

**JUNE  
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 Lúil

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

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

**FINANCE** - Appendix 1

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Age Friendly Alliance including the OPC, Offaly Older Network, LOETB and OLDC ARE working together on a writing project. The date for submissions has been extended to **August 22nd**. Contributions are coming in and a workshop was held in the Birr ETB Centre to assist people who were interested in Participating. 2 further workshop are proposed via Zoom to support anyone interested in contributing to the project. The closing date coincides with the Intergenerational Teddy Bears Picnic which takes place on August 22nd at the Charleville Centre Tullamore. Preparations are ongoing for this event. This is a Garda initiative supported by members of the Age Friendly Alliance.

**NATIONAL  
HERITAGE  
WEEK 2021  
14-22 AUG**



Offaly Libraries are proud to take part in Heritage Week 2021 and look forward to bringing fascinating aspects of Offaly Heritage to life. From a talk on the history of hurling, looking at the history of Blundell Castle, to folklore and music, we look forward to sharing the week with you. Full details of all our Heritage Week events will soon be on our website and on our social media channels.

### **REPORT AT A GLANCE**

#### **Conservation of Birr Courthouse**

Working alongside the Conservation Master Plan for the Courthouse and with architect, Rachel McKenna €200,000 was received from the Historic Towns Initiative and €50,000 from the Historic Structures Fund. The e-tenders will be assessed in July with works planned August to September on site focusing on the roof, façade render and windows.

#### **Tullamore Living River Project**

Work has now commenced on the Tullamore Living River Project site. This project sets out to deliver a landmark project for the residents and future visitors to Tullamore town which improves water quality, enhances biodiversity, provides amenities, allows flood relief and engages the local community with their spatial surroundings. It is a 15-week work program.

#### **N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link**

Public consultation stage 3 will commence in July / August 2021 where the emerging preferred route will be presented. As with previous public consultation there will be a presentation for the elected members before the public consultation commences.



## PLANNING

	To end June 2021	To end June 2020	Total 2020
Planning Applications	414	263	674
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	12	1	12
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	6(2)	2(1)	14 (6)

## Development Management

Planning Applications continue to grow year on year which is a reflection of strong growth following the COVID Pandemic. During the month of June, the following larger Applications were received:

Joseph Doorley	99 Unit Housing development at Arden. Tullamore
Sheila Doorley	99 Unit Housing development at Arden. Tullamore
Ravine Limited	Redevelop the Mill Building as 4 retail units and 18 apartments in Tullamore
Samleigh properties Ltd.	17 Unit Housing development at Ferbane
Euram Air Leases	Construction of 1600m2 Industrial / Commercial and Offices at Ferbane.

## Forward Planning

A copy of the Material Alterations to draft Offaly County Development Plan

2021-2027 and all accompanying determinations and reports are available for public inspection from **Thursday 17th June 2021 - 4pm Friday 16th July 2021 (both dates inclusive)**. Written submissions or observations must state the full name and address of the person or relevant body or agency making it, and should be clearly marked "*Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027*", and should quote the relevant material alteration reference number(s) (which commences with 'MA')

Submissions or observations can be made by using the online portal or by submitting in hard copy. Please note submissions or observations that are emailed **cannot** be considered and will be returned.

## HERITAGE

In line with Covid-19 guidelines, project planning continues under the Offaly Heritage Plan 2017-21. The Offaly Heritage Forum have their second meeting scheduled for July.

## Heritage Council funding

Funding of €30,000 has been secured in 2021 for three projects. The first is the **Conservation Master Plan for Birr Courthouse** which is in the process of being prepared by Howley Hayes Conservation Architects liaising with Birr 2020 who are the proposed users of the building for a Creative Court. The second is towards the delivery of the **Offaly County Archive Service** in partnership with Offaly History following the completion of the archive building at Axis Business Park. The third element includes a number of community outreach awareness projects.

### Offaly Biodiversity

- **National Biodiversity Action Plan Funding** - A grant offer of €27,400 has been confirmed to support the ongoing work at Ballywilliam / Killaun Bog and to assist in the recording of biodiversity data.
- We are working with four main stakeholders to develop a plan for the **Ballywilliam/ Killaun bog** east of Birr as well as carrying out some baseline ecology studies. Since last August we have been actively working with Saint Brendan's Community School who own the southern 40 hectares and are currently upgrading the 420m boardwalk with recycle plastic from Irish Recycled Products in Syngefield.
- **Invasive Species Funding** of €16,000 has been received to continue to treat Japanese knotweed county wide and to remove himalyan balsam from the Camcor and Little Brosna Catchments and work should start on site in July.
- The series **Wildflowers of Offaly** **YouTube** videos by John Feehan continues to develop and is hosted on the Offaly Heritage YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/user/offalyheritage>
- Working with Laois County Council we are supporting 6 **In Your Nature Podcasts** by **BIRDWATCH Ireland** in second summer series.

### Birr Destination Town Funding

Working with the OCC team to deliver this project following the review of the Public Realm Plan from 2009. Three main elements are being developed; upgrading the Green with works to start on site in July; improved access with Birr Demesne with ongoing discussions to look at opening a

connection to the Green from the Courtyard; and an interpretation strategy for the town which will lead to specific interventions for interpretation. The Interpretive Plan is being led by Alan Hill, public consultation has been concluded and the report is being drafted.

### Creative Ireland

In 2021 a budget of €147,000 is allocated to the Offaly Creative Ireland core programme with additional funding for Older Persons project and Cruinniu Children's Day in June. In Offaly the team involves the libraries, arts, architecture, heritage, enterprise and community all working together. Projects are underway. An application for the Climate Change separate funding stream was submitted in partnership with the communities of Pollagh, Geashill, Ferbane and Birr.

### Decade of Commemorations

A grant offer of €57,000 was received in June 2021 following a joint proposal from the Council with Offaly History and historical societies across Offaly. A comprehensive body of work is being developed with blogs, podcasts and a website.

### Community Monuments Fund

Funding offers were received in late June with funding towards conservation of the medieval ruins at Blundell Castle in Edenderry and Castlearmstrong near Ballycumber; conservation report for the boundary walls of Seir Kieran graveyard and signage for Lynally.

### Medieval Churches

- We have received confirmation of Just Transition funding with Laois Heritage Office of €748,000 which will go towards 'conservation and pollination' plans and works at a medieval church in each MD. The

churches in Offaly are Monasteroris in Edenderry, Kilbride (nr canal) in Tullamore and Kilmurry near Shinrone in Birr. The etenders are being assessed in July for the team to develop conservation reports and plans for each of the six sites.

