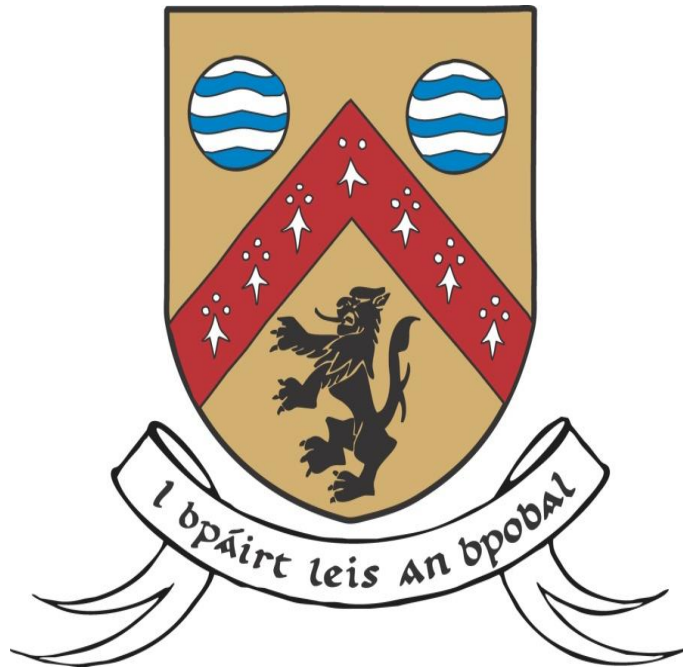


LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE



**MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT
APRIL 2023
TUARASCÁIL BHAINISTÍOCHTA
AIBREAN 2023**

To: Each Member of Laois County Council
Do: Gach Ball Comhairle Chontae Laoise

Section 136(2) of the Local Government Act, 2011 as inserted by Section 51 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, requires the Chief Executive to prepare monthly management report. The report for April 2023 is as follows: -

FINANCE & ALLOCATIONS NOTIFIED

Expenditure and income to the 31/03/2023 is summarised below:

Service Division	Budget Allocation	Exp to 31/03/2023
Housing and Building	€21,247,400	€5,109,678
Road Transportation & Safety	€26,291,600	€2,087,738
Water Services	€3,404,500	€930,169
Development Management	€9,586,000	€2,091,111
Environmental Services	€8,677,500	€1,253,304
Recreation and Amenity	€4,990,000	€754,226
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	€900,000	€146,514
Miscellaneous Services	€9,498,700	€2,094,397
Central Management Charge	€11,213,300	€2,520,074
Total	€95,809,000	€16,987,211

Service Division	Budget Allocation	Inc to 31/03/2023
Housing and Building	€22,725,300	€4,097,859
Road Transportation & Safety	€21,583,000	453,663
Water Services	€4,502,000	€1,185,521
Development Management	€6,495,500	€1,263,256
Environmental Services	€2,231,000	€327,130
Recreation and Amenity	€1,049,000	€328,626
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	€436,000	€48,525
Miscellaneous Services	€11,954,262	€1,767,806
Superannuation	€720,000	€194,025
Local Property Tax	€9,033,703	€1,505,617
Rates	€14,578,963	€1,416,995
Capital transfer	500,272	
Total	€95,809,000	€12,589,023

The Miscellaneous Services Expenditure is broken down as follows:

Machinery Account	€220,000	€53,560
Administration of Rates	€2,211,000	€124,824
Franchise Costs	€104,000	€14,552
Op of Morgue and Coroner Expenses	€130,000	€5,439
Op of Markets and Casual Trading	€3,000	€1,617
Local Representation/Civic Leadership	€987,000	€209,946
Motor Taxation	€226,000	€49,314
Agency & Recoupable Services	€5,617,700	€1,635,145
Total	€9,498,700	€2,094,397

The Central Management Charge Expenditure is broken down as follows:

Corporate Building Costs	€2,038,300	€30,646
General Corporate Services	€1,281,000	€431,166
Information and Communications Tech	€1,738,000	€527,863
Human Resources Function	€1,083,000	€288,980
Finance Function	€761,000	€204,161
Pensions and Lump Sum Costs	€4,312,000	€1,037,259
Total	€11,213,300	€2,520,075

Allocations Notified:

DCEDIY -Capital Grant Scheme for Playgrounds- Accessibility / Biodiversity Playground upgrade phase 1 – Mountmellick Playground.	€18,000.00
DHLGH - Community Monuments Fund	€158,040.38
DHLGH - Historic Structures Fund	€107,100.00
DHLGH - Conservation Grants	€94,450.00

HOUSING and REGENERATION

SOCIAL HOUSING DELIVERY

Annual Social Housing Delivery Targets under Housing for All

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Units	200	79	80	87	88	534
Delivered	229	-	-	-	-	-

Annual Social Housing Delivery Targets under Laois County Council Housing Delivery Action Plan

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Units	254	365	175	66	40	*900

*Total figure of 925 units published in HDAP includes 25 proposed LA Buy and Renew units. These units are not counted for social housing delivery figures.

Social Housing Schemes Under Construction in 2023

Location	Total No. of Houses	House Types	Constructed by	Comment
Harbour Court, Mountmellick	6	6 No. 2 Bed bungalows	LCC (Construction)	On Site – expected delivery Q2 2023
Moore St, Rathdowney	6	6 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Construction)	On site – expected delivery Q4 2023
Mooreville, Rathdowney	7	3 No. 2 Bed bungalow 4 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Construction)	On site – expected delivery Q1 2024

St. Kieran's Errill	14	6 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 8 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	On site – expected delivery Q4 2023
Church Avenue, Stradbally	31	9 No. 4 Bed 2 Storey 20 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 2 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Turnkey)	On site – phased delivery starting Q2 2023
Market Square, Portarlington	18	15 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey 2 No. 2 Bed Apts 1 No. 3 Bed Apt	LCC (Turnkey)	On site – delivery Q2 2023
Bruach Na Habhainn, Killeen	1	1 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Turnkey)	On Site – Phase 1 (1 unit) delivery Q2 2023
The Orchard, Ballylynan (Phase 3)	1	1 No. 3-Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Turnkey)	On Site – Phase 3 (1 unit) delivery Q3 2023
Oak Park Halting Site	4	4 no. serviced bays	LCC	Contractor back on site - Estimated delivery date Q4 2023.
Oldcourt, Ballylinan	1	1 No. 4 bed 1 storey	LCC (Renewal)	On site – expected delivery Q4 2023
Townparks, Rathdowney Rd, Borris-in-Ossory	26	4 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 12 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 10 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey	LCC Turnkey	On site – expected delivery Q4 2024
Ballymorris Green, Portarlington (Ph 1)	34	34 no. 3 bed 2 storey houses	Cluid Housing	Due for delivery in May 2023
Harpurs Lane, Portlaoise	44	20 no. 2 bed houses 16 no. 3 bed houses 4 no. 1 bed apt 4 no. 2 bed apt	Respond	On site – expected delivery Q2 2023
Ballymorris Green, Portarlington (Ph 2)	12	12 no. 3 bed houses	Cluid Housing	Currently on site – Last phase of scheme – advised that these units will be delivered in early 2024.
Clonrooske Abbey, Portlaoise	18	18 no. 3 bed 2 storey	Cluid Housing	Advised by Cluid Housing - to be delivered in Q2 2023.
Goldencroft, Portlaoise (Old CBS site)	67	13 no. 2 bed apts 24 no. 3 bed houses 26 no. 2 bed houses 4 no. 2 bed bungalow	Cluid Housing	3 Phases – on site. Advised that Phases 1 and 2 will be delivered together in Q2 2023 Phase 3 to be delivered by Q4 2023.
South Dublin Road, Kilminchy	36	13 no. 2 bed houses 23 no 3 bed houses	Cooperative Housing	On site – 3 phases for delivery commencing Q2 2023.
The Meadows (old Midland Dairies site), Portlaoise	48	19 no. 3 bed houses 9 no. 4 bed houses 20 no. 2 bed apts	Cluid Housing	Currently on site – expected delivery Q3 2023
TOTAL	374			

