

**MARCH  
2023**



**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 2023 Monthly Meeting.

### **EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS:**

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

### **FINANCE:**

Finance Report– Appendix 1

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

#### ***MOST ENTERPRISING PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT (OR STUDENTS)!***

The closing date for entries is **Thursday, 20th April**. This year the awards will be presented at a ceremony in the Tullamore Court Hotel on **Tuesday 25th April** by Cathaoirleach Offaly County Council, Cllr. Frank Moran.

#### ***EXPERIENCE OFFALY PAVILION***

If you, or a business you know, is interesting in exhibiting please apply via the link <https://submit.link/1Fh> The closing date for receipt of applications is **21st April at 4.30pm**.

#### ***CLIMATE ACTION ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES***

Local Authorities Supporting Enterprise Conference in the Tullamore Court Hotel on Wednesday, **26th April 2023**

#### ***BUILDING BETTER BUSINESS MIDLANDS***

Thursday **27th April**, Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise

### **REPORT AT A GLANCE**

#### ***Ferbane Regeneration Project***

Offaly County Council in partnership with An Síolán held a Public Open Day on Friday 31st March 2023 in St. Joseph's Convent, Ferbane, Co. Offaly from 3.00pm to 7.00pm, to which over 100 people attended. For those that were unable to attend the in-person event, an online survey is still available by visiting <https://forms.office.com/e/DaJ8QBnpig>

Closing date for online survey will be 21st April, 2023

#### ***Ballycommon Part 8 proposal***

The Roads Department have published a Part 8 proposal for the construction of a new trailhead at Ballycommon on the 24th of March 2023. The proposal will be on public display until 24th April, and submissions on the proposal will be accepted up to 9th May.

## PLANNING

## Development Management

	To end Mar 2023	To end Mar 2022	Total 2022
<b>Planning Applications</b>	136	165	681
<b>Extensions of Duration Applications &amp; Assessments</b>	3	2	16
<b>Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued</b>	73 (44)	3(1)	158 (15)

During the month of **March 2023**, the following large planning applications were received:

<b>Laois &amp; Offaly Education Training Board</b>	Pp Change of Use Industrial Unit to Training Facilities, Protected Structure 23-242, Kilcruttin Business Centre, Tullamore.
<b>Synergy Health Ireland Limited</b>	Pp New Sterilization Technology Facility, Clara Road, Tullamore.
<b>Gorry Stainless Steel</b>	Pp New Industrial Unit Extension Onto Existing Industrial Building, Cluster Industrial Estate, Tullamore.
<b>Ballyboy Community Development Company Limited</b>	Pp Demo of Existing Derelict Community Hall, Construct New One, New Septic Tank, Site Works And Boundary Walls.
<b>Elgin Energy Services Ltd</b>	Pp Change Granted Permission 17/275, Merge Substation and Esb Building to One and Extend Operational Life to 40 Years, With a Project Life Extension to 10 Years, Shanderry and Kilmalogue, Portarlinton

## Forward Planning

On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023 the Chief Executive's Report on the submissions received on the draft Edenderry Local Area Plan 2023-2029 was circulated to Members.

The 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 was the closing date for receipt of submissions on the proposed material alterations to the Birr Local Area Plan 2023-2029. 8 no. submissions were received.

Of those who made submissions on the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) Draft Map, 16 landowners received Notification Letters as to whether their land should remain in-scope for the RZLT. The decision is open to appeal to An Bord Pleanála until 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023.

## Just Transition

Offaly County Council hosted a site visit by the Secretariat for Technical Assistance for Regions in Transition (START) from March 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>. The visit included a series of engagements with project partners Offaly County Council, the Technological University of the Shannon, Laois Offaly Education and Training Board and Offaly Local Development Company to explore the role of each in supporting the county through transition.

The East and Midlands Regional Assembly presented to the delegation and to the elected members on the forthcoming European Just Transition Fund. The delegation also met with Comhairle na nÓg, former Bord na Móna workers, members of the Bord na Móna Management Team and had an update from the Midlands Regional Transition Team.

The START delegation will now draft a Work Plan and Service Level Agreement for the provision of 75 days of Technical

Assistance to Offaly as the only successful START application from Ireland.



Members of Offaly County Council meet START project partners, the START team and Jim Conway Director of the East & Midlands Regional Assembly

## REGENERATION

### Rural Regeneration Development Fund Ferbane Regeneration Project update

The aim of the open day was to allow the community to tour the buildings and grounds and to give their views and comments on the refurbishment of St. Joseph's Convent for use as a multipurpose community/enterprise/learning space in Ferbane, Co. Offaly. This will ensure that the local knowledge informs the uses and opportunities for the entire property over the coming years.



A Design Team will shortly be appointed to undertake all necessary analysis of the community information gathered at the open day which will assist in the design process over the coming months. Further public consultations will take place throughout the design process.



