

APRIL
2021



Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Do: Baill Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí

To: Each Member of Offaly County Council

Tuairisc mhíosúil bainistíochta a bhreithniú i gcomhair tionóil mí Bealtaine

Monthly Management Report for consideration at the May 2021 Monthly Meeting.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS - A schedule of Chief Executive Orders is included with the Council Agenda.

FINANCE - Appendix 1

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Outdoor Seating & Accessories for Tourism & Hospitality Business

The scheme is being administered by the tourism team and is open for applications until 30th September 2021. More information is available in the Tourism section of this report.

Cruinniú 2021

As part of Cruinniú 2021, Offaly Libraries are hosting a "Writing for Wellbeing for Teens" course with Elizabeth Murray. It is a 4-week course running from Saturday 22nd May to Saturday 12th June inclusive. Email jmcintyre@offalycoco.ie to book a place.



Writing for Wellbeing
for Teens
with
E.R. Murray

4 Week Course via Zoom
beginning
Saturday 22nd May at 10am

To register your interest,
please email
jmcintyre@offalycoco.ie
or phone 057 9346832

Clár Eile (Mánuach)
Programme
2017-2023

Libraries
Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

REPORT AT A GLANCE

Offaly Libraries have re-opened!!!



Offaly Libraries are delighted to announce that our library buildings have re-opened to the public for **Browsing Services** and **Contact and Collect Services** since Monday, 10th May. On 17th May our national request system will be switched back on.

In line with other sectors during this Phase, this is a gradual return to library services, bearing current public health guidance in mind at all times, and subject to review. In preparation for the reopening, we worked diligently to ensure safety protocols and appropriate preventative measures are in place.

PLANNING

	To end April 2021	To end April 2020	Total 2020
Planning Applications	263	157	674
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	6	1	12
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	2 (1)	2 (1)	14(6)

Development Management

Planning Applications to date in 2021 reflect a 67% increase on 2020. The first four months' applications are on a par with the first six months of 2020. Applications for Pre-Planning have increased by almost 60% on previous years.

Forward Planning

During the month of April, a schedule of Meetings was arranged by Municipal District to discuss the contents of the Chief Executive report on submissions received on the draft Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027. The members are considering the Report on the submissions received in advance of Special Council Meetings scheduled for May.

REGENERATION**Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)**

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for ORIS 2021 funding on 29th April, 2021. Applications will be developed and prepared for Measure 2 and 3 by Regen Team in the Planning Section in conjunction with other relevant sections, community groups and stakeholders for the closing date in July, 2021.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for TVR 2021 funding on 3RD May, 2021. Applications will be developed and prepared by Regen Team in the Planning Section in conjunction with other relevant sections, community groups and stakeholders for the closing date in July, 2021

Offaly County Council will advertise for expressions of interest on potential projects from community groups in the coming week. The measures that will be supported in 2021 include

- tackling dereliction and bringing vacant properties back into use,
- marketing campaigns to attract remote workers,
- investments in green spaces, parks and recreational amenities,
- shop front and streetscape improvements, and
- night-time economy projects

ROADS

Roads Programme 2021: All construction works commenced on the 4th May and Roads and the three MDs are progressing from planning, design and procurement of schemes for 2021 to appointing Contractors and works commencing throughout the County.

Offaly Grand Canal Greenway

Offaly County Council has completed 30km of the Grand Canal Greenway in Offaly. 76km from Edenderry in the East of the County to Lough Boora parkland in the West and extending to the County Boundary in Shannon Bridge will be complete by 2023. The construction of the Greenway from Pollagh to Turraun, a distance of 3.3km, and Ballycommon to the County Boundary, a distance of 7.5km was completed in April. The link from

Ballycommon to Daingean will be completed by June.



*Offaly Greenway Pollagh to Turraun
Pollagh East End*



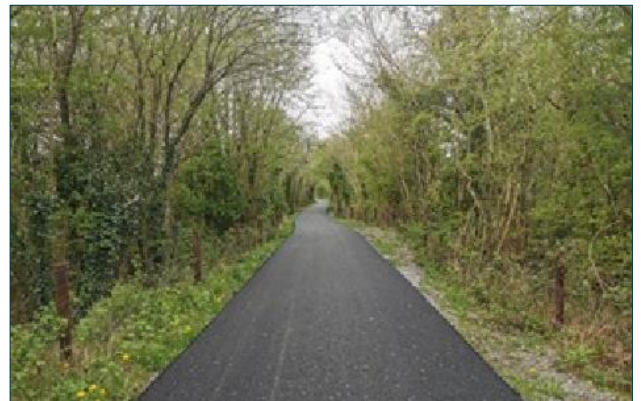
*Offaly Greenway Pollagh to Turraun
Turraun West End*

Offaly Greenway Ballycommon to County Boundary



Wood of O through Bracklin Bog (south end)

Wood of O through Bracklin Bog (north end)



Bracklin Little Near County Boundary

ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES

Environment

Litter & Waste Management

EWS received and investigated 606 environmental complaints to the end of April 2021.

EWS supported An Taisce in their annual National Spring Clean which took place during April 2021. Local communities registered on line, bags and pickers were available from the Environment Section with collected/bagged litter disposed of by OCC litter wardens. In 2020, An Taisce estimated that 2,900 tonnes of litter was collected nationwide.

EWS continues to support schools in their green schools and work with An Taisce to

deliver the Green Schools Programme in an effective manner remotely.

In relation to the Community Action Fund, the deadline for the 2019/2020 projects has been extended by the DCCAE until June 2021. E&WS has completed the vast majority of projects and will have completed all projects by the deadline.

An application for funding has been made to the Department under the 2021 Anti-Dumping Initiative.

Water Services

Wastewater

Consultants are to be appointed shortly for the upgrade of the Edenderry WWTP Plant, this project will be led by Irish Water.

Funding was announced for the upgrade of Rhode WWTP under the Irish Water Small Town and Village Growth Programme.

Water

On the 21 April 2021, IW announced that more Offaly householders can now benefit from Irish Water's free leak repair service following approval by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) to extend the scheme.

