

OFFALY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2011

Compiled by the staff of Offaly Sports Partnership



Offaly Sports Partnership is a sub structure of Offaly County Development Board, funded by the Irish Sports Council and hosted by the Community, Enterprise and Economic Development section of Offaly County Council.

Introduction

Offaly Sports Partnership was initiated in 2003 and received full designation from the Irish Sports Council in 2006 with a full time coordinator being appointed at the end of the year. Following an expansion of the Board and broad consultations in 2007, an initial three year Strategic Plan which focused on four thematic goals was launched at the start of 2008.

A second Strategic Plan “Everyone’s Participation Counts 2011 - 2015” focusing on four new thematic goals was developed in 2010. John Treacy, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Irish Sports Council officially launched this plan in May 2011.



Members of Offaly Sports Partnership with John Treacy, CEO of the Irish Sports Council at the launch of “Everyone’s Participation Counts 2011 - 2015”

Front row: Eamon Flynn; Kathleen Carroll; John Treacy, Irish Sports Council; Miriam O’Callaghan; Cllr Danny Owens; Eamonn Henry; Barry Keegan; Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick
Back row: Monica Cleary; Gráinne McIntyre; Jude Feehan; Cllr John Carroll

This is the first annual report of our second strategic plan, “Everyone’s Participation Counts 2011 - 2015”, and gives an overview of the work of the Partnership in 2011. The report shall make mention of key changes in operations as well as giving an update on each of the four priority themes.

The Partnership is an inter agency sub group of Offaly County Development Board, funded by the Irish Sports Council and hosted by the Community, Enterprise and Economic Development section of Offaly County Council.

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2011 Operations

The Board of Offaly Sports Partnership

In 2011, there were no changes made to the board of Offaly Sports Partnership. All agencies represented on the board reconfirmed their existing nominees.



Matt Conor continues to be the patron of the Partnership.

The 16 board members for 2011 are shown below.



Councillor John Carroll
Public Representative



Clodagh Armitage
The HSE



Sergeant Ollie Baker
An Garda Síochána



Peadar Boland
Offaly Local
Development Company



Karl Bond Senior
Sports Sector – FAI



Grainne McKinlym
Sports Sector – Camogie



Jude Fehan
Sports Sector –
Community Games



Eamon Flynn
Sports Sector – GAA



Tom Godley
Sports Sector – Athletics



Barry Keegan
The Private Sector



Kathleen Carroll
Offaly Sportsability Forum



Monica Cleary
Offaly County Council



Councillor Eddie Fitzpatrick
Offaly County
Development Board



Lorraine Morgan
Traid Árann Sgoian -
AIT



Miriam O'Callaghan
Offaly VEC



Councillor Dermot Owens
Public Representative

The AGM of the Partnership was held on the 12th April at which the officers and executive committee for 2011 were elected. No changes were made to the composition of the executive at the AGM. The 2011 Executive committee were: -

Chair - Miriam O'Callaghan

Vice chair - Cllr John Carroll

Secretary to the Board / Executive - Eamonn Henry

Financial monitor - Barry Keegan

CDB liaison - Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick

Representative of the employing body, Offaly County Council - Monica Cleary

The **sub groups** of the Partnership for 2011 were: -

Cycle Forum - Clodagh Armitage (liaison to the Board)

Golf for Disadvantaged Youth - Barry Keegan (liaison to the Board)

Disability forum - Kathleen Carroll (liaison to the Board)

In addition to the sub groups outlined above, the Coordinator represented the Partnership at national meetings and forums in relation to the integration of migrant communities.



Offaly Sports Partnership wishes to congratulate Cllr Danny Owens (Cathaoirleach, Offaly County Council and Offaly Sports Partnership board member) on his appointment to the Irish Sports Council. Cllr Owens has been an active members of the Board of the Partnership since 2009 and is a strong advocate for its work.