- The maintenance programme will continue at the medieval church sites that have been conserved in recent years.
- We are working with the community at Kilcomin, near Shinrone, to plan for the conservation of the early Christian Monastic Site. This project has received funding from the Heritage Council.

#### County Council Working Groups

- OCC Climate Action Group
- Lough Boora Parklands Sculpture Park working group – there are 3 representatives from OCC and 3 from Bord na Mona to manage the future of the sculpture park – led by Sally O’Leary Arts officer.
- Birr Town Camcor River Study – on working group with Birr 2020 who secured LEADER funding for this project. The report was presented on line and workshops are planned to discuss delivery in September.
- Birr Destination Town Group

#### Tidy Towns’ Network

Working with the Community Section, we continue to provide information to groups who are preparing online application forms for the deadline of Friday 2 July 2021. All judging is remote and online.

Roads and the three MDs are progressing works throughout the County.

#### Edenderry Town Inner Relief Road

This has received approval from the Department of Transport to progress to tender and Phase 1 was published on etenders.ie on 24th May, closing 18th June. Construction commencement anticipated in Q3.

#### Local Improvement Scheme 2021

OCC received an allocation of €298,871 for the Local Improvement Scheme in 2021 for the Department of Rural and Community Development, an increase of 5% this year.

#### Active Travel and Outdoor Recreation

The NTA **Active Travel** and **Outdoor Infrastructure** schemes are progressing throughout the County to improve walking and cycling infrastructure and changes to traffic management arrangements to facilitate the reallocation of overall road space to improve facilities and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.



*New Pedestrian Crossing, Mucklagh*

#### ROADS

Roads Programme 2021: All construction works commenced on the 4<sup>th</sup> May and



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**ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES**

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**Climate Action**

A meeting of the Climate Action Steering group was held on the 25<sup>th</sup> June, where discussions took place around the 5 areas of:

- Climate Action Projects
- Economic opportunities arising from Climate Action
- Decarbonisation Zone
- Climate Action Plan
- Climate Action communication.

**Environment****Litter & Waste Management**

We have initiated 24 legal actions for littering and illegal dumping under Section 32 (1) of the Waste Management Act 1996. Three prosecutions pertain to action taken under Section 32 (2) of the WMA where it is an offence to give waste to an unauthorised waste collector. Eighteen of these cases have progressed to the District Court due in court in July.

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 Environment 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. The roll-out of a 2021 CEAF scheme will be considered when all projects under the previous scheme have been completed and when there is more clarity on the Covid-19 crisis situation.

**Wastewater**

Consultants have been appointed for the upgrade of the Edenderry Plant, this

project will be led by Irish Water, and it is hoped a kick off meeting will take place in the near future.

Walsh Island: The design of reed bed is progressing.

Shannonbridge: Repair works were carried out on the tanks, and All weep holes have been

**Water**

Works on the upgrade of the Tullamore, Birr and Clonaslee Water Treatment plants are on-going.

Find and fix works are ongoing in Tullamore, Newtown Ferbane and Pullough.

Watermain rehabilitation works are being designed for Newtown.

Disinfection programme is nearing completion at Tubberdaly, Coolderry, Clonbullogue, Edenderry and Walsh Island.

**Rural Water Programme**

The Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2019 – 2021 is ongoing. The Annual Group Water Scheme applications have been received by the Rural Water Team and are being processed.

**Burial Grounds**

Kilreaghan Cemetery, the extension to the cemetery was published on eTenders website, with a closing date of the 23 of June. Submissions are now being reviewed.

**HOUSING****Covid-19 – Housing**

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

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

**June Housing Update**

- There are 530 on the Social Housing List awaiting housing support at the end of June 2021.
- A further 836 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 15 signed up for HAP and 12 exited from HAP in June.

- At the end of June, 17 single people and 2 families were being supported in emergency accommodation.
- 15 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans applications have been received in 2021. 1 has been approved, 6 declined, 1 ineligible, 1 withdrawn and the remainder are awaiting decisions. Overall 15 RIHLs have been drawn down since the commencement of the programme.
- The Housing Section have commenced a Rent Review of Local Authority housing units. A final call for documentation has issued. All communications in relation to the Rent Review can be emailed to [rentreview@offalcoco.ie](mailto:rentreview@offalcoco.ie)

**Housing Stock – Number, Maintenance & Repair**

- Total housing stock at end of June 2021 is 1,935.
- Maintenance has returned to non-emergency works with Covid-19 precautions in place.

**Housing Capital Programme Update**

- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – Stage 3 approval application (permission to proceed to Tender) will be submitted to the Department in July/August 2021; Part 8 resolution was passed at the May Council meeting following presentation of the Chief Executives Report. Letters to those who submitted observations in relation to the Part 8 will issue in June 2021.
- Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane (20 Units) – received Stage 1 approval in April 2020. The Design Team have been appointed. Following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions the required site investigations were commenced in May 2021. Awaiting Site Survey and investigation report

to finalise Stage 2 submission to the department which will issue in early Q3, 2021.

- Moneygall (4 units) – received Stage 3 approved on June 18th 2021. Contract documents will be uploaded to e-tenders in July / August
- Beechgrove Belmont (7 units) – received Stage 3 approval received June 17th 2021. Tender documents will be uploaded to e-tenders in July/August 2021
- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 Units) – Stage 3 submission lodged on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- Banagher, Kylebeg (18 Units) – Stage 4 approval received on 25<sup>th</sup> June. Construction due to start in August / September 2021
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) - Stage 3 approval was received in March 2021. Works Tender will issue on [www.etenders.gov.ie](http://www.etenders.gov.ie) in early Q3, 2021 with a view to commencing construction in Autumn 2021.
- Circular Road, Daingean, Site 2 (9 Units) – Stage 1 approval application was granted on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021 for the site adjoining the OCC housing site on Circular Road
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (8 Units) – Stage 1 approval was granted by the Department on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Design Team appointment will proceed to enable site investigations to progress and Stage 2 application to be submitted in Q4 2021.

#### Vacant Houses Initiatives

- 1 Newbridge Street, Birr: Refurbishment of derelict dwelling to provide retrofitted 3-bedroom dwelling. Stage 3 submitted on June 21<sup>st</sup>.