Social Housing Schemes at Planning, Design or Tender Stage – LCC & AHB

Location/Scheme	No of Houses	House Types	To be constructed by	Comment
Carraig Glas, Stradbally	26	15 no. 2 bed houses 9 no. 3 bed houses 2 no 4 bed houses	LCC (Construction)	Tender evaluation on-going and construction due to start in Q2 2023
Clonrooske (Knockmay), Portlaoise	12	8 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 3 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 1 No. 3 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Part VIII approved. Stage 3 to be submitted in Q2 2023.
Iona, Portlaoise	7	2 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 1 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 4 No. 1 Bed Apt	LCC (Construction)	Part VIII approved. Stage 3 to be submitted Q2 2023.
Doonane	12	12 no. 3 bed 2 storey	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 approved. Part VIII exemption. In-committee consultation with MD members will take place in Q2 2023.
Derry Road, Durrow	18	9 No. 1 Bed 1 Storey 4 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 5 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Construction)	18 dwellings and 4 serviced sites. Stage 2 to be submitted in Q2 2023
Ballyadams	1	1 no. 6 bed bungalow	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 Approved. Part VIII exemption. In-committee consultation with MD members will take place in Q2 2023.
Stradbally Road, Portlaoise	67		LCC Social and Affordable	Stage 1 approved. Design Team appointed. In-committee meeting with MD members to be arranged to discuss proposed design.
Bracklone St, Portarlington	15	15 no. 2 bed houses	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 to be progressed in Q2 2023
Rushall Mountrath	2	2 no. 3 bed 2 storey	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 approved
Maryborough School, Stradbally Road, Portlaoise	11	2 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey 7 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey 2 No. 1 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 To Be Submitted in Q2 2023
Main St, Ballinakill	3	2 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 1 No. 1 Bed Apt	LCC (Construction)	Stage 1 approved
Moanbaun, Mountrath	15	4 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 7 No. 2 Bed 2 Storey 4 No. 2 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Construction)	Stage 2 to be progressed in Q2 2023
1 New Road, Portlaoise	1	1 No. 4 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Renewal)	Stage 2 approved
6 Emmett Terrace, Mountmellick	1	1 No. 4 Bed 1 Storey	LCC (Renewal)	Stage 2 approved
13 and 14 Lakeglen, Portlaoise	2	1 No. 3 Bed 2 Storey 1 No. 4 Bed 2 Storey	LCC (Renewal)	Design Team Appointed and Stage 1 To Be Submitted
Convent Lands, Portlaoise (CAS)	52	33 no 2 bed apts 15 no 1 bed apts 4 no. 2 bed houses	Sophia Housing	Tender (stage 2) for construction advertised – deadline for receipt end of April 2023.

County Hotel, Portlaoise (CAS)	10	8 no. 1 bed apts 2 no. 2 bed apts	Cluid Housing	Propping up works complete – surveys ongoing to inform cost plan and progression to Part VIII
“Radharc Darach” Hepburn Court, Portlaoise	54	8 no. 2 bed bungalow 12 no. 2 bed 2 storey 34 no. 2 bed 2 storey	Cluid Housing	Site transfer in progress. Construction to commence in Q2 2023. Negotiations ongoing with ESB regarding the substation boundary treatment. Local residents will be informed by Cluid in relation to phasing of the build and any potential effect of this.
Curragh na Mona, Abbeyleix Rd, Portlaoise	39	5 x 2 bed fully accessible apts 12 x 2 bed bungalows 6 x 3 bed house with downstairs bedroom 2 x 4 bed house with downstairs bedroom 2 x 2 bed apts – accessible (ground floor) apts 2 x 1 bed 1 st floor apts 4 x 3 bed 2 storey. 6 x 2 bed 1 st floor apts	Respond Housing	Respond has advised that they are currently preparing a new funding application for this scheme under the new CALF model recently announced.
TOTAL	348			

AFFORDABLE HOUSING / COST RENTAL

Minimum targets for Laois issued by Dept of Housing in relation to the delivery of Affordable Purchase / Cost Rental housing by the local authority are as follows:

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	TOTAL
LA Affordable Purchase & Cost Rental Delivery Target	5	7	10	8	8	38

Application sent to the Housing Agency in respect of 13 affordable homes.

Discussions ongoing to progress potential affordable units as follows:

Affordable	AHF Application submitted to DHLGH – Potential no of unit yield	Advance Turnkey Purchase arrangement – EOI's received Potential No of unit yield	Part V – Potential No of Unit Yield	LCC Construction Potential No of Unit Yield
Affordable	13	71*	8	3**
Cost Rental		27		

*Expressions of Interest received for 71 proposed units across 4 potential schemes, under consideration from the perspective of demand, affordability of price and feasibility of subsidy funding from DHLGH. Not all units may be realised.

****Design Team procured for the design of social and affordable housing on Council owned landbank on the Stradbally Road, Portlaoise. No of affordable units to be determined.**

Feasibility of constructing social/affordable units on site at Beladd currently being examined.

Call remains open for Expressions of Interest in respect of:

- a. Appropriately zoned land for housing development
- b. Advanced Turnkey Purchase arrangements for un-commenced residential developments in respect of social/affordable housing.

Scheme of Priorities for Affordable Housing in Laois

Scheme of Priorities to determine the manner in which affordable units will be offered to applicants considered by the Housing, Planning and Regeneration SPC on 20th April and will be brought for consideration by the members at the May Council Meeting.

