

**NOVEMBER
2022**



Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Do: Baill Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí

To: Each Member of Offaly County Council

Tuairisc mhíosúil bainistíochta a bhreithniú i gcomhair tionóil mí Nollaig

Monthly Management Report for consideration at the December 2022 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

BUILT HERITAGE INVESTMENT SCHEME AND HISTORIC STRUCTURES FUND 2023 GRANTS

Advertised in paper and OCC / planning homepage. All interested owners have received information. **Closing date 26th January 2023.**

UKRAINE ENTERPRISE CRISIS SCHEME

In the recent budget the government announced details of the new €200m Ukraine Enterprise Crisis Scheme. This Scheme provides funding to assist viable but vulnerable companies of all sizes in the manufacturing and internationally traded services sectors. The Scheme offers two streams of support.

Closing Date for Applications:

Stream 1 will close on Friday 30th December 2022 at 17:30 Irish time

Stream 2 will close on Thursday 2nd March 2023 at 17:30 Irish time

REPORT AT A GLANCE

The Offaly Heritage Plan 2023-27 was approved at the September County Council meeting and was formally launched at the Annual Offaly Heritage Seminar on Saturday 19 November by the Cathaoirleach.

Town Centre First, Clara 2021

A Public Consultation Event was held on the 17th November 2022 in the Clara Family Resource Centre, where approximately 50 people coming by in a 3 hour window.

Croí Cónaithe

On November 15th Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O'Brien TD expanded Croí Cónaithe to allow rural properties to apply.

Tullamore Regeneration Framework

On 10th November Minister Darragh O'Brien visited Tullamore Municipal District and attended the signing of the Contract for this project.

PLANNING

Development Management

	To end Nov 2022	To end Nov 2021	Total 2021
Planning Applications	627	751	831
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	15	13	13
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	146 (12)	30 (2)	30 (2)

During the month of **November 2022**, the following large planning applications were received:

DAINGEAN GAA CLUB	Retention for installation of 4 no. Floodlights located to the south of the existing football pitch and pp two storey extension, alterations to existing door and windows to the west, north and south elevations, alterations to the existing clubhouse roof and existing west extension will be demolished, new all-weather pitch, wall ball, high security fencing, floodlights, upgrading of car park, new drainage, decommission existing 12 high floodlights and replace with 4 floodlights to north of existing football pitch.
HARMONY SOLAR OFFALY LIMITED	Pp 10 year permission and 40 year operation for a solar farm. Townlands of Dovehill, Gortamuck, Curraghmore and Freagh.
KEVIN & ANNA MARIE MAHER	Pp 16 no. Retirement homes. Eiscir Ri nursing home, Clara.

THOR HAMMER LTD.	Pp demo of existing commercial premises, pp 5 new dwellings. Upper Main Street, Banagher.
JOHN FLANAGAN DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED	Pp construction of two warehouse buildings consisting of 19 units. Site 2, Axis Business Park, Tullamore.
DAINGEAN GAA CLUB	Pp proposed and existing club house, Astroturf and drainage plan, floodlight, road soakaway and retaining wall details.
HEALTH SERVICE EXECUTIVE	Retention for development at midlands regional hospital, retention of 2 existing single storey extensions. Arden Road, Tullamore.

Forward Planning

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was announced in Central Government's Budget 2022 and was introduced into Part 22A of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 by the Finance Act 2021. The principal purpose of the RZLT is to encourage the timely activation of zoned and serviced residential development land for housing. The Ministerial Guidelines titled *'Residential Zoned Land Tax – Guidelines for Planning Authorities June 2022'* clarifies the requirements for planning authorities in relation to RZLT. In order to implement this tax measure, local authorities were required to undertake mapping to identify lands in-scope for the tax, with provisions allowing those landowners identified as being within the scope to make submissions and appeal. The draft map of these lands was placed on public display 1st November 2022 and will remain on display until 1st January 2023. The administration of the tax will be undertaken by the Revenue

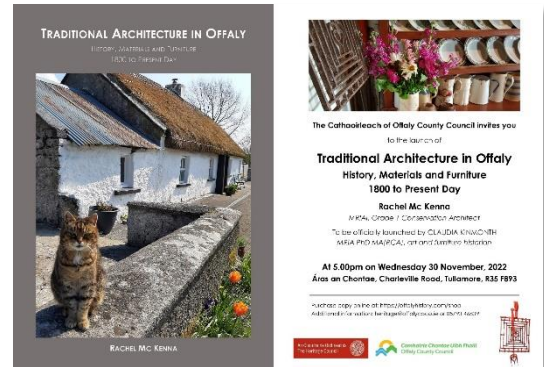
Commissioners, with the tax in effect by 2024.

Conservation Architecture

- **All 2022 grants complete and paid:**
 - **BHIS 2022: 20 complete:** allocation €126,400.
 - **HSF 2022: 3 complete:** increased allocation €150,000.
 - **Creative Ireland 2022: 2 complete:** Annual Follies Project €10,000, Bloomfield Mausoleum complete, Vernacular Architecture fund projects €5,000
 - **Follies Trust** –Repairs of Bloomfield Mausoleum €3,500, complete.
 - **Heritage Council Stewardship Funding: 4 projects complete:** €15,000 approved for OCC, 4 new Offaly projects. Hawkswood Dowry Chest – repairs complete €1,300. Lime Workshop Birr Heritage School – complete €5,500.
 - **CMF** – application by AP, **Emmel Castle** complete: maximum grant of €100,000.
 - **Note total grant costs directly overseen by SEA in 2022 - €409,900.**
- **Birr Destination Town** – continue to work with team, moving on €650k Failte Ireland Funding, liaise with consultants for new entrance to The Green, tender approval internally, proceeding with Letter of Intent to Consultant.
- **S57 Declarations and Planning reports relating to Protected Structures** – ongoing.
- **Team Administration** – Notification of approved post of Biodiversity Officer

to form part of Architecture and Heritage Team, post advertised.

- **Traditional Architecture in Offaly by Rachel Mc Kenna**, c.286 pages, 750 copies printed. Book launch on 30 November 2022 at Áras an Chontae, with Claudia Kinmonth.



Heritage

Q4 has been dominated by grant claims and hosting the **Annual Offaly Heritage Seminar** on Friday 18th and Saturday 19th November 2022 to showcase the projects from the year. 85 people attended the event which was hosted in Birr Library and Birr Theatre and Arts Centre with field trips to Emmel Castle, Kilcomin Church, Crinkill and Birr Town projects.

Heritage Council Funded Projects

- Streetscape projects for O'Connor Square and High Street in Tullamore and Market Square and Castle Street in Birr examining the condition of the facades and usage. Lotts Architecture carried out the architectural input and Offaly History have done the historical analysis, part of which was presented at the annual seminar in Birr. These reports will be presented in early 2023.
- Arctron 3D scanning project - hosting the carved 3d scans of carved stone, Ardara Bridge and the

Glass Furnace near Shinrone on Sketchfab online.

- Publication about the Camcor River researched and written by John Feehan has been printed and will be launched in the New Year.