Watermain rehabilitation works have recently been completed at Lakeview Clara and Fahey, Rhode. Works are ongoing at Cork Hill, Clara, and Rhode village. Works are about to start at O' Moore Street in Tullamore.

Rural Water Programme

Annual subsidies application forms for Group Water Schemes have been sent to the relevant Group Water Schemes on 01/04/21 and are due to be returned to Offaly County Council by Friday, 25/06/21. We will commence work on the subsidy payments as we receive the completed applications.

Due to staff changes in the HSE we have agreed to take over the sampling of Small

Private Schemes. We will continue to be provided with professional advice from and consultation with the Environmental Health Team in the HSE.

Burial Grounds

The tender documents for the extension of Kilreaghan Cemetery in Ferbane are due to be issued in May 2021, and tender documents for the extension of Kilcoursey in Clara will issue in June.

Climate Action

Decarbonisation Zone: Tullamore Town was nominated as the initial decarbonisation zone in County Offaly. A position paper was submitted to the Department for their consideration, and we await their response and feedback.

Climate Action Training: Training of all staff in the council is ongoing, with the Grade 6 staff and equivalents having completed their training. The Grade 5 staff will now commence training.

Climate Action Steering Group: This cross departmental multidisciplinary group continue to meet on monthly basis, some of the items being actioned by the group at the moment as well as the bigger infrastructural projects of Active Travel, Flooding and Tullamore Living River project, include:

Libraries

Grow It Forward



Offaly Libraries led out on the **Grow It Forward** campaign with the distribution of 830 seeds kits during April. This programme is the lead activation of the eating well pillar under the government's **Keep Well** 2020-21 campaign during

Covid-19 with key community partnerships of Libraries Ireland and GIY.

Due to positive community response, the library received an additional 80 seed kits. Each kit comprises of 5 packets of seeds (tomatoes, beetroot, carrots, peas and oriental greens), 10 gift labels (for sharing) and a growing guide. The objective of the campaign is to encourage people to share some part of the growing process with 9 other people. This can include sharing seeds with your neighbours, giving some seedlings to your friends or cooking a meal for your family. So send an email to askthelibrarian@offalycoco.ie and collect your seeds from your local library from the 10th May.

IT Section

Are running a pilot of moving users to a single device (laptop with docking station and VPN access from home) This will save on the amount of desktop pc's in use and hugely reduce power consumption for each user.

Promoting using MS Forms and Submit.com for changing business processes in the Co. Council, which will reduce paper usage.

HOUSING

Covid-19 – Housing

The Housing Section continued to provide critical essential services as outlined in the Government Roadmap during the Covid-19 level 5 restrictions. To assist us in streamlining service delivery 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

April Housing Update:

- There are 529 on the Social Housing List awaiting housing support at the end of April 2021.
- A further 849 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 6 signed up for HAP and 8 exited from HAP in April.
- The Council has nominated 27 families to Tuath Housing for allocating to the recently completed houses at Killane Drive, Edenderry.
- At the end of April 20 single people and 4 families were being supported in emergency accommodation.
- 9 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans applications have been received in 2021. 1 has been approved, 2 declined and the remainder awaiting decision. Overall 15 RIHLs have been drawn down since the commencement of the programme.

2021 Rent Review

The Housing Section have commenced a Rent Review of Local Authority housing units. The majority of Local Authority housing tenants completed and submitted the required documentation by 30th April. However, all outstanding returns should be immediately submitted to the Housing Section. Rent review queries can be emailed to rentreview@offalycoco.ie

Housing Stock – Number, Maintenance & Repair:

- Total housing stock at end of April 2021 is 1,933.
- 231 maintenance calls were logged in April. In accordance with current Covid-19 restrictions only emergency repairs are currently being responded to.
- €476,000 announced for further retrofit works under the national retrofitting scheme whereby a number of voids will be targeted.

Housing Capital Programme Update:

- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – received Stage 2 approval on 21st August 2020; Currently in the Part 8 planning process, closing date for submissions was 11th March 2021; 53 no. were received. The Chief Executives Report will be presented at the May Council meeting.
- Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane (20 Units) – received Stage 1 approval in April 2020. The Design Team have been appointed and initial meeting held. Following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions the required site investigations were completed in late April 2021. On receipt of the this report the Stage 2 application can be prepared and it

will be submitted to the Department in early Q3, 2021.

- Moneygall (4 units) – received Stage 2 approval in July 2020 and the members approved the Part 8 planning at the October Council meeting. Stage 3 application (permission to proceed to Tender) to be submitted to the Department in May 2021.
- Beechgrove Belmont (7 units) – received Stage 2 approval in July 2020 and the members approved the Part 8 planning at the November Council meeting. Stage 3 application will be submitted to the Department in May 2021.
- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 Units) – received Stage 2 approval in August 2020, and Part 8 planning was approved by the Elected Members at the December Council meeting. Stage 3 is currently being prepared for submission and is expected to be lodged with Department in June 2021.
- Banagher, Kylebeg (18 Units) – 4 No. valid Tenders were returned on April 22nd last. The project Quantity Surveyor is currently preparing the Tender Report for the Stage 4 approval application to the Department and requesting permission to appoint the most advantageous tenderer. It is hoped that to commence works in June 2021.
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) - Stage 3 approval was received in March 2021. Works Tender will issue on www.etenders.gov.ie in June 2021.
- Circular Road, Daingean, Site 2 (9 Units) – Stage 1 approval application was made to the Department in April 2021 for the

site adjoining the OCC housing site on Circular Road.

- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (8 Units) – Stage 1 approval application lodged to the Department in April 2021.

Vacant Houses Initiatives:

- 1 Newbridge Street, Birr: Refurbishment of derelict dwelling to provide retrofitted 3-bedroom dwelling. An external design team is appointed and Stage 2 departmental approval was received in October 2020. Stage 3 will be lodged in Q2 2021.
- 4 Hillview, Holly Park, Birr: Stage 1 application was submitted to the Department on 22nd December 2020 to refurbish the existing derelict dwelling. Departmental decision is pending.
- 121 Lakeview, Clara: Stage 1 submission in May 2021.
- 3 x Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) complete in 2021, An application for funding for their refurbishment has been submitted to the department.

