

**NOVEMBER
2020**



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 Nollaig

Monthly Management Report for consideration at the December 2020 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

CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS – See Appendix 2

SHORTLISTING FOR NATIONAL PROCUREMENT AWARDS

The NWCPO has been shortlisted for a procurement award under the “Office Best Green Procurement Project of the Year” category. The “Circular & Social Public Procurement Project” involved the outfitting of the NWCPO office with upcycled and second hand furniture. This intuitive supported the environment, the local economy and social enterprise. The award ceremony is due to be held virtually on the 16th of December.

LEO FEASIBILITY GRANT CALL

Feasibility grant towards prototype development & research available - Next closing date 31st December 2020.

FREE CHRISTMAS TREE TAKE-BACK SERVICE

Free Christmas Tree take-back service available at the 3 recycling centres – Tullamore, Edenderry, and Birr up until **Saturday, 23rd January, 2021**. Trees must be free of decorations, tinsel, lights etc. One tree per customer.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

Just Transition Funding

During November, €998,000 in Just Transition Funding was received in respect of strengthening the connections to Lough Boora Discovery Park from the Grand Canal Greenway and to develop the Midland Cycling Destination – Feasibility Study into an Implementation Strategy. Offaly County Council will match this with €176,000 in match funds.

Tullamore Living River Project

The Tender process for this scheme is now complete. Leader/LCDC have approved the funding for the wetland application, in principal at their November Meeting. The project is due to commence in Spring 2021.

#LookForLocal Campaign

By shopping locally this winter, we'll be helping our local businesses and keeping jobs in our communities. We have examples of Offaly businesses listed on the LEO Offaly website, along with their website addresses. So, let's all #LookForLocal!

'Make a Break for it'

Fáilte Ireland confirmed that the 'Make a Break for it' campaign, which included Offaly, will continue in 2021

PLANNING

	To end November 2020	To end November 2019	Total 2019
Planning Applications	600	582	628
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	5	11	12
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	13(2)	14(4)	14 (6)

Planning Administration

The review process of Offaly County Council Draft Development Contribution Scheme 2021 – 2025 has commenced and the draft document remains available for review. Publication of the Development Contribution Scheme Final Draft has commenced a six-week submission process from 6th November to 18th December 2020 where submissions from interested parties continue to be invited.

Forward Planning

The last date for receipt of submissions on the draft Offaly County Development Plan was 7th October 2020. 196 submissions were received. A Chief Executive report will be prepared on these by early January 2021 for the elected members' consideration.

Regeneration

Rural Regeneration Development Fund: (RRDF)

Rural Regeneration Category 1 (Shovel ready):

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for RRDF Cat. 1 2020 funding in June 2020. Applications were submitted by the Regeneration Team in conjunction with other relevant sections on 1st December, 2020.

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme: (ORIS)

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for ORIS 2020 funding on 29th May 2020. Applications were submitted by Regeneration Team in conjunction with other relevant sections for 30th November, 2020.

Greenways

Work is proceeding on the Grand Canal Greenway eastwards from Ballycommon towards Daingean and from Wood of O Bridge to the county boundary (Kilbeggan Branch). Funding from the Department of Transport has been received to continue the greenway to the county boundary at Edenderry in 2021.

TOURISM

Slieve Bloom Destination Development Programme

The Slieve Bloom Destination Development Programme got underway in November, with Fáilte Ireland developing a suite of supports for all those engaged in tourism in the region.

Fáilte Ireland believes it is a very exciting time for the Slieve Bloom region as a new emerging destination in IAE. With the €4.35m RRDF capital investment into the Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trails together with new visitor experience and management plans being developed for the Slieve Bloom Nature Reserve, the time is opportune for all to embrace a collaborative approach to growing the destination economically.

The objectives over the coming months are to support businesses to motivate domestic, and in time international visitors, to come to the Slieve Bloom area, stay longer and spend more.

Domestic Market Segmentation and Destination Selling Workshop

Offaly Tourism team along with members of the trade took part in Fáilte Ireland's first Domestic Market Segmentation and Destination Selling Workshop for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands region on Tuesday, 24th November. The purpose of this was to;

- Drive cross-county, commercial tourism network which will bolster the resilience and integration of your business as well as the destination as a whole.
- Collaborate with other tourism businesses within visitor-centric product catchments across Ireland's Hidden Heartlands to increase the profile of the destination, and its ability to grow and sustain its share of the domestic and international tourism market.
- Develop bespoke itineraries for specific segments and learn how to present them.
- Get up to speed with the latest consumer insights and sentiments and learn how to apply them in the development of new saleable experiences and revenue-generating opportunities.

Offaly Tourism Marketing (CLG)

The **AGM for Offaly Tourism Marketing (CLG)** was held virtually on the 10th of November. This was followed by a **Marketing Meeting** on the 25th of November. Both meetings were well attended by the trade and Fáilte Ireland representatives attended both meetings. Members were updated on the following;

- Offaly Tourism Marketing members were updated on the recent announcement on the closure of the Old Bonded Warehouse of Tullamore Dew Visitor Centre, at Bury Quay. It is now planned to develop a new visitor centre at the

site of the new distillery on the outskirts of Tullamore. The hope is to have this ready and open to visitors for summer 2021.

- Offaly Tourism team are currently working on the 2021 marketing plan.
- The Visit Offaly videography that was planned for summer 2020 is now postponed until April/ May 2021.
- Recent projects completed by the Offaly Tourism team included; the Golfing in Offaly brochure and the new A3 Visit Offaly tearaway maps, which have been printed.

ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES

Water

Daingean Storm tank has been commissioned and the new Treatment Plant at Bracknagh has been up & running since early November. The Rahan Wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is progressing well and should be commissioned in Q2 of 2021 at the latest.

Edenderry WWTP: There have been ongoing correspondences between Irish Water and Offaly County Council in relation to both the operation and maintenance of the existing wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) and the proposed upgrade of the WWTP. IW are preparing tender documents to appoint a Consultant to prepare a Feasibility Study Report.

