

**MARCH
2022**



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 Aibreann

Monthly Management Report for consideration at the April 2022 Monthly Meeting.

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

FINANCE - Appendix 1

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

National Spring Clean

National Spring Clean is Ireland's most popular, well recognized and successful anti-litter initiative. Taking place during the **whole month of April** and now in its 21st year, the campaign encourages every sector of society to actively participate and take responsibility for litter, by actually conducting clean ups in their own local environment.

**Please Support the NSC in your area.
Pickers, gloves and Hi-vis vest available
from Environment Section.**

Most Enterprising Primary School Student (or Students)!

Local Enterprise Office Offaly is delighted to announce entries are now being accepted for this year's Most Enterprising Student Awards. The initiative is designed to introduce the concept of business to primary school children. All primary schools in the county have been sent details including a link to the entry form, **closing date for entries is Friday, 29th April.**

The awards will take place at a presentation ceremony in the Tullamore Court Hotel on Monday, 23rd May 2022. The nominated children are invited to set up a display table of their work and have their products available for sale on the day if they wish.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

Active Travel

There are approximately 20 schemes identified for 2022 with an allocation of €3,681,908 approved to allow for schemes to progress to design and planning, procurement, construction and close out.

Climate Action

There were two Ministerial visits in early March, when Minister Pippa Hackett visited a number of Council retrofitted homes to see and hear first-hand from those benefiting from the scheme. Minister Joe O'Brien visited the location of the proposed OLDC/Green Offaly "Green Headquarters" at Fiesta Hall in Kilcormac.



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PLANNING

	To end March 2022	To end March 2021	Total 2021
Planning Applications	165	179	831
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	2	1	5
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	3 (1)	2 (1)	13(2)

Architectural Services BHIS 2022

Letter of Provisional Approval to **27 applicants** successful applicants – increased allocation of **€126,400**. Works have already commenced on three projects involving site visits and meetings with owners to commence.

- **HSF 2022:** Departmental notification of 3 (out of possible 4) successful projects, plus 1 carryover from 2021, providing an Offaly allocation of **€178,000**. Sophia Housing former Portarlinton Convent - €77,000 Lowland House - €38,000 Cloneyhurke House - €38,000 Tullamore Gaol Railings - €25,000
- **Creative Ireland** – Part of reporting group and Annual Follies Project €10,000, work and guide owner, consultant, site visits reports etc. Vernacular Architecture fund projects €5,000
- **Follies Trust** – agreed to provide funding towards repairs of Bloomfield Mausoleum **€3,500**
This brings the total funding in

2022 (to date, separate application to Heritage Council), **towards the conservation of the built heritage to €322,900, with 32 projects to be completed on site by October 2022.**

- **Architectural/Conservation Report for Planning Applications and Pre Planning**, note significant increase in number of reports required throughout 2021. 30 Architectural/Conservation reports to Planning - January to March 2022 v 16 reports in the same timeframe 2020
- **Tullamore URDF** – ongoing assistance as required, steering group for Masterplan and Harbour Plan. Note Phase 2 of the Acres Folly project has been completed as part of this scheme and the new stair inserted to allow for managed access.
- **RRDF** - Steering Group for current Banagher project, prepare designs, drawings and mapping documents for 2022 projects, Birr, Ferbane etc. – ongoing.
- **Urban & Village Renewal, Outdoor Dining Schemes** etc: Assist MD's with successful applications on proposed designs (Lloyd Park etc) – ongoing. Provide proposals for Mucklagh TVR with a suite of proposals.
- **Birr Courthouse** – Form part of broader 2022 RRDF application.
- **Birr Destination Town** – continue to work with team, meeting every three weeks moving on €650k Fáilte Ireland Funding, liaise with

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consultants for new entrance to The Green, FI request by Department regarding test archaeological trenches, carried out and submitted. Tender to determine costs next stage, remaining funding with determine proposed approach for Interpretation piece.

- Birr town Plan – Assist Forward Planners with current chapters 2, 3 and 4, review and comment.
- Edenderry – provide sketch proposals for possible site purchase in the town.
- **Publication on Vernacular Architecture in Offaly** (TBC cover attached) by **Rachel Mc Kenna**, looks at Setting, Materials and Furniture, in particular focusing on the fragile remaining thatch structures in the county. Text completed c.280 pages. Edit stage. Book launch TBC 2022.
- **Team Administration** - Relevant paperwork and resources in management of 4-person team and required ongoing H&S.

ROADS

Roads Programme 2022

The 2022 Roads programme was adopted by the member of Offaly County Council on the 28th of March. The Initial Roads Programme budget for 2022 is €16,634,125 funded from the Department of Transport(DOT), National Transport Authority(NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland(TII)and funding approved by Offaly County Council. Procurement and pre construction planning is ongoing across

all our Municipal District Offices in order to deliver the agreed works programme for 2022.

Active Travel

Offaly County Councils **Active Travel Team** continue to deliver on a number of agreed projects and schemes for 2022 all of which promote and facilitate the introduction and implementation of sustainable transport modes while promoting and serving Healthy Communities.

An example of the works carried out by our Active Travel Team is shown below in a number of photos from an Active Travel Scheme at Frederick Street Clara which was completed in Q1 of 2022. The scope of the project involved the design and construction of footpaths, set down area, pedestrian crossing and junction improvements at Árd Scoil Charáin Naofa, Fredrick Street, Clara, County Offaly.

The completed works, a length of 142m include:

- Installation of a 2m wide footpath & build out of old drop off zone;
- Provision of a dedicated off street set down area with new entrance;
- Upgrade of the existing Pedestrian Crossing;
- Realignment of the Station Road Junction with the R436 for pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures

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Junction Upgrade at the Station Road



Upgraded Pedestrian Facilities at Frederick Street



New Set down area at Frederick Street Clara

Edenderry Town Inner Relief Road

Construction work on the Edenderry Town Inner Relief Road are continuing at pace.

ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

Consultations

Climate Action

A dedicated Climate Action & Energy Office has been appointed, and this kick started a strategic review of the CA Steering Group membership, with recent staff turnover a number of gaps were identified and several staff in positions relevant to CA have now added their expertise to the group. Meetings continue on a monthly basis, with a wide variety of CA topics being discussed and presented. During the most recent steering group meeting, staff engaged with the SEAI County Mentor for their Sustainable Energy Communities programme.

March saw the launch of the Council's Climate Action Steering Group Newsletter, which was distributed to all staff and elected members to help raise CA awareness and promote initiatives that the Council are engaged in, such as "No Mow May" & "Marchathon". To further help promote our "No Mow May" campaign a series of talks have been arranged on the topic of biodiversity and how you can help by horticulturist Aoife Munn. Aoife will give an individual talk to each MD on-line with booking details available.

The CARO's continue to roll out their 2022 Training Programme, with a number of staff attending their highly recommended "Empowering Change" course which is aimed at staff who work closely with local

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communities. The final “Championing Leadership” course aimed at elected members and senior management ran early in April, and will go under further design and development. CARO have just published their 2023 training brochure and is available on their website or from the Climate Action officer.

Recent CA publications of note include a CCMA/CARO report titled “Climate Change- Global Issue, Local Leadership” which highlights many of the good work done to date by Councils under a variety of headings such as Transport, Flood Risk Management, Energy Efficiency, Public Engagement etc. The Office of the Planning Regulator also published a case study paper titled “Climate Action and the Local Authority Development Plan” which sets out a framework to understanding LA CA planning while providing relevant case studies. The Department of Transport have also published their “Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025” consultation document which aims to gather wider stakeholder views.

Energy

The Councils Energy Action Team has been re-instated, this team comprised of significant energy users across the organisation will look to build on the Council exceeding its 2020 energy efficiency targets of 33% (35.5% achieved) and will work towards 2030 targets (50% energy efficiency). The team will look at energy consumption, efficiencies and renewables across the whole organisation, identifying energy projects that will help reduce costs and meeting 2030 targets.

Late April sees the deadline for the Councils mandatory return on energy consumption to SEAI. This year sees the introduction of reporting on “business travel” which refers to all road, rail, sea and air business travel undertaken by staff or elected members.

Tree of Hope; the Chairman’s initiative

Following extensive liaison with Community Groups, Tidy Towns Network’s and Municipal Districts throughout 2021, 50 trees have now been planted across a range of locations across the County.

Dermot Ward, Woodfield Garden Centre is now in the process of preparing a video on tree aftercare that will be available shortly on you tube.

Environment

Litter & Waste Management

New Solar Litter Bins

Purchase of the new solar litter bins (5 no.) due in May. Locations will be agreed with area engineers. This is being funded by Litter Infrastructure Grant.

Anti-dumping initiative

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications is again making funding of €3M available, through the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLAs) to support the 2022 Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI).

As with previous year’s allocations, the 2022 ADI aims to reduce incidents of illegal dumping nationally by providing funding for projects aimed at tackling the problem, using a collaborative approach

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involving local authorities, communities and other State Agencies.

In 2022, the focus of the ADI will remain on the same four key areas as listed hereunder and project proposals will again be assessed based on their potential impact in these areas.

- i (i) prevention,
- ii (ii) abatement,
- iii (iii) education and
- iv (iv) enforcement.

If there are any ideas or blackspots, please get in contact with the Environment Section.

Bottle banks: Increased costs for the bring banks processing of glass, our budget is being affected by the current crisis.

Litter/waste complaints received is 196 since Jan and this includes 77 clean ups. There have been 11 fines issued to date.

Rural Water Programme

The Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2019 – 2021 is ongoing. Of the 19 projects awarded funding 14 are now complete and the remainder are due to be completed by the end of quarter 2/22. In addition, three Group Water Schemes have been approved for funding for projects that have arisen during the term of the current funding programme and four more projects are awaiting confirmation from the Rural Water Unit. The next Multi Annual Rural Water Programme circular and measures is due to be issued to Local Authorities in late 2022 and we are contacting all relevant Group Water Schemes to advise them to begin preparing their submissions.

Annual Group Water Scheme Subsidy Forms have been sent out to all registered Group Water Schemes and are due to be returned to OCC by 24/06/22

Burial Grounds

In 2022 we will continue implementing the All-Ireland Pollinator plan across as many burial grounds as possible to create wild flower meadows in unused parts of our burial grounds a short flowering meadow plan is being implemented in Rath cemetery on a pilot basis this year, which includes NoMowMay.

Tullamore Living River continues to take shape

Approximately 30 trees have now been planted at the Tullamore Living River site, this will be followed by further landscaping works in the following weeks.



National Spring Clean April 2022

Offaly County Council is encouraging all residents to participate in cleaning up their

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local area during the month of April as part of National Spring Clean.

All volunteers wishing to participate in NSC can avail of litter packs from Offaly County Council (litter pickers, bags, gloves, collection of bags). Please contact the Environment Section for more information.

Email: environment@offalycoco.ie or tel: 057 9357403.

Flood Management

Rahan Village, Flood Relief Project

The flood relief project includes approximately 220m of embankment to protect the houses at the rear of College View, protection of the Waste Water Plant and provide a flood defence to tie in to the bridge.

Environmental Section has continued to work on project, including arranging removal of vegetation in preparation for site works, on site archaeological excavations and preparation of drawings for Part 8 planning process for the flood relief scheme.

It is intended that the Part 8 Planning process will commence in Q3, pending report on archaeological excavations.

