

**SEPTEMBER
2020**



Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly County Council

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Do: Baill Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí

To: Each Member of Offaly County Council

Tuairisc mhíosúil bainistíochta a bhreithniú i gcomhair tionóil mí Deireadh Fómhair

Monthly Management Report for consideration at the October 2020 Monthly Meeting.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS:

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

FINANCE:

Finance Report– Appendix 1

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

AGE FRIENDLY STRATEGY

A regional Age Friendly action is now underway, this is a tri county piece of work with Midlands 103 which will include Westmeath & Laois. This action will come to fruition on November 1st 2020 with a one-hour radio slot on Sunday mornings.

CUSTOMS WORKSHOPS - PREPARING FOR BREXIT

Free Online workshop will take place remotely on Friday 13th November covering customs procedures.

LEO FEASIBILITY GRANT CALL

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

HULLABALOO!

The virtual festival will take place from Wednesday 28th – Saturday 31st October 2020.

REPORT AT A GLANCE



Level 3 of the Plan for Living with COVID-19

In line with the Government's decision for the country to move to Level 3 of the Plan for Living with COVID-19 for three weeks, Offaly Libraries reverted to Contact and Collect services only from Wednesday, 7th October. This means our library branches will not be open for browsing and computer visits. We should have a straight forward switchover in Offaly Libraries to Contact & Collect Services as we have continued the offer since June and it is well utilised and trusted by our public. Returns Boxes are also available at our libraries for safe, contactless book returns.

GREENWAYS

During September, the Council completed a further 6km of the Grand Canal Greenway from Digby Bridge to Ballycommon and already the section is heavily used, with welcome additional footfall to Ballycommon.

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PLANNING

	To end Sept 2020	To end Sept 2019	Total 2019
Planning Applications	467	481	628
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	2	11	12
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	6(2)	8(1)	14 (6)

Planning Administration

The review of Offaly County Council Development Contribution Scheme 2021 – 2025 has commenced and will be published this month in accordance with Planning Circular PL1/2013 and the Guidelines attached thereto. This new draft scheme will be open to submissions over a period of 6 weeks in accordance with legislative requirements.

Historic Structures Fund 2020

Emmell Castle will be receiving allocation of €44,445 & Cangort Park House will be receiving an allocation of €15,000 (bringing their allocation to €50,000) Works at Emmell Castle:

REGENERATION

Rural Regeneration Development Fund: (RRDF)

Rural Regeneration Category 1 (Shovel ready)
The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for RRDF Cat 1 2020 funding in June 2020. Applications will be developed and prepared for submission by the Regeneration Team in conjunction with

other relevant sections for closing date of 1st December, 2020.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for TVR 2020 funding on 27th May, 2020. In August, Minister Heather Humphreys, T.D announced additional funding of €10 million for the Town and Village Renewal Scheme as part of the Government's July Stimulus Package which increased the amount of projects a Local Authority could apply for.

To date the Regeneration Team in conjunction with Municipals Districts and other sections have submitted 18 projects in Rounds 1-3 of the TVR accelerated measures in response to Covid 19.

DRCD announced successful Offaly project, from Round 1-

Shop front scheme for all Towns and Villages with a population of <10,000 - €40,000

Covid Capacity Scheme for businesses to increase outdoor seating facilities - €25,000
Shannonbridge – public realm improvement and seating area at the Lock House - €25,000

Round 2-

Broadband connection points in Ballycommon, Shannon Harbour, Kilconfert, Croghan, Clareen and Coolderry.

- Edenderry, O'Connell Square outdoor covered gathering space
- Birr geodome tents x4 festival equipment
- Killeigh Green public
- Clareen public realm
- Lusmagh public realm

Round 3 announcements are due shortly.

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TVR scheme 2020

Offaly County Council have submitted 10 applications to the standard Town and Village Renewal Scheme on the 30th September, 2020.

Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme: (ORIS)

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for ORIS 2020 funding on 29th May 2020. Applications will be developed and prepared for Measure 2 and 3 by Regeneration Team in conjunction with other relevant sections for 30th November, 2020.

GREENWAYS

During September, the Council completed a further 6km of the Grand Canal Greenway from Digby Bridge to Ballycommon and already the section is heavily used, with welcome additional footfall to Ballycommon. It is planned to start on the Ballycommon to Daingean section very shortly. This work is being funded by the National Greenway Strategy Fund, DTTAS.