Community Monuments Fund

Four projects received funding in 2022. Two of the sites, Emmel and Kilcomin, were visited as part of the annual seminar.

- Conservation of the medieval sections of the boundary walls of Seir Kieran graveyard in Clareen has been completed and secured the maximum funding of €100,000.
- Emmel Castle roofing and repairs received total funding of €100,000.
- Castlearmstrong near Ballycumber (phase two) – conservation of castle masonry walls received c€80,000.
- Kilcomin Church near Shinrone – conservation of masonry walls and collapsed boundary wall received €85,000.
- The fund for 2023 has been announced and there is an open call for projects currently. Any interested party should contact the heritage office.

Heritage Stewardship Grant

This new fund from the Heritage Council provided funding towards the publishing of *Traditional Architecture in Offaly* by Rachel McKenna, published by Offaly County Council which was launched on Wednesday 30th November 2022.

Medieval Churches - Just Transition Project

2023 will be the final year of this 3 year project. The churches are Monasteroris in Edenderry, Kilbride (nr canal) in Tullamore and Kilmurryely near Shinrone in Birr MD.

The conservation plans are all drafted. Initial vegetation control has taken place. Revamp Contractors are currently on site at Monasteroris. Due to the level of work required some of these sites will be submitted for Community Monuments Funding in 2023. Tenders are being finalised for the community engagement and training aspect of the project in 2023.

Offaly Biodiversity

Many of the projects are supported through the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Fund

- Works are in hand at Syngesfield Demesne to proactively manage the 8ha for biodiversity within the context of the demesne landscape.
- The control programme for **invasive species** - Himalayan balsam on the Camcor catchment and Japanese knotweed in the public realm throughout the county - has been completed for 2022.
- The series **Wildflowers of Offaly** **YouTube** videos by John Feehan continues to develop and is hosted on the Offaly Heritage YouTube channel.
<https://www.youtube.com/user/offalyheritage>
- Working with Laois County Council we have continued with the commissioning of **In Your Nature Podcasts by Birdwatch Ireland**.

Creative Ireland

In 2022 a budget of €145,000 was allocated to the Offaly Creative Ireland core programme with additional funding for Older Persons project and Cruinniú Children's Day in June bringing the total to over €200,000. In Offaly the team involves the libraries, arts, architecture, heritage, enterprise and community all working together with the heritage officer as county co-ordinator. A wide range of predominantly community led projects are

facilitated and supported and can be viewed on <https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/offaly/>. A new five-year Creative Ireland plan for Offaly was prepared by the team and will be launched with all the county plans at a National Creative Ireland event in Dublin in December 2022.

Decade of Commemorations

A comprehensive body of work has been completed with blogs, podcasts and a website. See

<https://www.offalyhistory.com/offaly-and-the-decade-of-centenaries>

The Council supported the community in Crinkill who have hosted a range of events and commissioned a mural by Nik Purdy to mark Birr Barracks.

Offaly Archives Service

Continued liaison with Offaly History to deliver the County Archive Service. Offaly History will be advertising for a new archivist as Lisa Shortall has departed to lecture in UCD.

Tidy Towns' Network

The County continued to perform well in the annual awards which were announced in October 2022. Geashill were second in the Tidiest Village category; Tullamore and Geashill were awarded a Gold medal; Birr a Silver and Clonbullogue a Bronze; Kilcormac won the Endeavour Award; Geashill the Midlands East Pollinator Award; Birr the Shopfront Award and Ferbane the **Climate Action Award – small village category**.

County Council Working Groups

- OCC Climate Action Group.
- Lough Boora Parklands Sculpture Park working group – there are 3 representatives from OCC and 3 from Bord na Mona to manage the

future of the sculpture park – led by Sally O’Leary Arts officer.

- Birr Camcor River town walk group – looking at options to develop a looped walk along the Camcor River
- Birr Destination Town group – delivering the Failte Ireland Destination Towns project.

REGENERATION

Town Centre First, Clara 2021

The Consultants, Urban Agency Architects Ltd., have presented the Inception Report including the Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy for the Clara Town Centre First Plan, marking the completion of the First Stage of a 6 Stage Process.



As well as the in person public consultation, there was also an online survey launched for those who were unable to attend the event. A total of 55 responses were received through the online survey.

A further consultation night is due on Thursday, 8th December that will highlight the results of the first consultation event and online survey and to consider the opportunities the Project Team have identified and evaluated as a result.

The Consultants are in the process of preparing the Baseline Report for the Town Centre First Plan. Presentation of the Baseline Report will mark the completion of the second stage of the plan-making process.

Banagher Painting Scheme

A fresh coat for a fresh start, Banagher Painting Scheme was funded under a Department of Rural and Community Development initiative, the Pilot Residential Occupancy Scheme. The aim of the scheme was to improve the visual appearance of the town on the approach from the Marina, making Banagher a more attractive place to live in and to visit.

Applications were received from eligible property owners in Banagher to avail of a grant to paint the façades of buildings where needed, in order to improve and enhance their appearance, thereby contributing to an overall improvement of the streetscape. The success of the scheme was down to the partnership approach of local businesses, residents and communities coming together to rejuvenate their town increasing pride and confidence.



These pictures give an indication of the positive and restorative effect painting a building façade can have. To date vacant properties that were painted under the scheme have engaged with County Council staff to avail of other reburbiment grants to bring their properties back into occupancy. Offaly County Council also have acquired the old Shannon Hotel site to develop under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund.

Croí Cónaithe

This fund will provide grants of up to a maximum of €30,000 for the refurbishment of vacant properties for occupation as a principal private residence. Where the refurbishment costs are expected to exceed the standard grant of up to €30,000, a maximum top-up grant amount of up to €20,000 will be available where the property is confirmed by the applicant to be derelict (i.e. structurally unsound and dangerous) bringing the total grant available for a derelict property up to a maximum of €50,000.

Some of the main conditions of the grant are as follows,

- There is a grant of up to €30,000 to refurbish a vacant property, there is also a maximum top up grant of €20,000, (total of €50,000) if the property is derelict and structurally unsound and dangerous, this will have to be confirmed by a quantity surveyor or engineer.
- The building has to have been vacant for at least two years and have been built before 1993, confirmation of vacancy must be confirmed.
- Applicants will have to also submit other documentation such as Tax clearance, proof of ownership or actively negotiating to buy a property, a quotation for the

construction works, local property tax and others demands.

- Persons availing of the grant must live in the property when the work is completed and will have to provide proof of residence.
- The grant is for properties located in a town or villages and **recently extended to allow rural properties apply.**

The Regeneration Section, Derelict/Vacant properties staff have received over 75 queries about the fund since it was officially launched.

Applications received to date

- 13 application forms being processed.
- 3 successful application have been approved, 3 pending approval.

Application forms or queries to tvr@offalycoco.ie or by downloading an application form.