Small Towns & Villages Development Plan: OCC have submitted our priority list to IW for consideration. The priority list is as follows: 1. Rhode WWTP, 2. Daingean WWTP, 3. Walsh Island WWTP, 4. Mount Lucas Borehole, 5. Clonbullogue Water Rising Main.

Boil Water Notice

There is currently a boil water notice in place for Clonbullogue Village. This Boil water notice was put in place as a precaution to protect approximately 840 customers while upgrade works to the disinfection system at the water treatment plant are underway. It is anticipated these works will be completed before year end.

Environmental Complaints

From the 1st January 2020 to the first week in December, the Environment Section of Offaly County Council received and investigated 1401 complaints. These complaints cover the full range environmental issues such as litter, waste, noise, water quality, control of dogs, control of horses etc.

The Environment Section assisted in 220 community clean-ups across the county, providing bags, pickers, gloves and removing materials collected. It should be noted that the 220 community clean-ups are addition to the complaints mentioned above.

Water Quality

DWWTS (septic tank inspections) National Inspection Plan continues through December with a nationally agreed target of 50% of 2020 inspections being completed by year's end, due to Covid restrictions. LASNTG have been approached with regards to potential training in septic tank inspections for additional section staff, in order to meet requirements.

Flooding Relief Works

Flood relief works to the Bog Road in Portarlinton are now complete. This scheme was funded under the OPW Minor Flood Mitigation Works fund, with a funding claim having been forwarded to the relevant principal officer in OPW for reimbursement.

Other flood relief works are being developed in Rahan, Birr and Shannon Harbour.

Rural Water Programme

The Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2019 – 2021 is ongoing. Of the 19 projects across the county that were approved for grant funding for capital projects under MARWP 19-20, 7 have been completed to date and the other 12 projects are at various stages of planning and construction.

Annual subsidies for Group Water Schemes have been completed, a total of €978,426.00 was paid to schemes across the county.

Water quality sampling of Group Water Schemes has continued during the year with the Groups Schemes helpfully providing sampling kiosks and access to outside taps to assist with sampling during Covid-19 related restrictions.

NWCPO

Applications Processed and Projections

The NWCPO continues to process waste collection permit applications during the COVID-19 emergency through remote working measures and online communication tools.

As of 30th November 2020, there are **2,001** granted waste collection permits on the NWCPO register and **206** applications pending. 2020 as projected was a busy year for the office and is on track to be the busiest year to date with the largest number of applications being received this year.

Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy

The NWCPO continues to scope the new waste policy “**A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy**” launched by the DECC on the 4th September 2020.

NWCPO role to be expanded to include:

- Data analysis on the operation of the market
- Oversight of charging structures and penalties
- Oversight of service provision
- Management of consumer rights and a complaint escalation mechanism
- Data Protection
- Additional functions in waste data management
- Implementation of other waste policy measures through the existing system

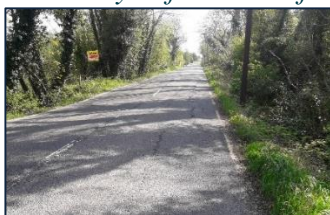
ROADS

Roads Programme 2020 is complete throughout the County and the final grant claim successfully submitted.



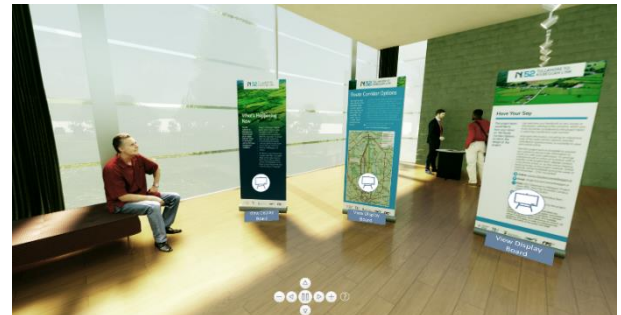
N80 Tullamore to Killeigh Road Pavement Scheme

Road Recycling Scheme R441 Ballystrig, Edenderry before and after



N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link Road

The Phase 2 Public Consultation for **N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan Link Road Scheme** Route Corridor Options commenced on Friday 6th November 2020 to 11th December. Information on the online consultation room is available on the website www.n52tullamoretokilbeggan.ie.



Bog Road Portarlinton

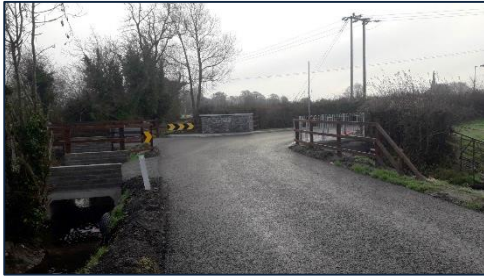
The L-5015-1 Bog Road, Portarlinton Emergency Flood Relief Works in Edenderry was successfully completed in November. The scheme will address an ongoing annual flooding issue in the locations and required installing culverts and raising the road.

July 2020 Before



August 2020 During

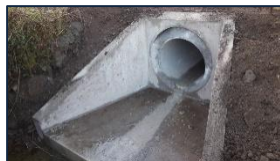




November 2020 After

Active travel and climate change adaptation measures in Offaly will continue in 2021.

Flood Relief Works in Geashill



Pedestrian Crossing in Cloghan



The new Offaly County Council Logo has been placed on our new vehicles and you will see them around the County.



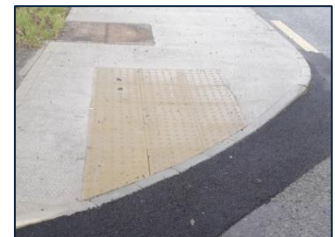
The upgrade of the Bus stop in Cloncollig Tullamore is near completion with the bus shelter installed. The Eastbound bus stop (outside Aldi) and the pedestrian crossing will be constructed in January. A similar project will commence in Edenderry in the new year.

Roads safety improvements schemes on our national routes were carried out in 2020. The RSI Works on the N52 at Durrow Cross and the N62 at Ballyvora Grove Ferbane are examples of the schemes:

Visibility to the right from local road L-2006-2 to the N52 at Durrow Cross was improved embankment regrading and new fence line.



