

**SEPTEMBER  
2022**



**Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí**  
Offaly County Council

## **MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT**

#Do: Baill Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí

To: Each Member of Offaly County Council

Tuairisc mhíosúil bainistíochta a bhreithniú i gcomhair tionóil mí Deireadh Fómhair

Monthly Management Report for consideration at the October 2022 Monthly Meeting.

### **EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS:**

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

### **FINANCE:**

Finance Report– Appendix 1

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### ***BIRR LOCAL AREA PLAN***

The draft Birr LAP went on public display on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022 until 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022, during which submissions are invited.

### ***ROADS WINTER SERVICE PLAN***

Offaly County Councils Winter Service Plan has commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2022 and will run until the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2023.

## **REPORT AT A GLANCE**

### ***Grand Canal Greenway***

Works are continuing on the Henseys Bridge to Pullough section of the Grand Canal Greenway currently. Works are scheduled for completion in November.

### ***Climate Action & Energy***

Our staff awareness Climate Action day was held on the 15th September where 17 different participants exhibiting or presenting on climate actions / energy / biodiversity themes throughout the day.

### ***Tullamore 400***

The year 2022 is the 400th anniversary of the grant of the lands of Tullamore to the Elizabethan soldier-settler family of Moore with the usual rights to hold markets and fairs and a manor court.



### ***Public Participation Network***

Make Way Day was held on Sept. 30th 2022 with an event at O'Connor Square, Tullamore in the morning and a walkabout in Geashill in the afternoon.

PLANNING

Development Management

	To end Sept 2022	To end Sept 2021	Total 2021
Planning Applications	517	610	831
Extensions of Duration Applications & Assessments	13	12	13
Warning Letters and (Enforcement Notices) issued	36 (9)	23(1)	30 (2)

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

MONEYGALL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION COMPANY LTD.	COMMUNITY CENTRE, WITH MEETING ROOM, CHANGING ROOM, TOILETS/SHOWER AREAS, KITCHEN, PLANT ROOM.
LORRAINE DOYLE	PITCH & PUTT CLUB, CLUBHOUSE, STORAGE SHED, CONNECTION TO PUBLIC SEWER, RECESSED ENTRANCE, CRINKLE, BIRR.
OAKDALE NURSING HOME LTD	NEW EXTENSION TO BUILD OF 49 BED ROOMS, RECREATIONAL SPACE, STAFF FACILITIES, OTHER ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING BUILDING, SOLAR PANELS TO ROOF, ESB SUBSTATION, PORTARLINGTON.

CANNAKILL FARM LIMITED	836.72M2 OF PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS GROUND MOUNTED SOUTH EAST OF EXISTING BUILDINGS, CROGHAN.
OXIGEN ENVIRONMENTAL UNLIMITED COMPANY	DEMO OF EXISTING AGRI SHEDS, PP EXTEND AND INCREASE SIZE OF THE PLANT TO FULL OPERATIONS OF 90,000 TONNES IN PHASE 2, DAINGEAN.
CLONCANT RENEWABLE ENERGY LIMITED	CONSTRUCTION UNPAVED ROAD TO CUSAHLING WINDFARM, UNDERGROUND CABLE, DEMO AND REPLACE EXISTING BOG BRIDGE, RELOCATE SUBSTATION 25 METERS SOUTHWARDS. BALLYKILLEEN, SHEAN, KILCUMBER AND BALLINLOWLART NORTH.

Forward Planning

A public consultation drop-in session was held at Edenderry Town Hall on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022 in relation to the making of the future draft Edenderry LAP. Seven people expressed their views on the future development of Edenderry.

Residential Zoned Land Tax

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was announced in Central Government's Budget 2022 and was introduced into Part 22A of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 by the Finance Act 2021. The principal purpose of the RZLT is to encourage the timely activation of zoned and serviced

residential development land for housing. The Ministerial Guidelines titled *'Residential Zoned Land Tax – Guidelines for Planning Authorities June 2022'* clarifies the requirements for planning authorities in relation to RZLT. In order to implement this tax measure, local authorities are required to undertake mapping to identify lands in-scope for the tax, with provisions allowing those landowners identified as being within the scope to make submissions and appeal. The draft map of these lands will be placed on public display from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 until 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023. The administration of the tax will be undertaken by the Revenue Commissioners, with the tax in effect by 2024.