- 4 Hillview, Holly Park, Birr: Progressing as an acquisition
- 121 Lakeview, Clara: Stage 1 submission will be submitted to the Department in July 2021.
- 3 x Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) complete in 2021. Contractor appointed for the refurbishment of two of these units

#### Approved Housing Bodies Schemes

- Cluid Housing Association: Construction on the 26 units has recommenced with completion date projected for February 2022
- Oaklee: Clonminch, Tullamore (19 units) – Contractor is appointed and construction is progressing well
- Oaklee: Kearney's Field (41 Units) – Contractor is appointed and construction is progressing well
- 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.
- 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): Under Construction

- 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 and will be allocated in the coming weeks.

### 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 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. Design details and tenders are currently being progressed for several extension and adaption grants.

### Retrofit Programme

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

Lot 1&2, Birr: A letter of intent to appoint the preferred tenderer to carry out the retrofitting works was issued on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021. Works will commence in Q3, 2021 on these 35 houses following department approval.

Lot 3&4, Tullamore: The appointed consultants have surveyed the 42 houses in Tullamore and are preparing the works tender which will be advertised on [www.etenders.gov.ie.in](http://www.etenders.gov.ie.in) 2021.

Lot 5&6, Edenderry, Daingean, Clara, Ferbane, Shannonbridge, Cloghan: The tender has been awarded to consultants and surveys of the 43 houses almost complete.

## LOCAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Offaly Community Response Forum

The interagency Community Response Forum has met 21 times since the first meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> 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.

### Public Participation Network

The PPN in conjunction with ODEN (Offaly Disability Equality Network) and the Tullamore Chamber of Commerce This is an awareness campaign to encourage businesses to be conscious of where they place street furniture and to understand the difficulties encountered by people with mobility issues or those with visual impairments or special awareness difficulties. This initiative was launched by the Cathaoirleach Declan Harvey in June in O'Connor square.

Business are encouraged to display a sticker denoting their understanding and



willingness to take everyone into account when locating street furniture outside their premises.



The PPN's in Offaly & Laois held an Online Security & Safety event Online following on from the concerns address at the most recent JPC about the level of Phone & Text Scams circulation at the moment. This was a very successful event. Sgt. Graham Kavanagh presented on the different scams currently occurring and explaining to people about the Do's & Don'ts and also about other areas including managing Farm security during this busy farming season.

The PPN continues to promote funding opportunities and other opportunities of interest to the Community & Voluntary sector via email, Newsletter and Social Media.

### Age Friendly Alliance

The June edition of Connecting the Faithful Newsletter was circulated across the county. The following poem was included in the June edition, well timed

### FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS

(by Ed Devery Feb. 2021)

*That green, white and gold jersey  
The Faithful County we all adore  
Famed for sport throughout the land  
Hurling and football always to the fore*

*They have all given great pride and joy  
With a never say die attitude and more  
To Faithful followers from all over Offaly  
Birr, Edenderry, Ferbane and Tullamore*

*They have all tasted true All-Ireland  
success*

*Croke Park always just like a second home  
With hurlers and footballers at their best  
Making Sam and Liam trophies their own*

*The Faithful County are now taking a break  
Footballers and hurlers taking some time  
out*

*But already plans are in place for future  
success*

*For Faithful followers to once again cheer  
aloud*

(Dedicated to all Offaly hurlers, footballers and supporters of the past and the present, and hopefully of the future.)

### Comhairle na nÓg

Offaly Comhairle na nÓg Executive held their Executive meeting on the 3rd of June. On the 12th of June they held another meeting to develop their app which is to create awareness about single use plastics in schools. On the 17th of June a steering group meeting was held and the Executive welcomed Cllr. Neil Feighery to the steering group and Donal Lillis from

Libraries. It was a very productive meeting and the Executive received good advice in relation to their topic. Anita Allen also kindly invited the Executive to spend some time at St Marys Youth Centre to give awareness about what Comhairle is to young people there. It was a very enjoyable experience.



### Offaly Community Recognition Awards 2021

Offaly County Council in partnership with the Offaly Independent newspaper were delighted to hold their inaugural Offaly Community Recognition Awards 2021 on Friday 18th June 2021 at 8pm. The awards were held in order to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding community efforts by individuals, groups and volunteers in County Offaly during the past difficult year.

The high number of entries and nominations received under the 7 categories were an acknowledgement of the outstanding community efforts that individuals and groups have delivered in County Offaly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Both the Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, and the Chief Executive acknowledged the great variety of community supports which were put in

place in County Offaly, and these were reflected in the category Winners and Runners Up.

Congratulations to all of our worthy Winners and Runner Ups listed below:

<b>Above and Beyond Award</b>	<b>Winner</b>	Daingean GAA
	<b>Runner Up</b>	Bernie Ryan Keegan, Gallen CS
<b>Business Champion Award</b>	<b>Winner</b>	Shishir Restaurant, Tullamore
	<b>Runner Up</b>	The Square Café, Tullamore
<b>Climate Change Award</b>	<b>Winner</b>	Scoil Mhuire Naofa, Rhode
	<b>Runner Up</b>	Clonbullogue Development Association
<b>Community Collaboration Award</b>	<b>Winner</b>	Pullough Community Shop
	<b>Runner Up</b>	Kilcormac Development Association
<b>Digital Support Award</b>	<b>Winner</b>	Awfully Irish Podcast
	<b>Runner Up</b>	Ballycommon Telework & Training Centre
<b>Individual Impact Award</b>	<b>Winner</b>	Jack McDermott, Tullamore
	<b>Runner Up</b>	Caroline Bryant, Mucklagh
<b>Social Inclusion Award</b>	<b>Winner</b>	Martina Gorman, Killeigh
	<b>Runner Up</b>	Lloyd Bracken 'Little Town Media'
<b>Pride of Place entrants 2020 recognised</b>	Glendaniel Residents Association, Tullamore	
	Lusmagh Development Group	

The video of the Community Recognition Awards is available on [www.Offaly.ie](http://www.Offaly.ie), on the Offaly Independent website at <http://www.offalyindependent.ie/> and on social media platforms over the next few weeks.