Reducing the corners radii and installing tactile paving at the junction Ballyvora Grove Ferbane to the N62 slows traffic down and improves safety for pedestrians and Vulnerable Road Users and is a good example of using the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) guidelines.



Winter Service 2020

The Winter Service 2020 – 2021 commenced in November when the temperatures dropped. The winter service drivers have treated the roads in Offaly 10 nights to date in accordance with our Winter Service Plan

<https://www.offaly.ie/eng/Services/Roads/Winter-Service/>

HOUSING

Covid 19 – Housing

Level 5 Covid 19 restrictions continued throughout November 2020. The Housing Section reviewed service delivery and continues to provide critical essential services as outlined in the Government Roadmap. To assist us in streamlining service delivery we encourage the use of the following email addresses:

HAP Enquiries

hap@offalycoco.ie

Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans

homeloans@offalycoco.ie

Housing Inspections – HAP, Leased, Private, etc.

standards@offalycoco.ie

General Enquiries, Maintenance Issues, etc.

housing@offalycoco.ie

RAS & Leasing Enquiries

RAS@offalycoco.ie

Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People & People with a Disability Scheme

HousingAidGrants@offalycoco.ie

Anti-Social Behaviour

ASB@offalycoco.ie

November Housing Update

- The 2020 Housing Need Assessment was submitted to the Department in early November.
- There are 536 on the Social Housing List awaiting housing support at the end of November 2020.
- A further 859 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments

(HAP) Scheme, 9 signed up for HAP and 0 exited from HAP.

- At the end of November 2020 there were 21 single people and 5 families in emergency accommodation.
- 21 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans applications were received in 2020 to date and 3 RIHL have been approved.

Housing Stock – Number, Maintenance & Repair

- Total housing stock at end of November, 2020 is 1,919.
- 3,208 maintenance call were logged to 30th November, with 377 received in November.

Housing Capital Programme Update

- Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane (20 Units) – received Stage 1 approval in March 2020. The Design Team have been appointed and initial meeting has been held.
- Beechgrove Belmont (7 units) – received Stage 2 approval in July 2020 and the members approved the Part 8 planning at the November Council meeting.
- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 Units) – received Stage 2 approval in August 2020, and currently the scheme is at Part 8 public consultation stage. Approval for planning is listed on the December Council meeting agenda for the members' consideration.

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes

- Mid Offaly Housing Association: Mountbolus, (4 Units) The nominated persons received their keys on Friday, 27th November 2020.
- Oaklee: Kearney's Field (41 Units) - Tendering process is complete and

the project is to commence in early 2021.

- Cluid Housing Association: Construction on the 26 units commenced in November 2020.

Turnkey Developments

- Main Street Daingean (8 Units): Approved 13th August and works commenced in November 2020.
- 6 further Turnkey Schemes have been submitted to the department for approval in November 2020

Housing Grants

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government notified the Council that the funding for 2020 Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability Scheme is €1,333,231 of which €266,646 will be provided from Offaly County Council's own resources. All grant funding has been approved to date and Council staff are following up with the applicants.

Disabled Person's Grants

The Council received notification from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government that funding for DPG's, i.e., works on Council owned properties for 2020 is €174,740.51 (2019's allocation was €205,000). The Department considered the Council's request for additional funding and on 20th November approved an additional €26,418.49 to give a revised 2020 allocation of €201,160 (90%).

Retrofit Programme

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

A surveyor has been appointed for the first lot of 36 houses and the initial surveys were completed in November. The information gathered will inform contract documents


and works will be tendered prior to Christmas. It is envisaged that a contractor will be appointed in the new year for these units. Prior to the retrofit works commencing in 2021 there will be further discussions with tenants to outline the works involved in each situation. An additional surveyor has been appointed for a further 42 units has been appointed. The consultants will determine the works that will be required, works may include the following:


- Replacement of the heating system to a new technology heating system called a "Heat Pump"
- New radiators
- Attic insulation top up
- External or internal wall insulation
- Window Replacement
- New Doors
- Improved Ventilation

The Council has advised SEAI of the locations of these units for retrofitting and SEAI will now engage with private properties located near these dwellings to offer similar works under their existing home energy grant schemes.

In addition to the above construction works are progressing well on 20 void units.

LIBRARY SERVICES



Good News, we're open!  **Libraries**
Comhairle Chontae Uíbhí Pháilí
Offaly County Council

In line with COVID-19 Level 3 restrictions, Offaly Libraries are reopening for **Browsing Services & Contact and Collect services** from Tuesday, 1st December.

We have lots of new books all ready to be borrowed.

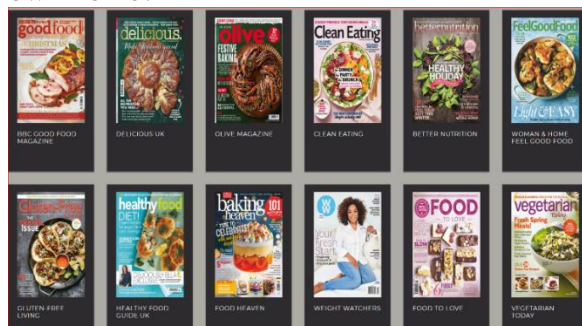
We can't wait to welcome you back!

Level 3 of the Plan for Living with COVID-19

In line with the Government's decision for the country to move to Level 3 of the Plan for Living with COVID-19 from December 1st, Offaly Libraries re-opened with Browsing Services & Contact and Collect services. We are delighted to welcome back our patrons who can once again; browse; borrow books, DVDs, CDs; mobile printing; scanning and of course Contact and Collect.

Offaly Digital Libraries

We continue to build on our full digital suite of online resources and services which have been widely used over the past few months, and are sure to be popular over the holiday period. Enjoy your festive reading and entertainment from the comfort of your own home!



Users have access to eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, eNewspapers, educational courses, language learning, free music and film streaming. You'll find these services in the [Digital Library](#) section of our website.

