry, this will include developments as part of the Creative Places Edenderry project.

HEALTHY OFFALY



All five Healthy Offaly Round 4 projects are now fully up and running. While Offaly Sports Partnership's *'Drop & Move'* action for parents of children attending GAA training commenced last May, the remaining four

have fully commenced in September with good attendance numbers reported.

The other four actions are:

- Clara Community and Family Resource Obesity intervention measure *'Invest in Yourself'* catered

to those overweight and overcoming chronic illness.

- The FAI's 'Traveller Men's Football Team' action is specifically targeting traveller men aged 18-35 to get active in a team sport, organised training sessions and matches in a soccer league.
- Social Farming Ireland's 'Physical Activity through Farming' action whereby those vulnerable and most disadvantaged would have the opportunity to undertake manual tasks and to be out in nature to increase physical activity levels.
- Crinkle Sports & Recreation Centre's 'After School Physical Activity' programme for primary

school aged children to meet up in Crinkle after school and take part in a series of fun games and activities to encourage exercise.

The work of the Healthy Ireland Coordinator during September has largely centred around meeting with Community Groups and potential implementing partners to discuss the possibility of animating new projects for the last quarter of 2023 and for 2024. Several 'expressions of interest' have been received from potential partners with further detail having been requested by Healthy Offaly regarding specifics on numbers, target groups and costings.

SPORTS

Funding



Offaly Sports Partnership submitted its 2024 core funding application to Sport Ireland

Education & Training

- One Safeguarding 2 (club children's officer) training programmes delivered for five volunteers from four clubs.
- Offaly Sports Partnership's new sports coaching programme for transition years commenced in September. St Mary's Secondary School commenced the programme in September with a further four schools due to join the programme in October.

Programmes

ACE programme – Liam O Reilly

September saw the recommencement of our in school physical activity programmes.

Fast Feet is currently being delivered across 26 schools in the county.

Community sports hubs – Jean Brady & Liam O Reilly

September saw the recommencement of a number of sport and physical activity programmes across our sports hubs in Daingean and Mucklagh

Sports Inclusion Development Programme – Jean Brady

Among the sport inclusion development programmes delivered in September were:

-

Sports Inclusion Day for Tullamore Camogie



Walk Leader Training in advance of the delivery of a “Woodlands for Health” programme due to commence on Wednesday, 4th October.



Expressions of interest have also been sought for various programmes due to commence in October including:

- 1:1 physical activity supports for young people with additional needs
- HER Moves Come Try Boxing
- Corrective Gymnastics for primary schools
- Adapted physical activity programmes for Muiriosa & St Anne’s services.
- Woodlands for Health
- Additional programmes due for delivery in quarter 4

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

Triumphant Return for Offaly Libraries Comic Con!



Tullamore Library welcomed over **1,300 visitors** to the much-anticipated return of Offaly Libraries Comic Con on Saturday, 16th September.

The main library floor was transformed into a vendor hall and artists alley, with many of the stalls displaying works of

phenomenal artistry as well as comic books, unique pop culture merchandise and vintage games.



Professional cosplayers and artists performed demonstrations throughout the day, delighting attendees and passers-by alike with Vikings, Medieval Knights and famous characters such as Chewbacca, Predator and Storm Troopers.



Workshops were on offer in our Creative Zone, with over **60 participants** in Fantasy Map Making, Mythological Character Building and Lego workshops.

The family-friendly event also featured a wide variety of activities for children of all ages including Dungeons and Dragons sessions, Lego Freeplay, VEX Robotics and Virtual Reality.

Clár Éire Ildánach Creative Ireland Programme

Kindly co-funded by Creative Ireland, Offaly Libraries Comic Con is a shining light of innovation, creativity and fun within Offaly Libraries' calendar.

Culture Night at Offaly Libraries



Visitors to Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore Libraries enjoyed a wonderful array of events in celebration of Culture Night on Friday,

22nd September.

