

**FEBRUARY
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 Márta

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

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS:

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

FINANCE:

Finance Report– Appendix 1

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

NATIONAL SPRING CLEAN

Environment and Water Services are happy to support An Taisce in their annual National Spring Clean which takes place during April 2021. Local communities can register on line, bags and pickers will be 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.

CREATIVE EDENDERRY

Shoes of Edenderry will take place between 19-21st March, these events are affiliated to the Galway 2020 programme and can be found on the Galway2020 website.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

Litter & Waste Management

Environment and Water Services have issued 540 letters to residents of various housing estates in Tullamore, Kilcormac and Birr. These letters are in relation to segregation, storage and presentation of household waste by-laws i.e. how households manage their waste, if they have kerbside collection or use other authorised facilities. This project will be rolled out across the entire county in due course.

Winter Voices 2021

Winter Voices ran online over mid-term break on 18/19th February. This was run in partnership with Sing Ireland and Music Generation Louth. We had a great turn out of approx. 50 children. We were delighted when the course featured in the Sunday Independent. Spring voices will be held over Easter break.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING...

SING YOUR HEART OUT

Don't let lockdown put a damper on midterm fun – sign your teens up for an online voice camp that promises to cover everything from songwriting to rap. The two-day course is led by tenor and Irish Youth Choir tutor Alan Leech, with a team of guest facilitators including rap sessions from Gary McCarthy (GMC Beats). Open to 12-18 year olds, Winter Voices runs February 18 and 19, 10.30am-2pm, tickets €22: musicgenerationoffalywestmeath.ie



PLANNING

| | To end Feb 2021 | To end Feb 2020 | Total 2020 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Planning Applications | 79 | 66 | 674 |
| Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued | 3 (1) | 2 (1) | 13(2) |

County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 (Draft Stage)

The CE report issued to members on 10th March.

Peatland Climate Action Scheme

Planning Department has made submissions on 7 rehabilitation plans to date.

Development Management

Continued increase on Planning Applications has been evident at the start of 2021 to date with large increase on the complex Planning Applications around Green Energy and larger housing Developments.

REGENERATION

Regeneration Team gave presentation to February Council meeting, summarising the work from 2016-2019 and projections for 2020/2021 and beyond. No further update URDF, RRDF & ORIS announcements from 2020 all pending. No calls for funding applications to date for 2021.

ROADS

Roads Programme 2021: In line with Public Health Measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 road works are currently

restricted to essential services: repair/construction of critical road and utility infrastructure. The service has continued with minimum disruption with planning, design and procurement of schemes for 2021 have progressed as normal.

Offaly County Council received the 2021 National Roads Allocation of €2,300,855 from the TII and the Regional & Local Allocation of €12,447,240 from the Department of Transport. Offaly County Council has allocated €1,867,130 from own resources. The 2021 Roads Programme (currently being agreed in each MD) will be presented at the April Council meeting.

The TII allocation includes funding for the N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link major scheme, N62 Cloghan to Derrinlough peat replacement minor works scheme with €1.86m allocated for improvement works.

The DOT allocation includes funding of €900k to progress the Edenderry Inner Relief Road, former national roads, active travel and climate adaptation.

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has developed a five year walking and cycling infrastructure delivery plan to progress the Government's commitment of €1.8bn toward the development of active travel over the next 5 years. The Roads section and MDs are currently engaging with the NTA to deliver active travel projects in Offaly in 2021 and funding will be announced soon.

Greenways and associated projects. Roads support the planning, funding applications and the Design, Tendering and Delivery of Greenways and cycling infrastructure in the following locations-

- Grand Canal Greenway from Turraun to Daingean (Except Tullamore)
GCGW - DOT €2.35m - c.30km
Total Length. 11.5km (2019 - 2021).
- Grand Canal Greenway – Urban Tullamore
URDF – DHLGH €750k - 2.7km (2021)
- Grand Canal Greenway from Daingean to Edenderry to County Bounds
GCGW – DOT €3.10m - c.21km (2021/2022)
- Grand Canal Greenway Kilbeggan Branch. Wood of O to WH County Bounds
ORIS – DRCD €391k - 3.5km (2021)
- Upgrade cycle links from Turraun to Lough Boora Parklands
Just Transition – DECC € 750k - 10km (2021 – 2023)
- Grand Canal Greenway Turraun to Shannonharbour (future scheme)
GCGW – DOT €TBC - 17km(2022)

In addition, Roads provide support to the MD's in the area of cycle infrastructure development.

ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES

Climate Action

Climate Action is continuing to be embedded in the day to day working of each section of Offaly County Council. The Climate Action Steering Group met again on Friday 26th of February.

Climate Action Leadership Training was delivered to elected members and senior staff on the morning on the 12 February 2021, and training is being rolled out to all staff during the year.