Healthy Ireland Series: Mindfulness for Pregnancy & Birth Preparation

As part of our Healthy Ireland programme, Offaly Libraries are delighted to present a series entitled 'Mindfulness for Pregnancy and Birth Preparation' with Leona McDonnell, Mindfulness and Wellness coach. This series comprises of six episodes exploring the ways in which mindfulness can help ease your worries and stress.

Leona will demonstrate some practical mindfulness techniques along with guided meditation. New episodes will be posted every Monday morning over the next 7 weeks, allowing for a short break over the Christmas holidays. View the series so far here: <https://bit.ly/3oDvLP5>



Christmas Family Time at Offaly Libraries



Our staff have been busy decorating and preparing for the festive season. We have so much happening for the month of December, make sure you tune in to our social media accounts so you don't miss a thing!

- We have lots of Christmas gift bags for children with a book and a treat.
- To coincide with our '12 Days of Christmas' singalongs from December 13th, the three districts will produce 12 Christmas Storytime videos for broadcast at 6pm daily

- We have started hosting lots of seasonal 'Zoom into the Library' storytime sessions for schools.
- We will re-imagine our traditional Polar Express events this year
- Did you see our live interview with Mrs Claus this year, courtesy of Clara Library? Visit our facebook page to hear all her pre-Christmas news!
- Our virtual *Wishing Line* will spread positivity, gratitude, and wellbeing and we ask the community of Offaly to email us naming things they are grateful for or feel positive about in 2020; and with their wishes for 2021. These wishes will appear across our social media platforms throughout the holidays.



Science Week 8th -15th of November 2020

The Offaly Libraries team hosted 9 fantastic science-



related stories on famous Scientist from our Little People – Big Dreams collection. We also hosted online chats about the old weather traditions related to changes in our weather in Ireland and quirky facts that

have been around by word of mouth through the ages

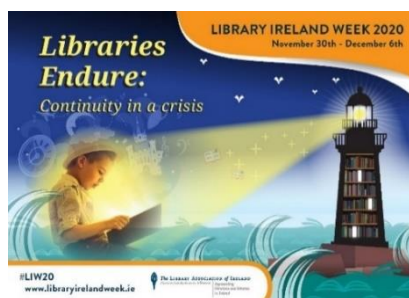
Each day of Science Week 2020, with our resident scientist, Einstein O'Brien, we



investigated the wonders of science with a new video each day. Have a look and enjoy our collection of science-based storytimes and experiments. Videos can be viewed via our [Facebookpage](https://bit.ly/39TQ0ns) here: <https://bit.ly/39TQ0ns>

Library Ireland Week 2020: 'Libraries Endure: Continuity in Crisis'

Offaly Libraries celebrated Library Ireland Week from November 30th - December 6th with lots of great events, activities and content showcasing the celebration of



libraries and library staff. The message for the week was 'Libraries Endure: Continuity in Crisis'. Take a look back on our celebration of Library Ireland Week here: <https://bit.ly/3qAXkul> #LIW20 @LAionline.

DAF Projects Update

Our **Touch-Type Read and Spell (TTRS)** resource is a multi-sensory course that teaches touch-typing to help children and adults improve their reading and spelling skills. The resource is currently being piloted with key user groups in advance of 1,000 licences being made available around the county.



Our **BrickFlicks** project is a stop motion Lego animation workshop and is underway online. These workshops involve plenty of hands-on learning which will be combined with some online demonstrations. The students will collaborate to design and create their own film sets, storyboards, and script for their stop motion movies. They will film and edit these movies on iPads or tablets.

Songwriting for Your Community and the **Bricks 4 kids** workshops are in development and will progress when safe to do so under public health guidelines.

Small scale capital works in Libraries: Update

The recent grant of €100,000 from the Department of Rural and Community Development, as part of the Small Scale Capital Works Programme in public libraries is currently being expended.



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Works underway range from installation of new library spaces, occupancy controls, perspex screens, to building reconfigurations and refurbishments; all of which will make a real difference to our libraries and help us comply with new public health guidelines. These works will

ensure our libraries are modern, well-equipped and comfortable facilities for our library users. We look forward to welcoming patrons back to our improved buildings.

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 of course through following our social media channels. The link to subscribe to our newsletter is here; [Offaly Libraries Newsletter](#)

Christmas Opening Hours

See Appendix 2

LOCAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Offaly Covid-19 Community Response Helpline

The Community Call Helpline continues to operate from 9.00am to 5.00pm, 7 days per week helping those who are vulnerable and who need help accessing essential services or a listening ear. The Helpline number for Offaly is **FREEPHONE: 1800 81 81 81**. A dedicated team of Community & Culture staff answer queries, with two staff working each weekend. There were 8 calls to the Helpline during the Covid Level 5 lockdown period between 21st October and 1st December 2020 – 1 call regarding Meals on Wheels and 7 general calls regarding the Helpline service. A monthly breakdown of calls to the Helpline to date is given below.

Month	Number	%
April	312	68
May	93	20
June	18	4
July	8	2
August	8	2
September	7	2
October	9	2
November	3	0.6
Total	458	100

Summary of Calls & Emails to Covid Helpline by Type		
	Calls	%
Deliveries of food/fuel etc.	76	17
Social Isolation, supports, co-ordination	30	7
Meals	8	1
Garda Related	5	1
Medical/Health/Covid tests	105	23
Other (offers to volunteer, misc. queries	234	51
Total	458	100

Offaly Community Response Forum

There have been 15 meetings of the Offaly Community Response Forum to date. There was one meeting in November and members were updated on support services being provided. On the 20th November 2020 Pobal issued Guidelines on the implementation of the Keep Well/Community Resilience Fund. Offaly has been allocated €67,225 to be spent over the coming months on a variety of actions as outlined below.