Edenderry Library hosted a great line up of local talent with music from Radar, Anna Hackett, Eden Choral and art presented by Veronica Nicholson.

Birr Library welcomed **37 attendees** to VOICE by Yvonne O'Toole, featuring performances by her young choir, featured soloists and Yvonne herself.



Silver Strings and Wordsmiths, two groups who meet weekly in Tullamore Library showcased their talents for Culture Night through music, poetry and prose readings.



Sustainable Development Goals Week 2023

As part of Sustainable Development Goals Week, Birr Library hosted a craft session using recycled materials for on Saturday 30th September.



Daingean Library also hosted a story time and craft session on Tuesday, 26th September which centred around the story of the 'The Lorax' by Dr Suess.

Offaly & Laois Parenting Support Programme: Autumn 2023



Offaly Libraries together with Laois Libraries are delighted to co-deliver a series of online talks and in-person workshops for parents and guardians. Supported by Laois Offaly Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC), the Parenting Support Programme invites experts to discuss a broad range of parenting topics currently impacting children.

Details of each event is available

offaly.ie/libraries.

on



Positive Ageing Week 2023



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

Offaly Libraries have organised a wide variety of events for our older patrons including Coffee Mornings, Chair Yoga, Intergenerational Music and Mindfulness sessions.



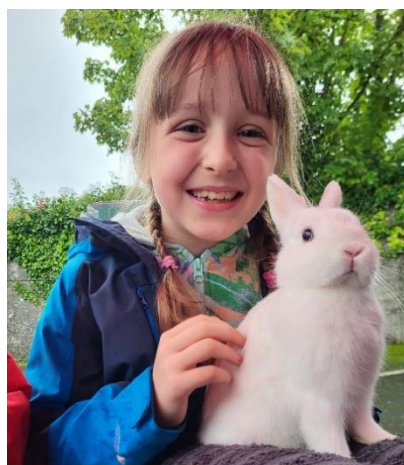
Pictured above are some of the 12 attendees at Ferbane Library's Coffee Morning on Thursday, 5th October.

Wooly Farm Visit to Offaly Libraries

Visitors to Tullamore Library on 30th September were greeted to a pop-up petting farm, complete with bunnies, goats and chickens!

32 attendees enjoyed the animals and learned all about the workings of a modern Irish farm!

This event was kindly supported by CYPSC's Integration Fund.



Ready Steady Play: Gymboree Sessions in Banagher Library and Tullamore Library

Gymboree play sessions will take place in Banagher Library and Tullamore Library on Friday 13th October.

Suitable for 0-5 year olds, the events are free but booking is required. The events are funded through Laois Offaly CYPSC and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth's Integration Fund.

Please contact [Banagher Library](#) or [Tullamore Library](#) directly to reserve a place.



Sensory Play with Play Therapist, Eleanor Glennon

Play Therapist, Eleanor Glennon, led some wonderful sensory play at Clara Library on September 23rd, one of several around the county as part of our Sensory Offaly programme, kindly funded through CYPSC.



More information on the Sensory Offaly programme and collections can be found [here](#).

Offaly Libraries STEAM Programme

Some exciting STEAM events were held in Birr Library this past month!



An App-Building workshop was held on Friday, 15th September for **20 Transition Year students**.



Offaly's STEM Education Officer also held a Microbits session for Mercy Primary School's **4th Class students**.

Lego Freeplay sessions, delivered as part of our STEAM offerings, continue to be well attended in libraries around the county. We look forward to celebrating **Space Week** from October, 4th – 10th.

There is plenty on offer in our libraries, including class workshops with STEM communicator, Seanie Morris, VEX

Robotics sessions and craft sessions with an Astro-twist!

Offaly Libraries are working in collaboration with **Midlands Science** to offer an exciting programme of **Science Week** events in November. Watch this space!



Check out the [STEAM programme on offaly.ie/libraries](https://offaly.ie/libraries) for more information.

Healthy Ireland at the Library

6th year students from St. Brendan's in Birr enjoyed a mindfulness session in Birr Library on Wednesday 20th September with Leona McDonnell.



