

Lúil agus Lúnasa / July & August

Rose of Tralee Tour

Offaly Tourism hosted the 2023 Rose of Tralee Tour in August for a fun filled trip around the county. River Shannon, Banagher and Clonmacnoise



Tullamore Show - Experience Offaly Pavilion

Niamh Dooley from BiaSol and Anne Marie Feighery from Feighery's Farm are pictured with Agriculture Minister, Charlie McConologue at the launch in the Offaly Pavilion at the Tullamore Show.



Public Participation Network

Offaly PPN supported the Ukrainian Independence Day celebrations with Offaly Volunteer Centre and NLN on 24 August



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Outdoor Recreation Scheme

Expressions of Interest are now available at

<https://www.offaly.ie/oris-2023/>

Land Use, Planning and Economic Development Services

PLANNING

Development Management

	To end August 2023	To end August 2022	Total 2022
Planning Applications	461	466	681
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	14	12	16
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	161 (69)	31 (5)	158 (15)

During the month of **July/August 2023**, the following large planning applications were received:

Endrim Construction Services Ltd	<p>FOR (A) TWO WAREHOUSE/ STORAGE UNITS, ONE WITH A 2 STOREY ANNEX BUILDING COMPRISING OFFICES AND STAFF FACILITIES; (B) A SINGLE STOREY LINK BUILDING TO FORM A LOADING BAY TO SERVE BOTH NEW UNITS; (C) CAR PARKING, ACCESS AND FENCING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS</p> <p>FERBANE BUSINESS PARK, BALLYVLIN/AGHABOY</p> <p>FERBANE</p> <p>CO. OFFALY</p>
Collins Lane Housing Development Ltd.	<p>A Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD). The proposed development consists of 126 no. residential units comprised of 102 no. dwelling houses and 24 no. apartments and a childcare facility/creche.</p> <p>The houses are arranged as 7 no. two-story, detached houses (5 no. 3-bedroom, and 2 no. 4-bedroom), 50 no. two-storey, semi-detached houses (2 no., 4-bedroom, 44 no. 3-bedroom and 4 no. 2-bedroom), 21 no. two-storey terraced houses (in 7 terraces each with 3 no. 2-bedroom houses) and 24 no. three-story (third floor in roof/dormer space), semi-detached houses (containing 4 bedrooms).</p> <p>The apartments are arranged as two-story (and part single-story) units with own-door access with 2 no. units, each containing 4 no. 2-bedroom apartments (2 no. 2-bed at ground floor level and 2 no. 2-bed at first floor level) and 2 no. terraced apartment units each containing 8 no. apartments (4 no., 2-bed at ground floor level and 4 no., 1-bed at first floor level). Bin/recycling stores and bicycle shelters are proposed for the apartments.</p> <p>The development also includes a single-story, childcare facility/creche containing pre-school and after-school facilities with associated, on-site parking, bicycle shelter, bins/recycling stores and amenity/play areas.</p> <p>Proposed vehicular access is proposed to be provided off the existing roundabouts (on the north-south link road between Collins Lane (R443) and the Educate Together School), one by the continuation of the existing road serving the Jehovah Witness Hall site, one by a new roadway from the central roundabout (through the neighbourhood centre zoned site). A new vehicular entrance serving the development is also proposed off the R443, Collin's Lane. An internal link road is proposed to The Hawthorns housing estate to the north of the site.</p> <p>Works include all new estate roads, boundary treatments, public open space serving the development including amenity/play areas, landscaping, pedestrian, cycle facilities and landscaping along the R443. Works include waste and surface water services, the under-</p>

	<p>grounding of overhead power lines and ground-mounted transformers, related and ancillary services and all associated site-works.</p> <p>Collins Lane (R443)</p> <p>Ardan</p> <p>Tullamore</p> <p>R35 WK53</p>
Kilcormac Community Childcare CLG	<p>USE OF THE PREMISES AS SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE FACILITY AND PLANNING PERMISSION IS SOUGHT TO USE THE PREMISES AS AN EARLY YEARS/CRECHE/CHILDCARE FACILITY WITH A TOTAL FLOOR AREA OF 519.5M2 AND ALL ASSOCIATED SIGNAGE AND SITE WORKS</p> <p>KILGOLAN LOWER, KILCORMAC</p> <p>CO. OFFALY</p> <p>R42 HF88</p>
Shane Ryan	<p>1/ Change of use of Units 2 & 3 from previously approved restaurant/takeaway to retail use (Previous planning reference No. 08/916). 2/Construction of 1st floor Mezzanine floors within Units 2 & 3. (Previous planning reference No.06/553). 3/ Merge existing ground floor pharmacy shop and 1st floor storage within units 4,5 & 6 with proposed Units 2 & 3 (Previous Planning Reference No.'s 06/625 & 01/480)</p> <p>Downshire Row on JKL Street,</p> <p>New Row & Carrick Road,</p> <p>Edenderry, Co. Offaly.</p> <p>R45 RT21</p>
Offaly Solar Energy Ltd.	<p>The installation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm, including a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) consisting of 48no. units and provision of a bridge crossing the Silver River, on 87.96Ha./217.37 acres of lands comprising 18no. agricultural fields on two separate land parcels within the townlands of Lumcloon and Falsk, Gallen Co. Offaly (E: 613500; N: 720000 – centre of site). The solar farm will consist of a series solar photovoltaic (PV) panels mounted on steel support structures to a height not greater than 3.00m. Development ancillary to the siting of solar PV panels includes 19no. transformers; pole-mounted CCTV cameras; underground cabling; deer fenceline measuring 2.00m high; a proposed 5.00m wide graded track between an existing site entrance and BESS; internal access tracks; widening of 2no. existing field entrances and all associated development. Two temporary compounds, measuring 5250sqm approx. in overall area, will be established during the construction phase of the solar farm. The planning permission will have a duration of 10-years, with a subsequent operational lifetime of 40- years, after which it will be decommissioned with all associated lands returned to their original use excluding the Silver River bridge crossing, which shall be retained. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared and submitted in support of this planning application.</p> <p>Lands within the townlands of Lumcloon and Falsk</p> <p>Gallen</p> <p>Co. Offaly</p>
Cushina Wind Limited	<p>(I) THE EXISTING 80 METRE METEOROLOGICAL MAST, WHICH WAS ERECTED AS EXEMPTED DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH CLASS 20A, SCHEDULE 2, OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2001 (AS AMENDED), AND ALL ANCILLARY INFRASTRUCTURE; AND (II) PERMISSION FOR THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE EXISTING METEOROLOGICAL MAST FOR A PERIOD OF UP TO FIVE YEARS</p> <p>RAHEENAKEERAN, WALSH ISLAND</p> <p>GEASHILL</p> <p>CO. OFFALY</p>