HERITAGE

Creative Ireland

Additional Funding has been received from **Creative Ireland** (€70,000 in addition to original allocation of €97,000). This is being used for the following key areas.

- Creative Practitioners' Supports to adapt to C19 conditions
- Supporting St Brendan's Secondary School to replace 440m Killaun Bog Boardwalk (supported by heritage office)

- Offaly Archives Service (Offaly History with library service and heritage office)
- Conservation of Acres' Folly (led by Rachel McKenna, senior executive architect)
- Tullamore Engagement - Museum of Everyone (led by Arts Office)
- Creative Edenderry (led by Arts Office)

Funding of €20,000 was received from the **Community Peatlands Engagement Scheme** for the Killaun Bog Boardwalk which is managed by St Brendan's Community School in Birr supported by the heritage office.

Additional funding of €53,437 has been offered from the **Community Monuments Fund** for the following 3 project

- Conservation report for Blundell Castle (owned by Offaly County Council)
- Conservation report for St Brendan's Church Birr (medieval ruin and owned by Offaly County Council)
- Conservation works at Drumcullen church to complete the lime mortar work done in 2018.

Medieval Churches

- Roscomroe Church conservation has been completed.
- Kilbride, Ballycowan - a conservation report for works to be undertaken has been commissioned.
- A maintenance programme continues at Drumcullen, Lynally and Croghan to keep vegetation under control where churches have

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been conserved. The communities of Lemanaghan and Kilbride Clara must be acknowledged for the maintenance of their medieval church sites which have been conserved.

Publications

Progress has been made with 4 more publications

- **Derrinlough Briquette Factory**, a photographic book by James Fraher was launched on line and distributed in the local shops.
- **Forgotten Souls** by James Scully details the memorials of St Ryanagh's medieval church in Banagher and is currently being printed.
- Stephen Callaghan on the burials at **Birr Barracks Military Cemetery** in Crinkill will be printed this autumn.
- Offaly History is developing the **Rathrobbin Magan** photos for publication in the near future.

Heritage Week took place in August in very challenging conditions in Offaly – however a considerable number of heritage groups rose to the occasion and hosted events online and did recordings of their projects marking the week.

The **Himalayan Balsam** control project on the Little Brosna and Camcor river has been delivered. (Heritage Council funded and National Biodiversity Plan Fund, additional funding of €6,000 was received post July Stimulus Package)

John Feehan has continued the **youtubes on the Wildflowers of Offaly**, hosted on the Offaly Heritage youtube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/user/offalyheritage> This season will culminate in 50 youtube videos and with views currently over 22,000.

ROADS

Roads Programme 2020 is progressing throughout the County. All works are proceeding with Covid safety measures in place. The following road works are currently ongoing or due to commence in the County:

- N80 Tullamore to Killeigh road surface improvement scheme to commence in October;
- Works on the Collins Lane junction, Arden Way and Arden View Junction to commenced in September;
- Offaly Grand Canal Greenway Ballycommon Bridge to Daingean and Wood-of-O Bridge to County Boundary are due to commence in October;
- Edenderry Granary Court to Fairgreen Link Road to commence in October.

The N62 Boveen to Dromakeenan 2.5km pavement scheme is complete. The scheme completes the improvement of the N62 south of Birr over the last few years and results in a high quality road resurfaced for the next 15 years.

You Tube and Wildflowers of Offaly

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ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES

Water

Works on the upgrade of the Tullamore, Birr and Clonaslee Water Treatment plants are on-going.

IW are currently preparing the design for replacement reservoir at Clonbullogue and considering a replacement reservoir at Walsh Island.

Leak repair: Find and fix works are ongoing in Edenderry, Daingean and Clara.

Approval has been given for Watermain upgrades at Clonin and Newtown. Works are ongoing at Clonin with Newtown to follow on.

Work is ongoing with Daingean Storm Tank, Rahan Wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is progressing well- and in Bracknagh WWTP we are-awaiting a Blower from Italy.

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

Environment

Environmental Complaints

To the start of October, Environment Section received 807 complaints since the 1st January 2020.

These complaints can be broken down into the following categories:

Air Pollution (Dust/odour/emissions)	26
Litter pollution (fly tipping/casual litter/litter on property)	386

Waste (dumping/burning/unauthorised sites)	145
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Noise - (community/commercial/industrial)	24
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Control of Horses	42
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Control of dogs	159
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Water Quality	25
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All 807 complaints have been investigated, with 527 closed and 280 cases are ongoing enforcement actions.