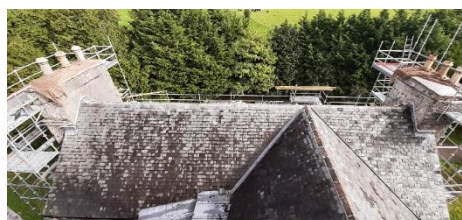
### Architecture

- **BHIS 2022: 27 applicants** received Provisional Approval, total allocation of allocation of **€126,400**. 7 withdrawn, 20 projects complete to complete with all payments through by mid-October. Final forms then to Department.
- **HSF 2022:** Three projects underway and grant allocations carried out, Lowland House (€38k) – window repairs, Tullamore Gaol (€25) - railings and wall repair and Cloneyhurke House (€38k) – arch, steps and render repair.
- **Creative Ireland** –Annual Follies Project €10,000, Bloomfield Mausoleum complete, site visits reports etc. Vernacular Architecture fund projects - €5,000
- **Follies Trust** –Repairs of Bloomfield Mausoleum **€3,500**, complete
- **Heritage Council Stewardship Funding: €15,000** approved for OCC, 4 new Offaly projects. Funding includes edits and printing costs for new

publication - Traditional Architecture in Offaly by Rachel Mc Kenna, to printer October 2022, c.286 pages. Hawkswood Dowry Chest – repairs complete €1,300. Lime Workshop Birr Heritage School – complete.



- **CMF** – application by AP, Emmel Castle roof repairs underway to be monitored by Architect, **€85,000** funding. Department meeting on site – secured additional €15,000 funding for this project bringing it to the maximum grant of **€100,000**.





## REGENERATION

### Streetscape Enhancement Measure

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2022 Minister Humphreys announced the successful nominated towns under the Streetscape Enhancement Measure 2022. Clara is Offaly's town for this Measure in 2022. As 60 applications were submitted due to the great assistance of Clara Tidy Towns and Regeneration team personnel, the eligible grant of €100,000 was well oversubscribed. 40 properties were selected and are now sent to Department for final approval on 7<sup>th</sup> of October.

### Croí Cónaithe

On 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2022 Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O'Brien TD announced the new Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund. The new fund will provide grants of up to a maximum of €30,000 for the refurbishment of vacant properties for occupation as a principal private residence. Where the refurbishment costs are expected to exceed the standard grant of up to €30,000, a maximum top-up grant amount of up to €20,000 will be available where the property is confirmed by the applicant to be derelict (i.e. structurally unsound and dangerous) bringing the total grant available for a derelict property up to a maximum of €50,000.

The Regeneration Section, Derelict/Vacant properties staff have received 40 queries about the fund since it was officially launched.

Applications received to date

- 13 application forms with supporting documentation.
- 1 successful application has been approved, 2 pending approval.
- 10 other applications were not approved due to being outside the

criteria or due to incomplete application forms.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> September the fund was expanded to allow the provision of funding for applicants to purchase existing serviced sites.

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

- There is a grant of up to €30,000 to refurbish a vacant property, there is also a maximum top up grant of €20,000, (total of €50,000) if the property is derelict and structurally unsound and dangerous, this will have to be confirmed by a quantity surveyor or engineer.
- The building has to have been vacant for at least two years and have been built before 1993, confirmation of vacancy must be confirmed.
- Applicants will have to also submit other documentation such as Tax clearance, proof of ownership or actively negotiating to buy a property, a quotation for the construction works, local property tax and others demands.
- Persons availing of the grant must live in the property when the work is completed and will have to provide proof of residence.
- The grant is for properties located in a town or villages currently and this is being revised currently.

Application forms or queries to [tvr@offalycoco.ie](mailto:tvr@offalycoco.ie) or by downloading an application form.

### Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a call for TVR 2022 funding on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2022. 10 applications were developed and prepared

in a very quick turnaround time by Regen Team in conjunction with other relevant sections, community groups and stakeholders for the closing date 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2022. Applications are now being assessed by the DRCD and announcements pending hopefully in Q4 2022.

### Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF)

#### Successful RRDF projects progress update

##### 2021 Edenderry Phase II

- Demolition and site clearance of 33/34 JKL Street is now complete
- Contracts signed with Sean Harrington Architects as design team for community library

##### 2020 Banagher Regeneration

- A 2<sup>nd</sup> public consultation phase for the Architectural and Tourism Master Plan for Banagher Marina and environs is ongoing with a second public survey live on social media platforms, closing date Sept 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Other project elements to progress in 2022 once Master Plan process is fully complete.

##### 2021 – Ferbane Regeneration

- St Joseph’s Convent purchase complete
- Preparing procurement documentation for design team for Convent redevelopment.

### Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

#### Successful ORIS projects progress update

##### 2019 – Clara footpath linkage to Bog Boardwalk

- Nearing completion

##### 2020 - ‘Route to the Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trails’, ‘Kinnitty Woods Novice-Grade MTB Loop’, and “Rediscovering Castle Bernard’s Historic Bridges”

- Part 8 now in place
- Tender advertised for “route to the trails” from Kinnitty village
- Novice loop to be constructed by Coillte, ready to commence
- Rediscovering Castle Bernard’s Historic Bridges project complete



##### 2021 – Derryounce Lakes and Trails, project development

- Steering group established
- Tender complete
- Stakeholder consultation commenced

##### 2021 – Clashawaun River Walk

- Initial consultation in progress

### ROADS

#### Roads Programme 2022

The annual Roads programme is ongoing with works substantially completed across specific funding programs.

#### Emergency Repairs on our Roads constructed over Peat Subgrades

Due to the extended dry spell during the months of August and September, we have experienced significant failures across our Road Network constructed over Peat subgrades. In recognition of the Health and

Safety risks associated with these failures, we have received approval for the reallocation of our Peat Roads Pilot monies towards these necessary interventions. We have further secured additional monies to assist in these interventions across the County. These emergency-targeted works have been agreed and are ongoing currently in order to mitigate the highest risk locations. The main risk factors affecting the delivery of these works are weather conditions and contractor availability. Both of which we believe we can manage and mitigate if they arise.

### Active Travel Works

Active Travel works are ongoing throughout the County. The majority of the approved schemes for 2022 have commenced and are currently at either design stage, procurement stage or construction stage.

Procurement for Technical Consultancy Services for the Spollenstown Pedestrian Bridge and the Birr Riverside Walk scheme are now approaching award stage.

Tenders have been issued for Badgers Lane in the Edenderry Municipal District, and Brockagh Road Mucklagh in the Tullamore Municipal District in September. Outstanding Tenders for footpath improvement on Spollenstown Road, Tullamore and Ballycumber will be issued in early October.

Offaly County Council have issued a Pathfinder proposal for consideration to the Department of Transport for the construction of pedestrian and cycling links to the Grand Canal Greenway throughout the County.

**National Road Pavement Improvements**  
TII funding has been received in September under the HD28 works program for targeted

upgrades on roads sections only at the Cloncollig Roundabout on the N52 and on the southbound approach to the N52/N80 roundabout in Tullamore.

## ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES

### Climate Action& Energy

The Climate Action steering group Bulbs 4 Bulbs initiative ran for the week of 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> September with fair exchanges at 4 locations. This initiative saw 5000 pollinator friendly flower bulbs being distributed among staff in exchange for recycled light bulbs.



The library service are currently running their Positive Age Week where they are providing pollinator friendly bulbs in attractive gift bags to age appropriate patrons.

All initiatives were registered with the Department for Environment, Climate and Communication for the SDG Week.

Offaly County Council are signed up for the OPW's "Optimising Power at Work". This is a 100% free programme provided by the OPW where they install energy metering

equipment to monitor energy consumption, they prepare detailed energy awareness campaigns, they appoint energy conservation specialists to optimize settings in buildings i.e. summer/winter settings, organize staff awareness days, conduct annual out of hours audits, and issue monthly and annual reports on energy consumption.

This is in conjunction with SEAI's "Reduce Your Use" staff awareness campaigns. This is in line with recent Department guidelines requiring public buildings to reduce their energy consumption by 15% over the next six months.

Offaly library services have 8 Home Energy Saving Kits (funded by OCC CA) available for hire. An order for 1000 Guide to Home Energy Savings booklets has been placed, and we hope to have those in the coming week or two. Both the kits and booklets have been developed by Codema, Dublin's energy agency.

### Environment

Community groups in Offaly have undertaken 231 litter picks, with pickers and bags supplied by OCC.

See below before and after photographs from one of our clean ups using our Anti-Dumping Initiative funding.



### Solar compaction litter bins

Offaly County Council has installed 10 solar compaction litter bins since April and these have proved to be very successful. This type of unit can hold up to 8 times more waste than the standard 120 litre street bins.

Using a sensor, these state-of-the-art bins determine the amount waste in a bin and compact the waste, when required, to provide more holding capacity. When they are ready to be emptied, they send an electronic message to council staff. This new technology will mean fewer collections, lower collection costs and fewer emissions. In addition, the fully-enclosed design means they are bird and vermin-proof, can be operated using a foot pedal and provide data on which streets generate the most binned litter.