REGENERATION / VACANT HOMES

Vacant Homes Office

Vacancy Surveys were carried out in Mountmellick and Mountrath in 2022. The following is the status at 31st March 2023 of the surveyed properties:

	Mountmellick	Mountrath
No. of properties identified as potentially vacant at initial survey	95	69
No. of properties subsequently found to be occupied following further investigation	21	17
No. of properties that have been sold or are for sale since the survey was carried out	11	2
No. of properties going through CPO/Repair & Leasing/ Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant process	7	4
No. of properties where correspondence has been issued to registered owners	18	22

Efforts are ongoing to contact the owners of residential properties identified as being vacant in the surveys. Where ownership cannot be established, we will continue to make local enquiries in relation to ownership, vacancy history, etc. and use the CPO process to acquire properties deemed to be suitable for social housing where all other means of returning the properties to use have been exhausted.

Vacancy / Regeneration Funding Schemes

- **Croí Conaithe (Towns) Fund Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant**
 - A grant of up to a maximum of €30,000, including VAT, available for the refurbishment of vacant properties for *occupation as a principal private residence*, including the conversion of a property which has not been used as residential heretofore. A top-up grant of up to €20,000 is also available for properties which are derelict.

Croí Conaithe (Towns) Applications at 31st March 2023

No. of Applications received to date	48
No. finally approved	11
No. Approved in principle	4
No. refused	1
No. withdrawn by Applicant	1
No. under consideration	31

- **Buy and Renew Scheme**

- This scheme enables the local authority to recoup costs where we acquire a property that is need of major refurbishment, beyond the limits of our acquisition cost ceilings.
- 2 properties received B&R Construct Stage 2 approval in 2022 – 1 New Road, Portlaoise and 6 Emmett Terrace, Mountmellick.

- **Repair and Leasing Scheme**

Applications received to date	45
Applications approved to proceed	10
Applications under consideration	4
No. of Leases commenced	1
Applications Refused	30*

**Applications refused as properties deemed to be unsuitable for the R&L Scheme due to:*

- (a) their location in areas of low housing demand or;*
- (b) the extent of works required exceeded the Scheme limit or;*
- (c) works were commenced or almost complete before an application was submitted, which is not permitted under the R&L Scheme.*

PRIVATE RENTED INSPECTIONS

Laois County Council is responsible, through inspection, for determining if a property meets the standards for rental accommodation in accordance with the Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2019.

	Jan - March 2023
No of properties inspected	295
No of notices of works issued	213

The Housing Inspections team can be contacted via email at propertyinspections@laoiscoco.ie.

SERVICED SITES

Laois County Council is actively progressing the development of **serviced sites** over the coming years at a number of locations in the county. In advance of finalising its plans, Laois County Council has opened a **survey** to establish the level of interest in serviced sites among prospective home buyers in the county and, in general, their preferred locations.

In the first instance, eligibility will be determined by criteria as set out under the **Croí Conaithe (Towns) Fund – Ready to Build Scheme (Serviced Sites for New Homes)**

Scheme. Under the scheme, local authorities are supported to make serviced sites in towns and villages available to potential individual purchasers. These sites will be available at a discount on the market value of the site for the building of a property for occupation as the principal private residence of the purchaser. The level of discount to the individual will depend on the level of servicing cost incurred by the local authority before the sale of the site with discounts up to a maximum of €30,000. The amount of such discount will be reflected in the sale price of the site to the purchaser.

The survey can be located on the links below:

<https://laois.ie/serviced-site-development-survey/>

<https://consult.laois.ie/en/content/serviced-site-development-survey>

The following locations are currently under consideration for serviced sites and/or have advertised sites for sale. Sites to be a minimum of 0.25 acres in size.

Location	No. of Sites	Comment
Ballacolla Road, Durrow	4	Sites currently on the market and application forms available on LCC website.
Gleann na Glaise	4	Sites currently on the market and application forms available on LCC website.
Doonane	2	Stage 1 approved as part of larger housing scheme Part VIII to be progressed in Q1 2023
Derry Road Durrow	4	Stage 1 approved as part of larger housing scheme Part VIII to be progressed in Q2 2023
Castletown	9	Proposal. Detailed design currently on-going
TOTAL SITES UNDER CONSIDERATION	23	

HOUSING STOCK

Housing Re-Lets

2023

Month	LA Keys Surrendered	Properties Acquired	Works Completed
January 23	7	3	6
February 23	2	2	0
March 23	9	7	13
TOTAL (YTD)	18	12	19

NOTE: There are currently 27 vacant units from our existing stock and a further 10 units that the Council acquired. Works are either ongoing on these properties or specifications are being prepared for works to be carried out.

Housing Maintenance

2023

Month	Work Orders Raised	Work Orders Closed	Work Orders Open
January 23	504	479	25
February 23	378	335	43
March 23	464	343	121
TOTAL (YTD)	1,346	1,157	189

Midlands Retrofit Programme

Address	Properties	Units Commenced	Units Completed	Update
Mountain View Sq., Portlaoise	24	24	24 houses complete	All Works complete.
Hillview Drive, Portlaoise	19	19	19 houses complete	All Works complete.
Quigley Pk, Rathdowney	20	20	20 houses complete	All Works complete.
Radharc Alainn, Arles	18	18	18 Houses complete.	All Works complete.
Derrymore, Portarlington	26	26	26 houses complete	All Works complete.
Kirwan Park, Mountmellick	51	51	51 houses complete	All Works complete.
Total Properties	158	158	158 Units (fully complete)	

Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting Programme:

Address	Properties	Units Commenced	Units Completed	Update
O'Moore Place, Portlaoise	27	19	14	Construction Works has commenced on 18 houses. 14 of these have heating completed and external insulation works complete. Works continuing on remaining houses.
Total Properties	27	19	14	

Tenders for the 2023 properties and currently being evaluated and due to funding constraints, it is now proposed to commence works on the 2023 properties in the Phases below.

Phase 1

- 1) Thornberry, Abbeyleix – 16 units.
- 2) Church Avenue, Stradbally – 9 units.
- 3) Slieve Bloom Park, Clonaslee – 8 units.

Phase 2

- 1) Old School Road, Ballylynan – 7 units.

Phase 3

- 1) St. John's Square, Portlaoise – 7 units.

LCC has also recently issued a tender for Energy Consultancy services for 2023 for a further 53 houses.

The Housing Section are currently preparing their submission for the continued programme of retrofitting homes in 2023. We have been advised that funding will be made available for up to 65% of last year's programme and we have been provisionally approved funding with an average of €36,000/unit.

The following 53 units in the following estates are being considered in 2023:

- 1) St Brigids Place, Portlaoise – 26 units.
- 2) Fr O'Connor Crescent, Mountrath – 11 units.
- 3) Erkindale Drive, Durrow – 6 units.
- 4) Rossmore View, Graiguecullen – 10 units.

(NOTE: The above estates were prioritised based on property age and MD area.)

There will be a match funding requirement to complete all the retrofitting works which will depend on the tender prices returned. Once this proposal has been approved by the Dept, we will commence surveys of properties to inform the tender for works.