Offaly County Council will have to identify one location or area which will be subject

to a plan for a Decarbonization Zone prior to the end April, in order to comply with Action 165 of the Climate Action Plan. Watch this space.

Environment

EWS received and investigated 270 environmental complaints to date for 2021. Dog fouling is highlighted as been an issue and we have started a social media awareness campaign advising the public to clean up after their dogs. Tidy Towns or community groups can receive supplies of “doggie waste bags” from the Environment Section.

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

PRE-DRAFT NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF THE “NATIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY”

Legislation:- Waste Management Act, 1996 and Waste Management (Planning) Regulations, 1997

The 3 Regional Waste Management Planning Offices are giving notice of intention to commence preparation of the “National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy” to replace the existing Regional Waste Management Plans. This plan will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.

The current plans are available on www.mywaste.ie

Written submissions in relation to the preparation of the plans can be made to info@srwmo.ie or by post to Southern Region Waste Management Office, Lissanalta House, Dooradoyle Road Limerick, V94 K6PO and/or by completing a short questionnaire on www.mywaste.ie by close of business on the 6th May 2021.

Water Quality

River Basin Management Plan - Cycle 3 Characterisation – a review of all waterbodies (rivers) has been completed by the EPA, and the Environment & Water Services Section have made submissions for Offaly's waterbodies. This will be incorporated in the next *Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027* which will also be open for public consultation in 2021, and all Councillors will be notified.

Water Services

On the 23rd of February the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O'Brien T.D. published the Government's Policy Paper on Water Sector Transformation, entitled *Irish Water – Towards a National, Publicly-Owned, Regulated, Water Services Utility*.

The paper and accompanying press release are available at www.gov.ie/housing.

The paper sets out the Government's approach to water sector transformation including addressing Irish Water as the Single Public Utility.

The Minister has asked the key stakeholders to engage through Workplace Relations commission (WRC) to agree a framework for a stable operating structure for the future delivery of Water services, within six months, to conclude by July 2021. Implementation is hoped to concluded by the end of 2022.

Wastewater

A number of remedial works were completed this month in Tullamore, which should improve the quality of the receiving waters– including, Tara Street, St Brigids Place and Bachelors Walk – Lidl

The design for the upgrade and expansion of Edenderry WWTP is ongoing. Design Works are also commenced for Rhode, Walsh Island, Rahan, Kilcormac, and Daingean Wastewater Treatment Plants.

Water

Find and fix works are ongoing in Portarlinton, Tullamore, Rahan, Banagher, and will commence in Clara. Watermain rehabilitation works are ongoing in Clara, and will commence in Fahey, Rhode this month.

Rural Water Programme

The Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2019 – 2021 is ongoing. Of the 19 projects across the county that were approved for grant funding for capital projects under MARWP 19-20, 7 have been completed to date and the other 12 projects are at various stages of planning and construction. More than €1.85m was allocated to Group Water Schemes in Co. Offaly under the MARWP 2019-2021 and so far €568,166.35 has been paid to GWSs for the works already carried out.

Annual subsidies for Group Water Schemes have been completed, a total of €978,426.00 was paid to schemes across the county. Our subsidy payments process was audited internally in 2020 and was found to provide 'Satisfactory Assurance' that it is in compliance with the Public Spending Code. Water quality sampling of Group Water Schemes has continued during the year with the Groups Schemes helpfully providing sampling kiosks and access to outside taps to assist with sampling during Covid-19 related restrictions.

Burial Grounds

The tender documents for the extension of Kilreaghan Cemetery in Ferbane are due to be issued in Q1 2021 and Offaly County Council are in consultation with the local cemetery committee to include their views on the project. The proposed extension to Kilcoursey Cemetery in Clara was adopted under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regs, 2001 and will proceed to tender in 2021.

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 |

February Housing Update

- There are 507 on the Social Housing List awaiting housing support at the end of February 2021.
- A further 858 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 11 signed up for HAP and 6 exited from HAP in February.
- At the end of February there were 24 single people and 4 families in emergency accommodation.
- 4 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans applications have been received in 2021 to date and are currently being assessed.

Housing Stock – Number, Maintenance & Repair:

- Total housing stock at end of February, 2021 is 1925.
- 218 maintenance call were logged in February. 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. It is currently at public consultation phase of the Part 8 planning process, closing date for submissions is 11th March 2021.
- Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane (20 Units) – received Stage 1 approval in March 2020. The Design Team have been appointed and initial meeting held. Site investigations contractor has been procured but works cannot commence during the

current Covid-19 level 5 restrictions.