### Locations are:

- Heritage Centre Ferbane
- Crinkle Village
- Emmet Sq., Birr
- Mountbolus Park



- Clara Square
- Tullamore Millennium Plaza
- Tullamore O'Connor Sq
- Edenderry JKL Street
- Edenderry- Main Street (Spar)
- Edenderry – Medical Hall



### Burial Grounds

Kilcoursey cemetery extension construction works commenced in August and will be completed by end of October. It includes extension to roadway, burial plots, footpaths and fencing as shown below.



### Water Services

There are a number of schemes being designed, developed and constructed around the County.

A few of these include:

### Ardan, Birr & Clonaslee WTP

The three new water treatment plants at Ardan, Birr and Clonaslee are all commissioned (with the exception of some minor snags and outstanding paperwork). During the upgrade works the plants were operated by the DBO contractor and OCC expect to take back direct operation of all three in early 2023.

In the **Leak Reduction Programme (Find & Fix)** Works are ongoing in Birr, Doon, Edenderry, Rhode and Tullamore.

### TULLAMORE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

#### Tullamore 400



Tullamore commenced the celebrations of the 400th Anniversary of the beginning of the Township of Tullamore with a historic family day in Millennium Square, Main Street, Tullamore on Friday 30th September 2022 from 2pm to 6pm.

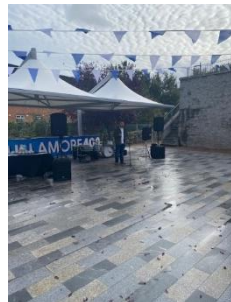
The event included an outdoor exhibition of 400 years of Tullamore 1622 to 2022 which will be displayed in the Áras. The event was opened by Joey Mooney, playing the bagpipes to commence the event with the Cathaoirleach of OCC, Cllr Frank Moran and Cathaoirleach of TMD Cllr Neil Feighery.



Local historian Michael Byrne of Offaly History gave a speech on the history of the town followed by local songwriter and musician Dominic Madden including his song *Tullamore I Miss You* and poet Cormac Lally, with his poems including *Tullamore Poem*. Tullamore Comhaltas brought the evening to a close at 6pm.



It was a successful day with support from the local businesses on Main Street to commence the Tullamore 400 celebrations and encourage interested groups will arrange their own Tullamore 400 celebrations throughout the year in the Town.



This event is funded by the Local Live Performance Programming Scheme Phase 3, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, TMD GMA fund and supported by Offaly County Council.

Please visit the TMD webpage [Tullamore 400](#) for further information.

## HOUSING

Housing Services will provide a presentation at the October monthly meeting.

## LOCAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Offaly LCDC held their monthly meeting on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2022. Main agenda items included the Rural Development LEADER Programme 2014 – 2020 & Transitional LEADER Programme 2021 – 2022, Local Economic Community Plan (LECP) (Update), Community Activities Fund (CAF) 2022 (Update) and Community Response Forum (Update).

### LEADER Projects

Four LEADER Projects were approved to the value of €27,841.52.

### LECP

Members were updated in relation to progress on the preparation of the new Local Economic Community Plan, due for completion in 2023. An Advisory Steering Group (ASG), which meets bi-monthly, was set up in May 2022 in order to assist in preparing, drafting, adopting, implementing and monitoring of the LECP and a Terms of Reference has been agreed by the members. The LECP Guidelines require both economic elements and community elements. Draft high level goals are currently being developed by the ASG. The Offaly Economic Development Strategy Plan will be available shortly and it will feed into the LECP. Eighty business stakeholders were consulted, also students and education providers. Baseline data has been collected in relation to Key Economic Indicators, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) trends.

### Community Activities Fund (CAF) 2022 (update)

Members were provided with a detailed account of the CAF scheme that had been approved by Offaly LCDC in early 2022.

The one-off fund of €277,102 was used to support not for profit community and voluntary groups in Offaly with non-pay running costs e.g. utility bills; capital repairs and improvements to facilities and purchase of equipment. The sum of €64,557 of the fund was ring fenced to help support community playgrounds for upgrades and maintenance costs. The hugely successful scheme saw 136 groups across the county approved for funding. Details were provided to the members on the funding allocations across different community streams and the progress on payments to date.

### Community Response Forum (update)

Members were advised that the Community Response Forum continues to coordinate the response to the Ukraine crisis. The Forum, consisting of key local agencies, continues to meet on a regular basis to share information and updates. The total number of Ukrainians in Offaly has increased in recent months, with the majority of families accommodated in Tullamore, Birr, Portarlinton and Moneygall. All agencies play important roles in responding to the needs of the families. An update on the various programmes and supports being provided was outlined to the members.

