

OCTOBER  
2021



Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí  
Offaly County Council

## MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Do: Baill Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí

To: Each Member of Offaly County Council

Tuairisc mhíosúil bainistíochta a bhreithniú i gcomhair tionóil mí Deireadh Samhain

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

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

**FINANCE** - Appendix 1

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

#### The Sensory Offaly 2021 programme

This programme continues in November, and we will have talks with Dr. Dorothy Armstrong on 'Executive Function: Strategies to help Neurodiverse Teenagers' on November 16th; Sibshop Ireland will join us for 'Supporting Children Who have a Sibling with Additional Needs' on November 15th and a Sibshop Workshop on November 12th; and a talk with Dr. Blánaid Gavin on 'ADHD – causes, diagnosis, impacts, and supports' on November 25th. These events are suitable for parents, teachers and carers, and can all be booked for free on [Eventbrite](#)

November 2021		
Nov 9	Anger Management Strategies	19.30-20.30
Nov 12	Sibshop Workshop	16.00-17.30
Nov 15	Sibshop Parent Talk	19.00-20.30
Nov 16	Executive Function	19.30-20.30
Nov 25	ADHD Talk	19.30-20.30

### REPORT AT A GLANCE

#### Medieval Churches, Conservation and Pollination

Laois Offaly Just Transition project - The churches being conserved in Offaly are Monasteroris in Edenderry, Kilbride (nr canal) in Tullamore and Kilmurryely near Shinrone in Birr.

#### Accelerate Green

Calling all innovators, inventors, game-changers, leaders, can-doers, pioneer Accelerate Green is a focussed scaling accelerator programme.

<https://accelerategreen.ie/>. The first of its kind in Ireland, it provides access to Bord Na Móna for collaboration and as a reference customer. It will open up access to infrastructure and R&D test beds and will provide national and international expertise in commercial, financial, and technical areas of the climate change economy. The programme will be run in a 375sq.m standalone premises located in the Bord Na Móna complex, Leabeg, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. It offers high quality office space with Wi-Fi, open plan desk space, meeting rooms and individual offices. If you are aware of businesses that may be suitable, please invite them to register their interest at

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1QmZ-AfamJh-6hj2K7lvCdSzVyaAqgkBEpZzIRrc/edit>

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## **HERITAGE**

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In line with Covid-19 guidelines, work continues to deliver the Offaly Heritage Plan 2017-21.

### **The Conservation Master Plan for Birr Courthouse**

The Plan has been completed by Howley Hayes Conservation Architects. An estimated €2million is needed to fully refurbish the Courthouse. Works started to secure the building envelope on site in August to make the roof watertight and to repair the windows to the façade. This initial work in 2021 is funded through the Historic Towns Initiative, Historic Structures fund and Offaly County Council.

### **Community Monuments Fund**

This is the second year of this fund which offers 100% funding towards the care of archaeological monuments. Works are completed at Castelarmstrong near Ballycumber (phase 1 in 2021); works are due to commence shortly at Blundell Castle, Edenderry; the Irish Heritage School in Birr have co-ordinated the conservation report for the graveyard wall at Seir Kieran monastic site near Clareen on behalf of the Church of Ireland and a new sign has been delivered for Lynally Monastic Site.

### **Medieval Churches, Conservation and Pollination**

Laois Offaly Just Transition project - Howley Hayes Cooney were awarded the tender and the first round of site visits has taken place.

- The maintenance programme continues at the medieval church sites that have been conserved in recent years.
- Working with the community at Kilcomin, near Shinrone, to plan for the conservation of the early

Christian Monastic Site. Funded by the Heritage Council Community Grant conservation plans drawn up for works in 2022.

- A method statement has been commissioned for the conservation of the burial ground wall at Lemanaghan.

### **Killaun Bog Project**

The replacement of the board walk at Killaun is finished; studies on the birds, molluscs, bryophytes and spiders are all completed and have informed the forthcoming publication by John Feehan on Killaun Bog which is being published with St Brendan's Community School. This project has been supported through the National Biodiversity Action Plan Funding.

### **Invasive Species Funding**

Funding of €16,000 has been received to continue to treat Japanese knotweed county wide and to remove Himalayan balsam from the Camcor and Little Brosna Catchments and the full treatment programme for the county is now complete.

### **County Barn Owl Survey and Nest Box project**

The early survey results show a positive increase in range for barn owls in Offaly over the last decade. 20 suitable barn owl nest sites were selected and boxes erected with kind permission of the land owners.

### **Birr Destination Town Funding**

Working with the OCC team to deliver this project. Three main elements are being developed; upgrading the Green with works well progressed; improved access with Birr Demesne with planning permission for a second entrance to the courtyard submitted in October; and an interpretation strategy for the town completed by Alan Hill which sets out specific interventions for

interpretation arising from community engagement.

### **Creative Ireland**

A considerable range of county wide creative projects have been delivered under this programme in 2021 ranging from vernacular architecture conservation projects, to the Carole Nelson' Brosna Suite composition and concert, to the sculpture of the Geashill pig by Luke Carson!

### **Decade of Commemorations**

A grant offer of €57,500 was received in June 2021 following a joint proposal from the Council with Offaly History and historical societies across Offaly. A comprehensive body of work has been produced with blogs, podcasts and a website. See the new platform on [www.offalyhistory.com](http://www.offalyhistory.com)

### **Heritage Week**

Despite restrictions continuing a number of projects proceeded on and off line and the 'Empty Pillars' project led by Caroline Conway with Birr Theatre was recently announced the county award winner by the Heritage Council.