Present at the public open day  
Back row l-r PJ Dooley, An Siolán; Justin Murtagh, Executive Engineer, Offaly County Council; Olwen Cummins, Town Regeneration Officer, Offaly County Council; Brian Flynn, An Siolán, Danny Gleeson; An Siolán  
Front row l-r Ann Galvin, An Siolán; Annette Egan; An Siolán; Anna Marie Delany, CE, Offaly County Council; Cllr. Eamonn Dooley.

## ROADS

### Roads Programme 2023

The Elected Members approved the 2023 Roads programme on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2023. Works have now commenced across all Municipal Districts in the delivery of the area specific works programs.

### Walsh Island Safety Scheme

A section 38 proposal was issued for public consultation in March on proposed Safety measures at Walsh Island in the Edenderry Municipal District. Submissions on the proposal are currently under review.

### Edenderry Inner Relief Road Stage 2

Tender submissions for the completion of Stage 2 of the Edenderry Inner Relief Road have been received and are currently undergoing the tender assessment stage of the procurement process. It is hoped that works may start onsite by the end of Q2 2023.

### N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link

The Option Selection Report for the N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link is now complete and is available for viewing on the project website

[www.n52tullamoretokilbeggan.ie](http://www.n52tullamoretokilbeggan.ie)

## ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES

### Climate Action Plan

Following on from the Minister for the Environment has instructed Local Authorities to make their First Climate Action Plan, the Climate Action Team has commenced baseline assessment along with internal stakeholder engagement.

### Environmental Management

In March, the Environment Section received 195 environmental complaints. All were investigated in a timely manner and resolved where possible.

Complaint Category	NO
Litter pollution (fly tipping/casual litter/litter on property)	72
Waste (dumping/burning/unauthorised sites)	39
Noise (community/commercial/industrial)	38
Control of Horses	3
Control of Dogs	4
Water Quality	39

### Waste Management

Environment continues to support community groups in their litter picks across the County. OCC continues to support primary and secondary schools in the Green Schools programme, with 25 schools in the Birr MD area registered or the Green Schools programme. The closing date for school assessments for their Green Flag was March 24<sup>th</sup>.

Three secondary schools are involved in a Relove Fashion project including – Gallen Community School in Ferbane. The final for this exciting project was held in March and although Gallen CC were selected as a finalist, the winning school was from County Meath.

### Burial Grounds

#### St. Mary's Cemetery, Edenderry

The Part 8 Planning Process to extend St. Mary's Cemetery, Edenderry has commenced with plans for proposed project on display in Offaly County Council, Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore (R35 F893) and Edenderry Municipal District, Edenderry Town Hall, Edenderry.



### Water Services - RURAL WATER PROGRAMME - Subsidies

In 2022, Annual Group Water Scheme Subsidy payments totalling €1,018,504 were made to 16 no. Group Water Schemes which supply a combined total of 4,436 no. domestic customers. Annual subsidies amounted to €411,105.00 and advance subsidies totaling €607,369. The GWS Subsidies help to support group water scheme to operate to their full potential and deliver potable water to their customers. Applications for 2023 subsidies for the relevant schemes are being prepared for issue.

### 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	<a href="mailto:hap@offalycoco.ie">hap@offalycoco.ie</a>
Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans	<a href="mailto:homeloans@offalycoco.ie">homeloans@offalycoco.ie</a>
Housing Inspections – HAP, Leased, Private, etc.	<a href="mailto:standards@offalycoco.ie">standards@offalycoco.ie</a>
General Enquiries, Maintenance Issues, etc.	<a href="mailto:housing@offalycoco.ie">housing@offalycoco.ie</a>
RAS & Leasing Enquiries	<a href="mailto:RAS@offalycoco.ie">RAS@offalycoco.ie</a>
Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability Scheme	<a href="mailto:HousingAidGrants@offalycoco.ie">HousingAidGrants@offalycoco.ie</a>
Anti-Social Behaviour	<a href="mailto:ASB@offalycoco.ie">ASB@offalycoco.ie</a>

### Housing Update

The ‘Winter Emergency Period’ under the *Residential Tenancies (Deferment of Termination Dates of Certain Tenancies) Act 2022* ceased on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Accordingly, deferred tenancy terminations may take effect over a staggered period from 1<sup>st</sup> April.

- Where a tenant is on a valid Notice of Termination, qualifies for Social Housing supports and is in receipt of HAP or RAS the Housing Section are engaging with them on a number of fronts – referral and support of the HAP Placefinder services, engagement with the Landlord in relation to possible social leasing options and where appropriate exploring the possibility of acquiring the unit.
- Where an individual/household are in a position to purchase a property, Housing are advising them of the availability of the First Home Scheme. The First Home Scheme is a shared equity scheme designed to help bridge the gap between the applicant’s deposit and mortgage, and the price of the home. Further details of the First Home Scheme is available at [www.firsthomescheme.ie](http://www.firsthomescheme.ie).
- Where a tenant has received a valid Notice of Termination and do not qualify for Social Housing supports Housing and the tenant(s) may be in a position to acquire the house Housing are engaging with them and assisting them to complete an application for a Local Authority Home Loan. These applications are being prioritised with the HFA and LAHL Assessment Committee.
- Where a tenant has received a valid Notice of Termination and do not qualify for Social Housing supports and has a net household income of