### Comhairle Na nÓg

#### Highlights this month:

- In September Comhairle Na nÓg members presented to a Greek Delegation as part of an Exchange EU programme, which took place in the Council Chamber. The Exchange EU Programme is an initiative of the EU Platform for Coal Regions in Transition and this event was organised to enable similar regions in transition to share common experiences and gain knowledge and learnings from each

other. The regions of Western Macedonia and the Midlands have similar characteristics in terms of population, development & landscape. Comhairle Na nÓg Executive Members represented the Youth Voice – Being heard in Just Transition. The group raised the issue of the lack of awareness raising that has been done on the Just Transition and the need for more engagement and consultation with young people on the topic as it will impact their lives, deeply.

- Niamh, Offaly's National Youth Assembly Representative, attended the Assembly Catch up Meeting. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment requested engagement with young people in relation to Artificial Intelligence as part of the first Strand of its Strategy - AI- Here for Good.
- Comhairle members have been preparing for their AGM, which is taking place in October.

### Public Participation Network

September was a very busy month for Offaly PPN. We held the first Offaly Social Inclusion Week, a countywide initiative with social inclusion supports and services opening their doors to the public. Planning for this project was ongoing for a number of months.



Offaly Volunteer Centre with members of the Ukrainian community.

Social Walk in Lough Boora Sensory Park



Offaly Traveller Movement

Key Note Speaker: Padraig Naughton, Executive Director Arts & Disability

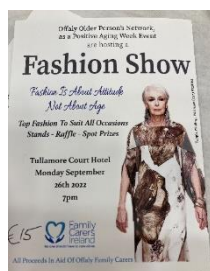
On Sept 14<sup>th</sup> 2022, a Social Inclusion Showcase event took place in the Tullamore Court Hotel with over 40 exhibitors and a steady flow of people visiting the stands throughout the day.

Offaly PPN were also in attendance at the \_\_\_\_\_ Ploughing Championships at the Dept. Of Rural & Community Development's PPN stand.



### Offaly Age Friendly

Offaly Older Persons Network held a Fashion Show in the Tullamore Court Hotel on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The event was in aid of Offaly family carers. Age Friendly Work is starting to progress with Kilcormac.



Promotion of the Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme is underway with online training commencing in October 2022.

## ARTS

### The Arts Office

#### Funding Applications

The Arts Office have submitted two funding application to the Arts Council, one for annual partnership funding for the arts programme 2023, plus an application for the Invitation to Collaboration which is a proposed collaborative project that will take place at Lough Boora Sculpture Park and Tir Saile in County Mayo in 2023.

#### FilmOffaly Awards 2021

The Arts Office FilmOffaly Award 2021 winner Mixed Bag Media's film Personal Space will be premiered at the 2022 OFFline Film festival in October.

#### FilmOffaly Review

The Arts Office have put out a call for a researcher to carry out a review of Film in Offaly. The review will examine the development of film production and the film sector in Offaly to date and will offer recommendations for the potential growth of Film in Offaly going forward. The report will focus on the developments of the film commission FilmOffaly, the Offaly County Council Arts Office and Creative Ireland Film and animation programmes, and other key film activity that takes place in the county. The purpose being to demonstrate the value of Film to the county as a social, cultural and economic driver.

#### Birr Writer's Residency

The Arts Office provided funding for the delivery of the Birr Writer's Residency, which is now underway. Five writers selected to the residency programme for 2022, included an additional residency or a writer to work in schools through Irish as part of their residency.



### Culture Night 2022

15 large scale events across Offaly at 13 venues with over 90 artists involved. The night attracted almost 800 people with huge engagement on social media with a dedicated campaign on the Culture Night Offaly Facebook Page reaching 26, 023 people. There were four specially commissioned art works for Culture Night, 'Follow The Leader' by Donlon Dance Company, Tullamore, 'Palimpsest' by Eileen Casey and Emma Barone in Birr, 'The Black River Of Herself' by Sheila and Patrick Hough in Banagher and 'Neart Fir/Strength Of Men' with Eugene O'Brien and guests in Edenderry. In its twelfth year, Culture Night Offaly had a focus on diversity, inclusion and community in the eclectic cultural programme that reflected the cultural exuberance within the county.



The first fully in-person programme delivered since 2019 attracted huge media interest and community participation from all sectors with culturally diverse events and an event with Offaly Travellers proving hugely popular. Two events 'The Black River of Herself' (Banagher) and 'Neart Fir'



(Edenderry) made national news several times, being selected as top pick's in The Irish Times, Journal.ie and RTÉ out of 1,700 events nationwide. Culture Night featured prominently across all local media, making front page of the Offaly Topic.