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes:

- Cluid Housing Association: Construction on the 26 units has recommenced with completion date projected for February 2022
- Tuath: Killane Drive, Edenderry (27 units) – Houses completed and Housing have forwarded nominations to Tuath Housing in May 2021
- Oaklee: Clonminch, Tullamore (19 units) – Contractor is appointed and will start in May 2021
- Oaklee: Kearney's Field (41 Units) – Contractor is appointed and will start in May 2021

- Sofia Housing: Stage 2 approved (39 units) at Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Stage 2 submission was made in October. Sophia Housing have lodged a planning application for the development in recent days.
- Sofia Housing, in a joint initiative with Midlands Simon Community, acquired Clonamore Hotel in Q3, 2020. The facility will be developed as an enhanced centre for the provision of supported accommodation for homeless people. Under the terms of a landmark agreement Midlands Simon Community will operate the facility, with a team of qualified social care workers providing support on a 24/7 basis. Following refurbishment, the facility will provide professional supports for up to 17 people.

Turnkey Developments/Part V:

- Main Street Daingean (8 Units): Site has resumed construction
- MacGregor, Birr: (12 Units) – All 12 Units are now complete
- 6 Turnkey Schemes (82 units) [Mucklagh 8 units; Bog Road, Portarlinton - 28 units; Woodfield, Birr - 34 units; Walsh Island - 4 units; Tullamore – 5 units; Cloneygowan – 3 units] received departmental approval in December 2020. Construction has resumed on all schemes that had started prior to lock down.
- 4 No. Part V units in Silverbrook Drive, Tullamore are complete

Housing Grants

The Department has advised that €1,368,805, of which €273,761 is to be provided from Offaly County Council own revenues, will be made available for private

housing grants, i.e., Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People; People with a Disability Scheme and Mobility Grants. Funds are being allocated to qualified households and under the current Covid-19 restrictions works should proceed if the householder agree to these works progressing with the approved contractor. Staff are following up with households who were awarded grants to ascertain the status of the work programme.

Disabled Person's Grants

The Council received notification from the Department for a significantly increased funding for Disabled Persons works on Local Authority housing units for 2021. €790,556 has been approved for works, of which €79,056 is to be provided from Offaly County Council own revenues.

Retrofit Programme

The Council received notification on 8th September that €3.3m was being awarded to Offaly for the 'Just Transition for the Midlands Region' programme.

Lot 1&2, Birr: The Works tender is currently on www.etenders.gov.ie with a return date of 21st May 2021. A contractor will be appointed in June 2021 to carry out the retrofit works on 35 houses.

Lot 3&4, Tullamore: The appointed consultants are arranging surveys on the 42 houses in Tullamore.

Lot 5&6, Edenderry, Daingean, Clara, Ferbane, Shannonbridge, Cloghan: The tender has been awarded to consultants to carry out surveys of 47 houses in May 2021.

LOCAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Offaly Covid-19 Community Response Helpline

The Offaly Community Call Helpline has operated since 30th March 2020. It operates from 9.00am to 5.00pm, 7 days per week

helping those who are vulnerable and who need help accessing essential services or a listening ear. The Helpline number for Offaly is **FREEPHONE: 1800 81 81 81**. A dedicated team of Community & Culture staff answer queries, with two staff working each weekend.

The number of calls increased slightly in April 2021 due to the roll out of the vaccination programme. There has been 1 call to the Helpline up to 6th May 2021.

The breakdown of monthly Helpline calls to date is as follows:

Month	Number	%
April	312	60.1
May	93	17.9
June	19	3.7
July	8	1.5
August	8	1.5
September	7	1.3
October	9	1.7
Nov	3	0.6
Dec	8	1.5
Jan-21	19	3.7
Feb-21	11	2.1
Mar-21	9	1.7
Apr-21	13	2.5
Total	519	100

The breakdown of calls received during April is: Vaccination process/Transport to vaccination 10 Other/general 3

Offaly Community Response Forum

The interagency Community Response Forum has met 20 times since the first meeting on 30th March 2020. The role of the Forum is to lead the co-ordination of community supports and resilience, helping vulnerable members of the community or those living alone to get deliveries of groceries, medicine and fuels and to have social contact during the pandemic.

The most recent meeting was held on the 22nd April 2021. The HSE reported on the opening of the vaccination centre in the Tullamore Court Hotel in early May and progress made with online registration by age group.

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

No LCDC meeting was held in April however LEADER projects approved at a previous stage are progressing as normal through claim stage to payment. In April a total of 5 LEADER grants were paid out totalling €74,044.34.

Public Participation Network

- PPN Elections were ratified and 7 new Reps elected. Two meetings were held in April to welcome our new reps and discuss the role of the PPN representative. This also gave sitting PPN reps an opportunity to share information. Information packs were emailed to all new reps following the meeting.
- The Department of Rural and Community Development has commissioned Social Justice Ireland, with the support of Waterford Institute of Technology, to develop a comprehensive training course for PPN stakeholders. This training programme has been offered to all of our PPN representatives. The course demonstrates the Department's commitment to supporting PPNs nationally and addressing their needs. Five of the Offaly PPN reps are availing of this opportunity.
- Green Offaly launched their website on 22nd April (Earth day).
- Fortnightly email continues to be issued to all PPN members.

- We continue to provide information on Social Media platforms in relation to Covid-19 Updates and the Community Helpline supports.

Comhairle na nÓg

Comhairle na nÓg held several talks online in April. On the 6th April an information talk with Rory O' Connor of 'Rory's Stories' was held. This was a very enjoyable experience for the Executive members as Rory spoke of his experience of being a teenager and his time in school. All of the Executive received signed copies of Rory's book.

On the 7th April Comhairle na nÓg members invited Elaine Butler of 'Zero Waste' to speak with them and educate them on waste as part of their current project. The current project they are working on is to help make secondary schools in Offaly 'single use plastic free' and design an app which will help schools achieve this.