Theme	Detail	€
Your County	Delivery of local actions with Age Friendly Co-ordinators, such as care and information packs delivered to isolated and vulnerable members of the community. Promotion of the “Keep Well” campaign and local mental health and wellbeing supports through newsletters, radio adverts, newspapers, and online media.	19,000
Switching Off - being creative	A series of actions which are designed to improve the life skills of parents and children who have become isolated and are struggling during Covid. Other actions will provide people of all ages with interesting, creative and educational actions which	28,000

	they can access and implement in their own home or in their locality. These actions will increase awareness of aspects of heritage and biodiversity which will enhance their sense of belonging to their neighbourhood.	
Staying Connected (Comm. Call)	Promotion of support services such as the Community Call initiative and developing befriending services to assist those most vulnerable in our County. Actions will help address social isolation in our communities. The assistance of partners such as An Garda Síochána, Laois Offaly Children & Young Person Committee, Muintir na Tire, etc. will be provided to actively seek out vulnerable people without support networks to ensure their needs are met. Actions are aimed at reconnecting with Older persons, families and those experiencing loneliness by advertising supports on local media platforms, providing handy quick reference support guides and through intergenerational music befriending initiatives.	20,225
Totals		67,225

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Offaly LCDC held their monthly meeting on Thursday 19th November with some members in the Council Chamber and the remainder attending by video link. Agenda items included the Rural Development

LEADER Programme 2014–2020 and the Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 Annual Plan 2021 Update.

Under the Rural Development LEADER Programme, 14 Projects were approved and the total amount of funding awarded was €634,704.54.

The committee were advised that the Empowering Communities Working Group held a meeting on 20th October 2020 in preparation for the SICAP Annual Plan 2021 and the Group also held their Annual Engagement Meeting with POBAL on that date. It was recommended that the Emerging Needs Group for 2021 is '*Older People that are Socially Isolated*'.

Age Friendly Strategy

The Age Friendly Alliance met on November 6th. A draft report on the work carried out in 2020 was presented and members asked to update their areas with the key focus being Covid 19 measures and actions. Articles and information is being collated for the Christmas Edition of Connecting the Faithful. It is planned to publish 6,000 copies as the demand for the Newsletter has grown substantially. Work is underway in conjunction with the Gardaí, OLDC & Tullamore Credit Union to run a draw in Tullamore in lieu of the Older Persons Christmas party. There are 25 hampers with a Christmas card printed by Print Plus at no cost and a Christmas Photo for the Cards from Paul Moore at no cost too.

The Age Friendly Tri County Radio programme aired for the first time on Sunday Nov 1st from 8 – 9 and is a regular slot now every Sunday morning. Guests on the first programme included Molly Buckley who provided an oversight on the programme and on the Age Friendly Alliance. A subcommittee chaired by the Regional Age Friendly Manager Brian Pey continues to meet and a production team are

in place comprising of OPC members from the three counties to ensure the programme content is interesting and uplifting.

Public Participation Network

Four Climate Change Workshops were delivered by Gavin Harte in conjunction with the Environmental Section OCC. Participation was excellent with participants engaging in the process and drawing up short, medium & long term goals for their communities. Offaly PPN participate in the Just Transition meetings. The PPN are supporting three groups who were unsuccessful in their Applications for Just Transition funding via training opportunities and direction in terms of other funding options.

Community CCTV is progressing with the different communities and we expect to move to the next stage of application in early 2021

The PPN held three Plenaries in November one in each County via Zoom. They were all well attended with an introduction to the following courses due to be rolled out in 2021.

- Committee Skills
- Fundraising
- Grant Applications National & International

Comhairle na nÓg

A Steering Group meeting was held on the 3rd of November in which three members of the Comhairle Executive joined in a valuable discussion on planning for the AGM. The Executive members had prepared a survey which was to all secondary schools in Offaly to find out what issues are important to them and to narrow down what issues we should focus on for discussion at the AGM in December. The survey was shown at the Steering Group meeting and some valuable conclusions were reached about how best to proceed.

The survey was made live and sent out. It received a great response and had in total 1686 responses from secondary school students from all over Offaly. The results highlighted that issues like Homelessness, mental health, discrimination of Ethnic Minorities, climate change and COVID 19 are all important to the young people of Offaly. It gave the Executive a very good insight in what would be important topics to discuss at the AGM in December. To prepare for the AGM the Executive had meetings on the 18th of November and 25th of November.

On Tuesday the 17th of November Executive members Aishling Flaherty and Kenneth Bracken alongside the Chief Executive Anna-Marie Delaney, Cathaoirleach John Carroll, Ann Sheeran (Youth Work Midlands) and Nate Condrón from Tullamore Youth Project raised the flag for LGBTI at Offaly County Council.



Our Executive member Ruth Egan took part in the Climate Change Webinar on the 3rd of November offered by Offaly County Council and the PPN. She found this very worthwhile and informative as this year's topic is Climate Change for the Offaly CNN.

On the 13th of November a presentation was made at the Community and Culture SPC in relation to the Gender Balance and Diversity Policy. Feedback was received and the Policy will be discussed at the next SPC in February.

Music Generation Offaly Westmeath Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards 2020

We were delighted when Offaly County Council were announced overall winners of a Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local



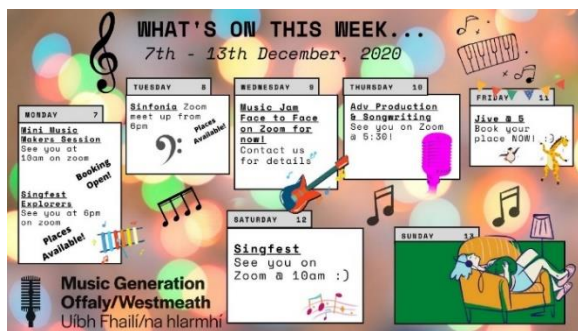
Government Award 2020, in the category of sustaining the arts in recognition of the organization's role as Lead Partner of Music Generation Offaly/Westmeath.

Online Programme

Much of MGOW's community work has moved on line in recent months. Nonetheless a busy schedule of community orientated events has evolved. Most of these sessions are occur in the evenings and at weekends and include:

- Monday morning music sessions aimed towards preschools and crèches,
- a range of choral activities for all ages,
- the continuation of our Sinfonia project developed in partnership with Maynooth University Music Department;
- music production and song writing;
- and our newest addition due to start in the run up to Christmas Jive @ 5 – an inclusive sing along session for the many friends we would normally see in the course of our delivery in special education settings.