As well as fifteen events programmed across the County, the big reveal in recent weeks, was the announcement that Offaly's Lough Boora would be the location for RTÉ's live National Culture Night broadcast. Tullamore's Tolú Makay opened the show, in an exciting collaboration between RTÉ, Offaly Arts Office and Music Generation Offaly Westmeath.

A choir performing during this year's Culture Night celebration featured children from Music Generation Offaly's Tullamore-based partner primary schools in St. Joseph's N.S. and Scoil Eoin Phóil. Joined by members of the Singfest Regional Choirs, this unique intergenerational choir sang the stunning 'Aye' with Tolú Makay, Felispeaks and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra. The performance can be enjoyed on the RTÉ player for those who missed the live show. Culture Night is co-funded by the Arts Council.

## Hullaballoo



Planning for Hullabaloo Children's Art Festival has been taking place since July with partner organisations, Offaly County Council Arts Office, Birr Theatre and Arts Centre, Clara

Resource Centre and Offaly Libraries. Collaboration has also taken place with artists and organisations in Edenderry and Tullamore. This year the programme is fully back with in-person events at all locations. The festival will take place 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> November. The full programme of events is now being distributed and the booking is open

## Mini Movie

The Arts Office are again running the Mini Movies programme in schools this year. Film maker Julie Forrester will be working in Banagher College, St Rynagh's NS and St Mary's NS in Banagher and the film created by students will be showcased as part of the OFFline Film Festival in Birr later in the year.

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

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

### Arts Infrastructure Strategy

The Arts infrastructure Strategy for the County continues to be progressed by People Places Consulting: Caoimh n Corrigan and Siobh n 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.

## Esker Arts

Work continues to great progress and the much awaited opening of the new art centre is drawing closer. The Esker Arts board of management have recently begun a recruitment drive and positions for jobs in the Arts Centre have been advertised locally and nationally.



## 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.

## HEALTHY OFFALY

Dermot Egan has been reappointed as Healthy Ireland Coordinator for Round 4 of the Healthy Ireland Fund. Planning for Round 4 is currently underway. An Information event, to be hosted by Pobal, will take place on 5th October.

## LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

### National Women's Enterprise Day Midlands Events (Offaly, Westmeath, Laois and Longford)

 National Women's Enterprise Day took place on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> October. It is designed and led by women and is an annual high point in promoting entrepreneurship to women in the Midlands.

This event, hosted by the Local Enterprise Offices in the Midlands region, offered an exciting opportunity for participants to learn key tips from the experiences and journeys of all the speakers to apply to the running of their own businesses.

The theme this year was *Our Future, Our Way* and 27 LEO Offaly female clients attended.

### Offaly Business is winner of the SEAI Energy Award 2022 for SMBs

Huge congratulations to LEO Offaly client **The FACTORY** who is the winner of the SEAI Energy Award 2022 in the Small and Medium Business category. The SEAI Energy Awards recognise and reward excellence in all aspects of energy efficiency and renewable energy.

The FACTORY is an eco-print and graphic design studio and are now generating 65% of its electricity on-site via wind and solar power. It has installed LED lighting, air-to-water heating, a solar PV array, a small wind turbine and invested in an electric vehicle for local deliveries. Other measures implemented include a four-day work week and managing five acres of land for biodiversity. The FACTORY is determined to make its sustainable energy journey fully transparent and it has shared its journey and results on social media. The data shows

how small businesses can be more sustainable and the FACTORY wants to empower similar businesses to reduce their carbon footprint. Details on other winners is available here:

<https://www.seai.ie/events/sustainable-energy-awards/award-winners/>



Lisa, Brendan and Gina recently participated in the Offaly County Council Climate Action Awareness Day with a stand in the Áras. It is fantastic news that The Factory are getting the recognition for their huge investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

### The Tullamore & District Chamber 2022 Business Awards

Congratulations to Offaly Innovation and Design Centre CLG (The Junction, eHive and stream BIRR) who have been shortlisted for this year's Tullamore & District Chamber of Commerce

Best Professional Services award. The winners will be announced at the awards event on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October in The Bridge House Hotel Tullamore.





Offaly Innovation and Design CLG operate three hubs in County Offaly - The Junction, Business Innovation Centre - Offaly, E-hive Edenderry and StreamBirr.