Patrick Muldoon	<p>(A) Planning Permission for the demolition of existing single storey house to facilitate access to the proposed development from the R400</p> <p>(B) Planning Permission for 69 no. houses consisting of (i) Type A - 6 no. detached 3 bed single storey type houses (ii) Type B - 4 no. detached 3 bed single storey type houses (iii) Type C – 5 no. detached 2 bed single storey type houses (iv) Type D - 3 no. detached 3 bed dormer type houses (v) Type E- 20 no. semi-detached 3 bedroom two storey type houses (vi) Type F – 17 no. semi-detached 4 bedroom two storey type houses (vii) Type G – 3 no. semi-detached 3 bedroom two storey dual aspect type houses (viii) Type H – 7 no. semi-detached 2 bedroom two storey type houses (ix) Type J – 4 no. 1 bedroom maisonettes type houses</p> <p>(C) Planning permission for pedestrian access to the adjoining community playground and public car park and</p> <p>(D) Planning Permission for foul and surface water drainage works and all associated ancillary siteworks to facilitate this development.</p> <p>Edenderry Road Laurencetown Rhode, Co. Offaly R35 K068</p>
Ulster Bank Ireland Dac	<p>External works after the removal of the raised ulster bank lettering, bus stop sign and the general blue ulster bank signage. Permission to carry out the removal of the ATM with temporary cover and the night safe, replacing with stone to match existing and the removal of the blue shop front sign. Permission to carry out of internal works for the removal of the ATM's in stud wall, as well as the removal of loose furniture and the removal of Ulster Bank signage and merchandise on all floors</p> <p>High Street Tullamore Co. Offaly R35 R293</p>
Euram Air Leases Ireland Ltd. Unit 2, Ferbane Business And Technology Park, Co. Offaly R42 EC91	<p>construction of a 1008m2 warehouse, together with parking, security fencing, lighting, signage, surface water attenuation system, connect to all services, and all ancillary site works</p> <p>Ferbane Business and Technology Park Ballycumber Road, Aghaboy Rd., Ferbane, Co. Offaly</p>
LIDL IRELAND Gmbh HEAD OFFICE MAIN ROAD TALLAGHT DUBLIN 24	<p>17/392 FOR DEVELOPMENT AT THIS SITE MEASURING C. 1.33 HA. THE DEVELOPMENT WILL CONSIST OF THE DEMOLITION OF THE 5 NO. EXISTING COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS ON SITE (5,179 SQ M) AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING A SINGLE-LEVEL, DOUBLE ...</p> <p>CHURCH ROAD AND TANYARD LANE TULLAMORE CO. OFFALY</p>
Emmet Lynch C/O Project Design Architects Unit 1, Beech Court Business Park Kilcoole Co Wicklow	<p>THE CONVERSION OF EXISTING APPROVED TWO STOREY DWELLING TO EMERGENCY SHORT STAY ACCOMMODATION CONSISTING OF 10 FAMILY ROOMS AND COMMUNAL AREA AND RETENTION OF 5 NO. SINGLE STOREY SINGLE ROOMS UNITS TO REAR OF THE CURRENT PROPERTY AND 1 NO. LAUNDRY / ...</p> <p>LYNCH'S TOWNHOUSE, ARDEN ROAD, TULLAMORE CO. OFFALY R35 C950</p>

Vantage Towers Limited Mountainview, Leopardstown, Dublin 18	Erecting a 30m high telecommunications lattice structure together with antennas, dishes, access track and associated telecommunications equipment, all enclosed by security fencing Kiltubbrid Island, Kinnitty, Birr, Co. Offaly.
Electricity Supply Board (E.S.B) Engineering And Major Projects, Esb One Dublin Airport Central Cloghran Co. Dublin	THE CONSTRUCTION & OPERATION OF A 250 MVA (ELECTRICAL RATING) SYNCHRONOUS CONDENSER LOCATED WITHIN A C. 0.8 HA FENCED & GATED COMPOUND & WILL INCLUDE: (A) A SYNC CON BUILDING (C. 962 SQ.M., C. 14 M HIGH) TO HOUSE EQUIPMENT INCLUDING THE GENERATOR, FL ... A C. 14.1 HA SITE LOCATED WITHIN THE SITE OF THE FORMER WEST OFFALY POWER (WOP) STATION IN THE TOWNLAND OF CLONIFFEEN, SHANNONBRIDGE , CO. OFFALY N37 C840
Joed Build Spv Limited Main Street Banagher Co. Offaly	for change of use from previously granted development (PL Ref: 081047) for residential apartments comprising nine one-bed apartments, three two-bed apartments, alterations to existing elevations, construction of apartments within existing carport, as ... Main Street Banagher Co. Offaly

Online Planning

The successful launch of 'Online Planning' in Offaly County Council took place on **Tuesday 27 June 2023**. This is part of the Local Government Ireland Planning System which is designed to streamline the application process for planning permission.

Forward Planning

The Edenderry Local Area Plan 2023-2029 was adopted 17th July 2023 and will come into effect 6 weeks later on 28th August 2023.

ARCHITECTURE AND CONSERVATION

Birr Destination Town Failte Ireland funding, project to commenced on site and underway, new entrance to Birr Demesne, The Green. Liaise with consultants, stakeholders and in-house team. New frame has been manufactured at Bushy Park, Dublin and installed on site with stonework built in around it. Curved stone wall



to courtyard completed. Large Oak doors under construction.



Built Heritage Investment Scheme, 16 provisional grants, funding €126,400. **New Thatching Grant** by Department €15,450, funding approved for 4 thatch projects. Difficulty this year availing of thatchers, 2 are not working in Offaly this year. 3 projects already complete, Woodfield House windows, 1 Compton Row lime render (*Photos: cement render removed, brick gable allowed to dry out, lime render applied*), Old Monastery windows. 8 further projects are underway.

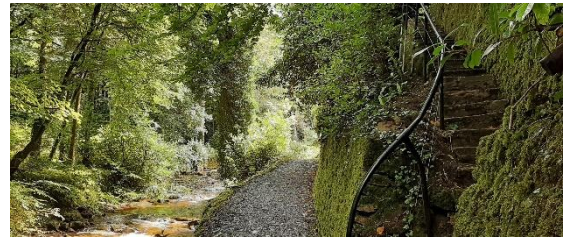


Historic Structures Fund All 4 projects approved by Department, Kinnitty Castle window repairs (€37,500) - underway, Birr Suspension Bridge, repairs (€200, 000) – to start on site this week, St Mary's COI Ballyboy, structural repairs – tenders received via consultants, PSCS process, OCC owned, (€37,500), Rahan Vernacular building, structural repairs (€10,000) – withdrawn due to rise in contractor costs. **Total for 2023 €285,000**

Heritage Stewardship Heritage Council, €19,926 approved for Conservation Management Plan Tubberdaly Gazebo (former castle) by Howley Hayes Cooney. Site visit by full team to assess and agree proposed works and timeframe, 22/03/23. Hosted a talk during Heritage Week outlining the project, proposals, and recommendations.

Creative Ireland Follies and Vernacular Architecture, part of Creative Ireland Team - Annual funding for Follies project €10,000 and Vernacular Architecture €5,000

Other areas: Heritage Forum attend and update quarterly meetings. **ORIS** assist with ongoing Kinnitty application. Railings to stepped area painted as discussed to assist with bedding into site.



Department NIAH Building Stocktake, new project funded by Department for a select number of county councils. They have approved Offaly to update their 2004 Inventory in a select number of towns across the county. To be completed by consultants before the end of 2023. **Nationwide** 1-day filming 27/07/23 at Gloster House with owners and guest speakers. To air Oct/Nov. **Tracks and Trails** filmed at Kinnitty Castle 15/08/23.



Heritage Week: Acres Folly three-hour long tours arranged by Karen Gray and given by Rachel McKenna, great groups of all ages attended to view to town from the top of the folly 16/08/23.



Gloster House Tour with 80 people arranged by the owner, assistance with tour and talk at folly 16/08/23.



IGS Seminar Present at Vernacular Architecture Study Day with 12 speakers, City Assembly House 26/07/23.

Request by SPAB (Society of Protection of Ancient Buildings) to provide a 1hr **podcast** on Traditional Architecture and Conservation in Offaly 01/08/23, air in September.