HOUSING NEED

Social Housing Acquisitions

Dept of Housing Circular 17/2023 (*Mitigation Measures to ease the impact of the end of winter emergency period*) summarises the status of ongoing and additional mitigation measures which have or will be put in place with a view to easing the impact of the end of the eviction ban. It outlines measures that local authorities may take for any individual or household who present with a Notice to Quit and advise the Housing Officer that they are at risk of homelessness.

1. The local authority should follow the established process of assessment of homelessness risk for the individual/household as defined in Section 2 of the Housing Act 1988.
2. When this assessment has taken place and a risk established, the local authority should use prevention measures such as:
 - a. Referral to prevention service, e.g., Threshold
 - b. Assist to secure alternative accommodation through the HAP Placefinder Service
 - c. Allocate a social housing tenancy if appropriate.
3. If the household wishes to buy the property, the local authority will take them through the schemes available to them, e.g., the First Home Scheme (as amended) and the Local Authority Home Loan.

4. If the household/individual is eligible for social housing and assessed as being at risk of homelessness, the local authority can examine the acquisition of the property under an existing Tenant in Situ scheme, once all other accommodation options are exhausted.
5. If the household/individual is NOT eligible for social housing and all other homeless prevention options are exhausted, the local authority can consider whether it is appropriate to refer them to the new Cost Rental Tenant in Situ Scheme, being operated by the Housing Agency. This scheme facilitates the acquisition of the house by the Housing Agency to prevent the risk of homelessness for the tenant, where they are not in receipt of any social housing supports, e.g., HAP. This scheme commenced on 1st April 2023.

To date, Laois County Council has received 60 expressions of interest for acquisition of houses that are tenanted, all in varying circumstances. Also, to date there have been 65 Notices to Quit reported to us. All NTQ's are examined on a case-by-case basis and tenants are being dealt with using all social and other housing options available.

By the end of Q1 2023, Laois County Council completed 16 acquisitions, 18 acquisitions in conveyancing currently and a further 13 properties are under consideration, totalling 45 units. 10 of these properties have tenants in situ. The above figures change with every case examined and regular cross referencing between NTQ's presented and Expressions of Interest for acquisition of properties.

Homeless Presentations

Time Period	Homeless Presentations	Breakdown of Household
1 st March – 31 st March 2023	19	12 single, 7 families

Homeless Accommodation

	Emergency Accommodation booked at 31 st March 2023	Social Housing allocated from homelessness in March 2023
Families	5	4
Single Persons	11	6
TOTAL	16	10

Social Housing List at 31st March 2023

TOTAL No of Social Housing Applicants on waiting list	1,765
Proportion of SH applicants availing of HAP supports	46%
Proportion of HAP tenants transferred from Rent Supplement	7%

RAS/Leasing Statistics at 31st March 2023

Active RAS tenancies	77
Active short-term leasing tenancies (Social Housing Leasing Scheme)	28
Active Repair & Leasing Scheme tenancies	1
Active long-term leasing tenancies with private landlords/investors	11
Active long-term Mortgage to Rent leasing tenancies with a private company	27

Applicants housed during the period 1st January - 31st March 2023

Method of Delivery	No. housed 1st January – 31st March 2023
First allocation of New Build/Acquired unit	18
Relet / Refurbished Stock Allocation	18
Nominations to AHB housing which create a tenancy	37 (28 new builds & 9 casual vacancies)
Housed via leasing	0
TOTAL	73

LOANS AND GRANTS

Loans

Local Authority Home Loan (LAHL) at 31st March 2023

No of Loan Applications received since scheme commenced	76
No of Applications approved since scheme commenced	30
No of Applications refused since scheme commenced	22

Grants

Housing Adaptation Grants at 31st March 2023

Allocation €TBC

	No. of applications received to 31/03/2023	No. of applications paid by 31/03/2023	Value of applications paid by 31/03/2023	No. of applications currently at work stage	Value of applications currently at work stage
HOP	46	23	€93,910	51	€241,190
MAG	9	6	€16,660	6	€29,200
HGD	36	3	€18,500	34	€325,370
TOTAL	91	32	€129,070	91	€595,760

Disabled Persons Grant for Social Housing

DPG works at 31st March 2023:

Allocation 2023 (including LA funded portion)	€TBC
No of new applications received to 31/03/2023	6

Queries in relation to Housing Grants should be emailed to housinggrants@laoiscoco.ie

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO REFUGEES FLEEING CONFLICT

Laois County Council continues to lead and coordinate the **Laois Ukrainian Community Response Forum**. The Forum, consisting of 23 statutory and voluntary groups/agencies, meets regularly, with 15 meetings held to date, and ensures consistency and efficiency in service delivery and supports to new arrivals to our county from Ukraine. The most recent data indicates there are 922 displaced Ukrainian citizens in the County. Approximately 250 of these are in accommodation centres such as hotels, guesthouses, hostels, and refurbished properties, with the remainder in privately sourced or pledged accommodation.

The Council continues to assist the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS - under the auspices of Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, DCEDIY) with the temporary accommodation of Ukrainian arrivals to our county, as well as providing details nationally in relation to vacant buildings and sites suitable for medium to long term accommodation solutions. The Council continues to allocate privately pledged/offered accommodation to Ukrainian families. In excess of 40 families have been provided with accommodation through these mechanisms to date. Site works are underway at the 42 Modular Homes project in Rathdowney. DCEDIY have indicated they expect handover of the site from OPW by mid year.

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & HERITAGE

Residential Zoned Land Tax

An evaluation of all submissions has been made, including a determination as to whether or not the subject lands shall be retained in scope for the purposes of the RZLT. No amendments were made to the lands included in the RZLT based on the submissions received.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT REPORT

E-Planing Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPlanning has been live since 11th November 2022 		
Planning Applications	Year	Valid applications from 01/01/2023 – 14/04/2023	Valid applications from 01/01/2022– 14/04/2022
		161	178
Total Number of valid applications received:	161		
Number of decisions made	160		
Invalid applications returned to applicant	102 (2023 invalid applications)		
Number of applications granted:	155(Decisions to Grant)		
Number of applications refused:	5(Decisions to Refuse) 3.1% refusal rate		
No of appeals to ABP	6		
PRE PLANNING			
No of requests to date	77		

No of meetings held to date	45
Wait time	2.5 Weeks
Change of Use under P&D(Amendment)(No2) Regs 2018	2 to date in 2023 (Article 10) 5 applications received in 2022
Applications for Licence under Section 254	3 applications received (NBI)– 18 granted

ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Current year	2023		2022	
Service Review	Mar	Jan - Mar	Mar	Jan - Mar
Total number of new cases subject to complaints that were investigated	18	41	9	35
Number of Warning Letters served	37	107	29	92
Number of Enforcement Notices served	7	42	5	11
No Of cases referred for legal proceedings	4	7	0	1
Number of cases in Court(incl adjournments)	4	15	4	23
Number of cases Resolved in Court	0	1	3	4
Number of Files Closed	13	31	21	50
Number of cases on system	153	153	164	164
Enforcement Costs recouped	€ 1,200.00	€ 1,290.00	€ 600.00	€ 3,156.98
Number of Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	4	10	3	7
Fees received through Valid Retention Applications Received relating to Enforcement Action	€682.00	€ 4,603.13	€2,401.80	€ 5,897.50
Legal fees paid	€1,385.22	€ 2,540.35	€54.12	€ 5,920.77

HERITAGE

Community Monuments Fund 2023

The following applications submitted under the Community Monuments Fund 2023, have been awarded grants. Regarding those applications which were successful, a formal letter of offer with relevant conditions will issue shortly.