5th and 6th year students from Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa attended two separate workshops with Leona in Clara Library. A total of **83 students** were in attendance at all events.

Offaly Libraries NEW School Newsletter Launched in September

Dubbed 'The Bookmark Bulletin', the first instalment of our new school newsletter was issued at the beginning of September. Packed with information to help teachers and schools, education providers are invited to discover more about our innovative programs, educational offerings, school supports and other ways that Offaly Libraries can benefit Offaly students.

You can [read the first issue here](#) or sign up to [receive future newsletters here](#).



The newsletter now has **74 subscribers!**

Children's Book Festival this October



Children's Book Festival is one of the four central pillars of the national **Right to Read** initiative. We have an exciting programme of events organised to celebrate the Children's Book Festival this October!

Celebrated children's authors, Éanna Ní Lamhna, Shane Hegarty and Gerry Daly will visit our libraries to deliver some fascinating workshops for primary school aged children.

We will also welcome local illustrator Shannon Bergin and puppet-master extraordinaire, Simone Schuemmelfeder of StoryGate, for some fun workshops and shows. For more information, [check out the full programme brochure here](#).

New! Remembered History Hour at Edenderry Library

Edenderry Library are delighted to launch a **Remembered History Hour**, every Friday morning at 11am in the library.

A selection of items from our local studies collection will be provided to the group and anyone with an interest in local history

is welcome to attend. No booking is required. Feel free to get in touch with Edenderry Library at 046-9731028 or email EdenderryLibrary@offalycoco.ie with any queries.



'No Message' Exhibition in Tullamore Library this October



Tullamore Library is hosting a very colourful exhibition of paintings by Shane Feighery for the month of October. The exhibition is entitled 'No Message'.

'Through My Eyes': Photo Exhibition in Birr Library

Birr Library is excited to host an exhibition of photographs shot by members of the Offaly Down Syndrome Association. In February 2023, funding allocated by Offaly County Council under the Disability Participation Fund, gave the group the resources to hire a venue to run a week-long course, purchase digital cameras for all participants, and curate their work.



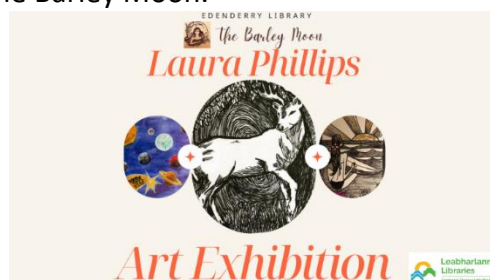
The exhibition will be displayed at Birr Library for the entire month of October and will include the final images from the project, including a glimpse behind-the-

scenes, as well as observations and comments by photographer, James Crombie.

All are welcome to this event and can view the photographic work during library opening hours.

'The Barley Moon' Exhibition in Edenderry Library

Edenderry Library is delighted to host an exhibition by local artist Laura Phillips of The Barley Moon.



This mixed media exhibition of art is inspired by spirituality and her time as an illustrator. The exhibition was launched by Laura in Edenderry Library on Wednesday 6th September.

Book Clubs at Offaly Libraries



Did you know that Offaly Libraries have **book clubs** spread across our library branches *and* online? [Check them all out here.](#)

Sign up for our Library Newsletter

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. [Read our latest newsletter here.](#)

Currently we have **2,724 email subscribers** to the newsletter. Follow the link to subscribe.

Climate Action Environment Water & Transportation

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Action

Offaly County Council are finalising the drafting of their **Local Authority Climate Action Plan** in line with national climate obligations. The draft plan will be put before the elected members at their October meeting prior to going on public display. The public display period will last for a period of six week from mid-October until early December, during which comments and submissions are welcomed. A number of public consultation events will be scheduled during the display period in libraries and OCC offices. Submissions can be submitted by email to climate@offalycoco.ie or through a dedicated Submit.com page.