Water Quality

Water

Works on the upgrade of the Tullamore, Birr and Clonaslee Water Treatment plants are on-going. The three plants have now begun their 1 year operation phase, after which time they will be returned to Offaly County Council staff to operate. The reservoir at Birr WTP is currently under construction.

Find and fix works are ongoing in Birr, Moneygall, Lisduff, and Clonbullogue. Work is due to commence in Edenderry.

Watermain rehabilitation works are completed in Newtown Rahan, Tullamore and Fahey Rhode. Works are ongoing on the Agall-Holmshill rising main.

Design work on 12km of watermain in the Pollagh area is complete. Construction for 4.5km has been approved and will commence this month.

Disinfection programme is nearing completion at Tobberdaly, Coolderry, Clonbullogue, Edenderry and Walsh Island. Design works are ongoing in Geashill and Holmshill.

Wastewater

Edenderry WWTP

Aecom are the consultant engineers for the project. An initial site meeting took place and their surveyors have commenced works. Consultants working on design of project.

Rhode WWTP

Under the Small Towns Programme Rhode was shortlisted for an upgrade. At initial stages of design and it look like an additional aeration tank will be recommended. Design team also in consultation with EPA re discharge limits.

Daingean WWTP

Works have been completed on the following:

A new screen has been installed along with a new inlet sump that has increased the capacity from 2m³ to 50m³. Also a new

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sludge tank has been constructed. These improvements will help to ensure that the plant can achieve its monthly compliance limits.

With regard to IWSS programme, IW have appointed a consulting engineer who is examining the existing inlet & storm tank. IW are currently in negotiations with the adjoining landowner to acquire lands for the installation of reed beds.

Walsh Island

The plant needs a major overhaul as it is overloaded. Reed beds are to be considered.

Rahan WWTP: All M&E and Civil works complete. Waiting for ESB connection.

Kilcormac WWTP

Problem with inlet channel and is under investigation

Banagher Network

CCTV survey recently completed in the Harbour Road area. The survey revealed that the network was general in good condition, however sections of the network are too small and have to be upsized. In conjunction with the area engineer 150m of the sewer has been upgraded along the Harbour road. This had increased the capacity significantly and to date no major flooding reported along the Harbour Road.

Clara Ballycumber Rd. ongoing odour issue. IW have engaged a consulting engineer to examine this issue. To date they have come up with two options to connect the end of the rising main (where the odour is) into the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

This may be funded under IW capital program if funds become available.

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

February Housing Update

- There are 507 on the Social Housing List awaiting housing support at the end of March 2022.

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- A further 767 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 14 signed up for HAP and 12 exited from HAP in March.
- At the end of February, 16 single people and 9 families were being supported in emergency accommodation.

Housing Stock – Number, Maintenance & Repair

- Total housing stock at end of March 2022 is 1978.
- 299 maintenance calls were logged in March.

Housing Capital Programme Update

- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – The Stage 4 approval application was approved by the DHLGH on 24th February 2022. The Letter of Intent issued to the preferred Tenderer in March 2022. However, the lowest tendering Contractor has pulled out of the project stating material hyperinflation costs as the reason. The project will be retendered in May 2022 using the new Public Works Form of Contract and a new Stage 4 application will lodge with the Department in July 2022.
- Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane (20 Units) – Stage 2 was approved on 17th November 2021. Part 8 consultation was advertised on 2nd March 2022. Period for public

submissions ended on April 14th 2022. No submissions were received. Stage 3 will be submitted to the Department in Q3 2022.

- Moneygall (4 units) – Contractor commenced works on site on 31st January 2022. Due for completion in Q1 2023.
- Beechgrove, Belmont (7 units) – Project commenced on site on 10th November 2021. Due for completion in Q3, 2022.
- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 no. Older Person's dwellings) – Stage 4 approval was granted on 11th April 2022 and works are due to commence on site in May 2022. Letter of Intent to issue this week.
- Banagher, Kylebeg (18 Units) – Stage 4 approval received on 25th June 2021. Contractor has been appointed (Pat Loftus Construction Ltd.) and work has commenced on site. Project is due for completion in Q4, 2022.
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) - Stage 4 approval was received on 8th March 2022 and works were due to commence on site in May 2022, however following issue of the letter of intent the preferred contractor has pulled out of the project stating hyperinflation as the reason. Pending approval by the DHLGH, Offaly County Council intend to appoint the next valid tenderer. If this is acceptable to the DHLGH a new Stage 4 approval

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application will be lodged in May 2022. Works should then commence in late Q2 2022. If this proposal is not acceptable to the DHLGH the project will be retendered using the new Public Works Contract and Stage 4 will be lodged in Q3 2022.

- Circular Road, Daingean, Site 2 (10 Units) – Stage 1 approval application was granted on 3rd August 2021 for the site adjoining the OCC housing site on Circular Road. Stage 2 is due to be lodged in Q2 2022. Consultant appointments are currently being put in place.
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (9 Units) – Stage 1 approval was granted by the Department on 11th May 2021. Design Team have been appointed and all surveys completed. Stage 2 will be lodged in Q2 2022.

Vacant Houses Initiatives

- 1 Newbridge Street, Birr: Works commenced on site on 16th December 2021. Works are ongoing and due for completion at the end of May 2022.
- 4 Hillview, Holly Park, Birr: Consultant Tenders have been completed. Combined stage 2/3 approval application will be lodged in Q3 2022.
- 121 Lakeview, Clara: Stage 1 submission will be submitted to the Department in Q2, 2022
- 3 x Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) completed in 2021.

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes

- Cluid Housing Association: Jackson's Hill, Tullamore - Construction ongoing on 26 units with completion date projected for April/May 2022.
- Oaklee: Clonminch, Tullamore (19 units) – Completion in November 2022
- Oaklee: Kearney's Field, Tullamore (41 Units) – Completion in Q1 2023
- 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 – further information is being sought from the AHB.
- 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. Permission to proceed to tender approved in December 2021.