## ARTS

## Music Generation Offaly/Westmeath

## Munch time Sing

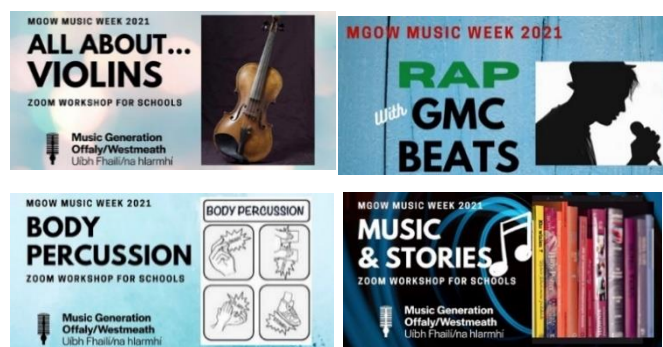
Munch time choir has been running now for 6 weeks and we are receiving a great response to the choir. Choir is led by choral conductor Robbie Pender. We were very lucky to receive funding from the community resilience fund to run this choir. We are taking a break for the summer but hope to recommence the munch time choir again in September



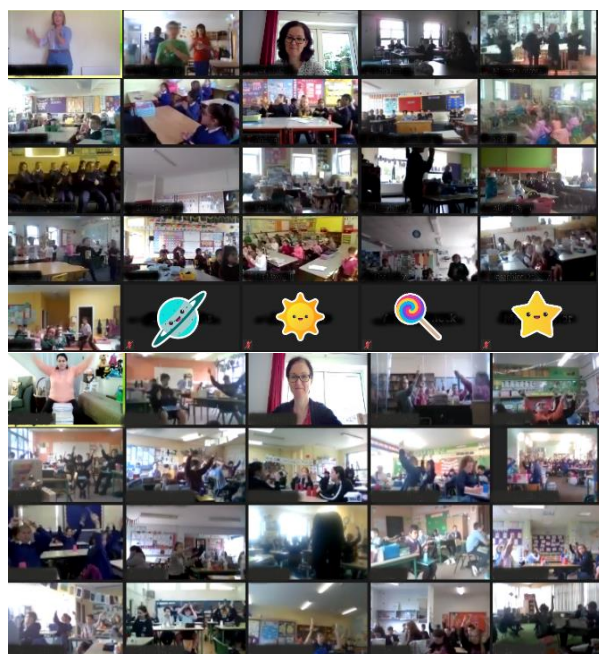
Music Generation Offaly Westmeath put together an online music activity week for Offaly & Westmeath primary schools which commenced on June 14th. We would ordinarily finish up in schools at this time of year so this year we decided to run Music week to finish the academic year. We had 118 classes from 43 primary schools across Offaly & Westmeath. We had lots of schools that we had not engaged with before so this gave us the opportunity to engage with new schools. The workshops included body percussion, learning about the violin with Ingrid Nicola of the RTE Con Tempo Quartet and to end the week some rapping fun with Gary McCarthy of GMC Beats.

## Intergenerational Ukulele Sessions

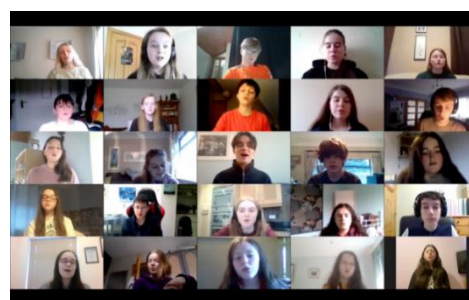
We had a zoom tea party on 24<sup>th</sup> June with a performance from the ukulele group to mark our break for the summer period. Again we were very lucky to receive funding from the Community Resilience fund to continue these sessions which we love doing and we hope to get back to these sessions in September.



## Music week 14th to 18th June 2021



## Spring Voices Virtual Choir



During the course of our Spring Voices and working in partnership with Music Generation Louth and Sing Ireland, in April of this year, the young people learnt and recorded the song *Over the Rainbow* and a video has been produced. The video will be shared via social media and available to watch on the MGOW YouTube channel in the coming days.

### Planning for events over the Summer

We are working on a number of projects for the summer period.

- Try the Pipes event Saturday 14th and 21st August in connection with Na Píobairí Uilleann. We are going to run taster workshops in the libraries in Offaly & Westmeath on the 14<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> August to give kids the opportunity to try the pipes before we commence piping sessions in Sept / October 2021 in venues in Offaly & Westmeath.
- Summer Voices – We are preparing our summer voices programme for August 2021.

### Online programmes

- Monday morning music for pre-schoolers,
- Choral activities for all ages - Singfest Choirs
- Our Sinfonia Ensemble
- Rock at 2pm for children and young people based in SEN/ ASD units
- Music Production and song writing
- Music Jam

All the above online programmes are on a break for the summer but will recommence again in September.

### Planning for 2021-2022

We have commenced corresponding with our partner schools and planning for the academic year 2021-2022. We will work with the Dept. of Education and our partner schools to work out MGOW phased return to face to face teaching in September / October 2021.

### CPD for Music Educators

We are using the summer period to provide some CPD for Music Educators.

### Quality Framework Review

In conjunction with MG NDO we are undertaking a quality review of our Kodaly programme with a number of our musicians. We are just looking at ways to improve & strengthen our Kodaly programme.



### Social Media / Website

We are very active on all our social media outlets and working to keep our website ([www.musicgenerationoffalywestmeath.ie](http://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 for a very busy annual programme for 2021. The annual programme will be delivered in response to the current and anticipated restrictions, therefore will be a combination of online and where possible on the ground projects.

### Lough Boora - Art in Landscape Seminar

Planning for an Art in Landscape seminar is in progress, with the cultural the producer's selection process in progress. Funding for this seminar was made available through the Arts Council's Invitation to Collaboration Scheme, as a continuation project / partnership with Mayo County Council. This seminar will focus on a discussion of how arts, culture, tourism and climate change policies can align / work together and how this collaboration can inform future policy. The Cultural Producers will be required to devise a number of lead-in workshops, community engagement initiatives with local communities / stakeholders, prior to the seminar. The key audience for the seminar will include people interested in and

working in the arts, culture, tourism and environment sectors, people living locally who engage with art in the landscape, and experts in their field nationally and internationally. The cultural producer will expand on this audience base, to reach as wide as possible existing and new audiences.

### Grants & Awards

Arts Acts Grants, Professional Artists Support Scheme, Festival Arts Grants – have been awarded and are in progress. Drawdown date for all the above is end of November 2021, and grants are accessed throughout this time.

### Local Live Performance Scheme

A call went out to Musicians and Performers for submissions for proposals for consideration under the Local Live Performance Scheme. Closing date is Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021. The call is to put in place a panel of performers and artists for the programming of the Local Live Performance events planned to take place in the Municipals of Birr, Tullamore and Edenderry. Offaly County Council has been awarded funding from the Department for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, and this funding has been allocated across the three municipal districts. The funding will be used to assist producers, promoters and venues to provide support for people in the industry to facilitate professional programming of outdoor live performances in summer 2021 animating town centres for local communities, should public health considerations permit.