On the 28th of April the Executive held a meeting with Sue Adams www.educationforsustainability.ie to discuss their project and to learn more about the environment and plastic waste.

On the 7th April four of the Executive Caitlin Guinan, Ruth Egan, Grainne Hannigan and Glory Omoruyi attended the National Networking Event held online for Comhairle na nÓg members.

Offaly Community Recognition Awards 2021

Offaly County Council has been working in partnership with the Offaly Independent to prepare for the launch of the Offaly Community Recognition Awards 2021 in early May by the Cathaoirleach Councillor John Carroll. The aim of the awards is to

acknowledge the outstanding community efforts that individuals and groups have delivered in County Offaly in the past year. Nominations and entries will be welcome in the following Categories:

- Community Collaboration Award
- Above and Beyond Award
- Individual Impact Award
- Digital Supports Award
- Social Inclusion Award
- Business Champion Award
- Climate Action Award

Pride of Place

The Offaly entries to the Pride of Place competition 2020 will also be recognised. Full details will be available on www.offaly.ie on social media and at www.offalyindependent.ie

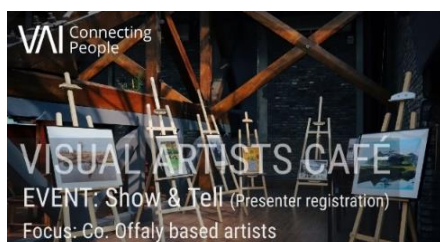
Arts Office Lough Boora

The Report funded by the Arts Council under the Invitation to Collaboration scheme, in partnership with Mayo County Council and Visual Artists Ireland is in the final stages of production, a number of presentations of the document have been held with more to follow.

Public Art

Plans for the launch of Jessica Traynor's public art project are currently on hold – a launch date is under discussion.

Artist Supports

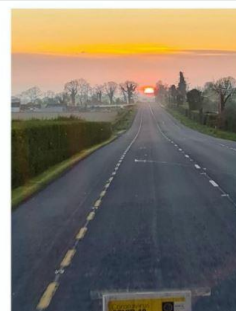


Offaly's professional artists were supported through a collaboration with Visual Artist Ireland. Six artists local to Offaly presented

on a specially designed webinar in the format of a Show and Tell. Giving the artists the opportunity to promote their work online.

Capital Projects Tullamore Art Centre

Museum of Everyone
May 2 at 4:45 PM · 100+
Since February, Vukasin Nedeljkovic has been facilitating photography workshops with residents at the Marian Hostel, a Direct Provision Centre in Tullamore. With the participants, he is creating a Photographic Series which will culminate in an exhibition for MOE 2021. Here is an image taken by Shafinah Jaso. We can't wait to see all the work created in these workshops.
www.asylumarchive.com



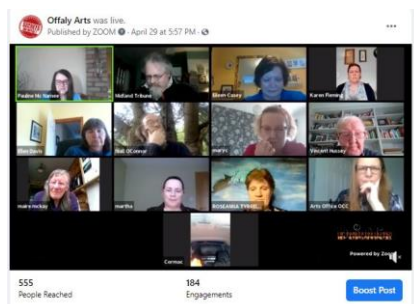
Work continues with regards to the development of the Arts Centre. The Arts Office have commissioned the development of a stand-alone curated project – based on the re-ignition of the Tullamore Foundation Festival. The programme has started, will have the aim to re-engage an audience / local community participation in advance of the Art Centre opening. Curator Brendan Fox has initiated a project titled Museum of Everyone (MOE). MOE is a fascinating and exciting new arts endeavour which is embedded in the community of Tullamore which aims to entice and revitalise passion for our local arts while we eagerly await the anticipated construction completion of the Arts Centre MOE and will see an array of artists facilitating online workshops, talks, devising offsite projects and working within the Tullamore community in numerous settings over the coming months.

Online Communications

We engage public and artists through our online and social platforms, Facebook, twitter and our extensive email distribution database. We continue to advise artists and

the public on opportunities, achievements and online events.

To celebrate National Poetry Day, Offaly Arts Office hosted an online live poetry reading Zoom event.



FilmOffaly

Offaly Film Commission has decided to change the specifications for the FilmOffaly Short Film Award 2021 – this year the award of €10,000 will go to a commissioned short film that responds to the unique circumstances that we are facing and allows for a mentorship element for Offaly Film Professionals within its creation.



The FilmOffaly Short Film Award 2021 was evaluated and awardees are Offaly production company Mixed Bag Media FilmOffaly Script Mentoring: A call is currently out for both mentors and script mentees for this scheme Closing date is in May 2021.

The FilmOffaly Award 2020 *The Passion* finalised the post production of their film and the film has been submitted to this years film festivals.

Offaly Culture Night 2021

There will be a number of direct art commissions for Culture Night 2021. A commission brief has been circulated to all local professional artists. Closing date for proposals in May.

Hullabaloo! Offaly Children's Arts Festival

Planning has begun for the 2021 festival. A call has been advertised for proposals for workshops and performances during the festival. Closing date is beginning of June

Youth Arts Forum

Offaly Arts is continuing to work with a Youth Arts Facilitator in the establishment of a Youth Arts Forum. The forum is now meeting once a month.

SPORTS

Funding

Offaly Sports Partnership launched a Covid-19 Impact On Sport Grant for sports clubs in Offaly in April. The grant is designed to address the impact that Covid-19 has had on organised sport in Co Offaly; and to provide some small support to sporting clubs / organisations to alleviate some of the losses that they have incurred. Applications should be submitted online at <https://offalcoco.submit.com/show/85> by close of business on Monday, 17th May.

Education & Training

- Safeguarding 1 and 2 delivered online via Zoom in April
- Sport inclusion & Disability awareness training undertaken by Edenderry GAA as a precursor to the establishment of a GAA for all section in the club

Programmes

While the majority of Offaly Sports Partnership's programmes are continuing online; planning is underway with regard to

the return of face to face provision of physical activity programmes in keeping with the Government's "Recovery and Resilience: The Path Ahead" plan

Schools programmes

- Offaly Sports Partnership is preparing for a return face to face provision of physical activity programmes in schools. 22 schools have signed up to a Spring /Summer fitness programme; and a tutor training day has been held in advance of the commencement of the programme in May.
- A physical activity resource with a focus on integration through PE and sport has been developed for publication and dissemination among schools in September 2021. This resource has been funded via Communities' Integration Funding provided by the Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth.