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## **ROADS**

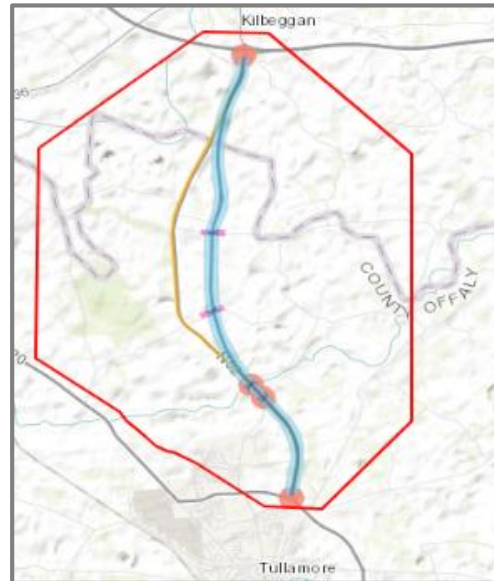
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### **Roads Programme 2021**

All construction works commenced in May and Roads and the three MDs are progressing works throughout the County.

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

Public consultation stage 3 (emerging preferred corridor) has concluded. Feedback report on stage 3 is being prepared. The next step is finishing the Route options selection process to be concluded by year end.



*TKL Emerging Preferred Route Corridor*

### **The NTA Active Travel and Outdoor Infrastructure**

These schemes are progressing throughout the County. The dedicated Active Travel Team i.e. Senior Executive Engineer and Executive Technician are in place with remaining member to join the team by year end.



*Planning out driving Lane N52 Arden*

### **National Road Pavement Improvements**

These are nearing completion (thru the HD28 & Capital Maintenance programmes) and weather permitting all works will be complete this week. The main body of works recently undertaken were on the N52 Tullamore bypass and along the N52 towards Kilbeggan.

**Edenderry Town Inner Relief Road**  
Works on this project commenced in October. Works progressing well. Cut and fill of preparation layer complete. Drainage works 40% complete. Ducting works commencing this week. Construction works to deliver the scheme will be ongoing into 2022.

#### **Local Improvement Scheme 2021**

OCC received a total allocation of €545,240. The scheme was publically advertised and applications received. Works within the MD's are ongoing for LIS programme delivery.

Offaly County Council received an allocation of €47,025 under **CLÁR 2021** Measure 1 and 2 funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development in August. Delivery of projects is ongoing.

#### **Winter Service**

The winter service period commenced in October 2021 Night-time salting has already occurred on the routes identified in the in The Winter Service plan covering the 2021/2022 period. The approved plan is available on [Offaly.ie](http://Offaly.ie) to be viewed by members of the public.



#### **Grand Canal Greenway**

Roads are continuing to deliver the Greenway in Offaly. Significant progress has taken place between Daingean and Edenderry. The Greenway link between these urban centres should be in place by year end. Part 8 planning for the Upgrade to the Pollagh canal line will be advertised in 2 weeks.

*New Greenway under development at Toberdaly Bridge*



*Contract Signing for Phase 1 of Edenderry Inner Relief Road*



## **HOUSING**

### **Covid-19 – Housing**

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

<b>Service</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
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
Housing Leasing Enquiries	leasing@offalycoco.ie
Anti-Social Behaviour	ASB@offalycoco.ie

### **October Housing Update**

- There are 520 on the Social Housing List awaiting housing support at the end of October 2021.
- A further 798 active tenancies are currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 15 signed up for HAP and 9 exited from HAP in October.
- At the end of October, 15 single people and 3 families were being

supported in emergency accommodation.

- 26 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans applications have been received in 2021. 6 have been approved, 9 declined, 2 ineligible, 2 withdrawn and the remaining 7 are at various stages. Overall 15 RIHLs have been drawn down since the commencement of the programme.
- Social Housing Assessments (SSHA) 2021 is to be completed by 17th November 2021. All qualified applicants should have completed returns should be submitted to the Housing Section at this time.
- Following a competitive tendering process, a consultant has been appointed to carry out Private Rented House Inspections to ensure that the property complies with the Minimum Housing Standards Act.

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

- Total housing stock at end of October 2021 is 1,943.
- 331 maintenance calls were logged in October. Maintenance of non-emergency works is continuing with Covid-19 precautions in place.

### **Housing Capital Programme Update**

- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – Stage 3 approval application (permission to proceed to Tender) was received from the Department on August 26<sup>th</sup> 2021; Works Tender has been advertised on etenders and is due for return on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021 after which a Contractor will be appointed following Stage 4 approval submission to the DHLGH.
- Dargan Drive, Chancery Lane (20 Units) – Stage 2 approval

application was submitted to the Department on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

- Moneygall (4 units) – Two Tenders were received on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021. Stage 4 submission will be submitted to the Department in October with a view to starting on site in November 2021.
- Beechgrove, Belmont (7 units) – Stage 4 approval was granted on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021. A contractor has been appointed and is due to start on site on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021.
- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 no. Older Person's dwellings) – Stage 3 approval was granted on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021. Works Tender will be advertised on etenders in November 2021.
- Banagher, Kylebeg (18 Units) – Stage 4 approval received on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Contractor has been appointed (Pat Loftus Construction Ltd.) and work has commenced on site.
- Circular Road, Daingean (9 units) - Stage 3 approval was received in March 2021. Works Tender will issue in Q4 2021 with a view to commencing construction in Q4 2021.
- Circular Road, Daingean, Site 2 (9 Units) – Stage 1 approval application was granted on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021 for the site adjoining the OCC housing site on Circular Road. Stage 2 due to be lodged in March 2022.
- Sycamore Drive, Ballycumber (10 Units) – Stage 1 approval was granted by the Department on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Design Team appointments are in progress along with site investigation procurement. Stage 2 application to be submitted in Q4 2021.