Heritage Team

Delivery of Offaly Heritage Plan 2023-27

This report is based on the 7 Key Actions in the **Offaly Heritage Plan 2023-27**. The second quarterly Offaly Heritage Forum meeting was held on Wednesday 28th June 2023 in Ferbane Convent with a site visit to Ballylin Bog afterwards.

Offaly County Council Projects

Creative Ireland

Funding of c. €191,000 has been allocated to Offaly County Council for 2023. A substantial sum is allocated to Creative Community projects.

- Research and publication on public sculptures in Offaly with photography by Paul Moore.
- Conservation of the nineteenth century Shinrone Hurley
- A book documenting the unique story of Irish Mist
- A public artwork to commemorate the Geashill Cauldron now in the National Museum
- Rahan to Clonmacnoise pilgrimage (2nd Sept) organised by Clara Heritage Society
- Mosaic Murals – Birr Theatre and Art Club

Decade of Centenaries

Now in the final year of the decade €50,000 has been approved by the Department for collaborative projects with Offaly History and to explore options for a military trail in Crinkill.

Biodiversity

- Geashill Tidy Towns were presented with the regional Pollinator Award at the 2022 awards in Trim in June 2023.
- Local Biodiversity Action Fund (LBAF) grant funding of c. €120,000 has been allocated to Offaly County Council for 2023. Fifteen projects spanning from a value of €5,000 to €20'000 Have been complete or are underway currently. Some examples include; the removal of Himalayan balsam which has taken place during the summer along the Camcor River and the treatment of Japanese knotweed taking place across

the county in the coming days (second week of September). Green Pine Consultants are currently working with communities in Clara and Kilcormac to develop Biodiversity Action Plans for respective localities, these will provide a roadmap of actions to work towards to improve the areas for nature and the environment.



Group pictured at the Kilcormac Biodiversity Action Plan meeting

- A number of Biodiversity themed events were hosted as part of Heritage Week in August with many highlights including the moth trapping event at Fancroft Mill and Garden and a swallow bird ring event at Pallas Lake.



Heritage Week moth event at Fancroft Mill + Gardens

- A community wildflower seed collection and saving workshop took place on Wednesday 6th and 9th of September, a collaboration between the climate team and biodiversity officer to promote All

Ireland Pollinator Plan actions further across the county. An online webinar was followed-up by two field visits to Birr and Daingean.

- An all-day community Biodiversity Knowledge-share Day is organised in Geashill on Saturday September 23rd. This is a networking and upskilling event aimed at Tidy Towns + Community groups actively seeking to improve biodiversity in their respective localities. OCC staff will be joined by experts and community representatives to deliver the event (full schedule below)
- An in-house biodiversity training seminar on “planning for Swifts” is scheduled on Tuesday Sept 26th which will cover swift conservation measures appropriate to planners and the planning system.

Partnering with Local Communities and Societies

- Work is ongoing with the Lemanaghan Community Group to explore options to interpret and present the monastic site.
- Liaising with the Lions Clubs of Tullamore and Birr to progress their research proposal for part of Clonbeale bog.



Lions Club meeting onsite with John Feehan and Offaly heritage team

Built Heritage

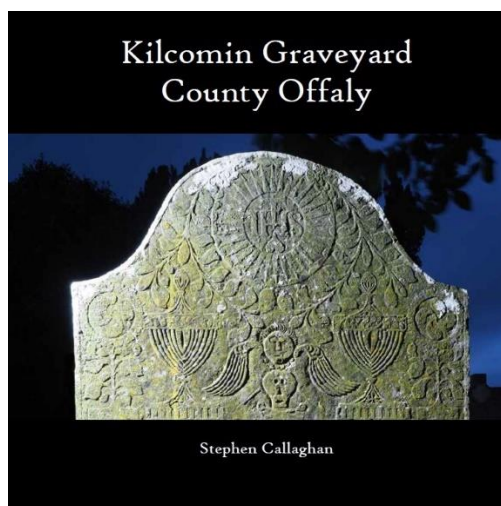
Offaly History research continues into the streetscapes of Tullamore town.

Documenting Heritage

County Archive Service Quarterly meetings are held with Offaly History to oversee the delivery of the county archive service. Recent new acquisitions made by Offaly County Council include manuscripts of accounts from Charleville Estate.

Publications Two significant publications were launched. *Camcor The River of Birr* by John Feehan was launched on 30 March in Birr (supported by the Heritage Council) and Jim Houlihan's book *The Great Law of Birr* was launched in Birr Library on 27th April. (supported by Creative Ireland).

Kilcomin Graveyard memorials book by Stephen Callaghan was launched on 10 June hosted by Shrinrone Heritage Group.



Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites

Under the **Community Monuments Fund** support towards 6 projects in County Offaly totalling

€442,000 has been allocated. This will enable conservation works on site at the medieval churches Monasteroris and Kilbride Churches to move to the next stage, continuing the great work under the Just Transition Conservation and Pollination programme.

Conservation commenced in 2022 on the walls at Seir Kieran Monastic site at Clareen and the team are back on site to continue with the next phase.

Revamp Conservation Contractors are on site at the chapter house, part of the old Franciscan Friary in Killeigh where the vault is being conserved and areas of repairs made to the upstanding walls.



Killeigh Chapter House undergoing conservation.

Research teams are set up to deliver the conservation management plan for Ballintemple Church near Walsh Island as well as research into the unique staircase at Emmel Castle.

Just Transition Conservation and Pollination Programme Conservation works are underway at Kilbride and Monasteroris. In conjunction with this the Irish Heritage School are running a community engagement programme with an online lecture series, workshops in lime mortar, and site visits.

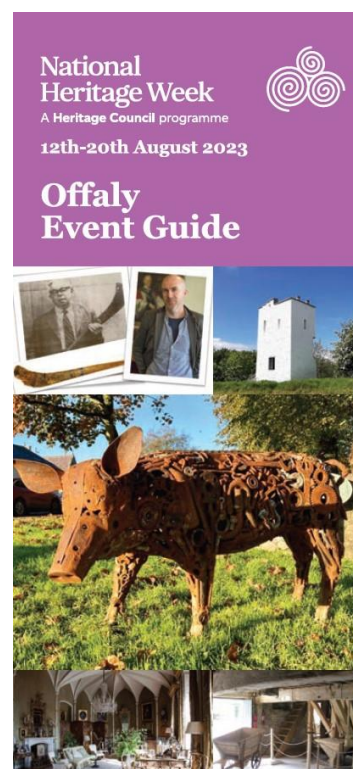
Access to Heritage

The **Offaly Naturalists' Field Club** has recommenced programming with a range of events including exploring the upper reaches of the Camcor, a dusk chorus at Derrycastle and the Offaly Naturalists' Summer school for a week in Birr on the topic of pollination.

The new podcast season of **In Your Nature** in partnership with BirdWatch Ireland and the Heritage Council is now underway with over 8,000 downloads of the first season.

The **Wildflowers of Offaly** YouTube series has continued in 2023 with a partnership with LAWPRO featuring water plants.

Over 40 events were hosted by community groups, individuals and Offaly County Council for the nine days of **Heritage Week** in August.