Stream 1			
CMF ID No	Local Authority Area	Site Monument/Project	Award
<u>CMF23-1-LA003</u>	Laois	Baunaghra Church	€43,241.48
<u>CMF23-1-LA001</u>	Laois	Dysart Enos Church	€60,300.00
Total			€103,541.48

Stream 2			
CMF ID No	Local Authority Area	Site Monument/Project	Award
<u>CMF23-2-LA001</u>	Laois	Clonkeen Church & Graveyard	€21,709.50
<u>CMF23-2-LA002</u>	Laois	Ballyadden Medieval Church & Graveyard	€27,789.40
<u>CMF23-2-WI001</u>	Wicklow	Drumgoff Barracks	€5,000.00
TOTAL			€54,498.90

Under the Historic Structures Fund 2023, the following grants were awarded;

Site Name	Short description of works	Grant
Donaghmore Workhouse and Agricultural Museum Roof repairs	Roof repairs are required to halt water ingress and damage to the mill.	€37,500.00
Roundwood House, Mountrath	The works will consist of: - improvement of the drainage system; - repair of the cracks on the basement vault; - repair of the cracks on the rear chimney wall; - repairs to roof and chimney stacks, following inspections; - localised repairs of internal decorative elements.	€37,000
Vicarstown National School	Removal of cementitious external render, replace with a lime-based render and limewash. Localised repairs to brickwork where necessary. Repair and re-painting of the decorative timber bargeboards to be carried out.	€22,600
Vernacular Residence, Dooary, Ballyroan	Remove cement render and replace with appropriate lime-based render on external walls.	€10,000

Conservation Grants

Laois County Council received a total of €94,450 under the BHIS conservation grant scheme. The following projects were successful:

BHIS/LS01	"Newtown Mill Newtown House & Mill, Newtown, Durrow Co. Laois"	€15,000
BHIS/LS02	Protrane House Stradbally Road Portlaoise	€15,000
BHIS/LS03	Preston House Boutique Ltd. Abbeyleix Co. Laois	€15,000
BHIS/LS04	Thatched House Rathmakelly	€4,750
BHIS/LS05	RIC Barracks Clonaslee	€15,000
BHIS/LS06	Fisherman's Inn, Fisherstown	€7,500
BHIS/LS07	Cuffsborough House, Ballacolla	€11,100
BHIS/LS08	Former Goods Shed Abbeyleix	€11,100

LOCAL ENTERPRISE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LEO Update – April 2023

- €124,146 was approved in grant aid to 5 businesses with potential to create 8 new jobs.
- One business approved for the Gradstart programme which is delivered in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland.
- 2 trading online voucher applications approved
- 85 businesses set up to avail of 1-1 mentoring.
- 4 training courses were delivered to a total of 41 participants.
- 2 additional companies signed up for the Green for Micro programme
- 1 new Laois businesses was assisted to access Micro Finance Ireland (MFI) loan funding.
- 3 student finalists from Heywood and Portlaoise College supported and assisted with preparations to go forward to represent Laois at the National Finals being held in Croke Park on Friday 5th May
- Ballykilcavan Brewing Co Ltd from Stradbally were selected as this year's winner of the Laois County Enterprise Award for 2023. They will go on to represent Local Enterprise Office Laois at the 23rd National Enterprise Awards in Dublin on the 1st June.
- Portarlinton based food company O'Mimos was selected to represent Laois on the Food Academy programme. This is a food business development programme for early to mid-stage food business owners. which is run in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Office Network Bord Bia and Supervalu.

Business Support Unit (BSU) – April 2023

- The Vacant Commercial Property Incentive Scheme, in collaboration with Laois Chamber Alliance, the Portarlinton Business Group and Offaly County Council, is being extended to Portarlinton with a launch date in early May. A priority list of towns to extend the scheme to is being drawn up.
- Business Incentive Scheme: maps are currently being prepared to extend the scheme in to Killenard.
- Killeshin Hub - Contacts were signed on Wednesday 12th April 2023 and works are to commence within 6 weeks once all commencement notices and health and safety requirements are completed.
- Abbeyleix Streetscape - 45 applications were received, 28 have been approved with works commencing, 6 in progress awaiting further documentation and 11 applicants did not meet the criteria.

Annual Road Works Scheme 2023

The annual roads programme for 2023 to a value of €31m was presented for the Members' consideration at the March monthly meeting and was agreed. Works have now commenced on the delivery of the approved schemes.

N80 Kyletalesha to Mountmellick Phase 2 Pavement Rehabilitation Scheme

The tender award process for this contract is complete. The program for completing the works will be agreed in coming weeks.

Regional Roads Safety Improvement Schemes



Derrin Cross Safety Improvements Works



Redcastle Cross R445 former National Road/Junction improvement scheme

Local Improvement Schemes

The initial seven approved schemes for 2023 have been offered out to applicants and contributions have been received for the majority of the schemes. Schemes where the necessary works will now be scheduled

Public Lighting Maintenance

Public lighting Maintenance repairs are ongoing and while there are a number of outages on the network progress has been made with regard to the overall outage rate on the network having reduced from just over 1.2% to 0.79% over the last month.

J 17 National Enterprise Park Western Arm

Works are continuing on the development of the Western Arm (phase 4) with the deep services of foul & surface water network infrastructure are now installed. Excavation to road formation and road construction has also advanced. The next stage of the works will involve the installation of ESB, Telecoms, Gas & Watermain services.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

1. Kyletalesha Landfill, Transfer Station & Civic Amenity Site, Portlaoise:

Normal services continue at Kyletalesha Landfill Facility and Civic Amenity Site. Landfill monitoring and aftercare maintenance is on-going. All monitoring results are being submitted to the EPA.

Kyletalesha Landfill Monitoring Committee met on the 10th March 2023.

2. Bring Banks:

Tonnages for 2023 recyclable materials is in Table 1 below.

Month	Tonnage	Month	Tonnage	Month	Tonnage
Jan	164.24	May	0	Sept	0
Feb	129.06	June	0	Oct	0
Mar	140.63	July	0	Nov	0
Apr	0	Aug	0	Dec	0
Annual Total			433.93 Tonnes		

Table 1 – 2023 Bring Bank Tonnages

The bring bank facilities in the county are being inspected and maintained by Environment Staff.

3. Waste Management, Complaints & Litter Management:

a) **Waste Enforcement & Complaints**

Table 4 below details the number and types of complaints received to the end of March 2023.