Environment Section assisted in 196 community clean-ups across the county, providing bags, pickers, gloves and removing materials collected. It should be noted that the 196 community clean-ups are not included in the complaint figures.

Illegal Dumping

An application was made to the DCCAE for funding under the Anti-Dumping Initiative to clean up some very littered areas and to provide funding for CCTV at bottle banks, Offaly County Council received €64,534. Along with prior successful clean-ups completed to date, another very successful clean up occurred at Church Hill estate towards the end of August. Efforts are ongoing in order to provide waste collection initiatives to residents/encampments who may be dumping illegally.

Water Quality

Water Framework Directive sampling programme has recommenced again having been suspended during the local lock-down for Kildare, Laois and Offaly. Detailed submission has been returned to the EPA regarding the 3rd Cycle Characterisation of local rivers under the EPA's River Basin Management Plan, covering both the Midlands & East region and the South East

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region. A workshop took place for staff on the 8th October 2020.

Tullamore Low Smoke Zone:

In late July the DCCAE finalised the SI and Regulations wording to cover the 13 additional towns to be covered by a Low Smoke Zone. Tullamore town and its surrounds now come under the new Regulations and came into effect from 1st September 2020. The DCCAE issued a press release together with digital and PDF maps showing the full extent of the Tullamore Low Smoke Zone which are all on the Council's website.

Tullamore Living River Project

The Tullamore Living River Project is ongoing. A Request for Tenders was issued in September with tenders received on Friday last, 2nd of October. These tenders are currently being reviewed. LEADER funding is being sought for this project, which will commence in Spring 2021 if funding is received.

Rural Water Programme:

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

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

Water quality sampling of Group Water Schemes has continued during the year with the Groups Schemes helpfully providing sampling kiosks and access to outside taps

to assist with sampling during Covid-19 related restrictions.

HOUSING

Covid 19 – Housing

Following the introduction of Covid 19 Level 3 restrictions the Housing Section has continued to provide critical essential services as outlined in the Government Roadmap. Housing services continue to be managed effectively on a remote basis with appointments being scheduled as required.

To assist us in streamlining service delivery we would encourage the use of the following email addresses:

Service Email Addresses

HAP Enquiries

hap@offalycoco.ie

Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans

homeloans@offalycoco.ie

Housing Inspections – HAP, Leased, Private, etc.

standards@offalycoco.ie

General Enquiries, Maintenance Issues, etc.

housing@offalycoco.ie

RAS & Leasing Enquiries

RAS@offalycoco.ie

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

HousingAidGrants@offalycoco.ie

Anti-Social Behaviour

ASB@offalycoco.ie

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September Housing Update

- 18 families received keys to their new homes at Chancery Lane, Tullamore. Housing staff provided Pre-Tenancy Training to each household in advance of their allocation.
- 10 households were nominated to the Peter McVerry Trust who have acquired the apartments in Downshire Place, Edenderry.
- The Housing Need Assessment 2020 is currently being completed. All relevant applicants were requested to return their documentation by 18th September. A second / final reminder letter issued requesting details from those who had not returned their forms requesting that they submit documents by 7th October. Staff are currently reviewing all files and where documentation has not been returned the application for Social Housing will be closed. Accordingly, it is very important that all forms are submitted.
- There are 675 on the Housing Waiting List awaiting housing support at the end of September 2020.
- A further 857 active tenancies currently being supported under the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Scheme, 13 signed up for HAP and 9 exited from HAP in September 2020.
- At the end of September 2020 there were 19 single people and 5 families in emergency accommodation.
- 15 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans applications were received in 2020

to date and 3 RIHL have been approved.

Housing Stock – Number, Maintenance & Repair: -

- Total housing stock at end of September, 2020 is 1,920.
- 2,457 maintenance call logged in 2020 to 30th September with 342 received in September.

Housing Capital Programme Update

- Raheen, Clara development (38 units) – received Stage 2 approval on 21st August 2020, progressing to planning
- Moneygall (4 units) – received Stage 2 Approval July 2020 and consideration of the Part 8 is listed on the October Council meeting agenda
- Beechgrove Belmont (7 units) – received Stage 2 Approval July 2020 and currently at Part 8 public consultation stage
- Sr. Senan, Edenderry (4 Units) – received Stage 2 Approval August 2020, and currently at Part 8 public consultation stage
- Banagher, Kylebeg 18 Units, a second stage 3 submission was made in April 2020. Stage 3 was approved by the DHPLG in May 2020 and the Tender documentation is being prepared and will issue in October.