### Arts Council Funding

The Arts Office have been notified of two large scale programme funding awards from the Arts Council. In the Open | Faoin Spéir – funding award of €90,000 plus Creative Places – Edenderry which will

have a value of almost €500,000 for the town over a three-year funding period. Totalling a commitment of almost €600,000 for developing the arts in Offaly.

### In the Open | Faoin Spéir

This is a special purpose ‘Invitation to Collaboration’ round in 2021 that has been developed in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The purpose of the award is to generate a sustained and curated programme of multidisciplinary, inclusive arts activity in public or open spaces in towns and communities around Ireland between July 2021 and April 2022. In the Open | Faoin Spéir will help to bring a renewed spirit of optimism and confidence in a fulsome return to the arts. A collaborative partnership, led by Offaly County Council’s Arts Office, included Birr Theatre and Arts Centre and Birr Festivals Collective. Its aim is to develop an exciting and innovative curated programme of outdoor events, planned for Birr, Lough Boora, (in conjunction with the Sculpture Park) and Tullamore, in anticipation of the opening of the new Arts Centre for the town next year. The programme which will now commence this summer was devised by Offaly curator, Brendan Fox. The title of the programme is *‘Spectacular Venacular - Making the Ordinary Extraordinary’* and was designed with the intention to afford a collaborative stakeholders programme to galvanise the collective ambitions for the Arts in Offaly in a manner which will align all the long-term strategic goals of each partner. Spectacular Venacular is a curated multi-disciplinary arts programme incorporating a series of outdoor events, workshops, performances and happenings that will focus on developing new creative networks and opportunities for both artists and the community.



### Creative Places Edenderry

The Arts Office in conjunction with the national charitable agency, Creative Lives has been successful in an application to the Arts Council for funding under their Creative Places scheme. Creative Lives works with communities, organisations, policy-makers and funders as a voice for change, to improve the landscape in which creative participation takes place. This ambitious three-year funding stream (which will have a value of nearly 500,000 to the town over the period) will be led by Creative Lives in partnership with Offaly County Council Arts Office and Edenderry Municipal Council. This is a ground up developmental project which has the potential to galvanise and transform the creative and cultural scene in Edenderry. The project will include a steering committee inclusive of Creative Lives, Offaly County Council Arts Office and Edenderry Municipal District, together with Offaly County Library Service, Creative Edenderry, North Offaly Community Development Network and Edenderry Community Cabin. The ambition of the partners is to facilitate the emergence of a strong cultural identity for the area and support sustainable networks and opportunities for cultural engagement and participation. It will aim to achieve this through open, collaborative methods engaging with the community at grassroots level. The project will work in alignment with plans for the new library and art space.

### Capital Projects Tullamore Art Centre

Work continues with regards to the opening of the Arts Centre in 2022.

The Arts Office have commissioned the development of a stand-alone curated project, which has been funded by Creative Ireland Funding – based on the re-ignition of the Tullamore Foundation Festival. This programme has started and will aim to re-

engage an audience / local community participation in advance of the Art Centre opening. A recent performance in Tullamore Park, was the culmination of series of workshops for young dancers from Donlan's Dance Company, with facilitation by internationally acclaimed B-Boy (Breakdancer) and Hip Hop dancer Tobi Omoseto.

### Creative Ireland

The Arts Office continues to lead on a number of Creative Ireland projects including:

- The Animation Residency and the Tullamore Arts Development Project, plus the community projects:
- Writers project in conjunction with Lough Boora and BNM with Kilcormac Economic Development Association
- Reimagining the astronomical heritage of Birr
- Phoenix Remembered Tullamore Youth Project
- A Song of Resilience – Birr Festivals Collective
- Art on Your Doorstep – cross county arts and health project

### FilmOffaly

The FilmOffaly Short Film Award 2021 contract has been signed with Mixed Bag Media and promotion call for mentees on the film will start in early July.

FilmOffaly Script Mentoring: Ireland's leading Script Writer, editor and mentor Mary Kate O'Flanagan was selected as



FilmOffaly's Script Mentor for 2021. Four mentees have been selected and the programme will commence for 6 months starting from early July.

The FilmOffaly Award 2019 *The Whale* is now in preproduction due to be shot on location in July.

Offaly film director, producer and writer Paddy Slattery has been nominated for 5 IFTA Awards plus a young star rising award for his first feature length film *Broken Law*. Also Cardel Entertainment has picked up a nomination for their Stop Motion production *Gunter Falls In Love*. Finally our FilmOffaly Short Film Awardee *The Passion* has been selected for the Galway Film Festival.

### Offaly Culture Night 2021

Commissions and proposals have been evaluated and selected for Offaly Culture Night. Planning and scheduling is now underway for the nights events.

### Hullabaloo! Offaly Children's Arts Festival

Planning has begun for the 2021 festival. Artists workshop and show performances have been evaluated.

### Youth Arts Commission

Evaluations were undertaken with respect to submissions of proposals for a €15,000 Youth Arts Commission. The successful submission was a project proposed by a collaboration of artists. Contract documents are in progress.

### Mini Movies Programme

A facilitator for this scheme has been contracted and they will be working with three schools in Edenderry in September 2021 to produce their own mini movies. This scheme is undertaken in collaboration with OFFline Film Festival.

### Art Event Highlights in June

There were numerous events during June including

**Cois Ceim in Killeigh:** Funded through the Arts Council, Cois Ceim Dance Theatre projected a stunning live contemporary dance performance directly onto the Bally Alley in Killeigh.



**Light Ballet:** Funded by the Arts Council. This was an amazing light installation to music that travelled along the Shannon River, visible to all those along the route.

**Dance in the Park:** Students of Amy Donlon's Contemporary Dance company and dance facilitator Tobi Omesto (Museum of Everyone Artist) worked over several months to produce an original choreographed dance piece which was performed in Tullamore Park



**Art in the Park and in The Atrium:** Tullamore artist Julie Spollen funded under the Arts Act Grant worked with members of the Ballycumber Leamonaghan elder age community to produce original portraits, a response to the lock down. Several of these portraits have been enlarged and are now on public display in Tullamore Park.