Nature	Number	Nature	Number
Waste Management/Enforcement	183	Air	11
Litter	122	Noise	6
Water	17	Waste Infrastructure	2
Total	341		

Table 2 – Environmental Complaint Register

b) **Litter Fines**

Month	Number	Month	Number	Month	Number
Jan	11	May	0	Sept	0
Feb	9	June	0	Oct	0
Mar	4	July	0	Nov	0
Apr	0	Aug	0	Dec	0
Annual Total			24		

Table 3 – 2023 Litter Fines

c) **Illegal Dumping**

Tonnes of material collected to the end of March 2023 is 63 tonnes.

4. Waste Management & Enforcement:

The Environment Section continues with its duties and responsibilities regarding facility authorisation, waste management and enforcement, producer responsibility and the national waste priorities.

5. Environmental Protection

a) **Protect the Water Quality Status in all Water Bodies**

On site investigations of complaints in relation to water quality/water pollution are being carried out by Environmental staff.

- Investigation ongoing into wastewater discharges to the lakes at Kilminchy.
- On-going assessment of planning applications with regards to water quality protection.
- On-site investigations of complaints in relation to water pollution.

b) **Air & Noise:**

- All noise and air complaints are being investigated.
- On-going assessment of planning applications with regards to air and noise protection.

Disinfection/PH Control Programme

Civil works progressing in Meelick, Derryguile, Kyle, Five Wells, Derrymoyle and Lough WTPs. Mechanical, Electrical, Instrumentation, Control and Automation works progressed at the Strand, Knocks, Derryguile, Lough, Kyle, Five Wells, Clonin Hill, Derrymoyle, Ballyroan and Meelick Water Treatment Plant (WTP).

ESB supply upgrade currently being progressed for Five Wells. Design for Kilminchy, Fermoy, Castle Durrow, Drim, Donaghmore, Cloghogue and Camross Water Treatment Plants currently being progressed by CWL/Uisce Eireann (UE). An automated run to waste system recently installed at the Knocks WTP to address periodic raw water turbidity issue.

Irish Water Small Towns & Villages Growth Programme

Uisce Eireann is currently considering the options and pricing report for Ballyroan. Planning and design works are ongoing for Ballinakill and Borris in Ossory.

Mountmellick and Portarlinton DAP

Survey works to be progressed throughout 2023.

East and Midlands Ground Water Programme

Workshop for Portarlinton Water Supply, the Swan WTP supply and the Knocks WTP supply with NOD/UE/LCC now complete.

Inlet Works Storm and Sludge Programme

Ballyroan WWTP Upgrade – Workshop 4 with UE/LCC/Conway Engineering has been completed and works are expected to progress in Q3 of 2023/Q1 of 2024.

Networks and Water Conservation

First fix, find and fix and lead replacement work is continuing in 2023.

Mains rehabilitation works currently ongoing in Portarlinton and Mountrath which will provide a safer, more secure water supply by minimising the frequency of bursts and improving the resilience of the network.

National WWPS Programme

Pump Station (Bob's Bar) project is currently with Uisce Eireann at design estimation stage, awaiting conclusion of any potential environmental impacts.

WWBG PS Growth Programme (Eastern Region) Stage 2 - Borris Road PS

The estimated construction completion is Q3, 2025. Planned timeframe for WS 4 is September 2023. The Colliers Lane scope item (and other potential advanced works) may be progressed earlier and will be determined during the detail design phase.

Taking in Charge

We continue to work with UI for them to take the outstanding legacy estates in charge. 10 no. estates have been progressed and referred to the Planning Section and work is ongoing on the remaining 7 no. estates.

Work is progressing on transitioning of Moyadd Group Water Scheme to Uisce Eireann and this scheme will be taken in charge in 2023.

Multi Annual Rural Water Programme

Projects under the current programme, 2019 – 2021, are being completed. It is expected that the Department will issue details of the next Rural Water Programme in mid 2023.

Application and feasibility studies for Vicarstown and Cullough, submitted to the Department on the 15th of September for funding under Measure, A8 (Wastewater

Collection and Treatment Needs for Villages and Settlements without access to Public Wastewater Services) are being reviewed and adjudicated upon. No response received as of yet from the Department.

Construction has commenced in Rosenallis on the Goodwin Estate Group Sewerage Scheme.

Well Grants

18 applications have been received to date in 2023 for grant aid assistance to improve private water supplies to domestic households.

The Domestic Lead Remediation Grant Scheme

The grant for the Domestic Lead Remediation Grant Scheme is no longer means tested and is available for both public and private water supplies. This grant provides 100% financial assistance (max of €5,000) to eligible applicants to replace lead piping and fittings in a house, that is occupied as the applicant's normal place of residence.

Emergency Planning, Fire Services & Flood Relief

In 2023 (to 31st March 2023) Laois County Fire & Rescue Service attended 180 emergency incidents consisting of 65 fires, 86 special service incidents & 29 false alarms.

Turnout by Station*:

Portlaoise – 74	Portarlinton - 35	Stradbally – 34	Mountmellick – 35
Abbeyleix - 22	Mountrath – 26	Durrow – 12	Rathdowney – 11

***Note – figures are higher as many incidents are 2 station turnouts as per the PDA.**

New Fire Station in Stradbally

Following approval of Part 8 proposals in February 2022, for a new Fire Station in Stradbally, Laois County Council has recently received ‘*approval in principle for the construction of a new Fire Station at Stradbally.*’ Laois County Council has now prepared a design brief for the project with a view to the appointment of a design team to oversee the detailed design, tendering and delivery of the new Fire Station. This brief was sent to the NDFEM in December & approval to appoint the design team has now been received. The procurement process to appoint an architect led design team has now commenced.

Mountmellick Fire Station upgrade

Approval to go to tender for the upgrade has been sought from the NDFEM.

Fire Service capital funding by the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management

New Paratech trench rescue and urban search & rescue equipment (USAR) to the value of €90,000 has been received by LCFRS. Training in the use of this new equipment will be delivered by the manufacturer/supplier in early May

A second hand Mitsubishi Fuso lorry to the value of €25,000 has been delivered & will shortly go on the run as technical response rescue unit. This vehicle has an additional payload to carry the newly delivered Paratech USAR equipment.

CORPORATE, COMMUNITY, CLIMATE ACTION, ARTS, CULTURE, LIBRARIES & TOURISM

Laois Public Participation Network (PPN)

Laois PPN hosted “A Tree for Peace”, on Friday the 24th of March 2023 in the *Peoples Park* Portlaoise. This was a tree planting ceremony in support of the Ukrainian Community in Laois coinciding with National Tree Week in Ireland.



Laois PPN welcomed delegates from Longford, Kildare, Meath, Offaly and Westmeath to Castle Durrow on Thursday, the 23rd March for the first quarterly meeting of the Midlands Region PPN in 2023.

Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

The Public Consultation for the 10 LECP High Level Goals concluded on Friday 14th April. All submissions will now be reviewed, and a report will be prepared, in addition to a revision of the high level goals based on the consultation.