Offaly County Council are proud to announce their **2 Go Cup** sustainability initiative which removed all single use cups from the Aras an Chontae canteen.

Offaly County Council have registered their participation in the "Reduce Your Use" campaign for 2023/24 which aims to reduce energy consumption across the winter period. An energy awareness and behavioural change campaign will commence during October.

Environmental Management

In September, the Environment Section received 81 environmental complaints. All were investigated in a timely manner and resolved where possible.

Complaint Category	No.
Litter pollution (fly tipping/casual litter/litter on property)	45
Waste (dumping/burning/unauthorised sites)	12
Noise (community/commercial/industrial)	2
Control of Horses	1
Control of Dogs	14
Water Quality	1
Abandoned vehicles	3
Air pollution	3

Burial Grounds

St. Mary's Cemetery, Edenderry

We are currently in the process of tendering for the construction of the extension to St. Mary's.

Clonmacnoise Cemetery

BMD staff in the Ferbane office have recently undertaken a large clean-up operation in the cemetery.

Veterinary

Control of Dogs

So far in 2023 we have cared for 195 dogs in the Dog Shelter and managed to reunite and rehome 191 of them. This represents an increase of 10% in surrenders and seizures compared to the same period last year. We also received 61 complaints during that period.

Control of Horses

We have dealt with 20 complaints under Control of Horse legislation so far in 2023, which resulted in the seizure of 11 horses and donkeys. All issues are closed or are under investigation.

Veterinary Inspections

Offaly County Council continues to operate the Shared Service Agreement for

Veterinary Services in the Westmeath County Council administrative area.

WATER

Rural Water Programme

Subsidies

The GWS annual subsidy payments have been completed. A total of €1,072,067.00 has been paid to 15 no. Group Water Schemes

Capital

The Rural Water Unit of the Department of Housing advised that the next Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme capital funding scheme will be announced imminently.

TRANSPORTATION

PLEEP

Survey works on all of the PLEEP assets is now substantially completed. Light replacement works will now commence in early 2024.

Winter Service Plan

Offaly County Councils Winter Service Plan will commence on the 16th of October 2023 and will run until the 30th of April 2024.

EV –Charging/Strategy

Offaly County Council in collaboration with our colleagues in Laois, Westmeath, Roscommon and Longford have commenced the Regional EV strategy. Offaly County Council are the lead authority.

De-Carbonisation of Corporate Fleet

We have now taken delivery of 4 of our 5 electric vehicles and commenced the migration of our fleet over to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil or HVO which will produce a 90% reduction in our CO2 emissions.

Grand Canal Greenway

The final contract on the Grand Canal Greenway was issued to tender in September. It is now anticipated that Offaly County Council will have completed the Grand Canal Greenway from Edenderry to Shannon Harbor by later Q1 2024.

National Road Pavement Improvements

Offaly County Council have received additional TII funding for pavement protection and renewal works at Blueball on the N52 and Ballinasrah on the N80. Works will commence in late October.

Speed Limit Review

The speed limit review Public Consultation period has now closed and it is expected that our Speed Limit report and proposals will issue to the Elected Members for consideration and approval in Q4 2023.

Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Finance

Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 30 September 2023			
OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr Budget 2023 €m	Preliminary Value to Sept 2023 €m	% Year To Date
Payroll costs	32.97	22.88	69.4%
Grants and Subsidies Income	40.80	25.55	62.6%
OCC to 30th Sept 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 June	13.39	5.90	0.45
Closing Balance Sept 30th, 2023	5.19	0.62	0.05
<u>2022 Cash collected to Sept 30th</u>	12.12***	5.53	0.41
% Collection at this point in 2022	110%	107%	109%
*** Collections impacted in 2022 by Q1 waiver and effect of building business back up after lockdowns			
<u>Bank Overdraft to 30th Sept 2023</u>			% YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date		57	21%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to Sept 30th 2023 YTD (Estimate)			€12,463
Bank Administration and transactional charges to Sept 30th 2023 YTD (Estimate)			€27,085