- 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) will be submitted to the Department in Quarter 1, 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 Quarter 1, 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 Quarter 1, 2021.
- Banagher, Kylebeg (18 Units) - a second stage 3 submission was made in April 2020 and was approved by the DHPLG in May 2020. Tender documentation is almost complete and Tender will issue in Quarter 1, 2021
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) - Stage 2 approval was received in December 2019 and the Part 8 planning resolution was approved by the members at the September Council meeting. Stage 3 approval to proceed to Tender was lodged on December 17th and the scheme is expected to proceed to Tender in early February pending Department approval.

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. Part 8 consultation for extension will be advertised in the next few weeks with Stage 3 application to follow.
- 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 Q1 2021
- 3 x Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) complete in 2021, An application for funding for their refurbishment will be submitted to the department.

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes

- Cluid Housing Association: Construction on the 26 units has stopped due to the current Covid-19 Level 5 restrictions.
- Tuath: Killane Drive, Edenderry (27 units) – Deemed an essential site and completion is expected in Q1, 2021.
- Oaklee: Clonminch, Tullamore (19 units) – Appointment of contractor is pending the resumption of construction activity.
- Oaklee: Kearney's Field (41 Units) – In process of appointing a consultant.
- Sofia Housing: Stage 2 approved (39 units) at Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Stage 2 submission was made in October. Project now needs to progress to planning.

- 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

- Main Street Daingean (8 Units): Approved 13th August and works commenced in November 2020 currently on hold due to the current Covid-19 Level 5 restrictions
- MacGregol, Birr: (12 Units) – 8 units complete and a further 4 are progressing and will be delivered in 2021
- 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 of all schemes are paused until level 5 restrictions are lifted

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 only proceed should the householder agree to these works progressing with the approved contractor.

Disabled Person's Grants

In anticipation of department allocation, the preparation of 2021 works is underway.

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.

The Design Team have completed surveys of 36 no. houses and Tenders for the completion of the retrofit works for this first Lot of houses in Birr will issue shortly. A further lot of 42 houses surveys were due to take place in January 2021 but have now been postponed owing to the current Covid situation. Lot 5 & 6 of the retrofit surveys has been tendered to consultants and award of this lot of 47 no. houses is also on hold until restrictions are lifted.

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.

A summary of the calls to the Community Call Helpline by month is given below. January was the busiest month for the Helpline since June 2020, but calls have reduced again in February.

| Month | Number | % |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| April | 312 | 62.8 |
| May | 93 | 18.7 |
| June | 19 | 3.8 |
| July | 8 | 1.6 |
| August | 8 | 1.6 |
| September | 7 | 1.4 |
| October | 9 | 1.8 |
| Nov | 3 | 0.6 |
| Dec | 8 | 1.6 |
| Jan-21 | 19 | 3.8 |
| Feb-21 | 11 | 2.2 |
| Total | 497 | 100 |

| SUMMARY OF TYPE OF CALLS AND EMAILS TO COVID HELPLINE 2021 | |
|--|--------|
| | Number |
| Deliveries | 9 |
| Isolation | 0 |
| Meals | 1 |
| Garda | 0 |
| Medical | 0 |
| Other e.g. volunteers | 19 |
| Total | 29 |

A Community Call Helpline article called 'A Listening Ear to Help and Support' was run in last week's Offaly Independent funded through the 'Staying Connected' theme of the Community Resilience/Keep Well Fund. The article gave some background on the Helpline service, what's provided and some statistics on calls received to date. This was accompanied by another CRF initiative called the 'Help is at Hand' poster which lists the contact details for a range of mental and physical wellbeing support services in the county. Both features ran on two separate pages in the publication. This in addition to the current Midlands 103 'top of the hour' Community Call ad campaign which aims to maximise awareness of the service.

Offaly Community Response Forum

The interagency Community Response Forum has met 18 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.

In April 2020 Offaly Community Response Forum allocated €65,553 in Covid-19 Emergency Funding from the Dept. of Rural & Community Development to 37 community groups and agencies responding to the Covid pandemic. A second Emergency Fund award of €48,694 was allocated by Offaly LCDC to 44 successful applicants. These grants are of great benefit to the applicants whose services have been badly affected by the Covid pandemic.

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Offaly LCDC held their monthly meeting on Thursday 11th February with members attending by video link. Agenda items included the Rural Development LEADER Programme 2014–2020, The Transitional LEADER Programme, Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022: SICAP 2020 Annual Performance Review, Annual Progress Report and Case Study; SICAP 2021 Annual Plan; LCDC Annual Report 2020, Offaly COVID-19 Emergency Fund and Community Response Forum Update.