Approved Housing Bodies Schemes

- Mid Offaly Housing Association: Mountbolus, (4 Units) – completion due in October
- Oaklee: Clonminch, Tullamore – (19 units), Tender Report almost

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complete by AHB, Stage 4 submission due in October

- Cluid Housing Association social housing scheme on the Rahan Rd (Jacksons Hill) (26 units) to start in October 2020
- Sofia Housing: Stage 1 approved for 32 units at Presentation Lands, Portarlinton. Stage 2 submission from AHB will issue in October with 7 additional units.

Turnkey Developments

- Main Street Daingean (8 Units): Approved 13th August to start in October 2020
- MacGregor, Birr: 12 Units – 6 units complete and remaining 6 will be delivered in 2020.

Housing Grants

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government notified the Council that the funding for 2020 Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability Scheme is €1,333,231 of which €266,646 will be provided from Offaly County Council's own resources. A number of grants have been approved to date, in accordance with the scheme, and 25 have been completed and paid to applicants.

Disabled Person's Grants

The Council received notification from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government that funding for DPG's, i.e., works on Council owned properties for 2020 is €174,740.51 (2019's allocation was €205,000). The Council is currently progressing 7 units in line with this scheme.

Retrofit Programme

The Council received notification on 8th September that €3.3m was being awarded to Offaly for the 'Just Transition for the Midlands Region' Restart programme. Following a procurement process. Surveyor has been appointed and will commence in the coming weeks the surveying of the initial 40 units that have been identified for the retrofit programme. Letters have issued to the tenants whose properties are being considered for inclusion in the Retrofit Programme.

LOCAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Offaly Covid-19 Community Response Helpline

The Helpline remains in operation with weekend calls redirected to staff in the Community & Culture section on a rota basis. Call levels are very low at the moment, however the service remains prepared and ready to respond in light of recent developments nationwide.

BREAKDOWN OF HELPLINE CALLS BY MONTH							
Month	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Totals
No.	312	93	19	8	8	7	447
%	70	21	4	2	2	1	100

Offaly Community Response Forum

There have been 13 meetings of the Offaly Community Response Forum to date. The members of the Forum are Offaly County Council, HSE, GAA, OLDC, An Garda Síochána, ALONE, SVP, An POST, Offaly PPN, Local Link, Citizens Information Service, Túsla, IFA, Offaly Traveller Movement, Kildare Volunteer Centre (covering Offaly), Civil Defence, Offaly

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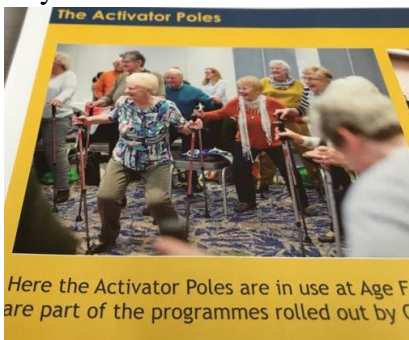
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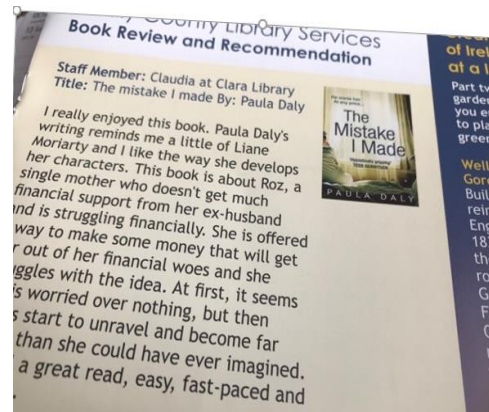
Library Service, Family Resource Centres, and Offaly Community Services. Regular meetings will continue to be held to ensure an efficient and coordinated response by the relevant agencies and support services.

Age Friendly Strategy

A regional Age Friendly action is now underway; this is a tri county piece of work with Midlands 103 which will include Westmeath & Laois. They are delighted to come on board with this Offaly Age Friendly initiative.