Community Sports Development Programme

- **Offaly's Longest Day 2021** – 1,700 participants have expressed an interest in participating in the Longest Day Challenge 2021. 2,000 diaries have been ordered for dissemination in May to participants.
- **Older adults / women** – online dance classes for 20 older adults and women aged 35 – 55 years are continuing.
- **Ballycumber Ramblers** – discussions are underway in relation to the establishment of a recreational walking group in Ballycumber.
- **Ladies Gaelic** – Denise Coghill is working with Ladies Gaelic

Football to further develop participation in the sport in Offaly.

- **Walking football** – working with the FAI, Eoghan Pernot is continuing to look into re-establishing walking football in the county when the easing of restrictions allows for same in the hopes that a summer walking football league for 30 – 55 year olds can take place.

Sports Inclusion Development Programme

- Jean Brady continues to support online delivery of physical activity supports for disability services and SEN classes / schools.
- Jean recently attended CARA's online "Accessibility & the Great Outdoors" training programme and an online open day with IWA Sport in relation to the promotion of IWA Sport opportunities for people with disabilities in the county.

Women in sport

The online strength & conditioning programme for women in sport continued in April.

HEALTHY OFFALY

The work of Healthy Offaly continued apace in April. Presentations were made by the Healthy Offaly Coordinator, Dermot Egan, to the Birr and Edenderry Municipal District meetings on 12th and 14th April respectively. Feedback on the work of Healthy Offaly was very positive from the Birr and Edenderry Councillors who were grateful for the information provided.

The main focus in April has been progressing the Community Resilience Fund 'Keep Well' actions. The delivery of the newsletter promoting the 'Keep Well' programme has been completed and the funding of the 'Chatters & Matters' radio

show has concluded though the radio show will continue to be aired each Sunday morning. Also fully delivered is the Library's Crafty Mosaic bag action and the Nature awareness podcast series organised by Heritage section of Offaly County Council. Other important publicity initiatives being rolled out under the 'Keep Well' banner is successive newspaper articles advertising all Covid-19 alleviation measures under the CRF. This has been continuing throughout the month and will proceed into May and June also.

Projects well progressed and ongoing are Munitir na Tire's Community Register, Offaly Heritage's Know your 5K, the Library's Family Support/Life Skills Programme, the Care packs initiatives being run by OLDC, North Offaly Development Network and Shannonbridge Community Services 'Meals On Wheels' action. Partners of projects that have not commenced fully due to Covid-19 restrictions have been contacted to consider alternatives if their projects cannot proceed and these actions will be monitored closely in the coming weeks. All partners, however, are confident of being able to complete their projects as restrictions continue to ease.

TOURISM

Slieve Bloom Destination Development Programme

The Failte Ireland destination development programme for the Slieve Bloom region recently came to successful conclusion. Participants were treated to a suite of 4 online training sessions specifically tailored for key products and services in the Slieve Bloom region. Each session included a facilitated discussion with industry experts;

- Developing saleable experiences for immediate increased sales and revenues into the B2C domestic

market and in time the international market

- Action plan together and establish more innovative ways to present and lead out on selling the Slieve Bloom as a new destination in Ireland's Ancient East,
- Participate in cooperative partnerships, collaborative messaging, communications, and optimised online presence.

Outdoor Seating & Accessories for Tourism & Hospitality Business

The new Outdoor Seating and Accessories for Tourism and Hospitality Business Scheme from Offaly County Council and Fáilte Ireland provides financial support to tourism and hospitality businesses to purchase or upgrade equipment for outdoor seating, increasing outdoor dining capacity.

The Scheme allows such businesses to rethink their outdoor spaces and create outdoor dining experiences, allow for greater use of such spaces and help towards business growth in our communities.

The scheme is being administered by the tourism team and is open for applications until 30th September 2021.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly team continues to work remotely and provides a full service to new and existing enterprises in Offaly. The LEO team are providing much needed assistance to deal with the unprecedented numbers of business owners contacting the Local Enterprise Office.

Economic Development Co-Working Hubs

LEO Offaly continued its work in developing The Junction Business

Innovation Centre. The Junction is ideal for remote workers (working one or more days away from the main office), and for those setting up or growing their own business. Services include: hot desk facilities and office space, IT training facilities and training, industry focused events, and industry-led research projects. Just Transition Fund Provisional offer to extend 25J by converting the warehouse.

E-Hive, situated in Edenderry MD Town Hall has over 20 desks in a co-working environment, meeting rooms, and event space for workshops. The hub features affordable hot desk facilities, meeting rooms and high speed internet access and is supported by LEO Offaly and Offaly Innovation & Design Centre CLG. The Junction and E-Hive are busy, with increasing numbers of people looking to take desk/office space in the co-working hubs.

STREAM Creative Suite in Birr provides a central location and space, where research and education meets business. I-LOFAR provides a unique opportunity to access big data in real time. This data can be utilised for training purposes and for proving algorithms for many sectors. Professors and researchers of universities affiliated with the international LOFAR network together with Software Developers and Data Analysts from companies operating within or in cooperation with companies based in the Midland Region will have the opportunity to use the STREAM Creative Suite – either through regular hot desk usage or through the establishment of a base there. In collaboration with AIT and DIAS, there will be upcoming virtual training and events in data analytics.

Upcoming Events and New Initiatives **The Green for Micro programme**

Offaly's small businesses are being encouraged to become more sustainable this year following the launch of a new

programme to green your business. The Green for Micro programme is an initiative from the Local Enterprise Offices, with support from Enterprise Ireland, being rolled-out nationwide to help prepare small businesses for the low carbon, more resource efficient economy of the future. It is now available to businesses across Offaly via the Local Enterprise Office.