less than €53,000 Housing are engaging with the tenant(s) to assess if they qualify for the Temporary Cost Rental Tenant In-Situ (CRTiS) Scheme. Under this scheme, the Housing Agency may acquire a home with tenant(s) in-situ where a Notice of Termination has been issued due to the intended sale of the home, subject to certain conditions relating to the status of the tenant(s) and the property. Housing are arranging for the initial assessment of tenants and where it is determined that such tenant(s) may be at risk of homelessness, and the household is not in receipt of Housing Assistance Payment, the Local Authority, with the tenant(s) approval, passes the details of the tenant(s) and the property to the Housing Agency for consideration of the acquisition. The Housing Agency have delegated sanction and discretion, subject to certain criteria to make acquisitions. Should the acquisition be completed the household becomes a tenant of the Housing Agency. Further terms and conditions will apply these will be communicated to prospective tenant(s).

- There are 486 on the Social Housing Support List at the end of March 2023.
- A further 673 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 27 signed up for HAP and 8 exited from HAP in March.
- At the end of March, 28 single people and 16 couples and families were being supported in emergency accommodation.

- The annual rent review of Local Authority Tenants has commenced. 1,984 rent assessment forms issued to Local Authority Tenants and at the end of March 147 rent assessment forms have yet to be returned. These and any queries from tenants can be directed to our email [RentReview@offalycoco.ie](mailto:RentReview@offalycoco.ie).
- Local Authority Home Loans (LAHL): currently 5 applications at approval in principle stage to a value of €856,000. 5 Approval in Principle (AiP) carried over from 2022 and 6 applications have been received in 2023. The status of these are as follows: 1 AiP, 3 declined and 2 currently with the Housing Agency. 1 drawdown has been completed in 2023 to date in the sum of €195,300.

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

- Total housing stock at end of February 2023 is 2,033.
- 330 maintenance calls were logged in March.
- 49 inspections on Local Authority houses were held between January and March 2023.

#### **Housing Capital Programme Update**

- Moneygall (4 units) – Houses completed and allocated.
- 1 Newbridge Street, Birr, 1 unit: Works are now complete and the dwelling allocated.
- Banagher, Kylebeg (18 Units) – Stage 4 approval received on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Project is due for completion in April 2023.
- Beechgrove, Belmont (7 units) – Project commenced on site on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Due for completion in Q2, 2023.

- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 no. Older Person's dwellings) – Stage 4 approval was granted on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022, contractor appointed and has started on site. Due for completion in Q4 2023.
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) – Contractor appointed and project started on site in early March 2023.
- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – Project started on site on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Due for completion in September 2024.
- Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane (20 Units) – Part 8 approved at the May council meeting. Stage 3 to be submitted to the Department once ESB lines on the site are undergrounded.
- Circular Road, Daingean, Site 2 (10 Units) – Stage 2 approval was granted on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023. New Part 8 exemption process; Section 179A of Planning and Development Act will shortly be advertised.
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (10 Units) – Stage 2 approval received 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 2022. Part 8 Public Display ended on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023. No submissions were received. Part 8 report to be presented for resolution at next Council meeting.
- 4 Holly Park, Birr, 1 Unit: Consultants have been appointed; Combined Stage 2/3 application to be submitted to Department in April 2023.
- 121 Lakeview, Clara: Stage 1 approval application lodged on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022. Queries were received from DHLGH on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Project size to be reduced in line with funding being offered.

### **Approved Housing Bodies Schemes**

- Oaklee: Clonminch, Tullamore (19 units) – Completion in early April 2023 and nominations to Oaklee Housing pending.
- Oaklee: Kearney's Field, Tullamore (41 Units) – Completion in Q2, 2023.
- Sofia Housing: Stage 2 approved (39 units) at Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Planning Application lodged.
- Sofia Housing, Clonamore, Tullamore – Contractor has been appointed and works are progressing well.

### **Turnkey Developments/Part V**

- Woodfield, Birr, 35 units - Completed and being allocated.
- Walsh Island, 4 units – Completed and allocated.
- 2 x Part V units under construction at Ard na Carriage, Edenderry. Completed and being allocated.
- Bog Road, Portarlinton, 28 units - Under Construction, completion May 2023 and allocations pending.
- Part V units in Redwood & Silverbrook, Tullamore under construction.

### **Community Development**

- Estate Management Funding for the three Municipal Districts have been assigned and works are commencing or are scheduled to commence shortly.
- Continuing to support established resident committees and engaging with other groups and communities in an effort to establish them and thereby support the development of their community.
- *Easter Games on the Green* events held in 3 Local Authority Housing

Estates across the Municipal Districts and a summer programme is currently being developed.

- Engagement with LOETB to develop classes which will be organised in conjunction with Offaly Local Development Company in Kilbrook Community Centre, Tullamore.

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### **LOCAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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Offaly LCDC held their monthly meeting on Thursday 9th March. Main agenda items included the Rural Development LEADER Programme 2014–2020 & Transitional LEADER Programme 2021–2022, LEADER Programme 2023–2027, CEP - Community Support Fund 2022, Community Recognition Fund 2023 and Healthy Ireland Funding Round 4.