Laois Comhairle na nÓg

Members of Laois Comhairle na nÓg attended the Showcase 2023 in Croke Park on Tuesday, 4th April.



World of Work Educational Partnership Programme 2022/23

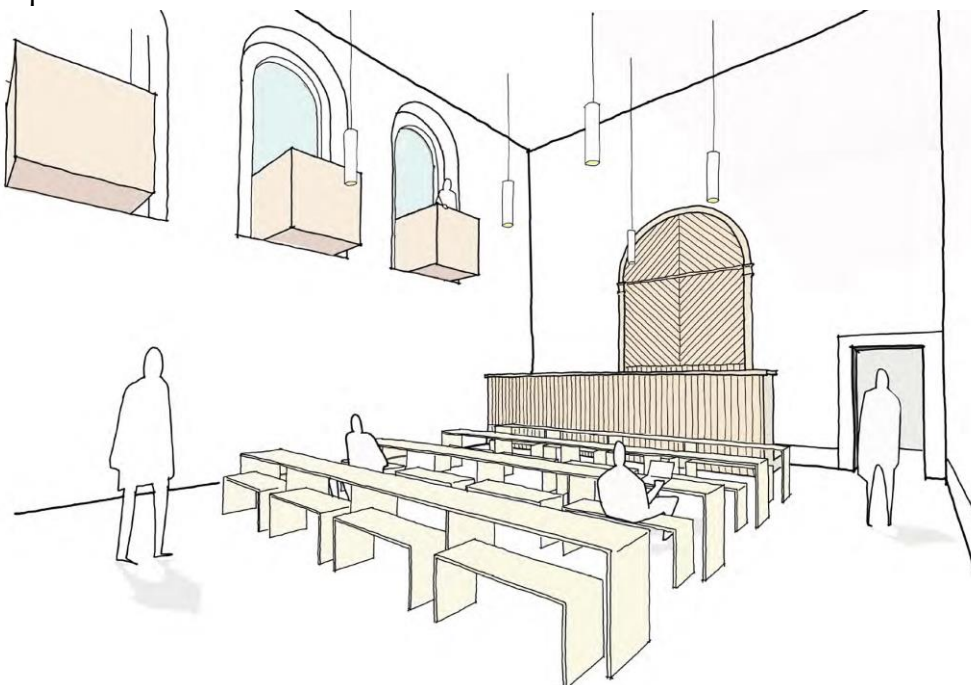
2nd year Students from Portlaoise College visited Portlaoise Fire Station on Tuesday, 21st March where they met members of the Fire Service. They enjoyed a tour of the fire station and were briefed on the importance of fire safety and shown equipment used by the Fire Service.



RRDF- Borris in Ossory Courthouse

Laois County Council is in the process of renovating and adapting the former courthouse building and site in Borris in Ossory. As part of the design process, a public consultation meeting was held on the evening of Wednesday 29th March in the Old Boys School. Initial design proposals were presented by the design team and remained on display for a number of days. The consultation meeting was well attended by the community and plans for the Courthouse were positively received.

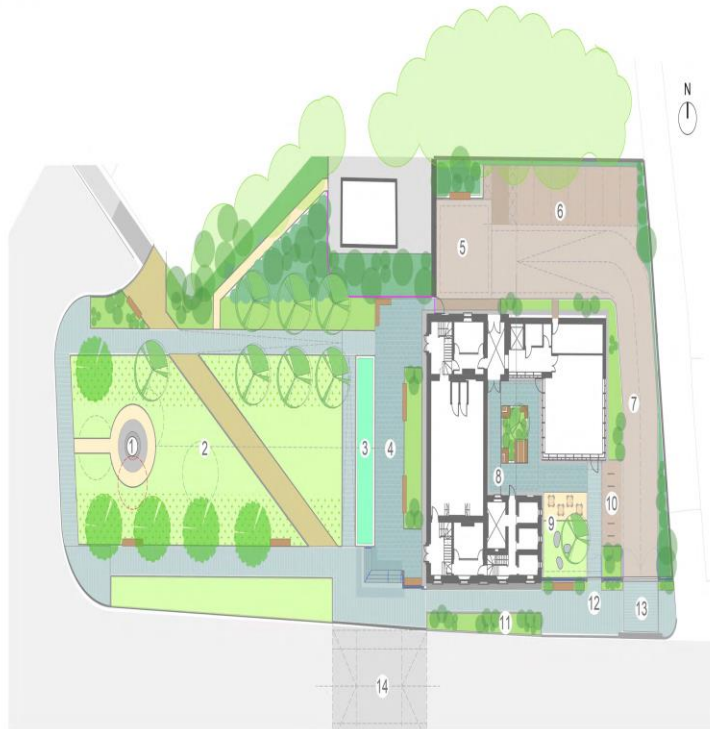
Proposed Internal view



Proposed External view



- | Legend | Key |
|--------|---|
| | 1 Relocated Millennium Fountain |
| | 2 Formal Laid-out Gardens |
| | 3 Rain Garden (SUDS) |
| | 4 Raised Front Plaza |
| | 5 Turning Head |
| | 6 Parking (B) |
| | 7 Shared Surface Access |
| | 8 Workspace Courtyard |
| | 9 Social Garden |
| | 10 Cycle Parking |
| | 11 Green Separator Strip |
| | 12 Arched Pedestrian Access |
| | 13 Pedestrian Priority Vehicular Entrance |
| | 14 Traffic Calming & Crossing |
| | |
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Borris-In-Ossory Courthouse
 Stage 1 Public Consultation - 29.03.2023



The closing date to receive completed Tidy Towns Grant applications was the 31st March 2023 and completion reports for each Tidy Town Group availing of this grant are due in on 30th September 2023.

Community Grant Scheme 2023

Applications were invited from interested not for profit bodies, groups, committees and organisations (excluding sporting organisations) who intend to engage in environmental/amenity works during 2023. Closing date for receipt of applications was 3rd April 2023.

Green Hub Portarlinton

Portarlinton Art Collective and Portarlinton Business Association SEC submitted a proposal in conjunction with Laois County Council for Green Hub Project. The project was one of 6 selected nationally and received €10k in funding from the Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Management Office.

Five artists have been partnered with a business and commissioned to make “Gragoyles” from their waste to symbolise the warding off of excessive waste. Craig Benton visited on the 30th March and conducted a number of “dumpster dives” /waste audits with participating local businesses. Reports are currently being drawn up.

A **water bottle refill unit** was installed on 27th March in the local park in Portarlinton from LAPN funding. The showcase event whereby the Gragoyles will be unveiled is planned for the 21st April.



