



ANNUAL REPORT 2013

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.

Offaly Sports Partnership Operational Report 2013 (compiled by the staff of Offaly Sports Partnership)

Introduction

Offaly Sports Partnership is an inter agency and multi sectoral sub committee of Offaly County Development Board. It is hosted by the Community, Enterprise and Economic Development section of Offaly County Council; and receives its annual operating budget from the Irish Sports Council.

The Partnership is currently delivering its second strategic plan for the period 2011 to 2015. This operational report is the third for the five years covered by the plan.

The Board of Offaly Sports Partnership

In 2013, there were no changes to the board of Offaly Sports Partnership. The agencies reconfirmed their existing nominees to the board with Matt Connor remaining on as patron to the Partnership.



From top left to bottom right

Matt Connor (patron); Miriam O Callaghan (Offaly VEC); Cllr John Carroll (public representative); Barry Keegan (private sector representative); Cllr Ger Plunkett (Offaly County Development Board) Monica Cleary (Offaly County Council); Cllr Danny Owens (public representative); Sgt Ollie Bake (An Garda Síochána); Clodagh Armitage (Health Services Executive); Joe Meegan (3rd level representative); Pdraig Boland (Offaly Local Development Company); Kathleen Carroll (Disability forum); Gráinne Mc Intyre (Offaly Camogie); Tom Godley (Offaly Athletics); Jude Feehan (Offaly Community Games); Tony Hurley (Combined Counties Football League - Football Association of Ireland); Pauric Pierce (Offaly GAA)

The executive of the Partnership at the end of 2013 consisted of: -

- Miriam O Callaghan - Chair
- Cllr John Carroll - Vice chair
- Barry Keegan - Financial monitor
- Cllr Ger Plunkett - Offaly County Development Bard liaison
- Jude Feehan - Offaly Community Games (sports sector representative)
- Monica Cleary - Offaly County Council representative

In addition to the executive, there were two sub groups in 2013: -

- Cycle forum - chaired by Clodagh Armitage
- Disability forum - chaired by Kathleen Carroll

The cycle forum took the lead in the planning of Bike week activities. In the absence of a dedicated Sports Inclusion Development Officer, there was limited activity by the disability forum.

In addition to the sub groups referred to above the Coordinator represented the Partnership at regional meetings hosted by the Irish Sports Council; while the Administrator represented the Partnership at regional meetings of the Sports Inclusion Development programme (SIDP).

Staffing in 2013

In 2013, Offaly County Council continued to facilitate the employment of two full time staff for the Partnership. The two core positions of Coordinator and 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; due to the delay in securing derogation for the employment of this role, the position of Sports Inclusion Development Officer remained vacant in 2013.

Eamonn Henry continued as Coordinator for a seventh year; while Olivia Murphy continued in the role of Administrator for a fifth year.



Eamonn Henry, Coordinator



Olivia Murphy, Administrator



In the latter half of 2013, the Partnership secured four nine month internships through the Jobsbridge programme. Shane Mc Manus, TJ Meehan, Declan Mulally and Niamh Treacy joined the staff of the Partnership, and commenced their internships in July 2013.

Contracted tutors / Student placements / Volunteers

Much of the work of the Partnership throughout the year was also made possible through the efforts of contracted tutors, students on placement and a number of volunteers who assisted the Partnership in the delivery of a range of events. These included: -

- Buntu Mlisana and James Nolan - Community Games, Integration and Schools programmes
- Pauline Curley and Noreen Nevin - Meet and Train programmes
- Karen Walsh and John Ryan - Child protection training
- Brendan Buckley - Student placement

Three transition year students also completed work experience placements with the Partnership for between one and two weeks during the course of the year; while students from Athlone IT assisted in the delivery of the third All Ireland SPORTSHALL Athletics programme.

Finally the Partnership would like to acknowledge the support of the myriad of National Governing Bodies of Sport who assisted in the delivery of a community coaching programme for the unemployed.

The board and staff of Offaly Sports Partnership wish to express their thanks to all those that helped in the delivery of our programmes in 2013. Go raibh mile maith agaibh!



OFFALY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP
STRATEGIC PLAN
2011 - 2015

Strategic Plan Implementation

During 2013, the Partnership continued the implementation of its second five year strategic plan, "Everybody's Participation Counts 2011 - 2015".



EVERYONE'S PARTICIPATION COUNTS!



The plan sets 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 the work completed in 2013 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.