Members were briefed on the focus of the new LEADER Transitional Programme which has been introduced to 'bridge the gap' between EU programming periods. The aim of the Transitional Programme is to work closely with communities and particularly those who have not previously benefitted from LEADER funding, to build their capacity in preparation for the next

programming period and ensure that weaker communities are not left behind. Projects are also to be explored and developed for funding in thematic areas which are likely to feature strongly in the next EU funded programme – projects which address the climate agenda and digital transformation. Members were also advised that the new programme is due to commence on 1st April 2021 for project approval,

Following a detailed overview of the 2020 SICAP Annual Performance Review and Annual Progress Report the members approved same, noting that all targets were achieved and exceeded. Members also formally approved the SICAP Annual Plan for 2021. A brief presentation was given to the attendees on the awarding of the most recent round of Covid-19 Emergency Funding and an update on the Community Response Forum.

Age Friendly Strategy

The Age Friendly Alliance met and work commenced on planning for 2021. Reference was made to the Report on 2020 actions and the level of work that occurred during 2020 was commended. It is envisaged that further collaboration and a partnership approach will dominate actions in 2021. We have secured 7 Acorn Tablets via Sláinte Care & Age Friendly Ireland which will be distributed to Nursing Homes during March. This will complement the Tablets distributed to Nursing Homes in April of 2020. Work on the first issue of the ‘Connecting the Faithful’ Age Friendly Newsletter is underway. Communication and Information sharing was highlighted as a key action going forward. One such area highlighted was Fuel Poverty/understanding Retro Fitting as fear among older people is growing in terms of this issue. The Radio Programme ‘Chatters and Matters’ received funding via Healthy Ireland to ensure the programme continues

until sponsorship is obtained. The programme remains informative and provided light entertainment on Sunday mornings 8-9 am.

Public Participation Network

Training was rolled out to groups on Committee skills and Writing a Project Budget. It was very well received. As the PPN Representative on ODEN (Offaly Disability Equality Network) discussion on managing Dog Fouling in the County are underway with the Environmental Awareness Officer and the Area Engineer on possible solutions to minimise the level of Dog fouling through a collective awareness campaign.

The PPN participated in Climate Change Conversation Training in advance of the meeting on March 24th.

Work is underway for the upcoming PPN Elections to fill a number of positions on the following committees: SPC, JPC, LCDC and the Secretariat.

Comhairle na nÓg

Comhairle na nÓg held their first online meeting of the year on the 03/02/2021. They reviewed the AGM which was held on the 04/12/2020. The members were delighted with the attendance from every school in Offaly, with the items discussed, and with the overall atmosphere. On the 10/02/2021 the members met again to give information to new members who wished to join Comhairle. The new members officially joined Offaly Comhairle na nÓg and there are now 26 members from all over Offaly. The members also elected their Chairperson (Caitlin Guinan), Vice Chairperson (Kenneth Bracken), Secretary (Grainne Hannigan), Public Relations Officer (Aishling Flaherty) and Vice Public Relations Officer (Hannah Cormican). Five members expressed interest in joining a fitness programme with Mayo Comhairle. This is a fitness programme between the

Comhairlí in Ireland to count their steps and a prize given to the fittest Comhairle at the end of the competition. Galway University and Trinity are doing a yearlong research project in relation to young people and the effects of COVID 19 on them. Six members volunteered to consult on this throughout the year.

ARTS

Music generation Offaly Westmeath Lockdown Lunchtime Choir

Our Lockdown Lunchtime Choir for young people from 2nd class up started this month. We received a great interest in this and it worked very well. We are happy that this introduced us to schools in Offaly & Westmeath that we don't already work with.



Guitar Lessons

John Byrne, Music Educator with MGOW ran beginner guitar lessons online. We had good interest in these lessons and now that kids are returning to school we are going to continue these lessons in the evening times so children can continue to receive their guitar lesson.

MGOW Review

This review is nearing completion stage and Liz Powell, consultant, presented a draft report of her findings to the music Gen. Management group recently.

Online Programme

All of MGOW's community & school work are continuing on line as we remain in level 5.

Sessions include:

- Monday morning music for pre-schoolers,
- Choral activities for all ages – Singfest Choirs
- Ukulele and guitar with MGOW musicians Ronan and John for primary & post primary students
- Our Sinfonia Ensemble developed in partnership with Maynooth University Music Department;
- MGOW Schools Kodaly online – Junior & Senior Infants
- MGOW Schools Kodaly online – 1st & 2nd class
- Intergenerational Ukulele
- Rock at 2pm for children and young people based in SEN/ ASD units
- Music Production and song writing



MGOW working in partner schools

We are continuing to work with our partner schools with the aid of learning apps such as seesaw and google classroom. We provide online videos for our schools and

also zoom ukulele lessons for children in our partner schools.

With schools now commencing a phased return to schools it is anticipated that we will also work with the Dept. of Education and our partner schools to work out MGOW phased return to face to face teaching.