### Learning Gate in collaboration with Offaly Innovation and Design Centre and Technological University of the Shannon

Offaly Innovation and Design Centre



CLG (The Junction, eHive and stream BIRR) and Technological University of the Shannon are committed to the development of cooperation opportunities towards the provision of Higher Education programmes in County Offaly. The Learning Gate project with TUS is launching on 26<sup>th</sup> October in The Junction and the programme will work towards the provision of Higher Education programs in Offaly.

### Early Entry Funding Mechanisms - Technological University of the Shannon

The Midland Regional Enterprise Plan (MREP) to 2024 contains 3 strategic objectives to support recovery and resilience across the region. Objective 2 of the MREP seeks to build on achievements to date in sectors in which the region has a competitive advantage through Smart Specialisation and wider adoption of digitalisation within business, leveraging the new Technological University of the Shannon.

Within this objective there is an action which seeks to: Develop a Smart Connected Technologies Cluster to leverage identified and established regional competencies in telecoms and supporting areas including augmented reality, machine learning, data analytics etc.

The Midlands ICT Cluster operates within the ethos of the triple helix model, ICT companies, public sector and academia operating across the Midlands Region of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath and has established three thematic working groups as follows:

1. Marketing Working Group
2. Skills & Talent Working Group
3. R&D, Collaboration and ICT Ecosystem Working Group

A number of LEO Offaly clients attended an information session on the 14<sup>th</sup> October in the Engineering Building, TUS. This event provided initial engagement between TUS & Midland LEOs under Midlands ICT Cluster, with a view to developing relationships with Midland based companies to help them scale and provide employment opportunities within the region.

### Public Procurement Guide 2022

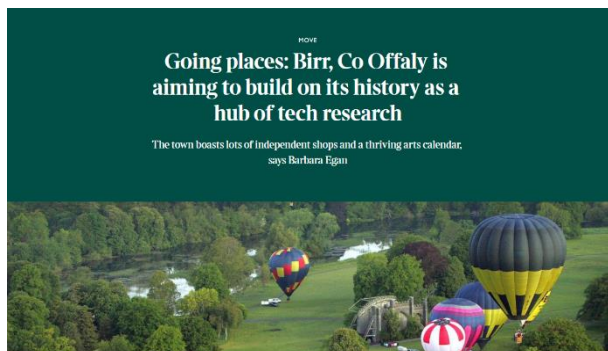
There is a new Public Procurement Guide 2022 to help small and medium enterprises and sole traders to make the most of business opportunities in the public sector. The guide was developed by the local government sector to provide an easy-to-understand introduction to public procurement processes, procedures and vocabulary. It aims to explain, in simple language, how local authorities and other public bodies purchase goods, services and works and to encourage businesses of all sizes to engage with the many business opportunities within local authorities and public bodies.

Click [HERE](#) to access the Public Procurement Guide 2022.

## “Offaly good taste”



Balloonists from around the world took part in the 50<sup>th</sup> Irish Hot Air Ballooning Championships in Birr in September. Offaly, and in particular Birr, got great exposure in the Sunday Times piece that looks at the benefits of living and working in Birr and highlights the town as a “hub of tech research”. streamBIRR was promoted as the ideal base for remote working and setting up a business in.



## LIBRARY SERVICES

### Design Team Contract Signing for new Community Library in Edenderry



Offaly Library Service is pleased to announce the signing of Design Team contracts with Seán Harrington Architects, to begin design of a new state-of-the-art, accessible and user centered community library for the town of Edenderry.

This is one of a number of key actions enabled by the recent award of €2.1 million from the Department of Rural and Community Development to Offaly County Council for Phase II of the Edenderry Regeneration Project.

### Three Twenty One Exhibition



Offaly Libraries are delighted to host the Three Twenty One photograph exhibition by

James Crombie, Ireland's press photographer of the year.



The exhibition consists of 46 close-up and thought-provoking portraits of familiar faces local to Offaly.

Launched in Tullamore Library in celebration of **World Down Syndrome Awareness Month** this October, the photographs could be viewed in **Tullamore Library** from 4th October - 7th October, **Birr Library** from 11th - 14th and a digital exhibition will be on display in **Edenderry Library** and **Clara Library** from 18th - 21st, and digitally displayed in **Banagher Library** from the 25th - 28th October.

### Positive Ageing Week, 26th September – 1st October

Kindly co-funded by **Age Friendly Offaly** and **Offaly Adapts**, we celebrated **Positive Ageing Week** with socially inclusive events including coffee mornings, art and crafts sessions, lunchtime concerts, computer classes and more. All events were well received with **69 in attendance** overall.

**250 of our older patrons** were gifted with Butterfly and Bee Friendly bulbs, as well as good quality, sustainable Chancery bags.