27 actions to address lifelong involvement in sport were written in to the Partnership's operational plan for 2013. Of the 27 actions outlined in the operational report, all of the actions were delivered on. Actions were delivered in / on behalf of: -

- Bike week
- Local sports clubs / groups - community games programmes, education and training for sports clubs volunteers, meet and train, meet and spin, sporting events for the Gathering Ireland 2013, SPORTSHALL athletics in clubs,
- Older people - Go for Life, o50s boccia
- Operation Transformation - national walk day
- Primary schools - SPORTSHALL athletics
- Post primary schools - world marathon challenge incorporating the John Treacy relay marathon
- Workplace initiatives - Irish Sports Council physical activity challenge

Highlights of the year included: -

Bike week

Bike Week 2013 took place from Saturday 15th to Sunday 23rd June with cycling events all over the country, organised by local authorities, community groups, charities and cycling groups. From free bike checks, fun cycles, lunchtime city rides, heritage cycles, electric bike races, school cycling events, road races and much more, there was something for every age and ability.



Offaly Sports Partnership in conjunction with Offaly County Council, the HSE and An Taisce delivered a range of events (from safer cycle training to club cycles, road cycling workshops top lunchtime cycles and a Pedal in the Park) for approximately 500 people of all ages and abilities as part of Bike Week 2013.



Bike week lunchtime cycles

Local sports groups / clubs

A range of programmes were delivered in support of local clubs / groups including (but not limited to): -



1. **Education and training programmes for sports clubs volunteers** - 11 child protection courses delivered to 160 volunteers from 62 clubs / groups covering such topics as the National Vetting Bureau Act, Code of Ethics and Children's Officer training .
2. **Meet & train programmes** - The Partnership delivered seven meet and train type programmes to over 200 people in Offaly in 2013. Two of these programmes were in support of the Gathering Ireland 2013, while another four were primarily aimed at women. The final programme delivered was an after work meet and train programme delivered with the support of Pauline Curley and the Tullamore Harriers. The Tullamore Harriers have since subsumed this programme in to the range of programmes the club currently offers.





3. **Meet & spin programmes** - An eight week meet and spin programme was delivered in north Offaly with the support of Westmeath Sports Partnership and Grand Canal Sports. 46 people signed up to the programme. At least 20 of the participants continued to meet on a Sunday morning for a meet and spin session.

Meet and spin session in Daingean

4. **Sporting events for the Gathering Ireland 2013** - With the advent of the Gathering Ireland 2013, Offaly Sports Partnership supported local clubs and organisations in the roll out of programmes in the lead up to Gathering events. Two meet and train type groups were supported in preparation for the Marion Geraghty Sarcoidosis Run and the Moneygall Festival Run. 50 people signed up across the two programmes.
5. **SPORTSHALL athletics in clubs** - The Partnership supported the introduction of the SPORTSHALL Athletics programme into the juvenile section of the Tullamore Harriers over a period of four weeks. 40 children of primary school age participated on this programme in the last quarter of 2013, and the Tullamore Harriers continues to run these sessions as part of their winter training programme for juveniles.

Older people

A range of programmes were delivered to support older people's participation in sport and physical activities including (but not limited to): -

1. **Physical Activity Leader training** - Offaly Sports Partnership with the support of Go for Life delivered the final five workshops in the Go for Life Physical Activity Leader training programme to 34 older people from five active retirement groups. At least 50% of the newly qualified leaders continue to lead physical activity sessions within their group on a regular basis. Following the conclusion of their training, leaders from the Tullamore Active Retirement Association began leading a physical activity session in a local hall every week for up to 25 participants.



Physical activity leader training

2. **o50s Boccia League** - The Partnership continued to coordinate the o50s boccia league in 2013. 22 teams from 12 groups participated in the 2012 / 2013 o50s boccia league, with Belmont Men winning the title in 2013. 27 teams from 15 groups are currently playing in the 2013 / 2014 league.



o50s boccia league 2012 / 2013 finals

3. **Health enhancing physical activity sessions (HEPAs) / Go for Life Games** - Offaly Sports Partnership supported the roll out of HEPAs and Go for Life Games as part of their work in 2013. Six HEPA / Go for Life Games sessions have been delivered to almost 70 older people from 15 groups.



HEPA / Go for Life Games sessions



Operation Transformation - Linked to the Operation Transformation programme, the Partnership delivered a 5.8k family walk on the Slí na Sláinte route for over 100 people.

Operation Transformation walk 2013

Primary school programmes

Two primary school programmes based around the SPORTSHALL Athletics concept were delivered in 2013: -

1. **SPORTSHALL Athletics Offaly (primary):** SPORTSHALL Athletics training was delivered in 15 primary schools to 1,800 pupils in 2013.