Intergenerational Ukulele Sessions

Our intergenerational ukulele sessions are continuing with Ronan every Thursday. Our active age group are really progressing and enjoying the weekly classes.

Weekly Newsletters

We issue weekly newsletters to our partner schools and all primary & post primary schools in Offaly & Westmeath and everyone on our mailing list.

Social Media / Website

We are very active on all our social media outlets and working to keep our website www.musicgenerationoffalywestmeath.ie updated. We also produce regular newsletters which are circulated with our subscribers and partner schools.



Arts Office

The Arts Office continues to plan the very busy annual programme in Feb following a successful application to the Arts Council for programme funding. The Arts Office were also awarded funding from the Arts Council for a continuation project from their Invitation to Collaboration funding of €35,000 to deliver a project and symposium with partner organisations Mayo County Council and Visual Artists Ireland for Lough Boora Sculpture Park

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.

Grants & Awards

The call out for 2021 awards included; Arts Acts Grants, Professional Artists Support Scheme, Festival Arts Grants. All applications have been assessed are awarded as follows:

Arts Acts Grants – Budget €20,000

Total applications received = 15

Total grants recommended = 15

Total funding approved for received applications for 2021 is **€13,050**

Applications received from: Birr (6); Tullamore (7); Edenderry (2)

It was noted that the level of innovation and creative thinking that communities have shown in their applications in view of ongoing Covid restrictions should be recognised and celebrated. Approval was received on surplus funding €6,950 being allocated to further develop arts in community projects from where application for funding is low with the intention of increasing applications for 2022.

Festival Arts Grants – Budget: 10,000

Total applications received = 9

Total applications recommended = 6

Total Funding = **€9,550**

The number and quality of applications was very high. Due to the level of available funding 2 applicants were recommended to be funded under the Arts Acts Grants. 1 applicant supplied insufficient information and was asked to resubmit once they have this information to be reassessed.

Professional Artist Scheme – Budget: €10,000

Total applications received = 25

Total applications recommended = 19

Total applications recommended for alternative funding stream = 1

Total recommendations = €10,200

Public Art

Jessica Traynor who was awarded the Banagher Public Art Literature Commission is in the final stages of production for this project and plans are being finalised for a launch to take place in April. The project has consisted of:

- Primary and secondary school workshops
- Mentorship programme - A summer mentorship programme for 6th year students and adults
- Creative Writing workshops at Crank House
- Oral history conversations
- A four week online creative writing workshop
- Workshops with composer Elaine Agnew with primary and secondary schools – the poetry that they made together will be set to music
- Jessica has written the poetic history of Banagher – a pamphlet of fifteen poems inspired by the folklore and history of Banagher. The pamphlet is called **A Place of Pointed Stones**, a translation of the word *Banagher*.

Capital Projects

Arts Infrastructure Strategy

An Arts Infrastructure Strategy for the County was commissioned at the end of 2020 and is now currently being progressed by the appointed tender submitted by People Places Consulting: Caoimhín Corrigan and Siobhán O'Malley, and is in the consultation phase. The strategy is required in order to ensure that all the Arts Infrastructure (existing and planned) develop in a collaborative and harmonic manner, resulting in a cohesive, complimentary and self-sustaining network

of arts infrastructure that is beneficial to the whole county. With this in mind and in agreement with the Arts Council, the Arts Office developed a tender for the research and development of this strategy in late 2020.

Tullamore Art Centre

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 starting in 2021 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.



Edenderry Library and Arts Space

The Arts Office will be continuing to work in 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.

Platform31

Platform 31 is the nationwide artist development scheme being piloted by ALAEO (Association of Local Authority Arts Officers) in collaboration with the Arts Council. This national opportunity is for artists to develop their practice and test new ideas of collaboration, research, audience-development, place-making and sharing their work, each county will put out a call for artists to apply through a selection process, and each county will select a local artist for the scheme. The selection process is completed and the artist selected will be announced shortly.

Creative Ireland

The Arts Office will continue to lead on a number of Creative Ireland projects including: Creative Edenderry, Community Open Call projects, Animation Residency and the Tullamore Arts Development Project.

Online Communications

We engage public and artists through our online and social platforms, Facebook, twitter and our extensive email distribution database. In February we concentrated on advising artists and the public on opportunities, achievements and online events.