### **Vacant Houses Initiatives**

- 1 Newbridge Street, Birr: Refurbishment of derelict dwelling to provide retrofitted 3-bedroom dwelling. Tender issued on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021. 3 no. Tenders were returned on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Stage 4 approval was granted on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021. Contractor will be formally appointed in the near future and works will commence on site in Q4 2021.
- 4 Hillview, Holly Park, Birr: Progressing as an acquisition.
- 121 Lakeview, Clara: Stage 1 submission will be submitted to the Department in Q4 2021
- 3 x Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) completed in 2021.

### **Approved Housing Bodies Schemes**

- Cluid Housing Association: Construction ongoing on 26 units with completion date projected for February 2022
- Oaklee: Clonminch, Tullamore (19 units) – Contractor is appointed and construction is progressing well
- Oaklee: Kearney's Field, Tullamore (41 Units) – Contractor is appointed and construction is progressing well
- Sofia Housing: Stage 2 approved (39 units) at Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Stage 2 submission was made in October. Sophia Housing have lodged a planning application for the development – further information is being sought from the AHB
- Sofia Housing, in a joint initiative with Midlands Simon Community, acquired Clonamore Hotel in Q3, 2020. The facility will be developed as an enhanced centre for the provision of supported accommodation for homeless people. Under the terms of a

landmark agreement Midlands Simon Community will operate the facility, with a team of qualified social care workers providing support on a 24/7 basis. Following refurbishment, the facility will provide professional supports for up to 17 people. Permission to proceed to tender was lodged with the department on the 6th August.

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

- Main Street, Daingean (8 Units): houses completed and 8 families allocated to their new homes.
- 6 Turnkey Schemes (82 units) which received departmental approval in December 2020 are progressing as follows:
  1. Mucklagh 8 units - Under Construction
  2. Woodfield, Birr 34 units - Under Construction
  3. Bog Road, Portarlinton 28 units - Under Construction
  4. Walsh Island 4 units - Under Construction;
  5. Tullamore, 5 units – discussions ongoing
  6. Cloneygowan – 2 units – completed and allocated
- 4 No. Part V units in Silverbrook Drive, Tullamore have been completed and allocated.

### **Housing Grants**

The Department has advised that €1,368,805, of which €273,761 is to be provided from Offaly County Council own revenues, will be made available for private housing grants, i.e., Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People; People with a Disability Scheme and Mobility Grants. Funds have been allocated to qualified households and staff are following up with households who were awarded grants to ascertain the status of the work programme.

On 28<sup>th</sup> September, the Department approved a request from the Council for additional funding towards housing grants. An additional €184,956, was approved bringing the total allocation in 2021 to €1,600,000.

### **Disabled Person's Grants**

The Council received notification from the Department for a significantly increased funding for Disabled Persons works on Local Authority housing units for 2021. €790,556 has been approved for works, of which €79,056 is to be provided from Offaly County Council own revenues. Design details and tenders are currently being progressed for several extension and adaption grants.

### **Retrofit Programme**

The Council received notification on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021 of an increased in their allocation under 'Just Transition for the Midlands Region' programme to €4.2m  
Lot 1&2, Birr: The Contractor for the works has been appointed (Retrofit Design Ltd.) and works have commenced on the 35 houses.

Lot 3&4, Tullamore: The Works Tender for the 42 houses in Tullamore has been advertised on [www.etenders.gov.ie](http://www.etenders.gov.ie). Tenders are due back on November 15<sup>th</sup> 2021 after which Contractor will be appointed.

Lot 5&6, Edenderry, Daingean, Clara, Ferbane, Shannonbridge, Cloghan: The appointed consultants have surveyed the 43 houses and are preparing the works tender which will be advertised on [www.etenders.gov.ie](http://www.etenders.gov.ie) Q4 2021.

**LOCAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**Offaly Covid-19 Community Response Helpline**

The Offaly Community Call Helpline continued to operate from 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday during October. Of the 10 calls received during October, 9 were general queries related to Covid-19 testing by the HSE, and 1 call relating to transport to a hospital appointment.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021 the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage decided that due to the reopening of the economy and society, as well as the fall in demand for the services provided under the Community Call initiative, the Community Helpline and Community Response Forum would cease operation from that date. As the Community Response Forum operates as a subgroup of Offaly LCDC, its future will be discussed at the November meeting of Offaly LCDC.

SUMMARY OF MONTHLY CALLS TO COVID HELPLINE 2020-2021					
2020			2021		
	No.	%		No.	%
<b>Apr</b>	312	57.7	<b>Jan</b>	19	3.4
<b>May</b>	93	17.2	<b>Feb</b>	11	2.0
<b>Jun</b>	19	3.5	<b>Mar</b>	9	1.5
<b>Jul</b>	8	1.5	<b>Apr</b>	13	2.4
<b>Aug</b>	8	1.5	<b>May</b>	9	1.6
<b>Sep</b>	7	1.3	<b>Jun</b>	3	0.5
<b>Oct</b>	9	1.7	<b>Jul</b>	3	0.5
<b>Nov</b>	3	0.6	<b>Aug</b>	3	0.5
<b>Dec</b>	8	1.5	<b>Sep</b>	4	0.7
			<b>Oct</b>	10	1.8
<b>2020 &amp; 2021</b>			<b>Total</b>	<b>551</b>	

**Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)**

Offaly LCDC held their monthly meeting on Thursday 14th October, 2021 with members attending by video link. Main agenda items included the Rural Development LEADER Programme 2014 – 2020 & Transitional LEADER Programme

2021 - 2022; Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme 2018-2022 (SICAP); Proposed New Structure for Offaly Sports Partnership Management Committee and the Social Enterprise Capital Grant Scheme 2021. Members were briefed in relation to SICAP targets for 2022, Annual Plan process for 2022 and the SICAP Mid Programme Review with the members approving the Statement of Priorities for 2022 and 2023. Offaly County Council's Internal Audit Unit carried out a verification inspection of Offaly Integrated Local Development Company's implementation of the SICAP Programme for 2020 and a report was circulated with no significant findings of concern raised. Members agreed to the proposed new structure for Offaly Sports Partnership Management Committee as per document circulated. A project summary report was agreed by the members to be submitted to the Minister for approval in respect of Social Enterprise Capital Grants Scheme 2021.