Singfest Choirs

Alongside our on-going fortnightly sessions, we were delighted to re-establish our Singfest Explorers choir for our youngest singers aged only 5 – 8. We had our first meeting on Monday 2nd November and look forward to running weekly sessions from now on. In addition, our senior choir have begun a composition project with Irish Composer Finnola Merrivale in partnership with Irish National Opera. This is a first step towards preparing for our part in Traction (<https://www.traction-project.eu/>), the EU funded project with which we are involved.



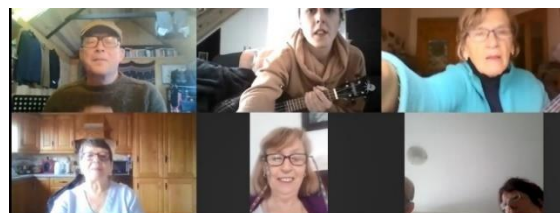
MGOW working in schools

Since September, MGOW have been working to prepare and equip our musicians for working safely in schools. From updating risk assessments to purchasing additional musical instruments we now have tuition back in place in c.12 schools

and delivery c.77 hours of tuition each week. Whilst a significant reduction on previous years, we have been delighted to get this opportunity to not only create work for our musician team, but to also hone our skills as we re-develop and adapt to the new context MGOW is operating.

Intergenerational Ukulele Sessions Begin

In partnership with Offaly Active Aging, we have reimagined our intergenerational ukulele project. As COVID restrictions impacted our weekly sessions in Arden View FRC, we started to look at additional opportunities as to how we could continue the project. Clara FRC and Offaly LDC Social Prescribing helped us reach our target group and we now have a group of c.20 people who have signed up to our virtual sessions. They now have access to a weekly zoom lesson from one of MGOW's musician educator team, supplemented by an online learning management system where participants can communicate with the tutors, access music and resources and even watch recordings of sessions at a time that suits them. Offaly Active Aging have even organised IT support and training for participants with a Laois/ Offaly ETB tutor.





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.

Youth Arts

The Youth Arts report *The Makings Fostering Youth*

Creativity – has been approved by

the SPC and is now on the Arts website. Promotion of the document will be co-ordinated with the launch of the Youth Arts Forum in 2021.



Platform 31

Platform 31 is the nationwide artist development scheme being piloted by ALAOO (Association of Local Authority Arts Officers) in collaboration with the Arts Council. This national opportunity is for artists to develop their practice and test new ideas of collaboration, research, audience-development, place-making and sharing their work, each county will put out a call for artists to apply through a selection process, and each county will select a local artist for the scheme. Stage 1 of the selection process will be completed in December.

Capital Projects

Arts Infrastructure Strategy

The Arts Office of Offaly County Council has, within its remit, the role of supporting and developing a number of Arts Infrastructure organisations within the County. It is now timely to develop a

Strategic Plan for Arts infrastructure within the County, in order to ensure that all the Arts Infrastructure develop in a collaborative and harmonic manner, resulting in a cohesive, complimentary and self-sustaining network, beneficial to the whole county. With this in mind and in agreement with the Arts Council, the Arts Office developed a tender for the research and development of this strategy. The tender process has been completed and the successful tender appointed, People Places Consulting: Caoimhín Corrigan and Siobhán O'Malley will be developing the research project into 2021

Tullamore Community Art Centre

Exploring operational planning options. An initial programming proposal has been developed for the Arts Centre. This will be a stand-alone curated project – based on a re-ignited Foundation Festival – to run from September 2020 – 2021 with the aim to re-engage an audience / local community participation in advance of the Art Centre opening – Foundation Festival could then become an annual / bi-annual festival with invited curators.

Support to Artists

Provision of online workshops through the Creative Ireland fund. The Arts Office held a series of online workshops for Offaly artists with regard to delivering their business and working on line, more workshops are being planned for 2021.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

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

As we say goodbye to 2020 and face in to 2021, there are actions we can take to help sustain our local economy. If we all #LookForLocal in Offaly this winter, we'll be helping local businesses and supporting jobs in local communities. With Brexit now less than 30 days away, time is of the essence to get prepared if you haven't already.

€5.5m for Offaly specific projects under Strand 2 of Just Transition

Funding of over €5.5m for Offaly specific projects under Strand 2 of Just Transition. The projects represent innovative and inspiring plans from businesses, local authorities and communities in the midlands who are committed to creating a green and sustainable economy for the region. This dedication from the community and targeted support will make the region an attractive and sustainable place to live and work. It will fund training and reskilling so local businesses and communities can adjust to a low-carbon transition.

These were announced with other regional projects which will also benefit the county and the announcement of €108m for peat restoration projects in the Midlands.

The Offaly specific projects approved for provisional funding are:

- Building Resilience and Adaptability in Primary School Children through STEM in Impacted Communities - Offaly County Council - €119,000
- Edenderry Carbon Challenge: Feasibility Study - Edenderry Tidy Towns - €70,000
- Ferbane Food Campus and Innovation Centre - Ferbane Business and Technology Park CLG - €595,000
- Green HQ for Offaly - Offaly Local Development Company and Green Offaly - €960,298
- Lough Boora Discovery Park and Midlands Cycling Destination - Sustainable Connections 2020 - Offaly County Council - €998,155
- Real Leaf Farm (Offaly) - Galway Herb Farm Limited t/a Real Leaf Farm - €1,000,000
- Rhode Green Energy Park - Offaly County Council - €807,500
- Rhode Green Energy Park Integration Study - Newleaf - €100,000
- St Joseph's Community Centre Development - Kilcormac Development Association - €435,853
- Strategic Area Response Plan Implementation - Shannonbridge Action Group - €405,960
- Traveller Community Enterprise and Social Farming Project - Offaly Traveller Movement - €997,738
- Tullamore Enterprise Space and Infrastructure - Offaly Innovation and Design Centre CLG - €476,000

Upcoming Events and New Initiatives Ready for Customs Grant

This new grant provides companies with financial assistance to cover the costs of taking on much needed additional customs clearance staff, which will be required when Brexit becomes a reality on the 1st January 2021. This is a cash limited scheme of up to €20m, with the following financial support available:

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

Enterprise Ireland may seek repayment of the grant if 12 months from the date of offer it is established that the dedicated customs

role was not sustained, or that suitable customs training was not provided.