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 will take place on 13th September 2023. The aim of the workshop is 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 is 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 late 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 (ZEVI) is 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 deadline to apply is **5pm on Thursday, 28 September 2023**. The call is being administered through Pobal. Full call information and how to apply can be found on www.pobal.ie/programmes/eujtf-ev/

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**. The Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiative Scheme will support the development of bioeconomy piloting and demonstration projects in the wider midlands area. With a budget of €10

million for two separate projects, proposals are being sought to support the bio-based sector to become climate neutral and sustainable with enhanced circularity, while remaining competitive on the global market. This can be achieved by replacing non-renewable and fossil based raw materials and mineral resources with sustainably sourced biomass and biological waste to produce industrial and consumer goods. Funding will support close collaboration between stakeholders along the entire bio-based value chain, including SMEs, research performing organisations, universities, local authorities, clusters, primary producers, bioprocessing industries, and consumer brands. This funding call has two topics:

Optimised and integrated industrial bio-based systems based on agriculture and/or forestry-based value chains.

- Processing and co-processing of bio-based waste and mixed bio-based waste.

Closing date for applications is **12.00pm noon on 13th October 2023**. This call is being administered through the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Full call information, including call specification and call guidelines, and how to apply can be found on www.gov.ie/en/publication/deb47-2023-bioeconomy-demonstration-initiative-eu-just-transition-fund/

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. This will create new jobs in the sector and grow the visitor economy. Through this scheme, Failte Ireland will also provide funding to develop the digital capabilities of businesses to make the most of opportunities offered by digitalisation and ensure an increase in the levels of inclusivity in tourism in the Territory.

This call is being administered through Failte Ireland. Full call information, including call specification and call guidelines, and how to apply can be found on <https://www.failteireland.ie/Identify-Available-Funding/Just-Transition-Fund/investment-grant-aid-scheme.aspx>

REGENERATION

Urban Regeneration Development Fund (Call 3)

Offaly County Council secured funding of €2 million under 'Call 3' of the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) for Tullamore Town. The aim of this fund is to end long-term vacancy and dereliction. Work has commenced on selected vacant and derelict properties and Regen staff are liaising with the property owners, auctioneers and where appropriate the legal team

to progress occupation of properties.

Croi Conaithe – 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.

To date:

19 grants have been fully approved,
47 grants, Offaly County Council have requested further information and are pending approval,
1 grant is fully complete and property reoccupied.

For information and application forms please see link below.

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

Town Centre First.

Offaly County Council together with Clara Town Team have developed and finalised the Clara Town Centre First Plan.

Consultants, Urban Agency Architects were appointed by Offaly County Council to support Clara Town Team in preparing the Town Centre First Plan, this process is now complete and is available to view on Offaly.ie



<https://www.offaly.ie/clara-town-centre-first-plan-2/>

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

The 2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme was launched on 1st June 2023. The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) provides funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure. It also provides support for the necessary repair, maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas across Ireland.

Expression of interest under Measure 2 for medium scale projects with funding of up to €200,000 and Measure 3 for large scale projects seeking funding of up to €500,000 are currently being evaluated by the Regeneration Team.

Derrynounce Lakes and Trails

ORIS Project Development 2022

Offaly County Council together with Portarlington Community Development Association signed contracts with the

Project Team, SLR Consulting Ltd. to prepare a 10 Year Plan and Concept Designs for the Derrynounce Lakes and Trails.



On Thursday 6th July 2023 Offaly County Council in partnership with Portarlington Community Development Association held a Stakeholder Workshop which over 30 people attended. The aim of the workshop was to contribute to the development of a visionary long-term plan for the future development of Derrynounce over the next 10 years.



Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVR) 2023

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced the launch of the 2023 Town and Village Renewal Scheme on Friday 21st July 2023. The 2023 Scheme will place particular emphasis on the following:

- Investment in infrastructure to support town and village centre markets;
- Bringing vacant and derelict buildings back into use a multi-purpose community spaces, or to address remote working needs.
- Investing in the development of parks, green spaces and recreational amenities in town centres;
- A new option to allow local authorities to acquire plots of land to enable development of town regeneration, such as town parks, plazas etc;
- Refurbishment of existing community centres.

Offaly County Council can submit a maximum of 4 applications in the amount of €250k and one application in the amount of €500k. Offaly County Council advertised for Expressions of Interests from community groups which closed on the 5th September and are now currently being evaluated for further development and possible submission to the Department.

Community Centre Investment Fund 2023

Offaly County Council worked closely with Moneygall Development Association and submitted an application under the Community Centre Investment Fund for Moneygall Development Association in July 2023 which is currently being considered.

The criteria for new build community centres required that projects be shovel-ready with all the necessary permissions, consents and leases in place. In addition, the project had to be located on a green/brown field site.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

Offaly Women in Enterprise Event

A fantastic interactive lunch, learn, and networking event took place on July 5th in the grounds of the beautiful Mount Briscoe Country House, bringing together over thirty women from across County Offaly. The event provided a wonderful opportunity for participants to engage with one another, forming new relationships and synergies. Orla Martin, Head of Enterprise, opened the event welcoming attendees and giving an overview of the supports available in LEO Offaly. Director of Service, Ann Dillon, complemented the businesswomen on their success to date and emphasized the importance of events like these in the County.



During the event, Eileen Fleming, a renowned business consultant and founder/owner of The Buff Day Spa, Dublin, shared valuable insights, tips,

and tools on achieving a better work-life balance and maximizing resources for business success. Owner of Mount Briscoe, Margaret Edgill, another dynamic entrepreneur, shared her own experiences and discussed plans for further expansion using sustainable methods, providing inspiring examples for attendees.

Recent national award-winning entrepreneur Gretchen Donovan also attended and praised the staff of LEO Offaly for their exceptional support. She emphasized how their assistance has played a crucial role in positioning her for success in her business journey.

The contributions and expertise shared by all speakers 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.

Call for female entrepreneurs in rural areas to apply for 9th year of ACORNS new business development programme

ACORNS is a free development programme for early-stage female entrepreneurs based in rural Ireland and funded through the Rural Innovation

and Development Fund by the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM).

Charlie McConalogue T.D., Minister for Agriculture, Food, and the Marine, recently launched the opening of the call for applications for ACORNS 9. The deadline for applications is midnight, September 22.

Niamh Dooley from BiaSol and Anne Marie Feighery from Feighery's Farm found that the programme provided them with a group of supportive, focused, and positive women and it was incredibly motivating.

Further details are available here: [gov.ie - Call for female entrepreneurs in rural areas to apply for 9th year of ACORNS new business development programme \(www.gov.ie\)](https://gov.ie - Call for female entrepreneurs in rural areas to apply for 9th year of ACORNS new business development programme (www.gov.ie))

Industry Clusters in the Midlands

Across the Midlands, Smart Specialisation has seen several Industry Clusters grow and develop. Our regional clusters have created ecosystems which aid economic growth for partners by focusing on cooperation and collaboration. Our clusters bring together the triple helix of Industry, Government and Education to ensure continued competitive advantage for members.

The Midland Regional Enterprise Plan (MREP) to 2024 contains 3 strategic objectives to support recovery and resilience across the region.

Read more and view the strategies at <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Offaly/Enterprise-Development/Industry-Clusters-in-the-Midlands/>
Further details are available on www.MidlandsIreland.ie

Upskill with TUS and avail of the Learning Gateways in County Offaly

The Offaly Innovation and Design Centre CLG (The Junction, eHive and stream BIRR) and Technological University of the Shannon are committed to the development of cooperation opportunities towards the provision of Higher

Education programmes in County Offaly. Students of TUS may avail of a discounted rate to use the Hot Desks in the hubs.

Mary Hensey, manager of The Junction, eHive and stream BIRR, would like to remind prospective students that “Our hubs offer calm professional spaces with an essential range of facilities such as fast broadband, and Eduroam that support learning, and encourage collaboration among members”.