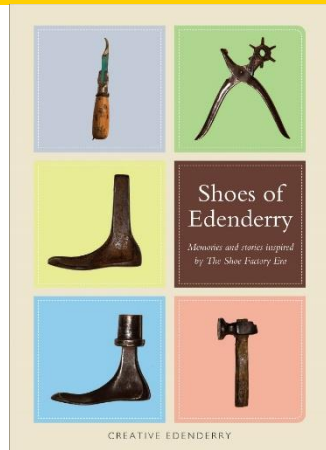
FilmOffaly

FilmOffaly took part in the Screen Ireland Regional Film Commission Forum and webinars. There was amazing news for several of Offaly's film production companies namely Cardel Entertainment who won awards for animated films at the Sundance Film Festival and Offaly director/producer Paddy Slattery's first feature film *Broken Law* purchased and then trending on Netflix. FilmOffaly Award winner *The Whale* was due to shoot but same was postponed due to Covid 19 restrictions. FilmOffaly Award winner *The Passion* completed filming in December 2020, working on post production, film due for completion and submission to festivals for April.



Creative Edenderry

Creative Edenderry has grown from strength to strength with the delivery of a programme during Culture Night last year and they now are in the final planning stage of a weekend of events titled Shoes of Edenderry taking place between 19-21st March, these events are affiliated to the Galway 2020 programme and can be found on the Galway2020 website as well as on the groups social media page. The series of events include the publication of a book of collected stories memories, and photographs from the Edenderry Shoe Factory era, the installation of a glass artwork by Michelle O'Donnell, titled *Walking in My Shoes*, on exhibition in the window of Edenderry library and an exhibition of photographic portraits of and by people Edenderry being displayed on large billboards on the facade of the old Tesco site on JKL Street Edenderry.



SPORTS

Education & Training

Three safeguarding 1 programmes were delivered online in February. 55 people participated across the three programmes

Programmes



Keep well packs – funded by Sport Ireland, 400 keep well packs were disseminated to “Longest Day” participants; and participants who had signed up to programmes in Q4 2020 which were later deferred as a result of Covid19 health restrictions

The majority of Offaly Sports Partnership’s physical activity programmes are continuing online: -

Operation Transformation minimum fitness test programme

An eight week online programme designed to support people to achieve a minimum level of fitness; the programme commenced on the 1st February. 55 people signed up with participants divided into 11 groups of five. Each group participates in a twice weekly online exercise class and receives support and information on leading a healthier lifestyle.



Older adults

Online dance classes for older adults and women: a 10-week online dance programme for 20 older adults is currently being delivered

School supports

- Online fit class challenges – 19 fit class challenge videos were developed as part of the Healthy Ireland funded fit class programme in 2020. To support children to stay physically active during the current lockdown, three videos were shared with the schools on our database every fortnight which in turn could be incorporated into a school's remote learning programme as part of their PE curriculum
- Online PE with Pauline – the programme was initially piloted over a two-week period in one school. 45 primary school children participated across the two weeks.

Sports Inclusion Development Programme

- National Learning Network Tullamore Fitness Friday – Offaly Sports Partnership is supporting the National Learning Network in the delivery of their "Fitness Friday" programme by sourcing tutors to deliver various physical activity sessions – dance, Pilates, strength & conditioning, yoga, etc. – on their

behalf. Up to 75 participants take part in the programme weekly

- Online exercise programmes for disability services – three services (St Cronan's Birr, Riverview Resources Birr and the Bannon Centre Tullamore) are being supported in the delivery of 10-week physical activity and exercise programmes for their service users

Women in sport

Online strength & conditioning programme for women in sport – 22 female teams from boxing, camogie, golf, ladies Gaelic, rowing, rugby and soccer are participating in online strength and conditioning classes.



LIBRARY SERVICES

Level 5 of the Plan for Living with COVID-19

As we remain in Level 5 of the Govt's Plan for Living with Covid-19, all Offaly Library spaces will remain closed to the public.

We continue to programme events safely in online settings for children, teens, families and adults. Keep an eye on our website, social media channels and our newsletter so you don't miss out! The library's [digital collections](#) can be accessed from home and include [eBooks](#), [eAudiobooks](#), [eMagazines](#) and [eNewspapers](#). You can also stream [films](#) and [music](#) and access many online resources for [children](#). In addition, you can

avail of our online [learning resources](#) any time, anywhere.

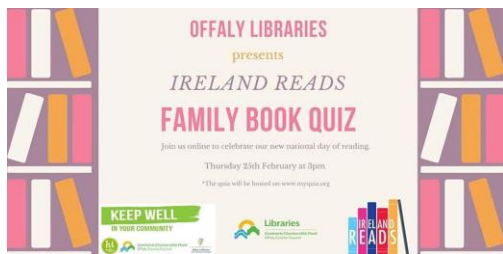
Ireland Reads: Squeeze in a Read with Offaly Libraries

For the month of February lots of people in Offaly managed to “SqueezeInARead” and especially on Ireland Reads day - Thursday, 25th February. People across Ireland of all ages took the pledge to read and spent over 900,000 minutes reading on this day alone! This successful campaign is part of our 'Keep Well' campaign and Ireland Reads national initiative.