Presentations were provided in relation to (i) the review of the Offaly LECP 2016 – 2021, specifically in relation to the Economic elements of the Plan, and (ii) Healthy Ireland/Offaly update on objectives, actions and budgets. Members were provided with a summary of the Community Enhancement Programme to date.

**Public Participation Network**

The Nomination of reps to a range of SPC's and other boards and Committees took place in October with plans in progress for the Elections in November

Preparations are underway for the PPN Municipal District meetings. The Theme is Funding with the following presenting from Offaly County Council: Brian Pey and Olwen Cummins alongside staff members



from OLDC. The meeting takes place in November with a ticketing system via Eventbrite in place to manage numbers with the venues responsible for checking Covid-19 certs. For those unable to attend, a Zoom link will afford them an opportunity to join in with the option to watch live on Facebook also available.

A Cop 26 event was held in Charleville Castle on Nov 1<sup>st</sup> with a contingent from the Dingle Hub enroute to Cop 26 in Glasgow twinning with Green Offaly on a learning journey. 'From Peninsula to Peatlands'. A number of meetings were held during October with Key Stakeholders to bring this event to fruition.

A consultation meeting was held with Offaly Disability Equality Network on their proposal for **Changing Places**, a facility for people with Disabilities who require assistance with toileting. The Community Call Learning for the future Online Webinar was attended. The Midlands Regional PPN event was hosted by Westmeath PPN and the Theme was 'Groups emerging from Covid' - Opportunities and threats.

### Age Friendly Alliance

The Positive Ageing Week Closing event at the Charleville Centre Tullamore. To wrap up positive ageing week, a gathering was held with Older People across the county invited along for Afternoon Teas and some Music. An Age Friendly collaboration between the OPC, OLDC, the LOETB, the Gardai and OCC.

A number of Age Friendly workshops and information events took place during October.

The Midland Regional Age Friendly Manager Eileen Hughes organised the Midlands Region Age Friendly Climate



Action Workshops with Older Person's Council Members and Age Friendly Managers participating in the workshops.

Age Friendly Ireland events included: The launch of the AF Housing website [www.agefriendlyhomes.ie](http://www.agefriendlyhomes.ie) – providing resources, guidance and information on housing for the ageing population.

- BCP Thematic Programme Grant information session
- Age Friendly Waffle App
- Slainte Healthy Communities Webinar
- The Age Friendly Interdepartmental Team was established within Offaly County Council

Ngo Networking Meeting where each county presented on the local activities under specific themes.

At a local level the Offaly Older Person's group held a meeting to review the activities undertaken during the year and to plan their work to the end of the year in line with the Age Friendly Strategy.



Work continues on a bi weekly basis to organise content for the Chatters & Matters weekly Programme.

The Connecting the Faithful Newsletter was also circulated across the county.



### Comhairle na nÓg:

Offaly Comhairle na nÓg have been developing an app named 'Trash-Talk'. The launch of this project took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of October. The app provides secondary school students in Offaly with a toolkit for students to make their schools free of single-use-plastic. Anyone can download and use this app from their app store.

Comhairle na nÓg has collaborated with the Environment section in Offaly County Council to deliver workshops on 'Education for Sustainability' in 6 secondary schools in Offaly. The workshops advise young people on sustainability and environmental based actions ([www.educationforsustainability.ie](http://www.educationforsustainability.ie)).

Students from St Brendan's Community School in Birr and the Sacred Heart School in Tullamore of October have completed

the workshop. Four other secondary schools will complete workshops in the coming weeks.

Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, Cllr. Declan Harvey opened the campaign at the Sacred Heart School Tullamore on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> of October and stated '*it's a good example of collaborative working with Comhairle na nÓg and Offaly County Council who provided the funding for the schools to complete the workshops*'.

Comhairle na nÓg held their quarterly Steering Group meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October. All attendees praised the project that Offaly Comhairle completed on their topic of Climate Change.

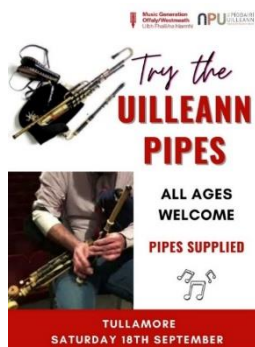
### Music Generation Offaly/Westmeath A Song of Resilience:

We were delighted to get involved in the Birr based Creative Ireland project *A Song of Resilience* over the midterm break. MGOW musician Triona Walsh joined a group of young singers who were tasked with learning the original composition. For more details on the project see <https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/event/a-song-of-resilience/>



## Uilleann Pipes

Our first Offaly BCP Piperlink point is due to get underway very soon with our first class expected to start in the next couple of weeks in Kilclonfert BCP.



## Intergenerational Ukulele Groups / Musical Memories

Our online intergenerational ukulele group moved online back in April thanks to support from Healthy Ireland and Offaly Active Aging. We're delighted that the group are still meeting and will soon be joined by others interested in getting involved in our intergenerational music activities. Over the last few months we've been reaching out to men's sheds, active retirement groups, day care settings and other community groups that may be interested in getting involved in our Creative Ireland funded intergenerational project. We've now gathered all of our participants and sessions are starting up this week and run for 6 weeks up to Christmas. We'll be inviting participants to join us in our Christmas Play-Along sessions – details to follow.



## Social Media / Website

We are very active on all our social media outlets and working to keep our website ([www.musicgenerationoffalywestmeath.ie](http://www.musicgenerationoffalywestmeath.ie)) updated. We also produce regular newsletters which are circulated with our subscribers and partner schools.