The Staff of Offaly Sports Partnership

In 2011, Offaly County Council continued to facilitate the employment of three fulltime staff for the Partnership. Two core positions, the Coordinator and the Administrator were 100% funded by the Irish Sports Council, while the continued employment of the Sports Inclusion Development Officer was made possible through 50% funding from the Irish Sports Council, with match funding made available from Offaly County Council and earned income of the Partnership.

Eamonn Henry continued as Coordinator for a fifth Year. Olivia Murphy continued in the role of Administrator and took maternity leave in the latter half of the year, with her position being covered by Fiona Dunne. Congratulations from the Board of Offaly Sports Partnership to Olivia and her husband, Rob on the birth of their baby boy, Fiachra.

Claire Grehan remained on as the Sports Inclusion Development Officer to the end of 2011. Unfortunately as full match funding for the continuation of this post was not secured by the end of the year, this position was made redundant. This will have a huge impact on the frontline services of the Partnership. Offaly Sports Partnership wish to thank Claire Grehan for almost four years of dedicated service that she has given to the role of the Sports Inclusion Development officer. She will be greatly missed but we do hope to secure support to engage a Sports Inclusion Development officer in the future albeit on a probable part-time basis.



Eamonn Henry Coordinator	Olivia Murphy Administrator	Fiona Dunne Administrator (maternity leave)	Claire Grehan Sports Inclusion Development Officer
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Contracted tutors of Offaly Sports Partnership

A number of contracted tutors assisted in the delivery of the Partnership's programmes. These tutors included: -

- Buntu Mlisana - community games, integration and schools programmes
- Donagh McArdle - golf for disadvantaged youth programme
- Igor Prvseionoj - integration and schools programmes
- James Nolan - integration and schools programmes
- Karen Walsh - Buntús and code of ethics programmes
- Nicolas Mvula - integration programme
- Stephen Barrett - golf for disadvantaged youth programme
- Sylvia Gee - Buntús programmes

Student placements of Offaly Sports Partnership

A number of student placements also assisted in the delivery of the Partnership's programmes. Students on placement included: -

- Ana Carmines (European Volunteer Programme) - schools and sports inclusion development programme support
- Katie Troy - sports inclusion development programme support
- Patrick Doyle (Sligo IT) - community games and schools programme support
- Students of Athlone Institute of Technology, and Moate Business College - sportshall athletics programmes

We wish to express our thanks to all those that helped in the delivery of our programmes in 2011; and our partners such as St Mary's Youth and Community Centre, the HSE and Offaly Local Development Company that hosted placements on our behalf.

Strategic Plan Implementation

During 2011, the Partnership began the implementation of its second five year strategic plan, "Everybody's Participation Counts 2011 - 2015". The plan set out four priority themes: -



1. **Lifelong involvement in sport**
2. **Sustainable inclusion**
3. **Dialogue to increase participation**
4. **The marketing of sport**

The following sections in this report will give an overview of work completed in 2011 under each of the strategic goals.

Priority theme 1: Lifelong involvement in sport

Offaly Sports Partnership is committed to supporting lifelong involvement in sport and physical activity. Progress in achieving this goal is detailed in the following pages.

35 actions to address lifelong involvement in sport were written into the Partnership's operational plan for 2011. Of the 35 actions outlined in the operational report, 32 of the actions were delivered on. Actions were delivered in / on behalf of: -

- Active retirement groups - o50s boccia and Physical Activity Leader training
- Community groups - summer camps
- Local sports groups - Community Games programmes, Meet & Train (Midlands Run Series), Bike week, Gaelic Games, Code of ethics, Club development grant scheme, and pack
- Operation Transformation
- Pre schools - Buntús start and Play mornings
- Primary schools - Buntús, Sportshall Athletics and Bike week
- Post primary schools - John Treacy & Pauline Curley Relay Marathons, and the World Marathon Relay
- Youth projects - Shane Lowry Golf Tournament for disadvantaged youth, and the Nightline project

Highlights of the year included: -



Operation Transformation - Two events were delivered in support of Operation Transformation

1. National walk - As part of the national walk day, the Partnership hosted a walk on the Slí na Sláinte in Tullamore. 70 people participated
2. Give a Sport a Go - Give a Sport a Go was hosted by the Midlands Sports Partnerships of Longford, Offaly and Westmeath in Athlone Institute of Technology. 145 people (old and young, men, women and children, people with disabilities) participated.