#### **Leader 2014-2022**

Members were briefed in relation to the LEADER Annual Progress Report 2022 & Implementation Plan 2023, and provided with an overview of the LEADER budgets in respect of the main LEADER Programme projects, EURI projects, Co-Operation and Food Initiative projects, and details of the projected spend for 2023 and up to June 2024 to complete the current programme. A presentation of 2 LEADER case studies was given highlighting the key results of each. The LEADER Annual Progress Report 2022 & the Implementation Plan 2023 were agreed by the members.

#### **CEP Community Support Fund 2022-2023**

Members were advised that a funding allocation of €298,782 for Offaly was received from the DRCD for the Community Support Fund designed to support not-for-profit community and voluntary groups in Offaly with operating

costs, capital repairs and improvements to facilities/purchase of equipment, LED lighting and Women's Sheds non-pay running costs. Members were provided with an overview of the scheme, the timelines involved, breakdown by category, grant size and by municipal district and were also advised in regard to the work and recommendations of the Evaluation Committee. The CSF Evaluation recommendations and allocations were agreed and approved by members.

#### **Community Recognition Fund 2023**

Members were briefed in relation to the Community Recognition Fund 2023 and the amount of €669,691 allocated to Offaly. This funding is specifically targeted at capital projects that are located in communities, towns and villages that are hosting the Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and/or International Protection Applicants ('new arrivals') including towns identified for the rapid build homes programme. Members noted that the number of displaced in Offaly is now over one thousand, located at various areas throughout the county. Members were advised that the Evaluation Committee had met prior to the LCDC meeting to discuss and evaluate applications received and a recommendation was prepared for member's consideration and approval, in accordance with guidelines. 26 applications were recommended for funding at various locations across Offaly. The CRF Evaluation recommendations and allocations were agreed and approved by members.

#### **Healthy Ireland Funding Round 4 – Projects**

Members were advised that the application process for funding under the Health Ireland Round 4 fund was now closed. Five applications to the value of €80,400 were received from targeted eligible groups



across the county. The Grant Assessment Sub-Committee met to evaluate and approve applications received and these allocations were agreed and approved by the LCDC.

### Public Participation Network

PPN Staff participated in a number of different pieces of work during March. This included attendance at:

- The Regional Social Enterprise Policy Workshops
- The Law Reform Commission on the Liability of Unincorporated Associations Public Consultation
- International Women's day
- Climate Action Team Meeting Lough Boora
- North Offaly Development Association
- Midland Regional PPN meeting
- Pride of Place Civic Reception
- Offaly Older Persons Network
- Disability Information Workshop



Three Community Area Meetings took place covering each of the Municipal Districts with meeting in the following locations: Banagher, Clonbullogue & Clara.

Consultations on the Local Development Strategy took place at each of the three locations. A number of

different agencies and support services attended and presented on their respective areas.



**Banagher:** ODEN, LOETB, OLDC, OVC, BHP, Laois Offaly Local Link and Birr District Community Alert.

**Clonbullogue:** ODEN, LOETB, OLDC, OVC, Laois Offaly Local Link and Edenderry Creative Places

**Clara:** ODEN, LOETB, OLDC, OVC, Laois Offaly Local Link

### Comhairle Na nÓg

A National Showcase preparation meeting took place on 7<sup>th</sup> March, with 21 members in attendance. The members broke into three campaign working groups; Libraries, Schools and Radios. Each group brainstormed campaign ideas, next actions and organised online meetings in their working groups. They also suggested ideas for what should be included on the display board for the National Showcase event on 4<sup>th</sup> April, in Croke Park. A follow up meeting took place on 28<sup>th</sup> March, to design the display board for the event using images and events from the past 2 years.

Members gave considerations and raised questions for the Dept. of Transport's Statement of Strategy 2021-2023.

**START** – Secretariat for the Assistance of Regions in Transition: 5 members presented in the Offaly Council Chambers on the 29<sup>th</sup> March as the Youth Voice –

Being heard in Just Transition; Interactive conversation with Youth representatives on their family connections with the peatlands, opinion on Just Transition, and prospects for the future. The group met online via Zoom on the 24<sup>th</sup> March to design and practice their presentation.



## Age Friendly

The Age Friendly Alliance and Interdepartmental Team met at the beginning of March and discussed proposed plans for developing Age Friendly Towns within Offaly. Clara & Kilcormac have been identified as towns to progress in 2023.

The Age Friendly Regional Manager & Local Programme Manager attended an Age Friendly walkability audit in Moate, to gain practical experience for proposed walkability audits to be carried out in Offaly. Works are ongoing on the Development of the Age Friendly Strategy 2022-2027.



## ARTS OFFICE

### Arts Strategy 2023-2028

The Arts Office has advertised for the engagement of an experienced Arts Consultant(s) to assist with the planning / consultation process that aligns with the newly adopted **Arts Infrastructure Strategy**. An assessment process will be undertaken following the closing date.