## ARTS

The Arts Office continues to plan for a very busy annual programme for 2021. The annual programme will be delivered in response to the current and anticipated restrictions, therefore will be a combination of online and where possible on the ground projects.

## Lough Boora - Art in Landscape Seminar:

Work for the Art in Landscape seminar continues, with the cultural producer's Studio Response, selected, contracts completed and planning in progress. This seminar will focus on a discussion of how arts, culture, tourism and climate change policies can align / work together and how this collaboration can inform future policy. The Cultural Producers will devise a number of lead-in workshops, community engagement initiatives with local communities / stakeholders starting from early 2022, prior to the seminar, planned to take place May 2022. The key audience for the seminar will include people interested in and working in the arts, culture, tourism and environment sectors, people living locally who engage with art in the landscape, and experts in their field nationally and Internationally. The cultural producer will expand on this audience base, to reach as wide as possible existing and new audiences.

## Grants & Awards

Arts Acts Grants, Professional Artists Support Scheme, Festival Arts Grants – the



drawdown date of end of November 2021 is currently being progressed

### **Arts Council Funding In the Open | Faoin Spéir**

The purpose of the award is to generate a sustained and curated programme of multidisciplinary, inclusive arts activity in public or open spaces in towns and communities around Ireland between July 2021 and April 2022. This is a collaborative partnership, led by Offaly County Council's Arts Office, including Birr Theatre and Arts Centre and Birr Festivals Collective. With the aim to develop an exciting and innovative curated programme of outdoor events, planned for Birr, Lough Boora, (in conjunction with the Sculpture Park) and Tullamore, in anticipation of the opening of the new Arts Centre for the town next year. The planning and programming is underway and will be launched November 12<sup>th</sup> at Birr Theatre and Arts Centre.



### **Creative Places**

This ambitious three-year funding stream is being led by Creative Lives in partnership with Offaly County Council Arts Office and Edenderry Municipal District. The partnership held their first meetings in September, and plans are underway for the launch of the programme and PR to take place Oct/Nov

### **Capital Projects**

#### **Arts Infrastructure Strategy**

The Arts Infrastructure Strategy for the County continues to be progressed by People Places Consulting: Caoimhín Corrigan and Siobhán O'Malley. The strategy will explore how all the Arts Infrastructure (existing and planned) can be developed in a collaborative and harmonic

manner, resulting in a cohesive, complimentary and self-sustaining network of arts infrastructure that is beneficial to the whole county.

### **Tullamore Art Centre**

Work continues with regards to the opening of the Arts Centre in 2022. The Arts Office are continuing to develop a series of arts events, funded by Creative Ireland Funding and will this also include events as part of the In the Open | Faoin Spéir project. This programme will aim to re-engage an audience / local community participation in advance of the Art Centre opening. The Arts Office, in conjunction with the Arts Centre committee developed a questionnaire to assess local community, art organisations and artist's interest in room rental as an information gathering exercise to be used by the Art Centre management upon opening. 21 arts organisations from the Tullamore area responded to the questionnaire.

### **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**

The Arts Office is facilitating the draw-down on a number of Creative Ireland projects including:

- The Animation Residency and the Tullamore Arts Development Project, plus the community projects:
- Writers project in conjunction with Lough Boora and BNM with Kilcormac Economic Development Association



- Reimagining the astronomical heritage of Birr
- A Song of Resilience – Birr Festivals Collective
- Art on Your Doorstep – cross county arts and health project

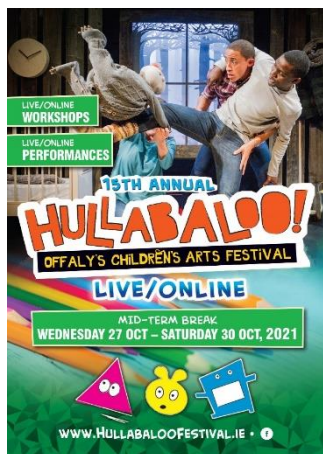
### Artist Support

We continually provide opportunities for artists to upskill and grow.

### FilmOffaly

FilmOffaly Award Winner 2019 – The Whale is nearing post production completion. Due to finish in November. FilmOffaly Award Winner 2021 – This is a mentoring programme. Mentees have been selected and are currently working with Mixed Bag Media on delivering a documentary. Production starts on the documentary in November. Just to note that Mixed Bag Media's short film 'Nothing to Declare' was selected for the Oscars and is also being shown in the internationally recognised DOC NYC Festival – America's largest documentary festival.

### Hullabaloo! Offaly Children's Arts Festival



The festival took place from Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2021. 2021 saw a hybrid festival comprising of four days of workshops over three towns Birr, Clara and Edenderry plus

online zoom workshops, pre-recorded workshops and live and online shows facilitated by over 35 artists. The festival is a partnership venture between OCC Arts and Birr Theatre with collaborators Offaly

libraries and Clara Community and Family Resource Centre. Analysis of data and figures will take place in November

### Youth Arts Forum

Offaly Arts is continuing to work with a Youth Arts Facilitator in the establishment of a Youth Arts Forum. The forum broke up for the summer and plans are now underway to reconvene the group.

### Youth Arts Commission

Evaluations were undertaken with respect to submissions of proposals for a €15,000 Youth Arts Commission. The successful submission was a project proposed by a collaboration of artists. Artists' contracts completed, and the project is due to start before end 2021.

### OFFLine and Mini Movies Programme

The Arts Office launched the Mini Movies programme with 100 Children at St Marys Primary School, Edenderry. This was then streamed to the OFFLine festival, which also included the launch of *Made in the Midlands* – including our FilmOffaly Award Winner 2020 *The Passion*. As part of the festival the Arts Office organised the FilmOffaly Industry Day (in partnership with OFFLine and LEO) facilitated by Mary Kate O'Flanagan and a board of experts. The seminar had over 30 in attendance and there was a one to one mentoring session after the seminar.