### Children's Book Festival this October at Offaly Libraries



Children's Book Festival 2022 runs nationally this



October and is a central strand of the **Right to Read** initiative. Offaly Libraries are celebrating with an array of events and activities, kindly co-funded by **Creative Ireland**.

Events will be held both online and in our libraries, with something scheduled for readers of all ages and interests. School Zoom events will **feature authors Jackie Burke and E.R. Murray**. **Authors Brian Gallagher and Shane Hegarty** will visit **Edenderry, Tullamore and Birr** libraries to chat to primary school students. **Niamh Hynan** will facilitate a Roy Lichtenstein workshop in **Clara and Daingean** Libraries and **Simone Schuemmelfeder (StoryGate)** will visit **Kilcormac, Banagher and Ferbane** libraries with her puppetry and storytelling session.

Full details of all our events are available in our [Children's Book Festival brochure here](#).



## Offaly Libraries 2022 School STEAM Programme



Our [School STEAM programme](#) kicked off with some great workshops and events to celebrate **Space Week, September 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>**.

Classes from local primary schools around the county were invited to attend fascinating workshops offered in **Birr, Clara, Edenderry and Tullamore libraries**. Online workshops were also facilitated for more remote schools.

Over the four days, **121 students** visited their local library in person, **116 students** joined us via Zoom and we hosted a ticketed event for the public which was well attended with **29 children and parents**. **Overall, 266 individuals attended our Space Week events.**

## Sensory Offaly Seminar and Workshop Series 2022

Kindly co-funded by **CYPSC**, the Sensory Offaly seminar and Workshop programme aims to support the people of Offaly with the challenges they and their families may face through disability and learning differences.

It is free of charge to all attendees (parents, children, young adults, teachers, carers, SNAs, etc.). Advance booking is required.



Events are available to book through [Ticket Tailor](#) or by contacting the library hosting the event directly.

More detailed information on each event is included in the [digital brochure here](#).

## New Board Game Club at Edenderry Library



**Edenderry Library** are delighted to host a new Board Game Club, suitable for ages 10 and up!

The club will meet every second Wednesday at 6pm, beginning **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October**.

Those who wish to sign up for the club can do so by contacting Edenderry Library directly by dropping in, by phone on 046 9731028 or by emailing [edenderrylibrary@offalycoco.ie](mailto:edenderrylibrary@offalycoco.ie). The opening hours for Edenderry Library can be found [here](#).

### New eResources to Support Schools from Offaly Libraries

Offaly Libraries are now offering three fantastic new eResources in support of Primary School students in Offaly, kindly co-funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund.



**Times tables Rock Stars:** Every Primary School in Offaly can register for a 'whole school' license to Times

Tables Rock Stars, a carefully sequenced programme of daily times tables practice **until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2023**.

The top twenty performing schools will then receive an additional 6 months of access. All participating schools are also invited to take part in **Ireland Rocks** challenge as part of **Maths Week**. More information [here](#).

**Reading Eggs** is the online reading program that helps children learn to read with hundreds of online reading lessons, phonics games and books for ages 2 – 13.



Individual licenses for students are available through participating schools.

**Mathletics** is an online math program that builds confidence through personalized learning, exciting games and mastery challenges. Individual licenses for students are available through participating schools.



*Anna Marie Delaney, Chief Executive*

**Appendix 1**
**Revenue Account Grant Income & Payroll Summary to 30th September 2022**

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL	Full Yr Budget 2022 €m	Preliminary Value to Sept 2022 €m	% Year To Date
Payroll costs	29.81	21.02	70.5%
Grants and Subsidies Income	37.98	28.30	74.5%

**OCC to 30th Sept 2022**

	<u>Rates</u> <u>€m</u>	<u>Rents</u> <u>€m</u>	<u>Loans</u> <u>€m</u>
Opening Balance Jan 1st, 2022	2.77	0.48	0.13
Net Invoices & Adjustments, waivers	15.22	5.53	0.39
2022 Cash Collected to end of Sept	12.12	5.53	0.41
Closing Balance Sept 30th, 2022	5.86	0.48	0.10

**2021 Cash collected to Sept 30th**

	12.45	4.82	0.42
	***		
% Collection at this point in 2021	97%	115%	100%

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

**Bank Overdraft to 30th Sept 2022**

	-	-	% YTD
Number of days Overdrawn in Bank year to date		57	21%
Bank Interest and non conforming charges to Sept 30th 2022 YTD			€6,247
Bank Administration and transactional charges to Sept 30th 2022 YTD			€24,464