## ARTS OFFICE PROGRAMMES

### Lough Boora - Art in Landscape Project Funding

Offaly County Council Arts Office in collaboration with Mayo County Council Arts Office and Visual Artists Ireland were successful in securing project funding under the Art Council's Invitation for Collaboration Scheme. OCC Art's Office is the lead partner on the project.



The project will include a series of events to take place at Lough Boora Sculpture Park and Tír Sáile (Co. Mayo) in September/October. Briefing documents were prepared for the roles of Project Manager and Curator for the project, to advance to the next stage of the project. These roles are currently being advertised across all platforms.

Once appointed, the curator will deliver a curatorial direction for the project and the Project Manager responsibilities will include managing artist commissions,

planning and delivering of a Hedge School, as well as a wide array of consultation, documentation and evaluation.

### Arts in Health

The Arts Office worked with Offaly Down Syndrome Association and renowned Offaly-based Photographer James Crombie, to deliver an Arts in Health Project throughout February, involving workshops and a field trip. Offaly Arts celebrated World Down Syndrome Day on 21<sup>st</sup> March, with an exhibition of the work of the fledgling photographers, at The Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore.

### FilmOffaly

The FilmOffaly Award 2022 entitled, *Missing* was shot on location in Offaly in March and the film is now in post-production. The FilmOffaly 2023 Award recently closed, with 41 applicants submitting applications. Shortlisted filmmakers will be brought forward for a script writing workshop followed by an interview with an external panel.

### FilmOffaly Review

The FilmOffaly Review is underway by researchers, *Culture Works* is continuing with an update anticipated for May 2023.

### Annual Programme

- Planning for Hullabaloo Children's Arts Festival, Mini Movies and Culture Night is underway. The Arts Office is currently working on adaption of callout for work for Culture Night. The Mini Movies programme is also under review, with a refreshed programme planned for 2023.
- The Arts Office is also supporting Birr Theatre & Arts Centre and Esker Arts in working with the *Bealtaine Roots & Shoots Programme* scheduled for May

2023. Both venues will host age-friendly Arts events in May 2023 with Esker Arts hosting the Offaly County Council, Le Chéile and HSE Choirs for a *Timeless Tunes* performance at Esker Arts on May 28<sup>th</sup> a programme of music, specially selected for Bealtaine. Birr Theatre & Arts Centre will host the popular Midlands writer and storyteller Jean Farrell with an afternoon of Memories & Melodies on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

- The Arts Office are also supporting *Poetry Day 2023*, planned for April 27<sup>th</sup> 2023 following consultation with Poetry Ireland. The Arts Office will support a Poetry Workshop at Esker Arts on 21<sup>st</sup> April, with an Offaly Poet leading participants in a day-long workshop, designed to guide poets towards the creation and performance of a poem for the day itself. Esker Arts will then host the first Open Mic Poetry event at Esker Arts on Poetry Day, April 27<sup>th</sup> which will be open to poets from across Offaly.
- The Arts Office recently collaborated with Theatre Forum to offer bursaries to Offaly Theatre artists to attend the annual Gathering, due to take place in Waterford in May 2023. Following an open call, three Offaly artists were awarded bursaries which will support their attendance at the annual conference.

### Arts Newsletter

The Arts Office recently launched Offaly Arts Alert, offering updates and information on Arts events, workshops, exhibitions etc. across the County as well as promoting and sharing funding and bursary opportunities that might be of interest to artists and communities that have a shared



interest in the Arts. The newsletter was very well received and work is underway to create the next edition. An easy-read and video version was also developed to support mixed levels of access and varying reading/comprehension styles and needs.

### Creative Places Edenderry

The Creative Places programme is well underway with Creative Places co-ordinator Seonaid Murray in place leading a number of initiatives on the ground. Seonaid has facilitated the first Creative Places Steering Group for 2023 with another planned for early April. The Creative Places programme is divided into three phases, 'Connect, Cultivate, and Celebrate'. Now in the Cultivate phase of the project, following the gathering of ideas, thoughts and input from the local community, a number of workshops, events and projects are underway, such as the Friday Community Social, and writing workshops with Eugene O' Brien and Pauline Mc Namee. Creative Grants applications will soon be assessed, with the outcome of same, pollinating further arts activity in the area.



### CAPITAL PROJECTS

#### Esker Arts

Works, operational planning and programming continues with regards to the, soon to be opened, Esker Arts. Exterior signage has been underway and there has been much consultation on upcoming projects. There is a huge sense of optimism present ahead of the mid-April opening date. The Lions Club Choral event, which will be the first event open to audience, sold out in a matter of days and there is much

excitement ahead of this and the Arts Council Breaking Ground exhibition.



### SPORTS

#### Condolences



Offaly Sports Partnership extended their condolences to the Kearns family on the sudden passing of Liam, Offaly GAA

Senior Manager. "Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam".

#### Congratulations

Offaly Sports Partnership would like to congratulate Paul Buckley of Ferbane Athletics Club who was named the 2022 Co Offaly recipient of the Federation of Irish Sports "Volunteers in Sport Award".