### SPORTS

#### Offaly Sports Partnership AGM, Committee restructure & Strategic plan 2021 – 2025

- Offaly SP has recently completed development of its new strategic plan for the period 2021 – 2025. The

plan is due to be launched in the coming weeks

- Following the development of Offaly SP's newest strategic plan, the management committee of the sports partnership has been restructured; and expressions of interest are being sought for up to eight voluntary persons, four male and four female, with a commitment to sport to join the committee. Particulars of the roles and application forms can be had by contacting Eamonn Henry at [ehenry@offalycoco.ie](mailto:ehenry@offalycoco.ie)
- The AGM of Offaly SP takes place on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> December

#### **Funding / Governance**

- Sport Ireland core, dormant accounts, c19 return to sport supports and capital applications submitted
- Offaly SP is currently finalising its compliance with the governance code for sport by local authority sports partnerships documentation for submission to Sport Ireland in advance of the end of year deadline for same

#### **Human Resources**

Offaly County Council on behalf of Offaly SP will soon be advertising for a new staff role - ACE coordinator - with the sports partnership in the coming weeks. The ACE (assisting children excel) project will specifically target children from disadvantaged backgrounds and provide them with opportunities to realise their sporting potential

#### **Programmes**

##### **Education & Training**

- 11 dormant account funded youth / sports leader training completed in

five schools for 275 TY students between September and mid term

- Four additional courses to be delivered in two schools across December 2021 to March 2022

#### **Community sports development programme**

Various programmes ongoing including:

- activator poles for older adults
- fitness sessions for men in Crinkle
- fitness sessions for older adults in Cloneyhurke
- outdoor fitness sessions for women

#### **Integration**

Halloween integrated athletics camp supported by Tullamore Harriers and Offaly SP delivered. 57 children registered and took part in the event

#### **Schools programmes**

- Remote inter schools sprint event took place in primary schools in Tullamore, Edenderry, Portarlinton, Birr and Clara in advance of mid-term. 2,400 children participated
- Multi-sport and athletics programmes underway in 15 schools

#### **Sports Inclusion Development Programme**

Various programmes ongoing including: -

- activator poles for people with disabilities
- outdoor fitness sessions for people with disabilities
- physical activity supports for day care centres catering for people with disabilities
- physical activity supports for special education needs units in five primary schools

### **Dormant account funded programmes**

- Community volunteer supports - swim programme for coaches supporting people with disabilities underway
- South Offaly sports hub - staff have supported delivery of various outreach programmes in the community
- Daingean sports hub – various programmes underway
- Sports inclusion capital supports – additional adapted equipment in the process of being purchased for inclusion in all ability kits due to be disseminated to schools, clubs and organisations catering for people with disabilities



*Adapted equipment – Tri Golf*



*Urban outdoor adventure  
20 splash & dash sessions completed in  
Edenderry for 367 primary school pupils  
and secondary school students*

### **HEALTHY OFFALY**

Much of the activity of Healthy Offaly in October was focused on the HIF actions and the ramping up of activity as restrictions continued to ease. Action 1: Fit Class activity diary was printed ‘as gaeilge’ and sent to all the gael scoileanna in the County. Once the final printing costs invoices are processed for payment this will complete this action. All other actions have made considerable progress since the summer and are on course to complete the majority of their budget spends before 31<sup>st</sup> December.

Towards month end news was received from Pobal that the Department of Health has agreed a 3-month extension of Round 3 of the Healthy Ireland Fund Programme from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The purpose of this 3-month extension is to provide additional time for the delivery of approved actions/activities and the achievement of full spend under HIF Round 3, and to facilitate planning for Healthy Ireland Round 4. All partners have been advised of the extension but there is a desire from them to keep momentum going on actions and budget spends regardless of an extension. The Healthy Ireland Coordinator position will now be funded for this period also to complete all programme reporting.

### **LIBRARY SERVICES**

#### **Fáilte ar ais!**

Offaly Libraries are offering a wider range of services such as public PCs, comfortable seating and bookable study spaces. In order

**Fáilte! Welcome!**

**WiFi**

Come and use our Public Computers, Free WiFi, Browse, Borrow, Print, and much more!

**Libraries**  
Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí  
Offaly County Council

Full details and opening information is available on [www.Offaly.ie/Libraries](http://www.Offaly.ie/Libraries)



to ensure that everyone has a safe and enjoyable visit, these services are facilitated in accordance with government guidelines. Welcome back!

### Children's Book Festival at Offaly Libraries



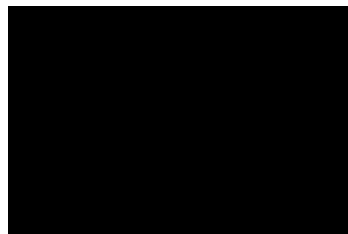
Children's Book Festival 2021 was a jam packed event. Offaly Libraries celebrated CBF with an array of events and activities, part funded by Creative Ireland.



Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme  
2017-2022

Due to Covid-19 all our events were on Offaly Libraries Zoom Platform. School Zoom events featured authors Derek Landy, Judi Curtin, Oisín McGann, Jackie Burke, E.R. Murray and Gordon D'arcy with author Paul Howard. Authors Debbie Thomas and E.R Murray hosted online writing workshops and artist Marta Boniakowska presented Comic Character Design workshops. Gordon D'Arcy and Paul Howard's interactive event for sports-mad kids was packed with hilarious live readings, jokes and a Q&A session. Online family events were scheduled throughout the month, with award-winning author Dave Rudden who hosted an online family writing workshop where parents and kids teamed up to create their own stories.