The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) is making more than 1,500 flexible learning places worth more than €8.5 million available for the next academic year. These HCI and Springboard skilled focused programmes were developed following detailed engagement with local industry.

Funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), Human Capital Initiative (HCI) and Springboard are focused on increasing capacity in higher education for skills-focused programmes, designed to meet the priority skills needs of industry in the region and nationally.

Further information and a full listing of courses on offer is available at tus.ie/flexible.

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



Spotlight on “Digital for Business”

Digital for Business provides support through expert digital consultants that will help to develop a unique digital strategy that transforms your businesses by identifying where you are on your digital business journey, developing a digital adaptation plan based on your identified need and assisting you to implement your digital plan. It will give your business a digital advantage.

It's designed to help you improve your business by using digital tools and techniques. It will help you to focus on optimising your processes, making your customers' digital experience smooth, and helping you use data more effectively. With this programme, you can prepare for and implement a plan to upgrade your business digitally.



Have a look at these great examples of businesses who describe their digital journey and the benefits they enjoy from participating in Digital Start: [Digital Start Case Studies](#)

Marketing Strategy for LEO Offaly

LEO Offaly is excited to inform you that we are in the process of developing an innovative Marketing Strategy. This strategy aims to enhance our ability to connect with our audience through highly targeted and impactful campaigns, as well as

effective public relations initiatives. By doing so, we intend to significantly raise our brand awareness, enabling us to support a greater number of entrepreneurs and businesses in County Offaly. Additionally, our efforts will showcase County Offaly as an attractive destination for work, investment, and living. We look forward to sharing the results with you.



Upcoming Events

Local Enterprise Village at the Ploughing Championships, Ratheniska, County Laois

Gretchen Donovan, Glass Innovations Ltd based in Ferbane and more than 30 small businesses from across the country will get a chance to sell and promote themselves to crowds of almost 300,000 as part of our #LocalEnterprise Village at the Ploughing Championship in September. Glass Innovations Ltd. provide 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. This opportunity to meet with thousands of people at the Local Enterprise Village, which is one of the most popular stands at the Ploughing, will provide a great boost to Glass Innovation's business.

Lunchtime Networking Event for businesspeople in Offaly!

LEO Offaly is hosting a networking lunchtime event in the County Arms Hotel, Birr on 4th October. This is another opportunity for business owners to learn more and to foster connections in their business community.

The **Nail Your Marketing Message networking lunchtime event** will assist participants to unlock powerful marketing messages and provide an opportunity to connect with fellow professionals, Una Ryan, from The Marketing Eye, is a dynamic speaker who will share her expertise, cutting-edge trends, and innovative strategies to help businesses stay ahead of the game.

Link to Book is here:
LocalEnterprise.ie/Offaly/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/Nail-Your-Marketing-Message-Join-Our-Networking-Lunchtime-Event!



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.

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.

To book a place click on the following link:
<https://tinyurl.com/2w6b9pej>

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	Date
SYOB Evening Course	Wed 30th Aug - Wed 4th Oct
Management Development Programme	Mon 4th Sep - Mon 18th Dec
SYOB Day (In Person - Tullamore Library)	Mon 11th Sep - Mon 25th Sep
Social Media Marketing Bootcamp (5 sessions)	Tues 12th Sep - Tues 10th Oct
Grow Your Business Programme Introduction Webinar	Wed 20th Sep
How to plan a new website for your business	Tues 26th Sep
SYOB Evening Course	Thurs 28th Sep - Thurs 2nd Nov
SYOB Evening Course	Tues 7th Nov - Tues 12th Dec
Digital Marketing Programme (6 sessions)	Wed 8th Nov - Wed 13th Dec
SYOB Day Course	Mon 27th Nov - Mon 11th Dec

TOURISM

It was a very busy Summer for Offaly Tourism with festivals and events in full swing and many opportunities to promote our attractions to potential visitors.

2023 saw the return of our much loved events including, Tullamore Show & FBD National Livestock Show, Edenderry Festival, That Beats Banagher and Beat on the Street, Brosna River Literary and Music Festival, and the renowned Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival. New events emerged which was very welcome, including; Beat on the Peat, Rahan to Clonmacnoise ecumenical pilgrimage and Litha Festival Clara.

Attendance and participation was very positive this year as the event organisers worked hard to make the events special and attract visitors from near and far.

Tullamore Show

Once again, the Experience Offaly Pavilion returned to the Tullamore Show, Ireland's Premier Show & Country Lifestyle Event, this August and provided great interest for visitors.

The pavilion hosted 26 exhibitors from a variety of craft, artisan food and tourism providers in the county. The atmosphere on the day was electric as visitors enjoyed experiencing all of the best that Offaly has to offer.



Rose of Tralee Tour

Offaly Tourism hosted the 2023 Rose of Tralee Tour in August for a fun filled trip around the county. The Roses were greeted by a large enthusiastic crowd in O'Connor Square where they were treated to music and dance before they had a civic reception in the Library HQ.



The Roses experienced many of our great sights and attractions which included Tullamore Dew Distillery Visitor Experience, Linda O'Brien Jewellery, Birr Castle Demesne, Clonmacnoise and the mighty River Shannon at Banagher and Shannonbridge. It was an excellent opportunity to showcase Offaly to a national and international audience with exposure on national TV.

Tracks and Trails

The tourism team secured an episode for Offaly in next year's very popular Tracks and Trails TV Show.

The film crew filmed in three locations in August visiting Croghan Hill, Glinsk Castle Loop Kinnitty and The Grand Canal Greenway.



The bestselling author Sinéad Moriarty will host the show, having a large appeal to our desired demographic.



The prime time RTÉ One show has viewing numbers close to 200k, and the new season will be broadcast from March 2024 onwards, perfect timing for the 2024 holiday season.

Media Coverage

Offaly received much coverage in the media over the Summer period with full features in The Sunday World and www.thegloss.ie.



Other noteworthy mentions included The Sunday Times, www.her.ie, www.joe.ie, The Irish Independent and The Irish Times.

Once again we invited Virgin Media personality Deric Hartigan to visit Birr for the Birr Vintage Week and Arts Festival.

Ireland AM broadcast live throughout the morning from Birr Castle Demesne on the opening day and Deric posted on his very popular social media accounts, gaining much welcome interest.



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@offalcoco.ie
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans	homeloans@offalcoco.ie
Housing Inspections – HAP, Leased, Private, etc.	standards@offalcoco.ie
General Enquiries, Maintenance Issues, etc.	housing@offalcoco.ie
RAS & Leasing Enquiries	RAS@offalcoco.ie
Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability Scheme	HousingAidGrants@offalcoco.ie
Anti-Social Behaviour	ASB@offalcoco.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 523 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of August 2023.
- A further 647 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 11 signed up for HAP and 21 exited from HAP in July and August
- At the end of August, 31 single people and 22 couples and families were being supported in emergency accommodation.
- Housing coordinated a number of Summer Community Activities, including Robotic Workshops and Games on the Green, in Local Authority housing estates in each of the Municipal Districts.

Housing Stock – Number, Maintenance & Repair

- Total housing stock at end of August 2023 is 2057.
- 315 maintenance calls were logged in August.

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 Q3, 2023.
- Elderberry Drive Moneygall (4 Units) – Complete.
- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 no. Older Person's dwellings) – Due for completion in Q4 2023.
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) – Construction commenced. Completion 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 in September 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 September 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 Q3, 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 in Q3, 2023.
- 8 Units (6 Turnkey & 2 Part V) Approved May 2023 at Bell Lane, Daingean. Construction & allocations complete
- 7 x Part V units @ Redwood, Tullamore acquired
- 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.