#### Good wishes

Offaly Sports Partnership would like to wish Denise Coghill all the best as she departs on maternity leave. We look forward to seeing you back with the sports partnership in a few months' time.

#### Education & Training

Safeguarding 1 delivered for 15 volunteers from four sports clubs.



### Programmes

#### Community Sports Development Programme – Denise Coghill

**Basketball** – Three primary (Clonmacnoise, Rashina and St Cynoc's), and one secondary school (Gallen) took part in a 6-week in school basketball programme. 300 primary school pupils and 75 secondary school students participated. An after schools programme for 30 primary school pupils and 20 secondary school students is also underway.

**Good to Go training** – designed to support people leading physical activity sessions for older adults and people with disabilities, this 4-week programme was delivered by Frank Fahy of Fizzical. An average of 25 to 30 people attended each session.

#### Community sports hubs

**Daingean** – Liam O Reilly, ACE Project Coordinator will be managing the work plan of the Daingean Community Sports Hub while Denise is on maternity leave. March saw another full timetable of programmes and classes in the Daingean Community Sports Hub. Search Daingean Community Sports Hub on Facebook for up to date information on what's going on at the Hub.

**Mucklagh** – Jean Brady, Sports Inclusion Development Officer continues to coordinate delivery of activities within the Mucklagh sports hub. Quarter 1 programmes concluded in March; while details of upcoming programmes for quarter 2 will be published soon.

#### Sports Inclusion Development Programme – Jean Brady

March saw the continuing roll out of the following programmes: -

**Banagher College/IWA** 5-week boccia programme: the league commenced in March; with three teams each from Banagher College and the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) taking part, while the remaining students officiated the games each week. The IWA secured the trophy at the end of the programme.



**The Muiriosa Foundation's** 8-week multi-sport programme for 10 service users across seven houses (up from three in February) continues in Mucklagh Community Centre.

An 8-week multi-sport programme for 40 adults from **Rehab Care** also commenced in the Mucklagh Community Centre in March.

A multi-sport day for 40 secondary school students with additional needs from four schools (**Ard Scoil Chiaráin, Clara; Coláiste Naomh Cormac; Oaklands Community College and St Mary's Secondary School, Edenderry**) took place on Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March.



## Women in Sport week

Offaly Sports Partnership hosted its second annual women in sport week from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> March. Among the events delivered by the sports partnership were: -



**Gaelic blitz** for 150 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> class girls from eight schools (Ballinagar; Ballinamere; Clonmacnoise; Presentation Portarlinton; Scoil Bhríde, St Mary's and St Patrick's, Edenderry; and Scoil Mhuire, Tullamore) in the Faithful Fields. 3v3 basketball for 90 secondary school girls from the Sacred Heart School and Tullamore College in the college.

**Women in Sport coaching workshop** to launch our research partnership with SHE TUS Athlone – 25 people in attendance



**X7s rugby** for 100 secondary school girls from five schools (Killina Presentation Secondary School; St Brendan's Community School, Birr; St Mary's Secondary School, Edenderry; Tullamore College; and Wilsons Hospital School) in Tullamore Rugby.

**Futsal blitz** for 140 secondary school girls in the Sacred Heart School, Tullamore.

Pauline Curley **Relay Marathon** – 40 girls from five schools ran the relay marathon in 2h 10m 19s.



Various clubs also delivered a range of activities for women across the week.

## TOURISM

Fáilte Ireland's annual Meitheal trade show took place in the INEC in Killarney in March and welcomed 234 overseas buyers from 17 countries.

Our Tourism Officer Olive Farrelly joined the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands team to show support for this great event and promote our unique offering.



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**LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE**

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**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. 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.

**Experience Offaly Pavilion at the 2023 Tullamore Show**

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly in conjunction with Offaly Local Development Company and Offaly County Council will support the Offaly pavilion in the 2023 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.

**Food Starter Programme**

The Food Starter programme is an online 4 x 1/2-day programme designed to help those with a food idea, or those at a very early stage of starting up a food business, typically within the first 24 months.



It will cover everything from an overview of the Irish food sector to the specifics of starting a food production business.

Full details including how to book your place are available on our website: [Food Starter Programme](#). The programme starts on Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> April.



This conference places a spotlight on the need for innovation in enterprise to help in the fight to combat climate change and the role of local authorities in facilitating sustainable enterprise. The conference will showcase examples of how businesses are pivoting to capitalise on new opportunities and in doing so are becoming green economy pioneers, with the support of local authorities. Further details and how to register are available [HERE](#).

**Building Better Business Midlands,**

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is holding a series of free events for businesses which will highlight the opportunities and challenges presented by digital transformation and decarbonisation. The 'Building Better Business' conference for the Midlands region will be held on 27th April in the Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise.



The event will include a keynote address by Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Simon Coveney, panel discussions on how digital transformation and decarbonisation can boost business, expert information on the range of government supports available to businesses and an opportunity to connect with and learn from businesses of all sizes across all sectors in the Midlands.