In the first quarter of 2013, inter school activities were held in 17 schools. Of the 17 schools that participated in these activities, 10 schools (500 pupils) went on to compete in the Offaly inter schools event with four schools (50 pupils) qualifying to compete at the Midlands and East regional heats in advance of the All Ireland SPORTSHALL Athletics final.



3rd / 4th class girls on the line at the Offaly SPORTSHALL Athletics finals

2. **3rd All Ireland SPOTSHALL Athletics Championships:** The Partnership coordinated all aspects of the third All Ireland SPORTSHALL Athletics Championships on behalf of the wider Sports Partnership Network in conjunction with the Athletics Association of Ireland (AAI) and Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT).



Edenderry boys going through the tunnel on the 3rd / 4th class over / under relay at the All Ireland SPORTSHALL Athletics Championships

13 counties participated creating the need for three regional heats to be held in advance of the final. Offaly qualified to participate in two of the four categories (represented by 25 pupils) at its regional heats; and placed 1st in the 3rd / 4th class boys category and 3rd in the 5th / 6th class boys category at the finals.

Post primary schools The “Save the Children World Marathon Challenge” is the largest mass participation global event for children / teenagers currently held.

In Offaly, the event, incorporating the John Treacy Marathon Relay Challenge in Ireland, was hosted in two locations. 80 students from schools in Banagher and Tullamore participated.



The final lap of the challenge

A total of nine teams from Ireland participated in the global challenge which catered for 219 teams. Tullamore came eighth overall (and first in Ireland, thereby retaining the “John Treacy Marathon Relay Challenge” title for another year) while Banagher came 85th overall.



Workplace programmes - For the second year, Offaly Sports Partnership supported the delivery of the Irish Sports Council physical activity challenge in Offaly Local Authorities.

60 staff registered for the challenge. Four challenges were offered - cycle, run, swim and walk. 1,200k covered by 15 cyclists; 900k covered by 20 joggers / runners; 10k covered by eight swimmers; and 2,000k covered by the 39 walkers.

Priority theme 2: Sustainable inclusion

Offaly Sports Partnership is committed to delivering measures to involve, sustain and mainstream the inclusion of underrepresented 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 and Girls, Older people, Youth at risk, Low income communities (rural and urban), Travellers, and People of an ethnic minority*. Progress in achieving this goal is detailed in the following pages.

19 actions to address sustainable inclusion were written into the Partnership's operational plan for 2013. Of the 19 actions outlined in the operational report, 15 of the actions were delivered on. Actions were delivered in / on behalf of: -

1. **People with a disability** - Despite the continuing lack of a Sports Inclusion Development Officer, the Partnership continued to support the delivery of a range of activities for people with disabilities. Among the activities supported were a Rehab Care Boccia League, National Council for The Blind in Ireland (NCBI) Come Try Tandem Cycle days (x3), and Come Try Kayak session with Tullamore Canoe Club for Laois Offaly Families for Autism (LOFFA). Approximately 45 people with disabilities availed of these programmes.



Programmes for people with disabilities (NCBI come try tandem / LOFFA come try kayak)

In addition Offaly Sports Partnership were centrally involved with the development of CARA's Xcessible Youth Initiative - Special School SPORTSHALL Athletics programme. The actual delivery of this programme commenced in January 2014.

2. **The unemployed** - The main programme delivered for the unemployed in 2013 was the Partnership's community coaching programme. 12 trainees (all unemployed) signed up for the nine week community coaching programme. A further six people associated with the sports sector undertook some of the sports specific modules.

Of the 12 trainees who signed up to the programme, eight completed the full programme; with four of these securing nine month internships with the Partnership under the Jobsbridge programme supporting the delivery of a range of schools based work and out of school activities (such as futsal, badminton, spikeball and a soccer training programme in conjunction with the Offaly Traveller Movement) throughout the county. Interns have also gained experience in the delivery of programmes for older people.

In total the eight trainees who completed the programme, through their voluntary work and their links with the programmes of the Partnership have reached over 2,000 persons in the county.

3. **Women & Girls** - the Partnership delivered four meet and train programmes, specifically aimed at women. These programmes included two meet and train (jog) programmes in Lloyd Town Park Tullamore; one meet and train (walk) programme in Lloyd Town Park Tullamore; and a final meet and train (jog) programme in Edenderry. 125 people signed up to the programmes.



Pauline Curley putting the group through their paces in Lloyd Town Park, Tullamore

The Edenderry meet and train group went on to make local arrangements with their coaches to continue the programme; and are also currently in discussions with the Edenderry Athletics Club to establish a senior's section within the club.

4. **Older people** - a variety of programmes were offered to the o50s including boccia, health enhancing physical activity sessions, Go for Life Games and Go for Life physical activity leader training.