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Turnkey Developments/Part V

- Main Street, Daingean (8 Units): houses completed and 8 families allocated to their new homes.
- 6 Turnkey Schemes (82 units) which received departmental approval in December 2020 are progressing as follows:
 - Mucklagh, 8 units – Completion in April/May 2022
 - Woodfield, Birr, 35 units - 9 completed to date.
 - Bog Road, Portarlinton, 28 units - Under Construction
 - Walsh Island, 4 units - Under Construction
 - Tullamore, 5 units – discussions ongoing
 - Cloneygowan, 2 units – completed and allocated in 2021
- 4 x Part V units in Silverbrook Drive, Tullamore have been completed and allocated.
- 7 x Part V Units @ Hawthorns completed in 2021, 5 more due in April/May 2022

Housing Grants (Private)

Housing were notified on 28th March that the 2022 Allocation - Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability Scheme for private homes is €1,543,750 which is composed of €1,235,000 Exchequer funding (representing 80%), and €308,750 matching local authority funding (representing 20%) to be provided from Offaly County Council's own resources. Housing are progressing the 2022 works

programme and continue to liaise with all applicants who have been approved for works in an effort to ensure that all works are progressing and to facilitate the timely drawdown of funds.

Disabled Person's Grants (Social Housing)

On 31st March 2022 Housing were advised that the allocation for Disabled Person's Grants for Social Housing Units is €658,800, which is composed of €592,920 exchequer funding (representing 90%), and €65,880 matching local authority funding (representing 10%) to be provided from Offaly County Council's own resources.

Retrofit Programme

The Council received notification on 22nd October 2021 of an increase in their allocation under 'Just Transition for the Midlands Region' programme to €4.2m.

Lot 1&2, Birr: The Contractor for the works has been appointed (Retrofit Design Ltd.) and works are in progress on the Birr houses. Completion in Q2 2022.

Lot 3&4, Tullamore: The closing date for the Works Tender for the 42 houses in Tullamore was 24th November [2021. 4 no. tenders were returned. Works are still awaiting Department funding approval.](#)

Lot 5&6, Edenderry, Daingean, Clara, Ferbane, Shannonbridge, Cloghan: The appointed consultants have prepared the works tender which will be advertised on www.etenders.gov.ie. [When and if funding is approved by the DHLGH.](#)

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OFFALY RESPONSE TO UKRAINE REFUGEE CRISIS

Offaly County Council continues to work in co-operation with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth; the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS); the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) to provide local supports to the national response to the Ukrainian Refugee emergency.

As part of those responses, Offaly County Council chairs the Offaly Community Response Forum, an interagency Group consisting of the following membership:

Offaly County Council	An Garda Síochána
Health Service Executive	Local Link Laois Offaly
Offaly Local Development Company	Offaly Library Service
Offaly Volunteer Centre	Family Resource Centres
Túsla	Citizens Information Service
County Childcare Committee	SVP
Department of Social Protection	Laois Offaly ETB
Civil Defence	

Meetings of the Forum are being held on a weekly basis at present and provide useful sharing of information and invaluable co-ordination of communication of services between agencies. A service contact framework document has been prepared by

the Forum members which provides details of the services provided by each agency and key points of contact for essential services needed by the refugees. This information is available on the offaly.ie website. The contact email address for the Forum is communityforum@offalycoco.ie

The main purpose of the Community Response Forum is to provide a co-ordinated community response to support the refugees arriving from Ukraine. The demand-led nature of the potential numbers of refugees arriving in Offaly however, requires that the model and role of the Forum will be constantly reviewed. The Department has recommended that Local Development Companies examine how the SICAP programme can respond to the emerging need through maximising and re-organising existing resources. OLDC has put in place a range of services to ensure that refugees arriving into the county receive appropriate and timely information and access to services. We would like to thank all of our partners on the Forum for their role in ensuring that refugees are welcomed and supported on their arrival into the county and also for working in partnership to ensure a collaborative approach to this emergency.

The International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) have primary responsibility for the provision of accommodation for refugees. IPAS is working in conjunction with the Red Cross and also the City and County Managers Association (CCMA) to provide temporary emergency accommodation for refugees entering the state. However, such is the number of refugees arriving that Local

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Authorities have been requested to provide a series of supports including access to and/or the provision of emergency accommodation, identification of private and public accommodation and sites suitable for short, medium and long term use. Offaly County Council is working with IPAS to identify key properties and sites and this work will continue with support from our Housing Section, Fire and Emergency Services Department and Civil Defence.

In terms of the provision of emergency accommodation, Laois Offaly ETB has made available its Outdoor Pursuits Centre in Roscrea Road, Birr. We are very thankful to LOETB and also the Centre Manager for their support and work in providing safe temporary accommodation for refugees while IPAS source more long term care. Offaly County Council is currently reviewing options for additional emergency accommodation in conjunction with local community and sporting organisations.

Offaly Library Services continue to see an increase in the Ukrainian Community visiting and joining up for library membership. A number are accessing public computers and the free WiFi. Offaly Libraries have subscribed to and are testing a new online storytime resource (LOTE) which features children's stories in various languages including Ukrainian and Russian. Offaly Libraries is currently endeavouring to source a language app which may be of use to families. Children's Books in Ukrainian are being purchased, but there is a significant lead in time. And finally, the Library Service is connecting with partner agencies about possible events

in libraries to commence after the Easter break e.g. parent and toddler time/storytime in the library.

It will be appreciated that the nature of this crisis is continually evolving and is proving challenging for all services involved, with accommodation proving to be particularly difficult. The Community Response Forum will continue to meet regularly to keep communication lines flowing and to assist agencies to work together to meet identified needs as they arise. Our Housing and Emergency Services Sections will continue to liaise with IPAS and the Departments to provide appropriate information, inspections and linkages.

LOCAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Offaly LCDC held their monthly meeting on Thursday 10th March, 2022. Main agenda items included the Rural Development LEADER Programme 2014 – 2020 & Transitional LEADER Programme 2021 – 2022, Transitional LEADER Programme Budget Allocation & LEADER Annual Progress Report 2021 & Implementation Plan 2022 and the Community Activities Fund 2021.

Six LEADER Projects were approved to the value of €78,576.82. Members were briefed on the LEADER Annual Progress Report 2021 & Implementation Plan 2022, and provided with a presentation detailing 2 case studies, an overview of the LEADER Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and the LEADER Transitional Programme

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including key challenges and achievements.

Members were provided with a comprehensive presentation on the distribution of funding among Themes and Sub-Themes under the Original LEADER and Transitional Programmes and EURI budget allocations. The LEADER Annual Progress Report 2021 and Implementation Plan for 2022 was presented and approved by the members. Key achievements and level of progress to date was outlined together with estimated project approval and expenditure for 2022 and 2023.

Members were provided with an overview of the Community Activities Fund 2021 detailing timelines involved, a summary of applications received, evaluation process and criteria and a list of recommended grants. Members discussed, agreed and approved the recommendations and allocations as presented. Details of same are required to be forwarded to DRCD for final approval.

Members were advised of the three (3) Community Groups chosen for 2022 Pride of Place Competition as follows:

- Pullough Community Shop – Birr MD
- Mucklagh Community Development CLG – Tullamore MD
- Geashill Tidy Towns – Edenderry MD

Age Friendly Alliance

Work has commenced on planning for the New Age Friendly Strategy. The first Age Friendly Alliance meeting of 2022 took

place via Zoom on the 11th March. Jean Gaffey, HSE CHO 8, a new representative, was welcomed by chair Sharon Kennedy.

A Library Walkability Audit was undertaken by Older People over two afternoons at Tullamore Library. The Age Friendly Interdepartmental Team met focusing on Clara as an Age Friendly pilot town. The Walkability Audit and Age Friendly Business Workshop are both taking place in April. A review of the Midlands 103 Age Friendly Tri-County Radio programme 'Chatters & Matters' took place during February/March and a meeting to discuss the review will take place in April.

Public Participation Network

Minister Joe O'Brien visited the Green Offaly Just Transition project at the Fiesta Hall, Kilcormac on March 3rd. Offaly PPN attended the official launch of the Offaly Volunteer Centre by Minister Joe O'Brien. A meeting was held with the 3 PPN Pillars, Community & Voluntary, Social Inclusion & Environment.

We participated in Training on Climate Change over 2 days. Staff are undertaking training on Salesforce, the data base for the PPN membership, in advance of the reregistration of groups. Our PPN Support worker, Catherina, completed the PPN Training facilitated by WIT and Social Justice Ireland over a number of weeks alongside some of the Offaly PPN Reps.

The first meeting of the PPN migrant forum took place with the next meeting scheduled for the 13th of April. The PPN Plenary with Guest speaker Ciaran Mullooly was a very

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successful event, our first in-person Plenary in over two years.

The PPN sit on the Community Forum and provide an information sharing service to the membership in relation to many areas including updates and local actions on the Ukraine situation.

Community Activities Fund

The Community Activities Fund (CAF) is a once-off fund allocated by Offaly LCDC under the Department's Community Enhancement Programme. It is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development with €277,102 approved for Offaly. The closing date for applications was 12 noon on Friday 11th February 2022. Over 140 applications were received, acknowledged and assessed by a LCDC sub-committee in early March.

Comhairle na nÓg

- The Group have met in person since Covid restrictions lifted but they continue to have some meetings online via Spatial Chat.
- Amanda Pedlow, Heritage Officer began a conversation with the group about Offaly's next 5-year Heritage plan. Members of the group shared their own experiences of heritage sites local to them.
- Four members attended the Dáil na nÓg event at the Convention Centre Dublin.
- This year a number of members are representative of the Seldom Heard Voices - this refers to Young People who have fewer opportunities to participate and/or who encounter more obstacles when attempting to

participate in decision making. The CNN Coordinator continues to reach out to organisations that work with young people in this category.

ARTS

Music Generation Offaly/Westmeath Harp Programme



Music Generation Offaly Westmeath recently commenced our Harp programme in Durrow National School, Co Offaly and Gaelscoil an Choillín in Mullingar, Co Westmeath.

MGOW purchased a number of harps from Brian Callan Harp maker and harpist Síofra Ní Dhubhghaill is delivering the programme. It is hoped to expand this programme later in the year.

Intergenerational Ukulele Groups/ Musical Memories

Our online intergenerational ukulele group continues online thanks to support from Creative Ireland funded intergenerational project. We're delighted that this group are still meeting. We are currently running 5 separate intergenerational ukulele sessions to facilitate the number of groups we have.



We are currently engaging with the following groups:

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- Online intergenerational ukulele group (established in 2021)
- Rochfortbridge Active Retirement Group
- Kilbeggan Men's shed
- Arden View Family Resource Centre
- Tullamore Men's shed

From Shannon to St. Rynagh's project
Music Generation Offaly Westmeath were delighted to work with the students of St. Rynagh's NS on this project. Ger Relfh, MGOW Resource worker, worked closely with the 6th class students of St Rynagh's NS. This project involved a song written by Jessica Traynor in collaboration with 2020 transition years of Banagher College. It is composed by Elaine Agnew and sung by the 2021 6th Class of St Rynagh's National School Banagher. The song & video can be view by clicking the following link: <https://fb.watch/aDKbD5MWL2/>

Planning for Singfest 2022 – Choral Trail
We are delighted to announce the return of Singfest for 2022, albeit in a new format. This year we are doing a Singfest Choral Trail in Tullamore Town Park and Belvedere House & Gardens in Mullingar on the 9th & 10th June. We have over 1,000 children registered so far across the two counties. There is a lot of preparation involved in having an outdoor event but we are confident it will be a great success.