## SPORTS

### Funding

Offaly Sports Partnership has secured €68,680 in Dormant Accounts funding from Sport Ireland under the 2021 scheme. €43,680 has been allocated to support the continuing development of the newly established Daingean sports hub; while €12,500 each has been allocated to support delivery of sports leader training for transition years and the purchase of sports inclusion development programme equipment

Play Day and Bike Week applications submitted to their respective Departments. €3,000 has been allocated for the delivery of Play Day activities on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> July.

Following a review of the Covid19 impact on sport grant applications, 44 clubs / organisations were allocated funding under this scheme: -

- Mucklagh Schoolboys / Schoolgirls Soccer Club - €1,100
- Ballyskenagh / Killavilla GAA Club, Kilcormac / Killoughey Camogie Club, Naomh Ciaran Ladies Gaelic Football Club,

Ballinagar GAA, Birr GAA, Durrow GAA, Kilclonfert GAA, Killeigh Schoolboys / girls Soccer Club, Rhode Ladies Gaelic Football Club, Tullamore Rugby Club - €1,000 each

- Bracknagh GAA, Derry Rovers Football Club, St. Bridget's Boxing Club Edenderry, Edenderry Snooker Club, St. Sinchills Camogie Club, Tullamore Camogie Club, Tullamore Hockey Club - €900 each
- Cloneygowan Celtic Football Club, Edenderry Golf Club, Kilcormac Killoughey Badminton Club, Slieve Bloom Cricket Club, Sparticus Boxing Club Tullamore, St. Joseph's Boxing Club Edenderry, Tullamore Ladies Gaelic Football Club, Tullamore Town Soccer Club - €800 each
- Clodiagh Gaels GAA Club, Clonmore / Riverside Soccer Club, Offaly Rowing Club, Portarlinton Golf Club, St. Manchan's Ladies Gaelic Football Club - €750 each
- Coolraine Soccer Club, Moneygall Soccer Club, Banagher Snooker Club, Seir Kieran GAA Club, Shamrocks GAA Club, Walsh Island GAA Club, Naomh Molaoise Ladies Gaelic Football Club - €700 each
- Belmont GAA Club, Birr Leisure Centre, Shamrock's Ladies Gaelic Football Club, Naomh Mhuire Athletics Club, Belmont Fishing Club, Shannonbridge GAA Club - €650 each

### Education & Training

Safeguarding 1 delivered online via Zoom in June for 15 volunteers.

Offaly Sports Partnership tutors completed their "activator pole" training with *Fizzical*

in June. Two online sessions and a practical session were delivered

### Programmes

In accordance with the Government's "Recovery and Resilience: The Path Ahead" plan, Offaly Sports Partnership continued to deliver community sport, and sport inclusion development programmes in June: -

*"The Longest Day Challenge"* commenced on 1st June and ran until the 21st June. 2,000 participants signed up to the challenge in which each participant committed to taking part in some kind of daily physical activity everyday between the 1st and 20th June; and to log their daily physical activity in a specifically commissioned diary for the challenge. Diaries are currently being returned for review, and prize winners will be announced in July.

Delivery of physical activity, exercise and sport programmes for 50 older adults and women in local outdoor facilities continued. 1:1 physical activity supports for people with disabilities recommenced in June. School sport & physical activity programmes - the six-week school sport and physical activity programme which commenced in May wrapped up in schools at the start of June.

The Sports Inclusion Development Officer has also planned a range of sports inclusion development programmes for delivery in July. These programmes include July provisions and multi-sport inclusive camps for children and young people with disabilities.

### HEALTHY OFFALY

With the further easing of restrictions in the summer months, the roll-out of Healthy

Ireland actions has continued to gather pace.

In the Building Healthier Communities action, a walking programmes for older adults and young people has been piloted among existing and newly established health and wellbeing groups. If restrictions continue to ease, the additional elements of facilitated workshops and social chat at the conclusion of each session will recommence. Four groups are developing activities to be delivered during the summer including: -

- i. Scurragh street league programme: equipment, materials and refreshments are in the process of being purchased to support delivery of this project
- ii. Pullough – "thank you" celebration at planning stage. Event to be delivered in August
- iii. Offaly Healthy Homes – inter generational letter writing project underway

Under the 'Grow it Yourself & Healthy Eating action Moneygall & Bracknagh grow it yourself groups continue to be supported with a social farming project recommencing for five people with intellectual disabilities. Three additional projects in Ballycumber, Birr and Ferbane are at pre development stage.

For the *Eco Spaces as places of Health and Well-Being* action, a Tullamore equine group and a dog walking group has commenced activities in recent weeks. A Shinrone sensory group has also commenced activities. A Babycaf initiative is being prepared for rollout, these are supports for parents of young children in pre development stage. This Programme is due to commence in September. The Moneygall community gym is now open.



Finally, a Grand Canal Edenderry canal based activities group for young people is due to commence soon.

Currently Healthy Offaly staff are processing the year 2 Healthy Ireland Fund spend for all partners which is to be transmitted to Pobal before 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

### Community Resilience Fund

All partner organisations who received a grant award under the Community Resilience Fund have now submitted their action progress and financial reports. In total 17 actions were funded from a broad spectrum of activities under the three themes 1. Your County 2. Switching Off & Being Active 3. Staying Connected (Community Call). A total of €67,225 was distributed to the following groups for action development and rollout:

- Offaly Age Friendly Alliance
- Community Section, Offaly County Council
- Music Generation
- Parents First
- Youth Work Ireland Midlands
- Offaly Local Development Company
- North Offaly Community Development Network
- Shannonbridge Community Services Group
- Offaly Library Service
- Offaly Heritage Office

Currently, the Healthy Ireland Coordinator is collating all the information received back into one centralised reporting database for transmission to Pobal for verification. The deadline for completion of all CRF reporting is 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

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### TOURISM

The tourism team have been busy preparing for the Summer Season in anticipation of a busy period for the tourism & hospitality sector.

### Launch of Tourism Promotional Videos

It's an exciting time for Offaly Tourism as these are the first suite of promotional videos ever commissioned to promote tourism in Offaly.

We are extremely happy with the end product; the videos are lively, engaging and Offaly's sites and attractions look super appealing.

The first video in the suite of four was launched on 24<sup>th</sup> June targeting the family market. The remaining three videos will launch in the early weeks of July.

The promotional videos are focused around different target markets: Connected families, footloose socialisers, culturally curious and great escapers. They showcase the best Offaly has to offer the potential visitors and include well known visitor attractions along with lesser known 'Hidden Gems'.