Both events were covered as part of the Operation Transformation series on television and radio.



Sportshall Athletics - Four Sportshall Athletics programmes were delivered in 2011



1. **Inaugural inter county Sportshall Athletics Championships:** As a follow on to the various Sportshall Athletics programmes being delivered countrywide, and following discussions with the Athletics Association of Ireland and other sports partnerships, the inaugural inter county Sportshall Athletics Championships was held in March in Athlone IT. Seven counties and 343 pupils participated on the programme.

2. **Sportshall Athletics Offaly (primary):** In 2011, 2,000 pupils from 18 schools participated in the primary Sportshall Athletics programme. In an effort to make the programme sustainable moving forward, Sportshall Athletics teacher training was offered to teachers participating on the programme in 2011. 15 schools were offered three hours of teacher training which covered the 12 activities on the Sportshall Primary programme based on universal rules. As part of the Partnership's commitment to increase immigrant participation in sport there was a continued direct targeting of schools with above average migrant populations.

3. **Disability Sportshall Athletics:** Continuing the successful roll out of Sportshall Athletics in schools with designated special education units, 23 pupils from four schools participated on this programme, and competed in the Offaly inter schools Sportshall Athletics Championships in 2011.

4. **Sportshall Athletics Offaly (secondary):** Following the success of the Sportshall Athletics programme in primary schools, the Partnership began the process of collaborating with post primary schools to offer



the Sportshall Athletics programme in the secondary format. Eight schools expressed interest in the programme, and the inaugural Offaly inter schools Sportshall Athletics Championships for secondary schools took place in the first quarter of 2012.

Club supports - A variety of club supports were on offer to clubs in 2011



1. **Code of ethics training** - nine code of ethics were delivered to 148 volunteers covering 56 sporting organisations

2. **Club development grant scheme** - Five grants, each of €1,500 were made available to clubs under our club development grant scheme. Clubs securing support included Ballycommon GAA, Ballycumber / Tubber Ladies GAA, Rhode Ladies Football, Tullamore Basketball Club and Wolftrap Cycling Club

3. **Community games** - The Partnership worked closely with Paul Friel, Regional Development Officer for Community Games in supporting Community Games areas in the early stages of reestablishment, and also in the hosting of a “Come Try Day” in Tullamore Harriers in September. The ultimate aim of the “Come Try Day” was to encourage girls to participate in the range of sports tried on the day. 22 young people participated on the day with three sports introduced (hockey, rounders and timber skittles). We are grateful to Tullamore Hockey Club and the relevant governing bodies for rounders and skittles for supporting this event.



4. **Shane Lowry Golf Tournament for Disadvantaged Youth** - Tullamore Golf Club was the location for the inaugural Shane Lowry Golf Tournament. This tournament was a culmination of a process that saw the coming together of golf clubs, youth projects and An Garda Síochana so that young people who might never play golf would be afforded the chance to do so. Eighteen young people from five youth projects participated. The Partnership is extremely grateful to: -

- Barry Keegan, Chair of the Golf for Disadvantaged Youth working group, for all his efforts in liaising with the golf clubs and youth projects in the organisation of the programme
- The Tullamore Golf Club for making its facilities available
- Tutors, Donagh McArdle and Stephen Barrett
- All participating youth projects and golf clubs
- The local media for their support in promoting this programme, and
- Shane Lowry for endorsing this valuable event.



Bike week 2011 - Offaly County Council, Offaly Sports Partnership, An Taisce and the Health Services Executive came together to host a fantastic week of cycling events that attracted 170 participants from around the county. Events were supported by the Wolftrap Cycling Club in Birr and Tullamore Cycling Club, and included: -



- Sprocket rocket training in Tullamore, followed by participation in the Sprocket Rocket fun day in Punchestown, Kildare
- Introduction to cycling, Birr
- An Taisce Green Schools cycle, Birr
- Exploring the local cycling loop, Birr
- Free bike checks, countywide
- Family fun cycle, Birr



o50s Boccia League 2011 / 2012 - Seventeen teams from eight active retirement groups are currently participating in the o50s Boccia League 2011 / 2012 which commenced in October 2011.