22 teams from 12 groups participated in the 2012 / 2013 o50s boccia league, with Belmont Men A securing the victory. 27 teams from 14 groups are currently participating in the 2013 / 2014 o50s boccia league.



2012 / 2013 o50s boccia league finals

Five health enhancing physical activity sessions were delivered to 10 groups across the year.

Go for Life Games and Go for Life physical activity leader training was delivered to almost 50 older people during 2013. Of the participants from the go for life physical activity leader training, at least 50% of these continue to lead physical activity sessions with their groups from week to week.

5. **Youth at risk / Low income communities**- The Partnership supported the delivery of summer camps for youth at risk / low income communities through partner agencies in the county. Many of these summer camps were supported by way of equipment provision, while one summer camp sports day was delivered by the Partnership on behalf of the organising committee for the summer camp.

6. **People of an ethnic background including Travellers** - a range of programmes were offered to people of an ethnic background including the Integrated Academy for Athletics Performance and a Traveller soccer programme.



The **Integrated Academy for Athletics Performance (IAAP)** continued to run in two venues in the first half of 2013. The long term goal of the academy is the visible participation of persons of a migrant background at all levels (local, county, regional / provincial, national and international) in mainstream athletics in numbers, which at minimum, is reflective of the new makeup of Irish society. As visible participation within the mainstream is the project goal, this programme is one of the Partnership's few programmes where performance is used as a measure of its impact.

Almost 80 participants took part in the academy across the two locations of Edenderry and Portarlington.

Of the 45 participants in IAAP Edenderry, close to 50% of them qualified to represent their local school at the Offaly inter schools SPORTSHALL Athletics Championships; and then went on to represent Offaly at the All Ireland SPORTSHALL Athletics Championships. In addition, most went on to join their local athletics club and a number represented Edenderry Community Games at National Community Games events.

Of the 35 participants in IAAP Portarlington, 14 of them qualified to represent their local school at the All Ireland SPORTSHALL Athletics Championships representing Laois. This included six of the team that won the 5th / 6th class girls national finals.

A further three members of the academy including one individual champion qualified to the Community Games finals in Athlone.



Six of the 12 member Portarlington team that won the National SPORTSHALL Athletics Finals were of a migrant background (Parentage: Jamaican, Zimbabwean, Polish, Lithuanian, Palestinian)



Three members of the IAAP at 2013 All Ireland Community Games with Sports Partnership Coordinator

Two coaches of migrant backgrounds with specific skills in the sports of track and field athletics continue to take their skills into the mainstream. The process of linking migrant children and families to mainstream clubs is underway. Progress in this regard will be monitored and reported on in future years.

Following a request from the Offaly Traveller Movement, the Partnership supported the delivery of a **soccer programme for Traveller males** through one of our Jobsbridge interns, Shane Mc Manus. The programme was delivered to 34 male Travellers, both young and old over a six week period. Local leaders were trained in the delivery of the programme for the future. The programme culminated in a soccer blitz for the participants.

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.

Three actions to ensure “dialogue to increase participation” were written into the Partnership’s operational plan for 2013. Of the three actions outlined in the operational report, all actions were delivered on. Some of the actions delivered included: -

Board, Executive and Working Group meetings

- The Board of the Partnership met six times in 2013
- The Executive of the Partnership met twice
- The cycle forum met on a number of occasions and were heavily involved in the planning and delivery of actions for Bike Week
- In the absence of a Sports Inclusion Development Officer in 2012, no meetings of the Sports Ability Forum were convened

SPORTSHALL Athletics working group - This action was linked to priority theme one and involved the Partnership working with the Athletics Association of Ireland (AAI) and other Sports Partnerships in the promotion of SPORTSHALL Athletics in 2013. From this work, 13 counties participated in the third annual All Ireland SPORTSHALL Athletics Championships.

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.

There were no specific actions to market sport and the Partnership written into the Partnership's operational plan for 2013. However under the objectives outlined in our strategic plan 2011 - 2015, the following outcomes resulted: -



The Partnership supported the delivery of five events as part of The Gathering Ireland 2013. The five events supported included: -

- Rhode Run
- Croghan Hill Viking Challenge (*see photo opposite*)
- Grand Canal Sports Duathlon
- Marion Geraghty Run
- Moneygall Festival Run

In preparation for two of these events, the Partnership supported the delivery of meet and train sessions in Moneygall and Mount Bolus.