Community Culture and Emergency Services

COMMUNITY

Local Community Development Committee



Offaly LCDC held meetings on 6th and 13th July 2023. 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 update 2023.

Two LEADER projects were approved to the value of €58,587.99.

SICAP

A comprehensive overview of SICAP delivered in Jan-May 2023 was provided and the SICAP Mid-Year Performance Review was approved by the members. Proposals for SICAP Case Study 2023 were approved.

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 170 groups have been paid their grants amounting to €258,183. The remaining 18 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 and works have commenced for 15 projects. All projects must be completed by 18 October 2024. Nine of the successful projects have decided to wait until 2024 before commencing works.

Pride of Place 2023

The three entrants for the 2023 Pride of Place competition have been really busy over the summer months, preparing their presentations for the judges and ensuring that their areas are looking their best. Two judges will be arriving in early September to put the entrants through their paces. Hopefully we will be successful again when the awards are announced 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 Sept 2023 AM
Tullamore Tidy Towns	Climate Action and Biodiversity	Tullamore MD	Wed 6 Sept 2023 PM
Bracknagh Community Assoc.	Population 0 to 500	Edenderry MD	Thur 7 Sept 2023 AM

Public Participation Network

Offaly PPN were busy during the months of July and August promoting the PPN and supporting our colleagues in different services and supports across the county while also preparing for and supporting groups engaging in:

- **Social Inclusion week 11th – 15th September**
- **Environmental Awareness weekend 22nd & 23rd September**
- **Culture Night 22nd September**

Following on from the PPN Disability Awareness week in June, Mucklagh Community Centre raised €1,400 for Mucklagh/Midlands United Powerchair.

The PPN also supported the Traveller Pride event on August 14th on the grounds of Charleville Castle.



The Property Marking machine is making its way around the County with events in Birr, Edenderry and Rahan. Demand for use of the machine and further training is increasing.



Clare and Bridie represent Offaly PPN at the official opening of the LOETB Enterprise Hub and the LOETB Information Hub by Minister Simon Harris, TD, Minister for Further and Higher education and Science.



Offaly PPN stand at the Tullamore show which was an excellent promotional opportunity.



Offaly PPN at the Launch of Tullamore Goes Green on Sept 1st

Comhairle Na nÓg



The group are designing workshops as part of a Disability Awareness Campaign. There is ongoing communication with ODEN (Offaly Disability Equality Network) in relation to this. It is planned to roll these out in September when schools re-open.

Members met with Ray Bell, Head of IS, OCC in relation to recording and editing podcasts. Ray showed the group how to use the equipment. Representatives from ODEN attended the meeting and the group recorded interviews with them in relation to Disability.



ARTS

Arts Strategy 2024-2029

Following an open call and selection process the Arts Office recently 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 currently working in the first research phase and has held initial meetings as part of the process, which will continue over the coming months.

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 they will be meeting with artists, individuals and groups and facilitating events in Offaly in September and October 2023.

FilmOffaly

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.

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

Annual Programme

Planning for Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival, Mini Movies and Culture Night is ongoing, with these projects coming to fruition across the last quarter of the year.

The **Culture Night** programme has grown, with a broadening of geographical reach into new areas like Kilcormac and Moneygall and a thirty per cent increase in the number of programmed events. The programme of free events, taking place across venues on Friday 22nd September, will include five artist commissions this year, as well as a range of community events involving an eclectic array including Offaly Down Syndrome Association, Kilcormac Development Association, Music Generation Offaly, Creative Places Edenderry as well as Birr Theatre & Arts Centre and Esker Arts, who are hosting multiple events on the night.

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 will be launched in 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.



As part of a review of the **Mini Movies** programme, the Arts Office will *host A Meeting Of Young Minds* at Offline Film Festival in October, inviting children and young people to a curated consultation, to help shape what the programme of Mini Movies, will look like, going forward.

Creative Places Edenderry

The Creative Places programme with Creative Places co-ordinator Seonaid Murray in place, has been 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. Recent activities have included the following;

- Visual Art workshop for and by people who identify as disabled with Eleanor Farrelly
- Music sessions at The Youth Café with John Nolan
- The Community Social with Nesrin,
- Story-Telling House with Angi Ward, Singing and Socialising session.
- Lego Clinic with Eleanor Farrelly
- Writing Weekend - 4th, 5th and 6th of August with John Grogan, Amy Lousie Wyatt and Colin Hassard
- Tell Me a Story with Danna Daly - Edenderry library
- Baby and Me! with Danna Daly



- Latin Rhythm's with Retox Dance
- Acro dance - age 4+ with Retox Dance
- Mammy/Daddy and Me - dance class with Retox Dance

Creative Edenderry have also distributed 2 Artist Commissions to artists practicing in the local community: the successful recipients were; John Grogan – Playwright, and Jenny Bergin – Visual Artist, who were awarded, 4,200 and 6,000 euro respectively to run artist commissions within the community over the coming months. A larger commission of 12,000 euro is also in the process of being assessed. Planning is underway for the next phase of the project as it moves into

the 'Celebrate' Phase, which includes opportunities to showcase and celebrate some of the activity of the past months. The project will also collaborate with some of the Arts Office core projects, such as Culture Night and Hullabaloo across the Autumn.



CAPITAL PROJECTS

Esker Arts

Across July and August, Esker Arts has continued with annual programming, hosting a number of very popular events including music and theatre. The exhibition 'Imposed Geometries' opened in August.

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 Wiczorek, it runs until the end of September.

Esker Arts will also collaborate with some of the Arts Office core projects, such as

Culture Night and Hullabaloo across the Autumn.

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



July/August was a busy period for Healthy Offaly. The initial 50% HIF Grant payments to partners were processed for payment. In total €40,200 was paid over to our five implementing partners; Offaly Sports Partnership, Clara Community & Family Resource Centre, the FAI, Crinkle Sports & Recreation Centre and Social Farming Ireland.

Work has commenced on Offaly Sports Partnership's 'Drop & Move' action for parents/guardians taking place in Tullamore, Bracknagh, Kilcormac-Killoughey and Rhode GAA. The action took a break for July/August but will resume in September with increased levels of interest already expressed.

Social Farming Ireland have commenced their physical activity action in Catherine Molloy's Farm in Killyon, Birr, with another farm due to come on board in September. The remaining three implementing partners (Crinkle Sports & Recreation Centre, the FAI and Clara Community & Family Resource Centre) will commence their actions in September also.

The third quarter Healthy Offaly Subcommittee Meeting took place on 29th August. All implementing partners gave an update on their actions to the Subcommittee. Dermot Egan, Healthy Ireland Coordinator gave a presentation to the Subcommittee and Implementing Partners on the measurement tools available to gauge action progress and requirements regarding the reporting of the financial and progress reports prior to actions being completed by 31st December.

SPORTS

Funding



Offaly Sports Partnership secured €10k under the Sport Ireland Energy Support Scheme 2023. This funding will be shared among four organisations including Edenderry Swimming Pool, Moneygall Community Hall, St Brigid's Community Centre and St Mary's Youth Centre.

€24k from Healthy Offaly. This funding is being used to pilot a "Drop & Move" programme for adults. The initial programme was delivered across May to July in six locations.

Human Resources

Sport Ireland has indicated that Offaly SP has been approved for funding for an additional staff resource under the European Social Fund+ Programme. A request has been submitted to the HR

section of Offaly County Council to progress the recruitment process for this role.