We had huge engagement on social media with **783 views** of our #IrelandReads videos. We also received lots of photos of library members reading their favourite books!

The Family Book Quiz on Ireland Reads Day was a fun quiz with questions that tested all the families who participated. It was such a success we will host another family quiz on World Book Day!



Library usage in February 2021

- Over 100 people registered onto our online events in February.
- eBook loans saw a 155% increase from February 2020.

- eAudiobook loans saw a 131% increase from February 2020.
- There is a 109% increase in registered BorrowBox users from February 2020.
- eMagazine and eNewspapers are continually popular with an increase in usage of over 100%.
- 165 registered users used eLanguages in February 2021.
- A huge increase of 417% in the number of eLearning Courses this month.
- 469% increase in the number of times Vision Net, the Company search service, was used with 444 registered uses.
- The Library Blog continues to have excellent engagement with the public with 627 visits in February alone. This is a 19% increase on the same period last year.
- Our social media platforms attracted 10,000 views in total in February.

Seachtain na Gaeilge 2021

Following a virtual launch by Cathaoirleach, Cllr. John Carroll, Offaly Libraries are very excited to host a special programme of online events in celebration of Seachtain Na Gaeilge 2021. We have plenty planned to suit all ages and all levels of Ghaelghoiri!



Cómhrá Am Lóin le Cathaoirleach, Cllr. John Carroll, a series of lunch-time conversations as Gaeilge. These online conversations will take place every day at

1pm from Monday, 8th March to Friday, 12th March, and will cover a variety of topics from memories of Offaly's historic All-Ireland hurling win in 1981 to Irish as a living language. The events will last 30-40 minutes each day, and tickets are available on [Eventbrite](#). There are many fun activities planned for children over the coicís including regular postings of Irish Story Times and Irish Language Games on our Social Media channels.

Primary Schools are also invited to 'Tar Isteach sa Leabarlann le Zoom' for live story sessions.

12 MONTHS OF CEILIDH

OFFLAY LIBRARIES
presents

Seachtain
na Gaeilge
le nGaeilge

Tráth Na gCeist
FAMILY QUIZ

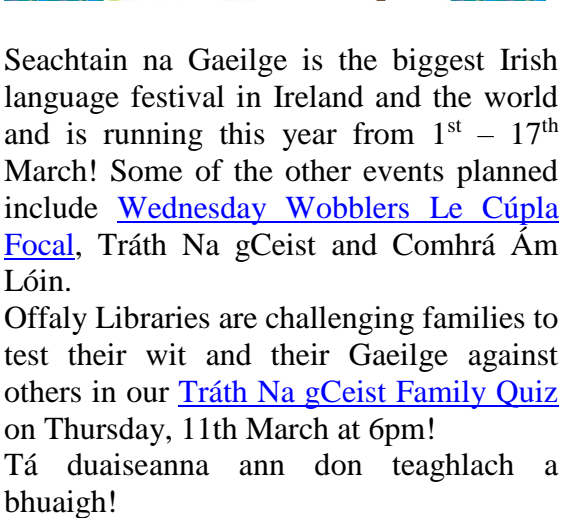
Join us online to test your Irish & help us celebrate Seachtain Na Gaeilge
Thursday 11th March at 6pm

"The quiz will be hosted on
www.naagceist.org

KEEP WELL
IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Tá Wí-Fi aige.

12 MONTHS OF CEILIDH
Seachtain Na Gaeilge
Department of Education and Skills
National Library of Ireland



Offaly Libraries are challenging families to test their wit and their Gaeilge against others in our [Tráth Na gCeist Family Quiz](#) on Thursday, 11th March at 6pm!
Tá duaiseanna ann don teaghlach a bhuaigh!

Tá duaiseanna ann don teaghlach a bhuaigh!

The [National Adult Literacy Agency](#) (NALA) are running some excellent online training, this is particularly relevant this week, which is Adult Learners' Festival!

- Access Irish and international newspapers and magazines on [PressReader](#)

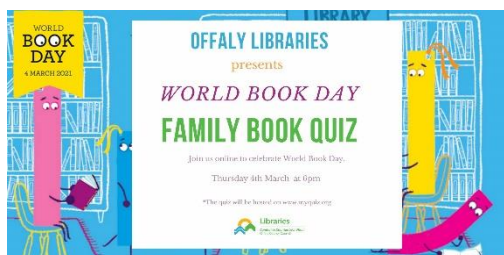
- Click on [Universal Class, Inc.](#) and take online courses from the comfort of home
- Learning another language with [Transparent Language](#), on our [#DigitalLibrary](#)



World Book Day 2021

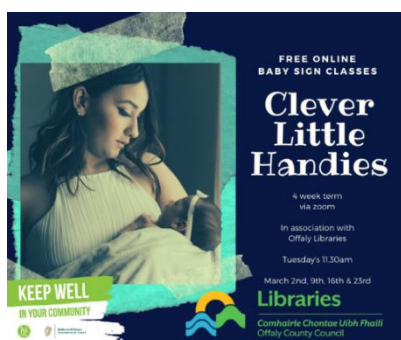
Offaly Libraries celebrated World Book Day on Thursday 4th March 2021. Over the last 24 years, World Book Day has become firmly established as Ireland's biggest annual event promoting the enjoyment of books and reading. The main aim is to encourage children to explore the pleasure of books and reading. A large number of

library members have signed up to the World Book Day quiz which is fantastic.