In addition to the Partnership's support of The Gathering Ireland, three other mass participation events were promoted / delivered in Offaly. These events included: -

- Operation Transformation walk as part of the national walk day on 19th January (over 100 participants in attendance);
- Bike Week 2013 from the 16th to 24th June (up to 600 participants in attendance across five main events);
- Offaly Mental Health Talk Week physical activity sessions with Pauline Curley and Francie Meehan



*Mass participation events promoted in Offaly in 2013 -
Operation Transformation Walk & Pedal in the Park (delivered as part of Bike Week 2013)*

In relation to promoting a range of events with the support of successful sports person from the county, five programmes were delivered in 2013 -

- Cycle with Francie Meehan for Offaly Mental Health Talk Week
- Meet and train programmes (x five) promoted with the support of Pauline Curley
- Run with Pauline Curley for Offaly Mental Health Talk Week
- SPORTSHALL Athletics promoted with the support of James Nolan
- World Marathon Challenge incorporating the running of the third annual John Treacy Relay Marathon promoted with the support of Pauline Curley

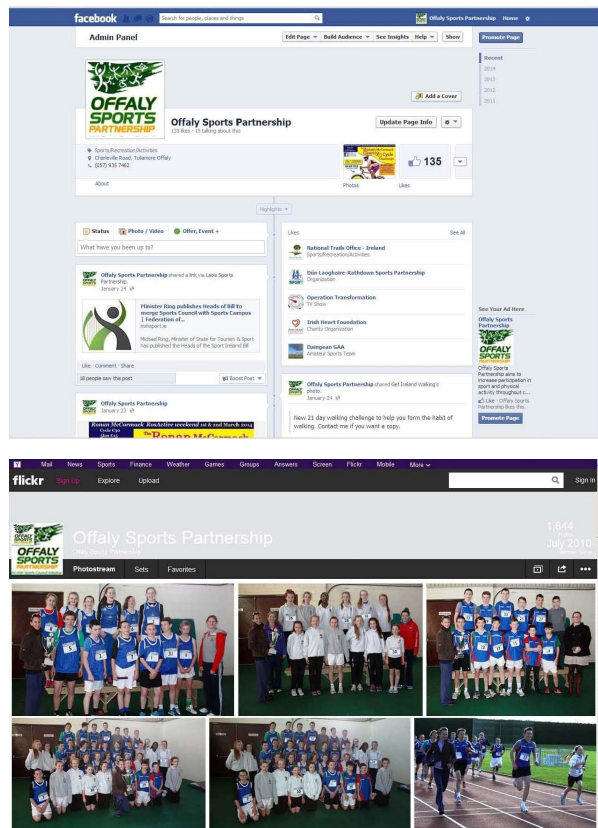
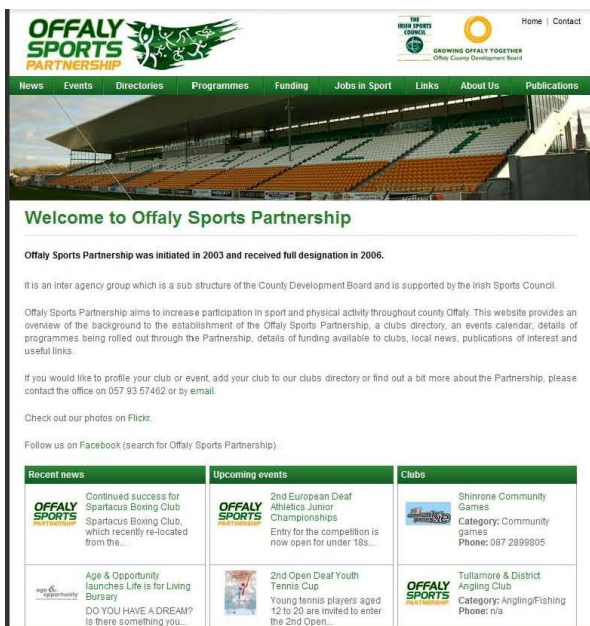
The logo of the Partnership was widely promoted in all communications, public meetings, events, conferences, public awareness campaigns, on tee shirts and medallions for mass participation events. 19 press releases were issued and carried in local media sources.

The three websites of the Partnership were continually updated with information and the approximate numbers viewing the sites amount to: -

www.offalysports.ie (from November 2012 to October 2013) - 884,384 hits on the site and 71,975 visiting the site.

www.facebook.com/OffalySportsPartnership - the statistics as at the 31st December 2013 for this website are 125 likes, of which 48% are men and 48% are women.

www.flickr.com/OffalySportsPartnership - in-depth statistics are not available for the number of people viewing this site given the limitations of the account type



Webistes of Offaly Sports Partnership

For further information on the work of Offaly Sports Partnership, contact the office on 057 93 57462, by email to sports@offalycoco.ie, visit www.offalysports.ie or follow us on Facebook