With the help of a Green Consultant, small businesses with up to ten employees can get free advice and technical support on resource efficiency, how to better understand their carbon footprint and how to implement an environmental management system to reduce costs and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

To find out more about the new Green for Micro programme, contact LEO Offaly or go to www.LocalEnterprise.ie/Green for more information.

New Frontiers Phase 1 – Applications Open

New Frontiers is an Enterprise Ireland programme aimed at supporting the establishment and growth of technology or knowledge intensive ventures that have the potential to trade internationally and create employment in Ireland.

Phase 1 lasts approximately six weeks and is part-time in nature – typically entailing one evening session per week and normally includes a weekend boot camp.

The Phase 1 programme will introduce you to relevant start-up strategies, challenge your business idea and encourage you to demonstrate market validation of your proposed product or service. The goal is to see if you have a viable idea worth taking forward and to learn the fundamentals of entrepreneurship.

Participants who complete Phase 1 will be encouraged to apply for Phase 2 of New Frontiers. For more information, please contact Nick Allen, Programme Manager,

at: 090-6483043 or email nallen@ait.ie. Applications are open until May 13th 2021.

Engenuity Midlands Engineering Network

Engenuity is for any Midlands engineering firm with an ambition to grow their business. Engenuity enables access to a range of unique supports, and is enabling networking of business owners throughout the Midlands Region. Engenuity Midlands Engineering Network is an initiative of the Midland LEOs. New members are welcome, for more information, visit www.midlandsengineering.ie.

Food eirEEN Meet the Buyer & Matchmaking Event

Enterprise Europe Network, in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Offices in Ireland, is hosting Food eirEEN, a virtual food “Meet the Buyer” event which offers participants a unique opportunity to engage in face-to-face virtual sales meetings with senior food buyers from throughout Ireland and the EU.

It is expected that in excess of 25 food buyers, and 100 supplier companies, will attend the event, and we would be delighted if you could join us for what promises to be an unrivaled opportunity to grow your business. Participation at Food eirEEN is FREE of charge! Register at <https://food-eireen-meet-buyer.b2match.io/> before 2nd June 2021.

Climate Enterprise Action Fund

The new Climate Enterprise Action Fund supports Irish companies to build the capabilities required to deliver sustainable products, services and business models. There is a range of financial supports reflect the needs of companies at different stages of their decarbonisation and sustainability journey. For further information visit <https://globalambition.ie/climate-enterprise-action-fund/>

BREXIT – Information for Businesses

With Brexit now upon us, LEO Offaly continues to provide a range of training supports, mentoring and initiatives to help business deal with the reality of BREXIT.

Ready for Customs Grant

This new grant provides companies with financial assistance to cover the costs of taking on much needed additional customs clearance staff. This is a cash limited scheme of up to €20m, with the following financial support available:

- A grant of €9,000 to support the recruitment or redeployment of a full-time¹ employee into a dedicated customs role.
- A grant of €4,500 to support the recruitment or redeployment of a part-time² employee into a dedicated customs role.

GradStart scheme now available for LEO clients

The GradStart scheme is a 24-month graduate placement programme with funding of up to €30k (€15k per year). Local Enterprise Office client companies with at least 5 full time staff can apply for the GradStart programme.

The objective of GradStart is to assist indigenous companies to scale and grow their businesses through the introduction of good graduate talent (with a minimum Level 6 degree qualification) to deliver clearly defined projects.

Innovation Vouchers - open call

Open call for applications continues for 2021. The Innovation Voucher initiative was developed to build links between Ireland's public Knowledge Providers (i.e. higher education institutes, public research bodies) and small businesses. Innovation Vouchers worth €5,000 are available to assist a company or companies to explore a

business opportunity or problem with a registered knowledge provider.

Apprenticeship Incentivisation Scheme

The Apprenticeship Incentivisation Scheme, delivered by SOLAS, provides financial support for apprenticeship employers who take on apprentices on national apprenticeship programmes. Apprenticeship employers are eligible for a €3,000 payment for each new apprentice.

COVID 19 Supports

COVID-19 Online Retail Scheme

The new €5 million COVID-19 Online Retail Scheme is open to eligible Irish-owned retail enterprises that had 10 or more employees on or before 29 February 2020 (or have grown to this level since then) and have the potential to sustain or create jobs, generate growth in online transactions and with an ambition to internationalise their business in the future. Successful applicants will receive a grant ranging from €10,000 to a maximum of €40,000 - covering up to 80% of project costs. The scheme closes at 12 noon on 25 May 2021.

Tourism Business Continuity Scheme

Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Business Continuity Scheme supports tourism businesses not eligible for the COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS) payment or previous Fáilte Ireland continuity grant schemes. Funding under its Strategic Tourism Transport Business Continuity Scheme is open to eligible tourism transport operators. Please visit the Business Continuity Scheme at www.failteireland.ie.

Remote Training Sessions

Booking is now available for a number of Online courses such as Start your Own Business Course, Digital marketing for Business, COVID-19 Government Supports for business, A Layman's Guide to

Tax, How to create marketing videos on a budget and Start your Own Business course, Mentoring Sessions with Bobby Connolly. These courses are aimed at those interested in starting their own business or growing their business. Most of the courses have been fully booked and have received excellent feedback.

Remote Mentoring Sessions

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly has a number of free mentoring sessions to assist businesses through the Covid-19 crisis. Please contact us to arrange a mentoring session. The types of mentoring available are Business, Finance, Banking Supports & Advice, Human Resources, Social Media Strategy and Microfinance Loans.