Baby Sign Classes

On 2nd March we started a new term of online Baby Sign Language classes with Claire from ‘Clever Little Handies’.



The first term we ran in January and it was so popular and fully subscribed that we are running another offering. Further details and [link to book](#) is available on our [website](#).

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](#)

Engineers Week – 27th February to 5th March

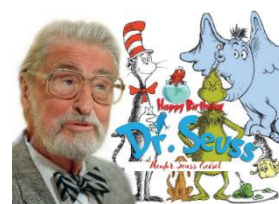


Offaly Libraries enjoyed celebrating Engineers Week 2021 with demonstrations

and online storytimes showcasing some aspects of engineering. The timing worked out great with schools reopening for classes up to 2nd Class so we hosted three primary school events via Tullamore Library this week – two with **Dublin Zoo** on giraffe habitats and one with **Anyone4Science** on making marble runs out of recycled materials.

Library Blog

Check out a lovely blog celebrating [Dr. Seuss' Birthday](#) on March 2nd!



Upcoming Keep Well Online Workshops (all available to book on EventBrite)

- Saturday 6th March @ 12Noon: [Wildflowers Masterclass](#) with Aoife Munn, Horticulturalist
- Saturday 13th March @ 3 pm: The Cool Food School: St. Patricks Day Themed Cookery Workshop: Green Soup & Bread
- Tuesday 9th March @ 7.30 pm: “Getting organised at home” with Sarah Reynolds, Declutter Expert from Organised Chaos
- Saturday 27th March @ 3 pm: The Cool Food School: Easter Themed Cookery Workshop

COMING SOON...

‘Shoes of Edenderry’ exhibition in Edenderry Library

As part of the Galway 2020 festival, March 18th sees the launch of Creative Edenderry’s book and exhibition ‘Shoes of Edenderry’ in association with Offaly Libraries.



Take a look at the art installations on Main Street in Edenderry, as well as the digital photography and glasswork exhibition on display in Edenderry Library. To read more

about the photos and the stories behind the shoes, you can also buy the book 'Shoes of Edenderry' at local shops.

If a stroll through Edenderry is not possible, never fear- Offaly Libraries are bringing the art to you through our [Facebook page](#). Tune in at 1:00pm every day from Thursday 18th - Sunday 21st March to view from the comfort of home.

National Tree Week March 21st to 27th – National Tree Council



TREE COUNCIL OF IRELAND

Comhairle Crann na hÉireann

Fostering a tree culture in Ireland through action & awareness

This year, it is a Virtual National Tree Week - "All Things Trees". Keep an eye on Offaly Libraries' social media platforms for lots of tree-related events coinciding with National Tree Week from 21st to 27th March. We will have storytime, poetry reading, ideas for walks and lots of interesting snippets!

Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Appendix 1

Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 28th February 2021

| OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL | Full Yr Budget 2021 €m | Preliminary Value to February 2021 €m | % Year To Date |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|-------------------|
| | | | |
| Payroll costs | 28.03 | 3.81 | 13.6% |
| | | | |
| Grants and Subsidies Income | 38.24 | 2.66 | 7.0% |

OCC to 28th February 2021

| | <u>Rates</u> €m | <u>Rents</u> €m | <u>Loans</u> €m |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Opening Balance Jan 1, 2021 - Estimated | 3.35 | 0.57 | 0.23 |
| Invoices/Adjustments | 11.77 | 1.08 | 0.05 |
| 2021 Cash Collected to end of February | 0.53 | 1.00 | 0.09 |
| Closing Balance February 28th, 2021 | 14.59 | 0.65 | 0.19 |

2020 Cash collected to February

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 0.32 | 1.09 | 0.09 |
| % Collection at this point in 2020 | 165% | 92% | 101% |

Bank Overdraft to 28th February 2021

| | | |
|--|----|--------|
| Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date | 14 | 24% |
| Overdraft/Negative Interest and non conforming charges to February 28th 2021 YTD | | €4,392 |
| Bank Administration and transactional charges to February 28th 2021 YTD | | €2,987 |