Education & Training

Two Safeguarding 1 programmes delivered for 42 volunteers.

Consultative fora

Sports Capital workshop hosted on Tuesday, 22nd August with over 60 volunteers in attendance.

Congratulations

Offaly Sports Partnership wishes to extend its congratulations to Nicole Turner on her participation at the World Para Swim Championships in Manchester in August

Programmes

ACE / Community Sports Development Programmes – Liam O Reilly

July / August saw the:

- delivery of an ACE academy summer camp for 40 children
- continued roll out of our teen summer programmes including rounders and kayaking. Two more rounders programmes were hosted in Daingean and Tullamore; while a further six kayak sessions for 95 teens were hosted in Daingean, Shannonbridge and Tullamore
- ongoing delivery of “Games on the Green” in association with the Housing section of Offaly County Council
- delivery of a summer camp for children of an ethnic minority background in association with Mucklagh sports hub; and the delivery of an inclusive Cúl camp with Offaly GAA and my colleague, Jean (Sports Inclusion Development Officer).

Community sports hubs – Jean Brady & Liam O Reilly

July / August saw the continuation of several successful programmes in both the Daingean and Mucklagh sports hubs; as well as the delivery of various multi-sport camps for children with additional needs and children of an ethnic minority background



Teen kayaking



Games on the Green



ACE Academy summer camp

Sports Inclusion Development Programme – Jean Brady

Among the programmes delivered in July / August were: -

- three July provision days for 100+ pupils with additional needs
- two-day multi-sport camp for 35 children with additional needs
- three-day inclusive Cúl Camp for 30 children with additional needs
- three-day multi-sport camp for children with autism

Multi sport camps for children with additional needs



Women in Sport

HER Outdoors week took place from the 14th – 20th August 2023. Offaly Sports Partnership hosted five activities across the week including come try dance, three come try kayak days and a come try boxercise day across the week.



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

Stellar Turn Out for Summer Stars



We are overjoyed to report that over **1880 children** across Offaly continued to read and develop their literacy over the

Summer months as part of our Summer Stars Reading Adventure.

As part of the celebrations, our libraries delivered some **58 events**, including crafts and story time sessions, for almost **850 children** across the county during the Summer months.

Summer Stars is one of the four pillars of the national **Right to Read** programme. We look forward to the next pillar of Right to Read: Children's Book Festival, coming in October.



Heritage Week

Offaly Libraries celebrated another successful Heritage Week this year, with plenty of events to celebrate our local heritage, history, and culture.



Birr Library's Pop-up Gaeltacht, facilitated by **Ciorcal Cómhra Biorra**, attracted **40 attendees** while a further **22 attendees** joined Jeff Harvey for a talk on Photographic Heritage.



Banagher Library welcomed 49 people to a talk on the fascinating history of Banagher and attendees witnessed the unveiling of a new street name in Banagher town.



90 people attended Edenderry Library for a talk delivered by Dr. Ciaran Reilly, Department of History in Maynooth University, accompanied by a poetry reading from Dr. Philip Brady.

An ICA art exhibition was also launched on the evening called 'Fifteen Shining Stars', remembering the 15 girls from Edenderry Workhouse who were sent to Australia under the Earl Grey Orphan scheme.

Tullamore Library welcomes the Rose of Tralee

On August 15th, Tullamore Library was delighted to welcome **174 attendees** to a meet and greet with this year's Roses as they made their way to Tralee.



Sarah Sparkles Storytimes at Banagher and Tullamore Libraries



On 19 August, Sarah Sparkles visited Banagher and Tullamore Libraries for two storytimes, funded via Laois Offaly CYPSC under the Integration Fund. **23 children** and their families were treated to stories, puppets, and bubbles.

Woolly Farm Visits to Offaly libraries

Visitors to Banagher Library on 23rd August were greeted to a pop-up petting zoo, complete with bunnies, goats and chickens!

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



Tullamore Library will play host to Woolly Farm at 11am on Saturday, 30th September.

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

Dog's Trust Storytimes



Clara, Edenderry, Ferbane and Tullamore Libraries held some special Dog's Trust storytimes and information sessions in August. Overall, **48 people** attended the **4 sessions**.

Back to School with Offaly Libraries

September has rolled around again, and we would like to remind all teachers that Offaly Libraries are here to support schools and students with a range of resources, services and activities. As always activities, resources and services are free!



New! Offaly Libraries School Newsletter 'The Bookmark Bulletin'

Stay in the know about all that is taking place and available for schools at Offaly Libraries by subscribing to 'The Bookmark Bulletin' and get information on events and resources directly to your inbox!

61 teachers have subscribed already and, with the new academic year started, we look forward to expanding this further.

[Sign up here.](#)

Free Teacher's Library Card

A Teacher's Library Card is available to every teacher, allowing them to borrow up to 30 items at a time for three months. Teachers can sign up for a card by presenting at their local library with photo ID and school details. This card can also be used to access online resources via our [Digital Library](#).

Class Sets

Offaly Libraries holds 30-copy sets of children's books suitable for a variety of ages, which can be borrowed on a teacher's card for three months at a time.

[View our Class Set booklet here.](#)



Class Visits

Offaly Libraries would like to encourage all classes to visit the library at least once during the school year so students can choose their own books to borrow. We can guarantee a friendly welcome and guidance on selecting books for all ages. Just contact your local library in advance.

Offaly Libraries Comic Con returns, Saturday 16th September!



We are very excited to present the eagerly awaited fourth instalment of Offaly Libraries Comic Con 2023, coming to Tullamore Library on Saturday, 16th September!

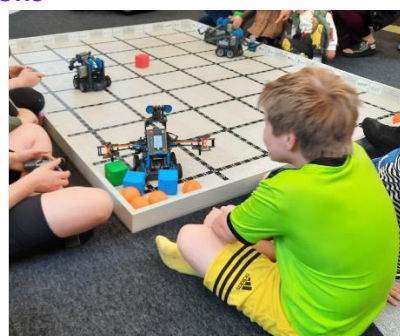
For information on all the amazing events, activities and spectacles on offer throughout the day, please check out our programme on offaly.ie/libraries.

This series of free events has been organised by Offaly Libraries, with support from Creative Ireland.

Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



Offaly Libraries STEAM Programme: VEX Summer Camps and Freeplay Sessions



Birr Library was delighted to host 6 VEX Robotics play sessions during August, delighting **52 attendees**.

Edenderry Library hosted a 2 day VEX Robotics Camp which saw **7 children** build and code their own robots.

Tullamore Library hosted two separate VEX Robotics Summer Camps over 6 days in August also, with **30 children** attending both camps.

Space Week, October 4th – 10th



Offaly Libraries ever-popular STEAM programme is back again beginning with Space Week from October, 4th – 10th.

There will be plenty on offer in our libraries, including class workshops with STEM communicator, Seanie Morris, VEX Robotics sessions and craft sessions with an Astro-twist!

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

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 on offaly.ie/libraries.



Two Little Voices with Lucinda Murrihy: Webinar



Lucinda Murrihy, M.A., B.Sc. is an accomplished communications and advocacy specialist who currently sits on the As I Am board. She will deliver one-hour talk over Zoom on Tuesday, September 19th from 10:30. The talk will support those who wish to learn about autism and families setting out on their own autism journey.

Contact Tullamore Library at TullamoreLibrary@offalycoco.ie or 057 9346832 to book a spot, and we will send you the Zoom link.

Sensory Play Sessions with Eleanor Glennon



Eleanor Glennon, play therapist, hosted several Sensory Play sessions in Birr, Clara and Edenderry Libraries in July. The sessions were well attended with **45 children** taking part.