A production team comprising of Age friendly staff and OPC members from the three counties will ensure the content is uplifting and engaging for the listenership. This action will come to fruition on November 1st 2020 with a one-hour radio slot on Sunday mornings. The Faithful Fields Newsletter continues to be published receiving a positive response across the county. Contributions to the Newsletter below from the Offaly Sports Partnership and the Library Services



Public Participation Network

Weekly newsletters are distributed online with a range of information on both local national and international news, funding opportunities and new initiatives coming on stream.



The PPN participated in the Make Way Day National event on the 25th of September. The meeting was facilitated by ODEN Offaly Disability Equality Network took place in the Council Chamber with a number of people participating via Zoom. Cathaoirleach John Carroll made the opening address. This highlighted the positive actions that have occurred across the county in particular O Connor Square in terms of accessibility. A number of matters were highlighted on the day in terms of where further improvements could occur.

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Education for everyone in terms of Disability awareness was the key theme running through the whole event.



Music Generation Offaly Westmeath Singfest 2020/21: Singfest has gone virtual

We're working with 35 singers twice a month on a Saturday in 90 minute sessions. Some of our group are new to Singfest but many are returning young people who have been part of our choirs since they began. We plan to meet like this up to Christmas and we will review things in the New Year. It is great to be back doing what we love and working with our Singfesters again.



Online Courses, Sinfonia, Percussion and Guitar Ensembles

Preparations are well under way for a range of new online courses. Sinfonia, our orchestral ensemble developed in partnership with Maynooth University Music Department is due to start back in October and there are plans to introduce a range of smaller online ensembles through

which we can keep our young people and musicians connected.

Schools/ Community Group Participation

We are back in some of our partner schools, with more schools expected back after mid-term. It is great to be back teaching. We have reimagined our programme this year removing our strong focus on singing to involve a wider range of musical activities. All of our musicians have been supported in adapting their practise to ensure adhesion to Department guidelines. We will review our programme and procedures in the new year. At this stage we have 13 of our music educator team back teaching.

Music Jam one of our Youth Work projects has recommenced in Mullingar and we are in the process of trying to get Edenderry Rockers back in Edenderry.

FilmOffaly Programme

We are working with several other independent films on locations in Offaly. Screen Ireland has released specific H&S guidelines for the film industry and although challenging the production companies are able to schedule filming. We are currently organising a series of film industry events at OFFline Film Festival together with a needs analysis for the industry.

FilmOffaly Mentoring Programme

FilmOffaly mentor Helen Flanagan has been engaged and is working with 4 writers selected for the programme. Film Professional Alan Fitzpatrick has been delivering a series of online workshops in September for film professionals in Offaly. This programme is in collaboration with LOETB, LEO and Screen Skills Ireland.

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Culture Night

Culture Night took place on 18th September and was a resounding success. The Arts Office commissioned the production of a short film with the Film Company One Productions to showcase our artists, venues and locations. The programme for Culture Night is a mix of Online and Offline activities. The Arts Office are currently reviewing the audience figures.

Hullabaloo

The Arts Office are progressing with scheduling of workshops and events for Hullabaloo! for October. Due to the current restrictions the programme has had to go fully online which has taken additional time and resources to undertake. However, there will be a very full programme on online events for the week of the festival.

Lough Boora

The Arts Office have been invited to take part in an online discussion on Creativity and Climate Change – showcasing the Deep Mapping project as a model of Arts commissioning under this theme. This forms part of the Creative Ireland programme.

Creative Edenderry

An application from the IPB / Galway 2020 was made in conjunction with the group with a planned series of events to take place in March 2021 was successful. The artist Michael Fortune has been engaged to work with the group towards the delivery of an activity in March.

Capital Projects

Arts Infrastructure Strategy

The Arts Office of Offaly County Council has, within its remit, the role of supporting

and developing a number of Arts Infrastructure organisations within the County. It is now timely to develop a Strategic Plan for Arts infrastructure within the County, in order to ensure that all the Arts Infrastructure develop in a collaborative and harmonic manner, resulting in a cohesive, complimentary and self-sustaining network, beneficial to the whole county. With this in mind and in agreement with the Arts Council, the Arts Office developed a tender for the research and development of this strategy. This tender process is in progress.