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.

SPORTS

Staffing

Offaly Sports Partnership is delighted to welcome Denise Coghill (pictured), Community Sports Development Officer back to work after her maternity leave.



Interviews for new ACE programme coordinator were held on Wednesday, 30th March.

Funding

Offaly Sports Partnership launched two grant schemes in March: -

1. Covid-19 Resumption of Sporting Activity - this fund will be made available to support the return to sport and physical activity post pandemic for:
 - affiliates of the following national governing bodies of sport recognised by Sport Ireland based in Offaly - Angling Council of Ireland, Badminton Ireland, Irish Wheelchair Association Sport, Motor Cycling Ireland, National Coarse Fishing Federation, National Community Games, Pitch & Putt Ireland, Snooker & Billiards Ireland, Table Tennis Ireland, Tennis Ireland, Trout Anglers Association of Ireland, Tug of War Ireland and Volleyball Ireland.

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- clubs / organisations in Offaly that cater for special interest groups whose core activity is sport related (Offaly based community centres and similar organisations are included within this categorisation subject to them operating as not for profit).

The maximum level of grant assistance per successful application will be €1,500. The grant can be put toward costs associated with resumption of sporting activity including purchase of non-personal training equipment, return to sport programmes, programmes reaching target groups of Offaly Sports Partnership (including older adults, people with a disability, people of an ethnic minority background including Travellers, people experiencing rural or urban disadvantage, the unemployed / under employed, women and girls, and youth at risk), promotion and marketing costs, some essential running costs including insurance and affiliation, Covid consumables, volunteer supports, etc.

Clubs and Organisations can apply for this fund at <https://submit.link/NT>

- Club development grant scheme - this grant scheme is designed to support:

- mid to long term club planning.
- education & training programmes.
- initiatives designed to increase the participation of underrepresented groups (including older adults, people

with a disability, people of an ethnic minority background including Travellers, people experiencing rural or urban disadvantage, the unemployed/under employed, women and girls, and youth at risk) in sport.

- the purchase of non-personal training equipment to support return to sport programmes.

Applications can only be accepted from Offaly based affiliates of a National Governing Body of Sport recognised by Sport Ireland at <https://submit.link/Pp>; with a maximum level of grant assistance per successful application standing at €1,500.

Closing date for receipt of applications for both schemes is Sunday, 24th April at 9pm. Terms and conditions for each scheme can be had by contacting clubdevelopmentgrants@offalycoco.ie.

Programmes

Women in Sport Week 2022

In support of Sport Ireland's national women in sport week which took place from the 6th to 13th March, Offaly Sports Partnership hosted and / or supported a number of local events as follows: -

- Canoeing* – Canoeing Ireland launched its "Teen Connect" video for social media channels on Monday 7th March. This online video featuring local paddler and Special Olympian Moira Scott and other TY student highlighted the

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benefits of paddle sports to teenage girls.

- *Golf* – International Women’s Day Golf tournament for Seniors in Tullamore Golf Club on Tuesday 8th March. Junior Golf tournament for girls in Tullamore Golf Club throughout the week.
- *Rugby* – Offaly Secondary School rugby blitz in Birr Rugby in conjunction with Leinster Rugby on Tuesday 8th March.
- *Basketball* – 3 v 3 inter school “street basketball” blitz for secondary school girls on Thursday 10th March in Tullamore College.
- *Athletics* – The Pauline Curley Marathon Relay: 30 primary school girls shared the running of the marathon distance in Tullamore Harriers on Friday 11th March.
- *Soccer* – FAI launched a 4-week “Glow Football” programme in Clara Town FC for girls aged 8 – 10 years on Friday 11th March. Details of the launch of recreational football for women and girls aged over 16 years was also announced.
- *Park Run Tullamore* (Fiona's Way, Grand Canal, Tullamore) women in sport themed event on Saturday 12th March at 9.30am.
- *Camogie* – Parents, current and former members of the Tullamore Camogie Club were invited to join Pauline Curley in O’Brien Park for a walk followed by a Camogie session, a meet up with members of its “Hurl with Me” and “Caman & Chat” groups, club coaches, etc. on Saturday, 12th March.
- *Cycling* – 40km women’s cycle on Saturday 12th March organised by Team 905 Cycling Club, Edenderry.
- *Boxing* – Open female sparing in St. Brigid’s Boxing Club, Edenderry throughout the week.
- *Hockey* – Support for Tullamore Hockey Club in its administration of the West Leinster Cup and Plate finals for U-14 and U-16 girls.
- *Ladies Football* – Edenderry Ladies Gaelic Football blitz for club members aged 13 to 16 years and others on Sunday 13th March.

HEALTHY OFFALY

March has finally arrived and with it the end of the Healthy Ireland Fund Strand 1 Round 3. The deadline for the completion of the Healthy Ireland programme actions was 31st March 2021. Prior to the deadline, work had commenced on uploading all details of expenditure and progress reports for the actions already completed. These were the Physical Fitness Programme for Children & Young People (Fit Schools), the Community Engagement and Community

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Mental Health Fund Small Grants Scheme Actions.

Other HIF Implementing partners have also submitted their reports and the next few weeks will be spent uploading all of this information. The official end date for HIF Round 3 is 31st May 2022, allowing April and May for completion of reporting and any other outstanding administrative matters relating to the round.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Easter Fun and Spring Into Storytime at Offaly Libraries 2022



Offaly Libraries are currently in the midst of another exciting Spring into Storytime programme featuring a blended offering of story times delivered both in-branch and online through our various social media channels.