Priority theme 2: Sustainable inclusion

Offaly Sports Partnership is committed to delivering measures to involve, sustain and mainstream the inclusion of under represented groups in sport and physical activity in the county. The eight groups prioritised in the current five year strategic plan are *People with a disability, The unemployed, Women & Girls, Older people, Youth at risk, Low income communities (rural and urban), Travellers & People of an ethnic minority*. Progress in achieving this goal is detailed in the following pages.

22 actions to address sustainable inclusion were written into the Partnership's operational plan for 2011. Of the 22 actions outlined in the operational report, 21 of the actions were delivered on. Actions were delivered in / on behalf of: -

- Low income communities - no specific actions were planned, however projects targeting youth at risk, the unemployed and a number of older people's programmes were specific to low income communities
- Older people - Camcor Active Trails, Get active presentations, the o50s boccia league 2011 / 2012 and Go for Life's Physical Activity Leader training are among the programmes delivered to older people in the county. Updates on some of these programmes can be found under priority theme 2 and priority theme 3
- People with disabilities - Claire Grehan, Sports Inclusion Development Officer delivered a number of programmes to increase the participation of people with disabilities in physical activity and sport. Some of these programmes are highlighted below
- The unemployed - community sports training and link to be active
- Travellers & People of an ethnic background - schools athletics programme and the Integrated Academy for Athletics Performance" (IAAP)
- Women & Girls - circuit training programmes, Community Games programmes and Cumann Peile Gael na mBan programmes
- Youth at risk - Shane Lowry Golf Tournament for Disadvantaged Youth. An update on this programme can be found under priority theme 1



People with disabilities - Claire Grehan continued as the Sports Inclusion Development Officer for 2011. Claire delivered thirteen programmes to 320 people with disabilities in 2011. She was supported in the delivery of some of these programmes by Katie Troy, a student with an intellectual disability who was on a twelve week work placement with the Partnership from March to May 2012. Claire was further supported in her work with the reconvening of the "Sports Ability Forum" who reviewed the strategic plan for "Increasing the Involvement of People with a Disability in Physical Activity 2010 - 2012".

Unfortunately due to funding constraints, Claire is now finished with the Partnership, and has recently taken up a position with Special Olympics Ireland. The Partnership wishes to thank Claire for her past dedication to the work of Offaly Sports Partnership, and we wish her well in her new role with Special Olympics Ireland.

Among the programmes / support delivered / offered by Claire were: -

1. **Sports Ability Meet & Trains** - Seven of these programmes were delivered to 135 people with a variety of disabilities. The programmes covered a wide range of physical and sporting activities including but not limited to athletics, basketball, circuit training, gym instruction, orienteering, soccer, spinning, and walking.



2. **Midlands Boccia League** - the third annual running of the Midlands Boccia League saw 100+ people with disabilities from two counties (Offaly and Westmeath) participate in three days of boccia competition. In support of the programme, ten service providers from five services were trained to deliver boccia within their own services to ensure the sustainability of the programme moving forward. In addition, students from Banagher College (a post

primary school in Offaly) and Athlone Institute of Technology were trained to officiate at local games throughout the year. In further support of the programme, Tullamore Boccia Club was established to allow those interested in the game to continue to play throughout the year.



3. **Walking challenge** - the second annual Offaly Sports Partnership walking challenge for people with disabilities was held in 2011. 58 people completed the challenge which was to walk 40km over a twelve week period.

4. **Midlands United Powerchair Soccer Club** - Claire, along with her counterpart, Mary Duignan from Westmeath Sports Partnership continued to support the Midlands United Powerchair Soccer Club through training sessions and committee support in the first half of 2011. The club finished second in the Association of Irish Powerchair Football League 2010 / 2011, and three of its members represented Ireland at the World Cup in Paris in late 2011.