SPORTS

Funding

Dept. of Justice & Equality –

- €5,000 secured under the Dept. of Justice & Equality's community integration fund for the delivery of an early school years' sports integration project targeting junior infants to second class
- national integration fund application submitted (Offaly Sports Partnership worked with Athletics Ireland to draft a funding application to further develop the concept of integrated athletics activities for children and young people from an ethnic minority background)

Sport Ireland

- €114,000 secured in dormant accounts funding for Offaly. Five programme supported – south Offaly Sports hub (€20,000), Daingean sports hub (€61,000), youth leadership (€8,000), community volunteer supports

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(€15,000) and sports inclusion development programme capital supports (€10,000)

- Mid-year returns submitted
- Covid19 small grant scheme application overview submitted - 51 applications submitted / 48 recommended for funding totalling €53,389.56 / OSP to apply for an additional €10k restart and renewal grant
- Core & Dormant Accounts funding applications for 2021 due 16th October and 2nd November respectively

underway in Edenderry and Tullamore. Contact Denise (dcoghil@offalycoco.ie or 086 7912513), Community Sports Development Officer to book a place.



Programmes

Sports Inclusion Development Programme - one to one physical activity programmes for people with disabilities continue to be delivered. Contact Denise (dcoghil@offalycoco.ie or 086 7912513), Community Sports Development Officer to book a consultation. Over 50 people with disabilities are being supported by three tutors engaged to deliver the programme



Community Sports Development Officer programme – outdoor physical activity sessions for women and older adults



Six week, twice weekly outdoor physical activity challenge for women commenced with Pauline Curley on the 06/10/20



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Primary school physical activity programmes due to commence in up to 40 schools after mid term.

Four youth / sports leadership training programmes completed in St Brendan's Community School, Birr for 100 transition year students. 11 students supporting Birr juvenile athletics as volunteer coaches as a result of completing this training.

Three additional youth / sports leadership



programmes under delivery in Oaklands Community College in October for 75 transition year students; while four further programmes are due to commence in Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa, Clara (two programmes) and Tullamore College (two programmes) after midterm for 100 students

Staff of Offaly Sports Partnership continue to support the community helpline as required.

staycation. The campaign was first launched on 25th August, planned to run for 16 weeks in press, radio, online audio and social media. The content in these adverts changed on a weekly basis focusing on different sites and attractions each week. Offaly have been featured in adverts for both of the regional brands; IAE & IHH.

An additional €1m promotional budget was made available to the counties of Offaly, Laois & Kildare who experienced local lockdowns in August. The counties of Offaly, Laois & Kildare are to get an equal share of this €1m. This campaign focuses on increasing the appeal of Offaly to visitors and drive bookings as the shoulder season commences. These Offaly specific ads are in addition to the adverts already planned under the original 'Make a break for it' campaign, for which Offaly continued to feature in and reached 97% of Irish Adults.

TOURISM



Fáilte Ireland's 'Make a break for it' campaign continued throughout September. The campaign encourages the domestic audience to visit their own country and experience the joy of the

Offaly featured heavily in the 'Autumn Breakaways' supplement in the Iconic Group's publications in September. The supplement was available in over twenty titles, distributed in counties such as Donegal, Louth & Waterford. Offaly Tourism purchased in a full page advert, full page editorial and appeared in numerous articles throughout the publication.

Offaly Tourism Marketing held a virtual meeting on 15th September. The meeting was well attended by members of the trade and Lorraine Sheehan from Ireland's Ancient East team gave a comprehensive presentation on Fáilte Ireland's supports and plans going forward.

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LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

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

First Time Exporters Initiative

The First Time Exporters Initiative has been carefully designed to help high potential micro enterprise companies or LEO clients of Longford, Laois, Westmeath & Offaly expand into international markets for the first time and will run over the next 6 months. The programme is designed to equip business owners/managers with in-depth knowledge, know-how and confidence to take the first steps to export success.

As the current business climate is extremely challenging and winning new business is more important than ever. The programme will be delivered by experienced sales professionals and will include practical topics such as “lead generation”, “best practice in virtual selling” and “negotiating export contracts”.

Customs Workshops - Preparing for Brexit

Free Online workshop will take place remotely on Friday 13th November covering customs procedures.

COVID 19 Supports

Additional Supports in Offaly, Laois and Kildare

Additional financial supports were allocated to businesses impacted in Offaly, Laois and Kildare under local lockdown were unveiled by the Government in

August. Businesses owners in the three counties were allocated a 20pc top up to the Restart Grant for firms reopening once Covid-19 restrictions are eased. The grants increased from €4,000 and €25,000 to €4,800 and €30,000. The Local Enterprise Offices in Offaly, Laois and Kildare received an additional €1m to support businesses through and following the restrictions and an additional €18,000 to the three LEOs to promote business sectors and locations.