There are some fabulous events planned throughout April, including a *Storytime & Drawing* session with author and illustrator Gerry Daly in Edenderry Library.

As well as that, our younger members will receive some themed Craft Bags to take home over the Easter holidays featuring fun



projects like Bunny Book Mark Kits, Sunflower Magnet Kits and Easter Lamb Decoration Kits.

Little Library Bags: Free for Every Child Starting School in 2022

To help children navigate starting school, libraries have put together a bag of books just for them that can be collected at any Offaly library.



The 'My Little Library Book Bag' initiative is a collaboration between libraries and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as part of the First 5 Strategy.

As part of the initiative, a 'My Little Library Book Bag' is available free for every child starting school in 2022 to help them prepare for this big step. Children and their parents or guardians can collect the bags at any library throughout Offaly.



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Book bags are available in both Irish and English and each 'My Little Library Book Bag' contains:

- Three books on starting school, making friends and being comfortable to be yourself
- A story card on going to the library
- A postcard the child can write or draw on and give to the teacher on their first day at school
- Their very own library card and special 'My Little Library' cardholder



Offaly Libraries can't wait to welcome all the 4 and 5-year-old children in to collect their book bags and begin their library membership journey. We hope that once they visit the library to pick up their book bag, our new library members and their families will come back regularly to keep their bag filled up with borrowed books and to take part in storytimes, classes and all the other events we have to offer at the library. More supports to help the transition to primary school are available on the Let's Get Ready page on [Gov.ie](https://gov.ie).

New Library System



On **March 29th**, Offaly Libraries, along with libraries all over the country, introduced a new online library system with improved functionality to help us provide a better service to library members.

Members can now manage their library accounts online, browse a catalogue of 12 million items, and reserve items to borrow. The new system has many improved features, offering recommendations to readers as well as themed bookshelves and links to useful resources.



Members can reserve eBooks and eAudiobooks as well as physical books in one searchable catalogue. Library membership can be renewed online for the first time. The new system has a new look and works great on mobile phones and tablets!

Work Matters at your Library Lunchtime Webinars

In collaboration with Laois Libraries and Europe Direct Portlaoise, Offaly



Libraries were thrilled to welcome **Guy Flouch, head of EUNiCAS, to discuss study abroad options in Europe**. 10 students and parents attended the talk in Tullamore Library on Thursday 24th of March, with a recording of the talk made

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available to schools and shared on social media following the event.

Derval Chambers Petit will return to Offaly Libraries this **April** to deliver another series of bite-sized lunchtime webinars through Zoom. **Each webinar will start at 1pm and will last approximately 20 minutes.** Derval will cover the following topics, offering practical tips and advice:

- 6th April - Returning to the Office: Managing the Transition
- 13th April - Hybrid Working: Making it work for you
- 20th April - Managing Stress

These events are bookable via Ticket Tailor: <https://bit.ly/3KMSiZw>



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**Work
Matters
at the
Library**
SUPPORT
FOR BUSINESS
& EMPLOYMENT

‘Crowned’ Photographic Exhibition Launch at Tullamore Library

Tullamore Library, in conjunction with Tullamore Arts as part of **Spectacular Vernacular** and **In the Open / Faoin Spéir** festivals, are delighted to display the photographic works of artist **Breda Mayock**.

The exhibition focuses on the subject of hair with black women living in Ireland. Commenting on the exhibition, Mayock describes: “Struggles with identity, self care and freedom of expression are discussed as the women share their experiences of overcoming Colonial narratives of afro hair and of reclaiming their beauty” The exhibition was officially launched on Thursday, April 7th and will be on display in the windows of Tullamore Library throughout the month of April.



Edenderry Art Exhibition: Homecoming Collection - by Pauline McNelis

Edenderry Library is delighted to host the ‘Homecoming Collection’ by Pauline McNelis during April and May 2022. There will be a physical exhibition in the library and a digital exhibition on our You Tube and Facebook channels toward the end of April.

Pauline is a native of Edenderry and her beautiful paintings highlight many of the historical places, landscapes, and wildlife Edenderry has to offer. Previously, most of her inspiration for landscape painting came from County Donegal which she visited regularly.

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While restricted to her local town during the COVID Pandemic, Pauline began to realise how important home is, and viewed the familiar surrounding landscapes and historical sites where she grew up through an artistic eye. The beautiful walks along the Grand Canal, the open fields and wildlife became more than a lifeline, it supported the wellbeing of the many people who availed of what was on their doorstep. This collection is an appreciation of her hometown and bringing her artwork back to where it all started.



New eResources from Offaly Libraries

Offaly Libraries are delighted to announce **four new additions to our suite of resources** in our eLibrary.

[Busy Code](#)

introduces children aged 6 to 13 to coding and is designed to teach code in a way that is intuitive and fun.



[Encyclopaedia Britannica](#)



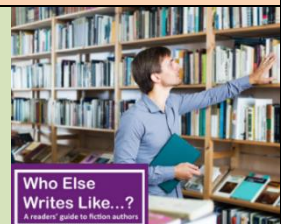
gives readers access to comprehensive age-appropriate content on numerous topics including arts, humanities, science and maths.

[Who Next...?](#)



is designed to help parents, teachers and librarians encourage children and young people to read more widely by suggesting authors they might enjoy.

[Who Else Writes Like...?](#)



Have you read all the books by your favourite authors? Use this guide to find similar books and discover your new favourite author.

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All of these new digital resources can be accessed online for **FREE** with your library Offaly Libraries membership card. For more information on these and all of our other online resources [check out our eLibrary](#).

Tech Week 2022 17th – 23rd April



As part of [Offaly Libraries STEAM School Programme](#), we will be celebrating Tech week, a nationwide festival of technology driven events aimed at students, parents and the public.