Financial Supports Overview

Some financial supports that may be available to Offaly businesses are listed below. Further information on all of these supports is available on <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Offaly/Financial-Supports/>

Feasibility, Research and Development:

- a. LEO Feasibility Grant
- b. Agile Innovation Fund (Enterprise Ireland Scheme open to LEO Clients)

Business Start-Ups:

- a. Priming Grant
- b. Microfinance Loan Scheme

Business Expansion:

- a. Business Expansion Grant
- b. Microfinance Loan Scheme
- c. GradStart Scheme (Enterprise Ireland Scheme open to LEO Clients)
- d. Ready for Customs Grant ((Enterprise Ireland Scheme open to LEO Clients)
- e. Trading Online Voucher

Additional financial supports from other agencies include:**1. InterTrade Ireland Start To Plan Voucher Scheme**

InterTrade Ireland offers 100% financial support up to €2250 (inclusive of VAT) towards professional advice in relation to Brexit matters. This support can help your business get advice on specific issues such as movement of labour, goods, services and currency management. For more information, visit www.intertradeireland.com.

2. SBCI Brexit Loan Scheme

The Brexit Loan Scheme can provide affordable financing to businesses that are impacted by Brexit. The Scheme is delivered by the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) through commercial lenders and will make €300 million available to eligible businesses with up to 499 employees at an interest rate of 4% or less. The loans are available through AIB, Bank of Ireland and Ulster Bank. Loans will range from €25,000 to €1.5 million per eligible business, with unsecured loans up to €500,000 and terms ranging from 1-3 years. For more information, please visit www.sbc.gov.ie

3. InterTrade Ireland: Support towards employing a full-time sales person

Many businesses face the challenge of funding and recruiting a dedicated professional to win sales in the cross-border market – and, here again, Acumen can help. Acumen will fund up to 50% of the cost of a Sales Person's salary in the first year. The maximum cost covered can be up to €37,500/£30,000 with Acumen paying up to €18,750/£15,000. For more information, visit www.intertradeireland.com.

LIBRARY SERVICES**Offaly Libraries have re-opened!!!**

Our libraries are offering **Print & Collect** services for self-service printing /scanning / photocopying where building health and safety arrangements allow. During this first phase of re-opening libraries are unable to offer PC access, study space or leisure seating but look forward to reinstating these services in a graduated way over the coming months and always in line with [Government guidelines](#).

**Bealtaine at Home**

Offaly Libraries Bealtaine Festival 2021 is an exciting programme with a collection of crafts including paintings, crochet, knitting, gardening, and baking from many of our crafters around the county who have kept very busy over the Covid-19 year. The people of Offaly have been kindly submitting photos of their work. Here is just a small selection.

Offaly libraries also welcomed Offaly GAA legend Joe Dooley and GAA referee Brian Gavin chatting about growing up around GAA and all the great times gone by. Joe and Brian have contributed a lovely interview to our 'Down Memory Lane' piece as part of our Bealtaine 2021 festival.

Check our full collection of Bealtaine videos on [Facebook here](#).



Offaly Libraries: Supporting Parents

Offaly Libraries Supporting Parents

Offaly Libraries have been running a series of parenting talks to help support parents and also professionals working with children and young people. These events have been organised by Offaly Libraries as part of the Keep Well Campaign and funded by the Community Resilience Fund.



MAY PARENTING PROGRAMME			
TUESDAY 04 THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC THERAPY @ 10 AM HOW MUSIC CAN WORK AS A USEFUL THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION.	WEDNESDAY 05 THINKING BETTER IN A CRISIS FOR PARENTS @ 8 PM A ONE-HOUR WEBINAR FOR PARENTS ON HOW TO THINK BETTER IN A CRISIS.	THURSDAY 06 FIRST AID FOR PARENTS @ 11 AM PEDIATRIC FIRST AID SESSION FOCUSING ON LIFESAVING TOPICS AND MEDICAL EMERGENCIES.	TUESDAY 11 UNDERSTANDING SLEEP FROM BIRTH TO 5 YEARS @ 8 PM TOOLS TO CREATE HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS FOR YOUR CHILD.
WEDNESDAY 12 HOW TO TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT SENSITIVE STUFF LIKE SEX @ 8 PM LEARN TO COMFORTABLY TEACH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT HEALTHY SEXUALITY.	THURSDAY 13 HELPING YOUR AUTISTIC CHILD TO MANAGE THEIR ANXIETY @ 7 PM TIPS TO ASSIST YOU IN HELPING YOUR CHILD MANAGE THEIR ANXIETY.	TUESDAY 18 MANAGING FUSSY EATING WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND @ 8 PM STRATEGIES THAT WILL HELP YOU TO MANAGE FUSSY EATING.	WEDNESDAY 19 MANAGING YOUR CHILD'S ANXIETY @ 7 PM PRACTICAL SKILLS TO HELP MANAGE YOUR CHILD'S ANXIETY.
THURSDAY 20 THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC THERAPY @ 8 PM HOW MUSIC CAN WORK AS A USEFUL THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION.	TUESDAY 25 MANAGING FUSSY EATING WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND @ 10:30 AM STRATEGIES THAT WILL HELP YOU TO MANAGE FUSSY EATING.	WEDNESDAY 26 PROMOTING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH READING WITH YOUR CHILD @ 7 PM FOCUS ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND ON THE BENEFITS OF READING ALOUD.	THURSDAY 27 FIRST AID FOR PARENTS @ 8 PM PEDIATRIC FIRST AID SESSION FOCUSING ON LIFESAVING TOPICS AND MEDICAL EMERGENCIES.

So far this month there have been **12 events** with over **90 participants**. We even made the front page of the **Offaly Topic** recently! Attendance at all events is Free of Charge but places must be booked on Eventbrite, link to book is [here](#).

Interim Library Development Plan – Public Consultation

Offaly Library Service is preparing an Interim Library Development Plan 2021 - 2023. During April as part of the consultation process a public survey, a school's specific survey and some online focus groups have progressed. We are busy collating the data and proceeding towards the next steps in preparing the plan, which will map library development objectives into 2023 and line with National Public Library Strategies.

Free Music Streaming

In the first year, our music streaming service was very popular with **8,776 songs** downloaded or streamed. This is a free service offering access to 15 million songs, including Sony's Music catalogue of legendary artists and over 40,000 music videos to registered Offaly library members.



Each month, new featured playlists, albums, songs, music videos, audiobooks and artists are introduced. Users have three hours unlimited ad-free streaming per day and up to three free downloads per week! Research shows there are many positive benefits to listening to music for everyone and these include improving focus on work or study, to lifting or improving your mood, to boosting confidence, to relax, decreasing anxiety, managing stress and a great form of expression.