The maximum number of eligible employees per enterprise who will qualify for support will be limited by the amount of De Minimis Aid available to the enterprise. However, Enterprise Ireland reserves the right to determine that the number of employees proposed is appropriate to the additional customs clearance capacity proposed. The scheme closes on 15th December 2020 at 15:00 or when all the funds are allocated, whichever is the earlier.

EENGINEX Meet the Buyer event, 15th April

EENGINEX, the engineering “Meet the Buyer” event, makes a welcome return in 2021, where firms from all over Ireland and further afield will meet at City North Hotel to engage in face-to-face meetings with senior buyers and fellow manufacturers from throughout Ireland and the EU.

COVID 19 Supports

Remote Training Sessions

Booking is now available for a number of Online courses such as Start your Own Business Course, Digital marketing for Business, COVID-19 Government Supports for business, A Layman's Guide to Tax, how to create marketing videos on a budget and Start your Own Business course. These courses are aimed at those interested in starting their own business or growing their business. Most of the courses have been fully booked and have received excellent feedback.

Remote Mentoring Sessions

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

Trading Online Voucher (eCommerce) Grants Available

LEO Offaly continues to experience high demand for the Trading Online Voucher scheme. The voucher is a financial incentive to small businesses to develop or enhance their ability to trade online. Under the scheme a qualifying business may apply for funding to a maximum value of €2,500. Following approval of their application, a successful applicant can engage suppliers and upon completion of the work, submit a request for payment to the LEO in line with the terms and conditions of their voucher. One to one mentoring and information seminars are available online. The application process for the vouchers will be a competitive process.

LEO Feasibility Grant Call

Feasibility grant towards prototype development & research available - Next closing date 31st December 2020. Feasibility/Innovation Grants are designed to assist the promoter with researching market demand for a new product or service and examining its sustainability. It includes assistance with innovation including specific consultancy requirements, private specialists, design, and prototype development.

LEO Financial Supports

Priming and Business Expansion grants are available for eligible businesses. Local Enterprise Office Offaly offers a wide range of financial assistance to help you start up your business or grow your existing business. We provide a free information and advisory service to new and existing entrepreneurs on all aspects of setting up and running a business. For further information, visit:

www.localenterprise.ie/Offaly/

GradStart scheme now available for LEO clients

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

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

Microfinance Ireland loans

The COVID-19 Business Loan from Microfinance Ireland is a government initiative to support small businesses with less than 10 employees through the current period of uncertainty and protect job creation or sustainment in Ireland. The loan scheme has been revised and relaunched. Loans are from €5,000 – €25,000 up to 3 years. First 6 months – 0% Interest & Zero repayments. Reduced interest rate 4.5% APR for LEO applications.

Prepare for Brexit – Information for Businesses

With Brexit now less than 30 days away, time is of the essence to get prepared if you haven't already. For any businesses dealing with UK companies, there may be issues with continuity of supply post December 31st 2020. In particular payment of UK VAT on purchases will be demanded and this cost will not be recoverable. In addition, customs duties will be payable on most products.

Eight practical measures that businesses on the island of Ireland should adopt now:

1. Register online with HMRC or Revenue for an EORI number – you cannot trade without one.
2. Contact your suppliers and logistics providers about the continuity of

goods and services you need for trade.

3. Check if your non-UK suppliers use the UK as a land-bridge and ascertain whether this will cost and cause delays.
4. Classify the goods that you import or export for customs duties and know their origin.
5. Seek out a customs agent or enhance in house customs knowledge.
6. Ensure that you have a line of credit to deal with the customs duties that will arise on imports from the UK or Ireland.
7. Check whether your current certifications, licences or authorisations will be valid post-Brexit.
8. Use the Local Enterprise Offices and other Irish Government supports available.

The Local Enterprise Office Offaly also recommends that all businesses take the Brexit Scorecard first. This will analyse your business and outline the key areas of concern in the event of a hard Brexit.

Financial Supports

1. InterTrade Ireland Start to Plan Voucher Scheme

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

www.intertradeireland.com.

2. SBCI Brexit Loan Scheme

The Brexit Loan Scheme can provide affordable financing to businesses that are impacted by Brexit. The Scheme is delivered by the Strategic Banking

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

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

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

Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Appendix 1
Draft Consolidated Revenue Account Income & Expenditure Summary by Service Division to 30th September 2020

	Expenditure €	Income €
Housing & Building	9,479,572	9,386,032
Road Transport & Safety	14,273,307	10,072,976
Water Services	3,593,669	3,289,994
Development Management	14,573,135	10,186,807
Environmental Services	6,029,208	1,279,400
Recreation & Amenity	3,104,401	302,439
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	477,420	316,214
Miscellaneous Services	7,279,006	2,417,838
Local Government Fund / GPG		6,299,001
Gross Rates Income	0	13437929
	58,809,718	56,988,630
Deficit increase to 30th September 2020		(1,821,088)
Budget deficit reduction to 31st December 2020		400,000

OCC to 30th November 2020

	<u>Rates</u> €m	<u>Rents</u> €m	<u>Loans</u> €m
Opening Balance Jan 1, 2020	2.29	0.73	0.32
Invoices/Adjustments	14.60	5.73	0.44
2020 Cash Collected to end of November	7.87	5.81	0.50
Closing Balance November 30th, 2020	9.02	0.65	0.27
2019 Cash collected to November	13.94	5.51	0.48
% Collection at this point in 2019	56%	105%	105%

Bank Overdraft to 30th November 2020

Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date	45	13%
Overdraft Interest and non-conforming charges to November 30th 2020 YTD		€27,589
Bank Administration and transactional charges to November 30th 2020 YTD		€33,632

APPENDIX 2 - CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS 2020

Offaly County Council, Áras an Chontae, Tullamore & Municipal Districts of Tullamore, Birr & Edenderry

The offices will close at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, 23rd December and will re-open on Wednesday 30th December (9.30a.m. to 1p.m.). They will be closed on Friday, 1st January and re-open on Monday 4th January (9.30a.m. to 1p.m.). Please call 1890 750 750 for out of office hours' emergencies relating to Council services. To report an issue on water supply/water quality or waste water please contact Irish Water on 1890 278 278.