Check out the testimonials below for a flavour of some of the people with disabilities that have been supported through Claire's work.



Shane - National Learning Network Service User

Shane takes part in a lot of sports - basketball, soccer, boccia and swimming

"My favourite day of sport so far was my trip to Lough Derg Yacht Club. Wight of us from the National Learning Network went there with eight members of the Comhairle group. It was so much fun. We played team games in the water, went on a speed boat and did canoeing. I made great friends."



Nicole Turner - Garryhinch

Nicole participates in a monthly athletic programme with the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA Sport) in Santry and takes part in track, discus and javelin throwing. She also participates in the summer athletics programme of the Partnership and swims with Piranha Swim Club.

"I love the summer athletics programme in Tullamore Harriers because I love sport, particularly running. I also love to meet my friends that I would not get a chance to see if it wasn't for the athletics in Tullamore."



Alan Lonergan - Rehab Care Service User

Alan is a member of Tullamore Special Olympics Club where he plays bowling and soccer

"I participate in basketball, boccia and soccer during the week with Claire. I ma a member of Tullamore Special Olympics and there I play bowling and soccer also. Sport makes me happy. I like scoring goals and meeting my friends"

Keisha – National Council for the Blind in Ireland (NCBI) Service User

Keisha enjoys playing sport even though it's tough at times

"I'm Keisha. I like to play as much sport as I can as it's fun and I like making new friends. I did rowing with Frank Durkin in Tullamore Rowing Club and I loved it. I also took part in tandem cycling at Wolftrap Cycling Club's family fun cycle in Birr. I like playing soccer even though it's hard at times."



The unemployed - Two programmes were delivered to assist the unemployed to participate in sport and physical activity.

1. **Community based training** was offered to unemployed people to enable them to achieve coaching qualifications. While the concept was developed by the Partnership, training was provided by Offaly VEC and the relevant national governing bodies for the major field sports.



2. **Link 2 B Active** is a programme designed to tackle the challenge of affordability and access to physical activity participation where there is a cost or membership involved for people who are unemployed. Link 2 B Active creates an opportunity for the unemployed to access sports facilities (e.g. gyms, leisure centres, all weather pitches, etc) at a reduced rate, encouraging them to participate in recreational activities, thereby allowing them to achieve the recommended 30 minutes of moderate physical activity for adults five days a week as outlined

in the National Physical Activity Guidelines. Six facilities signed up to the programme

Travellers and People of an ethnic background - Two programmes were delivered to encourage Travellers and People of an ethnic background to participate in sport and physical activity. Both programmes have been funded by the Office for the Minister of Integration to the value of €20,000 with co funding to the value of €2,000 received from the Irish Sports Council.



1. **Schools athletics programme** - 7 schools and 1,100 pupils participated on schools based athletics programme. Following this programme, the Integrated Academy for Athletics Performance (IAAP) was established



2. **Integrated Academy for Athletics Performance (IAAP)** - the IAAP is designed as a pathway programme for young children, and those of an immigrant background in particular, to move into mainstream athletics through striving for a series of commitment, performance and aspirational awards. Over 30 children participated on this programme, eight of who have gone on to join mainstream clubs to date. The academy also identified three coaches from immigrant communities resident in Offaly to assist in the delivery of this programme.

Women & Girls - a number of programmes were delivered to encourage women and girls to participate in sport and physical activity. Among these programmes were: -

1. **Circuit training** - circuit training continued for women and girls tin Geashill in 2011
2. **Community Games programmes** - . Community Games minority sports for girls were also delivered through Come Try Days. For more updates on the “Come Try Days”, see priority theme 1.



3. Specific support was also offered to Cumann Peile Gael na mBan to introduce the **Gaelic 4 Girls** programme into two locations in Offaly. 60+ girls participated on the programme and were given the opportunity to attend the Gaelic 4 Girls blitz in Tipperary and an end of programme activity in Croke Park. As a result of this support, a new club was established in Gracefield. Of particular note was the quality and enthusiasm of Transition Year volunteers that were trained to assist in the delivery of the programme.