### Extended Outdoor Seating & Accessories Scheme

The existing Outdoor Seating & Accessories for Tourism & Hospitality Business scheme which is an initiative from Fáilte Ireland in conjunction with the local authorities, has been extended to include Pubs not in possession of a food licence. The tourism team are administering the scheme and are accepting applications up to 30/9/2021.

### Television Coverage

Offaly Tourism hosted the crew of the US Travel TV Show 'Ireland County by



County' in June. The production company filmed in Offaly for 3 days in early June, visiting our world class attractions and meeting the faces behind the scenes. The 30-minute magazine style programme is due to be broadcast to US audiences in the Autumn. We are looking forward to seeing the end product.

Filming for two other TV productions took place in Offaly in recent weeks, the TG4 music documentary 'Fleadh 21' and TG4's 'Heartland' TV Series featuring Sharon Shannon who performed in Clonmacnoise and Shannonbridge.

### Radio Campaigns

'Get away from it all this Summer, and escape to Offaly' is the opening line in a new radio campaign broadcast on iRadio in the month of June. The advert ran for a period of two weeks on iRadio, covering its two geographic areas of the North East and North West, with the potential reach of 360,000 listeners.

Offaly Tourism's collaboration with its neighbouring counties of Laois and Westmeath continued in June, with an extra month of radio advertisements on Midlands 103. The adverts promote the 'magical Midlands' and encourage the listeners to explore the wonders that the region has to offer, on their doorstep. The adverts will run for a total of 8 weeks, up until 14<sup>th</sup> July.

### Festival Dome Launch

Birr Festivals Collective took receipt of four stunning geodesic domes in mid-June - just in time for the recommencement of the midlands town season of Summer festivals and events. The four domes - which vary in size from 5m to 9.5m diameter will be used for street-based arts events and spectacles - from classical concerts to workshops, theatre productions to screenings. The domes were secured as

part of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020 (accelerated measures) in response to Covid-19 and were majority funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and part funded by Offaly County Council. They will be a great addition to the festival programme and we look forward to seeing them utilised and enjoyed in the near future.

### LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

#### Oat in the City: An Offaly good success story!

LEO Offaly is proud to see our client Liam Lynam's new business Oat in the City going from strength to strength. Oat in the City is a new oat drink produced by Liam on his farm in Tullamore. The product is gluten free and dairy free. Their oats drink range retains the oats natural fibres, beta glucans and protein, has no added sugar and is low in natural sugars. Their products produce little to no waste and they are interested in sustainability and reducing food waste, as it is one of the leading causes of climate change.

Their initial aim is to change the retail landscape where currently there are international brands using globally sourced Oat syrup to a place where Irish consumers have a choice to purchase from local Irish food processors such as Oat in the City using Irish Oat to make a far more nutritional Oat drink.



The product is now available in retail and hospitality businesses and is stocked in over

200 stores nationwide and growing. The business has also featured in numerous publications including The Farmer's Journal, The Business Post, Agriland.ie, thatsfarming.com and his interview on Midlands 103 "Taking Care of Business" Show.

### **Upcoming Events and New Initiatives** **Small Business Assistance Scheme for COVID (SBASC)**

The Government extends eligibility of Small Business Assistance Scheme for COVID (SBASC) to Businesses operating from a non-rateable premises such as a home office or hot-desk, are now eligible for help with fixed costs. Self-employed working from home, wedding planners, on-course bookmakers, travel counsellors and photographers among those expected to benefit.

The Small Business Assistance Scheme for COVID (SBASC) is for businesses that are down 75% or more of turnover and are not eligible for CRSS or other sector specific grants. The extension of eligibility for the SBASC to businesses operating from non-rateable premises will assist in defraying ongoing fixed costs. Such costs can include utilities, maintenance of equipment and mobile business, security, IT systems fees, storage, legal and accountancy and costs required to provide a safe working environment. Business will be asked to declare that they intend to resume trading in full once Government COVID restrictions are eased.

SBASC also aligns with grant schemes for the tourism, arts and entertainment sectors. The grant is available from Offaly County Council, and is a contribution towards fixed costs to assist a business to keep operational for the re-opening. Closing date for Phase 2 applications will be 21 July 2021.

### **The Green for Micro programme**

Offaly's small businesses are being encouraged to avail of The Green for Micro Programme, which is 2 Free Days of Consultancy to help them become more sustainable. The consultant will provide specific recommendations that business owners can implement. These recommendations could include improvements to energy efficiencies, reduced water usage, reduced or improved packaging, product design, materials etc. 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.

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

### **New Frontiers Phase 2 2021 - OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS**

New Frontiers is the national programme designed to develop entrepreneurs. It is delivered on behalf of Enterprise Ireland by Institutes of Technology and Universities across Ireland. The programme's primary purpose is to accelerate the development of sustainable new businesses that have strong employment and growth potential and contribute to job creation and economic activity in regional locations. It is open to business ideas from across all sectors including food & consumer products; information & communication technology; engineering & electronics; medical devices; biotechnology; pharma, digital media; cleantech/renewable energy; and eligible internationally-traded services. For further information, visit

<https://www.ait.ie/research-and-innovation/new-frontiers>

**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/>.

**Calling all Vacant Property Owners**

Do you own a commercial or industrial premises that is currently vacant? Do you have industrial sites? Interested in selling or leasing? If you like to be included in our FREE online property database, contact us at [info@leo.offalycoco.ie](mailto:info@leo.offalycoco.ie)

**BREXIT – Information for Businesses**

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

**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****Enterprise Ireland Supports**

Enterprise Ireland is the state agency responsible for supporting the development of manufacturing and internationally traded services companies. They provide funding and supports for companies from entrepreneurs with business propositions for a high potential start-up through to large companies expanding their activities, improving efficiency and growing international sales. For more information on Enterprise Ireland supports visit <https://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/funding-supports/>

**InterTradeIreland Supports**

InterTradeIreland helps SMEs across the island by offering practical cross-border business funding, intelligence and contacts. For more information, visit [www.intertradeireland.com](http://www.intertradeireland.com)

**Financial Supports Overview**

Some financial supports that may be available to Offaly businesses are listed below. For further information > <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:****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 is 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. For more information, please visit [www.sbc.gov.ie](http://www.sbc.gov.ie)

**In-Focus****Engenuity Midlands Engineering Network**

Engenuity Midlands Engineering Network is a member led engineering cluster based in the Midlands. The Engenuity Engineering Network was set up in 2017. This Network is an initiative forming part of the Regional Action Plan for Jobs–Midlands, funded under the LEO Competitive Fund and delivered by the

Westmeath, Offaly, Longford & Laois Local Enterprise Offices in association with other enterprise and innovation stakeholders. Engenuity acts as an exchange forum where members can build links, share experiences and undertake joint commercial activity. Engenuity enables access to a range of unique supports, and is enabling networking of business owners throughout the Midlands Region.