Check out the great video with children's fiction superstar Derek Landy in conversation with David O'Callaghan on our [YouTube channel](#)!



### Science Week at Offaly Libraries

Science Week is on November 7-14 this year. There is plenty to spark your scientific curiosity for adults, teenagers and children on [BorrowBox](#), our online platform or eBooks and eAudiobooks.

Check out all the interesting videos on our [YouTube channel](#), exploring the exciting world of science.



### Offaly & Laois Libraries in partnership [Parenting Support Programme Autumn Series](#)

The Parenting Programme funded by the **Dormant Accounts Fund** started on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September and covers very relevant topics affecting all areas of



parenting babies to teens. There have been a fantastic **451 attendees at 19 events** up to 03/11/2021.



Join Stella O'Malley for skills and strategies on how to help children tap into their inner strength and learn to deflect negative attention for the final event of the series titled **Bully-Proof Kids: Developing Resilience & Social Skills**. All events may be booked on Offaly Libraries [Eventbrite](#) page and full details are available on our [website](#) and on our [social media channels](#).



### Sensory Offaly Online Webinar Series 2021

Offaly Libraries hosted five online events as part of the Sensory Offaly 2021 Programme, funded by Laois Offaly CYPSC and HIAYL. These included two Sibshop Workshops to support the siblings of children with additional needs, two sensory workshops, and a talk on supporting your child with Dyslexia at School.



### Positive Ageing Week 2021

Offaly Libraries continued to celebrate **Positive Ageing Week 2021** with an “at-home” and “in library” tea morning in Kilcormac Library. This was a great opportunity for our older members to receive their Offaly Libraries gift umbrella. PAW is a fun and lively festival and a way for us to appreciate the contribution and guidance the older person in our lives makes to our community.



### Shocktober in Offaly Libraries

Halloween/Shocktober was celebrated county wide this year, with spooky stories shared by adults and children alike. Kids were most excited to enter our colouring



competition, made up of three age categories and open to all! Stay tuned to our [social media pages](#) to find out the winners!

We also got our **3D-Printer** up and going on the floor of Tullamore Library and used it to print some Halloween-themed items to decorate the library.



### Offaly Libraries History Lecture Series 2021

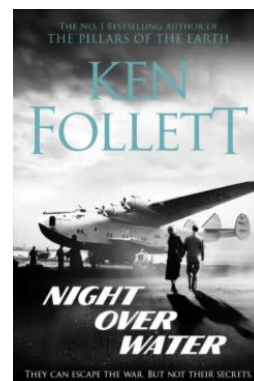
The third lecture in the History lecture Series took place on November 11th. Dr. Ciarán Reilly focused on researching local history in Offaly: a guide to resources. Full details on the series can be found here <https://midd.me/3bjb>



All presentations to date are now available on Offaly Libraries' [Facebook](#) and [YOUTUBE](#) channels. This series of events has been funded by Creative Ireland.

### Adult Book Club

The selected book for November is '**Night Over Water**' by Ken Follett which is available as an eBook or Audiobook on Borrowbox. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm. Email



[TullamoreLibrary@Offalycoco.ie](mailto:TullamoreLibrary@Offalycoco.ie) if you would like to join the Book Club.

### Hullabaloo!

Offaly Libraries distributed Hullabaloo Trick and Treat Hedgehog Craft bags to go with the lovely [craft video](#) with Deirdre from Tullamore Library.



Hullabaloo events included an Open Air Virtual Exhibition with art from the children of Tullamore Educate Together National School. An amazing 1940s phonebox projected the children's artwork onto Tullamore Library on Wednesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>.



## TOURISM

### Advertising

To tap in to the Halloween market and reach the domestic traveller, Offaly Tourism advertised in a targeted Autumn Breaks Supplement in October. The supplement was distributed among the Irish Times seven regional titles which include; The Western People, The Kildare, Laois and Carlow Nationalist, Waterford News and Star, Cork Echo and Roscommon Herald, with an estimated readership of 295,000.

### Promotional Videos

October saw the launch of the second set of promotional videos for tourism in Offaly. These videos are focusing on the wealth of exciting outdoor activities which Offaly has to offer.

They were launched on our social media channels and received great feedback. They are also available to view on [www.visitoffaly.ie](http://www.visitoffaly.ie) and are great marketing resource for future promotion.

### Outdoor Seating and Accessories Scheme

Applications for the Outdoor Seating and Accessories Scheme closed on 8<sup>th</sup> October. There was a large amount of interest in this grant scheme, which was funded by Fáilte Ireland and administered by the tourism team. 51 businesses were successful with their applications; with over €76k paid to date and a further €54K to be awarded under the scheme (totalling €130k).

## LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

### Dotser Announced As Finalist For The 2021 National Digital Media Awards

The Digital Media Awards are recognised as the most prestigious digital awards in Ireland and have been running for the last nineteen years. Commenting on the nomination, CEO and Founder of Dotser Loughnan Hooper said, "Dotser has been delivering strategic e-commerce and digital marketing solutions to leading clients across every county in Ireland for the last 20 years. I am delighted for our experienced team of 14 professionals that have worked across a wide range of sectors including retail, engineering and professional clients, while building a strong reputation in the hardware, agri parts and event industry with dedicated online software solutions". Best of luck to the Dotser team from us all at the Local Enterprise Office!



*Pictured above, is CEO & Founder of Dotser, Loughnan Hooper.*



## **Upcoming Events and New Initiatives**

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

Offaly's small businesses are being encouraged to avail of The Green for Micro Programme, which is 2 Free Days of Consultancy to help them become more sustainable. The consultant will provide specific recommendations that business owners can implement. These recommendations could include improvements to energy efficiencies, reduced water usage, reduced or improved packaging, product design, materials etc. The Green for Micro programme is an initiative from the Local Enterprise Offices, with support from Enterprise Ireland, being rolled-out nationwide to help prepare small businesses for the low carbon, more resource efficient economy of the future. It is now available to businesses across Offaly via the Local Enterprise Office. To find out more about the new Green for Micro programme, contact LEO Offaly or go to [www.LocalEnterprise.ie/Green](http://www.LocalEnterprise.ie/Green) for more information.