### Offaly Job Fair 2023

The Offaly Job Fair is taking place again this year after a very successful inaugural event last year. Over 650 job seekers from all over the Midlands and further afield flocked to the first ever Offaly Job Fair last year. There were 36 employer stands and over 500 hundred jobs on offer. This year promises to be bigger and better. If you are an employer looking to hire staff, contact the Tullamore Chamber of Commerce to book a stand - [info@tullamorechamber.com](mailto:info@tullamorechamber.com)

There will be lots of employers looking to fill vacant positions so spread the word!

**ffaly Job Fair**

Saturday 10th June | 10am - 3pm

**FIND YOUR DREAM JOB**

Manufacturing | Construction | Retail  
Hospitality | Engineering | Pharmaceutical  
Financial | Administration | Many More

**TULLAMORE COURT HOTEL**



### Energy supports for business

Information on starting your energy efficiency journey including Toolkits and Energy Audits is available on the [Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment website](#).

### Upcoming Events

Most of our courses are **FREE OF CHARGE!** Whether it is starting a business or growing a business there is something suitable for everyone. Full details and links to book are here: <https://bit.ly/3B5LTku>

Upcoming Events		See All Events >
03/04/2023	How to make and use Reels on Instagram and Facebook	<a href="#">Book online</a>
20/04/2023	Trading Online Voucher Webinar	<a href="#">Book online</a>
24/04/2023	Website Health Check (1:1 Mentoring) Clinic 24 Apr...	<a href="#">Book online</a>
24/04/2023	Food Starter Programme	<a href="#">Book online</a>
25/04/2023	Introduction to Podcasts for business	<a href="#">Book online</a>
27/04/2023	Free One to One Mentoring on Financial Matters	<a href="#">Book online</a>
03/05/2023	Part-Time Business Start Up (while holding down a ...	<a href="#">Book online</a>



## LIBRARY SERVICES

**Easter Activities and Spring into Storytime at Offaly Libraries**

Offaly Libraries welcome another *Spring into Storytime* programme, a central pillar of the national Right to Read campaign.



Visitors to our library branches over the coming weeks and especially during the Easter Break will be delighted to see the variety of activities organised by library staff. Easter Craft Bags, Colouring Sheets, Scavenger Hunts and a 'Design a Book Cover' competition, will all feature throughout April.

*Storytimes and Craft sessions* are also on offer across the county for children on their Easter holidays with more information available to view on our website [here](https://www.offalylibraries.ie).

Library branches look forward to welcoming schools back after the Easter break for a series of class visits and storytimes.

Pictured here are Shane and Clare of Tullamore Library, just back from St.



Joseph's National School having completed storytimes for **150 students**.

**Irish Astronomy Week, March 20 – 26**

Offaly Libraries celebrated Irish Astronomy Week from **March 20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>**, as part of our **School STEAM Programme** for 2023 with stellar book displays and colouring sheets on offer in all our libraries. Birr Library hosted a fabulous Astronomy-themed storytime, an Arts and Craft session, and a Lego Space Challenge, which attracted approximately **50 attendees**.

Understanding and appreciation of the night sky was the focus of a fantastic **Family Stargazing evening at Tullamore Library** on 21<sup>st</sup> March from 7pm to 9pm.



Although the night sky was heavily overcast, we did not let the Irish weather dampen our spirits and **37 attendees** enjoyed a fantastic evening of story times and space facts.

**Seanie Morris of Midlands Astronomy Club** was on hand to answer questions about astronomy and also hosted fun 'Rocket Building' workshops for all attendees. Those who had successfully launched their rockets were then treated to amazing tours of space on our **Virtual Reality headsets**.

### Offaly Libraries STEAM 2023

Programme has been kindly co-funded by Creative Ireland.

Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme



### Introducing our New Look Library Cards!

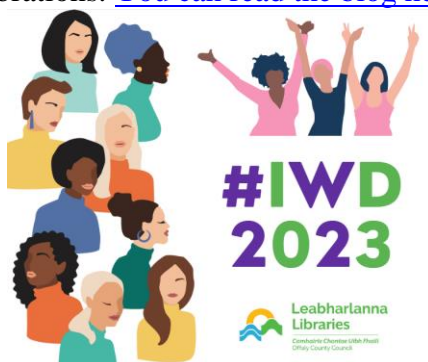
Our library cards recently underwent a makeover and we are so excited to introduce the new look to all our current and future patrons.

A quick reminder that new members can [register quickly and easily online here](#).



### International Women's Day

The 8<sup>th</sup> of March is an important day for the international women's movement. Library staff member, Sandra, has written an excellent blog full of recommended reads for our patrons to join in on the celebrations. [You can read the blog here](#).



Offaly Libraries coordinated a spread of events across the county to contribute to the celebrations. Special storytimes were delivered in our libraries and Edenderry Library also held an **International Women's Day Coffee Morning**, which was a great success with **30 attendees**.

### Europe Direct Talk: How to Manage Your Sustainable Kitchen Garden

Tullamore Library welcomed attendees to an evening talk with Tanguy de Toulgoët on Thursday, March 30<sup>th</sup>. Organised in collaboration with Europe Direct Portlaoise, the talk offered practical tips and advice on how to manage a sustainable kitchen garden.