So try our [Free Music Streaming](#) – rediscover your childhood favourites, throw some shapes and create happy memories.

Offaly Online Bookclubs

Our third online bookclub meeting was held on Thursday 6th May via Zoom. The book was 'The Other Woman' by Sandie Jones' which stimulated a lively discussion and was rated 2.5/5 by the members.

New members are welcome to consider our next book, '**Stay With Me**' by Ayobami Adebayo' which was a shortlisted BAILEYS Women's Prize for Fiction 2017. Our book club will meet again on **Thursday 3rd June @ 7pm**. Download '[Stay With Me](#)' from [Borrowbox](#) and get in touch with tullamorelibrary@offalycoco.ie if you would like to join us for the next meeting in June.



Work Matters at Offaly Libraries

We had a very successful series of lunchtime webinars with **over 60 attendees** in total. The feedback was excellent and we will be running another series in the autumn.

You can watch all three webinars on the Offaly Libraries' [YouTube channel](#).

Work Matters at Offaly Libraries
Lunchtime Bite-Sized Webinars
April 14, 21 & 28
1:10pm for 20 minutes

- Wednesday, 14th April: Looking after your mental health while working from home
- Wednesday, 21st April: Connection. Tips on how to connect/reconnect with ourselves and others.
- Wednesday, 28th April: Managing stress: tips to help manage our daily stressors.

Register on Eventbrite:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/offaly-libraries-on-eventbrite>

Libraries
Offaly County Council

Derval Chambers Petit
Life Coaching
Career Development
Coaching and Training
dervalchamberspetit.ie

April Lunchtime Webinars with Offaly Libraries
www.offaly.ie/libraries

Earth Week 2021

Offaly Libraries are excited about upcoming Earth Week from May 31st to June 5th which is World Environment Day 2021.



We have organised a whole host of videos and activities such as a mindful

walk to upcycling, arts and crafts, story times, nature blogs and much more. To view these videos, keep an eye on Offaly Libraries' Facebook page.

Sign up for our Library Newsletter

A quick reminder that the best way to keep up to date with library programmes, developments and new services is via our Library Newsletter subscribe here; [Offaly Libraries Newsletter](#)

Spring Into Storytime 2021

Offaly Libraries organised a host of virtual events and activities, all based around reading and listening to stories, which families enjoyed at home. We have **31 episodes** of storytimes on [Facebook](#) that can be enjoyed at any time. There have been over **2,700 views** of these videos to date. The total engagement on Facebook over the Spring Into Storytime festival has been over **35,000!**



We also hosted live **Zoom to the Library** events to schools in Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore in April with 268 participants across the 3 MDs.

There are also two lovely Spring Into Storytime blogs from Edenderry and Daingean libraries; [Using Picture Books to Promote Language Development](#) and [From Picky Eaters to Tricky Teens – Lauren Child has got it Covered!](#)

Coming soon to Offaly Libraries

Cruinniú na nÓg 2021

This year, Cruinniú na nÓg will take place on **Saturday 12th June**.

This is a special day of creativity for children from 0-18 years old. It will be a jam-packed day of activity with **39 workshops**



including some developmental programmes including Writing for Wellbeing, Animations workshop using Blender and Printmaking with Aidan Byrne. There is something for everyone including Cool Food Workshops, Clayotic Art, Comic writing, willow weaving, ceramic workshops and much more.

Our pre-recorded videos will be available on our Facebook page. Workshops will be online via Zoom. Booking will be available via [Eventbrite](#) from 17th May.



As part of our Crinnniú na Nóg celebrations, Offaly Libraries are delighted to welcome back **Offaly Libraries Comic Con**. The event was an outstanding success in 2019 and we are very excited about another brilliant festival for 2021.

With a programme full of virtual events, including workshops, tutorials, discussions and competitions, it's sure to keep the whole family entertained. For details on how to book your place for workshops, enter our competitions and join in on the day, keep up to date with our website and social media.

Summer Stars 2021



Summer Stars is the public library national summer reading

programme for children and this year it launches on the 14th of June. All children throughout Offaly are invited to join the adventure and enjoy the fun and pleasure of reading and writing over the summer. Summer Stars is non-competitive reading initiative. Every child who reads even one book is rewarded for completing the programme – and it's all free!

Activities for Summer Stars 2021 will include Online Storytimes, Crafts and Quizzes. Keep an eye on all our social media platforms or sign up to our newsletter for details of all these fun events.

First 5 Little Library Initiative

The **First 5 Little Library Initiative** is a collaborative project between the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA). The project aims to support the development of 'little libraries' in early

learning and care settings and encourage a love of books and reading among our youngest children.

Under this initiative, early learning and care settings will be invited to collect a free book bag along with other resources from their local Offaly library branch.

This initiative will encourage membership and use of the library network among early learning and care services and among young children and their families and support the early learning and care services and families in use of this resource. It will also encourage ongoing collaboration between early learning and care services and libraries, and support families in establishing or developing the practice of reading.



Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Appendix 1
Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 30th April 2021

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr Budget 2021 €m	Preliminary Value to April 2021 €m	% Year To Date
Payroll costs	28.03	8.52	30.4%
Grants and Subsidies Income	38.24	12.96	33.9%

OCC to 30th April 2021

	<u>Rates</u> €m	<u>Rents</u> €m	<u>Loans</u> €m
Opening Balance Jan 1, 2021	3.35	0.57	0.19
Invoices/Adjustments	11.58	2.07	0.18
2021 Cash Collected to end of April	1.95	2.15	0.19
Closing Balance April 30th , 2021	12.98	0.50	0.18

2020 Cash collected to April

	3.27	2.13	0.29
% Collection at this point in 2020	60%	101%	66%

Bank Overdraft to 30th April 2021

Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date	19	16%
Overdraft Interest and non-conforming charges to April 30th 2021 YTD		€6,985
Bank Administration and transactional charges to April 30th 2021 YTD		€8,815