### **Free Intensive Digital Marketing Workshop**

Hosted by The Junction, this free course will cover the fundamentals of Digital Marketing and provide an action plan for developing your own Digital Marketing Strategy to help drive your business forward in the digital world. The workshop, which will be held over two evenings, covers Content Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, Website Optimization & how to develop a Digital Marketing Strategy from scratch. The course will be delivered by Jesse Morris, the Director of Global Communications & Marketing for ACETECH Vehicle Intelligence. If you are aware of individuals or businesses that may be interested in this course, please invite

them to contact [mary@thejunctionoffaly.ie](mailto:mary@thejunctionoffaly.ie) to secure their place.

### **Growing Lean – Building a Better Business Seminar**

Learn more about the Lean approach - doing things Quicker, Smarter, Cheaper, & Better. Get started at our FREE online info session on "Growing Lean - Building a Better Business" this Nov 25th from 1-2pm. The event will set out the many Lean supports available to businesses, give you an introduction to Lean Thinking, and how it is applied. Find talks from local businesspeople and insight into the real and tangible change LEAN principles can bring. Book a seat at <https://lnkd.in/eeSCqdrZ>

### **Q4 Offaly Property Database**

Our property database has been updated and can be viewed at <https://www.offaly.ie/eng/Services/Enterprise-Business-Supports/Local-Authority-Supports-for-Business/Offaly-Property-Database/>. Do you own a commercial or industrial premises that is currently vacant? Do you have industrial sites? Interested in selling or leasing? and if you'd like to be included in our FREE online property database, contact us at [info@leo.offalycoco.ie](mailto:info@leo.offalycoco.ie)

### **The Level Project**

Learn how enhancing the gender balance of senior management teams can help build strong leadership, attract talent and improve performance. Register now for [Enterprise Ireland's](https://lnkd.in/eK3qjakp) Nov 23rd launch of 'The Level Project' - a new gender balance initiative at <https://lnkd.in/eK3qjakp>. In this webinar, Irish business leaders will talk about why gender balance at leadership level is important to them and how they are working to improve the gender mix in their senior teams. Learn more about Enterprise Ireland's new Action Planning toolkit to



help businesses assess their own position and to put measures in place to help improve the gender mix in their companies.

### 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. First time applicants will be required to register on the Enterprise Ireland Online Application System. See <https://secure.enterprise-ireland.com/Xtranet/CredentialManagement/cmLogin.aspx> to register.

### New Offaly Shopping Voucher Scheme Unveiled

Great [#Shoplocal](#) news!! [Tullamore & District Chamber of Commerce](#) and [#Tullamore Credit Union](#) have announced that QUIDs Shopping Vouchers are once again available to purchase for gifts and rewards. Just in time for Christmas! This [#lookforlocal](#)-friendly QUIDs scheme allows employers to reward their staff with up to €500 in shopping vouchers tax-free. More info here at Offaly News - <https://lnkd.in/emfURrBR>

### In-Focus

**Unwind: The snack bar that encourages you to have a good night's sleep**



*Pictured above is Deirdre Hynds, the Founder of Unwind.*

In February this year, self-confessed insomniac [DeirdreHynds](#) launched [Unwind](#), a range of snack bars for evening time made with ingredients such as chamomile, l-theanine and Montmorency cherry to promote feelings of calm and boost the production of the sleep hormone, melatonin.

Having experienced chronic sleep problems from the age of 17, Hynds says she has spent two decades “obsessing over different ways to get a better night’s sleep”. About five years ago, she added diet to the other solutions she was using (such as yoga, meditation and CBT) to manage her condition. The all-natural Irish-made products are free from artificial sweeteners and positioned as an after-dinner nibble for those who like to eat something before bed time but don’t want an energy surge from a big sugar hit.

There are three flavours in the launch lineup: malted milk, roasted nut and orange with dark chocolate. Apart from launching the physical product, Hynds has also tapped into the current zeitgeist for a direct connection between products and lifestyle and has developed a series of “relax hacks” which consumers can access free through the company’s website or social media

channels. “This is original content and includes sleepy stretchy yoga sequences, bedtime stories for grown-ups and guided evening meditations all designed to help our customers unwind even more,” she says.



*Pictured above, are the three flavours of Unwind.*

The big push now is to get Unwind onto the shelves and to build the brand’s profile with a view to looking for investment to ramp up sales and start moving into international markets.

**Source:** The Irish Times

***Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive***

**Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 31st October 2021**

	Full Yr Budget 2021 €m	Preliminary Value to October 2021 €m	% Year To Date
OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL			
Payroll costs	28.03	22.02	78.5%
Grants and Subsidies Income	38.24	27.86	72.8%

**OCC to 31st October 2021**

	<u>Rates</u> €m	<u>Rents</u> €m	<u>Loans</u> €m
Opening Balance Jan 1, 2021	3.60	0.57	0.19
Net Invoices & Adjustments	12.43	5.40	0.40
2021 Cash Collected to end of October	12.85	5.40	0.46
Closing Balance October 31st, 2021	3.19	0.57	0.13

**2020 Cash collected to October**

	7.70	5.32	0.46
Rate Collections impacted in 2020 by waiver uncertainty and effect of lockdowns			
% Collection at this point in 2020	167%	102%	101%

**Bank Overdraft to 31st October 2021**

Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date	42	14%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to October 31st 2021 YTD		€16,567
Bank Administration and transactional charges to October 31st 2021 YTD		€28,332