### Emotional Wellbeing App for Kids: Available Free with Offaly Libraries



Give your kids the best emotional start in life. Moshi's content allows children aged 0 - 10 to filter complicated emotions like sadness, self-confidence, frustration or empathy through the safe and magical world of Moshi and recognize their feelings through the eyes of over 100 characters.



Offaly Library members can now access 30 days of Moshi stories that help your kids sleep, entertain them with healthy screen time and support their emotional learning. When the month is up, simply come back and

login to renew access with no charge! [More information here.](#)

### The Second Reformation and Catholic-Protestant relations in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: History Talk at Birr Library

On 24 October 1822, the newly-appointed Church of Ireland archbishop of Dublin, William Magee delivered a sermon in St Patrick's Cathedral, which would initiate what became known as the 'Second Reformation'.

Taking place on Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, this lecture discusses the 'Second Reformation' including the infamous Birr Crotty Schism, with reference to the exhibition that has been hosted in Birr library for the past month.

### Sensory Rooms at Tullamore and Edenderry Library

During March alone, **133 attendees** availed of Tullamore Library's Sensory Room and feedback from users has been overwhelmingly positive. Sensory Room bookings can be made via our [online booking system here.](#)



The Sensory Room in Edenderry Library is available every Thursday from 10am to 4:00pm. Bookings can be made directly with



Edenderry Library on 046 97 31028 or by email to [edenderrylibrary@offalycoco.ie](mailto:edenderrylibrary@offalycoco.ie)

### Healthy Ireland Zoom Talk on Self-Harm

Josephine Rigney delivers an informative talk via Zoom on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April, from 18.00 – 20.00.



This talk aims to provide health care professionals, carers, families and others with the tools to help support those struggling with self-harm. Josephine will also deliver an in-person talk in Tullamore Library on May 11<sup>th</sup>, from 18.00 – 20.00. Those interested in attending either event may reserve their place by contacting Tullamore Library directly on 05793 46832 or email [tullamorelibrary@offalycoco.ie](mailto:tullamorelibrary@offalycoco.ie)

### VEX Robotics Easter Camp at Tullamore Library!

VEX Robotics returned to Tullamore Library during April, in the form of a three-day Easter camp offered to children aged 8 – 12.

Our Creative Zone was put to good use with plenty of innovative builds, coding and demonstrations taking place from 10am – 2pm each day with library staff in support. Delivered by Offaly County Council's STEM Education Officer.





### Shannon Bergin Art Exhibition at Tullamore Library this April

Shannon Bergin's gorgeously colourful print exhibition is on display in Tullamore Library for the month of April. Shannon is an Irish illustrator, avid doodler, and tea drinker. Her artwork is inspired by her love of stories and books. She graduated from Limerick School of Art and Design with a BA (Hons) in Animation and Motion Design and is currently spending her days making art and picture books.



### School Exhibition at Edenderry Library

Edenderry Library are hosting a fabric art display created by St Mary's Secondary School Second Year Home Economics class. The fabric art is called **Comfort Blanket: Memories of our Ancestors** and will remain on display in the library until the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April.



### Book Clubs at Offaly Libraries

Did you know that Offaly Libraries now have **nine book clubs** spread across four library branches *and* online? [Check them all out here.](#)



With clubs for **children, young adults and mature readers**, why not join one of the clubs on offer or, if you do not see your local branch mentioned, our library staff would be thrilled to help you start one. Here is a taste of what our book clubs are reading this month:



### Sign up for our Library Newsletter

A quick reminder that the best way to keep up to date with all library programmes, developments and new services is via **Offaly Libraries Newsletter** and by following our social media channels. Read our [latest newsletter here.](#)



Currently we have **1,816 subscribers** to the newsletter. Follow the link to subscribe to our newsletter: [Offaly Libraries Newsletter.](#)

*Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive*



## Revenue Account Grant Income &amp; Payroll Summary to 31 March 2023

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr Budget 2023 €m	Preliminary Value to March 2023 €m	% Year To Date
Payroll costs	32.97	7.19	21.8%
Grants and Subsidies Income	40.80	5.22	12.8%

## OCC to 31st Mar 2023

	<u>Rates</u> <u>€m</u>	<u>Rents</u> <u>€m</u>	<u>Loans</u> <u>€m</u>
Opening Balance Jan 1st, 2023	3.00	0.56	0.10
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers	16.78	1.89	0.13
2023 Cash Collected to end of March	4.30	1.92	0.15
Closing Balance March 31st, 2023	15.48	0.53	0.08
<b><u>2022 Cash collected to March 31st</u></b>	<b>1.13</b>	1.76	0.13
% Collection at this point in 2022	381%	109%	115%

Collections impacted in 2022 by Q1 waiver and effect of building business back up after lockdowns

## Bank Overdraft to 31st March 2023

		% YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date	47	52%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to March 31st 2023 YTD (estimate)		€2,000
Bank Administration and transactional charges to March 31st 2023 YTD (estimate)		€4,695