Customers should note the following opening hours for individual offices and services

Motor Tax Office	9.30 to 1p.m. 23 rd December	Cash Office:	9.30 to 1p.m. 23 rd December
	9.30 to 1p.m. 30 th & 31 st December		9.30 to 1p.m. 30 th & 31 st December
Planning Office	9.30 to 1p.m. 23 rd December	Housing Office	9.30 to 12 noon 23 rd December
By Appointment	9.30 to 1p.m. 30 th & 31 st December		9.30 to 12 noon 30 th & 31 st December.

OFFALY LIBRARIES CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS



Offaly Libraries Christmas Opening Hours

Banagher Library
will close Tuesday, 22nd December
& re-open on Thursday, 31st December

Clara Library
will close Wednesday, 23rd December
& re-open on Wednesday, 30th December

Edenderry Library
will close Wednesday, 23rd December
& re-open on Wednesday, 30th December

Kilcormac Library
will close Tuesday, 22nd December
& re-open on Thursday, 31st December

Birr Library
will close Wednesday, 23rd December
& re-open on Wednesday, 30th December

Daingean Library
will close Tuesday, 22nd December
& re-open on Thursday, 31st December

Ferbane Library
will close Tuesday, 22nd December
& re-open on Thursday, 31st December

Tullamore Library
will close Wednesday, 23rd December
& re-open on Wednesday, 30th December

The libraries will resume normal opening hours starting on Monday 4th, January 2021.

Please note: Libraries normally due to open late on 30th and 31st December 2020 will close early. Please see www.offaly.ie/libraries for individual branch arrangements. **All libraries will be closed on Saturday 2nd January 2021.** The libraries will resume normal opening hours starting on Monday 4th January 2021. My Open Library services are **not** available during this period in Banagher, Ferbane and Tullamore Libraries due to Government restrictions in line with Level 3 of the Plan for Living with Covid-19

THE DOG POUND:

Offaly Dog Shelter is located in Cappincur, Tullamore, Co. Offaly 057 9351181 currently open by appointment only from 10 am to 1 pm, Mon to Sat. Offaly Dog Shelter will not accept any surrenders or rehome any dogs from 14th December 2020 to 4th January 2021. All dogs in the pound during this time will be cared for but no dogs can be accepted or rehomed during this time.

Monday 21 st December 2020 10am to 1pm - <i>by appointment only</i>	Tuesday 22 nd December 2020 10am to 1pm - <i>by appointment only</i>
Wednesday 23 rd December 2020 Closed	Thursday 24 th December 2020 Closed
Friday 25 th December 2020 Closed	Saturday 26 th December 2020 Closed
Sunday 27 th December 2020 Closed	Monday 28 th December 2020 Closed
Tuesday 29 th December 2020 Closed	Wednesday 30 th December 2020 Closed
Thursday 31 st December 2020 10am to 1pm - <i>by appointment only</i>	Friday 1 st January 2021 Closed
Saturday 2 nd January 2021 10am to 1pm - <i>by appointment only</i>	Sunday 3 rd January 2021 Closed

RECYCLING CENTRES:

Tullamore		Birr		Edenderry	
Dates	Opening Hours	Dates	Opening Hours	Dates	Opening Hours
Monday 21 st Dec	8am to 4:30pm	Monday 21 st Dec	9am to 5pm	Monday 21 st Dec	9am to 5pm
Tuesday 22 nd Dec	8am to 4:30pm	Tuesday 22 nd Dec	9am to 5pm	Tuesday 22 nd Dec	9am to 5pm
Wednesday 23 rd Dec	8am to 4:30pm	Wednesday 23 rd Dec	9am to 5pm	Wednesday 23 rd Dec	9am to 5pm
Thursday 24 th Dec	Closed	Thursday 24 th Dec	Closed	Thursday 24 th Dec	Closed
Friday 25 th Dec	Closed	Friday 25 th Dec	Closed	Friday 25 th Dec	Closed
Saturday 26 th Dec	Closed	Saturday 26 th Dec	Closed	Saturday 26 th Dec	Closed
Sunday 27 th Dec	Closed	Sunday 27 th Dec	Closed	Sunday 27 th Dec	Closed
Monday 28 th Dec	Closed	Monday 28 th Dec	Closed	Monday 28 th Dec	Closed
Tuesday 29 th Dec	8am – 4:30pm	Tuesday 29 th Dec	9am – 5pm	Tuesday 29 th Dec	9am – 5pm
Wednesday 30 th Dec	8am – 4:30pm	Wednesday 30 th Dec	9am – 5pm	Wednesday 30 th Dec	9am – 5pm
Thursday 31 st Dec	8am – 4:30pm	Thursday 31 st Dec	9am-5pm	Thursday 31 st Dec	9am - 5pm
Friday 1 st Jan	Closed	Friday 1 st Jan	Closed	Friday 1 st Jan	Closed
Saturday 2 nd Jan	8am – 3 p.m.	Saturday 2 nd Jan	9am-5pm	Saturday 2 nd Jan	9am-5pm
Sunday 3 rd Jan	Closed	Sunday 3 rd Jan	Closed	Sunday 3 rd Jan	Closed
Monday 4 th Jan	8am – 4.30p.m.	Monday 4 th Jan	9am - 5pm	Monday 4 th Jan	9am – 5pm

Tullamore Waste facility & Recycling Centre, Derryclure
 Edenderry Recycling Centre, Dublin Road
 Birr Recycling Centre, Syngfield Industrial Estate.

Tel: 057 93 44186
 Tel: 046 97 72677
 Tel: 057 91 25905