Streetscape Enhancement Measure

Offaly County Council's applications, from property owners in Clara, were submitted to the Department and awaiting final approval.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for TVR 2022 funding on 27th May, 2022. 10 applications were developed and prepared in a very quick turnaround time by Regen Team in conjunction with other relevant sections, community groups and stakeholders for the closing date 22nd July, 2022. Applications are now being assessed by the DRCD and announcements pending.

A new strand of TVR in 2022 was a **Building Acquisition Measure**, which allowed a grant for the Council to acquire a maximum of 2 vacant/derelict town centre

properties for redevelopment for community use only. In consultation with the Community Development groups in Moneygall and Ballyboy 2 such properties were selected and a Letter of Understanding has been signed with the DRCD to acquire a property in Ballyboy and Moneygall subject to terms and conditions. These acquisitions are at their final stages for closing.

All 13 active TVR projects from 2019-2021 are progressing:

Birr MD	Edenderry MD	Tullamore MD
Shinrone phase II (2019)	Blundell Park (2019)	Mount Bolus phase I (2019) Now complete
Pollagh (2020)	Cloneygowan (2020)	Mucklagh (2020)
Ferbane Fairgreen (2020)	Daingean Phase II (2020) now complete	Mount Bolus Phase II (2020)
Ballyboy (2021)	Kilmalogue (2020)	Killeigh (2021)
	Clonbullogue (2021)	

Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) - Successful RRDF projects progress update

2021 Edenderry Phase II

- First conception meeting with Sean Harrington Architects took place in October.

2020 Banagher Regeneration

- A 2nd public consultation phase for the Architectural and Tourism Master Plan for Banagher Marina and environs now complete.
- Shannon Royal Hotel site acquisition now complete.
- Preparing procurement documentation for a design team for Hotel redevelopment.

2020 - 'Route to the Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trails', 'Kinnitty Woods Novice-Grade MTB Loop', and "Rediscovering Castle Bernard's Historic Bridges"

- Part 8 now in place
- Progressing to tender for "route to the trails" from Kinnitty village
- Novice loop to be constructed by Coillte ongoing
- Rediscovering Castle Bernard's Historic Bridges almost project complete

2021 – Derrycastle Lakes and Trails, project development

- Steering group established
- Tender published for a '10 Year Development Plan and Concept Designs for Derrycastle Lakes & Trails'
- The deadline date for responses to this tender is the 31st January 2023.

2021 – Clashawaun River Walk

- Initial consultation in progress

The Framework will provide a vision for Tullamore, a plan for future public realm, regeneration and renewal opportunities for delivering future integrated urban developments for Tullamore by both the public and private sectors. The Framework will set the vision for the development of a number of key opportunity sites, delivered to make for a strong town centre with sustainable access & permeability in the Town.

Tullamore This Christmas 2022

Tullamore celebrated the start of Christmas from 25th to the 27th of November with Christmas markets, music, local choirs and celebration in O'Connor Square over the weekend with the arrival of Santa and the tuning on the lights on the Sunday.



TULLAMORE MD

Appointment of Consultant for Tullamore Regeneration Framework

Consultant Architects Brady Shipman Martin and their team of Designers and Engineers were appointed for the Tullamore Regeneration Framework funded under URDF.



ROADS

2022 Annual Roads Program

The 2022 Roads program is now completed across all Municipal Districts. Notwithstanding the net negative effects of the current inflationary environment on materials, energy and construction related activities our Municipal Districts delivered more than the intended program due to emergency interventions on roads constructed over Peat Subgrades.

Additional funding was secured to address the effects of the prolonged dry spell on our Peat Roads in August 2022. The additional

funding equated to €1.2 million euros coupled with the approval from our Department of Transport colleague's to divert our Peat Roads pilot allocation of €800,000 towards emergency interventions. In total €1.9 million in additional road repairs were carried out in 2022 due to the effects of climate conditions on our roads infrastructure in order to address significant Safety risks to our stakeholders due to catastrophic failure points an example of which are shown below.



Grand Canal Greenway

The Roads Department provided an update on the status of our Greenway Delivery Program to all Municipal District meetings in early Quarter 4 of 2022.

Works are now substantially completed on the Hennessey's Bridge to Pullough section. We are now awaiting approval to award the contracts for the next phase of our Grand

Canal Greenway project from Turraun to Shannonharbour. This section of the scheme is approximately 4km in length and we hope to have works commencing in early quarter 1 of 2023 subject to TII approval.

The Roads Department plan to commence the planning process for a number of projects linking the Grand Canal Greenway to our Towns and Villages in the coming months with a view to delivering the first scheme in 2023 in tandem with the Greenways programs.

Climate Action and Offaly County Councils Road Section

Carbon reduction within the Road Program delivery can sometimes be achieved by changing the way in which we do our works, changing the type of infrastructure we prioritise for delivery or the materials that we use to deliver our schemes. The following is a list of changes implemented by the Roads Department in 2022 that will be strengthened and built upon in 2023 and onwards;

- Construction of Sustainable, Safe, Green Infrastructure to promote Modal Shift towards Walking and Cycling via our Greenway funding/Active Travel Funding.
- Roll out of Zero Emission Vehicle Fast Charging points across the County.
- Decarbonisation of the Corporate Fleet
- Trial use of Zero Emission Road Marking Materials
- Purchase of new Technologies such as the 2 new Velocity Patching Units to decrease our Carbon Footprint when repairing Road Failures.
- PLEEP-Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project

Proposed Reclassification of R402/R420 Edenderry to Tullamore Route

At the January 2021 meeting of Offaly County Council a motion was proposed by Councillor Robert McDermott and supported by the other members, to contact the Minister for Transport for the purposes of reclassifying the existing R402 and a section of the R420 from the N52 at Tullamore to Edenderry and the junction with the M6 at Enfield to national secondary status.

Offaly County Council subsequently submitted a business case to the Department and we were advised that the reclassification would be considered as part of a general reclassification (National) review which was due to take place in 2022. Our Department Inspector has now advised that the general reclassification was not carried out in 2022, and it now intended to carry it out in 2023. We have not been given a specific date for the commencement of the reclassification process in 2023. We will update the Council again on notice of the reclassification process.

ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES

Climate Action & Energy

Offaly County Council acted as the contracting authority for the 5 CARO sub-regional Midlands & Eastern counties of Offaly, Laois, Westmeath, Longford and Roscommon for the procurement of Climate Action Plan evidence based assessment reports. OCC appointed consultants to carry out countywide Baseline Emission Inventory assessments (BEI), climate change risk assessments and Decarbonisation Zone BEI assessments for each of the 5 local authorities. Work is progressing on each report, with final issued expected in early December.

Work has also commenced on the development of a Tree Management Policy document. Consultants have been appointed to produce a county specific yet regionally consistent policy document for adoption across the 4 midlands counties of Laois, Offaly, Westmeath and Roscommon.

Litter Management

Three litter/illegal dumping cases, taken by Environment Section, were heard in Tullamore District Court on 21st November. Case 1 related to littering at Banagher bottlebanks. Evidence was found relating to an individual who was then issued with a litter fine of €150. The fine was not paid and legal action was then initiated. The defendant came to court, pleaded guilty and was fined €300.