Remote Mentoring Sessions

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

Trading Online Voucher (eCommerce) Grants Available

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

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seminars are available online. The application process for the vouchers will be a competitive process.

LEO Feasibility Grant Call

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

LEO Financial Supports

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

GradStart scheme now available for LEO clients

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

The objective of GradStart is to assist indigenous companies to scale and grow their businesses through the introduction of good graduate talent (with a minimum

Level 6-degree qualification) to deliver clearly defined projects.

Microfinance Ireland loans

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

Financial Supports

1 - InterTrade Ireland Start To Plan Voucher Scheme

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

(1) Applications must be from an SME with 250 employees or less and Turnover less than €50M and your business must have a satisfactory trading record. Your business must submit a valid tax clearance with your application.

(2) The assistance requested must relate to a Brexit issue.

2 - SBCI Brexit Loan Scheme

The Brexit Loan Scheme can provide affordable financing to businesses that are impacted by Brexit. The Scheme is delivered by the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) through commercial lenders and will make €300

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million available to eligible businesses with up to 499 employees at an interest rate of 4% or less. If your business exports/imports products, services or raw materials to/from the UK (including Northern Ireland) and equates to at least 15% of business turnover and are in good financial health are eligible to apply. The loans are available through AIB, Bank of Ireland and Ulster Bank. Loans will range from €25,000 to €1.5 million per eligible business, with unsecured loans up to €500,000 and terms ranging from 1-3 years. How to apply -

(1) Your business must first complete the Eligibility Application Form to check if they are eligible to apply to the bank(s) for a loan under the Scheme. This should take a twenty minutes to complete.

(2) If your business is eligible you will receive a letter of confirmation from the SBCI which you then present to your bank, as part of the credit application process.

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

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

LIBRARY SERVICES

Positive Ageing Week 2020



Offaly Libraries thank Cathaoirleach of Offaly County Council, Cllr. John Carroll, for kindly launching this year's Positive Ageing Week which took place from 28th September and extended into the following week due to its success. This year Offaly Libraries organised a "virtual" Positive Ageing Week due to COVID 19 restrictions. You will have seen from our social media that we have been presenting our borrowers with a **Positive Ageing Week gift bag** as a thank you from Offaly Libraries and our Age Friendly Alliance partners.



We curated a week of online readings, poetry and music kindly contributed by

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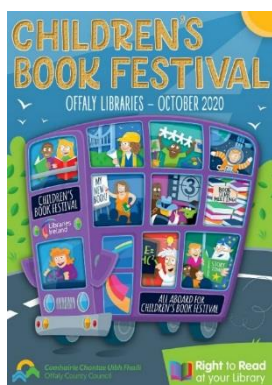
staff and local community partners for people to enjoy from the comfort of their own homes. **The programme consisted of 7 videos, which reached over 24,000 people with 3,080 engagements and 6,920 views.** Clara Library staff led out on Offaly Libraries' countywide 2020 PAW programme, and presented the first Positive Ageing Week Gift Bag to Emily Scanlon of Clara. Offaly Libraries extend thanks to all our community and Age Friendly Alliance partners for their wonderful contributions to the gift bags.

Library Newsletter

A quick reminder that the best way to keep up to date with all library programmes, developments and new services is via our Library Newsletter and of course through following our social media channels. The link to subscribe to our newsletter is here; [Offaly Libraries Newsletter](#)

Children's Book Festival at Offaly Libraries October 2020

Offaly Libraries is delighted to bring you a fun-filled Children's Book Festival Programme for 2020. The Children's Book Festival 2020 runs nationally for the month of October and is a great opportunity for young people, parents, teachers, and libraries to celebrate books and reading! We are marking this very special time of year with an array of events and activities. We have secured many "big name" Irish authors this year including Sarah Webb, Judy Curtin and Oisín McGann to deliver



virtual engagement pieces for our younger library members and school communities. Events have gone online but there are still plenty of reasons to visit via Contact & Collect as **Crafty Take-Aways** will be available for children! Full details are in our brochure which is available [here](#).

Capital Grant Success

Offaly Libraries have been successful in securing a funding grant of €100,000 from the Department of Rural and Community Development, as part of the Small Scale Capital Works Programme in public libraries.