Priority theme 3: Dialogue to increase participation

Offaly Sports Partnership is committed to facilitating dialogue between stakeholders to support sustained increase in participation. Progress in achieving this goal is detailed below.

Six actions to ensure “dialogue to increase participation” were written into the Partnership’s operational plan for 2011. Of the six actions outlined in the operational report, four of the actions were delivered on: -



1. **Establishment of a cycle forum** - this forum was established and is chaired by Clodagh Armitage, the HSE representative on our management committee. Two meetings have been held and the forum supported the roll out of Bike Week 2011 in conjunction with Offaly County Council, Offaly Sports Partnership, cycling clubs and shops in Offaly.

2. The ad hoc working group (i.e. **Golf for disadvantaged youth**) tasked with the roll out of the Shane Lowry Golf Tournament was supported in its work in 2011. The Shane Lowry Golf Tournament was a great success and discussions are underway as to how the programme can be continued into 2012.



3. **Offaly Local Development Company (OLDC) discussions** - discussions have been held throughout the year between the Partnership and OLDC in relation to support for programmes (e.g. Trim Trail - a collaboration between Birr Leisure Centre, Birr Town Council, the HSE, Offaly County Council, OLDC and the Partnership to build a Trim Trail for older people in Camcor Park, Birr. OLDC supported this programme by providing €21,000 towards the cost of building this trail in 2011; while the Partnership will collaborate with Birr Leisure Centre and the OLDC Community worker to deliver on the training aspect of this project in 2012).

4. **Athletics Association of Ireland (AAI) and Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs) discussions** - the Partnership facilitated the coming together of AAI and other LSPs delivering Sportshall Athletics in their respective counties with the aim of hosting the inaugural inter county Sportshall Athletics Championships in Athlone Institute of Technology in 2011. Seven counties and 350 children participated in the inaugural inter county Sportshall Athletics Championships in 2011 with Offaly taking honours in all four categories.



Priority theme 4: The Marketing of Sport

Offaly Sports Partnership is committed to marketing sport and the Partnership inside and outside the county. Progress in achieving this goal is detailed below.

Eight actions to market sport and the Partnership were written into the Partnership's operational plan for 2011. Of the eight actions outlined in the operational report, eight actions were delivered on. Marketing highlights for the year include: -



1. **Everybody's Participation Counts**, Strategic Plan 2011 - 2015 was launched in May. 70 people were in attendance and 250 copies of the strategic plan were disseminated to clubs, stakeholders and other interested parties. Copies of the strategic plan can also be downloaded from www.offalysport.ie/Publications

2. The Partnership became an **"Invited Partner"** to the **EU funded "Join In"** project which is concerned with disseminating learning / best practice in the integration of young migrant communities into sport.

3. Two programmes were delivered which were endorsed by successful sporting people from Offaly (i.e. Sportshall Athletics endorsed by James Nolan, Irish Olympian; and the Shane Lowry Golf Tournament for Disadvantaged Youth, endorsed by Shane Lowry); and nationwide (i.e. John Treacy Relay Marathon endorsed by John Treacy, Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Sports Council and Irish Olympian)



4. **Midlands Cycle & Run Series** branded and launched. 125 people participated in the Offaly leg of the Midlands Run Series while the Midlands Cycle Series has been deferred to 2012

5. **Credmoor Cup** (equivalent of the Ryder Cup in golf) hosted in the Midlands Shooting Centre, Blueball, Tullamore with 90+ visitors to Offaly attending the event over the week (19th to 26th June). This was a very successful event in promoting Offaly as a sporting destination to an American tourist audience.



6. **Croghan Hill Challenge** - Offaly Sports Partnership supported the delivery of the Croghan Hill Challenge in June. 450 people participated in the challenge.

7. **Websites** - 1m+ hits on www.offalysports.ie; 1,200+ views on www.flickr.com/offalysportspartnership; and 40 "likes" on www.facebook.com/offalysportspartnership