Case 2 related to illegal dumping in the Birr area. Evidence was found and the individual was issued with a litter fine which was not paid. They were taken to Court and fined €300.

Case 3 related to illegal dumping in Tullamore. Evidence was found and the person was issued with a litter fine, which was unpaid. The defendant did not turn up in Court and evidence was heard in the defendant's absence leading to a conviction and fine of €1000.

Anti-Litter & Anti-Graffiti Awareness Grant Scheme

Offaly County Council applied for funding from the Dept of Environment, Climate & Communications to cover the following proposed projects under the Anti-Litter & Anti-Graffiti Awareness Grant Scheme-

- Provision of kitchen caddies and compost bins
- Anti-litter campaign at tourist areas such as marinas
- School environmental workshops to support green schools

- Provision of litter supplies – pickers, bags & gloves
- Provision of environmental materials for schools

A Grant of €14,560 was provided to a cover 70% of proposed project cost.

Rural Water Programme:

Multi Annual Rural Water Programme (MARWP) for Capital Works

The total allocation to the successful projects under the 2019-2021 programme is €1,839,625.00 for 19 projects. Two extra projects have been added to the programme during its lifetime. Seventeen of these projects are completed and the other 4 are at various stages of progress with all projects expected to be completed in q1/23. The circular to roll out the MARWP 2022-24 is due in quarter 4 of 2022.

Veterinary

The number of dogs being surrendered has increased since May with over 100 dogs being surrendered to the Dog Warden since May. In 2022 so far the Control of Dogs team has cared for more dogs than in either 2020 or 2021. In November, 10 more dogs were surrendered to the dog shelter, and the team rehomed 17 dogs through dog rescue charities and 5 were rehomed directly from the pound.

Burial Grounds

Kilcoursey cemetery extension construction works are substantially completed with landscaping and planting remaining to be done over the winter.

Work is commencing on the Part 8 Planning Process to extend St. Mary's Cemetery, Edenderry and it is planned to have this completed during 2023.

Water Services - Wastewater

Edenderry WWTP

Consultants working on the upgrade design. Forecast construction mid-2025.

Rhode WWTP

Upgrade construction forecast mid-2025.

Daingean WWTP

To commence works Q1 2023. This will involve the upgrade of the inlet works plus the construction of reed beds.

Tullamore South West Interceptor

Irish Water has appointed Ryan Hanley as consultants & the Coffey Group as contractors. The detailed design of the 1st phase will shortly commence. This involves the construction a gravity sewer along the Charleville road and a rising main along St. Colman's Tce.

Banagher Network

Sewer rehabilitation- the sewer in Harbour Street is currently being relined

Water - Water Mains Projects

Pollagh 5000m completed. Canal crossing outstanding

Marian SQ, Clara 96% of pipework complete. House connections & back yard services to commence.

Geashill Disinfection Programme

95% of works complete.

Holmshill Disinfection Prog.

85% of works complete.

Arden, Birr & Clonaslee WTP

The three new water treatment plants at Arden, Birr and Clonaslee are all commissioned (with the exception of some minor snags and outstanding paperwork) and are all currently operational as of December 2021. The new reservoir at Arden is currently being commissioned.

HOUSING

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

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

Housing Update

- There are 454 on the Social Housing List awaiting housing support at the end of November 2022.
- A further 681 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 26 signed up for HAP and 7 exited from HAP in November.
- At the end of November, 25 single people and 16 couples and families were being supported in emergency accommodation.

- 16 Local Authority Ireland Home Loans applications have been received in 2022 to date. 3 have been approved, 8 declined, 5 ineligible and the remainder are awaiting decisions.

Housing Stock – Number, Maintenance & Repair

- Total housing stock at end of November 2022 is 2,017.
- 443 maintenance calls were logged in November.

Housing Capital Programme Update

- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – Revised Stage 4 approval was granted on the 18th October 2022. Letters to Tenderers have issued including Letter of Intent to Preferred Tenderer. Project scheduled to start on site in Q1, 2023.
- 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.
- Moneygall (4 units) – Contractor commenced works on site on 31st January 2022. Due for completion in Q4, 2022.
- Beechgrove, Belmont (7 units) – Project commenced on site on 10th November 2021. Due for completion in Q1, 2023.
- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 no. Older Person's dwellings) – Stage 4 approval was granted on 11th April 2022, contractor appointed and has started on site.
- Banagher, Kylebeg (18 Units) – Stage 4 approval received on 25th June 2021. Project is due for completion in Q1, 2023.

- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) - Stage 4 approval was received on 8th March 2022 and works were due to commence on site in May 2022. However, the scheme had to be re-tendered and tenders were received on 12th September 2022. Letters to Tenderers have issued including Letter of Intent to Preferred Tenderer. Project scheduled to start on site in Q1, 2023.
- Circular Road, Daingean, Site 2 (10 Units) – Stage 1 approval application was granted on 3rd August 2021 for the site adjoining the OCC housing site on Circular Road. Consultants are appointed and Surveys are complete. Stage 2 is due to be lodged in Q4, 2022.
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (10 Units) – Stage 1 approval was granted by the Department on 11th May 2021. Design Team have been appointed and all surveys completed. Stage 2 approval received 30th Nov 2022. Part 8 to follow.
- 1 Newbridge Street, Birr: Works are now complete and the dwelling allocated.
- 4 Holly Park, Birr: Consultants have been appointed; Enabling works have been completed. Works tender will issue with brief based on these opening up works following combined Stage 2/3 application in Q1 2023.

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes

- Oaklee: Clonminch, Tullamore (19 units) – Completion in Q1 2023
- Oaklee: Kearney's Field, Tullamore (41 Units) – Completion in Q2, 2023
- Sofia Housing: Stage 2 approved (39 units) at Presentation Lands,

Portarlinton. Planning Application to be lodged

- Sofia Housing, Clonamore, Tullamore – Contractor has been appointed and works are progressing well.

Turnkey Developments/Part V

- Woodfield, Birr, 35 units - Completions Q4 2022
- Bog Road, Portarlinton, 28 units - Under Construction, completion in Q1, 2023
- Walsh Island, 4 units - Under Construction. Projected to be completed in Q4 2022
- 2 x Part V units under construction at Ard na Carriage, Edenderry. Completion in Q4 2022
- Part V units in Redwood & Silverbrook, Tullamore under construction

Housing Grants (Private)

€1.6m was awarded to the Local Authority for Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability Scheme; 80% is met by exchequer with the balancing 20% being provided from Offaly County Council's own resources.

Housing are progressing the 2022 works programme, liaising with applicants and finalising end of year claims with the Department.