More sessions are organised for various dates and locations in September. See the events section on offaly.ie/libraries for more information. Kindly supported by CYPSC.

Healthy Ireland at the Library



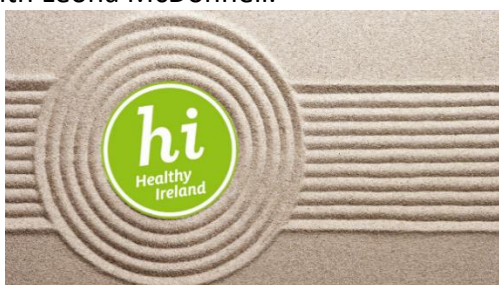
Food & Mood Webinar

Offaly Libraries hosted a Food & Mood webinar with Dietitian Aoife McDonald on Wednesday, September 6th at 7pm.

This webinar was well received by attendees who explored how food can impact the way we feel.

Mindfulness with Leona McDonnell

Students from local schools will enjoy a mindfulness session in the library on Wednesday 20th September at 11.30am with Leona McDonnell.



For bookings, please contact Birr Library on 0579124950 or at birrlibrary@offalycoco.ie. All are welcome to attend.

Exhibition in Tullamore Library: 50 Years of Tullamore Camogie Club



During the month of September, Tullamore Library will host an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia commemorating the 50 year anniversary of Tullamore Camogie Club!

'Under an Irish Sky: Exhibition in Birr Library

Under an Irish Sky exhibition by artist Pauline McNelis brings together a collection of paintings highlighting many of our beautiful landscapes, coastlines,

wildlife, historical bridges and walks along our Grand Canal Greenways.



'The Barley Moon' Exhibition in Edenderry Library



Edenderry Library is delighted to host an exhibition by local artist Laura Phillip's of The Barley Moon. This mixed media exhibition of art is inspired by spirituality and her time as an illustrator and will be on display for the month of September, with a launch by Laura on Wednesday 6th September at 6:30pm.

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 **2703 email subscribers** to the newsletter. Follow the link to subscribe.

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 **2703 email subscribers** to the newsletter. Follow the link to subscribe.

Climate Action Environment Water & Transportation

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Management

In August, the Environment Section received 69 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)	54
Waste (dumping/burning/unauthorised sites)	13
Noise (community/commercial/industrial)	0
Control of Horses	0
Control of Dogs	0
Water Quality	2

Anti-Dumping Initiative Grant

Offaly County Council received approval for €72,500 under the anti-dumping initiative. A number of proposed projects were put forward including, clean ups, purchasing of solar compact bins and a radio awareness campaign.

All projects are completed and claims for funds will be submitted by deadline of 6th of October.

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

Veterinary - Control of Dogs

An Average of 26 dogs per month are cared for in the Dog Shelter. On average 15% of the dogs are reclaimed by their owners, 15% are rehomed by the Care of Dogs Team and the other 70% are rehomed through animal rescue charities. We have dealt with 51 since the start of the year.

Control of Horses

We have dealt with 19 complaints under Control of Horse legislation from January to August 2023, which resulted in the seizure of 11 horses and donkeys.

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 is currently being calculated and paid to the relevant GWSs

Capital

At the recent NFGWS annual conference, attended by OCC staff, 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

Roads Program

Works across all the program headings under the 2023 Roads program are well advanced within each Municipal District. Active Travel project works are also well advanced within Ballycumber, along Spollenstown Road and Rhode, with works to upgrade R402-1 Lidl/Tesco Junction in Edenderry completed by end of August.

Additional LIS Allocation for the works Programme 2023

Offaly County Council received an additional allocation of €355,548 under the LIS Programme. The total allocation under the LIS programme for 2023 now equates to €704,325. Works are on-going to deliver these schemes.

Restoration Improvement Grant

Additional road grant funding of €219,500 has been notified by the Department of Transport.

Edenderry Town Inner Relief Road

Construction has commenced and progress is in line with the programme issued for the project with completion expected in Q2 2024.

Birr North Distributor Road

The Roads team in collaboration with TOBIN consulting Engineers are progressing the Birr North Distributor Road

with the intention to have a set of contract documents available for tender by the end of Q4 2023/early Q1 2024. It is hoped that subject to Department of Transport approval we will be in a position to commence construction works in 2024.

Birr Southeastern Distributor Road

The tender process for the appointment of Technical Consultancy Services for the Birr South Eastern Distributor Road has been completed. OCC Roads Department has sent tender assessment report and request to appoint preferred tenderer Department of Transport (DoT) for approval. Subject to receipt of approval from DoT it's hoped to appoint preferred consultant in late Q3 2023.

N62 Pavement Protection and Renewal Works 2023

OCC received an TII 2023 allocation of €4,000,000 to deliver Pavement Protection and Renewal Works on the N62. Overall length of scheme is 8.625 KM. Works commenced at end of July 2023 and are on schedule to be completed by mid-October 2023 as programmed.

N62 Crancreagh Ground Investigation Works

Ground Investigations have been completed in August 2023 for a 1.5km section of the N62 at Crancreagh. This

information will inform Westmeath NRO for any future road widening/peat removal design in this area.

Greenways

Grand Canal Turraun to Shannon Harbour

Stage 1 Turraun-Falsk (4.1km) under construction, to be completed by October 2023. Stage 2 Falsk-Gallen (2.9km) Tender for works to be issued by OCC by mid-September.

Stage 3 Gallen-Belmont (4.1km) construction due to start by end of September 2023.

Stage 4 Belmont-Shannon Harbour (6.2km) construction to start by end of Sept 2023.

Speed Limit Review

The Public Consultation for the 2023 Speed Limits began on Wednesday, September 6th and will run for 30 days until October 5th, 2023. Following this consultation, submissions will be examined by OCC and liaison with TII on national road applications will take place. It is proposed that the Speed Limit Byelaws will be finalized by December 2023.

Public Lighting Update

Maintenance works are ongoing on the Public Lighting Network across the County by our specialist contractor. There are 9289 lights on our network. There are 140 outages across the County which equates to 1.51% outages.

Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Finance

Draft Consolidated Revenue Account Income & Expenditure Summary by Service Division to 30 June 2023

	Expenditure €	Income €
Housing & Building	8,409,170	8,401,829
Road Transport & Safety	8,475,743	5,206,666
Water Services	2,392,396	2,175,209
Development Management	5,888,022	2,882,792
Environmental Services	4,836,092	891,592
Recreation & Amenity	2,650,235	327,602
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	318,528	108,982
Miscellaneous Services	4,384,909	4,979,607
Local Government Fund / GPG		4,158,896
Gross Rates Income		8,248,326
	37,355,095	37,381,501
Surplus to 30th June 2022		26,406

OCC to 31st August 2023

	<u>Rates</u> €m	<u>Rents</u> €m	<u>Loans</u> €m
Opening Balance Jan 1, 2023	3.00	0.56	0.10
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers	15.58	5.29	0.35
2023 Cash Collected to end of August	12.75	5.19	0.40
Closing Balance August 31st 2023	5.84	0.65	0.05

2022 Cash collected to Aug 31st

	11.46	4.84	0.37
% Collection at this point in 2022	111%	107%	107%

*** Collections impacted in 2022 by waiver uncertainty and effect of lockdowns

Bank Overdraft to 31st August 2023

	-	%	YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date		56	23%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to August 31st 2023 YTD			€11,685
Bank Administration and transactional charges to August 31st 2023 YTD			€29,334