A number of online events have been arranged throughout the week, including a **3D Printer Workshop** with our own Donal of Tullamore Library, a **series of Digital Literacy Webinars** will be delivered by **CyberSafeKids** to local schools and a **VEX Workshop** is to be delivered by Offaly County Council's own Head of IT, Ray Bell.



Cruinniu na nÓg and Comic Con Preparations

Plans are well under way for Offaly Libraries Cruinniu na nÓg on 11th June 2022 the day of Creativity for Young People with Creative Ireland and the eagerly awaited return of Offaly Libraries Comic Con, which will take place on 18th June 2022.



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 and through following our social media channels. Currently we have **1,304 subscribers** to the newsletter. The link to subscribe to our newsletter is here; [Offaly Libraries Newsletter](#).

TOURISM

The tourism team recently held a five week tailored tourism training programme for members of Offaly Tourism Marketing. Commencing on 23rd February, the two hour training sessions continued weekly until 30th March.

The program was free to Offaly Tourism Marketing members and was facilitated by the extremely experienced Tina O'Dwyer, owner of the Tourism Space. A number of very relevant and interesting topics were covered over the five week program including, how to network and generate referrals, winning customer service and how to leverage local and national marketing campaigns.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

Local Enterprise Week took place Monday 7th March to Saturday 12th March 2022

Offaly Local Enterprise Office along with the 30 other Local Enterprise Offices nationally joined forces, to deliver an extensive range of workshops, suited to all businesses.

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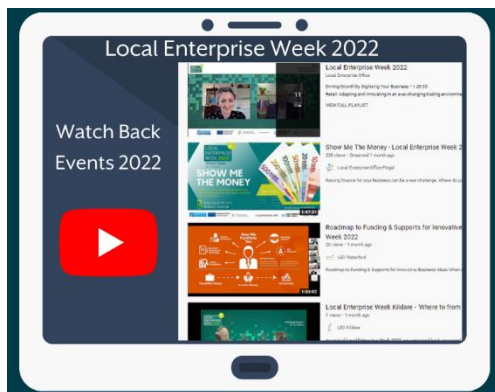
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Events were delivered online and in hybrid format, making them inclusive and easy to attend irrespective of your location! Click to [watch back](#) on Local Enterprise Week 2022



Dynamic Company led by Edenderry Entrepreneur is Overall Winner of Offaly County Enterprise Award for 2022

Acoustic Interiors is the Overall Winner of 2022 Offaly County Enterprise Awards. As the winner of the top award, receiving a cash prize of €1,500, Acoustic Interiors will now represent Co. Offaly and Local Enterprise Office Offaly at the National Enterprise Awards in June.

Acoustic Interiors was formed in 2020 to provide a sound design and installation

company which provides a turnkey solution to acoustic, noise and vibration issues to the residential, commercial, entertainment, education and medical sectors. The company has started exporting to the US. Other winners included four category prize-winners. Each of the category winners received a cash prize of €750.

- Fivaleley based The Factory (Sustainability Award);
- Edenderry based Equital Ltd T/A SPM Online Marketing (Digital Award);
- Portarlinton based James Cooper Carpentry (Bespoke Manufacturing) and
- Tullamore based BiaSol (Best New Business).

Speaking during Local Enterprise Week, Orla Martin, Head of Enterprise with Local Enterprise Office Offaly said: “Acoustic Interiors is a success story and the judges were particularly impressed by the export potential for this business. Offaly is proud to be represented by Acoustic Interiors. at the National Enterprise Awards.”

Sincere thanks to our judging panel comprising Mr. Bobby Connolly, Bobby Connolly and Associates and Jeanette Minnock of Allied Irish Bank.

Upcoming Courses and Initiatives

For details on our upcoming training courses, please click on the link below

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Offaly/>

Calling Offaly Craft and Design Enterprises

Offaly Local Enterprise Office and Westmeath Local Enterprise Office in partnership with Design & Crafts Council

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Ireland, Offaly Local Development Company and Westmeath Community Development, are delighted to announce **FUSE Product Development Clinics** in Westmeath on 27th April for 1-to-1 clinics with a panel of expert mentors.

The FUSE Product Development Clinics are essential for craft and design enterprises looking to develop their product range and brand identity.

Learn More and Book now at <https://bit.ly/OffalyFUSE>



Tullamore Show 2022

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly in conjunction with Offaly Local Development Company and Offaly County Council will support the Offaly pavilion in the 2022 Tullamore Show. This will be under the banner of **Experience Offaly**.

This pavilion provides an excellent opportunity for local businesses to showcase the diversity of high-quality enterprises in the county. Applications are now being accepted from enterprises producing in Co. Offaly that have expressed an interest to exhibit in this pavilion.

CORPORATE SERVICES

On their visit to New York for St. Patrick's Day celebrations, Cllr. Declan Harvey, Cathaoirleach and Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive attended business meetings with Enterprise Ireland, IDA and Tourism Ireland. On the invitation of the Offaly Association New York they participated in the New York parade on St. Patrick's day and the Pearl River Parade on Saturday 19th March 2022.



Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

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APPENDIX 1

Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 31st March 2022

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr Budget 2022 €m	Preliminary Value to March 2022 €m	% Year To Date
Payroll costs	29.81	6.78	22.8%
Grants and Subsidies Income	37.98	5.98	15.7%

OCC to 31st March 2022

	<u>Rates</u> €m	<u>Rents</u> €m	<u>Loans</u> €m
Opening Balance Jan 1, 2022	2.77	0.48	0.125
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers	16.63	1.81	0.128
2022 Cash Collected to end of March	1.13	1.76	0.131
Closing Balance March 31st, 2022	18.26	0.53	0.122

Bank Overdraft to 31st March 2022

	-	-	% YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date		31	53%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to March 31st 2022 YTD			€7,558
Bank Administration and transactional charges to March 31st 2022 YTD			€3,543