Disabled Person's Grants (Social Housing)

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

Retrofit Programme

- 31 Units Complete to date under National Retrofit Programme
- 50 Units to date complete under the Midlands Retrofit Programme including 2 Shinrone; 1 Kilcormac; 1 Clara; 3 Crinkill; 32 Birr; 7 Tullamore; 2 Edenderry; 1 Portarlinton; 1 Bracknagh
- Lot 3 & 4, Tullamore: [Tender analysis is complete. Subject to funding approval from the DHLGH the preferred Tenderer will be appointed to carry out the works.](#)
- Lot 5 & 6, Edenderry, Daingean, Clara, Ferbane, Shannonbridge, Cloghan: [Tender analysis is complete. Subject to funding approval from the DHLGH the preferred Tenderer will be appointed to carry out the works.](#)

Ukrainian Humanitarian Response

Offaly County Council is appealing to those who have unoccupied properties to offer them as temporary homes for those fleeing war in Ukraine. The call is part of a new government initiative, led by local authorities, to make use of unoccupied houses, apartments or holiday homes to house Ukrainian people and families.

A tax-free recognition payment of €800 per month is available for properties used to house those arriving from Ukraine. This payment rate applies from December 1st 2022.

More than 60,000 people have arrived to Ireland from Ukraine seeking safety and the vast majority need accommodation.

Under a new programme, Offaly County Council will take offers of houses, apartments or holiday homes for temporary accommodation, liaise with owners to assess suitability, and arrange for their use by Ukrainian people and families.

Property owners can offer homes at **offerahome.ie** or by contacting Offaly County Council via

offerahome@offalycoco.ie

LOCAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Offaly LCDC held their monthly meeting on Friday 18th November, 2022. Main agenda items included the Rural Development LEADER Programme 2014 – 2020 & Transitional LEADER Programme 2021 – 2022, New LEADER Programme 2023 – 2027 and Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme 2018-2023 (SICAP) update.

LEADER Projects: Ten LEADER Projects were approved to the value of €507,749.29.

SICAP updates were provided in relation to Lot Targets and Emerging Needs Group for 2023, which was identified as ‘New Communities’. The SICAP Annual Plan 2023 was being prepared. A Pobal Engagement Meeting was held with the members of the Empowering Communities Working Group and agenda items included: SICAP Programme updates and supports, Social Inclusion Analysis, Implementation of SICAP 2022 and proposed SICAP Annual Plan for 2023.

Details of the **Ukrainian Refugee Health & Wellbeing Support Fund** for 2022 were advised to the members. The purpose of this fund is to promote the health and wellbeing of Ukrainian refugees who have sought protection in Ireland, by providing activities focused on benefits to mental health, physical activity, integration and social connection. €9,525 had been

allocated to Offaly based on the numbers of refugees living in the county.

Comhairle Na nÓg

While the group continue to meet and further develop their chosen topic for this year, perhaps the highlight this month was a trip to Trinity College, Dublin.

Members of the group presented to Social Innovation students at Trinity College Dublin. Dr Gemma Donnelly-Cox who saw them present to the Greek Delegate, in the Offaly County Council Chambers, earlier in the year, was impressed by their presentation. Dr Gemma thought that they could make a valuable contribution to her students' learning and offer a relevant perspective on the Just Transition and so invited them to make their presentation at Trinity College. The members also got tours of the university, a visit to the Book of Kells and time to hold a discussion with academics and PhD students on the topic of the Just Transition.



The roundtable discussion proved invaluable as academics whose research is founded in social enterprise, innovation and climate justice were extremely interested in the views of the Offaly Comhairle na nÓg members. It is hoped that they will seek out their opinion for future research on the area of the Just Transition and Offaly.

ARTS

ARTS OFFICE

The Arts Office is coming to the close of delivering a very busy annual programme events and grants for 2022.

Arts Council Funding

The Arts Office has received confirmation from the Arts Council for two arts council applications for 2023. The first application is for the Invitation to Collaboration Award. Approval of €72,500 awarded for project funding allocated to the Art in Landscape collaborative project between Offaly County Council (Lough Boora Sculpture Park), Mayo County Council (Tir Saile) and Visual Artist Ireland. Offaly County Council is the lead partner on this project. The Arts Council has also approved partnership funding to the county council of €96,000 for the Arts Office implementation of the framework agreement between Offaly County Council and the Arts Council.

Arts Grants and Awards

The Arts Office has processed payments and received reports from successful applicants for the many arts awards, including, the Arts Acts Grants, Festival Grants and Professional Artist Support Scheme – all now submitted

The FilmOffaly Award 2022

The FilmOffaly Award contract has been approved and awarded towards the production of a short film entitled, *Missing*, to be directed by Maura Foley, produced by Maggie Ryan, Escape Pod Media Ltd and written and by Maura Foley. Shooting for the film will commence in 2023.

The FilmOffaly Award 2021 winner *Personal Space* by Mixed Bag Media, is now completed and is doing well on the festival circuit having won the Best Short Documentary 2022 at the Richard Harris

International Film Festival. The FilmOffaly Award winner 2019, *The Whale* by Wildfire Films is also on the festival circuit.

FilmOffaly Review

The selection for the award is completed. The approved award has been contracted to *Culture Works*, a consultancy service with extensive experience in the film production sector in Ireland, UK and beyond. The review which will commence in Dec 2022 and complete 2023, will examine the development of film production and the film sector in Offaly to date and will offer recommendations for the potential growth of Film in Offaly going forward. The report will focus on the developments of the film commission FilmOffaly, the Offaly County Council Arts Office and Creative Ireland Film and animation programmes, and other key film activity that takes place in the county. The purpose being to demonstrate the value of Film to the county as a social, cultural and economic driver.

Birr Writer's Residency

Five writer's residencies have taken place through this programme by the end of 2022.

Annual Programming - Hullabaloo

Hullabaloo! Offaly's Children's Arts Festival took place from **Wednesday 2nd November to Saturday 5th November** in Birr, Clara, Edenderry and Tullamore.



The festival grew to new proportions with a record 82 events taking place across the four towns. There were 65 workshops and 17 performances for children in Offaly

to enjoy. Hullabaloo! is all about creativity with the goal being to stimulate curiosity and appreciation for a variety of art forms in children aged 12 and under. This year children had the opportunity to explore a wide variety of workshops from juggling to abstract paint to journaling.



The festival enjoyed a healthy growth in audience, with a reach of 1,597 attendees across the four towns. The total audience attendance in 2019 (the last fully in-person festival) was 847, which shows the growth in appetite and participation across the board.



29 artists were engaged in the delivery of workshops and shows, with workshops in particular reaching capacity across the board. There was a sizeable increase in participation in Edenderry, which moved from 50 attendees in 2019 to 173 in 2022. Similarly, Birr saw an increase from an audience of 514 in 2019 to 913 in 2022.

A taster programme of events was offered for Tullamore audiences, in advance of the opening of Esker Arts Centre, which again showed good levels of engagement with 236 attendees. Clara audience figures



remained proportionate to 2019 figures with little change in attendance.

A total number of 1,597 attendees generating an income in ticket sales of €4,883. Equity and inclusion remained central to the ethos of the festival with the pricing remaining at the affordable cost of €4 per workshop and €5 per show. This year also saw a growth in diversity of art form and ethnicity of artists presenting. Audience survey results indicate that The Barcelo Brothers, whose heartfelt songs infused with instrumental virtuosity, impromptu dance moves and a contagious 'joie de vivre' were a firm favourite with young audiences closely followed by circus skills and puppetry workshops.