There was a tight deadline for the grant application and we are very happy that we can proceed with our plans to deliver a progressive library service and safe facilities that are fit for purpose in Covid times. Planned works range from the installation of some study spaces, occupancy controls, perspex screens, to building reconfigurations and refurbishments; all of which will make a real difference to our libraries and help us comply with new public health guidelines. These works will strengthen the library's position as a community hub and ensure that it is a modern, well-equipped and comfortable facility that will leave a positive legacy for years to come.

Dormant Accounts Funding Success

Offaly Library Service has successfully securing a funding grant of €17,412 from the Dormant

Account Fund, for Library Supports for Marginalised, Socially Excluded and


ciste na
gcuntas díomhaoin
the dormant
accounts fund

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Disadvantaged Communities. This will allow the library service to carry out a number of socially inclusive programmes including *Songwriting for your Community*, (a community intergenerational music project for communities prioritised by OCC Housing Section) and a *Brick Flicks Stop-Go Animation* programme for primary school ASD students. The grant will also provide for Digital Literacy Supports in the form of 1,000 Touch-Type-Read-Spell



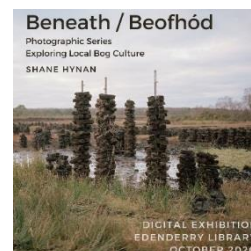
Licences which will be made available via the library service. This software is specifically designed for those with learning differences such as Dyslexia and Dyspraxia but can be used by all.

Offaly Digital Libraries

We continue to build on our full digital suite of online resources and services which have been widely used over the past few months. There have been **17,795 eAudiobooks and eBooks borrowed in Offaly in 2020 already!** Users have access to eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, eNewspapers, educational courses, language learning, free music and film streaming. You'll find these services in the Digital Library section of our website.

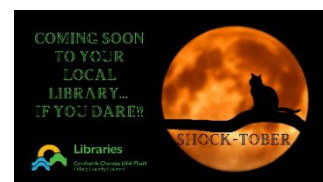
Roald Dahl Story Day 2020

To celebrate Roald Dahl Story Day on 13th September, Offaly Libraries ran two very exciting competitions. Lucky children found eight golden tickets which were hidden in books in each of our libraries, the finders all won a prize. We also held a creative competition in which we invited children to create their own vile villain in our 'Craftiest Character' competition! Details and photos of our winners are all on our social media pages and on our website.



SHOCK-TOBER

For the month of October Offaly libraries have decided to embrace the dark side... If



you love the thrill of being terrified, see how far along our scary scale you dare to go!!! Keep an eye on our social media channels for spooky updates!

Exhibitions in Tullamore and Edenderry libraries

Tullamore Library is home to two exhibitions this month! Offaly artist Geraldine McNamee's paintings can be seen in digital form on-screen in the front window of the library, and look particularly well as it gets dark. The second exhibition, entitled 'Tu cýtam', meaning 'I Read Here', comprises posters by Polish children's illustrators and graphic designers, and is provided by Bardzo



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Ladnie NGO, a Polish organisation promoting Polish culture and fostering Irish-Polish cultural exchange in Ireland. Edenderry Library is delighted to host Shane Hynan's 'Beneath / Beofhód' digital photography exhibition on the Smart TV located in a prime position in the front window of the library during October 2020.

CORPORATE SERVICES

On Friday 18th September Cllr. John Carroll and Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive welcomed Mr. Sandeep Kumar, Ambassador of India to Ireland to Offaly at the Áras an Chontae.



Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive

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Appendix 1

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Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 30th September 2020

	Full Yr Budget 2020 €m	Preliminary Value to September 2020 €m	% Year To Date
OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL			
Payroll costs	27.07	20.32	75.1%
Grants and Subsidies Income	34.94	28.27	80.9%

OCC to 30th September 2020

	<u>Rates</u> €m	<u>Rents</u> €m	<u>Loans</u> €m
Opening Balance Jan 1, 2020	2.29	0.73	0.32
Invoices/Adjustments	14.59	4.63	0.35
2020 Cash Collected to end of September	7.56	4.75	0.41
Closing Balance September 30th, 2020	9.32	0.61	0.26
<u>2019 Cash collected to September</u>	13.02	4.65	0.39
% Collection at this point in 2019	58%	102%	107%

Bank Overdraft to 30th September 2020

Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date	28	10%
Overdraft/Negative Interest and non-conforming charges to September 30th 2020 YTD		€24,253
Bank Administration and transactional charges to September 30th 2020 YTD		€24,747

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