Healthy Laois/Age Friendly Laois

Age Friendly Laois collaborated with Healthy Laois for the inaugural Living Well Expo, which took place in Portlaoise College on the 13th April. This event was the first of its kind in the county with over 1,000 people in attendance on the day. It was a fun filled initiative and was an opportunity for stakeholders to network, information share about what supports are available in Laois. The format for the event included:

- 1 main Expo Hall housing 70 exhibitors
- Stage Area featuring talks and demos
- 1 room featuring talks on Menopause
- 1 room dedicated to HSE Health Screening

The Ukrainian choir opened the Expo with a beautiful rendition of “Mo Ghile Mear”. This was followed by an address by Cathaoirleach Cllr Thomasina Connell to the attendees. Laois’ Age Friendly Ambassador, Mrs Anna May McHugh, then officially opened the event.





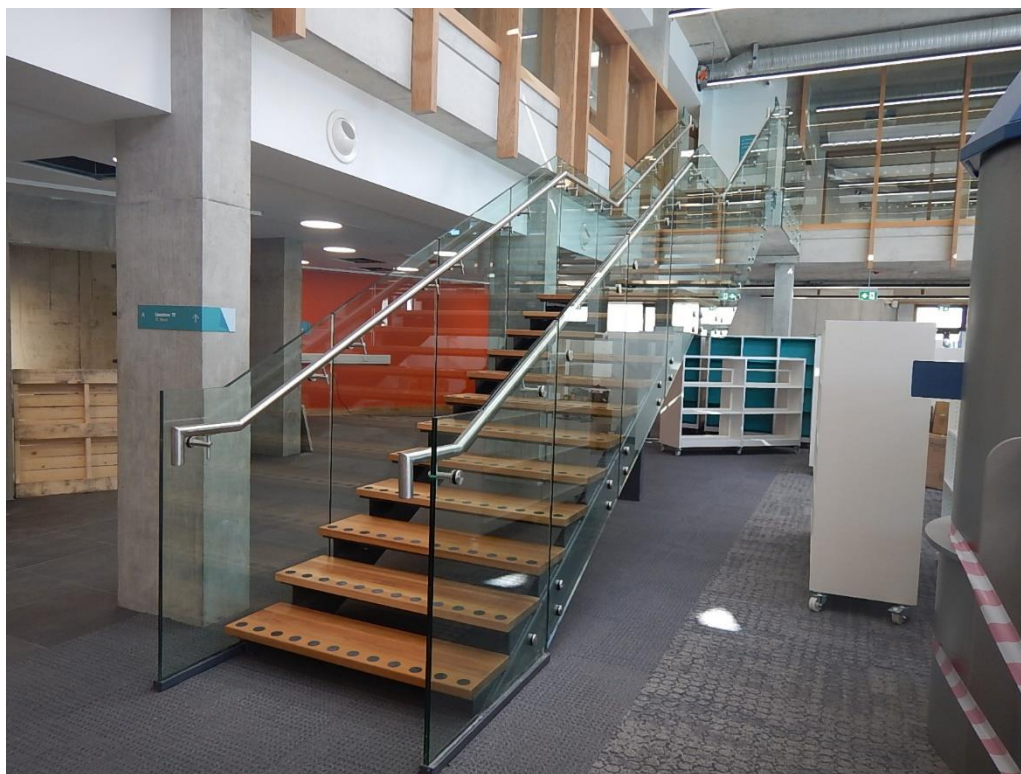
Sport & Leisure Section

DCEDIY Capital Grant Scheme for Playgrounds

Notification has been received from DCEDIY that €18,000 has been awarded for Accessibility / Biodiversity Playground upgrade phase 1 at Mountmellick Playground. This upgrade will be completed by year end 2023.

New County Library

Final works are being completed on the new library in preparation for handover to Laois County Council. Fitout, ICT set up and arrangement of library stock will be undertaken over the coming weeks with an expected opening date of June 2023



Library events -Easter

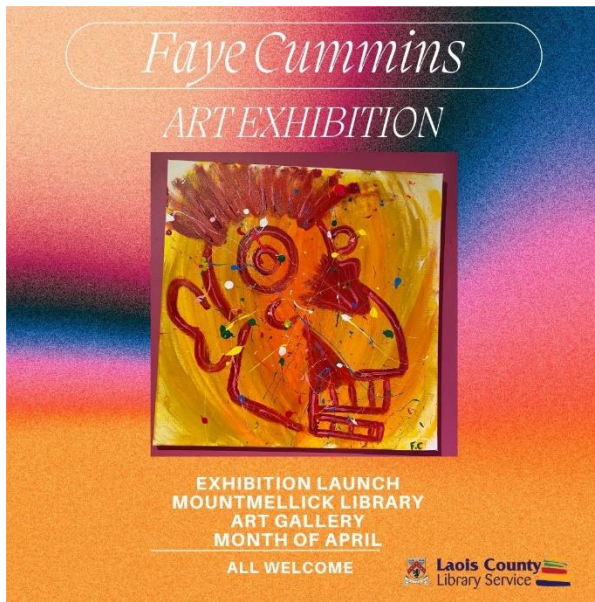
1. **Interactive Storytime** – Children’s author Juliette Saumande visited Portarlinton, Mountmellick and Portlaoise library on Weds, 12th Apr for interactive story times Juliette was joined by Katya who translated the stories into Ukrainian.

2. **Intro to Chess** – Ruairi from Red King Chess visited Portlaoise , Stradbally and Portarlinton libraries on Thurs, 13th Apr for chess workshop for kids .
3. **Upcycling Furniture Demonstration** –Portlaoise library supported by Europe Direct hosted an upcycling furniture demonstration in the library on Weds, 19th Apr with the Rediscovery Centre. Participants learned how to prep and paint their old furniture

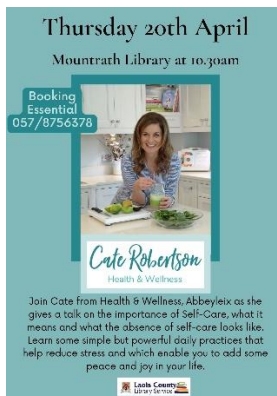


4. A **Cancer Awareness Talk** takes place on Tuesday 25th April at 12noon in Mountmellick Library . Michelle from [@irishcancersociety](https://www.irishcancersociety.ie) will hold a cancer awareness talk, covering the most common cancers in men.
5. **Local History Talk-Decade of Centenaries** was held online on Tuesday the 17th of April .
Title 'Protestant Experiences of the Irish Revolution and Free State'.
Speakers included Emmet O'Connor, Ida Milne and Ian d'Alton.

The **Gallery in Mountmellick** Library is hosting for the month of April the Kildare based artist Faye Cummins. All are welcome to come and view these vibrant paintings during library opening hours. Faye says” I love texture, colour, wild images and whatever my brain decides it wants to come up with next”.



Mountrath Library hosted a FREE talk by Cate Robertson on Thursday 20th April at Cate from Health & Wellness, spoke on the topic of Self-Care and its importance in our daily lives.



Chief Executive's Orders

- ✚ A schedule of Chief Executive Orders signed during the month of April 2023 will be circulated.

John Mulholland
Chief Executive

April 21st 2023