The 16th annual festival evidenced the important place the festival has in the wider cultural ecology of the County. Children of all ages had the opportunity to try a wide range of art practices, creating and producing their own art with highly qualified artists. The energy and appetite for creativity was palpable across all ten venues used across the four towns this Midterm break.

Creative Places

Edenderry continues to develop its programme led by Creative Lives in partnership with Offaly County Council Arts Office and Edenderry Municipal District, with a host of opportunities for artists and communities on the way. A recent update on the project claimed that one of the strong messages that had emerged from the conversations with the local community is how much they value their own local artists. Creative Lives continue to work with existing initiatives such as the Edenderry Festival and Hullabaloo Festival to collaborate on opportunities for artists and creative

engagement. Creative Places Edenderry, was invited to present the project at the Creative Places National Networking meeting in Tuam Co. Galway in November, which saw all Creative Places projects update their projects as part of the national programme. A new co-ordinator for the project is due to start in December.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Arts Infrastructure Strategy 2023-2026

The Arts infrastructure Strategy for the County by People Places Consulting: Caoimhín Corrigan and Siobhán O'Malley was presented by Caoimhín Corrigan at SPC meeting in November. The SPC recommended the draft strategy and the document will now be brought forward to the Management Team, CPG and Council, early 2023.

Esker Arts

Excitement for the opening of the new art centre Esker Arts is increasing, with the building completed and the final internal fit-out almost completed. An Artistic Director Sean Walsh, has been appointed and two other key posts are now recruited, the Marketing / Box Office Manager and the Administrator, the final post of Technical Facilities Manager is in process.



The Arts Office are working with the director to assess best practice operational and planning options for the Art Centre and will continue to work closely in terms of strategic development with Sean Walsh prior to and post opening.

Edenderry Library and Arts Space

The Arts Office will be continuing to work in collaboration with the county librarian in the development of plans for a multi-purpose arts space to be incorporated into the planning of the new library for Edenderry, this will include developments as part of the Creative Places Edenderry project.

Creative Ireland

Creative Ireland projects led by the Arts Office have been completed with the CI team finalising payments and receiving reports from successful applicants.

Artist Support

The Arts Office continue to provide opportunities for artists to upskill and develop.

Art Strategy 2023-27

The Arts Office Strategy *Inspire – Imagine – Involve* 2018-22 is due for revision with a new strategy researched and written and due for completion 2023. The new Arts Strategy 2023-2028 will be aligned with the Arts Infrastructure Strategy 2023-2028. The approach to the development of the delivery process for the new Arts Strategy was brought to the attention of the SPC for Community and Culture in November and this approach was agreed with further meetings to update on progress. The Arts Office will now work on a brief for consultant support.

HEALTHY OFFALY

The work of Healthy Offaly has increased in the last few weeks. Preparation of Round 4 has commenced in November with the appointment of a Consultant, Dr. Diane Cooper from Edufit, to assist in the formulation of the Healthy Ireland Fund Local Strategy 2023 -2025.

The strategy will inform the two high-level health outcome indicators which must be decided upon before the Round 4 Fund application is made on 27th January 2023. In order to complete the strategy and online application, a consultation day involving the relevant statutory bodies and community groups was held in the Tullamore Court Hotel on Monday, 21st November 2022. The day was extremely informative and was facilitated by Dr. Cooper.

The day involved setting the scene for what was required from the day, using the HSE Health Atlas to highlight the health and wellbeing challenges in the County and asking attendees for their feedback on the perceived health inequalities existing in Offaly.

The feedback was extremely positive from respondents and follow-up work included a health survey issued to multiple stakeholders after the event to further compliment the consultative process. The closing date for the survey is Monday 5th December 2022 with the high-level outcome indicators to be decided after that date. Healthy Offaly are on track to have this body of work completed before year-end with an invitation for expressions of interest to access funding commencing early in the New Year.

The new direction from the Department of Health and Pobal from an ‘action led’ to an ‘outcomes led’ approach to project delivery



and creation of a grant assessment subcommittee was approved at the October meeting of the Local Community Development Committee.

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

Waterways Ireland & Offaly County Council sign contract for Grand Canal Harbour masterplan project

On 10th November Waterways Ireland and Offaly County Council signed a contract with Grafton Architects in the presence of Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD. for the Grand Canal Harbour masterplan project, heralding the commencement of work envisioning future redevelopment of a 200-year old harbour in the centre of Tullamore.

The €200,000 project will assess the development potential of the Grand Canal Harbour site as well as the adjacent Young's Store on Convent Road. Under the project, Grafton Architects will prepare development options for the site and a viability appraisal. They will then prepare a masterplan following direction from the Waterways Ireland and Offaly County Council project management team on the preferred option.

The project is funded through an Urban Regeneration & Development Fund award of €150,000 from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and funding of €25,000 each from

Waterways Ireland and Offaly County Council.

Minister Darragh O'Brien said: "The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund is all about delivering compact and sustainable development in towns and cities across the country to ensure that more of our urban areas become attractive and vibrant areas in which to live, work, visit and invest. I am delighted to be able to provide funding to assess the development potential of the Grand Canal Harbour site in Tullamore and I look forward to seeing what can be done to restore this heritage gem to a social and economic enabler for the town and the region."

The 3.7-acre Grand Canal Tullamore Harbour site has 2.2 acres of development opportunity, which includes the canal basin. Of the 2.2 acres, two acres are owned by Waterways Ireland, with the remainder owned by Offaly County Council and licensed to Waterways Ireland. Young's Store is a three-storey former warehouse, which is owned by Waterways Ireland.

Waterways Ireland has used the harbour site as an operational depot for lock-gate manufacture and mechanical services since 1999. It is now relocating its operations to a new location adjacent to the Grand Canal outside of the town.

Chief Executive of Offaly County Council, Anna Marie Delaney added: "Our vision for Offaly is one of sustainable economic, social and community development – resulting in a county that is an attractive place to live, work in or visit. The Grand Canal Harbour masterplan project is another step in that direction. The site is a key location within the town, just a short walk from the town centre, and provides excellent waterway and canal bank access to the Grand Canal. I am really excited to



see what can be done to reintegrate this area into the town and to see how it can once again become a focal point, boosting economic and recreation potential for the town of Tullamore, the county of Offaly and the wider region.”

Innovation, Research and Big Data in Birr

streamBirr welcomed Minister Damien English to I-LOFAR on the grounds of Birr Castle on 10th November. I-LOFAR is the Irish addition to the international network of state-of-the-art telescopes used to observe the Universe in unprecedented detail at low radio frequencies and the 12th international station to be built in Europe. It allows Irish astrophysical research to be integrated into one of the most sophisticated telescopes on the planet. The network uses state-of-the-art data processing and storage systems as well as sophisticated computing techniques to combine the entire network into a telescope with the effective size of the European continent.