Engenuity enables access to support by facilitating workshops, networking events, guest speakers and member presentations. By sharing knowledge of the sector and support bodies, engineering firms in the Midlands can continue to grow. The Network acts as an exchange forum and cohesive network for its members to build links, share experience and undertake joint commercial activity. The network includes events to share expertise and best practice based around specific topics, facilitate guest speakers, member presentations, workshops and networking (physical and virtual) so that companies can learn from each other and access support from peers and stakeholder organisations, such as the industry, knowledge sector and other enterprise support bodies.

The cluster is based on the knowledge that Engineering firms thrive when they work to support each other. The cluster focuses on bringing solutions to industry challenges for engineering firms in the Midlands using peer learning and leveraging existing Government supports. The Midlands Engineering Network is an integral part of the structured effort to promote market-led innovation, stakeholder collaboration, ‘best practice’ transfer and product and trade development among the Midlands Engineering Cluster. There are currently 51 companies in total of which 16 are from Offaly including Belmac Engineering, Coughlan Engineering (Tullamore) Ltd, Applied Concepts, Decontamination Technical Services Ltd and Grant



Engineering. Engenuity Midlands Engineering Network is an initiative of the Midland LEOs. New members are welcome, for more information, visit [www.midlandsengineering.ie](http://www.midlandsengineering.ie).



### LIBRARY SERVICES

#### Summer in Offaly Libraries

Offaly Libraries are delighted to present our **Summer Stars** programme. 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 a non-competitive reading initiative and a calendar highlight in our **Right to Read Campaign**. Every child who reads even one book is rewarded for completing the programme – and it's all free! The accompanying events programme will be delivered online with lots of fun activities planned for Summer Stars 2021, including online stories, quizzes, craft videos, lots of book recommendations and competitions. There are shelves of new

books in all our branches and on BorrowBox. More details can be found on our [website](#) and on our [social media pages](#)! Since reopening on 10th May we have had **10,000 visitors** across all eight branches with over **15,000 items borrowed**! We have very much enjoyed welcoming back our patrons.



#### Cruinniú na nÓg 2021





Cruinniú na nÓg celebrations took place on **Saturday 12th June** and Offaly Libraries, on behalf of the Offaly Creative Ireland Team would like to thank all facilitators for their contributions. A particular thanks is also extended to everyone who attended events online and visited libraries on the day. This special day of creativity for children was jam-packed with [35 workshops](#) delivered.



There was a total of [490 participants](#) for Cruinniú and 7 videos attracted 3,149 views. A first for Cruinniú in Offaly, our events were attended by a global audience with children in Spain, the Middle East, America and Australia attending via Zoom! Comic Con hosted 10 workshops for children with a 181 participants or 71% participation rate. All recorded videos are still available on Offaly Libraries [Facebook page](#) for anybody who missed out on the day.

As part of our Cruinniú na nÓg celebrations, we were delighted to welcome back our award-winning [Offaly Libraries Comic Con](#).

We received some truly amazing entries to our 'Create a Comic Character' competition for Offaly Libraries Comic Con! All entries were compiled into a [digital art exhibition](#) and displayed on social media and in branches. Comic Con competitions in Cosplay received over 100 entries. Congratulations are extended to all competition winners, two of whom have already called in to collect prizes and are pictured below.



### Digital Exhibitions

Offaly Libraries are hosting two lovely digital exhibitions ongoing at the moment, check out the images of the wonderful paintings the next time you visit the library.



### Birr Library

Come visit Birr Library to enjoy [A Digital Exhibition of Paintings](#) by Geraldine McNamee

#### Geraldine McNamee - Artefact 1967

For more information, email Geraldine at [artefact1967@gmail.com](mailto:artefact1967@gmail.com) or call Geraldine on 085 877 6262.

Follow Geraldine's journey on Facebook too!

'Geraldine McNamee - Artefact 1967'



### Tullamore Library

For the month of July there will be a digital exhibition of [Paula Finlay's work](#) at Tullamore Library



### Upcoming Events in Offaly Libraries

#### Family Fun Quizzes

As part of Offaly Libraries' Summer Stars programme, we are running a series of fun family quizzes to celebrate the Summer Stars Reading Adventure.

Participants will be in with a chance of winning a prize from the comfort of their own home.



\*The quiz will be hosted on [www.myquiz.org](http://www.myquiz.org)

Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as part of the National Play Day Funding Scheme 2021.

On Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> July children in Offaly will be provided with "build your own" kits for kites, harry potter spells, soap / bath bombs, etc. These will be available for collection via library branches and children will participate at a later date in online "build your own" workshops.

Play packs with lots of fun toys for different age groups will also be available for collection in our libraries. This programme will provide both guided and self-directed possibilities for children and young people to play in Offaly.



### Don't Miss Out: Sign up for our Library Newsletter

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

*Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive*

### Let's Play in Offaly

Offaly Libraries has successfully secured funding from the Department of Children,

## Revenue Account Grant Income &amp; Payroll Summary to 30th June 2021

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr. Budget 2021 €m	Preliminary Value to June 2021 €m	% Year To Date
Payroll costs	28.03	14.03	50.0%
Grants and Subsidies Income	38.24	15.77	41.2%

## OCC to 30th June 2021

	<u>Rates</u> <u>€m</u>	<u>Rents</u> <u>€m</u>	<u>Loans</u> <u>€m</u>
Opening Balance Jan 1, 2021	3.60	0.57	0.19
Invoices/Adjustments	13.01	3.25	0.28
2021 Cash Collected to end of June	7.31	3.18	0.27
Closing Balance June 30th , 2021	9.30	0.65	0.19
<b><u>2020 Cash collected to June</u></b>	5.90	3.14	0.28
% Collection at this point in 2020	124%	101%	96%

## Bank Overdraft to 30th June 2021

Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date	20	11%
Overdraft Interest and non-conforming charges to June 30th 2021 YTD		€10,105
Bank Administration and transactional charges to June 30th 2021 YTD		€13,700