Caitriona Montgomery, Business Development Manager streamBirr, presented the latest developments in innovation & research utilizing I-LOFAR generated big data and also highlighted the connections to industry and academic engagement. The event also showcased the work of Ray Bell and his team in educating the children of County Offaly through the VEX Robotics school programme. Children from Gaelscoil na Laochra demonstrated the robots they built in action.

Temporary Business Energy Support Scheme (TBESS)

The TBESS was introduced to support businesses with increases in their electricity or natural gas (energy) costs. Businesses can make a claim under the scheme if it:

- is tax compliant
- carries on a Case I trade or Case II profession. This includes charities and approved sporting bodies that carry on certain activities
- **and**
- has experienced a significant increase of 50% or more in its electricity and/or natural gas average unit price.

Qualifying businesses can claim for 40% of the increases in their energy bills. The increase in energy bills must be between the ‘claim period’ and the ‘reference period’.

A claim period is a calendar month from September 2022 to February 2023. A reference period is the corresponding calendar month in the previous year. For example, September 2021 is the reference period for the September 2022 claim period. Further information on the scheme is contained in the [TBESS guidelines](#).

How to register for the TBESS and make a claim

A claim for a Temporary Business Energy Payment (TBEP) may be made through **Revenue’s Online Service (ROS)** by qualifying businesses in respect of their eligible costs.



Ukraine Enterprise Crisis Scheme



Stream 1 – Liquidity Needs

Stream 1 is a liquidity measure that will help viable manufacturing and Internationally Traded Services companies experiencing trading difficulties to access funding up to €500,000. 50% of this funding is provided on a non-repayable basis. The minimum aid award of €20,000 will not have a repayable advance associated with it and will be in the form of a grant.

To qualify for funding, companies must demonstrate a 15% reduction in profitability (EBITDA) between 2021 and this year, as a direct or indirect result of the crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine.

Stream 2 - Support for Energy intensive companies

Stream 2 is a state aid support for eligible “energy intensive” businesses who are experiencing severe increases in energy costs in 2022. Energy intensive businesses are businesses where at least 3% of turnover in 2021 was expended on energy costs.

To qualify for funding, companies must demonstrate that their unit energy costs at least doubled in 2022, compared to 2021, and that they have seen a 15% decrease in profitability (EBITDA). In such cases, a 30% contribution will apply to any unit energy charges in 2022 that more than double the 2021 cost. Further details on the overall Scheme (Stream 1 & 2) can be accessed [HERE](#).

How to apply

Business can check if the scheme is suitable for them and request an application pack, by contacting The Hub at Enterprise Ireland via the [ENQUIRY FORM](#)

Closing Date for Applications:

- Stream 1 will close on **Friday 30th December 2022 at 17:30 Irish time.**
- Stream 2 will close on **Thursday 2nd March 2023 at 17:30 Irish time**

Minister English launches Ireland’s largest Student Enterprise Programme for 2023



Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, Damien English said at the launch of the Student Enterprise Programme for 2023: “The Student Enterprise Programme is a hugely valuable initiative by the Local Enterprise Offices. Not only does it encourage and foster a love of entrepreneurship, it also creates understanding on what is involved in starting a running a business from idea right through to making sales. No matter what these students do in later life they will acquire skills in this programme that they can bring with them into jobs and hopefully their own companies in the years to come. Again this year we look forward to innovative and indeed sustainable businesses that these students will create.” An initiative of the Local Enterprise Offices

to encourage entrepreneurship in secondary schools, the Student Enterprise Programme has seen over 325,000 secondary school students take part in the programme since it first began, with over 25,000 participants expected this year. Last year nine schools in Offaly with almost 500 students participated in the programme. Further details on the programme are available here: <https://www.studententerprise.ie/>

Connected Hubs National Hub Summit

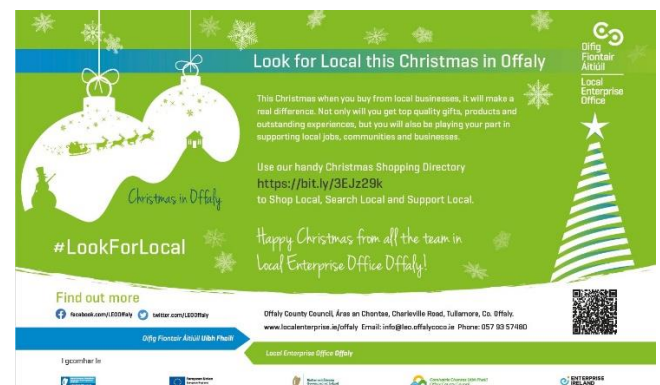
Minister Heather Humphreys and Minister Damien English launched Ireland's first-ever National Hub Summit on Thursday, 24th November 2022 in Athlone, The Summit brought together businesses, hub managers, and policymakers, to network, and share knowledge, all to inform the development of the National Hub Strategy which is been developed by the Department for Rural and Community Development with the Department of Enterprise, Trade, and Employment. Mary Hensey, Business Development Manager of The Junction and eHive represented Offaly Innovation and Design Centre CLG and also facilitated one of the breakout groups.



Look for Local this Christmas in Offaly

Don't forget when you buy from local businesses, it will make a real difference. Not only will you get top quality gifts, products and outstanding experiences, but you will also be playing your part in supporting local jobs, communities and businesses.

Use our handy Christmas Shopping Directory <https://bit.ly/3EJz29k> to Shop Local, Search Local and Support Local.!



Upcoming Training & Mentoring Courses

In the Local Enterprise Office Offaly we provide a range of training courses and workshops designed to assist with the establishment and/or growth of local businesses which are tailored to meet specific business requirements. 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 and News

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

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



Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office



BUSINESS MENTORING

LEO Offaly has a wide panel of business mentors that you can access to address a particular need in your business e.g. HR advice, Business Strategy, New Product Development, Financial Reporting, etc.

Mentoring with our panel of experts can help you to improve your strategy, sales, marketing, business planning, productivity, and leadership capabilities.

Contact us today to find out more.

Find out more

facebook.com/LEOOffaly
twitter.com/LEOOffaly

Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil Uíbh Fhailí

I gcomhar le

Offaly County Council, Áras an Chontae,
Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
www.localenterprise.ie/offaly
Email: info@leo.offalycoco.ie
Phone: 057 93 57480

Local Enterprise Office Offaly



We kicked off our **Family Time at Your Libraries** festival at the beginning of December and have some lovely events organised for families, including story times, Art and Craft sessions, Christmas Movie screenings and more.



Family Time at Your Library events aim to

support a family-focused approach to reading with children as part of the national **Right to Read** campaign and increases awareness of the benefits of reading as a fun, recreational activity for children.



LIBRARY SERVICES



Celebrate the Holiday Season at Offaly Libraries!

Start celebrating the holiday season with us in Offaly Libraries where we have something for everyone; for all ages and interests. Enjoy the beautiful Christmas Book Displays, Christmas Trees and Window Decorations in all our branches.

Children across the county were invited to take part in our Santa Letter Writing Workshops, which were delivered over the first couple of days of December, just in time for the North Pole post!



Library staff will be busy delivering winter story times throughout December and we look forward to welcoming the **55 classes** who have already signed up to hear a festive tale and a chat online with library staff during our **School Zoom Story Times**.



For children who want to personalise their Christmas Cards this year, Heather of Tullamore Library will host a **Lino Printing Workshop** on Saturday, 10th December from 3pm. To book, please contact Tullamore Library on 057 93 46832 or email TullamoreLibrary@offalycoco.ie

Our older patrons can look forward to **Wreath Making Classes** with the LOETB, Christmas Coffee Mornings, Christmas Carols and seasonal book displays! Keep an eye on our [Social Media pages](#) for details on all our events.

Libraries Ireland Week 2022: Libraries as Places of Sanctuary

Organised by the **Library Association of Ireland**, Library Ireland Week takes place from Sunday December 4th to Saturday, December 10th, 2022. **Library Ireland Week** is a celebration of libraries and the people who work in libraries throughout Ireland.

This year, the theme is "**Libraries as Places of Sanctuary**", with a focus on how libraries in Ireland have the ability to provide democratic, open and welcoming places for all. In this spirit, library staff were thrilled to showcase the library service to council staff in Áras an Chontae on Tuesday, 6th December.



Library staff will also be on hand to showcase the many facets of the library to members of the public in the Bridge Shopping Centre, Tullamore on Wednesday, 7th December from 10am. Visitors are invited to ask questions, update their accounts or join the library!

Offaly Libraries Sensory Toy Collection

The Sensory Offaly Toys and Equipment Collection contains a range of items to help in the development of fine motor, gross motor, communication and life skills. Based primarily in Tullamore Library,



collection from each of our eight branches can be arranged in advance.

If you wish to browse the entire Sensory Offaly Toys and Equipment Collection, or you wish for more information, please [check out our brochure](#).

More information on **Sensory Offaly**, including our **Sensory Book** collection and our **Sensory Rooms** in Tullamore and Edenderry libraries, [can be found here](#).



Hosted by Eleanor Glennon,
Play Therapist and Psychotherapist

Offaly Libraries 2022 School STEAM Programme: Science Week

Offaly Libraries enthusiastically celebrated **Science Week, November 14th – 18th** as part of our wider **School STEAM Programme**, kindly co-funded by the **Dormant Accounts Fund**.

Some **569 students** from primary schools around the county attended fascinating, in person science workshops in **Birr, Clara, Edenderry and Tullamore libraries**. St. Mary's Primary School in Edenderry were treated to a **whole school science show**, with Marie of Daingean Library also in attendance.

We distributed **484 activities** to teachers and schools located in **Banagher, Daingean, Ferbane and Kilcormac** through our **Take Away 'Science in a Bag' Class Sets**.

Take Away Bags containing **90 Science Activities** were also distributed to **Ukrainian children** with the help of the **Offaly Volunteer Centre**.



Healthy Ireland Talk: Heading into the Holiday Season with Confidence

As part of our offerings for Healthy Ireland at Your Library, an online talk targeting parents was held online, Monday 5th December at 8pm.



Delivered by Play Therapist and Psychotherapist, Eleanor Glennon, the talk delved

into how parents can manage the stress and expectations that often accompany the holiday season.

The talk was well received and we look forward to delivering more Healthy Ireland events in the New Year. For more information on our **Healthy Ireland collections**, [please see here](#).

Board Games Available to Borrow from Offaly Libraries

Offaly Libraries now have Board Games available to borrow from our libraries, just in time for the holidays with games including **Harry Potter Scrabble, Articulate, Mouse Trap** and much more!

Library users can borrow the games for up to three weeks at a time. Please contact your local library for availability. Branch Information can be [found here](#)



A regular **Board Game Night** for families and teenagers has been introduced in Edenderry Library and runs **every second Wednesday, from 6pm**. For more information, please phone Edenderry Library on 046 9731028 or email edenderrylibrary@offalycoco.ie

Ciorcal Comhrá in Birr Library

We are very pleased to continue to facilitate a Ciorcal Comhrá in Birr Library, meeting **every Saturday morning from 11am – 1pm**.



The group is an excellent opportunity for those who wish to improve their Irish in an informal and friendly environment. If you wish to learn more about the group, please phone Birr Library on 057 91 24950 or email birrlibrary@offalycoco.ie

'Finding Joy' Art Exhibition in Tullamore Library

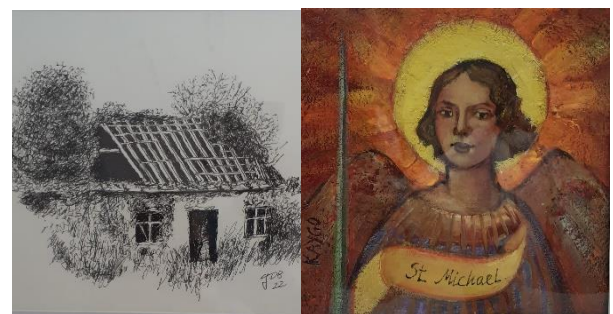
Rahan based artist, Catherine Leavy Hickey will launch her art exhibition, 'Finding Joy' on Monday, 5th December from Tullamore Library. Catherine said "growing up in the countryside in the midlands has given me a deep appreciation of landscape, nature and authenticity."



On display in Tullamore Library for the duration of December, the paintings will be for sale with 20% of the proceeds going to the local branch of **Family Carers**.

Birr Art group– Art Exhibition in The Atrium at Birr Library

Birr Library are pleased to present a series of artworks provided by **Birr Art Group**, currently on display in The Atrium for the month of December.



Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

Appendix 1

**Draft Consolidated Revenue Account Income & Expenditure Summary by Service Division
To 30th September 2022**

	Expenditure €	Income €
Housing & Building	11,427,338	11,165,728
Road Transport & Safety	18,372,434	14,055,832
Water Services	4,476,996	4,128,119
Development Management	8,788,649	4,318,673
Environmental Services	6,654,666	1,542,716
Recreation & Amenity	3,578,275	643,513
Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	484,274	184,966
Miscellaneous Services	5,932,507	4,637,281
Local Government Fund / GPG		6,301,292
Gross Rates Income		12,642,481
	59,715,139	59,620,601
Deficit to 30th September 2022		(94,538)

OCC to 30th November 2022

	<u>Rates</u> €m	<u>Rents</u> €m	<u>Loans</u> €m
Opening Balance January 1, 2022	2.77	0.48	0.13
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers	15.22	6.84	0.43
2022 Cash Collected to end of November	13.22	6.75	0.51
Closing Balance November 30th 2022	4.77	0.57	0.05
<u>2021 Cash collected to November 30th</u>	13.10 ***	5.96	0.51
% Collection at this point in 2021	101%	113%	100%

*** Collections impacted in 2021 and 2022 by waiver uncertainty and effect of lockdowns

Bank Overdraft to 30th November 2022		% YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date	70	21%
Bank Interest and non-conforming charges to November 30th 2022 YTD		€6,254
Bank Administration and transactional charges to November 30th 2022 YTD		€31,612